

Report Title: Southport Response and Recovery

Date of meeting:	9 January 2025		
Report to:	Cabinet		
Report of:	The Chief Executive		
Portfolio:	Leader of the Council		
Wards affected:	All		
Is this a key decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	No
Exempt/confidential report:	No		

Summary

This report provides Cabinet with a detailed overview of the response to the tragic events of the 29th July and the public disorder of the 30th July. The report provides:

- The breadth of the response, including the significant contribution of a range of partners,
- The key principles of how the response was delivered, is continuing, and will continue to be delivered,
- The medium, and long-term ambition for recovery including how additional government funding will be used to support this.
- The current estimated costs, including how government funding will support the response.

Recommendation(s):

Cabinet is asked to:

- (1) Note the contents of the report and acknowledge the breadth of the community, partnership and Council response.
- (2) Approve the financial plan that underpins both response and recovery including the use of central government funding.
- (3) Approve the longer-term ambition for recovery

1. The rationale and evidence for recommendations

- 1.1 In every aspect of response to the unimaginable events of July 2024, Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King, and Elsie Dot Stancombe will remain at the forefront of minds. The families and all of those affected by these tragic events have been, and will remain, at the heart of how we respond and how we seek to recover.
- 1.2 The events of the 29th and 30th July 2024 are very different. It is important that we treat them as such, in order to better understand the need that they present for recovery and how we can then lead this recovery.

2.0 Incidents and Immediate response

29th July 2024

- 2.1 At around 11:45am on the 29th July 2024, three innocent children were killed in an attack on a dance class in Hart Street, Southport. Bebe King and Elsie Dot Stancombe both died at the scene and Alice da Silva Aguiar died in hospital a day later. Twenty-nine families are known to have been directly affected by this attack, eleven people were physically injured, nine of whom were children. Six children and two adults were left in a critical condition following the stabbings.
- 2.2 Merseyside Police were notified at 11:47am and all emergency services (Police, Fire and Ambulance) were immediately dispatched given the nature of the incident. The immediacy of the response and the actions taken by our emergency services undoubtedly saved lives.
- 2.3 A major incident was declared immediately, and the Merseyside Resilience Forum established a Strategic Co-ordination Group to manage the multi-agency response. Members of the community helped and provided shelter to those who had managed to escape from the building. Council officers were rapidly deployed to support the response and worked closely with partners throughout the hours, days and weeks that followed.
- 2.4 A 17-year-old male was arrested and charged with the murders of the three girls, ten attempted murder and possession of a knife, all relating to the incident at Hart Street. He has since been charged with two further offences under the Biological weapons Act 1974 and section 58 of the Terrorism Act 2000. The criminal trial is due to take place in early 2025.
- 2.5 A Recovery Coordination Group was established to support the Strategic Coordination Group. The recovery process began once the initial response phase had been completed. The community, partnership and Council officers have, and continue to, work to support the victims and the affected community and to deal with the significant press and public attention.
- 2.6 Everyone who attended the class and their families, or those that were in the immediate vicinity of the attack have had the most horrific experience imaginable. Residents and businesses in the area have also been significantly affected by this tragedy. Tens of thousands of tributes were laid at various sites across Southport and a vigil at The Atkinson on Lord Street on the 30th July was marked by thousands of attendees. Thousands of pounds in donations have been raised globally, from multiple donors to support those impacted. Southport received multiple, high-profile visits in the weeks that followed – including from His Majesty The King, their Royal Highnesses the Prince & Princess of Wales, the Prime Minister, The Home Secretary, Lord Khan and the Secretary of State for Health & Social Care.

3.0 30th July 2024

- 3.1 On the evening of the 30th July 2024 a peaceful vigil, organised by the community and supported by Southport BID, was held at Southport Town Hall to remember the three girls who had tragically lost their lives. Following the conclusion of the vigil, at around 7.30pm, hundreds of protestors, most of whom had not attended the vigil, gathered outside the Southport Mosque and Islamic Cultural Centre on St Lukes Road, Southport. Rioting and violence ensued as those who had assembled began attacking the Mosque with bricks, bottles, and rocks. A police vehicle was set on fire, windows were smashed, walls destroyed, bins were set on fire and a local mini market was looted. Thirty-nine police officers were injured, twenty-seven of whom were hospitalised, with eight sustaining serious injuries. The violence is believed to have been fuelled by huge misinformation and disinformation circulated on Social Media with regards to the identity of the person who had attacked the dance school the previous day.
- 3.2 In the days following, public disorder also spread to towns and cities across England as well as to Belfast, leading to over 1,000 reported arrests. This attack had a major direct impact on those who were in the Mosque at the time and those who use the Mosque. The attack significantly impacted the residents and small businesses in the immediate surrounding area of the Mosque as well as communities across Sefton.
- 3.3 The council working with partners stepped-up to respond to this incident, whilst also leading the response to the incident on the 29th July. An ongoing, partnership-wide effort to support the response and recovery has been undertaken focused around the needs of those affected. By 3am, and as soon as it was safe to do so, on the 31st July services had arrived on-site to clear away the rubbish and debris, re-tarmac the road surface and replace melted or stolen wheelie bins.
- 3.4 The most striking contribution to this response was that of the community. Community members carried out heroic acts during the time of the disorder, extinguishing fires moving debris that could be used as weapons. The following day the community, including local Councillors, fully contributed to the clean-up. Furthermore, local businesses offering their services for free contributed to the rebuilding of walls, reglazing of windows and repairing fences at Mosque and surrounding properties. A true demonstration of the best of Southport.

Combined response to both events

- 3.5 Over the course of the following 3 days Sefton Council staff from a number of departments, local Councillors, Sefton CVS, Faith leaders, staff from the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner and Merseyside Police colleagues joined Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service colleagues in carrying out welfare/reassurance visits to households within a 1-mile radius of the scene of the 2 incidents. All of those living within the immediate proximity of both sites were visited on at least three occasions in the days following, to check on any support needs they may have following the incidents.
- 3.6 Adult Social Care visited all vulnerable residents in the same area over the same period.
- 3.7 The Linaker Family Hub delivered a safe place for anyone in the community to seek support through extended hours in the evening and at weekends.
- 3.8 Southport Football Club opened its stadium and hospitality lounges for members of the community to gather and be together
- 3.9 In response to both incidents, NHS Cheshire & Merseyside Integrated Care Partnership led on the activation of the Cheshire and Merseyside Psychological Support Plan Following a Major Incident plan. The aim of this plan is to provide a cohesive and coordinated response

for psychological support in the event of a declared major incident with impacts affecting Cheshire and Merseyside

The plan outlines the response from the NHS providers of mental health services and local authorities within Cheshire and Merseyside, whose collective actions will enhance existing processes and has been developed in conjunction with local NHS Trusts, NHS England, Merseyside Police and National victim Support.

The Cheshire and Merseyside Recovery Cell activated the 'Psychological Support Plan Following a Major Incident' during the 11:00hrs meeting on 30th July 2024 following the Major Incident Declaration by the Police in Sefton on 29th July 2024. The 'Psychological Care Coordination Subgroup' was established and met at 14:30hrs on 30th July 2024 with a subsequent meeting at 09:00hrs on 31st July 2024 to coordinate the response, led by NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

There has been a significant focus on the psychological support that will be required for all those affected by this incident in the immediate and longer term which has resulted in creation of three pathways for all those affected and/ or witnessed the incident

- **Pathway 1 – Psychological Support Offer to Children and Parents Directly Involved.** This offer is for the children who were present at the incident and their parents/guardians. This support will be provided by Victim Support, Alder Hey, Mental Health Matters services and Mersey Care.
- **Pathway 2 - Psychological Support Offer to Adults Directly Involved (Victims) and Witnesses Identified by Police.** This offer is for the adults who were present at the incident. This support will be provided by Police, Victim Support, Mental Health Matters services and Mersey Care.
- **Pathway 3 - Psychological Support Offer to Adults Affected by the Southport Major Incident.** This offer is for the adults who have been affected by the incident in Southport (public). This support will be provided by Mental Health Matters services and Mersey Care.

Resources have also been developed as part of the psychological care offer and a live webpage on Sefton Council website has been developed to provide ongoing updates, to support the victims, their families, and the wider community. This support continues and will continue as long as there is a need.

- 3.10 Schools led the response to 29 July 2024 for their communities with support from the council. The leadership at all schools in response to both events was inspiring, showing the strength and importance of our schools. However, it was particularly inspiring at Churchtown Primary, Marshside and Farnborough Road Infants the schools that Alice da Silva Aguiar, Bebe King, and Elsie Dot Stancombe attended. Schools opened where they could during the Summer Holidays and the Educational Psychology Service visited those that opened to provide support. Families were directed to the Linaker Well Being Hub, where the Education team were also based.
- 3.11 Almost immediately a number of fund-raising efforts were set up – from the larger Southport Stronger Together Appeal and the Swifties appeal to smaller more hyper local fund raisers. These had a mix of target audiences – from raising funds for the families of the three girls, to the families of all children and adults involved in the attack, to the schools the children attended to raising funds for Alder Hey in recognition of their initial response to the attack. The larger funds have been managed by the Community Foundation for Merseyside and Lancashire who have distributed a number of amounts to families and organisations.

4.0 Creating a Strategic Framework

4.1 In leading this recovery, we have committed to ensuring that all actions, plans, and decisions are guided by those who were directly affected – especially the families. To guide our work on recovery we have committed to the following principles:

- *Engaging and listening* to the people directly affected and our communities, ensuring that the voice of children and young people is central, and their views shape the community impact assessment, the response (services and support)
- *Responding quickly* to the immediate emotional and practical issues.
- *Creating a clear strategic framework* for the recovery response, with clear aims and accountability, harnessing the energy and creativity of people, families, communities, and the avoiding duplication.
- *Ensuring we are open to challenge; we learn from other places* and their recovery journeys and utilise the experience and expertise of people who have delivered this kind of recovery response before.

4.2 The five strategic aims to support a longer-term recovery from both events are:

- 1) Ensure that we create an appropriate, accessible, effective, and family led support for children and their families in Southport
- 2) Enhance, co-ordinate and ensure easy access to the full and graduated offer of practical psychological, emotional, and wider health support and assistance to those directly or indirectly affected by the incident both children and adults
- 3) Ensure that we build resilience in our communities and community leadership to deal with long term impact and address hate crime and extremist behaviour in our communities
- 4) Mitigate the short-term impacts and ensure the long-term success of regeneration projects and the wider Southport economy
- 5) Create a lasting memorial and legacy which acknowledges not just the loss of the children but a memorial which celebrates the unique contribution they made in their young lives.

4.3 These aims, as well as the objectives and actions that underpin them are used to guide our work with partners and the community on recovery.

4.4 A detailed structure to support our work with partners on recovery is in place. This includes four dedicated sub-groups whose work aligns with four of the five strategic priorities listed above. The structure looks to build on the strength of the excellent partnership work already established in Sefton such as Sefton CVS, Southport BID and the Southport Learning Partnership. The structure for this is shown at Appendix.

4.5 The council has established a dedicated Recovery Team to co-ordinate this work across Sefton. This team are super-numerary to the existing establishment for a fixed term.

4.6 Our work to listen to and understand the impact of both events will continue on an iterative basis, as we move forward. This will contribute to our work to develop a Community Impact Assessment which will help us to understand at a greater level of detail the impact of both events on the community.

5.0 Action taken after the immediate response until now

5.1 Collaboration underpins the response and the longer-term recovery plan.

5.2 Elected members came together on 12th September 2024 for an Extra-Ordinary Council meeting to reflect on and acknowledge the tragic events of 29 July 2024 where the Leader of the Council, members of the opposition as well as key partners with the Chief Constable

delivering a statement of support for the families and unity for the community on behalf of the blue light services.

- 5.3 The council has continuously sought the advice and insights of colleagues who have been involved in the response to and recovery from major incidents elsewhere to help guide our efforts including colleagues in Greater Manchester who responded to the Manchester arena attack, those involved in the Grenfell disaster as well as colleagues in Plymouth who experienced a mass shooting. We have also sought advice and guidance from disaster recovery adviser Dr Lucy Easthope.
- 5.4 Sefton Council has received support from our MP's and the Metro Mayor, Steve Rotherham in engaging with central government. The combined authority continues to support Sefton in regular update calls with the Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG)
- 5.5 Central government departments such as Ministry for Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) have supported through providing advice, guidance, and practical support as well as funding (see section further in the report).
- 5.6 We have also benefited from the support of the Local Government Association (LGA) throughout this period, including the secondment of an officer into the council to support our work, as well as support to produce a specific communications strategy.
- 5.7 The Department for Education (DfE) have provided support for Education colleagues as well as additional funding to support recovery.
- 5.8 We have, and we continue to work in partnership, to deliver for children, families, and the communities of Southport. We continue to listen and respond appropriately; we remain open to challenge however we remain committed to doing the right thing for the families affected.
- 5.9 Households living in the vicinity of the incidents told us that they were grateful for the Council and partners carrying out welfare visits and offering support, however they wanted to be left alone to make sense of the events in their own way. The welfare visits therefore ceased whilst making sure everyone knew where to go if they needed to access help.
- 5.10 The team were then diverted to support the community in the management of a number of floral tribute sites across Southport. The main floral tribute site at the front of The Atkinson was tended to by a team of volunteers from Lord Street In-Bloom, who are supported by Southport BID, whilst other tribute sites, near to the scene of the attack were tended to by residents. Schools were supported in the management of their floral tributes by residents and Council staff.
- 5.11 Once the floral tributes began to perish, they were transported to Southport Botanic gardens to be composted. This compost has been preserved and will be used at some point in the future to support the planting of memorial plants. The other tributes, such as teddy bears, balloons, windmills as well as the gift cards attached to flowers, have been collected and preserved for a future memorial piece of work that will be led by the families of those directly affected by what happened on 29 July 2024.
- 5.12 Sefton CVS established a Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector, (VCFS), Recovery Group to galvanise the local experience and expertise to put in place a VCFS Recovery plan, reporting into the overall Council Recovery Cell. In September, a comprehensive 'listening exercise' with the VCF sector was held to gain insight into the immediate, medium, and long-term needs of the community. The findings from this exercise will be used to inform the sector's approach to supporting and enabling both Southport's and Sefton's recovery.

- 5.13 In October CVS also launched the VCF sector Anti-Racism and Inclusion Pledge as the framework to drive forward the sectors approach to tackling racism, extremism and promoting Inclusion and Diversity.
- 5.14 Southport Business Improvement District (BID) carried out a survey of businesses in Southport to understand the impact on them and the economy. This was followed up by a survey conducted by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA).
- 5.15 The immediate support in relation to business support was on the geographic areas directly affected by the July events, including (but not limited to) Hart St and St Luke's Rd. This included proactive engagement with all affected businesses and their owners, A Southport Business Recovery Fund was established and approved by Cabinet in September 2024 and has delivered grant funding to businesses directly affected by the events in question. A robust process has been established for approval of funding applications, with evidence collation and review of loss of income during the impacted period to ensure appropriateness of allocations. However, Council officers have worked proactively, and continue to work collaboratively, with all applicant businesses to provide support with this process to make this as straightforward and as quick for businesses as possible.
- 5.16 Support for businesses has also included, in some areas, support relating to Property and Building Services. This has included working with the Hart Space, the venue in which the event of 29th July 2024 occurred, to identify a new location for continuity of delivery of their programmes. The Council worked with the business to secure a lease on a new Council-owned asset that could be readily available to move into and commence activity quickly.
- 5.17 Sefton Council will also take over the lease of the building in question at Hart St, on the same terms and for the same duration as the previous lease with the Hart Space, to ensure that the owner of that building is not financially impacted by the relocation of the Hart Space to a new venue and is able to focus on other priorities.
- 5.18 In preparation for the return to school, which was an anxious time for many children, families and school staff, a range of training was provided at Formby Professional Development Centre (PDC) to help prepare school staff for the start of the school year. In addition and in partnership with Southport Learning Partnership all children were written to by the Leader of the Council to provide reassurance upon the return to school.

6.0 Longer Term Recovery

- 6.1 As previously mentioned, there are four dedicated sub-groups whose work is aligned to four of the five strategic objectives of the recovery plan. These respond to the specific and tragic events of 29 July 2024, but also the wider impact of the public disorder on 30 July 2024. These four workstreams are predicated on children and families being at the heart of the recovery plan.
- A dedicated focus those children and families directly affected with a focus on Southport Schools and collaboration with Southport Learning Partnership
 - Ensuring children and families psychological and wider health and well-being needs are met
 - Ensuring our response to community cohesion has their voice at the heart of it and we test new / additional youth services
 - The Economy work will create more opportunities and events for children and families in Southport and across Sefton to make it an even better place to live.

6.2 Southport Education

6.2.1 This sub-group focusses on schools, and in recognising the cross-cutting support to children in other workstreams this sub-group has 4 workstreams

1. Recognising that there will be a medium to long term impact for children and their families across Sefton. We expect that not only will we see an increase in numbers of referrals but that there will also be a deeper complexity. Therefore, Sefton Family Advice and Support Team (FAST) / Sefton Children's Help and Advice Team (CHAT) – building capacity at front door to deal with increase in referrals and complexity. This so we can respond quickly and appropriately.
2. Roll out of Trauma informed training for all frontline staff working in Southport. This is so staff are equipped with the skills to operate in a trauma informed manner.
3. Team Around the School (TAS) – roll out to include Southport clusters – this offer covers all children and young people and supported by Southport Learning Partnership, including support for Voluntary, Community, Faith Sector (VCFS) involvement. This is so we can wrap appropriate support around schools identifying children and families that need support at the earliest opportunity.
4. Direct support for schools, particularly those schools with children directly affected by the incidents. This is so we can support the schools that have been most affected by the tragedies by providing additional resources where required.

6.3 Psychological Care Coordination Subgroup'

6.3.1 Work focusses on 3 workstreams.

1. Psychological Support - the original plan (Cheshire and Merseyside Psychological Support Plan) Following a Major Incident involved increased existing psychological provision and creating suitable pathways to meet initial demand. There are interdependencies between this work and Children & Families sub-group. This is to ensure everyone affected that needs psychological support can access appropriate psychological services to meet their needs.
2. Longer term H&WB offer to be expanded and delivered including VCFS involvement. This is to roll out a wider Health and Well-being offer so that residents can easily access services.
3. Occupational Health Offer for all council staff enhanced to meet new demand and complexity. This is to improve the quality of the Occupational Health offer for staff, in particular those that have been involved in supporting children and families directly and indirectly affected by the events.

6.4 Community Cohesion

6.4.1 This sub-group is focused on the following workstreams:

1. Multi-disciplinary team to include an increase in Equality, Diversity & Inclusion capacity, and Education & Learning Officer with a fund to deliver cohesion programmes. This is so we have capacity to work with our minority ethnic communities as well as work with those with extremist views and provide educational cohesion programmes.
2. Enhanced Youth Services focussed on youth work in the Southport area. This is so we can work with young people around a range of issues including racism, extremism, and cohesion.
3. Capital costs to increase building security across VCFS sector. This is to improve security across a range of VCFS sector buildings.

4. Support for Sefton CVS leadership capacity in response phase and the provision of a VCF Fund – fund provided by CVS to support sector in activities during response phase. This grant programme is for small grants to support community organisations to put events on that support community spirit and cohesion.

6.5 Business & Economy

6.5.1 This sub-group focuses on 3 workstreams:

1. Short term response being implemented focused on hyper-local and immediate support for businesses and self-employed people. This is a small grants programme to support businesses, and their owners and employees, directly affected near to the scenes of both incidents.
2. Medium term response includes events support for 2024 and into 2025 and beyond. This is to support events that drive up footfall into the town, which will lead to an increase in spend to the benefit of local economy and businesses.
3. Long Term response includes Strategic Recovery and Marketing – including the development of a visitor and economy strategy as well as work to prioritise and bring forward pipeline sites and projects to support long term economic growth. This is a longer-term piece of work that connects with existing regeneration projects and identifies new opportunities that will support economic resilience and recovery.

6.5.2 Beyond short-term grant funding to the businesses directly affected, the approach to economic resilience and recovery in Southport following these events is, broadly, to:

- a) To either directly deliver or to support delivery of events that maximise footfall and visitor numbers in 2025 and beyond for Southport, helping to make the town as exciting a place to be as possible for families and children - this includes enhancement of existing events and creation of new events, and is intended to attract increased visitors to Southport from elsewhere in the region and elsewhere in the country.
- b) To build and sustain momentum with Southport's regeneration programme, including those projects being delivered or to be delivered by Sefton Council, those projects delivered by private sector stakeholders in the town, and new opportunities that support economic growth; and
- c) To maintain and strengthen collaborative ongoing dialogue between Sefton Council, Southport BID, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and a range of public and private sector stakeholders and partners who share ambition for Southport, its economy, and its future.

6.5.3 The strategy for Southport's town centre and economy remains consistent with that articulated in the bid to Central Government for Town Deal funding in 2020, for which £37.5m was secured for a range of capital projects. This strategy, following an extensive consultation and engagement process across town, was to:

- Strengthen visitor economy – more reasons to visit Southport, to stay, and to stay longer; and to do so all year round.
- Diversify our economy – supporting growth in new market sectors in town and supporting businesses in a wide range of industries; and
- Deliver the infrastructure that underpins the two focus areas above – including transport, digital, skills and beyond.

6.5.4 Sefton Council and Southport BID hosted a well-attended business event in November 2024, aimed at providing an update on the above to local businesses, and at sustaining two-way dialogue in relation to the town and its future. The event included guest speakers

with a wealth of related subject matter expertise, including in response and recovery to such events. The event was also supported by the LCRCA Business Growth team. The focus outlined in the previous sections is intended to maximise return on investment for the collective benefit of the town and its economy.

6.6 Finance – Costs and Funding

6.6.1 The approach to recovery has always been to do “the right thing” – whatever is needed by those directly affected. Community organisations, partners and the Council have all stepped up and incurred indirect costs that they have accommodated in their core budgets. For example;

- Alder Hey and MerseyCare responded immediately to establish a dedicated psychological team to support children, families, staff and public affected
- The Primary Care Network and Southport GP’s ensured that access to primary care was a priority.
- Teams within Neighbourhood Engagement were solely focussed on Southport support for several weeks and therefore existing work commitments were delayed.
- The Atkinson became a focal point for support for floral tribute maintenance and the book of remembrance.
- The Lord Street In Bloom volunteers managed and maintained the huge numbers of floral tributes placed at The Atkinson 7 days a week for approximately 3 months.
- The InvestSefton team have focussed solely on Southport Businesses since August 2024, with no costs recharged

6.6.2 In addition to this, there are direct and additional costs to the recovery work. The current estimate for these direct and additional costs is £5.75m. The Council and partners have been in positive dialogue with central government on the financial support that could be made available and are confident that all costs will be covered. MHCLG have made an offer of £4m additional funding which is subject to the approval of a business plan. In addition to this the Council has received £600k Community Recovery Fund. The Community Recovery Fund is a funding allocation provided to all Local Authorities that encountered public disorder in the summer to support direct costs associated with repair and clean up as well as supporting longer term community cohesion work. Whilst this is not subject to a business plan, there is guidance on spend including a requirement to spend 15% on capital projects. Furthermore, the Department of Education (DfE) has offered £400k of support which is subject to monitoring. This brings the total sum of central government funding that is subject to final approval to £5m, not including the DHSC / NHS contributions which are the core of the psychological support and wider wellbeing work.

6.6.3 A small, fixed term Recovery Team has been set up to support and oversee all aspects of recovery. The team ensures there is always a single and co-ordinated point of contact and there is a quick response across any and all aspects of the recovery to whoever requests it, and they administer the work set out in the next section. The costs for this team are approximately 7% of the direct costs associated with recovery, which is consistent with admin and management costs for most government grants.

6.6.4 The plans for this total spend are contained in the table below and include the different funding streams highlighted above. Dialogue continues with other government departments to secure additional resources and reduce the financial contribution that the Council will need to make.

Sub-Group	Budget
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Southport Education	£1,884,700
Psychological Support & H&W Offer	£665,000
Community Cohesion	£790,000
Business & Economy	£1,900,000
Recovery Team	£420,000
Totals	£5,659,700

- 6.6.5 Having moved from the response to recovery phase there is now a longer-term ambition that will be delivered by a plan that each sub-group will deliver elements.
- 6.6.6 Recovery is a co-ordinated process of supporting affected communities in the restoration of emotional, social, economic, and physical well-being. After emergencies, the recovery phase will often target the restoration of an affected area to its previous condition - normalisation. However, there may be a strategic opportunity to go beyond 'recovery' and achieve longer-term regeneration and wider improvements for Southport families.
- 6.6.7 Recovery is, therefore, more than simply the replacement of what has been destroyed and the rehabilitation of those affected. It is a complex social and developmental process rather than just a remedial process. The manner in which recovery processes are undertaken is critical to their success.
- 6.6.8 In many scenarios, the response phase to an emergency can be relatively short in contrast to the recovery phase. Recovery usually takes years rather than months to complete as it seeks to address the enduring human, physical, environmental, and economic consequences of emergencies.
- 6.6.9 The recovery plan remains iterative and as demonstrated we continue to listen and respond. The plan is for a 12-month period of time. We know things will change and we will need to respond. This is something we have not experienced before, and we continue to learn as new issues emerge. We will continue to work with central government in an attempt to secure additional resources to support long term recovery.
- 6.6.10 The fifth strategic priority involves creating a lasting memorial and legacy for the three girls. We will be guided by the families as to how this is delivered and whilst early dialogue is underway, there are no details to share at this moment.
- 6.6.11 Key future dates connected to the events will require careful consideration and support. The anniversary of the tragedy on 29 July will be profoundly sad for those directly involved and undoubtedly bring renewed media interest and we will work with the families to support their wishes at that time

7.0 Financial Implications

- 7.1 As reported in the main body of the report, the council has estimated that the costs for the first 12 months of response will cost £5.7m with £5m to date having been secured from central government. Discussions are ongoing with other government departments to fund other aspects of the response and with other partners. A final sum that will be met by the council will then be known. There is no core budget for any such sum therefore any residual balance will need to be met from general balances. Upon formal approval of the central government funding, supplementary capital and revenue estimates will be brought forward for cabinet and council approval as per the councils Financial Procedure Rules within a future monitoring report.

7.2 The council is clear that this sum will provide the funding for this phase of recovery and support that is required, therefore additional financial support will be required as the response continues.

8.0 Legal Implications

Not applicable.

9.0 Risk Implications

9.1 There is a financial risk to the Council. Depending on the outcome of the business case decision the identified support offered by each workstream may not be delivered or may only be delivered on a reduced basis.

10.0 Staffing HR Implications

A fixed term team has been set up to support and oversee the recovery programme. The response has seen a huge call on existing staffing resources, with many services having to prioritise the Southport response over other business as usual services. In addition, Executive, Senior Leadership, and officers have dedicated significant portions of their time to the response and to recovery.

11.0 Conclusion

11.1 The tragic events of the 29 July will never be forgotten. However, the way community, partners and Council have responded has shown 'the best' of Southport and the wider Sefton borough at the most difficult of times should also not be forgotten.

11.2 This report looks closely at how Sefton Council, partners, and the community are leading on and will continue to lead on a specialist ongoing recovery operation which focusses on helping children and families heal, creating safer and more united communities and assisting businesses to recover economically.

11.3 We know this is going to take time and the support for the community will be there as long as it is needed. We want and encourage the public to stay informed, participate in various support programmes and take full advantage of the resources available for emotional, social, and economic support.

11.4 A heartfelt thanks goes to all those who helped in any way over the last 6 months and everything we have done and everything that we will do will be done with the families and victims at the heart. We are guided by them and their needs.

11.5 This report, and the funding that supports it, represents a significant step in addressing the emotional, social, and economic impacts of the tragedies, while also planning for a stronger future for Southport..

12.0 Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There are no alternative options.

Equality Implications:

The equality implications have been identified and risk remains, as detailed in the report. Our understanding of these implications will continue to develop, alongside a dedicated Community Impact Assessment.

Impact on Children and Young People:

These are considered throughout the programme of work on recovery.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will have a Neutral impact.

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7908/25) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD6008/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The council is working closely with external partners in leading the community recovery from the events of the 29th and 30th July. This is reflected in the governance framework for the recovery efforts.

Implementation Date for the Decision:

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Cabinet decision.

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Appendices:

Appendix A- Recovery Structure

Background Papers:

Not applicable.