

# Public Document Pack

**Sefton Council** 

[www.sefton.gov.uk](http://www.sefton.gov.uk)

Town Hall  
Trinity Road  
Bootle  
L20 7AE

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

Date: 3 November 2022  
Our Ref:  
Your Ref:

**Please contact:** Paul Fraser  
**Contact Number:** 0151 934 2068

**e-mail:** paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

## **OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER, 2022**

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

<b>Agenda No.</b>	<b>Item</b>
9.	<b>Cabinet Member Reports - September 2022 - October 2022</b> (Pages 147 - 190)  Cabinet Member reports for Communities and Housing, Locality Services; and Regeneration and Skills

Yours sincerely,

D.Johnson

Chief Executive

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b> <b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 08<sup>th</sup> November 2022)</b>		
<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Trish Hardy	Communities and Housing	November 2022

**NEIGHBOURHOODS AND PARTNERSHIPS**

Officers have been working with Crosby Housing to develop a Good Neighbour agreement. They have attended hot spot areas to encourage tenants to sign up to the charter with a view to cleaning up the streets and the rear entries and stopping the fly tipping and Anti-Social Behaviour. The team delivered rear entry fly tipping leaflets, placed dog fouling stickers up and placed a notice on an abandoned vehicle. Work is ongoing with our ASB team, and we will be delivering clean up days going forward.

Additional youth engagement nights have taken place in Bedford Park to tackle Anti-Social Behaviour and engage with young people in the area. Funded via Ward budgets the youth nights actively engaged with young people ranging from 15-19.

Operation Banger planning is complete and the Multi Agency plan is in place. There will be bonfire material removal in the period running up to bonfire night available in hot spot areas, and there will be a coordinated night of activity around Halloween.

The summer Holiday Activity and Food programme was a great success. There were 38 providers ranging from schools and charities to skate parks, performing arts providers and sports camps. The activities saw almost 1500 children attend across the 6 weeks. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive with providers reporting benefits for children with additional needs; those at risk of becoming involved with county lines; and children suffering from anxiety. Additionally, the provision has enabled parents to stay in work and undertake training courses and has allowed schools to switch from term time to 52-week contracts.

Planning for Christmas is well underway. Ward Councillors have been working with the team to identify their Christmas tree and Christmas Lighting needs. Ward budgets will be used to fund Christmas activities.

The following areas are having new cut tree pits installed

Location	Work agreed & ordered
South Rd	Cut Tree Pit to be installed (hard standing)
Birkdale Village	Cut tree pit to be installed (hard standing)
Thornton	Cut Tree pit to be installed (soft standing)

The trees for the sites listed below have been ordered and we are expecting delivery in Mid-November. The table also shows proposed dates of Christmas events.

Location	Tree Size	Funding Agreed	Christmas Event
Birkdale Village	Trader's sourcing tree	Birkdale Ward	End of November TBC
Thornton	26ft Nordmann Fir	Manor Ward	Friday 2 <sup>nd</sup> December 6.45pm
Crosby Village	26ft Nordmann Fir	B-Sands/Victoria Ward	TBC
South Rd	26ft Nordmann Fir	Church Ward	Thurs 24 <sup>th</sup> November 4.45pm
Bootle Strand	20ft Nordmann Fir	Crosby Village Ward	Friday 18 <sup>th</sup> November 5pm

# Agenda Item 9

Seaton Village	25ft Nordmann Fir	Linacre Ward	N/A
Bispham Rd	25ft Nordmann Fir	Norwood	Fri 25 <sup>th</sup> November 5.30pm
Kirkstone Rd	N/A	Ford	Thursday 1 <sup>st</sup> December 5pm
Marian Sq.	N/A	St Oswalds	Tues 29 <sup>th</sup> November 6.30pm

## Welfare Reform

### Food bank

1st April 2022 – 1 <sup>st</sup> August 2022	South Sefton	Southport
Total Vouchers received	2038	718
Adults Fed	2588	973
Children Fed	1478	560
Total Fed	4066	1533
Crisis Type	Low income – 1458 vouchers presented 2912 people fed	Low income – 376 vouchers presented 780 people fed
Family Type	Single 1186 vouchers presented 58.19%	Single 349 vouchers presented 48.61%
Age group	25-64: 2279	25 – 64: 848

## Hate Crime

The Council is working with the Liverpool City Region Pride Foundation and the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to consider introducing the “You’re Safe Here” training in Sefton. This training is aimed at making the night-time economy a safe place for LGBT people.

## Equalities

The Council have maintained the Navajo Charter Mark after the reassessment interviews which took place in July. The Corporate Equality Group and Cabinet Member are reviewing the assessment report and will be recommending actions to address the issues raised.

The Corporate Equality Group have recommended to Cabinet Member that the Council join the Inclusive Companies network. This is a cross industry network harnessing best practices & innovation to drive inclusion for all. This will build on the work already carried out as part of the Navajo Charter Mark, Disability Confident Charter Mark etc.

A workshop took place on the 26th of September at Crosby Lakeside and delivered the following objectives:

- Raise the profile and reinforce the importance of the CEG (Corporate Equalities Group) and other groups
- Launch and promote National Inclusion Week, Black History Month, and other key events
- Share updates, progress, and actions from the CEG and other groups
- Capture and share good practice and lessons learned from other organisations
- Discuss and inform the shape of a future strategy for Equalities and Diversity

The 26th of September was chosen as the date for this event as it was the start of National Inclusion Week, an event aimed at celebrating inclusion and encouraging employers to create inclusive workplaces. During the week **Page 148** launched its new LGBT and Disability staff support groups, and there was a meeting of the existing Diverse Ethnic Background group.

# Agenda Item 9

To support Black History Month a web page was set up which contained information on events and activities that took place across the community. These included the following:

- A performance by Nwoko Arts at The Strand on 15<sup>th</sup> October to tie in with the World Reimagined globe that was installed there. This was supported by local Ward funds.
- An event at The Atkinson organised by Southport Against Racism on 22<sup>nd</sup> October, again supported by local ward funds.
- Messages sent out via the Council communications channels
- eLearning courses offered at a discounted rate

In response to Motions recently passed by Council (race equality declaration of intent and tackling transphobia) the actions from both motions are currently being incorporated into the new equalities strategy.

CEG chair Stephen Watson has been liaising with Cabinet Member regarding terms of reference and membership for the proposed Race Equality Monitoring Group.

Officers have continued to promote awareness days and are working with our City Region colleagues on a joint LCR calendar.

Since the motion was passed, we have successfully reassessed for the Navajo LGBT charter mark. We have also established a new staff group for LGBT staff.

Officers are working with the office of the Police and Crime Commissioner to investigate rolling out the LCR Pride Foundation “You’re Safe Here” training in Sefton. This is aimed at the night-time economy and ensuring people feel safe.

Hate crime training including transphobia will be delivered to members on the 2<sup>nd</sup> November.

## Anti-Social Behaviour

The table below shows the total number of ASB cases referred into the team since 1st April 2022. Of these 360 referrals, 180 progressed to open cases, and the remaining referrals were either categorised as not ASB or referred to other agencies such as Noise Nuisance.

### Incident Category by Year 2022 : Sefton ASB Unit

Sum of Incident Occasions	Category	Animal related problems	Criminal damage / vandalism	Drug / Alcohol Related	Drug / alcohol related / dealing	Intimidation / Harassment	Litter / rubbish	Noise	Nuisance behaviour	On the grounds of	Rowdy	Rowdy behaviour	Street Drinking	Vehicle related nuisance	Grand Total
Row Labels															
2022/23		4	16	15	15	50	5	126	9	49	17	40	4	10	360
<b>Grand Total</b>		<b>4</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>50</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>126</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>40</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>360</b>

# Agenda Item 9

## RESSETTLEMENT SERVICES

### Homes for Ukraine

#### School impact

Of the children (aged 2-18) that have arrived in Sefton to date, 73% have been placed at school settings. Of the children that have been placed at a school, there have been no major issues and the schools have been incredibly supportive and accommodating. We are finding that families are requesting schools where other Ukrainian children attend but are equally understanding if we inform them there is no room at that school or in that year group. The remaining 27% of children are mostly either in early years settings or have only just arrived.

Funding to support children in schools through the Department for Education (DfE) has been confirmed. This will provide much needed support to Ukrainian pupils that speak little, or no, English.

#### Resettlement Team

The Resettlement Team is in place and is responsible for implementing the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Sefton.

A Homeless Prevention Officer, linked from the Council's Housing Options Service, will work with the Resettlement Team to support guests and hosts started in post during October 2022.

The welcome centre in Crosby (Crosby Ukrainian Hub) has become the focal point for Ukrainian refugees in Sefton, and in some cases beyond. The Resettlement Team work closely with the welcome centre and attend multi-agency events there on a weekly basis.

#### Accommodation

Work is underway in modelling accommodation needs of guests over the next quarter. Some guests have expressed interest in finding their own accommodation, some wish to return to Ukraine, some are comfortable with their current arrangements. The modelling exercise will help determine the level of demand for accommodation in Sefton and where that may be needed in the borough.

The result of this work will help inform how to meet the accommodation needs of guests wishing to remain in Sefton longer term.

Where there have been relationship breakdowns guests are rematched with new hosts. No Ukrainian refugees have had to come through the homelessness route. The Resettlement Team continue to make contact and visit households that have expressed an interest in becoming hosts. Although many households have come forward, we are planning some additional communications to promote new expressions of interest from households.

From 10 August 2022 the Homes for Ukraine scheme was expanded to eligible children to join the scheme and travel to the UK to stay with an adult relative as an unaccompanied minor. The guidance associated with this arrangement requires several pre-arrival checks from the Home Office followed by joint working between the Council's resettlement team and Children's Social Care. The process follows the process Page 150, fostering arrangements and joint procedures have been agreed with Sefton Children's Services.

## LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICE

### **National Portfolio Organisation funding bid submitted**

A funding bid to Arts Council England has been submitted to turn the Human Libraries project into an accredited National Portfolio Organisation. The bid is for £200,000 funding each year for a minimum of 3 years and if successful funding would start in April 2023. This round of funding has seen a huge increase in applications and the Arts Council have already received 1700 applications. As a back-up, a follow up bid to the National Lottery Reaching Communities Fund is being considered.

### **Language Exchange Project - Colour Of Pomegranates**

Sefton Libraries are working with Venus and the Red Cross to offer sanctuary seeking women a space to practice their English speaking and listening skills with native speakers, through creative activity and conversation.

We are bringing together those learning English for the first time, and local fluent speakers who would like to learn about different cultures and languages and offer friendship and support to women who may be newly-arrived in the UK.

This programme follows the Xenia model of holding a space for exchange between women, and therefore is a women-only session to allow women from all cultural backgrounds to participate. The first session took place at Bootle Library where participants practiced their language skills by exchanging recipes with native Bootleians.

Alongside the language exchange we have been offering creative sessions, led by artists including Jessica el Mal and Ibukun Baldwin, as well as our library and project team.

The sessions are run on a Saturday morning at Bootle Library and currently have 30 regular attendees

### **The Summer Reading Challenge**

Over the summer Libraries took part in the annual Summer Reading Challenge with this year's theme being 'Gadgeteers'. This year staff have worked hard to re-invigorate the project following two disappointing years in lockdown and post-lockdown.

This year 2670 children took part in the summer reading challenge across our six library sites. The children had to read at least six library books and make four visits to the library to earn their certificate and Children's University points. Along the way children were gifted book bags, stickers, pencils and bookmarks. The numbers taking part exceed the pre-pandemic 2019 total, which library staff are delighted about!

Libraries hosted 162 activity sessions for families, including FizzPop science sessions, interactive storytelling sessions and all manner of craft making session. Crosby library welcomed 75 children to a Slime making session, only stopping when they ran out of ingredients!

### **Communications**

Events promoted via the Council website, TPage 151 website, The Atkinson social media, through the press and Liverpool City Region

# Agenda Item 9

## Theatre Programme

Helen Forrester *Twopence to Cross the Mersey* - adapted from the author's million-selling autobiography this stunning period drama tells the story of local life during the Great Depression of the 1930s. The show will feature 6 performances commencing from Tues 1st Nov.

The Atkinson is also delighted to announce that TV and Film celebrity Patsy Kensit will star as the Genie of the Lamp in our Christmas pantomime production of *Aladdin*. This will be the third season of working in association with LHK Productions and the cast will also feature some familiar favourite performers from previous shows.

## Museum Programme

This November will mark the hundredth anniversary of Howard Carter opening the tomb of Tutankhamun in Egypt's The Valley of the Kings. A series of events will celebrate the occasion and promote our **Goodison Egyptology Collection**. Activities will include talks, tours, family friendly activities and Egyptology classes. There will also be the chance to 'meet' the amazing Mrs Goodison herself in the guise of a role-playing performer/teacher.

## Exhibitions Programme

### **The Unselfish Selfie Art Exhibition 8 October 2022 – 4 March 2023**

The Atkinson is working with guest curator and artist Nahem Shoa to present the exhibition. Alongside historic self-portraits, the exhibition shines a light on self-portraits by contemporary artists, who traditionally have not been given an equal voice and remained largely invisible, particularly women artists and artists of colour.

To discuss the wider themes of exhibition Nahem Shoa will deliver a talk on 9<sup>th</sup> November entitled 'Why Do Artists Paint Themselves?' His presentation will explore the meaning behind some of the greatest Self Portraits, from the 14th century to present day, discovering why they remain fresh and relevant, even now in the 21st Century.

## Southport Library

The Atkinson celebrated **National Poetry Day** on Thurs 6th October with a special event linked to the art exhibition 'The Poetry of Trees'. Set amidst the fine art collection the evening featured readings from poet Gillian Floyd. She revealed how trees and nature have offered her inspiration over the course of her writing career.

## Other news

**Book of Condolence:** The Atkinson supported the Council's contribution to 'Operation London Bridge' by hosting a Book of Condolence throughout the period of national mourning. Collectively the Atkinson team provided a space for intimate reflection within the foyer of the building and offered a respectful welcome to those residents wishing to record their thoughts and feelings at this poignant time. A total of 1,101 entries were made across the period.

## **Communications**

Events promoted via the Council website, The Atkinson website, The Atkinson social media, through the press and Liverpool City Region



## HOUSING

### **Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027)**

Sefton's Housing Strategy was approved by Cabinet on 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022. This new document will help to build upon the previous housing priorities and address the significant local and national housing challenges that Sefton's residents face over the coming years.

The new housing strategy recognises and acknowledges that the Council has an intrinsic role to play, by ensuring that housing provides 'a secure foundation for individuals to live the lives they want to live. Finding the right home, in the right place, can be an essential platform for people seeking to support their families and sustain work'

The key themes and housing priorities from Sefton's previous strategy have been reviewed and continue to remain relevant in this new version. This ensures a measure of continuity in delivery and helps to advance our successful outcomes, previously achieved. Over the period of this strategy our housing priorities include:

- *Driving housing quality in communities and neighbourhoods;*
- *Meeting people's housing needs;*
- *Enabling people to live independently;*
- *Tackling barriers to obtaining suitable housing for the most vulnerable and ensuring equal access to housing services;*
- *Effectively utilising Council assets to support housing delivery.*

The themes outlined above are broad and a key next step is to develop an Action Plan which will specifically outline how these priorities will be delivered, making it clear the timescales and who is responsible for this. The Action Plan will be published on the Council's website and reviewed annually to track progress against the targets that are set out.

### **Cost of Living Crisis**

As colleagues will be aware the Council has been delivering an ambitious retrofit programme for some time and the latest phase of this, the Local Authority Delivery 2 (LAD2) scheme is due to be completed at the end of September with all targets met. In total work has been done to 222 properties through the LAD2 scheme, saving residents on average £551 per annum. The Energy Team continues to bid for external funding to carry out further retrofit work with work underway in the borough under the Sustainable Warmth Programme which includes LAD 3 and Home Upgrade Grants. The work takes a 'fabric first' approach with a focus on improving the thermal efficiency of properties through insulation upgrades.

The service has recently been successful in an external grant application which will allow 2 additional specialist Housing Compliance Officers to be employed for 12 months to take enforcement action against Private Landlords who do not comply with the Energy Efficiency (Private Rented Property) (England and Wales) Regulations which establish a Minimum Energy Efficiency Standard (MEES) for privately rented properties.

In addition, in preparation for what is anticipated to be a challenging winter period for residents the service is engaging with registered housing providers operating in the borough to understand what they are doing to help Sefton residents so that the Council is better able to signpost residents to the help that is available.

### **Extra Care Housing**

Work continues to progress in relation to delivering several Extra Care Schemes to enable us to meet our target of 1306 units across the borough by 2036. I am pleased to report that progress has been made on several potential schemes across the borough. In particular, I am pleased to report that a scheme to develop 91 Extra Care Homes and 67 for Affordable Rent is about to commence on a site off Hawthorne Road in Bootle, and that the proposed development of 90 Extra Care Homes, 40 for Affordable Rent and Council facility providing 8 short-term assessment units at Sandbrook Road in Ainsdale has now secured planning consent.

To support the provision of extra care housing Sefton's first Extra Care Nominations Policy, process and system has now been drafted and will be going to the Public Consultation and Engagement board in November and will be presented to Cabinet for approval summer 2023 with a view to being implemented from September 2023.

### **Children's and Adults Social Care Support**

The Housing Service is working closely with colleagues in the Adult Social Care and Children's Social Care Services to meet the housing need for more specialist type of accommodation in the borough.

The following work is currently underway:

- 1) Monthly meetings between Strategic Housing, Children's Social Care, Adults Social Care and Commissioning.
- 2) Weekly update with Children's commissioning specifically around housing
- 3) Quarterly strategic meetings are being held with key housing partners within the borough around all housing needs across the borough including specialist social care needs
- 4) Advanced discussions are underway with a registered provider to bring forward emergency children's accommodation
- 5) A review of council assets and accommodation to ascertain if any would be suitable in meeting the identified needs
- 6) Bid to DfE for capital funding to support the redevelopment of a council owned property, anticipated decision in principle week commencing 24<sup>th</sup> October 2022

The Housing Service is also working with colleagues to develop a Specialist and Supported Housing Prospectus to better engage the market around specialist housing need in the borough with a view to generating innovative approaches to assisting the Council to meet its duty's.

The prospectus is currently in draft and includes an assessment of our current accommodation profile, future housing needs and requirements including location and type, and aims around partnership approach to meeting these demands. The document also ensures that the 'voice of the child' is heard in relation to future housing requirements.

## **Private Sector Housing**

### *Enforcement and Licencing*

On 6<sup>th</sup> October Cabinet approved the re-designation of both the Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes for a further 5 years until end Feb 2028. The current schemes that come to an end in Feb 2023, have proved successful.

Almost 3,300 licences have been issued under the current schemes, which is 130% of the number estimated to require a licence at the start of schemes almost 5 years ago. The team continue to enforce against those landlords that have still failed to apply for a licence and against landlords that are in breach of licence conditions and have served 14 Final Civil Penalty fine notices since 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022. The licensing schemes have proved invaluable in providing an up-to-date source of data to enable the Housing Standards Team to contact private sector landlords quickly and efficiently if and when needed, and has enabled us to target our activities.

There have been 84 requests for service relating to poor housing standards issues since 1<sup>st</sup> August 2022 . The majority have been dealt with informally, however 14 cases have resulted in formal action. 2 properties have been closed with the service of 1 x Emergency Prohibition Order and 1 x Prohibition Order. 12 other properties have required formal notices in relation to serious health & safety hazards.

With regards to vacant properties the team has started 'enforced sale' action on another long-term vacant property and one long-term vacant property (which had been a problematic HMO until the Housing Standards Team enforced its closure) has been sold at auction with a view to it now being renovated to provide good accommodation.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues, and officers have attended 7 Unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments in August and 5 in September. A Condition Survey has also been completed on the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site and work to address the issues that were highlighted has been programmed.

## **Rough Sleepers & Homeless services**

The number of presentations to the Housing Options Team is still high and more households are presenting due to being served an eviction notice. Housing Options received approximately 680 telephone calls per week during Quarter 1 in 2022, an increase of 12% from the previous quarter.

Each year each Local Authority is obliged to advise the DCLG as to the extent of Rough Sleeping in the borough on an annual basis, and this is done through a Rough Sleeper Count. I am pleased to report that during the count which took place in November 2021 no rough sleepers were observed in the borough. Planning for this year's Rough Sleeper Count has started and the 'typical night' chosen for the estimate is the evening of the 9<sup>th</sup> November to the morning of the 10<sup>th</sup> November. Two spotlight count teams will carry out a physical count within south Sefton and north Sefton focussing on those areas of interest to the Rough Sleeper Outreach Team.

I would also like to report to committee that a recent visit by DLUHC's Homelessness & Rough Sleeper Advisor, Alastair Reeves, to Sefton to inspect the homeless service providers was particularly successful, with Alastair providing the following comments on Sefton's commissioned homeless services:

*'Overall, I was so impressed with all the services and people I met. Clearly it is no accident that you have managed such a significant reduction in the number of rough sleepers seen out regularly in recent years and it felt to me that there was a real commitment to making sure the interventions were as sustainable as possible, which should mean that entrenched rough sleeping can be a thing of the past in Sefton.'*

Page 156

*The two hostels in Bootle run by Bosco were both impressive resources I thought, and the new crash bed area in Bosco House particularly is looking good and is exactly the sort of change that we are supportive of. As a wannabe gardener I was super impressed with the garden area as well, which is the best maintained one I have seen!*

*It was really good to sit and chat with Carlie and Mary at the Venus Centre, which is such a fantastic project and takes such a forward looking, psychologically informed approach that is exactly the sort of thing we try and encourage more of across the country. I know from talking to Jason how impressed he was with the way in which the Everyone In project was run which applied those principles during such a challenging time and it is fantastic to hear some of the positive stories that resulted from that period, especially given the challenging winter that it feels like is ahead of us.*

*The 2 New Start projects were also excellent, really smart, high quality and forward-looking projects that are a credit to the managers, staff and commissioners. Part of my job is to highlight good practice across the country and all the Sefton accommodation projects I saw would be great examples for others to follow.*

*I thought the Excel project we visited in Southport was also a great example of dispersed accommodation for vulnerable adults and the staff were really impressive. It was interesting to hear of some of the challenges with shared Housing First clients and I'll take that away to discuss with commissioners of that service.*

*Finally, I thought the staff at the Light for Life Hub were really impressive and clearly take as holistic and preventative approach to working with rough sleepers as is possible. Having all the services that are delivered out of that building in the one place is, I think, the best way to offer a joined-up service and it clearly works.'*

### **Council Housing Programme**

Work on the new Council Housing Programme is progressing well and consultants are working with the Housing Service to develop a Business Plan for the programme, alongside making arrangements to procure a Management Agent to help manage the first of the Council's new housing stock at Buckley Hill in Netherton. Procurement of the Management Agent is expected to commence next month and the Business Plan will be brought to Cabinet before the end of the year.

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)</b>		
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Date</b>
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	November 2022

## **Operational In-House Services**

### **Catering and Building Cleaning Services**

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.

Two schools are returning to our Cleaning Service in the coming weeks which is a positive outcome.

This issue is likely to be further exacerbated once the annual pay award for 2022/23 is finalised. The current offer would give most catering staff a pay increase of 10.4% and most cleaning staff an increase of 10.5%.

Recruitment of staff in both services remains very difficult in certain parts of the Borough with some posts receiving no applications, causing operational difficulties. It is hoped that the forthcoming pay award will make such roles more attractive to potential applicants.

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.

# Agenda Item 9

## **Burials and Cremations**

The Burials and Cremations team have received a high standard of recognition from the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) for Southport Crematorium following an inspection of the site found that all areas inspected were deemed excellent. The service has continuously improved by reducing complaints and ensuring an improved standard of service.

A new contract is currently in progress for the control and safety of all memorial headstones across all of our burial sites, and further training of a wider staff cohort on the use of cremation equipment is underway to ensure sustainability of service provision for the future.

The service is now fully staffed following the completion of a restructure in July 2022 and savings realised through that restructure has enabled the service to employ 2 apprentices to give back to young people and allow them to learn new skills for the future.

Thornton Crematorium and Cemetery has had some larger maintenance works undertaken to ensure correct service provision for the future including roadway repairs to major potholes on the drives and new flooring laid within the Crematory to ensure a safe operation of the cremation process.

## **Sefton ARC and Careline**

As part of the service review that has been underway, an ICT project is underway to improve network switches across all Sefton ARC functions and provide additional control measures for cyber security.

The service recently received a successful assessment for NSI Fire Technical Alarm provision. The assessment report included the following feedback:

*"I have reviewed your NSI Portal and have noted there are no improvement observations which require a response submitting to the NSI - Fantastic result!!"*

The Careline successfully moved over to a cloud-based platform on the 26 October 2022. Not only did this bring the team together in a new office location within the Sefton ARC building, more importantly, it has significantly increased the resilience of the Careline Service as a whole. The team are now working more efficiently together, and work will continue to make further improvements, with the overall focus on improving processes and working towards our TSA accreditation which is due at the end of November. Work is continuing with transition from analogue to digital alarms across the borough with many analogue lifelines being replaced by Digital Smart Hubs. The move onto the new platform will also provide the opportunity to explore other compatible digital products.

The next project for the Careline team will be the implementation of a new database which will significantly improve the way in which the whole team works. The database, which is already used within Sefton Equipment Stores, will allow us to automate stock monitoring of TECS kit, provide a single point of contact to manage customer information as well as providing more accurate reports into our overall performance.

## **Waste Management and Street Cleansing**



The Overview and Scrutiny Committee asked for a specific report on the following service areas for November:

## **Weed Control**

As with many areas nationwide, Sefton has had issues with weed growth across varying areas of the Borough. Whilst there are certainly challenges Boroughwide, the weed growth has been particularly prevalent within the South substantially.

This was given significant focus through the formation of a MRG in 2021 dedicated to exploring these issues and seeking resolution, including the production of a commissioned assessment report from APSE. The South of the Borough has increased street furniture, is significantly more industrialised and high volume of commercial traffic creates increased detritus in channels. In turn, this creates significant seed beds for germination within short periods of time, particularly with warm and wet weather conditions becoming prevalent.

With effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022, the management of the weed control programme delivered via a contractor was moved from the Highway Service to the Street Cleansing Service as part of recommendations made by the MRG.

All street cleansing staff are aware of the necessity to scrape out weeds encompassed within their daily duties, the task is resource intensive. Additional resource has been applied to this task through the recent budget uplift.

A robust monitoring process has been introduced to ensure contract compliance in addition to regular contract review meetings. The programme delivery schedule has now almost completed the fourth spray of the season.

The contractor provides a daily update of areas sprayed and officers undertake spot inspections of those locations to evidence 'die back'.

Failure of the weed control chemical is reported back to the contractor for respray at their costs. A full weed removal programme on the identified trunk roads is also underway.

## **Street Cleansing Provision**

Synopsis of the service prior to April 2022:

The street cleansing service operate a Monday – Friday service delivery model, with the exception of a weekend provision to the tourist designated locations within Southport. Small selection of locations of high footfall or night-time economy are serviced outside of the Monday – Friday service delivery.

The service delivers mechanical cleansing (both channel and footpath) and manual cleansing.

The current assumed frequency for mechanical channel sweeping is quoted as a 12–14-week rota, however due to only having 3 large mechanical sweepers on the fleet this was not being achieved.

# Agenda Item 9

For a Borough the size of Sefton, with the density of population, high leaf fall areas in addition to the highly industrialised locations and docks of the south, this is an ineffective timeframe to address the deterioration of the local environmental quality.

The large mechanical sweeping fleet requires increase to efficiently rectify this issue. Additionally, a 'needs based' provision should be considered rather than a 'one size fits all' approach to fully maximise outcomes.

The employees who deliver the manual cleansing service have a keen focus on the litter picking aspect of their role, however, the wider understanding of 'street cleansing' required reinvigoration. A culture of not seeing the wider issues within the 'street scene' such as accumulation of leaves, fly posting, weed growth or graffiti has developed and this contributes to the deterioration of the local environmental quality or the 'broken window effect' in many locations.

## Litter bins:

The litter bin replacement budget does not sit within the service area but is encompassed within 'Ward budgets' under the control of the relevant elected members.

There is no agreed boroughwide 'Litter Bin Installation Policy' which many Councils have adopted with clear criteria to adhere to. Although not an exhaustive list, examples of which may contain:

- Areas of high footfall
- Grazing route from shop to school
- Night-time economy locations
- Area has generated X number of complaints within an agreed period of assessment

A scoring mechanism is usually attributed to each criteria, and if the installation request meets the agreed threshold, then a litter bin is installed. It provides an equitable approach and can be clearly explained to residents.

Future consideration may wish to be given to a Boroughwide litter bin renewal and replacement programme by undertaking a condition survey of litter bins to ensure they are fit for purpose in terms of capacity and review style/aesthetics moving forward to promote uniformity of street furniture etc.

Over the years, differing suppliers have been used and now there are a selection of styles and sizes in situ across the Borough. These could be phased out over an agreed programme for example, with the aim of improvements across the 'street scene' if central management of the budget was an option.

## Fly tipping:

There is an excessive fly tipping problem/culture within the Borough.

An O&S report in 2021 assessing enforcement provision made a recommendation of an increased presence of uniformed enforcement officers. If introduced, the focus of said enforcement would be **Page 162** weighted towards 'environmental

enforcement' encompassing incidents of fly tipping and visiting commercial premises to ensure that they have legitimate waste disposal arrangements in place.

All UK local authorities are required to collect data relating to the number of incidents of fly tipping within their Borough and submit the quarterly return for Government data collecting purposes. This is done via the web based municipal waste data system Waste Data Flow.

Within all local authorities, when identifying the data required for incidents of fly tipping it is essential that accurate data is captured. There are two sets of data that need to be amalgamated and submitted to accurately reflect the volume of work that is being undertaken and also show the scale for the problem for service led decision making. It's valuable management information when attributing resources to tackle the problem and showing trends.

The first set of data is derived from incidents of fly tipping reported by members of the public either online or via the Contact Centre. The second set of data is from the operational teams themselves who should complete a fly tipping log of any incidents that they identify during the course of their duties that has not already been raised as a formal 'job ticket'.

The Street Cleansing service in Sefton did not undertake the team recording functionality prior to April 2022 therefore the accurate scale of the problem has been masked in terms of data analysis. This has now been rectified.

Improvements since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 as follows:

Increase of large mechanical sweeper fleet from 3 to 4 – the focus of the new round is the South of the Borough, areas of high footfall and locations with high deterioration of local environmental quality.

Rear entry teams have increased from 4 teams to 5, they have been allocated their own 'zone' and will work on a continuous loop within the designated zones. This means that the teams will begin to take accountability for their own work area and also be a presence within the locations, able to respond to issues timely.

A small pilot project was undertaken within the Litherland Ward which incorporated the full removal of vegetation from the rear entries following fly tipping removal. Whilst this was a costly undertaking as the vegetation removal was undertaken by our weed control contractors, it did provide an excellent outcome. Sadly, it did not deter residents from continuing to fly tip in the rear entries in some areas, often as quickly as within a day of the final clearance.

3 x 'Glutton' machines have been purchased and deployed across the Borough, they have both suction and wash facilities. Additionally, the teams have been provided with additional equipment such as blowers and hand tools. Significant low base epicormic growth from street trees has been underway to prevent trapped litter and detritus.

There are currently 12 vacancies within the Street Cleansing Service, 5 are newly funded through the recent revenue up  
Page 163  
vacancies that had not been

# Agenda Item 9

filled when the former post holder exited the organisation. Recruitment is underway with a focus on internal opportunities in the first instance before external advertisement. Agency staff have been utilised in their interim period until all permanent positions are filled.

The structure of how the teams are deployed on a daily basis is now under review to create a zonal approach that mirrors the model of the rear entry teams where possible, again to provide accountability and a regular area presence.

The service continues to establish a working relationship with National Highways to fulfil our statutory requirement for manual and mechanical cleansing on the A5036.

## **Waste Containment Consultation**

For clarity, the initial Waste Containment Consultation was part of a Cleansing Services Review Report in 2018/19 proposed by the then Head of Locality Services.

The approach to the introduction of communal bins and/or wheelie bins for alternative weekly collection (where infrastructure allowed) to enable the eradication of black sack waste collection methods was part of a number of service improvement proposals at that time.

There were a number of successes following this review and a percentage of properties benefited from receiving individual household wheelie bins. However, the low number of communal bin sites that were created and installed proved far more controversial. There was significant opposition to the sites and furthermore, they attracted fly tipping, unauthorised disposal of commercial waste and unsightly style of waste disposal as some users did not contain waste appropriately or ensure apertures were completely closed following use.

A combination of management instability within the service and the COVID pandemic prevented the project being rolled out any further and this meant that the proposals to provide additional bins – be they individual wheelie bins per household or communal sites – effectively lay dormant for a period of time until late 2021 when the project was re-established and a consultation of the remaining proposed electoral wards took place in early 2022.

The results of which to date are as follows:

### Overview

The consultation area was made up of 8,372 premises over 187 individual streets. These premises spanned across 7 electoral wards in total.

Of those 8,372 premises, the Council received 1,209 returns, resulting in just over a 14% participation rate. These 1,209 responses included data collected from online consultation, emails, calls, elected member enquiries, MPs, and petitions.

Whilst every effort was made to address match the email responses a small number could not be identified. Mapping details have been retained to demonstrate overall totals and area totals split into preference.

### Engagement and Consultation Online Survey Results

- Total of 983 returns from those who participated online

- 62 without unique code submission therefore input is officially deemed as 'spoilt' as the data cannot be linked to an address

## Communications Received outside of the Online Process (Direct Contact)

- Total of 400 emails received from various sources, including residents, elected members, MP's.
- Of those received, 277 households indicated a preference to remain on a sack collection method
- 15 households wanted to take up alternative weekly collections (AWC) utilising wheelie bins
- 4 households expressed a preference for the installation of communal bin sites
- 104 either objected to the consultation or refused both options
- There were a number of petitions received from the L20 area, all of which expressed a desire to remain upon sack collections.

## From all combined responses both online and direct communications:

Of the 1,209 the following results:

- Communal Bins - 123 households in support
- AWC (individual household wheelie bins) - 783 households in support
- Remain on sack collections – 248 households expressed this desire

Resulting data illustrates:

- Participation in the online consultation was extremely low
- Data gathered from both sources demonstrated little or no appetite for the implementation of Communal Bins across this area of Sefton
- Direct communication results confirms that there is an appetite from a percentage of residents to remain on a sack collection method
- A small number made preference to AWC and wanting a wheelie bin

## Resulting Actions

Benefit analysis regarding moving forward, including further discussions on appetite for change is required.

Whilst there remains a preference from a significant cohort of residents to remain in a sack collection style service, it must be acknowledged that that does not provide the most appropriate methodology in terms of waste containment, control of volume of waste, not does it promote recycling.

Consideration could be given to adopting a 'Waste Containment' approach for the Borough in terms of household waste collection which would need to include significant behavioural change and education to improve

Any requests for communal bins have not been progressed following the announcement by the Cabinet Member at Budget Council in March 2022 that this method of collection will not be pursued.

Upon request from ward members, any communal bins that had already been installed as part of the initial pilot and are no longer required have been removed and residents have reverted back to sack collection. There are a low number of sites

# Agenda Item 9

where communal bins have remained, these were site specific requests supported by ward members.

Whilst residents remain on sack collections, there may be merit in providing storage vessels to all residents who require them. This will help to contain waste until sacks are presented upon day of collection.

Further assessments for those areas requesting AWC collections to identify round remodelling and route optimisation is underway.

However, this is a significant undertaking from a resource perspective which will require a controlled project plan of implementation.

Route optimisation surveys have been conducted on all roads identified within the project, this equates to 187 streets containing 8,372 premises. This was an extensive process as we needed to incorporate areas within existing rounds and in some cases introduce new round collection days where necessary.

This phase is almost complete, and feedback will be provided through the Cabinet Member Briefing process and subsequently to ward members, providing information regarding any the properties that are recommended to transfer to AWC collection.

Following the conclusion of discussions with ward members, all residents affected by proposed changes will be written to providing the implementation plan for their address. Corporate comms messages will also be distributed. A definitive timescale for the conclusion of this project is still to be agreed.

## **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.
- There is little change in the progress of the Port of Liverpool Access scheme. National Highways have confirmed that they are concentrating on updating their traffic modelling to take account of the impact of changes in traffic patterns resulting from Covid. They have confirmed in their latest update, from July 22, that 'this detailed and important work is likely to take approximately 12 months to complete' and therefore they will not be in a position to publish an updated project timeline, including when they intend to formally consult the local community and the wider general public their proposals, until this traffic modelling work is completed. The statutory public consultation needs to be undertaken in advance of the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate. This is unlikely to take place until late 2023 at the earliest.

### **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 was agreed and the

spend. The settlement 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.

- Consideration has been given to a programme for 23-24 and beyond to ensure there are no delays in delivery. This programme will be agreed by the LCRCA in February 2023 and will shortly be reviewed and agreed with Cabinet Member.
- 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 Transport Strategy for the borough. Some initial baselining work has been completed and the outcome will be shared, initially with Members. The Council is seeking a report, the aim of which will be to provide a quantification of the current transport related carbon position for the Council and a future trajectory for reductions towards Net Zero. The consultants are also identifying the next steps, which will include an engagement exercise. Progress is also being made on the development of an Active Travel and E-mobility Strategies for the Borough.
- In order to identify potential improvement to the Council's walking and cycling network a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan is being developed. Proposals for stakeholder engagement will be presented to the Consultation and Engagement Panel in early November. A number of engagement sessions have already been held with specific interest groups and some initial plans developed for helping inform the engagement process.
- The preliminary design of the schemes to be included in the Full Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor has been completed and discussed with Active Travel England. The detailed design work is now progressing on both schemes and the final drawings will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. Part of the Maritime Corridor scheme is likely to be funded from the Levelling Up Fund, following the success of the transport bid. There is some pressure to have the scheme delivered as soon as the FBC is approved, and therefore procurement options are being examined. Some further engagement to ensure that local Members, businesses and residents are sighted on the proposals and have an ability to shape them is planned for November - January.
- Design work is continuing on improvements to 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. Discussions will have been undertaken with local Ward Members and Maghull Town Council on the details of both schemes and further consultation with the wider public is programmed.
- In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been completed, including the installation of lighting. Some defect works are planned for completion in January 2023.

# Agenda Item 9

- Design work on the first phase of public realm project identified within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) has begun. Some targeted consultation with local businesses is currently underway. This should ensure that all immediate and long-term implication are known.
- Works has commenced on the detailed design of the highway works which will support the development proposed for the Green Car Park which is subject the Levelling Up Fund. The works are aimed at reducing severance and improving access to the town centre. Discussions are ongoing with relevant authorities over the potential phasing of the works.
- Initial work has also been commissioned to review access to the Strand in Bootle, in order to help shape initial work associated with the re-imagining of the centre.

## Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2022/23 was approved some months ago and will shortly be updates and submitted to Cabinet Member for approval.

## Sustainable Transport

- The proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle route through Crosby Coastal Park were not approved by the Council's Planning Department despite the public consultation indicating overall support.

The perceived safety issue which was cited as the reason for refusal has been further examined and a number of alternative options examined with a preferred solution developed. Some further engagement has been held with representatives from the coastal Forum, residents' groups and Ward Members. Further meetings are planned which could help shape further plans. The LCRCA have indicated that there is a limited extension to the funding window which allows time for a modified scheme, which addresses the Planning Committees concerns to be submitted to Planning. A procurement exercise has previously been completed and may have to be repeated prior to works will commence if and when approval is granted. Habitat improvement works will also be delivered as part of the scheme should approval be granted,

- The Department for Transport has confirmed that the funding secured from tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund can be used for proposals to improve the cycle and waking facilities on part of the Formby Bypass. The design has been agreed with Active Travel England, and tenders invited. Works are programmed to commence in December 2022 and completed by March 2023.
- 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 is 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 and a dedicated officer, seconded from Sustrans, will shortly commence the selection and engagement work.



- The LCRCA have commissioned consultants to commence works on the Green Bus Corridor, which includes the consideration of proposals for Bus Priority and active travel on the No 53 bus corridor which includes Stanley Road. Initial meetings have been held with the Council and information provided to the consultant.

## **Highway Development Control**

### **Planning Applications**

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the recent turnover in staffing resources, increased by the fact that no suitable applications were received for the vacant senior highway development engineer post.

The applications include sites identified in the Local Plan and continue to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department. A total of 246 applications have been responded to in June to August 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 – 39
  - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 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 – 18
  - 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 63 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 by February 2023.

### **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.

# Agenda Item 9

- 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 collaborating 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 active travels 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 completed, tenders have been received and appraised for the Crosby Coastal Park 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. Discussions have commenced with Network Rail over this scheme

## **Highway Asset Management**

### **Winter Maintenance**

- The winter maintenance policy for this year was approved by Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 28<sup>th</sup> September.
- Our winter season officially starts on 31<sup>st</sup> October and all pre-season calibration and checks have been completed.
- Regular updates will be provided throughout the season to monitor expenditure, as we have done in previous years.

### **Street Lighting LED retro fit scheme**

- As of 12<sup>th</sup> October, we have replaced 11,712 lanterns, 2136 lamp columns and 78 LED signs.
- This equates to 1,630,139.53 KWH of energy savings and 357.69 TC02e of carbon savings.
- Discussions are on-going about potential to accelerate the programme with a view to increasing the energy and carbon savings

- We have received complaints from residents regarding the reduction in lighting levels as a result of the new LED lanterns. We are continuing to address these complaints as they are received.

## **Traffic signals LED retro fit scheme**

- Approval has been given and funding has been received from the LCRA for the replacement of all LED signal head equipment in the Borough.
- This scheme will also reduce energy consumption and provide carbon savings, as well as reducing on-going maintenance costs.
- The scheme is due to start in the next few months and is expected to take 2 years to complete.

This page is intentionally left blank

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b>		
Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Period of Report</b>
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	November 2022

## **BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT**

### **Federation of Small Businesses Local Authority awards:**

#### **Sefton Council scoops North West title for backing small businesses**

*The council's work supporting businesses during the pandemic recognised at FSB's first-ever Local Government Awards*

*Sefton Council has been awarded a prestigious 'best in the region' award for its support for the local small business community.*

*Sefton beat local authorities from across the Northwest to scoop council of the year in the COVID-19 Support and Recovery category - testament to its fantastic work supporting businesses during the pandemic.*

*It was among 250 councils in England who entered the inaugural Local Government Awards run by FSB, the UK's 's biggest business representation group, ultimately emerging triumphant!*

*FSB's inaugural Local Government awards, sponsored by Maybe, were aimed at celebrating and recognising those that had made the biggest impact on local SMEs during the Covid crisis and beyond.*

*At a virtual online final on Friday, 14 October, Sefton Council was named as the North West regional champion, with judges being impressed by the council's work to help the local small business community.*

*Cllr Marion Atkinson, Sefton Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills, said: "During the COVID, our Invest Sefton and Business Rates teams paid out a total of over £100 million in grants to hundreds local businesses to support them through the pandemic, so I am delighted that work has been recognised through this FSB award.*

*Cllr Paulette Lappin, Sefton Council's Cabinet Member for Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services said:*

*"It was an unprecedented time and I am so proud of the way our teams adapted quickly to enable them to provide so much this financial and practical support to local businesses."*  
*Cheers*

*Phil McCabe, FSB Development Manager for Merseyside and Cheshire, said he was pleased Sefton Council's hard work had been recognised amid a high-quality field of entries from local councils.*

# Agenda Item 9

*“It is really pleasing to see Sefton Council rewarded for its hard work and effort to help local SMEs through what has been a very challenging couple of years.*

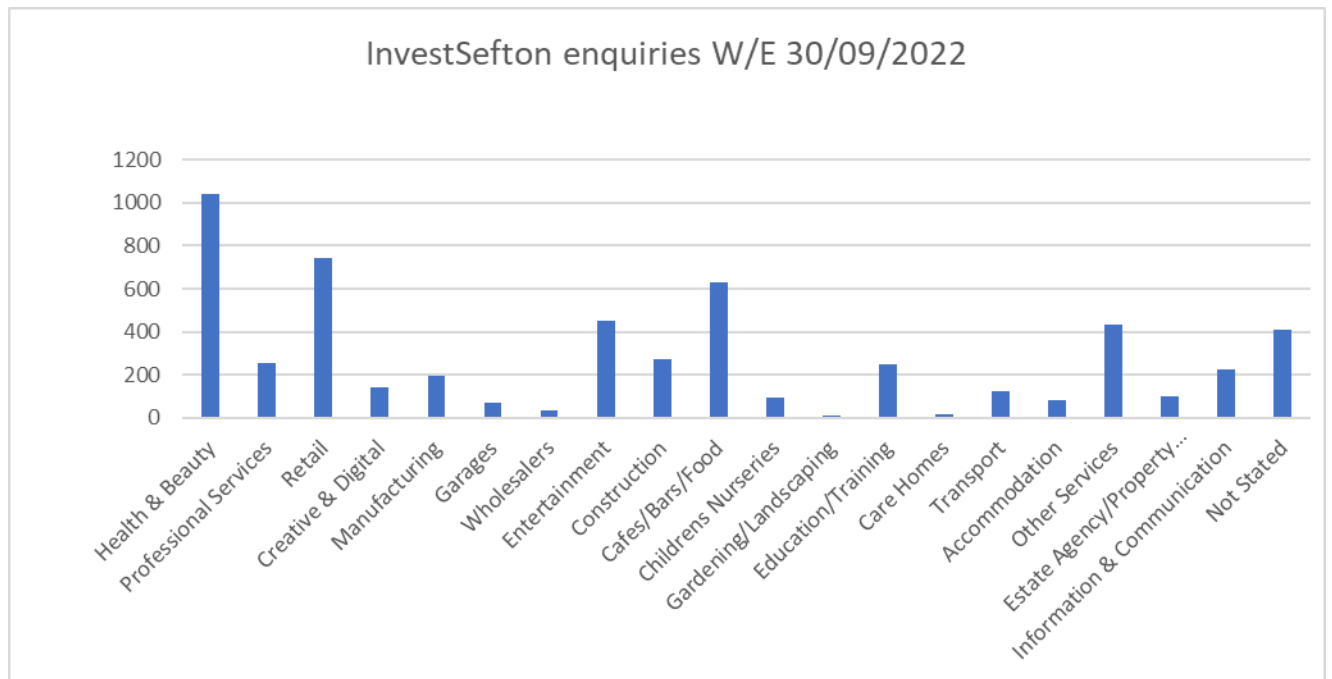
*“Both the quality and quantity of entries from this region and beyond was incredibly high so Sefton should feel very proud to be among the winners. We look forward to continuing to work with Sefton - and all our other business-supporting councils - to ensure we can build a vibrant and strong local SME community.”*

## Website

- InvestSefton website is updated regularly with the latest guidance and news from Government, Growth Platform, Sefton Council and other sources of business support. Since Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 29th September 2022, the site has had 61,274 unique sessions.
- From Friday 23rd to Thursday 29th September 2022 the website has had 292 sessions.
- Average time spent on the website in the past week was 45 seconds.
- The devices used were as follows: Desktop 55.1%, Mobile 42.5% and Tablet 2.4%.
- The Top two pages were home page and starting a business.

## Business enquiries

- Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled **5,656 enquiries** from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 30<sup>th</sup> September 2022.



# Agenda Item 9

Total enquiry numbers from 13<sup>th</sup> March to date:

Year	Total Enquiries
13 <sup>th</sup> March 2020- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 21	3737
1 <sup>st</sup> April 21- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 22	1326
1 <sup>st</sup> April 22- to date	593
Total	5,656

## Sefton Growth Hub targets

16th May 2022 to 31st March 2023	Overall Target	Sefton Total Figures	Sefton % Overall
Number of unique businesses receiving light touch intervention	250	231	92%
Number of unique businesses receiving medium intensity intervention	90	60	67%
Number of unique businesses brokered and introduced to Growth Platform Programmes	20	10	50%

- The team is well on track meeting its Local Growth Hub targets despite the ongoing disruption and impact caused by the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. We are also preparing a cost-of-living business support factsheet with other council services.

## Case studies

Waterloo based company established in 2015. The business has suffered badly due to both Brexit and covid lockdowns as around 95% of its business was related to the hospitality industry. The business has now repositioned itself and is becoming a specialist in the supply of multimedia virtual tours using 360/3d imaging photography, video and audio. InvestSefton assisted the business with the preparation of a business plan to make them investment ready and enable them to purchase additional equipment.

Crosby based business that designs, builds and installs up market bathrooms. The business took premises in November 2020 to offer a high-end showroom experience but needed to complete installation of fittings due to various Covid lockdowns. InvestSefton supported the business with completion of a business plan and financial projections to enable them to secure finance to complete the showroom.

Southport based business that provides teaching techniques for Plasterwork. The business was established in 2016 and has steadily increased turnover and investment in buying premises in September 2021 to locate to a specialist centre. The Business has good growth potential, but the Directors want to enhance their personal skills and put growth strategy in place to take the business forward. InvestSefton supported the business by working with them to develop and implement their growth strategy as well as providing managed referrals for finance and business skills workshops.

## Inward Investment

- Industrial units at the new Biz Parks Estate on Dunningsbridge Road are now available for viewings. The site has 15 new units from 1,500 square foot up to 6,000

# Agenda Item 9

square foot (units can be combined if needed up to 12,000 square foot), suitable for trade counter/warehouse use. Further details here: [Commercial Property for sale, to rent and for let UK \(avisonyoung.co.uk\)](https://www.avisonyoung.co.uk)

- **Mersey Reach, Bootle**-This development is close to completion. Invest Sefton continue to attend the marketing meetings with the landlord and agents 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. Despite uncertain market conditions, enquiry levels remain high with units under offer to public and private sector organisations. Interest has also been shown by existing Sefton SMEs with negotiations ongoing. An official launch of the site is scheduled for late November 2022.
- **Atlantic Park, Bootle**-In conjunction with planning, a meeting was held with the planning agents representing the owner to discuss development plans for this site. The intention is to develop the site in 3 phases. With planning permission now granted to demolish 3 of the existing 4 buildings (including Big Foot, the largest building currently on site), a planning application for phase 1 is imminent.
- **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.

## EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

### Sefton@work Funding and Service Succession

#### **UK Shared Prosperity Funding for employment support and SIF “gap” funding**

- A request has been made to the LCR CA for SIF (strategic investment finance) funding to allow continuity for Sefton@work during the “gap” year between funding programmes following the end of ESF (European Social Fund)
- This request for SIF will need to come forward for a formal decision by the Investment Board in the New year of 2023.
- In the interim period, we have been asked to work with the LCR-CA team to provide a range of information about the monitoring and reporting and governance arrangements we have in place for the Ways to Work programme.
- A review exercise is expected within the next few months to identify the most appropriate priorities from Ways to Work to be taken forward under the UKSPF from 2024 onwards as UKSPF is approximately £10m per year less than previously received into the LCR from European funding.
- The review will also need to reflect parallel activity delivered through the LCR -CA's own Households into work project.



## Sefton@work General Performance Data for August 2022

Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	5,057
New Clients accessing service	August 2022	116
New clients registering by age	August 2022	16-24 37 25-49 44 50+ 24 Unknown 11
W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16 August 2022	58.1% 43.6%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16 August 2022	41.8% 56.4%
W2W contracts Other	Since 01/01/16 August 2022	0.08% 0.0%
Positive Inclusions Male	Since 01/01/21 August 2022	67.0% 54.5%
Positive Inclusions Female	Since 01/01/21 August 2022	32.4% 45.5%
Positive Inclusions Other	Since 01/01/21 August 2022	0.6% 0.0%
ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016 August 2022	1,530 8
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	11
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	W2W & PI + 200 from other programmes <b>Total 1,998</b>
Ways to Work Starts	Since 01/01/2016 August 2022	4,475 39
Positive Inclusions Starts	Since 01/01/2021 August 2022	176 11

### Sefton@work - Restart

- Sefton@work has made changes to the client journey for Restart to improve the delivery of the initial stages of joining the programme.
- These are now yielding welcome improvements for clients with a much higher rate of success in attachments. We are now seeing results of 85% of new clients joining the programme within 15 days and 97% within 30 days, exceeding the customer service KPIs laid down in the contract.
- Our changes have included a new protocol for the segregation of the pre and initial engagement process to the new trainee staff who are able to provide a key focus on this area and concentrate solely on success of their 2-way engagements prior to the initial appointment.
- Our Job start rate is above target with job outcome/retention rate currently at 89% against target. This ranks Sefton as 4<sup>th</sup> in our supplier list for the whole of the North-West for restart.
- Advisers are now attending the local JCP offices 1 day per week to engage with those clients who have failed to attend their first 2 initial appointments at the Sefton@Work sites. Weekly meetings are also in place with JCP nominated staff to discuss any problematic cases or to flag up those that may be unsuitable or need to be withdrawn from the programme.
- Debate continues with DWP about the suitability of some clients to enter Restart. There are clients who are referred on to Restart who technically meet the eligibility criteria but whose personal circumstances are such that they may be unable or

# Agenda Item 9

unlikely to benefit. This includes people with chronic health conditions, particularly mental health, people who are very close to state retirement age and some others. Sefton@work staff continue Advocacy with DWP for these clients to ensure they are able to access support that meets their needs.

- Rate of Clients moving into employment remains steady with advisers working intensively with those who are ready to match them to local vacancies, utilising our employer liaison team and local events such as the Jobs Fairs and employer open days.
- The job outcome rate for those remaining in work, reaching the earnings milestones continues to increase and although July is currently at 72%, the overall programme rate to date is 87%. Staff work with those who fall out of employment intensively to help them return rapidly and understand the sustainability issues they have faced.
- Sefton Adult Learning Service continue to support Restart by delivering a 2-day Preparation for Employment course to support those who need additional support with their motivation, CV and Interview Skills and can benefit from group activity to build their confidence.
- Staff are reporting more frequent instances of clients reporting they are facing growing and severe financial hardship across all support programmes. For those on Restart, the service is considering some new interventions be able to respond with some assistance to assist people to remain engaged in Restart above and beyond the current help with travel expenses.

## **Sefton@work Staffing**

- Concentrated effort has been made to overcome some of the staffing shortage issues faced by the Service over the last few months to ensure we are closer to the full staff cohort.
- The establishment of trainee advisory positions has been extremely positive and the three trainees are now in position and have started both their training framework and their supervised caseload for certain processes within Restart.
- Upon completion of their qualifications, the trainees' grading will be reviewed, meaning professional qualifications will mean an uplift in pay & progression
- The post of Co-ordinator for the Caring Business Charter is also underway and will be line managed via Sefton@work through the Employer Liaison function.

## **Positive Inclusions Update**

- This ESF project has allowed Sefton@work to provide targeted and intensive support to a range of groups who are deemed very far away from the labour market.
- Under the young person element, we have worked with colleagues across the Council to ensure they can refer looked after young people from the age of 16, people known to the youth justice teams and the SEND team.
- Sadly, this project will end in March 2023 and there no plans for its extension under UK Shared Prosperity Funding or any other measure.
- We will certainly miss this capacity in Sefton after this point as it does not appear likely that we can continue with this intensive support into the future.
- We intend to produce a "Lessons Learned" evaluation for this project as it concludes over the next six months.
- Engagement activities for 16-24s are to be delivered in partnership with Adult Learning and an external vocational training provider through end September and into October.
- ILM funding from Positive Inclusions has been identified to extend existing placements within the Sefton@work workforce and we have also engaged with Autism Ventures for a new placement for a young person in their Me-Cycle project, who has now started and is doing well.

# Agenda Item 9

- Additional headroom is still available, and placements are continuing to be set up to match individual clients needs but the period of placement will be shorter as we reach the end of the funding period.
- Career Connect have made a number of referrals of longer term NEET clients into Positive Inclusions but it has not been possible to match these young people into employer placements due to the complexity of issues they are facing.
- Further referrals are being sought from the Youth Justice team as this referral route has proven to be the most successful for this project.

## **Aspiring Instructors 2022**

- Initial meetings have now been held with Active Sefton who are leading on the initiative this year and an outline timetable for commencement agreed with DWP. This will see recruitment begin in autumn 2022 and the course delivery will be scheduled to complete in time for sessional work opportunities in the spring of 2023.
- The offer is likely to change from previous years as capacity and access at Crosby Lakeside cannot be guaranteed in the same way as previous intakes and the Adult Learning element will need to be re-evaluated to ensure we are in line with compliance requirements for this academic year.

## **Sefton Adult Learning Service**

### **New Academic Year**

- The Service has now commenced most of its curriculum offer for the first half of the new term with many classes are now underway from Cambridge Road together with other sites being retained.
- Prior to start of the term, the Service received a pleasing upturn in numbers of enquiries and booking a from learners but despite this, but enrolments have still not completely recovered to the same levels prior to Covid-19.
- The 2022/23 prospectus has gone live generating 175 email enquiries and 234 bookings taken via this method, with a further 35 waiting to undertake initial assessments for ESOL courses where demand is particularly strong. However, tutor availability for this area remains problematic.
- The Service hosted a very successful open-day on 31<sup>st</sup> August for local residents to visit the centre and take part in free workshops and demonstrations. Individuals had the opportunity to enrol directly onto a course whilst at the centre. "Save the date" invites also were circulated to partners and stakeholders. A pre-announcement banner was included in the Champion newspaper along with the annual wrap-around including e-posters and leaflets to advertise the open-day.

### **Promotional work**

- The following summer events were attended by the Service:
  - Bowersdale Funday - 50 learners took part in our Aromatherapy and Bird-Box workshops
  - Rimrose Valley Community Celebration - 55 individuals completed learning activities on the day
  - Southport Flower Show
  - Thornton Family Fun-day

### **Engagement Activities**

- DWP Updated all Work Coaches on Service programme and provision.
  - Crosby Health Hub – The Service was invited to take part and provide an update to staff and long-term unemployed claimants regarding Health and Wellbeing support.
- ASDA Working alongside Asda's Community Champion the Service engaged with shoppers to promote courses.

# Agenda Item 9

To further target specific cohorts, the Service is creating individual promotional material for the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Family learning
- Employability
- Digital

## Quality

- In preparation for any forthcoming Ofsted inspection, all the service's internal documentation (including Learner Handbook, Individual Learner Plans, Policies and Procedures etc) are currently being reviewed and updated for the new academic year.
- Self-assessment processes have also been instigated and specialist support from HOLEX as the sector adult education organisation is under consideration.
- Support for nominee awareness training is also available funded by the LCR-CA Adult Education unit.

## Ukrainian Support

- As part of the Ukrainian Operational Group, Adult Learning staff are working with other Council departments to advocate for Ukrainian families on specific issues of childcare sufficiency and investigate funding so individuals can progress on to ESOL Provision.

## Workforce sufficiency issues

- The Service, along with all similar LA learning services across the City Region, continues to experience difficulties in attracting and retaining trained tutors, despite recruitment being open and ongoing and a "grow our own" CPD exercise for maths tutors under Multiply being authorised.
- A new approach is under consideration to convert some of the posts which are currently established as sessional positions into more substantive jobs, especially in areas such as English, maths and ESOL where shortages are so critical.

## Multiply Numeracy initiative

- Multiply, the government's national adult numeracy initiative is part of the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) portfolio and is linked to the Levelling up agenda. While other aspects of People and Skills delivery have been rolled forward into year 3 of the UKSPF plan, Multiply will now need to be delivered before end March 2023 in order for the Liverpool City Region to meet its targets.
- Sefton Adult Learning has accordingly received a grant offer for Multiply from the LCR-CA for the sum of £89,000, which incorporates an element of engagement work to be commissioned out to voluntary grassroots groups, family and community learning, adult skills, and continuous professional development.
- The CPD element forms part of a city region wide initiative to "grow" the bank of trained and available maths tutors.
- The family learning element of Multiply is being worked up to offer an element of maths homework club support for parents in a number of schools.
- Discussion about the options for delivery of the voluntary/community element (approximately £67k) are ongoing. We have already met with Sefton Citizens Advice and it is felt an option to enable them to add value to the debt casework they are already undertaking across Sefton would be most helpful in the current financial climate affecting our communities.
- Activity such as this under Multiply would need to be monitored using AEB registration processes and would be based upon the voluntary/community sector group undertaking engagement activities that lead to agreed numbers of new learners commencing on maths/numeracy related classes with the Service within the initial six-month period.

- Discussions continue with proposed partners who are looking to take up rental agreements for some of the upper floor spaces. We have not yet finalised agreements with Immersive Interactive but they have continued to be engaged and are open to delivering a range of complimentary works to support our learning programmes in addition to co-location.

## NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Service

### NCCIS NEET & Not Known Combined Measure for August 2022

#### NEET/Not Known – Age 16-17

The latest published data from August 2022 confirms the following position:

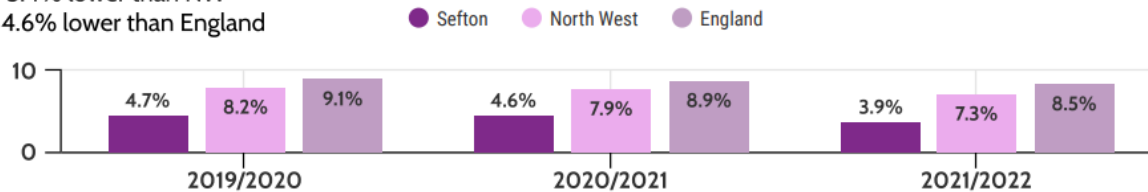
Area	August 2022	July 2022	August 2021
Sefton	3.73%	3.76%	3.84%

#### 16-17 NEET and Not Known % Sefton yearly average comparison with regional and national data

Sefton showing a reduction of -0.8% from 2019

-3.4% lower than NW

-4.6% lower than England



- At 3.73% the Sefton NEET and Not Known combined indicator has improved by -0.11% in comparison to August 2021, it has also improved by -0.03% since July 2022. It is -2/3% below North West average (6%) and -6.4% below England average (10%)
- Sefton is ranked the lowest in the Liverpool City region for the NEET and Not Known for 16-17
- Year on Year improvement – Sefton has reduced NEET by 0.1% and NK by 0.1% compared to August 2021
- Our NEET (only) rate at 3.1% has reduced by -0.1% year on year. This is -0.6% below the regional average of 3.7%
- At 0.6% Sefton's Not Known (only) has reduced by -0.1% year on year. This is -1.7% below the regional average of 2.3%
- Age 16 (full cohort of young people in this year group is 2792), shows that 61 young people (2.18%) are currently NEET, and 10 young people (0.36%) are Not Known to the service
- Age 17 (full cohort of young people in this year groups is 2859), shows that 115 young people (4.02%) are NEET and 25 young people (0.87%) are Not Known

## SEN NEET

The SEN group has been hard hit by Covid and our latest data indicates that we are improving for the full cohort of 16-24 year olds and we are outperforming our statistical neighbours. However, for our 16-17 year cohort, participation in learning is lower and continues to decrease resulting in higher NEET numbers for younger SEN people

- For statistical neighbours all ages 16-24 SEN, Sefton is ranked highest for "in learning" and lowest for combined NEET & NK.
- However for 16-17 year olds, we are ranked 6<sup>th</sup> for In Learning and 6<sup>th</sup> lowest for combined NEET and Not Known measures

# Agenda Item 9

- Sefton has the highest performance in the LCR for in learning for 16-17 year-olds and 2<sup>nd</sup> highest for the 16-24 group.
- This picture is replicated elsewhere across the LCR and in the statistical neighbours' group and by these comparisons, although Sefton 's position has not improved, it is still outperforming against key comparators.
- 8% of the 16-24 SEND cohort are also in another vulnerable group **(50 of the 624)** indicating these young people are facing multiple challenges
- SEN 16-24 Not Known measure has **reduced by -0.5% year on year to 1.6% This is -22.2% below the NW average at 23.8%**
- NEET SEN 16/17 Year-olds has **increased by 1.9%** in comparison to June 21. This is an increase of 4 young people.

## Care Experienced Offer

- Within the year 11 cohort for Care experienced young people (ie 48 young people) being supported by Career Connect, 26 of these live within the borough of Sefton and 22 live out of borough. This is particularly important as supporting young people out of borough when they may be across the country in different placements proves a persistent challenge in this area of work.
- **There were 48 care experienced young people exiting year 11 in 2022. Of these 41 are in learning or work or training and classed as EET with (23 of these in borough and 18 out of borough)**
- **7 care experienced young people exiting year 11 in 2022 are NEET with 2 of these living in borough and 5 out of borough)**

Year 11 leavers September Destination	Total Cohort	NEET	%	EET	%
2018	32	4 (2)**	12.5%	28	87.5%
2019	32	8 (5)**	25.5%	26	75.0%
2020	35	1 (1)**	2.85%	34	97.15%
2021	46	9 (7)**	19.6%	37	80.4%
2022	48	7 (5)**	14.6%	41	85.4%
** living out of Sefton					

## Re-contracting Plans for 2023 onwards

- The current contract with Career Connect is in its final stage and will expire on 2<sup>nd</sup> June 2023, at which point no further extension of the existing arrangements are expected.
- Officers in Employment and Learning are therefore working with the Council's Legal and Procurement teams to plan a route-map to a new tendering exercise. Given the expected scale of the contract, the procurement exercise to identify the most suitable supplier moving forward will take some months.
- The impact of this work is felt across different parts of the Council. In recognition of this, it is expected that a targeted consultation exercise will need to be undertaken prior to publication of a tender specification to ensure all Sefton's priorities are reflected and the tender yields successful application from suitably qualified suppliers. Given the success we have had with the current supplier, it will be our prime objective to ensure the improvements made in terms of NEET rates can be consolidated and service delivery improved upon in the context of current economic uncertainty.

## **Building Better Customer Experience – Southport Town Deal**

- This is a project within the Southport Town Deal being operated by Employment & Learning. The project funding, ringfenced within the Town Deal business plan is for a total of £200k and will be the only element of revenue project funding under Town Deal.
- The project is focused on providing training to help improve the quality of the customer experience in a range of different settings across Southport using new and innovative, inclusive approaches.
- There are three complimentary strands of activity, with funding being given to Southport College to deliver a modular programme of “bolt-on” training packages to students in the College and many of the local employers they engage with, a strand with Adult Learning which will focus on training for volunteers and other community members in line with events in the Town and a third which will focus on inhouse workforce development using the Council’s online platform.

## **TOURISM**

### **Business Events**

- The weekend 28<sup>th</sup> -30<sup>th</sup> October sees the return of Lambretta Club of Great Britain (scooters). Hosting their event across three venues in Southport two of which are Sefton owned venues.
- The event hosts a social night Friday and Saturday night in The Prince of Wales and on Saturday a trade show at Dunes Leisure Centre and a custom Scooter display at Southport Market.
- The event brings 800 -1000 visitors to town filling up hotels and guest houses and attracting spend within bars, restaurants and retail. A total forecasted economic impact of £922,000.
- The event previously took place at Southport Theatre and Convention Centre but through the service proactively working with the client the event has been retained within the town despite closure of STCC.
- With the formal announcement of the MLEC operator ASM Global sales planning sessions are taking place to formalise a marketing and sales plan to build the sales pipeline for opening in 2026 and following years.
- A detailed plan and activities will be formulated and shared in subsequent months. As part of this meetings have taken place with further planned with key accommodation partners who will be involved in supporting the sales and marketing plan.
- In partnership with Gardiner & Theobald businesses were invited to attend an MLEC presentation information session at Southport Market on the 6<sup>th</sup> of October. There were four sessions throughout the day giving the opportunity for businesses to view the development materials and ask questions. The sessions were attended by mainly accommodation businesses.
- Continuing to support local guesthouses with business support, reviewing accommodation occupancy for the summer and forecasts for the coming months. Hotels and guesthouses have enjoyed another good year of occupancy but forecasts are down as consumers fear to commit with cost of living crisis. Accommodation providers are keen to remain price competitive but face their own financial challenges.
- Planning continues with Southport College and Stanley High School to host an educational event as part of the Social Engagement commitment for the MLEC project. There will be approximate 15 Stanley High School pupils and 25 Southport College students attending the event. In addition to presentations by the professionals in the MLEC project team, Southport College are hosting a tour of their design facilities.

# Agenda Item 9

- As part of the SIF funding for the wider Liverpool City Region Southport Conference Bureau is working with Liverpool Conference Bureau to formulate a number of leisure experiences which can be enjoyed by conference delegates across the region. Further working together is also required for the Eurovision event planned for 2023.

## Events

The British Musical Fireworks Championship 2022

- The event took place with Sunday being cancelled due to high winds.
- Friday & Saturday commenced as planned and Saturday was sell out.
- Five companies competed over the 2 days and the winners, 'Optimum Fireworks', were announced at the awards ceremony which was held on the Sunday at the Southport Market.
- The Sunday competitors will automatically be invited back to compete in 2023.

## 2023 Events

The dates have been announced as follows:-

- Food & Drink Festival - 2<sup>nd</sup> – 4<sup>th</sup> June
- Air Show - 9<sup>th</sup> & 10<sup>th</sup> September
- The British Musical Fireworks Championship - 22<sup>nd</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup> September.
- Budgets for the 2023 events are being finalised
- Procurement of infrastructure and event planning has started

## Marketing

- Autumn Campaign – Step 8 of our 2022 campaign is underway, primarily digital via social media, website and e-newsletter.
- Design & Campaign Management Agency – The tender for our 2023 agency is currently on The Chest with a decision and award to be made in November.
- PR – The contract with our current agency finishes December this year. We have gone out to a number of agencies for proposals for 2023.
- Visitor Guide – the 2023 guide design and advertising sales are currently underway. With the demise of The Champion, we have had to move advertising sales to Wirral Media. We do not yet know what impact this change will have on sales. The print run is 45,000.
- Southport Restaurateurs Association – The 2023 guide is currently being designed with delivery due just before Christmas. Print run will again be 10,000.
- E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 50,000 with the addition of 2022 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience.
- Travel Trade – advertising has been placed in key travel trade publications. Editorial has been secured alongside all ads to date. A Southport Showcase (mini exhibition) is being held on 24 April next year. Invitations have gone out to local Marketing Southport members to exhibit at the event.
- Golf – 2022 has been a very busy year for international visitors and the EGC shoulder season package. Headline figures: 1,500 bed nights, value £200,000 with an average room rate of £133.



# Agenda Item 9

- Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 104 (108 this time last year). The next Marketing Southport board meeting is to be held on 22 November. A half year report will be produced in time for this meeting. We are also producing an updated version of the membership document.

## Tourism Operations

### Southport Market

- Summer trading at the market was strong, this is in the face of several challenges for the hospitality industry as a whole. The current cost of living crisis is impacting on the whole industry, especially midweek business;
- The Market continues to attract new trader interest, hot food units are still full and a waiting list is in operation for incoming traders;
- The Market continues to host a number of paid and free events to attract further footfall into Southport;
- A number of community groups and partnerships continue to use the events space free of charge thus helping the local community.

### Kings Gardens

- Extensive work is continuing in Kings Gardens, these works are being funded by Sefton's Kings Gardens contingency fund;
- Work is underway on all of the Victorian shelters and benches within the Gardens.

### Southport Pier

- Phase 1 of the deck replacement has now been completed; the Pier remained open throughout the works;
- It is now planned to replace the remaining full deck of the Pier, starting later this year. It is expected to cost circa £3m. Cabinet agreed to this on 1<sup>st</sup> September. Work has begun on design and specification along with professional team and contractor appointments.

### Marine Lake Events Centre

- The MLEC project continues to make good progress, RIBA Stage 2 is complete, and RIBA Stage 3 is nearing completion;
- ASM Global have been selected as the preferred operator, the biggest events venue operator in the world;
- ASM are now involved in the design process helping shape the final internal layout (for example kitchens, kiosks);
- The procurement of the build contractor is underway, with a view to appoint by December 2022;
- Full planning application submitted, aiming for December planning committee;
- Business case has been submitted to Government for final approval of Town Fund;
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has also confirmed £20m allocation at their last Board meeting;
- Planning to be on site Q1 2023.

## REGENERATION, GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

- The Regeneration service is providing both a lead and supporting role across the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme delivery on a number of key Council projects and external partner projects.

## Levelling Up Round 2

# Agenda Item 9

- Sefton Council submitted two levelling up funding bids in August 2022 for Bootle and Crosby. Totalling £30.3 million both bids are designed to help regenerate these areas, tackle local deprivation, enhance and/or provide new facilities to serve the local communities and support the creation of investment and employment opportunities in the two town centres.
- These have been previously reported, but given a decision from Government is still awaited, for completeness details are shared again below:

## Bootle LUF

- The Bootle bid is for £20 million to underpin a major regeneration scheme to transform Bootle town centre, focused on the iconic Bootle Strand I the heart of the centre. Additionally, a large area of unused land alongside the Leeds-Liverpool Canal will transformed into green spaces for local communities to use. This will support more healthy lifestyles, activities and events and improvements to the overall the environment;
- The development will also contribute to a more diverse and better-quality town centre with new food and drink, culture, arts and entertainment spaces. A hi-tech gigabyte fast digital hub, education and training, business support and a new integrated health and social care hub will all be available on the high-street. This will complement, refresh and improve the retail and town centre services currently available and on which local people rely;
- The investment will drive the growth of night-time economy, attract more visitors and drive inward investment from new businesses. This will enable Bootle to re-build after having been one of the boroughs hardest hit in the UK by the Covid pandemic.

## Crosby LUF

- The £10.3 million bid for Crosby Town Centre underpins the programme of regeneration ambitions of the local community set out in the Crosby Investment Strategy. The proposals will enhance the viability and vitality of Crosby town centre and support local businesses by helping to attract more residents and visitors;
- The proposal if approved will build a new learning, skills, health and well-being hub, library and GP/community health care. It will be a place for people to both work and develop skills within Crosby;
- Levelling Up Fund resources would also allow for a significant upgrade of the main gateways into the town centre, better pedestrian and cycle access and new electric vehicle charging points in car parks, while also fund on the appearance of public spaces;
- Sefton is a Category 3 (least priority) for Levelling Up funding however has been lobbying hard for support for these key projects;
- [Council submits Levelling Up bids despite being judged alongside 'prosperous' Cambridge & Windsor - My Sefton News Channel](#)
- A decision is expected later this year;
- Work is continuing in preparing a planning application for highway and parking works linked to a Combined Authority funding award to support access and accessibility in Crosby. The planning application will include an outline for the use of the Green Car Park in Crosby for the proposed Library and Health facility. The planning application will be submitted early in 2023 with works to start later in the year subject to all approvals being in place.

## Bootle Town Centre

- The Council is progressing plans for a repurposed Strand Shopping Centre and Bootle Canalside following completion of Phase 1 works to the Bootle Canalside event and activity space;
- **Strand Transformation** – work is progressing to scope out the next stage of work for this phased repurposing programme should a decision be made on the outcome of the LUF bid submitted earlier this year. Options for the future development and

# Agenda Item 9

operational arrangements of this key town centre asset, including investment market considerations and delivery strategy are being assessed. This will enable members to reach a view on the best approach for delivery of the Strand repurposing programme. This has included a review of current market conditions and cost inflation for this key town centre asset and service centre. The Strand continues to provide support and warmth to the communities who depend on it throughout the year;

- The Strand repurposing forms a key component of the delivery of the Bootle Area Action Plan which is going through the key issues and options consultation stage at present. A review of Bootle employment land and premises is currently underway and will conclude at the end of December to help inform the plan with the decision on the preferred options to come forward later in 2023;
- **Bootle Canalside** -members approved the business case for Bootle Canalside for the next phase of works earlier this year to help complete site development as a key events and activity space for the benefit of the local community;
- The main elements of the work still to be completed relate to the canal edge works to open up the boundary between the site and the Leeds Liverpool Canal, and to finalise the utilities infrastructure required to service the site. Design and implementation to date has slowed due to the need to agree the works with the Canal and Rivers Trust however discussions are progressing well to agree all works proposed for the canal edge;
- The Council has entered into an agreement with the Nationwide Caterers Association (NCASS) which providing consultancy support to develop and support a street food pilot project based at Bootle canal-side but reaching across Sefton, to support job creation, entrepreneurship and the local community. Further details of how this pilot will work will be brought to a future meeting and is based upon the success of a similar model in Birmingham;
- Ongoing design review, branding and marketing are being investigated at present to develop the site identity and help with promotion and event marketing.

## SOUTHPORT

### Southport Town Deal

- Following the Southport Town Deal allocation of £37.5m business cases have been submitted for all of the projects in the programme in accordance with the Town Deal bid submission requirements.
- Business cases have now been approved for:
  - Southport Enterprise Arcade
  - Les Transformation de Southport (Public Realm enhancement) Phase 1
  - Building a Better Customer Experience
- The business case for the Marine Lake Events Centre was submitted in August 2022 as agreed with DLUCH, ongoing dialogue continues on the details of the proposal and a decision is expected toward the end of this year;
- Programme Management for Town Deal continues including monitoring and evaluation for programme delivery and output measurement for reporting purposes to Government.

### The Enterprise Arcade, Southport

- Refurbishment of one of Southport's central town centre buildings next to Southport Market for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project. This will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport;
- Cabinet approved plans to transform the Crown Buildings 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 regeneration and transformation of Crown Buildings, eventually creating a purpose-built hub for individuals, freelancers, enterprises, and independent professionals who are taking their first steps into setting up their own business;

# Agenda Item 9

- The Enterprise Arcade project is a key project within the Southport Town Deal programme to kickstart the previously untapped digital, creative and technological sectors within the resort;
- Design work is continuing for the project and the process of appointing contractors to carry out the works will be completed early in the new year with works starting later in 2023.

## **Les Transformation de Southport**

- The business case for this project was submitted to Government in March 2022 following endorsement by the Town Deal Board and approval by Sefton Cabinet. The business case has been accepted by central Government and Sefton Council are progressing with the next stage of the project;
- This involves the delivery of the first phase of the improvements, focussing on the area around Southport Market, and the development of the proposals for future phases;
- The Town Deal will provide the funding for the first phase of the works and the business case will be used to pursue funding options for the future phases of the project;
- Public consultation and engagement was undertaken in February and March 2022 which concluded there was a lot of support from residents, businesses and young people (through the schools' responses) for many aspects of the proposals. The next stage of work will involve further consultation with businesses directly affected in early November, on the works to be implemented next year.

## **Building a Better Customer Experience**

- Following approval of the business case for this training project earlier this year by the Council and Town Deal Board, work is underway with identified training providers to deliver this programme of activity to support the hospitality sector in Southport as part of the Town Deal programme. This is being led, as alluded elsewhere within this report by Employment and Learning Service colleagues.

**Marine Lake Events Centre** – see Tourism update above.

## **CROSBY**

### **Crosby Town Centre Regeneration**

- In addition to the work to explore the potential of Levelling Up Round 2 support for Crosby Village work is progressing on the Central Buildings site development by Plus Dane Group for a mixed residential and commercial scheme. Planning approval has also been secured for Telegraph House, Moor Lane, Crosby for a mixed use development containing commercial and community floorspace at ground floor and 72 residential apartments on upper floors. The Council is supporting engagement with the CA on Brownfield Land Fund opportunities for this project.

### **Crosby Lakeside**

- The main contract for Crosby Lakeside refurbishment is now complete and the restaurant facility opened to the public in August 2022;
- The Sefton Council hospitality company (Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited) is in place to oversee the hospitality management of the facility now it is operational.
- Marketing of the location for Christmas events is underway.

## **AINSDALE ON SEA**

### **Ainsdale Coastal Gateway**

#### **Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.**

- Sefton Council have gone out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) earlier this year, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site;

# Agenda Item 9

- External Agents were appointed to ensure maximum visibility for the opportunity both local and nationally;
- Formal marketing took place early summer 2022 generating several formal expressions of interest;
- Late Summer 2022 interested respondents asked to provide more detail to enable formal evaluation of the submissions;
- The marketing is to remain 'live' and the opportunity continues to be made available to other parties subject to progress with and conclusion of consideration of the current submissions;
- Brochure can be seen here: [Former Sands PH Marketing Brochure](#)
- Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills](#); and [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#)

## **Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way**

- Following Cabinet agreement to acquire the current leasehold interests in this centre by agreement and to bring it into full Council ownership, negotiations with owners are continuing;
- Approximately 50% of the interests have now been acquired and brought into Council control;
- A review of an agreed shortlist of options for this site is now complete 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 and local ward councilors, which has helped inform the option appraisal shortlist being assessed;
- Site clearing has also taken place over the summer to Sandbrook Way to address resident concerns about weeds and appearance of the area.

This page is intentionally left blank