

The Strand Shopping Centre and the surrounding area, Bootle

Presentation to Audit and Governance Committee

15th September 2021



Introduction

- The following presentation aims to respond to items raised in the report to Audit and Governance Committee on 23rd June 2021 by Cllr Sir Ron Watson titled “Bootle New Strand and Surrounding Area”.
- The Committee requested that officers present a response to that report at this, the subsequent, meeting of the Committee.
- This presentation includes information on the financial performance of the Strand to date, and as projected in the Business Plan for 2021/22 to 2023/24.
- However, given that the acquisition of the Strand, and adjacent sites, was for the purposes of regeneration and was not a speculative property investment, the presentation also includes an overview of the process and outline plans as the Council works towards the future of these sites, the town centre, and all of Bootle.
- A copy of the presentation will be provided to Members after the meeting.

Financial Performance

The information that follows relates to Appendix 1, Items B, D and E

Financial Year	Surplus / Deficit £m	Cumulative £m	Comments
2017/18	1.000	1.000	
2018/19	0.162	1.162	
2019/20	0.031	1.193	
2020/21	-3.029	-1.836	Residual balance met from within council's budget
2021/22	-2.089		As per Business Plan 21/22-23/24, approved by Cabinet in June 2021
2022/23	-0.584		As per Business Plan 21/22-23/24
2023/24	-0.964		As per Business Plan 21/22-23/24

Notwithstanding continued challenges across the retail sector, across the UK, there is no variance to the existing Business Plan is to be reported at this time. This detail was provided on the main Cabinet agenda in June 2021.

Valuation at 31st March 2021 (submitted 8th June 2021) - £14.240m

It is to be reaffirmed that, to put the valuation in context, there is no intention to sell the asset in question, therefore any change in value since last year is purely a notional adjustment in the accounts.

Financial Performance – sector-wide challenges

- Retail sector capital values have fallen every single month between December 2017 and May 2021.
- Growth in May 2021 is driven entirely by retail warehouses.
- Capital growth for shopping centres and high streets continues to fall monthly.
- Retail rental values continue to fall – all retail subsectors continue to see falling rental values.

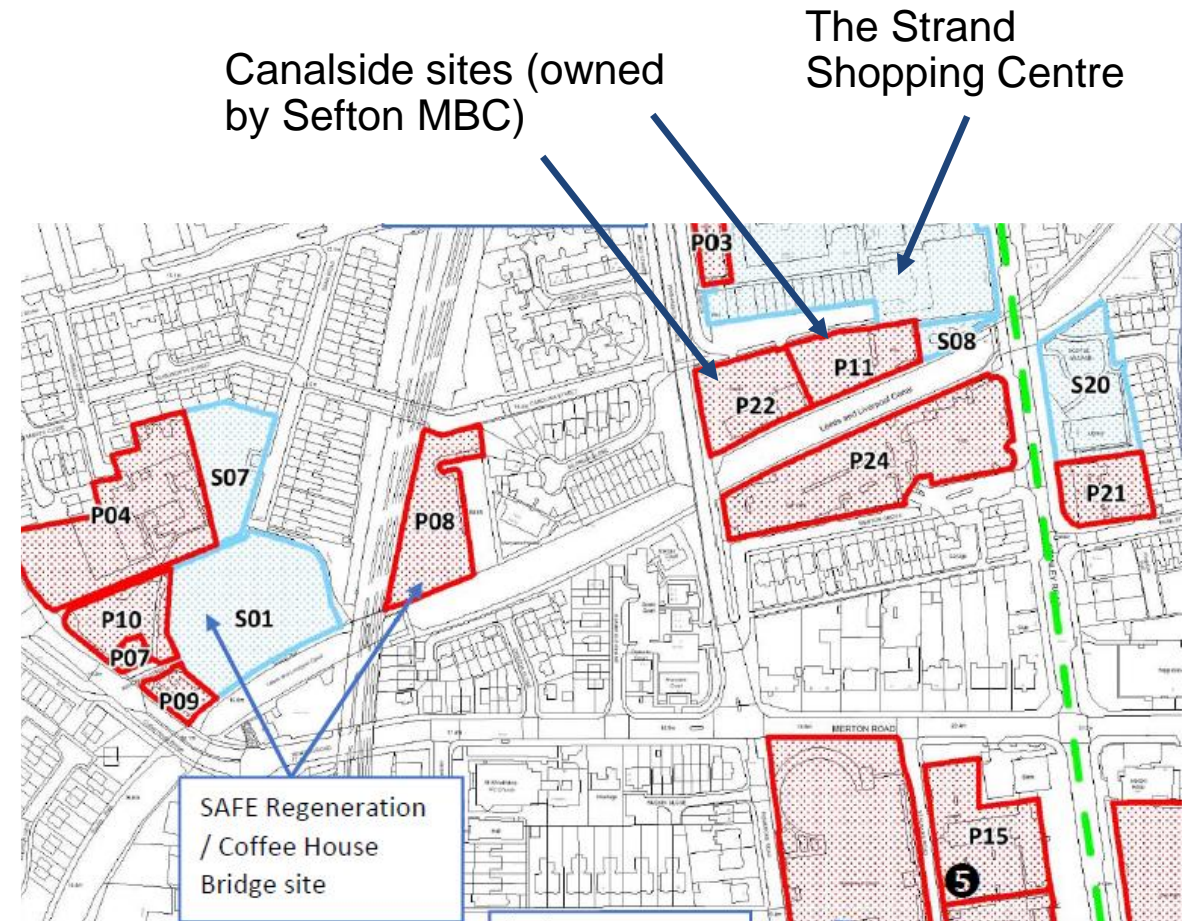
Source: <https://news.cbre.co.uk/retail-sector-capital-values-increase-for-the-first-time-in-over-three-years-while-office-values-continued-to-post-small-declines-in-value/>

Planning

The information that follows relates to Appendix 1, Item C

As stated during the meeting, the planning application to which the report referred was made by a third party, not by the council. The prominent planning application made and rejected in recent months was from Safe Regeneration Ltd – albeit for a site near the canal in Bootle, it was not for the council-owned canalside site.

Sefton Council has, however, received consent from the planning committee for temporary uses on its own canalside site.



Bootle Canalside

The information that follows relates to Appendix 2, Items 1 to 9. These questions were also raised and answered at the Council meeting of 17th September 2020.

1. The purchase of the sites adjacent to the Strand, referred to herein as the Canalside site, were approved following a report presented to Cabinet on the 9th January 2020 and Council on 23rd January 2020, for all monies associated with these acquisitions, including agreement to accept and draw down the SIF grant funding. The purchase prices totalling £0.85m were agreed. The acquisitions were independently assessed.
2. The acquisition was funded in full by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, and was independently assessed.
3. There are no annual repayment costs associated with acquisition of the Canalside site.
4. “Meanwhile uses” is the common term used for temporary uses on a site in advance of longer-term development. An example would be the “pop-up” food and drink festival held on the site in August 2021, as a test event to support engagement with communities on the medium- and long-term future of the Canalside.

Bootle Canalside

5. As there are no formal proposals at this time for the medium- and long-term future of the Canalside, with consultation ongoing with communities regarding the site, there is no Business Case in place at this stage.

6. Officers have been proactive with regards to private sector investment in all of Sefton, including but not limited to Bootle. However, it is vital to reaffirm that the acquisition of the Strand and the Canalside site were never to be focused on the retail sector alone. It is widely recognised that the retention of a smaller retail footprint aligned to customer needs is required.

7. Independent support with development of these options has been procured, with Avison Young appointed to deliver a scope of work funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Bootle Canalside

8. The output of the work identified in item 7 will address item 8.

9. As with elsewhere in the council's Growth and Strategic Investment Programme, consultation and engagement will be comprehensive in its breadth and depth, with focus on economic, social and environmental benefits and impacts for communities and stakeholders. However, there may be commercially sensitive information that may be exempt from external publication, depending on the nature of the emerging proposals.

Meanwhile Uses – Canalside “Pop-Up” Event

Feedback Verbatims — *“What the public said”...*

“Our family and friends have only since the lockdown discovered how lovely the canal area is with our walks along it towards the city centre etc. We would like a nice area and pathway with flowers and boxes and safe lighting by the canal. Thank you for asking.” **Resident, Merton Road**

“Well done Sefton Council, I live in high rise opposite so I’ve seen all the hard work put in by everyone, more advertising I think would have helped. Once again, well done – give us more!” **Local resident**

“I enjoyed what the bank holiday pop up had to offer when I visited with my mum and dad, I would like to see at the future at the pop up, things such as contests, prizes, face painting, and horse riding and other things that would be good for our community.” **Child and Family Visit**

“The market is the cutest thing I have ever seen <3, we want more things on the canal. Salt and pepper chicken was tasty. Are the neighbours annoyed that it is noisy? 😊- **Young Visitor**

“Live music was super cute, and everyone seems to be enjoying themselves. Happy Bootle = #Hootle (my suggested hashtag.)” **Young reveller**

The future of The Strand

The future of The Strand must be:

People First

A plan developed through consultation and engagement with communities, delivering positive economic, social and environmental outcomes for those communities

Connected

Building on proximity to Liverpool and to the new Everton FC stadium, and on strong transport and digital connectivity

Green

An environmentally-sustainable asset that aligns with Sefton Council's strategy for climate emergency

Resilient

A diversified proposition that complements the wider town centre offering and is regionally competitive through its distinctiveness

The future of The Strand

Diversification

Retention of a smaller retail footprint aligned to customer needs
A flexible office accommodation offering for the future world of work
Leisure, food and beverage offers that build on proximity to the city of Liverpool and to the new Everton FC stadium, and support extension of the evening economy
Public spaces and other uses that enhance the area and maximise the canalside location

Distinctiveness

Reflective of Bootle and its history, character, community and values
Recognising the need to differentiate the offer from other secondary towns across the region
Building on our assets:
The Leeds – Liverpool Canal
Excellent public transport links
Sefton’s high-quality digital infrastructure
Expansion of the Port of Liverpool
The growth and success of Hugh Baird

Driven by communities

Formal and informal consultation, engagement and communications throughout the planning and development process
Creating opportunities for local offerings in retail, culture, food and beverage, and beyond
An environment for events led by communities, and for communities
A vision, a project and an asset that build on and engender pride and belonging in Bootle

Bootle Canalside



Levelling Up funding bid

- Bid for Levelling Up funding of £14.5m submitted to Government in June 2021, with feedback expected late this year.
- The scheme comprises “Flying Theatre” and associated technology centre offer, with close links to Everton FC and Hugh Baird College.
- It also includes transformation of the Canalside site with food, drink and leisure uses, urban gardens, and opening up to the canal.
- Concept design only at this stage, with consultation and engagement ongoing, while feedback on the bid submission is awaited.

