

Report Title: Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report 2023/24

Date of meeting:	25th November 2024		
Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Report of:	Head of Operational In-House Services		
Portfolio:	Health and Wellbeing		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary: The Flood and Water Management Act 2010 previously required that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions. Following the cessation of this requirement, O&S has requested that an annual Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) review be brought to them.

Recommendation(s): That the Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills) committee;

- (1) Review the report
- (2) That any comments from this committee be referred to the Cabinet Member (Health & Wellbeing) for consideration.

1. The Rationale and Evidence for the Recommendations

The purpose of the report is to ensure that delivery of flood and coastal erosion risk management is undertaken appropriately and the committee's views are considered in the future delivery of the Council's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management function.

A summary digital report has been created and is accessible via this link <https://sway.cloud.microsoft/ptpmElQBjBvp6ACU?ref=Link>

2. Financial Implications

There are no additional revenue implications as a result of this report. The capital projects detailed in the report are subject to funding being provided.

3. Legal Implications

Sefton Council has duties under the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 as a Lead Local Flood Authority that are detailed within the report.

4. Corporate Risk Implications

Flooding and coastal erosion are significant risks across the borough of Sefton, this report provides the context of these risks.

5 Staffing HR Implications

There are no staffing implications associated with this report.

6 Conclusion

The Council is undertaking its best endeavours to manage flood and coastal erosion risk across the borough with the resources it has available. It remains a significant challenge to manage these risks and requires working with multiple partners. Climate change impacts puts additional pressures on this function and long term planning (100+yrs) is essential for the sustainability of the borough.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not applicable

Equality Implications:
There are no equality implications.
Impact on Children and Young People:
There are no impacts on children or young people
Climate Emergency Implications:
The recommendations within this report will have a Positive impact. The content of this report sets out the work and project undertaken by the FCERM in managing flood risk. The nature of this work is to manage a climate impact on our communities. The approaches taken by FCERM are to adapt and mitigate the risks posed by climate change, from assessing planning applications to ensure future climate prediction are considered in designs, to designing in sustainable drainages systems within our sites. The schemes undertaken are designed to better understand and address flood risk now and into the future. Though over the short term some of the work, especially any construction can have a negative impact, its long-term goal is to provide improvements. It is therefore considered that the work has a positive effect on climate change.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Services & Commercial (FD.7817/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5917/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision :

With immediate effect.

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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

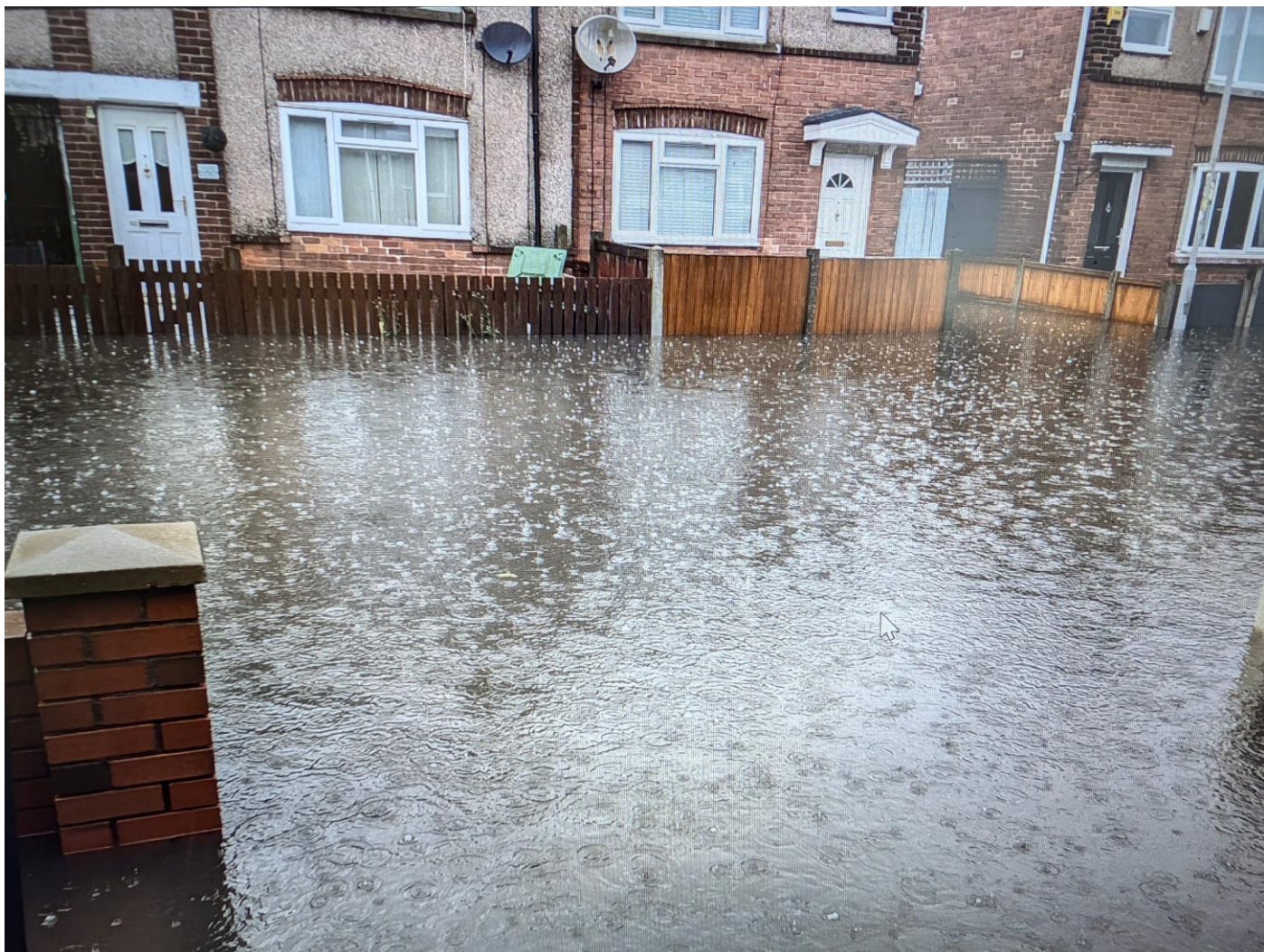
The following background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet can be accessed on the Council website:

[Summary digital report](#)

[Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management strategy](#)

[Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management business plan](#)

[FCERM Flood Investigation Policy](#)



**Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management
Annual Report 2023/24**

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1. Introduction

The Annual Review covers a 12-month period from September 2023-2024 and details the following key areas:

- Information on **flooding & erosion incidents** experienced over the last year.
- Work progress relative to our **legislative responsibilities** as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Riparian Owner & Coastal Authority.
- Work progress relative to our own **actions** set out in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2022-2030.
- Overview of annual finances

A summary digital report has been created and is accessible via this link

<https://sway.cloud.microsoft/ptpmEIQBjBvp6ACU?ref=Link>

2. Overview of Flooding & Coastal Change Incidents October 2023 – September 2024

2.1. Inland Surface Water Flood events

The total flood incidents (all types) reported between Oct-2023 and Sep-24 were 83 reports of flooding. There have been 40 reports of internal flooding (Internal flooding includes into the habitable part of a property, the main business and/or garages or outbuildings that are joined to the main property), the majority of which, 37, occurred on the 30th September in Bootle. This flooding occurred due to a failure on the combined sewer system that resulting in water surcharging and causing the flooding. The event was a prolonged heavy rainfall over almost 24hrs. The remaining reports occurred on 16 separate dates, with storm Babet 21/10/23 and 22/10/23 and Storm Pierrick 9/04/24 being the most notable events. Despite the weather being fairly wet the rainfall hasn't been as intense as the previous year, especially during the summer months when less thunderstorms occurred.

Figure 1a highlights the distribution of flood incidents across the Sefton borough for 2023/24.

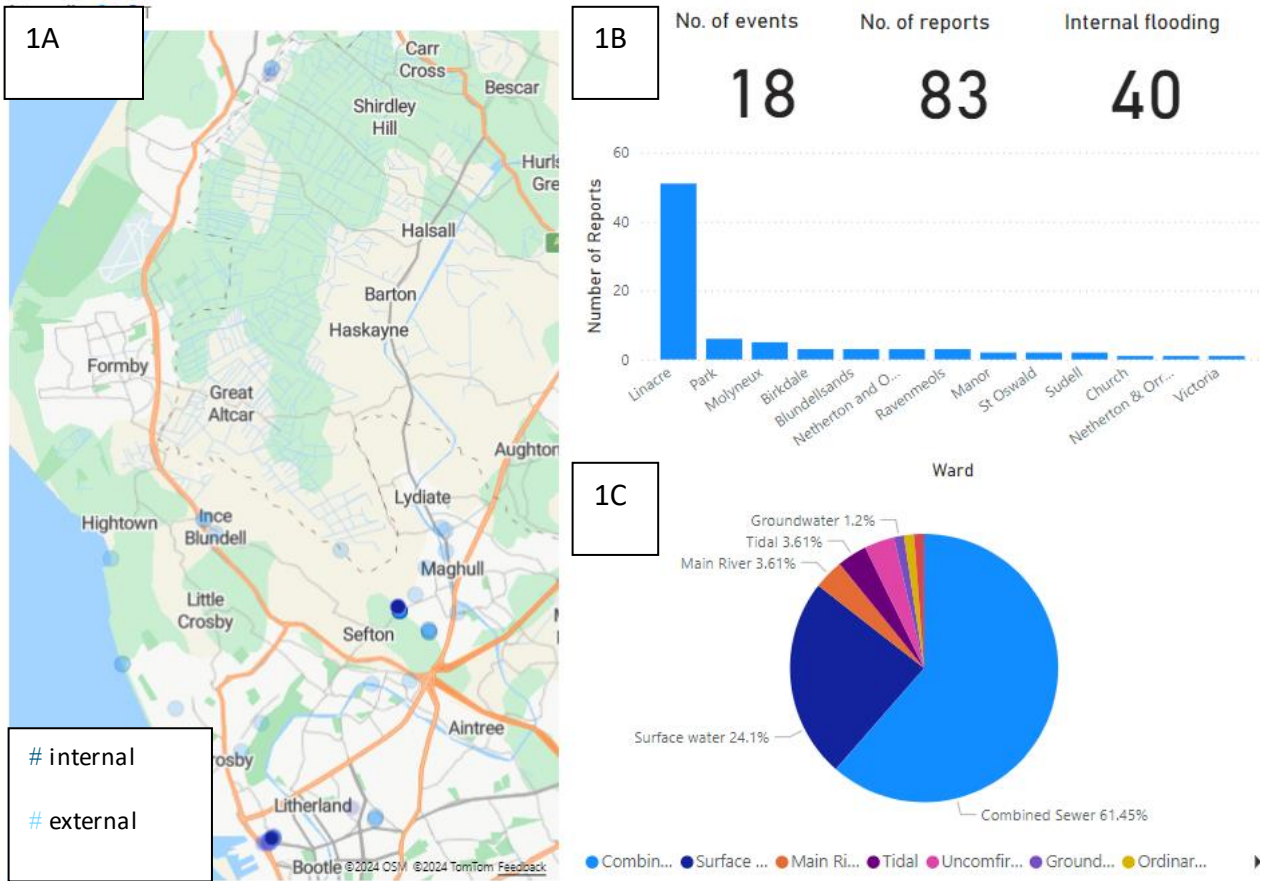


Figure 1a-c: This figure highlights the flood incidents across the Sefton Borough between Oct-23 to Sep-24. a.) Distribution and type of flooding incident - internal or external b.) Flood incidents reported by ward c.) Flood incident reports relating to land use type.

Since the introduction of the Flood and Water Management Act in 2010 (1st April 2010) there has been 720 reports of flooding covering 224 events with 215 being reported as internal flood events. Of these events, 69 reports were made due to during Storm Christoph (January 2021), 38 Storm Eva (December 2015) and 41 August thunderstorms 2020, 37 on 30th September 2024 and 30 August thunderstorms 2023. This shows that the large storm events do cause a significant impact and are very hard to predict and manage. Figure 2 shows the distribution of events covering the borough, with 61% of all flood reports from residential properties and 6% from businesses. Figure 3 shows the flood reports by settlement with Maghull reporting the most floods (239) followed by Bootle (91) and Southport (65).

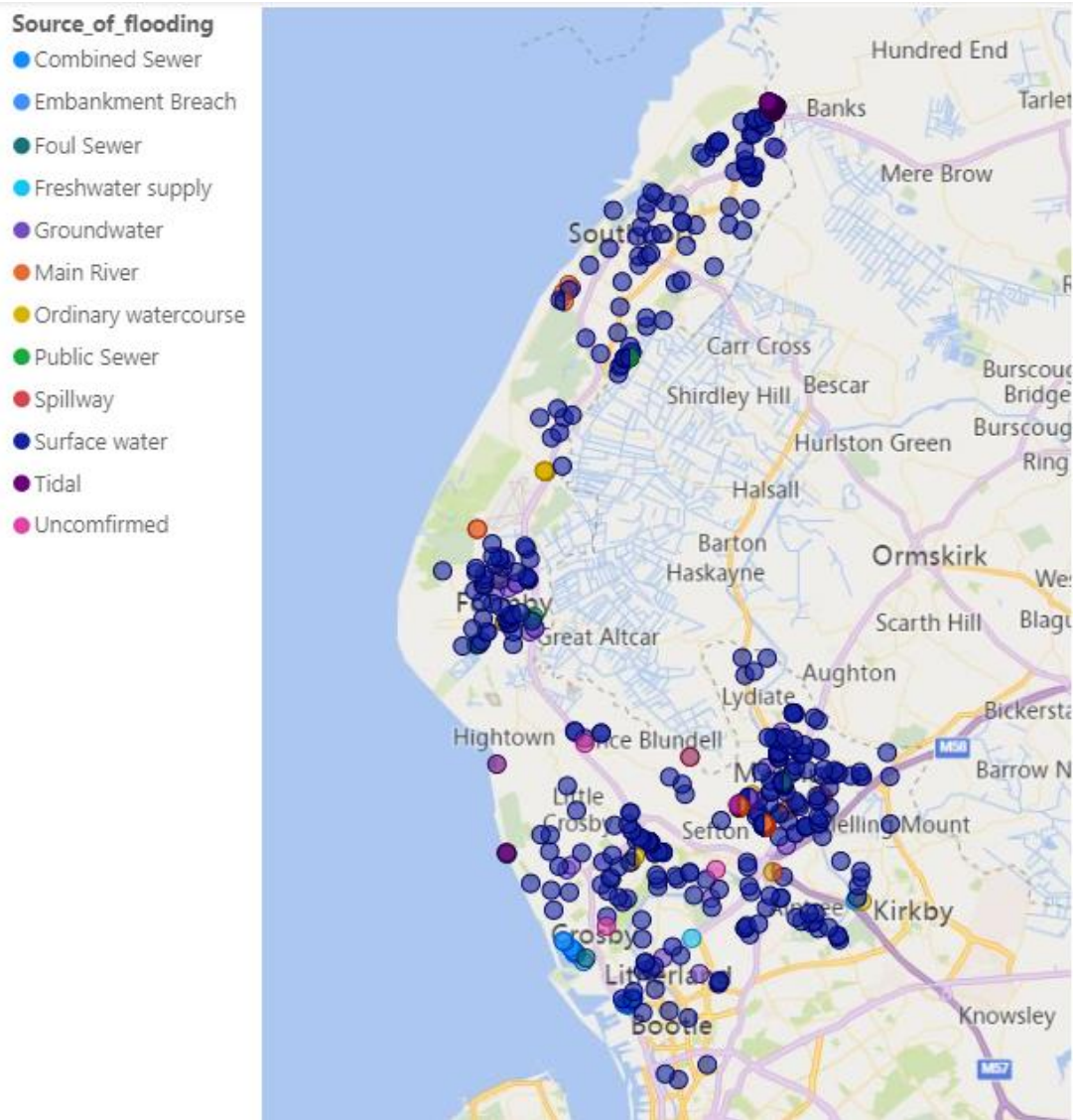


Figure 2. Sefton flood reports by source 01/04/2010 to 30/09/2024

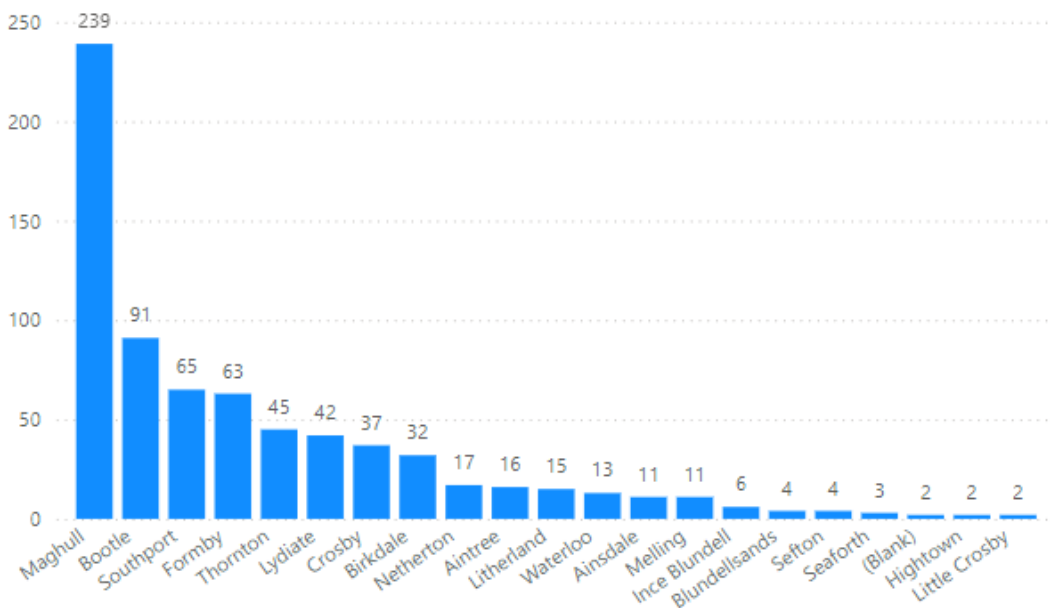


Figure 3. Flooding by settlement 1/4/2010-20/09/2024

2.2. Coastal Flooding & Change

During the 2023/2024 period there was some coastal flooding and erosion during storm Pierrick in April 2024 with flooding caused by waves crashing into the seawall and spray flooding the promenade and car park at Hall Road Blundellsands. This storm also caused some erosion of the soft defences (sand dunes) across the whole frontage with Hightown losing up to 5m of dunes.

3. Legislative Responsibilities

Sefton's statutory duties and legislative responsibilities have been integrated into the actions of the FCERM business plan which is reported in section 4. However, it is useful to separate these actions out here for clarity to demonstrate how they are being delivered.

3.1. Delivery of Duties Under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010)

The Flood and Water Management Act (FWMA) 2010 established Sefton Council as a LLFA making it responsible for the management of 'local flood risk'. 'Local Flood Risk' refers to flooding from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses (ditches, stream and smaller rivers). **As an LLFA, Sefton Council has several responsibilities (a-f)**. The delivery of these responsibilities is outlined beneath each subtitle:

a) Prepare and maintain a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy which manages surface water runoff, groundwater & ordinary watercourses.

Under Section 9 of the FWMA, an LLFA has a duty to develop, maintain, apply and monitor a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy. In January 2022, Sefton Council adopted its new [Local Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Strategy 2022-2030](#) (see background papers to this report) which aligns with Sefton Council's 2030 Vision and takes into consideration the National FCERM strategy.

The local strategy provides information on who the risk management authorities are in Sefton, their relevant functions and how our approach to flood risk management is coordinated. It offers information on how wider environmental objectives will be achieved in Sefton and provides timescales of when our approach will be reviewed.

The strategy is supported by a [Business Plan](#) which outlines Sefton's future actions for managing flood and coastal erosion risk and provides detail on the process, timescales, benefits and costs associated with any proposed actions. This strategy provides local communities and stakeholders with clarity on flood risk management in Sefton.

b) Co-operate with other Risk Management Authorities (RMA) and work closely to ensure local and national plans are linked.

Over the past year Sefton Council has continued to work in partnership with other RMAs to reduce flood risk across the borough on a national-, regional- and project-scale. Sefton Council's interests have been represented at the working groups displayed in Table 1 (both virtual and in-person, where suitable).

The attendance of these meetings has allowed RMAs to share examples of best practice, exchange data & information and examine more efficient & prioritised ways of achieving our actions in collaboration with our RMA partners.

Table 1: Meetings & Working Groups attended during the past 12-month period.

Meeting	Scale	RMA's Attending	Frequency	Outcomes
The Merseyside Flood Risk Partnership: Operational, Tactical and Strategic	Regional	EA, UU, Merseyside LLFAs	Quarterly	Worked in partnership to resolve local flood issues. Administered quick win funding
The NW Regional Flood & Coastal Committee	Regional	EA, UU, Regional Strategic Partnerships	Quarterly	New business plan approved. Increased quick win funding to £100k per partnership.
The Liverpool Bay Coastal Sub-Group	Regional	EA, maritime authorities	Biannually	Undertook a health check, reviewed action plan and developed a handbook to explain the purpose of the group more clearly.
Northern Coastal Sub-Group	Regional	EA, maritime authorities	Quarterly	Supported and provided feedback to the coastal monitoring programme
The North West and North Wales Coastal Group	Regional	EA, UU, maritime authorities	Quarterly	Advancement of SMP action plan, Supporting the Our Future Coast Project, undertaken a health check review and developing a handbook for the coastal group.
Alt Crossens catchment Partnership	Regional	EA, UU	Quarterly	Coordination of project activity across catchment inc. several bids for watercourse improvements, studies on Alt and Melling Brook and submitted a business case with the Mersey Rivers Trust to deliver a catchment to coast NFM project along the River Alt.
National Network of Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme Steering Group	National	EA, national regional monitoring programmes	Quarterly	Exchange of knowledge across network – defining specification for survey work

c) Establish and maintain a register of structures or features which have a significant effect on flood risk.

Whilst we have updated and improved our system for asset recording, there has been a national and regional push to update asset registers. Merseyside and Greater Manchester are working together to

establish best practice for collecting, storing and accessing asset data. This review is due to be complete in Spring 2025.

d) Undertake the role of a statutory consultee to Sefton planning authorities by providing technical advice on surface water drainage.

Sefton Council, in its role as LLFA, is a statutory consultee and, therefore, provides technical advice on surface water drainage for major planning applications (≥10 dwellings/ ≥0.5 Ha). Figure 5 shows the number of different types of applications that were received.

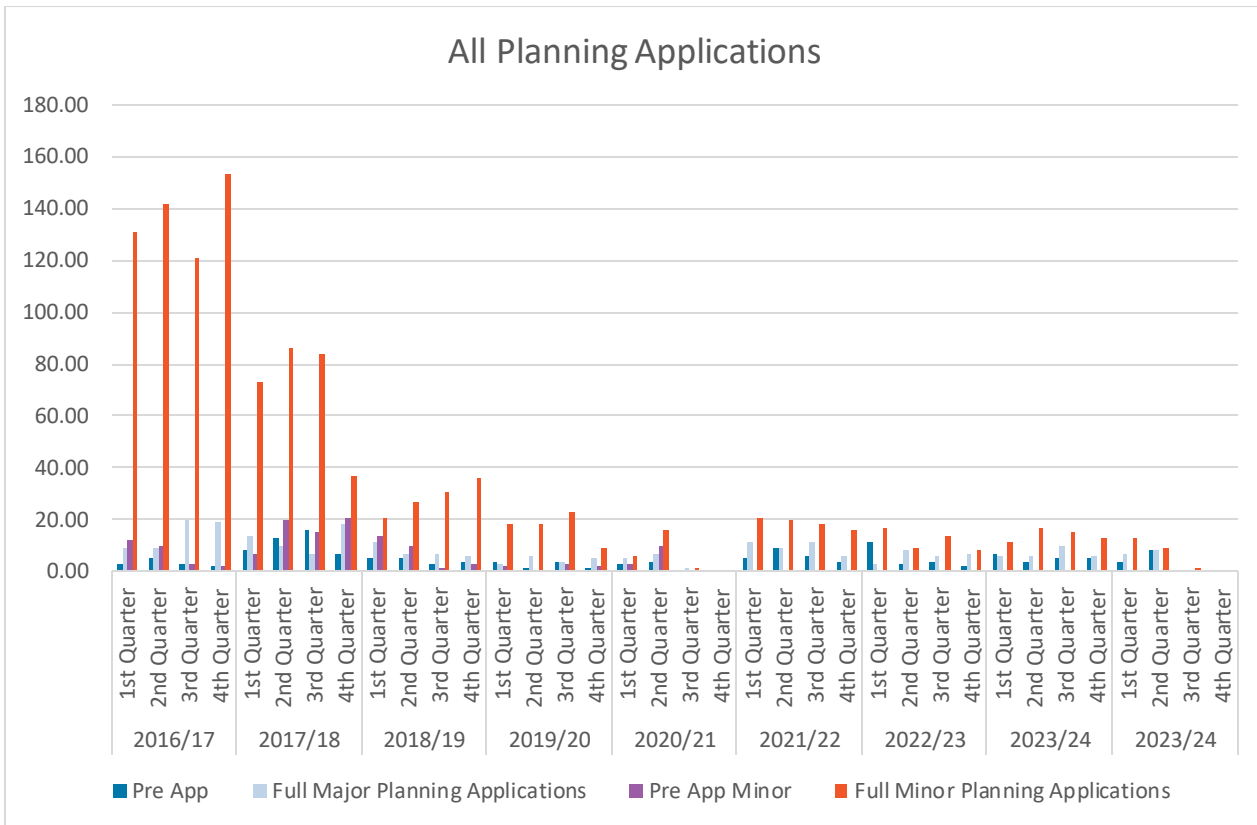


Figure 5: The annual (Oct-Sep) number of planning applications (Major, Minor, Major Pre. App, Minor Pre. App) received by the FCERM team from 2017-2024.

The number of planning applications received has remained constant over the last few years after the initial high numbers following the publication of the local plan and the minimal numbers during covid lockdown. However, the complexity of the flood risk management on the sites is high, meaning applications are taking a long time to resolve.

e) Investigate and publish reports on significant flooding in Sefton.

Sefton Council has a duty to publish flood investigation reports under Section 19 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010. The FCERM Flood Investigation Policy defines what is considered to be a ‘significant flood event’ and the criteria for triggering a Section 19 report. Section 19 reports provide an overview of the circumstances of the event for public record with the objectives of the report being to:

- Identify and explain the probable cause of flooding.
- Identify which authorities, communities and individuals have relevant flood risk management powers and responsibilities.

- Provide recommendations for each of those authorities, communities, and individuals.
- Outline whether those authorities, communities or individuals have or will exercise their powers or responsibilities in response to the flooding incident.

The report does not include analysis of flood mechanisms or hydraulic modelling as it is not intended to provide solutions or mitigation options in relation to the event.

The LLFA cannot:

- Resolve the flooding issues or provide designed solutions.
- Force authorities to undertake any of the recommended actions.

A section 19 report will be undertaken for the flooding that occurred on the 30th September 2024 in Bootle.

f) Regulate ordinary watercourses through consent and enforcement powers to ensure riparian owners are undertaking their duties.

The Land Drainage Act 1991 and amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 requires anyone wishing to alter an ordinary watercourse to obtain consent from the Council prior to undertaking the work. Failure to do so can result in the enforcement action being taken by Sefton Council to ensure the capacity and condition of the watercourse are not compromised.

Where the flow of an Ordinary Watercourse is impeded, Sefton Council also has permissive powers to undertake enforcement action which are set out in the Land Drainage Act 1991 in three key sections:

- Section 21: Enforcement of obligations to repair watercourses, bridges, etc.
- Section 23 & 24: Prohibition on obstructions etc. in watercourses.
- Section 25: Powers to require works for maintaining flow of watercourse.

Enforcement action will be considered within available resources, by serving notice, where it is in overriding public interest and efforts of negotiation have failed to resolve. Sefton Council will prioritise enforcement action as set out in table 2:

Priority	Likely consequence of flooding
1	Internal flooding to a dwelling or business premises
2	Flooding to highways defined as part of Sefton’s Key Route Network or critical infrastructure*
3	Flooding to highways defined as classified roads or local distributor roads.
4	Flooding to outbuildings, gardens, open space and farmland that is not on part of the functional floodplain

Table 2: Flood risk prioritisation

*Critical infrastructure refers to:

- Railway lines and stations.
- Police, ambulance and fire stations and command centres.

- Hospitals.
- Universities, colleges and schools.
- Local authority main offices.
- Residential institutions supporting vulnerable people.

Whilst there haven't been any formal enforcement action, we are undertaking negotiated actions with a number of Riparian owners.

3.2. Delivery of Duties as a Riparian Owner (Land Drainage Act, 1991)

Under the Land Drainage Act (1991), riparian landowners have a legal responsibility to maintain the free passage of water through the section of watercourse that flows across their land. A riparian owner possesses land which has a watercourse running next to, underneath or through it. As a landowner, and a riparian owner, Sefton Council has a legal obligation to actively maintain watercourses across its land. Figure 6 shows the proportion of spend as a Riparian owner and on Critical ordinary watercourses.

3.3. Delivery of Duties under the Coast Protection Act (1949)

Under the Coast Protection Act (1949) Sefton Council was designated as a Coastal Protection Authority and as such has powers to protect and maintain the Sefton coast.

To ensure we are fulfilling our obligations the following maintenance has been undertaken:

- Crosby Seawall
Repairs have been undertaken to the timber breastwork, railings and promenade but are all subject to recurrence following storm events.
- Coastal Defence Inspection.
Both hard and soft defences have been inspected.

4. Delivery of Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) Actions (2022-2030)

In 2021/22, the FCERM produced and adopted a new LFRMS and Business Plan. To ensure we are delivering on our actions our progress will be measured relative to the actions set out in the LFRMS Business Plan which were based on the Sefton 2030 Vision themes (Figure 7). The table below provides an update on the actions.



Figure 7: Themes of the Sefton Council’s Vision 2030

Together a Stronger Community
<i>What we said we’d do in 2023/24</i>
Exchange knowledge and best practice with wider partners to ensure improvements, efficiencies and effective ways of working
<i>What we said we’d do in 2023/24</i>
Continue to attend existing meetings and further develop partnerships, with the Crosby and Pool Schemes being a key co developed project with the EA and UU that will begin to be delivered this year is approved.
<i>What we have done in 2023/24</i>
Over the period 2023/2024, Sefton Council has continued to work in partnership with other RMAs to reduce flood risk across the borough on a national-, regional- and project-scale. Sefton Council’s interests has been represented at the following working groups: Merseyside operational, tactical and strategic. Sefton council also attends the Liverpool coastal subgroup whilst providing a Regional Coastal Monitoring update at the Northern coastal subgroup, the Liverpool Bay coastal subgroup and the North West North Wales Coastal Group. An officer from Sefton Council now chairs the Liverpool Bay Coastal Group and another is the secretariate for all three Coastal Groups for the North West. Officers contributed information to the Council’s weather emergency plan. Officers have also contributed to the university of Liverpool Coastal Module in Septemeber 2023, where they provided a lecture on Coastal Monitoring data and the link between the Shoreline Management Plan. Officers have also contributed to the COastal group COnference in March 2023 and the Coastal Practioners Conference in May 2024
<i>What we will do in 2024/25</i>
Continue to attend existing meetings and further develop partnerships with universities, coastal groups, and community groups.
Engage with communities where FCERM projects will be undertaken
<i>What we said we’d do in 2023/24</i>
Engage with communities at the appropriate times through the consultation process and planning consent to keep communities up to date with progress and gather their thoughts. Consultation response reports will be produced following any consultation or engagement campaigns.
<i>What we have done in 2023/24</i>

Carried out public consultation on the interim Coastal defence works at Crosby. Delivered presentation to Hightown Parish Council and Crosby and seaforth residents action group on Coastal change, monitoring and management. Completed the Pool consultation exercise and produced a report on the feedback received.
<i>What we will do in 2024/25</i>
Further public engagement when the works are due to commence and via the planning process. Once we have a steer from ELT on the way forward with the full Crosby coastal defence scheme, further public consultation and engagement will commence on this too. We will continue to monitor the Hightown section of the Coast, and as and when triggers are met to implement action, public consultation and engagement will be undertaken if necessary works are needed. Some consultation and engagement will be needed with Hightown residents if the NFM project is approved and we do further work on options development for the management of the Alt where it meets the sea at Hightown. Continue consultation about the Pool Project through the planning process and take findings of the process to the consultation and engagement panel.
Work with land managers and NW coastal group on the delivery of the Our Future Coast (Eco buffers) project at Formby Point
<i>What we said we'd do in 2023/24</i>
Deliver project to programme, focussing on research and evidence collection.
<i>What we have done in 2023/24</i>
We have undertaken an extensive literature review on the sand dune at formby and have proposed 3 research questions to partners. A readiness assessment survey has been developed in partnership with the Our Future Coast Team and has been circulated to Formby residents. We recieved over 400 responses.
<i>What we will do in 2024/25</i>
Seek to complete reseach into the Dunes dynamics. Analyse the survey responses to inform future actions. Take learning from the project and look to apply along the Sefton Coast.
Ensure council-delivered SuDs schemes achieve multiple benefits
<i>What we said we'd do in 2023/24</i>
Continue to seek opportunities to deliver SuDs to support council assets and seek planning and funding approval to deliver the 'Making space for water scheme in Churchtown and Crossens' which will be constructed on Sefton owned green spaces. Review the SuDS opportunity mapping report by Atkins for Formby and Maghull to see what measures are feasible to be implemented.
<i>What we have done in 2023/24</i>
Finalised the suds opportunity report with Atkins and some of the identified options have supported the development of the NFM innovative resilience project lead by the Mersey Rivers Trust. Sharing the report with UU to see if there are any opportunities to do work to reduce flows into the combined sewer systems using suds. Pool project progressing with planning application submitted and public consultation undertaken.
<i>What we will do in 2024/25</i>
Seek to deliver Suds schemes identified in the Suds opportunity reports and deliver the Pool scheme.

A Borough for Everyone
Assess deliverability and seek funding to deliver the Pool Scheme (Making Space for Water in Churchtown/Crossens)
<i>What we said we'd do in 2023/24</i>
Review plans following public consultation, submit planning application and business case, if all approved commence works on site Spring 2024.
<i>What we have done in 2023/24</i>
Continued to develop the business case and re assessed the partnership funding calculator.

What we will do in 2024/25
Seek planning approval, procurement of works and scheme delivery.
Review FCERM policies & develop new policies were necessary.
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Review all existing FCERM policies and identify the need of any new ones.
What we have done in 2023/24
Review of existing policies hasn't progressed, however we have inputted into the SMP refresh and action delivery, submitted comments on NPPF planning policy consultation.
What we will do in 2024/25
Review existing policies.

Living, working & having fun
Reactive inspection of private-owned assets following reports of flooding.
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Seek to inspect assets following reports of flooding as resources allow.
What we have done in 2023/24
Following repeated flooding in Ince private, unmapped assets where inspected and findings were shared with the landowner and worked together to resolve the issue.
What we will do in 2024/25
Seek to inspect assets following reports of flooding as resources allow.

Ready for the Future
Deliver actions set out in Shoreline Management Plan
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Continue working with the North West and North Wales Coastal group to deliver actions. Seek to take forward work at Crosby and Hightown, subject to funding.
What we have done in 2023/24
Reviewed existing actions and ensuring actions are progressed.
What we will do in 2024/25
Deliver actions set out in the SMP for Sefton.
Establish plan and triggers for works to Hightown Coastline
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Establish if it is beneficial for Hightown and Crosby to combined into one scheme, secure funding and undertake detailed designs.
What we have done in 2023/24
Monitoring reports have been reviewed with potential trigger identified by an external consultant. These are being monitored closely and options are being considered to action as and when needed.
What we will do in 2024/25
Continue to monitor the beach and dunes closely to see if any triggers are met that require interventions.
Coordinate the delivery of groundwater monitoring across the Merseyside Authorities.
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Make a decision on the future direction of the project.
What we have done in 2023/24
Discussed groundwater monitoring with the other Merseyside LAs but wasn't able to get a collective response
What we will do in 2024/25
Further discussions with Liverpool John Moores University about groundwater monitoring and potential analyse using students. And follow up with the Merseyside authorities
Undertake a programme of inspection for coastal assets
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Continue with monthly and annual inspection programmes
What we have done in 2023/24
The following inspections have been completed in 2023: Sefton, Fylde, Blackpool, Wyre, Lancaster, South Lakes, Barrow, Copeland and Allerdale. Reports have been completed for Sefton, Fylde, Blackpool, Wyre, Lancaster, South Lakes. Barrow, Copeland and Allerdale reports are still outstanding due to staff sickness.

What we will do in 2024/25
The following inspections have been booked in for completion during 2024: Sefton July, Lancaster and Blackpool August, Allerdale and South Lakes October, Copeland November, Barrow December. Wyre BC will inspect and report on Fylde and Wyre inspections. Wyre will also complete reports for Lancaster, South Lakes, Barrow, Copeland and Allerdale.
Undertake programmed and reactive maintenance for highways assets
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
Work with highways to review Brooms Cross highway suds drainage maintenance programme
What we have done in 2023/24
Inspected the assets on Brooms Cross road and liasied with highways and their contractor with regards on going maintenance and improvements
What we will do in 2024/25
Carry on inspecting and liasing with highways to ensure the assets are functional.
Seek to deliver natural flood manament measures
What we said we'd do in 2023/24
What we have done in 2023/24
A call for bids was made for natural flood management scheme by Defra, a Alt Catchment Partnership bid was successful with interventions planned in Maghull (Mersey Rivers Trust), Formby, Sefton Council and Hightown Sefton Council. The full business case has been submitted and the outcome is due in Autumn 2024.
What we will do in 2024/25
Deliver the projects to install the interventions (subject to funding approval)

5. Upcoming Policy or legislative changes

5.1. Proposed enactment of Section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010.

In January 2023, the government announced its decision to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England to better control flooding and wastewater discharges.

The schedule is expected to be implemented in 2024 and will provide a framework for the approval and adoption of sustainable drainage systems to decrease the volume and/or rate of water flowing into sewers and storm overflow discharges. The core purpose of [Schedule 3](#) is to make the incorporation of sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) into new developments mandatory.

The latest update is that this is going through further review following the establishment of the new government.