

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Peter Harvey	Cabinet Member Cleansing & Street Scene	November 2024

Building Cleaning

The service continues to operate well both financially and operationally.

Schools and other customers continue to access their service provider options and there are currently two contracts which the service hold that are out to competitive tender.

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Cleaning Contract

The above MAT put its Cleaning Services out to competitive tender earlier this year. The tender was for two schools. The service currently hold the contract for one of the schools, The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco.

Since the initial tender was released, a further four schools have joined the trust in September 2024. The Trust plans to have up to 28 schools in the MAT in the coming years.

The result of the tender exercise was initially due in July, but the process has taken longer than expected and the contract has yet to be awarded.

Officers from the Building Cleaning section gave a presentation to the Trust in early October.

Whilst individual schools that join the Trust will be free to choose their preferred contractor, whoever is awarded this contract, will be in pole position to operate the contracts at those schools.

Peterhouse School

Peterhouse School is a non-maintained Specialist School for children and young people aged 5 to 19 who have a diagnosis of Autism Spectrum Condition. The school is located in Southport and is administered by the Autism Initiatives (AI) charity.

Building Cleaning have provided a cleaning service to the school for a number of years. The school has decided to put the contract out to competitive tender, with the new contract due to start in January 2025.

The contract is a relatively small one, the service employs 2 cleaners who provide 40 hours cleaning per week. The Building Cleaning Service have submitted a proposal, and the contract is expected to be awarded in November.

Recruitment of Staff

Recruitment of staff remains very difficult in certain parts of the Borough with some posts receiving no applications, causing operational difficulties. It is hoped that when the annual pay award is finalised, this will aid with the recruitment issues the service is facing.

Catering

After a difficult year financially in 2023/24, the position is much more secure in this financial year.

For the first time in recent years, the food market is relatively stable, and this has made food costs easier to predict and build into SLA costings.

In addition, the Electronic Kitchen Management System that the service purchased last year, has made reacting to price changes much more efficient.

As with the Building Cleaning Service, schools, particularly those part of a Multi Academy Trust (MAT), continue to explore their service provider options.

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust Cleaning Contract

As with Building Cleaning, the MAT has put its Catering contract out to tender. At this stage it only involves one school, Sacred Heart Catholic Academy. The service currently operate this contract and as with Building Cleaning, with more schools joining the MAT every year, it is a contract that we are very keen to retain.

Officers from the service gave a presentation to the trust in October. As with the Building Cleaning contract, the tendering process has taken significantly longer than the trust anticipated, and the contract is yet to be awarded.

Endeavour Learning Trust

Whilst the Endeavour Learning Trust have six schools within their portfolio, only one school, Churchtown Primary, is in Sefton. The remainder are in Lancashire.

The Catering Service have been informed by Linaker Primary School in Southport, that the school is set to join the Endeavour Learning Trust and that it will be ending it's SLA for Catering at the end of March 2025.

The Council's Obesity Strategy.

The Catering Service are continuing to support the Council's Obesity Strategy. The Service Manager chairs the Live Well subgroup, which is charged with reviewing and refreshing the Council's work to ensure compliance with Food Active's Healthy Weight Declaration accreditation.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance T&VM

The Transport and Fleet Service continue to provide a full maintenance and fleet compliance service to all departments within the Authority who utilise fleet vehicles.

The rating from the Traffic Commissioners Office remains green, this is the highest standard on the rating system.

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

As part of the services contribution to net zero by reducing carbon emissions within the fleet, they have commenced soft market testing with local fuel companies to carry out a grade change for 1 of the fuel tanks at the main depot at Hawthorne Road from diesel to petrol, this will not only contribute to reduced emissions but will also enable the service to offer a wider range of vehicles at more competitive cost.

The Transport Manager represents the service at the Liverpool City Region Waste & Resources Partnership to discuss vehicle specifications and requirements in preparation for food waste collections which DEFRA have instructed local authorities to implement with effect from April 2026. With large quantity orders being placed across all Councils, it is essential to reserve build slots at the earliest opportunity to have the vehicles delivered to meet the deadline.

In conjunction with service leads, the Transport Department has commenced the fleet renewal programme. There has been a £455k spend to date for this financial year, but due to current economic uncertainty within the market they are re-evaluating the remaining fleet renewal for this year on a case-by-case basis.

School Crossing Service (SCP)

The service currently has 3 vacancies, 1 in the south of the borough and 2 in the north. The Service have provided 100% cover at these locations since the start of term. They have managed to recruit applicants and are currently at the start of the recruitment process for 2 of the vacancies.

In accordance with new guidance from the Department of Education, all schools are now required to implement a school week of at least 32.5 hours. This has led many schools to extend their school day, which has directly affected the operating hours of approximately 20 Patrols. These Patrols are now working additional hours to align with the extended school days.

The service has discussed with Cabinet Member the potential budget pressure as a result of this change to legislation and the need for additional uplift in the SCP budget for the next financial year.

Specialist Transport Unit (STU)

The Specialist Transport Unit provides home to school and day centre travel for the most vulnerable in our society.

The service currently operate 17 x School Routes and 9 x Adult Social Care routes. They are working closely with colleagues in ASC regarding the provision of transport for customers to and from Day Centres in the south of the borough.

The STU currently provide transport for 131 SEND service users each day and 52 x ASC customers to and from their destination.

The service users are amongst some of the most vulnerable in our society who need the support and extra care that the STU in-house service provide.

The in-house fleet consists of Sefton owned vehicles and leased. The fleet renewal has been agreed for the replacement of 18 x STU custom built minibuses within the Specialist Transport Unit. These vehicles will be purchased in 2025/26 financial year.

The vehicles will provide a year on year saving to both Adults and Children Social Care as the cost will reduce significantly given that vehicles will replace leased vehicles and will not require the level of maintenance that older vehicles have. The new vehicles are also estimated to have a resale value after the 7-year programme.

Sefton ARC

Merseyside Police bid approved for the cameras on Stanley Road and two in Hawthorne / South Park.

- Camera 30 - Stanley Road / Strand Road- outside main entrance to the strand - replacement camera
- Camera 56 - Stanley Road / Vermont Way - replacement camera
- Camera 88 - Stanley Road / Marsh Lane - replacement camera
- Camera 18 - Bedford Road / Hawthorne Road – replacement camera
- Camera 100 South Park- not working, action required is to dig to nearest supply and repair

Whilst a number of new town centre cameras have recently been upgraded, further exploration of funding opportunities is still underway to secure maintenance agreements going forward.

The Service continue to monitor and work closely with the education service daily to maintain service delivery, since the introduction of the new transparent SLA the feedback from school governors has been positive.

Sefton ARC respond to CCTV enquires from both members of the public, police and insurance companies as well as offering services such as ID cards for Sefton employees, patrol services and support for our highway team.

Sefton ARC also manages lone worker services along with Sefton Careline and handles the out of hours service for the Councils Contact Centre. In Q2, the Patrol teams dealt with 99 highways incidents and 424 alarm activations.

Sefton ARC have also received 82 CCTV enquiries of which they were able to provide footage for 17 incidents. The team have also provided 433 ID cards for employees across the council. In the same quarter, the ARC handled 6,536 calls.

The electrical team have successfully recruited 2 apprentice electricians, through education studying at Hugh Baird College, following our previous apprenticeships gaining qualification and moving into full time roles within the Sefton ARC team, this has proved a huge success in providing opportunities.

The team will look to recruit to the role of electrician's mate, this role is for someone who is a qualified electrician but needs on-site experience, this helps with the development of the electrician and supports Sefton ARC service delivery.

The service have introduced a new 12-hour rota pattern for the ARC responder roles, this has helped the service massively improve with each responder now working alongside an ARC operator for a full shift to enable better efficiency, the staff have also welcomed this change to help with a better work/life balance.

Sefton Careline:

Careline Service answered a total of 16,320 calls of which 16,122 were answered within 60 seconds exceeding the TSA target of 97.5%.

Referrals and installations:

A total of 401 referrals were received by the Careline over the last quarter with an average of 92 installations per month.

This figure is inclusive of requests from social services, hospital discharges and OT's (Occupational Therapists) and includes additional appointments for visits to test, replace and review equipment.

Automated Voice Telephony:

Sefton Careline has been working alongside CC2I Care and Sefton Equipment Community Stores to progress with the automated telephony project which will allow the service to reach out to service users of both areas. The aim is to develop a specialist calling service provision that will provide regular well-being calls throughout the year which will allow staff to identify whether the service are meeting their needs, improve the recycling programme of unused equipment and to identify any additional support they may need.

The service has now successfully launched, and feedback so far has been well received. Further analysis will be undertaken to identify areas for improvement.

Recruitment:

The Service have successfully recruited a full time Assistive Technology Installer. A further part time vacancy for a Careline Advisor has been advertised and it is hoped that the successful person will be in post by the end of 2024.

Lone Worker option

Following on from a two-week trial the Lone Worker option for Sefton Employees is now available for employees across the council.

Analogue to Digital Switchover A2D:

The analogue telephone network will cease to operate by the end of 2027 when all telephone lines across the UK will switch to a digital network. The A2D switchover will have a significant impact on all Telecare services UK wide and it is essential that the service transition existing service users onto digitally enabled Lifeline products.

This will also impact the Public Realm CCTV, meetings have been held with the current provider BT and an increase for the line rental is expected in April 2025. A scope has been written and meetings have started regarding moving away from legacy fibre cables onto new digital WI-FI to bring the ARC and its infrastructure up to current standards, external funding is currently being explored and eventually the market will be explored through procurement to carry out the project required.

To date, the service have successfully secured 135k from the DFG fund and expect to secure further funding this year. The equipment will be distributed to existing Careline clients to replace their analogue lifeline product. Lifeline equipment is provided on a rental basis and as such equipment is continually repurposed.

Existing service users are currently being reviewed and equipment is being replaced as required.

New equipment:

The Service have completed testing with two new suppliers of TECS equipment and will now start to distribute new digital devices as part of the Careline packages currently available. This is a significant step forward for the Careline who are now able to work with four market leading suppliers.

The Service will still keep abreast of any new technical developments within the TECS industry to ensure they continue to provide our residents with the best equipment to suit their individual needs.

Public Conveniences

A Contract for 6 months is now in place for Danfo LTD, to continue to provide the service, maintenance and reconciliation of coinage for the facilities, Sefton ARC are currently working with the procurement team to put in place a long-term contract for the service maintenance offering value for money to the council through a framework.

Street Cleansing

The Street Cleansing Service have worked with COMMS through social media to spread good news stories with photo evidence of the fantastic works they have completed throughout the borough.

Re-balance of mechanical sweeping rounds has taken place to ensure equity and a more comprehensive process of recording works completed has been introduced.

A process has been introduced to ensure timely inspection takes place after entry clearance has concluded, Supervisor inspection sheets created for recording purposes and feedback provided to teams accordingly to ensure they are aware of the expected standard and also thanked for the completed work, staff have felt undervalued in the past and culture needs to change.

A Rear Entries Priority List has been created, the supervisor instructs teams on a daily basis of priority locations – 2 teams of 2 working together for maximum impact and to reduce downtime of staff to transfer station etc. The Supervisor inspects within 24 hours as per process outlined above, completing documentation and taking photographs. Information is then shared with Area Co-ordinators to ensure elected members are updated. Once the priority list is completed, cyclical work as per rota which encompasses all rear entries on an agreed programme will be delivered.

Waste Management

The Assistant Director continues to play a key role in the LCR Waste & Resources Partnership in preparation for the roll out of food waste in April 2026 and the future adoption of the governments Simpler Recycling principles.

The vacancy for Service Manager has gone through the recruitment process and interviews will take place in early November. This is a key role for the Authority for the appointment of an experienced individual is critical to bring stability and direction to this front facing high profile service.

As part of the Corporate Transformation Projects, the AD is leading on a route optimisation project to ensure optimum utilisation of resources, both staff and fleet. This project will run over the winter months and involve the frontline staff at appropriate stages to review round information with the aim of adoption of new rounds in Spring 2025.

The new Waste Minimisation Officer is now in post, this member of the team will develop education and behavioural change material and work closely with both the internal Comms team and colleagues within Environmental Enforcement. They will also have a role within the project team who are delivering the in-service innovation such as 'sacks to bins' in addition to reviewing the current assisted collections to ensure accuracy of data.

Burials and Cremations

Burials and Cremations Service continue to provide a sustainable and professional service to the bereaved. The cremation and burial numbers remain at a steady rate however this is expected to increase as we enter the winter months.

The process of investment planning has now started and is progressing well with consultants on board now preparing an outline and full business case for the service to provide evidence that much needed investment is required to ensure service continuity for the future with changing legislation up and coming the service needs to be ready to meet this change and demand for the future.

Maintenance works have continued throughout the summer months with some areas more challenging than others however as we enter the winter months the teams have done a great job in ensuring that maintenance has been completed as much as possible and areas that have become challenging are also being brought up to standard as we continue in to winter while still providing a burial service to the families that use Sefton Bereavement services.

Repairs and maintenance continue to be prioritised and memorial testing on headstone stability continues to ensure the safety of the public visiting cemeteries is top priority.

Environmental Enforcement

The Sefton Dog Related Incident Reduction Strategy Group (partnership with Merseyside Police and colleagues in Green Sefton, Comm's and community Safety & Dogs Trust) continues to work well despite demands on resources following the incidents in Southport curtailing planned joint patrols. It is anticipated these will restart in the coming month with further partnership activity with the dog's trust being undertaken.

The WFT? Fly tipping campaign ran throughout July and August in the project area within Derby and parts of Linacre ward. This saw over 3000 houses visited, new letters distributed and paid for media advertisements. Residents were engaged on the doorstep and provided detail of the aims of the campaign and steps they could take to minimise fly tipping along with seeking feedback from them. Enforcement officers and a contractor worked with cleansing services as rear entries were cleared of fly tipping, to gather evidence, challenge residents and where possible issue fixed penalty notices. This has assisted in further strengthening working relationships with Street Cleansing and other Council services.

Two Regulation and compliance apprentices within the Environmental Enforcement and Trading Standards Teams have both been successful in obtaining employment within the Council one with the Trading Standards Team and one within Legal Services.

11 businesses visited as part of a national survey ran by the Office of Product safety & Standards (OPSS) into the safety of e-bikes, e-scooters and conversion kits, following a number of fatal house fires caused when charging their lithium-ion batteries. The aim of the survey was to identify businesses engaged in the supply, repair, modification and conversion of these products; raise awareness to ensure that the businesses are fully aware of the risks posed by their activities and the responsibilities they hold under the relevant Regulations; provide advice on how to meet their obligations in ensuring products are safe and that consumers have the necessary instructions to use products safely. Trading Standards are continuing to support one business importing e-bikes direct from China and two fitting conversion kits, to meet their obligations under the legislation as responsible persons.

The Environmental Enforcement team continues to be overstretched with the issue of tackling fly tipping remaining high on the public & political agenda. The Regulation Appliance Apprentice has applied for and was successfully appointed to a post within the Trading Standards Team, leaving the enforcement team again short of capacity. Steps are being taken to recruit a new apprentice to the team.

Taxi Licensing:

Bootle One Stop Shop Update:

At present, the processing of vehicle plates and the renewal of driver's badges continues to be very good. Throughout September, the majority of work was completed within three-days of receipt.

For new driver applications, Customer Services are working on applications that were received through the portal on 13th September 2024. Three sets of Knowledge tests at Bootle One Stop Shop are now being offered and since 1st October 24, a total of 43 have so far passed the test and have been issued with a Sefton licence.

Drivers are still experiencing issues accessing the portal and creating an e-mail account. Technical support remains available at Bootle One Stop Shop and support is also being provided by the trade representatives at selected garages. Colleagues from Sefton's Adult Education team have been back in contact and are currently assessing how they can offer digital support.

The work required to increase the licence fees for drivers and vehicles is near completion with officers from the Taxi Licensing Enforcement Team commencing trade consultation imminently. In addition to the proposed uplifted licence fees, a £50.00 non-refundable application fee will also be imposed. The application fee is due to be activated by Rocktime our 3rd part supplier at the beginning of November.

Following a request from the trade, the work to revamp the Taxi Licensing website to make it more user-friendly has now been completed. The new pages can be viewed via the following link <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/business/licensing-registration/taxi-licensing/>

Weekly internal meetings between Customer Services and Taxi Licensing (Enforcement) continue and the trade are given regular updates on progress.

Enforcement:

Following successful recruitment, the induction and training of our 2 new Enforcement Officers in Taxi Licensing is progressing well.

As a result of the recruitment to the vacant Enforcement Officer posts, planned weekend and out of hours taxi licensing enforcement work within the Borough is recommencing, with on road vehicle inspections also resuming in November.

Additionally, 3 recent joint enforcement operations have taken place at the following locations:

- Liverpool Airport = 13 Private Hire Vehicles (PHV) checked – 5 Stop Notices issued, 8 vehicles clear.
- Manchester Airport = 12 PHV checked – 1 Defect Notice issued, 5 Stop Notices issued, 6 vehicles clear.
- Manchester Piccadilly Station = 12 PHV checked – 1 Defect Notice issued, 9 Stop Notices issued, 2 vehicles clear.

Officers continue to work strategically with LCR Authorities to progress standardisation across the region. The main work areas (along with the Authority Leading on the work) are detailed below :

- Vehicle Compliance Testing – St Helens lead
- Vehicle Conditions – Wirral lead
- Driver Training – Sefton lead
- Drugs Policy – Liverpool lead
- Fit and Proper / Convictions policy – Knowsley lead

Local Licensing

The vacant post within the Local Licensing Team has now been filled following a successful recruitment exercise with the officer's induction and training progressing well.

Officers from the Local Licensing team along with Pollution Control Officers regularly attend Merseyside Police licensing partners meeting which is held every fortnight. The meetings are an effective way for officers to share intelligence about licensed premises, provide case updates and co-ordinate enforcement activities.

Licensing Officers now attend the Southport Pub Watch quarterly meetings to provide advice to Licensees, respond to licensing questions and queries and signpost to other services.

Martyn's Law: formerly The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Bill had its' first reading in parliament on 12/9/2024. This will require qualifying premises or events to take specific steps to minimise the threat of terrorist attacks. The 'standard tier' duties will now be proposed to apply to premises with a capacity limit of 200 or more as opposed to 100, as was originally stated. The second reading took place on

14/10/2024 - please see the following website link to view the discussion: [Terrorism \(Protection of Premises\) Bill - Hansard - UK Parliament](#)

Outdoor Smoking Bans: Discussed in late August 2024, the discussion is still in its' infancy stages and details are yet to be revealed to reduce the number of preventable deaths linked to tobacco use. It is thought likely that smoking could be banned in pub gardens, outdoor restaurants specifically, which may impact the hospitality sector as well as outside hospitals and sports grounds. Any new ban introduced would apply to England only. Devolved governments may choose to bring in similar rules.