

<b>CABINET MEMBER REPORT</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) - 3 March 2020</b>		
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Period of Report</b>
Paulette Lappin	Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services	January 2020

**CORPORATE SUPPORT SERVICES**

**Strategic Support Unit**

Strategic Support’s main priority continues to be the support and project management of the Public-Sector Reform projects. All the open projects and sub-projects are being supported. An evaluation workshop has been planned for the end of January 20 to review progress and capture lessons learned which can be applied to future projects.

The team are continuing to support the refresh of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, Children and Young People’s Plan, SEND Joint Commissioning Framework and other key initiatives.

At the end of October, Strategic Support co-ordinated and supported the first Mental Health Centre of Excellence workshop held at Crosby Lakeside. Mental health professionals were able to share their learning and consider opportunities to collaborate to improve the health and wellbeing of our residents.

The team continues to support the monthly drop in sessions for the Innovation, Challenge and Improvement (ICI) Factory, which provides staff with an opportunity to suggest ideas about how we could do things better for our customers and residents. There has been an increase in applications from staff to present at the sessions and actions following presentations are being tracked to ensure they are progressed.

Strategic Support co-ordinated and project managed another successful afternoon at the Star Awards on 15th November, alongside One Council volunteers. This fantastic event has gone from strength to strength and the team will now begin planning for the next Award ceremony which takes a great deal of preparation and co-ordination.

Strategic Support attended a Sefton Parent Carers event on 21<sup>st</sup> November to provide support with the completion of a survey for parents/carers of children and young people with Special Educational Needs and /or Disabilities (SEND) to capture their views on Education, Health and Social Care services and the information and support that is currently received.

As part of improving accessible information, we have requested volunteers from Service Areas to become Accessible Information Advocates. 10 staff have shown an interest to date and meetings have taken place to support them in their volunteering role. This group will continue to meet and hope that there are more volunteers who will join in the group in the new year who will help to raise awareness of different communication needs and get involved in developing training to be shared with others and therefore contribute to improving outcomes for Sefton residents.

Strategic Support facilitate and support the Get Involved Group for self-advocates with Learning Disabilities. In the November meeting, they staged a mock election in Bootle Town Hall. This included recreating a polling station with a voting booth, ballot papers and a ballot box. The members at the meeting were told about the importance of voting, how to register to vote (including proxy and postal voting) and what happens in a polling station. The vote was carried out, counted and the winner (Mr Happy) was declared.

## **The Commissioning Support Team**

The team continues to lead and support several key commissioning projects/activities, PSR projects: - Personalisation, Acute Wrap around, also providing children's placements and Quality Assurance activity.

Priorities agreed with Interim Director of Adult Social Services and Interim Director of Children's Services include:

- Supporting fee increases for the full range of Adult Social Care provision for 2020-21, will commence early in the new year. This will include coordination of requests, understanding costs to inform increases and a range of consultation with providers, compiling a cabinet report to gain approval for the increases once consultation is complete.
- Supported Living and Community Support Provision, Cabinet has now approved the commencement of the procurement processes and re-commissioning of these services. The plan is for new contracts to be in place for September 2020.
- A pilot has been agreed to use assistive technology in a number of Supported Living Schemes to aid understanding of needs around sleep in provision and assess best use of AT in the future.
- Performance management of domiciliary care and re-enablement to support effective hospital discharges including delivery of the capital programme in order to offset demand in services, support to embed a single-handed care approach alongside social workers and occupational therapists. A new rapid response provision has been agreed with Sefton New Directions which will complement the Re-enablement provision and aid swift hospital discharge. Progress is being made with the single-handed care process which reduces the need for invasive support for people in receipt of care.
- Capital grant to care homes will commence in the new year, with a process being developed for applications and management of this.
- Procurement of statutory advocacy services and working with Healthwatch and Sefton Carers Centre to improve the specification for the services.
- Supporting provider engagement and exploring good practice.
- Contributing to the re-procuring leaving care framework being led by North West Placements.
- Exploring the benefits of joining a new North West purchasing system for education placements.
- In addition, the team will be providing support in developing a draft joint commissioning strategy for SEND provision, the Children's plan and commissioning vision.

The Quality Team have been involved in and coordinated several multi-agency monitoring and safeguarding responses, ensuring that services are being provided in safe and effective ways to vulnerable people. The quality of care homes in Sefton has continued to improve with no homes currently in receipt of a rating of inadequate, however a focus will be maintained across homes rated requires improvement. The team and its processes were recently subject to an audit by the Merseyside Safeguarding Executive Board and obtained a good rating.

The Interim Director of Adult Social Care and the Commissioning Support Team led a piece of work earlier in the year to introduce a new way of funding care for people who have complex needs. This project was submitted for national recognition and we have been recently notified that we had been successful in the Local Government Chronicle awards for the work to develop individual service user funds. Councils who have been shortlisted for an LGC award are among the most innovative and their innovation helps provide the best services for residents. The award nomination is for thinking of new ways to deliver the best services and individual service user funds are away to enable people to have choice and control over the services they receive. The winners will be announced in March 2020.

The team continues to work closely with the other Liverpool City Region teams to share and develop good practice.

### **The Procurement Team:**

The Procurement team continues to lead on procurement activity across the whole Council and has over 60 procurement exercises valued in excess of £30m at differing stages on the current work plan. Many of these are complex procurement exercises that exceed the OJEU procurement thresholds. The team continues to work closely with all service areas and has introduced quarterly reporting aimed at improving the forward planning of procurement activity across the Council.

The new Procurement Manager joined the organisation in December 2019. The role will strengthen the Procurement teams strategic involvement in shaping future sourcing strategies.

The Central Procurement team continue to be involved in working closely with the other Liverpool City Region Procurement teams looking for opportunities to collaborate on best practice, service transformation and consolidation of spend.

Key projects currently being undertaken through the team include:

- Radar coastal monitoring programme (collaborative procurement led by Sefton Council)
- Stop smoking service
- Domiciliary care for adults including older people (Areas 4 and 5) framework call off
- Supported and independent living (collaborative procurement led by Bolton Council)
- HR and payroll system
- Vehicle parts
- Liquid fuels (call off from YPO framework)
- Insurance
- Cycle path improvements
- Self-employed instrument / vocal tutors dynamic framework for schools

### **Performance & Business Intelligence Function.**

**The Service has:**

- Provided performance presentation and producing performance reports for the Youth Offending Board.
- Completed new operational and strategic performance dashboards for Early Help / Localities service.
- Introduced a new member of the team, who will focus on supporting the Troubled Families programme and supporting the identification of validated claims requirement for period.
- Developed new safeguarding and contacts dashboards for Adult Social Care.
- Begun work preparing for the statutory ASC client survey.
- Updated the 'delayed transfers of care' monitoring database.
- Redesigned the Children's performance monitoring dashboard.
- Completed the statutory Children's Social Care Workforce return.
- Produced data and infographics for the Public Health Service in support of the re-refresh of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy.
- Completed and distributed education performance information packs for all secondary and primary schools, including cluster groups.

- Produced 2019 performance summary reports covering all educational attainment, from Early Years to Post 16 (EYFS, Phonics, KS1, KS2, KS4, & KS5)
- Produced detailed mapping of child placement information relating to Lydiate Primary School.
- Produced detailed analysis of pupil information and performance for the 'Impact' Pupil Referral Unit.
- Continued to respond to 'ad hoc' requests for information, including Freedom of Information requests, service operational support.
- Continued to develop the operational performance dashboard to track SEND performance for requests for assessment, planning and issue of EHCPs.
- Analysed the data on the Council's local welfare scheme, identifying demographic areas of significant demand to inform intervention strategies.
- Analysed data about complaints to the Council for the previous 12-month period, identifying volumes by services, departments and teams.
- Continued to lead on the consultation and stakeholder engagement on behalf of the Council, including the Health & Wellbeing Strategy, SEND services baseline survey and air quality survey.

**The immediate priorities for the Service are:**

- Supporting the response to the DfE in respect of SEND continuous improvement by providing timely and accurate performance data.
- Developing the new Corporate Performance Framework.
- Implementation of a 'sandpit' enterprise data warehouse, which will be a test system and central repositories of integrated data from one or more disparate sources used for reporting and data analysis.
- Support the categorising and processing of existing legacy paper records in the SEND department.
- Analysis of the responses to the consultation Health & Wellbeing Strategy, SEND services baseline survey and air quality survey.

**The Service continues to:**

- Support PSR programme 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.
- Support the transition of the Council's ELAS services into the Benefits Service, monitoring the impact of the local Universal Credit full service roll-out and ensuring that those residents affected by welfare reform, low or irregular income and potential poverty receive appropriate support.
- Continue to support the Council to respond to comments, compliments complaints, FOI, Subject Access and other representations, with a focus on Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and SEND.
- Continue to provide comprehensive support across the Council relating to information management and data protection, assessment of proposed information sharing arrangement and the investigation of potential data breaches.
- Process existing legacy paper records from across various Council departments, securely destroying records that no-longer need to be retained and digitising those that do.
- Co-ordinate the provision of Independent visiting and advocacy services for children looked after.

## The Communications Team

The Communications Team continues to support on number of key Council priorities, recent work has included:

- In relation to the General Election, the team provided advice for staff on purdah, and pushed messages out about postal votes, proxy votes, polling station information and encouraging residents to vote. On the night itself, Comms Team members joined scores of other Sefton Council staff and volunteers at the counts for Bootle, Central Sefton and Southport, which as a potential swing seat, had twice the media presence of the other two venues
- As part of Sefton's Year of Friendship, we're delighted to have been able to embark on a collaborative project with Hugh Baird's Digital Imaging and Photography undergraduates for "Friendship: A Photography Exhibition" which is now on display at The Atkinson until January 18, 2020.
- The Year of Friendship closing event is planned for 10th January 2020 at the Atkinson.
- During Year of friendship each month had a theme; for December the theme was "giving", neatly enabling the communications team to package the Mayor's Christmas Toy Appeal and Sefton Foodbanks creative reverse advent calendar.
- The team worked on Sefton 4 Good's seasonal push and ways Sefton residents and communities can make a difference as part of the suite of Winter Messages.
- Our social media channels have seen a wide range of winter and festive themed content, which always proves popular, including info to support rough sleepers, staying well, looking out for elderly neighbours, festive shopping sprees, drink driving and more.
- 2020 will see communications working closely with our colleagues in ICT on a number of key projects, in particular the development of a new corporate website, which in turn will be underpinned by an updated version of the content management system (CMS), Umbraco. Working with colleagues in strategic support we are creating a plan to develop the site that will include a consultation process with stakeholders.
- Our regular feature in the Liverpool Echo Business Post has proven popular; with features covering the regeneration of our town centres and coastal gateways.
- We continue to inform local people of the exciting refurbishment of Splashworld in Southport, and will push the message that the Dunes facilities remain open for business while Splash World is closed.
- The team have worked on a detailed Communications Plan in relation to the closure and refurbishment of the hospitality services at Crosby Lakeside and continue to support the Project Team with ongoing communications and updates.
- Following the launch of Borough of Culture with the Constellations event in Crosby (which proved immensely popular on our social media channels), we have now launched the "Sefton Stories" project, and have made application forms available for funding for community groups.
- Following the Cabinet approval of proposals for a Clean Air Zone we received significant media coverage. As well as a front page feature on the Bootle edition of the Champion, it was covered by the Liverpool Echo, Radio Merseyside and BBC North West Tonight, with the communications team coordinating interviews for Council Leader, Cllr Ian Maher on Radio Merseyside and Matt Ashton, our Director of Public Health on BBC North West Tonight.
- The team co-ordinated communications support for the Remembrance Sunday events which gained a lot of traction across our social media channels, as well as being featured in the Champion newspaper, Sefton's Remembrance plans have chimed with communities on social media.
- The communications team joined colleagues from Merseyside Police as part of Operation Target, a major policing operation, which aims to tackle serious and violent crime, putting the people responsible behind bars. We publicised the day of action in Sefton, encouraging local people to report serious and organised crime

- Key highlights of the last 6 months in Sefton, as well as a look ahead to the next six, can be found in the My Sefton newsletter, which has been published and can be viewed [here](#)
- Last but by no means least, we have welcomed Charlotte Callister to the team as our Communications Apprentice.

## **CORPORATE RESOURCES**

### **Corporate Finance**

#### **Budget Monitoring 2019/2020**

The most recent forecast **revenue budget** position (as at the end of November 2019) will be reported to Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2020. This continues to highlight the significant pressures being experienced in several service areas, particularly Children’s Social Care, Locality Services and Home to School Transport. The reported forecast overspend was £3.587m, an increase of £0.208m on the position in October. The forecast deficit can be partially met by not implementing the Business Rates reserve increase and utilising the Budget Pressure Fund. An exercise with Heads of Service has commenced to ensure the robustness of all estimates and identify what remedial measures will be implemented to meet the current residual forecast deficit of £0.589m. The next forecast (as at the end of December 2019) will be reported to Cabinet on 6<sup>th</sup> February 2020. This will include details of the remedial measures being implemented.

#### **Medium Term Financial Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23**

The Government announced the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21 on 20<sup>th</sup> December 2019. There were no material differences to the funding assumptions included in the report on the updated MTFP that was presented to Cabinet on 7<sup>th</sup> November 2019. The final Settlement is expected to be published towards the end of January 2020. The implications will be built into the Budget Report that will be presented to Cabinet and Council in February.

### **Internal Audit**

Work to deliver the Internal Audit Plan continues, with audits having been completed in the period in the following areas:

Audit Title	Audit Opinion	Recommendations		
		High	Medium	Low
<b>2019/2020</b>				
ICT Leavers	Moderate	0	4	2
Accounts Payable	Major	6	5	1
Accounts Receivable	Major	7	12	4
One Stop Shops – cash handling	Moderate	3	3	4
Melling Primary School	Moderate	1	5	1
<i>Court of Protection / Appointeeship</i>	Moderate	1	2	3
European Social Fund	Moderate	0	3	3
<i>Procurement</i>	Moderate	0	5	6
<i>St. George’s Primary School</i>	Moderate	0	7	1
<i>Valewood Primary School</i>	Moderate	0	3	4

Audit Title	Audit Opinion	Recommendations		
		High	Medium	Low
Cash Handling at One Stop Shops	Moderate	3	3	4
M58 2019/20 Q2 Grant Certification	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
STEP 2019/20 Q2 Grant Certification	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
Pot Action Fund (18/19)	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
Additional Pothole Action Fund (17/18)	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
Flood Resilience Fund (17/18)	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
Integrated Transport and HW Maintenance Grant (18/19)	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
Troubled Families – Period 15 Grant Certification	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
A59 2019/20 Q2 Grant Certification	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
Urban Traffic Control 2019/20 Q2 Grant Certification	Assurance provided to facilitate certification			
<i>ASC Systems Development (previously LAS Project)</i>	<i>Ongoing Assurance Provided</i>			
<i>LCS Project</i>	<i>Ongoing Assurance Provided</i>			
<i>ContrOCC Working Group</i>	<i>Ongoing Assurance Provided</i>			
Operational Risk Register	Ongoing and additional support provided			

Reports in italics are draft reports.

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 to substantiate this.

## **Health and Safety**

During the period, the following key pieces of work/projects have been undertaken:

- The new post of Health and Safety Co-ordinator, included in the Quarter 1 2019/20 re-structure, has now been advertised externally following an internal advertisement with interviews due to take place in December/ January. A temporary Health and Safety Adviser has been in post since July 2019 to provide capacity whilst a recruitment exercise was undertaken.
- The Health and Safety Team completed a risk assessment training exercise during October and November 2019 for 250 managers who are required to complete risk assessments for their staff as part of their role. The training requires managers to refresh existing risk assessments and for the completed documents to be reviewed by the Health and Safety Team during December 2019/January 2020.

- The Council's claims management provider, Gallagher Bassett, provided a free accredited Institute of Occupational Safety and Health Managing Safely course for the Council's Health and Safety Co-ordinators who attended between 9 – 17 September 2019.
- In addition to the Managing Safely Course, Gallagher Bassett also delivered a Control of Contractors course between 11 June and 1 October 2019 for which 23 staff attended.
- A Risk Management for Highways Professionals course, which 18 staff attended, was also delivered on the 2 October 2019. This was held to assist the Highways Section following the introduction of the Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice in October 2018.
- Work is continuing in the development of a Council's health and safety training needs assessment which will eventually build into the Council-wide health and safety training plan.
- Health and Safety Key Performance Indicators have been devised which include information from the Departmental Health and Safety Committees and is fed back to the Corporate Health and Safety Committee. There has been steady progress during the year on improving governance, risk assessments and training.
- Work continues to further embed the Departmental Health and Safety Committees into the Council's health and safety framework with Heads of Service being encouraged to plan three meetings in advance to ensure these meetings are a priority for the forthcoming year.
- A revised standard core agenda for the various health and safety sub-committees has been designed and provided to the Heads of Service to ensure a consistent approach at each meeting.
- A member of the Health and Safety team has recently undertaken a Radiation Protection Officer course to act as the Council Co-ordinator between the Radiation Protection Supervisor at CLEAPSS, the Consortium of Local Education Authorities for the Provision of School Science, and the schools who buy into the scheme. This aims to ensure the safe storage and use of radioactive sources which are held and used in schools as part of practical science to meet the requirements of the National Curriculum.
- A course was also attended on the EVOLVE on-line system, which was facilitated by the Health and Safety team for the use of schools for planning, approving and managing educational visits and extra-curricular activities.

There has been contact with the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in an enforcement capacity following the reporting of an incident at one of the Council owned premises. An improvement notice was issued at the time of the incident and the HSE is currently investigating the incident and further enforcement action may be taken as a result of the review. The Health and Safety Team are working closely with the local management team to ensure the lessons learnt from the incident are implemented to enhance the local health and safety system.

There was a total of two RIDDOR accidents reported during the quarter.

All RIDDOR incidents are reviewed by the Health and Safety team to ensure that the accident is properly investigated and that the lessons learnt are shared with other service areas where appropriate.

## **Insurance**



During the period, the following key pieces of work/projects have been undertaken:

- Renewal of the Authority's insurance policies took place on 29<sup>th</sup> September 2019 and, as forecasted, produced no major changes with terms and conditions remaining unchanged. Expiring rates were also maintained except for the motor policy, where there was a 5% increase, which insurers felt they could not sustain going forward because of the recent change in the Ogden rate (used to calculate future losses in personal injury claims). In addition, there was a small uplift in the Marine Craft premium due to both inflation and an increase in exposure.
- A mini tender exercise via The Chest has also been completed for the following policies, which had not been tendered with the main insurance programme in September 2018, due to their specialist nature, so that in time they will fall in line with the main policies tender timescales and the procurement demonstrate value for money:
  - Premises Pollution for Sefton Council
  - Directors & Officers Insurance for the Mayors Charity
  - Directors & Officers Insurance for Sandway Homes
  - Directors & Officers Insurance for Sefton New Directions
  - Professional Indemnity and Public Liability for Sefton Arc
  - Cyber for Sefton Council

Except for Directors & Officers Insurance for Sandway Homes, expiring terms and ratings were maintained and a small reduction for Sefton Arc was also achieved. The increase in exposure as a result of moving forward with the building plans for Sandway Homes produced a substantial increase in proposed premium for Sandway Homes Directors & Officers policy.

- The Department for Education (DfE) recently put forward a Consultation Paper for all Local Authority Maintained Schools (LAMS) to secure their future insurance cover through an extension of the Risk Protection Arrangement (RPA) that most, if not all, Academies currently utilise. A large exercise, in consultation with colleagues in Finance, was undertaken before the DfE were provided with a response to meet the 4<sup>th</sup> November deadline. Full detail of the cover to be made available to LAMS is not yet known, however from the results of the exercise undertaken, economies of scale will be lost and if LAMS transfer to the RPA scheme, there will be a likely increase in net costs to the Council. Although a set date is not yet known, the result of the consultation is expected in the January 2020.
- Under the terms of the Council's contract with its liability insurers, an allocation of training days to assist with implementing effective risk management across the organisation is available. The Council makes regular use of these days and a recent event was held to assist colleagues in the Highways Team following the introduction of the new Well-Managed Highways Infrastructure Code of Practice in October 2018. The session was well attended and as well as giving insights into the subject matter also provided assurance on the effectiveness of the processes that Highways currently have in place.
- The Council continues to defend cases robustly to protect the public purse. The team also works extensively with Service Teams to improve the management of insurable risk in areas where there are high numbers of claims. The Council generally has high defensibility rates and such risk management activity will assist in maintaining and potentially improving the position further. Since the last update, there have been no claims that have been contested in court which is pleasing in itself and which provides a degree of assurance that the Council's risk management practices are effective.
- The Team continue to attend as many free of charge seminars/workshops as possible to raise awareness and increase knowledge of current trends, opportunities and developments within the sector.

## **Risk and Resilience**

During the period, the following key pieces of work/projects have been undertaken:

- A considerable amount of time was taken supporting each of the Council's service areas in identifying their key risks in the event of a no-deal EU exit. The Ministry for Housing Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) continue to use established Civil Contingencies structures to assess community and agency risk and co-ordinate preparedness for a 'no deal' scenario relating to the UK Government EU Exit strategy. The Risk and Resilience officers have delivered a key support role to the Council's internal steering group and multi-agency partnership working in the run up to the extended departure dates.
- Strategic and Tactical level officers have been designated as Single Point of Contacts for co-ordinating EU Exit related matters on behalf of the council and link in to the Local Resilience Forum (LRF) multi-agency working groups via the Risk and Resilience team. Officers and ourselves participate in weekly Tactical Co-ordinating and regular Strategic Co-ordinating Group meetings in addition to various targeted Task and Finish work groups creating plans to mitigate specific areas of risk e.g. potential road congestion around the Port access routes. Plans Resolvere and Ro-Ro have been developed collaboratively to address this risk
- Sefton Highways Management also submitted a successful joint capital bid for funding on behalf of Merseyside Resilience Forum partners to deliver additional infrastructure at the identified holding locations for HGVs temporarily unable to board EU bound ferries due to incomplete documentation requirements.
- We have undertaken joint site visits, consultation meetings, workshops and exercises to continually review and test the plans. Progress is reported regularly to the Border Delivery Group, MHCLG, Liverpool City Region Chief Executives and LRF partner agencies. Consideration has also been given to how the Council will provide operational response within the activation phase of a multi-agency Information Cell and staffing of the shift rota should this be required to activate.
- In the run up to 31 October 2019, the team have reviewed and completed reporting templates for submission to MHCLG as required under Operation Yellow hammer. This outlines the Command, Control and Co-ordination arrangements that central government have requested all responder agencies to adhere to whilst assessing existing and emerging risks for the UK daily and provide a common operating picture of activity to ministers.
- A workshop was arranged in early September for members of the Sefton Council internal steering group for EU Exit planning at the request of the group Chair. The event aimed to explore and identify the nature of potential risk from a no deal scenario and how this may affect council service delivery. It was delivered by an external facilitator from Zurich, one of our Insurers.  
The event was well attended with representation from most service areas of the council.
- Following the workshop, the Risk and Resilience officers took an action to organise and deliver Service Area based risk assessment sessions. Heads of Service nominated representatives from their departments and we held a session for each, to facilitate development of LA generic EU Exit risk registers using national planning assumptions outlined under the central government Operation Yellowhammer guidelines.

- The risk registers were sent to Heads of Service for sign off and presented to the internal steering group for shared understanding of the common themes and identification of gaps for further work. This will also integrate with the controls and action plans identified for the EU Exit risk referenced on the Corporate Risk Register.
- Implementation of actions identified in the Risk and Resilience Improvement plan continue to take the work areas of Business Continuity, Emergency Planning and Risk Management forward.
- Following completion of Business Impact Analyses (BIA) for all service areas of the Council, a template for a Business Continuity Recovery plan was developed. The data collected from the BIA's and from further meetings with relevant plan owners was used to populate the recovery plans from across all the service areas. This work has now been completed for all operational teams in the Council.
- During September, there were protracted incidents of surface water and watercourse flooding, particularly in the Maghull area, from extreme rainfall events which affected some residential properties. Risk and Resilience officers were in attendance both in and out of hours with on call Emergency Duty Officers, colleagues from Green Sefton and the Environment Agency to go to site, meet with residents and assist with deployment of sandbags and flood sacks.
- The Team have organised/ attended various training exercises and events that have been hosted by the Merseyside Resilience Forum (MRF) including;
  - i. **Merseyside Shoreline Pollution - Annexe to the Merseyside Emergency Response Manual (MERM).** The Merseyside coastal LA s (Sefton, Wirral and Liverpool) lead on this piece of work and have recently completed a new and updated multi-agency plan for validations and sign off by the MRF. Sefton Risk and Resilience team led the organisation of an event to walk partners and stakeholders through the plan and raise awareness of how this type of incident is managed by inviting presentations from key role players such as the Maritime and Coastguard Agency Counter Pollution team and the Environment Agency. Colleagues from across the council attended and feedback comments to shape the next steps which is to re-visit individual Local Authority plans.
  - ii. **Exercise Elsa 2** - NHS (England) led event with Local Authority, Social Care and mental health providers to explore the challenges of how we can best plan in response to psychological and trauma needs of people caught up in major emergency incidents. A model formulated at the time of the Manchester Arena attack was debated and adaptations suggested for how this may apply in a Merseyside / Cheshire setting.
  - iii. **Exercise Discous** – a week-long National Counter Terrorism event hosted by Merseyside Police. Sefton officers designated as on call Emergency Duty Co-ordinators, Communications and Resilience team officers took part in the live play and table top scenarios to test council consequence management capabilities.
- Further development of Sefton's planning for Operation London Bridge has taken place and will continue in review to ensure the expectations of local residents are fulfilled. This plan will be tested during an exercise in December.
- In September, a member of the team attended Alarm's Northern Seminar where topics presented included Managing the Risk of Cyber Breaches and Developing Organisational Resilience.

- The Risk and Audit Team have attended a selection of operational risk management meetings to improve insight of key risks and their subsequent mitigations.
- The Corporate Risk Register has been reviewed and is due to be presented to the Audit and Governance Committee for approval. Meetings with risk owners continue to be held to ensure ongoing improvement to risk management arrangements across the Council.
- An updated version of the risk scoring matrix was prepared for consideration and approved by the Audit and Governance Committee on the 18<sup>th</sup> December 2019. This will encourage a comprehensive review of the scoring of the existing risks to the council and ensure that any new risks identified are scored appropriately.

## **Energy & Environmental Management**

This team manages the Council's (including schools and New Directions) energy and water supplies, carbon management, environmental education and community domestic energy / affordable warmth programmes.

Specific actions to note:

- Sefton have now appointed a managing agent for water supply (utility). We anticipate the switch to self-supply with United Utilities will be 1<sup>st</sup> April 2020. We will review the scheme over the coming 12-18 months to assess the savings on water utility costs and potential for replication across the Liverpool City Region.
- Work is continuing on Sefton's Climate emergency declaration to support the process being led by Andrea watts and Stephan Van Arendsen. Presentations are currently being rolled out to all departments to establish their involvement in the process.
- Work is continuing on a business case for the Strand Shopping centre to install solar p.v. on the roof and retrofit LEDs in the communal areas. We are exploring opportunities with partners to invest in local renewable energy projects including a solar farm in Hightown and replacement wind turbine in Southport.
- Staff at the Eco centre have been very busy with a record number of schools visiting the centre. Evaluation of the service continues to show the education provided is rated as excellent.
- Our Affordable warmth team are extremely busy assisting residents vulnerable to the cold and/or experiencing fuel poverty. We continue to apply for funding to maintain the service.

## **ICT**

### **Cyber Security**

The Council has submitted its annual PSN (Public Services Network) statement and awaits confirmation of re-accreditation. Specialist Cyber Security training for ICT Client staff has now been completed and colleagues have successfully achieved Cyber Essentials Consultancy certification. Further awareness raising bitesize learning is due to launch in January.

### **Transformation**

Rollout for Councillors has completed bar the two councillors currently on long-term absence.

Deployment of end user devices to Council officers nears completion; a small number of legacy Windows 7 devices remain in use (mainly due to compatibility reasons) and plans are in place to migrate these.

Email migration to the cloud is nearly complete, with most users now located in the cloud; this activity is planned in parallel to the issuing of new mobile phones to reduce any operational impact.

Office 365 rapid upskill training has now been delivered to 48 colleagues across the organisation, these 48 ICT Champions are now enabled to support their teams in using the new Office 365 platform. Further sessions are planned in first quarter 2020. MeLearning content for Office 365 is now live on Sefton's Learning Platform and a marketing campaign has started to increase usage. Over the next few months the ICT Client team will be working alongside the ICT Champions to pilot the use of Microsoft Teams.

Work is underway to scope out the requirements of the authority in terms of voice communications, with a view to moving from the old ISDN (analogue) telephone system to a cloud-based platform which will support more agile working as well as a reduction in running costs for the authority.

Work continues in the scoping of phase 2 projects, alongside a detailed review of the core infrastructure and an assessment of the investment required to ensure the continued provision of a robust and secure network.

The ICT Client Team will work with colleagues in Strategic Support & Agilisys on the implementation of the new CRM/digital customer platform, commencing in January 2020.

### **ICT Contracts/procurement**

The ICT client team has worked closely with Strategic Support colleagues to procure the new CRM system and is supporting the Revenues and Benefits team on their procurement activity.

Award of the mobile phones tender is now completed, and the ICT Client has prioritised the ordering of new devices for lone workers currently without a phone, a further programme of handset upgrades will then follow.

### **Infrastructure**

Work continues the ICT project to enable all EIP bases, all phase one are now completed and work is well underway for the remaining EIP bases. A full review of the ICT Infrastructure is now completed, and work is underway to refresh some of the core infrastructure as well as extending the corporate WiFi network to support Agile Working.

In addition, Sefton has now joined with neighbouring authorities, St. Helens, Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Mersey Travel and Wirral to provide Gov Roam, which supports agile working across discrete networks enabling colocation and regional teams, this will be ready for release in early 2020.

### **Revenues and Benefits**

#### Council Tax and Business Rates collection

##### Council Tax

- Collection performance as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 was 81.98% compared to 82.12% at the same date in 2018/19. Direct Debit payments, received during the Council's Christmas shutdown period, are due to be allocated to accounts imminently.

## Business Rates

- Collection performance as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2019 was 83.91% compared to 81.66% at the same date in 2018/19. Collection performance is currently over-stated because of some complex revaluation amendments that are due to be made later in January.

Collection performance for both Council Tax and Business Rates continue to be closely monitored as we head towards the final months of 2019/20.

## Annual Billing 2020/21

Preparation is underway to plan for the annual billing of Council Tax, Business Rates and the issue of benefit notification letters in March 2020.

## Money Advice and Pensions Service (MAPS)

Service managers have met with MAPS with a view to participating in a pilot scheme for the creation of a single point of access to debt advice for debtors, creditors and debt advice agencies. The pilot aims to improve access to specialist debt advice agencies for those in need of help and to evaluate online options for debt advice.

## Benefits

Speed of processing for Housing Benefit new claims and changes continues to compare well to both national statistics published by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and to performance of neighbouring Liverpool City Region authorities.

## Discretionary Spending

The DWP has provided DHP funding of £659,531 for 2019/20 for the provision of extra support to local residents who need help to meet rent payments. The fund is closely monitored and based on levels committed so far and forecasting information, the full amount of DWP funding will be spent by the end of 2019/20. Work has begun to map at ward-level the areas of greatest demand for DHP;

The administration of the Council's Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme (ELAS) moved into the Benefits Service from October 2019. The transition has been seamless with the scheme operated in line with well-established procedures. The Benefits team will continue to work with colleagues from Performance & Business Intelligence around ELAS reporting.

## Procurement of Revenues and Benefits Software Solution

A team consisting of colleagues from Revenues and Benefits, Legal, Procurement and the ICT Client has worked together to produce a specification of requirements to tender for a Revenues and Benefits software solution. The team is due to evaluate bids in late-January/early February before making a recommendation of award for Head of Service approval.

## Customer Services

The Customer Services team continues to experience a reduction in traditional contact methods via the telephone and visits to the One Stop Shops as there is more take-up of online services.

During October and November there was an increase in Taxi-licensing enquiries due to drivers wanting to be licensed in advance of the Christmas period.

As expected, ahead of the General Election, there was an increase in calls from customers keen to ensure that they were registered to vote or to enquire about postal voting.

Sefton Citizens Advice continues to provide "Help to Claim" support from Bootle One Stop Shop to help Universal Credit (UC) claimants make their initial claim.

## **PERSONNEL DEPARTMENT**

### **Operational Issues**

Advice and support continues to be provided to all 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 continue to take place regarding school 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. Support is also provided in respect of insourcing and outsourcing of services and relevant staffing issues under TUPE.

### **Pay & Grading and Establishment Control 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. The Establishment Control team are then responsible for building any revised structures and changes to reporting hierarchies into the Councils operating systems.

The TUPE transfer of the former Arvato staff in the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services and Operations support sections took place on 1<sup>st</sup> October 2018. The review of this service is nearing completion and all the revised posts have been job evaluated prior to the commencement of the consultation with staff and Trade Unions in due course relative to the review proposals.

The Establishment Control Panel takes place every 2 weeks to consider requests in relation to the release of vacancies and the approval of any changes to the Establishment held in ResourceLink. All changes to the Establishment are mapped to ensure correct procedures are followed. Discussions have commenced with ICT Transformation Support with a view to reviewing the Establishment Control Forms and associated guidance to managers and implementing changes to make the process more user friendly and efficient.

Establishment Control review safeguarding checks held against posts e.g. Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS formally CRB), Health Care Professional Council (HCPC) etc. with Heads of Service and amend as required. This now includes safer recruitment checks. Guidance for managers on all aspects of safeguarding is currently being produced to ensure that the adequate checks are carried out on all roles. The team also manages and controls the temporary end dates relative to all fixed term contracts and provides establishment control and sickness absence information reports for the Council and schools.

Regrading applications and appeals are processed in line with the Council protocol.

The team undertakes the review of HAY graded positions for new posts and the evaluation of HAY posts stemming from any revised proposals to the HAY grading structure.

The National Joint Council for Local Government Services have amended the National Agreement on Pay and Conditions of Service relative to the calculation of Term-time only (TTO) salaries. Team members are involved in the potential adoption of the NJC advisory model and are liaising with neighbouring authorities, Managers and Headteachers relative to its potential implementation.

A consideration of new case law on holiday pay is also taking place.

Team members are involved in service reviews and work to support transformational proposals and potential changes to service delivery including the closure and refurbishment of the CLAC hospitality service. Work is also ongoing with Trade Unions and staff members of the Crosby Lakeside Hospitality Team relative to proposed settlement agreements regarding terms and conditions issues associated with Bank holiday working and Hospitality Terms and conditions.

Management of the Matrix contract relative to the recruitment of all Agency workers continues along with the management of sickness absence, including production of reports, analysis and management data.

### **Transactional HR Payroll & Pension (THRP) Services**

There was a restructure effective from 1<sup>st</sup> July 2019 and the office has been moved around so staff now sit in their new teams. Each team are now reviewing their processes and letters to help improve timeliness of processing.

A working Group has been set up to introduce workflow to help recruitment, transactional HR, payroll and pension processes. The voluntary resignation/retirement process is now live for all Council staff and 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 changes to hours process is currently being built and Hawthorne Road have agreed to pilot the new process.

The team are also looking at a solution for removing the need for paper claim forms and this is in the very early stages of development.

The Team are also working on a pilot with Merseyside Pension Fund to produce a monthly data file to replace the year end return for all members of LGPS.

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

ResourceLink is the Payroll/HR system used by the Council and the current contract expires 30<sup>th</sup> September 2021, so in conjunction with other HR colleagues the procurement process has commenced but is only in the very early stages.

### **Occupational Health**

For the period October to November 2019, a total of 129 referrals for SMBC employees were made to the Health Unit. This is significantly less than the number of referrals within the same period in 2018 which was 154.



The majority of referrals during this period were from Education Excellence (33.3%), Locality Services (24.1%) and Adult Social Care (11.6%). The main reasons were stress and mental health related (48.1%), musculoskeletal problems (25.6%) and acute medical illness (16.3%).

## **Workforce Learning and Development (CLC)**

### **Personalisation Training**

SCLC continues to work with Adult Social Care to support the roll out of Personalisation training. This includes a package of consultancy and learning and development sessions which consists of different key elements which draw on best practice principles of Personalisation. To date we have delivered the following courses/sessions:

- **Care Act Briefings** - 4 sessions delivered, total attendance 155 staff.
- **Care Act Principles Duties** - 13 sessions delivered, total attendance 250 staff
- **Assessment of needs, carer assessment and eligibility determination (2 days)** - Day 1, 13 sessions delivered, total attendance 234 staff / Day 2, 13 sessions delivered, total attendance 227.
- **Person Centred Care and Strengths-Based Approach (SBA)** – 12 sessions delivered, total attendance 224 staff.
- **Recording in Social Care** – 13 sessions delivered, total attendance 233 staff.
- **2x surgeries** will be delivered in the new year to provide staff with an opportunity to trouble shoot / gain advice and support regarding current cases/support plans currently being worked on.
- **Champions skills training** - Towards the end of the personalisation training programme (February 2020) we are planning to identify a cohort of Champions to work with us to embed and monitor continuous improvement. This includes supporting reflection, skills development and provides staff with the opportunity to get involved in the delivery of future training.

### **Mental Health First Aid and Wellbeing Booklets**

Mental Health First Aid Training will be offered to staff from March/April 2020. The course teaches staff how to identify, understand and help someone who may be experiencing a mental health issue, and teaches you to listen, reassure and respond, even in a crisis, potentially stopping a crisis from happening.

8 staff from Sefton Corporate Learning centre are currently enrolled on Mental Health First Aid 'Train the Trainer' and they are due to complete the course on Friday 13<sup>th</sup> December. Following completion and a period of planning/preparation we will be able to provide the course to Council staff free of charge and to Sefton schools for a reduced fee.

It is envisaged the course will enable staff from across the organisation to support their colleagues, service users and members of the community who may be suffering from a low level Mental Health issue to avoid further escalation and/or input from statutory services.

Two emotional wellbeing booklets are currently under development, one for staff and a separate booklet for managers. The staff booklet contains 8 simple tips to help our staff build their emotional resilience and the manager's booklet explains their responsibilities and ways to help keep staff in their teams resilient. It also provides some guidelines on what to suggest when someone is feeling stressed or anxious.

### **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 internal departments

and schools. Since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy on 1st May 2017 we have signed up 361 apprentices.

We have produced an Apprenticeship Strategy 2019 – 2022 which sets out as an employer the positive action we take in our approach to apprenticeships as part of our workforce development strategy. The Strategy was signed off by Cabinet on Thursday 3<sup>rd</sup> October and a meeting will shortly take place to plan a formal launch of the strategy.

Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) were recently awarded the Level 6 and 7 Leadership and Management Apprenticeship contract. 14 Managers submitted an expression of interest to undertake the Level 7 from January 2020 however only 10 places were available on the course. All 14 applications will be reviewed by an Executive Director/Chief Personnel Officer and feedback will be given to the successful/unsuccessful applicants.

## **Agile Working**

SCLC continues to support the ICT Transformation programme across the Council through the delivery of joint drop-in sessions with support from Agilisys. The aim of these sessions is to support staff who need extra help with One Drive, SharePoint and OneNote. Dates have now been agreed until December 2019.

A further session of ICT Digital Champions training took place on 16<sup>th</sup> October 2019. 12 staff from across different service areas attended the training, ensuring they can support their peers with any ICT related issues e.g. Office 365, SharePoint, OneDrive etc.

## **Organisational Development / One Council Network**

Recent activities include:

- Planning for this year's staff survey
- Held an Apprenticeship Celebration for all employees who achieved an apprenticeship qualification between 1<sup>st</sup> January 2018 – 31<sup>st</sup> December 2018
- Held meetings to discuss the application process for the L7 MBA Senior Leader Programme
- Created a robust induction for the two newly appointed National Management Trainee's (NMT)
- Supported the NMT to commence their first placement
- Met with Democratic Services to discuss an induction for newly appointed elected members
- Created a new PDR template with the be responsive and efficient thematic group
- Attended an event at the LGA to discuss the graduate programme
- Planned the apprenticeship programme for Localities Provision and the Leaving Care Team
- Promoted the volunteering policy
- Created apprenticeship marketing materials for managers
- Met to discuss a project plan for #askme
- Supported the ICI Factory sessions.

## **Democratic Services**

### **Overview and Scrutiny**

### **General Matters**

### **Council Motion – Climate Change Emergency**

The Council at its meeting held on 18 July 2019 approved a Council Motion about Climate Change Emergency. The Council resolution is multifaceted and includes the following:

“Request that Overview and Scrutiny Management Board consider the impact of climate change and the environment when reviewing Council policies and strategies and charge Task and Finish groups to also consider those impacts in any report and every topic”

It is envisaged that the cross-cutting nature of the climate change topic will involve all Overview and Scrutiny Committees, as well as the Management Board, becoming involved in the work of task and finish groups. It is anticipated that a report will be considered by all Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the January cycle.

### **Submission of Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports to Council**

A report on the Government’s Statutory Scrutiny Guidance was considered and approved by the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the October/November 2019 committee cycle. One section of the guidance related to maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of Overview and Scrutiny Committees and to comply with this, a recommendation was approved that “Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet and then Council for final approval and that the Constitution be amended accordingly”.

A report will be submitted to both the Audit and Governance Committee and Council at their meetings to be held on 18 December 2019 and 23 January 2020 respectively gain approval for this course of action.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)**

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 22 October 2019. The Committee again considered its Work Programme for the forthcoming year and also considered reports relating to the “Manage my Requests” (iCasework) System – Statistical Update; the Revenue and Capital Budget Update 2019/20; and Members Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update.

### **Working Group Update - Council’s Ethical Business Practices**

Councillors Bradshaw, Doyle, Killen, McKinley, John Sayers and Yvonne Sayers had agreed to be Members of the Working Group. Councillor McKinley has been appointed as the Lead Member.

The Working Group has now produced its Final Report and this will be considered by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet and Council during the January/February cycle of meetings.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)**

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 15 October 2019. The Committee received a presentation from the Chief Executive of Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust on the merger of Aintree Broadgreen and the Royal Liverpool Hospitals. A joint briefing paper was submitted to the Committee on

behalf of NHS Knowsley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), NHS Liverpool CCG and the two Sefton CCGs, presenting the case for change for a re-design of hyper-acute stroke services across the North Mersey area. The Committee received joint reports from the two Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) on the compilation of a draft Five Year Place Plan for the local NHS; providing an update of the work of the CCGs; and data on key performance areas for Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. The Committee also received a Progress Update on the Development of a New Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Sefton 2020-2025; update reports from the relevant Cabinet Members and on its Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

### **Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)**

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 5 November 2019. The Committee again considered its Work Programme for the forthcoming year and also considered reports relating to Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report; and Green Sefton.

### **Working Group Update - Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity**

Councillors Dowd, Michael O'Brien, Pullin, Roche Robinson and John Sayers have agreed to be Members of the Working Group.

The Working Group has met on three occasions and has approved its Scoping Document; and received presentations on the legal enforcement powers available to the Council and planning enforcement. It is anticipated that the next meeting of the Working Group will be held in January 2020.

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

The last meeting of the Committee was held on 12 November 2019. The Committee received a presentation providing an update on breastfeeding rates in Sefton. A report was submitted by the two Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) providing an update on Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). The Committee considered reports on the development of a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Sefton for 2020 – 2025; the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Continuous Improvement Agenda; and the Children and Young People's Plan 2020 – 2025. The Committee also received update reports from the Cabinet Member and on its Work Programme for the remainder of the Municipal Year.

### Working Group Update

#### Persistent Pupil Absence Working Group

Councillors Bennett, Carragher and Keith, together with Mrs. Cain, Independent Advisory Member, have agreed to be Members of the Working Group. Councillor Carragher is the Lead Member.

The Working Group has met on two occasions and has approved its Scoping Document. A site visit to the Pinefield Centre in Formby has taken place. It is anticipated that the next meeting of the Working Group will be held in January 2020.

## **Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCR CA O&S)**

Senior Democratic Services Officers regularly attend LCR CA O&S meetings to be kept abreast of scrutiny developments across the City Region. The most recent meeting to be attended was the LCR CA O&S held on 6 November 2019. Details of this meeting and all other LCR CA O&S meetings can be obtained using the following link:

<https://modern.gov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CIId=365&Year=0>

### **Overview and Scrutiny Management Board**

The Management Board meets to keep the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees abreast of O&S developments across the Council. The most recent meeting of the Management Board was held on 5 November 2019.

The Management Board at its meeting held on 10 September 2019 appointed Councillors John Sayers and Roscoe as its Chair and Vice-Chair respectively for the 2019/20 Municipal Year. As mentioned above, the Management Board will play an important role in co-ordination of work in respect of the Climate Change Emergency Council Motion.

### **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. The section has dealt with 15 applications for secondary schools and 43 applications for primary schools during the period from 14 October to 11 December 2019.

Training for panel members for exclusion reviews took place on Wednesday 6 November 2019, was again delivered "in-house". Admissions and Admission Appeals annual training has been arranged 26 March 2020, with a beginners course likely to be held earlier in March subject to demand.

### **Civic and Mayoral Services**

#### **Mayor of Sefton's Motown Night**

The Mayor of Sefton held a Charity Motown Night on 15<sup>th</sup> November, the event was a success raising £900.00 for the Mayor's Charity Fund, the next charity event is on Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> January which is a Burns Themed Night at Bootle Town Hall

#### **Remembrance Sunday**

Remembrance Sunday 2019 overall went very well, there are issues and improvements which will be addressed across the various four main sites, one major issue being the closure of Stanley Road for the Bootle Service, a meeting is scheduled for early in 2020 to discuss this.

#### **Mayor of Sefton's Gala Charity Ball**

Plans are also underway for the Mayor of Sefton's Gala Charity Ball which is on Saturday 28<sup>th</sup> March at Southport Theatre & Convention Centre, tickets are now on sale and available from the Mayor's Office, it promises to be a fantastic occasion with some great entertainment performing along with a raffle, tombola and auction.

## **Legal Services**

### ***Contract and Employment***

- The Team acts as a key adviser on range of major projects and public-sector reform work which forms part of the Council's commercialisation approach. These projects are confidential and therefore beyond the scope of this report but this work is a key element of the Team's caseload, supporting a key Council priority. This work includes advising on contracts, staffing and procurement issues.
- The Team advises on day to day contracts across the Council and supports Schools in the Borough in contract law matters. Recent work includes advising on major procurements of the Council's client relationship management and revenue and benefits systems.
- The Team also works across the region on a number of Liverpool City Region and Combined Authority projects.
- The Team continues to provide employment advice to both the Council and the majority of the Schools in the Borough across a broad range of staffing issues. The Team also handles all of the disputes and litigation for both the Council and the Schools. Currently, the Team is handing 6 claims in the Employment Tribunal and regularly appears in the Tribunal. In the last month, the Team have taken on three new claims. Further, as above, the team advises regularly on employment and staffing issues in respect of the Council's commercial projects.
- The Team supports the Council's Planning Function advising and negotiating on Section 106 agreements for a number of significant commercial and residential developments, in addition to assisting with other planning agreements. The Team has recently been instructed in relation to s106 agreements relating to two very large-scale developments.
- The Team has also taken responsibility for definitive map modification orders.

### ***Property***

- The Legal Property Team continue to support colleagues in various departments to facilitate the Council's management, aims and objectives in relation to its property portfolio.
- All legal documentation for Pleasureland Southport, was completed on 18.12.19 thereby facilitating the investment of £9 million in the future development of the leisure attraction.
- The Team continues to advise on a number of high-profile confidential property matters, which because of their nature are beyond the scope of this report. However, this is a key area of work that helps drives a number of major Council initiatives.

### ***Compliance and Regulation***

- The continue to advise the Council on a range of confidential information compliance matters, including data protection, FOIA and environmental regulations. These matters are confidential, which because of their nature are beyond the scope of this report but this is a vital support function for the Council.
- The Team continues to handle a wide range of prosecution matters in the Courts, this includes a number of successful CPN prosecutions and successful housing standards prosecutions. Other highlights include:
  - The Team successfully prosecuted a fly-tipper who set fire to a mattress on the site of a bonfire from the previous evening. The Defendant was ordered to pay a fine and costs.
  - The Team have prosecuted 5 residents for failing to return information about earnings for Council tax. They were people we have liability orders against who have failed to provide income information on request which is an offence. This is an offence that the Team have recently started to prosecute and the result will hopefully deter residents from failing to respond to requests for further information.
  - The Team had successfully prosecuted a 'cowboy builder' in the Liverpool Magistrates Court, the builder received 100 hours community service, and an order to pay compensation to the victims of £1,500 together with the Council's costs of £1,564.
  - The Team also obtained destruction orders in relation to alcohol seized at two off-licence premises in Southport that were not fit for human consumption.
  - The Team has been supporting housing licensing appeal cases and has issued 21 civil penalty notices to landlords for a failure to hold a licence.
- The Team continues to develop its debt recovery function, which supports the Council's financial position. The cumulative total recovered is £126,760 in sundry debts and £79,000 in business rates.

### ***Children/Adults Social Care Team***

- The Team is the largest in the legal department and provides advice to those departments providing a service to the most vulnerable members of this Borough. The team continues to work at full capacity with a slight increase in the figures in the last quarter in respect of Applications for care orders and Pre-proceedings.
- The Team not only provides advice to the Social Care departments both Children and Adults but also advises the majority of Sefton Schools in the Borough, along with the in-house Education Department and Special Educational Needs Department.
- Advice is also given to the Safeguarding Board and Child Death Overview panel. The Team have also been liaising with the courts regarding a Justice Review and provide advice and assistance on Private Social Care matters and Care proceedings. The Adult Social Care team are also currently undertaking some work which has been outsourced from Halton BC and is therefore the Adults team are also bringing in some income into the department.

- From the 1st September to the 30th November there were 15 applications which involved 23 children being made the subject of Interim Care orders. Cases are heard before Magistrates, however in most cases applications are heard by District and Circuit Judges and some cases do go before section 9 High court judges. We currently have one case which has been transferred to an International High Court Judge due to the complexities of the case and another case in which we have now instructed Queens Counsel.
- The number of cases involving a foreign element have increased significantly in the past 12 months, this has involved the Team having to liaise with foreign consulates and cross boarders making the legal process of obtaining evidence and orders more complex. The Team is currently liaising with overseas jurisdictions including Portugal, Lithuania, Poland, Canada and America and have arranged for assessment of family members in India. The Team also has a very complex Iranian case which will require specialist international advice.
- In addition to care cases the Team deal with adoptions and applications for Deprivation of Liberty DOLS and applications for young people to be detained in secure accommodation. There has also been an increase in unaccompanied asylum seekers, involving complex immigration advice to be given.
- The Team operates a duty system so that social workers have access to timely and effective advice at the point of need, which underpins the social work function and reduces issues by providing effective advice at an early stage.
- In addition to the cases mentioned above the lawyers in the Team manage a heavy pre-proceedings case load and provide advice in respect of serious case reviews and Child Death overview panel for the Merseyside area. We also convene the Education Interest Group for Northwest Education lawyers which takes place quarterly in Manchester.
- The Adult Social Care Team deal with complex capacity issues and DOLS cases. This legislation in this area is changing next year to Liberty Protection Safeguards and will require the team to adapt to new complex legislation. We have one Lawyer who is employed to advise the Special Educational needs team and she is busy defending tribunal applications for the SEN team and also given recent advice to a school which has resulted in that case being settled.