

**CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT**  
**Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 4<sup>th</sup> July 2017)**

<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Patricia Hardy	Communities and Housing	June 2017

## **NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

### **Sefton Safer Communities Partnership (SSCP)**

The SSCP have agreed to fund a further 100 drug wipes for use in disrupting our Organised Crime Groups through targeting vehicles known to be used by them and undertaking drug driving tests. These tests have resulted in significant driving offences and significant banning orders being imposed by the court.

The recruitment of two Child Criminal Exploitation Advocates in partnership with Knowsley MBC is complete. The advocates are now introducing themselves to key partners within Sefton and Knowsley in order to develop relationships and to provide education, training and resource in this complex area for twelve months.

The SSCP is looking to assist Councillors and Partners within Maghull with tackling ASB issues within a particular hotspot location.

The SSCP has recently received presentations from the Chief Superintendent for Sefton on our approach to Tackling Serious and Organised Crime and from Service Manager Neighbourhoods and Partnerships on Tackling Crime and ASB in the Night Time Economy.

### **Anti-Social Behaviour Unit (ASBU)**

The ASBU and Neighbourhoods team are continuing to work with Merseyside Police and will this year deliver the third round of the scrambler bike initiative. Five schools, Lander Road, The Grange, English Martyrs, Hatton Hill and All Saints will take part. The Schools will be asked to make short videos about the dangers of scrambler bike use and the impact they have on the community. Schools have been chosen who are within hot spot areas for scrambler bike nuisance. The project will commence in May with workshops being carried out in the schools throughout May – July with Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire Service, Alder Her and Sefton Councils ASB team. There will be an inter schools sports day arranged with Sefton Council Leisure Services hosted at the CLAC in September. One winning video from each schools will be chosen to be edited and their video used on social media to promote the project and to highlight the dangers to the local community. The winners from each school will be taken on a trip and a presentation event held at Police headquarters.

15 warning letters have been issued to offenders in relation to their behaviour in the Marian Square PSPO area. One case has proceeded to a full FPN and the fine has been paid.

Several arson reduction campaigns have taken place within Sefton since March. As part of Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services “Arson Awareness Campaign” we have been working with partners from MFRS, Registered Housing Providers, Merseyside Police and Mini Police to promote multi-agency working in order to engage communities and tackle deliberate fire setting and serious and organised crime.

Actions have included:-

- Community skips being placed within the area as well as utilising caged tippers to remove fly tipping.
- Void properties identified and referred to Arson Reduction Officer to secure.

- High Visibility Policing (HVP) by Community team as well as numerous reassurance visits.
- Mobile police station deployed.
- Police mobile youth van utilised.
- Mounted patrols provided HVP to the community.

Campaigns have taken place in the following areas:-

- Bark Road and Daley Road area – Wednesday 22nd March
- Marsh Avenue and surrounding areas – Friday 28th April
- Eden Vale area - Friday 26th May

### **Neighbourhood co-ordination**

Neighbourhood co-ordination activities have continued across the Borough with recent involvement including:

A six month community skips programme has been rolled out across Netherton & Orrell ward. The programme began in February has already seen 9 tonnes of waste removed from the ward. The programme has now been reviewed and with some slight amendments to locations, it has been agreed to continue with the programme for a further six months.

As part of the Litherland Prototype Project work is ongoing with English Martyrs school to develop a week long locality based, multi-agency project which will be delivered within the school. The programme will see various agencies working alongside each other to ensure the best deal for families within the school who have been highlighted as having complex needs. There will also be a number of drop-in sessions over the week long project which will take place week commencing 25<sup>th</sup> September. There will be a series of engagement sessions with local people to establish what sessions are most relevant to residents including, door knocking, letters from school and meetings with governors and PTA. It is envisaged that a timetable of activities will be developed with the community. Offers from organisations to deliver assistance have already included, sessions around physical wellbeing, mental health, drugs and alcohol, early years development, housing and debt management.

Work is ongoing with registered housing providers housing and their charitable partner “Big Help” on an environmental project which will be piloted in and around Carr Meadow Hey as part of the Litherland Prototype project. The project will see two vacant shop units on Carr Meadow Hey utilised to distribute furniture to residents who are in need of larger furniture items such as sofas, beds and wardrobes, all of which would have been recycled. Short term the aim of the project is to reduce waste and provide families or individuals with furniture items for their homes, and to pilot a small scale “Bulky Bobs” style service to the local community. Longer term it is hoped that registered providers could look to offer furnished tenancies, link to ELAS scheme and provide training opportunities to residents which would enable them to gain qualifications in DIY skills.

Work has been completed on all play equipment and fencing in Killen Green Park. 4 volunteer days in partnership with Emmanuel Baptist have taken place to edge pathways, clear grot spots and tidy up all entrances. Green Flag judging takes place on Wednesday 31<sup>st</sup> May.

The community growing project in Netherton held a hay-bale building day on Saturday 13<sup>th</sup> May which was attended by 25 people including children from the local area and 2 local businesses. Netherton Moss has also confirmed that they will be taking a group of children to the site for outdoor lessons every Monday afternoon and Rowan Park will attend every Thursday.

Neighbourhoods facilitated a meeting on Wednesday 24<sup>th</sup> May with partner agencies including local businesses and the voluntary sector. Discussions were based around the recent discharge in the area and the issues it has caused. Merseyside Police reassured all partners that they are working hard to combat the issues surrounding gang culture and only two days prior to the

meeting Merseyside Police had recovered 8 off road motorcycles from the Westminster Avenue area.

On-going meetings with registered providers regarding fly – tipping at the rear of Marian Square shops. Merseyside Fire and Rescue and SMBC are working with businesses to ensure rubbish is stored away securely and correctly after an arson attack on 2 wheelie bins that were set alight and then pushed up against the building.

There have been several post & shrubs schemes designed to protect grass verges across the borough. A combination of funding from ward budgets, Parish Council budgets and matched funding from the Transportation Capital Improvement Works budget has made these schemes possible.

Cabinet Member- Communities and Housing is considering the reintroduction of Community Payback throughout Sefton. Facilitated through the Neighbourhoods Team, requests for litter & fly-tipping removal; dog-fouling stencils & stickers would be carried out by offenders undertaking their court orders.

Members of Waterloo and Seaforth Carers continue to meet to address loneliness and social isolation within Church Ward. Following the successful launch of Waterloo and Seaforth Cares, the steering group has agreed to roll learning across all four wards of Crosby to establish a Crosby Hub.

The group will work closely the Community Asset Development Officers from Sefton CVS, who are currently working within Bootle to establish a web of connectivity between organisations, services and key protagonists within the community, who can help connect people who may otherwise be lonely or socially isolated. Waterloo and Seaforth Cares continue to work closely with key council groups such as the Early Intervention and Prevention Working Group, and the Dementia Action Alliance for Sefton.

Following recent discussions and meetings around The Crescent in Thornton a scheme has now been developed. This has been shared with the Local Elected Members and Thornton Parish Council. This will incorporate a One Way System, Kerb Build Outs and a New Street Lighting Column. The funding for the scheme is being sought and secured. Consultation works has now been undertaken with those directly affected by the highway changes proposed.

A very successful event was held at Rimrose Valley Country Park on the first Bank Holiday in May. The event was extremely well attended and fully supported by the elected member's from the wards surrounding the park.

Work in South Park continues. The Community Garden plan has been approved and is out to tender. A community growing project co-ordinator is in place to assist with the garden and engage with the local community, schools and Hugh Baird College. Regular meetings are being held to discuss the misuse of the park and surrounding area and to address the ASB that has been going on in recent months. A Fun Day is taking place in the park on Friday 18<sup>th</sup> August. The event will be free to the community and will include carousal rides, pony rides, a climbing wall and inflatables.

### **Community Transition Fund/Community Support Fund**

A total of £482,296 has been spent with £517,897 remaining in this fund as of June 2016.

### **Domestic Abuse**

Save the date invitations have been sent out to partners for the 2017 Domestic Abuse Conference on Thursday 6 July 2017 and a number of people have already put their name down to attend.

The MARAC Executive Group has met to discuss the recently completed MARAC Review. Overall the report shows Sefton's MARAC works well and operates within Safelives guidelines. The MARAC Executive Group has agreed a number of recommendations which will form the basis of an action plan to be delivered over the coming year. This will be shared with the Domestic Abuse Executive Group.

Sefton IDVA Team, SWACA and the No Xcuses programme team are working together to achieve joint accreditation for the Sefton's victim and perpetrator support work. This is being funded by the Turnaround Families programme and will be accredited by Safelives (for the victim services) and Respect (perpetrator services) which are nationally recognised organisations in their field. The initial self-assessment stage is due to be completed within the next couple of months.

DHR 7 has now been published on the Council website and shared with SSCP members and the LSCB and Safeguarding Adults Board Business Managers. A DHR briefing and case study has also been shared with partners.

DHR6 has been submitted to the Home Office for quality assurance and is due to be heard at their panel meeting on 20 September 2017.

## **Equalities**

We continue to work with the Learning & Development Team to develop LGBT and other equality and diversity training for staff. A briefing is being prepared for the Senior Leadership Board to highlight the importance of the online training in achieving the NAVAJO charter mark.

We have identified three Council buildings which can take part in the Liverpool Pride 'Come out of the Shadows' event in 2017 which is being delivered again following the success of the 2016 event. This involves the lighting up of buildings in the colours of the rainbow flag. The buildings are Bootle Town Hall, Crosby Library (took part in 2016) and The Atkinson (took part in 2016)

## **Hate Crime**

We are continuing to work with our network of 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting centres to raise awareness of hate crime and the Stop Hate UK helpline. We have obtained and distributed resources from Stop Hate UK including pull-up banners. Briefings on hate crime and the role of the 3<sup>rd</sup> party reporting centres have been delivered to staff from the Venus Centre, Sefton CAB and The Carers Centre.

We continue to work with the Merseyside Police SIGMA Team, including attending the new Sefton Community Action Group.

Hate crime training continues to be delivered to staff in organisations across Sefton. A hate crime awareness session was delivered to a group of school governors in May. Further training dates for staff in all agencies working in Sefton have been arranged for July and September. The Merseyside Police SIGMA team are arranging training for Arriva bus drivers and that will be delivered jointly with the Council. Contact has also been made with parent & carer groups and with Health watch Sefton.

The Council will again be Liaising with relevant agencies regarding Remembering Srebrenica in July.

## **Welfare Reform – Foodbanks**

9 Children's Centres across the Borough have agreed so far to take part in this summer's Access to Food project. Litherland Moss has agreed to be the kitchen for the South of the Borough with Linaker a possible kitchen for the North.

## **Illegal Money Lending**

Sefton Council and the “Migrant Workers Sefton Community” Charity (MWSC) delivered a social inclusion event called ‘Cakes of the World’ which was hosted by The Salvation Army, 65 Shakespeare Road in Southport on Saturday 29th April 2017. The event was aimed at improving social inclusion within Southport and for the migrant residents to see the range of social activities & groups that exist to increase participation. Tackling debt and getting residents onto the Electoral roll formed other themes for this day as well as giving migrant residents the opportunity to sign-up to ESOL courses and undertake consultation with the company (MEL Research) carrying out the Private Rented Sector Licensing Consultation.

## **LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES**

### **New Business workshops**

Over the last 2 months the Alt Valley Community Trust have held pop up Smarta Business workshops in Meadows, Crosby, Formby and Southport Libraries. Funded by European Regional Development Fund, the workshops provide advice to local residents interested in starting their own business. The workshops have proved very successful and the Alt Valley Community Trust are now supporting 17 new Sefton businesses on the back of the sessions.

### **Human Library**

The Library service has secured £99,000 of funding from the Arts Council to develop an arts related scheme called ‘The Human Library’. The scheme is aimed at encouraging the participation of adults in Bootle who are socially isolated or living with poor mental health, we will create a ‘human library’ where people can ‘gift’ their talents or experience to someone in need. A series of creative programmes will uncover local talents; in turn this will build a sustainable bank of volunteers who can pass their ‘gift’ on. The project will train volunteers & staff in social prescribing techniques including Making Every Contact Count. Gifts might range from preparing and hosting a community meal to 1:1 sessions with someone living with a mental health condition.

### **Arts Council / Libraries Opportunities for Everyone Innovation Fund**

The library service has been successful in its application for funding from the Arts Council to support a mental health project based in the Bootle area. The project will encourage adults to participate in the creation of a ‘human library’ where people can ‘gift their talents or experience to someone in need. The ambition is to build a sustainable bank of volunteers who can pass their ‘gift’ on. The project will train volunteers and staff in social prescribing techniques. Gifts may range from preparing and hosting a community meal to 1:1 sessions with someone living with a mental health condition

### **Sefton Super Reads**

The annual Sefton Super Read event took place at Crosby library on 30<sup>th</sup> March, with 90+ Teenagers, from eight high schools in attendance. Super Reads is a book award aimed at students in year 7, 8 and 9. The students read and review six titles, selected by a panel of schools librarians, teachers and public library staff. The students vote on their favourite book, with the winner announced at the award ceremony,. Three of the nominated authors attended the event, with Peter Bunzl crowned the winner for his book ‘Cogheart’. The aim of the award is to encourage continued reading for pleasure, amongst teens.

### **At the Library**

At The Library is a new programme of commissions, projects and activities inviting artists and communities to be creative in Sefton’s Libraries. It’s aimed at all ages and all members of Sefton's communities with different projects and activities taking place in Bootle, Crosby, Netherton, Maghull, Formby and the Atkinson, Southport. The programme will run until spring 2018 and is funded by Arts Council England.

At The Library was launched at Bootle Library with a One Pot lunch hosted and cooked in the Library by the Fair Land Collective. The artists, library users and invited guests prepared Japanese stuffed dumplings, printed napkins, made ceramic spoons, and created ikebana centre-pieces to decorate the table. One Pot meals will take place in each library over the coming year, creating a chance for people to gather and spend time together, sharing skills, ideas and food. The next meal is planned for Formby library on 14<sup>th</sup> June.

## **THE ATKINSON**

### **Writing Through Time - January - March 2017**

An outreach projects developing Literacy with Christchurch Primary School

In 2016, discussions began between The Atkinson, Sefton Library Service and Christchurch Primary School about school priorities in the south of Sefton. Christchurch is a larger than average primary school with a higher than average proportion of disadvantaged pupils. The 2016 Ofsted report states that the school 'Requires Improvement'. The school has taken pupils to visit Bootle library in the past but the school had never visited The Atkinson prior to this project. Improving writing was established as a key priority for schools in the area and developing writing across the curriculum was a specific priority for Christchurch.

It was agreed that the range of resources on offer at The Atkinson and Bootle library could be combined to deliver a cross-curricular project that would develop children's writing, their knowledge of Ancient Egypt and their awareness of local history. The story of Anne Goodison, the objects she collected and the letters she wrote would be used as stimulus for a variety of writing activities as a collection of letters written by her was discovered in Brooklyn Museum Archives. The Atkinson Development Trust agreed to fund the project as it met their objectives.

Two external experts came in to the school to work with the pupils: Claire Ollett, a Freelance Educator and Egyptologist and Mandy Coe, Prize-winning poet and author.

### **Evaluation**

At the end of the project detailed evaluation took place to understand the impact of the activities and work with the writer and archaeologist.

The teachers felt that the children's knowledge, understanding and writing of poetry definitely improved as a result of the project and the project hit the targets for poetry that are in the curriculum. They also noted that the children became excited about Ancient Egypt – with a significant increase in the pupils' confidence and enthusiasm when talking about Ancient Egypt. The teachers felt that the pupils got so much from visiting The Atkinson and working with an Egyptologist: "I couldn't believe that my kids could sit on the carpet for two hours and listen to her talk. I could deliver those facts and they wouldn't listen in the same way. During the celebration event Claire unveiled a new addition to The Atkinson's Egyptology collection and the pupils gasped with excitement when the artefact was revealed. Claire explained that one girl had made her own book about Ancient Egypt that was full of detailed research that she had done. Overall the project encouraged the children to be confident and resilient.

### **What impact did the project have on the school as a whole?**

The lead teacher gave the following evaluation: *It was really good for the school to be seen in a positive light and to be involved in something. We're often overlooked because we are requiring improvement and because of where we are. We were inspired by the way that Emma spoke about The Atkinson. For our pupils to experience something cultural beyond what they normally would, was a very positive thing. The celebration event helped to raise the profile of writing within the school. The teachers said that having Radio and press coverage was very good for the profile of the school and it encouraged the staff to look for other opportunities to promote the school. Families liked to see people like Emma and the trustees in school, and to see that they care about our school and want to support the local community in Bootle'*

## What next?

As part of the project, a selection of poetry books were purchased for the school. These will be available in the school library to inspire pupils and teachers in the future. Christchurch C of E Primary is already planning another project with Bootle library which will take place later in 2017. In Autumn 2017 there will be a temporary exhibition at The Atkinson about Anne Goodison and other female collectors. The work produced during this project will feature in the exhibition.

## INTEGRATED YOUTH SERVICES

### Sefton's Key National Performance Indicators – headlines

Police National Computer (PNC) Youth Justice Published data has been used to report on all three key Performance Indicators which are priorities of the Youth Justice Board,

- **Re-offending** – This was historically poor but is much improved across England, particularly for Sefton which has a lower rate nationally and locally compared to other Merseyside YOTs.
- **Our reoffending rates (per offender)** - In Sefton they are lower than others in the North West region but higher than the rest of Merseyside and in England. There is an increase across England in general.
- **First Time Entrants** – Performance is very good and continues to be better than Merseyside and England. Sefton achieved the second largest reduction but also had a significant lower number of first time entrants as the starting point.
- **Custody Rate** - Sefton's performance is now good but was historically high. It is currently lower than England and Merseyside.

To summarise Sefton's performance has gone from strength to strength in the majority of measures. The Reoffending per reoffender rate is a new measure and this shows some improvement is required.

While Sefton has reduced the numbers of young people offending and had some impact upon the number of offences committed, there is a small group of young people who commit the majority of offences. These young people are the harder to engage and motivate and the number of offences they are committing are beginning to increase. The management team will be reviewing the effectiveness of interventions and partnership resources that are drawn upon in working with young people who are at a high risk of re-offending.

### Critical incident

At 1.15pm on Wednesday 3<sup>rd</sup> May, a young male aged 17yrs was shot by an unknown male in Kirkby, in a public place within the community. He received serious injuries to his ankle, knee and stomach areas, although his injuries were not deemed life threatening but he suffered blood loss and required surgery.

The male is currently under the supervision of Sefton YOT and had complied with his order up until the time of this incident. A full Critical Learning Review is underway and the learning points will be shared.

Sefton YOT took responsibility for a number of actions as a result of strategy meetings and continues to offer support and manage the court order.

### Digital Advantage

Sefton has nominated 12 young people to engage in an innovative project which supports people to develop business ideas and build them on line. It's a unique opportunity for 15-17yrs olds to develop skills to enable them to be apprenticeship and work ready in a number of environments, but in particular the creative IT industry which has future apprenticeship on offer locally.

The project will be delivered in August 2017 by industry experts supported by two TYP workers and the young people are currently involved with TYP or YOT. There will be a celebration event at the end of the project to showcase the participants' success.

The project team are already securing opportunities as exit pathways to new experiences, involving local partners including Innovators Hub, Maghull Radio, Arvato and The Atkinson Centre.

### **New Beginnings - LGBTQ**

Following the growth and success of the New Beginnings session in Crosby, staff from TYP are in process of developing and extending provision of New beginnings in Southport which will be launched in July-August 2017.

TYP is also working in partnership with Merseyside Police via the Sefton Community Group and also a Transgender Community to develop stronger community links. Merseyside Community Engagement Team are dedicated to supporting the community to work with the police, who have also recognised that they need to work better with the LGBTQ community more specifically the Trans community.

## **HOUSING**

### **Work with Registered Providers**

We are looking to re-establish new relationships with the Registered Provider (RP) sector in the context of their operating models and principles. It is apparent to many that some are increasingly behaving as private companies; we need to redefine our partnerships in this context. The 2016 Housing and Planning Act introduces the voluntary Right to Buy imposed on housing associations, as well as other potential regulatory changes.

There are also opportunities to work positively with housing associations on issues such as welfare reform, improving health outcomes, sharing data and support to deliver council priorities, which I would like to explore in 2017/18.

### **Homes and Community Agency**

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) issued their prospectus for the next Affordable Housing funding round (2016-2021). However, virtually all of the funding was originally only available for low cost home ownership products. The results of this bid round were announced in early January 2017.

We have been advised by HCA that four scheme bids have been successful for Sefton, for funding to build new low cost ownership homes on sites in Southport, Thornton, Litherland and Melling.

The Chancellors 2016 Autumn Statement signals a change in Government positioning on affordable housing. Not only did the Government announce an extra £1.4bn of funding, but also that a third of this would be available for affordable rented homes. In the north of Sefton, particularly, there is a greater need for more affordable rented housing, so the change may help Registered Providers to deliver rented homes to meet this need.

The Autumn Statement announced a total of £5.4bn for a housing delivery programme. As well as the funds for affordable housing:

- £2.3bn Housing Investment fund. Available to bring forward housing development sites, mainly by private developers to deliver market housing. Delivery must be by 2021, in areas/sites where there is strong demand.
- £1.7bn accelerated construction fund – aimed at bringing forward surplus public sector land. This could include opportunities to buy land. HCA will require developers to build at a faster pace.

### **Housing Development Company**

I am also the Cabinet Member sponsoring the investigation to set 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 1<sup>st</sup> of September 2016.

Subject to successful feasibility and outline viability studies (these are currently being developed) we should be able to collate and report on the viability of the concept, at the Cabinet meeting in September. If all goes to plan then a Sefton Council development company could be up and running by the end of 2017.

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 rule limiting schemes to no more than 20% of private rented housing stock would not enable this to happen. We urgently need a licensing scheme in Bootle, Seaforth/Waterloo and Southport. A formal report and business case was approved by Cabinet on 1st December 2016, setting out our proposals.

A formal 12 week consultation, required by Law, is being undertaken, which commenced on the 1<sup>st</sup> of April 2017 and will run for 12 weeks up to the 24<sup>th</sup> June. This consultation has been widely promoted.

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 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 Act was introduced in the summer of 2016 and 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 recently issued a consultation on what offences could result in a banning order. Following this consultation the Government has indicated that it will seek to introduce regulations to come into force in October 2017. I intend to review the Council's own housing enforcement policies when there is greater clarity over these new measures.

In the meantime officers in the Housing Standards team take enforcement actions and occasional prosecutions.

### **Housing Strategy**

Our new Sefton Housing Strategy was approved by Cabinet in June 2016. I have recently agreed a Delivery Plan, which was published in January '17. 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.

Bellway Homes have begun remediation and site preparation works on the Klondyke Phase2-3 site, which is the final phase of new development from the former HMRI programme. Communications have been ongoing with local residents. Bellway Homes hope to begin construction of new housing in July/August this year.

### **Homeless services and Housing Options Service**

The Council has a legal duty to adopt a Homelessness Strategy. We adopted the current strategy in September 2013, together with a Delivery Plan. Together with our service delivery partners, we have reviewed the delivery plan, and I have recently approved an updated version with a number of new actions. During the course of 2018, we will have to undertake a formal review of homelessness in Sefton, with a view to adopting a new strategy by September 2018.

The Homeless Reduction Act received royal ascent recently. The principle behind the Act is to confer a legal duty on local authorities to provide homeless prevention services to all people who are potentially homeless. This mirrors the current legislation in Wales.

The current legislation (Housing Act 1996 as amended) broadly states that we must provide “housing advice to all” and “homeless assessment and resolution to those in priority need”. There was previously no legislation covering “prevention activity”, rather it is promoted as value for money good practice. Most local authorities only offer specific homeless prevention services to those who are deemed to be in priority need.

The Act once enforced will enforce a statutory duty to provide homeless prevention services to all people who are threatened with homelessness irrespective of whether they are in priority or not. The Act will offer more protection for people who are homeless or threatened with homelessness, at an earlier stage, to a greater number of people than we are currently obliged to assist.

The new Act is likely to become law “early 2018” so we should assume April 2018 at the latest. We will need to monitor and assess the impact of the new measures on the demand for Council services, particularly as we move toward the introduction of Locality teams in 2018.

### **Gypsy & Traveller Encampments**

I have received report 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. Southport Area Committee considered the same topic and have requested that the Council looks to provide a transit site in the borough. The Local Plan identifies a potential site for this. I will be reviewing what action can be taken in future to help deliver a Traveller Transit site provision.