

| <b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b>                              |                              |               |
|--|------------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)</b> |                              |               |
| <b>COUNCILLOR</b>  | <b>PORTFOLIO</b>             | <b>DATE</b>   |
| Mhairi Doyle   | Public Health and Well Being | December 2024 |

### **Green Sefton update**

Some service areas have found it challenging to meet expectations 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:

- The two new posts in the Tree and Woodland team were filled but unfortunately one of the team has since left and the post is back out to recruitment, this has of course caused a delay in the 'discovery' exercise in relation to trees on Council land that sit outside of the Green Sefton or Highway portfolios.
- New Machinery has continued to arrive from Gibson Groundscare (over 220 machinery assets). The Land Management team are now fully equipped with improved machinery that supports operations across all areas which is a positive step forward.
- Training – Three members of the Land Management Team 3 have undertaken a 'Train the Trainer' qualification. This will facilitate more efficient and cost-effective in-house training for new starters on handheld and pedestrian machinery.
- Green Sefton Health and Safety sub-committee, issues raised include: water safety review, event review, asbestos review, building management, tree management and more. Other H+S issues include:
  - Risk Assessments – Work is ongoing to review and update all RA's to the new Corporate template. 35+ 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.
- Countryside stewardship – CSHT supports the conservation grazing programme at Ainsdale and Birkdale LNR's where there is a flock of 25 Herwick sheep (supplied via Natural England), and a herd of 27 English Longhorn cattle (supplied through Lancs Wildlife Trust). These animals will be on site through the winter until sometime in March 2025.



- Winter works programme – Additional Land Management Team funding has been utilised to recruit additional seasonal staff throughout Winter 2024/25. Teams have been working through the maintenance tasks, including: Vegetation management along boundaries and access routes, the removal of invasive species, lifting and lowering shrubbery to improve sight lines and site safety. Working on 20+ sites out of 150 identified locations that required vegetation management.
- Hesketh Park Legacy Project - The waterfall has been serviced and the pump mechanism is working, the floral clock mechanism has been inspected and repair work identified. A conservation architect has been engaged to support the plans for the conservatory refurbishment.
- Severe flooding in Bootle on the 30<sup>th</sup> September caused internal flooding to 37 properties and had much wider impacts to the surrounding community. The flood risk management team have been supporting the wider Council's recovery work. Section 19 reporting is underway.



- The Making Space for Water Crossens business case has been submitted for approval by the Environment Agency for £1.7m funding. The business case has been received positively, however, there has been a national hold on grant-in-aid funding whilst the government reviews the funding model.
- The Land Management Team have continued to support two Sefton at Work placements in the team, developing horticultural grounds maintenance skills and experience. The team are very proud to have been nominated for an 'Employer Award' for Stephen Howe – Principal Grounds Maintenance officer for his commitment.
- Regenerus – Taking Root Project. The Land Management team have purchased 2 new machinery assets to support the ongoing creation and ongoing maintenance of wildflower meadow sites in the South of the Borough.



- Bonfire night - The Land Management Team have completed the clear up bonfire sites across the Borough working in close partnership with the Street Cleansing Service and Merseyside Fire & Rescue. In some locations this took a significant amount of time and additional resources which had an impact on core works.



- Coastal training beachmaster – shoreline pollution incidents preparedness - emergency planning – Merseyside group – 7 Sefton staff trained;
  - Supporting Southport recovery through composting material, friends group
  - Restarting of fountains on lord street
  - United Utilities work complete – restoration overview by Sefton
- Several audits are underway as identified by Green Sefton /Risk and Resilience /Audit inc:
  - Golf Shops finance systems
  - Bootle and Southport golf courses
  - Allotments
  - Botanic Gardens Depot (Natural Alternatives)
  - Hesketh Park Depot
  - Cambridge Road Depot
  - Water safety follow up meetings
  - Event and Activities follow up meetings

Action plans and costings have / are in the process of being agreed / implemented.

- Asset List for ‘corporate landlord’ work completed, and building inspections via Property Management have begun which is very welcome.
- Traveller Encampments at 10 locations so far this year have cost Green Sefton upwards of 15k in staff time and repairs following damage caused to barriers.
- Volunteer Hours (Friends of, community groups, individual volunteers) supported and facilitated by the Community Engagement team, are at 15000 so far this year (last year’s total was 38000).
- In Bloom – six days of judging, taking in Bootle, Seaforth and Litherland, Crosby and Waterloo, Ainsdale, Southport (and Maghull). Groups from Sefton attended recent award ceremonies, scooping 42 in total plus 2 discretionary awards.

- Green Flag / Green Flag Community Awards were all retained

**Planned activity over the next quarter:**

- Winter works until April
- Seek planning permission for the:
  - Crosby interim coastal defence works to protect the most vulnerable section of eroding coastline.
  - 'Making Space for Water' scheme in Crossens
- Publishing of the Section 19 flood investigation report for Bootle 30<sup>th</sup> September
- Seasonal recruitment for summer season 25/26
- Completion of play and drainage works under UKSPF funding
- Mersey Forest Plan refresh /consultation (led by TMF)
- Implementing the recommendations of recent audits
- Refresh of the 'Volunteer Handbook'
- Public Satisfaction Survey via 'Your Sefton Your Say'
- Planning for 2025 In Bloom / Green Flag Awards begins, intention to expand into Netherton and Litherland and to enter the National competition for Southport.