

REPORT TO: Planning Committee
Cabinet Member – Regeneration
Cabinet Member - Performance

DATE: 10th February 2010
17th February 2010
20th January 2010

SUBJECT: Planning and Economic Regeneration Department –
Performance Report: April – September 2009

WARDS AFFECTED: All

REPORT OF: Andy Wallis, Planning and Economic Regeneration Director

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**EXEMPT/
CONFIDENTIAL:** No

PURPOSE/SUMMARY:

This is the Department's six-monthly report on progress towards meeting its Service and Corporate Plan objectives and targets for the period to September 2009.

REASON WHY DECISION REQUIRED:

It is a requirement of the Council's Performance Management process.

RECOMMENDATION(S):

That Members note the progress achieved to date.

KEY DECISION: No

FORWARD PLAN: Not appropriate

IMPLEMENTATION DATE: Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the minutes of the meeting.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS:**IMPLICATIONS:****Budget/Policy Framework:****Financial:**

<u>CAPITAL EXPENDITURE</u>	2008/ 2009 £	2009/ 2010 £	2010/ 2011 £	2011/ 2012 £
Gross Increase in Capital Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton Capital Resources				
Specific Capital Resources				
<u>REVENUE IMPLICATIONS</u>				
Gross Increase in Revenue Expenditure				
Funded by:				
Sefton funded Resources				
Funded from External Resources				
Does the External Funding have an expiry date? Y/N	When?			
How will the service be funded post expiry?				

Legal:**Risk Assessment:****Asset Management:****CONSULTATION UNDERTAKEN/VIEWS**

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

1. Background

- 1.1 Attached to this report is a summary output from the Council's performance reporting (SPRINT) system which records the Department's progress against Service Plan actions and targets. The purpose of this report is to highlight some key aspects of the Department's performance in the past six months.

2. Service Achievements

Business support and employment services

- 2.1 The *Invest Sefton* and *Sefton@work* services, with financial assistance from StepClever (the re-named SLEGI programme), Working Neighbourhoods Fund, ESF, ERDF, Deprived Area Fund and the LSC, continue to make significant progress despite current economic conditions.

StepClever Enterprise Gateway project

- 2.2 Has been the subject of a mid programme review. Subsequently agreed amendments will enable the programme to deliver more flexible responses to clients. The programme will now run to March 2012 as a consequence of its endorsement by the StepClever Board.

Sefton Integrated Business Support (SIBS)

- 2.3 Recruitment difficulties have resulted in some slower service delivery.

Build Sefton/StepClever Construction support

- 2.4 Has made good progress with lead contractors in securing labour agreements to support recruitment of apprentices and other labour and skills enhancement.

Skills & Employment Team

- 2.5 There has been a substantial programme of work in delivering City Employment Strategy addressing worklessness and new claimant needs. The November 2009 Job Seekers Allowance figures a third consecutive month's reduction in claimants. The Child Poverty Pilot (Promoting Parents) has been recognised by the Department of Works and Pensions (DWP) as a national model of good practice.

Neighbourhoods Division

Area Management

- 2.6 Progress made in relation to Area Management has focused upon ensuring that the correct infrastructure is established to enable effective delivery to all parts of the Borough. Service mapping has now been undertaken and the results discussed with Members and Area Committee Chairs. Further interim arrangements have been agreed by Cabinet and will be in place early in 2010. Consultation has commenced around area-based governance structures.

Business Neighbourhoods

2.7 Business Neighbourhoods is a part of the StepClever programme which is a joint Sefton and Liverpool venture working in the six wards of Linacre, Derby, County, Anfield, Kirkdale and Everton. This project commenced in January 2008, and has to date assisted over 900 businesses. Currently in negotiation to secure resources for 2010/2011 which will deliver to a wider area of South Sefton.

2.8 The programme spend performance profile Quarter 1 & 2 has shown a 94% spend against profile. Overall the programme has achieved nearly 36% spend – this is as anticipated as programme has been operational for 2 quarters. Programmed to spend more in quarter 4, therefore, full spend should be achieved. In terms of Progress towards targets 2009/10:

- 59 people successfully obtained employment, through targeted support; job creation and as a result of indirect support
- 79 people were helped to stay in employment through the provision of out of school childcare
- 14 people have accessed advice on starting a business which will help people move into self employment and potentially create new jobs
- 6 businesses have directly received financial support to either enable them to stay in employment, retain staff in employment or create new jobs
- 1 session was carried out at a youth service provision with the Credit Union which allowed parents to access advice and Credit Union services
- 37 people have received training
- 377 young people participating in programmes to develop their skills and qualifications
- a large percentage of people think they can influence decisions in their locality

Neighbourhood Element – Park Lane Neighbourhood Team

2.9 The team based upon the Netherton Park estate have been delivering a number of activities to support residents on the estate including:

- Supporting residents through establishing a tenants group; holding a residents' fun day; supporting the Netherton Park Neighbourhood Centre and Gordon Youth Centre;
- Working in partnership with local services to deliver estate clean ups; distribute Smartwater crime prevention packs; developing multi-agency groups and work;
- Promoting the work of the team and services across the estate through newsletters.

Major Development Projects

Lydiate Village Centre

- 2.10 Sefton Council, on behalf of Lydiate Parish Council is managing the delivery of a £881,523 Village Centre on Lambshear Lane, Lydiate. The Contractor is currently on site, and the project is expected to be completed by early 2010.

Southport Commerce Park

- 2.11 The second phase of the Bus Link Road project is scheduled to commence in January and completed in March 2010.
- 2.12 The second project on the Commerce Park involves bringing forward a new office development, which would create some 5,776 m² of commercial floor space (1.2 hectares of land) in order to provide quality office accommodation to meet potential local demand. This is a grant funded project, the developer, Berkeley James is currently marketing the site in order to generate interest from potential end users.

An Independent Living Centre

- 2.13 ERDF/HLF grant funded 19–35 Scarisbrick Avenue, Southport project by Blythe's, and the difficulties the developer was encountering as result of the current economic climate. In order to ensure the completion of this project, and minimise the possibility of claw-back of grant Members agreed to the location of the Independent Living Centre on the ground floor of this development.

New Funding Opportunities

- 2.14 Officers are currently exploring a number of funding opportunities from the North West Operational Plan, Rural Development Programme for England, and the Big Lottery.

Local Development Framework

- 2.15 The Local Development Scheme (LDS) which sets out the 3-year work programme is in place and approved by GONW. The priority continues to be the preparation of the Core Strategy. Spatial profiles have been developed though discussion with stakeholders and these have formed the basis of presentations to all the Area Committees during the early Summer. This has led to discussion on the key issues and opportunities in each part of the Borough. Presentations have also been made to the Sefton Area Committee of Local Councils (the 'Ten Parishes') and to individual parish councils. Members have continued to contribute to this process through meetings of the Member / Officer Working Group.
- 2.16 A major element in the preparatory work for the Core Strategy is ensuring we have up to date information on which to develop policy. In this regard, a number of key evidence gathering studies are nearing completion, though progress has been slower than anticipated partly because most of the studies have been more complex than anticipated and, in the case of the latter two studies, the work has been carried out jointly with other authorities with Sefton leading. The studies include:

- Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) – was reported to Members during last Summer. It provides the basis for our affordable housing policy.
- Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) – this is a joint study being undertaken by consultants White Young Green for Knowsley, West Lancashire and Sefton. The study assesses the need for and amount of land that is available or likely to be available for housing development. This will be reported to Members early in 2010.
- Employment Land and Premises Study (EL&PS) – this is a joint study being undertaken by consultants BE Group for Halton, Knowsley, West Lancashire and Sefton. The study assesses the amount of land and premises that are available and are needed for employment purposes. This will be reported to Members early in 2010.

Preparation for 2011 Census

- 2.17 Within Sefton, the Planning and Economic Regeneration Directorate is providing assistance to the ONS in their preparation for the 2011 Census (taking place on the 27th March 2011) and have contributed to
- Address Register development to ensure fullest coverage.
 - Enumeration intelligence for targeting delivery methods and follow-up resources.
 - Identifying and developing Community Liaison contacts.
 - Recruitment of enumeration staff, publicity and logistics.
 - Provision of local information to support Data Quality assurance.

Regulatory Services

- 2.18 Quarterly reports on regulatory performance are submitted to Planning Committee. The Regulatory Group has met all the statutory Best Value targets for determining planning and building regulation applications over this period; for the municipal year as a whole 90.8% of planning applications were determined within 8 weeks and we continue to meet the DCLG target for planning appeals.
- 2.19 In respect of local targets it continues to be a time of consolidation. The Department has been encouraging submission of applications electronically (approx 40% are submitted this way now) and liaising with local agents and partners. The public make very good use of the information on the Council's web site concerning planning applications; far fewer members of the public now call to the offices to view plans which has allowed the Department to consolidate its services to Bootle. During this period we have seen a continuing fall in planning application volumes. This is having a consequential and significant impact on fee income.

3. Risks

- 3.1 The main risks to service delivery remain as set out in the Service Plan. As previously reported a key risk, particularly for economic regeneration, was the continuity of funding and the outcome of the Comprehensive Spending Review in particular. Sefton has been successful in attracting external resources through the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative, Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Heritage Lottery

Fund, ERDF, ESF and other smaller funding streams. Services are now on a stronger foundation for the next three years. However, the recent deterioration in the financial climate and the recession may well limit the effectiveness of the Council's contribution to its LAA targets for worklessness, enterprise and qualifications.

3.2 The Department continues to experience a reduction in the number of planning and building regulation applications with consequential impact on fee income.

4. Performance Indicators

4.1 There is a comprehensive suite of national Best Value Performance Indicators for the statutory planning services (Development Control, Local Development Framework, Conservation). Although there are no BVPIs relating to the Economic Regeneration service, there are key National Indicators and LAA targets for the delivery of Economic Development and Enterprise activities which are shown in the table below.

4.2 Overall, the table shows that performance against all key targets is strong, and we are exceeding targets in a number of areas. However, attention is drawn to some areas of concern identified in the comments column.

BVPI	Indicator	Target	Progress/Comment
106	New homes on previously developed land	70%	Although there are no final figures yet available for the past six months, it is clear from applications approved and completions that we will continue to deliver well over 90% of new homes on previously developed land.
109a/b/c	Planning applications <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 60% major applications in 13 weeks • 65% of minor applications in 8 weeks • 80% of other applications in 8 weeks 	60% 65% 80%	All BVPIs on our performance in dealing with planning applications have been met over the last twelve months.
200a/b/c	Plan Making <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Local Development Scheme • Plan Milestones Achieved • Annual Monitoring Report 	Achieve all target dates	

LAA	Indicator	Target	Progress
NI 153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	29.7% (2011)	GoNW has been advised that the deteriorating economic climate may impact achievement of this target.
NI 171	VAT registration rate	Tbc	This is a key measure of enterprise,

			but DCLG is replacing the existing indicator with a better measure of business start-ups, and a new target will be negotiated in January 2009.
NI 116	Proportion of children in poverty	Tbc	Also to be replaced by a new measure, no date announced for its introduction. New target to be included in refresh of LAA next March.
NI 163	Working age population qualified to at least NVQ level 2	76.7% (2011)	Sefton starts at a higher point than other Merseyside LAs, but has made slower progress in 2008. Achievement of this target may also be affected by a recession.

5. Corporate or Cross-Cutting Issues

Equalities

- 5.1 The Department has successfully completed level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government, as part of level 4 of the Equalities Standard all service areas continue to have equalities targets on their respective service plans. Virtually all staff managers have now received training for including equalities in PRDs and specialised training for Equalities and Procurement and Equality Impact Assessments is also being accessed.

Sickness Rates

- 5.2 Staff attendance record remains acceptable. Absence levels for long term and short-term sickness for the period April – September 2009 have reduced to 3.57% (from 4.12%).