

COUNCIL

**MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, SOUTHPORT
ON THURSDAY 18 APRIL 2024**

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

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

106. ORDER OF BUSINESS ON THE AGENDA

The Mayor announced that given the number of members of the public who wished to attend the Council meeting and the very lengthy agenda, she had decided to change the running order of the original agenda.

Given the similarity in subject matters in the public petition received and the Motion submitted by Councillor Morris - Openreach, the Mayor had decided to move Councillor Morris' Motion up the agenda to be the first Motion considered. This would allow the opportunity for members of the public interested in the item to then leave the meeting if they wished.

The Mayor had also decided that the Motion submitted by Councillor Carlin - Support for Calling for a Ceasefire in Palestine and Israel, should then be considered next. This would save those members of the public with an interest in that Motion having to wait until nearly the end of the meeting.

107. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Carragher, Cummins, Keith, John Kelly, Lloyd-Johnson, Christine Maher, Anne Thompson and Webster.

108. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

In accordance with Paragraph 9 of the Council's Code of Conduct, the following declarations of personal interest were made and the Members concerned remained in the room during the consideration of the item:

Member	Minute No.	Nature of Interest
Councillor Atkinson	Minute No. 123 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay to Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers	She is employed by Merseytravel – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Danny Burns	Minute No. 123 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay to Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers	He is employed by Knowsley Council Youth Offending Service – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Corcoran	Minute No. 123 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay to Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers	She is employed by Liverpool City Council – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor D’Albuquerque	Minute No. 111 - Matters Raised by the Public - Public Petition – Petition to stop the telegraph poles	He is a signatory to the petition referred to – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Dowd	Minute No. 123 -	She is employed by NHS

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	Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay to Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers	Cheshire and Mersey ICB (Liverpool Place) – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Grace	Minute No. 123 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay to Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers	She is employed by Liverpool City Council – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Morris	Minute No. 111 - Matters Raised by the Public - Public Petition – Petition to stop the telegraph poles	He is a signatory to the petition referred to – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Murphy	Minute No. 123 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay to Council: A Fully Funded, Proper Pay Rise for Council and School Workers	She is employed by Knowsley MBC – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon
Councillor Spring	Minute No. 123 - Motion Submitted by Councillor Lappin - Local Government Pay	He is employed by Merseytravel – stayed in the room, took part in the consideration of the item and voted thereon

to Council: A Fully
Funded, Proper
Pay Rise for
Council and
School Workers

109. MINUTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the Council Meeting held on 29 February 2024 be approved as a correct record.

110. MAYOR'S COMMUNICATIONS

Death of Councillor Paula Spencer

The Mayor reported with great sadness on the loss of Councillor Paula Spencer who passed away on 27 March 2024. Paula was elected as a Councillor for St. Oswald Ward on 7 May 2015. During her time on the Council Paula had served on the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding), Planning Committee and Licensing and Regulatory Committee. Paula had a particular interest in matters relating to children and was also Vice-Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) for two years.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor acknowledged Paula's dedicated service to Sefton and extended her sincere condolences to Paula's husband Andy, their children, Anna, Dale, Jimmy and Kathleen, and the rest of her family, at this difficult time.

Councillors Atkinson, Thomas, Ian Maher, Pugh, O'Brien, Dowd, Harrison Kelly and Prendergast paid tribute to Councillor Paula Spencer.

The Council observed a one-minute silence as a mark of respect in reflecting on the sad passing of Councillor Paula Spencer.

Councillors Not Seeking Re-Election

The Mayor reported that this was the last Council meeting before the Council Elections on 2 May 2024 and that the following Councillors would not be seeking re-election:

- Councillor Linda Cluskey who had served on Sefton Council on 3 separate occasions, for a total of 20 years.
- Councillor Sinclair D'Albuquerque who had served on Sefton Council for 3 years.

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- Councillor Trish Hardy who had served on Sefton Council for 21 years.
- Councillor John Joseph Kelly who had served on Sefton Council for 14 years.
- Councillor Christine Maher who had served on Sefton Council for 3 years.
- Councillor Anne Thompson who had served on Sefton Council for 11 years.
- Councillor Carran Waterfield who had served on Sefton Council for 5 years; and
- Councillor Andrew Wilson who had served on Sefton Council for 3 years.

On behalf of the Council, the Mayor thanked those Members for their dedicated service to the people of Sefton, which when combined totalled 80 years, and extended her best wishes to them for the future.

Mayor of Sefton's Gala Charity Ball 2024

The Mayor reported that her Gala Charity Ball was held on Saturday 6 April 2024 and was a great success. Over 170 people attended the event in Formby Hall, Formby, and a great deal of money was raised on the night for the Mayor's Charity Fund. The Mayor expressed her thanks to all those Members who attended and supported the event. The Mayor was currently planning events for her second term of office and would keep the Council updated on those events during the course of the year.

Royal Visit to Sefton Carers Centre

The Mayor reported that on 16 April, she was honoured to be invited to Sefton Carers Centre to commemorate the 30th anniversary of Sefton Carers. Her Royal Highness Princess Anne was also in attendance at the event. The Mayor considered that it was inspiring to see the invaluable support the Centre offered to unpaid caregivers living in Sefton and praised the number of young people who undertook a carer role.

Conflict in Palestine and Israel

The Mayor referred to the Motion on the agenda about the conflict in Palestine and Israel.

The Council then observed a one-minute silence to remember all those who had lost their lives because of the Palestinian - Israeli conflict.

111. MATTERS RAISED BY THE PUBLIC

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

1.	Mr. Jeffrey Holloway to Councillor Lappin (Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)
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together with the response given.

The member of the public who had submitted the question was in attendance at the Council meeting.

RESOLVED:

That the question and response, as set out in the schedule, be noted.

The Mayor reported that a public petition had been received as detailed below.

Petition to stop the telegraph poles

The terms of the petition, which contained over 700 signatures, stated that:

“We the undersigned petition the council to stop the telegraph poles. We the undersigned petition Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council to use all means possible (such as a by-law) to stop the installation of any new telegraph poles throughout Southport (or other communities within the borough opposed to them) and to require the roll-out of fibre to the premises (or other future above ground initiatives) to use underground infrastructure within roads and pavements instead.

We call upon the council to urgently lobby The Minister of State for Data and Digital Infrastructure and the boroughs three Members of Parliament to review the extensive permitted development rights under Schedule 2, Part 16, Class A of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (as amended) (the “GPDO”) that currently requires limited or no consultation regarding the installation of telecommunications equipment in communities or specific planning permission.

Where a network builder (code operator) is not adhering to their statutory obligations we call upon the council to formally report the operator to OFCOM and ensure there is an investigation and enforcement action taken.”

In accordance with the Council’s Constitution, the Lead Petitioner was advised of his right to make representations to the Council, not lasting more than 5 minutes. Mr. Neilson addressed the Council for 5 minutes in respect of the terms of the petition.

The Cabinet Member for Locality Services, Councillor Fairclough, responded to the petition and made the following points:

- The Council was limited in what it could do and did not have powers to stop the erection of the telegraph poles.
- The Byelaws (Alternative Procedure) England Regulations 2016 contained a list of categories for which a byelaw could be made. There was not a category within the Regulations which would allow the Council to make a byelaw that would prevent the installation of telegraph poles on the highway.
- He considered the use of telegraph poles by the operator to be a cost-cutting measure.
- There was no objection to lobbying the Minister and M.P.s., as requested by the petition.
- He considered that permitted development rights restricted consultation with residents and should be in line with permit conditions.
- There was no objection to reporting the operator to OFCOM.

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

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the lead petitioner be thanked for submitting and presenting the petition to the Council; and
- (2) the petition be noted and that the Council be mindful of the petition in considering the Motion submitted by Councillor Morris - Openreach (Minute No. 123 below refers).

112. QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

1.	Councillor Evans to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Atkinson)
2.	Councillor Brough to the Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing (Councillor Moncur)
3.	Councillor Halsall to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)
4.	Councillor Halsall to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Atkinson)
5.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Atkinson)
6.	Councillor Prendergast to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Howard)

7.	Councillor Sir Ron Watson to the Leader of the Council
8.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council
9.	Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council
10.	Councillor Sir Ron Watson to the Leader of the Council
11.	Councillor Sir Ron Watson to the Leader of the Council
12.	Councillor Pugh to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills

together with responses given. Supplementary questions to questions 1, 3, 4, 7, 10, 11 and 12 were responded to by the Leader of the Council, the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services and the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills.

113. COUNCIL HOUSING GOVERNANCE AND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

Further to Minute No. 153 of the meeting of the Cabinet of 4 April 2024, the Council considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) that sought delegated authority for the formal adoption of a suite of council housing policies required to facilitate the management and maintenance of any new Council owned homes as part of the Council Housing Programme; detailed the future governance arrangements for the management of the Council's homes; and also sought approval for an Early Acquisition Scheme including delegated authority to acquire additional properties for council housing provision.

The following appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 - Regulator of Social Housing Consumer Standards April 2024.

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary capital estimate of £750,000, for an Early Acquisition Scheme to acquire additional properties for Council housing to be included within the Capital Programme, funded through historic right to buy sharing agreement receipts and Homes England grant funding where this may be available and suitable, be approved.

114. CONTINUATION OF THE PUBLIC SPACES PROTECTION ORDER - DOG CONTROL

Further to Minute No. 37 of the meeting of the Licensing and Regulatory Committee of 11 March 2024, the Council considered the report of the Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) which

provided information concerning dog control and an overview of the public consultation on the proposed extension of the existing Public Spaces Protection Order Dog Control 2021 for a further three years.

RESOLVED:

That the extension of the Public Spaces Protection Order Dog Control 2021 for a further three years be approved.

115. FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT 2024/25 TO 2027/28 - REVENUE AND CAPITAL BUDGET UPDATE 2024/25 - ADDITIONAL ESTIMATES

Further to Minute No. 144 (5) of the meeting of the Cabinet of 7 March 2024, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services that set out a supplementary estimate for approval in the Council's Capital Programme 2024/25, following a recommendation from Cabinet in March.

RESOLVED:

That a supplementary capital estimate for £2.644m for the Food Waste Collection grant externally funded by Defra, be approved.

116. MEMBERSHIP OF COMMITTEES 2023/24

The Mayor reported that the Labour Group wished to make changes to the membership of the following Committees:

Audit and Governance Committee

Councillor Byrom to be a substitute member for Councillor Spring in place of Councillor Halsall

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)

Councillor Grace to be a member in place of Councillor Halsall

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)

Councillor Tweed to be a member in place of Councillor Carlin

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor Murphy to be a substitute member for Councillor Corcoran in place of Councillor Halsall

Local Joint Consultative Committee

Councillor Dowd to be a member in place of Councillor Carlin

Member Development Steering Group

Councillor Chris Page to be a member in place of Councillor Carlin

Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority

Councillor Hansen to be a representative in place of Councillor Carlin

Transport Committee (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Committee)

Councillor Danny Burns to be a representative in place of Councillor Halsall

RESOLVED:

That the changes as detailed above be approved.

**117. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR MORRIS -
OPENREACH**

It was moved by Councillor Morris, seconded by Councillor Prendergast:

Openreach Lack of Consultation with residents

Southport having a unique Victorian seaside townscape has been largely free of any overhead cables or above ground apparatus since the inception of Southport Corporation in 1867 except for the electrical tramways in 1900. Since the removal of the overhead wires for the tramways, Southport has enjoyed a visual amenity on its streets and townscape by having very few telegraph poles and overhead cables which would normally create a 'spiders web' spoiling the visual amenity of its streets for her residents. At present, most of Southport copper telephone infrastructure is buried 'direct in ground' and only very few streets have their telephone lines in ducting.

Network operators such as Openreach are exempt from requiring planning approval under 'Permitted Development' and are only required to inform the local authority one calendar month before requesting permits. The only consultation with residents and public is in the form of a paper notice pinned or taped to trees or lamp posts in the vicinity of a new pole, often poorly placed so that it will not be read i.e. facing the road rather than pavement 28 days before permits are sought. There is no telephone number to call with objections neither an email address, only a postal address.

Consultation then takes place with the 'objectors' whereby Openreach listen to all objections only to end the 'consultation' with the fact that they will still erect poles where they are not wanted. When asked why they do not carry out area consultations in church halls etc, they state that they would receive too many objections!

Openreach started the roll out of FTTP from the Churchtown exchange using telegraph poles in February of this year. Residents of those roads which opposed the erection of poles, spoiling the visual amenities of their streets and possibly reducing property prices protested peacefully to raise their collective objections to the roll out by Openreach.

The Minister of State for Data and Digital Infrastructure Hon Julia Lopez MP wrote to Openreach and other fixed line operators on 15 March 2024 and stated.

“New telegraph poles should only be in cases where installing lines underground is not reasonably practicable, and only after ensuring that appropriate community engagement has taken place and that the siting of new infrastructure will not cause obstructions to traffic or unduly impact the visible amenity of the local area”

This Council therefore resolves to:-

1. Urge Openreach to reconsider their decision to erect telegraph poles instead of ducting due to cost to preserve Southport's townscape and visible amenity.
2. Contact Openreach and insist that the spirit of the Ministers letter of the 14th March 2024 is adhered to in regard to meaningful consultation with residents, and pause the roll out in Southport until the existing 'cabinet and siting and pole siting Code of Practice of 2016 has been revised.
3. Support residents if the majority of the road or street do not want poles erected and write to Openreach asking for a pause to the installation and call for a public meeting with those residents to establish an amicable resolution.
4. If the Council considers that any operator has breached health and safety conditions attached to any permit or is using unsafe working practices this will be raised with the operator immediately in the most robust terms and the Council will be mindful of this when granting any further permits and / or when considering whether any permits should be suspended.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Myers, seconded by Councillor Fairclough that the Motion be revised as follows:

Openreach Lack of Consultation with residents

Southport having a unique Victorian seaside townscape has been largely free of any overhead cables or above ground apparatus since the inception of Southport Corporation in 1867 except for the electrical tramways in 1900. Since the removal of the overhead wires for the tramways, Southport has enjoyed a visual amenity on its streets and

townscape by having very few telegraph poles and overhead cables which would normally create a 'spiders web' spoiling the visual amenity of its streets for her residents. At present, most of Southport copper telephone infrastructure is buried 'direct in ground' with ducting also being installed in various streets since approximately the 90's.

Network operators such as Openreach are exempt from requiring planning approval under 'Permitted Development' and are only required to inform the local authority one calendar month before requesting permits. The only consultation with residents and public is in the form of a paper notice pinned or taped to trees or lamp posts in the vicinity of a new pole, often poorly placed so that it will not be read i.e. facing the road rather than pavement 28 days before permits are sought. There is no telephone number to call with objections neither an email address, only a postal address.

Consultation then takes place with the 'objectors' whereby Openreach listen to all objections only to end the 'consultation' with the fact that they will still erect poles where they are not wanted. When asked why they do not carry out area consultations in church halls etc, they state that they would receive too many objections!

Openreach started the roll out of FTTP from the Churchtown exchange using telegraph poles in February of this year. Residents of those roads which opposed the erection of poles, spoiling the visual amenities of their streets and possibly reducing property prices protested peacefully to raise their collective objections to the roll out by Openreach.

The Minister of State for Data and Digital Infrastructure Hon Julia Lopez MP wrote to Openreach and other fixed line operators on 15 March 2024 and stated:-

"New telegraph poles should only be in cases where installing lines underground is not reasonably practicable, and only after ensuring that appropriate community engagement has taken place and that the siting of new infrastructure will not cause obstructions to traffic or unduly impact the visible amenity of the local area."

Also making promises of changes to the current code of practice covering pole siting - however, no timescale was given for when these changes would take place nor details of how they would properly address situations like those locally or constrain operators from ignoring community concerns in future. As such, and in addition to the points to be raised as a result of the residents' petition on this subject earlier and agreed by Cllr Fairclough.

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- 1 Write to The Minister of State for Data and Digital Infrastructure Hon Julia Lopez MP expressing our strong concern over the way Openreach and other companies are allowed to exploit the situation created by the Government in recent years.

- 2 Urge the Minister to propose an immediate pause of work in those residential streets which have expressed strong concerns until the Minister outlines a detailed timetable for significant changes to the 2016 Cabinet siting and Pole Siting Code of Practice which will address the issues outlined above and then implements them.

This would include making meaningful and transparent pre-consultation with residents compulsory; making adherence to the code legally compulsory, and giving Ofcom powers to enforce it - none of which is presently the case.

- 3 Contact Openreach to inform them of the above and ask them to pause their work in streets where the majority of residents oppose the poles and to implement a system going forward where the company properly and openly consult with residents and then collate and make publicly available the results.

Following a debate on the **Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Amendment was carried** by 50 votes to 0 with 5 abstentions and on being put as the **Substantive Motion** it was **carried unanimously** and it was:

RESOLVED:

Openreach Lack of Consultation with residents

Southport having a unique Victorian seaside townscape has been largely free of any overhead cables or above ground apparatus since the inception of Southport Corporation in 1867 except for the electrical tramways in 1900. Since the removal of the overhead wires for the tramways, Southport has enjoyed a visual amenity on its streets and townscape by having very few telegraph poles and overhead cables which would normally create a 'spiders web' spoiling the visual amenity of its streets for her residents. At present, most of Southport copper telephone infrastructure is buried 'direct in ground' with ducting also being installed in various streets since approximately the 90's.

Network operators such as Openreach are exempt from requiring planning approval under 'Permitted Development' and are only required to inform the local authority one calendar month before requesting permits. The only consultation with residents and public is in the form of a paper notice pinned or taped to trees or lamp posts in the vicinity of a new pole, often poorly placed so that it will not be read i.e. facing the road rather than pavement 28 days before permits are sought. There is no telephone number to call with objections neither an email address, only a postal address.

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will still erect poles where they are not wanted. When asked why they do not carry out area consultations in church halls etc, they state that they would receive too many objections!

Openreach started the roll out of FTTP from the Churchtown exchange using telegraph poles in February of this year. Residents of those roads which opposed the erection of poles, spoiling the visual amenities of their streets and possibly reducing property prices protested peacefully to raise their collective objections to the roll out by Openreach.

The Minister of State for Data and Digital Infrastructure Hon Julia Lopez MP wrote to Openreach and other fixed line operators on 15 March 2024 and stated:-

“New telegraph poles should only be in cases where installing lines underground is not reasonably practicable, and only after ensuring that appropriate community engagement has taken place and that the siting of new infrastructure will not cause obstructions to traffic or unduly impact the visible amenity of the local area.”

Also making promises of changes to the current code of practice covering pole siting - however, no timescale was given for when these changes would take place nor details of how they would properly address situations like those locally or constrain operators from ignoring community concerns in future. As such, and in addition to the points to be raised as a result of the residents' petition on this subject earlier and agreed by Cllr Fairclough.

This Council therefore resolves to:-

- 1 Write to The Minister of State for Data and Digital Infrastructure Hon Julia Lopez MP expressing our strong concern over the way Openreach and other companies are allowed to exploit the situation created by the Government in recent years.
- 2 Urge the Minister to propose an immediate pause of work in those residential streets which have expressed strong concerns until the Minister outlines a detailed timetable for significant changes to the 2016 Cabinet siting and Pole Siting Code of Practice which will address the issues outlined above and then implements them.

This would include making meaningful and transparent pre-consultation with residents compulsory; making adherence to the code legally compulsory, and giving Ofcom powers to enforce it - none of which is presently the case.

- 3 Contact Openreach to inform them of the above and ask them to pause their work in streets where the majority of residents oppose the poles and to implement a system going forward where the

company properly and openly consult with residents and then collate and make publicly available the results.

118. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR CARLIN - SUPPORT FOR CALLING FOR A CEASEFIRE IN PALESTINE AND ISRAEL

It was moved by Councillor Carlin, seconded by Councillor Halsall:

Motion on Support for calling for a Ceasefire in Palestine and Israel

This Council:

Condemns the murder of innocent civilians, the taking of hostages and the subsequent death and destruction in Gaza. This Council believes that there must be an urgent priority to stop the deaths and suffering of anymore civilians internationally and to prevent potential harm caused directly and indirectly to Sefton Residents, both at home and abroad. This Council expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in Sefton who have been affected by this conflict, we offer our support in this difficult time.

Sefton Council supports calls by the UN Security Council for an immediate permanent ceasefire to allow more aid into Gaza and Palestine and to help the possibility of a peaceful resolution. It further supports the immediate release of all hostages and believes that there should be full humanitarian access in Gaza immediately. This would result in a reduction in the loss of lives and the distress caused internationally, whilst also reducing the stress and harm caused to those directly and indirectly impacted within our borough.

Believes that the recent tragic events in Palestine and Israel must not be allowed to divide our communities in Sefton. This Council therefore condemns any increase in Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK and believes that all forms of racism have no place in our Borough. This Council believes Jews, Muslims and people of all faiths should feel safe in Sefton.

This Council resolves to:

- Offer support to any local residents who need our assistance as a result of these violent events.
- Be ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events.
- Ask the leader of the council to write to the Prime Minister and the Leader of the Opposition to express the Council's view that there should be an urgent permanent ceasefire in Gaza, the rest of Palestine and Israel and that every effort should be made to resume the peace process, including upholding Humanitarian Law to ensure civilians everywhere are protected.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Fairclough that the Motion be revised as follows:

Support for calling for a Ceasefire in Palestine and Israel

This Council:

Condemns the murder of innocent civilians, the taking of hostages and regrets the subsequent death and destruction in Gaza. This Council believes that there must be an urgent priority to stop the deaths and suffering of anymore civilians internationally and to prevent potential harm caused directly and indirectly to Sefton Residents, both at home and abroad. This Council expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in Sefton who have been affected by this conflict, we offer our support in this difficult time.

Sefton Council supports calls by the UN Security Council for an immediate ceasefire to allow more aid into Gaza and Palestine and to help the possibility of a peaceful resolution. It further supports the immediate release of all hostages and believes that there should be full humanitarian access in Gaza immediately. This would result in a reduction in the loss of lives and the distress caused internationally, whilst also reducing the stress and harm caused to those directly and indirectly impacted within our borough.

Believes that the recent tragic events in Palestine and Israel must not be allowed to divide our communities in Sefton. This Council therefore condemns any increase in Anti-Semitic and Islamophobic violence and abuse in the UK and believes that all forms of racism have no place in our Borough. This Council believes Jews, Muslims and people of all faiths should feel safe in Sefton.

This Council resolves to:

- Offer support to any local residents who need our assistance as a result of these violent events.
- Be ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events.
- Ask the Leader of the Council to express the council's view and write to the Prime Minister supporting the stance of the Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and the UN Council and call for an immediate cease fire, the immediate release of all hostages and immediate humanitarian access into Gaza; so that we can have a permanent ceasefire and work towards a long-term peaceful solution.

Following a debate on the **Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Amendment was carried** by 45 votes to 9 with 1 abstention.

Following debate and in accordance with rule 95 of Chapter 4 in the Constitution, the voting on the **Substantive Motion** was recorded and the Members present at the time, voted as follows:

FOR THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION:

Councillors Atkinson, Bradshaw, Brough, Danny Burns, Byrom, Cluskey, Corcoran, Desmond, Dowd, Doyle, Fairclough, Grace, Hansen, Hardman, Harrison Kelly, Hart, Harvey, Howard, John Joseph Kelly, Sonya Kelly, Killen, Lappin, Lunn-Bates, Ian Maher, McKee, Moncur, Morris, Murphy, Myers, O'Brien, Catie Page, Christopher Page, Prendergast, Richards, Riley, Robinson, Roche, Roscoe, Spring, Thomas, Tweed, Veidman, Waterfield and Sir Ron Watson.

AGAINST THE SUBSTANTIVE MOTION:

None.

ABSTENTIONS:

Councillors Brodie-Browne, Carlin, D'Albuquerque, Dodd, Evans, Halsall, Pugh, Shaw, Lynne Thompson and Wilson.

The Mayor declared that the Substantive Motion was carried by 45 votes to 0 with 10 abstentions and it was:

RESOLVED:

Support for calling for a Ceasefire in Palestine and Israel

This Council:

Condemns the murder of innocent civilians, the taking of hostages and regrets the subsequent death and destruction in Gaza. This Council believes that there must be an urgent priority to stop the deaths and suffering of anymore civilians internationally and to prevent potential harm caused directly and indirectly to Sefton Residents, both at home and abroad. This Council expresses deep sympathy for all those affected by the conflict in Israel and Palestine. To those in Sefton who have been affected by this conflict, we offer our support in this difficult time.

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- Offer support to any local residents who need our assistance as a result of these violent events.
- Be ready to provide support and open our arms to innocent people displaced and affected by these events.
- Ask the Leader of the Council to express the council's view and write to the Prime Minister supporting the stance of the Shadow Secretary of State for Foreign, Commonwealth and Development Affairs and the UN Council and call for an immediate cease fire, the immediate release of all hostages and immediate humanitarian access into Gaza; so that we can have a permanent ceasefire and work towards a long-term peaceful solution.

**119. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR PRENDERGAST -
REMOVAL OF TEMPORARY CYCLE LANES**

It was moved by Councillor Prendergast, seconded by Councillor Morris:

Removal of Temporary Cycle Lanes

This council recognises that the temporary cycle lanes installed in Southport (Talbot Street, Houghton Street and Queens Road) were a mistake that should be rectified by their removal.

They are damaging local businesses, limiting access to town centre services to those who rely on their cars and have reduced the amount of parking available in Southport town centre.

Therefore, this council acknowledges that a mistake has been made and resolves to remove the temporary cycle lanes at the earliest opportunity.

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 12 votes to 40 with 3 abstentions.

**120. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR DANNY BURNS - END
FUEL POVERTY CUT STANDING CHARGES ON DOMESTIC
ENERGY BILLS**

It was moved by Councillor Danny Burns, seconded by Councillor Lappin:

End Fuel Poverty cut Standing Charges on Domestic Energy Bills

This Council notes that:

High standing charges for gas and electricity have resulted in unfair and excessively high energy bills which have seriously impacted on lower income energy users.

These households spend a much higher share of their income on energy, this adds massive pressure to their already stretched household income. There can be no justification for increasing standing charges starting from January 2024. The regulators have once again failed to protect lower income households and this continues to have a catastrophic effect on their personal income, driving people into further poverty. Switching supplier for a cheaper deal incurs exit fees resulting in low-income households being trapped in expensive and exploitative contracts, this was not the type of competitive deals we were promised with gas and electricity privatisation.

Between January and March 2024, average standing charges for customers on default tariffs will be capped in line with the levels set by Ofgem, this cap will charge at 53.34p per day for electricity and 29.60p per day for gas, excluding VAT. This is an example of a typical cost facing a dual fuel customer paying by direct debit. Between 1 April and 30 June 2024, Ofgem's new energy price cap will increase standing charges to be set at 60.10p per day for electricity and 31.43p per day for gas.

Standing charges vary from region to region, which raises the issue of equality and fairness - how are these charges decided?

The charges facing households on prepayment meters are the highest daily charge and are the most unfair. Charging those who cannot afford to pay for a standard account, or live in a property where they are denied access to this payment facility, results in them always paying more for their gas and electricity.

These hidden charges must be paid even if there is no credit on the meter, when the meter is topped up this charge must be repaid regardless of the household's financial circumstances.

Once a metre is installed into a property it is almost impossible to have it removed and revert back to monthly direct debits. This is not giving the customer any sort of choice as to how they access their energy supply and is leaving people with increased energy bills and potentially placing people in further, unnecessary hardship. Customers should have the right to choose how they pay their bills and not have these meters forced on them. New rulings made have stopped pre-payment metres from being forced onto Customers, yet pre-existing metres remain in homes with no recourse to have them removed.

The Child Poverty Action Group stated in 2023: -

- “By January 2023 over half of households in the UK (15 million) will be in fuel poverty – spending over 10 per cent of net income on fuel.
- They will on average be spending £38.25 above the 10 per cent threshold.
- There are big regional variations in fuel poverty ranging from 47.5 per cent in London to 71.7 per cent in Northern Ireland.

In an economy which boasts of being the 6th largest on the planet, the level of fuel poverty in the UK is a disgrace. To live in fear of receiving exceptionally high bills leaves adults and children existing in unheated homes, resulting in severe health issues for now and in later life.

There must be a real safety net for the most vulnerable residents of Sefton with health needs and disabilities who tend to be the highest users of energy due to their vulnerabilities. We ask all members of Sefton Council to support this motion.

The Council resolves:

To write to the Prime Minister urging him to work with Ofgem to lower these unfair high standing order charges as a matter of utmost urgency and to guarantee to put in place measures which will ensure that Sefton residents are not subjected to the cruel and debilitating effects of fuel poverty.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Wilson, seconded by Councillor Halsall that the Motion be amended as follows:

That the following text be added to the final paragraph after the words “Prime Minister”

- and the Leader of the Opposition

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the amendment was lost by 14 votes to 40.

On being put as the **Substantive Motion** it was **carried unanimously** and it was:

RESOLVED:

End Fuel Poverty cut Standing Charges on Domestic Energy Bills

This Council notes that:

High standing charges for gas and electricity have resulted in unfair and excessively high energy bills which have seriously impacted on lower income energy users.

These households spend a much higher share of their income on energy, this adds massive pressure to their already stretched household income. There can be no justification for increasing standing charges starting from January 2024. The regulators have once again failed to protect lower income households and this continues to have a catastrophic effect on their personal income, driving people into further poverty. Switching supplier for a cheaper deal incurs exit fees resulting in low-income households being trapped in expensive and exploitative contracts, this was not the type of competitive deals we were promised with gas and electricity privatisation.

Between January and March 2024, average standing charges for customers on default tariffs will be capped in line with the levels set by Ofgem, this cap will charge at 53.34p per day for electricity and 29.60p per day for gas, excluding VAT. This is an example of a typical cost facing a dual fuel customer paying by direct debit. Between 1 April and 30 June 2024, Ofgem's new energy price cap will increase standing charges to be set at 60.10p per day for electricity and 31.43p per day for gas.

Standing charges vary from region to region, which raises the issue of equality and fairness - how are these charges decided?

The charges facing households on prepayment meters are the highest daily charge and are the most unfair. Charging those who cannot afford to pay for a standard account, or live in a property where they are denied access to this payment facility, results in them always paying more for their gas and electricity.

These hidden charges must be paid even if there is no credit on the meter, when the meter is topped up this charge must be repaid regardless of the household's financial circumstances.

Once a metre is installed into a property it is almost impossible to have it removed and revert back to monthly direct debits. This is not giving the customer any sort of choice as to how they access their energy supply and is leaving people with increased energy bills and potentially placing people in further, unnecessary hardship. Customers should have the right to choose how they pay their bills and not have these meters forced on them. New rulings made have stopped pre-payment metres from being forced onto Customers, yet pre-existing metres remain in homes with no recourse to have them removed.

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- They will on average be spending £38.25 above the 10 per cent threshold.

- There are big regional variations in fuel poverty ranging from 47.5 per cent in London to 71.7 per cent in Northern Ireland.

In an economy which boasts of being the 6th largest on the planet, the level of fuel poverty in the UK is a disgrace. To live in fear of receiving exceptionally high bills leaves adults and children existing in unheated homes, resulting in severe health issues for now and in later life.

There must be a real safety net for the most vulnerable residents of Sefton with health needs and disabilities who tend to be the highest users of energy due to their vulnerabilities. We ask all members of Sefton Council to support this motion.

The Council resolves:

To write to the Prime Minister urging him to work with Ofgem to lower these unfair high standing order charges as a matter of utmost urgency and to guarantee to put in place measures which will ensure that Sefton residents are not subjected to the cruel and debilitating effects of fuel poverty.

121. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR ATKINSON - SUPPORT TO WOMEN IN PUBLIC LIFE

It was moved by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Prendergast and unanimously:

RESOLVED:

Support to Women in Public Life

45% of Sefton Councillors are women, with Sefton Council recently appointing its first female leader in its 50 year history.

Sefton is a positive reflection of how increasing numbers of women are participating in politics and wider public life, including being elected to public office, attending political events, and making their voices heard. Even in societies where women do not have equal rights, they often risk their lives to speak out and are not prepared to be silent partners in the future of their countries.

But despite the progress women have made in this country and in this instance in Sefton, there is the ever-present spectre of misogyny, particularly on social media. Unfortunately, we are all aware of the level of abuse many, if not all, female councillors experience. This can involve inappropriate language of a sexualised nature, threats, accusations, complete lies, foul language, humiliating negative comments about looks, body size and shape, to name a few. The sole aim of this disgraceful behaviour, given it is specifically targeted at women, is to seek to undermine all that is female. The trolls all have one thing in common...their hatred of women.

In recognition of this serious problem and the desire of this council to demonstrate its continued support to women in public life:

This council resolves to

- Take a zero-tolerance approach to this behaviour and help protect female councillors in Sefton.
- Agree to treat those individuals (with the appropriate evidence,) who are guilty of this despicable behaviour as vexatious complainants to deter further insult and degradation to women because of their gender.
- In light of this motion, ask officers to review the Council's Vexatious and Unfocussed Complaints Policy.
- Work closely with the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Police to hold to account and work toward full prosecution of those who are guilty of those behaviours.
- Work with newly elected female councillors to advise them of those who have been identified as vexatious complainants because of the inappropriate behaviour in order they take a robust approach and protect themselves from these attacks.

122. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR SPRING - SEFTON 50TH ANNIVERSARY

It was moved by Councillor Spring, seconded by Councillor Murphy:

Sefton 50th Anniversary

This Council notes on 1st April, it will be the 50th Anniversary of the creation of the Borough of Sefton. Sefton has a unique history with its 22 miles of coastline and has a rich history of culture, all across the borough.

This Council resolves:

to thank all the employees and voluntary sector of Sefton since 1974, ensuring that it has been successful; and

to continue to promote Sefton and ensure we thrive over the next 50 years.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Pugh, seconded by Councillor Shaw that the Motion be revised as follows:

By deleting the following words

Delete - to continue to promote Sefton and ensure we thrive over the next 50 years

Replace with - Recognising the very diverse, independent and proud communities that make up the municipal unit of Sefton and the stresses this has sometimes caused, to explore new ways of giving them greater powers of autonomy and self-control in line with previous recommendations of the Boundary Commission

Following a debate on the **amendment**, the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **amendment was lost** by 11 votes to 40.

On being put the **Original Motion** was **carried unanimously** and it was:

RESOLVED:

Sefton 50th Anniversary

This Council notes on 1st April, it will be the 50th Anniversary of the creation of the Borough of Sefton. Sefton has a unique history with its 22 miles of coastline and has a rich history of culture, all across the borough.

This Council resolves:

to thank all the employees and voluntary sector of Sefton since 1974, ensuring that it has been successful; and

to continue to promote Sefton and ensure we thrive over the next 50 years.

123. MOTION SUBMITTED BY COUNCILLOR LAPPIN - LOCAL GOVERNMENT PAY TO COUNCIL: A FULLY FUNDED, PROPER PAY RISE FOR COUNCIL AND SCHOOL WORKERS

It was moved by Councillor Lappin, seconded by Councillor Dowd:

Local government pay to council: a fully funded, proper pay rise for council and school workers

This council notes:

Since 2010, local government workers have lost an average of 25% from the value of their pay. Our staff are experiencing an ongoing cost of living crisis. Since 2010 the cost of living has risen by 60%, more and more local government workers have been pushed into debt, and their basic spending has overtaken their income, with 1 in 5 households having less than £100 to spare each month. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, the local government workforce has fallen by 30% as a result of job cuts. This has had a

disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Local government continues to show how indispensable it is. But staff are increasingly leaving the sector for better paid jobs elsewhere, for example in retail, leaving local authorities with a massive skills gap, and vacancies in a range of key services, including in social care, education and youth services.

Local government finance is in an enormously difficult state, facing an estimated funding gap of more than £3.5 billion for 2024/25. Recent research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2024 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This council believes:

Our workers are public service super-heroes. They keep our communities clean and safe, look after those in need and keep our neighbourhoods, towns and cities running.

Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone.

This council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of £3,000 or 10%, whichever is the greater.

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim, working with the unions to present a united front in defence of the local government workforce.

Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.

Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

An **amendment** was moved by Councillor Shaw, seconded by Councillor Halsall that the Motion be revised as follows:

By adding the following words to 'This council resolves to:' after paragraph three:

(Noting that a General Election must be held within the current 2024/25 municipal year, and that all current indications are that a change of government is highly likely) write to the Shadow Chancellor and the Shadow Secretary of State calling for any incoming Labour Government to pledge to fund the above pay increase with new money from central government, to the extent it is not funded by the present Conservative Government.

Following a debate on the **Amendment** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Amendment was lost** by 11 votes to 40.

Following a debate on the **Original Motion** the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer officiated a vote and the Mayor declared that the **Original Motion was carried** by 40 votes to 11 and it was:

RESOLVED:

Local government pay to council: a fully funded, proper pay rise for council and school workers

This council notes:

Since 2010, local government workers have lost an average of 25% from the value of their pay. Our staff are experiencing an ongoing cost of living crisis. Since 2010 the cost of living has risen by 60%, more and more local government workers have been pushed into debt, and their basic spending has overtaken their income, with 1 in 5 households having less than £100 to spare each month. This is a terrible situation for anyone to find themselves in.

At the same time, workers have experienced ever-increasing workloads and persistent job insecurity. Across the UK, the local government workforce has fallen by 30% as a result of job cuts. This has had a disproportionate impact on women, with women making up more than three-quarters of the local government workforce.

Local government continues to show how indispensable it is. But staff are increasingly leaving the sector for better paid jobs elsewhere, for example in retail, leaving local authorities with a massive skills gap, and vacancies in a range of key services, including in social care, education and youth services.

Local government finance is in an enormously difficult state, facing an estimated funding gap of more than £3.5 billion for 2024/25. Recent

research shows that if the Government were to fully fund the unions' 2024 pay claim, around half of the money would be recouped thanks to increased tax revenue, reduced expenditure on benefits and tax credits, and increased consumer spending in the local economy.

This council believes:

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Without the professionalism and dedication of our staff, the council services our residents rely on would not be deliverable.

Local government workers deserve a proper real-terms pay increase. The Government needs to take responsibility and fully fund this increase; it should not put the burden on local authorities whose funding has been cut to the bone.

This council resolves to:

Support the pay claim submitted by UNISON, GMB and Unite on behalf of council and school workers, for an increase of £3,000 or 10%, whichever is the greater.

Call on the Local Government Association to make urgent representations to central government to fund the NJC pay claim, working with the unions to present a united front in defence of the local government workforce.

Write to the Chancellor and Secretary of State to call for a pay increase for local government workers to be funded with new money from central government.

Meet with local NJC union representatives to convey support for the pay claim and consider practical ways in which the council can support the campaign.

Encourage all local government workers to join a union.

124. EXCLUSION OF PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That, under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act, 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act. The Public Interest Test has been applied and favours exclusion of the information from the Press and Public.

125. ACQUISITION OF MAGDALEN HOUSE, 30 TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE - EXEMPT APPENDIX

The Council considered exempt information provided by the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services in relation to the Acquisition of Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle (Minute No. 127 below refers).

RESOLVED:

That the exempt information be considered as part of the report in relation to the Acquisition of Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle (Minute No. 127 below refers).

126. RE-ADMITTANCE OF THE PUBLIC

RESOLVED:

That the press and public be re-admitted to the meeting.

127. ACQUISITION OF MAGDALEN HOUSE, 30 TRINITY ROAD, BOOTLE

Further to Minute No. 158 of the meeting of the Cabinet of 4 April 2024, the Council considered the report of the Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services on the principal terms and conditions agreed for the acquisition of the freehold interest in Magdalen House, Bootle.

The following exempt appendix was attached to the report:

- Appendix 1 – Financial Details

It was moved by Councillor Atkinson, seconded by Councillor Fairclough:

That:

Acquisition of Magdalen House, 30 Trinity Road, Bootle

- (1) the acquisition of the freehold interest in Magdalen House, on the basis of the price detailed within Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be authorised to complete the necessary legal documentation;
- (3) approval be granted to seek Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) funding to meet the capital costs required; and
- (4) a supplementary capital estimate, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for inclusion within the Capital Programme,

to be funded by borrowing, repayments to be met from the annual rental saving.

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 40 votes to none with 11 abstentions and it was:

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the acquisition of the freehold interest in Magdalen House, on the basis of the price detailed within Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;
- (2) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be authorised to complete the necessary legal documentation;
- (3) approval be granted to seek Public Works Loan Board (PWLB) funding to meet the capital costs required; and
- (4) a supplementary capital estimate, as detailed within Appendix 1 of the report, be approved for inclusion within the Capital Programme, to be funded by borrowing, repayments to be met from the annual rental saving.