

Cabinet Member Update Report

Overview & Scrutiny

Councillor	Portfolio	Date
Peter Harvey	Cleansing & Street Scene	January 2025

Catering & Building Cleaning Services

Building Cleaning

Pope Francis Multi Academy Trust (MAT) Cleaning Contract

The above MAT put its Cleaning Services out to competitive tender in 2024. The tender was for two schools. The service currently holds the contract for one of the schools, The Salesian Academy of St John Bosco, Bootle.

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.

Officers from the Building Cleaning service delivered a presentation to the trust. The result of the tender exercise was initially due in July 2024, but the process has taken longer than expected and the contract has yet to be awarded.

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 in Southport and is administered by the Autism Initiatives charity.

The service has provided a cleaning provision to the school for several years. The School to put the contract out to competitive tender, with the new contract due to start in January 2025. Officers from Building Cleaning gave a presentation to the school in late November and were informed shortly afterwards, that they had retained the contract which is excellent news.

Catering

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, Crosby. The service currently operates this contract. More schools are expected to join the MAT.

Officers from the service delivered a presentation to the trust. 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. No date for a decision has been given.

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

Following enquiries from various elected members, a report is due to be taken to the above committee in January 2025. It will cover:

- School Meals finances
- Nutrition
- Where the school meals section sits within the council structure and why
- Auto enrolment for free school meals

Rimrose Hope Primary School, Seaforth

The school currently operates its school meals service in-house, with the school employing the catering staff directly. The school is exploring the possibility of returning to the council's service, and positive discussions have taken place to this end.

The Council's Obesity Strategy.

The catering service continues to support the Council's Obesity Strategy. The Service Manager chairs the Live Well sub-group, which is charged with reviewing and refreshing the Council's work to ensure compliance with Food Active's Healthy Weight Declaration accreditation.

Burial and Cremation Service

The Burial and Cremation Service continues to provide a sustainable and professional service to the bereaved. Burial and cremation numbers are expected to increase during winter months.

Investment planning continues to progress well, with consultants and architects on board, preparing a full business case for the service, including evidence of much-needed investment to ensure service continuity for the future. Investment is essential due to upcoming changes in legislation.

Grounds maintenance works continue, with some areas more challenging than others. The service is keen to work with Merseyside UPW Team (community payback) to assist with maintenance works in cemeteries. Arrangements are in place to recruit additional grounds seasonal workers for 25/26.

Repairs and maintenance continue to be prioritised, including the completion of the much-needed improvements to the canopy at Thornton Crematorium recently. Memorial testing on headstone stability continues, to ensure the safety of the public visiting cemeteries is a priority. Cemetery maintenance staff will be undertaking grave digging training in January 2025 to ensure further resilience across staff resources.

The contract with the current music/media provider for Thornton Crematorium and Southport Crematorium ceases at the end of this month. Following a procurement exercise, Obitus, a new provider, was awarded the contract.

During the last couple of months the service, along with Obitus have been working very closely with staff, funeral directors and celebrants. New equipment was scheduled to be installed and operating in Southport and Thornton pre Christmas. This offers an improvement to sound and visuals (including a large screen in overflow areas, two large screens in chapels, etc).

Burial and Cremation services continued throughout the council's shutdown period. There were no services on Christmas Day, Boxing Day or New Year's Day. However, all grounds are open for the public to visit every day of the year.

Street Cleansing

The Street Cleansing Service has been working hard over several weeks to get through the rear entry alleyways priority list. The service is now coming towards the end of the priority list and will be working on the new rota for rear entries throughout the borough as they continue to improve the service delivery.

'Before and after' photos of the work undertaken illustrate the improvements, and through our communications team we are promoting the message to Sefton residents that fly tipping is not acceptable. Culprits who blight our neighbourhoods are being challenged and where appropriate action is being taken, including fixed penalty notices.

The Street Cleansing Service worked on clearing leaf fall throughout the borough in autumn.

Waste Management

Waste collections over the Christmas period took into account the council's shutdown days. Some staff volunteered to come into work on those days, and a collection service was revised to align with what was possible within the available resources.

As part of the Corporate Transformation Programme, the route optimisation project began on 1st November 2024. There will be a significant amount of work required to deliver the change and innovation that is much needed.

December also saw the appointment of the new Service Manager for the Waste Management & Street Cleansing Service. This is a welcome appointment and will bring management stability to a large, high profile, front facing core service.

Sefton ARC & Sefton Careline

Sefton ARC & Careline, Electrical & Alarms services continue to develop, and grow its current offer in accordance with the council's vision and core purpose and in alignment with other strategies and policies.

The service is working closely to help support colleagues through all service areas of the council through the services provided. Sefton ARC Alarms Section has recently been assessed by NSI for installation of alarms systems, feedback from NSI was that the assessment went well and Sefton ARC passed the necessary criteria to retain the award. This is testament to the ongoing good work consistently delivered by the team.

Sefton ARC is currently in discussion with BT, the provider of public realm CCTV infrastructure and how best to move forwards from analogue to digital switchover, this has resulted in very positive meetings to look at what the service could look like with future investment in the infrastructure.

With regard to the provision of public conveniences, the service will commence a mini tendering exercise in early January 2025 for the provision of services and maintenance of public conveniences throughout the borough. This will allow competition within the market ensuring the council is receiving value for money and a standard of service delivery through the correct procurement route.

The Careline Service continue to focus and support the transition of analogue to digital equipment as part of the national digital switchover. This work is being undertaken daily and numbers continue to fall of replacing the old analogue kit as part of the digital switchover for our clients. Careline is currently working with Procurement on the tender process for the new call monitoring platform to allow competition on the market ensuring the council is receiving value for money and a standard of service delivery through the correct procurement route.

Careline continue to support other service areas throughout the council with lone worker devices. By working with telecare suppliers this has allowed the service to introduce equipment to service users. It provides a piece of technology that is designed to be monitored through the Sefton Careline Team and an alert system to ensure lone worker safety. The most basic function of a lone worker device is to raise an SOS alarm when the user needs help, for example if they're in danger, suffer an injury or feel threatened. Upon an activation of the alarm, The Careline team will follow the process agreed with management at the setup of the lone worker agreement.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

The Transport and Fleet Service continues to provide a full maintenance and fleet compliance service to all departments within the authority. 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 service to both internal and external customers and remains 100% compliant with inspections and services. As part of the services contributing to net zero by reducing carbon emissions within the fleet work continues, the proposal is still to have one petrol tank at the main Hawthorne Road Depot.

The Food Waste Collection Vehicle and Food Caddy pre-procurement report has been agreed by Cabinet Member regarding the council's intent to purchase the new vehicles for the impending Food Waste Collection service that will become statutory in 2026. Sefton are working closely with all LCR Authorities to establish best practice regarding waste containment and collections.

The T&VM Service remained operational throughout the Christmas shutdown period as garage staff were required on call and in work to ensure the council fleet remained compliant.

Services such as MOTs and tachograph calibrations re-opened on 2nd January 2025.

School Crossing Patrol Service

The service currently has 6 vacancies. Recruitment does tend to be more challenging during the winter months due to the demographics of the staff cohort. The service continues to provide 100% cover at all established sites across the borough.

Specialist Transport Unit

The Specialist Transport Unit provide home-to-school and day centre travel for the most vulnerable in our society. The service currently operates 17 x School Routes and 9 x Adult Social Care routes.

The service is 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 provides transport for 131 SEND customers each day and 52 x ASC customers to and from their destination. The service users are among some of the most vulnerable in our society who need the support and extra care that the STU In-House service provides.

Many aspects of the service remained operational throughout the Christmas and shutdown period to ensure ASC service users were accommodated and transported throughout.

The service continues to evaluate all current practices to enhance service provision.

Taxi Licensing:

Bootle One Stop Shop Update:

- During November and December the processing of vehicle plates and the renewal of driver's badges continued with a high level of efficiency. Vehicle plates are currently being processed within 1-2 days.
- There are three sets of Knowledge tests currently being offered at Bootle One Stop Shop every week. In November, 137 tests were offered, 22 failed to attend and 56 failed the test. However, a total of 59 passed the test and have been issued with a Sefton licence. To improve the pass rate for the Knowledge test, discussions have been held with the trade representatives and several changes have been put in place.
- The £50 non-refundable application fee for all new drivers was introduced on 25th November 2024. The fee will not only generate valuable licensing revenue, but it will also recognise the resource time and effort carried out to process the applications.
- Weekly internal meetings between Customer Services and Taxi Licensing continue and the trade are given regular e-mail updates on progress. Quarterly trade meetings are also due to recommence in 2025.
- The Taxi Licensing website continues to be regularly updated with progress on new driver applications and it also explains how drivers may find quicker and easier access to the answers from the questions asked in the Knowledge test and can be found at [Taxi Licensing](#)

Enforcement:

- Training of the 2 new Taxi Enforcement Officers has continued with both officers progressing well and successfully commencing operational duties.
- 3 Further successful Joint Enforcement Operations have been undertaken in November and December 2024.

22nd November 2024 - Manchester Airport

11 Private Hire Vehicles (PHVs) inspected
5 Stop Notice issued – (2 no door signs, 2 defective tyres, 1 smashed wing mirror)
6 clear

29th November 2024 - Liverpool Airport

14 PHVs inspected
2 Defect Notices issued (wing mirror defect & plate on with cable ties)
8 Stop Notice issued – (no door signs)
3 vehicles clear
1 unlicensed vehicle – investigations on going

14th December 2024 - Manchester Airport

12 PHVs inspected
1 Defect Notice issued – (rear plate on with tape)
9 Stop Notices issued – (8 no door signs 1 no driver badge)
2 clear

- Regular routine Vehicle Inspections have recommenced and are taking place on Tuesdays (Southport) and Wednesdays (Bootle). Planned night time shift work will continue in the New Year with a focus on South Road Waterloo, Crosby & Birkdale, Formby & Lord Street areas.
- Officers continue to work strategically with LCR Authorities to progress standardisation across the region. Work on the following topics has progressed well - Vehicle Conditions / Drugs Policy / Fit and Proper Persons / Convictions policy. A more detailed update on this work will be provided in early 2025.

Local Licensing

- The Local licensing team continue to process high volumes of licence applications within the strict legal timescales. The new Licensing officers training is progressing well and she is now commencing operational duties.
- Officers from the Local Licensing team along with Pollution Control Officers continue to attend Merseyside Police licensing partners meeting which is held every fortnight. The meetings are extremely productive and an effective way for officers to share intelligence about licensed premises, provide case updates and co-ordinate enforcement activities.
- Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005 (GA05) requires that all licensing authorities prepare and publish a statement of the principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under the GA05 during the three-year period to which the Statement of Licensing Policy (the Policy) applies.

Sefton's existing Policy is now due for review. The Council must consult as part of this review process and a report on the proposed consultation is being taken to the next Consultation and Engagement Panel in January 2025. Further updates on this process will be provided in due course.