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Town Hall
Trinity Road
Bootle
L20 7AE

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

Date: 3 November 2023
Our Ref: PGF
Your Ref:

Please contact: Paul Fraser
Contact Number: 0151 934 2068
Fax No:
e-mail: paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 7TH NOVEMBER, 2023

I refer to the agenda for the above meeting and now enclose the following information that was unavailable when the agenda was published.

Agenda No.

Item

7. **Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 138 - 149)
Forward Plan published on 31 October 2023.
Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre
The Work Programme report contains information about a visit by the Committee to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre. Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority have now advised that they can facilitate the visit on Monday 15 January 2024. Members will be requested to give consideration to this date at the meeting.
8. **Cabinet Member Reports - September 2023 to November 2023** (Pages 150 - 199)
Cabinet Member reports for Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

Yours sincerely,

David McCullough

Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 DECEMBER 2023 - 31 MARCH 2024

This Forward Plan sets out the details of the key decisions which the Cabinet, individual Cabinet Members or Officers expect to take during the next four-month period. The Plan is rolled forward every month and is available to the public at least 28 days before the beginning of each month.

A Key Decision is defined in the Council's Constitution as:

1. any Executive decision that is not in the Annual Revenue Budget and Capital Programme approved by the Council and which requires a gross budget expenditure, saving or virement of more than £100,000 or more than 2% of a Departmental budget, whichever is the greater;
2. any Executive decision where the outcome will have a significant impact on a significant number of people living or working in two or more Wards

Anyone wishing to make representations about any of the matters listed below may do so by contacting the relevant officer listed against each Key Decision, within the time period indicated.

Under the Access to Information Procedure Rules set out in the Council's Constitution, a Key Decision may not be taken, unless:

- it is published in the Forward Plan;
- 5 clear days have lapsed since the publication of the Forward Plan; and
- if the decision is to be taken at a meeting of the Cabinet, 5 clear days notice of the meeting has been given.

The law and the Council's Constitution provide for urgent key decisions to be made, even though they have not been included in the Forward Plan in accordance with Rule 26 (General Exception) and Rule 28 (Special Urgency) of the Access to Information Procedure Rules.

Copies of the following documents may be inspected at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle L20 7AE or accessed from the Council's website: www.sefton.gov.uk

- Council Constitution
- Forward Plan
- Reports on the Key Decisions to be taken
- Other documents relating to the proposed decision may be submitted to the decision making meeting and these too will be made available by the contact officer named in the Plan
- The minutes for each Key Decision, which will normally be published within 5 working days after having been made

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Some reports to be considered by the Cabinet/Council may contain exempt information and will not be made available to the public. The specific reasons (Paragraph No(s)) why such reports are exempt are detailed in the Plan and the Paragraph No(s) and descriptions are set out below:-

1. Information relating to any individual
2. Information which is likely to reveal the identity of an individual
3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information)
4. Information relating to any consultations or negotiations, or contemplated consultations or negotiations in connection with any labour relations matter arising between the authority or a Minister of the Crown and employees of, or office holders under, the Authority
5. Information in respect of which a claim to legal professional privilege could be maintained in legal proceedings
6. Information which reveals that the authority proposes a) to give under any enactment a notice under or by virtue of which requirements are imposed on a person; or b) to make an order or direction under any enactment
7. Information relating to any action taken or to be taken in connection with the prevention, investigation or prosecution of crime
8. Information falling within paragraph 3 above is not exempt information by virtue of that paragraph if it is required to be registered under—
 - (a) the Companies Act 1985;
 - (b) the Friendly Societies Act 1974;
 - (c) the Friendly Societies Act 1992;
 - (d) the Industrial and Provident Societies Acts 1965 to 1978;
 - (e) the Building Societies Act 1986; or
 - (f) the Charities Act 1993.
9. Information is not exempt information if it relates to proposed development for which the local planning authority may grant itself planning permission pursuant to regulation 3 of the Town and Country Planning General Regulations 1992
10. Information which—
 - (a) falls within any of paragraphs 1 to 7 above; and
 - (b) is not prevented from being exempt by virtue of paragraph 8 or 9 above, is exempt information if and so long, as in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information.

Members of the public are welcome to attend meetings of the Cabinet and Council which are held at the Town Hall, Oriel Road, Bootle or the Town Hall, Lord Street, Southport. The dates and times of the meetings are published on www.sefton.gov.uk or you may contact the Democratic Services Section on telephone number 0151 934 2068.

NOTE:

For ease of identification, items listed within the document for the first time will appear shaded.

Phil Porter
Chief Executive

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Crosby New Library Outline Business Case Update	Joanne Doyle joanne.doyle@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2691
Culture Strategy	Mark Snaylam Mark.snaylam@sefton.gov.uk
Business Case for Proceeding with Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme	Nicky Owen nicky.owen@sefton.gov.uk
Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - Business Plan	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk
Southport Business Improvement District	Mark Catherall mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2315
Sandway Homes Limited Phase 1 Business Plan Update	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842
Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Graham Parry graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3446

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Crosby New Library Outline Business Case Update To provide an update on the Crosby New Library Outline Business Case.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Part 3)			
Wards Affected	Blundellsands; Church; Manor; Victoria			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Not directly relating to this report.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Not directly relating to this report.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Crosby New Library Outline Business Case Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Joanne Doyle joanne.doyle@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2691			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Culture Strategy To seek approval of Sefton's Culture Strategy and to set up a steering group for the Borough Of Culture 2025			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023 18 Jan 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director Executive Director			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Residents of the borough; Culture Strategy Steering Group			
Method(s) of Consultation	Surveys; Meetings; User groups			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Culture Strategy			
Contact Officer(s) details	Mark Snaylam Mark.snaylam@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Business Case for Proceeding with Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme</p> <p>Cabinet report detailing the proposals for proceeding with delivery of Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme, which is being funded by £20m Capital Levelling Up Funding (“CLUF”) awarded to the Council by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (“DLUHC”). The report includes the Business Case for the development, including an updated Business Plan for the Strand’s operating costs and income over the coming 3 years, fully accounting for proceeding with the development project.</p>			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	<p>7 Dec 2023</p> <p>Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 02/11/2023 to 07/12/2023. Reason: to allow time for further consultation on the proposed full designs for Phase 1 and accommodate any decided changes into the budget and programme</p>			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Part 3)			
Wards Affected	Linacre			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Commercial Development)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Members, officers, LCR Combined Authority, Strand tenants, statutory consultees (Utility companies, police, fire brigade) local community groups and residents.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails, letters, meetings, a dedicated website and a unit in the Strand Shopping Centre.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Business Case for Proceeding with Phase 1 of The Strand Re-purposing Programme			
Contact Officer(s) details	Nicky Owen nicky.owen@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - Business Plan Updated business plan for 2023-26 for SHOL			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 02/11/2023 to 07/12/2023. Reason: work is ongoing on the updated business plan			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Led by company with input from board and council officers			
Method(s) of Consultation	Led by company with input from board and council officers			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited - business plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Southport Business Improvement District Southport Business Improvement District Business Plan for 2024-2029 and ballot approvals.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	No	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Cambridge; Dukes			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Officers, Members and Businesses			
Method(s) of Consultation	The BID will undertake extensive consultation with all businesses within the BID area. The outcomes of this consultation will be included within the report.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Southport Business Improvement District			
Contact Officer(s) details	Mark Catherall mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2315			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Sandway Homes Limited Phase 1 Business Plan Update A report updating Cabinet on Sandway's Phase 1 Business Plan			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Dec 2023			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	None			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Sandway Homes Limited Phase 1 Business Plan Update			
Contact Officer(s) details	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842			

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan Approval of the Phase 1A Business Plan outlining future housing development by Sandway Homes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	1 Feb 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 07/12/2023 to 01/02/2024. Reason: to enable firm costs, rather than indicative costs, to be obtained from a contractor			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	None			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842			

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Details of Decision to be taken	Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029 The Homelessness Act 2002 requires every Local Authority to publish a Homelessness Strategy at least every 5 years. This Strategy seeks to tackle all forms of homelessness and end rough sleeping.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	7 Mar 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 07/12/2023 to 07/03/2024. Reason: To comply with the consultation period			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Public Consultation and Engagement Panel; key agencies linked to homelessness			
Method(s) of Consultation	Presented to the Public Consultation and Engagement Panel in July 2023 with a large number of key agencies linked to homelessness engaged with as well as interviews with lived experience.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029			
Contact Officer(s) details	Graham Parry graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3446			

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	October 2023

Highway Asset Management

Winter Maintenance

- The winter maintenance policy for 2023/24 was approved at Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) on 19th September.
- Salt stocks have now been delivered to ensure that we are at maximum capacity for the start of the season.
- All pre-season calibration checks have been completed in readiness for the season which starts on Monday 30th October.

Street Lighting LED retro fit scheme

- The high – wattage bulb replacement scheme is 95% complete with the remainder on track to be done by the end of November. This is helping maximise earlier reductions in energy savings to the Authority.
- The updated business case for the LED project is still being worked on by officers. Unforeseen energy and borrowing costs have impacted on the original forecasts.
- Cabinet have now approved a 2-year extension on the Street Lighting Contract. This will allow the LED project to be completed by the incumbent contractor, ensuring continuity of work and greater certainty on future works costs.

Traffic signals LED retro fit scheme

- Programmes are being worked on for the 2nd phase of the traffic signal LED project and discussions are being held to ensure there are no works clashes and delays.
- The project is providing further energy and financial savings to the Authority.

- This project is being externally funded through the Combined Authority.

Highway Maintenance

- Planned and routine maintenance operations are still progressing well and in accordance with allocated programming timeframes.
- To date, key maintenance improvements have been completed, which include the following:
- Application of footway surface treatments commonly known as “slurry Seal” has been applied to 41,000 M2 of bituminous footways with a spend value of £130,000.00.
- Surface treatments in the carriageway known as “Micro Surfacing” has been applied to 50,000M2 of defective carriageway with a spend value of £385,000.00.
- Surface treatments in the carriageway known as “Surface Dressing” has been applied to 73,000M2 of defective carriageway with a spend value of £530,000.00.
- Resurfacing which involves the removal of one or more surfacing layers in the carriageway has been completed, totalling 68,000 M2 with a spend value of £2,100,000.00.
- Works undertaken using CRSTS funding is being reported to the CA on monthly dashboards in accordance with the funding requirements.
- Routine safety inspections and other maintenance functions such as grass cutting, and drainage renewals continue to operate daily which identifies isolated defects and repairs in accordance with the council’s safety inspection policies and other industry guidelines.

Strategic Transport

Port Access

- A series of rail improvements have been set out in Liverpool City Region Investment Programme. These include a number of schemes within the ‘Rail Freight Investment Programme’ including projects aimed at improving freight capacity, including to the Port of Liverpool. Programme ‘roadmaps’ are currently being developed for all the proposed improvements.
- The Government has announced that the Port Access Route will now be considered as part of the Road Investment Strategy 3 (RIS3). The Transport

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Secretary confirmed, in March 2023, that the 'A5036 Port of Liverpool Access in the Roads Investment Strategy faces a range of challenges including environmental considerations and ongoing design changes, and so will be developed in RIS 3 (covering 2025-2030) to allow time to ensure stakeholders' views are fully considered' The scheme had previously been in the RIS2. It is understood that modelling and survey work is ongoing. This process is likely to take a further 10 months to complete.

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. Having achieved the agreed spend in Year 1 of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme despite the challenges the increased settlement has created, progress is now being made on the delivery of Year 2 . Recruitment for new staff to help deliver the programme is ongoing.
- The entire current CRSTS programme has been re-baselined by the LCRCA to ensure that the projects originally identified on the list submitted with the Business case are still capable of delivering within the current programme. It has also revised the funding allocations for each project. This follows consultation with all the local authorities.
- The Year 2 CRSTS scheme was set out in the 2023-24 Transport Capital Programme Report approved by Cabinet Member.
- The Government have indicated that funding previously allocated to HS2 will be allocated to the Combined and Local Authorities so a larger settlement is anticipated in the next CRSTS programme (CRSTS2) which will provide spending for projects from 2027 onwards. The Department for Transport have indicated that the CRSTS2 package will be [£1.581bn](#), which is over double the current allocation of £710 million between 2022-2027
- To help define these projects that will be included in CRSTS2 the LCRCA are in consultation with all the Local Authorities to understand current programmes and needs. Some analysis work has been completed to review 'access to transport, future housing, health and deprivation and economic development. This is to help shape future investment. It is expected that a Pipeline of projects will be developed in 2024.
- Work is progressing on the development of the next Local Transport Plan for the City Region. The target date for completion is Autumn 2024. Development has been impacted by the delay to the DfT providing the current guidelines. All future projects should be developed in accordance with the key themes within the LTP. These include a recognition that transport must support Placemaking and projects must aim to achieve a reduction in vehicle trips whilst growing the alternatives.

- **Low Carbon Strategy:** 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 a report completed. Plans are currently being developed for member engagement in advance of a wider consultation. The report will provide a quantification of the current transport related carbon position for the Council and a future trajectory for reductions towards Net Zero. Progress is also being made on the development of an Active Travel and E-mobility Strategies for the Borough. WSP have now been engaged to complete an assessment of the Carbon impact of the Capital Programme and to provide advice and instruction on carbon assessment of transport schemes. This work should be completed by early 2024.
- In order to identify potential improvement to the Councils walking and cycling network a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan is being developed. Proposals for stakeholder engagement were presented to the Consultation and Engagement Panel in early November. A number of engagement sessions were held with specific interest groups and some initial plans developed for helping inform the engagement process. Detailed plans for further engagement, initially planned with Members, are being developed. It is envisaged that these will follow engagement on the LCTS which hopefully should provide some context to the need for an LCWIP.
- **Southport Eastern Access and Maritime Corridor Business Cases:** The detailed design work is now progressing on both schemes and the final details will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. Part of the Maritime Corridor scheme will 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 a contractor, Balfour Beatty, have been appointed to complete some feasibility work on both schemes from which, subject to formal approval, some formal Early Contractor Involvement will follow. It is expected that LUF projects will be delivered by March 25. Some further engagement to ensure that local Members, businesses and residents are sighted on the proposals and have an ability to shape them is ongoing, with the public element of Maritime Corridor scheme just completed. Analysis work has been undertaken of the responses. Engagement has taken place with some key stakeholders, including land owners on both schemes. The re-baselining process has been undertaken to determine the realistic programme and costs of all projects in the current CRSTS settlement period; this will determine whether all or some of the designed schemes under both business cases will be delivered under the current programme. The agreed allocations are £21.2m (MC) and £16.8m (SEA)
- **A59 Junctions and Corridor:** Design work is continuing on improvements the junctions at Kenyon's Lane and at Hall Lane on the A59 Northway, these will be developed in the context of a wider improvement of the cycle route between Switch Island and Robins Island. A package of funding including Government grant funding for improvements to traffic signals, developer

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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 have been undertaken with local Ward Members and Maghull Town Council and Lydiate Parish Council on the details of both schemes and further consultation with the wider public has been completed. The works are programmed for delivery in early 2024.

- **Scarisbrick Avenue:** In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been completed, including the installation of lighting. Some defects were undertaken in April with some further work planned in last 2023. The scope of this work has been reviewed by landscape architects.
- **Southport Town Deal:** Preliminary Design work on the first phase of public realm project identified within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) has been completed and detailed design commenced and should be completed by the end of 2023. Construction will be undertaken in early 2024 with the programme being defined. Early Contractor Involvement has been sought, using Balfour Beatty through the SCAPE framework.
- A hard landscaping report has been completed which sets out the proposed materials to be used. This has been considered by the tourism, consultation, maintenance, Green Sefton and cleansing teams and comments provided and plans reviewed accordingly. The material adopted will then be used in further phases of improvement. A report highlighting potential changes to the highway to facilitate improved pedestrian accessibility and public realm to be delivered under subsequent phases has been developed and work is ongoing to define a second phase of public realm work.
- **Crosby Town Centre:** The highway works which will support the new library development proposed for the Green Car Park are on site with a view to being completed by the end of November 2023. The works are aimed at reducing severance and improving access to the town centre. Work has also been developed for some paving and public realm enhancement which are likely to be delivered, under the main contract, with works undertaken in early 2024. These works should set that standard for the external works associated with the planned new development. The Planning application for the Hub development has been submitted as a hybrid development. This includes all the traffic and transport work associated with the development. Ward Members, residents and businesses have been kept informed.
- **Bootle Town Centre:** - Work was commissioned to review access to the Strand in Bootle, in order to help shape initial work associated with the re-imagining of the centre. A Transport Framework has been established, some detailed work has been completed to look at the servicing of the Strand with a view to enabling the Vermont Way entrance to serve as access and egress. Consultation with residents and businesses on the changes was undertaken in September. The detailed design of this work has been completed and work

ordered for the works necessary to enable demolition work which is scheduled for early 2024. Some Master planning work will be undertaken looking at parking and bus waiting facilities. A series of parking surveys have been commissioned to help determine both current parking provision within the town and current demand.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2023/24 has been agreed and published. This report sets out the allocations to Local Safety Schemes, which include interventions at Crosby High School – zebra, Northern Road (Gt Crosby), Hawthorne Road and Prescott Road. These works will be delivered before March 2024, subject to formal approval.

Sustainable Transport

- **Crosby Coastal Park:** Works have been undertaken to provide lighting and an improved surface between South Road, Great Georges Road and the Lake House.
- **Formby By-pass:** Works to deliver an improved cycleway on the A565 south of Woodvale have been completed. Detailed design works are being undertaken on improvements to the junction of the A565 with the Coastal Road at Woodvale. Further design work is continuing on the section from Southport Road and through Ince Woods.
- **Revenue funding** 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. Further revenue money has been successfully bid for to continue this work and a Grant Funding Offer received.
- **School Streets:** Consultation work has been undertaken on three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. Two of the schemes were formally launched in July and further engagement events have been planned. The further scheme, at Stanley High School is more complicated and will be subject to further consultation development before implementation in early 2024. Funding has been secured to develop other school streets initiatives throughout the borough and a dedicated officer, seconded from Sustrans, has recently commenced the selection and engagement work. A priority list of 10 schools has been chose for further engagement and discussions are ongoing to determine the appetite from schools for engaging in this work. The initial response has been disappointed so some other schools are being approached.
- **Green Bus Corridor:** The LCRCA commissioned consultants to develop and appraise options for potential bus priority measures commence works on a

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number of routes in the City Region , including the No 53 bus corridor which travels between Crosby and Liverpool, passing on Stanley Road. Officers have provided some initial comments and a report is expected shortly setting out the results. The LCRCA are now engaging further consultants to develop schemes based on the initial options. Opportunities for 'quick wins' are also being established.

- **Great Georges Road:** Final design work to complete the previous cycle lane scheme along Great Georges Road has been completed and dates are being established for implementation.
- **Birkdale Village** – Some funding from the CRSTS programme has been established to enable to proposals to be developed to improve accessibility in Birkdale. These will be subject to consultation within Autumn 2023.

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. This has been exacerbated by more staff leave being undertaken over the spring and summer months and an increase in more complex and major applications. There is more of a backlog for highway responses than usual as a result. 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 155 applications have been responded to between July and August 2023. This number is based on per planning application and does not include the numerous responses that are provided for a particular planning application (there can be typically up to 5 responses for a major planning application and ones with significant highway issues).

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 – 51
 - 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 – 28

- Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up – 0

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 94 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 route is now a national trail and in the short-term Sefton Council is responsible for its maintenance but are able to apply to Natural England for a grant towards this. A grant application is currently be put together for the remaining part of this financial year. In the long-term Natural England requires the Local Authorities to set up a national trail partnership for the Merseyside and Cheshire West area with all the relevant Local Authorities, in order to manage and maintain the route. Work to establish this partnership is on-going and initial feedback from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority indicates that they may be willing to be part of the partnership and have the lead administrative role.
- Definitive Map Modification Applications – two of the seven applications submitted by the British Horse Society (BHS) were validated in May, meaning they must be determined by May 2024. The BHS has requested that one application be put on hold while they, the affected landowners and Sefton negotiate possible alternative routes and the remaining four applications have yet to be validated.
- Section 31 (6) Submissions – the Warden and Fellows of Nuffield College in the University of Oxford has submitted a deposit under section 31 (6) of the Highways Act 1980 for 11 parcels of land in and around the Lunt/Sefton area of the borough. This is currently being reviewed and if it is considered correct the details must be added to the register of Section 31 (6) Submissions for the borough and be made publicly available on Sefton's website.

Statutory Highway Orders

- A Highways Act section 116 extinguishment Order for a section of highway at Muttocks Rake is due to be considered at the Magistrates Court in August. The Council are presenting the case on behalf of the applicant.
- The Council has been consulted on two proposed section 257 Town and Country Planning Act highway extinguishment orders.

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- An application for a section 247 Town and Country Planning Act highway extinguishment Order for a footpath along Chapel Lane, Melling has been received.
- An application for a section 116 extinguishment Order for a section of highway at Station Road has been received.
- There is a requirement for a Highways Act s228 application for Aldi, Northway to add a missing section of adopted highway from the s278 agreement.

Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning

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

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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Planning & Building Control	7 November 2023

Introduction

1.1 The Planning Service is set up to operate the Council's regulatory functions in relation to the development and use of land.

1.2 It comprises the following functions:

- Development Management
- Enforcement
- Building Control
- Local Plans
- Heritage and Conservation
- Trees

These are supported by the Technical Support team.

1.3 A key focus as we have worked from home has been looking after staff wellbeing. We have carried out two surveys and devised an action plan. These have been received positively and sickness absence has reduced to 40% of pre-Covid levels.

1.4 We recognise the importance of customer satisfaction and the need to understand how our customers feel about the service they receive. We have addressed this with a survey of agents who submit planning applications to us and the overall response is they consider us to be the most efficient planning authority in the Liverpool City Region. We are planning to carry out a comprehensive customer survey in quarter 4 (January – March 2024).

1.5 We also know how importance it is to look after staff given most are still working from home most of the time and this is likely to continue. The Management Team have completed Mental Health First Aid training during the past year and some other members of staff have now also completed this training.

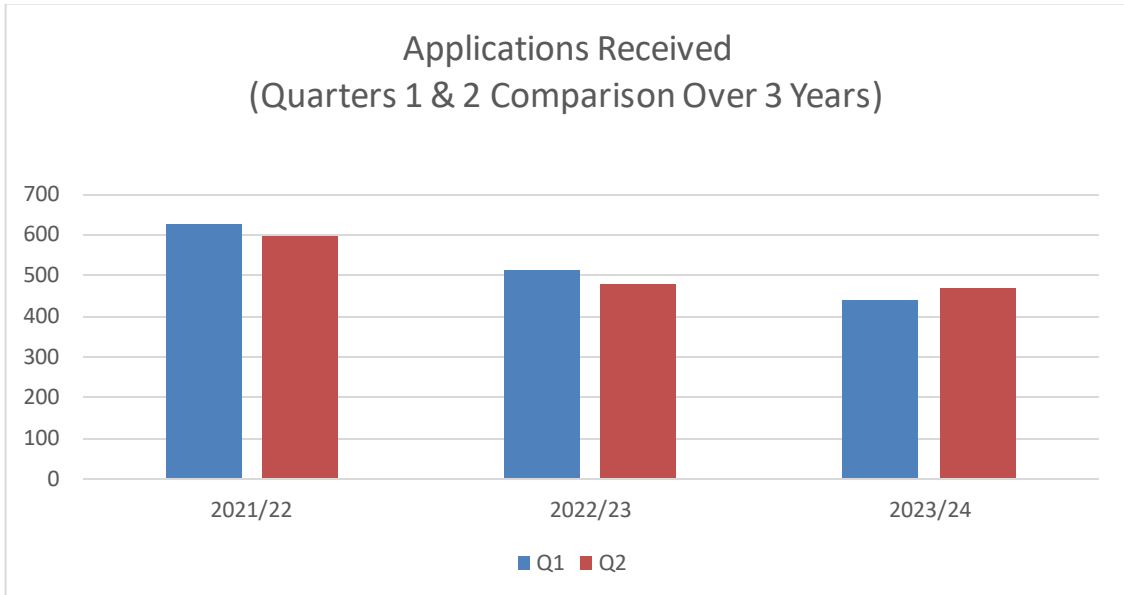
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2. Development Management

Number of planning applications received

- 2.1 Figure 2.1 below shows the number of planning applications received during the first two quarters of the past three years (that is April – September for the years 2021, 2022 and 2023). The numbers rose significantly during Covid after an initial decline, reaching 628 in April – June 2021. The numbers of applications since then have fallen back to levels similar to or slightly below pre-Covid levels.
- 2.2 However, the last quarter indicates that the rate of reduction seems to be slowing down with very similar numbers of applications having been received in Quarter 2 this year (468) compared to Quarter 2 last year (478) and, for the first time in 3 years, the number of applications received in Quarter 2 has exceeded those submitted in Quarter 1.

Figure 2.1 Applications received: Quarters One & Two, 3 Year Comparison



Speed of determining planning applications

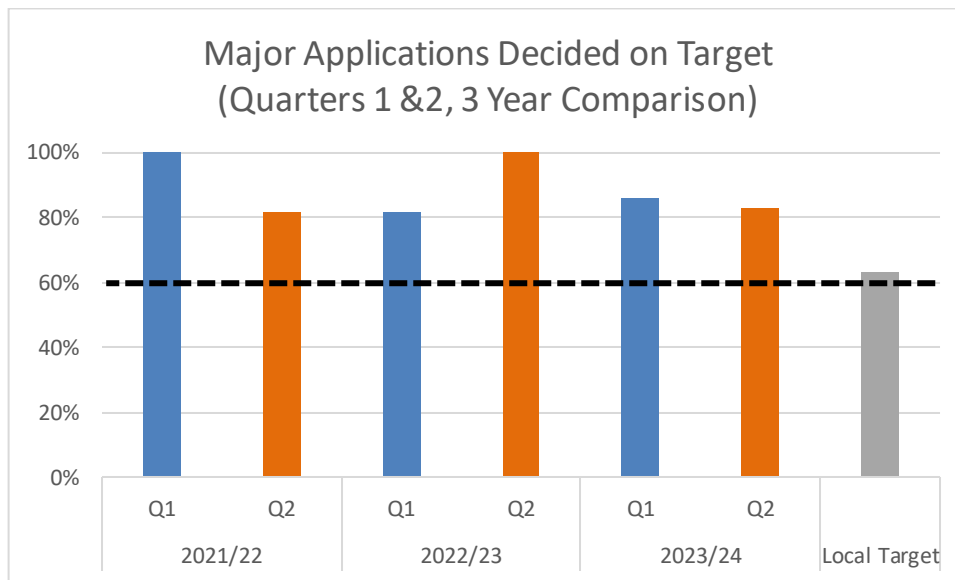
- 2.3 Figure 2.2 shows the major applications decided on target. The figure for Quarter 2 (83%) well exceeds both national (60%) and local (63%) targets. It is down from Quarter 2 last year which was 100%. However, given the small number of major applications determined in each quarter, this drop of 17% represents just one major application which was not decided on time.
- 2.4 The vast majority of applications are within the 'minor' and 'other' categories. Figure 2.2 shows an improvement in Quarter 2 in the speed of determination within both categories from Quarter 1 –'minors' up from 82% to 85%, and 'others' up from 92% to 96%. This is no doubt assisted by an overall decline in the number of applications which has returned to just below pre-Covid levels.
- 2.5 However, the performance needs to be viewed in context. When the numbers of applications were significantly higher during Covid (including April - June 2021), many staff put in extra time – unpaid – to try to maintain previous high levels of performance. Now the applications are easing off, it has enabled the team to take on board many duties which were temporarily put on hold. For example, procedures have been reviewed in a number of areas and this is enabling the team to work more effectively.
- 2.6 The planning process has generally become more complex with an increasing threat of judicial review if procedures are not followed exactly. The team is also preparing for the introduction of a significant new approach - the assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain – which comes into force in January 2024. These factors add time to make sure applications are being assessed fully and properly. We are dependent on consultees replying promptly to enable us to determine applications on time and we have been hampered by slow responses from a number of key consultees. We are addressing this matter direct with those consultees.

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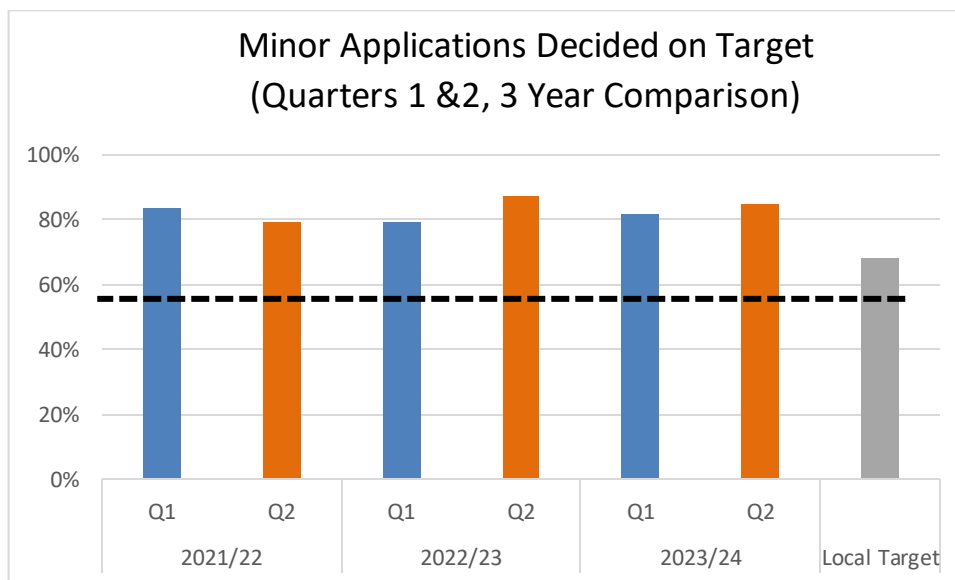
Figure 2.2

Key performance against national targets for speed of decision making:
Quarters One & Two (April – September)

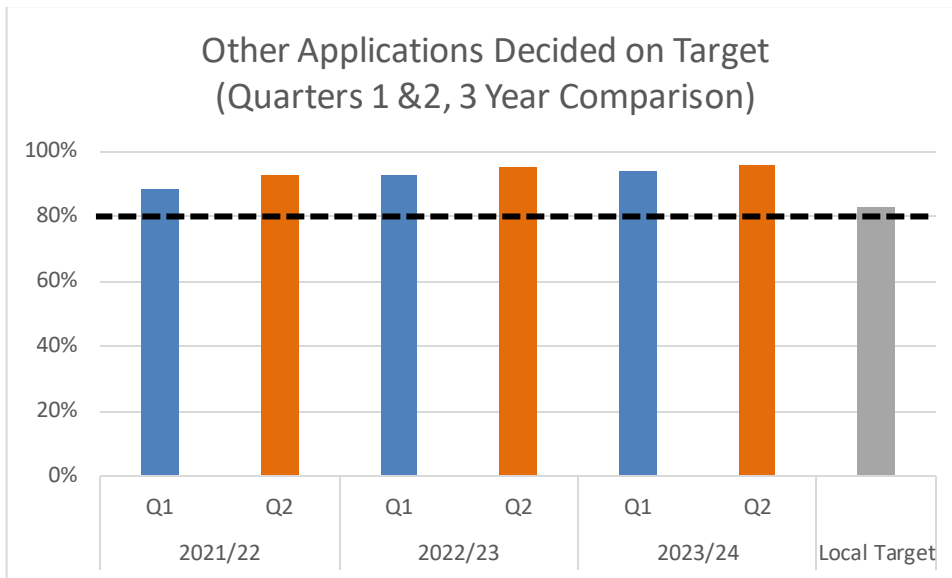
3 Year Comparison: 2021/22, 2022/23 & 2023/24



--- National Target



--- National Target



--- National Target

2.7 We recruited new staff to help deal with the increase in applications during Covid. In this quarter the Planning Manager has taken flexible retirement and one of the Team Leaders is covering his days off, reducing capacity within the team. There has also been an increase in staff sickness in Quarter 2 and this, with continuing maternity leave, has further reduced capacity within the team. The staff recruited during 2021 are now fully settled in and are making a major contribution to the performance of the team. We will continue to keep the staff complement under review. Overall, performance well exceeds national targets and also our own more demanding local targets.

Pre-application enquiries

2.8 We have one dedicated officer who focuses on responding to pre-application inquiries. The number of inquiries had dropped considerably over the period shown but in the last quarter has begun to rise again – see Figure 2.3 (67 in Q1 2021 dropping to 27 in Q1 2023, but rising to 44 in Q2 this year). At its peak, the officer was working in excess of her allocated hours and was responding to inquiries under considerable pressure. The speed in dealing with pre-applications has remained very high and consistently surpasses our target of 80% response rate within 28 days (Figure 2.4). The officer responsible for this area has been able to devote more time to each inquiry and provide a higher quality of response when numbers have been lower, and also takes on a caseload of planning applications when she has spare capacity.

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Figure 2.3 Pre-application Enquiry Responses 2021-24 (Quarters One & Two, 3 Year Comparison)

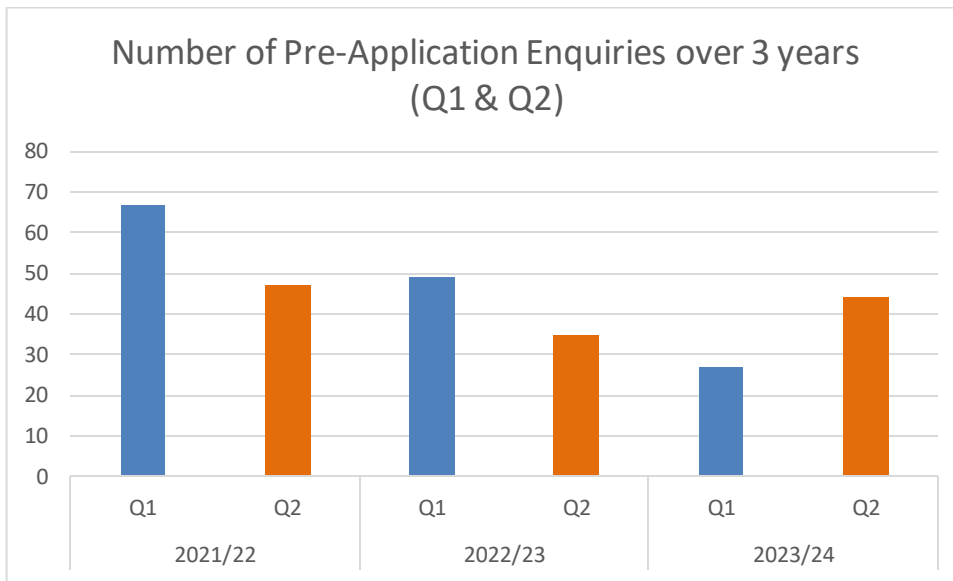
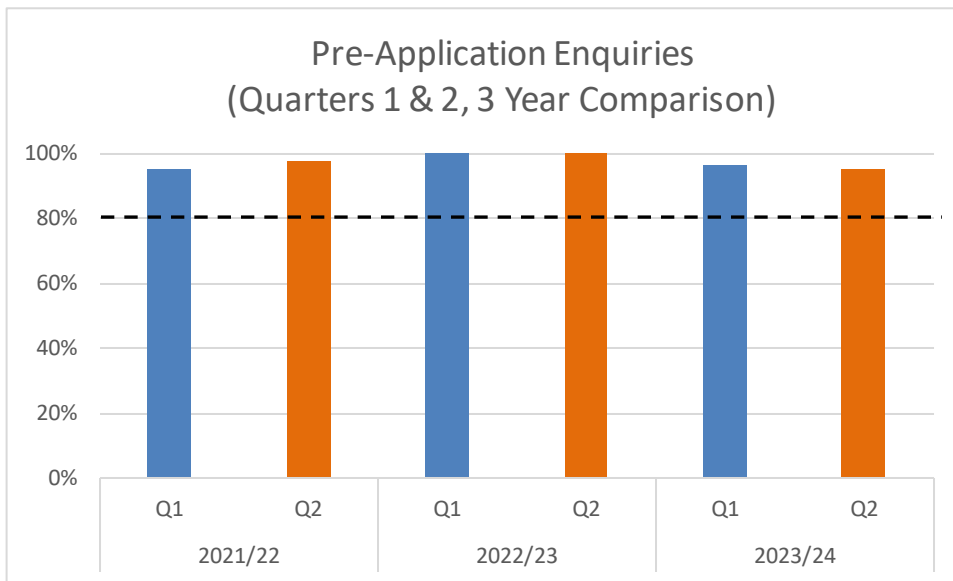


Figure 2.4 Pre-Application Responses on Target (Quarters One & Two, 3 Year Comparison)



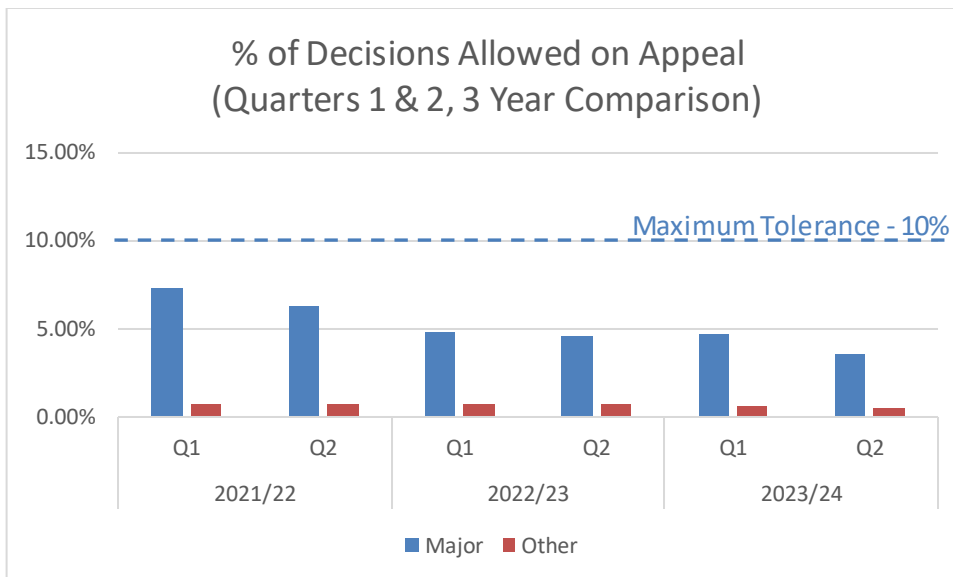
----- Local Target

Proportion of applications allowed at appeal and percentage of applications approved

2.9 The Service has kept significantly under the maximum tolerance in relation to the number of applications allowed at appeal (Figure 2.5). We have just dipped below our target of approving 90% of all applications in the most recent quarter (Figure 2.6). This reflects a stricter approach we have adopted over this quarter. We have advised applicants we will give them one main opportunity to revise their scheme to make it acceptable otherwise we will be likely to recommend refusal. Linked to this we are promoting our pre-application service which enables prospective applicants to seek advice upfront and be more likely to submit an acceptable scheme right from the start.

Figure 2.5

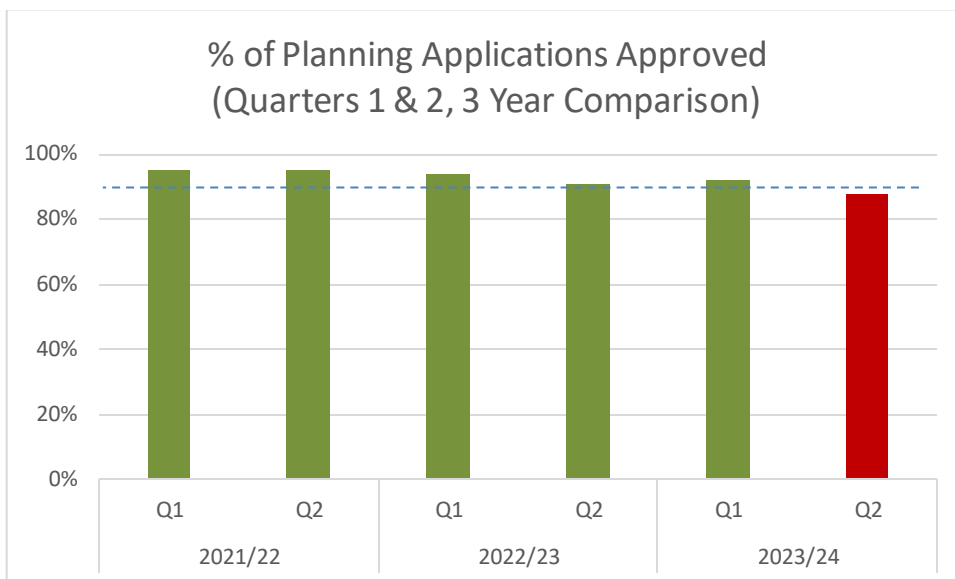
Percentage of decisions allowed on appeal: Quarters One and Two, 3 Year Comparison



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Figure 2.6

Percentage of planning applications approved: Quarters One & Two, 3 Year Comparison



----- Local Target

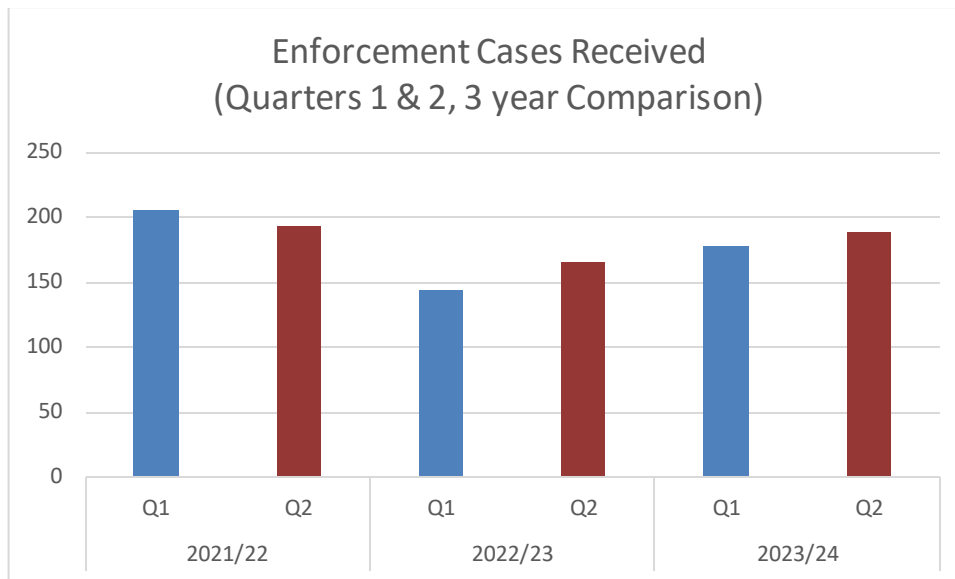
2.10 It is still a significant team effort across the Service to assess and determine applications expediently and in line with Government targets.

Enforcement

2.11 The number of complaints received has increased over the past two quarters when compared with the equivalent quarters from last year (up from 311 in 2022 to 358 in 2023) - see Figure 2.7 below. There is no obvious explanation for the rise of complaints except that it tends to mirror the amount of development activity taking place.

Figure 2.7

Enforcement cases received: Quarters One & Two, 3 Year Comparison



3. Building Control

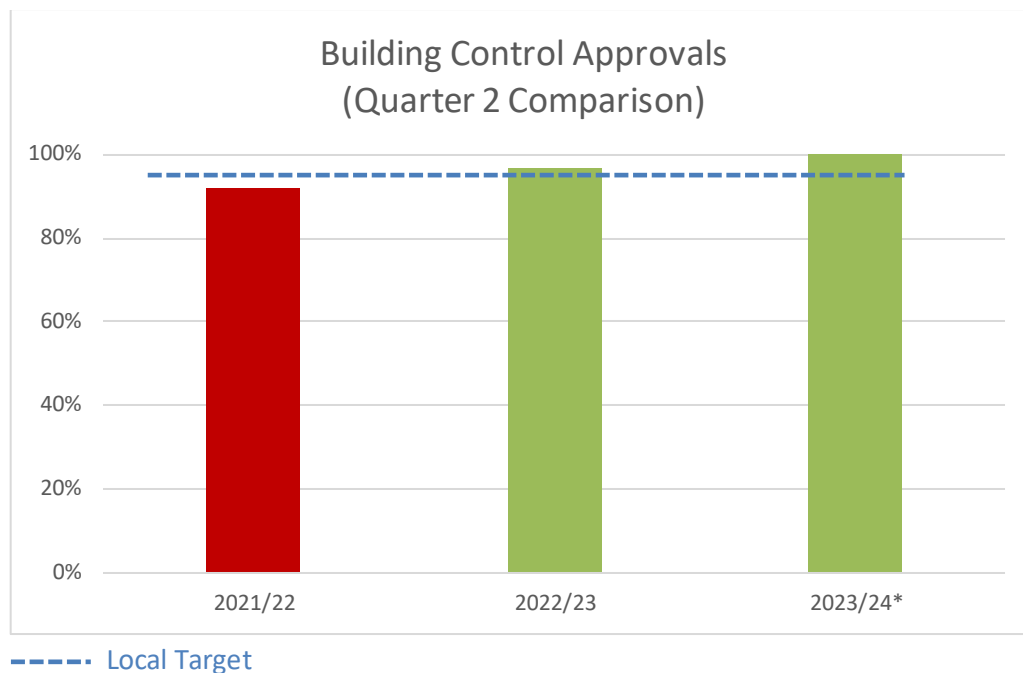
Performance targets

- 3.1 This section focuses on the Building Control Team's performance in the second quarter of 2023/24 and compares overall performance with the same period from the last 3 years.
- 3.2 The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan-checking and the carrying out of site inspections, although it is struggling to meet its locally set plan-checking targets due to the long-term absence of 2 members of staff and on-going staffing vacancies. However, in spite of this, the percentage of Building Regulation applications given full or conditional approval, is 98% for Quarter 2 of 2023/24 compared to the locally set target of 95%.
- 3.3 The Team's market share remains at the national average for local authority building control teams, although over the last 18 months the figure has reduced, as the recent loss of some key members of staff to private sector Building Control continues to have an adverse effect by taking key clients with them. An improvement plan has been put in place to address overall performance and once staffing levels are brought back up to the establishment, this should start to take effect.

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Figure 3.1

Percentage of building regulation applications approved: Quarter two, 3 year comparison



Income and financial performance

3.4 Building Regulation income for the previous 3/5 year financial cycle, shows that the Section's costs continue to be covered - in terms of the fee-earning work element. Initial financial figures from the first two quarters of 2023/24 indicate that Building Control income has made a strong start to the financial year – with a number of large housing developments commencing on site.

Safety at sports grounds

3.5 As part of conditions of the Safety Certificates held by Southport FC, Marine FC and Aintree Racecourse, the Building Control Team undertakes annual inspections to check the grandstands are properly maintained. The inspection of the five permanent grandstands at Aintree Racecourse was undertaken early in 2023 and inspections at Southport FC and Marine FC are due to be carried out towards the end of this year. The Building Control Team will shortly commence checking plans and details for the temporary structures planned for the 2024 Grand National race meeting.

Staffing

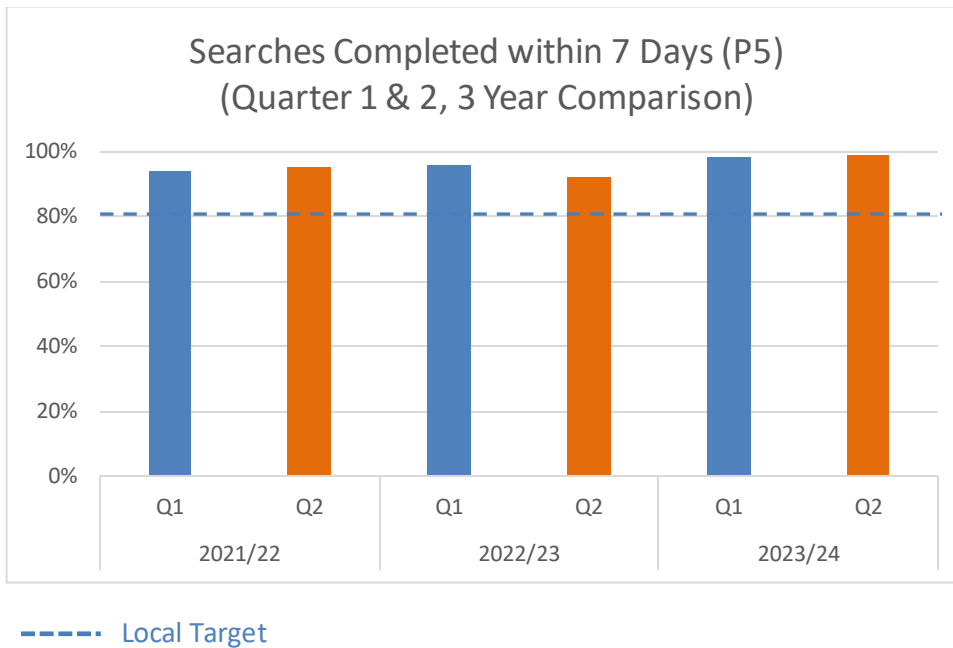
3.6 It is hoped to advertise a vacant Building Control Officer post early in November 2023. In addition, the Team has also been covering for a member of staff on maternity leave.

4. Technical Support

4.1 Figure 4.1 below shows our performance in quarters one and two for the last 3 years. Performance has improved compared to Quarter 1 and is now at its highest since 2021. Performance is currently running at 19% above target.

Figure 4.1

Searches completed within 7 days: Quarter One 3 Year Comparison

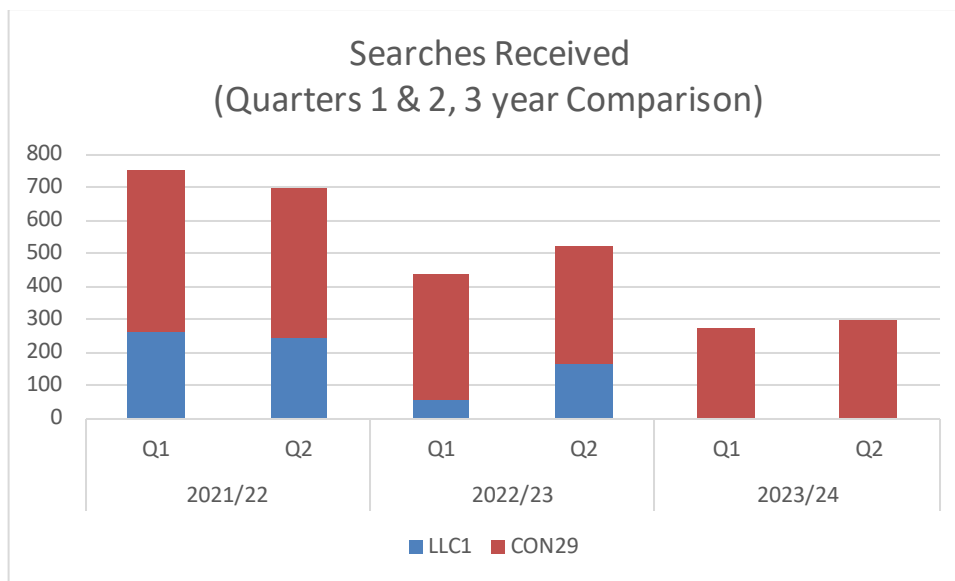


4.2 In January 2023, the Land Registry assumed responsibility for the Land Charges register. Figure 4.2 below shows the numbers of searches received over the last 3 years for quarters one and two. It shows that the makeup of the type of searches received has changed over the last 3 years, since the LLC1 portion of the search moved to the HM Land Registry earlier this year. This is having an overall impact on the total number of searches. Quarter 2 shows a further reduction in the number of search requests.

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Figure 4.2

Number of searches received: Quarters One and Two 3 Year Comparison



- 4.3 The fall in the number of searches received has significantly reduced the amount of income expected in Q2. Search requests have fallen to a similar level as in 2020 at the start of Covid due to slower housing market turnover. The team is currently carrying vacancies and resources have been reallocated to other areas of the team to ensure resilience in service delivery and improvements to how we monitor performance.

5. Local Planning

The Sefton Local Plan

- 5.1 Changes to the plan-making process are included in the Levelling Up and Planning Bill which is currently making its way through parliament. A Cabinet recommendation was recently approved to await clarification on the new plan-making system before work on a new Sefton Local Plan commences, even though the current Local Plan is now over 6 years old.
- 5.2 The government is currently consulting on changes to the plan-making system to support the emerging Levelling Up and Planning Act. This proposes that Councils will be allocated a 'wave' in which to commence a new style Local Plan, based on how old their current Local Plan is. Based on these proposals it is likely, subject to confirmation, that Sefton will be expected to commence a new Local Plan under the new system between in the next few years.
- 5.3 As of 30 September 2023, planning approval has been granted for 76.6% of the total indicative site capacity on Local Plan housing allocations, up from 74.5% last December. The latest approval (1st March) on a Local Plan housing allocation was 146 homes on the Waddicar Farm site in Melling.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other policy documents

- 5.4 A number of Supplementary Planning Documents and Information Notes were recently adopted. These will now assist in making planning decisions. They are:
- Affordable Housing SPD
 - Conversions to Flats and HMOs SPD
 - New Housing SPD
 - House Extensions SPD
 - Social Value (Employment and Skills) SPD
 - Contributions towards primary education from development Information Note
 - Recreation Mitigation on the Coast Information Note

Liverpool City Region work

- 5.5 The Combined Authority are working towards the next stage of consultation on the Spatial Development Strategy later this year. Sefton are asking for housing numbers to be based on the standard methodology approach and not a continuation of the Local Plan approach. The draft SDS is progressing through the internal approval stages and is expected to be public later this year.

Bootle Area Action Plan

- 5.6 To help support the regeneration and transformation of the wider Bootle area a Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP) is being progressed. This will set out a vision, objectives, projects, policies and **Page 173** the area. This is being led by the

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Planning Policy Team. To assist with this work, the Council has been successful in securing funding from a range of sources for various aspects of the Bootle AAP. These are:

- £138,000 from the Combined Authority to secure consultants to help with the AAP document preparation, background evidence and community engagement
- £50,000 from the MHCLG for the Council to test the Draft Model Design Toolkit in Bootle as a pilot scheme. Sefton was one of 14 Local Planning Authorities that were successful (out of over 70 applicants)
- £14,000 from the Local Government Association to procure guidance on a range of project delivery methods.

5.7 Public consultation on the Bootle AAP Issues and Options paper was undertaken from November 2021 to 31 January 2022. The engagement included a 12-page newsletter delivered to all 22,000 homes and businesses in the Bootle AAP area.

5.8 The draft ('Preferred Options') Bootle Area Action Plan has now been written and was approved at Cabinet on 22 June 2023. Public engagement on the Bootle Area Action Plan is underway and the Council have recently hosted a number of drop-in events at Bootle Strand. The period for comments on the Bootle AAP ends on Monday 6th November 2023. All comments made will be reported before the end of the year.

Other work

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

5.10 Following recent applications and appeal hearings for traveller accommodation sites, it was decided that the Council's evidence base for gypsy and traveller accommodation needed to be updated. The Council commissioned a Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment which is now completed and available online.

5.11 The Council has also recently undertaken a replacement Playing Pitch Strategy so that we have the evidence to deal with applications on existing playing pitches or can help secure contributions for improvements to existing pitches from large development proposals. The new strategy will also help support the Council's applications for funding for improvements to its playing pitches. This was a complicated and multidisciplinary piece of work and was managed and led by the Local Planning team. The Council have received a final report which is now approved and available online.

5.12 To inform both the Local Plan review and Bootle AAP (see above) the Council commissioned an Employment Land and Premises Supply assessment. This looks at all of Sefton's allocated and designated employment land, including

Bootle Office Quarter. The Council have received a final report which is now approved and available online.

- 5.13 The Local Plan team have recently completed its first Movers' Survey. This looks at where people moved to newly built homes in Sefton and why. It also looks at what services and facilities they have had to switch because of their move. The initial results can be found at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/5703/movers-survey-report-2022-first-edition.pdf>. The next round of the Movers' Survey will be undertaken late 2023.

6. Heritage and Conservation

Heritage at Risk

- 6.1 We are continuing to work towards the removal of the 6 Conservation Areas from the National Heritage at Risk Register. These are Lord Street, Promenade, West Birkdale, North Meols (Southport), Christ Church and Waterloo Park (Waterloo). This includes a number of different work areas including raising their profile through Twitter and Facebook, regeneration funding bids, working with the local community, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, taking enforcement and other legal action in relation to a number of derelict sites and listed buildings in these areas, including the major Lord Street Verandah project.
- 6.2 Progress has been made on a number of Heritage at Risk sites including working with colleagues and partners on a number of Council owned Listed Buildings to secure their improvement and long term use and sustainability.
- 6.3 In order to help prevent major repairs to historic homes and to help in the cost of living crisis the Heritage team have now published helpful guidance for homeowners in the maintenance of their property. Providing useful bespoke guidance for these important buildings will help prevent deterioration and buildings failing into costly disrepair. [Guide to Maintaining Sefton's Historic Homes](#)
- 6.4 In order to help deal with the Climate Emergency and the cost of living crisis the Heritage team have also published guidance for homeowners to help them improve energy efficiency in their historic homes and save money. [Guide to Improving Energy Efficiency in Sefton's Historic Homes - Digital](#)

Regeneration

- 6.5 The capital build part of the Southport Townscape Heritage project is progressing, and discussions continue with owners of targeted buildings. The first grant application has now been completed - 509-515 Lord Street. The project restored and repaired a long term vacant grade 2 Listed Building and removed it from the Council's Buildings at Risk Register. The project brought back 2 vacant retail units into use and converted the vacant upper floors into 9 apartments.

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- 6.6 The learning and skills activities for Southport Townscape Heritage project have been focused on raising awareness of Southport's built heritage. A talk about the project and Southport's heritage has been created and presented to community groups and schools including using the display information, the Built on Sand exhibition also being used as a pop-up in Wayfarers Arcade. The 'Southport's Streets – Seen by You' exhibition attracted over 40 entries from local artists and lots of interest from visitors. We continue to work closely with Sefton CVS, schools and community organisations e.g. the Brighter Living High Park project and Southport Hoteliers. Plans are underway for Heritage Open Days in September.
- 6.7 Discussions have taken place on a number of Heritage at Risk sites which are considered to be key strategic sites to find new uses or upgrade them to modern facilities so that they continue to be or find their optimum viable use and save them from further deterioration.

Policy

- 6.8 The Heritage team have completed draft Conservation Area and Management Plans for Hesketh Road, Carr Houses, Lunt Village and Homer Green. The public consultation event for Hesketh Road took place on 3rd August and the public consultation event for the remaining Conservation Areas on 4th October. Once the public comments are compiled it is intended to adopt these background planning documents by the end of the year.

Advice to Development Management team

- 6.9 The number of consultation responses sent in Q1 & Q2 for 2023 is 204, for the same period in 2022 is 212 and 2021 is 362. The decrease from previous years is due to removing the buffer zones for consultations so it means that requests for consultation are more targeted.
- 6.10 In addition, this part of the Service continues to assist in various appeals, on-site monitoring and enforcement cases.

7. Conclusion

- 7.1 The past two years have been unprecedented for the Council and with significant increases in the numbers of applications and staffing issues it was difficult for a period to maintain a high level of performance. However, staffing levels have improved and numbers of applications have reduced so once more targets are generally being exceeded.
- 7.2 Appropriate technology has been put in place to support staff who mainly work from home, and staff have performed very well. Staff surveys show the service has been able to respond to key issues in order to maintain essential services whilst maintaining staff morale. We continue to hold staff 'away sessions' to bring members of different teams together, as well as helping to integrate those who have joined the Service since the start of Covid and have never known what it is like to be part of a Service working together in one office.
- 7.3 The Planning Service received very positive feedback at our last Sefton Agents' Forum in February 2023. This was validated by our Service being awarded "Planning Authority of the Year" by the Royal Town Planning Institute North West Branch in June 2023. We have been nominated as a finalist for the national awards in London in November. As part of the same awards, the Chief Planning Officer has also been shortlisted in the category of 'Inspirational Leader of the Year'.
- 7.4 A new initiative was launched this quarter with a Design Awards competition to showcase the best of design in Sefton over the past 10 years. This has attracted a lot of interest and many high-quality schemes have been submitted across multiple categories from best heritage and commercial schemes through to best individual house and best house extension. This was held in the Grand Hotel, Southport, on 20th October.
- 7.5 The Service continues to respond to the unsettled context in which we are currently operating. We will closely monitor the number of planning applications we receive and keep staffing under review in the Development Management team, as well as trying to ensure the Building Control team is well equipped to face its own particular challenges. We are prepared to adapt to further changes on the horizon, in particular the major legislative change heralded in the Levelling Up and Planning Bill and recently announced reforms to the planning system which will have implications for the review of the Local Plan.

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)		
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	October 2023

INVEST SEFTON

External funded programmes

Growth Hub

InvestSefton is one of the Liverpool City Region Growth Hubs working alongside the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA), Growth Platform, other local authorities, Chambers of Commerce and The Women's Organisation. The total value for delivery in each of the LA areas is £20,000 compared to the £50,000 of previous years. **Government has announced that Growth Hub funding has been extended until September 2023. InvestSefton will continue the delivery of the Sefton growth hub.**

UKSPF Shared Prosperity Funding

Place Based Business Support - Sefton's allocation is £782,414, which includes c.£23k top-sliced monies for central co-ordination and website development via Growth Platform. The project has been given a new delivery brand name- **Business Support Service** and a steering group chaired by Sefton has been established.

Business Start-up support- This will now be delivered via the aforementioned Place Based Business Support programme. InvestSefton commissioned support for start-ups via competitive tender for a £80,000 contract. Following evaluation this was awarded to:

- **Merseyside Expanding Horizons (MEH) & Safe Regeneration** - This is a Bootle based partnership led by MEH who manage the Big Onion in Bootle Strand shopping centre and Southport Town Hall. The Big Onion facility is equipped with co-working spaces, meeting rooms, presentation facilities, and high-speed internet connectivity, and offers an incubator hub to up to 20 new start businesses. Within Southport, they use a prime location in the Town Hall. Safe Regeneration run incubator units in Bootle from the St Mary's Complex, this is their main delivery location. Both were part of the previous LCR Enterprise hub funded under ERDF until 30 June 2023.

Town Centres business support - Similarly, the team also went to open market for a business support sustainability commission worth £60,000. Following evaluation this was awarded to:

- **Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside** - Groundwork is a Merseyside based national organisation with a team of professional in-house consultants and associates with a variety of technical expertise including energy auditing, carbon management and environmental training. These are supported by the Director of Business who has over 25 years' experience delivering public funded environmental / low carbon business support projects to businesses, including delivery of the SRB 6 funded Sefton Business Environment Association. Specialisms include delivery of sustainability support and action plans through

Groundwork Sustainable Business Membership scheme. The team has previously worked with Groundwork under SRB projects in south Sefton.

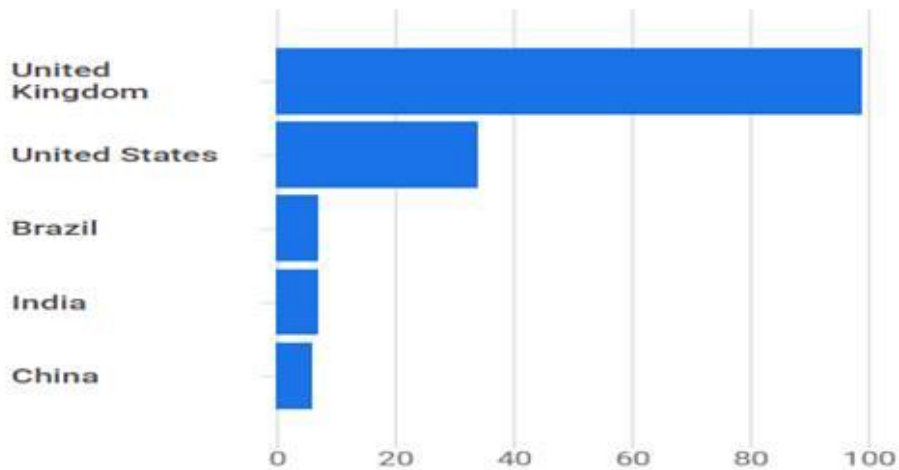
Business engagement

Business engagement-InvestSefton.com

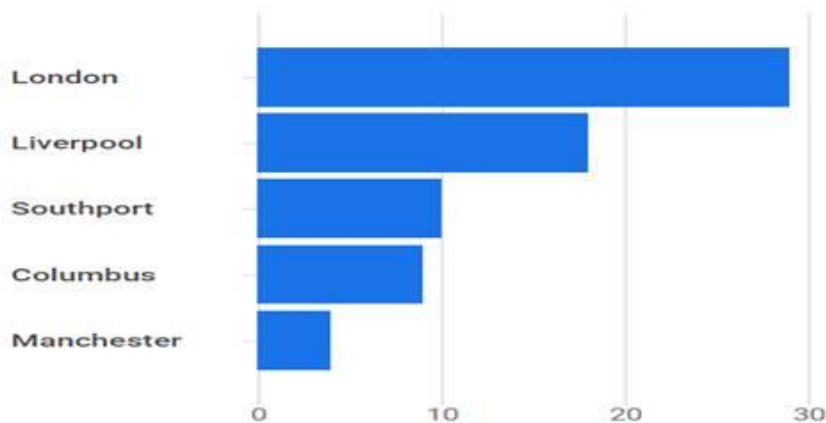
- From Friday 22nd to Thursday 28th September 2023, the website had 218 unique sessions.
- The most visits this week was on Tuesday 26th September.
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 28th September 2023, the site has had a total of **69,709** unique sessions.
- Posts on the website and twitter this week have included promoting our next Financial & Professional Networking Group on 19th October.
- InvestSefton twitter page has 1,608 followers.
- Sefton Huddle Facebook page has 24 members.

Country of origin of user of the website is broken down as follows:

Users by Country

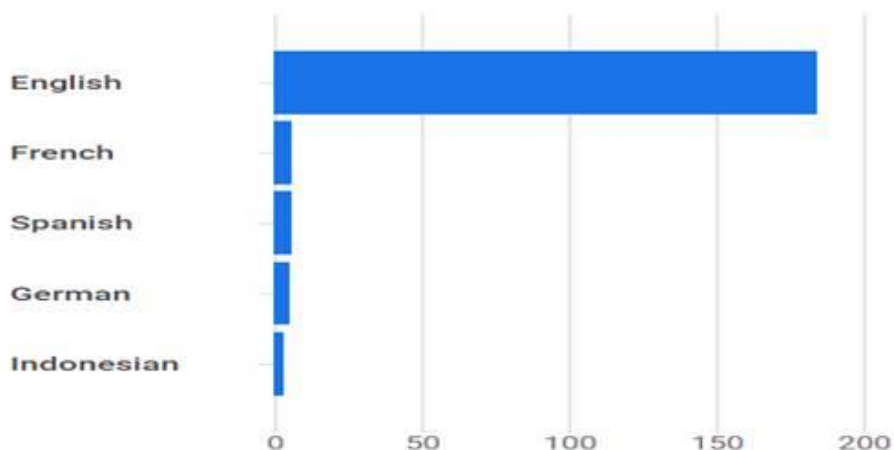


Users by Town/City



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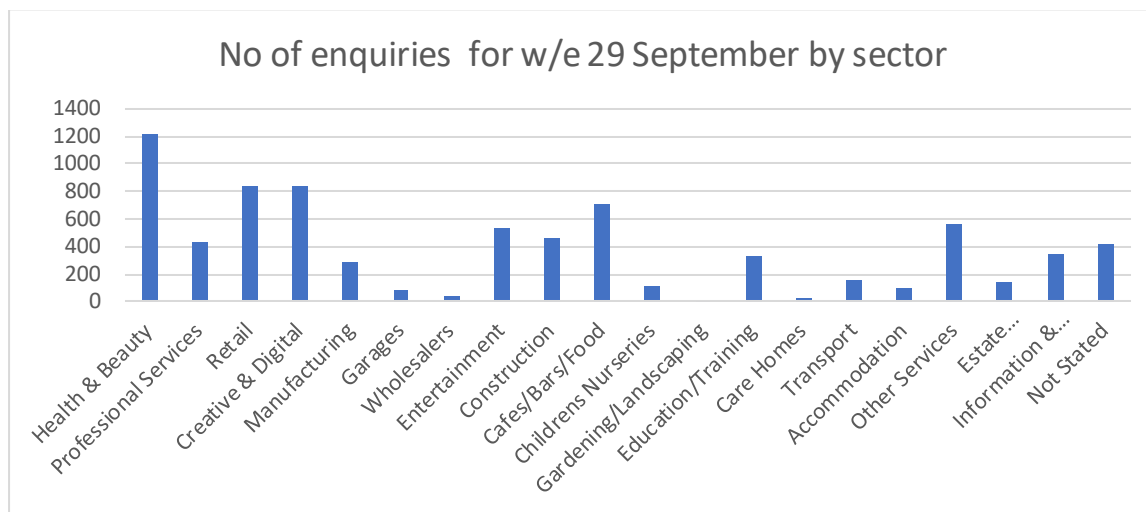
Users by Language



NB Much of the overseas traffic is generated by 'bots. While not all are legitimate and maybe be phishing, many of the US (See towns /cities) sessions will be those indexing the sites for search engines (most notably Google). The search engine bots will index the site approximately once per week. There is also the strong possibility that some of the US visitors will be ex-pats with a connection to parts of the borough or potential investors.

Business enquiries

Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled 7,090 enquiries from a wide range of businesses.



Case studies

The team continues to engage with businesses as part of its 1:1 delivery support. Recent anonymised case studies below

Southport based business specialising in online and offline marketing. Customers include banks, UK-wide financial services providers looking to train their teams in one-to-one sales and specialist small businesses. The Business is growth orientated and looking to expand its network within Sefton and the LCR. InvestSefton supported the business by assisting with Business Planning to support their entrance into New Markets.

Bootle Based business that runs online learning for people in the legal profession. The owner used to be at a large firm of solicitors but left to develop this business. The Business needs funding and to develop their contact base. InvestSefton supported the business by investigating the most appropriate funding streams and providing support through the application process to secure funding.

A business based in Crosby which has video editing and a recording studio for musicians. The business also creates documentaries and film events for businesses, public agencies, and commercial customers. The business is keen to support other young musicians with affordable recording and rehearsal space. InvestSefton supported the business by identifying local not for profit agencies to market services to as well as grant finder research into trusts and foundations criteria, KPI's etc.

A mobile coffee shop based in Burbo Bank Crosby. The Business has a 3-year licence from Sefton Council which enables him to serve hot drinks and non-packaged food items such as crepes and toasties. The Business is now looking at possible expansion and taking over a concession at Croxteth County Park. As well as needing funding to support this the Business is also considering a battery replacement of an existing diesel generator which costs circa £25K. The Business needs to decide which should be given priority. InvestSefton supported the Business by investigating battery technology to run the existing mobile at Burbo Bank as well as fully exploring the Croxteth Park concession to secure an appropriate finance package.

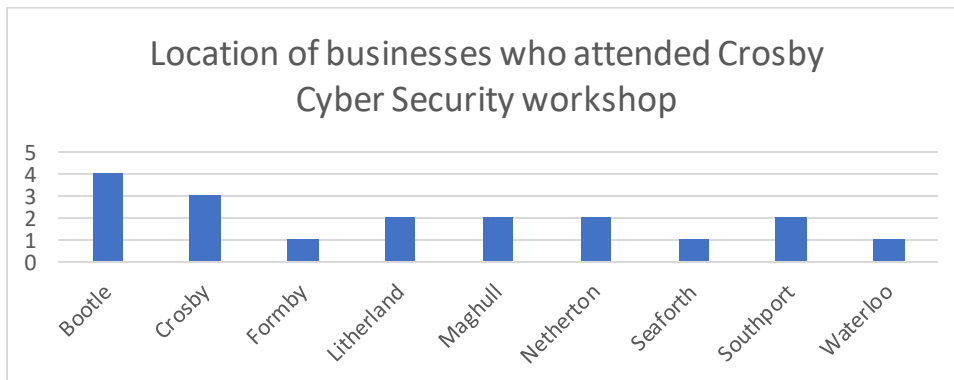
Webinars/Events

InvestSefton's webinars and events have become a useful vehicle for engaging with businesses on a one-to-many basis. The most recent events were two Cyber Workshops- These interactive sessions gave businesses a greater understanding of the cyber risks they are likely to face and how to reduce these risks, including:

- Phishing, passwords, networks, malware, and social media
- Live demonstrations and real-world examples
- Ask the cyber expert Q&A
- Developing an action plan
- Certificate of completion

The workshops are part a wider **Merseyside Cyber Security Programme**, which includes a free 12-month programme of support.

20th September 2023 -The Lake House, Crosby



- 19 business delegates of which 9 were Female attended.
- 22 evaluations were completed-selected feedback included:

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"Looking forward to next event. "

"Some really valuable information provided".

"Bigger screen needed".

"Really interesting and thought-provoking topic. Knowledgeable presenters in Jacob and Nathan"

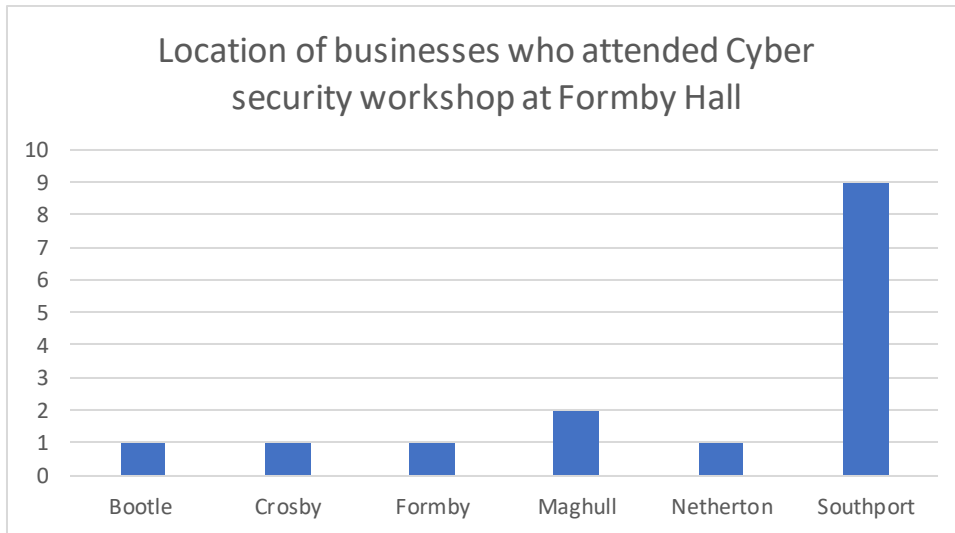
"Perhaps a longer event when there is so much information to be shared".

"Much prefer in person events than online".

"Well structured, good example, well presented and organised, useful information and follow on support".

"There is so much info on this course, may need longer or follow up courses to go into more detail"

21st September 2023 - Formby Hall Golf Resort and Spa



- 17 business delegates of which 8 were Female attended.
- 14 evaluations were completed-selected feedback included:

"Very good event, knowledgeable hosts"

"Zoom option would have been good".

"Very informative, you will learn a lot and pick up new things, as well as meet new businesses".

"A great presentation that was very informative with concise information I can take back and use".

"Well presented and made interactive".



Employment & Learning O & S October 2023

Strategic Investment Funding – Ways to Work continuation interim grant.

Sefton has now received a draft grant offer letter for 6 months for the continuation of Ways to Work after the expiry of the European Social funding at the end of September 2023.

Ways to Work – UK Shared Prosperity Funding for 2024/25

The UKSPF investment plan incorporates resource for providing assistance to people out of the workforce to re-enter work and for assistance with large scale recruitment or redundancy.

This funding will only cover support for people who meet the economically inactive group, as defined by DLUHC, as follows:

‘Economically inactive individuals are those not in work and not actively seeking work (unlike unemployed individuals who are actively seeking work). Not all economically inactive individuals claim benefits. For those that do, this would include those claiming either “legacy” benefits or those within specific conditionality regimes in Universal Credit: The former includes Employment Support Allowance (ESA), Incapacity Benefit (IB) and Income Support (IS). The latter includes claimants within the Preparation Requirement or Work Focused Interview Requirement conditionality regimes. There is no length of time on inactivity required. People count if they are 16+.’

Young Persons Guarantee

Further discussions have taken place on the delivery options for this Metro Mayoral promise. LA Growth Directors have proposed that this should be delivered as a wage incentive through the LA Ways to Work provider network. This proposal appears to have been accepted by the LCR-CA and negotiations are ongoing to allocate the funding and implement the programme. In effect, the Ways to Work service would be undertaking this scheme via the structure to be funded by SIF/UKSPF as there is insufficient finance to operate this as a stand-alone scheme.

Sefton@work General Performance Data for September 2023

Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	5,778 – numbers vary due to GDPR clean up quarterly
New Clients accessing service	September 2023	62
New clients registering by age	September 2023	16-24 11 25-49 44 50+ 6 Unknown 1
W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16 September 2023	58.1% 55.6%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16 September 2023	41.8% 44.4%
W2W contracts Other	Since 01/01/16 September 2023	0.1% 0.0%
ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016 September 2023	31.0% 44.4%
ESF clients without basic skills	Since 01/01/2016	30.0%

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	September 2023	33.3%
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	30
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	W2W & PI + 200 from other programmes Total 2,355
Ways to Work Starts	Since 01/01/2016 September 2023	5,026 77
Positive Inclusions Starts	Since 01/01/2021 September 2023	207 Project now closed
Footfall (Face to Face contact) (sub category of Overall Service Demand)	September 2023	944
Overall Service Demand	September 2023	1,771

Sefton@work Relocation

Work is moving forward with the relocation of Sefton@work into Bootle Strand Unit and the appointed contractors, Jennor's, are forecasting that the programme of works will be complete by mid-November. An employer agent called Arcus Ltd has been appointed to provide the project management functions on our behalf as this could not be accommodated by the Council's Property Services team.

The relocation project plan reflects arrangements for communications with service users, stakeholders and referral agencies and there will be a period of transfer of operations and final snagging etc. we are expecting the full transfer of services across to the new Unit will take place early in the New Year.

Sefton@work is a National Inclusion Award Finalist

Sefton@Work staff are delighted to have been selected as a finalist for the highly esteemed Inclusive Awards' Social Mobility Project Award. The team's commitment to empowering individuals in Sefton, helping them overcome their barriers, find fulfilling employment, and build vital skills and confidence has earned us the nomination. It demonstrates the dedication and positive impact our service has and positive impact on our clients and residents of Sefton.

Voluntary Routeways

Recruitment is now completed for the Voluntary Routeway Programme which offers placements to those who need experience to enhance their CVs or easing back into the world of work. Placements are offered within SMBC School Meals, Sandway Homes, Sefton Libraries (Formby & Crosby), Green Sefton, Sefton CAB, Sefton Adult Community Learning, Sefton@work, Citizens Advice Bootle and Citizens Advice Southport. This programme responds to needs of client groups who are struggling to enter the labour market through mainstream recruitment processes. 18 clients in total started their 10-week part-time placement at the end of September and also benefitted from an accredited 2-day pre-placement course delivered by SACL. Clients have been provided with any uniforms required and all travel expenses will be reimbursed. Recruitment for the routeways has not been limited to economically inactive clients.

Bespoke Programmes to Support Employability

Following the analysis of diagnostic assessments of client barriers to progression Sefton@Work has embarked on the delivery of a range of bespoke interventions working with other SMBC Departments. Fit For Success was designed with Active Sefton as a programme to tackle mental health, wellbeing, social inclusion and mindset among clients who are disillusioned and disengaged. This programme was delivered one day per week for 5 weeks and started early September. It promoted a positive mindset and included class-based activities in Water Sports such as rafting, kayaking and dragon boating for team working and confidence building. Following completion of the course clients were provided with a 3-month gym pass for Sefton Leisure Centres to continue on their wellbeing pathway. An additional pathway designed with younger people in mind called Find Your Purpose is also operating with a target group of young people referred from Early Help, Youth Justice team and Supporting Families.

New Rolling programme of Employment Support Sessions in the Strand

In preparation for our move, we are developing a package of group-led activity in partnership with SCLS so that a running programme of intervention and support is available every day in the new training room. We are looking at both job-focused and wellbeing led interventions to support clients.

Digital Inclusion

In collaboration with LCR and Lloyds Bank Foundation, Sefton@Work has taken steps to reduce the digital divide among Sefton residents. By providing access to IT courses, we have empowered clients with digital skills essential for job searching and various online activities, including banking. Notably, the 41 clients who completed these courses were given tablets and data plans, ensuring that they can continue to engage in these vital online activities beyond their job search, further enhancing their digital inclusion and overall wellbeing. Following this, clients are being invited to attend our pop-up job shop sessions in the Strand with their tablets to develop their skills.

Emerging Themes, Issues or Developments

Changes within JCP for Universal Credit claimants around 'working enough' are now mandatory, with further changes planned for introduction in December. This is targeting claimants working a small number of hours/low wage, who are still dependent on UC. The objective is to look at how they can increase their hours, get additional paid work or a higher paid role elsewhere that takes them 'off benefit'. We are working with our clients to ensure they are aware of this change and promote how we can support them navigate this. Increased numbers of those affected are seeking support from us but generally these clients are not seeking extra hours as they have working arrangements in place that fit their personal circumstances. This places these clients at risk of further action from JCP in retaining their benefit.

Merseyside Expanding Horizons "The Big Onion" – self-employment support

A small contract has been let to the Big Onion to deliver a pilot for group sessions and support for workless residents seeking to become non-traditional entrepreneurs. This includes people with experience of care, survivors of domestic abuse and long-term inactive people. The contract is being managed by Employment & Learning and funded by the Growth Budget.

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Sefton@Work has many clients that express an interest in developing their own enterprise and will deliver a referral pathway to this provision which will commence in November.

Sefton@work Case studies

A number of case studies are contained in the newsletter here [Sefton@Work Flash Extra Issue 02 – July 2023](#)

Sefton Caring Business Charter Update

The team working on the Charter has reviewed and adapted the Beacon newsletter to allow for young people and their support workers/families to have more background information about each of the opportunities available through Charter employers, organized by opportunity type.


There has also been a roundtable discussion between Council department representatives as part of National Inclusion Week, where progress and forward planning for the Charter were discussed.

A Careers Market Place was hosted at the Cambridge Road centre on 25th October. This included information and insights from Charter companies and some curated service offerings suggested by young people and their support workers. There was also be 10 jobs available for applications on the day (ringfenced for this client group) and secured by Sefton@work. The event took a holistic approach and included a range of specialist support services such as Housing Options, Welfare Benefits, Life Rooms and Paul's Place, We utilised the immersive room and its technology to engage in fun, informal learning activities and invited wellbeing practitioners on the day to offer complimentary therapies.

Sefton Adult Community Learning Service- General Performance Update

The table below indicates the year-to-date figures. It is notable that while the number of learners need to be increased, there is a pattern of a majority of learners, progressing through more than one learning aim, showing confidence in service and progression from one to onto another. 23/24 shows a slight reduction in the number of learners on this time last year, this is due to an inputting lag and true figures will be reflected in the next report.

Of the expected number of learners booked on to attend a course in September 93% actually attended and have started.

 Performance update <i>Year to Date Comparison</i> <i>1st August to 31st July</i>	Target	18/19*	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total number of learners	2000	484	538	159	272	495	441
Total number of unique learning aims	2940	576	643	196	305	564	521
* 18/19 was the last full year before covid							

Engagement and Events

To increase the visibility and profile of the service, the following events were attended throughout September:

- 7th September Health Hub in Crosby – 6 people attended, 2 signed up for initial assessments with 1 progressing onto a community learning course.

- 9th and 10th Southport Air Show – 24 individuals signed-up and took part in Family Learning Activities.
- 13th September Life-room 'Getting Back into Work' poorly attended.
- 14th September Sefton's Eco Event – 6 individual enrolled and completed a creative and well-being activity on the day.
- 16th September The Autumn Fair Marine Gardens – Friends of the Coastal – 21 x Family Learning and 8 x Creative and Wellbeing enrolments.
- 26th September Coffee Morning – the Service raised £238.80 through selling cakes and candles to learners and visitors.
- 5th Oct took part in the DWP Partnership meeting promoting the service to LCR, Expanding Horizons, National Careers Service, Homes into Work, Complete Skills Solutions and Talent Match.
- DWP will be hosting an event at the Centre on 23rd November focusing on 50+ for the first hour followed by a general open day for the remainder of the event.
- The Service is currently planning and developing its 2024 Spring prospectus.

Pathways to Teaching Project

Following the success of 2022/2023 Pathways to Teaching Pilot Liverpool City Region have provided further funding to run it once again. The Service expects to start recruiting for the programme early November with its first starts expected in December.

A Pathways to Teaching Celebration event will be held on 8th November - This is a great opportunity to come together and share the successes of the 2022/2023 Pathways.

New Test and Learn Pilots for 2023/24

This year we have negotiated 3 new pilots for Test and Learn, as follows:

ESOL - This programme will incorporate volunteering to support English Language Teaching and Learning with existing ESOL related curriculum models by provider learners with the basic skills required to support teaching and learning of ESOL in a wide range of contexts. This programme will create and develop both non-accredited and accredited course content that will target learners who would like to gain experience in an education setting or may have learned ESOL themselves.

Family Learning - This programme will incorporate a variety of short Family Learning courses in interesting subjects to provide hooks into more traditional learning into numeracy, literacy and/or digital skills at Sefton Community Learning, creating six new courses that will be developed, including course materials and innovative resources.

Sector Specific - This programme will develop a variety of short taster session courses, including virtual training, that will act as a stepping-stone into green jobs. Working closely with local employers, training materials and simulated experiences will be developed to aid in training, education and career decision making choices.

Multiply numeracy provision

The following VCS organisations were successful in securing Multiply grant awards for the delivery of innovative maths interventions:

- Merseyside Expanding Horizons "Big Onion"
- Acronym Community Empowerment
- Phoenix Youth and Community Centre

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- The Inclusion Network
- Rotunda

All delivery went live on the 1st September and the first cohort of learning has started with progression and next-steps appointments scheduled to discuss transition into core service. Contracts are being managed via Employment & Learning and include specific expectations about the progression of learners taking part in Multiply sessions being linked to AEB progression learning.

SACL Case Study

Emma Leyland Learner Journey, Level 3 Award in Education (Pathway to Teaching)

“The Level 3 Award in Education and Training course was exactly the kind of opportunity I had been looking for to re-train and re-establish myself in employment. I've always enjoyed working with people in an educational setting so training to become a community learning tutor seemed like a natural progression from my previous experience.

Training at Sefton Community Learning Service (SCLS) has been a great experience for me. I have really enjoyed the opportunities the course has provided. Our course tutor Jayne and all the staff have been very supportive throughout. After completing the course, I have now moved onto the next step and I'm really looking forward to working at SCLS, delivering programmes to assist other adult learners towards attaining successful outcomes. Look out for my 'Origami for Beginners' course in January 2024. Hope to see you there!”

Britta Kuhnen, Level 3 Award in Education (Pathway to Teaching)

“My New Year's resolution was to make more time for myself and what better way to do this than learning a new skill. I came across Sefton Community Learning Service (SCLS) on social media and signed up for the Level 3 Award in Education which is a post 16 and adult teaching qualification. I previously taught craft workshops so know that I enjoy sharing knowledge and interacting with people.

On completion of my qualification, I applied for a job as sessional tutor at SCLS and was successful. I really like the community spirit here and I am looking forward to delivering a wide variety of classes and meeting more learners!”

Success for Ukrainian Learners



Dennis Glynn (ESOL Curriculum Manager) with ESOL students’ Krystyna Skyba, Natalia Bolotova & Olena Medvedieva notifying classmate Alina Kudriashova (via face time to Ukraine) that she has achieved ESOL Speaking & Learning Entry Level 1.

Dennis Glynn states, ‘I have nothing but admiration for our ESOL learners. This photograph is testament to the many who continue to demonstrate an unbreakable spirit in the face of such unimaginable adversity.’

NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service

August 2023 NEET Performance

The following outlines the progress made by the service in August 2023. All data is cleansed locally and verified with government sources using the NCCIS database which each LA is required to update monthly.

Table 1 – Liverpool City Region Comparisons – Academic Age 16 – 17 NEET/NK

Area	NEET	NK	Combined	Current NEET Rank	Current NK Rank	Combined Rank
Sefton	3.4%	0.4%	3.8%	1	1	1
Wirral	3.9%	1.4%	5.3%	2	4	2
NORTHWEST	4.4%	1.8%	6.1%			
Knowsley	5.9%	0.5%	6.5%	3	2	3
ENGLAND	3.4%	3.7%	7.0%			
Halton	6.4%	0.9%	7.4%	5	3	4
St Helens	6.6%	1.6%	8.1%	6	5	5
Liverpool	6.3%	4.6%	10.9%	4	6	6

The table indicates:

- Sefton continues to have the lowest % rate for all 3 measures across the Greater Merseyside LA areas, and is below both Northwest and England
- Sefton statistical neighbour comparison for 16-17 NEET and NK % ranked 2nd lowest in August 2023, the same as this time last year
- Sefton 16-17 NEET/NK is -2.3% below Northwest and -3.2% below England.
- 42.92% of our NEET/NK cohort are within one or more of our vulnerable groups (94 out of 219) – this indicates the level of complex issues facing these young people.
- Although our NEET figure of 3.4% has increased by 0.28% year on year – 18 more young people, it is still 1% below the Northwest average at 4.4%
- At 0.4%, our NK has reduced by 0.28% year on year, 1.4% below the Northwest and 3.3% below England, demonstrating the validation of our data.

Year on Year Comparisons

Academic Age 16-17 Combined NEET and Not Known Indicator	August 23	August 22
2022/23 Previous Performance	3.73%	3.84%
2023/24 16-17 Combined NEET and NK%	3.83%	3.73%

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Difference	0.10%	-0.11%
2023/24 16-17 Combined NEET and NK figures	219	211
2023/24 16-17 Combined Cohort Figure	5711	5651

Academic Age 16-17 Actual NEET	August 23	August 22
2022/23 Previous Performance	3.11%	3.16%
2023/24 16-17 Actual NEET %	3.40%	3.11%
Difference	0.28%	-0.05
2023/24 16-17 Actual NEET figure	194	176
2023/24 16-17 Total Cohort	5711	5651

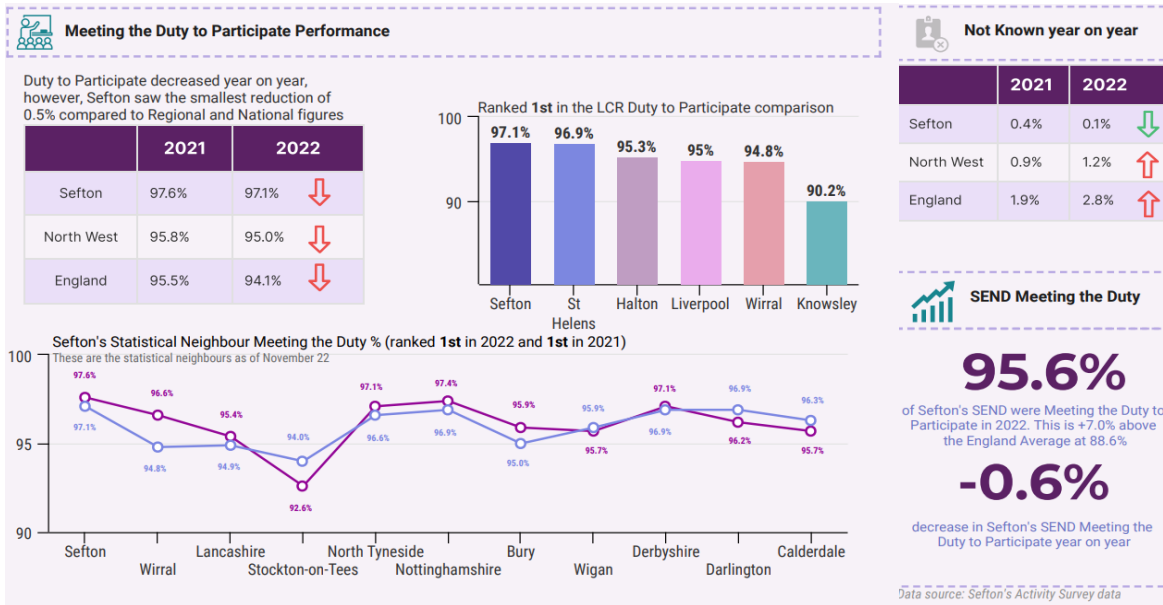
Academic Age 16-18 Actual NEET	August 23	August 22
2022/23 Previous Performance	3.74%	3.94%
2023/24 16-17 Actual NEET %	4.18%	3.74%
Difference	0.44%	-0.20%
2023/24 16-17 Actual NEET figure	356	314
2023/24 16-17 Total Cohort	8522	8393

NEET Joiners and Leavers	August 23	August 22
Total NEET Joiners	36	26
Total NEET Leavers	23	24

- NEET for 16/17 has increased by 18 young people in comparison to August 22, however, it is important to note that the overall cohort number has actually increased by 60.
- 18-year-old NEET has increased by 24 young people year on year
- There has been an increase of 129 young people 16-18 within the cohort compared to 2022.

Sefton Moving on Data – Year 11 Performance for 2022

This information is part of the Activity Survey and September Guarantee for 2022 year 11 leavers, it is published annually by the NCCIS.



- Sefton's outcomes for learning in 2022 achieved 97.1%, this is 2.1% higher than the Northwest and 3% higher than the England.
- At 95.6%, our SEND outcomes were 7% higher than the England average at 88.6%
- Sefton ranked 1st and the best LCR area with Wirral being Sefton's only statistical neighbour.
- Sefton Not Known at 0.1% shows an excellent contact rate and validates the accuracy of our data.

Care Experienced Young People (In borough)

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
16	3	11.50%	23	88.50%	26
17	4	13%	27	87%	31
18	20	53.00%	18	47%	38
	27	28%	68	72%	95

- As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service offer, Career Connect are responsible for 55% of the cohort post 16 – i.e. those young people living in the borough.
- Of the 95 16-18 year olds within our cohort, 72% are in EET and 28% NEET
- An additional 76 (45%) young people live outside of the borough and are supported through Virtual Schools
- Year 11 Total Cohort (in and out of borough) is 50 young people of the 26 who live in Sefton, 5 are currently NEET and 45 have moved into EET.
- In February 2022, 75% of the total year 11 cohort were assessed and identified as at risk of NEET and supported through early intervention, this has been an important fact and reflects in the high EET numbers.

Current Activity

Career Connect are continuing to follow up, engage and support 284 year 11 leavers at Risk of NEET of these, 246 (87%) have progressed in EET outcomes, 5 have moved out of the area and 33 remain NEET.

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September Guarantee Performance

2023 September Guarantee Performance – Year 11	Nos	%
2023 Year 11 with an 'offer' recorded	3124	98.80%
2023 Year 11 No Offers	38	1.20%
2023 Year 11 Total Cohort	3162	100%

2023 September Guarantee Performance – Year 12	Nos	%
2023 Year 12 with an 'offer' recorded	2774	95.00%
2023 Year 12 No Offers	146	5.00%
2023 Year 12 Total Cohort	2920	100%

Transition support and cohort checks all year groups – 3162 Year 11 Leavers.

In September Career Connect updated **7217** records all ages – **5521** with 16/17-year-olds. This included **808** substantial meaningful intervention with all age groups. In October there are a further 1500 to track and support.

Social Value – Job Creation

As part of its social value commitment, Career Connect have now recruited a care experienced young person through the Caring Business Charter. The young person is 17 and lives in Sefton, she has already participated in a taster day at Cambridge Road and has accepted the position. Relevant checks are now being completed and a start date for November has been agreed.

National Awards

Career Connect have been shortlisted for the Children and Young People Now (CYPN) Award in recognition of their work in Early Intervention. The results will be announced at an Event in London on 23rd November. A CYPN journalist has approached Sarah Vaughan – this is an excellent opportunity to showcase the innovative approach and good practice our service has to offer – the article will be published in December

Tourism

Business Tourism

The City Region Visitor Economy Sustainability Task Force (of which Southport Conference Bureau is part of) partnered with the 2030 Hub as part of Global Goals Week on 18th September at The Spine, Liverpool. The event promoted a sustainable visitor economy with representation from industry professionals such as Visit Britain and MIA (Meetings Industry Association) and local businesses promoting their products and services.

Working with Invest Sefton we have secured a provider to deliver training to local businesses across retail, accommodation and hospitality sector. The schedule of work will commence

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this month until end of March 25 and Southport Conference Bureau will be supporting the training delivery to businesses. The training will support businesses to measure their carbon footprint, produce an action plan to reduce their carbon emissions and design a sustainability policy.

Destination Marketing

Destination Campaign – Autumn will consist of social media, website updates and e-newsletter to our database (circa 50,000 contacts). We are working on Christmas in conjunction with Southport BID. As well as the digital element Christmas, will include some OOH (48 sheet digital signs), a mobile campaign and digital audio.

PR – We have a journalist from I Paper visiting 27-29 October. Our agency has put out a release and list of Halloween / half term activity and we are currently working on similar for Christmas.

Visitor Guide – Work is well underway on the 2024 guide and we are now at the final amends stage. This will go to print in January (print costs lower in January than December) Distribution will commence at the end of January.

Southport Restaurateurs Association – The 2024 guide is nearing sign-off with print in November. It will be distributed alongside the visitor Guide at the end of January. There has also been a small local radio / digital campaign running through October and into November.

E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 52,000 with the addition of 2022/2023 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience (the latest being as part of the autumn campaign).

Travel Trade – Our stand at British Tourism & Travel Show (March 2024) has been booked. We attended The Group Leisure & Travel Show in Milton Keynes on 5 October, this was on a stand-share basis with Liverpool. It was reasonably successful, and contacts made will be assessed before committing to 2024.

Advertising continues to be placed in key travel trade publications. Three pieces of editorial have been written and free additional space for this has been secured with all ads booked to date.

Golf – We continue to work with England's Golf Coast and Southport Golf Tours to ensure better co-ordination between the three partners and a draft golf activity plan has been produced.

Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 101 (102 this time last year).

A Marketing Southport board meeting was held on 19 September, with the next one scheduled for 16 January.

Brand – Work has commenced on reviewing the current agency and destination branding. The newly appointed agency will work on the branding mid to late 2024. Current branding will be used for the 2024 campaign. The new brand will also look how to utilise the Coast as a standalone brand.

Events

Southport Air Show - 9th & 10th September

- The condition of the beach has continued to be challenging in relation to car parking.

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- The decision to cancel beach parking was taken Saturday morning in the hope that the good weather would dry it out.
- The Marine Drive parking from Fairways was due to open at 10am along with the beach but was opened earlier to help with traffic flow.
- Unfortunately, the Red Arrows which were due to fly at 12 noon on the Saturday cancelled due to the weather at Blackpool Airport. They did a fly past at around 2pm.
- Traders all had a successful weekend.
- The Military Village was well received by customers.
- The attendance figures were over 36,000 over the 2 days, which is consistent with recent years.

The British Musical Fireworks Championship – 22nd & 23rd September

- The Friday night of the Fireworks was cancelled for health & safety reasons due to high winds which were blowing in the direction of the crowd.
- The decision was made to let the Friday competitors compete on the Saturday meaning there were 6 displays.
- Arrangements were made to open the gates earlier and event finished slightly later than usual.
- The Friday night customers were given an automatic refund.
- The Saturday night event sold out.
- The presentation ceremony took place at Southport Market and the winning team were Imperial Lotus.

Event dates 2024

Southport Food & Drink Festival – 31st May, 1st & 2nd June

Southport Air Show – 13th & 14th July

British Musical Fireworks Championship – 20th & 21st September

Salt & Tar - Bootle

Meetings with community groups within Bootle and The Strand, and joining their local networks have been completed and will continue to create a strong working relationships.

Scoping out opportunities for community engagement to help give the site some local personality and character has commenced.

Organising the marketing, trader recruitment and site logistics for a Festive Food and Drink Market event in December is underway.

We are supporting The Strand with their Christmas event with use of the site for a fairground and taking on a Steward Manager role on the day.

Mapping out 2024 event calendar with supporting event detail plan and budget focused on 3 major events and monthly food and drink events linked with entertainment is underway and will be shared in due course.

Southport Pier

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Southport Pier remains closed to the public following the visual inspection of structural engineers in December. Two detailed structural reports have also been completed and have been published along with a FAQ on Sefton's website.

Work is ongoing with regards to detailed cost and survey work along with the procurement of a main contractor while funding conversations continue.

MLEC

The Marine Lake Events Centre is progressing with key milestones being met, when finished the £73m venue will generate over £18m to the local economy and attract an additional 500,000 visitors to Southport.

Some of the key milestones achieved to date include:

- Appointment of Kier Construction to undertake the work under the pre-construction service agreement.
- Site Hoarding installed.
- Utility disconnections completed and major utility diversion orders processing. United Utilities technical approval received for the drainage diversion works. Legal work to progress the Section Agreement underway.
- Condition Surveys of adjacent properties progressing
- Completion of RIBA Stage 4 Design work. Works packages now being priced up.

Southport Conference Bureau and Regeneration Team hosted a careers event at Southport Market for 180, Year 9 Meols Cop High School students on 6th September. The morning session of the event gave students the opportunity to hear about the exciting opportunities connected to the MLEC project and the wider Town Deal regeneration projects. In the afternoon the students were set activities supported by local industry representation.

Accompanied by G&T, we met with Hugh Baird College Construction curriculum leaders to introduce the benefits of the MLEC project. A presentation by the professional team will be delivered early 2024. The meeting was extremely positive, and several initiatives are taking place in the short term:

30th Nov, Women in Construction session. Will be attended by members of the project team (AFL, Sefton, G&T, IPW, CBRE and Kier). The session will be open to the whole college for females to come and hear about roles in construction, career routes and challenges and will also include a Q&A session.

4 x masterclasses are being delivered over the next 3 months (Nov – Jan) by various members of the wider MLEC professional team with more to follow Jan – March 2024.

On 16th November we have secured free hire of the main function room at The Waterfront Hotel to host an event in partnership with MLEC architects AFL and MLEC Project Management consultants, Gardiner & Theobald. The event will focus on the design of the MLEC and set a task for the students to design the hoardings around set themes. The designs will be rotated and the same opportunity to produce some designs will be provided in the south of the borough later in the construction programme.

Visitor Economy

The 2022 Tourism STEAM figures have now also been calculated, the 2022 season was another strong season for Sefton, Key highlights include:

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- Visitors number up 33% to 7.6m
- Total employment up 30% to 6,111
- Economic Impact up 38% to £594m

REGENERATION : GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Regeneration Service support the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme for Sefton by helping to deliver a number of key Council projects and programmes across the borough. These includes a mix of direct delivery and project development work. The team also manage the monitoring and reporting for external capital grant projects. This update provides the current position on these projects.

BOOTLE

Bootle Town Centre

The Council is moving forward the next stages of work for repurposing Bootle Strand Shopping Centre including utilising the Salt n Tar event space referenced above.

Strand Transformation Programme

The next phase of Bootle Strand's repurposing programme is underway with the planning application submission for demolition work of a small part of Bootle Strand to open it up onto the Salt n Tar site next to the canal. Details of the proposals can be found on the Council's Website - [Bootle Strand \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk) including details of the planning application for the Phase 1 demolition works, submitted in October 2023. If approved this will enable start on site early in the new year. A tender was also issued in October 2023 for a contractor to carry out this work.

A Stakeholder communication and engagement plan is now in place to support this project and programme of work. This went through Sefton's Council Consultation and Engagement Panel in September 2023, who reviewed the project and the proposed approach to engagement with key local stakeholders. This included those directly affected and those who currently use the Strand. Part of the engagement work includes opening a shop unit in the Strand which is now open to the public to share information on this key project. In addition, there will be media updates/announcements at key stages throughout the project life. Details of information shared within the shop unit are included here - [the-strand visualisation-presentation-boards final.pdf \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#) The dedicated SECC unit in the Strand includes information for local stakeholders about the proposals and how to submit comments and feedback.

Highway works including a road closure of part of the Strand service road will be required for the demolition works to take place and to implement the proposed works. The planning application for the demolition works includes the proposed highway changes needed to enable the demolition to happen. This will involve the partial closure of the access from Washington Parade, and a new two-way system of the Service Road via Vermont Way.

SOUTHPORT

Southport Town Deal

Work is ongoing for delivery of the Southport Town Deal programme in accordance with the approved business cases agreed with the Towns Fund in 2022.

The Enterprise Arcade, Southport

Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre for a new business hub is another key Town Deal project. This will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport and forms part of the Southport Town Deal programme for generating economic growth.

Design work is finished for the construction contract and the final stages of the construction contractor appointment are being finalised, including the scope of works and programme with a view to starting on site this year.

Les Transformation de Southport

The first phase of transportation improvements, focusing on the area around Southport Market – Kings Street, Market Street, East Bank Street. Market Street and Eastbank Street is progressing detailed design work with a view to commencing on site early in 2024 to avoid seasonal disruption. This exciting project should help transform this area of the town centre and update the public realm.

Building a Better Customer Experience

New learning modules have now been developed by Southport College and have been rolled out amongst existing and new learners.

The pilot of the Building Better Customer Experience Training with Southport College has now been completed, in total 68 learners participated in the pilot including existing learners currently enrolled at the college and employees of a local business. The feedback received during and after the pilot programme was exceptionally positive and Southport College are now proposing to roll the course out to larger cohorts to meet demand. Training for volunteers and workless people through Sefton's Adult & Community Learning service is also proposed as part of this pilot programme.

CROSBY

Crosby Town Centre Regeneration

Crosby New and Existing Library at Waterloo

Sefton Council has announced it is pursuing the futures of both Crosby Village and Waterloo Library as two separate schemes in August 2023.

Crosby Lakeside

Nearing completion, the Crosby Lakeside Bunkbarn project is due to complete in November 2023. Initial information about the venue has been sent out to local schools.

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) in 2022, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site.

Agenda Item 8

Sefton is assessing responses received and carrying out further discussion with parties who have expressed an interest as part of ongoing due diligence. Marketing of the site will continue in the interim. 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

In February 2023 Cabinet agreed the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership , including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners.

Cabinet agreed to progress appointing agents to explore the market for this site, in order to support the Council's ambitions for change. Work is ongoing, however initial expressions of interest from the market are positive and the results are being considered by officers and members.

Details of the marketing brochure can be found here: [Sandbrook Way, Ainsdale PR8 3RW - Keppie Massie](#)

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