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Town Hall
Trinity Road
Bootle
L20 7AE

To all Members of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Date: 22 June 2022
Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Please contact: Paul Fraser
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Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 28TH JUNE, 2022

I refer to the agenda for the above meeting and now enclose the following Cabinet Member reports that were unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No.	Item
6.	Cabinet Member Reports - February 2022 - June 2022 (Pages 107 - 150) Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

Yours sincerely,

Dwayne Johnson

Chief Executive

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	June 2022

Strategic Transport

Port Access

- The new double track section of the rail line at the Port entrance has been operational since September 2021. Improvements to signals at Earlestown West are included in the works associated with transferring the control of signals from Warrington to Manchester, which is not due to happen until 2029.
- The Port of Liverpool Access scheme being proposed by National Highways remains significantly delayed. Site investigations, environmental surveys and scheme design work are being planned for 2022. The statutory public consultation in advance of the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate will take place once those investigations have been completed and this is not expected until 2023.

LTP and Growth Plan

- Sefton is continuing to work with the LCR Combined Authority/Merseytravel and the other local authorities on the delivery of the transport capital programme. Following the Government announcement of £710m over the next 5 years for the Liverpool City Region from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, the programme for 2022/23 has been approved by the CA. It provides a significant uplift in funding for transport infrastructure, particularly for highway maintenance, with a resulting pressure on staff resources. Recruitment for new staff to help deliver the programme is ongoing.
- In response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and an increased focus on active travel measures, work is continuing on the development of Low Carbon,, Active Travel and E-mobility Strategies for the Borough.
- The completion of the North Liverpool Key Corridor scheme on the A565 Derby Road was significantly delayed following the dispute between Liverpool City Council and its contractor. The final works have been completed with the exception of the commissioning of the new Toucan crossing near Bedford Place. This is programmed for the end of June.
- The development of Full Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor projects funded by the CA is continuing. Consultation on the Eastern Access scheme has been completed and comments reviewed. Both schemes are included in the CA's programme for

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delivery in the next 5 years and further development funding has been secured.

The designs completed have been sent to Active Travel England (ATE) for review. There is some frustration in securing a response.

- Design work is continuing on improvements the junctions at Kenyon's Lane and at Hall Lane on the A59 Northway, these will be developed in the context of a wider improvement of the cycle route between Switch island and Robins Island.. A package of funding including Government grant funding for improvements to traffic signals, developer contributions and Sefton transport capital programme will be used to deliver these improvements. ATE are supportive of the project and are encouraging the Council to consider the link to the wider communities and the potential for improvement east and west on the A59.
- In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative are currently underway.
- The business case for the movement, access and public realm project within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) has been completed and submitted to government for consideration. Consultation on the proposals to improve access and connectivity in the town centre and provide safer and more attractive public spaces has been completed and results appraised. The commissioning of further design and scheme development work is being programmed.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2022/23 has been compiled and will be reported to Cabinet Member.

Sustainable Transport

- The European Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) funding for two major cycling schemes was approved in December 2018. The design of a new pedestrian and cycle route through Crosby Coastal Park has been completed. Public consultation was carried out and the design has been revised in response to comments received and reported to Cabinet Member. The planning application has been considered by Planning Committee and a decision deferred. A review of work has been undertaken and concerns raised are being addressed, with the scheme being further considered at the Planning Committee at the end of June. A procurement exercise has been completed and works will commence if and when approval is granted. Habitat improvement works are also being considered.
- The Department for Transport have confirmed that they are willing of the funding provided from tranche 2 of the Active Travel fund to be used for improvements to a section of the A565 Formby By Pass. These improvements are targeted for being on site later in 2022.
- Revenue funding has been received from the Active Travel Fund for the development of projects capable to improving cycling and walking throughout the borough. Works are currently progressing the A59 cycleway, the remainder of the A565 corridor to complement the improvement to the links

identified above, junction on the A565, including Woodvale and the development of a local Walking and Infrastructure Plan to compliment the City Region Strategic Plan.

- Consultation work has been undertaken on three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. Funding has been secured to develop other school streets initiatives throughout the borough.

Highway Development and Design

Highway Development and Design

Planning Applications

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the recent turnover in staffing resources. These include applications for sites identified in the Local Plan and continues to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department. A total of 153 applications have been responded to in April and May 2022.

Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites.
- The report is as follows: -
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 38
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 1 where the developer appears to have ceased trading
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 0
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval – 12
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 1

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application also remains high, including the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 61 live s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- England Coast Path/Coastal Access The delivery of the establishment works are to be completed through the Term Maintenance contracts and are due to commence in the summer 2022 with a planned completion by October 2022.

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Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning

- The team is continuing to work closely with the Planning Department to provide a strategic approach to development to ensure that the necessary new transport infrastructure is in place to support new developments coming forward in future years.
- The team continues to request construction traffic management plans for new developments so that we can manage the highway network efficiently and effectively with minimum disruption to users of the highway and with the important benefit of highway safety. Once plans have been agreed, the team is working closely with colleagues in network management and planning to ensure that the plans are being adhered to.

Highway Design

- The team has continued to provide the design and delivery of strategic transport investment schemes, including major highway schemes, STEP programme schemes and to provide assistance in the planning and development of future strategic schemes led by the STPI team, with a number of schemes at various stages of delivery. Currently the Scarisbrick Avenue Public Realm works are on site, tenders have been received and appraised for the Crosby Coastal Park scheme and are currently being assessed, whilst designs are progressing on a number of other projects including junction improvement schemes on the A59, Ainsdale Car Park, Crosby Town Centre, Great Georges Road phase 2 and Birkdale Village.
- In addition, the team continues to support the Development Control function undertaking Transport Assessments and Technical Approvals for the Highways Act S38 and S278 submissions and the design and delivery of some Highways Act S278, including the Lydiate Lane roundabout and minor works schemes.
- The team also has responsibility for the revenue and capital bridge maintenance programme and is managing the maintenance schemes on Hightown station footbridge and Hillside station bridge as well as a number of minor bridge maintenance schemes. Further funding has been secured to enable an assessment to be undertaken of the strategically important Miller's Bridge over the railway.

Permit Scheme

- We have 2 new assistant permit co-ordinators who are helping with the increased number of permits that we are receiving.
- The 7th annual review of the scheme has been completed and officers are currently assessing the information. Early indications are that performance targets have once again been achieved and works durations continue to reduce.

Winter Service

- The annual consultation of the service has commenced. Results and recommendations will be included in the o&s report in September.
- Gallagher Bassett are also undertaking an independent assessment of the policy. This is being done alongside the annual review and any relevant information will be included in the report.

Operational In-House Services

Catering and Building Cleaning Services

Service provision in both Catering and Building Cleaning have returned to normal following the impact of Covid-19.

With schools finding their funding stretched more than ever before, in order to balance their budgets, many schools are reviewing their options as regards catering and cleaning provision.

Some schools have put or are in the process of putting their services out to competitive tender, whilst other schools need to reduce the cost of their services by reducing the provision they receive.

In the Building Cleaning Service, more schools are moving towards a term time only service with a summer clean, in order to reduce costs.

Officers are working with our partners in schools to creatively address the problems they are facing but also supporting staff through what can be an unsettling time. However, two schools are returning to the Building Cleaning Service in the coming weeks which is a positive outcome.

Recruitment of staff in both services remains very difficult in certain parts of the Borough with some posts receiving no applications, causing operational difficulties.

Food costs remain a significant concern. Price increases from suppliers have already been absorbed and there is every likelihood that further increases will follow later in the year.

As a member of the TUCO purchasing framework, we are as well placed as we can be to ensure that any future increases are not only justified but also fairly reflect the increases that food producers and distributors are having to bear.

We are also working closely with our operational staff to ensure that they are taking all the necessary steps to reduce food waste.

The catering section are continuing to support The Council's Obesity strategy. The Service Manager chairs the Live Well subgroup, which is charged with reviewing and refreshing the Council's work to ensure compliance with Food Active's Healthy Weight Declaration accreditation.

Transport and Vehicle Maintenance

To date the Transport and Vehicle Maintenance Department have inspected and serviced all related vehicles within its remit for the first part of 2022. They inspect, by way of the PMI (preventative maintenance inspection) all HVG vehicles on a 6-week cycle. All vehicles between 3.5 and 7.5 tonnes are inspected on a 12-week cycle.

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They ensure the vehicles are presented for inspection in a timely manner and work with all service areas to meet this target.

T&VM promote strong collaborative working arrangements with service areas to ensure fleet compliance and procurement is on schedule and is appropriate to meet demands of individual services. The aim going forward is to improve this by adopting service level working agreements between departments to ensure we provide the best service for each department.

The service ensures that all council vehicles and fleet have access to fuel and maintenance when required. They also provide an out of hours breakdown and recovery service for all fleet. As well as providing maintenance for our own fleet we also have several customers and clients for whom we provide maintenance and fleet compliance on their behalf.

Sefton Council's MOT inspections are of the highest quality and recommended due to our impartiality as we do not provide corrective measures or maintenance for this function. We do provide retests free of charge.

We provide a vehicle hire function that meets the demands of our service users, and in most cases exceeds expectation. The service often reacts rapidly to requests with very short notice to provide vehicles to services requesters such as Adult Social Care, Children's Services etc.

School Crossing Service

The School Crossing Service is currently preparing for the end of the summer term.

The service currently has:

84 School Crossing Sites across the Borough. It provides cover for children and adults who require assistance crossing the road.

For the first quarter of this year the service has provided approximately 74% of cover across all locations.

This amounts to 5,378 kerb hours of cover for both children and adults across the borough. And requests for new sites are processed within 1 week. Schools are informed of any vacancies in advance to ensure continuation of cover. Patrols undergo a retraining programme every 2 years.

Sites are risk assessed annually and a robust supervisory schedule is in operation, allowing staff to keep in touch with Management and discuss any concerns or requests.

Patrols staff undergo medicals at the start of their employment and annually for those aged 65 and over. This is due to potential sensory ability deterioration in this group of adults. This measure was agreed together with the Joint Trade Unions to protect and support staff within this demographic. The measure has proven to be a vital tool in identifying health issues for staff both personally and work related.

The service will soon undergo a review of its current structure to ensure we are meeting our objectives and providing the support necessary to all staff.

Burials and Cremations

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The service has seen some significant changes over the past 6 months with the commencement of the new Service Manager in December 2021. Since then, the service has undergone changes to improve service delivery and quality of offer to the bereaved.

The fees and charges for the service have remained the same as previous years as the Council have recognised the current cost of living increase and the impact this can have to families during the difficult time following bereavement.

Memorial provision is under review to ensure a more affordable memorial option is available for the bereaved across the service, in addition to a full memorial review to ensure sustainability throughout.

The service has gone through a whole service restructure to remove all temporary staffing arrangements that were in place and ensure staff are recruited on a permanent basis. To increase support for management and customers alike, there has been the creation of an Assistant Manager post in addition to increasing the customer services officer roles within the service to meet demand.

Whilst no staff have lost out, a realignment of vacant posts has provided a moderate saving on salary budgets enabling the service to employ a business support apprentice which supports the local economy of Sefton.

Contracts have been put in place for service security on equipment and new equipment has been sourced to ensure safety and service delivery is met throughout the service. The service will continue to provide a high standard to the bereaved.

Sefton ARC & Careline

The ARC & mobile guard services continued to operate throughout the pandemic, providing security duties, monitoring service, highways and out of hours emergency response.

The mobile guarding service has recently recruited an additional 6 patrol staff from core FTE budget as the posts had been vacant for some time. The recruitment to permanent posts removed the reliance upon agency staff and ensure consistency of service delivery.

The team continue to respond to enquiries for potential future installations, and provide regular quotations for provision of CCTV, Fire and Intruder alarms, and EM lighting.

There have been requests from potential external clients about using Sefton ARC as their preferred monitoring station and we are currently considering these requests.

The service has successfully passed all recent inspections and retained accreditation for National Security Inspectorate (NSI) for:

- FIRE,
- SECURITY (intruder, CCTV, Access control)
- ARC NSI Gold
- Specialist Services NSI Gold

Sefton ARC is preparing for NSI Guarding Gold assessment visit on the 5/6 July 2022.

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On-going installation work for a variety of fire, CCTV, intruder and access control systems are planned for the following locations:

- Southport Pier CCTV
- James Dixon Court
- Chase Hays
- Bootle Town Hall
- Vine House

Careline:

KPI: Careline call response time - Target: 97.5% calls answered within 60 seconds

Q1 to date: 99.45% calls answered within 30 seconds

Call volumes:

Q1 to date: 13,019 calls received

Disaster Recovery:

The DR provision is now in place in Hawthorne Road Depot and has been tested successfully. This will be a temporary DR provision until we move to the cloud-based platform when it is likely that we will reinstate our reciprocal arrangements with Coventry Council to become our DR.

Recruitment:

The installer vacancy has now been successfully recruited to and will commence mid-June. The role will provide much needed resource and support to the current function allowing the team to deal with more referrals and installations within the agreed timescales across the borough.

Move to cloud-based platform:

Work is underway to move the Careline onto a Cloud-based platform which will significantly improve the operation of the Careline. It is anticipated that the move should take no more than 12 weeks and once in place, it will allow the team to become more streamlined, improving efficiency and enabling us to move forward and drive further improvements.

Specialist Transport Unit

Recent confirmation has been received from Sefton's Travel Support Team that the tender process has now been completed for all routes with the STU keeping the current 15 school routes and 9 adult routes for the next 3 years.

This has increased from 9 school routes 9 Adult in recent years to cover routes that were previously undertaken by external contractor provision and also reduces the number of taxis being used. The STU staffing structure will be adapted to accommodate these requirements.

A review of the fleet is underway, all options being reviewed which will be financially viable and the inclusion of electric vehicles will also be considered however, infrastructure for recharging across the Borough needs to be a factor.

The service recently provided assistance to Adult Social Care regarding the closure of the Shielings Nursing Home in Lydiate, the relocation of residents to other nursing homes within Sefton and West Lancashire was completed in a smooth and sympathetic way.

Waste Management

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Both domestic and commercial waste collections have been impacted since the Easter Bank Holiday onwards due to a combination of factors - operational issues, significant sickness absence and low level resource availability of staff to work over the Bank Holiday days.

From an operational perspective, this impacted predominately the green bin collections Boroughwide resulting in missed collections for 3 cycles in some areas of the Borough (they are collected every 3 weeks), however it also impacted both grey and brown bin collections which were collected albeit delayed.

The service is now in a full recovery process. Grey and brown bin collections are taking place on scheduled days and green bins have been significantly recovered over the weekend of 18/19 June 2022.

Continual contact has been kept with any Trade customers who have been affected and adapted collections have taken place to ensure minimal disruption. These collections are also now back to scheduled service.

Some review of collection schedules is underway to ensure an equitable approach to the volume of properties attributed to each round. As new premises are built the round structure can become unbalanced in certain areas.

On a strategic perspective, the Head of Service attends the LCR Strategic Waste partnership for future planning regarding the implementation of the waste related aspects of the Environment Act 2021.

Street Cleansing

The street cleansing service has recently seen an increase in mechanisation with a fourth HGV sized mechanical sweeper being brought onto the fleet in addition to handheld leaf blowers and hand operated three street cleansing machinery known as 'Gluttons'.

The weed control programme commenced its third spray in early June. A comprehensive inspection process is underway to ensure that there is evidence of 'die back' of weeds approximately 10-14 days following scheduled spray.

The service is currently reviewing the rear entry clearance programme to ensure sufficient resources are attributed to this function. Collaborative working with Environmental Enforcement colleagues will form part of this approach.

GREEN SEFTON

Overview

Overall, the service continues to perform well under the pressures of expectation on service delivery, within the resources made available, and in the context of the ongoing pandemic situation further affecting staffing levels availability.

It is clear that several areas of the service are struggling to meet expectations / basic standards within resources available and efforts are being made to address this. This has resulted in further increase in complaints, and negative press coverage for several areas of the service.

To start to address this, an increase in revenue budget was approved by Full Council as part of the budget setting process for an additional £200k into the management of play areas /

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facilities from 2022/23 onwards (increasing the budget from £45k per year), and for several of the actions from the Coast Visitor Action Plan for the delivery of those actions on a permanent basis with a further £300k annual uplift – to include additional daytime and evening ranger staff, a full time Community Ranger for the Coast, increased litter management at key gateways, ongoing provision of temporary toilets at beach entrances, and a communications plan to encourage appropriate visitor behaviour.

In addition, to develop the service/ and undertake improvements external grants and other funding are being sought such as;

- the 500k Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier funding for conservation works over the next 5 years along the coast was accepted in February 2022
- a major bid for Botanic Gardens is in early development, with a Task Group set up (chaired by Cabinet Member, and with ward cllrs and community reps), and approval to consult publicly given at the Consultation and Engagement Panel in March 2022
- consultation has been completed for the allocation of monies for Hesketh Park, and cost estimate/ details for priority projects have been developed
- Cabinet gave formal approval to seek tenders for the future investment in Southport Golf Links in March 2022. Tenders for both the White House Café building, and the course itself are now in development
- the FCERM team continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partner agencies on seeking capital monies to reduce flood risk.

Further areas of the service will also need resource consideration in the coming times – both in terms of ongoing revenue, and other capital schemes too.

What is performing well

A narrated version of the 2021 Annual Review has been published on the website, and can be found here: www.sefton.gov.uk/greensefton

This was promoted via a newsletter which was shared in the community, with all ward councillors, with our 'Friends of' and other volunteer groups, sports clubs and leagues, other landowners and partner agencies including statutory and government bodies.

Highlights from the last quarter include:

- The service continues to work in partnership with many other organisations, partner agencies, and of course fundamentally our communities – supporting around 40 'Friends of' In Bloom and other volunteer groups, together with 300+ sports clubs and leagues that utilise our facilities;
- The service has undertaken significant formal consultations recently including an overall customer satisfaction survey for the service, and site / project specific consultations such as for Ainsdale Beach gateway, and Hesketh Park;
- Bootle Driving Range has been completed on site, had a soft launch in February 2022, and a formal opening by the Mayor with local school children in attendance in March 2022;
- Planning is underway for the coming tourist season, including the enactment of a new Visitor Action Plan for 2022. The Multi Agency Group with other landowners and emergency services etc also restarted in March

- The service has responded to several named storm events in recent months. Teams have reacted brilliantly to these emergency issues, with out of hours officer support, practical actions taken in a timely manner, and keeping relevant colleagues, and external bodies, abreast of developments

What requires improvement and what action is being taken

Overall work programming

The Annual report highlighted the tracking of the services overall performance against the actions contained within the Service Plan which has been RAG rated over the last two years. This clearly shows that many actions have slowed down or stalled since the pandemic started due to a reduced staffing capacity to deal with developmental issues, and new operational demands being placed on services as the 'staycation' phenomena resulted in massive increases in visitors and other pressures on our sites.

The action taken to address this has been to develop a more sophisticated work programming approach for the service, with an 'urgency/importance' matrix developed, see next page. This was presented to O&S Committee within the Annual Review, but has also led to each sub team creating their own version, with updates being discussed at team meetings, and individual monthly 1:1's. The overall team matrices were presented to Cabinet Member in January 2022, and will also form part of regular updates.

Working with Volunteers

A specific challenge over the last quarter has been ongoing issues arising with some of our volunteer groups. Probably symptomatic that the service no longer undertakes land management and maintenance to the standards previously seen, and that there is less officer capacity available to respond to complaints, nurture groups, and pro-actively keep them aligned – several groups have become dissatisfied with the Council and/or have suffered from internal issues leading to corporate complaints being raised.

The action taken to address this is to refresh the 'Friends of ...' Handbook – this guiding document introduces volunteers to setting up a group however it will now go much further in terms of expectations to be placed on volunteers about their Policies and Procedures expected of a group, including Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, and overall Code of Conduct – both in terms of the way volunteers treat each other, and also about how they deal with Council officers.

The first draft of this refresh is to be discussed with Cabinet Member

Defining Standards

As part of addressing some of the frustrations from the community referred to above, we have also instigated a piece of work to define our maintenance standards that we are now resourced to provide. This is initially being prioritised on the inland parks and greenspaces maintenance aspects of the service, but team leaders are working up thoughts on defining standards across wider areas too.

The first draft of this new document will be shared with Cabinet Member.

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) – 28 June 2022		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Planning	28 June 2022

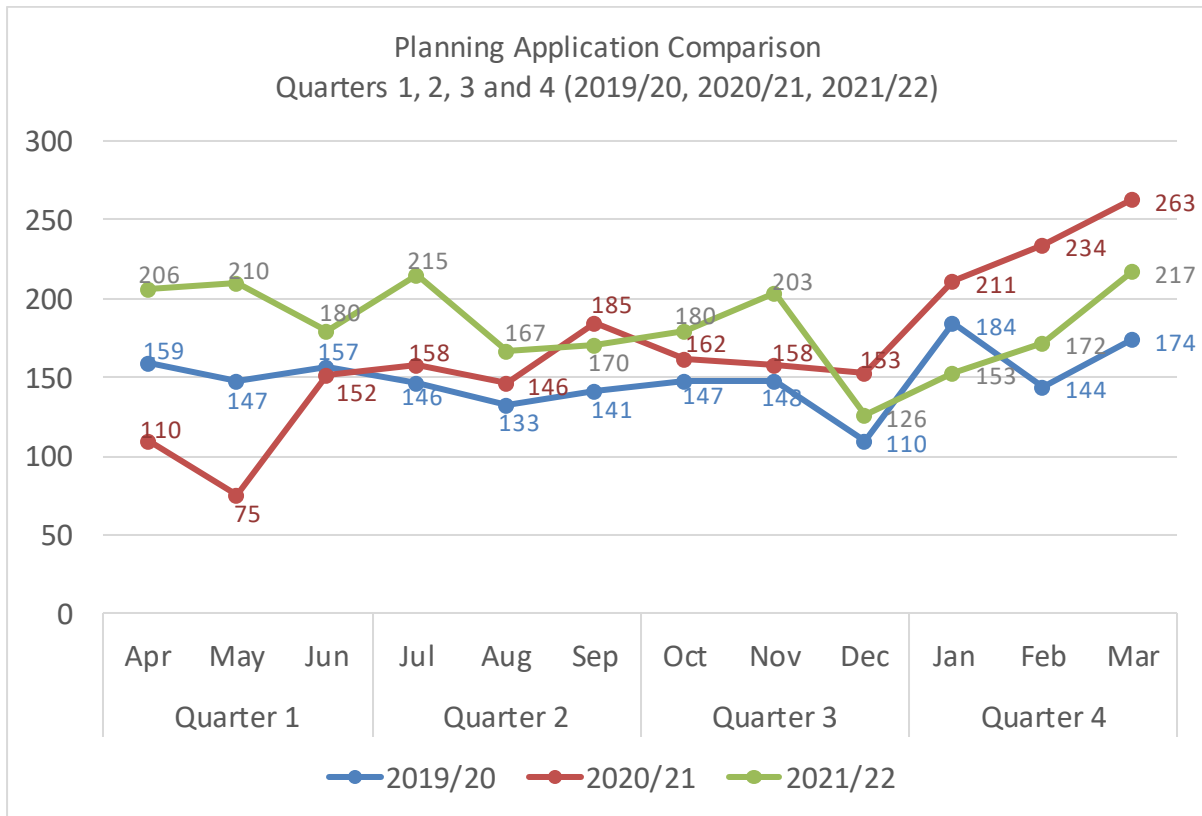
Introduction

- 1.1 The Planning Service is set up to operate the Council’s regulatory functions in relation to the development and use of land.
- 1.2 It comprises the following functions:
- Development Management
 - Building Control
 - Local Plans
 - Heritage and Conservation
- These are supported by the Technical Support team.
- 1.4 The graphs in this report compare Quarters 1 - 4 from the past three years, providing a comparison of activity pre-COVID, in the early days of COVID and more recently as we have begun to emerge from COVID.
- 1.5 A key focus as we have worked from home has been looking after staff mental health. We have carried out two surveys and devised an action plan. These have been received positively and sickness absence is at its lowest level ever.
- 1.6 We recognise the importance of customer satisfaction and the need to understand how our customers feel about the service they receive. We are currently addressing this with a survey of agents who submit planning applications to us.

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2. Development Management

2.1 The graph below shows the number of planning applications received during Quarters 1 - 4 in the years 2019, 2020 and 2021. It demonstrates that though there was a significant dip in applications following the onset of COVID 19, activity has picked up since then and the number of applications received in 2021-22 was just under 30% higher than the number for the same period in both 2019-20 and 2020-21.

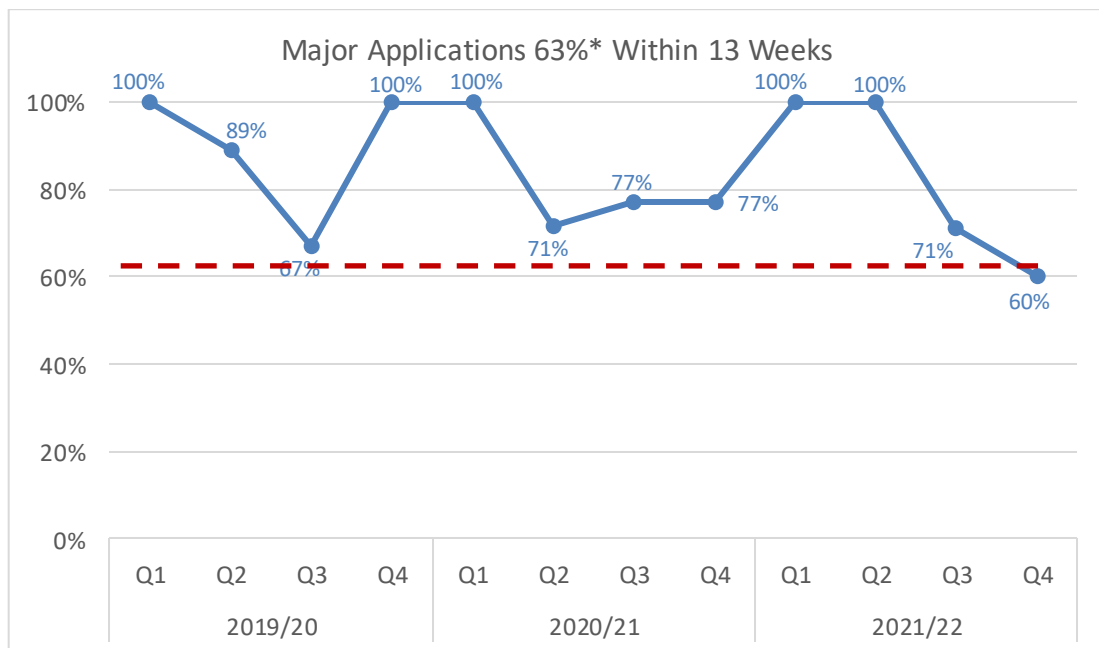
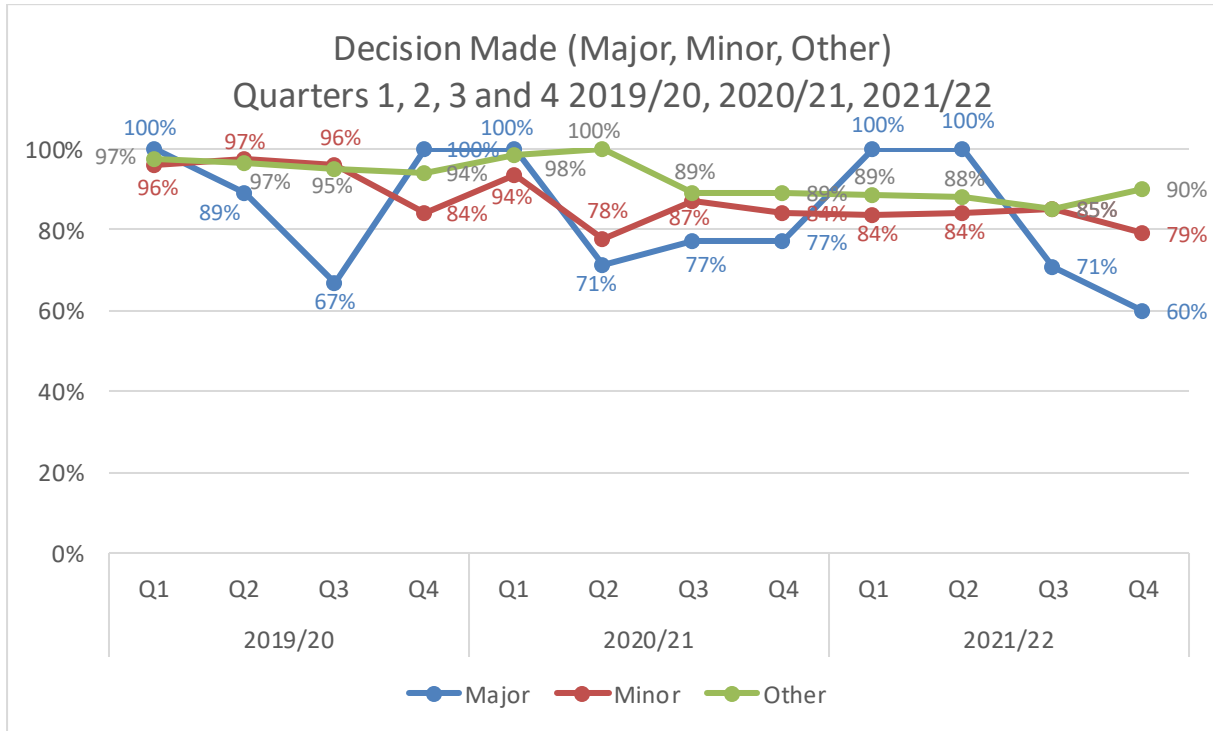


2.2 The chart below shows the performance of the Service over the same time periods. The rate of determining applications ‘minor’ and ‘other’ applications (this comprises the vast majority of all applications) has slowed down a little in 2021 - 22. This is only to be expected given the high numbers of applications received during 2020. The determination rate still significantly exceeds national and local targets.

2.3 This is a major achievement but has depended on the ability to agree ‘Extensions of Time’ with the applicant. This gives us more time to determine applications and still meet Government targets. The case for more resources has been accepted and we have been able to recruit to a number of posts with new staff coming into post in March / April 2022.

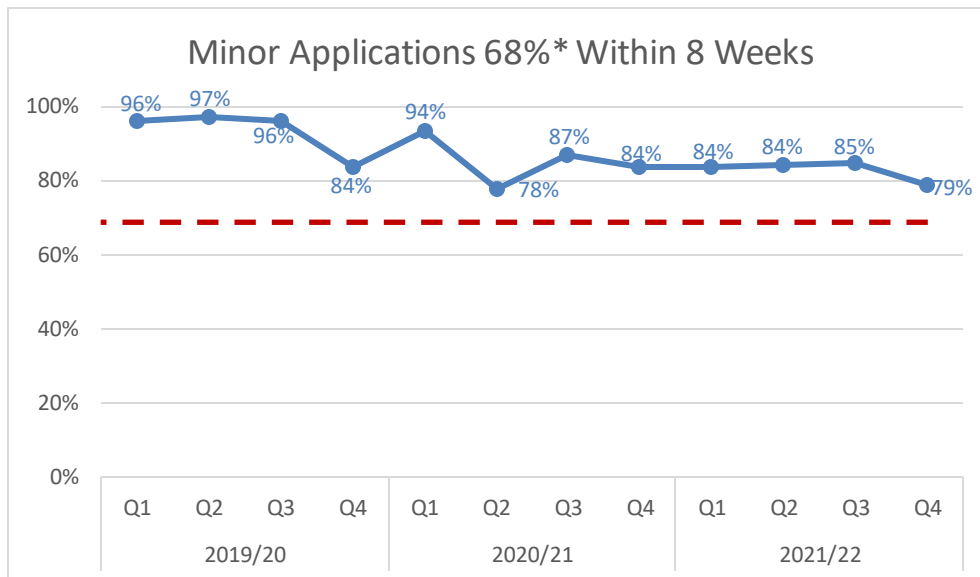
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Key performance against national targets for speed and quality of decision making:
Quarters 1 - 4 (April – December): 2019 - 2021

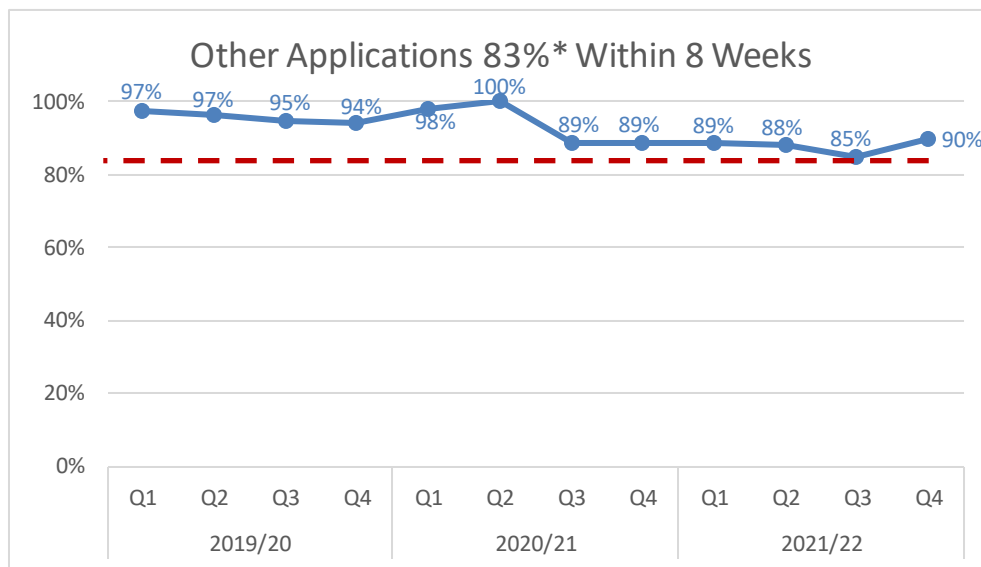


*Local Target

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*Local Target



*Local Targets

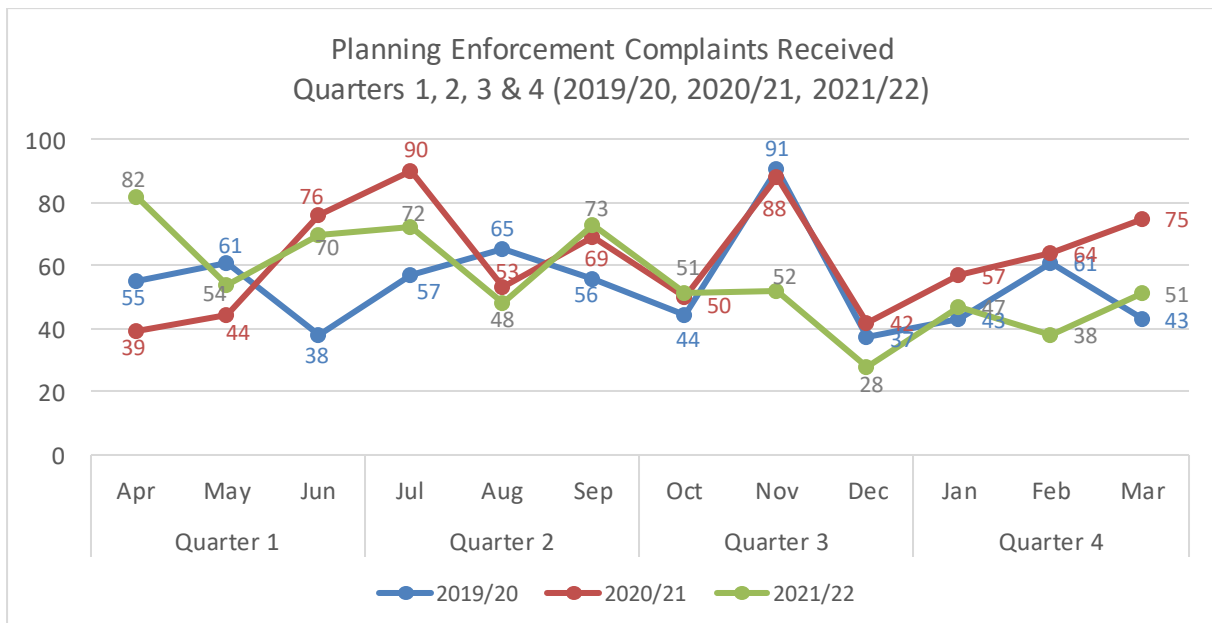
- 2.4 The pressure on this part of the Service continues with planning applications having been received for 31 of the 47 housing sites allocated in the Local Plan (approximately 5,400 homes (as at 30 November 2021). This equates to 73% of the homes allocated in the Local Plan.
- 2.5 The capacity of the Service is stretched by the increased pressure relating to dealing with many complex and contentious applications. Whilst working from home has not presented any major issues it does however have some implications for performance. It is a significant team effort across the Service to assess and determine applications expediently and in line with Government targets.

Planning Committee

- 2.6 Planning Committee deal with major applications and those which are subject to a petition or have been 'called in'.
- 2.7 We are now regularly livestreaming committees due to the limited capacity for members of the public in Bootle Town Hall.

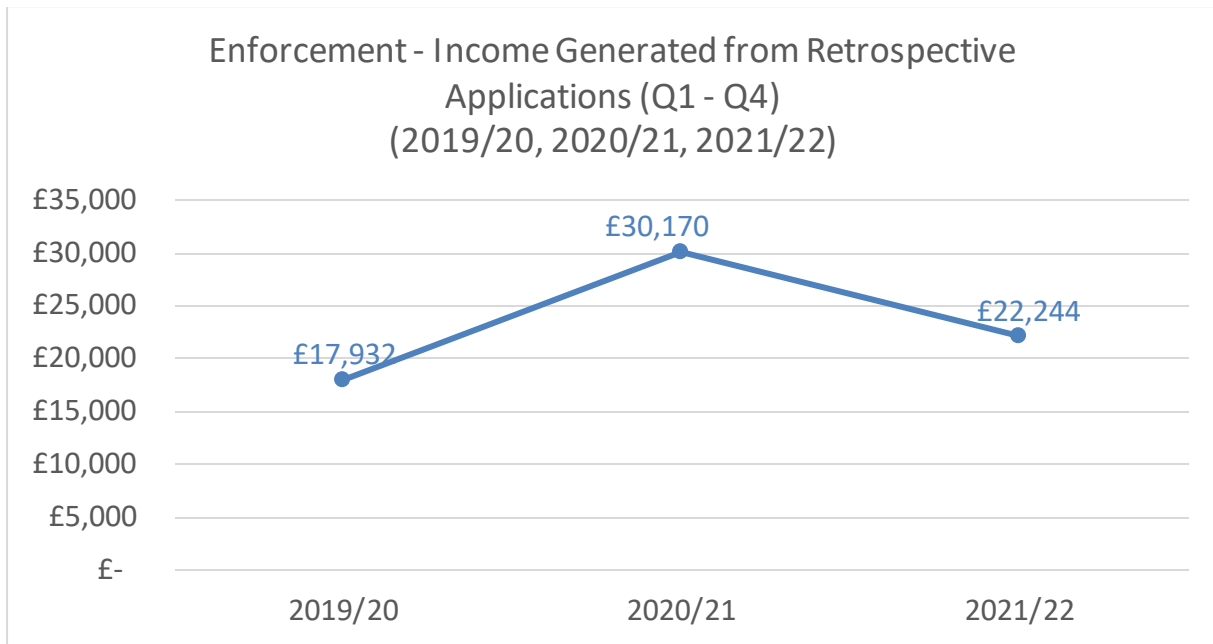
Enforcement

- 2.8 At the start of lockdown there was a significant dip in the number of enforcement complaints. However within a few weeks this began to rise again and the number of complaints significantly exceeded those in the same period the previous year. There was another peak in complaints in late 2020 when there was a further lockdown. These might be explained by more people working from home and deciding to carry out development to their home, and more people noticing what is happening as they are also based at home. Complaints in 2021 show lower levels than just after the onset of COVID, but higher than pre-COVID numbers.



- 2.9 The chart below shows the income generated from following up complaints which has resulted in planning applications being submitted, with a steady rise from 2019 to 2020 and then a drop back in 2021.

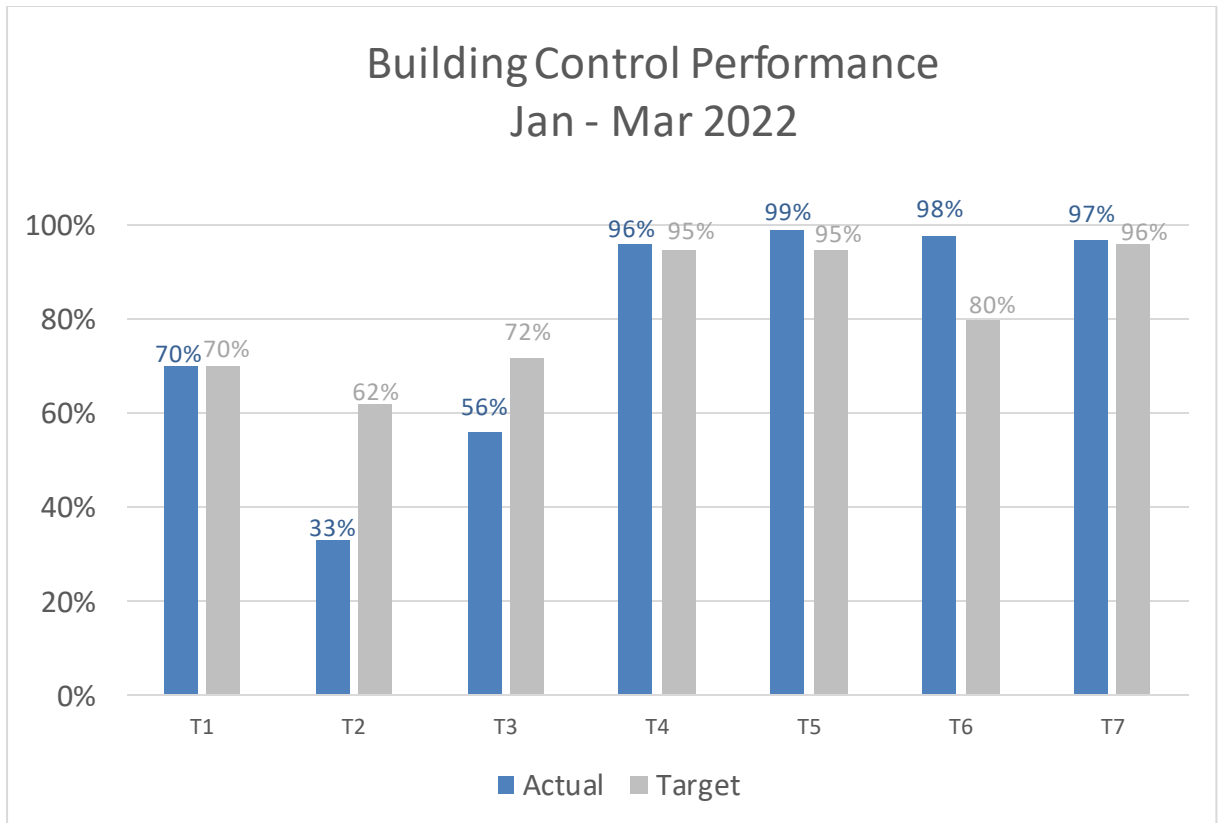
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3. Building Control

Performance targets

3.1 The number of building regulation applications received compared to earlier years is shown elsewhere in this report. This section focuses on the Building Control Team’s performance over that last quarter (Quarter 4 Jan-Mar 2022), as shown in the tables below:



	Detail	Target	Actual	Remarks
T1	Market share	70%	70%	Target being met
T2	Full Plans app decision / schedule within 3 weeks	62%	33%	Target not being met – increased workload, covering site work, staffing
T3	Full Plans app decision / schedule within 5 weeks	72%	56%	Target not being met – increased workload, covering site work, staffing
T4	Full Plans app conditionally or fully approved	95%	96%	Target being exceeded
T5	Site insp’s carried out on day they were arranged for	95%	99%	Target being exceeded
T6	Customer satisfaction rating (from March 2019)	80%	98%	Target being exceeded - from 2019 ISO customer questionnaire
T7	Sickness absence – attendance levels	96%	98%	Target being exceeded

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3.2 The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan-checking and the carrying out of site inspections. It is also meeting the majority of the locally set performance targets. Results for year 2021/22 show that the Team's market share was 70% - which is equal to or better than that of neighbouring authorities and is significantly above the average for English Councils, which stands at 65%. However, results from 2021/22 show that the Teams market share has reduced slightly to that of the previous financial year. This is mainly due to the loss of two Building Control Team Leaders to private sector Building Control, who will have taken some key clients with them. The Team's performance in respect of timely decision making on deposited applications shows that all statutory targets are being met. However, due to an increased number of Building Regulation applications being received and staffing shortages, the performance against some of the locally set targets (including market share) has shown a slight reduction in 2021/22 compared to the previous year.

Income and financial performance

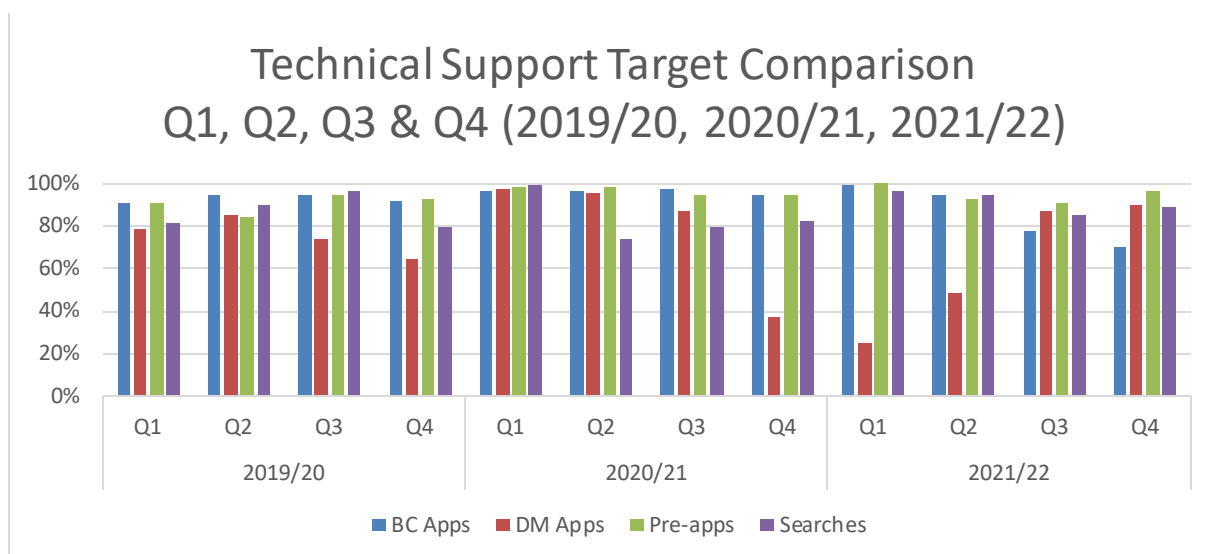
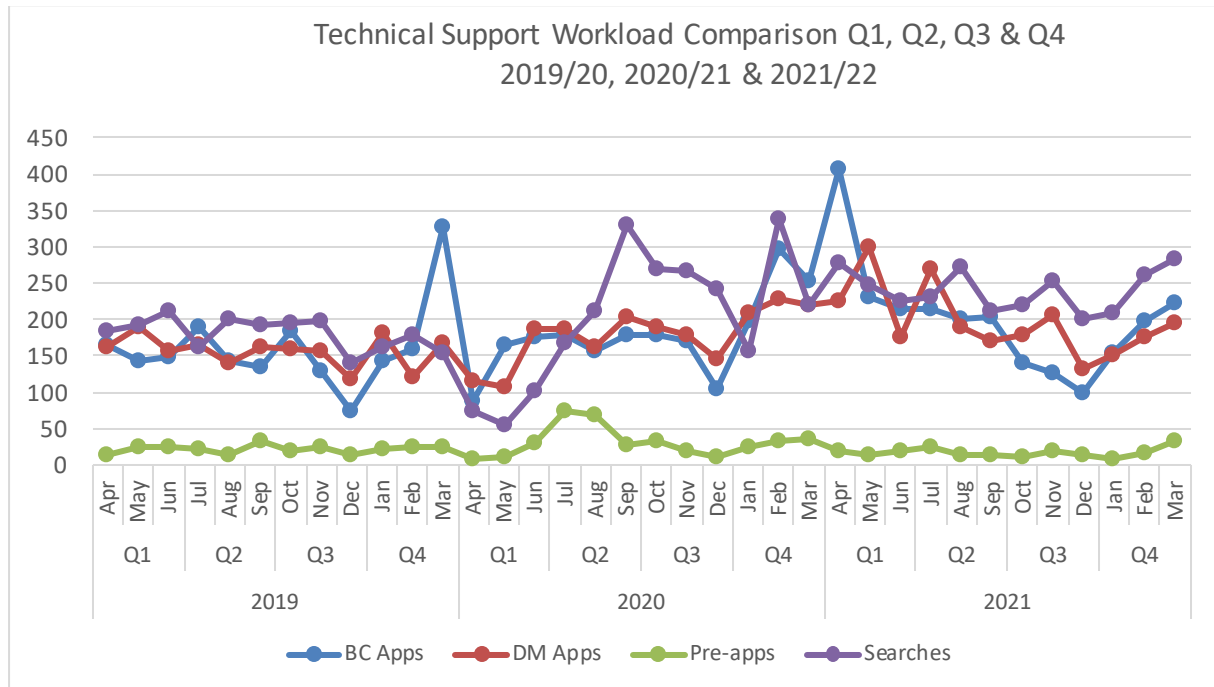
3.3 Building Regulation income for 2020/21 delivered an operating surplus - which will be used to off-set the cost of providing the statutory elements of the service, such as dealing with dangerous structures and safety at sports grounds. As of month 11 of 2021/22, income remains on course to deliver another operating surplus.

Safety at sports grounds

3.4 As part of conditions of the Safety Certificates held by Southport FC, Marine FC and Aintree Racecourse, the Building Control Team undertakes annual inspections in order to check the grandstands are properly maintained.

4. Technical Support

4.1 The chart below shows performance over the financial year compared with the same periods for 2019 and 2020.



Detail	Target	Actual	Remarks
Planning Apps validated within 5 days	84%	90%	Target being exceeded
Pre Apps validated within 3 days	93%	96%	Target being exceeded
BC Applications registered within 3 days	96%	70%	Target not met. The average number of days remains at 3 days overall but the percentage is lower when assessing all information
Searches completed within 7 days	80%	89%	

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- 4.2 As can be seen from the graphs above, the number of applications and service requests across the Service appears to be stabilising. Quarter 4 has seen an improvement in performance over Quarter 3 in respect of the validation of planning applications. Performance is good, and over target in most areas. One key member of the team has left the team this quarter and another remains on maternity leave. This will have an impact on the performance of the team until additional resources are in place. Two apprentices have been recruited who are due to start work in early May.
- 4.3 The team is multi-functional, and resources are allocated to the most urgent priorities daily. Whilst there has been an increase in performance on the planning application and land charges functions this has led to a slight reduction in performance against the targets for building control registration.
- 4.5 The new Monitoring Officer is now in place and will be focussing on the monitoring of S106 legal agreements.
- 4.6 An improvement in performance across all areas is anticipated once the new recruits are in place and have received the requisite training.

4.7 **Service Development**

Work is progressing the transfer of the Local Land Charges Register to HM Land Registry. The project is now in the data extraction and data cleansing phases and completion is anticipated at the end of 2022. Data extraction time has been longer than anticipated due to technical and scheduling issues across Technical Support, Agilisys, iDox and HM Land Registry. However, confidence remains high that the project will be delivered by the end of the year.

- 4.8 In house training for the validation team has been taking place to ensure continued improvement in performance and quality of validation.

5. Local Planning

The Sefton Local Plan

- 5.1 Planning applications continue to be submitted on allocated sites. Of the 47 housing sites allocated in the Local Plan (policy MN2) planning applications have been received for 31, equating to approximately 5,400 homes (as at 30 November 2021). This equates to 73% of the homes allocated in the Local Plan.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other policy documents

- 5.2 The Planning Policy Team are currently working on a number of Supplementary Planning Documents to support the Local Plan. These include:
- Affordable Housing
 - Conversions to Flats and HMOs
 - New Housing
 - House Extensions
 - Sustainable Travel
 - Social Value in development
- 5.3 Whilst these have been delayed a little due to staff being temporary used for other projects, it is anticipated these will be made available for public consultation in the 2022.

Liverpool City Region work

- 5.4 The Combined Authority undertook early engagement with the public on the Spatial Development Strategy (SDS) for the Liverpool City Region concluding January 2020 to which the Council submitted comments. The next stage of consultation on the SDS is expected in Summer 2022 and the Council will fully engage with this, and the supporting evidence.

Bootle Area Action Plan

- 5.5 To help support the regeneration and transformation of the wider Bootle area it has been decided to produce a Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP). This will set out a vision, objectives, projects, policies and priorities for the area. This will be led by the Planning Policy Team. In order to assist with this work, the Council has been successful in securing funding from a range of sources for various aspects of the Bootle AAP. These are:
- £138,000 from the Combined Authority to secure consultants to help with the AAP document preparation, background evidence and community engagement

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- £50,000 from the MHCLG for the Council to test the Draft Model Design Toolkit in Bootle as a pilot scheme. Sefton was one of 14 Local Planning Authorities that were successful (out of over 70 applicants)
- £14,000 from the Local Government Association to procure guidance on a range of project delivery methods.

5.6 The first draft iteration of the Bootle AAP was approved by Cabinet on 7 October for consultation. Public consultation on the Bootle AAP Issues and Options paper was undertaken from November to 31 January 2022. The engagement included a 12-page newsletter delivered to all 22,000 homes and businesses in the Bootle AAP area, a number of drop-in events and a number of targeted online discussions will be undertaken in the New Year. The Council are currently considering all the comments made.

5.7 The Design Pilot work is now completed, and the report has been submitted to the MHCLG. The Design Pilot focussed on canal side sites in Bootle. Public engagement was undertaken on this over the summer. The Design Pilot will help to inform the strategy and policies in the emerging Bootle AAP. The report received exceptionally positive feedback from the MHCLG (now DLUHC - Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities).

Other work

5.8 The Planning Policy team continues to provide policy advice on all relevant planning applications and pre-application inquiries, including large housing developments on the Local Plan allocations.

5.9 Following recent applications and appeal hearings for traveller accommodation sites, it has been decided that the Council's evidence base for gypsy and traveller accommodation needs to be updated.

5.10 The Council is also undertaking a replacement Playing Pitch Strategy so that we have the evidence to deal with applications on existing playing pitches or can help secure contributions for improvements to existing pitches from large development proposals. The new strategy will also help support the Council's applications for funding for improvements to its playing pitches. This will be a complicated and multidisciplinary piece of work and will be managed and led by the Local Planning team. KKP consultants have been appointed to undertake this work and are currently undertaking the site assessments.

5.11 To inform a future Sefton Local Plan review, and the emerging Bootle AAP, the Council wish to commission an Employment Land and Premises Study. This will look at the need for employment land and premises in Sefton and assess the Council's current supply and make a recommendation on whether a shortfall, or over-supply, exists or not. .

6. Heritage and Conservation

Heritage at Risk

- 6.1 We are continuing to work towards the removal of the 6 Conservation Areas from the National Heritage at Risk Register. This includes a number of different work areas including raising their profile through Twitter and Facebook, regeneration funding bids, working with the local community, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, taking enforcement and other legal action in relation to a number of derelict sites and listed buildings in these areas.
- 6.3 Progress has been made on a number of Heritage at Risk sites including working with colleagues and partners on a number of Council owned Listed Buildings to secure their improvement and long term use and sustainability.

Regeneration

- 6.4 The capital build part of the Southport Townscape Heritage project is progressing, and discussions continue with targeted building and discussions with interested property owners.
- 6.5 The learning and skills part of the Southport Townscape Heritage project has made significant progress in developing complementary training and education initiatives. This includes Southport's Victorians is a ninety minute interactive play aimed at school children aged 9-14yrs. Excerpts of the script have been filmed and have been uploaded to Youtube. We are looking to find ways of introducing this into the curriculum and host live performances of the play at The Atkinson for Southport based Primary Schools in the autumn. A successful and comprehensive week of Heritage Open Days was undertaken in the town centre last September 10-19th Sept with a repeat being planned for this autumn. This will again include town trails and a special children's heritage treasure trail. Volunteers have been recruited for a variety of events programmed over the next three years including "Built on Sand – 200 Years of Southport's Changing Street Scene" an interactive exhibition which the Atkinson will host from 25th June. We are also working closely with the CVS, Southport Civic Society and other local organisations.
- 6.6 Discussions have taken place on a number of Heritage at Risk sites which are considered to be key strategic sites to find new uses or upgrade them to modern facilities so that they continue to be or find their optimum viable use and save them from further deterioration.
- 6.7 Design work is being finalised on the public realm improvements of Scarisbrick Avenue. This public realm project is integral to the Southport Townscape Heritage project and is within the main cluster of target properties in order to complement the buildings themselves. The public realm will focus on high quality paving and new street lighting.

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Other Projects

- 6.8 After a successful joint bid from Sefton, Knowsley and Wirral Councils the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government awarded a grant to develop both the supporting documentation (selection criteria) and to establish a system for members of the public to propose heritage assets for local listing. The Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS), a joint environmental service, are leading on the project which has appointed a project officer and set up a website <http://local-heritage-list.org.uk/merseyside> which is inviting nominations of buildings to be included. Nominations to be received by 31st March 2023.

Advice to Development Management team

- 6.9 The pressure on this part of the Service has increased significantly over the past year for consultation requests on planning applications and pre-applications relating to a number of Listed Buildings and developments within a number of our Conservation Areas and non-designated heritage assets. The number of consultation requests in Quarter 3 (Oct – Dec 21) is 167 and 148 for Quarter 4 (Jan – Mar 22).
- 6.10 This is a significant rise in workload in this area. Back in Quarter 3 of last year this number was up on the figures for the previous two quarters, mainly in response to the rise in pre-applications as a result of the fee being waived. However this number has been exceeded in Quarter 1 this year despite the fee no longer being waived. In addition, this part of the Service continues to assist in various appeals, on-site monitoring and enforcement cases.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The past two years have been unprecedented for the Council. The Service has strived to maintain high levels of performance, but sustained increases in the numbers of applications and staffing issues have begun to impact on performance and a number of key targets are unlikely to be met this year.
- 7.2 Appropriate technology has been put in place to support staff and services, and staff have performed to the best of their ability. Staff surveys show the service has been able to respond to key issues in order to maintain essential services whilst maintaining staff morale.
- 7.3 The service has risen to the challenge posed by Covid with an innovative package of measures to promote and encourage economic activity by incentivising development, and the Council has been recognised nationally for this exceptional approach. We are seeing the results of this now with numbers of applications for planning permission and building approval restored to, and

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exceeding, pre-Covid levels which is maintaining inward investment into the Borough.

- 7.4 A new measure aimed at making the planning process more transparent and participants more accountable in the form of publishing comments online has taken a short while to embed. This has now been successfully embedded and enhances the service we provide to the public.

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	June 2022

GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATES

1. LEVELLING UP ROUND 2

- 1.1 The prospectus for Levelling Up Round 2 was issued in March 2022 by DLUHC. [Link here: [Levelling Up Fund Round 2: Prospectus - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/107122/levelling-up-fund-round-2-prospectus.pdf) This sets out the categorisation and themes for the next bidding round due for submission in July 2022.
- 1.2 LUF guidance now issued by DLUHC has been reviewed by officers to help inform potential bidding approach and strength in terms of the LUF mission statements and LUF Round 2 guidance and application form process. This is in addition to the recent Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill published in May which indicates further measures to be introduced to assist local growth and recovery.
- 1.3 Officers and members are reviewing Sefton approach to bid submission in July.

2. SEFTON GROWTH AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME

- 2.1 **Bootle Strand** –The Council is driving forward plans for a repurposed Strand Shopping Centre following completion of key acquisition and site clearance work and the creation of Bootle Canalside public space.
- 2.2 **Strand Transformation** – work is ongoing to explore options for repurposing the Strand. This will look at the future development options and operational arrangements for this key town centre asset, to aid town centre recovery and regeneration. This project links to the Bootle Area Action Plan preparation and consultation which took place earlier this year and explored key issues and options for Bootle Town Centre. And responds to the seismic impacts of the post pandemic economic restructuring and earlier decisions by Govt to relocation HMRC into Liverpool (over 2000 employees lost to the town centre).
- 2.3 **Bootle Canalside** -members approved the business case for Bootle Canalside for the next phase of works at the May Cabinet and help complete this site development as a key events and activity space for the benefit of the local community. Works continue to resurface the site, new wooden planters have been brought in and planting is being undertaken at the time of writing. Further works associated with the canalbank and opening up the canal are ongoing. Link to press release - [Bootle gets a boost as Cabinet approve Bootle Canalside business case - My Sefton News Channel](#)

3. SOUTHPORT

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3.1 Southport Town Deal

Following the Southport Town Deal allocation of £37.5m the finalised business cases have been submitted for the first tranche of projects in this programme and in accordance with the Town Deal requirements. These went to Cabinet earlier this year for :

- Southport Enterprise Arcade
- Les Transformation de Southport (Public Realm enhancement)
- Building a Better Customer Experience

The Business Case for Marine Lake Events Centre will be submitted later this year as agreed with DLUCH.

Programme Management for the programme including monitoring and evaluation plan for programme delivery and output measurement for reporting to Government on the Town Deal programme is progressing.

3.2 The Enterprise Arcade, Southport

In October, Cabinet approved plans to transform the Crown Buildings in Southport town centre into a high tech, collaborative and affordable workspace for small businesses, dubbed the 'Enterprise Arcade.' Forming part of the Southport Town Deal, £1.5 million has been earmarked for the project, eventually creating a purpose built hub for individuals, freelancers, enterprises, and independent professionals (and in particular the previously untapped digital, creative and technology sectors) who are taking their first steps into setting up their own business. The Business case is anticipated to be approved later this year.

3.3 Les Transformation de Southport - Consultation results have been received and are being analysed to help inform future works including business and wider community feedback.

4. CROSBY

4.1 Crosby Town Centre Regeneration

Work continues to explore the opportunities of Levelling Up Round 2 for potential funding to support the development of a library and health hub, as a key part of the Crosby Village regeneration.

In other developments, Central Buildings site development by Plus Dane for a mixed residential and commercial scheme is now on site in Crosby Village, whilst an appeal has been lodged against the Council's refusal of the Telegraph House scheme (a new revised planning application is also anticipated imminently).

4.2 Crosby Lakeside

Crosby Lakeside refurbishment continues with current contractor and refurbishment of this key coastal asset is anticipated to complete in the summer 2022. The Sefton Council hospitality company (Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited) is in place to oversee the fit out and ongoing facility hospitality management once complete. Ongoing work on lake management and cycle path improvements and highway works has also taken place this year.

5. AINSDALE ON SEA

5.1 Ainsdale Coastal Gateway

Green Sefton consultation and engagement on Ainsdale Beach Gateway improvements completed and outcome was reported to Cabinet Member.

On-beach and off beach concessions let for summer 2022 onwards being managed by Green Sefton and the Tourism Team. Planning approval has been given for off beach concessions. On-site toilet facilities refurbishment completed and reopened 1st April. Changing Places Unit funding agreed submitted with Ainsdale opportunity included. To be programmed for 2023 development and delivery

Marketing underway for the former Sands Public House to explore market interest in this key gateway property. Marketing process outcome to be reported in Summer 2022. Works to Toad Hall also being reviewed following storm damage earlier this year.

5.2 Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way

Following Cabinet agreement to fund the acquisition of multiple land interests in this centre and to bring it into full Council ownership, negotiations have continued throughout the pandemic period and are ongoing. A number of properties have now been acquired and brought into Council control. A review of an agreed shortlist of options for this site is nearing completion and will inform the best approach for this site once in Council ownership, including how it can support the wider neighbourhood and community. Consultation on site development options took place in 2021 with Cabinet, the local community and Ainsdale ward councillors, which has helped inform the option appraisal shortlist being assessed.

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING UPDATES

1. Funding updates

1.1 European Social Fund (ESF)

Members will be aware from previous reports that European Social Fund (ESF) funding will expire at the end of 2023. Without replacement funding, Ways to Work in Sefton and the Positive Inclusions Project are under threat. The replacement for ESF structural funds, UK Shared Prosperity Fund, has been launched by government with funding for People and skills only coming on stream from the year 2024/25. This will cause a “funding gap” between the end of ESF and the new programme. In addition, the new allocation under the UKSPF will be much less than what has been available to the LCR under ESF structural funds. Sefton, like the other LA partners within the Ways to Work delivery partnership, has been requested to provide a breakdown of costs arising from the funding gap.

1.2 DWP Restart

Restart funding will continue for a further five years. DWP has launched a contract review process, the initial phase of this has seen the extension of eligibility criteria for Restart to include many more potential clients with different characteristics and benefit status. The current phase of re-negotiation focuses on the “right-sizing” or reduction of overall scale of the Restart contracts, based on the recent economic analysis available to DWP. This picture shows the “bounce-back “ from Covid has resulted in fewer people becoming reliant on out of work benefits, with a stronger rate of employment than expected across the country. The experience in Sefton is that referrals to Restart are continuing at a very healthy rate at present.

1.3 Adult Education Budget and Cambridge Road Premises

Slightly later than expected, the Service has now in the process of returning back to Cambridge Road site (since May 2022), with a potential formal re-opening in June. Both Career Connect and the Community Pantry continue to setup ready for the Centre’s opening and their services resuming.

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Members will be aware that the original handover date for the building was expected to be March 2021. The prolonged delay has caused significant impact on the Service's ability to reach its 2021/2022 targeted outputs. The refurbishment delay has also increased the time pressures on the Service to deliver outputs against its Test and Learn Pilots. Intelligence from networking groups for AEB indicate all other providers across the area and at national level are facing similar challenges (and have not had the same challenge of operating remotely from satellite/temporary locations).

2 Service Performance Update

2.1 Sefton@work – ESF

Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	4,646
New Clients accessing service	April 2022	65
New clients registering by age	April 2022	16-24 20 25-49 27 50+ 17 Unknown 1
W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16 April 2022	58% 41%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16 April 2022	42% 59%
W2W contracts Other	Since 01/01/16 April 2022	0.02% 0.0%
Positive Inclusions Male	Since 01/01/21 April 2022	67% 70%
Positive Inclusions Female	Since 01/01/21 April 2022	32% 30%
Positive Inclusions Other	Since 01/01/21 April 2022	0.9% 0.0%
ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016 April 2022	1,476 17
Supporting Families (new project replacing former Turnaround)	All months	11
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	W2W & PI 1,665 200 Other programmes Total 1,865

2.2 Sefton@work - Restart

Sefton@work Advisers continue to attend JCP offices to build relations with Work Coaches, discuss any referral or engagement issues and to see those clients who have failed to attend their Initial Meeting.

Remotely accessed, digital accredited qualifications are now able to be offered as part of the Restart programme to support upskilling and the levelling up agenda. These are very short sessions including employability techniques, digital inclusion and they are proving popular.

2.3 Sefton Adult Learning

The following gives a snapshot of performance against the key target areas for the service for the months of April:

- No of enrolments on the system year to end of April 2022: 940 learners, 1349 learning aims.

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- No of online enrolments year to end of April 2022: 944 Online Enrolments have taken place.
- No of cancelled courses year to end of April 2022: 201 courses cancelled.

As stated above, the service has worked intensively over the last period to put new opportunities in place and to bring new learning venues online. However, the possibility of catching up on performance in-year before the end of July is a risk, despite the introduction of new qualifications, extensive planning and increased promotional activities. The continued workforce sufficiency issues in terms of teaching staff, which has been repeatedly flagged up to the CA also hampers delivery. The inability to use our key premises for such a protracted period has also been a limiting factor on achieving full delivery, as outlined above.

2.4 NEET Reduction & Early Intervention

The latest data from Career Connect for March 2022 confirms the following (see table below):

- Sefton has the lowest % for NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and 'NEET & NK (Not Known)' Combined across all Local LA areas and are below the England and NW Performance for all three measures (NEET, NK and Combined)
- We are performing better than the Northwest for our combined NEET & NK %
- In 2020/21, Sefton's annual average was 4.5%, a reduction of 1% from the previous year. In 2016/17, our annual average from Sefton was 8%, therefore achieving a reduction of 3.5%

Area	NEET	NK	Combined	Current Combined Rank
Sefton	2.90%	0.40%	3.30%	1
Halton	3.50%	0.30%	3.70%	2
St. Helens	3.70%	0.90%	4.50%	3
England	2.70%	1.80%	4.50%	
Wirral	3.60%	1.00%	4.60%	4
North West	3.30%	1.50%	4.80%	
Knowsley	5.00%	0.50%	5.50%	5
Liverpool	4.70%	2.90%	7.60%	6

SPOTLIGHT on Vulnerable Groups (March 2022)

SEND SPOTLIGHT

	Cohort	Currently Participating In			Total	NEET	NK	NEET & NK Combined
		Mainstream Education and Training	ISPs	Supported Internships				
England	53,132	86.2%	2.3%	0.1%	88.7%	7.2%	1.4%	8.6%
North West	7,886	83.6%	2.4%	0.2%	86.2%	9.4%	1.2%	10.6%
Halton	129	84.5%	0.8%	0.8%	86.0%	11.6%	0.0%	11.6%
Knowsley	199	84.4%	0.0%	0.0%	84.4%	9.0%	0.5%	9.5%
Liverpool	460	82.0%	0.4%	0.0%	82.4%	12.6%	3.7%	16.3%
Sefton	297	87.5%	0.0%	0.3%	87.9%	9.1%	0.0%	9.1%
St Helens	160	82.5%	0.0%	0.0%	82.5%	11.3%	0.0%	11.3%

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Wirral	339	82.6%	0.9%	0.0%	83.5%	13.9%	0.9%	14.7%
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16/17 year olds SEND

- NEET/NK in Sefton was better than the regional performance, at 9.1% it is 1.5% lower than the North West (**10.6%**) average.
- Sefton Supported Internship rate for 16-17 year olds in March 22 was **0.3%** - that is more than the England Average (0.1%) and the North West Average (0.2%)
- The proportion of SEND 16/17 in Sefton who are in mainstream education and training is **87.5%**, this is +3.9% higher than the North West average (83.6%) and +1.3% higher than England (86.2%).

20-24 year old SEND

- Young people SEND - age 20 to 24 NEET/NK in Sefton was significantly better than national and regional performance at **21.3%**. It is -51.3% lower than the North West (72.6%) and 55.4% lower than the England average (76.7%)
- Sefton Supported Internship for 20-24 year olds in March 22 was **7.3%** - that is +6.5% higher than the England Average (0.8%) and +6.0% higher than the North West Average (1.3%).
- The proportion of SEND 20+ in Sefton who are in mainstream education and training is **65.6%**, this is more than triple that of the England average (19.9%) and the North West average (19.7%).

16-24 year old (ie Full SEND Cohort)

- Young people SEND- age 16 to 24 NEET/NK in Sefton at **13.0%** which is performing significantly better than the England (42.5%) and North West (37.0%) averages
- Sefton Supported Internships for the full SEND cohort 16-24 year olds in March 22 was **2.7%** - that is +2.2% higher than England (0.5%) and +1.9% higher than the North West (0.8%) averages.
- At **79.5%**, 16-24 Sefton SEND in mainstream education and training is over 20% higher than the North West (56.2%) and over 25% higher than the England (53.1%) average.

Care Leavers and LAC SPOTLIGHT

Academic Age	16	%	17	%	18	%	Total	%
EET	40	80%	26	73.5%	36	63%	112	72%
NEET	10	20%	13	26.5%	21	37%	44	28%
TOTAL	50		49		57		156	

Participation in education, employment and training (EET) among Care leavers and LAC

EET has increased by 4% since January 2022 from 68% to 72%.

- 112 young people are in EET, with 5 in apprenticeships and 4 in Higher Education.
- EET destinations proportional to age group decreases at 18 years old, from 80% to 63%.
- There are currently 47 young people living outside the borough who are in EET, this 42% of the total EET cohort of 112.

NEET among Care leavers and LAC

- Young people living outside Sefton make up 38.6% of the NEET cohort and of the total cohort 36% are Inactive NEET. There has been a reduction in out of area NEET due to support from Virtual School and also a contributing factor is some young people have moved back to Sefton.. For 19+ group the Social Care PA's act as the link and for 19 plus for young people who are living outside Sefton.
- There are 64 young people living outside of Sefton area of which 73% EET and 27% NEET compared to those living inside Sefton which is 68.5% - this is the first time NEET is higher in Sefton. It is believed this is due to impact of new Education Worker in Virtual School tracking young people's movement more rapidly back to Sefton.
- Sefton Total cohort is 92 of which EET - 68.5% and NEET - 31.5%

3. Emerging Themes, Issues and Projects

3.1 Customer Service Excellence Award

Sefton@work has been told its latest independent inspection for the government's CSE award has been successful, with the formal report to be published in June.

The Customer Service Excellence award is the Government's quality mark which aims to make a tangible difference to service users by encouraging organisations to focus on their individual needs and preferences. Sefton@Work has held it continuously since 2008 and they have increased their Plus points year on year, meaning the inspectors can see how they have gone above and beyond the standards expected. The CSE award is focused on 5 key areas: Customer Insight, the Culture of the Organisation, Information and Access, Delivery, and Timeliness and Quality of Service. Essentially, the CSE award is about being able to demonstrate we are putting our residents and service users at the heart of everything we do.

3.2 Bootle Street Food- Community Learning Project

Following discussion with the Bootle Town Centre Canalside project team and the Nationwide Catering Association (NCASS), we are drafting a Street Food Community Pilot project, to operate in collaboration with a College-based pathway for street food, offering opportunities for current and future students pursuing Hugh Baird College's catering & hospitality curriculum.

The Community Pilot will seek to recruit a diverse group of individuals aged 19+ from across Sefton, regardless of their previous catering training or qualifications. The Key ingredient will be a passion for engaging through food and who have a street food business concept.

The Street Food Community Learning Pilot would aim to commence its first cohort of trainees in October 2022.

3.3 Cambridge Road – Hub of community Activity

Service is linking up with Active Walk Sefton as a designated start and end point for residents taking part in walking and cycling activities. This is seen as a great opportunity to encourage learners to increase their fitness, improve their wellbeing and meet new people from all walks of life. It also links with the range of wellbeing courses to be delivered from the centre and offers full family involvement.

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3.4 Adult Learning Workforce Issues – new approach

The lack of suitably qualified and available tutors, in particular for Maths and STEM subjects, continue to impact the Service. Over the last 12 months the tutor team has reduced from 23 to 19. As a result, the service has reviewed its recruitment process and is using a multi-channel approach to try and improve the number and quality of applicants using new imagery and positive messaging about the merits of working with adults and changing their lives through education.

3.5 Supporting Ukraine

The Adult Learning Service is actively participating in Sefton's Ukraine Refugee Action Group to identify and provide educational support for individuals through community learning, qualifications and family learning activities.

3.6 Sefton@work giving opportunities for young people

Sefton@work has commenced a bespoke ILM-style paid placement for a young person who was referred to the service as a Leaving Care client. After a trial and settling -in period, the young woman has now commenced the paid placement under Positive Inclusions.

A new Kickstart trainee has also started work in this period with Sefton@work, who will be helping the service to ramp up an Employment & Learning presence on social media, with the particular emphasis on seeking new ways to engage with younger clients.

4. Impacts and Case Studies

4.1 Restart Participant

A is a single mother on the Restart programme who had not worked since giving birth to her daughter who told her adviser when they first met that she did not want to rely on benefits forever and was very keen to get back into paid work. Ideally, A was looking for a full-time position with a role and hours that would fit around her family responsibilities. After much discussion about the kind of work she had done previously and her skills and priorities, A decided with the help of her adviser to change direction. She decided that an entry to the social care sector would be her direction of travel. She looked for entry roles in care work with elderly people. The knowledge that many employers in this sector offer family-friendly hours was a big factor for her.

Although A was determined, she was also anxious about leaving her children to return to work and she worried about the possibility of losing out financially by going back to work. A detailed transitional In-Work Benefit calculation was the next action A would take with her adviser, and this showed A what her finances would look like and flagged any additional support she could access. It was quickly identified that with her child being 3 years old she qualified for 15 hours of free childcare. When she was finally offered a position in social care which fitted this profile, she was delighted. Through further discussion and looking at the calculation it was apparent that the initial pay on offer would be sufficient in the longer term, but there was a problem with setting up the childcare she needed. The funding gap arose because the childcare provider required parents to pay at least one month of fees in advance and additional costs for the children's lunches and snacks. Without these upfront fees, the costs would be manageable once receiving A was receiving a wage on an ongoing basis.

It became evident that this childcare funding gap was now A's main barrier to becoming employed and short of borrowing money from relatives or friends which would need to be repaid, A could find no solution.

Sefton@Work stepped in and used its Restart budget to help A fund the gap in her childcare costs until September 2022, a cost of around £1,000 over a 4-month period. This covers the period until her child enters full time education. A was also supported with travelling expenses in the form of a train pass to allow her to get to work for a transitional period of 2 months, with an option for further review if needed.

A will also receive support through ongoing, regular contact with her adviser to help sustain her new role. A clear focus will continue to be ensuring that A benefits from working both financially and in other ways in terms of her family too. When we last spoke to A she said she was *“doing really well in the new role and finding my feet in gaining a good work-life balance, although the transition has not always been easy I am starting to feel the benefits and really want to be a good role model for my daughter”*.

4.2 Sefton Adult Learning – Recent Feedback from Learners

- *“I enjoyed my course and I improved my English*
- *Fantastic, boosted my confidence. Achieved what I wanted. Fantastic tutor who gave me confidence to do it.*
- *Excellent! Very professional and friendly. Thoroughly enjoyed it.*
- *Exactly what I needed at my pace.*
- *Very enjoyable and feel able to use my newfound skills.*
- *Excellent, inspirational, and accessible. Met and exceeded all the learning outcomes.*
- *Good course which has helped me.”*

INVEST SEFTON UPDATE

Summary

InvestSefton is now totally focussed on ‘business as usual activities’ although economic recovery is very much central to this as businesses now seek to trade out of the crisis and faced with re-instated VAT and increased cost of living, supply chain and energy costs across a range of sectors. As well as promoting continuing Government funded schemes at Financial support for businesses during coronavirus (COVID-19) - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk) the team is working with other city region support organisations such as the Enterprise Hub (start-ups), New Markets (accessing new business sales markets) and a range of other providers.

This will also help with transitioning work which is being planned as part of the wider review of the Sefton Economic Strategy for Autumn 2022. The team have begun face to face events for businesses and Business Advisers are also meeting customers on site.

InvestSefton is supporting a range of Council initiatives including its Digital strategy, development of TOMS (Themes, Outcomes & Measures) for procurement and business resilience. InvestSefton has continued to provide business support during the pandemic through its external funded programmes with enquires reaching unprecedented levels alongside website visits which have surpassed the 55,000 mark. The team has also handled 5,067 enquiries over the past 22 months.

The team is also receiving enquiries from the job centres, either people wanting to start a business, or those who are in business but not making a great deal of trade.

The ERDF Business Growth Programme has been approved for a project extension from 1 January 2022-30 June 2023 by the Department of Levelling Up Housing and Communities. The Deeds of Variation (DoV) has been approved for this project. The ERDF Place Marketing for Investment Project has also been approved and awaits its DoV

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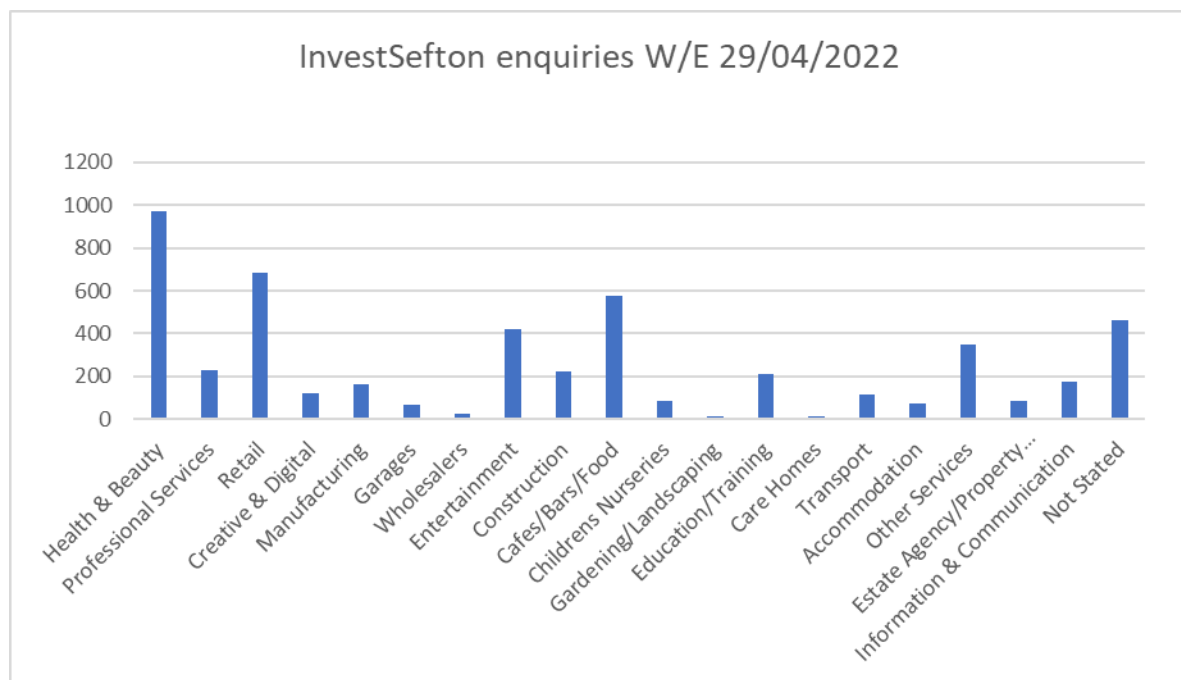
Inward Investment has also been secured most notably in Bootle through Mersey Reach and Atlantic Park while the team has supported Southport Town Deal and Southport Business Park activities. Other investment and expansion enquiries remain on going and active.

1 Business engagement

1.1 InvestSefton's website- has a dedicated COVID 19 landing page which is updated regularly with the latest guidance and news from Government, Growth Platform, Sefton Council and other sources of help. Since the site has gone live (Monday 30th March 2020) until Thursday 24th March 2022, the site has had 55,856 unique sessions. www.InvestSefton.com will be updated to reflect support available to businesses as economic recovery continues. The target date for its launch is week beginning 11th June 2022.

1.2 The top two pages visited were financial support and starting a business. The top five countries of origin accessing the website are as UK (76.4), China (10.9%) United States (5.8%) Ireland (1.6%) and Canada (1.2%).

1.3 InvestSefton supported Business Rates during the first month of the delivery of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants, handling over 1,740 recorded calls with a further 400 unrecorded due to the volumes of demand. InvestSefton has handled **5,067 enquiries** from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 29th April 2022.



Of these, 1,767 were in connection with business premises, starting a business, rates and business grant payments/ongoing business support through the pandemic. The remaining 3,327 are of a general business support nature including business start-up and property searches. As can be seen in the above graph most enquiries have come from businesses services such as high street retailers, including cafe's, hair/beauty salons but other sectors are also emerging as owners seek what support will be available in the event of ongoing restrictions.

1.4 The team is reporting increased demand for pre-start-up businesses from a mix of 2age ranges, these are being referred to the LCR Enterprise Hub for further dedicated support. The Advisers are also working with businesses seeking to grow and these will be featured in future case studies.

2.0 Case studies

2.1 The team continues to engage with businesses via one-to-one Teams calls. Recent case studies below:

Family owned-owned Shipping and forwarding business based in Formby and has traded for over 40 years specialising in the chemical industry. The business provides freight forwarding services to blue chip companies transporting by air, land and sea to Europe, the Middle East and USA. They also offer export and import related documentation services to businesses using their services. The business is looking to grow but needs to improve its markets. InvestSefton supported the business by researching their presence on online directories and platforms as well as providing digital marketing training, including SEO, Professional social media platforms and website content.

Digital marketing and publishing company based in Bootle. The business specialises in promoting leisure facilities including pubs and restaurants and licensed premises with rooms to hire. The business has built up a large clientele across the UK with over 11,000 businesses featuring in their online guides. The business is looking to broaden their offer by incorporating more variables and information when people are searching the site including social distancing, venue hire and outdoor facilities. InvestSefton supported the business with a review of current online marketing including website and social media as well as assisting with a New Markets grant application for digital marketing.

Bootle based company franchise offering drain cleaning and maintenance services to both Commercial and Residential properties in the Liverpool City Region. The Business is looking at potential growth but needs additional finance. InvestSefton supported the business by reviewing grant availability to secure funding towards additional capital equipment

Sports massage clinic based in Total Fitness in Aintree and was established in 2020. The business has three treatment rooms and subcontracts with two other therapists who advertise under the clinics brand and social media marketing. Despite the covid related shut down the business has built up its customer base and is now looking to expand their offer for businesses and public sector agencies locally. To do this the business needs to develop its marketing strategy. InvestSefton supported the business by assisting with the drafting of a marketing flyer for local businesses as well as competitor research for website content.

Business Visits with Councillor Marion Atkinson and Peter Dowd MP



Print Room UK Ltd, Bootle



Character Mailing, Aintree

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3Webinars/Events

3.1 InvestSefton’s webinars and events have become a useful vehicle for engaging with businesses on a one to many basis. The team has started the planning and development of events and workshops covering a wide range of demand-led themes. The first was a face-to-face event on Digital support held on 29 March in the Park **Hotel by 11 businesses of which 6 were women.** The “Developing a Digital Roadmap for Your Business”, was run in partnership with Maghull-based Search Online Marketing Ltd, and Liverpool John Moores University. The workshop included a breakout session and a Q&A, topics included:

- Developing a ‘digital roadmap’ for your business
- Digital marketing tools
- Market research & Competitor research
- Digital technologies to improve business operations
- Setting priorities & Measuring impact
- Business support and grants

3.2 Delegates were asked what they learnt at the event and responses included:

“the value of marketing”

“the importance of a good website”

“a very informative session

“I’m a former SEO/digital marketer but still learnt a lot! “

3.3 The team also supported the Active Sefton health and wellbeing event for employers with 11 businesses in attendance. A key area of focus has been digital skills and technology. The team has been supporting the Executive Director (People) who is the Council’s lead for Digital. This includes input to a Digital Skills board and the team is currently developing governance and terms of reference.

4 Inward Investment

4.1 **Mersey Reach** This development has now reached practical completion. Invest Sefton continue to attend the developers marketing meetings to ensure we are up to date with new companies moving in and can offer appropriate support and to work with any Sefton based companies that are expanding. Enquiry levels are good with several of the units under offer to national trade operators. The team is working with the developer on a date for a proposed launch event and PR.

4.2 **Atlantic Park**-Further meetings have been held regarding the development options for this site, with a wider range of unit sizes being considered. This process is being supported by planning colleagues, with a detailed briefing for members to be produced shortly.

4.3 **Southport Business Park**-Ongoing work to support investment in the site. Work with interested local end users and developers is gaining momentum. No3 Southport Business Park (Former Paymentsshield House) – Building works to meet the demand for smaller units to attract occupiers has now been completed with heads of terms already agreed on several of the units. The agents for Seabank House, (former Experian building) are in detailed discussions with one interested purchaser. The team worked with Asset Management and the Landlord representatives to ease conditions within the lease to enable smaller lettings to proceed more quickly and easily, similar changes will also apply to the headlease on No.3

TOURISM UPDATE

1 Destination Marketing

- 1.1 **Summer Campaign** – The main campaign for 2022 will run from now through to the end of August. It will consist of; radio (both FM and digital), digital (Google and Facebook), Outdoor (48 sheet digital sites, Rail escalator panels, passenger panels and poster sites), e-newsletter, PR activity and VisitSouthport website updates
- 1.2 **Design Agency** – Our agency (Gingerhead) has produced a 10-step campaign which runs through to December. Step 3 (June) creative is featured in digital activity, website, e-newsletter etc.
- 1.3 **PR** – Recent coverage secured in Lancashire Life, Group Travel World and online travel and leisure site B-C-ing-U
- 1.4 **Visitor Guide** – the 2022 guide distribution is well underway, with all copies anticipated to be in the hands of potential visitors by the end of July. Stock for local businesses is down to the last few hundred
- 1.5 **Southport Restaurateurs Association** – The 2022 Eating Out Guide has been printed and distributed, requests for top-ups are being actioned. A spring campaign ran through May, consisting of local radio, digital and press advertising
- 1.6 **E-newsletter** - Database stands at circa 50,000 with the addition of 2021 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience.
- 1.7 **Travel Trade** – advertising has been placed in key travel trade publications. Editorial has been secured alongside all ads to date. We are reviewing other opportunities to communicate with this market
- 1.8 **Golf** – We are working with England's Golf Coast to manage the re-scheduling of overseas golf business. 2021 was a difficult year with travel restrictions across the world. However, on a positive note, most of the business has been rewritten into this year rather than lost. Our main issue at present is the availability of tee times on the top courses for overseas groups with Royal Birkdale having no visitor tee times available until October. We are also working with the organisers of the Cazoo Classic being held at Hillside this year.
- 1.9 **Marketing Southport** – membership currently stands at 107 (108 this time last year). We have lost several businesses (closures or COVID affecting cash flow so unable to afford membership fees). However, we have secured new members including Botanic Road Retail Group, Birkdale Boutique Apartments and Rufford old Hall has re-joined.

2 Conferences

- 2.1 With no major conference venue currently, it is difficult to win many medium and large-scale conferences. Proposals submitted for:
- 2.2 Regular meetings take place with the Hospitality Southport group, in general business is buoyant in the weekend hotel leisure market, however midweek and shoulder season remains a concern. All properties are struggling with recruitment. Offer and support is continuing to be provided to small accommodation operators with business reviews. . The support with other properties resulted in a Southport Guest House winning at the Liverpool Tourism Awards, there has not been a winner from Southport since 2009. Following on from that success all properties are keen to engage so that they can be more attractive to be the best they can be and attract more guests across the visitor spectrum.

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3 Events

3.1 The Southport Food & Drink Festival

- The Food & Drink Festival took place over 4 days due to the Queens Jubilee extra Bank Holiday.
- Despite having to cancel the event on the Friday, due to the park being waterlogged, the event was very busy and a success.
- Feedback from the traders has been very positive
- The dates for next year are 2nd – 4th June 2023

3.2 Southport Air Show

- The Air Show tickets sales are up on the 2019 sales at this point.
- Trader bookings are lower than 2019, this may be due to companies no longer trading since Covid-19.
- The Military Village has increased in size with the Army bringing more assets than previously
- There is a strong flying display with the Red Arrows performing both days – this hasn't happened since 2015
- The Korean Air Force Black Eagles are displaying – they are only attending 3 Air Shows and it is their first appearance in the UK since 2012.
- Site set up will commence on Monday 4th July

3.3 The British Musical Fireworks Championship

- 7 competitors have now been confirmed for 2022.
- Infrastructure is being secured and quotes obtained.
- Tickets are on sale

3.4 Operations

3.5 Southport Market - continues to perform strongly, A new outdoor seating area for up to 100 people is now in place and proving very popular. Visually it lets the public know we're open for business, and from a capacity point, it vastly improves our ability to increase turnover.

3.6 The new Sales and Events officer has also been very busy working on a new events plan, that will include new high-quality markets throughout the summer season.

3.7 Markets are taking place, complementing the food offer, encouraging a greater footfall into the market and surrounding area.

3.8 Kings Gardens - Extensive work is taking place in Kings Gardens, these works are being funded by Sefton's Kings Gardens contingency fund

3.9 Works have started with the painting of the Venetian Bridge and work on the shelters is underway, work includes shelters and benches, Landscaping, Lighting column repairs, Play Area maintenance, Tea Rooms and Arts and Craft building repairs. The work will take several months to complete.

3.10 Southport Pier - After going out to tender, the award to replace the pier decking has gone to Rigby's Construction, site will be set up on the 4th of July with work to start on phase one on the 11th of July. The decking will take several years to complete due to the size and cost of the project

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We are also looking at the viability of CCTV and gates on the pier, and continue to work with our colleagues in Planning and Sefton Arc to bring this to fruition.

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