

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 21st January 2020)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Patricia Hardy	Communities and Housing	10 th March 2020

NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARTNERSHIPS

Area Co-ordination

The Community skip programmes across the borough continue to grow and are welcomed by the community.

- Netherton and Orrell programme has collected **7.84** tonnes of waste.
- Ford ward programme ended in November but is due to start a further six-month programme in February 2020.
- Church ward programme has collected **8.24** tonnes of waste.
- Manor Ward programme has so far collected **5.54** tonnes.
- The final phase of the programme in Knowsley Road and Albany Road in Southport has taken place. It was interesting to note that the skips were used more before Christmas than after. A total of 1.6 tonnes of waste were collected in the 4 skips
- A skip was placed in Preesall Close in the first week of January. This was very well used by the residents. It is hoped that this will now help address the fly tipping.

An Arson Reduction campaign has taken place in partnership with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service focusing on the streets around South Road. Kerry delivered leaflets regarding rear entry fly tipping as part of the campaign to properties in the following roads. The leaflet can be viewed by clicking on the link below: -

<https://indd.adobe.com/view/95b6950e-2291-4bde-8b49-98bfea3220b3>

- St Johns Road
- Argo Road
- Corona Road
- Lyra Road
- Norma Road
- Handfield Road
- Lorne Road
- Neville Road
- Curzon Road
- Willoughby Road
- Glendower Road

The scrambler bike project presentation event took place at Police Headquarters in Liverpool on Tuesday 4th February. Young people from five primary schools within South Sefton were invited to receive their prize for taking part in the project along with members from all three emergency services who assisted with the Road Traffic Re-enactment that was delivered in September.

Sefton Borough of Culture

A small grants funding opportunity was launched on the 16th December. We have currently received thirteen applications from group for up to £5k worth of funding. The Borough of Culture Steering group met on the 11th February to assess these applications. We have also received four application for funding between £5k -£15k. These applications will be reported to Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing to review and authorise.

Meetings have taken place with various community organisation to help support further funding applications.

Welfare Reform

Food bank

1 April – 31 December 2019	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	5067	1624
Adults Fed	6399	2233
Children Fed	4345	1520
Total Fed	10744	3753
Crisis Type	Low income - 2462 vouchers presented 5378 people fed	Low income – 807 vouchers presented 1796 people fed
Family Type	Single 2761 vouchers presented 54.49%	Single 770 vouchers presented 47.41%
Age group	No Data available	25 – 64 1927 people

Hate Crime

A training session was provided for school governors at Formby PDC in February. Sefton CVS have requested sessions for their staff in Waterloo and Southport.

Homelessness

Homeless presentations continue to increase. This is due to a range of issues such as austerity, the Homeless Reduction Act which contains the duty to refer and other determinants such as Private Landlord reluctance to deal with Universal Credit. As a result, the use of temporary accommodation and in turn bed and breakfast has increased. This is in line with the national picture that sees Councils in England seeing significantly more homeless households than the previous year.

The use and subsequently the cost of providing Bed & Breakfast in Sefton has risen significantly in 2019/20 compared to the previous year as temporary accommodation is constantly full and there are no other options with regards to housing individuals and families where a duty to provide accommodation lies. There has been an increase in the number of families presenting as homeless resulting in higher cost B&B accommodation being provided, where possible. This type of B&B accommodation has cooking facilities and is more like a small flat.

Housing Options

As a result of the Homeless Reduction Act the average length of time taken to complete a homeless assessment has risen from 20 minutes to 90 minutes. This means staff have less time in sourcing move-on accommodation or being more proactive with preventing homelessness.

The Early Intervention and Prevention Housing Options Advisor carries out work with cases that are pre-56 days to becoming homeless in an effort to prevent the homelessness incident from occurring. We have 2 more of these officers starting (3 in total) in the next month. This will allow better partnership working with One Vision Housing, Department of Work and Pensions as well as internal teams such as

Early Help, Children's Social Care and Adult Social Care to identify potential homeless cases at the earliest opportunity and put effective interventions in place.

An assertive outreach worker from the LCR Combined Authority is now collocated with the Housing Options Team 1 day per week. This focus of this role is to support those people leaving prison and those being discharged from hospital that require supporting with housing related needs.

YOUTH OFFENDING TEAM (YOT)

First Time Entrants (FTE)

Sefton's continues to be proactive through prevention strategies, particularly with out of court disposals and the use of Community Resolutions. FTE's are locally tracked at the end of each quarter using data from the YOT criminal justice system, local tracking shows a reduction in FTE's for all quarters for financial year 2018/19 and continued reduction comparing Q3 2018-19 with 11 FTE's and Q3 2019-20 with 9 FTE's.

Court Disposals

Court Disposal tracking also shows a reduction, during the first two quarters of 2019-20 compared with 2018-19. In Q1, 2018-19 there were 36 Court Disposals compared with 22 in Q1 2019-20 and in Q2, 2018-19 there were 34 Court Disposals compared with 24 in Q2 2019-20. Q3 2019-20 has seen a decrease with 28 court disposals compared to 40 in Q3 2018-19.

Custodial Sentences

The use of Custodial Sentences remains low in Sefton. There were 2 Custodial Sentences in 2018-19 during Q2 and there has been 1 Custodial Sentences in 2019-20 during Q3.

February Programme

Having received funding from the Merseyside Police via the Violence Reduction Partnership, YOT staff are preparing to deliver the February Programme over half term to groups of young people who are known to YOT services. The programme itself will cover a range of activities and educational sessions to increase participation in positive activities and to embed understanding around the negative impacts of crime and gang culture. YOT intend to bid for further funding so that more programmes can be delivered in the school holidays throughout the coming year.

Trauma Informed Practice

In partnership with colleagues in Public Health and Sefton CVS, Localities have secured funding to deliver Trauma Informed Practice Training. This will be delivered throughout February and March to front line staff from the Council and Partners, in addition Senior Leaders and Elected Members have been invited to a session to develop their understanding and secure their support for Sefton to become a trauma informed borough.

Princes Trust

Approximately 30 staff from the Family Wellbeing Centres and our Partners have been trained to deliver the Princes Trust programmes which are a suite of courses and workshops for young people. They offer positive activities with an education element right through to supporting young people to write CV's and prepare to apply for employment. Many of the courses award accreditations so young people can achieve at their own pace and develop friendships in a positive setting.

Youth Service

Duke of Edinburgh Awards

Preparation work is underway to get Sefton ready to host the Duke of Edinburgh Awards Ceremony which will take place at the Southport Convention Centre on Thursday 26th March. There will be an

abundance of young people who have worked tirelessly throughout the year to achieve the prestigious award as recognition of hard work and commitment.

Commissioned Youth Providers

The commissioned youth providers have had a busy start to the new year and some have been able to deliver additional activities which have been funded by Merseyside Police via the Violence Reduction Partnership. They continue to deliver programmes and activities through the week across the borough supporting young people to engage and achieve in social environments.

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

Libraries secure £10,000 grant from Lottery Heritage Fund

2020 marks the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II. The Library Service has secured a £10,000 grant from the Lottery Heritage Fund and £6000 matched funding from the Borough of Culture to run a variety of WWII related activities. The Library Service is developing a project to encourage community engagement and raise awareness across the borough of the impact of the conflict, particularly on Bootle. However, the conflict had consequences for each area of Sefton and the library project will seek to highlight the contribution of individual communities, which will engender pride in residents. Using a framework of a previous project, we will seek to research world War II casualties, which will be made available on an existing website for residents and researchers to use. A team of volunteers will be recruited to assist in these activities.

Award for Libraries project

In the recent Star Awards, Libraries once again secured the Chief Executives Award for outstanding team achievement. This time the library team received the award for delivering the Beyond the War Memorials Project, which received national recognition including features on it in The Guardian, BBC News, ITN news, local radio and mentions in MP speeches in the House of Commons. Heritage Lottery who funded the project were equally delighted with the project and requested the Library Service submit evidence on the impact of funding to a Parliamentary Select Committee

Pop-up exhibition space created

To support activities for the Borough of Culture, a new pop-up exhibition and event space has been created at Crosby Library. A former reserve stock room has been cleared and a major redesign of the upper floor completed to create a new space. This space has a capacity to host up to 50 people and a series of exhibition will be planned throughout the year. The first exhibition is now open which is Bootle in the Blitz. This large exhibition couldn't be hosted any other library due to its size and the subject resonates with the activities planned to commemorate the 75th anniversary of the end of World War II on VJ Day on 15th August 2020.

Liverpool City Region Cultural Awards runner-up

Library staff attended the Liverpool City Region Awards recently where the Human Library Project at Bootle Library had been shortlisted from a number of submissions in the Cultural Impact Award. The project was a creditable runner up for the award, but it still demonstrates the importance of the library's role in supporting good mental health in the Bootle area.

THE ATKINSON

Exhibition programme

Visitor figures for the museum and gallery increased by 9% in the last calendar year, from 106,817 in 2018 to 116,280. The calibre of last year's shows has really made an impact, and special thanks goes to the front of house staff and volunteers for encouraging visitors to explore the whole Centre.

Performing Arts Programming

The Atkinson held its annual *Kidsfest* programme during February half-term. Highlights included *Midnight* – a storytelling show celebrating the night and dreaming; *Hurrah for the Pirate King* – an interactive adventure combining Pantomime, Ballet & Opera; *Spark the Goblin Wizard* – magic rhymes and lyrics from poet Dommy B.

Public Engagement

This month's edition of *Lancashire Life* celebrates the Atkinson's Wellbeing choir under the title Harmonies for Health. The feature focuses on the health benefits of singing and includes several testimonies from participants.

Library and Information Service

Working with Sky Music Hub Southport Library is beginning an early years music project working with a regular story & rhyme time group. 'Birdy Beat' delivers training to staff and volunteers which enables them to facilitate early years sessions with children and carers to increase their understanding of how music and movement helps a child develop.

HOUSING

Liverpool City Region

I represent the Council on the Sub-Regional Housing & Spatial Planning Advisory Group, which feeds into the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Combined Authority Strategic Agenda. I have been re-appointed as the Vice Chair of this Advisory Group, for 2019-20. There are number of new LA Member representatives on this Group.

I hope to use this position to have greater influence across the LCR.

The role of the CA is having a growing significance, in particular when the Govt allocate resources to the CA for the whole of the LCR. The CA are looking to work with Homes England to secure resources to help bring forward development of brownfield sites across the sub-region. We are supporting this exercise.

The CA have also been consulting on a LCR Spatial Development Plan. Together with Cabinet Member Planning and Building Control (Cllr Daren Veidman), we will be submitting a response on behalf of Sefton.

Rough Sleepers & Homeless services

I have previously reported that our 2019 formal Rough Sleeper Count identified there were 2 rough sleepers in Sefton, which compared to 11 identified in 2018. The reduction in rough sleepers in 2019 compared to 2018 can be largely attributed to the good partnership working by our commissioned services.

Over the last year we have put in place a number of service interventions to assist rough sleepers in the borough. However, many of these service interventions have relied on ONE year funding allocations

from Government, for 2019-20. I have been concerned about our ability to sustain these service interventions going forward. In addition we submitted a further funding bid under the Government (MHCLG) Homeless Cold Weather initiative for 2019-20 winter period, which was agreed and is providing an enhanced sit up service over the current winter months.

We learnt the outcome of our funding bid for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) funding 2020-21, from MHCLG, at the end of January.

The value of our allocation is the FULL value of our Bid. We thought we might receive less than we asked for, and then have to remove some elements or reduce the scope of some elements of our proposals, but this has not proved to be the case.

This funding will allow us to maintain the additional homeless rough sleeper services we put into place using the 2019-20 funds, make some adjustments to these and introduce some new elements.

The RSI funding will help fund the following service interventions.

Existing service interventions and adjustments to these

- Retain the 8 complex needs beds and support services in our 2 hostels (SSHG Leyland Rd and Bosco Lodge), but enhance the level of support service by funding greater weekend staff cover
- Maintain the Clinical Outreach Post (Nurse) provided by Merseycare.
- Retaining the existing 2 Supported Lettings workers provided by Sefton Supported Housing Group (SSHG)
- Provide three full time Navigator posts delivered by Light for Life, where currently 2 FTE and 1 Part time post has been funded.

New service interventions

- A new 'Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub' provided by SSHG- Intention is to continue using the 'Hub' at the rear of Leyland Road hostel in Southport we have used (for the Winter cold weather service) as a Somewhere Safe to Stay Hub throughout the year. The idea is that individuals can access immediately and will have a rapid assessment of needs and prioritised for resettlement. Multi-agency services could also work from the Hub in the day including Housing Options (new post), treatment services, Navigators, Rough Sleeper Outreach and DWP. The creation of this Hub will be the first of it's kind in the Liverpool City Region.
- An Additional Housing Options Officer post within the Councils Housing Options team, who would work with individuals accessing the emergency 'Hub' and those in the complex needs beds, to ensure that individuals are being assessed under the Homeless Reduction Act requirements and are having homelessness applications / Personal Housing Plan's undertaken in their community setting
- A New Psychologist Support service. Sefton's Public Health team will work with the Clinical Commissioning Groups and the current Provider of mental health services, Merseycare, to ensure that this post was incorporated into the existing management/governance structures whilst ensuring that this was a specialist provision just for the homeless services and clients – Total value £80,000.

The LCR CA are leading on the development of a **Housing First homeless initiative**. This is a Housing and Support service model for homeless people with multiple and complex needs, that existing services are unable to effectively support. Unlike a traditional homeless service approach, clients will be assisted to move directly into their own home and receive adequate support for as long as they require. This service is being rolled out on a 'test and learn' basis from July, with a full roll out of the service later this year.

The CA have recruited staff teams to deliver the test and learn phase of the service.

During the Test and Learn Phase, Sefton have utilised our Complex Needs Panel (chaired by Sefton Housing Options) to consider suitable cases and make referrals to the Housing First Service.

We submitted 19 potential cases, and to date attempts to engage with 13 are in the process; 3 are engaging with their existing support providers in order to present them with a Housing First offer; 2 are on the watch & wait list. To date 1 client has been rehoused in Sefton.

The CA originally indicated that in the Test & Learn phase they would have capacity to take 60 clients from across the Liverpool City Region. However, they are in the process of recruiting two additional support teams during the test and learn phase, which will increase service capacity to 100, when we will be asked to provide additional referrals.

The CA have established a Charter with housing associations which will act as a protocol for sourcing properties for the Housing First clients.

The CA have also commissioned an outreach service, to engage with people who would be suitable for the Housing First initiative. Staff from this service spend at least one day a week with our housing options service to pick up some case load.

We have commissioned a 'pilot' temporary accommodation and support service with Riverside housing association, for homeless families who face difficulties accessing their own independent housing. This service went live from 2nd December 2019.

Housing Development Company - Sandway Homes

The Company has been operational since January 2019, with the Council's Head of Commercial acting as Managing Director. As originally planned, now that the Company is established, a recruitment process has started to find a full time Managing Director to whom the Head of Commercial can hand-over in due course.

The status of the 3 sites in Phase 1 of the Company's Business Plan (approved by Cabinet 25 July 2019) is as follows:

1. Land bordering Barton's Close, Southport: 30 houses for sale (10 Affordable Houses and 20 for open market sale):
 - a. Awaiting confirmation from HE of grant that will ensure viability – due early April
 - b. Builder selected and contract terms agreed although an exercise to identify any final opportunities for cost savings is being undertaken
 - c. Pre-commencement planning conditions discharge has commenced by the Council as land owner (with support from an independent Planning Consultant);
 - d. A license to build is now being prepared by the Council to allow the Company access to commence building work immediately on confirmation of the HE grant and scheme viability.
 - e. Works on site are scheduled to commence April 2020.

2. Land bordering Meadow Lane, Ainsdale: 48 houses for sale (16 Affordable Houses and 32 for open market sale):
 - a. Awaiting confirmation from HE of grant that will ensure viability – due early April
 - b. Builder selected and contract terms agreed although an exercise to identify any final opportunities for cost savings is being undertaken
 - c. Pre-commencement planning conditions discharge has commenced by the Council as land owner (with support from an independent Planning Consultant);
 - d. A license to build is now being prepared by the Council to allow the Company access to commence building work immediately on confirmation of the HE grant and scheme viability.
 - e. Works on site are scheduled to commence April 2020.

3. Land bordering Buckley Hill Lane in Netherton:
 - a. Initial outline designs are being reviewed following pre-planning feedback from the Planning Authority resulting in the original scheme being unviable.
 - b. Support from the Planning Authority for an increase in density and changes to housing type mix has allowed 2 new options to be brought forward. The preferred scheme design will be considered by Company Board in February
 - c. Planning application due to be submitted end April 2020
 - d. Works on site are scheduled to start September 2020.

Private Rented Sector Licencing

Our 3 private landlord licensing schemes went live on the 1st of March 2018- focusing on the licensing of all private landlords in Bootle, but developing stronger 'Additional HMO' licensing schemes to cover more types of HMO properties for Southport and Waterloo.

We have been actively promoting these schemes to ensure as many landlords as possible apply for Licenses. We have been writing to landlords who have not applied for licenses to inform them to do so, as we uncover unlicensed properties. Final warning letters have been sent out in relation to unlicensed premises. The majority of these have or are now in the process of making an application. Further investigative work is being undertaken on those that have not submitted applications and these will then be considered for enforcement action (Prosecution or Civil Penalty).

As at early January, the numbers of full applications is 2550 (previous report 2370) received and partially completed applications of 489 takes the total application figures up to 3039 (previous 2743), which is a greater number of premises than the 3,000 we anticipated would require a licence; mainly due to a greater number of additional HMO properties than anticipated..

We have had some staff turnover over recent months, reducing the capacity within the Housing Standards Team. We have recently carried out Licensing Compliance officer recruitment to 3 vacant posts. Staff began to start in post during October.

Officers have carried out and planned 755 compliance visits (previous report was 550). 45% of properties inspected have been fully compliant on 1st inspection. This figure continues to drop from an initial 49%, as the properties that we are now inspecting are not just those requesting/achieving accreditation, so there are more issues/deficiencies being identified. Where we uncover non-compliance, informal action is taken to give the landlord opportunity to remedy the issues identified. There is a requirement to revisit these properties to ensure compliance, resulting in a higher number of property visits staff have to undertake. Of the 55% non-compliant on first inspection, over 90% were fully compliant on 2nd visit.

We have worked with the Anti-social behaviour team and police who have identified some problematic properties in relation to ASB. These properties will be a priority for enforcement for either not having a licence or not complying with the ASB licensing condition.

Over 300 final warning letters have been sent out in relation to unlicensed premises. The majority of these have or are now in the process of making an application. We are finding that it is often the case that if we identify one unlicensed property we uncover that the landlord has more. Several properties are at the "Intention to serve" status for Civil Penalty action and Compliance officers are working through the policy to determine level of fines for each. It is anticipated that the numbers of enforcement action in the form of Civil Penalties or prosecution will steadily increase.

Any properties that are identified as having poor housing conditions, from the receipt of a complaint and do not have a licence application will be prioritised for enforcement action.

We have recently been successful in securing a Rent Repayment Order. The total monies we will recover is £13,293 in Housing Benefit paid to the landlord whilst the properties were unlicensed. Recovered funds will come to the Service to be spent on housing enforcement activities. An annual report on our Licensing schemes will be submitted to this Committee in due course.

Extra Care Housing

At its meeting in March 2019, Cabinet considered a report about the future provision of extra care housing for older residents. Together with Councillor Cummins, Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care, I will seek to oversee the work required on the Council's approach to Extra Care Housing. Extra Care Housing has been identified as a model which helps people to live independently at home for longer, thereby either delaying or preventing the need for long-term residential care and helps people to remain well, therefore avoiding Hospital admissions.

We have agreed to fund an additional staff post to lead on this piece of work. Recruitment has been undertaken and we have someone in post since January.

Social Housing Allocations (Property Pool Plus)

I have recently reviewed information about social housing allocations and lettings. The total number of applicants on the Housing Register is currently 5963, and by Priority Band the largest numbers of applicants are in Band B (30%) and Band E (31%). Looking at bedroom requirements, the largest numbers require 1 bedroom accommodation (57%) and 2 bedrooms (29%).

For comparison purposes, the Total numbers of applicants from the Housing Register at June 2015 was 3929; hence we have seen a significant increase (52%) in the total numbers of applicants since then. However, the distribution of bedroom size needs has broadly remained the same.

In terms of Number of properties becoming available, the number of properties becoming available to let and advertised via the Property Pool Plus (PPP) Allocations service, over Quarter 1 (April to June) 2019, shows the average number of applicants making bids for properties which become available is; 45 bidding for 1 bedroom properties, 59 for 2 bedroom, 109 for 3 bedroom, and 78 for 4 bedroom properties.

Sefton participates in the Property Pool Plus scheme along with Liverpool, Wirral, Knowsley and Halton Councils, as well as the participating housing associations. The Local Authorities have collectively agreed to review the current Policy and associated service arrangements. An external consultant (Neil Morland & Co) has been appointed to undertake this exercise, which began in August and will take place over the following 9 to 12 months. The consultant attended this Committees meeting in January, to share results of the review and some of the recommendations being considered. The consultant is sharing these recommendations with all of the participating LAs to gauge reaction to them. Consultations will also be carried out with participating housing associations.