

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Ian Maher	Cabinet Member Regeneration & Tourism	Oct/Nov 2013

Housing Market Renewal – General

Klondyke

- Phase 1 site construction underway to deliver 86 new housing units, 17 of which will be for affordable rent. The first completed handover of new properties took place at end of July. The remainder will be handed over in February 2014.
- All remaining residents in the Phases 2 & 3 area have now been rehoused. 2 were waiting for a new-build home on the Phase 1 site.
- A judicial review on the need for an environmental impact assessment on the demolition of the Springwell Chapel has been heard in the High Court for the 27th November following action taken by Save Britain's Heritage. The outcome/verdict was recently announced and found in the Council's favour. However, SAVE have applied to appeal this decision. This could cause further delays to implementing demolition and the redevelopment of Phase 2/3 area.
- This will delay the submission of Bellways planning application for Phase 2/3 area, which will also need to be considered for an environmental screening. Bellway have prepared a new layout proposal for Phases 2 and 3, with a view to seeking Planning Consent, in the coming months, but timing of this will need to be considered in light of the legal position.

Bedford/Queens

Construction of the Phase 2 site continues. The use of Regional Growth Funding to fund the development of Bedford Queens Phase 3, and St Winefrides sites has been approved by BIS. Construction work on both sites has begun.

2. Housing Options Service

- The Local Authority partners have almost completed a Review of the common Property Pool Plus Allocations Policy. A draft, revised policy for consultation with stakeholders has recently been approved. Consultations will begin in a few weeks time.
- The task of Reviewing our Homeless Services and producing of a new Homeless Strategy, as required by The Homelessness Act (2002), is

completed. The new Strategy was approved by Cabinet in September.

- The number of clients approaching the service for help, especially single people, has increased over the last year or so, and there is little likelihood of this increase slowing over the coming months and years. CLG report a 6% increase in homelessness, nationally, over the last year. We dealt with 575 households claiming to be homeless or seeking help to prevent homelessness, last year.
- We have also seen a year-on-year increase in the number of people Rough Sleeping in the Borough despite the introduction of the No Second Night Out project. However, numbers are relatively small, increasing from 4 cases in 2010, to 7 in 2012. Southport Members have been lobbying for local winter, night shelter services to be introduced, and have approved funding from their Area Committee budget to help set up a service.
- The lease disposal of Windsor House in Southport, was completed in September. Forum HA will begin to refurbish the property, which should be completed by the end of the year. This will then provide 9 units of low level supported accommodation for young single people.

4 Private Sector Housing Standards Service

- The Housing Standards Team have both an enforcement and advisory role dealing with Private Sector Landlords, tenants and owner occupiers. The Council has a legal duty to take action where a Category 1 Hazard (most serious hazard) exists. The vast majority of cases involve privately rented premises. We dealt with 1048 reports of hazardous housing conditions last year. There has been a significant increase in the demand for the service over the last 3 years. This level of increase in demand has surpassed the national increase in demand, which was reported by the charity Shelter
- In Sefton the number of people renting from private landlords has increased from 8,911 in the 2001 census (7.6%) to 15,804 (13.4%) in the 2011 census. This increase will certainly account for some of the rise in the number of clients requesting our team's service.
- A Landlord Accreditation scheme was finalised and agreed by Cabinet Member in June and was launched at the Private Landlords Forum event on July 18th. Staff have begun to receive a small number of enquiries and applications. We will be seeking to promote the scheme and encourage more applications.
- There is continued focus on dealing with empty homes, with staff taking enforcement actions on long term empty homes.
- Riverside Housing have received funding under an empty homes initiative; 'Clusters of Empty Homes'. They will be seeking to purchase,

repair and then sell 18 properties under their Own-Place scheme in the Knowsley Rd & Peel Rd area of Bootle. Officers are helping to identify suitable properties. Two properties on Dryden St will be the first to benefit from the scheme.

5. Home Improvements Team and DFGs

- The Team and DFG Budget delivered home adaptations for 257 disabled households in 2012-13
- The council have approved a capital budget for DFGs of circa £2.5m for 2013-14.

6. Housing Strategy

- David Adamson consultants were appointed to undertake a borough wide Private sector housing stock condition survey. Fieldwork surveying has been completed involving over 1200 randomly selected privately owned properties across the borough. The work has been procured jointly with Wirral council, to generate some efficiencies for both Authorities. The results and report should be finalised by the end of October.
- Officers have reviewed the Council's Empty Homes Strategy, and a revised strategy was approved by Cabinet Member Regeneration & Tourism. This will now be the subject of a consultation exercise, commencing in November.
- The Council has been successful in it's application for circa £300,000 of funding from the HCA, to improve the Council's Gypsy & Traveller site at Formby. Work will involve upgrading the utility blocks [for bathing and laundry] and hopefully the addition of 4 family pitches within the site, to meet growing demand.
- Emmaus housing trust intend to develop a new combined residential and training scheme on the site of the former Social club site in Seaforth. This will provide 28 hostel rooms for previously homeless people. A planning application should come forward over the coming months.

Low Carbon

REECH – Go Early Project

The Go Early project that was funded by the Department for Energy and Climate Changes (DECC) to deliver energy assessments in twenty six SME premises and retrofitting of five of them with a range of energy efficiency measures, has been successfully completed.

The Go Early project provided significant learning and experience for both the delivery team as well those SMEs that received energy assessments and the installation of energy saving measures, thus enabling a bid to be put to DCLG for

additional ERDF funding as part of the REECH into Business project.

REECH into Business

The Cabinet at its meeting on 10th October 2013 agreed to accept the additional £1.5 million ERDF funding for the REECH into Business project, and discussions are now being held with DCLG for a change control to enable the delivery of the project to commence in late November 2013.

The REECH into Business will continue the retrofit activity for social housing as part of the original REECH project, but will also include significant components of the Go Early project, namely the undertaking of a more detailed assessment of energy costs of SME premises as well as considering water and waste efficiency, and ensuring that these SMEs undertake climate change adaptation and mitigation measures. The assessment will also seek to explore the potential for businesses installing electric charging points, and purchasing electric vehicles.

It is intended that some 30 SME premises will receive detailed assessments, with 15 premises that meet the criteria getting ERDF funding for energy saving measures. It is also intended that some 5 premises will receive ERDF funding contributions for electric vehicle charging points and the purchase of electric vehicles.

Merseyside Superfast Broadband Project

After undertaking an extensive evaluation process as laid out by BDUK framework, BT has now been confirmed as the contractor that will deliver the Merseyside Superfast Broadband Project in those 'white' areas where this is currently limited or no broadband facility. As part of the ERDF funding condition, the Merseyside Superfast Broadband Project is targeted at SMEs within the region. Included within the overall project are proposals to appoint consultants that would provide business support to eligible SMEs to enable them to maximise the opportunities offered by the superfast broadband project.

The actual delivery of the Broadband is expected to start on the ground towards the end of the year. In order to ensure that planning and highway issues are minimised, a meeting has been set up for 14th November 2013 that will bring together BT representatives and officers from Sefton Council.

Tourism

Marketing

PR – Strong media coverage for both the Air Show and the British Musical Fireworks Championship. Media visit held for four travel journalists in September.

Design & Print – Design of 2014 Southport visitor guide well underway, to be printed in time for distribution to commence January 2014. Work about to begin on the Southport Eating Out Guide.

Website/new media – The new visitsouthport website is expected to receive over three quarters of a million unique users by the end of December. Conference website SEO ongoing and results are proving positive with Southport moving up Google rankings for a number of key search terms.

Business Tourism - Space booked for Confex 2014 and planning meetings underway. RIBI conference space for 2014 booked. Ad campaign underway linked features on North West / coastal conference destinations.

Travel Trade – Coach figures similar to last year, after a poor start to the year, numbers have picked up through the late summer months. Space booked for Best of Britain & Ireland Show and Great Days Out in 2014.

STBN/EGC – Southport Tourism Business Network membership stands at 109 (2 up on the last report), the main STBN (Alliance Board) meeting is to take place on 19 November. England's Golf Coast (EGC) marketing plan and commercial development plan being managed by Geoff Harris (EGC Manager).

Events

Southport Air Show 14th & 15th September 2013 – Due to extreme weather conditions Sunday had to be cancelled but Saturday was a huge success. Refunds have been given to those customers who were unable to attend on Saturday and there has been no negative feedback regarding the cancellation. The addition of the Air Show Radio Station proved successful especially in reporting traffic updates to customers on the approach into Southport. Next year's dates are 20th & 21st September.

British Musical Fireworks Championships 4th, 5th & 6th October 2013 – The event worked well in its new location and visitor figures were up on last year's event. Seated tickets were popular and sold out all three nights. With the increase in visitors, car parking will need to be looked at for 2014. Next year's dates are 3rd – 5th October. This year's winners were Syrotechnics.

Business tourism

The first half of 2013/14 financial year has resulted in 17 conference confirmations worth an estimated £11.7m in economic impact to the Borough. In addition, another 13 events were added to the diary on a provisional basis which, if converted would provide a further £8m in revenue to the region. Planning for our stand at International Confex in Spring 2014 has started and we recently exhibited at the TUC Congress in Bournemouth.

Invest Sefton

Events and workshops

43 workshops/forums took place in between April and September 2013 attracting 1,057 business participants. The majority of workshops have had a maximum number of 15 places available for companies and in some cases we have had to re

run workshops to satisfy demand, in particular the marketing essentials and marketing clinic workshops. Other event topics have included Export for Growth; Get it Write First Time; HR; Cloud & Business Continuity; Credit Management; Facebook and Twitter.

Sefton@Work are running HR workshops on a regular for Recruitment & Selection and Discipline & Grievance being held at the Feelgood Factory (Netherton), Sefton@Work (offices in Bootle) and the Promenade Office, Southport .

Feedback from all events/workshops has been very positive with 'thank you' emails received from a number of businesses

International Festival for Business 2014

The Council has allocated £37,500 capital monies to develop Sefton's business offer in the build up to the International Festival for Business in 2014. An 'International Sefton ' delivery plan is currently being prepared which will be shared with CMR.

Invest Sefton will also work in conjunction with Liverpool Vision and UKTI to host a Sefton based event and dinner on 10 June 2014 as part of the actual six week festival

Stepclever Legacy Fund

The fund offers capital grant support to both new and existing businesses in the six Stepclever qualifying wards of Derby/Linacre (south Sefton) and County/Anfield/Kirkdale/Everton (north Liverpool). Grants range from £700 up to £25,000 up to 45% of eligible costs

The project has supported 64 new business start ups over the past six month and engaged with 276 businesses.

Regional Growth Fund (RGF)-LCR Business Growth grants

Cabinet has approved the delivery of Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grants in Sefton. Invest Sefton will deliver the programme in Sefton and has had two expressions of interest already approved by the LEP Competitiveness and Consistency Panel. These projects will now be progressed into full applications for final approval by a Sefton steering group to be chaired by Cabinet Member for Regeneration, Housing & Tourism

Linacre Bridge

Linacre Bridge Steering group received and approved a proposal on 22 May from Sefton Council's Economy & Tourism service to provide specific and targeted services for residents and businesses in the Linacre Bridge area. An offer letter was received on 1st October 2013. The activities will be managed by Invest Sefton and Sefton@Work.

A range of intensive interventions have now been developed aimed at tackling worklessness in the area, reducing youth unemployment, helping local residents cope with challenges arising from welfare reform, raising awareness of the potential for enterprise within the community and provided much needed support for potential start-up enterprises

Support includes a Business Growth Fund which will be 'ring fenced' for start ups and existing businesses in the Linacre Bridge Improvement model area.

Inward Investment

InvestSefton continues to work directly with potential inward investors and collaboratively with the Liverpool City Region LEP and UKTI on maximising investment opportunities for Sefton.

There are a number of highly confidential enquiries which cannot be identified by company name but include:

Advanced negotiations relating to a 500,000 sq ft requirement for a major site in Dunnings Bridge Road that could lead to 300-500 jobs. InvestSefton. InvestSefton is working with developer and occupier to access financial assistance to secure the investment in Sefton, including a final stage application for £2.7m a potential RGF funding. Final decision imminent subject to funding being available. Planning application likely to be submitted by end of 2014 with occupation taking place mid 2015.

Supporting relocation of a long established Bootle to a 100,000 sq ft industrial facility on Wakefield Road. In the processes of developing a grant application for just under £600k from the LCR Business Growth Grant for an investment that will secure the existing 59 staff and create a further 15 new jobs.

Working on a number of mid-sized industrial requirements (20,000 -40,000 sq ft) across Sefton.

Continued engagement with developers on significant Sefton owned sites including Senate, Atlantic Park and the former Switch Car site.

Employment

Young & Workless

Sefton@work has been focussing support on those aged 18-24 and seeking employment through a number of initiatives. We have developed and commissioned a personal development and motivational course aimed at young people to inspire and encourage them to consider their options and take steps into following career paths and identifying real opportunities. 50% of the attendees of this course have already gained employment. Some of the young people taking part have reported that their confidence and self esteem have been very low following several years of disengagement, "scheme fatigue" or short term employment that they have been unable to sustain.

Sefton MBC Apprenticeship Incentive

The Sefton Apprentice Incentive has been developed over the summer in order to support and encourage the employment of local young people by companies within the travel to work area. The Council is offering this incentive for employers willing to sign up to creating an Apprenticeship position for a minimum of one year, with an accredited apprenticeship framework paying at least national minimum wage for the age of the successful candidate. This has recently been launched to great interest and is anticipated to continue the excellent job entry rates for 18-24 year olds in Sefton. As the Incentive Fund needs to be managed taking the circumstances of individual recruits into account, the Fund will be opened in cohorts to ensure effective targeting of the resource.

Youth Contract underspend

A joint Liverpool City region initiative has been successful in securing funding from government to support the delivery of the DWP Youth Contract. This will be to support interventions for the recruitment and retention of unemployed young people from the age of 18 into the workforce. This is currently being developed with LCR partners and is again expected to greatly benefit young Sefton people in gaining employment over the next 12 month period.

Job Readiness

A new initiative has been launched by Sefton@work entitled the 'Families Programme'. The focus is on potential joint family involvement in the widest sense of the term 'family' and on achieving employment through enhancing skills and confidence. We are working with family members to support this process through the achievement of progress measures aimed to remove barriers to employment which provides an innovative method of engaging people facing specific barriers such as digital inclusion, health issues etc.

A number of progress measures have been developed and are currently being delivered. The Digital Inclusion measure has had extremely strong take-up and this is particularly topical in the light of recent changes in the welfare benefit system which are being rolled out on a "digital by default" approach. Demand for the programme has been higher than anticipated and we are delighted that local residents are finding this voluntary programme a real help in identifying work opportunities including placements, and jobs.

Transport sector opportunities

Sefton@work has jointly with Merseytravel been focussing on supporting young people into employment opportunities in the transport sector. Offering incentives to employers has helped to secure supported waged placements with a number of companies, with an aim to providing a long term sustainable post for those who have successfully completed the preparatory programme.

High Intensity Support

For Sefton@work clients claiming Employment Support Allowance, we have recently undertaken a specialised initiative called 'Outlook' to help to identify what can be

achieved, rather than what cannot. The focus for these clients has been a mix of both teamwork and individual achievement, and aims to overcome what may have been significant long term health barriers for this client group. Their psychological mindset of these clients has been the main focus of attention on this intervention and many reported significant gains such as increased self-awareness, more positive approach and reduced isolation through the course.

Other personal development progression opportunities have been identified and offered to clients who would benefit on working on their aspirations and achievements following long periods of unemployment that have had the result of impaired personal effectiveness.

Place-based Regeneration - Superport

Working with Peel and other port employers, Sefton@work has been busy securing opportunities for local communities relating to growth in the port. In the near future in conjunction with the LEP through Stobarts and Sector based skills academy, it is the intention to run a focussed 'Logistics Bootcamp' with port and logistics companies to maximise job opportunities in this sector. We have run a number of recruitment sessions on behalf of port employers since April and will aim to build on this for the future.

Place-based Regeneration - Visitor Economy/Knowledge Economy

Over the summer, we have been encouraging the promotion of tasters at Hugh Baird College for training opportunities in both of these sectors, and we have been working with employers and training providers to encourage the take up of Apprenticeships Grants to Employers (AGE) during 2013 in these sectors also.

With Jobcentre Plus and Action4Employment, we have been encouraging recruitment in jobs in the Visitor Economy through new inward investment opportunities.

Support for SME's

Through the Merseyside Business Support Programme, the Employer Liaison Team within Sefton@work have been working with SME's to develop good HR practice, to support recruitment, advertise nearly 200 vacancies and aim to get the right people into the jobs to support business growth. Sefton@work also work closely with InvestSefton in providing a wide ranging support package, and utilise other resources as appropriate such as StepClever Legacy project for grants and the Sefton Apprenticeship Scheme to help ensure local people can take advantage of current vacancies.