

Community Engagement PlanBootle Area Action Plan (AAP)

August 2021





1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Community Engagement Strategy (CES) has been prepared to support the emerging Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP). Its overarching purpose is to provide an introduction to the AAP process and to outline the key engagement activities that will be undertaken throughout its preparation.
- 1.2 The document is structured to provide:
 - An introduction to Area Action Plans, their purpose and planning policy requirements with regard to consultation.
 - An overview of Bootle, who will be involved in the process of preparing the AAP and our proposed approach to consultation in the current COVID-19 context.
 - A summary of the stages of consultation and how Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC) intends to consult at these stages.
 - An overview of the next steps of the AAP process.
- 1.3 The Community Engagement Strategy has been produced for transparency and to demonstrate compliance with the AAP process. It will be published by SMBC to ensure transparency over the engagement process to inform preparation of the Bootle AAP.



2. The Area Action Plan and local planning policy

Background

- 2.1 Bootle is one of the main settlements in the borough of Sefton and as such is a regeneration priority for Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council (SMBC).
- 2.2 In recent years SMBC purchased the Strand Shopping Centre in Bootle, alongside some of its neighbouring sites, with a view of kick-starting the regeneration of the town. In the past year SMBC has been engaging with the local community about how aspects of the Strand could be repurposed, setting the context for the wider regeneration of Bootle. Later in 2021, SMBC will look to consult on more detailed plans for The Strand.
- 2.3 To complement the work that is due to be undertaken on The Strand, SMBC has considered how best to bring forward the regeneration of the wider Bootle area in partnership with the residents and stakeholders of the town and has decided that the most robust and comprehensive way to achieve this would be to create an Area Action Plan (AAP) for Bootle.
- 2.4 The AAP will set out an overall vision for the town which will guide public and private investment. It will identify a list of projects that would be suitable for development and provide certainty to the private sector that Bootle is a good place to invest. It will be a wide reaching document that is likely to cover the following themes:
 - Creating and strengthening communities and neighbourhoods
 - Environmental issues, including climate change and air quality
 - Public transport, parking, movement and connectivity
 - Shopping provision (including plans for Bootle Strand)
 - Employment areas and office provision
 - Where new homes could be provided
 - Education, training and learning
 - Parks, open spaces and recreation (including the canal corridor)
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Digital connectivity
 - Interaction between the town and port
 - Cultural activities and facilities
 - Links and opportunities to wider area/projects



2.5 Preparation of the AAP will provide an opportunity for SMBC to undertake a comprehensive conversation with the residents and stakeholders of Bootle about the future of their town. It will establish a shared vision of the future and will set out how new development could improve the quality of place and economic prosperity of the town.

Local planning policy

- 2.6 SMBC adopted the Sefton Local Plan in April 2017. This sets out a vision for the future of Sefton, for a 15 year period up to 2030, and a framework for the borough to grow in a positive and balanced way. The Local Plan forms part of the Development Plan alongside 'made' Neighbourhood Plans.
- 2.7 An AAP is a type of Development Plan Document that provides specific planning policy and guidance for an area where significant regeneration or investment needs to be delivered. Once formally adopted, the AAP will form part of the Development Plan and will sit alongside the Local Plan. Its purpose will be to set out a clear vision for the town and to identify the locations in the town where investment is needed.

The process of consulting on an AAP

- 2.8 National Planning Policy Guidance (Section 18 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004) sets out that local planning authorities must produce a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) to stipulate what consultation will take place in the preparation of Planning Policy documents. SMBC adopted its SCI in March 2018.
- 2.9 Once fully adopted, the AAP will become part of the Development Plan and the guidance set out in SMBC's SCI, specifically for the local plan, will be followed. This adheres to Regulation 18 of the Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) 2012.
- 2.10 The consultation stages, durations and methods SMBC, set out within the SCI, are summarised in **Figure 2.1** below.

Figure 2.1: The proposed stages of consultation for the Bootle AAP

Development Plan stage	Consultation duration	Consultation methods	
Scoping Consultation (Regulation 18-Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) 2012)	Minimum of 6 weeks (excluding Bank Holidays)	 Written/email consultations with statutory consultees, general consultees on our database, other relevant stakeholders, individuals and organisations who have expressed a wish to be consulted or have 	
Preferred Option Consultation (Regulation 18-Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) 2012)	Minimum of 6 weeks (excluding Bank Holidays)	 previously made comments; Consultation document available on the Council's website and hard copies available at the Council offices and libraries; 	

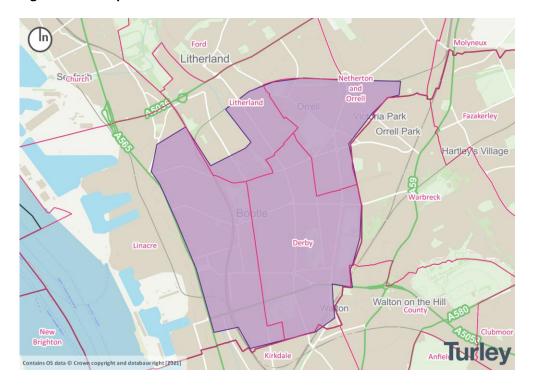


Development Plan stage	Consultation duration	Со	nsultation methods
Publication version Consultation (Regulation 19/20-Town and Country Planning Regulations (Local Planning) 2012)	Minimum of 6 weeks (excluding Bank Holidays)	•	Inviting representation on the document through press advertisements and a notice on the Council's website; and Public consultation events (at Scoping and Preferred Option stages).

The Bootle AAP area

2.11 The proposed Bootle AAP area is illustrated in **Figure 2.2** below. The AAP area may change and the Council will finalise the area following the first engagement stage.

Figure 2.2: Proposed AAP area





3. Accessibility and inclusivity

Bootle today

- 3.1 Located in south Sefton, Bootle is home to approximately 24,700 residents. It is one of the main settlements in the borough and shares the metropolitan character of Liverpool.
- 3.2 Bootle benefits from excellent transport links both to Liverpool city centre (located approximately 4 miles to the south) and other settlements in Sefton and beyond. It has a large percentage of young people when compared to other settlements in the borough and has an active community that cares deeply for the town.
- 3.3 Despite the large number of positive factors, some Bootle neighbourhoods are amongst the most deprived in the borough. It is recognised that the quality of people's living environment has a profound effect on their mental and physical health and wellbeing, therefore the AAP presents an opportunity to improve the area for those who currently live in Bootle, whilst making it an attractive place for people to live.

Stakeholders

- 3.4 Bootle has a wide range of diverse stakeholder groups, some of which have formed as a result of previous planning policy interventions.
- 3.5 In recent months, a database of stakeholders has been built based on previous exercises and through existing relationships. An initial list of stakeholder groups is included at **Appendix 1**. It is important to note that this an ongoing process and the list will be compiled over the coming months through conversations with officers and organisations in the area. This is considered to be an evolving list and those with an interest in the project are encouraged to get in touch with the team. Contact details are included on the last page of this document. In addition the list of stakeholders, the Council has access to a large number of active community groups through its social media presence.
- 3.6 Accessibility and inclusivity will be critical to the AAP. To ensure the success of the AAP process it will be absolutely vital that everyone in Bootle is given the opportunity to shape the future of their town, especially in the current COVID-19 context.

Consultation during COVID-19 and the 'new normal'

- 3.7 The steady increase in demand for digital consultation was accelerated by the impact of the pandemic and the inability to hold in person events and face to face meetings.
- 3.8 To meet the change in habits and ongoing local and national restrictions, flexible digitally-led consultation strategies have allowed effective consultation to continue facilitating two-way communication in a number of ways to ensure an accessible and meaningful engagement process is carried out.



- 3.9 Whilst there is hope that social distancing restrictions will be lifted in the near future, the impact this will have on events and how quickly people will feel comfortable engaging with in-person consultation activities are yet to be understood.
- 3.10 It will be important to continue to use a myriad of consultation activities and adapt to ensure our conversation is far reaching and that all members of the community are able to join in the process.

Accessibility

- 3.11 Ofcom has reported that the proportion of homes without internet access has fallen from 11% in March 2020 to 6% in March 2021 with the pandemic increasing digital confidence for those previously 'offline'.
- 3.12 Digital-first consultation can improve engagement levels, reach and inclusivity by making the process flexible and easy to access.
- 3.13 For example, those with mobility issues who may have found planning for and getting to and from events difficult can choose to access information online via a webinars, website or live chat. Similarly, those who may not speak English as their first language can use in built translation and audio recognition to really understand and meaningfully respond to the consultation in a way that may not have been possible before.
- 3.14 Digital engagement will often be the preferred choice for those with families, full-time jobs, caring and other responsibilities that prevent them getting to events at set times.
- 3.15 It is recognised however, that not everybody in Bootle will have access to the internet, therefore it will be important to ensure that they are not excluded and have the opportunity to participate fully in the process.
- 3.16 It remains important to use remote methods of consultation, such as leaflets, press releases, posters etc. to ensure the process if accessible for those who are offline or choose not to engage digitally.

A combination of traditional and online consultation techniques, along with provision of a variety of feedback methods, opens the conversation around the Bootle AAP – widening the reach and ensuring all those who have an interest are listened to through the process.



4. AAP Engagement plan and programme

- 4.1 Engagement and consultation on the AAP will be undertaken in stages in line with the table set out in Table 2.1 (page 6) in this document.
- 4.2 The diagram at **Figure 4.1** below provides an outline of these stages and the indicative dates these activities will take place. The dates provided are indicative and subject to change as the process develops.
- 4.3 The remaining sections of this document provides further detail of each of these stages, including how each stage will be promoted and consultation will be undertaken.

Figure 4.1: The stages of the Bootle AAP





5. Phase One: Issues and Options

Introduction

- 5.1 The first phase of the development of the Bootle AAP will begin with a consultation on the Issues and Options. This will be the first opportunity for the town's stakeholders and community to engage in the AAP process.
- 5.2 SMBC has previously undertaken engagement and consultation with the residents and stakeholders of Bootle with regard to planning and development. This includes the production of the Local Plan, the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework (in August 2016) and recent conversations with local people about potential meanwhile uses at the New Strand. These conversations will provide a starting point to embark on the Issues and Options stage of the AAP.
- 5.3 The Issues and Options stage will build on a baseline analysis, gathered via a review of evidence and feedback received during earlier consultations undertaken by SMBC and project partners in Bootle. It will provide a starting point for conversation with stakeholders and residents that will be loosely based upon previously identified themes. It will also help us to understand emerging issues that have not been identified but would need to be considered as part of the AAP process.
- 5.4 SMBC will also be undertaking conversations and workshops with officers and elected members to inform the initial data gathering stage.
- 5.5 A detailed Issues and Options document will be produced to identify key issues and potential areas of opportunity. This will be a starting point from which to build on for the Issues and Options consultation.
- 5.6 Details of how the Issues and Options consultation will be promoted and undertaken are included below. The proposed timing of the programme is included at the end of this chapter to give an indication of dates. It should be noted that these dates are only indicative at this stage and will be updated as the project develops.

Promotion

- 5.7 In March 2021, SMBC announced its intention to produce an AAP for Bootle. This was widely covered within the local media and created an early and initial buzz of excitement. A dedicated email address (BootleAAP@sefton.gov.uk) was provided for individuals to register their interest in taking part in the upcoming consultation on the AAP.
- 5.8 A visual brand will be created to promote the AAP to ensure that associated consultations and activities are easily identifiable.
- 5.9 The Issues and Options consultation will be promoted via a number of more traditional forms of advertising. These will include:



- Press release: A detailed press release will be released to local media titles, organisations and groups in and around Bootle.
- Posters: Will be displayed in a number of locations throughout Bootle that
 experience high levels of footfall. This is likely to include community centres,
 shopping areas, GP practices, health venue and many other locations.
- **Leaflets:** A number of leaflets will be distributed to groups via officers and contacts at key Bootle organisations.
- **Emails:** Emails will be issued to existing SCC databases that have opted in to this type of promotion.
- **Newspaper adverts:** An advert will be placed within the Bootle Champion.
- Newsletters and alerts: Information about the consultation will be included in a number of existing newsletters and publications distributed amongst local groups.
- 5.10 All forms of publicity will be written in plain English, avoiding acronyms and jargon where possible and at an accessible font size. The use of graphics, illustrations and colour will be carefully considered to ensure clear visual communication of the proposals.
- 5.11 On request, material can be translated into relevant languages should this be required.

 Braille and large print versions can also be provided on request.
- 5.12 All forms of advertising will provide a link to a dedicated consultation website (also with QR code) and include other ways of contacting the project team for those without internet access, including a dedicated Freephone telephone number and a Freepost address. The Freephone telephone number will be monitored throughout the entire AAP process and enable residents and stakeholders to speak with a member of the team.
- 5.13 To widen the reach of the consultation social media platforms such as Facebook, LinkedIn and Instagram will be utilised. This will include a mixture of paid-for social media adverts as well as engaging with existing groups.

Consultation activities

- 5.14 A six week consultation will provisionally take place will take place from Monday 23 August to Friday 8th October 2021. The final dates will be confirmed once the Issues and Options report is approved by Cabinet.
- 5.15 An interactive consultation website will be live throughout the duration of the AAP process. This will be updated regularly with news and, at the beginning of each stage of the AAP process, it will be updated with the relevant consultation material. This will be visually led and easy to navigate on all formats. As the consultation will be digitally-led the website will be the centre point of the AAP process.



- 5.16 During the Issues and Options consultation visual aids will be used including maps, plans and flavour images.
- 5.17 Although the consultation website will be an integral part of the consultation, it will be important to ensure those without access to the internet will be able to access the same information. A printed consultation pack will be made available for those who would like to participate. This will include a pre-paid envelope to encourage feedback. This will be available via the Freephone number or at select public locations including the Council offices and library.
- 5.18 Alongside the website there will also be an opportunity to participate in a number of activities. These will include:
 - Virtual workshops: These sessions will be used to consider the constraints, aspirations and regeneration objectives for Bootle. It is expected that each workshop will last approximately 1.5 hours, using Zoom or MS Teams platform. All stakeholders and residents will be able to book to join a workshop from the launch of consultation.
 - Static exhibition: An unmanned static exhibition will be available to view in the New Strand shopping centre or an alternative accessible location throughout the consultation period. There may be opportunities for this to be manned by members of the project team at set times should government restrictions allow. Attendees will be able to provide feedback at the exhibition. The emerging advice from Public Health England will be reviewed.
 - Immersive tours: A free immersive tour of Bootle will be available throughout the duration of the consultation. It will provide an opportunity for residents and stakeholders to see a different side to the town. The tour will not be guided in person. It will follow a set route guided by clues provided via either SMS message or QR codes. The tour will be aimed towards small groups / individuals and provide an innovative way for feedback to be provided. As part of the preparation of the tour, accessibility requirements will be carefully considered as well as the groups that may wish to participate. Further details will be provided at a later date.
 - Social media campaign: A social media campaign will be launched to encourage
 participants to upload or tag photographs and video content of parts of Bootle
 that they like or dislike using hashtags such as #makestheplace #wasteofspace.
 This will help to build up a pictorial narrative of the physical features, public
 realm and infrastructure elements of Bootle that people would like to retain, or
 wish to see regenerated.
 - Focussed stakeholder consultation: Focussed engagement will be undertaken with specific stakeholder groups including young people (via the local schools and colleges) and older residents (via Sefton Partnership for Older Citizens) amongst others. These will include focussed sessions and material. Early discussions with Sefton CVS and other support networks will be undertaken to determine which groups should be engaged and the best way to do this. One-to-one discussions will be offered to significant landowners in the Bootle AAP area



to discuss their aspirations for their sites. Existing forums, such as those the Council have with Registered Providers, will also be used to engage on the Bootle AAP. An indicative list of stakeholders groups is included at **Appendix 1.**

Feedback

- 5.19 There will several opportunities for feedback to be provided in response to the Issues and Options consultation. These will include:
 - Feedback survey: A detailed survey will also be available to complete on the
 website along with the opportunity to provide feedback on plans and maps. For
 those who do not have access to the internet or require the survey in different
 formats, help will be available via the advertised Freephone number.
 - **Feedback postcards**: Feedback postcards will be available to complete and return to the Freepost address at no cost to the respondent.
 - **Emails / letters:** A dedicated email address will be provided alongside the Freepost address for feedback to be provided.
- 5.20 The online and printed surveys will be produced in consultation with relevant officers to ensure they capture the required demographic information.

Review and analysis

5.21 Following the Issues and Options consultation, all feedback will be fully reviewed and considered. A detailed 'Consultation Report' will be produced within which a summary of all feedback received will be provided. This will be published on the consultation website.

Timing and programme

5.22 The proposed programme timings are included below. The dates included are indicative at this stage and could be subject to change.

Date	Stage	Activities		
Monday 23 August 2021	Publicity launch	 Press release Leaflets Posters Emails Social media campaign 		
W/C Monday 23 August to Friday 8 October 2021	Issues and Options public consultation	 Interactive consultation website Digital workshops Static exhibition (potential for manned events) Online survey / postal surveys Focussed stakeholder events 		



Date	Stage	Activities	
		Immersive tours	
		Feedback postcards	



6. Phase Two: Preferred Options

Introduction

- 6.1 SMBC is hopeful that, through the various consultation activities proposed as part of the 'Issues and Options' consultation, the level of responses will be high and constructive. It is vital that all feedback is carefully considered at this stage. It may be possible that some ideas and comments are not relevant to the AAP process, but could be utilised as part of other activities or interventions either currently or due to be undertaken by SMBC. This will be determined through a detailed review of the feedback.
- 6.2 It may also be necessary for SMBC and the consultant team to undertake further technical studies following the feedback received.
- 6.3 Upon completion of this review and studies SMBC will produce a Preferred Options document for consultation.
- 6.4 The Preferred Options document will set out SMBC's broad strategy for future development in Bootle. This will be based on the feedback received and will set out design principles, preferred policy approaches and key projects that could be brought forward in the town.
- 6.5 This will not be the finished product. However, it will provide more detail on how the ideas generated in earlier consultation could be brought forward and further feedback will be sought on this in the Preferred Options consultation.
- 6.6 Details of how the Preferred Options consultation will be promoted and undertaken are included below. The proposed timing of the programme is included at the end of this chapter to give an indication of dates. It should be noted that these dates are only indicative at this stage and will be updated as the project develops.

Promotion

- 6.7 The promotion of the 'Preferred Options' consultation will be largely consistent with the promotion of the 'Issues and Options' consultation and will therefore be promoted via the following methods:
 - Press release: A detailed press release will be released to local media titles, organisations and groups in and around Bootle.
 - Posters: Will be displayed in a number of locations throughout Bootle that experience high levels of footfall. This will be consistent with the Issues and Options consultation.
 - **Leaflets**: A number of leaflets will be distributed to groups via officers and contacts.



- **Emails**: Emails will be issued to existing SCC databases that have opted in to this type of promotion.
- **Newspaper adverts:** An advert will be placed within the Bootle Champion
- Newsletters and alerts: Information about the consultation will be included in a number of existing newsletters and publications distributed amongst local groups.

Consultation activities

- 6.8 A six week consultation will be undertaken on the 'Preferred Options' and, at this stage, we envisage this taking place between Monday 21 February Monday 11 April 2022. However, these dates are indicative and subject to change.
- 6.9 The dedicated website will be used as the main platform for the consultation. This will be updated with the full 'Preferred Options' document for review, alongside a more bite sized summary of the document. A detailed feedback form / survey will be available to compete on the website.
- 6.10 As with the Issues and Options consultation, it will be important to ensure those without access to the internet will be able to access the same information. Printed consultation packs will be made available for those who would like to participate. Prepaid envelopes will be provided to encourage feedback.
- 6.11 A number of both digital and face to face events will be undertaken in support of the 'Preferred Options' consultation. These will include:
 - Online webinars: These structured sessions will take place over a 1.5 hour period and include a presentation by the project team and a Q&A session for those in attendance to find out more.
 - Public exhibitions: As with the first stage of consultation, these will comprise a
 mixture of static exhibitions as well as several manned exhibitions. This will be
 monitored and be subject to the latest advice with regard toCOIVD-19 related
 restrictions
 - Stakeholder sessions: To ensure that the stakeholders engaged as part of the Issues and Options consultation can participate in the Preferred Options consultation, dedicated stakeholder sessions will be provided. These will be informed by the work undertaken during the first stage consultation.
- 6.12 In addition to the events, a copy of the Preferred Option document will be available to view in available in public places such as the Library and Town Hall throughout the consultation alongside a printed feedback form with pre-paid envelope. The Freephone telephone number will also be available and printed versions of the consultation material will be posted on request.



Review and analysis

6.13 All feedback will be fully reviewed and considered. As with the earlier stage, a detailed Consultation Report will be produced and published on the SMBC website.

Timing and programme

Date	Activity	Further details	
Monday 21 February 2022	Publicity launch	 Press release Leaflets Posters Emails Social media advertising Newsletter and alerts 	
W/C Monday 21 February - Monday 11 April 2022	Preferred Options public consultation	 Consultation website updated Live information webinars Exhibitions Online and postal survey Stakeholder sessions 	



7. Phase Three: Publication

Introduction

- 7.1 Following the 'Preferred Options' consultation, all feedback received will be fully analysed and considered. This feedback will be used in the finalisation of the final presubmission AAP document.
- 7.2 The final AAP will set out the key objectives and strategy of the Plan, the associated policies and how these policies will be delivered.
- 7.3 The intention of the third phase of the process will be to enable residents, stakeholders and other interested parties to view and make comments on the AAP before it is submitted to the Secretary of State for examination. This will not be a consultation in the same sense as the first and second phase. All comments made in response to the final pre-submission AAP document will be submitted to the Secretary of State, along with the AAP document, for consideration.

Promotion and consultation

- 7.4 All stakeholders and individuals that have been involved in the production of the AAP will be notified. A press release will be issued confirming that the final AAP document has been published.
- 7.5 The final pre-submission AAP document will be available to view for comment for a six week period. At this stage, it is envisaged this will take place from Monday 11 October to Monday 22 November 2022.
- 7.6 The document will be available to view on the consultation website and in public locations such as the library and Council offices. For those who are unable to access the internet the Freephone number will be available to arrange alternatives.

Review and analysis

7.7 Once the six week publication period is complete, all comments provided will be made available for the Planning Inspector to review. A full Consultation Statement will be prepared, which will summarise each stage of consultation, the feedback received to each stage and how this feedback has been responded to.



8. Public Examination and legacy

The Examination process

- 8.1 As the AAP will form part of the Sefton Development Plan, there will be a need for the document to undergo Examination by an independent Planning Inspector. This process will consider the soundness of the AAP and the representations made. The Planning Inspector will be appointed by the Secretary of State to conduct the examination. It is anticipated that this process could last up to 5 months.
- 8.2 The Examination process will likely include hearing sessions in the public domain and all sessions will be open to the public to attend and observe. The number of public sessions will depend on the amount, type and complexity of issues raised and how much the Inspector feels it necessary to have a public discussion of those issues.
- 8.3 Upon completion of the Examination, the Planning Inspector will prepare a binding report that will include suggested changes to the AAP, allowing the plan to be finalised.
- 8.4 Once finalised the AAP will be adopted by SMBC and the AAP will form part of the Development Plan for Sefton and will become a material consideration to any future planning applications submitted to SMBC within the AAP area. SMBC is hopeful that the AAP could be adopted by October 2023.

Legacy

- 8.5 Once fully adopted by SMBC the AAP will help to attract and maximise investment, improvement and regeneration in Bootle. It will help guide wider Council investment and provide certainty to the private sector that Bootle is a good place to invest.
- 8.6 This is a once in a lifetime opportunity for Bootle and SMBC is very much looking forward to engaging with residents and stakeholders of the town to produce a document that everyone can all be proud of.

For more information you can email BootleAAP@Sefton.gov.uk



Appendix 1: Initial Stakeholder Groups

Stakeholder groups
Political stakeholder including SMBC councillors, MP(s) and Liverpool City Region
Local residents, resident groups / associations and organisations
The business community and people who work in the area
Health organisations (including CCGs)
Young people (including Hugh Baird college, schools, Sefton Young Advisors)
Faith groups
BME Communities
Older people (including Sefton Older Persons' Forum)
Accessibility and advocacy (including Sefton Advocacy)
Voluntary and third sector groups
Public Transport providers and representative groups (including Merseytravel, Network Rail, Highways England, Canal and Rivers Trust)
Environmental Groups (including Environment Agency, Natural England, CPRE, Heritage England)
Neighbouring authorities
Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, NW Ambulance Service
Developers, housing associations and landowners
Utility providers (including United Utilities, Scottish Power, National Grid)
Communication companies
Homes England

Homes Builders Federation

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