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Economic portraits of North/Central/South Sefton

The purpose of this section is to help to identify which objectives of the Strategy apply to which geographical area of the borough, and to draw out the local configuration of need and opportunity. Investment priorities are proposed for North, Central and South Sefton, based on the comparative advantage of each location and their distinct needs and requirements.

2.1 North Sefton

90,000 population, (31% of Sefton total) - 2008

3,600 business units (41% Sefton total) - 2010

31,000 employees work in North Sefton (34% Sefton total) - 2010

2,000 benefit claimants (23% Sefton total) - 2011

Setting the scene

About 90,000 people live in North Sefton. With Southport the principal town, the north of Sefton is a highly self-contained settlement offering a high quality of life and attractive place to live. 80% of residents also work in the town, although there is a relatively significant amount of out-commuting to Liverpool, Southport and Lancashire. On the other hand, it has a national (and international) catchment area for its retail/tourism offer, and this positive balance of trade allows Southport to collect visitor expenditure and grow the town's economic base.

The north does not have the same strategic links as those between other areas of Sefton and Liverpool. However a shared agenda does exist for continued liaison on the availability of housing and employment land, migrant workers, and transport issues involving West Lancashire, and with other parts of Lancashire including Preston.

The regeneration of Southport in the 2000s is cited as an example of good regeneration practice (*Government's second response to the findings of the Coastal Towns Select Committee*) and some physical projects have won prestigious national awards. The challenge now is to build on the success of previous initiatives, overcome remaining issues and crucially, create a climate of confidence.

The Southport Investment Strategy was first prepared in 2008 and is periodically updated to prioritise opportunities to public and private investors in the town. The Southport Investment Strategy helps both to position Southport as England's 'Classic Resort', and to maximise benefits for the wider community as well as visitors.

The Southport Investment Strategy is broader than physical regeneration, and addresses health, housing, safety, the environment, employment, community and learning. All these issues influence the degree to which Southport can become a more prosperous and better place to live. As Southport Area Partnership is

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established, the SIS will continue to provide an agenda for economic and physical improvement of the town.

Given the general shortage of employment land, a cautious approach is being taken towards the loss of smaller 'backland' employment sites in Southport to other uses. The review of the Green Belt has identified the need for a new business park in North Sefton from 2016, to come on stream once the Business Park at Town Lane has been fully developed in the early 2020s.

Sefton's Retail Strategy Review 2012 undertaken by WYG for the Council has among other matters reviewed previous assessments of comparison retail floor space requirements for the Borough. As far as North Sefton is concerned WYG's latest assessment indicates a surplus capacity of between 500 sq m and 900 sq m (net) of new comparison floor space up to 2021, increasing to between 17,200 sq m and 28,700 sq m (net) by 2031. Logically most of this provision would need to be identified in Southport Town centre. This requirement has significantly reduced from that set out in the Retail Strategy Review 2009 work and now removes the urgency to find a large new town centre site for comparison goods sales in Southport. This, in large part, reflects the effects of the economic downturn and the reduced comparison goods expenditure available as consequence of this. Southport in this regard is not untypical of many retail centres in experiencing a downturn in expected future comparison goods floorspace growth.

The above noted, competition between Southport and other retail centres (principally Liverpool and Wigan and out-of-centre retail developments) will continue apace and there will therefore be an ongoing need for further retail investment in Southport Town centre. This will ensure the enhancement of its retail offer, which is essential if its vitality and viability are to be protected and enhanced and its position in the retail hierarchy is not to deteriorate from its present position of 81st best performing rail centre (as recorded by Venuescore 2011) in the UK.

Key investment opportunities

- The Tourism Economy will continue to deliver the Southport Visitor Economy Strategy and England's Golf Coast brand set out in 5.2.2 primarily through;
 - A high quality hotel and conference offer
 - The development of a critical mass of attractions (Cultural Centre, Market, Marine Park, Kings Gardens and Lord Street public realm)
 - Improving the quality and differentiation of Southport's retail offer with emphasis on appropriate new branded retail floor space and support for a distinctive and sustainable independent retail sector as a key differentiator
 - Retention of a core major events programme
 - Development of Southport's night time offer
 - A public relations approach towards raising awareness of what a Southport and Sefton offer represents from a potential visitor perspective

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- More effective partnering with the private sector to maximise the impact of remaining resources.
- Develop both the existing Business Park and the employment extension (through Wilson Bowden) at Town Lane and (depending on the outcome of Core Strategy consultation) identify a potential new Business Park either in the North of the borough or in Formby by 2016.
- Develop new homes at Kew, Southport that will help meet predicted housing need
- Complete the Southport Retail Strategy and move towards delivery depending on private sector partners
- Build on and drive forward private sector growth particularly around niche sectoral strengths in residential care, management consulting, public relations, digital and creative and wider and professional services.

2.2 Central Sefton

115,000 population (41% Sefton total) - 2008

3,300 business units (38% Sefton total) - 2010

28,000 employees working in Central Sefton (31% Sefton total) - 2010

2,500 benefit claimants (29% Sefton total) - 2011

Setting the Scene

Almost 115,000 people live in Central Sefton which represents 41% of the population. Many parts of Central Sefton offer a high quality of life. There are 3,300 business units and 28,000 employees work in the area. There are relatively few local employment opportunities so most residents in work commute to Bootle and Liverpool. The proposed Thornton to Switch Island bypass will improve access to the west of Sefton and the motorway network.

Most of central Sefton is eligible for Rural Development Programme funding. This funding is available until December 2013, with a possible extension to 2020. It supports projects such as farm diversification and conversion of stables/agricultural buildings. Lottery funding helped to deliver renewable energy schemes to Maghull Town Hall and Lydiate Community Centre. There is also potential for Formby, Hightown and Crosby to access the new Coastal Communities Fund.

Within Maghull there are proposals exist (although currently on hold due to funding constraints) from Merseytravel and Network Rail for a new railway station for North Maghull. Proposals exist to redevelop the retail centre in Maghull.

In Formby there is good access to coastal and countryside recreation facilities and plans exist for Formby to roll out the next generation of broadband to this area

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bringing benefits for business, enterprise, home-working, and access to online services from March 2012

Key Investment opportunities

- ❑ Knowledge cluster – BT roll-out of superfast broadband begins in Formby. Potential to develop business clusters
- ❑ Pursue community-based low carbon initiatives
- ❑ Onshore opportunities for renewable energy exist in Central Sefton for localised wind turbines – can help support farm and rural diversification and build community assets.
- ❑ Maghull Town Centre
- ❑ New railway station for North Maghull

2.3 South Sefton

78,000 population (27% Sefton total pop) – 2008

1,900 business units (21% Sefton total – 2010

32,000 employees working in South Sefton (35% Sefton total) – 2010

4,000 benefit claimants (47% Sefton total) – 2011

Setting the scene

South Sefton has a resident population of 78,000 residents. There are 1,900 businesses located here, and 32,000 employees work in this area. It is also characterised by concentrations of severe and multiple deprivation. Over 4,000 benefit claimants live in South Sefton.

As a labour market, South Sefton is very open. Only a third of people work in the area they live in. Each day 25,000 [check] residents go to work in Liverpool, while 20,000 a day come in the opposite direction. The Port, Bootle Office Quarter, Bootle Town Centre, and blue-chip companies along Dunning's Bridge Road all face outwards to the wider economy and generate "export earnings" for Sefton. Some local businesses service these exporters' supply chains, but the majority service local demand, many of them "lifestyle" businesses.

There is considerable similarity between south Sefton and north Liverpool, both in terms of relative deprivation and neglect, but also as zones of opportunity for new investment. This synergy is being exploited by joint action between the two Councils.

North Liverpool & South Sefton Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF)

The Strategic Regeneration framework is a partnership between Sefton Council and Liverpool City Council, with the support of NWDA and HCA. Through the SRF, Sefton has additional access to senior government and the private sector that it might not

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otherwise have enjoyed. It also increases the possibility of public and private investment.

The SRF area is made up of Linacre and Derby in south Sefton, plus County, Anfield, Kirkdale and Everton in north Liverpool. These six wards are a national spatial priority for regeneration by virtue of the scale of deprivation but also the scale of opportunity.

The SRF completed recently by both Sefton and Liverpool Councils, identifies a range of major investment opportunities. These include Peel Property's masterplan for Liverpool Waters, new stadia for Liverpool and Everton Football Clubs, and the Project Jennifer development (District Centre).

The SRF is critical to the delivery of some of Sefton's most important projects:

- The proposed post-Panamax River Berth and National Distribution Centre at Seaforth
- Port access and environmental mitigation
- Development of Bootle Office Quarter and Town Centre
- Completion of housing market renewal
- Job capture from construction
- Enterprise development
- Microgeneration.

The Port of Liverpool is a key economic driver for Sefton, the City Region and the North West. In Sefton the Port is committed to the construction and commissioning of a £300m in-river deep-water berth and container handling facilities at the Port of Liverpool. This will enable the Port to handle larger container vessels to post-Panamax capacity and increase direct shipping services. The Port Masterplan explains long term proposals for assembling land in the longer term for port centric businesses west of Derby Road. Activity associated with the Port may have an impact on local communities through traffic, and noise and air pollution, and this needs to be carefully considered in any proposals for expanding the Port's operations.

The Bootle Office Quarter is a major employment resource for the Bootle area. The aim is for the area to continue to attract commercial investment and create jobs. Existing comparison floorspace commitments in south Sefton will meet retail needs to 2014. Plans will be needed to anticipate the growth requirement beyond this period. It will be important to improve the retail offer in Bootle Town Centre.

The recent development of a new Asda, Lidl and Aldi stores on the edge of the town centre, has helped to address the shortage of convenience shopping that had previously existed in South Sefton. In general there are sufficient land and premises to meet forecast retail demand in the (next five) years ahead. There will be additional demand for 'comparison retail development' in the south in the longer term [check with new retail study available Nov 11].

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Progressive completion of Housing Market Renewal programmes in the area, and the careful re-assembly of neighbourhoods damaged by decades of restructuring and neglect, will help stabilise the population and ensure people finding work can have their housing and other needs met locally without forcing a rising generation to quit the area.

Key Investment Opportunities

- ❑ With less public money to gap-finance projects, more development will have to be funded from self-financing programmes e.g. Tax Increment Financing, Local Asset Backed Vehicles
- ❑ Discussions will continue with owners and representatives on bringing forward employment land and sites along Dunnings Bridge Road Corridor. Atlantic Park and the former Peerless Refinery site have both seen development take place because of active engagement with investors
- ❑ The bid for an onshore support base for Round 3 Irish Sea windfarms is a critical step in building the manufacturing and services supply chain for offshore wind in the region. Dunnings Bridge Road is identified in the bid as a supply chain park.
- ❑ The expansion plans for the Port of Liverpool will be triggered by the construction of the River Terminal. In preparing for Peel's investment (and if members agree), Sefton will prepare its own Investment Framework that will compliment the Local Plan. This work is intended to help improve employment opportunities and the local environment, as well as take account of novel methods of attracting finance and new types of delivery vehicle.
- ❑ A key investor stakeholder partnership will be nurtured to agree joint action to promote Bootle Town Centre (a key location in the North Liverpool Strategic Regeneration Framework) including its Office Quarter, learning and retail offers. A Destination Strategy for Bootle will be commissioned through the Stakeholder Group.
- ❑ Continue to support opportunities for housing market restructuring in the south following cessation of the HMR programme.