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Town Hall
Trinity Road
Bootle
L20 7AE

Date: 29 February 2024
Our Ref: PGF
Your Ref:

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

Please contact: Paul Fraser
Contact Number: 0151 934 2068

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

Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 5TH MARCH, 2024

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

Agenda No.	Item
8.	Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan (Pages 241 - 252) Forward Plan published on 29 February 2024
9.	Cabinet Member Reports - January 2024 to March 2024 (Pages 253 - 292) Cabinet Member Reports for Communities and Housing; Locality Services; and Regeneration and Skills

Yours sincerely,

Phil Porter

Chief Executive

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 APRIL 2024 - 31 JULY 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

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 3

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

APPENDIX 3

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Maritime Corridor Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Southport Eastern Access Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Extension of Highway Maintenance Contracts	Gary Jordan gary.jordan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4731
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Graham Parry graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3446
Council Housing Governance and Management Arrangements	Suzanne Blundell Suzanne.Blundell@sefton.gov.uk, Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842
Procurement of Temporary Accommodation	Allan Glennon allan.glennon@sefton.gov.uk
Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Receipt of Capital Funding	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766
Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Maritime Corridor Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding This report seeks Cabinet and Council approval for the receipt of Capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	4 Apr 2024 18 Apr 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Litherland; Molyneux; Netherton and Orrell; St. Oswald			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection) Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services; and Chief Legal and Democratic Officer			
Method(s) of Consultation	Meetings and emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Maritime Corridor Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Southport Eastern Access Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding This report seeks Cabinet and Council approval for the receipt of capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	4 Apr 2024 18 Apr 2024			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	No
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	Dukes; Kew; Norwood			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services; and Chief Legal and Democratic Officer			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Southport Eastern Access Scheme - Receipt of Capital Funding			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Extension of Highway Maintenance Contracts To seek approval to extend contract end dates.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	4 Apr 2024			
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 (Highways and Public Protection)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Extension of Highway Maintenance contracts			
Contact Officer(s) details	Gary Jordan gary.jordan@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4731			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<p>Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029</p> <p>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.</p>			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	<p>4 Apr 2024</p> <p>Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 07/03/2024 to 04/04/2024. Reason: consultations are on-going on the Strategy</p>			
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			

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Council Housing Governance and Management Arrangements Approval to the governance and management arrangements required to deliver Council housing across Sefton, including additional delivery of Council homes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	4 Apr 2024 18 Apr 2024			
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) Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Not applicable.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Not applicable.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Council Housing Governance and Management Arrangements			
Contact Officer(s) details	Suzanne Blundell Suzanne.Blundell@sefton.gov.uk, Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842			

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Procurement of Temporary Accommodation To seek approval for the procurement of temporary accommodation for homeless households.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	23 May 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 22/05/2024 to 23/05/2024. Reason: Further work on a procurement plan is required			
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 People (Communities)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Assistant Director for Corporate Services and Customer Services (Strategic Support).			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails and Phone Calls.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Procurement of Temporary Accommodation			
Contact Officer(s) details	Allan Glennon allan.glennon@sefton.gov.uk			

Agenda Item 7

APPENDIX 3

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Receipt of Capital Funding This report seeks Cabinet and Council approval to receive Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and to install electric vehicle charging points as indicated in the report.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet Council			
Decision Expected	23 May 2024 11 Jul 2024			
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 (Highways and Public Protection) Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer & Monitoring Officer; and Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure - Receipt of Capital Funding			
Contact Officer(s) details	Andrew Dunsmore andrew.dunsmore@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2766			

APPENDIX 3

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	23 May 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 01/02/2024 to 23/05/2024. 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	Executive Director - Place			
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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CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)		
COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Trish Hardy	Communities and Housing	March 2024

Community Safety and Engagement Team

The Neighbourhoods team facilitated a day of partnership work between our Cleansing Team and Liverpool City Councils Cleansing team to clear detritus/weeds and to sweep the inner gullies of the central reservation on Breeze Hill. LCC worked from Queens Drive up to the boundary with Sefton and provided the traffic management to the junction with Southport Road.

The team and Councillors have received complaints from members of the public about the increasing number of motorists using the pedestrianised area in Crosby Village. In response to the issues raised, the Highways team are considering the introducing an additional waiting restriction that would be enforced by the Parking Services Team. A briefing report would be circulated to all 9 Councillors covering Crosby Village, requesting feedback prior to then being presented to the relevant cabinet member for approval.

The consultation for covid memorials has been completed. 259 residents submitted a response to the consultation with residents in favour of the design and locations, with exception of Bootle. The respondents to the consultation felt Derby Park would be a more suitable location. Green Sefton and the Trees Department are liaising to install the memorials in the 5 chosen areas:

- Bootle – Derby Park
- Crosby – Victoria Park
- Maghull – KGV Park, Meadows
- Formby – Duke Street Park
- Southport – Botanic Gardens

Community Safety

The Community Safety Manager is working with colleagues in the Police to develop a Serious Dog Incident Reduction Strategy for Sefton. Key objectives have been identified with the aim to produce a multi-agency action plan. The draft Strategy has been shared with Safer Sefton Together (SST) committee inviting comments and feedback.

Following concerns raised at the November 2023 SST meeting, an initial Youth Subgroup meeting has taken place. At the meeting it was decided that key representatives from Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP), Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) and Police were to be invited. The meeting will look at youth provision opportunities with the aim to provide strategic oversight to the SST and ensure collaboration between agencies to best support Sefton's children and young people.

Cost of Living/Welfare Reform

Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator

In April we will have our first full financial year data from across the sector. This will enable us to analyse look at trends and analyse the information helping us to support providers over the coming year.

Agenda Item 8

The Cost-of-Living Support Uptake Group had its initial Stakeholder meeting. The organisations attending understand the impetus behind training frontline staff for the healthy start offer which will see an increase in take up from eligible residents.

Holiday Activity Fund (HAF)

Funding for the 2024/25 HAF Programme was confirmed in January, Sefton has been allocated. £1,024,090, an increase of £14,000 on the previous year.

Winter HAF was a success reaching 1472 unique young people, compared to 1137 last year, 197 of whom were identified as having additional needs. Young people took part in a wide variety of site-based activities including sports, arts and crafts, dance and drama, cooking, mindfulness, meditation, and fishing. Many providers also organised festive trips including days out to Knowsley Safari Park, indoor activity centres, the cinema, and local pantomimes. Feedback from the clubs was positive and focused on engaging with young people who otherwise would have spent the holidays indoors, providing activities which families may not have been able to afford, maintaining healthy habits throughout the holidays and supporting parents at a stressful time of year.

The offer for free swimming sessions for young people in receipt of benefits related free school meals has been extended into 2024. Eligible young people, including an accompanying adult for under 8s, can access 1 free swim in the Christmas, Easter, and half term holidays and 5 swims during the summer break.

Hate Crime

A walkabout in Southport took place in January, along Eastbank Street. Contacts were made with shopkeepers and business owners, and some agreed to display Stop Hate UK materials.

The Hate Crime Joint Action Group (JAG) is developing a hate crime strategy and action plan and refreshing the JAG terms of reference. Links are being made with the Prevent agenda in accordance with that action plan.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The ASB Officers are scheduled to be on training regarding personal protection and both have attended specialised training in February 24 for "In Court Prosecution Training" provided by Mallard Training, specialists in ASB Training.

In line with the national ASB review the team is reviewing and refreshing the ASB process to make it clearer for residents. As part of this process, we will include 'lessons learnt' information as well as customer/resident feedback. The process will look to provide dynamic scrutiny of the ASB response and the service.

Youth Service

The post 5 team are delivering open access sessions at Linacre Mission, SPACE, and community by nature. They are planning a new open access session to be delivered at Netherton Activity Centre.

The youth bus has been deployed to Derby Park, Park Lane Estate, supporting the Clear Hold Build project, North Park, and South Park.

Domestic Abuse

Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHRs)

Sefton has received feedback from the Home Office on a number of DHR reports. Once these final amendments have been made, the reports will be published, where appropriate. There are 3 DHR's currently underway or about to start and sadly, I have approved a request to proceed to a DHR for a murder that took place in November 2023. This will become DHR18 for Sefton and will commence after the criminal trial in Spring 2024. Information gathering was underway with regards to another, potential new DHR following a notification from Merseyside Police in January 2024.

Domestic Homicide Review Local Oversight Mechanism Pilot

The Domestic Abuse Commissioner (DAC) is exploring how learning from DHR's can be identified in a more coordinated way. Several pilot areas have been identified to trial the Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism; in Merseyside, the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner (OPCC) will run the pilot.

The purpose of the Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism (DHOM) is to bring independence to the Domestic Homicide Review (DHR) process post publication of reviews to ensure that there is local and national accountability for the implementation of DHR recommendations, as well as identifying common themes and trends and supporting change at a national level. This includes ensuring that learning is shared nationally, improving the effectiveness of DHR recommendations, and demonstrating where there is change following DHR recommendations. The Domestic Abuse Commissioner's, 'Domestic Homicide Oversight Mechanism' seeks to add value, provide consistency, and improve the quality of DHR processes.

The purpose of the local oversight pilot is to test and learn the best way for the DAC to oversee the implementation of recommendations and actions within DHRs, and to inform the development of the oversight mechanism for roll out nationally. This will provide an opportunity to understand the capacity and resource required to conduct effective oversight, the needs of local areas and how oversight can best support local implementation of recommendations and evidence impact.

Sefton will be required to share all learning from completed DHRs over the last 3 years and submit 6 monthly returns to the OPCC informing them of progress against the action plans that accompany the DHRs that have been completed.

Domestic Homicide Reviews to be Renamed

Following government consultation in 2023, Domestic Homicide Reviews are to be renamed Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews. This change will be brought into law via an amendment to the Victims and Prisoners Bill and will better recognise the often-hidden victims of domestic abuse who die after suicide, coercive and controlling behaviour, and economic abuse.

LIBRARIES

Regional success with the Summer Reading Challenge

The north-west figures for the Summer Reading Challenge have now been published and Sefton has done particularly well. Sefton had the highest completion rate of all authorities in the north-west, with an amazing 70% completion rate. Sefton also had the 3rd highest take up in the

Agenda Item 8

region, both numerically and by percentage with 12% of all 4–11-year-olds taking part. Only Manchester and Cheshire West had a higher take up, both vastly larger local authorities.

Across the Liverpool City Region Sefton had the highest uptake, and completers. The figures for take up demonstrate the high performance of Sefton with double the number of children taking part than St Helen's and 6 times greater than Knowsley:

Sefton	2982 (children taking part in the challenge)
Wirral	2388
St Helens	1477
Halton	704
Liverpool	609
Knowsley	497

New partnership with the Tate Liverpool

With the Tate in Liverpool closing for two years for a major refurbishment, an opportunity recently surfaced to work with them to distribute furniture, exhibition cabinets, kitchen equipment and other building related materials from the now closed Tate.

The Tate approached the library service due to our NPO status with a view to working with us on some new projects while they are closed and acting as a distribution point to Sefton community groups who may want any of the Tate's furniture. Following discussions, the Tate distributed equipment and furniture from Crosby Library to community groups in January, the same day the CEO of Arts Council England visited to see our NPO work in action.

Tate staff will also be running workshops from the library and community groups who work with them will be showcased in a new exhibition on how the Tate worked with local groups during their refurbishment and how their old equipment was passed around the LCR (Liverpool City Region) boroughs in an environmentally friendly way.

Sefton Libraries is the only library service the Tate is working with on this basis, and it is hoped to be the start of a fruitful partnership.

Funding secured by partner to work in Bootle Library

Our NPO partner Rule of Threes has secured £10,000 of European Challenge Funding to run activities related to issues associated with debt. Using the funding they will design actions and resources that support residents living with debt providing information & practical skills to make small but cost-effective changes; regaining confidence & optimism.

Sessions are being hosted at Bootle library with activities including:

- Practical support: money-management advice sessions with expert support; information on energy-saving & benefits; access to computers, free Wi-Fi, and data.
- Creative activity: we know the power of making together. Practical hands-on sessions that develop skills & support money-saving will bring people into conversation on the issue in a way that is non-confrontational, encouraging the sharing of experiences, building confidence and connection.
- Collective futuring: through creative workshops with expert arts facilitators, we will generate relevant actions & offers to be embedded into the library. These may include ways to shift the mindset about living with debt; peer-led support systems; "small change" actions; collaborative artworks; awareness-raising; shared reading sessions & book displays; and potential proposals to tackle community debt through campaigning or new creative social enterprise.

Extension of the Library NPO funding

Last year the Library Service successfully applied for National Portfolio Organisation status with Arts Council England (ACE) and is now one of a handful of library services to have this prestigious status. The award came with £585,000 funding over 3 years to deliver the At the Library programme. ACE have decided to extend the NPO status for a further year due to the challenging economic conditions facing arts-based organisations. This means that Sefton will receive an additional years' worth of funding and the At the Library Programme will now run for 4 years rather than 3 years.

Increasing take up of community activities

Some analysis has taken place on the take up of community activities taking place in libraries compared to the previous year. The first 3 quarters of 2023/24 has seen an increase of 13.5% in the number of people attending activities in libraries compared to the same period for the previous year. Of those who attended this year, 55% (17,553 attendees) were children, and 45% (14,297 attendees) were adult. Netherton Library saw the biggest jump in attendees being up 32.8% compared to last year. Netherton Library has been targeted in the last 12 months to improve usage, and this approach is bearing fruit.

THE ATKINSON

Theatre Programme

The theatre programme continues to enjoy success with ticket sales of January's ballet, musical, theatre and panto performances all approaching maximum capacity in the auditorium and studio.

The annual *Love Folk Festival* was held over the weekend 9th&10th February, with performances from popular bands such as Merry Hell and The Magpie Arc, and emerging new artists performing on the FATEA Busk Love Folk acoustic stage.

Exhibitions Programme

The Atkinson has been given two important paintings by prominent artists of the Northern school. Wigan born Lawrence Isherwood, who lived and worked in Southport for many years, painted colourful, expressionist views of Southport beach as well as scenes of Wigan street-life. His painting 'Rain, Cap and Shawl' is an excellent example of his work and is an important addition to the permanent collection. Roger Hampson's 'Path to Cleworth Colliery' is an atmospheric scene of miners setting off to work in the Tyldesley area. Both artists were friendly with L.S. Lowry, who owned examples of both of their work. The donations enhance the Atkinson's reputation for curating one of the best collections of Northern art in the country, with key examples by L.S. Lowry, Theodore Major, Harold Riley and Sheila Fell.

Museum Programme

Echoes of Ages: Ukraine's Storied Past and Indomitable Spirit

This powerful and moving exhibition explores the rich culture and history of Ukraine, from its legendary past to its present-day struggle for freedom. Events are being held every Saturday in February, engaging arts and crafts to reveal and celebrate Ukrainian heritage and identity. The display also features artwork created by Ukrainian children expressing their feelings about the war in their country, along with details of the people on the frontline. The celebrations commenced on 3rd February with craft, baking, and storytelling workshops. Dressed in traditional costumes, Ukrainian nationals welcomed visitors to the centre with gifts of braided bread, *Korovai*.

Agenda Item 8

Southport Library

On 7th February, the library hosted PLACED, a Liverpool City Region (LCR) consultation event engaging residents to discuss their perceptions of the local area and share ideas for future spatial development across the city region.

Other news

Following the conclusion of the 5-year Hope Streets youth project, the Atkinson is developing its action plan for ongoing engagement with young people aged between 14 and 25. A series of curated workshops have identified the following priority themes:

1. Inviting young people to work with The Atkinson as artists and curators
2. Supporting and learning from young people as potential workforce and volunteers
3. Nurturing young people as audiences and visitors

The activities will build on existing partnerships with young people's organisations and develop the role of young volunteers in shaping and supporting our programmes.

HOUSING

Draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-29

The Homelessness Act (2002) requires every Local Authority to carry out a homelessness review in its Borough every 5 years, to develop and publish a Homelessness Strategy based on this review and to consult with other statutory and voluntary organisations.

Sefton commissioned Imogen Blood & Associates to carry out the Homeless Review in early 2023. Since then, 32 professionals (council, partners, providers, CVS) have been interviewed; two focus group discussions at Homelessness Forum meetings have been carried out; wider services survey has been done with 27 responses received; 40 people with lived experience have been interviewed in visits to a dozen services; a snapshot survey of supported housing residents were done in July with 161 responses received; analysis of quantitative data, both published and directly supplied; attendance at Sefton's Consultation & Engagement Panel in July with an interim Equality Impact Assessment completed.

A draft Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy has now been produced, which is now subject to a 12-week consultation in order that a shared strategy is produced by all partners who influence homelessness.

The suggested strategic priorities for homelessness in Sefton by the consultants are:

1. Better accommodation and coordinating support for **people with high health and/or care needs.**
2. Implement **housing-led oversight** within the supported housing pathway and improve data reporting so this can be used to monitor **whole system performance.**
3. Improve the quality of **emergency bed and temporary accommodation provision** and associated support.
4. Develop alternative housing models and pathways for those who are **in or close to work, including younger people.**
5. Improve **access to affordable housing**, with housing strategy and development decisions to be informed by intelligence and priorities from the review.
6. **Improve coordination of homelessness prevention activities across sectors**, to include a focus on 'hidden' homelessness, tenancy sustainment and pre-eviction protocols.

Agenda Item 8

7. Sustain, further promote, and seek to expand **floating support, tenancy sustainment and dispersed schemes**, especially where there is potential to convert to general needs.
8. Continue to implement, evaluate, and develop novel approaches to delivering **Housing Options** services across the system.

Following the 12-week consultation, a report will be taken to Cabinet in early 2024 to approve the new strategy and action plan.

Council Housing Programme

Phase 1

Approval of the revised scheme proposal at Buckley Hill Lane has now been fully supported by full Council. The grant application and associated Investment Partner application is in the process of being prepared and finalised ready for submission to Homes England. A decision is expected around 6-8 weeks after the bid has been submitted subject to capacity at Homes England's decision-making clinics. The commencement of the Buckley Hill Lane site is an exciting milestone for the Council Housing Programme, and I very much look forward to welcoming our new tenants once their new homes are completed.

A great deal of work to facilitate the handover of properties is still progressing behind the scenes. Legal consultants Freeths are supporting the Council on a range of matters, including the drafting and preparation of the Development Agreement with Sandway for the purchase of the properties at Buckley Hill Lane which is making progress. In my last report, I updated that an exciting next step is for Freeths to help us draft the tenancy agreement we will use for our new council housing stock. I am pleased to report that a draft has now been prepared and officers are currently in the process of reviewing the agreement.

Work to onboard our Managing Agent is progressing well and a detailed policy review is underway. A suite of housing management related policies will need to be in place to comply with a range of legislative and regulatory requirements and work is progressing to draft these policies alongside developing proposals for our future governance and tenant engagement approach. It is important that we ensure that the voice of the tenant is heard, and they have opportunity to challenge and be part of the decisions taken in the management of their homes. Details of the governance proposals will be brought to Cabinet later this year.

Housing Standards Team

The new 5 year Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes commenced on 1st March 2023. As of 31 January 2024, we have received 2280 licence applications, which is 66% of the expected number of applications. 789 licences have been issued and 346 compliance inspections have been carried out with many landlords seeking to apply for property accreditation.

We have successfully defended another appeal at the First Tier Property Tribunal for failure of a landlord to licence properties within the Selective Licensing area. This takes the total number of Tribunal decisions to uphold our Civil Penalty Notices to 5 and a further 2 have been settled through mediation. There are 3 further appeal cases currently pending.

73 requests for service relating to poor housing standards or poor housing management have been received between 14 December and 30 January.

Agenda Item 8

Where landlords fail to comply with informal action, the team continue to take formal enforcement action. Since 14 Dec 2023 this has included the service of 1 Emergency Prohibition Order, 1 Improvement Notice, 2 Notices for failure to have smoke alarms fitted, 3 Notices for non-compliance with Electrical Safety Standards Regulations, including a Civil Penalty Fine for one of those.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with responses to 8 new Service Requests relating to problematic empty homes. One property subject to enforced sale, was sold at auction in December and will be brought back into use.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues. There have been no unauthorised Gypsy and Traveller encampments in Sefton during December and January.

Extra Care Housing

As colleagues are aware the Council has a target to deliver 1306 new Extra Housing units before 2036. To support this and ensure that Sefton residents with care needs are allocated to schemes accordingly cabinet have now approved our first Extra Care Allocations Policy. Work will now commence on the implementation plan to ensure the desired outcomes are achieved. Work continues to progress on several schemes across the borough:

Sandbrook Road (Riverside 90 x Extra Care, 40 General Needs, 8 Learning Disability)

- Demolition and site clearance is commencing over the coming weeks with a PR opportunity also arranged.

503 Hawthorne Road (91 x Extra Care, 67 General Needs Onward/Housing 21)

- The provider is currently in the process of discharging the pre-commencement planning conditions and the intention is to start on site early in the coming months.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (Regeneration and Skills)		
Councillor	Portfolio	Date
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	March 2024

Highway Asset Management

Winter Maintenance

- As of 22nd February, we have gritted the carriageways on 31 Occasions and the footways 16 times.
- Officers continue to monitor the weather conditions 24 hours a day and will do so throughout the remainder of the season.
- Regular spending updates are being provided to monitor against the allocated budgets.

Highways Maintenance Update

Since 1st April 2023 which coincides with the start of the new financial year, planned and routine maintenance operations are 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 **99,000 M2** with an invoiced spend value of **£3,557,896.00**. There are several projects which have been completed and awaiting receipt of final invoices which are not included in the current spend profile. Allocated funds for this financial year are fully committed.

Extended repairs have been undertaken in approximately **1,000M2** footway which has involved the replacement and relaying of PCC Paving and renewal of bituminous

Agenda Item 8

surfacing with a current spend value of **£115,000.00**. As works progress, valuations will increase and allocated funds for this year will be fully committed.

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. The volume and value of work does fluctuate and to date monthly budget spend continues to be in the region of **£160,000.00** to **£180,000.00**.

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 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. There is no firm indication that the scheme will be delivered or further developed under RIS3.

LTP and Growth Plan

- Work is currently progressing on the delivery of all projects set out in Year 2 of the current City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme. In discussions with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, it is clear that there is now some flexibility to enable some projects identified for expenditure in Year 2 to be delivered in Year 3 providing works have commenced. It should be noted that the increase in value of the Capital Programme has put some strain on resources. Recruitment for new staff to help deliver the programme is ongoing and the Transport Technical Support Services commission has been relied upon
- 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 delivery within the current programme. It has also revised the funding allocations for each project following consultation with all the local authorities.
- The Year 3 CRSTS scheme has previously been shared with Cabinet Member. The various allocations are now being refined as schemes have been further developed.

Agenda Item 8

The programme will be shared with Cabinet Member and then set out in the 2024-25 Transport Capital Programme Report to be forwarded for approval by Cabinet Member in Spring 24.

- 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 (CTSTS2) 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. Some further engagement has been programmed between the Council and LCRCA for the end of February 2024. This will lead to the development of a Pipeline of projects.
- 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. Baseline work has been undertaken and a report completed. Plans are currently being refined 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 late Spring and Early Summer 2024.
- One of the key elements of the **E Mobility Strategy** will be defining the Council's approach to On Street Charging. Some further discussion will be held with Cabinet colleagues to help inform the Council's Policy on On Street charging which will help inform resident engagement and focus investment. The LCRCA have submitted a bid for Local Electrical Vehicular Infrastructure (LEVI) funding. If successful, this will enable the Council to roll out new EV infrastructure across Council owned car parks whilst developing proposals for further potential installation. A decision on the LEVI funding is expected in March 2024.

Agenda Item 8

- 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.
- **Maritime Corridor Business Cases:** The detailed design work is now progressing and the final details will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. Part of the Maritime Corridor scheme, Phase 1, will be funded from the Levelling Up Fund, following the success of a transport bid submitted by LCRCA. The amount of Levelling Up Fund allocated to the MC scheme has been increased following a Baseline review. In order to ensure that sufficient work is expended within the timeframe, there is some pressure to progress the scheme to construction. As such Balfour Beatty, have been engaged, through the SCAPE framework, to complete some Early Contractor Involvement. Balfour's have already completed some feasibility work at no cost to the Council. This has helped define the likely cost and probable construction phasing. Cabinet approved Balfour's appointment into the Early Contractor Involvement stage of the scheme which will enable some initial enabling works to be completed and the Target Cost to be established. Some further engagement to ensure that local Members, businesses and residents are sighted on the proposals and have an ability to shape them has been completed. Analysis work has been undertaken of the responses and those relevant to the Phase 1 scheme were reported to L&R Committee who have approved the changes to the highway. Engagement has also taken place with some key stakeholders, including National Highways (for the works on the A5036) and land owners and discussions held with Planning colleagues over the elements of the scheme for which Planning approval will be required. The re-baselining process has led to a revised total . The agreed allocation is £21.2m (MC). There may be some elements of MC which were included in the Outline Business Case which won't be deliverable under the current programme. These elements are likely to be delivered in CRSTS 2.
- **Southport Eastern Access Business Cases:** The detailed design work is now nearing completion for Phase 1 and Phase 2 proposals and the final details will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. It is proposed that the same Procurement Route be adopted for the delivery of the project. The feasibility stage of the project has been completed and the scheme will move into the Early Contractor Involvement Stage. Some further development funding should shortly be announced following the LCRCA Gateway 3 process. Further engagement with local Members, businesses and residents has been undertaken and feedback appraised. In order to scope the necessary mitigation measures within the Norwood Ward, some specific targeted engagement with residents and businesses is required. A team has been established to lead on this process and initial discussion and site visits were agreed with Ward Members.

Sustrans will also be completing some school engagement work with schools in the area to help ensure that safer routes to schools are considered in the development of the proposals. The baselining process has resulted in £16.8m being allocated in the current CRSTS programme. As with the MC scheme which were included in the Outline Business Case which won't be deliverable under the current programme. These elements are likely to be delivered in CRSTS 2.

- **A59 Junctions and Corridor:** Design work is nearing completion on improvements to the junctions at Kenyon's Lane and at Hall Lane on the A59 Northway, these will be developed in the context of a wider improvement of the cycle route between Switch Island and Robins Island. The Road Safety Audit has been undertaken and its contents reviewed. A package of funding including Government grant funding for improvements to traffic signals, developer contributions and Sefton transport capital programme will be used to deliver these improvements. ATE are supportive of the project and are encouraging the Council to consider the link to the wider communities and the potential for improvement east and west on the A59. Discussions 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 Summer 2024.
- Outline design work is currently being undertaken on the difficult junction arrangement with Dodds Lane. Plans are also being developed for consideration of changes to Hall Lane on the section carrying the narrow bridge over the canal.
- **Scarisbrick Avenue:** In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been completed, including the installation of lighting. Some further correction and enhancement work has been identified and will be delivered in Spring 2024.
- **Southport Town Deal:** Design work on the first phase of public realm project identified within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) is progressing and should be completed in early 2024. Balfour Beatty have been engaged through the SCAPE framework and have completed the Feasibility Stage before moving into the formal Early Contractor Involvement Phase. Some Value Engineering have been reviewed to help inform the likely funding requirement from the CRSTS programme to supplement the £2.5m allocated under the Town Deal. Careful consideration is being given to the delivery programme to minimise impact on trade. Some initial work is likely to be undertaken in the Spring and the TRO introduced to enable residents and businesses to become used to the changes.
- A hard landscaping report was produced 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.

Agenda Item 8

- 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 agreement is being reached to define a second phase of public realm work. This is likely to be centred around MLEC development. No funding has been allocated for the works but proposals for securing funding will be developed and initial discussions have been undertaken. This 'Phase 2; work is at the early stage of design and some consultation will be undertaken in late Spring.
- **Crosby Town Centre:** The highway works which will support the new library development proposed for the Green Car Park were completed in late 2023. Some snagging work has been addressed and a Road safety Audit completed and reviewed. Work has also been developed for some paving and public realm enhancement work which will be delivered, under the main contract, with works programmed for March 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.
- **Bootle Town Centre:** - Work has been designed and procured to ensure the Strand Service Road can operate from Vermont Way, thus enabling a section to be closed and demolition to take place. Design work will shortly be commissioned on a scheme to improve this temporary arrangement and the contractor to co-ordinate works.
- Some Master planning has been commissioned looking at the area to the north of the Strand which includes the car parks and bus waiting facilities. A parking survey has been completed to determine both current parking capacity and use. Some further work is being commissioned to look at anticipated demand. The study has revealed an over provision of car parking spaces across the town. Some consideration will be given to the potential repurposing of some of the current car parking stock. Meanwhile some consideration is being given to the likely parking provision at the Strand for supporters attending the Bramley Dock and events at the Salt n Tar event space.

Local Safety Schemes

- The Local Safety Schemes in the Transport Capital Programme include interventions at Northern Road (Gt Crosby), Hawthorne Road and Prescott Road. These schemes have all been subject to consultation and approved by L&R Committee. Works will be delivered over the next few months (Northern Road through Easter) with the Prescott Road scheme being incorporated into a wider resurfacing scheme.

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.

Agenda Item 8

- **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 preliminary and outline 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.
- **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 undertaken. The further scheme, at Stanley High School is more complicated. Some initial safety measures have been identified and will be subject to further consultation development before implementation in summer 2024. Funding has been secured to develop other school streets initiatives throughout the borough and a dedicated officer, seconded from Sustrans, has been engaged in the selection and engagement work. A priority list of 10 schools has been chosen for further engagement and four schools are currently engaged with offers made to 1 more.
- **Green Bus Corridor:** The LCRCA commissioned consultants to develop and appraise options for potential bus priority measures commence works on a number of routes in the City Region, including the No 53 bus corridor which travels between Crosby and Liverpool, including Stanley Road. Officers have provided some initial comments and these are partly acknowledged in an Options Appraisal Report has been completed. The LCRCA are now engaging further consultants to develop schemes based on the initial options. Opportunities for 'quick wins' are also being established. It has been agreed that the timing and sequencing of engagement with Cabinet Member and Ward Members is key and a strategy will shortly be developed.
- **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 proposals to be developed to improve accessibility in Birkdale. Consultation material has been produced and public consultation will shortly be undertaken to be completed before purdah.
- **North- South Cycle Route in Southport** - The monitoring and evaluation report on the two schemes aimed at creating a safe and improved walking and cycling route in Southport and a more modest scheme in Bootle have been considered by Cabinet Member.

Agenda Item 8

A decision has been made, following a call in process, to retain the current schemes and make the associated orders permanent. This is on the basis that some further assessment work is developed for the Southport scheme and that work is commissioned on a more permanent scheme which would incorporate cycling and walking into a wider public realm project. Some initial design work has been undertaken. The Bootle project will be considered as part of a wider work described above.

- **Bootle Centre Walkability Project** – Some work has been undertaken, funded from the Freshfield Foundation, to develop some initiatives in Bootle ensuring the residents can safely walk between homes, schools, shops and public transport facilities. Some engagement work has been completed and possible schemes are being developed.

Highway Development Control

Planning Applications

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the vacant senior highway development engineer post and limited staff resources. This has been exacerbated by the backlog from staff leave over the summer and autumn months, increasing demand for non-statutory highway advice prior to formal planning application submissions to the planning department (including the Council's own applications) and requests from developers for meetings and/or further advice some of which are not deemed necessary and create additional workload and delay. There is an impact on timescales for highway responses 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 contract with one of the highway framework consultants is being set up to assist with the review of planning applications (particularly junction and area traffic modelling).
- **Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements**
- The report is as follows: -
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 45
 - 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 – 20
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up – 1

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application also remains high, including the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently

managing 98 live full s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council plus 31 minor s278 agreements. 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 – A grant application has been submitted to Natural England for a grant to maintain the route for this financial year and work to establish this wider trail partnership is on-going for the long-term maintenance. The grant funding from Natural England is to cover a proportion of the costs for maintaining the infrastructure but not revenue costs associated with staffing. How the maintenance function by Sefton Council will be managed has yet to be determined.
- Definitive Map Modification Applications – there have been no further modification order applications since the previous report and the seven applications submitted by the British Horse Society (BHS) are yet to be determined. Negotiations with the BHS, Sefton Council and two affected landowners have commenced with regards to one of the BHS applications, with a view to dedicating a path along an alternative route to that detailed in the application.

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. This is very challenging for the East Maghull development site in particular due to the different developers and landowners involved. It may not be possible to provide the full spine road through the site between Poverty Lane and School Lane as there are no statutory highway powers to ensure this happens.
- 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.

Operational In-House Services

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

The service are continuing to renew older fleet vehicles with more efficient low emission vehicles to help towards our carbon net zero target.

The service has commenced receipt of the new Mercedes electric vans for colleagues within the Pest Control Service. These vehicles are an improved version

Agenda Item 8

of their previous EV's and retain charge for a lot longer, reducing time spent charging.

The Transport Manager is discussing options regarding the electric infrastructure capacity with a view to significantly increasing the amount of charging points we have across our depot sites boroughwide.

Transport and Vehicle Maintenance remain compliant regarding legal obligations to the Traffic Commissioners Office in line with our obligations for the Authority's Operator's licence.

The service have continued to maintain our Operator Compliance Risk Score at the highest level, due to our continuous preventative maintenance programme for the whole of Sefton's Fleet.

The service is looking to fill a vacancy for a Mechanic within the workshop at Hawthorne Road Depot. Recruitment is challenging given the current employment market and external wage gaps.

The Apprentice mechanic has successfully attained a full-time permanent position following a successful 3 year training programme, which is a great outcome.

There vacant Apprenticeship post is now out to recruitment and the service is actively working with colleagues within the Apprenticeship Team to attract the right candidate.

The MOT testing facility continues to be successful, currently operating targets are above the national average for testing.

Discussions are ongoing with colleagues in Waste Services to agree implementation dates for Tachographs in all Waste Vehicles, together with future planning for food waste collection fleet when required.

Specialist Transport Unit – Operations

STU currently operate 9 x ASC routes attached to schools with 7 schools only.

The Department has proposed incorporating additional ASC passengers that could be bolted onto the SEND routes. The service is in discussions with colleagues in the Travel Support Team and ASC to evaluate the routes and possible transfer of ADS passengers to in-house transport service.

If proven beneficial it could result in a significant saving to ASC as current in-house transport arrangements could be extended and utilised, reducing the cost of a full external route.

The service continues to progress the procurement of its fleet renewal.

Discussions continue with the Transport Manager to assess options with particular attention to decarbonisation of the vehicles and all EV options.

School Crossing Service

Since the beginning of the January term, 6 Patrols have left the service. However due in part to a successful social media campaign the service has recruited 5 Patrols which has almost completed the replacement of staff lost. Currently there are 10

Agenda Item 8

vacancies within the service, and we are hopeful to continue to recruit across all areas of the borough.

The service is currently undertaking its legally required risk assessments on all of the established sites in Sefton. The service has completed 43% of eligible sites so far this term and are on target for 100% at the end of March 2024.

The service has provided 92% cover for all established crossings during Q3 of this year, any failure of completion is due to the aforementioned recruitment issues.

The service again gives thanks to all Patrols for their hard work and commitment they have demonstrated past and present and continue to do so in keeping the children and pedestrians safe whilst crossing the busy roads in Sefton.

Building Cleaning

The service continues to perform well both financially and operationally.

Schools continue to support the service despite increased costs and the fact school budgets are under significant pressure.

Two schools returned to the service from January 2024 with a further school returning in April 2024. Discussions are also on-going with another school and we hope to regain their business.

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

There is also concern over the recruitment of senior operational staff. With the removal of Grade A from April 2023 (the grade for Cleaners), the differential in pay between Cleaners and Cleaners-in-Charge is only one grade but carries considerably more responsibility.

Catering

Financial Position

The service has had to significantly increase charges to schools as it was set for a large overspend in 2023/24.

The increased charges were met with significant resistance by schools, unhappy that agreed charges were increased mid-year at a time when school budgets are stretched.

Discussions have been held with The Sefton Association of Primary Headteachers (SAPH) and it has been agreed that should we need to increase charges to schools mid-year in the future, we will consult with SAPH before any final decision is made.

Consultation is taking place with schools concerning the recommended unit price per meal that would be charged to parents for a school meal from April 2024. Whilst schools have the freedom to charge whatever price they deem most appropriate for their school, most follow the recommended Sefton price.

Agenda Item 8

The result of the consultation will be fed back to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services as part of The Council's Budget setting process.

The Council's Obesity Strategy

The catering section are continuing to support the Council's Obesity Strategy.

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

Waste Management

The service is continuing to move in the right direction and has recently undertaken a recruitment drive with numerous vacancies on the collection teams filled. This has created resilience within the service and has enabled resolution of long standing issues we had previously faced around staff holidays.

Strategically, the Assistant Director and Service Manager continues to attend the LCR Strategic Waste Partnership for future planning regarding the implementation of the waste related aspects of the Environment Act 2021.

Street Cleansing

The weed control programme is due to commence the first of four sprays in March 2024 and will finish the fourth spray in late October 2024. A stringent inspection process will be carried out daily by Officers to ensure evidence of 'die back' of weeds approximately 10-14 days following scheduled spray. That has proved successful in many aspects last year. However, we will continue to monitor the situation stringently and will be working closely with the contractor to improve the weed control across the Borough.

The service is currently introducing a new zonal working arrangements with the Street Cleansing Operation. Each team will be allocated a zone and they work exclusively within that zone taking ownership and ensuring its continuously maintained. Similar to the new zonal arrangements that were made to the rear entry teams.

The service is currently undergoing a recruitment drive which will see a number of vacancies filled over the next few weeks and will add much needed resilience to the current operation.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)		
Cllr Christine Howard	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	March 2024

EMPLOYMENT & LEARNING

Sefton@work General Performance Data for January 2023

The following table illustrates data from the Way to Work Esf project together with the SIF funded project activity which was commenced in October 2023 after the cessation of European Social Funding.

Data Description	Range	Figures								
Total Clients accessing service for ESF Ways to Work support	1 st January 2016 – 30 th September 2023	5,296								
Clients accessing service post ESF	From 1 October 2023	383								
New clients accessing service this month	January 2024	78								
New clients registering by age	January 2024	<table style="width: 100%; border: none;"> <tr> <td style="width: 60%;">16-24</td> <td style="text-align: right;">17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-49</td> <td style="text-align: right;">41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50+</td> <td style="text-align: right;">13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not yet known</td> <td style="text-align: right;">9</td> </tr> </table>	16-24	17	25-49	41	50+	13	Not yet known	9
16-24	17									
25-49	41									
50+	13									
Not yet known	9									
Welcome Appointments made	January 2024	21								
Male Participants	Since 01/01/2016	59.4%								
Female Participants	Since 01/01/2016	40.6%								
Other Participants	Since 01/01/2016	0.1%								
Participants with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016	32.7%								
Participants without basic skills	Since 01/01/2016	30.9%								
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	2,164								
SIF Ways to Work Starts on Programme	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	184 39								
SIF W2W contracts Male	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	67.4% 64.1%								
SIF W2W contracts Female	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	32.6% 35.9%								
SIF W2W clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/10/2020 January 2024	44.0% 48.7%								
SIF W2W clients without basic skills	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	38.6% 51.3%								
Footfall (Face to Face contact) (subcategory of Overall Service Demand)	To January 2024	629								
Overall Service Demand	To January 2024	1,429								

Agenda Item 8

Sefton@Work Relocation

Sefton@Work's relocation to new premises in Bootle Strand has gone smoothly with no service interruption across delivery programmes. There are still some finishing touches and resources to arrive to maximise the use of the space but will be fully completed by end February. Planning is underway to host a celebration event on the 14th March to mark the official launch of the new premises and celebrate 20 years of delivery of employment programmes to Sefton residents.

Mental Health & Wellbeing

After the success of the last Fit for Success course delivered by Sefton@Work another is now scheduled with Active Sefton to start at the end of February. The course was designed to promote a positive mindset and includes class-based activities in Water Sports such as rafting, kayaking, dragon boating for team working and confidence building. Following completion of the course clients will be offered a 3-month gym pass at Sefton Leisure Centres to continue their wellbeing pathway.

Construction & Warehouse Routeway

2 Routeway into Construction & Warehousing courses took place in both Jan & Feb combining confidence building/wellbeing with practical skills and qualifications that clients can take forward to construction/warehouse employment opportunities. The training provider delivered the 4-day programme to 2 separate cohorts of 12 Sefton@Work clients.

New Employment opportunities

A growth sector employer has approached us to manage ongoing recruitment for vacancies in civil engineering and fibre-optics work. They have contracts across the North West and are struggling to staff them due to skills shortages. In January we delivered a routeway into the sector which included training for Street-Works Operatives roles, Safe Working in Civils and Underground Safety roles. 8 long term unemployed clients attended in total and 4 have since been employed by the employer.

Early Years Sector Careers Event

Sefton@Work supported an SMBC Early Years Careers Event at SCLS on 10th January 2024. The event was aimed at people who are considering a career working with children and in response to the Early Years New Entitlement. The Early Years Team have also offered to meet Sefton@Work advisers in Feb and deliver an information session that will assist clients who are interested in the sector. Funding to support additional events in future is being sourced from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

Consolidating Partnerships with Local Employers

Sefton@Work's mission to enable more residents to access sustainable employment cannot be achieved without sympathetic local employers. In order to acknowledge the value that our local employers deliver for our clients, a new Employer Partnership Agreement has been launched. This initiative aims to strengthen Sefton@Work's relationship with local employers by acknowledging their commitment to local employment, the support they give to our clients and the opportunities they offer to vulnerable people who may not otherwise be able to demonstrate their talents in conventional recruitment processes.

It is planned that our Employer Liaison Officers will visit all our committed employers over the next months to present them with a framed 'Employer Partnership Certificate' which has been endorsed and signed by the Chief Executive of Sefton Council as a token of thanks and recognition.

Social Value

Sefton@Work met with A E Yates Ltd who have the contract to repair Southport Pier to discuss their social value policy and to foster a commitment from A E Yates to maintain a long-term relationship with SMBC and Sefton@Work, supporting ongoing social value and employment initiatives beyond the immediate 12-month Pier construction project or any potential future work.

We are working with A E Yates to commit to hiring a percentage of their workforce from Sefton, prioritising unemployed residents and care leavers and implement a targeted initiative to actively recruit them, ensuring they have ringfenced opportunities within the company. The company has signed the Caring Business Charter, as the Service requests all contractors to do who are successful in achieving Council contracts.

Recent Client Case studies

Client - J

J was not claiming any out of work benefits as his wife was working and financially supporting the family including their young children. He is originally from Nigeria and has lived in Sefton for approximately 2 years. His English Language skills were very good, but he felt he needed support when completing formal job applications. He had been applying for many jobs and had been successful in gaining interviews, but these did not materialise into jobs.

J had over 20 years experiences working within the administration, business support and customer service sectors. J was hoping to find full-time sustainable employment within these roles and has previously attended The Digital Inclusion Course to help support him with his job search and job applications.

His advisor suggested he consider a placement on a Sefton@Work Routeway scheme with Citizens Advice in a volunteer Customer service Role. He agreed to this and together they completed an application form. After an interview J was successful in gaining a place. Attending the Routeway placement helped J with his confidence whilst he continued to apply for other administrative roles.

After several months volunteering, J was successful in gaining an interview with Sefton Council Children's Services Department for a Business Support Assistant role. He felt the interview went well and was very pleased to be offered the role subject to references. J's advisor assisted in chasing up his references and he started employment with the Council in November 2023.

During his journey with Sefton@Work J informed his advisor that his family was struggling financially with only one income, so his advisor was able to issue him with a foodbank voucher, a cost-of-living package and also shared details of the Community Pantry which offers families a free evening meal every Monday & Tuesday evening. This assistance was available to J as part of Sefton@Work's commitment to the Child Poverty Strategy. J was also supported via our

Agenda Item 8

employability fund when he started employment with travel costs and suitable work clothes.

Client N

When N first came to Sefton@Work the majority of her work experience had been in the Retail sector and had been largely fragmented and temporary. N was looking for work which could offer her some reliability in terms of pay and something that was sustainable over the longer term to fit around her childcare needs.

N was considering a role within the social care sector but lacked any formal training and qualifications. Her adviser explained that a Health and Social Care course was due to start with a local provider that covered all aspects of care, and she welcomed the opportunity to enrol.

She completed the training, enjoyed the course, and was supported with travel costs from Sefton@Work's employability fund. After completing the qualification, N was successful in gaining several interviews by employers and was offered a variety of care roles. Unfortunately, N did not accept a position, as she was concerned about the reliability of hours in relation to her childcare, and proximity to her home.

Her Sefton@Work adviser encouraged her to speak with employers about her concerns and negotiate on more flexible hours, as the employers clearly saw her potential and the lack of applicants in this sector is a major factor. N took some convincing on this negotiating approach from her adviser as she needed to increase her sense of value and worth which did not come readily to her. However, she did take these concepts on board and when she was interviewed by Medline for a support worker vacancy, she was pleasantly surprised when she was offered guaranteed hours to suit her family needs. She was very excited when they offered her a position pending DBS and references. Her adviser completed a 'Better Off Calculation' to reassure N she would be better off financially.

N started her new role as an SEN Support Worker in late November 2023.

N's journey from unemployed retail worker to a successful SEN support worker highlights the importance of tailored support, flexible training options, and community collaboration in empowering individuals facing career transitions, especially those with unique challenges like childcare constraints. This case study emphasises the significance of addressing barriers systematically to facilitate successful career retraining and uplift the lives of individuals seeking meaningful employment.

NEET REDUCTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

December 2023 Performance on NEET and Not Known

The data for our monthly performance for NEET and Not Known is cleansed locally by Career Connect and verified with government sources using the NCCIS database which each LA is required to update monthly. This forms part of the tracking element of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. The purpose of this tracking is to identify, target and support those young people who are Not in Education, Employment or Training.

The following outlines the progress made by the Service in December 2023.

Table 1 – Current NEET 16-17 Performance (Dec 2023)

Area	NEET	Not Known (NK)	Combined NEET/NK
	3.4%	0.2%	3.6%
Halton	5.3%	0.4%	5.6%
Wirral	3.3%	2.3%	5.6%
St Helens	4.9%	0.9%	5.8%
ENGLAND	3.1%	2.9%	6.0%
NORTH WEST	4.1%	1.9%	6.0%
Knowsley	5.3%	2.1%	7.4%
Liverpool	5.3%	3.6%	8.9%

- Sefton has the lowest Combined NEET & NK % across the LCR
- Sefton is performing better than the NW and England NEET & NK Combined (- 2.4% below NW average and – 2.4% below national average)
- Sefton is ranked 2nd lowest in December 23 among its nominate group of Statistical Neighbour councils.
- At 0.2%, Sefton’s NK has decreased by 0.2% year on year, this is 2.7% below the national average and 1.7% below the NW.
- 26.97% of the NEET and NK cohort are in vulnerable group (58 out of 215)
- NEET at 3.4% in December 23 for our 16/17-year-olds has increased by 0.59% (41yp) year on year, however this is 0.7% below the regional average of 4.1% and nationally we are 0.3% higher than the average of 3.1% however the England Not Known is 2.9% with statistically a proportion being in NEET.
- Sefton is 0.2% below statistical neighbours 16-17 NEET average which is 3.6%
- Our current 16/17 cohort is 5912, 215 of whom are NEET. Although we have 33 additional young people in our NEET cohort, the total cohort size has increased by 207 year on year.

Year on Year Comparisons

Academic Age 16-17 Actual NEET	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	2.82%	2.48%
2023/24 Actual NEET %	3.42%	2.82%
Difference	0.59%	0.34%
2023/24 Actual NEET figure	202	161
2023/24 Total Cohort	5912	5705

Academic Age 16-18 Actual NEET	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	3.99%	3.59%
2023/24 Actual NEET %	4.45%	3.99%
Difference	0.46%	0.40%
2023/24 Actual NEET figure	387	341
2023/24 Total Cohort	8700	8545

Agenda Item 8

Academic Age 16-17 Not Known	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	0.37%	0.55%
2023/24 Not Known %	0.22%	0.37%
Difference	-0.15%	-0.19%
2023/24 Not Known figure	13	21
2023/24 Total Cohort	5912	5705

Academic Age 16-18 Not Known	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	1.21%	1.24%
2023/24 Not Known %	1.05%	1.21%
Difference	-0.16%	-0.03%
2023/24 Not Known figure	91	103
2023/24 Total Cohort	8700	8545

Care Experienced Young People (In borough)

As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service offer, Career Connect support 56.7% (105 young people) of the care experienced young people cohort, these are those living in the borough. The Virtual school support those living outside of the borough (i.e. 70 young people)

The table below shows those care experienced young people supported by our NREIS contract.

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
16	7	23%	23	77%	30
17	8	22%	28	77%	36
18	17	43%	22	47%	39
	32	30%	73	70%	105

- 15 young people 16-17 are NEET, which is 9.9% of the total cohort (i.e. 66)
- 70% of the overall cohort are NEET and 30% are EET.

It is important to note that the Cared for Children and Care Experienced young people cohort has increased year on year so there are more young people to support in this group. EET outcomes have increased by nearly 8.5% compared in 2022.

2023 Year 11 Leavers - The current position for 16 yr. old EET has dropped from 90% to 85% (5% decrease) This equates to 4 young people who have dropped out of EET.

A working group has been set up with Youth Justice, Career Connect and the Virtual School to identify ways in which we can work together to improve attendance and

engagement, provide careers advice and guidance and plan for post 16 transition, for young people in and out of borough who are NEET or at Risk of becoming NEET.

September Guarantee and Activity Survey

The September Guarantee forms part of the Raising the Age of Participation (RPA) statutory guidance to ensure that all young people in school year 11 and year 12 have an appropriate offer of education, employment, or training by the end of September each year. Appropriate offers must include working towards an accredited qualification.

The final figures reported by Career Connect to the DfE on 31st January 2024 for those young people who were in EET from September 2023, shows that 96.6% (3048) of our young people progressed into learning meeting RPA. Of the 96 not meeting the RPA, 27 are employed with no training.

Data recorded as at 31st Jan 2024

Activity	Number	%
Meeting the Duty to Participate	3048	96.6%
Not Participating	96	3.0%
Temporary Break from Learning	5	0.2%
Working towards Participation	6	0.2%
Total	3155	100%

Case Studies

M is female aged 17 and attended Hugh Baird College but due to a late start, didn't settle in very well and has left her course. M suffers from a panic disorder and has been struggling with the expectations of the course and with social interactions. M has been NEET for 4 months now. Career Connect referred her to Active Sefton, and she now goes to the gym once a week and is feeling much better in herself. Although M has her English Language GCSE, she wants to also achieve her Maths so that she can go back to college this September. Career Connect contacted Smart Training who deliver Functional Skills L2 Maths, but M needed a laptop to be able to access the training. Career Connect applied to Tameside Community Computer CIC who collects and recondition Laptops. This application was successful and M picked the laptop up in December, she awaits a start date for Smart Training and will commence the course at the end of February.

Young person 17 years old – living in semi-independent housing and has been previously cared for (not in Sefton). She has SEN and learning barriers as well as mental health issues. Career Connect have supported her with employability and confidence skills and helped her to apply for a vacancy at the Lakeside Restaurant, they also accessed their own organisation's Beneficiary Grant Fund to buy her interview clothes. The Career Connect coach has helped in practising mindfulness techniques and after some months of concentrated work, the young person attended this job interview and was successful in getting the job.

Agenda Item 8

K, young male has been NEET for 14 weeks. He had multiple barriers including confidence, motivation, and school attendance issues. K was previously identified as Sefton RONI at Litherland High School and offered early intervention support, but he refused the support at that time and engaged little in the school process. Career Connect engaged with K's parents through several phone calls and 3 home visits. Several options were discussed with the family concentrated more on personal self-development programmes in the first instance and a range of providers including Talent Match, Prince's Trust Fire Service Programme and Hugh Baird Prince's Trust offer. After some time, Career Connect arranged to meet with K and his parent to call into Hugh Baird in the evening to have a look around as it would be quieter, and K would be able to get a better feel of the College. They completed the walk around and arranged for a further visit to meet with the Prince's Trust team. The 2nd meeting took place and K registered for the course; K was invited for a taster day first which he attended. K is currently on programme with the Princes Trust and is now looking at future courses/programmes for when it ends.

The Caring Business Charter

Current Activity

The Charter Co-ordinator (a young person with experience of care herself) is currently working with **43** Active Employers, and **65** employers have signed the Charter. To date, there have been **62** referrals from partners and the following positive outcomes have been achieved for our young people:

- **9** have been supported into full time employment, **4** of whom are in apprenticeships.
- **2** have moved back into full time education to improve their qualifications.
- **1** is currently on a personal development programme with the Princes Trust.
- **8** are being supported by Sefton@Work through the DWP Restart Programme
- **1** young person is undertaking a "Find your Purpose" intervention with Sefton@work.
- **1** young person has just completed his CSCS course with Sefton@work and has been offered a work experience with Dowhigh Construction
- **16** young people attended the Careers Market Place held during National Care Leavers Week in October 2023.

As part of the Charter and to promote the offer, the Sefton Beacon is circulated to over 100+ stakeholders/partners monthly. The Beacon also promotes all Sefton Council and Sefton School Apprenticeship opportunities which are shared with the Leaving Care Team to identify suitable young people.

Multiply Programme – Voluntary Sector Delivery

Following a compliant procurement strategy, the following organisations were commissioned to deliver informal engagement and learning under the Multiply Numeracy programme:

- Acronym Community Empowerment (ACE)
- Award Solutions
- Merseyside Expanding Horizons (the Big Onion)

- Phoenix Community & Youth Project
- Rotunda
- The Inclusion Network

All VCS organisations delivering Multiply on behalf of the Council will be responsible for direct engagement through existing and new participants that will support the increase of referrals to our Adult and Community Learning Service. To date, 82 participants have been supported to increase their numeracy skills through the VCS route.

As Year 2 is due to end on 31st March 2024, we are currently preparing to re-tender for Year 3 delivery which is due to commence on 1st April 2024.

INVEST SEFTON

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 but await news of any replacement funding. InvestSefton delivered the Growth Hub contract in Sefton meeting its contractual requirements which included exceeding output targets for the number of businesses assisted.**

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 GFA has now been issued and should be signed-off by the time of CM briefing. 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 Marys Complex, this is their main delivery location. Both were

Agenda Item 8

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:

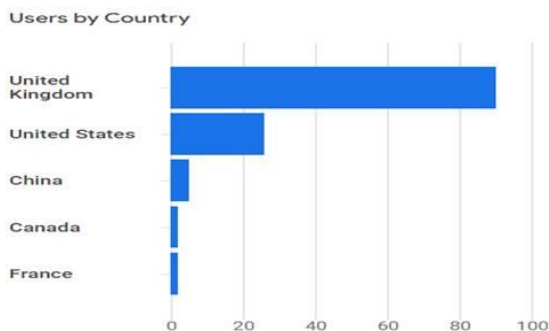
- **Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside**-Groundwork is a Merseyside based national organisation with a team of professional in-house consultants and associates with a variety of technical expertise including energy auditing, carbon management and environmental training. These are supported 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.

The team is also developing a brief to commission a Consultancy Framework to help augment existing business adviser support in niche areas based on demand recorded by the Advisers and officers.

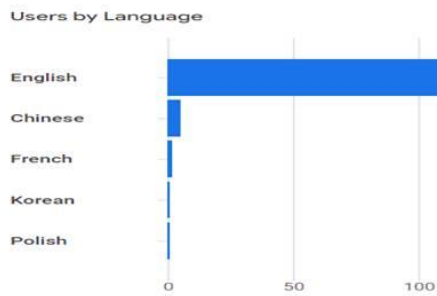
Business engagement

- From Friday 2nd to Thursday 8th Feb 2024, the website had 132 unique sessions.
- The most visits were on Thursday 8th Feb;
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 8th Feb 2024, the site has had a total of **72,066** unique sessions;
- Post this week have mainly been around promoting our upcoming events - Sefton Huddle for digital, creative and tech businesses (22nd Feb) and a Cyber Security Workshop on the 13th March;
- InvestSefton twitter page has 1616 followers;
- Sefton Huddle Facebook page has 25 members.

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



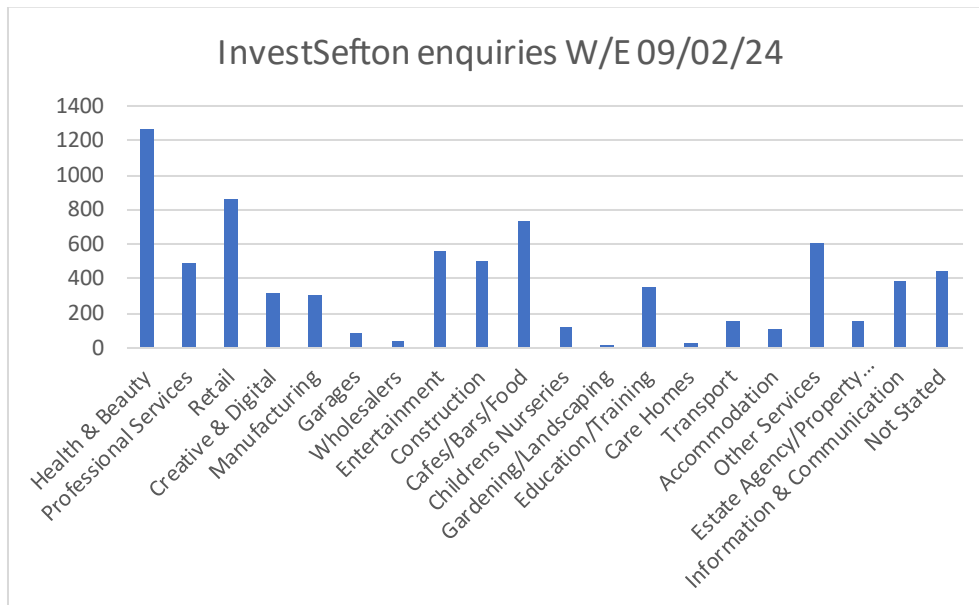
Language of the website user is broken down as follows:



Business Enquiries

Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled 7,543 enquiries from a wide range of businesses.

Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 9 February 2024:



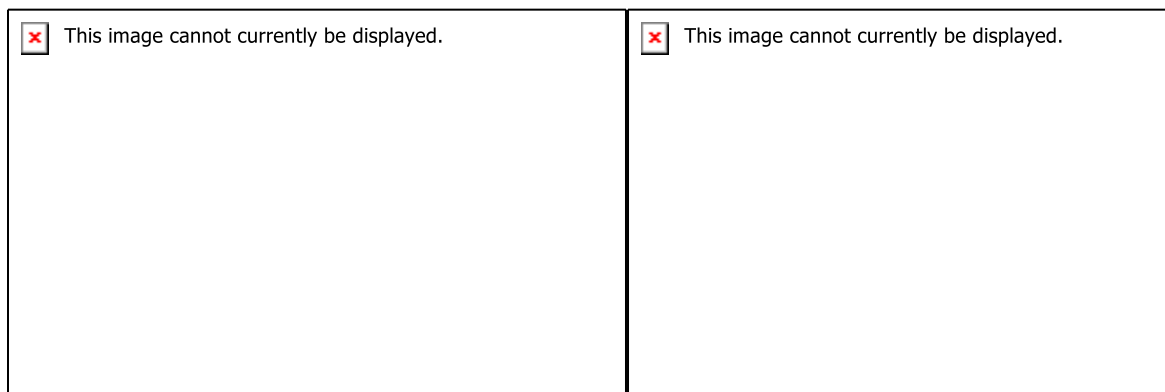
Total enquiry numbers from 13th March to date:

Year	Total Enquiries
13 th March 2020- 31 st March 21	3740
1 st April 21- 31 st March 22	1325
1 st April 22- 31 st March 23	1413
1 st April 23 – to date	1065
Total	7,543

Agenda Item 8

Sefton Economic Forum 7 December Lakehouse, Crosby

Some 91 people from 76 businesses (including 24 women business owners) attended the winter Economic Forum. The forum offered a diverse range of speakers covering the latest economic trends, growth at LJL Airport and insights into how businesses can use professional athlete coaching and mentoring techniques in their workplace.

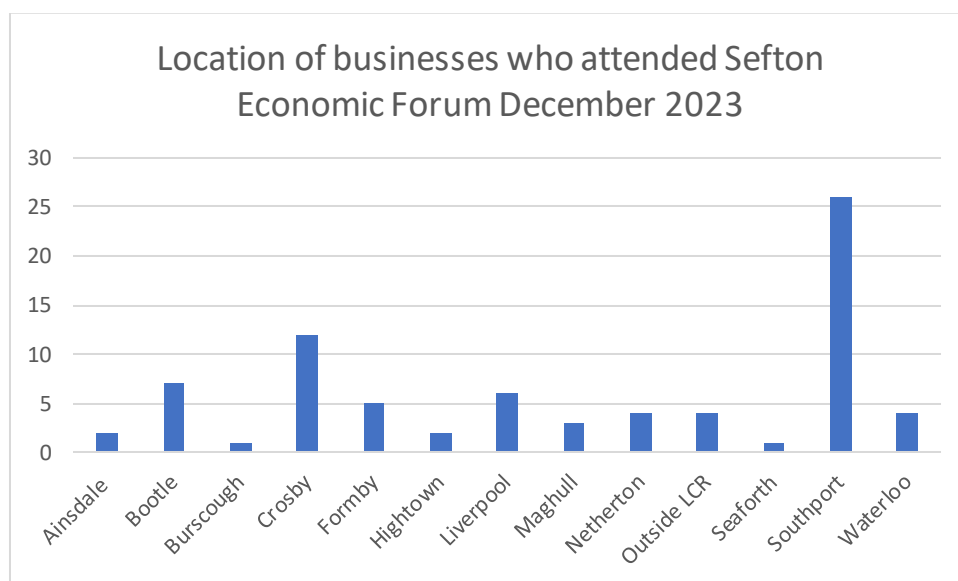


Feedback

“Elevate EBP – loved the meditation guy, will try the breathing exercises

Innovation Consulting – thought the Danny Donachie talk was right up his street, he was really into meditation”

“Christian Spence talk was very popular with most businesses, very easy to understand and interesting”



Case studies

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

Maintenance Services company based in Bootle offering Commercial Gas Electric and Maintenance Services. The business was incorporated in 2022 by Management staff from the demised Lockwood's Maintenance Services Limited retaining some of the staff and many customers of the former company. Clients include Southport College, Southport FC, Mitie Group and Sovini. The Business is looking to grow and is seeking new clients, growth opportunities and staff recruitment. InvestSefton Programme supported the business by providing free access to a range of workshops and events to enable them to develop their network and gain new business.

IT provider based in Southport are a managed service who provide additional services including VOIP telephone systems and IT systems audits. The Business is looking to increase its recurring monthly revenue through its consulting service offering or managed service support. InvestSefton supported the Business by reviewing its Website and SEO, comparing to local competitors as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personas for the business services.

An award-winning family run bed and breakfast based in Southport which has 10 rooms available to book. The business looks after a range of guests from overseas golfers to local businesses who use it for regional staff travelling into the area. The owner is keen on sustainability and has long been involved in visitor economy groups for Southport. Following the announcement of the new convention centre he was appointed the Sustainability champion for the centre with a goal to improve the sustainability of other local businesses in the area. InvestSefton has supported the business in a number of areas.

A bed and breakfast based in Southport. The current owners took over the hotel in 2016 and since then have had to face the challenges of covid shutdowns, the local conference centre closing and now the cost-of-living crisis. The Business aims to try to increase occupancy levels by improving their website and marketing activities. InvestSefton supported the business by reviewing its website and SEO and comparing them to national competitors as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personas for their venue.

Agenda Item 8

REGENERATION

Southport Town Deal

A range of projects are being supported through Southport Town Deal and form part of the Southport Town Deal programme for generating economic growth.

Marine Lake Events Centre and Water & Light Show

The Marine Lake Events Centre project is progressing on site with enabling and services diversion works being carried out in advance of the proposed demolition programme for this key site. The £73M Marine Lake Events Centre secured planning approval in April 2023, and work is progressing with the project team to deliver this key Town Deal project.

Some of the key milestones achieved to date include:

- April 2023 - Planning approval secured.
- August 2023 - Appointment of Kier Construction to undertake pre-construction services work.
- August 2023 - Site Hoarding installation.
- Utility disconnections completed and major utility diversion orders ongoing. United Utilities technical approval received for the drainage diversion works.
- Condition surveys of adjacent properties complete
- Completion of RIBA Stage 4 Design work and works packages being priced up.

The enabling works and main contract works will be procured separately. Currently major utilities diversion works are taking place on site, and this will take 10-12 weeks to complete. The Council is now in the process of procuring the main contractor with a start date later this year once the enabling and demolition works are complete. [Vital work to begin near Marine Lake Events Centre \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/news/vital-work-to-begin-near-marine-lake-events-centre)

Enterprise Arcade

The Enterprise Arcade has just moved forward with its next key milestone with the appointment of the contractor Skyline who started work in Jan 2024. Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project and will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport. This project is being showcased at Sefton Huddle event in February 2024 to share with wider stakeholders. [Works begin on huge creative hub project in heart of Southport \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/news/works-begin-on-huge-creative-hub-project-in-heart-of-southport)

Les Transformation de Southport

The first phase of transportation improvements, focusing on the area around Southport Market – Kings Street, Market Street, Eastbank Street. Market Street and Eastbank Street is progressing with further detailed design work. Further consultation is proposed with local businesses to share the details and minimise disruption. Work is anticipated to commence in 2024. This exciting project should help transform this area of the town centre by updating and improving the quality of the public realm and improving directional signage.

Building a Better Customer Experience

This key training programme has been operation for a year now and is progressing well.

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. Southport College have collaborated with 27 businesses north of the borough, they have also delivered focus groups with a range of learners and feedback was very positive, learners felt that the modules covered a range of topics which have enhanced their skills and increased confidence levels.

Southport Cove – The Esplanade

An Exclusivity Agreement is now in place with GSL the team behind the Cove Resort proposals for the Esplanade site in Southport. The agreement gives GSL 18 months to work on the details of the scheme and prior to agreement from the Council on any future lease arrangement for development of the site. During the 18 month period GSL will be expected to progress planning and all matters relating to delivery of the project on this site.

BOOTLE

Bootle Strand Repurposing

On 7th December 2023 Cabinet considered the 5 year Business Plan for Bootle Strand Shopping Centre and transformation project including agreement to progress RIBA Stage 3 for the £20m levelling up funding, approved in March last year. A key catalyst project for Bootle's wider regeneration, this decision marks a major milestone in progressing this complex project whilst also keeping the Strand open to support the community that rely on its shops and services.

The £20m DLUHC funding will assist with the first phase of delivery work which will include and build on the Salt and Tar events space, undertake selective demolition of part of the centre, provide a new town square and landscaping proposals for the town centre. The appointed contractor will accommodate requirements for the proposed 2024 events programme at Salt and Tar, including Tom Jones and Status Quo concerts in August [Status Quo set to rock all over Bootle \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/news/status-quo-set-to-rock-all-over-bootle) and comedy weekender in May ([Gary Delaney and Seann Walsh to take the stage at this year's Comedy Weekender in Bootle \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/news/gary-delaney-and-seann-walsh-to-take-the-stage-at-this-year-s-comedy-weekender-in-bootle)). The construction programme will be adjusted to take account of this to maintain momentum through the demolition period.

Bootle Regeneration Strategy

Work is ongoing to develop and inform this strategy from a range of sources. The recent Bootle AAP preferred options consultation has completed its consultation stage and will help inform the wider town centre strategy. Further work is needed however to review market conditions and key sector information on demand; identify key areas of opportunity and how these can be combined to bring forward viable investment and development propositions, including wider city region identified opportunities for growth and economic development and how this could help support Bootle's transformation programme.

People can find out more about the Bootle Strand scheme on the Council's website [Bootle Strand \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/news/bootle-strand)

Agenda Item 8

CROSBY

Crosby New and Existing Library at Waterloo

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

Sefton Council is committed to the exciting and innovative project in Crosby Village to help secure a successful and robust future for Crosby Village and in addition the Council's Cabinet has given consideration as to how refurbishment of the existing Library in Waterloo can be progressed as separate scheme.

Cabinet considered a report in December 2023 which provided an update on the Crosby Village outline business case. Scheme A new design team will now work on details for a revised library and health hub scheme and a detailed Full Business Case will be prepared in parallel to the new design for consideration by members later this year. A planning application was submitted in September 2023 for works to Crosby village car park and an outline planning application for the new library which is awaiting determination.

AINSDALE ON SEA

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works

Following conversations with residents, community groups and previous wider consultation on this area, the Council announced in 2023 that it would be looking to develop an updated vision for the coastal gateway in response to the feedback received. The Council have appointed a specialist planning and development consultancy to undertake a feasibility study for the coastal gateway. The consultant, Turley, will look at all assets at the site, including The Sands, Toad Hall, Council operational bases, and options for their development. This vision work is being finalised and will be reported back to members. ([Council shares next steps for Ainsdale-on-Sea \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#))

Ainsdale Toilet Refurbishment and Changing Places Toilets

In addition to the above the contract for the refurbishment of Ainsdale toilets including the provision of a changing places toilet started on site in October. This forms part of a wider programme of work for the installation of four Changing Places toilets (Ainsdale, Victoria Park, Dunes and Litherland Sports Centre.) Work is anticipated to complete in Spring/Summer 2024 to comply with grant funding requirements.

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site. Sefton is considering and 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 continues (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 considered the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Recently a further two additional properties have been acquired and a renewed effort are underway to bring the remaining ownerships into Council control. Parallel to this process, agents have been appointed continue to market the site to support the

Council's ambitions for change and redevelopment of this site. Expressions of interest are continuing to come forward, lines of enquiry explored further with the market, and members are being updated on progress.

MAGHULL

Maghull Health Park

Mersey Care are working closely with Sefton Council to develop plans for a Mental Health Digital Research Centre at Maghull Health Park. Building on the significant investment in the site to date - Europe's largest concentration of complex secure mental health services and sector leading clinical excellence for serious mental illness - Phase 1 of this health park development will look to bring forward a world class Mental Health Digital Research Centre, a landmark centre of excellence for digital mental health research in Sefton.

The proposals under development include 300,000sqft of medical research, technology and data-based occupier space which will anchor the development of a new regionally significant 10 ha Health Park for investors, innovators, clinicians, and academics to revolutionise the future of mental health care, research and digital innovation, including immersive and interactive spaces, augmented reality labs and research accommodation. The site forms part of a wider city region bid for Life Sciences Investment Zone funding which aims to develop and life sciences cluster in the region building on significant assets within the region the proposal will safeguard 1800 jobs currently on site and develop new jobs, training, research and product development opportunities as well as attracting private sector investment.

TOURISM

Events

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

- The closing date for applications was Friday 16th February and the response has been incredible.
- Applications are being shortlisted and successful businesses will be notified shortly.
- Infrastructure is being secured and any contracts that have finished are being re tendered via The Chest NW
- Children's Entertainment

Southport Air Show – 13th & 14th July

- Tickets are now on sale using See Tickets.
- Trader booking forms have been sent out and there has been a great response with most of the available pitches already being taken.
- The Flying Display Management has been secured by the tender process and it has been awarded to TSA Consulting.
- TSA have proceeded to obtain costs for aircraft displays and the military allocation will be announced at the end of March/beginning of April.
- The Traffic Management and Medical cover are due to be advertised for tender on the Chest NW.

Agenda Item 8

- The Comms Management, WIFI and box office staffing are also being tendered.
- A new PA company has been awarded the contract – they are called HG1 Communications.
- The Armed Forces are securing ground assets for the Military Village.
- We are hoping to have a larger STEM presence at the event and BAE Systems have shown an interest in attending with the possibility of sponsorship.

British Musical Fireworks Championship – 20th & 21st September

- Tickets are now on sale using See Tickets.
- The competitors briefing and site visit will take place on Wednesday 21st February at Victoria Park. The Competition Clerk and head judge will also attend to talk through the rules of the competition.
- Infrastructure is being secured.
- The PA system is being tendered via the Chest NW along with medical cover, Traffic Management and Comms Management

MLEC

- United Utility Diversion now on site, works expected to last around 12 weeks.
- Procurement of the demolition and enabling contractor has been completed, contract to be awarded in the next 14 days.
- Procurement planning for the main contractor is underway and will commence shortly to ensure programme delivery.
- Off the back of the success of the Southport Learning Trust Primary School Hoarding Design Event in November – SLT CEO Ian Raikes requested all primary school students who did not attend the event receive the same training. Southport Convention Bureau has trained 60 year 11 students who are career champions to deliver the training. We will be supporting the students to deliver the first couple of events scheduled for March.
- Gardiner & Theobald & Southport Convention Bureau represented the MLEC Project Team at the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy Conference where we explained how youth are consideration in every aspect of the MLEC project both through construction phase and the finished visitor destination.
- After the success of the Christmas Eve Boxes Appeal partnered with Compassion Acts of Southport a further a schedule of events are planned to incorporate as follows, an Easter Egg Appeal for an event on 23rd March, 'Back to School Kits' – School bags and contents. These will add value to the free school uniform service provided by Compassion Acts Uniform Hub, in readiness for their busy months of July and August. A further Christmas Eve Box event will take place in December.
- Gardiner & Theobald and Southport Convention Bureau met with Fletchers Solicitors – Responsible Business Manager, Reece Hobson Adams to identify ways to align collaboration for Social Value activities. We connected Fletchers with contacts to extend their reach for inclusive internships and to increase their environmental focus.

Agenda Item 8

- To support International Women's Day on Friday 8th March, we will be presenting to all Year 11 female students from The Southport Learning Trust at Edge Hill University. The theme is #inspireinclusion.
- Partnered with Invest Sefton and the appointed training delivery partner contractor Groundworks, a sustainability introductory event will take place on Tuesday March 12th at The Waterfront Hotel, Southport. The event is designed to target accommodation businesses to help prepare them for securing business for MLEC. Sustainability is a key buying criterion for conference and event organisers, and it is critical that as a destination in a competitive environment that Southport acts.
- Accommodation is an essential part of the Conferencing and Events offer and whilst the opening of MLEC is a couple of years away conversations with conference buyers and event organisers are ongoing. 60 businesses will have the opportunity to work on a 1 to 1 basis to write a bespoke sustainability policy and action plan assisting them to boost their business credentials and secure more business.

Salt & Tar

After successful pilot year plans are in place to deliver an exciting full year of events, the large-scale music event including Tom Jones has already been announced along with The Comedy Weekender. The full events programme will be announced soon. The key activities currently taking place include:

- Working with contractors to finish off site infrastructure, signage and design look and feel
- Finalised events calendar plan for 2024
- Organising press launch
- Organising public launch
- Procuring key suppliers to support operations for the next 3 years
- Driving marketing and promotion for Status Quo and Comedy ticketed events
- Improving way finding around site
- Involvement with Bootle regeneration subgroups to ensure Salt and Tar is worked into development plans
- Engaging with Sefton learning to progress with the trainee container kitchen idea
- Networking with the local community attending groups and workshops

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