

**REPORT TO:** CABINET MEMBER – REGENERATION

**DATE:** 16 February 2011

**SUBJECT:** Sefton Business Village Partnerships Review

**WARDS  
AFFECTED:** Linacre, Derby, Church, Victoria, Blundellsands, Manor,  
Dukes, Cambridge, Ravenmeols, Harrington, Sudell,  
Molyneux and Park.

**REPORT OF:** Alan Lunt, Director Neighbourhoods and Investment  
Programmes

**CONTACT  
OFFICER:** Steph Prewett Ext 3485

**EXEMPT/  
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

**PURPOSE/SUMMARY:**

To set out the:

- (i) background and context to the review, including resource constraints of the Council and the Localism policy agenda
- (ii) overall outcomes of the BVP Review
- (iii) potential succession options for BVPs post March 2011
- (iv) all of the above to allow SBVP Members to come to an informed view about what are the preferred options for post March 2011
- (v) next steps if there are any resource or governance implications for the Council

**REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:**

To agree preferred option for moving forward with BVP structure as part of wider area management arrangements.

**RECOMMENDATION(S):**

That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration

- (i) notes the background and context for the review
- (ii) considers the views of the Sefton BVP and their preferred options for BVPs in light of resource constraints and the direction of area management
- (iii) values the commitment that has gone into undertaking the review by the BVPs

**KEY DECISION:** No

**FORWARD PLAN:** No

**IMPLEMENTATION DATE:** Following expiry of the call in of the minutes of this meeting.

**ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**  
Discussed as part of the BVP review

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**Budget/Policy Framework:** No Implications.

**Financial:** There are no direct financial consequences as a result of this report. However, this service is currently under review and any savings arising from the options will be reported back to Members.

<b>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</b>	<b>2010/11</b>	<b>2011/12</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>	<b>£</b>
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<b>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</b>				
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:** No implications

**Risk Assessment:** No implications

**Asset Management:** No implications

**CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

Review carried out with the BVPs  
Outcomes of review to be discussed at the overarching Sefton BVP meeting on 7 February 2011  
FD 650 – The Interim Head of Corporate Finance and Information Services has been consulted and his comments have been incorporated into this report.

The Head of Corporate Legal Services has been consulted and has no comments. LD 00051/11

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

### **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		√	

### **1.0 BACKGROUND:**

- 1.1 The BVP Review has been triggered by the changing policy landscape of moving towards decentralisation/localism as well as the ending of the primary funding stream of BVPs on 31 March 2011. The BVP Review Framework was agreed at the last meeting on 30 September 2010. Members will recall that it was also agreed that a series of commissioning principles should be devised. These were to help structure the outcomes of the review and would be the things that the BVPs would need to sign up to and report back on if they wished to continue receiving financial support from the Council.
- 1.2 The Cabinet Member should also be aware that since the last meeting of the overarching BVP, it has been agreed by the Council that there will be a review of the Neighbourhoods Division (including BVP staff), Safer and Stronger Communities services and Southport Partnership team. The review will integrate the services and significant savings are expected to be made as a result. This review is at an early stage, but the outcomes will be fed back to Cabinet on 17 February 2011 to enable the Council to decide if this is what they want. Therefore, it is very important that the views of the overarching BVP Group inform this wider review.

### **2.0 OVERALL OUTCOMES AND SUGGESTED OPTIONS**

- 2.1 The theme of one size doesn't fit all has been integral to the entire BVP review process. Each BVP has undertaken the review in the way that they felt was most

appropriate to their needs and the outcomes reflect that each BVP is unique with differing strengths, problems and needs.

- 2.2 These individual outcomes and options, along with the methodology adopted are contained within the attached full Review document. This report takes the common outcomes from each of the individual BVPs and sets them out into an overall flexible approach against the commissioning principles and the wider review referred to in Section 3.2.
- 2.3 The overall outcomes and options are based on all of the previous points outlined above but also:
- what has worked well and not so well in the past for BVPs; learning from each other and elsewhere
  - what do BVP s want to get out of working with the Council and other key partner organisations
  - what benefits do the BVPs bring to the Council and partners and the wider business community and the area
- 2.4 There have been some real key notable successes coming out of the BVPs. They have been in existence for a considerable time and all of the BVPs have indicated a wish to continue in some form. Some have been really good at engaging and keeping businesses within their networks. Others have struggled to retain an interest through factors outside of their control. Some of these issues seem to relate to a feeling that they are not being listened to and cannot necessarily influence decision making. BVP Managers have also reflected this back as part of their self-assessment. Since the integration with Neighbourhoods this has improved, but there is still some way to go.
- 2.5 Meaningful engagement with businesses and having a clear focus on what a BVP is all about in each area is something that whatever direction the BVPs take needs to be looked at. From a Council and business point of view it is important that the voices of businesses are heard and listened to when developing policy and strategy. The emerging Area Partnerships, on which it is expected that the BVPs will be a key partner, will address some of the concerns about not being able to influence policy and strategy. The role of the BVP on that will be fundamental to understanding the needs of businesses in their area and being able to advocate on their behalf. A call for formal interest in having a place on the Area Partnerships has already been circulated to all BVPs.
- 2.6 One of the key outcomes of the review has been the importance of partnership working in delivering actions. The experience of the BVPs has shown that this, more than the specific structure, determines the success of their delivery. The BVPS have already demonstrated they can work with a wide range of partners. It is important this way of working is not lost but is tied in more closely to the emerging area management structure and local governance arrangements being developed

2.7 The review has identified that the BVPs feel involvement with the Council is important and recognise the need to also engage with wider partners in the public sector. Again, this thinking ties in well with the need to engage the business community in Sefton's area management agenda to ensure their views were represented in the area. Businesses have identified the value of having a single point of contact which helps them to access a range of support from the Council and key partners. It appears from the review outcomes that all BVPs are keen to ensure that this single point of contact is not lost.

2.8 The options are as follows:

**Option 1:**

Management and delivery funded solely via BVP private sector contributions and independent organisations through membership subscriptions or donations by partners. There would be limited involvement with SMBC structures and limited day to day liaison with Council.

**Option 2:**

Management and delivery funded solely via BVP but some support retained with SMBC ie via area management arrangements. Linked into area governance structures, with specific business engagement through Area Partnerships.

**Option 3:**

Management and delivery joint private sector and SMBC funded. To receive SMBC funding clear objectives and outcomes would need to be set showing benefits to the Council, with appropriate performance monitoring arrangements. This would also include a clear commitment from the private sector as to what benefits they could bring to the needs of the area and vice versa. This would be linked into the area governance structures and engagement through Area Partnerships. Work is already ongoing to maximise the income being generated into the BVPs.

**Option 4:**

Explore whether the role could be transferred to Federation of Small Businesses/Chamber of Commerce or another organisation. There are organisations that represent the business community that could deliver a BVP style partnership in the future. This option would need to be explored further with BVP Members and potential delivery organisations, as costs would have to be covered by private sector contributions. It may be more appropriate to explore more effective links with these organisations and what benefits businesses in the area could get by linking up with these organisations rather than a transfer of role. However, the key to this is whether the BVPs feel that this is an option worth

exploring.

### **3.0 CONSIDERATION OF OPTIONS:**

- 3.1 Option One, Two, and Four all assume that the BVPs will continue in some form with links into the Council and partners through area management, but with no financial support. Although, it has already been clearly stated it is worth re-iterating that none of the BVPs are in a position at the moment to sustain the current level of staffing and activity post March 2011 without some level of Council resources. Although, it is up to the BVPs as to whether they wish to request Council support and up to the Council as to whether it can be afforded.
- 3.2 Option Three offers a model of mixed private sector and Council support, amounts and type of support obviously to be determined depending on whether this is worth pursuing and how feasible it is from the BVPs' point of view.
- 3.3 If the preferred option is to keep some Council support for BVPs, they will need to be private sector driven but clearly aligned and signed up to the commissioning principles within the BVP Review. Any resources that could be offered by the Council would need to be justified in terms of clear outcomes and benefits to the delivery of the Council's core objectives. Whilst the individual BVP reviews certainly show a great deal of good work has been done in the past, it has been difficult to assess the impact of the activities delivered in a consistent measurable way. This is something that would have to change in the future.
- 3.4 The assumption has been made that there is little scope to retain dedicated BVP Managers in all areas in their current form. This is both a resource issue and due to the changing policy landscape. There are also areas which currently do not have dedicated BVPs which need to be taken into consideration. In recognition that not all areas are the same, it is perhaps something for BVPs to think about as to whether support for their areas of activity would be more effectively delivered by staff with a responsibility for a patch which encompassed residents, businesses and visitor needs as part of the community. This would be subject to resource constraints and Council agreement.

### **4.0 RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 4.1 That the Cabinet Member for Regeneration:
  - (i) notes the background and context for the review.
  - (ii) considers the views of the Sefton BVP and their preferred options for BVPs in light of resource constraints and the direction of area management.
  - (iii) values the commitment that has gone into undertaking the review by the BVPs .