

Cabinet Member Report		
Councillor	Committee	Date
Ian Maher	Cabinet Member Regeneration	4 February 2010

Stepclever

On 12th January, the Stepclever Board approved a two year Delivery Plan worth £7.2 million, that will pay for an enterprise programme for the six wards of north Liverpool and south Sefton (including Linacre and Derby wards within Sefton). The Plan needs to be ratified by Liverpool City Council as accountable body.

The new programme contains three projects which Sefton Council will lead:

- Enterprise Gateway – an advanced support service to stimulate new businesses and invest in local businesses
- Business Neighbourhoods – action on town centres and local parades
- Property – equipping the community with additional incubator space for new starts.

In addition, south Sefton will benefit from an Innovation Fund, projects to unlock enterprise in young people, and extensive community outreach to motivate potential entrepreneurs.

As total funding has reduced from the previous round of Stepclever contracts, there will be fewer posts in the Sefton-led delivery teams. We therefore anticipate staff on fixed-term contracts will be released if they are not recruited into the new posts, or cannot be redeployed elsewhere in the Council. Appropriate procedures are being developed to retain experienced personnel within the new projects and maximise opportunities available to affected staff.

North Liverpool/South Sefton Strategic Regeneration Framework

In December 2009, the Stage 1 Report of the Strategic Regeneration Framework for North Liverpool/South Sefton was published. It sets out a vision for the area and invites partners including Liverpool and Sefton Councils, NWDA and HCA to commit to the goal of regenerating the one part of Merseyside that has not benefited from the economic renaissance of the last decade. This is a key opportunity to identify the city region's top regeneration priorities for the post-election period, when there is expected to be intense competition for resources and only the strongest and most widely supported investment plans will be funded.

Officers have made comments on the Stage 1 Report. A wider Stakeholder Consultation event is planned for February, with a Stage 2 Report around Easter setting out the strategic options for investing in homes and neighbourhoods, the economy, infrastructure, and local services. Members will be fully consulted as the study unfolds.

RS2010

The Regional Strategy (RS2010) provides a twenty-year investment framework for the North West, which builds on the existing Regional Economic Strategy and Regional Spatial Strategy and develops and embeds a new Skills Strategy for the region.

A draft Part 1 of the Regional Strategy has been produced by the North West Development Agency in association with 4NW and this is now issued for public consultation. It has been informed by an Issues and Principles paper which was published late 2008. Part 1 provides the overarching vision and proposes strategic priorities.

In terms of focus and implications for Sefton, the strategy recognises the importance of the maritime sector and the Liverpool Superport including access, the potential for tidal power within the Mersey, developing the city region offer around the visitor economy including opportunities to make more of the heritage appeal of Southport, tackling barriers to reduce worklessness in our area and improve enterprise levels, investment in business incubation and growth facilities, support high value jobs in tourism and port-related development, continuing to support housing market renewal, and a focus on investment in utilities infrastructure and strategic employment sites.

The consultation period runs to 26th February 2010.

As part of that consultation The Mersey Partnership is organising a sub regional event, which will be held on 2nd February at the BT Convention Centre, ACC Liverpool from 8.30am to midday. The event will help shape the City Region response.

The RS2010 Part One document and supporting information can be viewed at www.nwregionalstrategy.com

Port consultation

The DfT has recently published for consultation a National Policy Statement (NPS) on Ports.

It provides the framework for future decisions on proposals for new port development to be taken by the Infrastructure Planning Commission (IPC) established under the 2008 Act to deal with nationally significant infrastructure proposals (NSIPs). It applies, wherever relevant, to associated development, such as road and rail links, for which consent is sought alongside that for the principal development.

The NPS sets out the Government's conclusions on the need for new port infrastructure, considering the current place of ports in the national economy, the available evidence on future demand, and the options for meeting future needs. It explains to planning decision-makers the approach they should take to proposals, including the main issues which, in the Government's view, will need to be addressed to ensure that future development is fully sustainable, and the weight to be given to the need for new port infrastructure and to the positive and negative impacts it may bring.

Concerns have been raised that the development needs and regional implications for England are not being considered in the round. With permission already approved for new and expanded ports facilities in the Greater South East – and with more in the pipeline – the role of northern ports is not properly considered.

Organisational Re-structuring

From January 1st 2010, the former Housing Market Renewal Department has been amalgamated with the Neighbourhoods Division (formerly Planning and Economic Regeneration Department) Private Sector Housing Division (formerly Environmental Protection Department), Energy Division (Formerly Technical Services) and Strategic Housing (formerly Health & Social Care). The new Neighbourhoods and Investment Programmes Department activities will fall under the Regeneration portfolio and future reports will reflect this.

Housing Market Renewal Update

The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) have confirmed funding for the Newheartlands Pathfinder for 2010-11. The full allocation has been made meaning that unlike last year, 10% has not been withheld and allocated later based on performance. This means that Sefton will receive £9.35 million for 2010-11.

On December 23rd, a funding agreement with Bellway homes was finalised enabling Bellway to acquire the former sports ground site at Orrell Lane. By providing a maximum of £700,000 funding for infrastructure / public realm works, the Council has ensured scheme viability that will see 96 dwellings developed on this problematical site, more than £12 million private sector investment secured, circa 50 jobs secured for 3-4 years in the construction industry and £1.65 million commuted sum for open space enhancement secured as part of the 'section 106' agreement. Bellway propose to commence activity on site during March with the erection of a sales office.

Remediation of the Tannery and Penpoll sites continues. Further underground tanks have been identified on the Tannery site which will require investigation to identify if their contents have leaked into adjacent ground. Both sites scheduled for remediation completion during April and June respectively.

Housing Update

An Empty Homes Action Plan has recently been agreed which will start to take action to reduce the number of empty properties we have in the borough, starting in the two priority areas of the hMR area and Dukes / Cambridge, which have the highest proportion of empty properties

Neighbourhoods Issues

The internal recruitment process for three Area Co-ordinators has commenced which will assist to take forward the Area Management / Area Working Agenda. Consultation with Area Committees as to the most effective way of taking forward Governance issues.

Energy Issues

A report has been prepared for Cabinet on February 4th which outlines the 'Carbon Reduction Commitment' scheme. The scheme is mandatory for Local Authorities and legislation will be passed during the current Parliamentary session. The scheme includes, principally, all gas and electricity consumption and their relative emissions, and can allow for power generating schemes, which put energy back into the grid. Vehicle emissions are excluded at present. At least 90% of all energy consumption must be incorporated into the scheme. If Carbon Reduction targets are not achieved then increasingly punitive levies are charged to the Local Authority concerned.

Most of Sefton's energy costs are concentrated around schools (approx 45% of total) and Street Lighting (approx 18% of total). In respect of schools, the Government's directive is that they will be included within a Local Authority's Carbon declaration, however, the schools delegated budgets may not be used to purchase carbon allowances. These must be purchased through the Council's general fund revenue account. As they are included in the scheme, schools may be allowed to take a share of any rewards or penalties arising from the scheme, and it is therefore important that they are fully on board with the scheme to understand the implications for themselves.