

Council Meeting – 14th September 2023

Questions from Members of the Public

1	COUNCIL QUESTION FROM Stuart Bennett	
	MEETING DATE:	14/09/23
	TO:	Leader of the Council
	SUBJECT:	Traffic reduction and port access feasibility study
	QUESTION: Please can the Leader of the Council provide an update in response to the points made in my letter of 27 th June, 2023 (attached)? Specifically, what steps have been taken to work with the Combined Authority to secure funding to progress a Sefton-focussed traffic-reduction project with Mobilityways, and has the full feasibility study on alternatives to port access, promised in 2021, now been commissioned?	
	RESPONSE:	
	<p>“The Council continues to work closely with the Combined Authority to maximise the resources available to the City Region and to ensure that the available resource is used to deliver the safest and most effective transport system possible; one that reduces congestion, carbon emissions and air pollution, and ensures Sefton remains a confident and connected borough.</p> <p>We recognise the merits of supporting employers to develop lower and zero-carbon commuting plans and would welcome additional government funding to support local businesses with this. We are unable to reallocate current funding to such an initiative but will continue to explore all funding opportunities with the Combined Authority.</p> <p>The Council remains opposed to National Highway’s Port of Liverpool Access Scheme proposals, and continues to work with all stakeholders, including LCRCA and Freeport, to develop a truly multi-modal solution for port access. This includes working as part of the Liverpool City Region Port Access Steering Group and its Multi-Modal Technical Working Group, to model and understand future demand and needs, and to identify and promote the best multi-modal options to address them. A decision on what further studies are required, and who will be responsible for leading them, will follow on from the current work”.</p>	

2	COUNCIL QUESTION FROM Jeffrey Holloway	
	MEETING DATE:	14/09/2023
	TO:	Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills
	SUBJECT:	Marine Lake Events Centre
<p>QUESTION:</p> <p>My question to the Cabinet member and the council is.</p> <p>How can the council and its members think that it is right that they sanction millions of pounds of Sefton taxpayers money and borrowing millions of pounds on an event building in Southport that will never benefit the majority of Sefton taxpayers and will only benefit the few but the majority will have to pay when we are living in very dangerous financial times as citizens and councils when some councils have gone bankrupt with ideas that have destroyed many people’s lives with their council tax increasing by 15% .</p>		
<p>RESPONSE:</p>		
<p>“The Marine Lake Events Centre is a major project for Sefton and the City Region, and is an integral part of the Council’s Regeneration Strategy which placed a focus on town centres. This pivotal and transformative project was the centrepiece of the Council’s bid for Town Deal funding to Government. The award of a £37.5m Town Deal for Southport followed an extensive consultation and engagement process which garnered more than 2,000 responses, and which identified a new venue on this site as a priority for the town and its economy. The project has secured external funding of over £53m after being rigorously evaluated by Central Government, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and independent experts. The Town Deal funding (of which Sefton received the 2nd largest allocation of any single town in the UK) was secured against a backdrop of competitive bidding, and significantly more projects than funding available. Sefton Council will continue to pursue an aggressive approach of trying to secure funding when opportunities arise, across the Borough, as exemplified by the recent award of £20m of Capital Levelling Up Funding for Bootle. The funding is specific to projects presented, and the evidence which justifies Government intervention, and thus it is not money which is available to transfer to other projects, programmes or corporate and community needs.</p> <p>Once complete in 2026, the Marine Lake Events Centre will generate over £18m annually to the local economy, attracting over 500,000 new visitors annually (including to the new Water and Light Show) while directly creating over 200 new jobs. The Visitor Economy in Sefton is vital, and this project will continue to support the sector and create real growth in the Borough. Despite the facility being located in Southport, it will be visited and used by the wider population of Sefton and beyond and the economic impacts through employment, trades, services and supplies will not be localised.</p>		

	<p>The construction partner, the operator and the Council have committed and already demonstrated to ensure benefits spread further afield, and this is exemplified at the time of writing by the social value activities of the construction team which includes collaboration with Hugh Baird College as well as the Southport Colleges”.</p>	
3	COUNCIL QUESTION FROM John Rice	
	MEETING DATE:	14/09/2023
	TO:	Leader of the Council
	SUBJECT:	Members’ Code of Conduct
	<p>Can the Leader of the Council state whether he believes that all councillors should always adhere to the Members' Code of Conduct and if so, does he still have confidence in his deputy's integrity and probity over his property dealings?</p>	
	RESPONSE:	
	<p>“Yes, and yes. However, as the questioner mentions conduct and integrity I would be interested to hear his views on a self-styled “community journalist” lifting photographs of people from Facebook and altering images in a derogatory manner and then posting them on social media. Does he feel that this is acceptable conduct and acting with integrity”?</p>	