

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b> Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Planning and Building Control	13 March 2018

## 1. Local Planning

### The Sefton Local Plan

- 1.1 Planning applications continue to be submitted on allocated sites.

### Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other policy documents

- 1.2 Having had 5 updated and new SPDs adopted by the Council in September, a further 5 SPDs and a series of Information Notes have been prepared and we anticipate adopting them in May 2018.
- 1.3 The Statement of Community Involvement has been updated and consulted on, and consultation has also taken place on an Information note relating to Recreational Pressure on the Sefton coast. These are due to be considered by Cabinet in March 2018.
- 1.4 A series of Information notes on Flood risk and drainage have also been produced, and an SPD for the Crosby Coastal Park will be prepared during the course of 2018.

### Liverpool City Region work

- 1.5 Work on the proposed Strategic Spatial Framework for the Liverpool City Region is now being led by the Combined Authority. Discussions have begun about follow up work that may be required to take this forward, including the need for a strategic B8 (warehousing) Study which will identify the need and optimal locations for new logistics development associated with the growth of the Port of Liverpool.

### Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.6 Four Neighbourhood Plans which are being prepared by five Town and Parish Councils will be submitted for examination in the near future. This will impose new challenges on the team as they organise examinations for each. Changes have been made to the Council's constitution to streamline the approval of a submitted Neighbourhood Plan, enabling it to proceed to examination in a timely manner in accordance with good practice.
- 1.7 We have also streamlined the procurement process in order to enable the Council, in conjunction with the body who submitted the Plan, to agree which Examiner to appoint as and when required. We have appointed a 'co-operative' which will be able to nominate suitably qualified and experienced persons to examine each Plan.

#### Other work

- 1.8 Members of the Local Plans team continue to provide policy advice on all relevant planning applications and pre-application inquiries, with members of the Local Plan team processing their own caseload of applications.
- 1.9 As a result of the Local Plan being adopted, the team have provided a lot of policy advice to developers on sites allocated in the Local Plan as well as providing advice once the planning applications have been submitted. Discussions are about to resume with the developers of the Land east of Maghull site and the other landowners / developers in relation to the preparation of a Master Plan to ensure this strategic site is developed in a comprehensive manner with all appropriate infrastructure being provided at the right time and in a coordinated way.

## **2. Heritage and Conservation**

### Heritage at Risk

- 2.1 We are continuing to work towards the removal of the 6 Heritage at Risk Areas from the National Register. This includes a number of different work areas including raising their profile, regeneration funding bids, working with the local community, Conservation Area Appraisals, taking enforcement and other legal action in relation to a number of derelict sites and listed buildings in these Areas including the major Lord Street Verandah project.
- 2.2 Recent success includes the continued restoration of Verandahs on Lord Street, Southport along with the improvements undertaken at previous derelict sites.

### Development Management

- 2.3 In terms of the general day to day responsibilities, allied to the increased development pressure which the wider Service is facing, the Conservation officers have formulated 89 detailed consultation responses from November to January on planning applications and pre-applications relating to a number of Listed Buildings and developments within a number of our Conservation Areas. We have also continued involvement in various appeals, on site monitoring and enforcement cases.

### 3. Development Management

- 3.1 The pressure on this part of the Service has continued to increase over the last quarter following the adoption of the Local Plan and the submission of both pre-application inquiries and more recently with applications relating to sites identified for development in the Local Plan.
- 3.2 Between November 2017 and January 2018 we have approved 144 units of residential accommodation.

The following 2 major developments were considered and approved by Planning Committee.

Ref	Address	Proposal
DC/2017/01716	St Philips Church Hall And Land Adjacent Orrell Road Litherland L21 8NG	Demolition of St Philip's Church Hall and the erection of 10 no. semi-detached dwellings with associated access, parking and landscaping
DC/2017/00606	Land To The South Of Andrews Lane Formby L37 2YH	Construction of 99 dwellings comprising a mix of houses and apartments together with the construction of access road and the laying out of open space (to include the installation of an attenuation pond) (Amended plans and description)

- 3.3 We have received a total of 526 applications in this time scale, including 66 pre-application enquiries.
- 3.4 The capacity of the Service is stretched by the increased pressure relating to the processing of these applications. It is a huge team effort across the Service to process, assess and determine applications expediently and in line with Government targets.
- 3.5 The 20% increase of planning fees (introduced in January 2018) and additional fee income through entering Planning Performance Agreements (PPAs) has allowed us to recruit further staff. They are proving critical to maintaining a high level of performance as we respond to significantly more complex and contentious proposals following the adoption of the Local Plan.

- 3.6 We have experienced long term illness to three of our staff which has put extra pressure on the rest of the team. This has demonstrated how little spare capacity there is in the team and our performance has begun to be affected by these absences.
- 3.7 We are looking at how we organise our staff and procedures to make sure that the maximum effort is directed towards those schemes which are the most sensitive, complex and contentious, and that we provide the best possible service within existing constraints. This will mean new ways of working and we will be exploring these over the next few months.

### Enforcement update

#### 3.8 Review of the quarter from 1<sup>st</sup> November 2017 – 31<sup>st</sup> January 2018

- New cases – 119
- Cases resolved – 265
- Formal action: 1 x Breach of condition notice.
- 17 retrospective applications totalling £7,350 fees.

3.9 On 22 January 2018, the owner of 1-3 Chapel Lane, Netherton, attended Sefton Magistrates' Court in respect of charges brought against him in relation to being in breach of two Enforcement Notices. One was in connection with a change of use at the property (keeping more than 6 dogs) and another in connection with operational development undertaken in respect of this (failure to remove a building).

3.10 At the trial, it was agreed that that the Council would discontinue the charge against the Operational Development Enforcement Notice given a guilty plea to the Change of Use Enforcement Notice. The breach/offence rested with keeping more than 6 dogs on the property at any one time and at the time of the offence (February 2017). The owner pleaded guilty to this and received a conditional discharge by way of sentence for a 12 month period. The owner agreed to pay the Council costs of £1,250 within 28 days.

A further site inspection will be carried out at end of February

## **4. Building Control**

### Performance targets

4.1 The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan checking and the carrying out of site inspections. It also meets the majority of the locally set performance targets it sets itself. Results up to the middle of the 4th quarter of 2017/18 show that the Team's market share is

76% - which remains equal to or better than that of neighbouring authorities and is significantly above the average for English Councils, which stands at 67%. The Building Control Team also continues to meet all key statutory targets for plan assessment and the carrying out of site inspections.

#### Income and financial performance

4.2 Building Regulation income to the middle of the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter of 2017/18 shows an increase of 10% when compared with the same stage in the previous financial year. As a result, it is projected that by the end of the current financial year, the Council's (fee-earning) Building Regulation service will continue to be self-funding and will be able to part subsidise the other various related statutory work elements it carries out - such as ensuring safety at sports grounds and dealing with reports of dangerous structures.

#### Safety at sports grounds

4.3 The Building Control Team has completed its annual round of inspections at the various sports stadiums within the Borough - where a safety certificate is held, including Southport Football Club and Aintree Racecourse. The Team is currently assessing plans for temporary grandstands / hospitality units for the Grand National Meeting at Aintree Racecourse in April 2018 and will then be carrying out site inspections to ensure their safe construction. Building Control Officers continue to work closely with the emergency services in relation to safety at sports grounds issues and they always consult with colleagues in the police, fire brigade and the ambulance service on the contents of issued safety certificates.

#### ISO 2001 quality Assurance standard

4.4 From the beginning of 2018, in a move to reduce costs, the Building Control Team changed its independent ISO 9001 accreditation provider. The new provider is Local Authority Building Control (LABC) and the first inspection audit by the new assessors is due to take place in April 2018. Having ISO 9001 accreditation is seen by many developers, as a pre-requisite for providing a building control service.

## **5. Technical Support**

#### Performance

5.1 Performance against targets within the last quarter is detailed below. The team have struggled to meet their targets over this period due to the mandatory Christmas shutdown and the influx of large scale planning applications.

- The validation of planning applications for this quarter (Nov 2017 - Jan 2018) within the target of 5 days is 55%, with cases taking an average of 6 working days. This includes the validation of 7 large scale applications. Major applications take more time and resources to process than other applications.

- The team registered and acknowledged 96% enforcement complaints within 3 days (16% over target, an increase of 3% on the previous quarter)
- Booking in of Building Control applications stands at 83% within 3 working days (13% below target).
- 65% of pre-application enquiries were validated within 3 working days.
- The team achieved 99% of land charge searches within 10 working days.

### Service Development

- 5.2 The scanning of historic documents is still ongoing with a target of June 2018 in line with the agile working timetable. We are currently looking at outsourcing some of the scanning of historic files to ensure service continuity and to meet the deadline. Staff have been identifying and disposing of surplus and redundant information using confidential disposal services.
- 5.3 The data cleaning project is continuing, this project is to ensure our planning and land charge data is accurate and up to date in preparation for the migration of the local land charges register to HM Land Registry.
- 5.4 A review of registration and validation procedures has been undertaken and changes implemented to ensure a more efficient and effective flow.
- 5.5 Following the successful implementation of the mobile working solution for Building Control, officers have been working with our IT suppliers to develop a similar solution for development management and enforcement cases. This will tie in with the Agile Working initiative.