

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Simon Shaw	Environmental	July August 2011

The following issues have been considered during the July / August period that come under the Environment Portfolio.

1 Scambusters - Decision

The CM considered a proposal to continue participation in a Nationally funded project for a NW Scambusters team to respond to the growth in cross-border consumer fraud that can only be effectively tackled by a team that can work across Local Authority boundaries. Known as Level Two fraud, these types of scams target the vulnerable across wide areas. They include cold-calling scams, where a builder who was “just passing” offers to fix a loose tile on an elderly person’s roof and substantially overcharges for poor, incomplete or unnecessary work; complex DVD piracy rings that operate in markets and computer fairs around the region as well as on the internet; and car-clocking conspiracies where cars are moved from auction to auction and “lose” thousands of miles from the odometer on the way.

Enforcement of this type of activity is specialised and resource intensive and relies heavily on observations and surveillance as well as developing strong links with intelligence sources and databases.

The CM Authorised the Director of Built Environment to sign the offer letter issued by BIS to enable the Council to participate in the Project as a Project Partner.

2 Illicit Money Lending Team - Decision

Illegal moneylenders commonly referred to as “*loan sharks*”, work outside of the regulatory regime, offering cash loans to the most vulnerable in the community who have an urgent need to buy something they cannot afford. Illegal moneylenders don’t issue written agreements highlighting the interest rates they charge, or consider whether their “*customers*” can afford the repayments. Illegal moneylenders have only one priority: to make sure they receive the repayments they have set from the people to whom they have given money. A money transaction of this kind is normally unenforceable in law and therefore bad payers may be intimidated, beaten or forced into the control of the illegal moneylender to ensure the money plus the interest is paid back.

Enforcement of this function is specialised and resource intensive and relies heavily on observations and surveillance as well as developing strong links with intelligence sources and databases. Funding is available from the Government for the continuation of this project subject to the signature of a joint agreement.

The CM Authorised the Director of Built Environment to sign the protocol for Illegal Money Lending Team Investigations to enable the Council to work in partnership with Birmingham City Council in relation to the Consumer Credit Act 1974 and the Illegal Money Lending Project.

3 National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme - Decision

Sefton Council is statutorily obliged to discharge food safety duties under the food Safety Act s 40 and codes of practice. Participation with the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme is strongly advised but is not yet compulsory. The Food Standards Agency have indicated that the requirement is likely to become obligatory if uptake by local authorities is inconsistent. The overarching aim of the scheme is to reduce the incidence of food-borne illness and the associated costs to the economy. Nationally approximately one million people suffer from food poisoning every year at an estimated cost to the economy of £1.5 billion. For the last 5 years Sefton has operated a similar scheme known as Scores on the Doors. Like the Scores on the Doors the National Food Hygiene Rating scheme is designed to help consumers choose where to eat and/or shop for food by giving them information about the hygiene standards in food premises at the time they are inspected by Environmental Health officers and Senior Technical Officers. The publication of the results of these inspections should encourage businesses to improve their standards. Catering and retail businesses will be given a hygiene rating under the scheme. It is a six tier numerical system with 0 (urgent improvement necessary) at the bottom to 5 (very good) at the top. Consumers will be able to access ratings at www.food.gov.uk/ratings and businesses will be encouraged to display stickers and certificates showing their rating at the premises.

The CM approved the migration to the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme and accepted the offer of grant from the FSA (£5,503) towards the preparatory costs of the transition.

4 Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme Procurement Framework - Decision

The CM considered a report on the results of tendering exercise to establish a procurement framework for the Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme 2011-2016 and seek approval to establish framework agreements with the successful companies. The CM approved the successful companies to go on an approved list framework for the North West Regional Coastal Monitoring Programme.

5 Draft Mersey Ports Master Plan – Decision

The CM considered a report about the draft master plan which sets out a 20 year strategy for growth for the Port of Liverpool and Manchester Ship Canal. The economic benefits of the port are of national, regional and sub regional importance. The proposed growth will have impacts on infrastructure, land and associated activities such as energy, waste and off shore wind. Specific considerations for Sefton include: the planned deepwater port, use of Seaforth Nature reserve, creation of Intermodal Freeport and possible land acquisition along regent/Derby Road. The report highlighted the key elements that the Council will respond to, under the consultation which closes 5 September 2011. The Council's proposed response balances issues within the master plan to ensure that economic benefits to be released by growth, are matched by appropriate environmental controls and direct investment in local areas to achieve major regeneration. CM approved that the detailed content of this report forms the basis of the Councils formal response to the draft Mersey Ports Master Plan.

6 Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy Consultation - Information

Last autumn, Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority and the Merseyside district councils in the Merseyside and Halton Waste Partnership undertook the 'Don't Waste Your Say Public' Consultation that gave residents in Merseyside the chance to have their say on how Merseyside will improve municipal waste management over the next thirty years and address some of the major resource challenges. The information and opinions collected from residents has informed the development of a revised Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Merseyside which will provide a way forward across the region from 2011 to 2041. The draft strategy has been out for public consultation. The final strategy will be presented to Sefton Members for approval at the end of the year. A full copy of the draft Strategy, a summary of the draft Strategy, the draft Environmental Report and other supporting documents can be found on the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority website: www.merseysidewda.gov.uk.

7 Changes to the Rat population within the Borough - Information

The above issue was considered in response to a request from a party Environmental spokesperson to consider the comparative levels of rat activity within the Borough and the implications of recent service changes. The Council has specific statutory duties with regard to controlling rats and mice under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act and must take such steps as may be necessary to ensure that the district is kept free from rats and mice. The level of rat activity in any one area is dependant upon a number of factors including the availability of food and water, suitability of nesting and harbourage and changes in climatic conditions. Poor infrastructure e.g. defective drainage systems and food sources such as fly tipped waste or discarded food all contribute to a potential for rat activity. Rat activity remains an issue within the Borough and pest control services and enforcement play a key role in tackling this. Public perceptions show a clear view that the environmental conditions and personal behaviour have a significant impact upon the levels of rat activity. Requests for rat treatment services boroughwide were 2748 in 2008/09, 2305 in 2009/10 and 2384 in 2010/11. This means there was a year on year reduction of around 16% followed by an increase of around 4%. Ongoing monitoring will be necessary to establish the potential impact that recent and potential service changes may have upon the levels of rat activity.

8 Climate Change Adaptation Plan – Information

The CM considered an update on the development of the Climate Change Adaptation Action Plan for Sefton Council that sets out a strategy to increase the resilience of Sefton Council and its community, the impacts of accelerated climate change and to position the Council to take advantage of any opportunities that may arise.

For Sefton MBC, the key risks relate to;

- The costs and operational issues of dealing with a major weather event (flooding, storms, heatwave)
- Increased cost of damage to assets (roads and buildings)
- Failure to meet statutory duties
- Increased demand on services, particularly social care, housing, transport and environmental health.

The Implementation plan sets out the ongoing process of how Sefton will:

- Implement the actionable measures of the Report
- Continue to progress the process of Climate Adaptation
- Provide support to facilitate Climate Adaptation by partners

- Widen the coverage of the adaptation process to include those not yet engaged.

Sefton will aim to embed adaptation in to existing programmes and decision making processes, rather than it being an additional thing to do. However, due to the diverse nature of the issues contained within the adaptation process and the very long timescales, a unique climate adaptation management system (CAMS) has been developed that will ensure climate adaptation is effectively managed and the organisation retains a 'memory' of the necessary actions and processes over the long, and potentially very long, timescales involved.

9 Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme - Information

The Carbon Reduction Commitment Energy Efficiency Scheme (CRC EES) is a mandatory energy efficiency scheme designed to assist the UK in meeting its European carbon emission reduction commitments. Total carbon emissions from the Council (excluding transport) will be collected and reported. There are very significant financial incentives and sanctions within the scheme and Councils need to ensure that financial incentives are maximized and that any penalties are avoided. The scheme legally commenced in April 2010 involving large non-energy intensive public and private sector organisations in the UK. The scheme is an emissions trading scheme and uses reputational and financial levers to secure commitment from participating organisations in achieving the objective of energy efficiency. The scheme requires organisations to purchase allowances to cover every tonne of carbon they emit. The Introductory Phase (2010 to 2014) price of allowances is £12 per tonne. Sefton Councils annual purchase of allowances is calculated at **£400K**. For 2011/12 allowances can be bought through a Government auction. The auction will take place retrospectively sometime between April and July 2012 i.e. based on actual emissions. Under the new Coalition Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, changes were made to remove the recycling payments of carbon allowances to participants in the first year, effectively turning the CRC EES into a tax. The scheme requires annual reports of carbon emissions. The Council will need to produce reports that will require energy use data from all departments. Schools, including Academies, have a "reasonable assistance duty" under the CRC EES order to provide energy data to the authority. The CRC scheme presents public sector organisations with a number of challenges including ensuring compliance with the schemes registration, administration and annual reporting and auditing requirements. Non-compliance would expose the Council to very significant financial penalties with fines for late or inaccurate data. Sefton must develop and maintain reliable systems of energy and carbon data collection that provide timely, complete and accurate information. Sefton provided its first statutory CRC Data Report by the due date.

10 Feed in Tariffs (FiTs) and the Sefton Options - Information

The Feed-in Tariffs (FiTs) were introduced in April 2010 as a direct payment to the installers of small-scale renewable electricity generating equipment. The tariffs have two elements, a generation tariff and an export tariff. The tariff levels are particularly attractive for the installation of photovoltaic (PV) also known as solar electric panels, generating an approximate 7% annual return on investment. A similar regime of payments exists for small wind turbines and electricity generated from biomass sources. Councils have been receiving positive pressure from the Government to take advantage of the income generating opportunities of the FiTs. Every Council has been contacted by the Secretary of State for Energy and Climate Change and encouraged to become 'power generators of the future'. Council decision-making timeframes have meant that

most Councils are introducing their renewable schemes this financial year. The presence of FiTs gives 4 potential working options. There are two models where we procure and own the PV panels and associated equipment; investing our own capital or borrow to invest capital. There are two further models where others raise the capital and own the equipment and we either; rent our roof/land space out for others to use, or an affinity scheme where we promote deals to others via the Council's endorsement usually the general public. Sefton officers have researched the best potential sites and whilst many promising buildings exist for such investments, the best types are schools and leisure centres, both of which have recently been subject to ownership issues either from Academy plans or through the transformation process. Listed buildings and older civic buildings such as the town halls have added complications such as planning issues, older electrics and complex roof design. Some developments have already proceeded and are being considered, for example Aintree Davenhill School works and Southport Arts Centre refurbishment. Officers have given some technical assistance to Lydiate Parish (now installed) and Maghull Town hall to explore possibilities. Recently Forefield school has submitted a planning application to install PV.

11 REECH - Information

An update of the work being undertaken by the Renewable Energy and Energy Efficiency in Community Housing (REECH) Steering Group in delivering the multi-million pound sub-regional project, for which Sefton is the accountable body.

12 VIRIDIS - Information

Informed of the work being undertaken across the region to deliver the Liverpool City Region Low Carbon Action Plan. The project also has linkages with the work being undertaken by Sefton Council as part of the REECH Project. Members were informed of the Feasibility Study being undertaken by AMION Consulting and Encraft Ltd on behalf of a group of registered social landlords and local authorities to explore the potential to establish a collaborate model to maximise the benefits arising from installation of Photovoltaic Panels within the sub-region.

13 Development of Sustainable Energy Action Plan for the Sub-region - Information

Local Authorities are expected to have appropriate policies in place in their Local Development Frameworks (DLFs) to address issues relating to renewable energy and to facilitate the delivery of resilient energy infrastructure. Increasingly there is also a need for local authorities to influence integrated development and regeneration at a level beyond that of a single development site, and also for them to drive improvement in the energy performance of the existing building stock. The update informed of the work being undertaken across the LCR to address issues relating to renewable energy and to facilitate the delivery of resilient energy infrastructure, and of the Feasibility Study being undertaken by ARUP consultants on behalf of Merseyside Environmental Advisory Services (MEAS) on the development of a Sustainable Energy Action Plan for the Liverpool City Region.

14 Air Quality Plan for the Achievement of Air Quality Limit Values for Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂) in Liverpool Urban Area

South Sefton is included in an Agglomeration (UK0006) which is predicted **not to comply with the Air Quality Directive** and for which, therefore, an Air Quality Plan

must be developed. Under the provisions of the Localism Bill **finances** for non compliance with the Air Quality Directive could be redistributed to local authorities, although there are no current proposals for how this would be done. Work by Sefton under the statutory Local Air Quality Management regime is in broad agreement with the Air Quality Plan for the Agglomeration leaving Sefton well placed to respond to the Plan and show that all practical actions are being taken.

CLEANSING SERVICES

15 Zoned Collection Service Fully Operational

The introduction of the new Zoned Collection Service has now been implemented in full. The number of 'issues' raised on a weekly basis has now returned to the very low 'pre Christmas' levels, resulting in the service being operated by less vehicles and less staff, but with the same high satisfaction, collection and completion levels enjoyed by Sefton residents prior to the implementation.

16 Reallocating Staff Resources

Following the efficiency savings within Street Cleansing, all previous ABG funded staff have been re-deployed into the core cleansing operation successfully using posts vacated by those employees taking VR/VER. Certain parts of the operation, such as rear entry, fly tipping squads and litter bin emptying teams, are under increased pressure from higher volumes of wastes which were previously collected via community skips and WNF funded squads. However, at this stage, the service is continuing to operate effectively.

17 Street Cleansing Successes

The Royal Wedding celebrations and recent public holidays all passed without problem, and the amended cleansing schedules were all completed according to plan. The Cleansing Service received a number of congratulatory and complimentary emails and letters from residents and visitors to Southport for the manner in which the resort was kept clean over the public holiday period when hundreds of thousands of visitors left huge volumes of litter and debris during and after their visit. Plans have now been developed to ensure that the Borough is presented to the highest possible standards, within existing resources, during the traditional busy summer holiday period.

All issues were subject to detailed reports / briefing notes which are available on request.