

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Mhairi Doyle	Public Health and Well Being	25 November 2024

Green Sefton update

Overview

It is clear that several areas of the service are struggling to meet expectations / basic standards within resources available and efforts are being made to address this. This has resulted in ongoing levels of complaints, FOI's and EIR requests, and at times negative press coverage for several areas of the service during the peak season of 2024/25.

Developments and issues of note over the last quarter:

- Two new posts in the Tree and Woodland team have been created following agreement in the Budgeting process for 24/25 onwards – one post is full time, to bring additional capacity for tree surveying undertaken, and the other is fixed term to allow a 'discovery' exercise to take place in understanding other trees that the Council owns/ has oversight of via leases etc, and what management takes place on these areas too
- Following release of the vacancy freeze in 2024/25, several other previously frozen posts have been released, advertised, and filled in this quarter too, including the Community Ranger (North), Play and Repairs Ranger, Office Manager, and several operational Ranger and Gardener posts
- In addition, one off funding has been found to extend some of the Seasonal Rangers into the Winter in order to assist with some of the backlog in maintenance works, cutting back of overgrown vegetation and more – not all works that have been left for many years due to budget constraints will be completed, but this will make a good start and a visible impact on several sites at least.
- Following approval of the tender in Winter 2023/24, the orders for the new Machinery and Equipment were placed in Spring and the new kit has been arriving steadily across the summer. Feedback from operatives if that this is good, high quality specifications, making the maintenance tasks much easier, safer and more efficient.
- Training - The Land Management Team have completed 77 machinery certifications with Gibsons Groundscare. Members of the team have also successfully passed the Lantra 'Tractor Driving and Trailed Implement' and 'Trailer Handling' certification. This years summer seasonals have successfully completed 90+ Competency Certificates covering all work areas.
- A fatality of a young boy off the coast near Crosby Coastal Park (off Peel Port land), is leading to a Coroners inquest to which officers are contributing statements and background information

- Officers have resurrected the internal Green Sefton Health and Safety sub (sub) committee, feeding into OIHS sub committee and in turn to Corporate H+S committee – raising issues such as water safety review, event review, asbestos review, building management, tree management and more. Other H+S issues include:
 - Following the sad loss of a member of the team in February 2024, defibrillators have been installed at Cambridge Road Depot, Hesketh Park Depot and Derby Park Depots, in addition to those existing at both golf courses, and another new one at the Ainsdale Beach Gateway toilets.
 - Risk Assessments – Work is ongoing to review and update all RA's to the new Corporate template. 15 Risk Assessments have been completed since May 2024 which has also included in house training in; the safe use of the Defibrillators and Depot Inspections.
 - PUWER Regs – The LMT have implemented PUWER (Provision and Use of Work Equipment Regulations 1998) assessments for all powered machinery & equipment.
 - Depot Compliance – Works have been ongoing at Cambridge Road Depot following the results of the compliance inspection in January 2024. Improvements include: Improved mess room welfare facilities for 20+ personnel, Traffic Management line marking, mandatory and advisory safety signage, improved lighting for welfare and workshop areas, improved electrical supply for safe working, installation of 2 COSHH lockers, improved CCTV coverage and relocation of the control system, improved office, meeting room and reception facilities, improved safe storage for uniform & PPE and dry stores, installation of an A3 printer and a new kitchenette (work in progress). Works are in progress for a door entry system, improved site security and an electronic gate.
 - The creation of a new 'Technical and Operations Officer' role in Dec 23 has enabled dedicated support with the implementation and ongoing development of the 93 Land Management Team operational Systems of Work. So far 67 are in progress at varying stages of completion, providing essential evidence for safe working practices.
- The Ainsdale Beach Gateway toilet refurbishment completion was confirmed in September after an initial phase 1 (internal areas) opening for use in August. This included both refurbishment and upgrade of the building inside and out, with ladies, gents and disabled facilities improved, but also the creation of a new Changing Places facility (funded by external grant) – see photos below. Although Green Sefton will have oversight of the building management and maintenance initially, this is without budget, and it is anticipated that this will be passed to a more suitable service in due course.



- The first phases of the Hesketh Park Legacy project have completed, with the Project Manager, Gardener and Apprentice all appointed (on two year fixed term contracts), and the first works are completing on site with the Sensory Garden completion. New bins and benches have been installed, including once with a memorialisation to Louis and Anita Marks, the couple that left the funds in their will:



Planned activity over the next quarter:

- The fixed term staffing associated with Winter works on the Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier (CSHT) works are to be extended further to the end of this funding (a further three years). Their efforts will be complemented by contractor support to undertake essential management and maintenance of the Sefton Coast, its protected status including legislated activity such as that associated with its status as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

- Following Cabinet Member approval, the Botanic Gardens Stakeholder Group will hold its first meetings in order to launch a match funding discovery and appeal with a view to making external funding bids in due course
- Next stages of the Hesketh Park Legacy project will be progressed, including seeking tendered prices for the works to the Conservatory, Waterfall, Fountain and Floral Clock – at which point (likely in Spring 2025), officers will discuss priorities and the spending profile of the overall scheme with the trustees of the will, Cabinet Member, and the Hesketh Park Heritage Group
- Plans for ongoing management of Ainsdale Beach Gateway toilets will be developed, in time for re-opening for the Summer 2025 season
- Orrell Mount Park – next stages of the development and delivery of the masterplan will be continued, with the pavilion as a high priority (but other opportunities will be explored reactively too)
- Seek Planning Permission for the 'Making Space for Water' scheme in Crossens