

CABINET MEMBER'S REPORT		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
Ian Maher	Cabinet Member Regeneration	3 rd March 2011

Planning & Economic Regeneration update

Future Jobs Fund Job Fair

Sefton attended a Jobsfair at St George's Hall on Thursday 27th January 2011. This is our last opportunity to delivery FJF opportunities before the end of the programme in March 2011. We have managed to work with local employers to offer 113 FJF vacancies which will enable us to achieve our full contract target of **382 FJF clients into opportunities** before the end of March 2011. The following employers from Sefton agreed to attend, interview and recruit on the day:

Autism Initiative	Brunswick Youth Centre
Deyes High School	First Initiatives
Freshfield Animal Rescue	Merseyside Fire & Rescue
Netherton Park Neighbourhood Centre	Next Steps (Connexions)
One Vision Housing Association	Sefton CAB
Sefton Carers	Sefton@Work
Sefton MBC Coastal	Y Kids/Not Just Cooking

New Enterprise Allowance contractor for Merseyside announced

The DWP Secretary of State announced his intentions on 5 October to introduce a New Enterprise Allowance. This is an initiative under Section 2 of the Employment and Training Act 1973, for the purpose of helping people to train for, obtain and retain employment.

The New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) approach is being tested in Merseyside Jobcentre Plus District (Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St. Helens, Wirral and Halton local authority districts) from 31 January 2011 to 30 April 2011. It will be available to Jobcentre Plus customers aged 25+ claiming Jobseeker's Allowance for six months (26 weeks) or more until they are required to join New Deal or the Work Programme.

We understand that the Merseyside JCP contract for NEA has been awarded to the Merseyside Chambers of Commerce.

Housing Update

Changes in housing related Policy

A number of changes to housing related policy have been announced by the Government including;

- Changes to the level of Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance
- Introduction of a flexible tenancy for Registered Providers which means that a tenancy can be intermittently reviewed in order to assess whether the household still requires a social housing tenancy
- Changes to the assessment of what constitutes an 'affordable' rent, which is now set at 80% of the market rent for the area in question

Taken together, these changes may have significant implications for the Council. Officers have begun an assessment of the potential impact and are engaging with Registered provider partners in order to gauge their views as part of the process.

New Homes Bonus

The proposed introduction of an incentive for new housebuilding as part of which the government will match Council Tax income for 6 years for every net addition to housing stock has been the subject of consultation. Officers have met with Housing minister Grant Shapps MP to set out the disadvantages to HMRI Councils such as Sefton who as a result of that programme, now have significant numbers of properties awaiting demolition, thus significantly reducing the benefit of the bonus. An exemption on the basis that the demolitions are part of a previously agreed proposal and are in any case low demand / obsolete and would not normally be re-occupied has been requested and DCLG officials are considering their response.

Completing Housing Market Renewal Activity

Following the withdrawal of Housing Market Renewal funding with effect from April 2011, Officers have been seeking to secure additional support from the Homes and Communities Agency for the purpose of completing the task of re-housing remaining residents to facilitate site assembly and thus re-development by housing developer partners. As a result, a further £1.25 million has been secured for acquisition and site remediation during 2010-11