

1. Introduction

Decommissioning - is when an activity/service delivered or commissioned by the Council is partly or fully ceased. This guidance details both the considerations to be made and processes to be followed in order to operationally manage the decommissioning of activities/services, in a safe, fair and transparent manner. The guidance is intended to address the requirement to have a robust process for proactively and appropriately decommissioning services as approved by Council.

This guidance is set in the context of the financial situation facing the Council over the next few years. Due to the associated constraints the Council will make best endeavours to observe and adhere to best practice, however, it must be noted that in some instances this will not always be possible. The related decision making processes have been approved by Cabinet and Council as have the decisions to decommission or reduce a range of activities.

Our local community and businesses will continue to look to the Council for leadership and support in these difficult times and we must continue to, even in the decommissioning activities, strive to deliver customer focussed, efficient, effective and high-quality services, whilst looking to reduce our own cost base.

2. Process

The decommissioning process in many instances will be triggered by a Council decision. This decommissioning guidance is not intended to provide a prescriptive format but to aid the formulation of a detailed decommissioning plan.

For each activity Officers should complete Section 1 of the template in Appendix A. All other sections should also be used to record the activities to be undertaken, owner of those activities and by when they should be completed. The guidance contained in each section will help the decommissioning team to identify key activities. This will help with prioritisation of activities, resource planning, and the checking of progress against deadlines. Officers should seek advice from the contacts named in the guidance at the earliest opportunity. The plans need to be approved by the relevant Service Director and completed plans, progress and copies of other supporting documentation must be provided to the Transformation Team.

Issues identified during the decommissioning process that will impact on the delivery of the financial saving should be recorded and reported to the Transformation Team. As required the Transformation Team will escalate issues to the Strategic Leadership Team.

Appendix A**Section 1 – Approved Proposal Information**

Record in detailed plan

Activity/Service to Cease

Activity/Service Description

Proposal Reference Value of Saving £ (if appropriate)

Date of Cabinet Approval Date of Council Approval

Date Decommissioning to Commence Lead Officer

Date Decommissioning to Complete Confirm Copy of Plan sent to Transformation

Section 2 –Public Consultation and / or Informing and Communicating

Decommissioning Part of a Service/Activity

Consultation basic principles are that you must :

- Follow defined statutory processes
- Consult
 - all the right people
 - When the decision making process for the decommissioning of which part of a service / activity is still at a formative stage
- Give the consultee
 - time to reflect and respond
 - accessible information on which to respond
- Take the consultation response into consideration

Decommissioning Whole of a Service/Activity

Basic principles are that you must:

- Follow defined statutory processes
- Inform and communicate all the right people
- Provide accessible information on reasons why the decisions have been taken
- Provide sufficient accessible information on the decommissioning process and timetable in a timely manner
- Ensure service users are provided with information about other services they could potentially access

Keep a record of your actions

List of Activities**Owner****Completion Date**

1
2
3
4

For help and guidance please contact Performance and Partnerships , Legal Services

Section 3 – Partner Consultation and / or Informing and Communicating

Basic principles are that you must inform and communicate :

- Providing accessible information on reasons why the decisions have been taken or options proposed at an early stage
- Providing sufficient accessible information on the decommissioning process and timetable in a timely manner
- Being aware of staffing implications

Keep a record of your actions

<u>List of Activities</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
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For help and guidance please contact Performance and Partnerships, Legal Services

Section 4 – Equality Impact Assessments

The basic principles are that you must impact assess proposed decisions:

- Follow defined statutory processes
- Assess impact of decommissioning of whole or part of a service using up to date information and data to identify adverse impacts
- Record impact assessment, decision made, any mitigating actions and make public if requested.

<u>List of Activities</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
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For help and guidance please contact Performance and Partnerships

Section 5 – Contracts and Service Level Agreements

Considerations:

- Contract term
- Notice periods
- Required documentation
- Statutory returns
- Penalty clauses for early termination
- Has the Council or the service provider leased any pieces of equipment in order to perform the service

e.g. vehicles, ICT licenses / equipment and what will the effect of decommissioning have on these leases

- Check any grant funding conditions to ensure that decommissioning is permitted and whether a proportion of funding does not need to be returned.

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List of Activities

Owner

Completion Date

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For help and guidance please contact Legal Services

Section 6 – Employee Consultation

Considerations:

- Personnel will consult with Trade Unions with departmental input as required
- Personnel will issue statutory notices Section 188 and HR1
- You must keep your team informed, promote pension surgeries etc.
- Record date soft consultation commenced, at risk and notice letters etc.
- Personnel will produce redundancy and pension quotes
- Personnel will produce at risk and notice letters to be delivered to employees by Service Director or Head of Service
- Establishment Control will update ResourceLink with relevant changes
- Personnel will manage the redeployment process
- Consider outstanding job evaluation appeals
- Establishment Control to report leavers to Payroll, ICT Client, Learning & Development, Civic Buildings Team
- Absent staff
- Seconded staff
- Agency staff
- Data Management
- Outstanding holidays

Keep a record of your actions

List of Activities

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For Trade Union consultation guidance please contact Head of Personnel Services

For process help and guidance please contact your Personnel Officer

For redeployment help and guidance please contact your Personnel Officer

Further information is available on the intranet

For job evaluation appeals help and guidance please contact the Pay Review Team

Section 7 – Finance Activities

Considerations

- Clawback and other payments to be made on termination
- Outstanding commitments – advise Finance e.g. utility bills
- Rationalisation of subjectives
- Impact on capital programme
- Removal of access to I-Proc, Oracle Financials
- changes to delivery locations for I-Proc orders
- completion of statutory returns
- record retention
- Finance will close cost centres
- Changes to Audit Plan
- Changes to Corporate Risk Register

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For help and guidance please contact Finance, Audit, Procurement

Section 8 – Operational Processes

Considerations

- management, handover, closure of casework
- process links to other service activities internal and external
- incoming mail redirection
- update procedures
- could self service support part or all of process?

- Corporate Risk Register
- completion of statutory returns
- impact on Contact Centre and One Stop Shops
- changes to internet and intranet
- public notices
- update/archive policy documentation
- archiving
- destruction of service literature (retain 1 copy for archive?)
- remove leaflets, posters etc. from Customer Access Points
- recycle unused leaflets, posters etc. as appropriate
- return of laptops, mobile phones etc. Line Managers must obtain a signed declaration from leavers that in addition to all Sefton equipment they have also returned all Sefton data however it is stored, and explicitly confirm that they will not use Council information. This should cover USB sticks, wraptor sticks, floppies, DVDs, CDs and paper records.
- Staff leaving or changing their status must perhaps also be informed that they are no longer authorised to access Sefton information systems regardless of whether their access has been revoked. This protects them and the Council against any continued access where removal processes fail or are delayed
- asset management - equipment that can be re-used or re-allocated
- decanting of other equipment and goods
- cancellation of subscriptions
- ICT implications
- accommodation implications

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For help and guidance on internet and intranet changes please contact the Communications Team
 For help and guidance on Contact Centre and One Stop Shops changes please contact the Client Team

Section 9 – Data Archiving & Record Retention

Considerations

- what kind of records are held and in what format?
- who is responsible for them?
- what records must be kept by the Council for legal or operational reasons?
- where and how should they be stored and who will be the new owner?
- how long should they be stored for?
- how can the remainder of the records be securely disposed of?
- what system holds the electronic records?
- if only part of the system is to be de-commissioned, how will the data be separated?

Key risks are of accidental or deliberate:

- Release or misuse of confidential, personal data or intellectual property (e.g. address lists, contracts, case files, personal data on staff or service users).
- Impacts are loss of revenue or reputation, litigation from employees, service users and contractors, also civil penalties up to £500K under data protection laws.

Keep a record of your actions

<u>List of Activities</u>	<u>Owner</u>	<u>Completion Date</u>
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Sefton Council's Information Security and Records Management Policies can be found in the Data Handling and FOI page on the intranet.

If you still have concerns about records that are held then contact the Data Protection and Information Security Officer.

Section 10 – ICT

Considerations

- Will there be a software system will no longer be used?
- Will there be parts or data fields in systems that will no longer be used? Interfaces no longer required? Reports no longer needed?
- Access rights to be changed or cancelled?
- Equipment that can be re-used or re-allocated?
- Mobile phones etc. to be cancelled and returned?
- Email and file storage to be reviewed with unwanted items deleted and a retention plan for the data that is to be kept?

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For help and guidance on these topics please contact the ICT Client Team

Section 11 - Accommodation

Considerations

- Lease arrangements including exit costs (e.g. reinstatement & dilapidations)
- Unoccupied floor space – liabilities and practical implications
- Small moves – is it a small move or more complex requiring professional input?
- Utility bills – residual liabilities
- Accommodation recharge – liability continues until lease terminated or freehold property is sold
- Storage (e.g. Files and specialist items or equipment)
- Lead-in time – Service of notices and mobilisation of resources

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For help and guidance on these topics please contact the Property Management Group additional information on the intranet.