

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Patricia Hardy	Communities and Housing	September 2022

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARTNERSHIPS

The Community Skip programme is underway again, and local area clean up days are planned with the MP's office.

There continue to be many reports of weeds and grass cutting and the Team are working with Cleansing, highways, and green spaces teams to work out a solution. There has been a concerted effort to ensure routes to Schools are clear.

STRAND schools' celebration event took place in the Chamber at Bootle Town Hall. Officers worked with all primary schools in South Sefton. The students had chosen the to explore issues around "Staying safe in your community", as a project for this year. The individual school councils chose a specific issue or concern for their school to explore. These issues ranged from, litter, dog fouling, internet security and cyber bullying. Members of each school council attended the celebration event to discuss their project and their findings. MP Dowd, The Mayor of Sefton, and the CEO of Sefton Council helped to host the event and discuss the issues the children had raised with them, The Mayor of Sefton has invited the schools back to raise a motion in the Chamber and debate the issue of their choice with the elected members. This is something we will be taking forward with the STRAND partnership when the return to school in September.

A memorial plaque has been erected in memory of Arthur Snellgrove who sadly passed away earlier this year. Arthur who served as a Sefton Council school crossing patrol, spent 23 years safely crossing generations of Netherton children to and from their schools in the area. The memorial plaque which was supplied by Canal & River Trust in partnership with the Elected Members for St Oswalds was unveiled on Monday 11th July. Arthurs close family attended the unveil along with Councillor Cluskey, Sefton Council Officers, Officers from CRT and the Head Teacher of St Benedicts Primary School.

The Community Payback national risk assessment has been approved and the team have returned to normal operation. If colleagues have any areas of work that they feel the community Payback team could support, please contact John Keogh (john.keogh@sefton.gov.uk)

Welfare Reform

Food bank

1st April 2022 – 1st August 2022	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	2038	718
Adults Fed	2588	973
Children Fed	1478	560
Total Fed	4066	1533
Crisis Type	Low income – 1458 vouchers presented 2912 people fed	Low income – 376 vouchers presented 780 people fed
Family Type	Single 1186 vouchers presented 58.19%	Single 349 vouchers presented 48.61%
Age group	25-64: 2279	25 – 64: 848

Holiday Activity and Food

Initial feedback from the HAF team is that the delivery of sessions was great and were well attended. The New HAF coordinator and Support officer visited most providers to carry out quality assurance checks and get to know the organisations. A full report will be provided when all the sessions have been completed.

Hate Crime

The Council flew flags at Bootle and Southport Town Halls during the period leading up to Srebrenica Memorial Day on July 11th. There were also displays in the foyer at Bootle Town Hall and at Crosby Library and The Atkinson. The mayor will be marking the memorial during their speech to the Council meeting on the 14th of July and there will be a display at Southport Town Hall. Sefton Council Comms team sent out messages and press releases.

Equalities

The reassessment for the NAVAHO LGBTQIA+ accreditation has taken place and the Council was successful in retaining the award for a further 2 years.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The new Public Space Protection Order for the Coast and Town Centres has been approved and is in force. Along with a range of guidelines for acceptable behaviour it will also give officers the authority to confiscate Alcohol if individuals are behaving in an antisocial manner.

Youth Service

The team have been supporting Park nights activities across the borough and have been attending hotspot areas where young people are congregating, responding to partners and residents reports.

THE ATKINSON

Theatre Programme

Dinosaur World Live: the Atkinson's theatre welcomed Dinosaur fans of all ages to six sold-out shows featuring 'live' animatronic models. The interactive production enabled our younger brave explorers to 'meet and greet' their prehistoric friends on stage.

Unfortunately, the Studio suffered a technical failure during the 12th August performance of popular Merseyside band China Crisis. The audience and band were very understanding, and it was agreed that the show should be re-scheduled. Repairs have been made to the lighting infrastructure and a new date has been set with the show being transferred into the larger theatre auditorium.

September's theatre programme will feature a variety of performances, including classical music, heritage talks, Country Superstars and a Horrid History of Terrible Tudors. An unusual highlight on 8th September will see BBC TV antiques expert David Harper take a 'Romp with the Georgians' as he reveals the colourful history of life in the Britain between 1714- 1830.

Museum Programme

Make It! Art and Craft sessions have been running throughout the Summer holidays. These are free drop in activities where families can get creative and be inspired by our exhibitions. They have been highly attended with between 150 and 200 at each session. Run by art facilitator Lisa Langan, who has been supported by our wonderful Atkinson volunteers.

Young Curator Summer Sessions, funded through the Hope Street project with lunch included for all attendees, has been a chance to introduce 13-18 year olds to what it means to be a

curator. Fourteen Young Curators from all over Sefton have visited the collection stores, learnt how to handle and condition check real museum objects, planned their own exhibition and created a display for the Museum Landing via learning how to screen print on fabric with art facilitator Dot Rogers.

Three teams of volunteers have been assisting The Atkinson's staff with the management of the collections. The volunteers have been helping with the cleaning of natural history specimens, digitising record cards and carrying out research to address the legacy of the slave trade in museum collections.

Exhibitions Programme

Sefton Young Artist of The Year Winners and Commended artworks have been on display in The Atkinson foyer during August. The exhibition was launched with a celebration prizegiving where the young artists received their certificates and prizes, sponsored by The Art Society Southport, with cake and refreshments. Many of the teachers and families of the Young Artists have messaged to say thank you and how great the event was in making the Young Artists feel appreciated and more confident in themselves. Visitors have enjoyed the exhibition and commented on the high standard of young talent in the borough.

Southport Library

Summer Reading Challenge - a successful return to the summer favourite, very busy with over 600 children joining in our library alone. This beats the number who joined in 2019, before the pandemic. Visiting primary schools to raise awareness was hugely worthwhile.

Summer activities - Fizzpop (science) and Debutots (storytelling) successful free activities with full attendance at each session.

Sefton Fostering - Information stand each Monday morning for three weeks, very positive engagements resulting in one sign up. The team would like to return for more sessions, including Saturdays.

New Starters - The library team is now fully staffed, welcoming three new starters. This meant we could return to our normal working hours, closing at 5pm Monday to Friday.

Apprentice Success - our library apprentice was successful in her application for a permanent library position.

A thank you – one grateful borrower left a thank you card in the library, expressing how the team 'do a great job, introducing people to new things and ideas'.

Other news

Great Little Place café: a combination of the hot weather and large audiences has placed a high demand for the centre's utilities. This has led to issues with low water pressure, which in turn has caused the temporary suspension of the Great Little Place café service on several days during the summer. Assessments of the utilities system are taking place to improve flow of water around the building.

Communications

Events promoted via the Council website, The Atkinson website, The Atkinson social media, through the press and Liverpool City Region

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

NPO funding bid submitted

Following approval, a funding bid to Arts Council England has been submitted to turn the Human Libraries project into an accredited National Portfolio Organisation. The bid is for £200,000 funding each year for a minimum of 3 years and if successful funding would start in April 2023. This round of funding has seen a huge increase in funding applications and ACE have received over 1700 applications, so competition is fierce. However, ACE have already looked through our application and asked for a clarification, which is a positive sign. Should this funding bid prove unsuccessful, this would leave funding for our ground breaking Human Libraries Project at an end. As a back up, a follow up bid to the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund is being considered.

Language Exchange Project - Colour Of Pomegranates

As part of the new At The Library programme and to support our Library of Sanctuary Status. Sefton Libraries are working with Venus and the Red Cross to offer sanctuary seeking women a space to practice their English speaking and listening skills with native speakers, through creative activity and conversation.

We are bringing together those learning English for the first time, and local fluent speakers who would like to learn about different cultures and languages and offer friendship and support to women who may be newly-arrived in the UK.

This programme follows the Xenia model of holding a space for exchange between women, and therefore is a women-only session to allow women from all cultural backgrounds to participate. The first session has now taken place at Bootle Library where participants practiced their language skills by exchanging recipes with native Bootleians.

Anti-social behaviour in libraries

It is regrettable to report that there have been 2 recent instances of anti-social behaviour requiring police incident reports to be lodged. At Crosby Library, a library member with known mental health issues was asked to leave by staff following a tirade of abuse to another library member. The person in question stormed out hurling abuse at staff and as she left pulled over a self-service machine causing £1500 worth of damage to the machine. The incident was captured on CCTV and police have requested a copy to pursue the matter further.

A second incident took place at Formby Library where a group of 15 teenagers rode their bicycles into the library doing wheelies, pulling over books and swearing at customers and staff. The group then loitered outside the main library doors shouting into the library in an attempt at intimidating behaviour. They dispersed when the police were called. Unfortunately, Formby Library currently doesn't have CCTV and none of the group were known to staff. The lack of CCTV is now being reviewed following this incident.

Summer Reading Challenge

The Summer Reading Challenge officially launched on Saturday 9th July, and there is already over 1000 children already signed up to take part in the first week. This is a promising figure, but we would expect treble that number to be taking part in a normal year, so we still have some work to do. Librarians have visited schools across the borough inviting children to take up the challenge of reading 6 books in the Summer Holidays, and informing them about the range of summer activities they can access in our library spaces. One of the new activities this year is called Phizz Pop which is a series of fun science activities, and these sessions are already fully booked. So, a promising start to this year's challenge

Improvement works to Meadows Library

Working with the Leisure Centre, the library layout is undergoing a significant change, to co-inside with works reported on in the last briefing.

For operational reasons, the Leisure Centre need to relocate it's main reception desk and office. This change is an opportunity to review the layout of the library and address some of the issues restricting multi-function use of the spaces. The reception desk is due to be moved in early September and the change in library layout will follow soon after.

As reported in the last briefing, the Library Service is working with the Hornby Society to deliver a unique look and feel to the library in Maghull. Following approval, a bid has now been submitted to the Heritage Fund to deliver some cosmetic changes to the library, develop cultural activities in Maghull and create a model railway in the centre garden. No funding bid is guaranteed success, but if this one does meet with approval from the Heritage Fund, the changes could lead to a significant improvement in library usage.

Communications

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HOUSING

HOUSING

Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027)

Consultation on the new Housing Strategy has now concluded. Officers have reported that there has been a good response from a diverse range of stakeholders, including; local developers, RPs, Voluntary groups alongside members of the general public.

A significant majority of responses received throughout this consultation have been favourable, especially regarding the strategic housing priorities outlined.

Officers are collating and analysing the responses to the consultation and will publish a short report on Housing Service's response to these consultation inputs before the final version of the housing strategy is considered.

The final version of the Housing Strategy will be presented to Cabinet for consideration in October 2022.

Extra Care Housing

As previously reported several Extra Care Schemes are being worked up to enable us to meet our target of 1306 units across the borough by 2036. I am pleased to report that significant progress has been made on this and that market engagement over the past 6 months is positive. The RAG rated table below provides detail of schemes that are at various stages of their predevelopment journey

SCHEME	DEVELOPER/ RP	STATUS	START ON SITE	COMPLETION	NOTES
Sandbrook Road, Ainsdale (90-unit Extra Care, 40 Affordable Rent and an 8-unit Short-term assessment scheme)	Riverside Housing Association	Planning app in anticipated committee/delegated report Q3 22/23	Q3 22/23	Q3 24/25	Heads of Terms are now agreed and the Development Agreement has been drafted. The Bat Survey of the existing building on the site revealed the presence of bats which need to be moved under licence before the building can be demolished.
Damfield Lane, Maghull, L31 3FA (107-unit Extra care mixed tenure 51 Affordable Rent and 56 Shared Ownership)	Torus Housing and Priory Asset Management	Section 73 submitted June 22	Q3 22/23	Q4 24/25	Land acquisition completed start on site anticipated Sep 22.
Town Lane Kew, Southport, PR8 4HQ (116 Extra Care, 18 apartments and 5 Mew style properties)	Torus Housing and Priory Asset Management	Section 73 submitted May 22	Q3 22/23	Q4 24/25	Land acquisition completed start on site anticipated Aug 22.
Hawthorne Road, Bootle, L20 6BY (91-unit Extra Care and 67 AR)	Housing 21 and Onward Homes	Planning approved	Q4 22/23	Q1 25/26	The Combined Authority has now approved the final Brownfield Land Fund allocation for this scheme.
Park House, Haigh House, Waterloo, L22 3XL (106-unit Extra Care)	Anwyl Developers	New planning application expected	TBC	TBC	Anwyl currently in discussions with various Housing providers in anticipation of new application being submitted. The scheme has been put forward for the next round of Brownfield Land Funding.
Coffee House Bridge, Bootle, L20 4AH (80-unit Extra Care and 107 AR)	SAFE Regeneration	Planning appeal lodged	TBC	TBC	Planning appeal hearing anticipated July 2022.

If the above 6 sites were all to progress this would deliver a total of 590 of the required 1306 extra care units (45%).

Private Sector Housing

Enforcement and Licencing

The Landlord Licencing scheme is now in the final year, and consultation on renewing this has now concluded with comments being collated with a view to a final report going to Cabinet in October. Licences continue to be issued and 25 properties have been identified as potentially requiring a licence, but no application has been received so final warning letters sent to these owners and will follow up with enforcement action if required

In addition, 10 x Final Civil Penalty fine notices have been served & 17 x Intention to Serve Civil Penalty Notices have been served for failure to licence properties. In total 71 properties have been licenced since June 15th. There have been 34 requests for service relating to poor housing standards issues and all have been addressed informal except one of these cases where an Emergency Prohibition Order was issued.

With regards to vacant properties the team has started 'enforced sale' action on another long-term vacant property.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues, and officers have attended 8 Unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments. A Condition Survey has also been completed on the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site and work to address the issues that were highlighted by this can now be programmed.

Rough Sleepers & Homeless services

The number of families accessing temporary accommodation is continuing to increase slightly due to evictions. Several larger families are being accommodation.

In addition to B&B, there are 21 other households placed in 'Air BnB' style accommodation used by Housing Options Team, an increase of 6 since July.

Sefton Housing Options continue to not place anyone without a priority need into emergency accommodation and are using the night shelter (Sit-Up rooms/Pods) to accommodate anyone presenting to the Council. Light for Life Rough Sleeper Service continue to inform the Council that this move has not had an impact on rough sleeping figures

Council Housing

The preparation of a Business Plan for the programme is underway and is being supported by ARK consulting who are currently producing an outline Business Plan for approval before commencing work on the full document.

Buckley Hill Lane

Updated valuations have now been received but Sandway still discussing contract sum with Barnfield Construction, therefore, the Council is not presently in a position to agree the final acquisition costs and progress the Homes England grant application. Handover of the first properties is expected in early 2024.

Freeths, (our commissioned external legal consultants) are currently working on the contract for the Managing Agent procurement and the Development Agreement contract with Sandway. The specification for the Managing Agent is being finalised with a view to procurement starting in September 2022.