

CABINET MEMBER REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) - 12 June 2018

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	May 2018

CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES

Strategic Support

Strategic Support main priority continues to be the support and project management of the Public Sector Reform projects. All the 10 projects and 25 sub-projects are being supported and developed.

Progress continues to be made with the team working with colleagues from across the Council development of WW1 Commemoration (1918 – 2018) activity plan.

As part of the Public Sector Reform work the team continues to work with colleagues to improve the information and advice available to residents and during March a short video a guide to understanding your Council Tax was shared on the website <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/council-tax.aspx> and via social media. The video has been viewed by over 10,500 people. The impact of this alongside close partnership working, promotion of e-billing, improvements to the website information and changes to policy, both the Contact Centre and One Stop shops have seen a considerable reduction in the number of contacts about Council Tax bills compared with last year.

As part of the drive to improve the information and advice available to residents the team has been working with colleagues in the Elections team to update the information available on our website <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/councillors,-meetings,-decisions/elections/register-to-vote.aspx>

The Communications team continue to work in partnership with colleagues from CVS to promote and celebrate the Year of the Volunteer. More information is available <http://mysefton.co.uk/category/year-of-the-volunteer/>

MerseyNow sign-ups continue to grow with over 600 people now signed up to receive a regular e-mail that keeps residents informed and to encourage them to take part in the great things going on across Sefton.

Commissioning Support and Business Intelligence Service

The Commissioning Support Team:

Continues to lead and support a number of key commissioning projects/activity, PSR projects:- Personalisation, Acute Wrap around, Family Centres, also providing children's placements, Quality Assurance activity, ASC payments and billing, financial assessments, Care Arranging and Direct Payments, including some specific examples:-

- *Pre-Paid Cards* – the numbers of recipients accessing Pre-paid Cards continues to increase in line with target for March 2018. Support to increase numbers, recover unused funds and reconcile accounts with outstanding reconciliation is being supported by ASC Social Work staff.
- *Adult Social Care Domiciliary Care Services* – Procurement processes are near completion for the services being developed as part of the tripartite approach with Liverpool and Knowsley. New contracts are to be in place for May 2018.
- *Supported Living* – The current phase of the Supported Living Project (review of service users and review/revision of provision) is nearing completion. The next phase will be to recommission services based on the new model and work done to date.

In January 2018 the Council launched its Internal Commissioning Academy. Based on a successful national programme originally introduced by the Cabinet Office, the Sefton Commissioning Academy is a key element of organisational development as part of the PSR10 project within the Council's Framework for Change. Over the next six months the Academy provides the opportunity for approximately 40 officers from across the Council to develop a better understanding and skills relating to commissioning. This will in turn lead to improved commissioning across the Council, better services and better value for money.

The Performance and Intelligence Service continues to:

- Support a number of PSR projects and the day-to-day performance management of key services across the Council by analysing and providing data, producing detailed reports which generate valuable insight and supports better business decision making. Examples, includes performance reports to the LSCB, CSIB and Merseyside Safeguarding Board; analysis of DTOC, LCR Adult Social Care market shaping; Statutory return for the Troubled Families Programme and analysis of 2017 Educational, 2017 Winter Mortality, Suicides and National Child Measurements.
- Support the proposed Merton House to Magdalen House accommodation move, providing information, advice and guidance on the process for reviewing, categorising and processing existing paper records across the Council, with a view to achieving a future paperless environment. This has included establishing purchasing framework agreements for the secure disposal of confidential waste, document storage and document image processing.
- Plan for the digitisation and transfer of legacy Children's and Adult Social Care paper records into secure storage facilities, mitigating the risk to information preservation and of information loss.
- Manage the provision of the Council's Welfare Rights and ELAS services, monitoring the impact of the local Universal Credit full service roll-out and ensuring that those resident affected by welfare reform, low or irregular income and potential poverty receive appropriate support.
- Manage the implementation of the 'Manage My Requests' (iCaseWork) system for capturing, managing and reporting all customer complaints, representations and feedback across the Council, with a 'go-live' date now scheduled for the February 2018.
- Manage the reconfiguration of the Assessment, Plan and Review forms and workflow in the 'LCS' (Children's Social Care) system, to improve the system in accordance with the recommendation of the Ofsted improvement plan.
- Plan for the major upgrade and reconfiguration of the Council's 'LAS' (Adult Social Care), 'LCS' (Children's Social Care) and 'EHM' (Early Help & Intervention) systems to introduce new functionality, reporting and improve system performance.
- Support the implementation of the automated payment routines for Adult Social Care provisions, transitioning to the 'ContrOCC' system for all scheduled and non-scheduled systems.
- Managed the upgraded to Capita ONE education system.
- Support the implementation of the Council Agile Working Strategy by leading on the testing of proposed mobile devices for social workers.
- Continue to support the Council to respond to comments, compliments complaints, FOI, Subject Access and others representations.
- Continue to provide comprehensive support across the Council relating to information management and data protection, in particular assessment of proposed information sharing arrangement and the investigation of potential data breaches.
- Plan for the implementation of the General data Protection Regulations (GDPR).

The Procurement Team:

Continues to assist and advise on procurement activity across the whole Council and has 95 procurement exercises at differing stages on the current work plan. Many of these are complex procurement exercises that exceed the OJEU procurement thresholds, examples of which include:

- Domiciliary Care Collaborative contract
- Collaborative Electoral Print requirement
- Supported living contract for 5 clients with learning difficulties and autism
- Housing Agency contract
- Holy Family Catholic High School - Building Cleaning
- Regional Adoption Agency
- Electronic Case Management System – Domiciliary Care
- High Ropes Course at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre
- ICT provision (replace Arvato contract)
- Extra Care Collaborative contract
- IAG Carers information and guidance contract
- Park and Ride contract
- Sexual Violence Support Services (Collaborative)

The Review of Procurement Processes, Rules and Guidance, and associated Action Plan, has now been completed. Updated Contract Procedure Rules were agreed by Audit and Governance in June and approved by Council in July 2017 and roll-out of the CPR e-learning programme to all relevant staff is progressing well. We are now in phase 3 of the training roll out, 208 officers have been invited to complete the training and 183 have so far successfully completed the online course. Once the remaining officers have successfully completed the training it will be rolled out to other officers nominated by their Heads of Service.

The Central Procurement team continue to be involved in working closely with the other Liverpool City Region Procurement teams. Current collaborative procurement processes under way include Domiciliary Care and Personal Protective Equipment & Corporate Clothing. Amongst other things, over the coming months the Central Procurement Team will be collaborating with the other LCR Authorities on the replacement contracts for Office Stationery, Office Furniture, and Cleaning Materials.

CORPORATE RESOURCES

Finance

Budget 2018/19 – 2019/20

Following a significant amount of work by the Finance team and other officers across the Council, the proposed Budget for 2018/19 has been prepared. The Council meeting on 1 March will approve a budget, which will then require Arvato to send out the associated bills for Council Tax and NNDR. The proposed Capital Programme and Fees & Charges for next year will also be considered.

Budget Monitoring - 2017/18 Financial Year

The most recent forecast revenue budget position is at the end of January 2018. The estimated year-end deficit for 2017/18 is £2.25m (a decrease on the previous month's figure of £0.128m).

The **service** budgets, including **Public Sector Reform** schemes, are showing an overall under-achievement of £1.5m. The savings agreed elsewhere within the budget are showing an under-achievement of the saving target of £0.75m.

The Council's **capital budget** in 2017/18 is £28.7m. As at the end of January, expenditure of £12.1m has been incurred and a full year outturn of £22.7m is currently forecast.

Closure of Accounts 2017/18

Work is now underway to close the Accounts for 2017/18. This is the final year of the Government's plan to bring forward the date for completion to the end of May i.e. one month earlier than for 2016/17 (i.e. three months earlier than three years ago). The external auditor (Ernst & Young) is now required to review approve the Statement of Accounts by the end of June. This has meant a complete review of processes for both organisations in order to meet this deadline.

ICT

Strategy

The Council is finalising a new ICT Strategy, and is also defining new policies & standards for the ICT service; this activity will be completed in March 2018.

Transformation

The Council, working with external contractor Agilisys and incumbent ICT provider Arvato, has now commenced its ICT Transformation Programme; there has been some slippage on this programme but is due to complete in August 2018, which will enhance and enable agile working through the deployment of new end user devices, new communications software, new business software and the migration of systems and data to cloud hosting.

Future Provision

The Council has commenced a procurement exercise for a new outsourced ICT provider to operate the Council's ICT service from 1 October 2018; the shortlisted bidders have been identified and the procurement process is now at the Invitation to Participate in Dialogue Stage. The process is due to complete in May 2018, at which point the successful bidder will be appointed.

Infrastructure

ICT continues to support a number of the Framework for Change / Public Sector Reform projects, most notably Asset Maximisation (via agile working) and the Early Intervention & Prevention community base programme.

Agile Working

Indicative costing has been completed for the Council's agile working requirements, with the initial focus being on the Merton to Magdalen relocation, and the Locality Teams programme. New end user devices have been identified to further enable agile working; rollout of these devices will be included in the abovementioned ICT Transformation programme and commence in April 2018.

Customer Service

Self Service Promotion

Customers visiting the One Shop Shops are advised about the digital access options available and encouraged to use the self-serve computers which are located in the One Stop Shops if they don't have internet access at home. The plasma screens continue to promote a number of online initiatives.

Taxi Licensing

Taxi Licensing enquiries continue to increase month by month with potential drivers from across the country choosing Sefton as their preferred location to complete their license application.

With the trade requesting additional Knowledge tests to cope with the increased demand, 3 additional staff are to be recruited to deal exclusively with Taxi Licensing enquiries.

Volumes will continue to be monitored to ensure vulnerable customers do not experience longer waiting periods to see a customer advisor.

Revenues Service

Council Tax collection

The rollout of Universal Credit Full Service in October 2017 has a detrimental impact on collection performance and on current trend a shortfall of approx. 0.2-0.3% is predicted against the annual in year target. The situation is being monitored and customers being advised to pay 16% of the council tax liability payments whilst waiting for universal credit payments.

Benefit Service

Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP)

The DWP have confirmed the DHP budget for 2017/18 is £720,214.00 an increase of 6% on previous year. As at 11th March 2018, DHP of £732,112.13 has been paid/committed resulting in an over spend of £11,898.13.

The DWP have stated that the DHP budget for 2018/19 will be £760,510.00 an increase of 5.5%.

The DHP policy is currently being reviewed against the DWP best practice guidance recently published.

Internal Audit

The Internal Audit Plan 2017-18 is being finalised, with work having been completed in the period in the following areas:

Audit Title	Audit Opinion	Recommendations		
		High	Medium	Low
Council Tax	Minor	0	1	1
Forefield Junior School	Fair	0	3	3
Ursuline School	Good	0	1	4
Rowan Park School	Good	0	1	4
Thomas Gray Primary	Fair	0	3	1
Libraries	Minor	0	1	4
Northway Community School	Very Good	0	1	2
Public Health Outcomes Framework	Minor	0	3	1
Capital Programme	Negligible	0	0	0
Annual Leave and Clock Cards	Investigation	1	2	5
Sefton CVS	Investigation	0	4	1
Merefield School	Fair	0	3	2
St Lukes CE Primary School	Good	0	1	3
The Atkinson	Moderate	1	3	0
Aintree Davenhill Primary School (Follow up)	All recommendations implemented			
Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (Follow Up)	All recommendations implemented			
Maricourt Catholic High School (Follow up)	All recommendations implemented			

Larkfield Primary School (Follow up)	All recommendations implemented
M58 Junction 1 Q3	Assurance Provided
Liverpool City Region - STEP Grant Q3	Assurance Provided
Disabled Facilities Grant	Assurance Provided
Troubled Families Grant Period 2	Assurance Provided
Troubled Families Grant Period 3	Assurance Provided

Responsible officers have given assurance that the recommendations made in the reports will be implemented within reasonable timescales. Follow up audit work will be undertaken so as to substantiate this.

The Internal Audit service has been the subject of an external inspection, to verify compliance with the Public Sector Internal Audit Standards. Such an inspection is a requirement, once every five years, of the Standards. The final report is awaited, but initial feedback suggests that the outcome will be favourable.

The Internal Audit Plan for 2018-19 was approved by Audit and Governance Committee on 21 March 2018. Particular attention has been paid to ensuring that the Internal Audit Plan is reflective of the changing risk landscape of the Council, and that it provides tangible added value to the Council in maintaining an effective system of internal control and management of risk. The plan has a particular emphasis on the role Internal Audit can play at a strategic level. This has been achieved through consultation with relevant stakeholders, and through incorporation of the principles of industry best practice.

Health and Safety

The team has undertaken statutory compliance visits to a range of Council buildings, so as to provide assurance that there is evidence to support compliance with the relevant health and safety legislation, concerning such matters as gas safety, asbestos, and legionella.

Work is continuing, jointly with Property and Building Services, to review compliance with the legislative Health and Safety requirements for Council buildings. This will assist in supporting Heads of Service in their management and maintenance of the Council's estate.

Insurance

This claims data relates to the period 1st November 2017 to 31st January 2018:

Category	Number of claims received	Total reserve on claims received (£)	Number of insurance claims paid out	Amount paid out in insurance claims (£) (not necessarily related to claims received in this period)
Public Liability	37	118,359	31	111,624
Employer's Liability	2	27,775	2	568
Motor Vehicle	41	23,102	10	14,992

Work has begun on the procurement exercise for the provision of insurance for the period September 2018 – 2021 (with two optional one year extension periods). Delegated authority for the contract award was given to the Cabinet member at the July 2017 Cabinet.

A round of meetings with brokers, insurers, claims handlers and legal advisers has taken place, and an increased focus on management of the respective contractors has been implemented. This will help to inform the planning for the tender exercise, helping to inform our expectations of our providers and to help to shape the performance management arrangements to be employed under the new contract. It is worthy of note that the performance of the incumbents is generally very satisfactory.

Risk and Resilience

The review of Emergency Planning continues, encompassing a number of key strands, including the review of Command and Control structures, training, and recruitment of volunteers. In the period since the last report to this Committee, the project has continued to make positive progress. Quarterly meetings have been arranged with Emergency Duty Co-ordinators, so as to give an opportunity to discuss recent incidents, learn lessons arising from these, and to explore training that can be provided to meet needs. The first of these meetings was held in March, and was well-attended and successful. The next meeting will take place in June.

PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT

Operational Issues

Advice and support continues to be provided to various service areas. Consultation is taking place with staff and the trade unions in respect of a number of staffing issues and weekly meetings are timetabled as necessary.

Various reviews and restructures across the organisation are continuing relative to budget savings/Public Sector Reform projects. These are the subject of trade union consultation. Briefings have also taken place on school budget issues, the Arvato insource and other staffing related budget issues.

The Department continues to have a full programme of work in respect of disciplinary, grievance and dignity at work issues. Support to service areas in respect of staffing reviews/restructures is being provided, together with advice and support in the management of sickness absence cases that are cause for concern and complex staffing matters.

A number of Senior Management posts are currently being recruited to and policy work continues on such matters as workforce reporting.

Pay & Grading Team

Job evaluation continues relative to all Council and School posts for new or revised roles. Job evaluations are also conducted relative to any operational and service reviews to maximise efficiencies as part of restructuring exercises across the Council as a consequence of budgetary pressures. Regrading applications and regrading appeals are processed in line with the Council protocol. The team also undertakes any review of HAY graded positions.

Management of the Matrix contract relative to the recruitment of all Agency workers continues. The former contract expired on 31st January 2018 and, following a formal tendering process, Matrix have been selected to continue to provide the service across all Merseyside Authorities under a new framework agreement with a revised charging mechanism. The contract is currently with Legal for approval pending a proposed contract start date of 10th February 2018 which will run for 4 years. The previous charging policy will apply in the interim period.

Team members are involved in service reviews and work to support transformational proposals associated with the budget proposals and potential changes to service delivery. Of the three team members one is involved with the EIP2 project and one on the EIP3 project.

A potential challenge has been submitted relative to the Terms and conditions applied in the Hospitality sector of the CLAC and an analysis of the effects of this equal pay challenge are currently being explored and have been highlighted to the appropriate Heads of Service and the Chief Executive.

Project work continues such as the management of sickness absence, including production of reports, analysis and management data and implementing training courses.

Establishment Control, Pensions, Payroll & HR Transactional Services

Regular Client meetings are continuing with the objective of improving processes and data quality. The Council and Arvato are currently mapping all the recruitment processes to ensure consistency. These processes will be built into the upgraded ResourceLink, so all users can see where each individual record is up to, which should alleviate queries and phone calls.

A working Group has been set up with Arvato to introduce workflow to help recruitment, transactional HR, payroll and pension processes. The first process being reviewed is staff terminations and the voluntary resignation workflow process is now built in ResourceLink and associated guidance available for managers. A pilot of the new process is being undertaken by managers in Hawthorne Road Depot. It is hoped this process will be rolled out for the rest of the Council at the end of April 2018 and for schools later in the year.

The Working Group is now looking at the best way to handle other reasons for leaving e.g. dismissal, redundancy etc. and how these will be managed.

There are 2 other processes which are being looked at, to be put into workflow and they are changes to hours and extensions to temporary arrangements.

The Pensions Officer is continuing to work closely with the Transformation team and Personnel Officers to provide redundancy/pension information when required.

The Establishment Control Panel is now embedded and occurs every 2 weeks, to consider requests to release vacancies and approve any changes to the Establishment held in ResourceLink. All changes to the Establishment are being mapped by the Council and Arvato to ensure correct procedures are followed.

The Government have proposed and agreed changes to exit payments for public sector staff and further clarification is required as to how this will be implemented. Further guidance is still not available.

The Council had to apply Auto-enrolment legislation on 1st April 2013 and as part of this process applied transition arrangements to a certain group of staff. Transition ended 30th September 2017. The affected staff have been written to and they will not be enrolled into their relevant pension scheme until 1st April 2019, but can opt in at any time.

There are various TUPE transfers in process as follows:

- St Andrews transferring to a Multi Academy Trust, date still to be agreed, but possibly 1st May 2018.
- Holy Trinity transferring to a Multi Academy Trust, 1st February 2018 - complete

Occupational Health

The number of referrals (225) to the HU from Sefton employees between 01/01/18 and 31/03/18 is exactly the same when compared with the same period last year.

The main reasons for referrals within this period are stress and mental health (45.78%) and musculoskeletal problems (22.67%). The majority of referrals are from schools (47.11%), Locality Services - Provision (16.89%) and Adult Social Care (10.22%).

Requests for counselling and cognitive behavioural therapy (CBT) continue to reflect the amount of support needed for employees. The average waiting time for such services is between 4 to 6 weeks for counselling and 6 to 8 weeks for CBT.

Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)

Training/eLearning

The Corporate Learning Centre continues to design, develop and deliver accredited training courses across the workforce. A total of 22 courses have now been submitted for Badge of Excellence programme approval; this includes four new courses (Baby Programme, Language Champion, playing to Learn and Early Literacy) for Sefton's Early Years' Service.

Apprenticeships

We continue to promote and access the Apprenticeship levy, have established a pool of lead training providers and we continue to raise awareness of the apprenticeship levy with schools. The Corporate Apprenticeship Team continues to attend departmental managers meetings to raise awareness of apprenticeships for existing staff.

As of 31st March 2018 the Corporate Apprenticeship Team has recruited a total of 100 apprentices against a target of 136. This is a fantastic achievement given that we didn't commence recruitment until May 2017 as well as experiencing some resource issues.

A celebrating success event for Apprentices has been provisionally scheduled to take place on Tuesday 15th May.

New Learner Management System

Sefton Corporate Learning Centre has invested in a fresh and innovative training booking system and eLearning platform that is fit for purpose and is able to meet our future training requirements. The new training system contains lots of modern features that include the following:

- Engaging and user friendly
- Deploys learning on mobile friendly platforms to make learning accessible to staff who work remotely or staff who do not have access to a workstation
- To effectively quality assure the training by capturing electronic delegate feedback
- The ability for staff and managers to access their own training history – this includes a personalised dashboard which tells you about the status of a course, upcoming courses and access to the course library which includes recommended courses

- The ability to record your own Continuous Professional Development (CPD) hours for external training, events and conferences and for staff who are required to maintain a CPD record for on-going professional qualifications
- An eLearning module to manage the Council's library of internally developed and commissioned eLearning courses.
- And many more exciting features!

We have been working with a provider called 'Me Learning' who are pioneers in online and classroom based learning and passionate about the work that they do. This involved migrating the data from our former booking system and eLearning platform across to the new system.

New log-in details for Me Learning will be circulated to staff on Tuesday 3rd April 2018.

Procurement

We have completed two Cabinet Member papers which include the following:

1. To request an extension of the existing Apprenticeship Training Provider Contracts procured in May 2017 (per the original contract terms and conditions).
2. To complete a separate procurement exercise to identify a number of additional occupational LOTS (Media and Communication, Buildings and Construction, Large Good Vehicle, Hybrid Repair and Maintenance) that are required to meet the business needs of the Council.

Both papers were agreed by the Cabinet Member and a procurement exercise was initiated to identify training providers to deliver the above occupational LOTS. We are expecting to award the contract the w/c Tuesday 3rd April 2018.

Korn Ferry Hay

The Corporate Learning Centre continues to work with Korn Ferry Hay, Strategic Support and SLB to develop the One Council champion's network to support the development and implementation of OD across the organisation. We have now appointed an Organisational Development Coordinator to take forward this work stream. Recent updates include the development of a One Council role description and work is being done to increase the visibility of the One Council Champions across the organisation.

Building and Property Services

Disposals

The Council undertakes a pro-active programme of property disposals to both rationalise the portfolio to remove unproductive assets and realise capital receipts. This process assists in the reduction of revenue costs and raises capital which contributes to the funding of the Council's capital Programme.

Specific Actions to note

- The transfer of the freehold for Phase 1 at the former Beach Road School with Adactus has completed and Phase 2 is with Legal
- Instructions have been sent to Legal to complete the sale of Vine House following Cabinet Member approval
- Valuation and review of Council Assets for end of year Financial Accounting underway.
- Supervision and implementation of initial Accommodation moves as part of Agile Working Strategy.
- Assistance with the acquisition of James Dixon Court and Heads of Terms for the operational Lease with New Directions
- Lettings of Unit 12 Sefton Lane Industrial Estate to the Highways Contractor and the Alt Centre to Hightown Parish Council
- Tenders for Carnegie Library have been received and evaluated
- Letting of Southport Pier – this is currently under review.

Cyclical Compliance and Maintenance Work

- Statutory testing and inspection works continue to be carried out in accordance with the defined cyclical timescales to those buildings under current corporate services
- Day to day responsive maintenance works continue to be undertaken as necessary to those buildings under corporate services
- Concerted efforts are being made to increase the level of planned preventative works in order to try and prolong the lifespan of building elements and reduce the overall building maintenance cost burden
- Consideration is also being given, with a paper recently being put forward to highlight the benefits of a centralised approach to statutory compliance and maintenance
- Major planned work (Corporate Buildings) are however in abeyance pending funding decisions. This has been the case for a number of years and the situation will only continue to deteriorate if sufficient resources are not made available
- Additional proposals for major planned maintenance intervention for 2018/19 have been identified and prioritised although no funding has been allocated at this present time

Major and Minor Adaptations

The Council supports Sefton resident through provision of both major and minor adaptations in their homes. Minor adaptations for grab rails, hand rails and other minor alterations are provided through both an in house service (33%), and external contractors (66%). Major adaptations (funded via Disabled Facilities Grant) are provided to residents through in house services, along with support from external contractors to complete the physical works or install necessary equipment. On an annual basis this results in funding of approximately £1.8m spent on essential improvements and alterations to over 250 homes. Both minor and major adaptation support resident and enable them to remain independently in their homes for as long as it is safe and practical to do so.

Energy and Environmental Management

- EEMS attended a Liverpool City Region LEP workshop on developing a regional Energy Strategy and will be exploring the impact of the UK: 100 affiliation and ensuring that it meets the Sefton 2030 vision.
- Continued work via O&S (Regeneration and Skills) – there was a joint meeting in November with United Utilities and Ofwat to address remaining overall imbalance of charging with other UK areas and seeking partnership funding support to reduce water charges further over next 5 years. Follow up action to meet with Defra in early 2018 to discuss policy relating to charging and options of further support e.g. investment funds to Local Authorities for water, similar to SALIX.
- Salix Funding (Invest to Save) EEMS fully committed the available fund for 2017/18 to replace Magdalen House office lighting (Floors Gnd, 1 & 2) with highly efficient LED as part of agile working, the project will bring energy, carbon and maintenance savings.
- Year to date over £61K has been recovered by EEMS for invalid electricity billing charges to the Council and schools.
- LCR Procurement review (all utilities) – EEMS will bring a further report on options and recommendations for Sefton and/or LCR to be implemented from 2019/20.
- Electricity Price renewal has been completed and all sites advised of tariffs, for 01 April 2018 and final year under current contract.
- The council has been successful in securing £926K in funding from the Warm homes Fund (a project of National Grid Affordable Warmth Solutions) to provide funding and aid residents with first time Central heating and connection to the gas grid. Sefton is leading on behalf of Merseyside and Lancashire for a 3 year project.
- The EEMS team is assisting with the transition and development of the Viridis project and associated European bid (worth an estimated £4m).

- EEMS have been involved in a review of revenue options at the Eco Centre and will be following up with partners, including renewal of the wind turbine (although the market is under significant stress as many contractors appear to be struggling financially).
- The EEMS education team have delivered phase I of the Air Quality promotion where they are engaging 10 schools in the Air Quality Management Areas to understand the issues and what they can do to mitigate the issues. The scheme will lead to a website and the team are considering expanding the programme to more schools.
- Staff at the Eco Centre will be conducting an information day with local partners to coincide with World Environment day, on the 9th June (as the nearest weekend day).
- Approval for Salix (Invest to Save) for assisting Schools to access up to £500k of interest free loan funding for energy efficiency projects.

Regeneration

The Building and Property Services are supporting the Head of Regeneration and Housing in the identification and development of regeneration initiatives providing input on Valuation, feasibility and cost across a number of potential projects.

REGULATION AND COMPLIANCE

Corporate Legal Services

The Property team are assisting with the following projects:

- The Magdalen House refurbishment – by agreeing the necessary consents with the Landlord of the building for the proposed works
- Supporting Property and Estates to ensure we keep as many Council premises occupied by tenants as possible, thus working to ensure we receive necessary rents.
- Advising on facilitating the council's purchase of James Dixon Court, Care Home in relation to which contracts were exchanged 06/02/18 and completed the purchase later that month.
- Advising on and facilitating the academy conversion of St Andrew's Deyes Lanes and Litherland Moss primary.

We have conducted a large number of education and littering prosecutions.

We have successfully arranged for the sale of a property situate 51 Scarisbrick New Road. A local developer has bought the property which has been a blight on the neighbourhood for over 20 years. He will be redeveloping the land, and improving the local area. The Council will receive from this disposal £19,122.62 relating to charging orders on the property relating to works in default and associated costs of the transaction.

We have successfully resisted 2 appeals by taxi drivers against revocation of licences.

We have advised on 2 licensing sub committees – 1 for the grant of a new licence (objections received) and the 2nd was a review of a licence requested by our environmental (pollution) team.

Following the fire at Acorn Way Industrial estate, Legal Services worked with colleagues Business rates and in Arvato to pursue the owners of the land for the unpaid Business rates which amounted to over £70,000. We have successfully recovered £62,000 and as a result of the threat of further action the land has now been transferred to a new land owner. The Council is now working closely with the new owner to resolve the problem of waste stored on the site and the danger of further fires occurring.

We have been granted permission by the High Court to continue with our Judicial Review of Highways England's decision not to consult on the possibility of a tunnel as opposed to their decision to consult on a new road through Rimrose Valley. We await a hearing date for the final hearing.

We were threatened with Judicial Review proceedings in relation to the advice and assistance offered to a young care leaver but following a robust reply outlining that we consider we have fulfilled our statutory duties we have had no further contact from the young person's solicitors.

We were served with Judicial Review proceedings against the Coroner in relation to the manner in which an inquest was conducted. Following the submission of a robust defence the High Court have refused permission for the claim to proceed and awarded the Council its costs.

The largest team within Corporate Legal Services is the Children and Social Care Team which continues to have the care and conduct of a very high volume of cases before the Family Proceedings Court and the Court of Protection.

Democratic Services

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)** recently held a Special Meeting in order to hear from NHS England (Cheshire and Merseyside) and the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups on the future of the Hightown GP Surgery.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)** has established a Special Educational Needs and Disability Process of Assessment Working Group and Councillor Spencer is the Lead Member. Three meetings of the Working Group have been held so far and the Working Group has undertaken site visits to schools to see facilities and meet with parents. The Working Group hopes to meet with the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups, the Head Educational Psychologist; and representatives of the Sefton Parent Carer Forum in the near future.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)** has two outstanding Working Groups as detailed below:-

- Parks and Greenspaces – It is anticipated that the Working Group's Final Report will be considered by Committee and Cabinet at their meetings to be held on 3 and 26 July 2018 respectively.
- Housing Licensing Performance Framework – the Working Group has now completed its review and the Final Report and recommendations were approved by Committee on 13 March 2018. Cabinet will consider the Final Report at its meeting to be held on 24 May 2018.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)** had last year agreed to establish a Working Group to look at the topic of Digital Inclusion. The Working Group has met on two occasions and is in the process of collating information and identifying witnesses as part of its review. It is anticipated that the Working Group will complete its review by reporting to Cabinet in October 2018.

The **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board** has met twice this Municipal Year and has considered a publication of the Communities and Local Government Select Committee (CLG) entitled "Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees". The Government has now announced its response to the report and the Management Board at its meeting to be held on 26 June 2018 will consider a further update on this issue.

Admission Appeals

In addition to the provision of administrative support for meetings of the Council, Cabinet, and Committees, the Section has also organised and clerked school admission appeal hearings involving 15 applications for 9 Secondary schools and 29 applications for 23 Primary schools during the period from 1 January to 31 April 2018.

In addition arrangements were made for a further 9 appeals to be heard during this period, which were subsequently withdrawn.

A training event for panel members was also organised for 6 March 2018.

Civic and Mayoral Services

Mayor of Sefton's Christmas Toy Appeal

Once again the Mayor's Toy Appeal was a great success, having increased our pick up/drop off points to include both ASDA Stores in Southport & Bootle as well as the points at the Leisure Centres in Sefton along with Bootle & Southport Town Halls, the appeal was able to provide toys to children and families in Sefton that struggle during that time of the year.

Holocaust Memorial Service

On Sunday 28th January the annual Holocaust Memorial Service was held at Christ Church in Southport, the event was extremely well attended, The Mayor of Sefton, Chief Executive Margaret Carney, Peter Dowd MP and Bill Esterson MP were in attendance, along with Sefton Councillors and members of the Community, the service was poignant, moving and fitting commemoration to not only the lives lost during the Holocaust but also lives lost to other events of genocide.

Mayor of Sefton's Charity Dinner

On Saturday 17th March 2018 at 6.00pm, the Mayor of Sefton will be hosting his annual Charity Dinner, at the Floral Hall in Southport Theatre & Convention Centre, tickets are now available and priced at £35.00 which includes a three course meal with welcome drink and live entertainment, along with the Tombola, Raffle and Auction, for this year we will also be having a silent auction run by AAA Sports Memorabilia which will have some fantastic prizes available signed by various people in the sporting world that we hope will raise a lot of money for the Mayor's Charity Fund.

Coroners

2 week jury inquest taking place at Bootle Town Hall 12 – 23 February. Alan Wilson, Coroner for Blackpool, will be holding the inquest as Christopher Sumner has been recused for this case by the Chief Coroner.

Introduction of digital (CT scan) autopsies on track to begin in April 2018. I-Gene London Ltd will have their Preston facility open by end March. Where suitable, a digital autopsy will replace a traditional invasive post mortem. This will be less traumatic for families.

Registrars

2 new wedding/civil partnership venues were approved at Licensing Committee on 8th January – The Bold Hotel in Southport and Oaklea Barns in Lydiate. Oaklea Barns are looking to hold festival style weddings which will give couples an alternative to traditional style ceremonies.

Environmental Health & Trading Standards

Together with colleagues in Corporate Legal Services we prosecuted a company for running an unlicensed boarding kennels. A representative of Paw2Paw Ltd, based on Scarisbrick New Road, plead guilty at South Sefton Magistrates Court this week (Wednesday January 31) to three offences under the Animal Boarding Establishments Act relating to keeping an unlicensed dog boarding establishment.

They were fined £990 and ordered to pay a £33 victim surcharge and £1007 in costs, totalling £2030.

Sefton Council's Trading Standards team were alerted to issues at Paw2Paw after receiving three complaints from members of the public regarding alleged treatment of their dogs while boarding at Scarisbrick New Road.

In one complaint it was alleged that a French Bulldog had suffered trauma and bloodshot eyes after boarding with Paw2Paw, while the owner of another noticed a change in the behaviour of their pet after being taken for walks by the company.

Together with colleagues in Corporate Legal Services we successfully prosecuted Daniel Howarth t/a Crosby Property Maintenance pleaded guilty to 4 x offences under the Consumer Protection from Unfair Trading Regulations 2008 and 1 x offence under the Consumer Rights Act 2015.

Two of the offences related to the unauthorised use of the Gas Safe and NICEIC logos on his website www.crosbypropertymaintenance.co.uk.

Gas Safe (previously Corgi) maintain the official list of gas businesses who are registered to work safely and legally on boilers, cookers, fires and all other gas appliances. By law all gas engineers must be on the Gas Safe Register and only registered engineers can use the Gas Safe logo.

NICEIC (The National Inspection Council for Electrical Installation Contracting regulates the training and work of electricians and electrical contractors in the UK. The NICEIC is one of several providers given Government approval to offer Competent Person Schemes to oversee electrical work within the electrical industry.

Mr Howarth has never been registered with Gas Safe or NICEIC.

Two offences relate to work Howarth carried out at two complainants' homes. On completion of the works Howarth gave the homeowners building certificates, claiming to be from the Local Authority confirming that building work had been assessed by qualified building control officers and deemed it to be safe and within building regulations. These certificates were false and the home owners to carry out further remedial works in order to comply with Building Regulations at further expense to themselves.

The Consumer Rights Act offence relates to false information he provided to Trading Standards Officers during their investigation, when he fabricated an email he claimed to have sent to his website provider asking them to remove the Gas Safe and NICEIC logos. No such email existed.

The court gave Howarth maximum credit for guilty pleas. He was fined a total of £1505 and ordered to pay costs of £1031.50.

Environmental Enforcement Following a successful tendering process NSL Limited have been awarded a contract for Parking and Environmental Enforcement which will commence 1st April 2018. This builds on existing enforcement and will ensure that Officers will be undertaking joint parking & environmental enforcement patrols including; littering, dog fouling and offences under the Public Space Protection Order – Dog Control across the Borough.