

COUNCIL

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE
ON THURSDAY 14TH SEPTEMBER, 2023**

PRESENT: The Mayor (Councillor June Burns) in the Chair
The Deputy Mayor (Councillor Carragher) Vice Chair

Councillors Atkinson, Bradshaw, Brodie-Browne, Danny Burns, Byrom, Carlin, Cluskey, Corcoran, Cummins, D'Albuquerque, Desmond, Dodd, Dowd, Doyle, Evans, Fairclough, Grace, Halsall, Hardy, Harrison, Hart, Harvey, Keith, John Kelly, Killen, Lappin, Lloyd-Johnson, Lunn-Bates, McGinnity, McKee, Moncur, Murphy, Myers, O'Brien, Catie Page, Christopher Page, Prendergast, Pugh, Richards, Riley, Robinson, Roche, Roscoe, Shaw, Spencer, Spring, Thomas, Lynne Thompson, Tweed, Veidman, Waterfield, Sir Ron Watson and Wilson

36. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Brough, Hansen, Hardman, Howard, John Joseph Kelly, Sonya Kelly, Christine Maher, Ian Maher, Morris, Anne Thompson and Webster.

37. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

38. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 13 July 2023 be approved as a correct record.

39. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Councillor Matthew Lock

The Mayor referred to the sad passing of Matthew Lock the previous weekend. Matty was a councillor with Maghull Town Council and Lydiate Parish Council. He was just 19 years old but already had a thriving business fixing vacuum cleaners, which had also given him the opportunity to appear several times on daytime television. He was an asset to Maghull

and Lydiate; undertaking litter picking, pruning trees and he regularly cleaned graffiti away from the local subway. He would do whatever jobs he could to make his community a better place to live.

First and foremost, he was the only child to Chris and Richard and the Mayor asked the Council to join her in sending condolences to his family. He was a superb young man and a credit to his parents.

The Council observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect in reflecting on the sad passing of Matthew Lock.

Charity Nights

Tickets were now on sale for two of the Mayor's Charity Nights which she hoped some Members had purchased prior to the Council meeting. The first charity night would be a Divas Night on 14 October 2023 and the second, a 70's Night on 18 November 2023. All proceeds would go towards the Mayor's Charity Fund. She would also shortly be releasing details of her Gala Charity Ball which would be on Saturday 6 April 2024 at Formby Hall.

Southport Air Show

The Mayor had attended Southport Air Show on 9 September 2023 and considered that it was another fantastic event that did Sefton proud. She particularly enjoyed the Euro Fighter Display.

Civic Service

The Mayor's Civic Sunday Service was held on 10 September 2023 at the Church of St Helen, Aintree, and she thanked fellow Councillors who attended the service.

Sefton Pride

The Mayor thanked Councillor Jen Corcoran for organising the first Sefton Pride event in Southport on 16 July 2023 and she hoped the event would go from strength to strength. Event details had to be changed at the last minute due to the weather forecast, but despite that, the Mayor considered that it was a great event.

MS Queen Victoria Cruise Ship

The Mayor reported that she has presented a Sefton plaque on board the Cunard liner MS Queen Victoria during its recent arrival in Liverpool, as part of the 80th anniversary of the Battle of the Atlantic.

Knitted Mascot

The Mayor displayed a knitted teddy bear that had been presented to her by a 95-year-old sight-impaired lady who had made the toy herself.

40. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

The Council considered a schedule setting out the written questions submitted by:

1.	Mr. Stu Bennett to Councillor Ian Maher (Leader of the Council)
2.	Mr. Jeffrey Holloway to Councillor Atkinson (Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills)
3.	Mr. John Rice to Councillor Ian Maher (Leader of the Council)

together with responses given.

The members of the public who had submitted questions 1 and 3 were not in attendance at the Council meeting.

A supplementary question to question 2 was responded to by the Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the questions and responses, as set out in the schedule, be noted; and
- (2) a copy of the responses from the Leader of the Council and the Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills be forwarded to the members of the public concerned.

41. QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

The Council considered a schedule setting out the written questions submitted by:

1.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)
2.	Councillor Prendergast to the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Fairclough)
3.	Councillor Prendergast to the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Fairclough)
4.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)
5.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
6.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and

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	Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
7.	Councillor Prendergast to the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Fairclough)
8.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)
9.	Councillor Evans to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Moncur)
10.	Councillor Doyle to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
11.	Councillor Doyle to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
12.	Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Education (Councillor Roscoe)
13.	Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
14.	Councillor Harrison to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
15.	Councillor Harrison to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
16.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)
17.	Councillor Shaw to the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care (Councillor Doyle)
18.	Councillor Brodie-Browne to the Cabinet Member for Education (Councillor Roscoe)
19.	Councillor Brodie-Browne to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Moncur)
20.	Councillor Shaw to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
21.	Councillor Lloyd-Johnson to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
22.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)
23.	Councillor D'Albuquerque to the Cabinet Member for Children's

	Social Care (Councillor Doyle)
24.	Councillor Keith to the Deputy Leader of the Council (Councillor Fairclough)

together with responses given. Supplementary questions to questions 2, 3, 7, 11, 12, 13, 17, 18, 19 and 20, were responded to by the Deputy Leader of the Council; and the Cabinet Members – Children’s Social Care, Education, Health and Wellbeing; and Regeneration and Skills.

42. HIGH NEEDS FUNDING 2023/24 QUARTERLY MONITORING UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 39 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 July 2023, the Council considered the report of the Assistant Director of Children’s Services (Education) that advised of:

1. The monitoring position of the High Needs budget position on 1 July 2023, as per the previous agreement to provide regular updates, and included:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end based on current / anticipated Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) support required during 2022/23.
 - The provisional High Need budget forecast for the 2023/24 financial year based on announced funding levels and estimated High Needs demands.
2. An update on the current SEN Review / Sufficiency Programme aimed at bringing High Needs expenditure pressures back into a more manageable financial position in the future including the outcomes from the work to date on the national Delivering Better Value Programme

It was moved by Councillor Roscoe, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED: That

Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) – High Needs Budget

- (1) the current forecast position relating to the 2023/24 High Needs Budget be noted;
- (2) the forecast accumulative deficit position of the High Needs Budget be noted;
- (3) the provisional potential deficit position facing the 2023/24 High Needs Budget be noted;

Update on the Special Educational Needs (SEN) Review / Sufficiency Programme

- (4) the outcomes from the Delivering Better Value Programme be noted; and
- (5) the continuing work being undertaken through the SEN Review/ Sufficiency Programme be noted.

43. ANNUAL REPORT OF THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE COMMITTEE 2022-2023

Further to Minute No. 16 of the meeting of the Audit and Governance Committee held on 6 September 2023, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services which formally presented the Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee 2022-2023.

This was the second year an annual report had been presented which contained updates on the following sections:

- Audit and Governance Committee Work Programme 2022-2023
- Assurance Activity
- Risk Management
- Treasury Management
- Statement of Accounts and External Auditors
- Information Governance/Constitution Updates
- Audit and Governance Self-Assessment Exercise
- Appointment of an Independent Member
- Audit and Governance Committee Member Training and Development
- Outcomes/Achievements

It was moved by Councillor Robinson, seconded by Councillor Roche and

RESOLVED:

That the 2022-2023 Annual Report of the Audit and Governance Committee be approved.

44. PROPER OFFICER FUNCTIONS

The Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services seeking approval to the statutory duties in relation to Electoral Administration and of the Returning Officer in relation to Parliamentary, Local, Parish Elections and Referenda being attached to the post of the Chief Executive, Philip Porter with effect from 15 September 2023.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED:

That the proposal that the Electoral Registration Officer Functions for the registration of Parliamentary and Local Government Electors and Returning Officer Functions for Parliamentary, Local, Parish Elections and Referenda under all relevant legislation, be attached to the post of the Chief Executive, Philip Porter and the current post holder be appointed to act as the Proper Officer for all related functions and relevant legislation with effect from 15 September 2023, be approved.

45. TREASURY MANAGEMENT OUTTURN 2022/23

Further to Minute No. 45 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 July 2023, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services providing a review of the Treasury Management activities undertaken during 2022/23 and an update to 30 June 2023. The Cabinet received the outturn report to allow monitoring against the Treasury Management Policy and Strategy and Prudential Indicators approved by the Cabinet and Council in March 2022. The report was also provided to the Audit and Governance Committee, whose role it was to carry out scrutiny of treasury management policies and practices.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED:

That the Treasury Management position during 2022/23 and the update to 30 June 2023 be noted, together with the review of the effects of decisions taken in pursuit of the Treasury Management Strategy and the implications of changes resulting from regulatory, economic and market factors affecting the Council's treasury management activities.

46. FINANCIAL AND CORPORATE PERFORMANCE 2022/2023

Further to Minute No. 47 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 27 July 2023, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the revenue and capital outturn position in relation to the 2022/23 financial year. The report outlined key variations and, where appropriate, any impact on future years' financial performance. In addition, the report provided details of the Council's Corporate Performance for 2022/23 and current corporate risks.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED:

Revenue Outturn

That the addition and utilisation of the Earmarked Reserves, as detailed in paragraph 6.4.(a), (c) and (d) in the report, be approved.

47. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2023/24 TO 2026/27 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2023/24 – SEPTEMBER UPDATE

Further to Minute No. 63 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 September 2023, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services advising of:

- 1) The current position relating to the 2023/24 revenue budget.
- 2) The current forecast on Council Tax and Business Rates collection for 2023/24.
- 3) The monitoring position of the Council's capital programme to the end of July 2023:
 - The forecast expenditure to year end.
 - Variations against the approved budgets and an explanation of those variations for consideration by Members.
 - Updates to spending profiles and proposed amendments to capital budgets necessary to ensure the efficient delivery of capital projects are also presented for approval.
- 4) The latest performance management information for 2023/24.

The following Appendices were attached to the report:

- Appendix A – Capital Programme 2023/24 to 2025/26
- Appendix B – Performance Information 2023/24 – Quarter 1

The Cabinet had approved a number of recommendations, three of which required Council approval.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED:

That:

Revenue Budget

- (1) a supplementary revenue estimate for £2.319m for Adult Social Care funded from the Market Sustainability Improvement Fund (MSIF): Workforce Fund be approved; and
- (2) a supplementary revenue estimate for £1.000m for Education Excellence funded from the Delivering Better Value in SEND Programme grant, subject to final approval from the Department for Education, be approved; and

Capital Programme

- (3) a supplementary capital estimate for £1.300m for the Local Authority Housing Fund, funded by grant from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC), be approved.

48. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2023/24 TO 2026/27 – MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL PLAN 2024/25 TO 2026/27

Further to Minute No. 64 of the meeting of the Cabinet held on 7 September 2023, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services advising of:

1. the update to the Medium-Term Financial Plan (MTFP) for 2024/25 to 2026/27 taking account of all currently available information.
2. an update on other areas that informed financial decision making including the Council's reserves position, its growth programme, its position on its wholly owned council companies and the High Needs budget as these were all interlinked with the MTFP.

The Cabinet had resolved (Minute No. 64) that:

- (1) the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and any assumptions made, be noted; and
- (2) the Council be recommended to approve the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and any assumptions made.

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Fairclough and

RESOLVED:

That the updated Medium-Term Financial Plan for 2024/25 to 2026/27 and any assumptions made be approved.

49. COUNCIL CONSTITUTION - RULE 46 (WAIVING CALL-IN) PROVISIONS

The Council considered the reports of the Leader of the Council in relation to two matters that were dealt with in accordance with Rule 46 (waiving call-in) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules of the Council Constitution, whereby "call in" was waived.

It was moved by Councillor Fairclough, seconded by Councillor Hardy and

RESOLVED:

That the reports be noted.

50. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2023/24

The Mayor advised that the Audit and Governance Committee had appointed a non-voting Independent Member, Rachel Oakes, effective

from 1 June 2023. The Mayor reported that the Labour Group wished to replace Councillor Lunn-Bates with Councillor Hart on the Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee.

RESOLVED:

Audit and Governance Committee

That the following addition be made the membership of the Audit and Governance Committee:

Non-voting Independent Member - Rachel Oakes

Merseyside Integrated Care System Joint Health Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Hart to replace Councillor Lunn-Bates.

51. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PRENDERGAST - MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES

It was moved by Councillor Prendergast, seconded by Councillor Sir Ron Watson and unanimously

RESOLVED:

Members' Allowances

The Leader of the Council will know that those Elected Members who resigned the Labour Whip and sat for a period as Independents refused to participate in the full workings of the Council by deciding not to accept positions on the Council's Committees.

Committee work is a critical part of the responsibilities of all Councillors and there is no precedent in the history of Sefton for Members taking the position that has been outlined.

Whilst those concerned at the time were prepared to undertake what can best be described as 'Ward work' deciding to absent themselves from a clear element of responsibility can best be described as a dereliction of duty and is not in the best interests of their constituents.

One element of Members' Allowances clearly reflects the need to play a full part in the work of a Councillor and in these circumstances would the Leader of the Council agree to make representations to the Local Government Association to give Local Authorities the authority to reduce the Members' allowance in cases such as this to reflect the concern at the lack of full involvement in the responsibilities Members should accept when elected.

There is no current provision within the regulations set nationally to allow this level of local discretion based on circumstances such as those

outlined which is why representations to the LGA represents the best way forward in terms of granting Councils the ability to make their own decisions in this area.

Therefore, this Council resolves:

- to ask the Leader of the Council to make representations to the Local Government Association that they raise this issue at a national level.
- To ask the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State to request a review of the current regulations around Member's Allowances so that Local Authorities have greater discretion in being able to reduce payments to those Members who have been allocated committee places but refuse to take them up.

**52. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SIR RON WATSON -
VEHICLE PARKING DUKES WARD**

It was moved by Councillor Sir Ron Watson, seconded by Councillor Prendergast:

Vehicle Parking Dukes Ward

Whilst it is accepted that Notices of Motion should normally be submitted when they have some bearing on the policy and/or strategic direction of the Council but there are occasions when a longstanding ward issue for Members who represent the area reach the stage where they need a higher level of senior involvement at both Member and Officer level.

Dukes Ward in Birkdale is the site of the Smedley Hydro complex.

The Smedley site provides a very important public service and employs not insignificant numbers of the local population in the Borough and on those two criteria alone it is an asset.

However, a complex of this size would not now be granted planning permission and it is no exaggeration to say that there has been a constant problem for decades over the vexed issue of car parking for Smedley employees.

Whilst the Council has made serious efforts to resolve some of the issues it remains a contentious problem and the adjoining residential roads and avenues suffer as a result as far as local residents and visitors are concerned. The attempts made so far have to a large degree simply moved the problem from one area to another.

Whilst it was hoped that the move towards home working would alleviate the problem it does not seem to have made any discernible difference.

Ward Councillors have attempted to have the Highways Department, in conjunction with other agencies such as the Police, undertake a thorough overall review but Councillors have been advised that the resources required to do such an in-depth study are not available and this financial aspect is one reason why wider consideration needs to be given to helping resolve the difficulties.

The Council therefore resolves to:

- (1) Initiate and undertake a thorough review of parking in the area affected and as part of this process invite other interested parties;
- (2) Smedley Hydro management should be asked to provide senior managerial input as part of this process;
- (3) As there is involvement by the Home Office on a national basis in addition to the representations already made the Member of Parliament should form an integral part of the issues to be addressed;
- (4) The Southport & Birkdale Cricket Club should also be included as they had previously provided, by agreement with Smedley Hydro, car parking facilities for Smedley Hydro staff; and
- (5) Residents of the area should be consulted and the appropriate documentation provided to enable them to have their own individual input. Such a process now remains the only viable option and what is outlined in terms of recommendations would in itself help mitigate the continual and growing concern from reasonable residents whose lives are often blighted by this situation.

Following a debate on the **Motion** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Motion was lost** by 43 votes to 11 with 1 abstention.

53. MOTION BY COUNCILLOR LLOYD-JOHNSON - TWO CHILD BENEFITS CAP

It was moved by Councillor Lloyd-Johnson, seconded by Councillor Pugh:

Two Child Benefits Cap

We read with great sadness that Government figures for 2020-21 show that in Sefton 9501 (16%) of children and young people aged 0-19 were living in relative poverty¹. Relative poverty is defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as, "where households have less than 60% of contemporary median income²."

¹ <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/6096/childhood-poverty-strategy-2022.pdf>

² <https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us/what-is-poverty>

The Department for Work and Pensions puts the 60% figure at just £202 per week for a lone parent with one child or £367 per week for a couple with 2 children³.

We believe that this situation is unsustainable, particularly as economic turmoil continues in the United Kingdom. We are in a cost-of-living crisis and the Government should be acting to protect those in society who are most vulnerable. There can be few more vulnerable than children born into homes who simply do not have enough income to pay for the most basic items and services.

The two-child benefit cap prevents parents from claiming child tax credit or universal credit for any third or subsequent child born after April 2017⁴. It has affected an estimated 1.5 million children⁵.

We believe the two-child benefit cap is economically misguided, societally damaging and immoral.

This Council notes;

House of Commons Library data shows that if the cap was removed it would lift 270,000 households out of poverty at a cost of £1.4 billion⁶.

Poverty in childhood has been strongly linked to detrimental effects in later life. Those born into poverty are proportionally more likely to suffer homelessness, addiction issues and family breakdown⁷.

This Council resolves to;

Put on record its support for the removal of the two-child benefit cap.

Ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor and Shadow Chancellor expressing these views and making them aware of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy.

Ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to each of the Members of Parliament representing areas within the borough, expressing the Council's support for the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap.

Release, through the Council's existing press mechanisms, a public statement that makes clear that councillors have resolved that they support the removal of the two-child benefit cap.

Following a debate on the **Motion** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Motion was carried** by 52 votes to 3 and it was:

³ <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/poverty-thresholds/>

⁴ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/16/two-child-benefit-cap-explainer>

⁵ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/16/two-child-benefit-cap-explainer>

⁶ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61220/the-twochild-benefit-cap>

⁷ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us/what-is-poverty>

RESOLVED:

Two Child Benefits Cap

We read with great sadness that Government figures for 2020-21 show that in Sefton 9501 (16%) of children and young people aged 0-19 were living in relative poverty⁸. Relative poverty is defined by the Joseph Rowntree Foundation as, “where households have less than 60% of contemporary median income⁹.”

The Department for Work and Pensions puts the 60% figure at just £202 per week for a lone parent with one child or £367 per week for a couple with 2 children¹⁰.

We believe that this situation is unsustainable, particularly as economic turmoil continues in the United Kingdom. We are in a cost-of-living crisis and the Government should be acting to protect those in society who are most vulnerable. There can be few more vulnerable than children born into homes who simply do not have enough income to pay for the most basic items and services.

The two-child benefit cap prevents parents from claiming child tax credit or universal credit for any third or subsequent child born after April 2017¹¹. It has affected an estimated 1.5 million children¹².

We believe the two-child benefit cap is economically misguided, societally damaging and immoral.

This Council notes;

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Poverty in childhood has been strongly linked to detrimental effects in later life. Those born into poverty are proportionally more likely to suffer homelessness, addiction issues and family breakdown¹⁴.

This Council resolves to;

Put on record its support for the removal of the two-child benefit cap.

⁸ <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/6096/childhood-poverty-strategy-2022.pdf>

⁹ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us/what-is-poverty>

¹⁰ <https://trustforlondon.org.uk/data/poverty-thresholds/>

¹¹ <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/16/two-child-benefit-cap-explainer>

¹² <https://www.theguardian.com/society/2023/jul/16/two-child-benefit-cap-explainer>

¹³ <https://edm.parliament.uk/early-day-motion/61220/the-twochild-benefit-cap>

¹⁴ <https://www.jrf.org.uk/about-us/what-is-poverty>

Ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to the Chancellor and Shadow Chancellor expressing these views and making them aware of the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy.

Ask the Council's Chief Executive to write to each of the Members of Parliament representing areas within the borough, expressing the Council's support for the scrapping of the two-child benefit cap.

Release, through the Council's existing press mechanisms, a public statement that makes clear that councillors have resolved that they support the removal of the two-child benefit cap.

54. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CORCORAN - REFORM OF THE CRIMINAL JUSTICE SYSTEM: SUPPORTING THE 'FACE THE FAMILY' CAMPAIGN

It was moved by Councillor Corcoran, seconded by Councillor Harvey and unanimously

RESOLVED:

Reform of the Criminal Justice System: Supporting the 'Face the Family' campaign

Council notes that currently offenders can choose not to appear in court for sentencing, including hearing victim impact statements. This can add to families and victims' suffering, as they are deprived the opportunity of presenting victim impact statements with offenders present. This was highlighted recently when Thomas Cashman refused to appear in court after being found guilty of the murder of nine-year-old Olivia Pratt-Korbel.

Council further notes the 'Face the Family' campaign, coordinated by Radio City, which is calling for a change to the law to insist offenders come into court for sentencing, or face possible additional penalty. Local MPs, our PCC, and others are asking for the government to introduce a new law to make offenders be present in court. This could be done by including it in the Victim and Witnesses Bill currently going through Parliament. This includes a current online petition.

Council supports the call for this change in the law to make our criminal justice system more supportive of victims and states its support of the 'Face the Family' campaign.

Council therefore calls on the Leader and Chief Executive to write to the Justice Minister setting out the terms of this motion, stating our support for the campaign and urge him to bring forward legislation as soon as possible.

55. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CORCORAN - HATE CRIME AMBASSADORS

It was moved by Councillor Corcoran, seconded by Councillor Spring and unanimously

RESOLVED:

Hate Crime Ambassadors

This Council notes that

A hate crime is any behaviour that someone thinks was caused by hostility, prejudice or hatred of their:

- Disability (including physical impairments, mental health problems, learning disabilities, hearing and visual impairments)
- Gender Identity (people who are transgender, transsexual or transvestite)
- Race, skin colour, nationality, ethnicity or heritage
- Religion, faith or belief (including people without a religious belief)
- Sexual orientation (people who are lesbian, gay, bisexual or heterosexual etc.)

It can include:

- name calling or verbal abuse
- graffiti or abusive writing
- damage to property
- threats or intimidation
- bullying or harassment
- physical attacks or violence, including sexual violence, arson and murder.

Anyone can be a victim of hate crime if they are targeted because of who they are, their friends or family or even who the perpetrator thinks they are.

If a court finds that any offence was aggravated by, or committed because of prejudice or hostility on any of the above grounds, then a more severe sentence can be imposed on the perpetrator.

Figures for hate crime, and non-crime hate incidents in Sefton (supplied by the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner) are as follows:

2020 – 589;
2021 – 654;
2022 – 756

This shows a steady increase.

This Council believes that:

Hate incidents and hate crimes are still underreported

Although we cannot be sure whether the increase means more incidents, or an increase in reporting, we believe that hate crime has no place in our society.

This Council resolves to:

Condemn racism, xenophobia, sexism, homophobia, transphobia and hate crimes of any description;

Reassure our residents, workers and visitors that Sefton is a welcoming borough which strives to be diverse and tolerant;

Undertake Hate Crime Ambassador training to champion awareness, increase public confidence and support reporting in our communities, including how to report a hate crime, and third party reporting.

Source for definition

<https://www.merseysidepcc.info/get-involved/resources-campaigns/hate-crime/>