

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)</b>		
<i>COUNCILLOR</i>	<i>PORTFOLIO</i>	<i>DATE</i>
Ian Moncur	Health and Well Being	January 2020

## **Green Sefton**

In summary, key ongoing issues headlines are as follows:

Development:

- Regional Coastal Monitoring next phase bid
- Crosby major scheme development
- The Pool project development
- Gormleys maintenance work
- Coronation park social finance project

Community and Resources

- Development of a new Tree strategy
- Market testing of empty buildings and land opportunities
- Golf driving ranges development
- Major consultation on the vision for Ainsdale Beach
- Allotment strategy working group
- Volunteers and group development strategy 2020
- Natural alternatives expansion

Land Management

- Green Sefton: Enterprise (our steps into the commercial world – bringing additional staffing and resource)
- Insource grounds maintenance for Cemeteries and Crematoria (incl 9 new staff joining the team April 2020)
- Changes to beach car park management and visitor engagement – longer hours of operation, and improvements to infrastructure
- Last year of the 10 year HLS project on Ainsdale and Birkdale sandhills
- Replacement of vehicles, fleet and machinery planned spring 2020
- England Coast Path (potential in house project delivery, only Local Authority in the UK!)

Overall: Green Sefton

- Coast Plan sub strategies development

- Our 'place based' strategy development
- Re-looking at time management; to make sure we focus on the right things at the right time
- Internal Working groups continue to develop – (incl income and growth, information and intelligence, systems of working, health and safety etc)

Overall: wider

- Input into Climate Change strategy
- Borough of Culture (incl environment focus autumn 2020)
- Good Business festival (incl coast themed focus for conference)

In more detail, ongoing updates across the service include:

### **Service Plan**

The progress of the establishment of the service has been reported to Cabinet Member (Health and Well Being), and Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Skills):

Some headline stats and facts:

- Working better as an integrated team within a new service culture (eg flexible response to flooding incidents)
- Succession planning with four apprentices into full time roles within the service
- Becoming a centre for innovation with initiatives such as the insourcing of the cemeteries and crematoria grounds maintenance function, and the social investment pilot project at Coronation Park
- Developing 48 income and growth proposals to assist with ongoing budget pressures, an aspiration for the service to become cost neutral to the council by 2030, and to find new ways of funding improvements to the boroughs landscape over time
- All of the above in conjunction with our communities - last year we recorded 44,000 hours of volunteer time (equivalent to 25 full time employee's)

More detail can be found in the full report together with an executive summary presentation: [Green Sefton annual update](#)

### **Community & Resources**

#### **Community Engagement Team**

**Volunteering** - the Community Engagement Team recorded a total of 23,000 hours of volunteer input from community groups including Friends of Groups, and In Bloom groups in 2018/19.

There are currently 23 'Friends of' groups associated with Green Sefton's open spaces (parks, coast, countryside etc). Held twice a year, the Friends' Forum is an opportunity to bring these groups together to discuss common themes and share information. October's event covered discussions on 'Borough of Culture', an update on 'Parks Funding' applications, presentations for Friends of Crosby and Hightown Beaches and workshop facilitated by Sefton CVS on the issues and challenges facing groups with regard to accessing funding, growing members, developing skills, promoting groups, sites and activities.

**Natural Alternatives** is Green Sefton's long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs. Volunteer hours were recorded of circa 21,000 hours in 2018/19.

Recruitment of two fixed term staff is supporting the expansion of this model in 2019/20 with the expectation that they will be self-funding from 2021 and onwards.

**Funding** - Using the Team's knowledge and experience, we are supporting a number of groups applying for external funding:

- **SpaceHive** – Friends of Ainsdale Beach – artwork for the coast (Borough of Culture)
- **Pocket Parks** – Friends of Merrilocks Park (railings) and Gateway Collective (raised planters)
- **Parks Funding** – 14 Friends of Groups awarded funding up to £2000 – we'll report on each project as it is completed / implemented

That's over £30,000 brought in to our open spaces by Friends of Groups in 2019/20

**Community Ranger Projects and Initiatives** - the Community Engagement Team have supported 'Food Growing in Parks' - led by Regenerus and involving Friends of North Park, South Park and Netherton Community Garden.

'Trees for Learning' – worked with 23 schools and 3 community groups planting 3000 trees as part of a DEFRA backed programme to support state primary schools to plant 1 million trees by 2020 within their school grounds and local green spaces.

**Engagement Outreach Activities – tackling anti-social behaviour** - the Community Engagement Team engage with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Team 'Outreach' on a weekly basis. Since March 2019 the MFRS has deployed its outreach workers at Seafront Gardens, North Park, Victoria Park, Coronation Park, Killen Green Park and Bootle Golf Course.

'Park Nights' – working with Sefton Council's Recreation and Culture Team to ensure young people are targeted in a positive way to engage in various sports activities.

Princes Trust Project – will be undertaking a 2-week Team Challenge in North Park and South Park.

Bedford Park

Merrilocks Park joint with NA

Duke of Edinburgh – Botanic Gardens

'Conquer Life CIC' - funded by the Home Office to empower young people aged 8 – 18 years at various venues in Bootle are engaged in North Park.

Corporate Engagement activities – Santander at Killen Green Park (July 2019), Rotten Row, Victoria Park Community Garden and Seafront Gardens

**Awards** - This year's Volunteer Celebration Event took place at St Luke's Church in Crosby. Attended by representatives from 28 'Friends of', 'In Bloom' and other community groups, the awards were presented by Mayor of Sefton, Cllr June Brown. Congratulations everyone!

The variety of projects and ideas from the community is truly impressive. Many of these contribute to national / international Awards and benchmarking schemes notably **'Northwest In Bloom'** and **'Green Flag'**.

Green Sefton officers attend regular steering group meetings, provide gardening support, advice, administration and guidance to new groups, organise week-long judging in July.

**2019 LCR Year of the Environment** – Green Sefton hosted a celebration day at Southport Eco Centre on May 31<sup>st</sup>, from 10am to 4pm with over 800 people in attendance.

**Crosby Coastal Park Consultation** – Green Sefton are led on the consultation on the 'Vision for Crosby Coastal Park' over the summer involving with a number of events, guided walks and talks etc. The outcome of this will be reported to all early in 2020

### **Facilities & Resources Team**

**Update on land and property** – The Facilities and Resources team are working on several projects to make better use of empty properties etc. These include:

The Hub at Botanic Gardens – exploring interest in the vacant greenhouses

Fernery at Botanic Gardens – Botanic Gardens Community Association (BGCA) offered a two-year licence to manage the fernery.

Hesketh Park –negotiated the release of the leasees catering rights for the 'conservatory area' of the park and the leasee is considering managing the public toilets.

Linacre Bridge Hub are completing leases on Johnsons Pavilion and are also interested in Orrell Mount Pavilion.

An expression of interest from Crosby Stewart FC to refurbish and manage Brookvale Pavilion is being considered.

An initial draft of an expression of interest has been received by Formby Community Football Club for the self-management of Watchyard Lane Playing Fields

Church Green, Formby –a small surfacing scheme at this site to alleviate local parking issues has been well received by residents.

**Traveller incursions, securing site security** – we have completed works to erect posts at the Stray, Southport and are writing to residents at Bills Lane, Formby regarding options to secure land to which residents require access. Further works will be required to other sites (subject to funding). To date this year we have experienced four encampments, three of which were ended by us seeking a court order.

**Allotments** - Green Sefton hosted a meeting of the North West Allotment Officers group at Ainsdale Discovery Centre and are developing a working group to agree the approach the future management and development of this work area

**Sports** - Officers continue to hold periodic meetings with the Council's Managing agent for football to discuss a range of works and how we might participate with FA funding initiatives. Improvements have been undertaken at a number of changing rooms and at this time we are looking at a programme of works with Community Payback.

**Golf** – There is a desire to increase the range of people using the courses, including young people, families and women. A number of colleagues from across the council volunteered to join on a working group developing these ideas. The actions agreed from this were to:

- Introduce a range of new contracts and a pricing structure which is cheaper and more accessible
- Gain approval to build a driving range and practice facilities at both courses
- (This is in addition to work being done by the growth programme to substantially improve the built facilities at both courses).
- A 'Festival of Golf' week ran in conjunction with the British Masters at Hillside Golf Club, introducing activities such as frisbee golf, competitions with 'money can't buy' prizes and free annual contracts for juniors who join during the week-long event - the event took place in May and was deemed a success
- We are working with Tourism to raise the profile of the two sites and updating promotional information online. We are also planning further promotional events over the Summer to increase foot fall to the courses.

<b><u>New Contract Type</u></b> <b><u>Uptake April 1<sup>st</sup></u></b> <b><u>2019 to date</u></b>	<b>10 round contract</b>	<b>9 hole contract</b>	<b>Weekend only contacts</b>	<b>Free junior contracts (Festival)</b>
<b>Bootle</b>	36	5	5	3
<b>Southport</b>	8	17	2	50
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>44</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>53</b>

### **Tree and Woodland Team**

Contract for Tree Works - has been successfully tendered and awarded by the Tree & Woodland Team.

Tree planting season 18-19 - approximately 350 trees have been planted this year throughout the borough by the Council's contractor. (it should be noted that circa 700 trees have been felled over the last three years, but over 900 have been planted in their place)

Highway tree replacement projects – working with the Highways Maintenance team, a number of trees were identified for removal due to their root systems outgrowing the location and causing damage to footways and the works completed over the winter.

Health & Safety work - The Tree and Woodland Team continue to monitor and prioritise tree works throughout the borough and including the “Epicormic Season”, removing the lower epicormic growth found on Lime trees where it is a problem for sight lines. Over 300 streets are visited at this time.

Living Christmas trees - The team continue to monitor the establishment of the living Christmas trees planted recently. Some trees are showing signs of stress and all remain under a replacement guarantee which will be called on if necessary.

## **Land Management**

**Higher Level Stewardship Habitat works.** Habitat improvement works are well under way and the team are making great progress. Minor amendments have been made to working practices following concerns from local residents due to the frequency of burning and communication of planned works.

**Fleet Vehicles Tender.** The first batch of Fleet vehicles have been procured and prepared for issue, comprising of small vans and service vehicles for play and repairs. The remainder of the fleet will be procured once the capital for vehicle renewal has been approved.

**Income Generation.** A report has been approved by Growth Board, and Cabinet Member for the creation of ‘Green Sefton Enterprise’ which will assist with providing the means to offer Grounds Maintenance services to other land owners. The initial team will comprise of 4 additional seasonal staff on a six-month contract. Several small contracts have been established in 2019/20 following direct approaches to Green Sefton for grounds maintenance, including schools, other council services and a Parish Council. Further marketing will be via the Schools Portal for support services and social media. Progress will be carefully monitored and the team (contracts) extended/increased in line with new contracts.

**Cemeteries Insourcing.** The current grounds maintenance and gravedigging contract with Continental expires in March 2020 and work is progressing well for TUPE transfer for the insourcing of the team. A review of fleet, machinery, depots and equipment has been undertaken to ensure a smooth transition of operation on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2020. The formal TUPE process will commence in January 2020 and a meeting has been arranged at the end of the month with the transferring personnel, HR and the trade Unions

## **Development Team**

### **Schemes**

**Crosby Coastal defences and flood scheme.** Work continues on the modelling, design and options analysis to develop an outline business case. The scheme was presented to the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee in July and was received positively, and another update will be provided in January 20. The initial options for the coastal defences were consulted on over the Summer as part of the Crosby Coastal Park Vision consultation.

**The Pool, Crossens.** A consultant has been appointed to undertake modelling and option analysis. The options assessment is due to be completed in January 2020. A long list of options has been identified and these are being refined to produce a short list of potentially viable options which will include some outline design work.

**Fouracres, Maghull.** A preferred option of pumping has been identified. Designs are currently being working up to assess its feasibility for securing grant funding. The initial costings of this option have made it unviable, we are reviewing further options and funding opportunities, which include those being considered by United Utilities.

**Ainsdale Birkdale foreshore drainage scheme.** This scheme was due to be undertaken this Autumn to enable free land drainage across the foreshore whilst improving the habitat quality for the protected species. However, delays in the appropriate authorisations from Natural England, this has now been reprogrammed for Autumn 2020

**Gormley Statues.** We are working with the Antony Gormley Studio to undertake the maintenance of all the piles for the statues. Around half of the statues were repaired in Autumn, with the remaining to be addressed in spring 2020

**Buckley Hill overflow car parks.** The overflow matting has been in place for several months with timber bollards and 30 new trees demarcate the edge of the parking area. Unfortunately, early use by local clubs, and poor weather has resulted in some damage and the site needs remedial works which are being developed.

Natural Alternatives will undertake the installation of additional bollards and support the planting of a hedge. The cycle racks will also be installed this summer. The overflow parking will be open for the new season.

**Southport and Municipal Golf Courses.** Work has begun on the designs of new driving ranges to be installed at these sites.

**Surface Water management plan level 2.** Sefton Council have award the contract to JBA to undertake a detailed optioneering exercise in three key flood risk areas; Maghull, Formby and Seaforth & Litherland. This project will identify, assess and develop outline business cases for a range of measures to reduce flood risk in the

areas. This will lead to a future programme of works that will require several grant applications for funding.

### **Section 106 funded works**

There remains a significant amount of monies associated with several parks throughout the borough. The Development team are engaging with the Ward Councillors to identify schemes and projects to deliver sustainable improvements to these parks. The team have met with the Council's Neighbourhoods team to discuss initial ideas.

The team are looking at undertaking a place-based approach to assessing future requirements of parks. This will include looking at the park in a wider context of place, its roles in providing space for recreation, relaxation, families, wildlife and flood risk management.