

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 8th November 2016)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Patricia Hardy	Communities and Housing	October 2016

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Sefton Safer Communities Partnership (SSCP)

- The SSCP have agreed to fund a number of CCTV improvements in our hotspot locations. This has resulted in 10 cameras and 2 mobile CCTV cameras being purchased which can be used when serious incidents occur.
- The recruitment of a Child Criminal Exploitation project worker in partnership with Knowsley MBC is nearly complete. Sefton and Knowsley MBC were successful in a joint bid for Police and Crime Commissioner Funds to recruit two staff to provide education, training and resource in this complex area for twelve months initially.
- The SSCP has supported a local agency to provide ISVA support for the next 12 months.
- The SSCP continues to be involved in the Merseyside Strategic Domestic Violence Group which is led by Merseyside Criminal Justice Board. This group last met on 1 September 2016 and reviewed the Terms of Reference to ensure the right agencies are represented.

Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU)

- The Anti-Social Behaviour Unit has received 49 new referrals via the call centre and dedicated email address. There have been 9 referrals from the Police and one from a private landlord since the last report.
- The unit has issued a further 4 Community Protection Notices and 1 Warning letter since the last report. The notices were issued due to people causing annoyance to their neighbours and communities.
- The final Public Space Protection Order report will be taken to Cabinet Member Briefing for approval on 17th October, and will then be signed off by the Chief Executive and the Legal department. It is hoped that the order will be in place in time for the Halloween and Bonfire period.

Neighbourhood co-ordination

Neighbourhood co-ordination activities have continued in the areas with recent involvement including:

- L30's Million have now commissioned Knowsley Mutual Credit Union to provide residents within the project catchment area with instant loans. We are hoping to have all due diligence completed within the next few weeks and the project in place to assist residents on the run up to Christmas.
- An outdoor cinema event delivered in partnership with Netherton Park Neighbourhood Centre is planned for Mischief Night.
- The Dogs Trust is providing educational assemblies about being a responsible dog owner at four schools in the Netherton area. This is as a result of a number of complaints to local councillors in regard to dog fouling around Marian Square. These sessions will take place on the 31st October and 2nd November.
- An outdoor Cinema and Firework display are planned for Netherton Activity Centre on the 5th November. Local schools are delivering a poster campaign to advertise the event via the L30's Million Facebook Page. One lucky young person will be chosen at random to launch the display on the 5th November.
- In Partnership with Merseyside Police, Sefton's ASB team and Alder Hey Children's Hospital educational sessions around the dangers of using scrambler bikes have been delivered at Schools. Children have been asked to design posters highlighting what they have learned. All the children who took part were taken to Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre to encourage them to try out activities that did not involve scrambler bikes. 16 Young people have now been chosen to have their posters designed by a professional design company which will be used in a Sefton wide campaign. A presentation will be held at Police Headquarters on 23rd November.

- A Christmas event is being planned to take place in Kirkstone Park on 24th November.
- Working in partnership with Leisure Services to deliver a six week programme of activities based around the newly installed Skate Park in Killen Green Park. Sessions start on Saturday 8th October.
- Currently recruiting a worker for the L30's Million Growing Project which will be managed by Feelgood factory. Shortlisting will take place on Friday 14th October.
- Following incidents in Bedford Road and Cambridge Road work is ongoing with residents including reassurance visits with the Police to Cambridge Road Nursery and Bedford Road Primary. The offer has been made to do assemblies with the children around the issues, including taking Bobby the Policeman to make it fun and interactive. There have also been issues highlighted with the alley gates in the area and improvements with security are being looked at.
- A six week clean-up is ongoing in Derby Ward. This has included skips in hotspot areas and concentrated enforcement where necessary. This is a partnership project with the Police and local RSL's.
- Work is ongoing in Sudell and Park Wards around parking issues at Schools. We are looking at ways to solve the issue – possibly posts and shrubs in selected areas.
- Funding for defibrillators to be placed in Crosby Village has been secured. This has included fund raising by local businesses. The idea was brought forward after a parent suffered the loss of their child there following a heart attack.
- Work is ongoing in South Park. This includes a community garden. Schools in the area and Hugh Baird College are keen to work in partnership with delivery.
- Bowersdale Park Friends of Group are having a Christmas Event in the community centre. Work is ongoing in supporting them.
- Unfortunately the Outdoor Cinema in South Park on Saturday 3rd September had to be cancelled due to bad weather conditions. The event is rescheduled to take place in May next year.
- Southport Operational Group addressed the issue of fly-tipping in central Southport, Dukes ward, by installing a camera, supplying a community skip and creating an information letter and leaflet. The Leaflet and letter have been translated into different languages to suit the diverse community.
- At the Southport Operational Group, the Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC) were invited to provide information of what activities they are able to provide to Sefton Council and what time they are able to give to Sefton. Their manager confirmed that many of the offenders are now placed within charity shops and that the CRC are not able to provide the same level of service as Sefton enjoyed with Merseyside Probation such as fly-tipping, graffiti removal or dog fouling removal but will confirm with us what they are able to provide.
- Southport Operational Group has arranged for Public Health to begin a trial of taking people's blood pressure and delivering cancer screening checks at the Park Run, which is on every Saturday morning in Hesketh Park from 9AM.
- Neighbourhoods team involved in a Merseyside Fire & Rescue bespoke Older Persons Day Campaign in the Southport area on Tuesday 20th September. Using Sefton Council data to identify the most vulnerable over 65 year olds, susceptible to experiencing severe hardship or potential poverty as a result of low or irregular income. A joint visit was then carried out by Sefton and Fire Service Officers to several residents to provide Home Fire Safety advice and details of the Sefton Directory.
- £500 from the Southport Town Wide budget was approved at Southport Area Committee to provide anti-theft devices for the 'Cop Shop' which is located within Southport Wayfarers Arcade to help address the current spike in cycle thefts in the town centre.
- Following the CLAHRC Stakeholder event in June, the group are exploring the ideas raised there to establish the focus of the programme.

Some of the ideas being considered are:

- Selective licensing
- Credit Unions (raising profile)
- Community hub/co-location of services
- Clearer communication pathways between services
- Social prescribing
- Dementia friendly shopping parades

The Steering Group are speaking to residents and partners to find out more about these areas of work and following this, will narrow down the options for the programme

Halloween and Bonfire Night Planning

- Neighbourhoods have coordinated the meetings to refresh the Bonfire Period Plan for 2016, which now includes Sporting Lights multi-agency programme on Mischief Night in North Park, Bootle; Killen Green, Netherton and Coronation Park, Crosby.
- Multi-partnership approach to removing combustible material now organised including Sefton Council, One Vision Housing, Riverside Housing and Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service.
- Public Spaces Protection Order planned to be operational in time for the period to cover the Marion Square area.
- Operation Staysafe also planned to patrol the main areas of concern from 2015 with Staysafe locations confirmed for the Brunswick Youth & Community Centre and Bootle & Netherton Fire Station.

Community Transition Fund/Community Support Fund

- A total of £468,296 has been spent with £531,897 remaining in this fund as of October 2016.
- Latest approvals include:

Organisation	Project	Amount
Migrant Workers Sefton Community	Over 60s Bus Pass and Pre Esol projects	£4,680
Waterloo Community Association	Waterloo Community Centre refurb works	£9,720
Sefton MBC – Planning	Heritage at Risk Officer	£35,000
Veterans in Sefton	Sefton Veterans Project	£13,767

Domestic Abuse

Strategy implementation

- Sefton IDVA team are working closely with Southport and Ormskirk Hospital Trust to embed the learning identified in a recent Domestic Homicide Review. This will involve continuing with additional domestic abuse training with hospital staff, reviewing their policies and referrals procedures for domestic abuse incidents to ensure they reflect current best practice, and provide on-site support and advice from a domestic abuse professional.
- The IDVA team are continuing to highlight the Sefton Behind Closed Doors campaign and recently attended the Hugh Baird College Fresher's Fair. They were positively received by both staff and students who proactively engaged with the team during the day.
- In August and September 2016 91 cases have been discussed at MARAC. The current MARAC repeat rate is 17% which is within the Safelives recommended level of 28-40%.
- As of 04.10.16 the IDVA Team has 44 open and 18 tracking cases. This is within the expected recommended IDVA workload as advised by Safelives.

Equalities

- Corporate Equality Group looking at updated versions of equality documentation and also proceeding with Navajo Charter Mark accreditation.
 - Equality Policy has been updated with new objectives and is now the subject of internal consultation
 - Response from Navajo to draft application form raised a lot of issues for CEG to take forward
 - CEG members to promote E&D training opportunities within their departments

Hate Crime

- Training workshops for New Directions staff continue with excellent feedback from attendees.
- Training dates for One Vision Housing for approximately 160 staff to be arranged.
- 3rd party reporting network for hate crime continues to develop, 12 locations now signed up. Review of the network by the hate crime MARAC at the September meeting, further support to be provided

- Support for events during Hate Crime Week 10th – 16th October, working with 3rd party reporting centres to hold 'drop-in' sessions

Srebrenica Memorial

- Letter of thanks received from Remembering Srebrenica organisation
- Liaising with local partners to identify Sefton delegates who can take part in the visits project.

Liverpool Pride

- Crosby Library and The Atkinson took part in the 'Coming Out Of the Shadows' project as part of Liverpool Pride week.

Welfare Reform – Foodbanks

- The total number of people fed across Sefton in the period April 2016 to the end of August 2016 is **5,594 – 3,303** Adults and **2,291** Children.
- **Southport: 1,486** people fed – **924** Adults and **562** Children
- **South Sefton and Crosby : 4,108** people fed – **2,379** Adults and **1,729** Children

Illegal Money Lending

- Stop Loan Shark workshops have been arranged to be delivered within Hugh Baird College on 9th November.

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

Sefton's e-lending service goes live

The Library Service has launched its e-lending service. E-books and e-audiobooks are now available to library members from its 'BorrowBox' solution. The service has been extensively promoted within the libraries and on social media, and new members are already joining the service as a result. The e-lending service adds another facet to library support of the digital inclusion agenda.

Libraries Change Lives

Sefton Library Service's *Lost Voices* project has been awarded the runners-up place for this prestigious national award. The annual award for best practice in UK libraries recognises services that are reaching people in the community to help people self-manage their health conditions and actively promote a healthy way of life. The *Lost Voices* project sees volunteers go into homes and care homes to record the life stories of local people in the first stages of memory loss.

Summer Reading Challenge finishes in Sefton

This has been a record breaking Summer Reading Challenge for Sefton Libraries, with 3102 children across Sefton joining up, 14% on last years' figure. 2213 children completed the challenge of reading at least 6 books over the summer holidays, an 8% increase on last year. The library service presents six Summer Reading Challenge cups, one for each library area. The cups are gifted to the schools with the highest percentage of completers. The SRC encourages children to continue to read through the long summer holidays, and helps to maintain and improve literacy levels.

Libraries Celebrate Shakespeare

As part of the ongoing celebration of Shakespeare 400, Sefton Libraries will be welcoming back storyteller John Kirk. John was a huge hit with both children and teachers when he launched SRC earlier this summer and is now back to bring Shakespeare 'to life' for a young audience. John will be performing at all Sefton libraries courtesy of an Arts Council grant, which was obtained through a national bid by ASCEL (Association of Senior Children's and Education Librarians).

THE ATKINSON

The Bootle Project

The Atkinson has been prioritising working with communities in Bootle and the South of the borough. As a result of a number of external partnerships and grant funding, we have been able to initiate some important new projects.

Learning Museum Partnership with the British Museum – The Atkinson was selected as one of only 10 museums nationally, to participate in this programme that has been funded by Heritage Lottery Fund *Skills for the Future*. This programme enables young people from diverse backgrounds to undertake a year-long vocational training placement at UK partner museums, developing practical skills in collections care, management and access. A young person from South Sefton has been recruited for this remarkable 12 month training programme that will equip them to embark on a career in museums (with qualification - a Level 3 Diploma in Cultural Heritage, and £13,000 bursary attached). The bursary is paid by the British Museum.

Linacre Mission - Heritage Lottery Funding is supporting work in Litherland and Bootle. Artist Paula Keenan who will be taking objects from The Atkinson's collections out to sheltered accommodation sites. Paula will be introducing the residents to the objects during reminiscence sessions where stories and memories about Bootle's past will be shared and recorded. Paula has been involved in developing public engagement with the Linacre Methodist Mission in Litherland.

City-region Partnerships – Funding from Arts Council England is supporting Culture Shifts, an ambitious city-region wide photography project, with nationally acclaimed photographers. Led by Open Eye Gallery, The Atkinson is one of 6 partner organisations. We have started working with Sefton Youth Services on a project which will see young people from Bootle working with a photographer to create their own photo stories about their identity. The project will culminate with an exhibition at the Atkinson and the Open Eye gallery in September 2017.

Displays in Bootle Town Hall - A Museum-standard display Case has been moved to Bootle Town Hall. The display of museum collections and Bootle Bombing interactive have been installed alongside a series of large framed photographic works.

Families Learning Together Project

The Atkinson has prioritising working with families since we first opened three years ago. As a result of a number of new partnerships and grant funding we have been able to increase the number of families using our services. We are currently working on improving our evaluation model so that we can more accurately determine who are visitors are and where they come from.

Parenting 2000 Children's Centre has relocated and now runs its services from The Atkinson. *"The Atkinson is the perfect place for the Children's Centre. The Children's Library is welcoming and relaxed and already attracts thousands of families and with our joint working we hope to showcase a new way of co-service delivery for Sefton Council. Its position is perfect, within the town centre and with good transport links. We have a chance to test new ways of working with The Atkinson team to meet shared objectives and help as many families as possible with a truly diverse offer across the Museum, Theatre, Library, Bakery and Gallery spaces."* Family services will include Baby Massage, Baby clinic, First Aid, Pramle Snack and Chat, Beginners English, Baby Group Stay and Play, Baby Mindful, Parenting Advice, Breastfeeding Support and more.

Summer Reading Challenge - This year the national theme for the Summer Reading Challenge (in which children sign up to read one book a week from their local library) was Roald Dahl. 855 children signed up to the Summer Reading Challenge this year at Southport Library which is an increase of 16% compared to last year.

Family Friendly Exhibitions - The HLF activity plan also funded a small 'pop up' family friendly exhibition which explored the history of Southport's Sweet Factories, this allowed us to target families that were using the library but hadn't been visiting the museum. As a result of this new approach we had 3500 additional visits to the Museum during the 6 week period of the summer holidays compared to the same time last year.

This summer we also programmed a family friendly exhibition in the main exhibition galleries. We worked with cartoonist and animator Carol Hanson to create a pop-up hand drawn house made out of paper and featuring live animation. Carol was inspired by the Victorian collector of our Egyptology collection Mrs Goodison to create her imagined version of the house she might have lived in. Families can add their own portraits of Mrs Goodison and add flowers to her 'garden' in the Art Box. We have received excellent feedback from families about the exhibition including the following:

Summer Holiday Activities - We programmed a range of free activities across the building for families during the Summer Holidays. Arty Aprons, a creative resource to help families explore the galleries, are available every day during the school holidays and every Saturday. The aprons were funded through the HLF activity plan and are managed by our volunteers. They were extremely popular during the summer with more than 200 families making use of them. We also ran weekly creative and hands on workshops and activities including 'Make it' and 'Explore it' workshops, object handling, and story and rhyme time. 1134 children and their guardians took part in these activities.

Linaker Children's Centre - Over the summer Linaker Children's Centre ran four themed events outside The Atkinson in anticipation of them moving in to The Atkinson. These events were very well attended and encouraged families to explore the Atkinson. On the first event 100 new families signed up to be members of the library.

On 24 September Linaker Children's Centre will officially extend its services to The Atkinson. They will occupy a dedicated private space in the Children's Library where a range of activities will be delivered. Services will be available every Monday, Thursday and Friday from 10am – 3pm from September 2016. Baby clinics and 'drop in' parenting support will also be available throughout the year. To launch this new service we are holding a family fun day with free creative activities across the building on 24 September. We are very excited about this new relationship and the opportunities it creates for us to work with a much broader demographic of families in Southport. We are working with Linaker Children's' Centre on a development plan around the Star Wars exhibition to maximise the impact we have on engagement and participation.

Big Imaginations - KidsFest in October half term is our annual Children's Festival bringing a week of amazing activities, events and things to do for all the family. The festival now in its third year brings TV favourites from CBeebies as well as Marvel Comic Book artist Tim Quinn who teaches a masterclass in creating superheroes. The Atkinson is a member of the Big Imaginations Touring Network. Big Imaginations is a region-wide group of venues and promoters dedicated to bringing brilliant children's theatre to the North West. Big imaginations first 0-3 year commission Sponge comes to The Atkinson on 26 October as part of Kidfest this half term. The Atkinson are working as part of the commissioning sub-group for a piece of work for 8-13 year olds. Core (funded by the Arts Council) will feature as part of the Big Imagination Festival in 2017.

Improving Access - For the past year Children and the Arts have provided funding for us to work with 3 local special schools (Presfield, Southport, Crosby High and Rowan Park (Bootle) so that they can engage with High quality art at The Atkinson. We have worked closely with teachers from this school and the relationship has led to big changes across The Atkinson as we seek to be more accessible for all our visitors, especially families and those with additional needs. Following feedback from the schools we have recently bought a set of ear defenders to loan to children who find noise within the building overwhelming. Our volunteer access team create tactile and audio content to support traditional interpretation in our exhibitions. We are in the process of creating a virtual tour on our website to help families and people with disabilities get to know the building before visiting. We also commissioned an access audit of the building which will help us to make further improvements. Additionally, we recently met with teams supporting Special Educational Needs across the council to consider ways we could work together.

INTEGRATED YOUTH SERVICES

Youth Justice Plan

YOT has submitted the Youth Justice Plan to the Youth Justice Board and this highlights how YOT will spend the YJB grant over the coming year. The plan also illustrates how YOT is governed, partnership arrangements, YOT performance over the last year against national indicators and an action plan for the coming year.

This was presented to the YOT Management Board for approval on 27th September.

Reoffending Subgroup

The Reoffending Subgroup has commenced several case study reviews to identify where there were potential opportunities to intervene early to prevent entry into the judicial system and also prevent other negative outcomes. YOT and Children Social Care are leading the case study reviews. The in-depth findings of the first review were presented to the YOT Management Board and further findings will be reported with the intention to inform change.

Meet the Council Event

The third 'meet the council' meeting took place on the 26th September at Bootle Town Hall. 20 young people attended the event with a number of elected members, Heads of Service, the Chief Executive and workers. The 3 minute updates gave everyone an insight into what work has been delivered, achievements, ideas and headlines over the last six months.

Members of Sefton's Youth Parliament described the Takeover Challenge national project that puts children and young people in decision making positions and encourages organisations and businesses to hear their views and how Sefton can participate in it this year. The briefing gave information of what the project is all about and what we all need to do to support this initiative. Application forms were given out to link young people with professionals.

Youth Parliament - Make Your Mark

'*Make Your Mark*' is Britain's largest youth consultation with young people on what issues they want to be discussed on 11th November at the UK Youth Parliament - House of Commons. The ballot papers are distributed through schools and a wide range of youth groups and services.

Currently we have received a total of 3500 ballot papers from the Targeted Youth Prevention team, commissioned providers and a number of schools. More ballot papers are expected to arrive this week.

HOUSING

Liverpool City Region

The Sub-Regional Housing and Spatial Planning Board (feeds into the LCR Combined Authority Strategic Agenda) and plans have been progressing with identifying sub-regional housing needs and strategy. Consultants are appointed by the LCR and they aim to prepare a draft overarching LCR Housing Strategy. At the LCR Board meeting in September 2016, it was agreed to look to produce a Mission Statement, which would capture socio-economic issues, and produce a 'delivery strategy' to support the work of the Housing Strategy. The delivery strategy will focus on investment needs, primarily to help deliver all types of housing within both Sefton and across the City Region for which there is significant demand with estimates running as high as 40,000 homes needed by 2030.

Registered Provider Sector

We are looking to re-establish new relationships with the RP sector in the context of their operating models and principles. It is apparent to many that they are increasingly behaving as private companies; we need to redefine our partnerships in this context.

The recent Housing and Planning Act introduces the voluntary Right to Buy imposed on housing associations, as well as other potential regulatory changes. There are other potential 'freedoms' Housing Associations may choose to adopt or not, again. There are also opportunities to work positively with housing associations on issues such as welfare reform, health issues, support to deliver council priorities. A lot of this detailed discussion will take place over the coming months and I will feedback on both the high and low lights of those discussions with a view to taking appropriate action where it is seen right to do so.

Homes and Community Agency

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have issued their prospectus for the next Affordable Housing funding round (2016-2021). However, virtually all of the funding is only available for low cost home ownership products.

In the north of Sefton, particularly, there is a greater need for more affordable rented housing, but the Government has not made any funding available to meet such needs. Low cost home ownership schemes can still help some households in a housing need, and we will still look to work with Housing Associations who can provide suitable housing which helps meet some of Sefton's needs.

We have been advised by HCA that a small number of bids have been submitted for Sefton, for funding to build new homes.

Sefton collaborated in a Liverpool City Region bid to the Govt/HCA, seeking to establish a partnership to develop new starter homes. We are still waiting to hear whether this bid has been successful or not.

Development Company

I am also leading the project in the role of Cabinet Member sponsor to investigate setting up a council wholly owned housing company that could build and sell and or rent properties at a variety of levels - due to the sensitivities of the markets this is confidential. Cabinet approved in principle the creation of a Sefton housing development company at the meeting on the 1st of September 2016.

We are reviewing proposals that subject to successful feasibility, outline viability and feasibility studies, need to be developed throughout the Autumn and Winter 2016/17 when we should be able to collate and report on the viability and concept. If all goes to plan then a Sefton Council development company could be up and running by Summer 2017 (subject to successful viability tests and feasibility).

The plan and options we have set out to date would additionally have the flexibility to compliment any proposals brought forward by the Combined Authority, subject to working through the fine detail. Clearly this is a highly confidential and sensitive piece of work that I am leading with officers currently.

Private Rented sector Licencing

We are progressing well with the private landlord licensing scheme. As you are aware the Government changed the legislation to make it very difficult to introduce borough wide schemes, as the current 20% of housing stock rules would not enable this to happen. We urgently need a licensing scheme in Bootle, Waterloo and Southport, which we are progressing proposals for. A Forward Plan item has been put forward, and I hope a formal report will be submitted to Cabinet in December, setting out our proposals.

Legal provisions will enable us to have three different schemes - focusing on the licensing of all private landlords in Bootle, but developing stronger 'Additional HMO' licensing schemes to cover more types of HMO properties for Southport and Waterloo. So this is the approach I am taking to maximise our impact and also run the development of all the schemes together.

The draft programme I have recently agreed to should see the three schemes implemented in Sefton by January 2018. I will update colleagues regularly as we make progress with these proposals.

Housing and Planning Act; Private rented sector enforcement

The new Act includes six measures designed to tackle rogue landlords and property agents:

- Banning orders for most prolific offenders
- Database of rogue landlords/property agents
- Civil penalties of up to £30,000
- Extension of Rent Repayment Orders
- Tougher Fit and Proper Person test for landlords
- Tenancy Deposit Protection Scheme data sharing.

However, all of these new measures will require new regulations to be introduced by Government before they can be implemented. For example the Government has promised an autumn consultation on what offences could result in a banning order, with draft regulations published in early 2017 and the measures coming in to force in October 2017. I intend to review the Council's own housing enforcement policies when there is greater clarity over these new measures.

Housing Strategy

Our new Sefton Housing Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June. I am now looking to develop a Delivery Plan, with a view to finalising it by November 2016. I will then look to prioritise and implement many actions, including the landlord licensing schemes. We will also use this as the basis for engagement with a wide variety of housing partners.

Estates Renewal Initiative

The Government has announced an 'Estate Renewal Initiative', aimed at improving areas of social housing. The detail of this is still unclear, and will be worked up by an Advisory Panel led by Michael Heseltine. The initiative could potentially offer some help in areas such as Linacre. There are some links between this initiative and the Well Sefton initiative. Therefore I agreed to submit an 'expression of interest' in the Estate Renewal Initiative. While we expected to receive a response to our bid during the autumn, unfortunately there has been no news as yet.

Homeless Services and Housing Options Service.

I have recently received reports outlining the performance of service contracts we have commissioned, which reveal positive results.

Sefton Council has also received special recognition over how it delivers its housing options and homelessness service. We are the first on Merseyside to receive a standard by the National Practitioner Support Service (NPSS). The NPSS is a support service set up to support local authorities to deliver improved housing option services across the country. The standard has 3 levels - gold, silver and bronze - and we have recently been awarded the bronze standard with plans in place to try to achieve silver by mid-2017, and gold in the future.

Gypsy and Traveller Encampments

I have received several reports concerning the increased numbers of unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments that have arrived in the Borough over the summer period and the impact on the Council's resources.

I will be reviewing what action can be taken in future to help relieve this problem, including the needs and requirements of the Local Plan in relation to Gypsy and Traveller Transit site provision.

Research and Development

I have received and am shaping research and development areas, working with officers that will investigate and set out in greater detail the impact of changing national policy and legislation, The Housing Planning Act being one example. Clearly given the amount of change and the number of projects we are sponsoring at a Sefton and Liverpool City Region Level, we will not be able to do everything. However, there are a number of priority areas that are emerging and I will keep colleagues informed of the areas that we take forward that will help shape the opportunities and manage the risks of the 2016/17 and 2017/18 work plan.