

MEETING: CABINET MEMBER - REGENERATION
DATE: Wednesday 17 March 2010
TIME: 11.00 am
VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle (this meeting will be video conferenced to the Town Hall, Southport)

Councillor

DECISION MAKER: Maher
SUBSTITUTE: P Dowd

SPOKESPERSONS: Hough Ibbs

SUBSTITUTES: McGuire Pearson

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Olaf Hansen Committee Clerk
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The Cabinet is responsible for making what are known as Key Decisions, which will be notified on the Forward Plan. Items marked with an * on the agenda involve Key Decisions

A key decision, as defined in the Council's Constitution, is: -

- any Executive decision that is not in the Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme approved by the Council and which requires a gross budget expenditure, saving or virement of more than £100,000 or more than 2% of a Departmental budget, whichever is the greater
- any Executive decision where the outcome will have a significant impact on a significant number of people living or working in two or more Wards

If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

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A G E N D A

Items marked with an * involve key decisions

<u>Item No.</u>	<u>Subject/Author(s)</u>	<u>Wards Affected</u>	
1.	Apologies for absence		
2.	Declarations of Interest Members and Officers are requested to give notice of any personal or prejudicial interest and the nature of that interest, relating to any item on the agenda in accordance with the relevant Code of Conduct.		
3.	Minutes of the meeting held on 17 February, 2010		(Pages 5 - 10)
* 4.	Delivery of Stepclever-Funded Projects in the 2010-12 Period Report of the Planning and Economic Development Director	Derby; Linacre;	(Pages 11 - 30)
5.	Additional Pitch Provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Sefton Joint Report of the Planning and Economic Development Director and the Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director	All Wards	(Pages 31 - 42)
6.	Informed Assessment of the Economic Viability of Affordable Housing in Sefton - Consultation Draft Report of the Planning and Economic Development Director	All Wards	(Pages 43 - 50)
* 7.	Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment 2008 - Final Report Report of the Planning and Economic Development Director	All Wards	(Pages 51 - 62)
8.	Local Resilience Action Plan Monitoring Report of the Neighbourhood and Investment Programmes Director	All Wards	(Pages 63 - 74)

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THE "CALL IN" PERIOD FOR THIS SET OF MINUTES ENDS AT 12 NOON ON FRIDAY 26 FEBRUARY, 2010. MINUTE NOS. 101 AND 103 ARE NOT SUBJECT TO "CALL IN".

CABINET MEMBER - REGENERATION

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON WEDNESDAY 17 FEBRUARY 2010

PRESENT: Councillor Maher

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Hough and Ibbs

97. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence were received.

98. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of interest were received.

99. MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 20 JANUARY, 2010

RESOLVED:

That the Minutes of the meeting held on 20 January 2010, be confirmed as a correct record.

100. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT AND CONSULTATION FRAMEWORK

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Development Director that sought comments on the final draft of the Sefton Business Engagement and Consultation Framework for submission to the Sefton Borough Partnership.

Members expressed their concern that the membership of the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel. In particular they were unsure about be the contribution from specific Panel members to business engagement, for example the NHS and emergency services; and felt there that was a lack of any detail as to who would be the representatives from Sefton businesses.

A copy of the Business Engagement and Consultation Framework was attached as an annexe to the report.

This item was a key decision and was included on the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

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RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Business Engagement and Consultation Framework report be noted;
- (2) the Planning and Economic Development Director be requested to note the Members' concern regarding the membership of the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel; and
- (3) the Planning and Economic Development Director be requested to provide the detail of which businesses would provide Public Engagement and Consultation Panel members.

101. 'SHOP SEFTON 2010' – SUPPORTING OUR TOWN CENTRES

Further to Minute No.131 of the Cabinet Member - Technical Services meeting held on the 10 February 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the joint report of the Planning and Economic Development Director and the Leisure and Tourism Director on 'Shop Sefton 2010' – Supporting Our Town Centres, that sought approval to enter into a partnership agreement with Liverpool Biennial in order to deliver a range of activities within Sefton's town centres that would help to enhance their viability and vitality. The report indicated that a decision on the matter was required to comply with standard portfolio reporting procedures.

The report also indicated that whilst officers had met with different owners of empty shops throughout the borough in order to use premises for a range of activities, including art work shops, window dressing, business advice etc, in order to create greater foot fall and raise the profile of town centres, due to rent and other overheads the remaining Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) grant of £48,131 would not sufficiently cover all costs for such purposes. Officers had explored alternatives and recommended that a partnership with Liverpool Biennial be established to deliver a range of activities in retail centres across the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report, and the fact that further progress reports would be submitted, as necessary, be noted; and
- (2) Cabinet be recommended to:
 - (a) note and endorse the bid submitted to the Arts Council, England;
 - (b) subject to securing Arts Council grant funding – as outlined in paragraph 7.2 of the report, agree that the Council should enter into a partnership agreement with Liverpool Biennial as outlined in paragraph 8.0 of the report;

- (c) note that the indicative delivery timetable is subject to change, as outlined in paragraph 6.0 of the report; and
- (d) give authority to the Legal Director to execute the partnership agreement.

102. AN ECONOMIC STRATEGY FOR RURAL MERSEYSIDE AND ACTION PLAN – PHASE 2

Further to Minute No.132 of the of Cabinet Member - Technical Services meeting held on the 10 February 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Development Director on the Economic Strategy for Rural Merseyside and Action Plan – Phase 2 and indicating that a decision on the matter was required in order to comply with the standard portfolio reporting procedures.

The report indicated that whilst the vast majority of the £3.9 billion available from the Rural Development Programme for England was earmarked for agri-environment and other land management schemes in rural areas, some £2.2 million was available for the Merseyside sub-region; that a study had been undertaken by specialist consultants – ‘Rural Innovation’ and the next steps required the development of an Action Plan, which would attract funding from a number of sources including the Regional Development Agency and European Regional Development Fund; and that the Action Plan would support the preparation of master bids to draw down the funding if approved.

RESOLVED:

That the report, and the fact that further update reports would be submitted, as necessary, be noted

103. DUNNINGS BRIDGE ROAD CORRIDOR IMPROVEMENT PROJECT

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Strategic Director Communities on the Dunnings Bridge Road Corridor Public Realm Improvements, which sought approval to include the Dunnings Bridge Road Corridor Project within the Capital Programme for 2010/11.

The report set out the additional information on the nature of the proposed scheme, and requested approval to the funding being included within the Capital Programme 2010/11, subject to this funding being approved by the NWDA/ERDF. The report also outlined timescales/slippages and financial implications of the scheme.

The Cabinet Member expressed his concern that the acoustic barriers installed along Dunnings Bridge Road were in a severe state of disrepair.

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Several of the barrier panels were broken and needed to be replaced; in addition they were very also unsightly due to being extremely dirty. He suggested that funds should be set aside for the maintenance of the barriers.

This item was a key decision and was included on the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Dunnings Bridge Road Corridor Improvement Project report be noted;
- (2) the Cabinet be recommended to approve the inclusion of the Dunnings Bridge Road Corridor Project within Sefton's Capital Programme 2010/11, subject to ERDF, RDA and LTP funding being confirmed;
- (3) the Cabinet be recommended to note that no further expenditure commitment will be entered into until all resources for the project are secured; and
- (4) the Cabinet be recommended to request further progress reports.

104. JOINT EMPLOYMENT LAND AND PREMISES STUDY 2008 - FINAL REPORT

Further to Minute No.165 of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 10 February 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Development Director that reported the key findings of the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study, which was one of a number of key evidence gathering studies that were being undertaken to inform the Core Strategy process and to guide advice and decisions on individual employment proposals and planning applications.

This item was a key decision and was included on the Council's Forward Plan of Key Decisions.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the key findings of the Joint Employment Land and Premises Study for Sefton be noted; and
- (2) the key findings of the study to inform the emerging Core Strategy, detailed within the report, be endorsed.

105. NORTH WEST REGIONAL STRATEGY 2010: DRAFT PART 1 CONSULTATION

Further to Minute No.166 of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 10 February 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the report of the Planning and Economic Development Director that informed of the consultation on the Draft Part 1 of the forthcoming Northwest Regional Strategy and sought delegated authority from the Cabinet for the Planning and Economic Development Director to provide partial comments on behalf of Sefton and to contribute towards a joint Liverpool City Region response.

Members expressed their concern that only Blackpool was singled out as a national tourist destination, with Southport only considered to be a regional destination. Members suggested that Southport should be given parity with Blackpool they also believed that the Strategy needed to include reference to Southport being 'England's Classic Resort' and the 'Golf Coast' in emphasising Southport's appeal.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the key elements of the North West Regional Strategy 2010: Draft Part 1 Consultation be noted and the suggested (partial) consultation response set out in the report be approved; and
- (2) the Planning and Economic Development Director be authorised to send the suggested consultation response, and any necessary further consultation comments, to the Department for Communities and Local Government as part of the Council's formal response to this consultation exercise.

106. PLANNING AND ECONOMIC REGENERATION DEPARTMENT - PERFORMANCE REPORT: APRIL - SEPTEMBER 2009

Further to Minute No.168 of the meeting of the Planning Committee held on 10 February 2010, the Cabinet Member considered the six-monthly report of the Planning and Economic Development Director on the progress towards the Planning Department meeting its Service and Corporate Plan objectives and targets for the period to September 2009.

RESOLVED:

That the Planning and Economic Regeneration Department – Performance Report for April to September 2009 be noted.

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107. REVENUE AND CAPITAL EXPENDITURE MONITORING TO 31 DECEMBER 2009

The Cabinet Member considered the report fo the Planning and Economic Development Director that provided the 9 month forecast position, based on information as at the 31 December 2009, in relation to the Portfolio's 2009/10 Revenue Budget and Capital Programme.

RESOLVED:

That the progress made on the Regeneration Portfolio's revenue budgets, which are subject to risk-based monitoring, be noted.

108. INTRODUCTION OF A PILOT CUSTOMER INCENTIVE SCHEME IN SOUTH SEFTON

The Cabinet Member considered the report of the Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director that set out a pilot customer incentive scheme for South Sefton and explained the outcomes and benefits.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) due to the need for resources to be used and used the focus on areas of deprivation, the fact that this pilot is being run in South Sefton, be noted;
- (2) the potential benefits of a pilot local customer incentive scheme, as detailed within the report, be noted;
- (3) the Council as the lead organisation within the scheme be approved;
- (4) the Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director be requested to provide further updates on performance of the Pilot Customer Incentive Scheme to inform potential roll out to other areas and its continuation, subject to resources being available; and
- (5) the fact that additional resources were not required by the Council to implement the pilot, as detailed within the report, be noted.

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REPORT TO: CABINET MEMBER - REGENERATION

DATE: 17TH MARCH 2010

SUBJECT: DELIVERING THE STEPCLEVER PROGRAMME 2010-12

WARDS AFFECTED: LINACRE/DERBY

REPORT OF: PLANNING & ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

CONTACT OFFICER: MARK LONG (x3471)

EXEMPT/ CONFIDENTIAL: NO

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To note contracts awarded to Sefton Council under the Stepclever Delivery Plan 2010-12; to approve a recruitment process for filling new posts that maximises redeployment and minimises recruitment; and to approve a revised structure and establishment for the Economic Regeneration Division of the Planning & Economic Regeneration Department.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To authorise a revised establishment and complement of staff following the termination of contracts ending 31st March 2010, and the commencement of new contracts on or after 1st April 2010.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That members:

- (i) Establish the posts in Enterprise Gateway as set out in para 23,
- (ii) Approve the organisation chart as set out in Annex 4, and
- (iii) Approve the maximum use of redeployment to fill vacancies in the new structure, with market recruitment a last resort and requiring the permission of the Vacancy Panel.

KEY DECISION: Yes

FORWARD PLAN: Yes

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IMPLEMENTATION DATE: After expiry of call-in period

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

The alternative is not to accept the offer of contracts valued at £9.14 million under the new Stepclever programme. The 20 staff on fixed-term contracts ending on 31st March would not be replaced, and the outputs associated with the new contracts would not be delivered (currently estimated at 354 start-ups created, 730 jobs created, 100 jobs safeguarded, and 2,250 businesses engaged). These losses are unnecessary given the availability of 100% external funding to cover all costs, and unacceptable given the impact of the reductions on the most disadvantaged wards in Sefton, Merseyside and indeed the UK.

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: The costs for delivering the Stepclever programme 2010-12 will be fully funded from external resources.

Financial: Any staff redundancy costs arising from the succession scheme, either at its commencement, or at its end, in March 2012, will be met from within the external funding resources.

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure		£3.29m		
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources		0		
Specific Capital Resources (LEGI)		£3.29m		
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure		£5.85m		
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources		0		
Funded from External Resources (LEGI)		£5.85m		
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y	31 st March 2012			
How will the service be funded post expiry?	Either terminated, or alternative external funding.			

Legal: N/a

Risk Assessment: Risks – payment is on outputs delivered so it is possible enough income is not generated to cover costs; that sufficient number & quality of staff will not be recruited; that demand for products and services will not materialise.

Risk mitigation – the project will track demand closely; adjust cost base to revealed demand; utilise project balances; and maximise redeployment.

Asset Management: Assets of any Stepclever project must be recorded in a register and not disposed of without the express consent of Liverpool CC as accountable body for LEGI grant.

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

Stepclever Board – 21st December 2009

Stepclever Board – 12th January 2010

Cabinet Member for Regeneration – 20th January 2010

Business Support Unit, CEO & Regeneration Depts

Personnel Dept

Finance Dept – FD 333 - The Acting Finance and Information Services Director has been consulted and his comments have been incorporated into this report.

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CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being		✓	
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities		✓	
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy	✓		
8	Children and Young People	✓		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Regeneris Consulting (2009), Stepclever Programme Impact Evaluation

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Background

1. Members received a report on 20th January 2010 introducing the Mid Term Review of the Stepclever programme, with a verbal update on the Stepclever Delivery Plan for the period 2010-12.
2. It was resolved that:
 - “(1) The Stepclever Mid-Term Review and Delivery Plan report be noted;
 - (2) The Delivery Plan be approved; and
 - (3) The Planning and Economic Regeneration Director be requested to produce a follow-up report on the implementation of the Delivery Plan including implications for staff and contracts” (minute 10/94).
3. The rest of this report explains the variations in staffing structure and staffing levels necessary to implement the new Stepclever projects for which the Council is responsible.

Transition arrangements

4. The previous report in January 2010 explained that Sefton is responsible for 6 projects in the 2007-10 Stepclever Delivery Plan. The contracts, with their complement of staff (Sefton employees only) and contract expiry dates, are listed below:

Projects 2007-10	Contract value (£ million)	Total employees	Expiry date
Enterprise Gateway	7.81	10	31 st March 2010
Business Neighbourhoods	2.02	1	31 st March 2010
Supply Mersey – Buy Side	1.09	7	31 st March 2010
Step Into Construction	0.72	3	31 st March 2010
Working for Yourself	1.04	3	31 st Dec 2010
Property Support Project	2.83*	1	31 st March 2011
Total	15.51	25	

* Contract value combines capital and revenue.

5. The Stepclever Board on 12th January 2010 approved a Delivery Plan for the 2010-12 period including three projects for which Sefton will be the accountable body for delivery (although in all cases working jointly with Liverpool CC or Liverpool Vision to design and co-ordinate the project). The projects are funded by a combination of carry forward of underspend from 2009/10, and an additional allocation for 2010/11 (which may itself be spent over a two year period to March 2012):

Projects 2010-12	Carry forward (£ million)	Allocation (£ million)	Totals available (£ million)
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Projects 2010-12	Carry forward (£ million)	Allocation (£ million)	Totals available (£ million)
Enterprise Gateway	(est) 1.30	3.95	5.25
Business Neighbourhoods	0	0.60	0.60
Property Support Project	(est.) 1.80	1.49	3.29
Totals	3.10	6.04	9.14

6. The Stepclever Board accepted the following transition arrangements:
- **Construction, Supply-Buy Side and Enterprise Gateway** will all end, but elements of service delivery from all three will be included within a new Enterprise Gateway project.
 - **Business Neighbourhoods** will be continued but at a scaled-down level, with a new proposal to be worked up by Liverpool and Sefton Councils.
 - **Working for Yourself** will be evaluated during 2010. If the evaluation is encouraging, the Board will consider funding it for a further period. Until then, the project is to be placed on a “Reserve List”. (As the 2010-12 funding is completely allocated, support after December 2010 will depend on slippage or re-allocation from elsewhere in the programme.)
 - **Property Support Project** will continue to term, with a decision taken nearer the end-date as to its extension or closure, depending on progress with its programme of property improvements. As this is a capital project, any decision by the Stepclever Board (and approved by Liverpool CC as accountable body) regarding the use of the allocation in Sefton will be reported back to Cabinet for approval to include in the capital programme.
7. The planned outputs of the new Delivery Plan for all 6 wards of the Stepclever area include 354 start-ups created, 730 jobs created, 100 jobs safeguarded, 2,250 businesses engaged, and 3,000 pupils engaged. This is a substantial intervention, on top of the results already delivered in the area (albeit impacted by the current global recession). The new Enterprise Gateway project is responsible for all the “hard” business outputs in the 2010-12 programme, such as investment and employment, and is therefore the keystone of the Delivery Plan.
8. Stepclever Board meets on 9th March, when the Enterprise Gateway Delivery Plan is to be received and approved. Officers will make a verbal report on the outcome of this meeting.

Staffing implications

9. It was inevitable once the StepClever Board agreed the new Delivery Plan that the overall level of resources and annual spend rates would be less in the next two years compared with the past three years.
10. After much consideration, and adopting a revised service model, a new Gateway project has been costed at £5.25 million (including £1.3 million of roll-forward) and will employ 16 staff. The project incorporates certain operational efficiencies which allow it to achieve about the same or better level of performance compared with the old Gateway, despite the reduction in funding. Nevertheless, a reduction in headcount is inevitable.
11. Sefton Council is the employer for the 20 staff employed in the old Gateway, Construction and Supply – Buy Side projects. All are on fixed-term contracts expiring 31st March 2010. The Council's Personnel and Legal Directors advise that where a vacancy is created that can be filled from a pool of potential candidates because they are in the same "job group", then a fair and non-discriminatory method of selecting one of them must be chosen. It is not generally possible to place individuals whose contracts are ending into new posts, as those not selected could object they have been unfairly passed over.
12. As we wish to ensure maximum continuity in Gateway, both for service users and for skilled and experienced staff, the preferred solution is to ringfence the 16 new posts for the 20 staff at risk, and allow all candidates to apply for any of the vacancies.
13. The advantage for individuals is that they have a choice of jobs to apply for as they approach the end of their contract of employment. The Council will enhance this choice by entering individuals into the general redeployment pool so they have first pick at any vacancy arising in the authority.
14. The advantage for the project is that it allows the employer to choose the right person for the job. It is desirable to match candidates against the revised service description and job profile so that we have the best possible fit, and bring the workforce up to date with current and anticipated requirements.
15. If it is not possible to fill every post from the 20 affected staff, then the field will be extended to all in the redeployment pool; and only if vacancies remain after the redeployment process is exhausted shall we seek permission through Vacancy Panel to recruit in the open market.
16. A fast-track grievance procedure will be put in place to handle any disputes that may arise from the redeployment process, and final decision-making powers resting with the Planning & Economic Regeneration Director.

Proposed staffing structure and establishment

17. The organisation charts for the old Gateway, Construction and Supply – Buy Side projects are attached as Annexes 1-3.

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18. The established posts for these three projects are as follows:

Project	Post Title	Emp No	Post	Grade
Construction	Business Systems Administrator	804923	09029	SO 1/2
	Construction Business Manager Team Lead	718248	09030	PO 12
	Construction Business Support Officer	804677	09028	SO 1/2
Enterprise Gateway	Administration and Finance Officer	801572	16127	Sc 5
	Business Development Manager	803237	16122	PO 6
	Business Development Manager	803413	16123	PO 6
	Business Development Manager	802175	11012	PO 6
	Business Start-Up Manager	803904	16125	PO 6
	Business Start-Up Manager	803288	16124	PO 6
	Business Start-up Manager	805185	16751	PO 6
	Enterprise Gateway Coordinator	803327	16121	PO 14
	Enterprise Gateway Manager	623243	16120	HAY 6
	Monitoring and Information Officer	623370	16126	SO 1/2
Supply	Administration and Technical Officer	803822	16381	Sc 1/2
	Procurement Development Manager	803782	16265	PO 6
	Procurement Development Manager	632478	16266	PO 6
	Procurement Development Manager	803753	16263	PO 6
	Procurement Development Manager	804972	16268	PO 6
	Procurement Development Manager	803855	16267	PO 6
	Project Man. Step-Up to Supply (Buy Side)	666062	07127	PO 14

19. The new structure and establishment for Enterprise Gateway take into account what has been achieved by these three projects, and incorporates feedback from the Stepclever Mid Term Review (2009-10), and from an internal review of Enterprise Gateway in late 2009.
20. The overall objective of the new Enterprise Gateway is to close the gap between the 6 Stepclever wards and the Liverpool City Region in terms of levels of enterprise, entrepreneurship, employment and business success.

21. The project comprises four strands of activity:

1. Engagement and Outreach

The project will establish referral networks with key organisations in the community to raise awareness, stimulate demand and provide a simplified access route for those thinking of self-employment or starting a business. In addition key sectors will be targeted for support. There will be a calendar of awareness sessions with general information about starting a business, working with other organisations to provide targeted sessions for special groups such as women, black and ethnic minorities and young people. Taking a grassroots approach, we will embed Enterprise Champions in local community organisations and centres to promote and support business opportunities for local people. The project will work with local entrepreneurs to become Enterprise Ambassadors, acting as role models to support those starting their own business.

2. Start-up Support and Aftercare

We will work in partnership with the network of existing community-based enterprise agencies in the Stepclever area to provide a fully integrated business start-up service. Support will include one-to-one advice from a SFEDI-accredited Business Start-up Advisor, business planning, access to finance (flexible discretionary grant for both start-ups and social enterprises, plus the Sefton Liverpool Investment Bond for social enterprises), a programme of tried-and-tested support activities for key sectors, together with special support targeted at groups traditionally under-represented in business. Gateway will offer a holistic service which supports the individual through pre-start, start-up and early stages of trading. We will establish a structured approach to aftercare including post-start tracking, mentoring, crisis intervention, access to premises and financial support to access professional services. We will encourage new businesses to join existing business networks to gain additional support and link into business opportunities.

3. Support for Existing Businesses

Gateway will provide intensive and tailored advice and assistance that promotes improvements in business performance. It will support struggling businesses as well as growing businesses, to both safeguard jobs and invest in growth opportunities. We will embed a team of SFEDI-accredited Business Development Managers within local business communities, providing direct expert support and where required drawing in appropriate specialist products and services. Gateway will aim to contact every company in the Stepclever area to establish a relationship, raise awareness of support and invite their participation. At the heart of the service is a detailed Assessment and Review of the company's needs, leading to an agreed Action Plan. Gateway will co-ordinate access to a wide range of mainstream and specialist support, such as access to finance (flexible support for investment in the company), use of energy and natural resources, support for industry-standard accreditations, access to professional services, effective buying, and workforce development. Companies

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needing urgent help will have access to a rapid response “business turnaround” service. Gateway will identify and target key sectors providing more intensive support for business growth and co-operation. Gateway will seize the opportunities presented by the 2010 World Expo in Shanghai to introduce local companies to emerging markets around the world and the benefits of international trade and investment.

4. Management and delivery

Gateway will be responsible for all business-facing delivery within the Stepclever Programme. Gateway will co-ordinate in-house and sub-contracted provision, and will ensure alignment with every other aspect of the Stepclever programme including enterprise in schools, business neighbourhoods and other enterprise activity.

As accountable body, Sefton Council will chair the Gateway Project Board, which will also include Liverpool Vision as strategic partner, and representatives from the Stepclever Board and the Stepclever Programmes Team.

Gateway will establish a senior manager who will lead and co-ordinate all elements of service delivery and programme management, accountable to the Gateway Board and reporting to the Programmes Team and Stepclever Board as required.

An integrated management information system will supply a regular and detailed flow of information on activities and outputs together with an assessment of the outcomes and impacts of Gateway.

22. The proposed staffing structure for the new Enterprise Gateway is set out in Annex 4.
23. In the new structure, the job roles and their proposed grades (all subject to the outcome of the Pay and Workforce Review) are:

Enterprise Gateway Manager (PO 14) – provides strategic leadership, develops relations with partners and providers, drives the implementation of the Gateway Delivery Plan, steers performance on the basis of feedback and best practice, and is accountable to the Gateway Project Board.

Senior Business Advisor (PO 10) – responsible for defining and developing the offer to customers, supervises the Business Development and Start-up Advisors, advises the Gateway Manager on all professional issues, and ensures quality of sub-contracted provision.

Business Development Advisor x 5 (PO 6) – pro-active outreach and engagement role, acting as account manager with a caseload of businesses, responsible for developing an ongoing relationship including financial assistance, assessment and action planning, and drawing in specialist support as required with aftercare.

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Business Start-Up Advisor x 3 (PO 6) - pro-active outreach and engagement role to stimulate demand, working closely with contracted CBED providers to refer and receive assisted businesses, and maximise survival through the first 36 months with financial assistance, and drawing in specialist support as required with aftercare.

Senior Project Development Officer (PO 6) – responsible for developing and maintaining the principal engagement networks for potential and existing businesses, co-ordination of marketing and outreach across Gateway and with the Programmes Team, and for developing projects above and beyond one-to-one advice to businesses such as sector/cluster development and collaborative projects.

Project Development Officer (sc6 – SO 1) – pro-active maintenance and development of outreach and engagement networks and processes, and operational support for projects.

Senior Finance & Monitoring Officer (PO 6) – maintain and continuously improve finance, output and client monitoring systems for the project, develop Service Level Agreements with providers, monitor performance to ensure standards, targets and priorities are being met, and supervise the finance and administration team to these ends.

Finance Officer (sc6 – SO 1) – responsible for operation of all project financial and output systems, supporting the Senior Finance & Monitoring Officer, ensuring compliance with financial procedures including audit, and monitoring SLAs with providers to improve performance

Information & Monitoring Officer (sc5 – 6) – responsible for maintaining and continuously improving comprehensive management information systems to support the whole Gateway team, including performance reporting and forecasting.

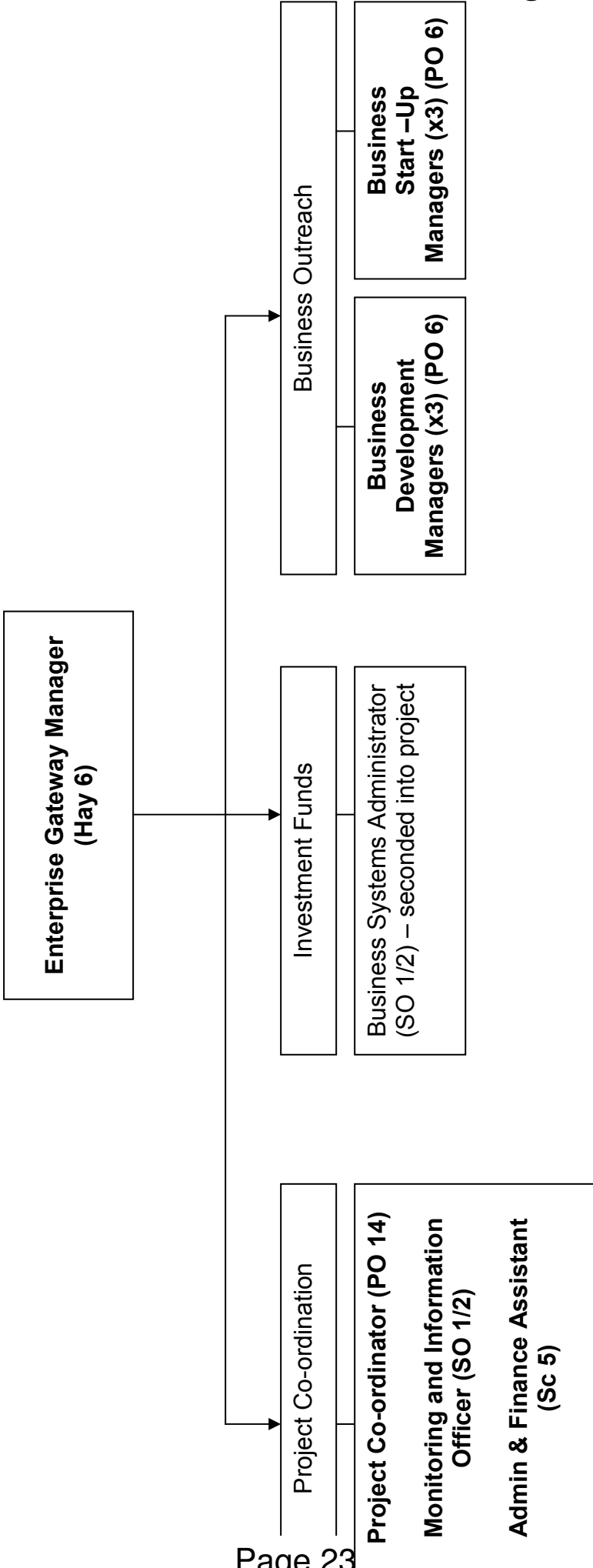
Administrator (Sc 5) – support for the whole Gateway team through the performance of clerical, administrative, financial, customer contact, event administration and other similar duties.

24. It has been possible to align all new job roles with posts already evaluated under the Pay & Workforce Review.
25. The trades unions have been consulted on the proposed structure and the filling of posts, and no comments have been received at the time of writing.
26. Any staff redundancy costs arising from the succession scheme, either at its commencement, or at its end, in March 2012, will be met from within the external funding resources.

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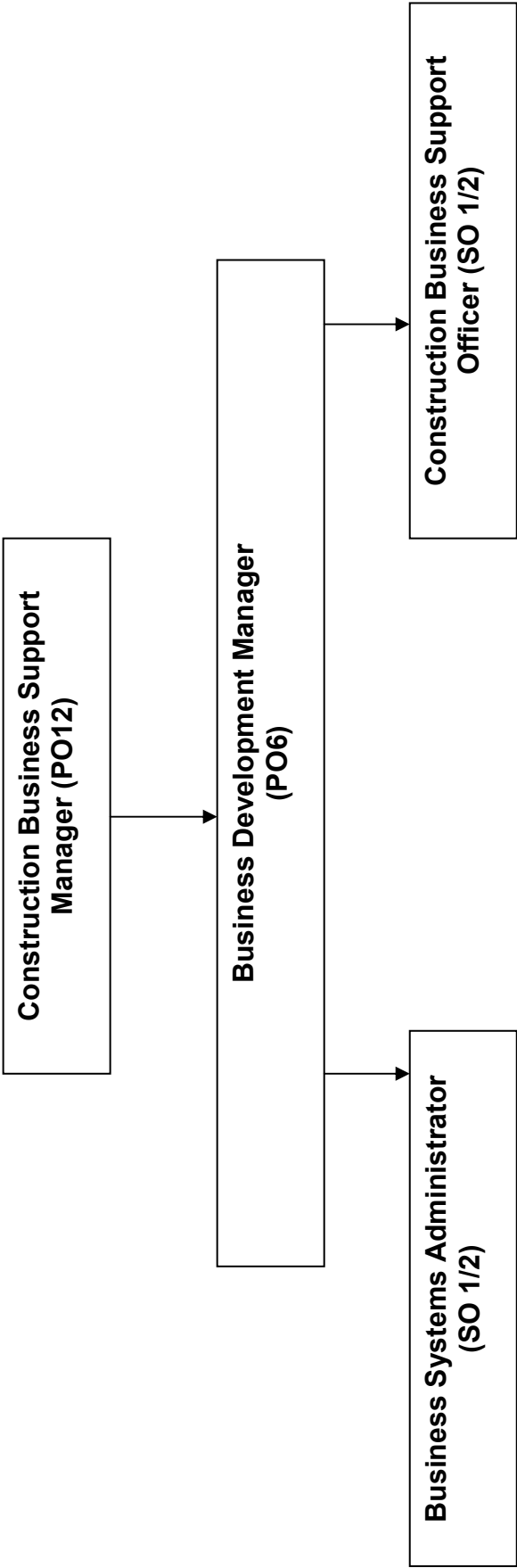
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Annex 1 – Enterprise Gateway (current staffing)



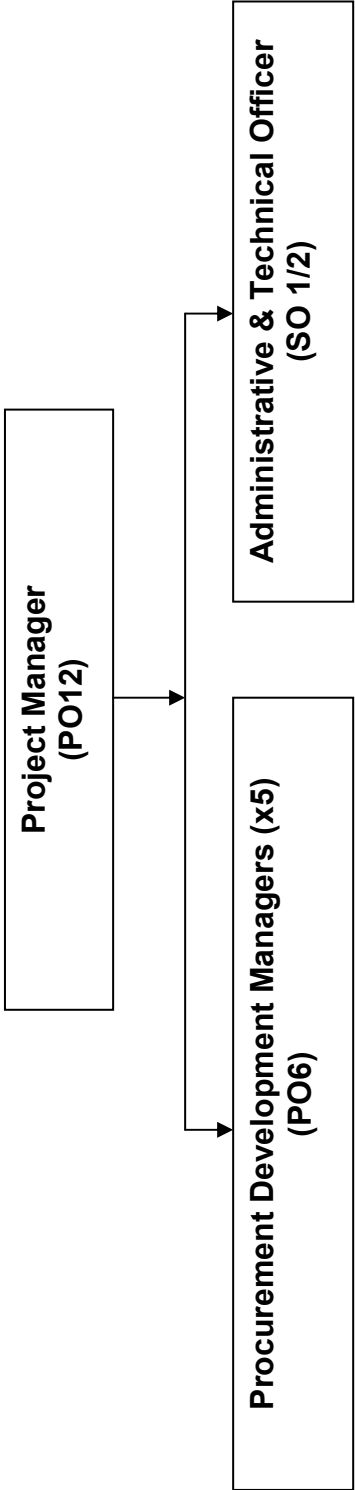
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Annex 2 – Build Sefton (current staffing)



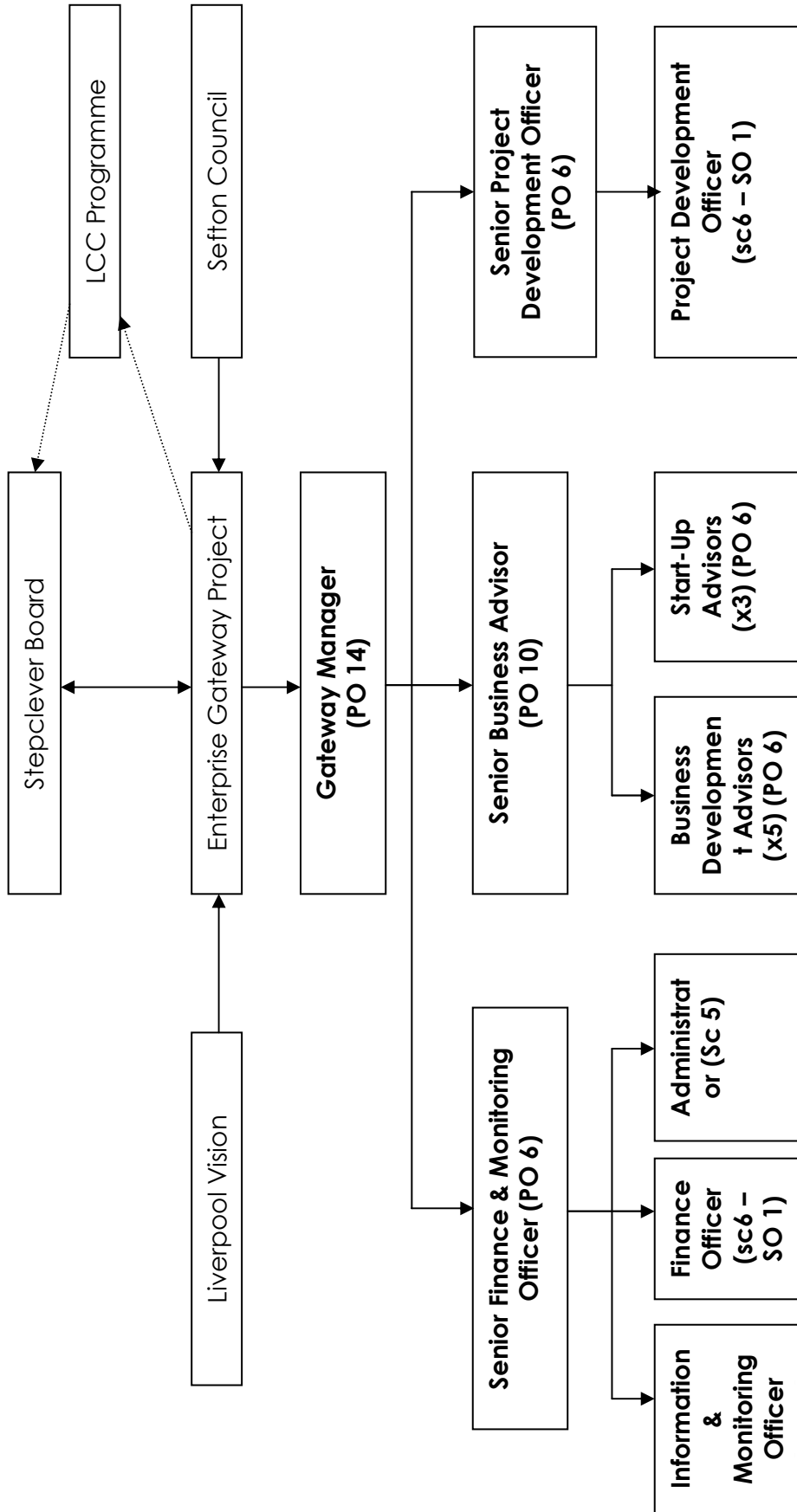
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Annex 3 – Step Up to Supply (Buy Side) Project (current staffing)



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Annex 4 – Enterprise Gateway (proposed staffing and context diagram)



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REPORT TO: Cabinet
Planning Committee
Cabinet Member Communities
Cabinet Member Regeneration

DATES: 15th April 2010 (Cabinet)
7th April 2010 (Planning Committee)
24th March 2010 (CM Communities)
17th March 2010 (CM Regeneration)

SUBJECT: Additional Pitch Provision for Gypsies and Travellers in Sefton

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REPORT OF: Alan Lunt – Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director
Andy Wallis – Planning and Economic Development Director

CONTACT OFFICER: Jim Ohren, Principal Manager, ☎ 934 3619
Ingrid Berry, Principal Planner ☎ 934 3551

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

This report explains the requirement on the local authority to secure additional pitch provision for gypsies and travellers; seeks approval to the methodology for site appraisal and selection; explains the process and likely timescale for site appraisal and submission of an application for gypsy and traveller site grant; and seeks delegated authority for the relevant Directors to make and submit an application for site grant should a suitable site (or sites) be identified, subject to subsequent endorsement by Cabinet.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

A decision is required in order to ensure that the relevant Directors have authority to submit an application for site grant in time for the deadline of 30th April 2010.

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RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Planning Committee and Cabinet Members note the report and recommend that Cabinet:

- 1) Note the report and the need to secure additional pitch provision (transit and permanent) for Gypsies and Travellers.
- 2) Approve the methodology for site appraisal and selection, and authorise the Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director in consultation with the Planning and Economic Regeneration Director to make minor changes to the scoring framework if early consultations with key partners/stakeholders show that this is necessary.
- 3) Authorise the Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director in consultation with the Planning and Economic Regeneration Director to submit an application for gypsy and traveller site grant to the Homes and Communities Agency on behalf of Sefton if the site appraisal process identifies a suitable site.
- 4) Agree that a further report be submitted to a subsequent Cabinet meeting in order to endorse any application for site gypsy and traveller site grant.

KEY DECISION: Yes

FORWARD PLAN: Yes

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Immediately, following the call in period after the Cabinet meeting on 15th April 2010.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: None

Financial: Exact costs are unknown at this time. Purchase of new site(s) is likely to be covered by a 100% Government grant, although availability is not guaranteed. (Site running costs are not met by the Government grant, but are defrayed by rents and service charges).

	2009/ 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>				
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: N/A

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

FD 347 - The Acting Finance and Information Services Director has been consulted and has no comments on this report.
 Environmental Protection Director; Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Director;
 Planning and Economic Regeneration Director

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities	✓		
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		✓	
8	Children and Young People	✓		

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment – University of Salford Housing and Urban Studies Unit - 2008
 Partial Review of the RSS - Interim Draft Policy for Gypsies and Travellers – 4NW - 2009
 Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessments Guidance – DCLG, Oct 2007
 Gypsy and Traveller Site Grant Guidance, HCA 2010

1.0 BACKGROUND

1.1 Under Section 8 of the Housing Act 1985 local authorities are required to consider the various accommodation needs of the local population and to carry out periodic reviews in order to provide relevant and appropriate provision to meet these needs. Section 225 of the Housing Act 2004 introduced a specific duty for local authorities to assess the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers within their localities. All authorities across the country are expected to respond to accommodation need where a need has been

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identified.

- 1.2 In relation to the future housing needs of Gypsies and Travellers, a report on this matter was considered by Sefton's Cabinet on 26th February 2009. This report summarised the findings of the Merseyside Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment together with the emerging requirements of the Partial Review of Regional Spatial Strategy. The report examined the likely implications for Sefton in relation to future additional permanent and transit pitch provision and meeting the housing and support needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Showpeople. It also sought delegated authority for the relevant Directors to make representations on behalf of Sefton Council to the Regional Spatial Strategy Partial review consultations and subsequent Examination in Public
- 1.3 The regional dimension is intended to ensure that all local authorities contribute to resolving the current shortage of authorised site accommodation in a strategic manner, which helps redress current imbalances in the pattern of provision, and enhances the sustainability of the Gypsy and Traveller site network.
- 1.4 At the time of the Cabinet report in February 2009 the interim draft Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy was subject to a consultation period, running until early March 2009. It indicated a minimum additional permanent residential pitch requirement for Sefton for the period 2007 to 2016 of 30 pitches, (i.e. 30 over and above the existing 16 pitches provided at present = 46 pitches in total) plus 5 transit pitches and 5 pitches for Travelling Showpeople
- 1.5 In line with the delegated authority granted by Cabinet representations were made on behalf of Sefton Council to the interim draft Partial Review consultation to the effect that the additional requirements were unjustified. The final version of the draft North West Plan Partial Review of the Regional Spatial Strategy was published in July 2009. In this version the figures for Sefton were revised downwards. Instead of 30 additional residential permanent pitches, it said 15 are required, plus 5 transit pitches, and there is no requirement to provide any Travelling Showpeople pitches. A statutory 12-week consultation period on the plan ended on 19th October 2009. The Examination in Public took place in early March and the Secretary of State's decision is expected later this year.
- 1.6 The revised figures vindicate Sefton Council's stance. They are much more acceptable, being very close to the figures arising from the Merseyside assessment commissioned by Sefton jointly with Knowsley, Wirral and Liverpool
- 1.7 The current position, therefore, is that Sefton should have a total of 31 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches for the period to 2016, with a similar number required over the next 10 years. As of 2010 there are currently 16 permanent pitches in Sefton, (at Broad Lane, Formby). Therefore provision for an additional 15 permanent pitches and 5 transit pitches needs to be made by to ensure adequate provision is made for the period to 2016.
- 1.8 Sefton has an existing policy in its Unitary Development Plan (UDP) for Gypsy and Traveller pitches (policy MD4). This is criteria based, and doesn't identify sites, but could provide the basis for permitting pitches in the absence of identified sites. The Local Development Framework, which Sefton are currently bringing forward, offers an opportunity to allocate sites for Gypsy and Traveller pitches. This will provide greater certainty for bringing sites forward and will help to enable funding bids to be successful.
- 1.9 The main document in Sefton's Local Development Framework is the Core Strategy. Work is in progress on this document and it anticipated this will be adopted in 2012. This document is likely to provide the broad policy framework for the provision of housing to meet all needs, including gypsy and travellers. However, it will not allocate land for gypsy and traveller pitches. Therefore, following on from the Core Strategy a Site Allocations Development Plan

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Document (DPD) will be produced. This will allocate land for uses such as housing and employment and include sites allocated for gypsy and traveller pitches.

- 1.10 Meanwhile, in advance of the adoption of the Core Strategy and the Site Allocations DPD the short term strategy for meeting the housing requirements of Gypsies and Travellers will be to identify suitable sites. As a starting point, it is proposed that we will examine sites over 0.5 hectares identified in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), as this is the minimum size of site that could meet our needs for a transit site. Ideally a site of about 2 hectares should be identified, but sites of this size are few and far between, so by setting the threshold higher we would be ruling out a number of sites which might be able to meet our needs in combination.
- 1.11 However, the SHLAA is a housing land study. Its purpose is to assess how much new housing land could potentially be available in Sefton over the next 15 years. Therefore it is proposed that these sites will be re-assessed using a bespoke scoring framework (albeit heavily informed by the scoring used in the SHLAA) as there will be different aspects, such as a suitable road access and different flood zone locational requirements, which need to be considered in relation to the identification of sites suitable for gypsies and traveller accommodation. This re-assessment will be used to identify a short-list of sites that will form the basis of consultation on the location of gypsy and traveller sites in Sefton.
- 1.12 Unlike the SHLAA, it is proposed that sites in the Green Belt be included if (and only if) no non-Green Belt sites are found to be suitable. This is because there is a potential that small, non-strategic Green Belt sites may be identified on the edge of the urban area and could be developed without a wider sub-regional Green Belt study having to have been completed.
- 1.13 The proposed site appraisal and selection criteria, in the form of a scoring framework, are attached at Appendix A. The scoring framework covers a range of issues that need to be considered when choosing a suitable gypsy and traveller site. The issues to be considered have been chosen as they have been identified in national policy guidance. These issues include obvious considerations such size and location, flood risk, accessibility and availability but also whether the land is likely to be suitable and whether the location would promote – or hinder - social inclusion. In this latter respect it is important that the site or sites will prove to be safe and secure for gypsies and travellers, will not present a barrier to integration with the wider local community, and also be broadly acceptable to existing local residents. Clearly, sensitivity to these considerations is required in appraising potential sites. Officers are mindful of this and aware of the importance that consultation with all stakeholders will play in arriving at judgments.
- 1.14 The Government has made available, through an annual bidding round, 100% grant aid for providing additional pitches/new sites once they are identified. The closing date for submissions in the current round is 30th April 2010. At the time of writing this report detailed appraisal work using the scoring framework has not been completed. However, it is envisaged that it may be possible to identify a site (or sites) that will prove suitable to submit for site grant funding, either before 30th April 2010 or reasonably soon thereafter. Should this be the case consultation with ward councillors and the local gypsy and traveller community as a minimum will take place as part of the submission, and subsequent Cabinet endorsement will be sought. Any site proposal would, of course, be subject to consultation with local residents as a separate exercise to inform the preparation of the Core Strategy, and ultimately the submission of a planning application.

2.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 2.1 Sefton are required to identify appropriate sites for Gypsy and Travellers in accordance with the requirements of the North West Regional Spatial Strategy. This report seeks to ensure

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that potential sites are identified on the basis of an agreed methodology and to allow application to be made to cover the cost of provision of the site, prior to the bid deadline of April 30th 2010. However, this will not prevent the identified sites from being subsequently approved (or otherwise) by Cabinet for the intended purpose.

Scoring Framework / Methodology for the appraisal and selection of potential Gypsy and Traveller sites in Sefton

It is proposed that sites will be assessed using a bespoke scoring framework similar to that used in the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment. The assessment will be used to identify a short-list of sites that will form the basis of consultation on the location of gypsy and traveller sites in Sefton.

The scoring framework will cover a range of issues that need to be considered when choosing a suitable gypsy and traveller site. The issues to be considered have been chosen as they have been identified in national policy guidance. For ease of reference the issues have been group into 6 broad types:

- Size and location;
- Suitability;
- Availability;
- Accessibility;
- Achievability; and
- Social inclusion

Below is the list of issues and a draft scoring system for the site assessment. Each issue has a maximum score of 10 with an overall maximum score of 270. At this stage, each of the issues has been given equal weighting. This can be changed if it is agreed that some issues are of more importance than others. Some of the criteria also have the potential to require the removal of the site from further consideration. This acknowledges that some issues are insurmountable.

Following the scoring framework is a site assessment pro forma which will be used to record all the scores.

Scoring Framework

1. Size and Location

a) Site size

The site is over 2 ha	10 points
The site is between 1.5 to 2 ha	7 points
The site is between 1 to 1.5 ha	5 points
The site is between 0.5 to 1ha	3 points
The site is smaller than 0.5 ha	Discard site from search
TOTAL	10 PTS

Notes:

Permanent sites - *The ideal situation would be for all of the 15 permanent pitches to be provided on one site. This will enable the G&T community to stay together. It would also be more cost effective in providing facilities and site management. The minimum ideal site size for 15 pitches and associated facilities is 1.5ha. It would also be cost effective and easier to*

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APPENDIX A

manage if the transit site was provided on the same site. Sites over 2ha therefore would score the maximum points, with lower scores for smaller sites.

b) Site access

The site is easily accessed directly from an existing main road	10 points
The site is accessible from a suitable (non main) road through non-residential area	7 points
The site is accessible from a suitable (non main) road through less than 100m of residential area	0 points
The site is only accessible through narrow/unsuitable roads or through more than 100 m of residential area	Discard site from search
TOTAL	10PTS

c) Flood Risk

The whole site is in flood zone 1	10 points
The whole site is in flood zones 1 or 2	5 points
Between 0 and 20% of the site is in flood zones 3a or 3b	0 points
Over 20% of the site is in flood zones 3a or 3b	Discard site from search
TOTAL	10 PTS

Notes: PPS25 sets out the types of development that can be permitted in each flood zone. Caravans, mobile homes and park homes for permanent residential use are classed as 'highly vulnerable' and therefore could be permitted in flood zone 1 and, if an exception test is passed, in flood zone 2. If over 80% of the site is in flood zone 3a or 3b then the site is removed from further consideration.

d) Location

The site is within 2.5km of existing site in Formby <u>or</u> is in South Sefton	10 points
The site is within 5km of existing site in Formby	7 points
The site is within 7.5km of existing site in Formby	4 points
The site is within 10km of existing site in Formby	2 points
The site is not within 10km of existing site in Formby and is not in South Sefton	0 points
TOTAL	10 POINTS

The site is in an existing urban area	10
The site is on the edge of an existing urban area	5
The site is detached from an existing urban area	0
TOTAL	10 POINTS

Notes: There are two preferred locations for a new permanent site, either as close as possible to the existing site in Formby, or in South Sefton (classed as the built-up areas of Bootle/Crosby Netherton/Seaforth/Litherland).

The ideal location for a G&T site is within existing built up areas. G&T sites shouldn't be pushed out away from other residents and should be fully integrated.

2. Suitability

	Yes	Partially	No
Does the site suffer from any physical constraints or barriers (e.g. topography, shape)?	0	5	10
Is the site affected by un-neighbourly uses (heavy industry, power lines, motorways, etc)?	0	5	10
Is there a possibility that the site is heavily contaminated?	0	5	10
Would the site achieve visual and acoustic privacy?	10	5	0
Does the site have any nature or heritage designations?	0	5	10
TOTAL	50 PTS		

Notes: *There are a number of factors that make a site less suitable for development. The above factors are relevant to G&T sites but also to other housing developments. However, there may be some extra criteria or other factors that the G&T community think are relevant, which would only be ascertained as a result of an initial consultation with them.*

3. Availability

	Yes	Partially	No
Does the site currently have a suitable UDP designation?	10	5	0
Is the site in active use?	0	5	10
Is the site subject to multiple or difficult land ownerships?	0	5	10
Is site in Council (or partner) ownership?	10	5	0
Is the owner willing to sell?	10	5	Discard from search
Would the costs involved in purchasing the site be prohibitive?	0	5	10
TOTAL	60 PTS		

Notes: *Regardless of how suitable a site is for development it also has to be available. It is considered likely that developers would resist their site being identified for a G&T site as this would reduce potential value.*

4. Achievability

	Yes	Partially	No
Are there any known significant abnormal costs (including remediation, demolition, etc)?	0	5	10
Does the site need significant new infrastructure (including utilities)?	0	5	10
TOTAL	20 PTS		

Notes: *How easily a site can be brought forward for development is a major factor on whether a site can be developed.*

5. Accessibility

	Yes	No
Is there a Primary school within 600m?	10	0
Is there a Local Centre within 800m?	10	0
Is there a Health Centre of GP within 1000m?	10	0
Is there an employment area within 5km?	10	0
Is there a railway station within 800m or a bus stop (frequent use) within 400m?	10	0
TOTAL	50 PTS	

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APPENDIX A

Notes: A site will be more sustainable the greater number of facilities and services are within easy reach. The distances used above are the same as used in the SHLAA. It is important that the site is close to a main access road due to potential high levels of traveller movement, particularly in the transit site.

6. Social Issues

	Yes	Partially	No
Is the site acceptable to the needs of the G&T community	10	5	Discard from search
Would the site enable residents to integrate with local neighbourhood?	10	5	0
Would the site provide a safe and secure environment?	10	5	Discard from search
Would the site be broadly acceptable to existing local residents?	10	5	0
TOTAL	40 PTS		

Notes: It is important that G&T sites are integrated into the community and not marginalised. It is also important that the existing local population accept the new residents.

Site ID	
Site Address	

Photo

Map

	For Permanent Site	For Transit Site
Size and Location Score (Max 50)		
Suitability Score (Max 50)		
Availability Score (Max 60)		
Achievability Score (Max 20)		
Accessibility Score (Max 50)		
Social Issues Score (Max 40)		
TOTAL (Max 270)		

Site Survey Comments

Conclusions

Site to be short listed for G&T site yes no

Is the site in the Green Belt? yes no. If yes, could the site be removed from the GB as a non-strategic release? yes no

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REPORT TO: PLANNING
CABINET MEMBER – REGENERATION

DATE: 10TH MARCH 2010
17TH MARCH 2010

SUBJECT: INFORMED ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC
VIABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SEFTON
STUDY - CONSULTATION DRAFT

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** ALL

REPORT OF: ANDY WALLIS – PLANNING AND ECONOMIC
DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR
ALAN LUNT – NEIGHBOURHOODS AND INVESTMENT
PROGRAMMES DIRECTOR

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** Alan Young – Strategic Planning and Information Manager
Tel: 0151 934 3551

Jim Ohren – Principal Manager
Tel: 0151 934 3619

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

The purpose of this report is to inform Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration of the findings of the draft Informed Assessment of the Economic Viability of Affordable Housing in Sefton Study and the intention to carry out a formal public and stakeholder consultation on this study.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

No decision required. Report for information only.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration note this report

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

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ITEM NO.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: N/a

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: None

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: None

Financial: The cost of the study (£25,000) is being met from the Regional Housing Pot Capital Grant in 2009/10

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources	£25,000			
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: N/a

Risk Assessment: N/a

Asset Management: N/a

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

N/a

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		✓	
8	Children and Young People		✓	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

PPS3: Housing, CLG, November 2006

INFORMED ASSESSMENT OF THE ECONOMIC VIABILITY OF AFFORDABLE HOUSING IN SEFTON STUDY - CONSULTATION DRAFT

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Members may recall last year (i.e. at Planning Committee on 6th May 2009, Cabinet Member – Regeneration on 6th May 2009 and Cabinet on 14th May 2009) that a decision was taken to commission a study on the economic viability of affordable housing in Sefton. Subsequently our retained specialist consultants on affordable housing viability, Three Dragons, were commissioned to undertake this study.
- 1.2 In accordance with best practice in this area of work, Three Dragons are independent of the Strategic Housing Market Assessment process (which assesses housing needs, including affordable housing) that was undertaken by Fordham Research for the Council and previously reported to Members last year (i.e. at Planning Committee on 19th August 2009, Cabinet Member – Regeneration on 2nd September 2009 and Cabinet on 3rd September 2009).
- 1.3 The need to carry out an economic viability study on affordable housing is set out in Planning Policy Statement 3. This requirement was reinforced by the landmark Blythe Valley Legal Decision, which essentially concluded that a Core Strategy could be found unsound if its affordable housing policies were not supported by such a study.
- 1.4 Notwithstanding the above, based on legal advice, we are currently applying affordable housing policies to specific qualifying sites, as set out on the Council's website at www.sefton.gov.uk/planningstudies
- 1.4 Importantly, the approach adopted by the Council in negotiating affordable housing fully recognises, consistent with PPS3 advice, that individual sites may need to be subject to an economic viability assessment and this is built into the overall affordable housing appraisal process.

2.0 Draft Informed Economic Assessment of Affordable Housing Study

- 2.1 Three Dragons were formally appointed to undertake the study in early August 2009. As part of the evidence gathering and engagement programme a workshop was held on 19th August 2009 at Bootle Cricket Club. At this meeting representatives from a range of organisations involved in the provision of affordable housing were present, including developers, registered social landlords, private sector landlords, neighbouring authorities and government housing and development agencies.
- 2.2 The workshop was useful in that it helped clarify some of the issues specific to Sefton that determine the viability of affordable housing. The information

gathered at this event was important to ensure that the draft study would be relevant to Sefton, would help in understanding local affordable housing issues and would be robust enough to help shape future affordable housing policy in the Borough.

- 2.3 Using the information gathered at the workshop and a range of other evidence (such as data on past affordable housing projects, land values and house prices) a draft of the study has been completed by Three Dragons and is now ready for public and stakeholder consultation. A copy of the draft study can be viewed at www.sefton.gov.uk/planningstudies

3.0 Key Findings of the Draft Informed Assessment Study

- 3.1 Some of the key findings of the draft study are:

(i) Identification of housing sub-markets in Sefton

- 3.2 It is apparent that the local variation in house prices has a significant impact on the viability of affordable housing in a particular scheme. A broad analysis of house prices in Sefton using HM Land Registry data was undertaken and identified seven viability sub markets -

- Prime Sefton (broadly Birkdale, Ainsdale and Blundellsands)
- Formby
- Crosby, Hightown and Rural Hinterland
- Maghull and Aintree
- Southport
- Litherland, Orrell and Netherton
- Bootle and Seaforth

- 3.3 These different sub-markets have significant differences in the residual value able to cross subsidise affordable housing. For example, a housing scheme in Prime Sefton with 30% affordable housing, at 40 dwellings per hectare (dph), will generate nearly £3 million residual value per hectare. The same scheme in Bootle will have costs of almost £0.5 million per hectare greater than its revenue (i.e. will have a negative residual value). On this basis, a single affordable housing target for the Borough would be a very difficult policy position to defend.

(ii) Testing the viability of a range of housing developments to deliver affordable housing

- 3.4 A number of development models were tested, using a range of size, house types and densities. These examples were chosen to reflect the range of sites that have been and are currently or likely to be available for development in Sefton. This testing showed that higher density development (over 80dph) looks marginal even without an affordable housing element in locations such as Bootle,

Seaforth, Litherland and Orrell. However, in higher value areas, affordable housing contributions on higher density schemes should be viable.

- 3.5 The introduction of external grant makes a significant difference in the mid to lower sub markets, although in the weakest sub-market areas grants may not be enough to 'rescue' schemes seeking an affordable housing element.
- 3.6 The analysis also shows that residual values are very sensitive to changes in house prices, both in the short and long term, and that additional costs, such as remediation works or the Code for Sustainable Homes can have significant impacts on scheme viability, most clearly in the lower value sub-markets. Viability is also highly sensitive to the relationship between existing (or, where relevant, alternative) use value. In this regard, affordable housing will often be viable on sites, for example, in back or garden use. However, small-scale redevelopment and conversion schemes (typically under 5 units) 'will be significantly challenging on viability grounds'.
- 3.7 The analysis of Sefton's supply of sites (based on extant unimplemented planning consents and the five year land supply) suggest that smaller sites (less than 15 units) makes a significant contribution (i.e. about 30%) to housing supply. Given this, Sefton's current policy approach (i.e. applying affordable housing requirements to sites 15 dwellings or more) is likely to 'miss' a significant opportunity to provide affordable housing in some parts of the Borough. From a housing management perspective the study did not find any, in principle, objections to the on-site provision of affordable housing on small sites, although a financial payment for off-site approach could be considered in certain circumstances.

(iii) Conclusions and Policy Recommendations

- 3.8 The report recommends that Sefton adopt the following key affordable housing policy positions through its Local Development Framework:
 - Based on strict viability approach apply a dual target broadly splitting the main urban area of Sefton, including Bootle and Seaforth and Litherland, Orrell and Urban Sefton (called 'lower value Sefton') versus the remaining higher value sub-markets. On this basis, Three Dragons propose a 30% target for the higher value areas and a 15% target for the lower value areas. Alternatively, a more location specific based approach may be considered, including a three-way policy target, to the level of affordable homes required in housing schemes. This would set a target of 30% for Prime Sefton (Ainsdale, Birkdale and Blundellsands) and Formby; 25% for Crosby, Maghull and Southport; and, 10% for Litherland, Orrell, Bootle and Seaforth.
 - That the Council should adopt a dual threshold approach for when the affordable housing target is implement, with a size threshold of 15

dwellings in the Pathfinder area and a size threshold of 5 dwellings elsewhere. Three Dragons think a size threshold below 5 dwellings would be difficult to justify in viability terms anywhere in the Borough.

- If there is any doubt about viability on a particular site, Three Dragons note that it will be the responsibility of the developer to make a case that applying the Council's affordable housing requirement for their scheme makes the scheme not viable. (This is currently the approach that Sefton applies where the viability of a proposal to deliver affordable housing is in question).
- In cases where it may not be feasible or appropriate to provide affordable housing on-site, Three Dragons consider that a commuted sum payment (based on the equivalent amount which would be contributed by the developer/landowner were the affordable housing provided on site) could be sought. This would require the Council to have a clear strategy to ensure the money is spent effectively on delivering affordable housing elsewhere and in a timely manner.

4.0 Next Stages

- 4.1 In accordance with best practice it seek wider public and stakeholder comment, the draft study will be made available for formal public and stakeholder consultation for a six-week period during late March and April/May 2010. This will include a further workshop aimed at developers/housebuilders, landowners, and registered social housing providers to discuss the study recommendations in detail.
- 4.2 It is anticipated that the comments received during consultation will inform the final study for which will be drafted by Three Dragons in late May or early June 2010. This, in turn, will inform the Core Strategy preferred strategy later this year. The final Informed Assessment of the Economic Viability of Affordable Housing will be reported to Planning Committee, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Cabinet for approval in the July cycle.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration note this report

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REPORT TO: PLANNING
CABINET MEMBER – REGENERATION
CABINET

DATE: 10th MARCH 2010 – PLANNING
17th MARCH 2010 – CABINET MEMBER - REGENERATION
15th APRIL 2010 – CABINET

SUBJECT: JOINT STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY
ASSESSMENT STUDY 2008 – FINAL REPORT

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** All

REPORT OF: Andy Wallis – Planning and Economic Development Director

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** Alan Young
Strategic Planning and Information Manager
☎ 0151 934 3551

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To report the key findings of the Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study 2008, one of a number of key evidence gathering studies that are being undertaken to inform the Core Strategy process and to guide advice and decisions on individual housing proposals and planning applications.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

To indicate Council support for key advice contained in the study document.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That:

- (i) Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration note the key findings of the Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study for Sefton and recommend that Cabinet endorses them to inform the emerging Core Strategy process;
- (ii) Subject to (iii) below, Planning Committee adopts the key findings of the study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process and use them to inform advice and decisions in relation to individual pre application proposals and planning applications which raise housing issues;
- (iii) Cabinet endorses the key findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process.

KEY DECISION: Yes

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FORWARD PLAN: Yes

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following expiry of call in period after Cabinet meeting on 15TH April 2010

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:

None

IMPLICATIONS: None

Budget/Policy Framework: None

Financial:

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure	£39,500*			
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

* This is Sefton's share of the joint study cost (total cost £90,000) has/will be paid over 2008/2009 and 2009/2010

Legal: N/A

Risk Assessment: N/A

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

N/A

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community		✓	
2	Creating Safe Communities		✓	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	✓		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	✓		
5	Environmental Sustainability	✓		
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	✓		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		✓	
8	Children and Young People		✓	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

PPS3: Housing, CLG, November 2006
 Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments: Practice Guidance, CLG, July 2007

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JOINT STRATEGIC HOUSING LAND AVAILABILITY ASSESSMENT 2008 – FINAL REPORT

1.0 Background

- 1.1 Following a competitive tender selection process, the Council commissioned specialist consultants, White Young Green (now WYG), to undertake a Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) Study on 7th April 2008. The study is a joint study commissioned on behalf of Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire local authorities respectively. The study has been led and tendered for by Sefton and funded by the three local authorities on a split cost basis, priced on an agreed formula based, in part on the number of sites to be assessed. Its principal purposes are to inform the preparation of the Council's Local Development Framework Core Strategy in relation to housing land supply matters and to guide advice on pre application proposals and planning applications which raise housing issues. The study is to be issued in three separate volumes relating to the individual local authorities. Sefton's study has now been completed and Knowsley and West Lancashire studies are almost complete at the time this report has been drafted.
- 1.2 The SHLAA study is regarded as one of the key evidence gathering studies (possibly the key study based on Core Strategy Inspectors' reports) and should be considered in parallel with the Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) which was previously reported to Members (Planning Committee on 19th August 2009; Cabinet Member - Regeneration on 2nd September 2009 and Cabinet on 3rd September 2009). Specifically, in this regard, PPS3: Housing states at Annex C that:
- 'Strategic Housing Market Assessments and Strategic Land Availability Assessments are an important part of the policy process. They provide information on the level of need and demand for housing and the opportunities that exist to meet it.'*
- 1.3 In short the SHLAA study examines the supply of housing and the SHMA examines the need and demand for housing. Both studies are essential and complementary to each other.
- 1.4 The Joint SHLAA Study report follows the general advice contained in PPS3: Housing and the more specific advice contained in the subsequently published Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments Practice Guidance which was published in July 2007. In this regard, Practice Guidance in its introduction states that:
- 'Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments are a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes.'*
- 1.5 Planning Committee agreed to the undertaking of such a study on 13th February 2008 and that a further report should be received on the outcome of the study at a later date. This report addresses that commitment.
- 1.6 A copy of the Sefton's part of the Joint SHLAA Study (i.e. Sefton's volume) can be inspected on the Sefton website at www.sefton.gov.uk/shlaa
- 1.7 The study context and approach are set out in Section 2 of this report; the key elements of the study are set out in Section 3 and a summary of the key findings of the study are

highlighted in Section 4. Section 5 highlights some key caveats associated with the study findings and Section 6 sets out the Director's comments on the study. Notwithstanding this, because the study report (and its Appendices) is a long and detailed document, for the avoidance of doubt, this report simply summarises some of the key elements/findings of the study that may be of particular interest to Members, and does not purport to be comprehensive in considering all matters raised in the study report. The definitive position is set out the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Final Report, February 2010.

- 1.8 Importantly, the draft study version of the document has been subject to key stakeholder involvement and to a full public and stakeholder consultation that have resulted in detailed comments and criticisms being made. These, in turn, have all been taken into account and have informed the preparation of the final study report. This process and its implications are summarised later in the committee report at Section 2, paragraphs 2.2 and 2.5 below.
- 1.9 The base date for the Sefton SHLAA is 1st April 2008.

2.0 Study Context and Approach

(i) Study Context

- 2.1 The general approach to undertaking SHLAAs is now well documented with a significant number of such studies having been completed by local authorities throughout the country. In Greater Merseyside all local authorities have or are undertaking a SHLAA study, albeit in slightly different ways and to different timescales. Sefton did explore, some three years ago, the possibility of a comprehensive sub-regional SHLAA being undertaken but for various reasons it was not possible, including the reason that different local authorities were at different stages in the Core Strategy process at the time. Apart from the current joint study, St Helens and Halton and Warrington have completed a Mid Mersey SHLAA and Liverpool and Wirral are currently co-operating on a producing a joint Cross Mersey SHLAA.
- 2.2 The SHLAA good practice guidance recommends the production of the assessment should be informed by engagement with key local stakeholders throughout via a Housing Market Partnership. Such a partnership should include house builders, social landlords and local property agents, amongst others. Whilst no formal Housing Market Partnership was organised as part of the SHLAA, extensive consultation has been undertaken with key stakeholders at various stages of the study. The programme of consultation has included two formal stakeholder workshops, a comprehensive 'call for sites' exercise (where developers/landowners and others are invited to submit possible housing sites), and a comprehensive public consultation at the draft stage of the SHLAA report, to which key stakeholders and the public were invited to comment. Importantly, in this regard WYG, who carried out the study, have commented that this effectively amounts to a Housing Market Partnership as advised by the Practice Guidance, namely:
- 'It is WYG's view that this level of consultation and involvement effectively constitutes a Housing Market Partnership, even though this title was never formally conferred.'*
- 2.3 It is important to be clear that the SHLAA is distinctly different from previous urban housing capacity studies prepared in the context of the now cancelled PPG3, including the Merseyside Sub-Region Urban Housing Capacity Study (including Sefton) that was completed in 2004. The key differences are:

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- whereas urban housing capacity studies covered only existing urban areas, the SHLAA must cover all settlements with housing potential, both urban and rural, going beyond existing settlement boundaries;
- whereas urban housing capacity studies covered only previously developed sites, the SHLAA must cover both previously developed and greenfield land;
- whereas urban housing capacity studies were underpinned by a sequential approach to identifying supply, there is no such requirement in the SHLAA;
- whereas urban housing capacity studies were required to identify only sufficient land to meet any housing target, the SHLAA needs to identify enough land so that a Core Strategy can maintain a continuous delivery for at least 15 years from the adoption of such a plan. To achieve this it should investigate all potential sites and, if appropriate, broad locations with housing potential; and
- whereas urban housing capacity studies were required to include an allowance for windfall sites, the SHLAA is specifically precluded from including such an allowance, unless there is robust evidence of genuine local circumstances that prevent specific sites being identified through the SHLAA process.

(ii) Study Approach

- 2.4 The study approach closely follows the advice set out in the CLG Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment: Practice Guidance published in July 2007. It draws on preparatory work undertaken in 2007 and early 2008 by the three local authorities, which respectively collated information and produced comprehensive lists of potential housing sites to be reviewed through the SHLAA process. Following on from this WYG were asked to review the work completed by the three local authorities and take the study forward to completion, ensuring compliance with Government good practice guidance.
- 2.5 To give added weight to this study, the draft SHLAA Study has gone significantly beyond the advice in the CLG Practice Guidance. In this respect, the Council undertook two publicised 'call for sites' exercises in order to encourage landowners, developers, and members of the public to submit additional potential sites for consideration. The initial formal 'call for sites' stage lasted from 25 October 2007 to 13 December 2007, and was followed by a second 'call for sites' stage from 27 May 2008 to 18 July 2008. In combination, these exercises generated a total of 212 site submissions. Furthermore, the draft SHLAA Study has additionally been subject to a formal full public consultation in order to maximise the opportunity for stakeholders and others to comment on, and have a direct input to the study. These comments and WYG's responses are set out in Appendix 2 – Summary and Responses to Representations Received at Draft Report Stage of the full report. Among other things, this has enabled the draft findings of the study to be substantiated and tested against the practical experience of landowners, property professionals, and local community members/ the wider public and regional stakeholders. In this regard, the draft SHLAA Study was made available for public consultation between 20th August and 1st October 2009 (6 weeks). Subsequently, this consultation period was informally extended by a week until 8th October 2009. The public consultation generated 72 representations in respect of Sefton and a further 17 additional sites were submitted for consideration.
- 2.6 The SHLAA has identified a total of some 1632 sites to be considered including sites identified by Sefton and 'call for sites' process. Due to the large number of sites identified, it was decided that it was not cost-effective or methodologically advantageous to visit all sites less than 0.1 ha in size. Instead a 10% statistically representative sample of the smaller sites was assessed and the findings grossed up to represent the total population size. In total this meant that 804 sites were subject to detailed appraisal and

visited by the WYG survey team. For the avoidance of doubt all 'call for sites' sites irrespective of size were all visited and assessed. WYG then applied a very detailed 25 criteria appraisal process to all sites visited. Importantly, in order to be considered deliverable for housing sites have to satisfy each of the following criteria:

Be Available – i.e. the site is available now or in the time frame to which they relate;

Be Suitable – i.e. the site offers a suitable location for housing development and would contribute to the creation of sustainable communities; and

Be Achievable – i.e. there is a reasonable prospect that housing will be delivered on the site in the time frame proposed.

3.0 Key Elements of the Study

3.1 As part of the study WYG made an early decision to exclude three categories of site for the following reasons:

Allocated Employment Sites (including Primarily Industrial Areas)

Consistent with the emerging advice in the draft Employment Land and Premises Study, these were considered likely to remain in their existing use and were therefore excluded from the identified housing supply, except where there was a very strong presumption otherwise. In practice only one site in a Primarily Industrial Area has been included in the identified housing supply; that at Foul Lane, south of the railway line, in Southport. This vacant site was specifically identified as being unsuited to continuing employment use by the recently completed Employment Land and Premises Study report, which was reported to Members in the last committee cycle.

Green Belt Sites

Whilst the SHLAA Practice Guidance does not permit Green Belt sites to be automatically excluded from any study, WYG have taken the view that Green Belt sites should be excluded from the overall amount of land with potential for residential development as these sites will be assessed through a separate Study which will consider broad locations for future housing development. In this regard, WYG point out that such a Study is outside the scope of the current commission and, accordingly, the SHLAA simply provides an indication of the total amount of Green Belt land that has been assessed, but deliberately does not ascribe any dwelling yield (i.e. housing delivery numbers) to these sites. To reinforce this stance, WYG further point out that it would be premature to consider these sites at this time, as the suitability of releasing any land from Green Belt has not yet been determined. Only one Green Belt site, the Powerhouse Site in Formby, is recommended, in principle, for housing use. However, this site is identified in the UDP as a 'major developed site in the Green Belt' and therefore has a different status to the other sites submitted. This confirms the view of the recently published Employment Land and Premises Study.

Flood Zone 3 sites

WYG have taken the view that sites located wholly within Flood Zone 3 are not likely to be considered suitable for housing and should not contribute towards the identified housing supply. Where, however, a site is partially located in Flood Zone 3, this part of the site has been removed from its net developable area.

3.2 Furthermore, as part of the study process WYG have adopted the following approach in

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terms of urban greenspaces and non allocated sites in existing employment use:

Urban Greenspace sites

As part of the study WYG made an early decision to take a very cautious view about sites that are designated as Urban Greenspace and other areas of open space that have policy protection. In this regard, a view was taken from Council Officers as to the quality and importance of urban green space prior to a site assessment being undertaken. Arising from this, Urban Greenspace sites have generally been considered to have very limited housing potential and therefore removed from potential supply where the Council has indicated that housing development would be likely to be resisted.

One exception to this is the Coffee House Bridge site in Bootle, subject of a Supplementary Planning Document, which clearly supports the principle of housing development on part of the site. A limited number of other sites have been considered partially suitable, with redevelopment potentially being acceptable on the footprint of existing buildings.

As a result of the Building Schools for the Future programme, it is probable that a number of school sites that are allocated as Urban Greenspace will become available for residential development in the future after public consultation on possible school amalgamations have taken place. These may add modestly to housing supply at a later date but the SHLAA study, because of prematurity, makes no assumption about any housing contribution from this source. Any contribution from this source would be picked up via subsequent monitoring or study updates.

Non allocated sites in existing employment use

In assessing 'non allocated sites in existing employment use' WYG have again taken a cautious approach, both in terms of the likelihood of such sites coming forward for redevelopment and with regard to whether the use for housing would be likely to be judged acceptable by the Council. In this regard, WYG's site specific assessments have been undertaken on the basis that the redevelopment for housing of sites currently used for employment purposes will generally only be permitted if the development of the site would not lead to an unacceptable loss of employment land supply in the locality. This is consistent with advice presented in the recent Employment Land & Premises Study.

4.0 A Summary of the Key Findings of the Study

4.1 Table 4.1, below, sets out a summary Sefton's housing supply position arising from the final SHLAA study.

Table 4.1 Risk Assessed Housing Supply at 1 April 2008

Source	1-5 Year	6-10 Year	11-15 Year	Total
SHLAA large sites	1,017	1,384	231	2,632
SHLAA small site allowance	216	152	40	408
Commitments	2,014	341	0	2,355
TOTAL	3,247	1,877	271	5,395
RSS Requirements ¹	2,660	2,660	2,596	7,916
Potential over/under supply	587	-783	-2,325	-2,521

¹RSS requirement includes a shortfall of 415 dwellings between 2003 and 2008, in addition to annual requirement of 500 dwellings. The requirement has been apportioned equally (i.e. 32 dwellings per annum) over the RSS period to

2021.

4.2 The key findings from table 4.1 and the full study (from a 1st April 2008 study base date) may be summarised below:

- In total the assessment indicates that Sefton has a 'risk assessed' housing land supply of 9.6 years from the study base date of 1st April 2008, against the RSS target of 500 per annum (plus the notional 32 dwellings per annum shortfall – see the footnote to Table 4.1 above). The 'risk assessment' that has been used applies a 20% discount for potential non-delivery of sites based on such factors as currently unknown constraints, changing landowner and developer intentions etc, and is based on best practice elsewhere where these studies have been undertaken.
- Of this headline supply, the majority is considered appropriate to come forward within the first 5 years. As can be seen in the above table, 3,247 units are considered suitable in the 1-5 year period; when compared to a RSS requirement of 2,660 units, this gives a five-year over-supply of 587 units.
- In the 6 to 10 year period there is an identified supply of a further 1,877 units, which compared to a RSS requirement of 2,660 units, presents a shortfall of 783 units. Taken in total with the five-year over supply of 587 units however, there is a ten-year shortfall of 196 units, equating to an overall 9.6 years supply.
- Looking ahead to the 11 to 15 year period there is a modest additional supply of 271 units. When measured against the 11-15 year requirement of 2,596 units, this gives an 11 to 15 year shortfall of 2,325 units.
- Taking the 15-year period 2008 to 2023 as a whole, there is a housing shortfall of 2,521 units (i.e. 196 plus 2,325)
- Accordingly, the study identifies a just less than 10 year 'risk assessed' housing supply covering the period 2008 to 2018 and a modest additional post 10 year supply (arising principally from land at Town Lane, Southport) of 271 units. There is no supply identified for the post 15-year period.
- The study, consistent with PPS3 advice, notes that there is a requirement for local planning authorities to identify, specific, developable sites to provide a 10-year supply of housing and, where possible, a 15-year supply. Where it is not possible to identify specific sites for the 11 to 15 year period, broad locations for future growth should be identified. Given that the study has demonstrated that there is insufficient housing land in Sefton to provide a 15 year supply of housing, WYG advise that there is a clear need for a separate study to be undertaken by the Council:

'...in order to consider the existing Green Belt boundary and identify broad locations where future housing growth could be accommodated. Such broad locations will often adjoin existing settlements, but could theoretically be located wholly outside the existing urban area. Any such assessment is outside the agreed scope of this commission, but it will need to consider Green Belt sites which have been excluded from the quantification of housing supply in the SHLAA broad. WYG is aware that Sefton and Knowsley Councils are currently in the process of appointing consultants to assist in the preparation of such a study.....'

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- Whilst not specifically addressed in the SHLAA report, it should be noted that the Core Strategy needs to cover the period 15 years from adoption in 2012. This further four year period (to 2027) would suggest the provision of an additional 2000 extra homes, based on an assumed rolling forward of the current RSS housing requirement of 500 dwellings each year to from 2023 to 2027. In total the housing shortfall to 2027 could therefore be of the order of 4,521 units (i.e. 2,521 units to 2023 and 2,000 units 2023-2027).

5.0 Key Caveats to be Attached to the Findings of this Study

5.1 The SHLAA Study at paragraph 1.04 is clear that it:

*'.... does not itself represent a statement of Council policy. Whilst it will inform the LDF process, it is for the LDF Core Strategy and Land Allocations documents to decide which sites should come forward for residential development and by what timescale. **The inclusion of sites within the study should not therefore be taken to imply that they will be allocated for development or that the Council will necessarily consider planning applications favourably.**'*

[NB, WYG's emphasis]

5.2 Furthermore, in support of the above the Council has received advice from Counsel that they should specifically add the following caveats to any approval of a SHLAA Study, namely:

(i) the study does not necessary cover all potential housing sites and others may emerge through the planning application or monitoring process;

(ii) in confirmation of WYG's cautionary comment above, the study is not meant to imply that that planning permission for housing development will be granted or is necessarily even likely to be granted for any particular site identified in the study; and

(iii) the study is a construct of broadly based evidence to support the development plan process and not a checklist of individual sites for s.78 planning appeals.

5.3 Given that above, whilst the SHLAA Study is intended to provide a robust and cautious view of overall future housing capacity in Sefton, it is not intended to imply that it is exhaustive in its assessment of supply (i.e. other sites may and are likely to emerge over time), nor that every site identified will necessarily be developed for housing. In this regard, it confirms that it is the best view of overall likely housing capacity at the base date of the study but it will need to be regularly monitored and updated.

6.0 Director's Comments

6.1 The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study is one of a number of key evidence gathering studies which are being prepared and will be used to inform Sefton's emerging Core Strategy. The study will also be used to inform advice on individual development proposals and planning applications which involve the development of land proposed for housing use. However, bearing in mind the advice of Counsel at paragraph 5.2 above it is important to note that it will be used to provide general advice about the adequacy of housing supply vis-à-vis housing need and most definitely not as a site specific checklist of what is acceptable for housing development in planning terms.

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- 6.2 It is generally accepted that the SHLAA Study is the pivotal evidence gathering study which underpins key elements of the Core Strategy process. In this regard its importance is reinforced by PPS3 which makes it clear that the Government attaches great weight to the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study process and its findings. Any local authority attempting to take forward a Development Plan Document without complying with the core requirements set out in the SHLAA Guidance would be at high risk of its plan being found unsound for a lack of robust evidence. In support of this it is apparent that Core Strategy Planning Inspectors very closely scrutinise the findings of such studies at the public examination stage of Core Strategies. It therefore must be robust and realistic.
- 6.3 The key message contained in the Study is that when measured against Sefton's RSS housing requirement of 500 dwellings per annum, the borough has an almost 10 year (actually 9.6 years) supply of housing land from a 2008 base date (i.e. 2008 to 2018), but little supply exists after this period. We also have robust 5 years supply base dated at 2008 (i.e. 2008-2013). Given that the Council has to look forward to at least 2027 as part of its Core Strategy (i.e. 15 years from a notional adoption date), we are likely to have a housing shortfall of about 4,600 units (i.e. slightly more than 9 years at 500 dwellings per annum). In this regard, under the heading 'Stage 9 – Housing Potential of Broad Locations' WYG make three key points at paras 3.69 to 3.71 of their report, namely:
- 3.69 The capacity identified by the study is compared with current RSS targets in order to quantify the number of years housing land supply that Sefton has. Should any SHLAA identify a future shortfall in housing land, this would be a matter for the emerging Core Strategy to consider, which provides an opportunity for local people, key stakeholders and the development industry to make detailed comments about the direction of future growth.*
- 3.70 Additional urban capacity may be found in the future through, for example, sites which are currently in active use becoming unexpectedly available, such as the closure of large employment sites which are not required for future business use. Capacity which comes forward from previously unidentified development sites will be recognised in future revisions of this study. Any additional capacity provided in this manner would ultimately reduce the need for, or delay the phasing of, extensions to the urban area.*
- 3.71 More substantial shortfalls in supply may require planned urban expansion. The form of any urban extension is for the LDF to consider, in the context provided by the findings of the forthcoming Green Belt study and taking into account factors such as sustainability, environmental impact on the surrounding area and existing infrastructure.*
- 6.4 In the context of the above, Members may be aware that the Council has already anticipated the medium to longer-term housing land shortfall suggested by the SHLAA Study and is in the process of commissioning the Green Belt study. This study will be critical to identifying 'broad locations' or 'areas of search' in the Green Belt, both of which are necessary to take forward our Core Strategy. And in this regard a report to Planning Committee on 16th December 2009 addressed the matter in detail. In particular, Members will be aware that this study is categorically not a review of Green Belt.
- 6.5 As a final point it is worth noting that the SHLAA Study and Employment Land and Premises Study (reported in the last Committee cycle) have been undertaken in tandem because they allow land availability to be assessed in terms of competing possible end uses. This is in compliance with best practice elsewhere and the advice in the SHLAA

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Practice Guidance. In this regard, Members will be aware that one of the key findings of the Employment Land and Premises Study was the need, with very limited exceptional circumstances, to protect our existing employment land supply across the Borough. Given this, we do not expect it to be a future significant source of housing land supply. The final SHLAA acknowledges this sensitivity and makes only very modest assumptions about the potential transferability of land in employment use to future housing use.

6.6 To conclude, the completion of the SHLAA Study is timely and has confirmed much of what we were already knew, albeit anecdotally, about housing land supply in Sefton and especially the very tight medium to longer term housing land supply position that exists across the Borough. It does, however, now provide us with a robust evidence base to address the issues arising from these pressures; both in terms of informing advice on pre applications and planning applications and the further work that we have now embarked upon with regard to a Green Belt Study. It will also need to be closely monitored and updated as we move forward with the Core Strategy process.

7.0 Recommendations

7.1 That:

(i) Planning Committee and Cabinet Member – Regeneration note the key findings of the Joint Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study for Sefton and recommend that Cabinet endorses them to inform the emerging Core Strategy process;

(ii) Subject to (iii) below, Planning Committee adopts the key findings of the study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process and use them to inform advice and decisions in relation to individual pre application proposals and planning applications which raise housing issues;

(iii) Cabinet endorses the key findings of the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Study to inform the emerging Core Strategy process.

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REPORT TO: Cabinet Member Regeneration

DATE: 17th March 2010

SUBJECT: Local Resilience Action Plan Monitoring

**WARDS
AFFECTED:** Borough-wide

REPORT OF: Director of Neighbourhoods & Investment Programmes

**CONTACT
OFFICER:** Neil Davies, HMR Strategy Manager, 934 4837
Jim Ohren, Principal Manager 934 3619

**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** N/A

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To provide monitoring information on Housing issues, as contained in the Local Resilience Action Plan, Responding to the Recession.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

The 'Local Resilience Action Plan, Responding to the Recession', adopted by the Sefton Borough Partnership in September 2009, includes a 'Housing' topic section, which requires a Monitoring Report to be submitted to Cabinet Member Regeneration on a bi-annual basis

RECOMMENDATION(S):

Cabinet Member notes the report

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: No

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: The report is for information only

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ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS: n/a

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: none

Financial: none arising from this report

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £	2012/ 2013 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal: n/a

Risk Assessment: n/a

Asset Management: n/a

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

The Local Resilience Action Plan was adopted by the Sefton Borough Partnership Executive, following consultations with a number of partnerships groups

CORPORATE OBJECTIVE MONITORING:

<u>Corporate Objective</u>		<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	X		
2	Creating Safe Communities		X	
3	Jobs and Prosperity	X		
4	Improving Health and Well-Being	X		
5	Environmental Sustainability		X	
6	Creating Inclusive Communities	X		
7	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening local Democracy		X	
8	Children and Young People		X	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

'Local Resilience Action Plan, Responding to the Recession', Sefton Borough Partnership, September 2009

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BACKGROUND

1.1 At its meeting of the 21st of September 2009, the Sefton Borough Partnership Executive adopted a 'Local Resilience Action Plan', as a response to the recession. This was launched to all partners at an event held in October.

1.2 The Action Plan takes a 'balanced scorecard' approach, and covers a range of topics where the recession has an impact. One of the topics is 'Housing', with a requirement to monitor a number of activities and report these to Cabinet Member Regeneration, on a bi-annual basis. This is the first monitoring report produced as a result of the Local Resilience Action Plan.

2.0 HOUSING ACTIVITIES TO BE MONITORED

1. *Monitor CAB Advice*: Monitor debt caseload seen by CAB Advisors, in order to identify numbers, reasons for advice, levels of debt and trends
2. *Advice & Guidance to HMRI households*: Joint work between [Sefton@Work](#) and partner R.S.L.s, to identify householders who would benefit from advice and assistance regarding barriers to employment/advice services and signposts.
3. *Construction Apprentices*: Maximise potential for apprenticeships/training opportunities as a result of continued HMR construction related activity
4. *Credit Crunch Monitor Report*: Work with NewHeartlands to produce a Credit Crunch Monitoring report, including local and national information on mortgage availability, auction activity, repossessions, sales prices, volume of sales and estate agents reports.
5. *Monitor referrals to Homelessness / Housing Advice Service*. To assess impact of the recession on ability to pay mortgage / rental
6. *Promote mortgage Rescue Scheme* Promote Government Mortgage Rescue scheme in order to increase 'take up'.

Information on each of these topics is provided below.

3.0 CAB ADVICE

The HMR programme provides funding support for the (Bootle) CAB, which pays 50% of the costs of employing a Debt Advice worker. Below are extracts of their monitoring reports for Quarter 2 (July to September '09) and Quarter 3 (October to December '09)

(i) Caseload Numbers

- During Quarter 2, the CAB Debt Advisor saw 92 clients, 57 from the HMR area. During Quarter 3, there were 89 clients, 32 from the HMR area.
- During Quarter 2, 13 cases were owner-occupiers where the households were successfully prevented from losing their home, while in one case a possession order was made.
- During Quarter 3, there were 15 owner-occupiers, 11 had possession of their home prevented.
- For comparison, during Quarter 2 in 2008, there were 8 possession orders made. The CAB have reported that the number of possession orders against owner-occupiers has been declining, as lenders are being more flexible, and the

introduction of different Government initiatives is beginning to have a positive effect.

(ii) Levels of Debt:

	Total Debts	Priority	Non-Priority	Mortgage Arrears
Quarter 2	749,765	143,642	550,825	26,511
Quarter 3	769,674	182,721	498,076	73,574

The above table provides a summary of debt levels. For comparison, the total level of debt in Quarter 2 2008, was £450,740. Hence there has been a significant increase in debt levels over the past year. The CAB also report that they are seeing an increasing number of clients from areas of the borough that they haven't traditionally seen before.

4.0 HOUSING ADVICE SERVICES TO HMR RESIDENTS

Over the past 2 years the 5 Lead HMR R.S.L.s have been working more closely with [Sefton@work](#), undertaking joint work to assist unemployed residents.

- (i) Over the first half of 2009, the number of clients seen by [Sefton@work](#) is set out below

Results, by postcode, within HMRI area

L20 250 new client registrations, 28 jobs
L21 200 new client registrations, 30 jobs
L22 50 new client registrations, 4 jobs
L23 84 new client registrations, 8 jobs
L30 158 new client registrations, 28 jobs

Total 742 new client registrations, 98 jobs obtained

- (ii) Neighbourhood engagement activity focussing on door to door canvassing has targeted over 700 households in the WNF priority neighbourhoods. Along with the regular Wednesday canvassing timetable [Sefton@Work's](#) Neighbourhood Co-ordinator has held numerous meetings with and conducted awareness raising sessions with staff from Riverside Housing Association and One Vision Housing to raise the profile of Sefton@Work within the local community. A number of other canvassing activities and events between RSL's and Sefton@Work were carried out over the summer '09.

A range of outreach sessions were delivered, to support the engagement of individuals within the priority neighbourhoods. These have taken place over quarter 2 in the following locations:

- Wednesday 1st July OVH Tennant Conference-Aintree Race Course
- Saturday 4th July Seaforth Residents Association Community Champions Day Bowersdale Park, Seaforth 11-3pm

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- Saturday 11th July Feelgood Factory Open Day
- Wed 26th Aug - May Logan, Bootle 10th anniversary Fun day 10am-4pm
- Thurs 27th Aug - St. Leonards, Bootle - One Vision Housing 'credit crunch/fun day' 11am-3pm
- Thurs 27th Aug - Netherton Park Community Centre fun day 1-4pm
- Friday 18th Sept - Open day at Sefton@Work Netherton Feelgood Factory
- Tues 22nd Sept Riverside Open Day at Cumberland Gate
- Wed 30th Sept - NAC, Netherton, Jobs and Training Fair (NEET) 10am-5pm

Targeted canvassing has also taken place with Riverside Housing Association on a small scale during this quarter. Working alongside the Tenant Liaison Officer, targeted visits in the Linacre and Derby wards are being used to introduce tenants to the service. Starting in September 09 this work has continued on a regular basis.

Canvassing currently with the Evolve Community Engagement officer in the Bedford Road area on a monthly basis. [S@W](#) also attended 2 “Community Events” set up by Riverside in Cumberland Gate and Linacre One.

Currently [Sefton@work](#) are working with One Vision, Crosby /Maritime, Evolve, Linacre One, Breathe+ and Riverside.

5.0 APPRENTICESHIPS

Both HMR Lead Developers have signed up to Sefton’s Employment and Training Charter. A revised, strengthened version of this is currently under discussion. Both developers are working towards the commencement of their next phases of new build housing construction, in the Spring this year.

Keepmoat have submitted a funding bid to the HCA, under their Kickstart programme, for the Queens-Bedford development. Keepmoat’s bid application includes a commitment to local employment, which will include working with Build Sefton to procure sub-contractors, goods and services locally where possible. They have also indicated that they will recruit 3 new apprentices. Likewise, Bellway Homes have committed themselves to recruiting a small number of new apprentices when their development of the former Tannery site starts.

6.0 CREDIT CRUNCH MONITOR REPORT; KEY FINDINGS, NOV 2009

The NewHeartlands *Credit Crunch Monitoring Report* is produced by the NewHeartlands core team on a quarterly basis. It is designed to assess how the credit crunch and recession is affecting the housing market across the pathfinder and therefore allow for strategy responses to be developed. Each report (which are available on the NewHeartlands website) includes data from a sample of lenders looking at mortgage rates for first time buyers; Loan To Value (LTV) ratios for mortgages; lenders’ policies on new build and income multipliers; information on house prices and number of sales; auction and repossession activity; insights from local estate agents; developer offers and incentives as well as anecdotal information

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collected from organisations such as the Council of Mortgage Lenders. More recent Monitoring reports have been divided into two sections: local and national. The national section adds context to the report while the local focuses closely on activity in the pathfinder and Liverpool, Sefton and Wirral authorities as a whole.

The latest *Credit Crunch Monitoring Report* was produced in November 2009. Its main findings are:

- The number of mortgage products available to first time buyers has increased since November 2008;
- A deposit of at least 15% is required by lenders (from a sample) for new build properties, with some refusing to lend or imposing tight restrictions on new build flats;
- Between April 2007 and October 2009, there were 2179 lots at auction from the NewHeartlands pathfinder, with large concentrations from the Wavertree, Stanley Park and City Centre South areas in Liverpool;
- The median house price in quarter 3 2009 for NewHeartlands was £94,250 representing a 10.9% increase on the previous quarter although this was a 5.04% drop on quarter 3 2008;
- The volume of sales fell by 43% between quarter 2 2008 and quarter 2 2009; and
- Overall there are positive signs to suggest that the housing market is picking up but data over the longer term will be needed to confirm this as any changes may be temporary or seasonal.

Looking forward, the report will be produced on a quarterly basis, with the next update due at the end of March and information on home ownership products will also be integrated into the report.

NewHeartlands team are working to enhance the design and distribution of this Intelligence Bulletin report to partner agencies and institutions including the NewMIS Group and the local authority HMR delivery teams; estate agents; developers; RSLs; private sector landlords; financial institutions; government bodies; local authority executive management and lenders. Recipients of the Bulletin, particularly developers and estate agents, will be encouraged to contribute and feed back market information into future Bulletins.

Another piece of research is the *North West Housing Market Review (Q2 2009 update)*, which has recently been produced by Nevin Leather Associates for 4NW to inform strategy and policy development at the North West regional level. It is produced every quarter and although it's analysis is at the regional level, analysis is undertaken at a more local level, including Pathfinder, and as such it is useful in helping identify issues which can impact on the NewHeartlands housing market area. The key findings of this piece of work are:

- Problems within the housing market such as a shortage of mortgage finance are being exacerbated further by increasing unemployment and economic uncertainty;
- The North West has been worse hit by the recession than the southern regions;
- House prices in the North West have ceased to fall, with the sharpest declines behind us, it is thought that prices will now remain static or increase very slowly, especially given the negative underlying economic indicators (changes in output

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and unemployment). The peak to trough house price fall in the North West was 17%;

- HMR areas and City Centres have experienced even greater price falls than the region overall, this is due to the domination of sales of flats and new dwellings in city centres which have both suffered the most of all dwelling types in terms of falling prices. In Liverpool City Centre prices are around £24,000 below their peak, and are continuing to fall, suggesting that there are no signs of green shoots in this area. A peak to trough decline of 23.6% in house prices was observed across NewHeartlands between 2007 and 2009. The average house price in NewHeartlands HMR area mid 2009 was £98,868;
- Since the peak in mid 2007, flats have experienced the largest fall in house prices (18%), followed by terraced properties (14%);
- Recent price increases have been attributed to a shortage of properties on the market as opposed to an improvement overall, with credit remaining tight thus preventing would be buyers translating enquiries into approvals;
- The fall in volume of transactions is more significant than the fall in house prices: in the North West the peak to trough fall in sales from August 2007 to January 2009 was 80%. Although sales have now recovered to a greater extent than prices, the collapse in sales turnover was the key factor in housing market change in the last two years. The pathfinder areas have experienced a higher peak to trough fall in sales turnover than at a national and regional level, the figure for NewHeartlands being 89.1%;
- The proportion of sales that were new build fell to their lowest on record in 2008, with the figure for flats exceeding that of any other dwelling type falling by 21%;
- Within the pathfinder areas, there is a higher than average proportion of cash sales (38.1% in the first half of 2009 within NewHeartlands) which hints at an active investment market. Conversely, there is also a high rate of new mortgage loans to stock – excluding buy-to-let mortgages;
- The average deposit required from first time buyers increased to 24% by the end of Q2 2009 in the North West. It is therefore not surprising that the region suffered the largest absolute fall in the number of first time buyers outside of London and the South East. First time buyers are taking out loans which are high in relation to their income, with 13% borrowing more than 4 times their income in 2008. This is a reflection of low interest rates and a high proportion of loans which are fixed rate, but could cause problems if rates rise. However, within pathfinder areas the exposure to mortgage risk among first time buyers through high loan to value ratios or high advance to income is very low;
- There was a large increase in the number of repossessions in Q1 2009, across the UK as a whole, it was expected that the total figure for 2009 would reach its highest level since 1995, which highlights the seriousness of the current crisis. The number of mortgage repossession claims was higher in the North West than in any other region in 2008, demonstrating that the North West has the highest mortgage risk and greatest mortgage problems than any other region.
- Although affordability has improved due to falling house prices, this improvement has been offset by tighter lender restrictions, particularly for first time buyers.

7.0 REFERRALS TO HOMELESSNESS / HOUSING ADVICE SERVICE.

Possession proceedings

On 11th February 2010 the latest possession proceedings statistics for England and Wales (for the fourth quarter of 2009) were published. Sefton figures for mortgage possession claims and for landlord possession claims (rent arrears) are as follows:

Mortgage Possession Claims leading to Orders made

80 (a decrease of 58% on a year earlier). In 2009 as a whole there were 390 orders made, which was a decrease of 47% over the 2008 figures. In Sefton this represents 3.31 per 1,000 households, which is higher than the average for England of 3.13 but lower than the average for the North West, which is 4.02.

The fall in orders made is considered to be as a result of packages of government support being effective. These measures include an agreement with lenders that they should only pursue repossession as a last resort, the Homeowners Mortgage Support Scheme, Support for Mortgage Interest, and an expansion of free and independent debt advice.

Landlord Possession Claims issued leading to Orders made

90 (a decrease of 40% on a year earlier). Total claims/orders made in 2009 as a whole for Sefton were 490, a 6% decrease on 2008 figures. However, this compares with a decrease nationally (England) of 8% and a decrease of 10% in the North West.

All in all the position in Sefton for all types of possession action is broadly in line with national trends, albeit the Sefton figures are marginally worse than the national trend.

Homeless presentations and acceptances

The table below shows the Sefton figures for total decisions made on homeless presentations and the numbers accepted as being homeless and in priority need from 2004 up to the end of 2009

Year	Total Decisions made	Accepted as being homeless and in Priority Need
2004	753	445
2005	529	284
2006	289	126
2007	175	82
2008	230	83
2009	214	78

As can be seen from the table the most recent peak in presentations/acceptances was in 2004. The Sefton statistics mirror the national trends. Since 2004 the emphasis in

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dealing with homelessness has increasingly been one of prevention, such as providing intensive housing options advice for clients, and the focus of the work of the staff has switched to this as opposed to, for example, simply reacting to homeless presentations by undertaking formal homelessness assessments. Again, this situation is mirrored nationally.

It is clear that, thus far, the effects of the credit crunch are not showing in the figures. However, this could be due (in part at least) to the operation of the relatively depressed housing market. For example, some landlords may be waiting for an increase in property values before selling up. It is difficult to predict future trends. However national pundits do warn of the possibility of worse to come, particularly if there is a significant increase in unemployment. There has been an increase in notifications from lenders that they are progressing to the County Court for possession proceedings since the New Year and this will increase the workload (homelessness prevention and assessment, and Mortgage Rescue) in the coming months.

8.0 MORTGAGE RESCUE

Sefton is actively participating in administering the Mortgage Rescue Scheme. This £200m scheme is part of a wider package of measures introduced by the Department of Communities and Local Government to help homeowners through the current economic difficulties.

The Scheme is specifically targeted to prevent homelessness in applicants to whom the Council would otherwise have a duty to rehouse, and as such the Scheme has an extensive eligibility criteria. Depending on individual circumstances, there are two options available to those who qualify for mortgage rescue:

1) Shared equity option - this means people with at least 25% equity in their home can, through a Home buy agent - who buys the equity share in the property - pay rent to a social landlord as part of an equity loan repayment, at an agreed affordable rate. Homeowners do have the option to buy back the equity and become full owners of the property again.

2) Mortgage to rent - The homeowner becomes a tenant of a registered social landlord, who buys the property and pays off the lender. This means the tenants will pay a lower than market rate rent to the landlord - there will still be the option to buy back the property.

There are eligibility criteria which includes not having an annual household income below £60,000. The scheme originally excluded to homeowners who are in negative equity (i.e. the property is worth less than the outstanding mortgage) however pressure from LA's based on financial status of applicants resulted in the government widening the scheme to those in negative equity but only up to 120% LTV (Loan to Value).

Since the scheme began in January 2009, there have been 72 approaches to Sefton under the scheme. Of these, 46 did not meet the criteria of the scheme. Of the remaining 26, 8 applications are currently in the process of assessment, and 18 applications have met the criteria. For these 18 a formal mortgage rescue application

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has been accepted and progressed with The RSL group. To date there have been 3 successful 'rescues' completed, all 3 being 'mortgage to rent' options.

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