

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

DEPARTMENT: STREET SCENE

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Cllr John Fairclough	Transportation	July to August 2011

SCHOOL CROSSING SERVICE

Standardised School Holidays

Following a two year consultation process an agreement was reached with the five Merseyside Authorities to introduce a standardised year across all schools. This was to provide a more structured holiday period for parents, school workers, and those in similar professions as all schools would be closed at the same time. It would also negate the need for overtime payments for School Crossing Patrols at a cost to this service. Most School Crossing Patrols cover more than one school and in the past could work for a number of days over the official finish dates due to schools deciding to close at different times. This again previously proved difficult when trying to cover locations and authorise overtime payments from a service with a limited budget.

Unfortunately, during recent holiday periods this year, several schools in Sefton have not adhered to the agreement. Cover was provided at short notice in this instance for the safety of the children. However, negotiations are once again ongoing with those schools who wish to operate outside of the agreement to try and ensure a safe and economically viable way forward.

SEFTON SECURITY

New Business Opportunities

Requests for alarm installations, CCTV and alarm monitoring and static security services have risen throughout the past year despite most sectors feeling the effects of the recession. Sefton Security has invested in a range of new technologies which will allow for additional growth over the coming year. This will provide both additional income to the Council and also contribute further to the additional savings required over the coming years. Officers are awaiting the outcome of Tender Submissions for security work for the NHS in Manchester and Speke, and for intruder alarm work for the Corporate Property Services in West Lancashire. The Service is also currently undertaking a wide range of new installations in North Wales and Manchester, coupled with new local installations at Davenhill School, Southport Market Hall, Thornton College, Netherton Activity Centre and Splash World.

Depot Security System Upgrade

A major security upgrade has been undertaken at Hawthorne Road Depot with the installation of a comprehensive intruder alarm system, a perimeter notification system, and a 48 camera CCTV system, all linked to the control room at Sefton Security for out of hours monitoring. In addition, a 'Voice over IP system' has been installed which will allow security and monitoring staff to speak directly to any person who is seen on site, day or night.

Access to the Depot will be via a remote controlled gate, once again operated via the Sefton Security control room. To assist in the day to day traffic management and vehicle/visitor monitoring at the Depot an ANPR (Automatic Number Plate Recognition) system has also been installed. The cost of this upgrade is less than the cost of current security arrangements, and as a business model, this system will be promoted to a wider audience to hopefully generate additional revenues.

Successful Tender Award

Sefton Security has been awarded a contract for the annual inspection of fire alarms and emergency lighting at some school sites in Sefton. The award follows a tender process undertaken by Capita on behalf of the Council and demonstrates that Sefton Security is able to provide works at rates which represent better value to the Council than those offered by external contactors.

Asbestos Removal

Prior to completing the extension to the Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) at Linacre Lane, and the subsequent increase in monitoring capacity, a works programme has commenced on 1st August 2011 to remove asbestos from the roof space of the building. Despite major upheaval and the closure of all first floor office accommodation in the building, Sefton Security continues to provide all scheduled and contracted services to all customers and clients. The asbestos removal programme is due to be completed by mid October 2011.

Civil Unrest Response

During the recent period of potential civil unrest, Sefton Security played a pivotal role in the co-ordination and deployment of resources, as well as the identification of both potential trouble hotspots and perpetrators.

Comments and praise received for the efforts of Sefton Security includes:

"I would like to express my real thanks to our colleagues in the control room at Sefton Security. Throughout the two evenings their work has been of central importance in alerting all our colleagues to the potential risk and escalation of any incidents. As a consequence the Police have been able to deploy resources immediately and 'nip things in the bud'.

The role of the Control Room (ARC) and staff on duty was mentioned and praised by the Police at de-brief meetings and thanks were noted in the minutes of the meetings.

Apprenticeship Programme

Sefton Security introduced an apprenticeship programme for four new apprentices who will start with the Service in early October 2011. The apprentices will gain invaluable experience across a range of intruder alarm, fire alarm and CCTV installations, as well as door entry systems, lone worker devices, static and mobile security protocols, and portable appliance testing. In addition to the practical components of the apprenticeship, those selected will also attend college to undertake a range of NVQ qualifications which will further help their career aspirations.

VEHICLE MAINTENANCE

VOSA – Operator Licence Risk Score

The Vehicle Operator Services Agency (VOSA) is responsible for monitoring 'Operator Licence Holders' on behalf of the Traffic Commissioner. As such, the Vehicle Maintenance Services at Hawthorne Road Depot are regularly subjected to external assessment. The latest Assessment has produced an outstanding rating for the services we offer. The 'Operator Licence Risk Score' is based on a percentage score related to the risks associated with operating the service. In both 'Road Worthiness' and 'Overall Traffic Score' the service was awarded 'top ten percentile', meaning that the services offered are better than at least 90% of all other facilities assessed nationwide. These are the best scores which can be achieved. The VOSA has rated the service "as an excellent operator demonstrating excellent history of roadworthiness, based on both MOT Test history and roadside checks". Such praise at a national level will greatly assist in further developing the services offered at the Depot in coming months to generate additional revenues from expanded services such as Pre HGV Test Inspections, including roller brake, smoke emission and headlight aim tests, and service and repairs of HGV Vehicles.

MOT Testing Licence

Having recently secured a contract to undertake pre-HGV inspections for a private sector fleet of 85 vehicles, the Vehicle Maintenance Section has been developing plans to further enhance the service to our in-house fleet, whilst also taking the opportunity to develop business opportunities to create additional revenues and reduce the cost of vehicle maintenance to the Council fleet. The Vehicle Maintenance Section has now been awarded an MOT Testing Licence allowing more work to be undertaken and certificated in-house. This facility can now also be used to generate additional revenues for the service and the Council.

SPECIALIST TRANSPORT UNIT (STU)

New Service Provision

The STU has recently commenced providing all transport requirements for the 'Looked After Children' service through the framework agreements negotiated by the STU. Daytime requirements are met via the in-house vehicle fleet and staff, with additional vehicles and resources provided as required. The initial reactions from the service providers are that all requests are being met in a timely and cost effective manner, and at a cheaper cost than previously expended via direct bookings with private sector providers.

The STU now provides transport on a regular and pre-planned basis for members of the Sefton Council Planning Committee, who are required to visit premises and locations as part of the local planning process. This is again at a cheaper cost than previously expended directly with private sector providers.

The STU has undertaken its first 'private trip' for an independent care home, who have then been subsequently invoiced accordingly. It is proposed to extend this area of service provision much further over the coming months, which will assist in further reducing the cost of providing transport within Sefton to 'internal' customers.

Vehicle Fleet Review

The new transport operating system known as 'Cleric' is due to be introduced at the start of the new academic year in September 2011. In addition, the new framework agreements for external buses and taxis will also be adopted at this time. As part of a review of resource allocation, a number of changes to staff rotas and existing vehicle capacity and deployment have been made prior to the start of the new term. This has resulted in the decommissioning of five vehicles from the fleet coupled with the resultant budgetary savings in terms of maintenance, fuel, repairs, etc. The in-house fleet now consists of 25 'ambulance' type vehicles and 2 'minibus' type vehicles, down from a total of 32 vehicles. The service provision is unaffected by this reduction as the STU are able to accommodate both current and increased usage levels with less vehicles.

CATERING SERVICES

School Meals Uptake Data

The School Food Trust annual survey results for 2010/11 have recently been released which shows that Sefton Council's catering Service is performing very well.

The 2010/11 uptake figures are as follows:

Primary / Special Schools uptake -	43.6% - an increase on 2009/10 of 1.1%
Secondary Schools uptake -	49.1% - an increase on 2009/10 of 4.3%

The national average uptake figures were as follows:

Primary / Special Schools uptake -	44.1%
Secondary Schools uptake -	37.6%

The uptake figure for Secondary Schools is well above the national average and further work is currently being undertaken in order that we may benchmark catering services in Sefton against individual authorities across the country to establish both the costs and efficiencies of our in-house services on a national level.

The Primary School score, whilst still higher than the national average, is very pleasing due to the fact that Sefton has an unusually large number of schools with no on-site cooking facilities. In Sefton, 29% of Primary Schools have no cooking facilities, against the national average of 15%. For these schools, food is cooked at another kitchen and transported to the receiving school. Uptake in such schools with no in-house cooking facilities is significantly lower than those which have their own facilities. In Sefton the uptake in such schools is 6.4% lower than schools which have their own facilities.