

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - 18 September 2018

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Planning and Building Control	September 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. They were consulted on in March/April. The SPDs were adopted by Cabinet in June, whilst the Sustainable Drainage and Flood Risk Information Notes were adopted in July.
- 1.3 SPDs for the Crosby Coastal Park and Pavement cafes, outdoor sales and A boards will be prepared during the course of 2018, and the Design and Shop fronts, security and signage SPD will be updated. Work has also commenced on updating and incorporating the Landscape Character SPG into a new Landscape SPD.

Liverpool City Region work

- 1.4 Work on the proposed Strategic Spatial Framework for the Liverpool City Region is now being led by the Combined Authority. Follow up work required relating to the need for a strategic B8 (warehousing) Study has been commissioned. This will initially identify the need for new logistics development associated with the growth of the Port of Liverpool. A subsequent piece of work will assess optimal locations where this need could be located.
- 1.5 We are also involved in the preparation of a 'Visitor Management Strategy' for the Greater Merseyside area. This will sets out how each LPA can address its legal obligations under the Habitat Regulations relating to the impact residential allocations and tourism-related development will have on sensitive habitats on the Sefton coast resulting from increased visitor pressure. Consultants have been engaged by the Combined Authority and we are contributing to its preparation.

Neighbourhood Planning

- 1.6 Four Neighbourhood Plans which are being prepared by five Town and Parish Councils in Sefton. The Maghull and Lydiate NPs were submitted for examination in April. The statutory 6-week consultation for each plan (known as the Regulation 16 Consultation) was been completed and all documents sent to independent Examiners. We expect to hear whether the Neighbourhood Plans can go forward to a referendum (for each Plan) by the end of the year. Assuming the Plans are approved by the local community, they will then become part of the Development Plan and have the same status as our Local Plan. If there are any conflicts in policy advice, the Neighbourhood Plans will take precedence, although this will only apply to the designated Neighbourhood Plan areas.
- 1.7 This will impose new challenges on the team as we organise examinations for each Neighbourhood 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. In addition, several members of the team are helping Development Management by processing their own caseload of applications.
- 1.9 As a result of the Local Plan being adopted, we 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 have resumed 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.
- 1.10 As a result of the Government's publication of a revised National Planning Policy Framework, we are reviewing our Local Plan policy approach to the provision of affordable housing as a result of new threshold and definitions that have been introduced. Consequently we have asked our retained consultants to assess what the implications are for Sefton and whether we need to change our existing policy approach.
- 1.11 As part of the requirements set out in the NPPF we not only have a 5-year supply of deliverable housing, but we also need to ensure that we pass the 3-year Housing Delivery Test. If we do not, we have to set out an action plan setting out what steps we will undertake to address the deficit and boost the delivery of housing in Sefton. This could result in us having to review our Local Plan, which will require a major input of both financial and staff resources. One simple way that would assist is that Local Plan sites allocated for housing that are owned by the Council are brought forward for development. The appointment of the Head of Commercial Development will assist us bringing these sites forward.

- 1.12 As part of our statutory requirements, and to ensure we meet these requirements, we are updating our Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) to April 2018, and up-dating the Brownfield Register which we are required to submit to the DHCLG by the end of each year. We are also about to commence work on updating the Urban Capacity Study, so we know what sites are potentially available in the urban area and whether they are developable. This work is expected to take about 6 months. We are also aiming to produce our Authority Monitoring Report by the end of the year.

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.
- 2.3 Works have started on a number of Heritage at Risk sites following planning permission being granted, this includes 2 Oxford Road, Birkdale, 8 Oxford Road, Birkdale and former Sunnymede School, 4 Westcliffe Road, Birkdale. A number of planning applications have been approved that include the improvement of Heritage at Risk sites including 30 Lulworth Road. A scheme is also being assessed on the major Heritage at Risk site of 40 Lancaster Road (former school for the partially hearing).

Development Management

- 2.4 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 85 detailed consultation responses from May to July 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 continues at a high level as we are considering the submission of a number major applications relating to sites identified for development in the Local Plan.
- 3.2 Between May 2018 and July 2018 we have approved 207 units of residential accommodation (taking account of the numbers in full or 'reserved matters' applications only, and not 'outline').

The following 5 major developments were considered and approved by Planning Committee.

REFVAL	Address	PROPOSAL
DC/2017/01641	71-73 Scarisbrick New Road and 1-1A Balfour Road, Southport	Erection of a three storey residential care home including layout of car parking with vehicular and pedestrian access and associated landscaping following demolition of existing dwellings
DC/2017/02138	Land Off Lenton Avenue, Formby	Application for approval of reserved matters for the erection of 34 dwellinghouses pursuant to outline planning permission DC/2015/02194 granted 22/11/2016 - for layout, scale, appearance and landscaping
DC/2018/00910	Former Peerless Refinery Site, Dunnings Bridge Road, Netherton	Variation of condition application attached to planning application DC/2016/02454 approved 07/07/2017 to vary Conditions 2, 10, 22, and 25 and to remove Conditions 31 and 32
DC/2014/01312	Former Arriva Bus Depot, 503-509 Hawthorne Road, Bootle	Outline Planning Application for redevelopment of former industrial land for mixed use development purposes comprising: demolition of all existing buildings; construction of 2,323 sq.m. Class A1 retail development; erection of 119 family dwellings, 100 space car park, servicing space and rationalisation of existing vehicular accesses onto Hawthorne Road to create 2 vehicular access points and 1 pedestrian access, new link road from Barton Close together with site wide landscaping and enhancement of the canal frontage area.
DC/2017/02359	Land East Of Waddicar Lane, North Of Footpath Melling No 3, North Of Rainbow Park Waddicar Lane Melling	Erection of 149 dwellings, construction of new vehicular access, flood attenuation basin, landscaping and associated works

- 3.3 We have received a total of 608 applications in this time scale, including 71 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 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 Staff levels have improved following extended periods of sickness within the team, and we have been able to recruit a team leader to strengthen the enforcement side of the service which has been under constant and increasing pressure in recent times.

- 3.7 We continue to look for opportunities to 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 continue to explore these where we feel they lead to an improved service.

Enforcement update

- 3.8 Review of the quarter from 1 May 2018 to the 31st of July 2018
- New cases - 223
 - Cases resolved - 179
 - 24 retrospective applications totalling £10,543 fees.

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 for the 1st quarter of financial year 2018/19 show that the Team's market share is 75% - 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 (and local) targets for plan assessment and the carrying out of site inspections.

Income and financial performance

- 4.2 Building Regulation income for the 1st quarter of 2018/19 shows an increase of 5% when compared with the same stage in the previous financial year. Whilst costs have also increased, the fee earning element of the Teams work has produced a surplus, which will be used to part subsidise the other various related statutory work elements of Building Control work - such as ensuring safety at sports grounds and dealing with reports of dangerous structures.

Safety at Sports Grounds

- 4.3 Over the close season, the Building Control Team has been inspecting improvement works to the main grandstand at Southport FC's Haig Avenue stadium. As a result of those works (and a change to the named safety certificate holder) the Team has also produced revised safety certificates and presented them to the Licencing and Regulatory Committee for their approval. The revised safety certificates for the Main Grandstand and the Jack Carr Stand were issued prior to the Club's first home game of the 2018/19 season.

Commencement on site of new schemes

- 4.4 A number of new schemes across the Borough have recently commenced on site - the Medium Secure Unit, Maghull, Lifeboat Station, Southport, Stage 4 of the David Wilson Housing site, Kew, Stage 2 of the Priory Assets site, Maghull and a new housing development in Oxford Road, Bootle. Work on the re-cladding of Cygnet House and Wren House Bootle continues and the change of use of 3TC House in Waterloo (to a residential property) is due to commence early September 2018.

5. Technical Support

Performance

- 5.1 Performance against targets for the period of May to July is detailed below. We have endeavoured to meet our targets but due to the influx of largescale housing applications, the seasonal increase in land charge search requests and the increase in market share of Building Regulation applications we have had to allocate resources to ensure all services are covered.

The validation of planning applications for this period within the target of 5 days is 54% (with an overall average of 6 days). This level of performance represents an increase from this time last year when the performance level was just 45%. A point of note, in July (the last full month in this reporting period) our performance was at 83% with an average of 5 working days. This 3-month period included a number of significant applications that required extensive consultation, notification and validation.

The team registered and acknowledged 97% of enforcement cases within 5 working days. This time last year it was 93%. There has been a significant increase in the number of enforcement cases for the comparable period last year.

Booking in of Building Control applications stands at 51% within 3 working days with the average number of days to book in being 5 days.

99% of pre-application enquiries were registered within 3 days, the average is 1 day to book in these. The same period last year it was 71% on target (+28%).

The team achieved 98% of land charge searches within 10 working days.

Service Development

- 5.2 Work has commenced on the transfer of the Local Land Charge Register to HM Land Registry. Detailed specification of extract routines for the back office software has been undertaken. New software has been installed on our test system to ensure we are able to facilitate the transfer. Initial testing of the extract routines will take place in due course.
- 5.3 Our data cleaning project is continuing, 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. It is anticipated that the Local Land Charges register and searches of it will be transferred by the end of 2018.

- 5.4 Initial meetings of the service improvement group have identified areas for service development. This includes review of standard letter templates, making our web pages more user friendly, preparing guidance notes for staff. Further opportunities for savings and income generation will be explored in the coming months.
- 5.5 Following the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulations key members of staff have undertaken training on the data management tool for our back office systems. This will enable the department to comply with its obligations under the new regulations.
- 5.6 Team members have been preparing for the decant of the Service to the 4th floor of Magdalen House. This has involved changes to working practices to ensure a smooth transition to agile working.