

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	19 September 2023

Highway Asset Management

Winter Maintenance

- The winter maintenance annual consultation has now been completed and any comments have been noted for inclusion in the report which will be presented to O&S (regeneration & skills) on 19th September.
- Salt is being ordered to bring us up to maximum capacity before the start of the next winter season which commences on Monday 30th October 2023.
- Pre-season calibration and checks will also be completed in advance of the new season.

Street Lighting LED retro fit scheme

- Work is continuing with the replacement of the high – wattage bulbs to maximise the energy savings. This is still on track for completion by the end of the calendar year.
- Officers are continuing to work with colleagues in finance to discuss the on-going financing of the LED project. This is to take into account increased borrowing costs, whilst also factoring in the rise in energy costs which have increased savings for the Authority.
- A report is scheduled to go to cabinet on 5th October to extend the current street lighting contract to align with the conclusion of the LED scheme. This will ensure continuity of works and also ensure consistency when dealing with any warranty defects that are discovered.

Traffic signals LED retro fit scheme

- The 1st phase of the traffic signals LED scheme has now been completed providing further energy savings to the Authority.
- This is a 2-year programme with the remaining stock due to be replaced within the next 12 months.
- This project is being externally funded through the Combined Authority.

Highway Maintenance

- Planned maintenance operations are progressing well and in accordance with allocated programming timeframes.
- Officers are continuing to monitor expenditure, due to increased inflation costs, to ensure the programme is delivered within the available revenue budgets.
- Works undertaken using CRSTS funding is being reported to the CA on monthly dashboards in accordance with the funding requirements.
- Routine safety inspections and other maintenance functions such as grass cutting, and drainage renewals continue to operate daily which identifies isolated defects and repairs in accordance with the council's safety inspection policies and other industry guidelines.

Operational In-House Services

Building Cleaning

The service continues to perform well both financially and operationally.

Schools continue to support the service despite the increased costs of the service and the fact school budgets are under significant pressure.

We have one school leaving the service in September. The school is part of a wider academy trust with schools in Lancashire and for financial reasons, the Trust has chosen to move all its cleaning requirements to one private sector contractor.

However, a school which currently provides its own cleaning service, is returning to our service from September.

The service continues to support events in Southport such as the British Musical Fireworks Championships, The Southport Food and Drink Festival and The Southport Flower Show.

Fleet Services

Following the recent recruitment of the new Transport and Fleet Manager, the Office of the Traffic Commissioner has stipulated that as a requirement of issuing Sefton's Operator Licence, the Authority must now have two named holders of the CPC Transport Manager Road Haulage qualification on the Operator Licence.

Whilst this requirement has never been applied previously, the change is due to the size of Sefton's fleet and the concerns the Traffic Commissioner has regarding a national shortage of resource and resilience throughout the HGV Haulage Industry.

The service is considering a number of options to define how to proceed and meet the requirements stipulated to ensure continued compliance with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

The service recently received notice from the DVSA of its intent to inspect our MOT Nominated Testers and standards. They requested that one of the MOT registered mechanics attend an inspection at Long Lane in Liverpool of a vehicle that had passed for MOT at Hawthorne Road Depot 2 months earlier.

The Authorised Examiner Designated Manager (AEDM) for our MOT testing station was the mechanic who had carried out this particular MOT and he duly attended. His work was scrutinised by 3 Inspector Engineers for over 2 hours whilst he was present in an observational capacity.

The result was that his work was deemed acceptable of DVSA standards. Whilst the experience was quite daunting, it proves that the service provided by our staff can be held up to scrutiny at the highest level with success.

The service continues to provide a full MOT service to both internal and external customers and remains 100% compliant with inspections and services.

School Crossing Patrol

The service has a total of 7 vacancies at present. Work has continued during the summer break with recruitment and the service has identified 2 new applicants who are awaiting medicals.

The annual requirement for all Patrols aged 65 and over to have a medical is currently being processed via our Occupational Health Unit. Staff within this group find the annual medical extremely beneficial as it also highlights any potential early-stage health issues that staff may have, particularly around blood pressure, eyesight and general health. Whilst the medical is a condition of service, staff do find it beneficial in general.

The service gives thanks to all Patrols for their hard work and commitment they have demonstrated past and present and continue to do so in keeping the children and pedestrians safe whilst crossing the busy roads in Sefton.

A large number of our schools have contacted the service requesting an increase in hours for the Patrols. This is as a result of Government introducing a non-statutory expectation of a 32.5 hour minimum core school week by September 2023.

In July 2023 the deadline to meet this expectation was deferred to September 2024 at the latest, in recognition of the pressures facing schools.

This will have a direct impact upon the School Crossing Service, not only in the request for additional Patrols but also a budget pressure due to a potential increase in hours.

Work is currently underway to identify those staff and locations affected and to begin start the transformation process. The service will provide updates of on-going developments.

Sefton ARC and Careline

The service has recently undergone a restructure which became effective from 1st August 2023. The restructure has provided a refreshed management structure and produced a financial saving.

The service has recently agreed to a trial of moving the process for providing CCTV footage to the Police via their platform "NICE" rather than providing it via disc/dvd. This will be funded through Merseyside Police and will realise efficiencies for both Sefton ARC and Merseyside Police. This will be trialled during September.

After meeting with Merseyside Police regarding the effectiveness of CCTV across the borough, they have provided funding for 8 new cameras. Additionally, the BID team have provided funding for an additional 4 new cameras throughout the Southport area. Discussions with Merseyside Police are ongoing to seek any further funding that is available to upgrade existing cameras on the CCTV network.

Waste Management

Officer attendance at the LCR Strategic Waste Partnership and Senior Officer Working Group continues. Sefton, along with all LCR districts have endorsed the LCR Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Framework.

The recycling rate across Sefton is currently around 35%. The Government target for 2020 was to reach 50% of all household waste generated to be sent for recycling so Sefton continues to fall short of this. By 2035, the Government target is 65% of household waste to be recycled.

The service is reviewing the current recycling provision to ensure that the offer is available to all households as there continues to be low participation from properties who currently receive a sack collection style service.

Additionally, the service is exploring resource availability to improve education, engagement and participation with the aspiration of delivering targeted communication and behavioural change campaigns.

A route optimisation of the collection rounds is currently taking place, this will enable the Service to remove inconsistencies across waste collections, presenting balanced rounds which and provide greater resilience across the service. Route optimisation is a regularly evolving process as house building in the Borough continues.

Street Cleansing

The Street Cleansing Service has adopted a zonal approach to weed removal with teams deployed in a similar way to the leaf fall programme. This method has proven to be productive and provide greater ownership amongst the staff of their work area.

Feedback from residents has been positive. The external contract continues to be closely monitored for compliance. The season has seen optimum growing conditions with warm and wet weather.

Fly tipping continues to be a blight on the Borough with significant resource being deployed on a daily basis to address the issue.