

Overview & Scrutiny



SEFTON COUNCIL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20

Sefton Council 



Overview & Scrutiny

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Overview and Scrutiny Management Board



Councillor John Sayers
*Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board
2019/20*

It gives me great pleasure to introduce the Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board for 2019/20.

Communication has always been a key consideration for the Management Board and the Board has previously agreed that Cabinet Member reports would be submitted to the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to contribute towards the relationship between the Executive and Overview and Scrutiny Members.

Members have welcomed the Cabinet Member update reports and attendance of relevant Cabinet Members at Overview and Scrutiny Committee meetings; and this process will remain in place during 2020/21.

The Management Board met four times during 2019/20 and considered the following issues:

- Overview and Scrutiny Training - seeking the views of the Management Board on the provision of Overview and Scrutiny training for Members;
- Consideration of the establishment of a Cross-Cutting Working Group Review following approval by the Council of a Motion on climate change. This was not proceeded with by the Management Board and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) was advised accordingly;
- Updates on the North-West Employers' Strategic Scrutiny Network;
- Updates on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee's work;
- Regular progress reports on the position of Working Groups established by the Council's four Overview and Scrutiny Committees;
- Maghull Masterplan - Update on item "called-in" to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)
- Possible Site Visit to Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) by Members of the Council.



- Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities
- Member Development/Training - A copy of the draft Guidance Handbook for newly Elected Members and Member Development Programme was provided for comments by the Management Board;
- Updates on the North West Scrutiny Support Officers Network;
- Updates on the work of the Centre for Public Scrutiny - including the initial results of a survey of Scrutiny Officers and Councillors with an involvement in Scrutiny; and new guidance published on "Taking Scrutiny Seriously".

Further, more detailed information about some of the issues considered can be found within the paragraphs below.

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee

The Combined Authority is led by the Metro Mayor and brings together the Liverpool City Region's six local authorities – Halton, Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens and Wirral – to tackle the major issues that affect people who live and work within the Region. Elected Members from each of the six local authorities form the Combined Authority. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee is made up of three elected Members from each of the constituent Local Authorities, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and from the Conservative Group. The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee includes scrutinising the decisions and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor.

At the commencement of the 2019/20 Municipal Year, Sefton Council appointed Councillor Paula Murphy, who was subsequently replaced by Councillor Dowd, as the Scrutiny Link, and also Councillors Howard and Marshall onto the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority (CA) Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Up to her resignation from the CA, Councillor Murphy submitted regular progress reports in relation to the operation of the LCR Overview and Scrutiny Committee. During 2019/20 both the Council's Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees received a report on Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities, and it was agreed that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny would be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in the future.

North-West Employers' Strategic Scrutiny Network

The Strategic Scrutiny Network is part of North West Employers' core membership offer and is designed to support councillors in the development of their scrutiny function and role, share good practice and highlight local and national drivers.

Throughout 2019/20 the Management Board received regular updates about meetings of the North West Employers' Strategic Scrutiny Network. Meetings of the Network are open to both Councillors and officers to attend and are useful in terms of recent developments in Scrutiny, including the recent Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities. Both Councillors Doyle and Murphy have attended Network meetings during the year, together with one of the officers from our Democratic Services Team and have provided useful feedback. I hope that Network meetings will continue in the future.

Centre for Public Scrutiny

The Centre for Public Scrutiny (CfPS) is a national centre of expertise on governance and scrutiny.

During 2019/20 the Management Board received updates about the work of the CfPS including the initial results of a survey of Scrutiny Officers and Councillors with an involvement in Scrutiny. As a result of the survey, new guidance was published entitled "Taking Scrutiny Seriously", and I look forward to receiving feedback from Cabinet Members on the new guidance during 2020/21.

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

During 2019/20, the Management Board considered reports that advised of the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny. The Management Board agreed that a report should be submitted to all four Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the October / November 2019 cycle of meetings. This resulted in a number of recommendations and developments, including the following:

- updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny would be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting;
- Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations would be submitted to the Cabinet and then full Council for final approval;
- each Overview and Scrutiny Working Group would consider if it is appropriate to seek the views of the general public on the matter under their consideration.



The Year Ahead

The following paragraphs set out details of some of the issues that I would anticipate the Management Board to consider during 2020/21.

The Local Government Association Peer Review Action Plan includes implications for Overview and Scrutiny in relation to strengthening corporate performance management and the development of the role of Members in a changing context for local government and a changing model of delivery locally. I would anticipate that the Management Board and Overview and Scrutiny Committees will consider issues associated with the Action Plan during the forthcoming year and will also consider the level of information to be included in the performance reports arising from the Peer Review.

Following a presentation by Sefton Council for Voluntary Services (CVS) about its interaction with smaller organisations in the Borough in November 2018, during 2019/20 the Management Board discussed a potential site visit to Sefton CVS and the possibility of extending such an invitation to attend to all Members of the Council. I hope we might be able to explore the possibility of such a visit in the future.

Looking ahead to 2020/21, I hope we will be able to secure and provide some training by an external provider for Overview and Scrutiny Members. The possibility of providing this on-line could be explored, if necessary.

I also look forward to receiving further updates on the work of the Centre for Public Scrutiny, including the full results of the survey of Scrutiny Officers and Councillors with an involvement in Scrutiny.

Given the scale of the financial and service challenges facing the Council, the year ahead will be extremely busy for both Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Management Board to scrutinise such challenges, including how they impact on the Council's statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and the desire to deliver the Sefton's 2030 Vision and Core Purpose.

Finally, I would like to take this opportunity to thank the Officers of the Democratic Services Team for all their hard work during the year; and to thank the Chairs and Vice-Chairs of all the Overview and Scrutiny Committees for their on-going input into the work of the Management Board.

Councillor John Sayers
September 2020



During 2019/20 the following Members served on the Committees indicated-

Overview & Scrutiny Management Board

Councillor John Sayers (Chair)
Councillor Roscoe (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Blackburne
Councillor Bradshaw
Councillor Byrom
Councillor Carragher
Councillor Doyle
Councillor Murphy

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health)

Chair: Cllr. Doyle
Vice-Chair: Cllr. Roscoe
Cllr. Carr
Cllr. Cluskey
Cllr. Howard
Cllr. Irving
Cllr. Jones
Cllr. Myers
Cllr. Pugh
Cllr. Waterfield

Mr. B. Clark, Healthwatch Representatives
Mr. R Hutchings, Healthwatch Representatives



Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding)

Chair: Cllr. Murphy
Vice-Chair: Cllr. Carragher
Cllr. Bennett
Cllr. Evans
Cllr. Keith
Cllr. Pitt
Cllr. Yvonne Sayers
Cllr. Spencer (Subsequently replaced by Councillor Cluskey)
Cllr. Thomas
Cllr. Webster

Mr. M. Byrne, Healthwatch Representative
Ms. K. Christie, Healthwatch Representative
Mrs. S. Cain, Advisory Member
Mr. S. Harrison, Church Diocesan Representative
Father D. Seddon, Church Archdiocesan Representative
Ms. M. McDermott, Parent Governor Representative
Ms. C. McDonough, Parent Governor Representative

Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Chair: Cllr. John Sayers
Vice-Chair: Cllr. Blackburne
Cllr. Brough
Cllr. Dowd
Cllr. Halsall
Cllr. Lewis
Cllr. Marshall
Cllr. Myers
Cllr. Robinson
Cllr. Sathiy



Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)

Chair: Cllr. Bradshaw

Vice-Chair: Cllr. Byrom

Cllr. Brodie-Browne

Cllr. Doyle

Cllr. Grace

Cllr. Killen

Cllr. Lewis

Cllr. McCann

Cllr. McKinley

Cllr. Morris (Subsequently replaced by Councillor Brough)



Adult Social Care and Health



Councillor Mhairi Doyle, MBE
Chair of the Overview & Scrutiny Committee
(Adult Social Care and Health)

It is my pleasure to introduce the 2019/20 Annual Report of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health).

Introduction

This is my first Annual Report as Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health). When I took on the role as Chair of the Committee, I did not anticipate that Adult Social Care and Health Services in general would be battling against a pandemic before the Municipal Year was over. I will highlight aspects of coronavirus and the response to the COVID-19 crisis at the end of this Report.

I believe that the Committee has built on the existing good working relationships we have with many of our health partners. The trust that has been established has meant that we are recognised in our role of “critical friend”; we are listened to and have been able to have a positive influence on the development of health and adult social care services within Sefton. This Report is presented to the Council and a wider audience beyond in the hope that the information it contains will contribute to the debate and discussion about the provision of health and adult social care services for Sefton residents and their development, improvement and access.

The Committee met formally on five occasions during 2019/20. An informal meeting of Members of the Committee was held in order to receive information on draft Quality Accounts, and a further informal meeting of Members took place to provide a training session on Adult Social Care. A site visit by Members was also held. Details of all these events are outlined below.

NHS Trust Quality Accounts

As usual, the Committee commenced the Municipal Year with the consideration of draft Quality Accounts from local healthcare providers. This provided Committee Members with an opportunity to comment on the performance of local NHS Trusts during the preceding twelve months, particularly in relation to patient experience, safety and clinical effectiveness. A number of local NHS Trusts routinely submit their draft Quality Accounts for consideration and comment each year and it is always a



challenge to determine where the Committee will focus each year. An informal meeting of Members of the Committee was held during May 2019, dedicated to considering the four draft Quality Accounts from the following NHS Providers:

- Lancashire Care NHS Foundation Trust, insofar as it related to community health service provision in the north of the Borough;
- Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, insofar as it related to community health service provision in the south of the Borough;
- Royal Liverpool and Broadgreen University Hospitals NHS Trust; and
- Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust.

The Providers concerned sent representatives to respond to our questioning and Committee Members also sought input from a representative of the two Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups, together with Healthwatch Sefton representatives. This proved to be an effective approach in scrutinising the four draft Quality Accounts concerned.

Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

Throughout 2019/20 the Committee received regular update reports from the two Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) within Sefton, namely the South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group and the Southport and Formby Clinical Commissioning Group.

The CCGs are, of course, responsible for the planning and commissioning of health care services for the local area. During 2019/20 they reported to the Committee on a range of activities designed to promote health and wellbeing amongst residents. I believe that excellent relationships exist between Committee Members and officers of the CCGs, particularly the Chief Officer who attends virtually every Committee meeting and has always been willing to take up issues raised by Members and explain aspects of the services provided.

Updates submitted by the CCGs have included details of CCG Board meetings to which members of the public are invited; representatives and elections for the CCG governing bodies; “Big Chat” events used to shape services; plus, details on various aspects of the work and health care services provided by the CCGs. The regular updates allow Members to raise questions and scrutinise aspects of the services provided by the CCGs.

We received separate reports from the CCGs on the following matters:

- Seven Day GP Access Update;
- Five Year Plan for Sefton;
- Primary Care Networks in Sefton;
- Update on North Mersey Urgent Care Review; and
- Social Prescribing in Sefton.

We also received a joint briefing paper produced on behalf of the following Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs):



- NHS Knowsley CCG;
- NHS Liverpool CCG;
- NHS South Sefton CCG; and
- NHS Southport and Formby CCG.

The briefing paper presented the case for change for a re-design of hyper-acute stroke services across the North Mersey area, proposing the adoption of a new model of care that would transform health outcomes, meet clinical standards and eliminate unwarranted variation for the population.

Throughout the year the Sefton CCGs have also submitted statistics to the Committee on Health Provider Performance which has enabled us to scrutinise the key performance areas of our local NHS Hospital Trusts, including the Friends and Family Test and A&E monitoring for both Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and Aintree University Hospital NHS Foundation Trust. These statistics have been particularly useful in scrutinising services during winter pressures. We raised concerns regarding transient ischaemic attack (TIA) (mini stroke) performance at Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and the Chief Operating Officer attended a meeting to discuss performance figures at the Trust.

I am grateful to Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for both the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups, and her staff, for their input into the work of the Committee and their attendance at Committee meetings.

NHS Trusts / Partners

Throughout 2019/20 the Committee received reports and presentations on work and activities undertaken by certain NHS organisations. Attendance at meetings by senior NHS representatives has enabled Committee Members to scrutinise NHS performance in the following areas:

- Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust; and
- Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, on the merger of Aintree, Broadgreen and the Royal Liverpool Hospitals.

I was very pleased that the Deputy Chief Executive and Medical Director for Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and the Chief Executive for Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust attended Committee meetings during the year, and I look forward to establishing a good working relationship between those Trusts and the Committee.

Towards the end of 2019/20 both myself and my Vice-Chair, Councillor Roscoe, also visited the new Chief Executive for Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust and I hope we will be able to develop this working relationship during the year ahead.



Adult Social Care

During the year, Committee Members received an informal training session from Deborah Butcher, Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health, on Adult Social Care in Sefton. The training included performance; budget; legal duties; commissioning; safeguarding of adults; strengths-based practice; Adult Social Care Teams; the current structure of Adult Social Care management; and challenges, including managing demand. This training also provided Members with an opportunity to raise a range of questions and issues about the Adult Social Care services and function.

I am grateful to Deborah Butcher and her Teams, for their input and their attendance at Committee meetings. I hope the Committee will be able to focus more on Adult Social Care in the forthcoming year and I look forward to receiving Deborah's reports in the future.

Public Health

During 2019/20 the Committee received a report on the Public Health Annual Report on the issue of air quality in Sefton. The annual report had been produced as a short animation, the aim of which was to present complex information in an accessible, engaging and transparent format which was easy to disseminate and could reach a broad audience.

Throughout the year the Committee also received reports on the following aspects of the Council's Public Health function:

- Progress Update on the Development of a New Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Sefton 2020-2025; and
- Community Substance Use.

I am very grateful to Margaret Jones, Director of Public Health, and her Team for keeping the Committee informed of Public Health developments during 2019/20.

Other Items

During the year we received a report from the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on "Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities". It was agreed that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny would be included within the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting in the future.

The Committee also received a presentation from a representative of the Council's Strategic Support Team on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), and Members were very interested to hear about the links from the JSNA to health and wellbeing.

Following on from the motion to declare a Climate Emergency, as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 18 July 2019, the Committee received a joint report from the Head of Corporate Resources and the Executive Director. Work had progressed on developing a programme structure, strategy and initial implementation plan for delivery of the motion and its objectives. In order to further inform this work, a baseline position was required across the Council of work that was currently underway or planned that could contribute to the Council achieving the aims of the motion. The Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources, attended the meeting to provide a presentation to Members on the Climate Emergency. A further presentation was provided at the following meeting on climate emergency information and initial baseline results, including initial results against adult social care.

I look forward to seeing further developments on this important topic during 2020/21.

Scrutiny Review Working Groups

The Committee did not establish any working groups during 2019/20, although we will consider whether there is a need during the next Municipal Year.

Site Visit

Towards the beginning of 2019/20, a site visit took place to the Aintree University Hospital, which has since become part of the Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust, following the merger of Aintree, Broadgreen and the Royal Liverpool Hospitals. Members met with the Chief Nurse and other senior managers for an overview of developments at the Trust and were provided with a tour of the Emergency Department, together with a tour of a ward for older people. Finally, Members were able to hold private discussions with Aintree Governors. Unfortunately, I was unable to attend the visit myself, although I did receive positive feedback from those Members who were present.

Pre-Scrutiny and the Key Decision Forward Plan

As ever, the Key Decision Forward Plan provided the Committee with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise Key Decision items from the Council's Forward Plans, as each of the latest Forward Plans are submitted to the Committee as part of its Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet and Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by allowing Overview and Scrutiny Committees to examine issues beforehand and make recommendations prior to a determination being made by the Executive.

Cabinet Member Reports

The regular attendance at Committee meetings of both Councillor Paul Cummins, Cabinet Member - Health and Social Care, and Councillor Ian Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing, has been very much appreciated by Members of the Committee. Throughout the year all the relevant Cabinet Member Update Reports have been included on agendas and I feel that it is particularly important to



include regular updates on major areas of the Council's activities, particularly as budgets have become increasingly under pressure. The Cabinet Member Update Reports have included a wealth of valuable information on aspects of the services and the Cabinet Members' attendance, together with the presence of senior officers from both the Council's Adult Social Care and Public Health service areas, has been very useful, providing Members with an opportunity to raise question and scrutinise developments within those Council Portfolio areas. I hope to develop scrutiny opportunities in these areas during the next Municipal Year.

Sefton Healthwatch

Back in 2014/15 the Committee was fortunate in securing the services of two Advisory Members from Healthwatch Sefton who bring additional experience and expertise to the table, and this good practice has continued into 2018/19.

Myself and my Vice-Chair have met informally with the Healthwatch representatives on a regular basis, together with the Manager of the Organisation, and these informal meetings have proved to be very useful, enabling us to discuss a range of issues and strengthen the excellent working relationship between Healthwatch Sefton and the Committee. We have also been able to use these informal meetings to plan ahead for Committee work, such as the scrutiny of draft Quality Accounts.

I am very grateful to both our Healthwatch co-opted Members for their valuable input into the work of the Committee and their attendance at Committee meetings.

Contributions Made During 2019/20

The attendance of representatives of organisations and partners, including senior officers of NHS Trusts, has been much appreciated and I would like to thank all our partners for their openness and their responses to our requests and suggestions. I have also appreciated the advice and support of Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for both the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs); Deborah Butcher, the Council's Executive Director of Adult Social Care and Health; and Margaret Jones, Director of Public Health, during 2019/20.

I am grateful to all the Members of the Committee for their support and for the enthusiastic way that they have contributed to our work. I would specifically like to thank my Vice-Chair during 2018/19, Councillor Diane Roscoe, for her help and assistance with the work of the Committee. During the year she has accompanied me to meet with the Chief Executive for Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust on an informal basis and this has helped forge closer working relationships between the Trust and the Committee. Diane has also attended informal meetings with Healthwatch representatives, and this has assisted in strengthening the excellent working relationship between Healthwatch Sefton and the Committee.

My particular appreciation goes to our Democratic Services Officers for their commitment, advice and support. Without them the work of Overview and Scrutiny could not take place. Specific thanks must go to the officer who supports the



Committee, Debbie Campbell, Senior Democratic Services Officer, for her hard work, dedication and patience.

Coronavirus and the Response to COVID-19

I cannot end my Annual Report without mentioning coronavirus and the pandemic that has dominated the news during 2020. Throughout the lock-down we were told to “Stay home. Protect the NHS. Save lives.” Please can I send out a huge thank you, not just to the health workers both in our region and nationally, but also to the carers who continued to go to work, both in care homes and within the community, to look after our most vulnerable residents during the crisis. We are indebted to these key workers and coronavirus has highlighted just how important these services really are. My thoughts are with the family and friends of those who have lost loved ones to COVID-19.

I hope that we can begin to look forward to a less stressful time in adult social care and health services in the months and years ahead. We need to continue to support services whilst they move forward and return to something approaching normality.

The Year Ahead

Looking ahead to 2020/21, there may be potential for some Health Scrutiny work in the following areas, although this work may have fallen behind during the coronavirus crisis:

- Review of Hyper-Acute Stroke Services;
- Southport and Ormskirk Hospital NHS Trust - The Acute Sustainability Programme; and
- North Mersey Urgent Care Review.

There is also the potential merger of the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) in North Merseyside. Whilst such a change would not formally require a consultation, it is essential as part of the approval process and I would anticipate updates from the CCGs.

We may also hear from Mersey Care NHS Foundation Trust, regarding the Trust’s plans for the Low Secure Unit Project.

With on-going pressures on social care and health services at a time when public expectations remain high, I am aware that the Committee faces fresh challenges at the beginning of each new Municipal Year and this year could see exceptional challenges. Despite these challenges, I am confident that the Committee will rise to meet the expectations on it and that Members will be kept fully informed and continue to play an active role on the Committee. The coronavirus has dominated available resources and it may be some considerable time before services are anywhere near fully recovered and able to function as something approaching normal.

Councillor Mhairi Doyle
September 2020



Children's Services and Safeguarding



Councillor Paula Murphy
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Children's Services and Safeguarding)

I am pleased to introduce Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) Annual Report 2019/20 to the Council.

Meetings

During 2019/20 the Committee met formally on six occasions. This included a special meeting, details of which are below.

Special Meeting – Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Review

At the beginning of the Municipal Year a Special Meeting of the Committee considered the outcome of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission (CQC) joint local area special educational needs and/or disabilities (SEND) re-visit. This had been undertaken in Sefton during April 2019 and the revisit was a follow-up to the SEND Inspection held in 2016. The re-visit had highlighted that partner agencies needed to significantly improve outcomes for children and young people and support parents and carers through improvements to joint working, transparency and health system responsibility.

There had been five areas of weakness identified at the time of the initial inspection during November 2016, as follows:

- Poor progress made from starting points by pupils with a statement of special educational needs, or an Education Health and Care (EHC) Plan at Key Stages 2 and 4.
- Poor operational oversight of the Designated Clinical Officer across health services in supporting children and young people who have special educational needs and/or disabilities and their families.
- Lack of awareness and understanding of health professionals in terms of their responsibilities and contribution to Education Health and Care Plans.
- Weakness of co-production with parents, and more generally in communications with parents.



- Weakness of joint commissioning in ensuring that there are adequate services to meet local demand.

Inspectors had found that sufficient progress had not been made to improve in the areas of weakness identified at the time of the initial inspection and considered that local area leaders had not made sufficient progress to improve each of the serious weaknesses identified.

Since the outcome of the re-visit, a Joint SEND Continuous Improvement Board (SENDICIB) had been established and has ensured that an Improvement Plan is in place to respond to the partner weaknesses, including action taken to recruit to vacant and additional posts created to meet the Education and EHC Plans 20-week statutory timescale for production of EHC Plans and to manage the backlog.

Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care and Health) were also invited to attend our Special Meeting, as the system supported children and young people aged 0 to 25.

At the Special Meeting, the Committee also heard from representatives of the partner agencies, including Dwayne Johnson, Chief Executive; Fiona Taylor, Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG; Lisa Cooper, Director of Community and Mental Health, Alder Hey Children's NHS Foundation Trust; and Kerrie France, Assistant Clinical Director, North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust.

The Committee agreed that the Improvement Plan would be submitted to a future meeting. Subsequent to the meeting, the Council's Health and Wellbeing Board requested this Committee to monitor progress against the Improvement Plan on a quarterly basis, commencing in January 2020.

The Health and Wellbeing Board continues to hold the system to account and this Committee provides robust challenge and additional scrutiny of the process.

Since the Special Meeting, the Committee has received information on the SEND Continuous Improvement Plan which has been agreed by the Department for Education (DfE) and has been published on the Local Offer. Progress against the Plan will continue to be monitored by the Committee on a quarterly basis, including updates on actions taken and progress made regarding the improvements required. The Improvement Notice issued to the Council by the DfE will remain in place for a minimum of 18 months.

I hope that we will see improvements to the SEND service in the months ahead.

Working Groups

Joint Working Group – Post-16 SEND Provision Working Group

During 2018/19, the Committee had established a Joint Working Group with Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills). Councillors Dowd, Michael O'Brien, Brenda O'Brien and Spencer were appointed to the Working Group. Councillor Spencer was appointed as the Lead Member of the Working Group, and subsequently, Councillor Dowd was appointed as Interim Lead Member of the Working Group for the purpose of producing and presenting the Final Report.

The Working Group considered the home to school/college transport provision for young people with SEND, as provided by the Council's Specialist Transport Unit (STU). This enables the young people concerned to access education and training. Working Group Members also broadened the scope of the joint review from the post-19 age group, in order to consider arrangements for the wider post-16 age category and the Working Group focussed on the possibility of offering Independent Travel Training.

The link to the Working Group report is below:

<https://modgov.sefton.gov.uk/ecSDDisplay.aspx?NAME=SD2725&ID=2725&RPID=25603479>

The Committee agreed the recommendations contained within the report and I look forward to receiving an annual report/update on progress made regarding Independent Travel Training, together with up-take of Personal Transport Budgets.

Working Group – Persistent Pupil Absence

During 2019/20, the Committee established a Working Group to review the topic of persistent pupil absence. Councillors Bennett, Carragher, Keith and Mrs. Sandra Cain, Independent Advisory Member, were appointed to serve on the working group and Councillor Carragher was appointed as the Lead Member of the Working Group. The Working Group undertook a number of site visits, that included the Council's Complimentary Education Service, Formby; the Jigsaw Primary Pupil Referral Unit, Thornton; and Newfield School, Edge Lane, Thornton.

Initially, the Working Group indicated that it would like to focus on persistent absentees in primary schools as the Sefton figure exceeds the regional and national averages. It was also considered that children who are persistently absent in primary school are unlikely to improve during secondary school. However, as work progressed, the focus shifted towards the transition from primary to high schools.

Unfortunately, the progress of the Working Group was curtailed by the outbreak of the coronavirus pandemic and I hope that the work will be completed during 2020/21.

Reports/Presentations from the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs)

The Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) are made up of local doctors, nurses, practice staff and lay members who are well placed to know the health needs and views of people living in the area. The CCGs are responsible for planning and buying, or “commissioning”, the majority of local health services that local residents may need.

Care Quality Commission Report – Review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Sefton – Presentations by the CCGs

During 2018/19, I had requested the inclusion of a report by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) on the findings of the review of health services in safeguarding and looked after children services in Sefton. The report focussed on the experiences and outcomes for children within the local authority area and reported on the performance of the health providers serving the area, including the Sefton Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and Local Authority Teams. The report set out a number of recommendations for various bodies and requested an action plan.

In July 2019, the Committee received a presentation providing an update on actions being undertaken since the Review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Sefton. This included progress against the 245 actions and the 23 sub-actions that remained “red”, or outstanding, together with anticipated dates for completion. We also heard that a number of Providers were involved in the delivery of the Service and that the Service and the improvements required were a priority. The position was complex regarding out-of-Borough placements and work was being undertaken on quality assurance for such placements.

In March 2020, the Committee received a further presentation providing an update on actions being undertaken since the CQC Review of Looked After Children and Safeguarding in Sefton. Progress on actions remaining “red” or outstanding; and on the task and finish group that would review the management and oversight of the action planning process, was reported.

I look forward to receiving further updates on the progress of actions being undertaken since the Review of Health Services for Children Looked After and Safeguarding in Sefton, during 2020/21.

Other Items Submitted by the CCGs

Throughout 2019/20 the Committee also received joint updates from NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG, on the following issues:

- Development of the NHS Sefton Five Year Place Plan – engagement and comment;
- Sefton Community Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) – update, details of CCG commissioned services, and future developments;



- Performance Reports for Key Children's Services – including waiting times for services;

I am grateful to Fiona Taylor, the Chief Officer for NHS South Sefton CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG, and her staff for their contributions towards the work of the Committee and their willingness to attend meetings to respond to questions put by Members.

Reports/Presentations on Children’s Social Care

The Council’s Children's Services aims to provide services to promote and safeguard the welfare of children.

During 2019/20 the Committee received and considered reports on the following aspects of Children’s Social Care:

- Children's Social Care Annual Report;
- Fostering Service Annual Report;
- Children and Young People's Plan 2020 – 2025;
- Joint Targeted Area Inspection of the Multi-Agency Response to Children's Mental Health;
- Corporate Parenting Role of Elected Members;
- Bi-Annual Report and Review of Children’s Social Care Improvement Plan; and
- Corporate Parenting Board Annual Evaluation.

Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI)

In relation to the Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of the Multi-Agency Response to Children's Mental Health, representatives of the key partner agencies involved attended a meeting to present the findings of the JTAI and outline the actions required. In addition to officers representing Children’s Social Care and Communities from the Council, representatives of NHS South Sefton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and NHS Southport and Formby CCG and Merseyside Police also attended. I am grateful that representatives of the key partner agencies attended our meeting to respond to questions put by Members of the Committee.

I would like to place on record my appreciation of the contribution made by Vicky Buchanan, Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education, and her Children’s Social Care Teams towards the work of the Committee.

Report on Schools

The Education Excellence service within the Council provides a range of statutory and support services for schools to ensure pupils have the best opportunity to achieve.

During the year the Committee considered a report on the Children and Young Peoples Plan 2015- 2020 - Priority One – Yearly Review of Educational Attainment Level. This report set out on progress against Priority One of the four priority areas of the current Plan, namely “To ensure that all children and young people have a positive

educational experience". The report set out educational attainment in Sefton, broken down into Nursery and Primary; Secondary and Special Schools Key Stage 4; and post-16 education. Actions undertaken by the local authority to support and challenge schools appropriately were also outlined. Although the performance of a number of secondary schools within the Borough has been a cause for concern for some time, it is pleasing to know that work does take place with most secondary academies to support and challenge them.

I am grateful to Tricia Davies, Interim Head of Education, and her Team for their contribution towards the work of the Committee.

Reports/Presentations on Public Health

Sefton Council's Public Health Team works to protect and improve health and wellbeing and to reduce health inequalities of local Sefton residents.

During 2019/20 the Committee received information on a variety of initiatives undertaken by the Council's Public Health Team that affect the children and young people of our Borough, details of which are outlined within the paragraphs below, together with some of the work undertaken with our partner organisations.

Public Health Annual Report (PHAR)

In 2019/20 the Committee received the Public Health Annual Report (PHAR), an independent annual report of the Director of Public Health, that had been produced as a short animation. The aim of this was to present complex information in an accessible, engaging and transparent format which was easy to disseminate and could reach a broad audience. This year the PHAR explored the issue of air quality in Sefton and explained the rationale for focussing on air quality; progress made to date; goals; other key people and organisations the Council needed to work with in this area; calls for action; and publication and dissemination of the finalised PHAR.

I look forward to hearing more regarding the work being undertaken to improve air quality within the Borough, particularly the important on-going work to raise awareness and to utilise our children and young people's enthusiasm within schools.

Health and Wellbeing Strategy

During the year we also received an update from the Director of Public Health on the development of a new Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy for Sefton for 2020 – 2025, that was a legal duty under the Health and Social Care Act 2012. Development of the Strategy was shared by both the local authority and the Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and was overseen by the Council's Health and Wellbeing Board. The report set out the background to the matter, together with the process and progress of the new Strategy; the policy context; public engagement; the proposed structure and content of the Strategy; areas that could benefit from further development; underlying assumptions and principles; the proposed outline; implementation, governance and oversight; and the next steps to be taken.

Mental Wellbeing in Schools

The Committee also received a report from the Director of Public Health providing an update on mental wellbeing in Sefton schools, including activity being undertaken in schools; sharing findings of a school's wellbeing survey; and details of the new Kooth service, an early intervention resource. The report set out the background to the matter, together with key findings by the Liverpool John Moores University and the next steps to be taken. The Committee also received a presentation on the matter from the Public Health Lead, on mental resilience in Sefton schools. We heard that the Kooth service had been procured and was an early intervention resource which targeted improvements in young people's emotional and mental wellbeing. The service complimented and was part of the Borough-wide THRIVE approach, that would provide the future pathway for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS). We also heard that the Amparo suicide support service had been commissioned and had worked with a variety of schools within the Borough. In addition, a wellbeing Toolkit was currently being developed for schools and colleges.

I do appreciate the contributions made by Matt Ashton, the former Director of Public Health, and his Team for the contributions they have made towards the work of the Committee and I look forward to working further with Margaret Jones, Director of Public Health, during 2020/21.

Breastfeeding Update

During 2019/20, the Committee also received a presentation from Infant Feeding staff at the North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust, proving an update on breastfeeding including the benefits; how Sefton compares; action being taken to improve breastfeeding rates; support available; collaboration; and local challenges.

We heard that breastfeeding was a significant public health priority; and that Sefton's breastfeeding rates were below the regional and national averages and that maintenance was an issue. Members were also concerned that there was some disparity in support services experienced by women from different local authorities at Liverpool Women's NHS Foundation Trust, with some new mothers unable to access certain maternity services depending on where they live. The Cheshire and Mersey Infant Feeding initiative had identified this disparity and hopefully, this will be addressed.

Breastfeeding, of course, is a contributory factor of one of the four key priorities within the Children and Young People's Plan, namely to "ensure all children have a healthy start in life". Committee Members considered that it would be useful to receive a further update on breastfeeding in Sefton in about twelve months' time and I hope that this will be included within the Committee's Work Programme for 2020/21.

I am very much obliged to the Infant Feeding staff at the North West Boroughs Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust for attending the Committee and updating Members on this important piece of work. I hope they will be able to attend a Committee meeting during 2020/21 to report on improvements to Sefton's breastfeeding rates.

Reports/Presentations from Corporate Resources

Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) Select Committee Report

In 2018/19 the Committee had received a report on the Government's response to the DCLG Select Committee Report on "Effectiveness of Local Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committees. During November 2019, the Committee received a report on "Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities", on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.

As a result of the report, the Committee agreed to the following:

- Overview and Scrutiny Working Group Final Reports and recommendations be submitted to Cabinet and then Council for final approval;
- updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Scrutiny be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting; and
- each Overview and Scrutiny Working Group consider if it is appropriate to seek the views of the general public on the matter under their consideration.

Climate Emergency

Following on from the motion to declare a Climate Emergency, as agreed by the Council at its meeting on 18 July 2019, the Committee received a joint report from the Head of Corporate Resources and the Executive Director. Work had progressed on developing a programme structure, strategy and initial implementation plan for delivery of the motion and its objectives. In order to further inform this work, a baseline position was required across the Council of work that was currently underway or planned that could contribute to the Council achieving the aims of the motion. The Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources, attended the meeting to provide a presentation to Members on the Climate Emergency. A further presentation was provided at the following meeting on climate emergency information and initial baseline results, including initial results against children's services.

I look forward to seeing further developments on this important topic during 2020/21.

Cabinet Member Reports

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had previously agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports for the Children, Schools and Safeguarding Portfolio to be submitted to the appropriate

Overview and Scrutiny Committee. During 2019/20, the Cabinet Member Update Reports have been included on Committee agendas for general information purposes for Members of the Committee.

Items considered within Cabinet Member reports have included issues relating to:

- Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) - Re-visit Letter / Notice to Improve;
- Office of the Schools Adjudicator Annual Return;
- Ofsted Inspection Outcome;
- Family Health and Wellbeing Centres and Early Help Update;
- Budget Monitoring – Schools Outturn 2018/19 and Forecast;
- Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) of services for children in Sefton;
- Strengthening Families;
- Education Excellence;
- Early Help Strategy;
- St. Teresa’s Catholic Infant and Nursery School – Consultation; and
- Sefton and Knowsley Youth Music Hub.

Councillor John Joseph Kelly, the Cabinet Member – Children, Schools and Families, attended meetings of the Committee during 2019/20 to present his Update Report, and I would like to place on record my thanks to the Cabinet Member for his regular update reports to our Committee, which have greatly assisted the Committee in keeping abreast of issues within the Children, Schools and Safeguarding Portfolio. The update reports are much appreciated by all the Committee Members. I am also grateful to him for his on-going support and commitment towards the Scrutiny function.

Pre-Scrutiny and the Key Decision Forward Plan

The Key Decision Forward Plan provides the Committee with an opportunity to pre-scrutinise Key Decision items from the Council’s Forward Plan, as the latest Forward Plan is submitted to the Committee as part of its Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet and Cabinet Members in making effective decisions as it allows Overview and Scrutiny Committees to examine issues and make recommendations prior to the executive decision being made.

I am pleased that Committee Members were presented with an on-going opportunity to pre-scrutinise Key Decisions relating to the Children, Schools and Families Portfolio.

Front-Line Visits by Elected Members

During 2018/19 a report was considered by the Committee on Enhancing Elected Member Involvement with Children’s Social Care that called for the provision of opportunities for a wider range of Members to engage with Children’s Social Care, to enhance understanding of front-line delivery. Subsequent to this, opportunities for visits to front-line teams became available to individual Members during 2019/20. These included visits to the following service areas:

- Locality South Team and Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH);
- Locality Central Team based in Netherton Activity Centre;
- Locality North Team based in Southport Town Hall;
- Corporate Parenting Social Work Teams based in Magdalen House, Bootle;
- Corporate Parenting Fostering Team based in Magdalen House, Bootle.

These visits have provided an opportunity for individual Members to have discussions with team managers and team members that include issues such as the staffing situation (vacancies, experience, skills, attendance levels); workloads and performance monitoring (outcomes for children); and staff support systems (IT, office accommodation and communication). I have found these visits to be a very interesting and informative experience as they have proved to be an effective method of seeing services in action, first hand, and to take back any issues raised. I am pleased other Members of the Committee have agreed to undertake such visits and I am grateful to them for volunteering. I hope these visits may be able to continue in 2020/21.

Co-Opted Members

The Committee has the following representatives as part of its membership:

- 1 Church of England diocese representative;
- 1 Roman Catholic archdiocese representative;
- 2 parent governor representatives;
- 2 advisory members from Healthwatch Sefton; and
- 1 independent advisory member.

All our co-opted members regularly attend the Committee to contribute towards debates and bring additional experience and expertise to the table. I would like to thank all our Added Members for their attendance and contributions during 2019/20, as it is very much appreciated.

During 2019/20 we welcomed Maurice Byrne as our second representative from Healthwatch Sefton and I look forward to forging even greater co-operation and links with Healthwatch during the next Municipal Year. We also welcomed Claire McDonough, our new Parent Governor Representative, onto the Committee and I look forward to working more closely with her during 2020/21.

Coronavirus and the Response to COVID-19

The end of the Municipal Year saw the closure of schools for most pupils with the inevitable disruption this has brought to education and examinations. I would like to extend my thanks to schools and their staff for remaining open to receive the children of key workers and for vulnerable children, whilst providing on-line learning and support to parents and children at home. Free school meals and food vouchers continued to be provided to those who needed them. Children with special educational needs and disabilities, and also vulnerable children, continued to receive support and I am grateful to the staff within the Council and other settings for providing this. During lockdown, throughout the Borough we saw pictures of rainbows placed in windows by

our younger children to convey a message of hope, together with teddy bears and other soft toys, in order to provide a fun activity for children undertaking a “bear hunt” during their daily walk.

As we move forward, I am pleased that children have now been able to resume their education and I hope they continue to thrive.

Thanks and Acknowledgements

I am particularly appreciative of our Democratic Services Officers for their commitment, advice and support. Our responsible officer is Debbie Campbell, Senior Democratic Services Officer, and I am grateful for the contributions she has made during 2019/20 towards the smooth running of the Committee.

I would also like to take this opportunity to thank all Committee Members, officers and partners for their support, hard work and contributions to our endeavours throughout the year.

Special thanks must go to Vicky Buchanan, Executive Director of Children’s Social Care and Education, for her hard work, commitment and patience in contributing towards the work of the Committee and ensuring that the service is as effective as it possibly can be.

The Year Ahead – 2020/21

I am sure that the Committee will look forward to the new Municipal Year as it works as a “critical friend” to our Cabinet Member and partners. The Committee will be examining a number of key areas during 2020/21 in order to ensure that the services we provide are continually improved to benefit all who live and work in the Borough, particularly children and young people.

I am conscious that the response to COVID-19 has dominated the way services are provided to children and we may need to take this into account in prioritising items during the new Municipal Year.

Councillor Paula Murphy
September 2020

Regeneration and Skills



Councillor John Sayers
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Regeneration and Skills)

It gives me great pleasure to introduce Sefton Council's Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) Annual Report 2019/20.

During the year the Committee has met five times and considered matters relating to: The Annual Monitoring of Housing Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes; The Post-16 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision Working Group; The Homelessness Annual Report 2018/19; The Digital Inclusion Working Group; Sefton Economic Strategy; Refuse Collection, Recycling and Food Waste; The Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan; Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities; Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual; Green Sefton Update report to Overview and Scrutiny; The Review of Social Housing Allocations; Climate Emergency; and The Borough of Culture 2020

The Committee received many presentations and this enabled Members to engage with colleagues from within and outside of the Council on topics referred to later in this report.

The Committee also received regular Work Programme and Cabinet Member update reports; and I would like to take the opportunity to thank Councillor Hardy, Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing, Councillor Veidman, Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control, Councillor Fairclough, Cabinet Member – Locality Services and Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills for their regular and informative update reports. I would like to thank Councillor Atkinson in particular for her regular attendance at meetings to answer questions from Members.

REPORTS

Annual Monitoring of Housing Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing on the annual monitoring of Housing Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes. The report indicated that three new licensing schemes came into force on 1 March 2018; that one selective licensing scheme covered the majority of Bootle that required all privately rented premises to be licensed, and two Additional (HMO)



licensing schemes in both central Southport and areas of Waterloo, Seaforth and Brighton-le-Sands, that required all Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs) to be licensed; that the agreed Performance Framework allowed the Council to monitor and test whether the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes were having an impact on improving the Licensing Neighbourhoods and private rented accommodation within them; that the Council had approved a “business case”, which set out its justification for introducing licensing schemes and that to justify the proposed schemes for Sefton it was argued that licensing of private rented homes would lead to better management of these homes.

Towards the end of the 5-year life of its schemes, the Council would need to consider whether it needed to extend the life of these schemes, and if it did, it would need to justify this through a new business case. Almost certainly, the Council would need the evidence that its schemes were having a positive impact. Therefore, the performance framework was an essential tool, both to monitor the effects of licensing and to help justify any extension of the life of its schemes, should it wish to do so.

The report also provided information on the implementation of the Licensing Schemes Performance Framework and detailed the monitoring factors and the progress made against each factor as at 28 February 2019; and detailed feedback from tenants and landlords.

Homelessness Annual Report 2018/19

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing that presented the ‘Annual Report on Levels of Homelessness in Sefton 2018/19’; and in particular, which drew attention to the sorts of data provided and how the data in the Annual Report was presented.

The report indicated that Sefton’s published Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2018-23 contained an action to,

‘Publish an annual report explaining the current levels of homelessness, to aid elected councillor and chief officer decision making, and to,

Carry out an in-depth analysis of data collected by the Homelessness Case Level Information Classification monitoring system (H-CLIC).’

that in July 2019, the Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing approved the Homelessness Annual Report 2018/19; and that the Annual Report allowed Sefton to present a picture of homelessness within the borough over the last year, and provide a baseline for future annual reports in so that Sefton could track the performance and impact on services since the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The report concluded that following approval of the Annual Report the Cabinet Member also recommended that it be forwarded to this Committee for further scrutiny and that it be noted as an example of good practice as to how a service area could present and report on its data.

Sefton Economic Strategy Update



The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing that updated on work relating to the production of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan for final approval by Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills.

The report indicated that the Sefton Economic Assessment, a factual statement of the borough's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, was approved by Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills on 9 March 2017 together with a draft Strategic Framework for Action, or the building blocks of the Strategy; that a business and public consultation exercise was undertaken which produced an excellent response with a total of 189 returns received through focus groups, online surveys, telephone contacts and written returns; that the strategy's focus on inclusive growth, which encompassed wellbeing, housing and infrastructure helped generate a larger response from residents (49%) and Sefton's business community (30%) and that there was also a good geographical split of responses; and that details of the responses were outlined in paragraph of the report.

The report also indicated that the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan would focus attention on Priority Actions and Key Outcomes with the actions focussing on 7 key priorities and objectives under Places, People and Productivity with an overarching aim of achieving Inclusive Growth for the benefit of Sefton's communities; that the Action Plan would be a working document that could be reviewed, challenged and updated on a regular basis; and that it would be underpinned by a robust Performance Framework developed through the commissioned assessment work and supplemented by more up to date and ongoing analysis from the Executive Directors and officers.

The report concluded by seeking the Comments of the Committee on the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan.

Refuse Collection, Recycling and Food Waste - Update

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Locality Services that provide an update on refuse collection, recycling and the suspension of food waste collections during 2018 / 2019.

The report indicated that the waste collection operation within the Council's Cleansing Services Section consisted of three strands:

- Waste which cannot be recycled (collected via black sack or grey wheeled bin)
- Waste which can be recycled (collected via hessian sack or brown wheeled bin)
- Green 'Garden' Waste (collected via green wheeled bin) a seasonal operation (March to end November)

And that in February 2019 elected Members determined to suspend food waste collections from June 2019 due to falling rates of collection / tonnages.

The report also indicated that it had now been just over three years since the dry recycling service was brought in-house, and a number of interesting outcomes had become apparent since the service was changed to fully comingled operation on 1

August 2016; one such outcome being that the anticipated extra tonnages of recycled materials had not materialised and recycling performance across the Council had somewhat slightly reversed at just over 38%. However, evidence from Merseyside recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA) showed that Sefton achieved the highest recycling rates of all other Liverpool City Region Councils. The report also indicated that the green (garden) waste service had improved dramatically over the last period and tonnages of collected waste levels were around 20,000 tonnes per year. In respect of household waste collections, in 2018/2019 the amount collected increased over the previous twelve months by approximately 900 tonnes; and that in 2018/19 the service collected just over 108,000 tonnes in total, which was approximately 1% above the total tonnage generated in 2015/ 2016.

The report also detailed current issues within refuse, recycling and green waste services and provided additional information relating to refuse collection/ recycling/green (garden) waste and food waste collections; and concluded that despite severe reductions in budget since 2010 across the waste collection service these reductions had overall been found via efficiencies alone as the Council was still required to collect refuse or empty bins from every property across the Borough; that Locality Services (Cleansing) would continue to seek ways to use its expenditure in a smarter and more efficient manner, however, given the proposed increase in new properties forecast between now and 2026, there would be considerable additional pressure placed upon the service for which solutions for the future operation and funding of the required services would be necessary; and that the service would continue to welcome observations, comments and suggestions from any interested party or parties relating to the provision or operation of any aspect of the refuse and recycling collection services.

Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that sought consideration and approval of the revised Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan policy document for 2019/20.

The report indicated that the Council provided a Highway Winter Service to the Borough in accordance with the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan; that officers monitored the weather conditions 24 hours a day throughout the winter season and enacted the plan when weather conditions dictated; that the Railways and Transport Safety Act 2003 (section 111) had inserted an additional section 41(1A) to the Highways Act 1980 which placed a duty on Highway Authorities in respect of winter conditions, and stated 'In particular, a Highway Authority was under duty to ensure, as far as reasonably practicable, that safe passage along a highway was not endangered by snow or ice'; and that in addition, the Traffic Management Act 2004 placed a Statutory Network Management Duty on all local traffic authorities in England requiring authorities to do all that was reasonably practicable to manage the network effectively to keep traffic moving.

The report also indicated that the Winter Service Policy and Operational Plan was subject to an annual review, reassessment and consultation; that as part of this and in accordance with Cabinet Member's wishes, a consultation letter was sent to every Elected Member; and that Merseytravel had also been contacted and asked if there had been any revisions to their bus routes since last year.

The report concluded that the Policy was based on guidance provided by the Government in a document entitled 'Well Maintained Highways – Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance Management.'; that a new code of practice was published in 2016 entitled 'Well Managed Highway Infrastructure' which superseded all previous codes; that Guidance relating to practical issues and delivery of the service was now contained within the National Winter Service Research Group (NWSRG) Practical Guidance Documents; that five practical Guidance Documents had been updated and released this year in respect of spread rates, salt storage, spread management, treatments for snow and ice and treatment method and technologies; and that a number of enhancements were made to the Winter Service policy last year through the provision of a new contract which included a new purpose built salt storage facility, capable of holding 3500 tonnes of rocksalt and new gritting vehicles with the latest technology to allow for optimum spread rates.

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.

The report indicated that the Government's Statutory Guidance was comprehensive and was set out in the following chapters:

- Culture
- Resourcing
- Selecting Committee Members
- Power to Access Information
- Planning Work
- Evidence Sessions

and that Members' attention was drawn to "Maintaining the interest of full Council in the work of the scrutiny committee" and "Communicating scrutiny's role to the public" where recommendations for change had been made.

The report concluded by detailing the up to date position regarding progress being made regarding the recent Local Government Association peer review in relation to Overview and Scrutiny receiving performance reports.

A copy of the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was attached as an appendix to the report.

Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Locality Services presenting formally the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management (FCERM) Annual Report.

The report indicated that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 required that arrangements had to be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions; and that this Annual Report satisfied that requirement. The report detailed key items of work in relation to:

- Duty to cooperate with other Risk Management Authorities
- Duty to have an up to date Local Flood Risk Strategy
- The undertaking of Sefton's duties as a Riparian owner
- Maintaining a public register on Flood Risk Management Assets
- Responding to major planning applications checking the sustainable drainage systems
- Flood and Coastal Erosion events
- Sefton's Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Strategy Update
- Green Sefton Service delivery
- Resilient Communities
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment
- Working with the Planning Authority
- Asset inspections
- Capital schemes
- Partnership Working
- Merseyside Strategic and Flood Risk Partnership
- North West and North Wales Coastal Groups
- Priorities for the next year including service planning; supporting the delivery of the Local Plan; Crosby Coastal Scheme; Surface Water Management Plan level 2; Fouracres flood risk scheme; Pool watercourse; and the development of a new investment programme post 2021

Appendix 1 to the report provided information on the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Time and billing review 2018/2019.

The report concluded by seeking comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

Green Sefton Update report to Overview and Scrutiny

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Locality Services that provided an update on the Green Sefton service progress after its first 18 months of operation.

Information was provided on:

- Green Sefton: a one stop shop for all issues associated with our landscape – from design and development, to management and maintenance and user engagement and community development; and that the service managed about 6,500ha of the landscape of the borough, Sefton's beautiful coast with protected sites, to a range of parks, greenspaces, outdoor sports and recreational sites, allotments, street trees etc.
- What our communities valued about Sefton and the Sefton 2030 Vision



- Sustainable aspects of Green Sefton to meet the needs and aspirations of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs
- Green Sefton values
- Positive aspects of the Green Sefton service in relation to staff working as one flexible team with a new service culture; and Innovative schemes such as insourcing cemeteries and crematoriums grounds maintenance, social investment proposals (e.g. Coronation Park)
- Income and growth issues associated with developing Sefton's golf offer; Making use of Sefton's assets; expansion of natural alternatives; and commercialisation and the approval of five growth proposals (£339k 19/20) with another 43 in the pipeline
- Key challenges affecting the Green Sefton service relating to reduced staffing levels, climate change and succession planning
- Looking forward to the future to deliver the service plan and vision which was directly linked to Sefton 2030; and to ultimately be a self-funding service by 2030,

The report indicated that Green Sefton brought together the former Coast and Countryside, Parks and Greenspaces, Flooding and Coastal Erosion and Risk Management services to ensure a joined-up approach to the vital management, development and oversight of Sefton's coastline, parks and green spaces; that the creation of Green Sefton was part of PSR 7, and its aim was to:

- Improve the way we manage Sefton's natural assets
- Provide a single point of contact and enable more efficient and effective use of resources and offer potential to create new opportunities for income generation
- Enable more community cohesion
- Offer further opportunities for volunteers, residents and other organisations
- Create a more focussed collaborative approach to the management, development and oversight of our coastline, parks and green spaces.
- Manage all land assets (excluding highways) in one portfolio

and provided an update on the development of the service since its creation in April 2018 in relation to strategy and service planning; finance; staffing; risk management; asset management; community engagement; contractual and commissioning; policy and procedures; health and safety; ICT systems; and communications.

The report concluded by seeking comments for referral to the Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing and the Cabinet Member - Locality Services for consideration.

Review of Social Housing Allocations

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Economic Growth and Housing that detailed the results of an exercise to review the Social Housing Allocations policy and procedure; that provided information on the findings, recommendations and next steps arising from the review; and which sought the Committee's comments on the review.

The report indicated that the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, on behalf of the 5 Local Authorities who participate in Property Pool Plus (PPP), a sub-regional Choice Based Lettings social housing allocation scheme, and St. Helens Council (who operated Under One Roof -U1R), had commissioned Neil Morland & Co (NM&Co) to carry out a review of how social rented housing was allocated across the city region; that the PPP service went 'live' in July 2012 following the introduction of a suitable IT system; and that the local authorities and participating housing associations wished to ensure that the future allocations policy was fit for purpose and supported strategic City Region wide aspirations around access to housing.

To achieve the aim referred to above the principal drivers for undertaking such a policy review included requirements that the policy:

- was legally compliant with relevant Government legislation, in particular the recent introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act 2017, Codes of Guidance, statutory obligations and also has regard to best practice and current case law
- incorporated aims and principles which remained appropriate and relevant
- helped support and deliver good customer service and outcomes and ensured that any proposed changes improved the customer journey
- supported wider system change for homeless people, maximising the number of people in housing need who were successfully housed
- was informed by housing association partner organisation's operational and business needs, in order to promote current and future co-operation and participation in the allocation scheme

The report concluded that NM&Co had completed stage 1 of the review exercise and their report on the findings of the review were attached as an appendix to the report; and the Committee's comments on the review were sought. Neil Morland, NM&Co presented the report's findings to Committee.

Climate Emergency

The Committee considered the joint [report](#) of the Head of Corporate Resources and Executive Director that advised that at the Council, at its meeting held on 18 July 2019, agreed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency and this was attached as Appendix A to this report; that in accordance with the terms of the Council motion, work had progressed on developing a programme structure, strategy and initial implementation plan for delivery of the motion and its objectives; that in order to further inform this work, a baseline position was required across the Council of work that was currently underway or planned that could contribute to the Council achieving the aims of the motion; and that the report provided a summary of work



undertaken to date and the exercise that was required to be led through each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to establish that baseline position.

The report also advised that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being asked to lead an immediate piece of work for completion by the next cycle of meetings that:

- conducted a stock take of all activity in relation to carbon emissions that would inform a comprehensive council wide baseline position;
- Identify all projects that were currently taking place across the council that would support the delivery of the Council's Strategy; and
- Identify potential long-term issues that would need to be addressed for the Council to meet the objectives within the Council motion.

The report concluded that the output from the work referred to above should be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in March/April 2020 and be led by the respective Heads of Service in conjunction with the Committee members and Cabinet Member; and that necessary support would be available from the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Service, the Head of Corporate Resources and the Executive Director in addition to the Council wide officer working group.

The Committee also received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources and Andrew Walker, Head of Locality Services, on the background to climate change and the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration which included information on:

- Sefton's target of net zero carbon by 2030; and the establishment of a working group and its commencement of work on a strategy, action plan and partnership working
- How Sefton quantified its emissions using the scope of the "Greenhouse Gas Protocol"
- Next steps which included most departments having now received information on the issues associated with the Climate Emergency Declaration, had been tasked with completing an initial scoping exercise and to consider further options

Mr. Walker advised the Committee that in order for the Council to meet the objectives within the Council motion each Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being asked to lead an immediate piece of work for completion by the next cycle of meetings (end of April 2020) that:

- Conducted a stock take of all activity in relation to carbon emissions that would inform a comprehensive council wide baseline position; and
- Identified all projects that were currently taking place across the Council that would support the delivery of the Council's Strategy; and Identified potential long-term issues that would need to be addressed.

and that Heads of Service were on-going with this work on behalf of the Committee.

Borough of Culture 2020

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Executive Director advising that Sefton would be the Liverpool City Region's Borough of Culture for 2020 and that an outline programme and business plan had been developed for the year following consultation and engagement with partners and communities across the borough; that this feedback recommended a focus on local history and the environment as the two priority areas for the programme, with emphasis in all events, activities and initiatives on participation (inclusive of all communities), permanence (assets, activities and relationships lasting beyond 2020), partnerships (working with partner organisations and communities across the borough), and on engendering local pride in Sefton.

Members of the Committee made reference to the following which could be included in the Borough of Culture programme:

- Alan John Percivale Taylor FBA, a British historian who specialised in 19th and 20th-century European diplomacy; was a journalist and a broadcaster and who became well known through his television lectures, who was born in Birkdale
- the Labour Party Conferences held in Southport in 1930s, at the former Garrick Theatre (now the Mecca bingo hall) that supported a motion for the establishment of the National Health Service
- Dan Dare, a British science fiction comic hero, created by illustrator Frank Hampson who also wrote the first stories. Frank Hampson was educated at King George V School, a grammar school in Southport
- Formby's Viking connection and any assistance that could be gained in this respect from the production company responsible for the HBO series "Vikings"

PRESENTATIONS

Winter Service Operation

The Committee received a presentation from Jerry McConkey, Service Manager – Transportation and Highway Infrastructure on the Council's Winter Service Policy.

Mr. McConkey indicated:

- That the Highways Act 1980 Section 41 and 58 clearly stated that the Highway Authorities had a statutory duty to maintain the highway and must at all times take reasonable care to ensure that the highway was not dangerous and that the standard of maintenance was appropriate for a highway of that character and used by such traffic; that it must also ensure that a competent person must supervise maintenance work, having received proper training with regard to the highway; and provided information on statutory guidance that must be adhered to including the release of 5 new documents in March 2018
- That in response to the statutory guidance the Council had procured a new Winter Contract; had a state of the art gritting fleet; that the gritting fleet was



tracked; that the Council had a purpose built Winter Facility in Nethererton; and had a long term strategy to meet the statutory requirements

- Provided information on gritting statistics which included 10 carriageway gritters covering 8 carriageway routes; that 35 tonnes of salt per call out was used covering 291 miles of carriageway; the salt storage facility for 3500 tonnes, the salt restocking agreement, and the 8 snow ploughing routes and grit bin locations
- Historical data on the number of grits per financial year
- The Policy and Operational Plan and that in the event of a major disruption a regional co-ordinating arrangement would be put in place via Gold Control, chaired by Merseyside Police with senior officer input from the Council
- Technical information relating to spreading rates; and examples of forecast summaries

Climate Emergency - Update Report

The Committee received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources, on Climate Emergency Information and initial baseline results. The presentation outlined the following:

- Climate Change;
- Greenhouse Effect;
- Carbon;
- Offsetting;
- International Context;
- Quantifying Sefton's Emissions;
- Key Features;
- Scope 1 and 2:
 - Council Operations;
 - How the information was collected and what is included;
 - Big emitters, some examples;
 - What does 15,547 tonnes equate to;
- Scope 3 what is included:
 - Regeneration and Skills;
- Evaluating the Baseline;
- Next Steps;
- Contact Details;
- Why a CO2 Focus; and
- Offsetting - Diagram.

Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority - Service Delivery Plan

The Committee received a presentation and report from Carl Beer, Chief Executive – Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority (MRWA). The report highlighted:

- 162.380 tonnes of waste each year were received at the 15 Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRC) in Merseyside and Halton. 68% currently recycled and 75% was diverted (including rubble). Target was 52.91% minimising costs by £700,000 this year.



- The biggest waste management issue across the region, Food waste remained at 39% (148,000 tonnes).
- Textiles discarded in household bins had fallen by almost 4,000 tonnes.

The presentation explained MWRA's Climate Action Plan, and detailed:

- Initial Plan
- Carbon reduction to date
 - Moving to Energy Recovery from Landfill
 - HWRC's recycling
 - Re-use
 - Education
 - Behavioural Change and waste prevention
- Annual carbon performance
 - Metrics
 - Baseline
 - Targets
 - Energy use
 - Solar
 - Renewable supply
 - Energy efficiency – pumps
 - Ending landfill even as contingency
 - Food waste
 - Carbon sequestration project Foul Lane
 - Gas control
 - Veolia 10-year Contract Review
 - Re-use cooperative models
 - Compositional analysis
 - E vehicles
 - Targets
 - Energy use
 - Solar
 - Renewable supply
 - Energy efficiency – pumps
 - Ending landfill even as contingency
 - Food waste
 - Carbon sequestration project Foul Lane
 - Gas control
 - Veolia 10-year Contract Review
 - Re-use cooperative models
 - Compositional analysis
 - E vehicles

WORKING GROUPS

Post-16 Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) Provision Working Group - Final Report

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that presented formally the final report of the Special Educational Needs and Disability Provision (SEND) Working Group.



The report indicated that Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Children's Services and Safeguarding) together with this Committee had agreed to establish a Joint Working Group to consider the provision for young people with SEND; that the terms of reference and objectives for the Working Group were "to review post-16 provision for Special Educational Needs and Disability in terms of home to school transport arrangements, as provided by the Council's Specialist Transport Unit (STU)"; and that the Working Group had appointed Councillor Spencer as the Lead Member for the review and that subsequently, it was agreed that Councillor Dowd would be the Interim Lead Member.

Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

The report also indicated that the Head of Economic Growth and Housing had advised that, additional to the responses to the recommendations, Sefton was aligning itself to LCR proposed Digital Programme structure, which would allow easier and better flow of information and ideas, and allow Sefton to move the "whole" Digital agenda forward at a pace.

Cabinet Member Reports

In keeping with previous years and in order to keep Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered the portfolios of the Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing, Cabinet Member – Locality Services, Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control and Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills. I would like to pay particular thanks to Councillor Atkinson who has been a regular attender at meetings to answer questions from Members of the Committee.

Pre-Scrutiny – The Key Decision Forward Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise items from the Council's Key Decision Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet to make effective decisions by giving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to examine issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

The Year Ahead

The Committee will continue to make progress on the following priorities over the coming year:

- Flood & Coastal Risk – Annual Report
- Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Review
- Review of Winter Service and Operational Plan
- Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2020/21



- United Utilities – Update on Increase in Charges
- Refuse Collection
- Leasehold House Sales
- Sefton’s Empty Homes Strategy
- Updates on the implementation of recommendations associated with the Peer Review and Housing Licensing Performance Framework Working Groups
- Approval of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council’s Enforcement Activity Working Group
- Progression of Working Group on Accommodation for Vulnerable Adults
- Identification of topics to be the subject of Working Group reviews

Given the scale of the financial and service challenges facing the Council, the year ahead will be extremely busy for both Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Management Board to scrutinise such challenges, including how they impact on the Council’s statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and the desire to deliver the Sefton’s 2030 Vision and Core Purpose.

Finally, and on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work over the past year. I would personally like to thank all Members of the Committee, Cabinet Members Councillors Atkinson, Fairclough, Hardy, Moncur and Veidman and officers who have attended meetings for their support to me over the past year and provided the Committee with valuable information.

Councillor John Sayers
September 2020



Regulatory, Compliance, and Corporate Services



Councillor Sue Bradshaw
Chair of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee
(Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services)

On behalf of the Members of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services) it gives me great pleasure to introduce the 2019/20 Annual Report.

During the year the Committee has met six times and considered matters relating to financial issues and updates associated with the 2019/20 revenue and capital budget and financial management across the Council. As is the usual practice, a Special Meeting of the Committee was held prior to Budget Council in order to scrutinise budget options and proposals.

Other reports considered by the Committee related to: “Tool-Kit” for the Armed Forces Covenant; Area Committees Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations; Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations; Disposal of Surplus Council Owned Land/Asset Management Strategy; Members Welfare Reform Reference Group – Update; Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities; “Manage my Requests” (iCasework) System – Statistical Update Report; Air Quality Update; Public Health Annual Report; Climate Emergency; Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme 2020/21, Council Tax Base 2020/21 and Changes to Council Tax Discounts for Empty Homes; Ethical Business Practices Working Group Final Report; and Levels of Disciplinary, Grievance and Sickness Absence.

The Committee also received regular Work Programme and Cabinet Member update reports.

The Committee received many presentations and this enabled Members to engage with colleagues from within and outside of the Council on topics identified below.



Finally, I would like to take the opportunity to thank Councillor Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services for her regular attendance at meetings to update Members on issues associated with her portfolio.

Financial Scrutiny

The Committee received regular budgetary update reports during the year and a Special Meeting of the Committee was held in February 2020 prior to the budget meetings of both Cabinet and Council. At this Special Meeting the Committee considered reports relating to: The Prudential Code for Capital Finance in Local Authorities - Prudential Indicators 2020/21; Treasury Management Policy and Strategy 2020/21; Capital Strategy 2020/21 to 2024/25; Robustness of the 2020/21 Budget Estimates and the Adequacy of Reserves – Local Government Act 2003 - Section 25; Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23 and Council Tax 2020/21.

At this meeting the main [report](#) for consideration was the joint report of the Chief Executive and the Head of Corporate Resources that provided information on the following issues in connection with the Council's forthcoming consideration and approval, on 27 February 2019, of the Revenue and Capital Budget Plan 2020/21 – 2022/23 and the level of Council Tax for 2020/21:

- An assessment of the Council's current financial position and approach to the 2020/21 Budget Plan and the new three-year budget period 2020/21 to 2022/23;
 - Progress that has been made during the last year within the Council's Framework for Change programme;
 - An update on the Government's announcement of resources that are available to the Council for 2020/21;
 - The Council's current financial position and the assumptions built into the Medium Term Financial Plan;
- The proposed Budget for 2020/21; and
- The proposed Capital Programme for 2020/21.

As such, the report set out the financial strategy of the Council and the national and local financial context within which it was operating; indicated that the Council had a statutory requirement to remain financially sustainable and to balance its budget every year; that the Council's Framework for Change Programme was a comprehensive and ambitious programme that sought to support the delivery of the Council's core purpose; that as would be expected with a programme of this size and complexity that spanned a number of financial years, the detailed proposals had been and would continue to be the subject of change as they were developed and ultimately implemented; that within this context, a detailed assessment of the previously approved plans for 2020/21 had been undertaken to confirm their deliverability; and that in addition, a limited number of additional savings proposals had been identified to balance the budget and ensure long-term financial sustainability.

Regarding the national context and financial environment the report indicated that 2019/20 would be the tenth year of the Government's programme of austerity and

that the impact of continuing central government funding reductions on local government since 2010 was stark and had been widely reported; that the National Audit Office (NAO) had published a report into the financial sustainability of local authorities which summarised the legacy of funding reductions and outlined the main challenges facing councils over the short and medium term; that the NAO found that local authorities experienced an average 49.1% real terms reduction in central government funding between 2010/11 and 2017/18; but that for Sefton, central government funding had reduced by 51% compared to 2010 thus demonstrating the inequality in funding reductions across the country and the disproportionate impact on this Council.

With regard to local factors and the approach to sustainable financial planning the report indicated that Sefton, like many local authorities, had found the last ten years challenging in terms of the national funding conditions and in light of significant and growing pressures across a range of council services; that the Council had a proven track record of effectively managing its finances, meeting its financial objectives and delivering financial sustainability, however this was becoming increasingly difficult particularly bearing in mind that the 10 year austerity budget reductions for Sefton had resulted in a £233 million funding gap by the end of 2019/20 with a direct loss of 51% of government funding which equated to £722 per Sefton household; however, that in the Council's recent Peer Review the approach to sustainable financial management was a key strength in the management of the overall Council.

The report also provided information on the following matters:

- Framework for Change Programme - was built on four workstreams / pillars and it is proposed that these will form the cornerstone of the new programme, namely Public Sector Reform, Growth and Strategic Investment and Economic Growth.
- the Council set a one-year budget for 2020/21. This reflected the uncertainty that exists in terms of future years' budget allocations and the lack of any meaningful information on which budget and service delivery decisions could be made by members beyond this point. It was anticipated that this information would come through over the course of 2020, therefore the Framework for Change programme needed to be developed on the principles of ensuring that the right issues were being addressed in each pillar, i.e. 'what were the right things to do to deliver the Core Purpose', that these activities Review of Public Sector Reform Projects (PSR) - the total savings planned for 2019/20 from the PSR programme was £12.882m. However, the budget planning assumptions had now been revised to £9.517m, a reduction of £3.365m
- Public Sector Reform
 - Within the new Public Sector Reform pillar, 2 projects are proposed. These are: -
 - Council of 2023; and
 - Demand Management
- Council of 2023



As Sefton looks to 2023 and beyond it will face another period of unprecedented change. The Council like the rest of Local Government during this time, will be faced with changes to its statutory responsibilities, how it is expected to interface and partner with Health and other public bodies, the needs of its residents and communities and the financial framework within which it is to operate.

This outlook was further complicated by the national political environment which included the impact of the UK's exit from the European Union- not due to the direct implications, which could be significant but would not be possible to evaluate for some time; but by the impact that this would have on central government resources that were required to develop and consult on key issues, e.g. the Adult Social Care (ASC) Green Paper and a comprehensive spending review expected in 2020. This presented the Council with significantly higher risk in terms of its policy, performance and financial planning.

This proposed project would therefore take account of the successful work to date in the delivery of the partnership 2030 Vision and the Council's Core Purpose. This would further enable the Council to define what it would do and how (within the budget available), what outcomes were expected, how these would be measured, what resources would be allocated and where it would focus its influence. This would ensure a clear correlation between the policy objectives of the Council and its budget / resource allocation process.

The report concluded by detailing the summary of budget proposals for 2020/21; precepts; the Capital Programme 2020/21 to 2022/23; and sought the Committee's comments to Cabinet which could be considered as part of the formal approval of the Budget Plan for 2020/21 and the Council Tax for 2020/21.

The following appendices were attached to the report:

- [Appendix A](#) Individual School Budgets 2020/21
- [Appendix B](#) Draft Council Budget Summary 2020/21
- [Appendix C](#) Fees and Charges 2020/21
- [Appendix D](#) Capital Programme 2020/21 - 2021/22

REPORTS

“Tool-Kit” for the Armed Forces Covenant

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that provided information, in accordance with the Committee's Work Programme, of the latest position regarding the “Tool-Kit” for the Armed Forces Covenant and recommending a way forward.

The report indicated that the Armed Forces Covenant was a promise from the nation ensuring that those who served or who had served in the Armed Forces, and their families, were treated fairly in recognition of the sacrifices they made on behalf of the country; that Covenant was not designed to give the Armed Forces, Veterans and their families' preferential treatment compared with other citizens but should ensure that they got a fair deal and were not disadvantaged because of their Service; that



Covenant relied on the government, communities, businesses, and individuals of the UK to actively support it in order to make a difference; and that Local Authorities were at the heart of that support group. The six councils in the Liverpool City Region had all signed the Covenant, and this review examined how they were working hard to make sure that Servicemen and women, veterans and their families got a fair deal.

The report concluded that the Committee had agreed during the last Municipal Year that a report be submitted on the “Tool-Kit” for the Armed Forces Covenant; that as reported at previous meetings the Committee had been advised that colleagues in the Liverpool City Region were preparing the tool-kit; and that this task had now been completed and the tool-kit had been circulated to Liverpool City Region local authorities. A copy of the tool-kit was attached as an [appendix](#) to the report.

Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee’s inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.

The report indicated that the Government’s Statutory Guidance was comprehensive and was set out in the following chapters:

- Culture
- Resourcing
- Selecting Committee Members
- Power to Access Information
- Planning Work
- Evidence Sessions

The report concluded by detailing the up to date position regarding progress being made regarding the recent Local Government Association peer review in relation to Overview and Scrutiny receiving performance reports.

A copy of the Statutory Guidance on Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities published by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government was attached as an [appendix](#) to the report.

“Manage my Requests” (iCasework) System – Statistical Update Report

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Strategic Support that updated on the adoption of the “Manage my Requests” iCasework system (the system) for capturing, managing and reporting all customer complaints, representations and feedback across the Council including the number and nature of complaints by Service.

The report indicated that the system had now been fully rolled-out across the Council, providing a simple web-based interface for front-line staff, case workers and responsible managers for capturing, recording and reporting information; detailed the



new two stage complaints process; and detailed in tabular form complaints by service area.

The report concluded by detailing that there was still further work to be undertaken by individual services to ensure that the system was adopted in their performance management process and cycle, maximising the system functionality to streamline the complaints handling process and provide effective performance data; that the Strategic Support Service would continue to develop performance reporting to ensure that information and insight was shared with the Senior Leadership Board and Members; and that a number of staff had recently received complaints handling training from the Ombudsman and that the Council would continue to strive to learn from the feedback that it received.

Air Quality Update

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Highways and Public Protection that updated on air quality management and recent air quality developments in Sefton.

The report indicated that Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) was introduced under the Environment Act 1995, that evidence had shown that certain atmospheric pollutants were linked to poor health and that the Act placed a statutory duty on all Local Authorities to review and assess air quality in their areas at regular intervals; that arising from National Air Quality Standard (NAQS) Objectives 2 pollutants, Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter PM10 were still of concern in Sefton; that the ongoing review and assessment process had confirmed that in most of Sefton Air Quality was of a good standard and complied with the NAQS objectives; but that four localised areas in South Sefton had been identified where levels of Nitrogen Dioxide had exceeded or were close to the annual average standard of 40 µg/m³. Accordingly, Air Quality Management Areas (AQMA) had been declared in the four locations at:

- A5036 Princess Way and Crosby Road South Junction, Seaforth
- A5058 Millers Bridge and Derby Road Junction, Bootle
- A565 Crosby Road North and South Road Junction, Waterloo
- B5422 Hawthorne Road and Church Road Junction, Litherland

The report also provided information on real time automatic monitoring stations and the monitoring results in respect of Nitrogen Dioxide and Particulate Matter PM10; in accordance with a previous decision of the Committee (Minute No. 24 (4) of 22 October 2019) the report detailed the air quality impacts associated with traffic redistribution due to the opening of Broom's Cross Road; and air quality actions and developments associated with the Air Quality Members Reference Group, Clean Air Zone feasibility study, Schools Air Quality project, DEFRA Air Quality grant fund and the Taxi Electric Vehicle project.

The report concluded that air quality in the majority of Sefton was within NAQS Objectives and that action plans were in place to work towards compliance in the four AQMA areas; that there remained areas where there were major challenges to air quality including the expansion of the Port of Liverpool and the associated

increase in HGVs; that officers would continue to develop and implement air quality improvement actions under the direction of the Air Quality Members Reference Group; and a more detailed report, specifically on the development of the business case for a Sefton Clean Air Zone, would be submitted to a future meeting of this Committee.

Public Health Annual Report

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Head of Health and Wellbeing that provided information about the Public Health Annual Report 2018/19 (PHAR) on the issue of Air Quality in Sefton; and advising that the PHAR was the independent annual report of the Director of Public Health and was a statutory duty.

The report indicated that the PHAR was an independent report on one or several aspects of health in the local population; that in recent years, PHARs had increasingly been used as an advocacy tool, for example, to highlight specific population health priorities and generate momentum for change and to draw attention towards the needs of specific groups, and to raise the profile of preventative approaches to improving population health; and that the PHAR for 2018/19 focused on the issue of air quality.

The report advised that the issue of air quality was selected for the reasons:

- Health problems caused by air pollution are falling in Sefton as air quality improves but this remained a significant population health issue
- Improving air quality was an ongoing top priority for Sefton Council and for many residents, particularly those living in or close to air quality management areas in the south of the borough. At the same time, that awareness-raising activity was needed elsewhere in Sefton
- Sefton Council had put in place a wide range of measures to improve air quality, often ahead of other local authority areas, but this type of work was not always visible
- Nationally, air quality had become more high profile both in the media and in national Why Air Pollution and Health? policy following publication of the National Clean Air Strategy in 2019.

Following positive feedback on the use of a film format for last year's PHAR, a decision was taken by the Air Quality Cabinet Members Reference Group, to use the same format this year; and the Committee watched the film during the meeting. The film highlighted the following:

- What do we mean by air quality and what is 'air pollution'?
- Where does pollution come from?
- It's not just the great outdoors...
- What happens when we breathe polluted air?
- How big a problem is air pollution for Sefton?
- What is air quality like in Sefton?
- Protect yourself and your family
- So, what is the Council doing to tackle air pollution?
- What can you do (walking and cycling)?



- What can you do (drivers)?
- What's next (our goals)?
- Who are the other key people we need to work with?
- Calls to action

The report concluded that in the context of continuing work to develop a detailed proposal for a Sefton Clean Air Zone, the PHAR was a valuable resource to help local people understand the scale, nature and causes of air pollution in Sefton and why a clean air zone was being considered.

The Committee's attention was also drawn to a more detailed 'Factfile', Air Quality and Health, which accompanied the animation and provided additional information and resources to help people and organisations understand the issue of air pollution in Sefton and the changes they could make. The animation and pdf Factfile are available at: www.sefton.gov.uk/phar.

Climate Emergency

The Committee considered the joint [report](#) of the Head of Corporate Resources and Executive Director that advised that the Council, at its meeting held on 18 July 2019, agreed a motion to declare a Climate Emergency and this was attached as Appendix A to this report; that in accordance with the terms of the Council motion, work had progressed on developing a programme structure, strategy and initial implementation plan for delivery of the motion and its objectives; that in order to further inform this work, a baseline position was required across the Council of work that was currently underway or planned that could contribute to the Council achieving the aims of the motion; and that the report provided a summary of work undertaken to date and the exercise that was required to be led through each Overview and Scrutiny Committee in order to establish that baseline position.

The report also advised that each Overview and Scrutiny Committee was being asked to lead an immediate piece of work for completion by the next cycle of meetings that:

- (1) conducted a stock take of all activity in relation to carbon emissions that would inform a comprehensive council wide baseline position;
- (2) Identify all projects that were currently taking place across the council that would support the delivery of the Council's Strategy; and
- (3) Identify potential long-term issues that would need to be addressed for the Council to meet the objectives within the Council motion.

The report concluded that the output from the work referred to above should be reported back to Overview and Scrutiny Committees in March/April 2020 and be led by the respective Heads of Service in conjunction with the Committee members and Cabinet Member; and that necessary support would be available from the Cabinet Member - Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Service, the Head of Corporate Resources and the Executive Director in addition to the Council wide officer working group.



Council Tax Reduction (CTR) Scheme 2020/21, Council Tax Base 2020/21 and Changes to Council Tax Discounts for Empty Homes

The Committee considered the report of the Head of Corporate Resources that provided details of the review of the local Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2019/20 and which recommended that there be no change to the scheme for 2020/21 for working age claimants.

The report would also be considered by Cabinet and Council and changes were recommended to discretionary Council Tax Empty Homes discounts following the outcome of a public consultation, and an additional increase to the Council Tax long-term Empty Homes Premium following a consultation exercise that took place in 2018; and the report also recommended an increase in the Exceptional Hardship Fund (EHF) budget from £150,000 to £170,000 from 2020/21 onwards.

The report also provided an updated Council Tax Base for Sefton Council and each Parish area for 2020/21.

Attached as annexes to the report were the Council Tax Base Report 2020/21; a summary of feedback from the consultation on changing Council Tax Empty Homes discounts and the associated equality impact assessment; and a summary of feedback from the consultation on increasing Council Tax long-term empty homes premium and the associated equality impact assessment.

Climate Emergency - Update Report

The Committee received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources, on Climate Emergency Information and initial baseline results. The presentation outlined the following:

- Climate Change;
- Greenhouse Effect;
- Carbon;
- Offsetting;
- International Context;
- Quantifying Sefton's Emissions;
- Key Features;
- Scope 1 and 2:
 - Council Operations;
 - How the information was collected and what is included;
 - Big emitters, some examples;
 - What does 15,547 tonnes equate to;
- Scope 3 what is included:
 - Corporate Resources;
- Evaluating the Baseline;
- Next Steps;
- Contact Details;
- Why a CO2 Focus; and
- Offsetting - Diagram.

Levels of Disciplinary, Grievance and Sickness Absence

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Personnel Officer, which provided information on the levels of discipline, grievance and sickness absence within the Council (excluding schools).

The report indicated that based on current records the total number of 'available days', from 1 October 2018 to 30 September 2019, was 619,617 Full Time Equivalent (FTE) days; that total sickness absence, both long and short term, was 38,735 FTE days which equated to 6.25%; that this comprised 1.84% short term and 4.4% long term; and that the overall Corporate target was 4% (short term 2.2%; long term 1.8%).

A programme through the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) would commence shortly and would provide extra support for employees to gain further help and assistance. This would involve (at no cost to Sefton) a dedicated consultant to sign post employees to a variety of interventions. This service would be complementary to Occupational Health.

Annexe 1 to the report provided a breakdown of formal cases for October 2018 to September 2019; and the report concluded by stating that for the period October 2018 to September 2019, 11 employees were suspended from the Authority.

Annexe 2 to the report provided data across a period of 12 months to 30 September 2019 and therefore provided an analysis of absence levels across departments. Organisational change within Sefton would continue to impact on making direct comparisons across departments but support was provided across all service areas.

Work Programme 2019/20, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan

The Committee considered the reports of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views of the Work Programme for 2019/20, the identification of potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by a Working Group(s) appointed by the Committee; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and provided an update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

PRESENTATIONS

Climate Change Emergency

The Committee also received a presentation from Stephanie Jukes, Section Manager Energy and Environmental Management, Corporate Resources on the background to climate change and the Council's Climate Emergency Declaration which included information on:

- Sefton's target of net zero carbon by 2030; and the establishment of a working group and its commencement of work on a strategy, action plan and partnership working
- How Sefton quantified its emissions using the scope of the "Greenhouse Gas Protocol"



- Next steps which included most departments having now received information on the issues associated with the Climate Emergency Declaration, had been tasked with completing an initial scoping exercise and to consider further options

WORKING GROUPS

During the year the Committee established a Working Group and considered a Working Group Final Report and updates on previously approved Final Reports relating to:

Ethical Business Practices Working Group Final Report

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that presented formally the final report of the Council’s Ethical Business Practices Working Group.

Digital Inclusion Working Group – Update on Recommendations

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that set out the progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

The report also indicated that the Head of Economic Growth and Housing had advised that, additional to the responses to the recommendations, Sefton was aligning itself to Liverpool City Region (LCR) proposed Digital Programme structure, which would allow easier and better flow of information and ideas, and allow Sefton to move the “whole” Digital agenda forward at a pace.

Area Committees Working Group Final Report – Update on Recommendations

The Committee considered the [report](#) of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that provided a monitoring report setting out progress made in respect of the recommendations formulated by the Area Committees Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

The report indicated that Area Committees ceased to operate and were replaced with Community Forums; that Constituency Forums were subsequently replaced with “Community Chats”; that the Head of Communities supported the operation of the Community Chats; and that the first round of Community Chats were held at 6.30 p.m. on the dates set out below and were advertised on the Council’s website and via press releases to local news websites and newspapers.

Bootle - 27 February 2019 – Bootle Town Hall
 Sefton Central – 7 March 2019 – Formby Professional Development Centre
 Southport – 13 February 2019 – The Atkinson

[Appendix 1](#) to the report provided information compiled by the Head of Communities on the operation of the Community Chat events whilst [Appendix 2](#) detailed views of Members of the Council on the first round of the events.

Members Welfare Reform Reference Group - Update

The Committee considered [update](#) of the Head of Health and Wellbeing on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group.

The update provided information on the purpose of the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Member Reference Group and in particular on activities associated with:

- The WRAP Conference
- Action Plan and next steps
- The Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme
- Summer Holidays Food Programme
- A project to provide winter coats

The update concluded by providing a narrative that had been developed and agreed by WRAP that would be used as a factsheet with the purpose of describing to other Members the services available in support of welfare reform; and it was emphasised that the focus was on sharing information about services available which included:

- ELAS
- Sefton Foodbank Network
- Welfare Rights Team
- Sefton Helping Hands
- Citizens Advice
- Sefton CVS
- Credit Unions

Members Welfare Reform Reference Group - Update

The Committee considered an [update](#) of the Head of Health and Wellbeing on the operation of the Members' Welfare Reform Reference Group.

The update provided information on the purpose of the Welfare Reform and Anti-Poverty (WRAP) Cabinet Member Reference Group and in particular on activities associated with:

- Holiday Food Programme
- Material Matters Programme
- Fuel Poverty Awareness
- Sefton Community Marketplace / Community Shop
- ELAS update summary performance data for the period 1 April 2019 – 30 September 2019

Cabinet Member Reports

In keeping with previous years and in order to keep Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees. The Terms of Reference of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee covered the portfolio of the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services.



Pre-Scrutiny – The Key Decision Forward Plan

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee has also been given the opportunity to pre-scrutinise items from the Council’s Key Decision Forward Plan. The Forward Plan is submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee as part of the Work Programme update. The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet to make effective decisions by giving the Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to examine issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

The Year Ahead

The Committee will continue to make progress on the following priorities over the coming year:

- The consideration of budget proposals and savings and the Medium Term Financial Plan
- Review the Council Tax Reduction Scheme during the seventh year of operation
- Social Media Use and Effectiveness
- the Update on the Progress of the LCR Digital Inclusion Strategy
- Monitoring the operation of the Procurement Strategy
- Update on the disposal of surplus council owned land
- Monitoring reports on the implementation of recommendations arising from Overview and Scrutiny Working Group reviews
- Other service operational reports as deemed appropriate by the Committee

I envisage the forthcoming year to be extremely busy and challenging for the Committee due to the impact of Covid-19, which will be felt for many years to come, the difficult budgetary position and financial savings that have to be met in Sefton. The Committee will have to oversee the development of a three-year budget from 2020/21 to 2022/23 with an estimated shortfall over the three-year period of £45m; this being on top of the £233 million budget reductions identified since 2010.

Finally, and on behalf of the Committee, I would like to thank everyone who has contributed to our work over the past year. I would personally like to thank all Members of the Committee, Councillor Paulette Lappin, Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services and officers who have attended meetings for their support to me over the past year and provided the Committee with valuable information.

Councillor Sue Bradshaw
September 2020

