

REPORT TO: Cabinet Member - Environmental
DATE: 18th November 2009
SUBJECT: **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES INITIATIVE - WORKLESSNESS**
WARDS AFFECTED: Linacre, Derby, St Oswalds, Netherton & Orrell, Ford and Litherland
REPORT OF: Peter Moore
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**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

To update the Cabinet Member - Environmental on the use of Working Neighbourhood Fund resources to help unemployed residents of South Sefton to return to a working environment.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

A project update is required at the half and full year terms.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That the Cabinet Member - Environmental notes the content of this report.

KEY DECISION: No
FORWARD PLAN: No
IMPLEMENTATION DATE: None

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:
None.

IMPLICATIONS:

Budget/Policy Framework: Nil

Financial: External funding via Area Based Grant (ABG).

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2009/ 2010 £	2010/ 20110 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure		
Funded by:		
Sefton Capital Resources		
Specific Capital Resources		
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>		
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure		
Funded by:	WNF	WNF
Sefton funded Resources		
Funded from External Resources	ABG	ABG

Legal: N/A

Risk Assessment: NA/

Asset Management: N/A

CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS

Extensive consultation has taken place with partners including Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) and Sefton @ Work.

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		√	

LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS RELIED UPON IN THE PREPARATION OF THIS REPORT

None.

Background:

1. In June 2008 the Environmental Protection Department was successful in securing funding from the Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) and Housing Market Renewal 'Living Through Change' to undertake an Environmental Services initiative that had an emphasis on encouraging local people into training and employment within the service. The initiative supports economic development by enhancing specific areas within South Sefton and aims to deliver safer and cleaner neighbourhoods. The initiative enhances the work provided by core funded cleansing functions within South Sefton and helps to improve cleanliness, as assessed and reported in accordance with National Indicator 195.
2. The following underlying principles provide the focus for the framework of the environmental services initiative; to address worklessness via the provision of work experience and training for local people to enhance their prospects of sustained future employment, providing enhanced services appropriate to the needs of the local neighbourhood, improving cleanliness to encourage longer-term behavioural change, addressing gaps in core funded service provision and to work in partnership via structured links with the Lead RSL partners in the various neighbourhoods of South Sefton.
3. The Environmental Services initiative specifically contributes to the following key National Indicators;

NI 153 Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods

NI 163 Working age population qualified to at least NVQ level 2 or equivalent

NI 195 Improved street and environmental cleanliness

And also contributes to;

NI 4 The percentage of people who think they can influence decisions in their locality
4. To measure progress against the above indicators a number of targets were established, as detailed in the table below;

	Targets to be Delivered	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11
a	Trainees completing an 11 month placement and achieving an NVQ Level 2 qualification	0	10	8
b	People completing a 10 week 'taster' programme through Routeway and achieving an accreditation	12	32	32
c	People going on to further training, education or employment	6	34	32
d	Environmental educational interventions targeted towards children and young people	10	20	20
e	Community clean up days held and number of local residents involved	20	25	30
f	DLEQ surveys in the following areas; Linacre/Derby, Ford/Litherland, St Oswald Netherton and Orrell	1	2	2

5. The Cabinet Member, Environmental will recall that a number of milestones were also established to measure the general progress of the initiative, which included the production of project performance reports of this nature.

Neighbourhood Cleansing Teams - Trainees

6. One of the targets outlined above is to recruit local residents, who have been unemployed for between 6 months and 2 years, as trainees to work alongside experienced staff as a member of the team. This provides trainees with practical work experience and complements the training that is also provided as part of the 'trainee package'.
7. Trainees are employed on a fixed '11 month' term contract during which they work to obtain a National Vocational Qualification Level 2+ in Waste and Environmental aspects.
8. Trainees take part in the following activities; manual and mechanical street cleansing, graffiti removal and the clearance of fly tipping, especially in industrial areas of South Sefton.
9. The Neighbourhood Cleansing teams, of which there are six, and the Rat Action Team, comprise two full time staff and one trainee. Initially six trainee staff were employed, via the 'Routeway' programme, one per team, as agreed between the Cleansing section and 'Sefton at Work'. This approach enables a trainee to enjoy an equivalent rate of pay to existing staff, learning from them whilst carrying out the task and to also receive agreed 'off the job' training.
10. The trainees are actively encouraged to apply for posts within the Council during their fixed term period of employment. Job vacancies that arise internally within the Cleansing section are advertised by an attachment to payslips, which are given to staff on a weekly basis.
11. The department recognised the depth of the recession in early 2009, and via agreement with the funding body was able to engage a further 4 trainees; 1 office based trainee and 3 operational based trainees, taking the total to 10 trainees. Significantly above the agreed target of 6 trainees stated in the original grant offer in 2008.
12. To the end of September 2009, 16 trainees have been recruited to this program. Of these sixteen, six have already obtained a NVQ level 2 plus certificate, eight have gone onto other employment; either a longer fixed term post as a driver within the Neighbourhood Cleansing initiative or a permanent post within the Cleansing section. This is a glowing testament to the trainees themselves and to the input from Sefton at Work, who administer internal training, and from Asset Training the organisation contracted to provide off the job training and workplace NVQ 2+ assessments, for all trainees.
13. The prime object is to equip all trainees with the necessary skills, qualifications and work ethic to enable them to compete fairly in the local job market in the future. Especially if they have not secured employment by the time that their fixed-term employment as a 'trainee' comes to an end.

14. The success of the operational 'trainee' training package has interested the Enforcement and Community Engagement teams based at Magdalen House, the team is currently assessing whether they can add trainees to their portfolio.

Neighbourhood Cleansing Teams – Taster Sessions

15. This aspect of the initiative also targets worklessness within South Sefton. The 'taster session package' comprises of eighty hours being spent with Neighbourhood Cleansing Teams, whilst they are actually out at work, in order to get a feel for this type of work activity. Once again this targets local residents who have been unemployed over 2 years. It requires an individual to commit to spending one day per week (8 hours) over 10 weeks to determine if this is an area of work that they are interested in.
16. The taster sessions offer unemployed residents the chance to sample work, one day per week, whilst not losing any entitlement to state benefits. The system allows the person to return to the work environment, shadowing the work of staff deployed on environmental improvement work within the South Sefton area.
17. The 'taster' sessions are held on Wednesdays, whilst trainees are on NVQ 2+ training activities, as this is the most practical opportunity and can be accommodated logistically. To date 16 local residents have been involved in the 'Taster Session' program. Six of these have gone onto further employment (have obtained a place as a 'trainee').
18. When taster sessions were initially introduced, mid 2008, Sefton@Work encountered difficulty in getting locally unemployed residents involved (to partake) in these sessions. However, by early 2009 due to the recession, more applicants have come forward, although still not to the level envisaged when the idea for this initiative was formed. On a positive note, a number of local residents, that have taken part in the 'taster' program, have secured fixed-term employment with the Council (within the Cleansing section of the Environmental Protection Department).

Environmental Services Initiative - Cleanliness and Behavioural Change

19. Whilst the above (sections 2 & 3) deal with the impact upon worklessness of the environmental services initiative it is clear that it also has an impact in relation to cleanliness.
20. The environmental services initiative provides additional resources, which not only allow training and employment opportunities, but also enable local neighbourhoods within the South Sefton area to benefit as a result of enhanced environmental activity. These additional teams/resources are used to improve the environmental aspects of South Sefton, therefore helping to make it a more attractive place to live, work, visit and/or invest in.
21. The activity of these teams significantly contributes to overall cleanliness within the South Sefton area. The initiative therefore helps the Council to achieve environmental improvements and the targets linked to the cleanliness indicator (NI 195).

22. In addition to funding Neighbourhood Cleansing Teams this initiative has also enabled the enhanced Good Neighbour skip service to continue to be provided. This is an extremely popular service, which again contributes to cleanliness. It provides other opportunities for local residents to dispose of domestic waste appropriately and helps to prevent anti-social behaviour (fly-tipping) within local neighbourhoods.
23. The Community Engagement Team provide a range of activities for engaging with communities and stakeholders to maintain and improve service providers' understanding of the community's needs, perceptions and expectations; They seek to improve understanding within the community of the services available and how to access them; to increase community input into decision making and shaping service provision; and to educate and encourage positive behavioural change. This service provides the direct link with Lead RSLs within each HMRI Neighbourhood and other partners. The work of this team contributes to NI 4 the percentage of people who think they can influence decisions in their locality.
24. Environmental Enforcement has also been enhanced via this initiative. Interventions take place across a range of environmental issues (e.g. waste, flytipping, litter, dog fouling etc.) to educate and enforce changes to individual behaviour within the residential and business communities to improve environmental conditions.
25. An integrated Pest management approach has been established which enables holistic intervention to pro-actively target hot spots of rat activity. The initiative funds a Rat Action Team which concentrates on removing harbourage, food sources, undertaking infrastructure improvements whilst also carrying out effective baiting of hot spot areas.
26. Additional mechanical sweeping resources are also available, via this initiative. The resources are used to enhance the frequency of mechanical sweeping for main roads/routes within the South Sefton area. Some of these resources are also used to complement the manual street cleansing activity that takes place within South Sefton, often targeting areas of most need.
27. The work carried out via this initiative is also helping to arrest decline in local neighbourhoods as a result of visual environmental improvements.
28. The initiative has also provided an opportunity for a number of agencies to working together for the benefit of local neighbourhoods and residents. The following organisations are associated with this initiative and contribute to the improvements that are being achieved, our thanks are offered to; Sefton at Work, Asset Training Ltd and Registered Social Landlords (One Vision Housing, Riverside, Plus Dane, Evolve and Breathe Plus Linacre One along with the Personnel Department (Central Learning & Development Unit and the Regeneration Directorate - Business Support Unit and of course all of the staff within the department that are directly or indirectly involved.