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Town Hall
Trinity Road
Bootle
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To all members of the Overview and Scrutiny
Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Date: 24 June 2025
Our Ref:
Your Ref:

Please contact: Paul Fraser
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Dear Councillor

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) - TUESDAY 25TH JUNE, 2024

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

Agenda No.	Item
6.	Cabinet Member Reports - March 2024 to June 2024 (Pages 77 - 98) Cabinet Member – Regeneration, Economy and Skills report

Yours sincerely,

Phil Porter

Chief Executive

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)		
Cllr Paulette Lappin	Cabinet Member Regeneration, Economy and Skills	25 June 2024

EMPLOYMENT & LEARNING

LCR Metro Mayor's Young Persons Guarantee

A grant offer letter has now been received from the LCR-CA in relation to this programme which will be operated through Sefton@work. The funding will be used to provide local employers with job incentive grants to recruit and retain unemployed Universal Credit claimants aged between 18 and 24. In the first year funding is available for 13 of these grants in Sefton, each worth £3,000 payable to an employer. As the number of outputs is very modest in comparison with other similar projects we have undertaken, we have agreed to target these grants primarily to employers in Early Years and Childcare.

DWP Restart

A two-year extension to the DWP Restart programme has now been received. This will allow Sefton@work to continue working with referred Universal Credit group for an extended period and enable the retention of experienced staff. Given that UKSPF, which is the other main funding source for Sefton@work has no opportunity to be extended beyond March 2025, this extension would be very welcome to provide some stability immediately after the current UKSPF funding ends.

Sefton@work General Performance Data for April 2024

<input type="checkbox"/> Data Description	<input type="checkbox"/> Range	<input type="checkbox"/> Figures
<input type="checkbox"/> Total Clients accessing service for ESF support	<input type="checkbox"/> 1 st March 2016 – 30 th September 2023	<input type="checkbox"/> 5,296
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Clients accessing service post ESF	<input type="checkbox"/> From 1 October 2023	<input type="checkbox"/> 725
<input type="checkbox"/> New clients accessing service this month	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 163*
<input type="checkbox"/> New clients registering by age	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 16-24 = 45 <input type="checkbox"/> 25-49 = 78 <input type="checkbox"/> 50+ =

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		40 <input type="checkbox"/> Not known 0
<input type="checkbox"/> Welcome Appointments made	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 130
<input type="checkbox"/> Previous Programmes – Claim Information		
<input type="checkbox"/>		
<input type="checkbox"/> Male Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> Since 01/01/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> 59.3%
<input type="checkbox"/> Female Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> Since 01/01/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> 40.6%
<input type="checkbox"/> Other Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> Since 01/01/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> 0.2%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants with Disabilities/Health Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> Since 01/01/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> 32.7%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants without basic skills	<input type="checkbox"/> Since 01/01/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> 30.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	<input type="checkbox"/> Since 01/01/2016	<input type="checkbox"/> 2,208
<input type="checkbox"/> UKSPF Programme		
<input type="checkbox"/> Starts on Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 90
<input type="checkbox"/> Male Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 50.0%
<input type="checkbox"/> Female Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 48.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> Prefer not to provide gender	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> 1.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> Inactive Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 81.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> Unemployed Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 18.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants at risk of redundancy	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 0%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants with Disabilities/Health Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 28.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants without basic skills	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 41.1%
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<input type="checkbox"/> Sefton@Work Programme (non UKSPF)		
<input type="checkbox"/> Starts on Programme	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 22
<input type="checkbox"/> Male Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 68.2%
<input type="checkbox"/> Female Participants	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 31.8%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants with Disabilities/Health Conditions	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 9.1%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants without basic skills	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 40.9%
<input type="checkbox"/> Participants into a positive outcome in month	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 2

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<input type="checkbox"/> Supporting Families active clients (new project replacing Turnaround)	<input type="checkbox"/> Current Active caseload	<input type="checkbox"/> 16	
<input type="checkbox"/> Footfall and Service Demand			
<input type="checkbox"/> Footfall (Face to Face contact) <input type="checkbox"/> (sub category of Overall Service Demand)	<input type="checkbox"/> Based on attendance at the Sefton@Work office and Southport Outreach – includes UKSPF, S@W & Restart	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 583
<input type="checkbox"/> Overall Service Demand	<input type="checkbox"/> All activity related to and with clients (includes footfall figures) UKSPF, S@W & Restart	<input type="checkbox"/> April 2024	<input type="checkbox"/> 1,195

Supporting Families

A new development in this project working with Early Help is that our team is now invited to attend cluster case conferencing through the ‘Team around the School’ which attempts to address issues or concerns before they escalate through a multi-agency core team and supporting team. The aim for Sefton@work is to align an adviser to each of the clusters as part of a broader support team to focus on employment and skills as a preventative measure. This would mean Sefton@work could be contacted through the Early Help monitoring systems if relevant to a particular case or family with older children.

Fast Track to Counselling for Sefton@work clients

Registered Clients are soon to be offered up to 12 counselling sessions with a psychotherapist. The two-fold aim is to offer sessions to clients who feel their personal barriers are preventing them from taking up opportunities and progressing on their journey back to work and to divert demand for counselling from the health service where waiting times can be significant. This offer started at the end of April and take-up so far has exceeded the level of demand we anticipated.

Quality Assurance

Sefton@Work has passed the annual Customer Service Excellence assessment for 2024. We were visited by the assessor on 18th April and he assessed the various standards within the published CSE Award. The assessor met with staff, clients, employers, and partners throughout the day and was very impressed with the new premises. 14 clients attended as part of a focus group to talk about their experience with the Service. We are also pleased to announce that we gained a further 2 “Compliance Plus” points this year bringing our total compliance plus points to 27, which is a fantastic achievement.

Digital Support

Following the success of wave 1.2 of the Digital Inclusion Initiative in partnership with LCR & Lloyds Bank Foundation, we are currently recruiting clients for another two sessions on wave 1.3. Up to 20 clients will complete a short digital intervention and receive a free tablet with 6 months free data.

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Sefton@Work is also planning to deliver future Digital Inclusion sessions internally. An LCR Train the Trainer course is scheduled for May and Sefton@Work will attend to ensure we can offer these sessions into the future for our clients in Sefton.

Programme of Bespoke Interventions for Clients

NHS Routeway

An NHS Health & Social Care Routeway course is currently being planned in conjunction with the LCR to be offered in our premises in The Strand. An information session for interested clients was held with strong numbers attending. The routeway will cover: information on the breadth of roles and responsibilities within the NHS, the application process for NHS, Trust Values, GDPR in the Health service, Confidentiality and Data Handling, Equality & Diversity issues in Health care, Effective Skills for dealing with patients and their families, Qualities and Attitudes for Work in a healthcare setting, Support with applications and practical interview preparations.

New Summer Routeway

A Sefton@Work Voluntary Routeway, usually delivered in term-time, is currently being planned for the school Summer holidays. These placements will be based around Sefton's provision of children's summer camps and activities.

Council and Citizens Advice Routeway

Sefton@Work's Voluntary Routeway Programme, which offers placements to those who need experience to enhance their CVs or help easing back into the world of work, has commenced recruitment. 5 placements within various SMBC departments and 3 with CAB Sefton have been secured. This programme responds to needs of clients who struggle to enter the labour market through mainstream recruitment processes. Participants will also benefit from an accredited 3-day pre-placement course delivered by SCLS. Clients will be provided with any uniforms required and all travel expenses will be reimbursed. Placements will run until the beginning of July 2024 and preparations will begin in August 2024 for the next cohort in early autumn.

Fit for Success – Second cohort

Our second Fit for Success course is scheduled to start in June. The course is 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 were offered a 3-month gym pass at Sefton Leisure Centres to continue on their wellbeing pathway. Participants from the first cohort reported increased health, improved positivity and a really beneficial sense of bonding and unexpected commonality between this diverse group who all became firm friends.

Create for Success

We have been developing the concept developed through Fit for Success to broaden the appeal of this approach to other clients who may not be attracted to sports but could benefit from a similar group experience. This has led to the new offer of Create for Success which incorporates art therapy and will be led by a local artist. The course would still be designed to promote a positive mindset but will encourage clients to take part in a wide range of visual arts and creative media sessions to help them build confidence and plan their next steps.

Early Years and Childcare

Sefton@Work continues to support SMBC Early Years team with a course that started in March to promote 'Careers with Children'. The course covered the Principles of working with children and the power of play, accredited safeguarding training, Paediatric 1st aid day, Food safety, and supporting children with SEND. The course aimed to encourage participants to consider working in childcare and feedback was positive. A meeting is currently scheduled in May with Sefton Early years to plan future courses and initiatives to encourage Early Years as a primary careers choice, including a second jobs fair. This partnership also underpins arrangements for the Young Persons Guarantee.

Hospitality

A Hospitality Routeway training programme has now been scheduled which will link Sefton@Work clients to local hospitality employers and job opportunities. The course will enhance client CV's and confidence at interview and equip participating clients with the skills and aptitudes required in the hospitality sector including customer service and Food Hygiene. Additional Barista training and a short work placement will also be offered to participants.

Contract Cleaning

A second Cleaning Routeway course has now been scheduled for May that will link clients to local cleaning job opportunities and employers including SMBC. The course will cover COSHH, Lone working, Working at Height, Manual Handling, Emergency First Aid, Health & Safety and Device training such as Buffer training.

Roll-on roll off Employability Sessions at The Strand

Sefton@Work is launching a rolling programme of delivery in the new training room which will consist of employability interventions, functional skills workshops, digital inclusion skills, sector qualifications and routeways, jobs fairs, employer and networking events and much more. As well as delivering ourselves some will be in partnership with SCLS and other trusted external partners and employers.

Co-location with Partners

Career Connect continue to attend Sefton@Work on a weekly outreach Programme to engage with our young people who are NEET or working with Early Help. Due to ongoing issues with money management, debt and housing amongst our clients we have commissioned Citizens Advice to deliver services 2 days per week from our office allowing our residents fast-tracked access to the support they need while on site. We continue to see a positive uptake in this offer since starting in January.

Housing Options colleagues also continue to attend our Bootle office 1 day per week to offer general housing advice and to link those who require ongoing support into the Housing Options offer which includes advice on accessing social housing through Property Pool, Section 21 eviction notices, and homelessness support.

Consolidating Employer Partnerships

Sefton@Work's Employer Liaison Team continues to attract new employers to sign the new Employer Partnership Agreement, signed off by our Chief Executive as a way of thanking them for helping us in our mission to promote the employment of Sefton residents. This initiative aims to strengthen Sefton@Work's relationship with local employers offering them a range of enhanced recruitment support, and increasing our ability to support our clients into work.

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Employer Liaison Officers now visit all newly engaged employers and present to them their framed 'Employer Partnership Certificate' which has been endorsed and signed by the Chief Executive of Sefton. Sefton@Work then promptly publicise an employer's commitment through various channels, including social media.

Sefton@work in Southport Town Centre

The current arrangements for service delivery in Southport need to be changed. Sefton@work staff have been co-located with another voluntary agency based in Houghton street for the past two years. However, following changes in this host organisation, the Service is obliged to identify new arrangements as swiftly as possible. Discussions have been held about the prospect of moving staff back to rooms within the Atkinson previously occupied by Sefton@work, but the progress of these negotiations has been slow as other strategic concerns need to be assessed. However, another option would be to occupy some unused space in the Cambridge Arcade, closes to the Town Hall. We will pursue some costings and a viability plan to identify whether this is a realistic option. The extension of Restart will require us to maintain an accessible provision in Southport, so urgent action will be taken to avoid any service disruption for clients.

NEET REDUCTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

March 2024 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 March 2024. Data for April 2024 has not yet been published.

Table 1 – Current NEET 16-17 Performance (March 2024)

Area	NEET	NK	Combined
Sefton	3.50%	0.20%	3.60%
Wirral	3.80%	0.80%	4.60%
ENGLAND	3.40%	1.70%	5.10%
NW	4.30%	1.20%	5.50%
Halton	6.40%	0.50%	6.90%
Knowsley	6.20%	1.00%	7.20%
St Helens	6.50%	0.80%	7.30%
Liverpool	6.10%	2.80%	8.90%

For LCR:

- Sefton has the lowest Combined NEET & NK % across the LCR
- Sefton is performing better than the regional NEET & NK combined %

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- Sefton is the ranked 2nd lowest/ best (NEET/NK in March 2024 among its nominated group of Statistical Neighbour councils. Wirral is Sefton's only statistical neighbour in LCR and Sefton is performing 0.6% better.
- All areas have seen an increase in NEET & NK combined % from March 23 – Sefton is 0.4% higher.
- Halton, Sefton, St Helens, and Wirral have all remained the same % of Not Known year on year.
- At 0.2% Sefton's Not Known has remained the same year on year this is 1% below North West and 1.5% below National Averages

Cohort Size

The following provides some current information on the size of the group that the contract with Career Connect covers:

Cohort Analysis

Age	Cohort Size	NEET	%	Not Known	%
16	2990	86	2.88%	2	0.07%
17	2942	121	4.11%	7	0.24%
Total	5932	207	3.5%	9	0.1%

- Our current 16/17 cohort is **5932**. 207 of whom are currently NEET and 9 are Not Known.
- The low figure of Not Knowns reflects a high level of confidence in the data supplied
- 32.4% of NEET and Not Known are also in a vulnerable group (70 of our 216)
- **SEND Comparison Data – March 2024 (Published Quarterly)**

Young people with a SEND - Year 12 - Year 16 + academic age 16 to 24

	Cohort	Proportion engaged in:			Total	NEET	Current activity not known	NEET & NK %
		Mainstream education and training	ISPs	Supported internships				
Halton	323	65.6%	7.7%	3.1%	76.5%	18.4%	0.6%	19.0%
Knowsley	604	34.6%	0.0%	0.0%	34.6%	12.6%	50.8%	63.4%
Liverpool	1,319	69.4%	1.3%	0.3%	71.0%	20.9%	5.2%	26.1%
Sefton	863	72.3%	3.1%	2.0%	77.4%	16.7%	0.9%	17.6%
St.Helens	381	66.4%	8.7%	0.0%	75.1%	15.8%	5.3%	21.1%
Wirral	944	69.9%	1.9%	0.0%	71.8%	17.4%	3.1%	20.5%
NORTH WEST	20,883	54.8%	4.4%	0.8%	60.0%	13.7%	23.0%	36.7%
ENGLAND	156,747	53.8%	2.7%	0.6%	57.1%	10.1%	30.7%	40.8%

This table shows that:

- Sefton is performing the best in the LCR for outcomes in mainstream education and training for age 16-24 at 72.3%.
- Sefton is 22.1% better than North West and 18.5% better than England averages for mainstream education and training.

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- Sefton has the lowest NEET and Not Known in the LCR at 17.6% and is better than the NW (36.7%) and England (40.8%)
- Sefton's Not Known at 0.9% is significantly better than the NW and England %. Sefton's low Not Known means that the data we collect is validated and young people are being tracked earlier and offered support to access the early help service through the NRE&IS service delivered by Career Connect on behalf of the Council.
- 7.9% of the 16-24 cohort are also in another vulnerable group (68 of the 863)
- The SEND group is by far the largest vulnerable group in Sefton

Spotlight on Cared For Children and Care Experienced young people

Below is the latest data we have from Career Connect in relation to young people who are supported by the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service (NREIS).

Our NREIS tracks and co-ordinates the reporting of destinations of LA residents on a National Client Caseload Information System (**NCCIS**) to send monthly *data* on young people's post-16 activities. This is used to report to DFE for this statutory duty and there are stringent quality standards for reporting. This is part of a wider commission and covers a cohort of approx. 9000 young people. Locally we have extended the use the reporting for cared for and care experienced young people 16-18 regardless of residency to ensure the quality is consistent.

Data on Young People 16-18 – Care Experience

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
17	2	50%	2	50%	4
18	23	32%	45	66%	68
Totals	25	35%	47	65%	72

Of the total cohort of 72, 22 are living out of Sefton and these are supported by the Virtual School.

Current Offer for 16–18-year-old Cared for/Care Experience

The main provision for this group is through Children's Services Personal Advisers team who co-ordinate a wide range of services and interventions for the young people on many aspects of their lives including housing, health/wellbeing and family contact etc. Education, employment & training also forms part of this support package through the PA team.

The Virtual school also supports the education planning for all cared for children and has recently received additional investment in the shape of additional staff to ensure every young person will have a Personal Education Plan in future.

NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Service (NR&EIS)

As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service, Career Connect support all young people within Sefton who are Cared for or Care Experienced up to the age of 18, and specific staffing resource is allocated to this group to augment the Council mainstream support through the PAs and Virtual school and add professional IAG expertise. This is important to ensure that all LAC young people can access careers advice and planning at the right stage in their schooling, especially as there is a high proportion of poor school attendance in this group.

Career Connect Offer for 16–18-year-olds Looked after young people

- NEET allocated staff for 16-18 Sefton residents – providing engagement, career planning and regular contact/support.
- Tracking of all Academic 16-18 cohort regardless of area of residence
- Co-ordination of EET progression support for out of borough clients including referrals to local services and advocacy to promote retention in learning.
- For NEET clients CC act as the conduit linking into out of borough provision/NEET support
- Post transition support for clients on schemes such as Sefton MBC Employability Pathways and other destinations, focused on risks to retention and picking up non-completers.
- Transition support at 16 and 18 linking with Virtual School, Employability Worker, and Sefton@Work

Career Connect for Pre – 16 under the Early Intervention Element of the contract.

- Staff Link with Virtual School for all pre 16 and with schools
- CC staff Support the production of Personal Education Plans and Career Action Plans
- Year 11 transition support for all – offer of learning for September Identify young people in the Spring term of Year 11 and Year 12 who have no intended destination or whose intended destination is doubtful and deploying skilled advisors to support them into an offer of an appropriate place, to meet the Councils responsibilities under the Raising Participation Agenda and DfE reporting. 75% of Year 11 leavers in 2023 were identified as risk of NEET and **90%** progressed into EET due to Early Intervention and Prevention transition support and partnership working.
- Early Intervention response for young people in years 9, 10 and 11 who are deemed most at risk of becoming NEET identified by the Virtual School or Social Workers.

In the past 12 months, Career Connect have supported young people either Cared for or Care Experienced from year 9 and have actively been engaging with of these young people within the last month.

They have also delivered **639** substantial interventions through support and/or guidance and made **1564** contacts with a range of support agencies on their behalf including Virtual Schools, Colleges, Social Workers, YOT etc. Since April 23 – March 24.

Sefton Adult Community Learning Service

Service Performance

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	Target	October		November		December		January		February		March		April		May	
	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24	22/23	23/24
Unique Learners	2000	531	501	705	637	795	755	996	860	1045	912	1125	965	1139	1047	1298	1067
Attendance	90%	90.33%	89.11%	89.39%	90.09%	89.53%	90.81%	90.31%	89.96%	90.21%	89.40%	90.02%	89.32%	89.08%	89.46%	89.31%	89.53%
Areas of Deprivation	35%	35.33%	39.35%	32.05%	37.26%	31.24%	35.38%	32.45%	35.63%	33.18%	35.14%	33.55%	34.17%	32.34%	34.17%	32.87%	34.74%
BME	16%	31.44%	24.55%	26.19%	23.33%	24.11%	19.88%	23.06%	22.46%	24.18%	21.31%	22.74%	19.59%	22.98%	18.73%	21.73%	18.69%
Disability	25%	14.26%	20.81%	16.48%	20.36%	15.62%	18.91%	16.68%	18.90%	16.89%	18.25%	18.55%	18.27%	17.43%	18.32%	18.55%	18.34%
Male	35%	19.77%	31.06%	23.25%	29.52%	21.70%	27.58%	23.97%	27.65%	24.77%	27.51%	27.15%	27.24%	25.84%	27.95%	26.75%	27.94%
Female	65%	80.23%	68.94%	76.75%	70.48%	78.30%	72.52%	76.03%	72.35%	75.23%	72.49%	72.85%	72.76%	74.16%	72.05%	73.25%	72.06%
Unemployed	40%	58.67%	61.95%	65.47%	61.43%	64.61%	57.31%	65.94%	59.72%	66.30%	59.38%	68.60%	59.43%	68.22%	57.84%	67.86%	57.31%
Learning Aims		617	615	886	840	1037	1026	1427	1291	1522	1403	1772	1524	1784	1703	2075	1750

NOTES:

Data provided for the month of May 24 is correct at time of writing but this represents an incomplete total for the month.

Devolved Adult Education Budget

- The allocation of devolved Adult Education Budget funding for 2024/25 has now been granted and the service is currently completing its delivery plan to underpin the allocation. Providers are waiting for the latest Test and Learn Prospectus to be released from LCR CA for 2024/25 themes. Details on activities to follow.
- Grant funded providers have been invited to complete the Free Courses for Jobs Expression of Interest delivery plan for the upcoming 2024/25 academic year. We will continue to investigate new qualifications and fund our Level 3 Teaching and Education qualification this way.
- Work is underway to complete the Autumn Prospectus, this to be distributed locally and made available online for potential learners to self-serve and enrol direction online. Enrolment days will also be made available for those with limited or no IT skills or facilities.
- Summer engagement plans are in place; the service will be attending various events to publicise courses and raise the profile of the service.
- Year 2 Pathways into Teaching Celebrations will take place on 9th July.

Cambridge Road – Building Management

- Work is underway to repair and make safe the disused toilet block which has posed a health and safety risk for some months. Appropriate measures are in place to ensure the safety of staff, learners and service users accessing the grounds. However, it has become apparent that the scale of works required exceeds that which was originally anticipated and the contractor has been asked to provide a detailed report with photographic evidence of the work now required. Property services and conservation colleagues have been requested to assist the service with resolving this matter.
- The contractor appointed to lay the paving to the exterior frontage to the Centre will be onsite throughout the Summer to remove and replace all the damaged/ incorrectly laid paving at the front of the building. A new temporary entrance will be made available at the rear of the building during this process.
- The Community Pantry CIC vacated the building at the end of May 24. The Service is investigating different options at present and will look to continue to provide free drinks and nutrition to Learners whilst on their course through other means in the

immediate term but will seek a viable alternative option for the kitchen and café space for the longer term.

- The 'Old Boys' group have been informed that they can continue to use the centre for their monthly catch-up meeting whilst pantry area is closed.
- Health and Safety Audit took place on 06/06/2024.

Quality Assurance

- Staffing - 23 tutors active since August 2023 - 20 currently active.
- Tutor recruitment campaign continues with some success: 3 new tutors have been appointed since last report. They are completing the relevant HR processes at present and will commence their induction shortly
- The LCR Pathways into Teaching programme also continues. CM will be aware that a learner from the latest cohort has completed their training and has now been successfully appointed as a casual 19+ Tutor within the Service.
- We have an ongoing shortage of ESOL tutors due to long sickness of substantial tutor and 2 resignations. This is a cause for concern as demand for ESOL continues to build within the community. We are actively promoting interests in these posts currently on social media as well as Council websites etc.
- 2 new post (Senior Admin. and Systems Support) have completed Corporate Induction on 21st May 24.
- Assistance with cover for reception duties continues with the temporary deployment of the Caring Business Charter co-ordinator and this arrangement has been extended to August 24.
- Observation of Teaching, Learning and Assessment: Completed: 19 full OTLAs (79%), plus 7 Observation Support Visits (100%) for new tutors. In total (91% of tutors have been observed)- Outcome: 94.7% Good or Better. 3 OTLAs - Support Visit as new tutors have been completed.
- Results for learners update: 88% has so far passed exams or successfully completed their qualifications. Re-sits for exams are planned before end of term.
- Awarding Body Quality Assurance: NCFE (Education & Health/Social Care) inspections were completed on 13th May 2024. WE were given a clean bill of health with no required actions or recommendations.

Ofsted Inspection

The Service's long awaited Ofsted Inspection took place on 2nd & 3rd May. A draft report has been received which requires no immediate corrective actions and the inspection was not upgraded to a four day visit through any safeguarding or other concerns. The final report is not yet published, at which time we will be able to publicise the outcome.

ESOL update

- Due to tutor shortage, we have prioritised those learners who were working towards a qualification since April 24 and place them in classes to prepare them for exams in June 24.
- English tutor accessing external ESOL training to be able to deliver ESOL classes from September.
- ESOL tutor internally trained to complete Internal Quality Assurance to help support learners sitting exams/re-sits over the coming weeks.
- ESOL Drop-in sessions started 9th May 2024 to support with exam technique and development of grammar – Well attended and very positive feedback received from learners.
- ESOL Test and Learn that had to be cancelled in January is being re-introduced as Community Learning. This is an introductory course starting 6th June; learners will

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have the opportunity to progress onto the Level 1 qualification starting in September 24.

Multiply Numeracy engagement programme

This is the third year of delivering the Multiply Grant fund on behalf of the LCR-CA. Multiply funding is for the delivery of a range of high quality, innovative numeracy interventions that meets the needs of local people and the national aims of the Multiply Programme. It aims to boost confidence and assist individuals with career progression whilst supporting the governments levelling up mission to ensure that by 2030, the number of people successfully completing high quality skills training with have increased.

This grant is only for Voluntary, community and faith sector suppliers and therefore, as we do not have existing sub-contracting arrangements through our mainstream AEB provision to draw upon for Multiply, we published an Invitation to Tender opportunity on the Chest procurement portal on 26th April 2024 with a closing date of 22nd May 2024, for bids between £10,000 - £20,000.

The total amount of grant funding available is £140,000 which is a substantially larger sum than previous years for Sefton. In total we received 6 bids, from a variety of existing and new suppliers. However, while the total ask from all the bidders would deploy 100% of the funding pot, the bids in their current state would achieve less than 60% of the required target learner numbers. We are currently in the process of scoring the applications and negotiation about value for money and increasing outputs will be required. Our aim is to commence delivery by the end of June 2024 to continue through to February 2025.

Southport Town Deal – Building Better Customer Service Experience

This is the only revenue element attached to the Town Deal and is a project which arose from early community and business consultation. The broad aim of the project is to help bring about a sea-change in the experience of customers across the town linked to every part of their experience as a visitor, diner, shopper or resident.

The first element of the projects has fully operational for a year and has been delivered by Southport College. This strand has featured the engagement of visitor economy businesses and the development of relevant learning modules to be incorporated alongside the College's provision related to hospitality, catering, and event management. This strand is well on course to achieve its targets, with 177 learners already having completed the course from a target of 320.

The second strand is being delivered by Sefton Adult Community Learning and is intended to provide short modular learning units to promote community pride and assist with the recruitment of volunteers to support the events programme in the town. The modules are now in final staged of development and will be rolled out in line with other courses and through community outreach.

The third strand is in the form of e-learning modules which are intended to be available to the wider workforce of Sefton Council through the Me-Learning platform. This rollout will be ready to go in the next few weeks.

The target for number of learners for the project is high, and will require a further implementation plan to fully complete. The service is currently working with a range of partners including Taxi Licensing section in order to put together a relevant delivery plan.

INVESTSEFTON

Business engagement

Investsefton.com

- From Friday 17th to Thursday 23rd May 2024, the website had 132 unique sessions
- The most visits were on Tuesday 21st May.
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 23rd May 2024, the site has had a total of 74,797 unique sessions
- Post this week on the website and twitter/X have been around promoting our gaming industry event held in Southport on 22nd May, our Economic Forum at Formby Hall on the 6th June and our Sefton Huddle on 20th June in Southport.
- InvestSefton twitter page has 1,613 followers.
- Sefton Huddle Facebook page has 25 members.

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

COUNTRY	USERS
United Kingdom	101
United States	14
Germany	6
Ireland	4
Austria	1
Canada	1
Finland	1

Town/city of origin of the website user is broken down as follows:

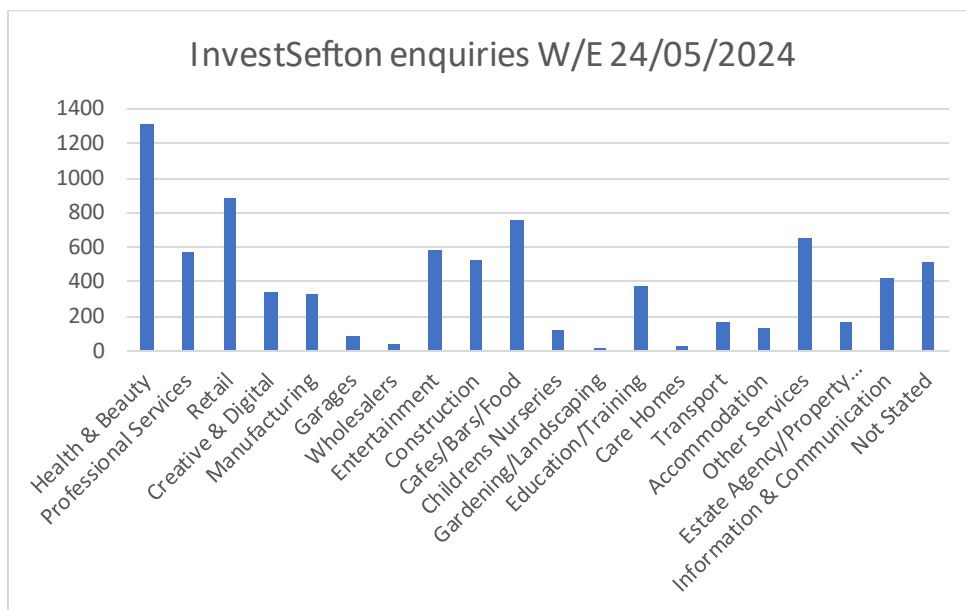
Users by Town/City

TOWN/CITY	USERS
London	32
Southport	12
Liverpool	11
Bootle	6
Frankfurt	6
Cardiff	4
Dublin	4

Business enquiries

Since 13 March 2020 InvestSefton has handled 8,027 enquiries from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 24th April 2024:

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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 – 31 st March 24	1,307
1 st April 24 – to date	242
Total	8027

Business Events & Workshops

InvestSefton has a busy and productive events calendar supporting businesses on a one-to-many basis. The events are often in the form of a workshop led by business leaders and experts free of charge focussing on a range of demand-led topics which the businesses request themselves.

Business Sustainability support launch

InvestSefton and Groundwork hosted a business sustainability event on 12 March in the Waterfront Hotel, Southport. Over 30 businesses attended the event for the project launch titled Sustainable Sefton. Sustainable Sefton will provide funded sustainability support to 60 businesses from the hospitality and retail sectors over the next 12 months, all of which will be supported by Groundwork consultants to develop a bespoke sustainability action plan.

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The sustainability action plans will help the businesses reduce their costs, attract new customers, and will contribute to the regions Net Zero target of 2040. The event included practical tips on how B&B's, small hotels and other accommodation providers can become more sustainable and outlined the multiple benefits of doing so. The agenda also included details of local grant funds, insights and experience from the sector and gave those attending the opportunity to meet with Groundwork consultants and register for 1:1 support.

Since the event 7 hotel accommodation providers have signed up and together with the Tourism service, the team is chasing up other local providers. Interest has been received from some of the larger hotels including the Bold, Vincent and Formby Hall. Future cohorts will include bars, restaurants and independent. Groundwork has set up a registration site at <https://groundworksbs.org.uk/sustainable-sefton/>

Financial & Professionals (F&P) Networking Group-17th April

The latest Sefton F&P event was held at Southport & Birkdale Sports Club, the event including presentations from representatives of River Capital Management Ltd, LCR Angel Network and Edge Hill University. Some 18 business representatives attended for what was a fantastic opportunity to connect with other Financial & Professional sector businesses as well as hearing the presentations. Event attendance breakdown:

- 18 business delegates attended , of which
- 4 were women business owners
- 16 evaluations completed

Feedback from the businesses

Boom – Development annual programme of events/network

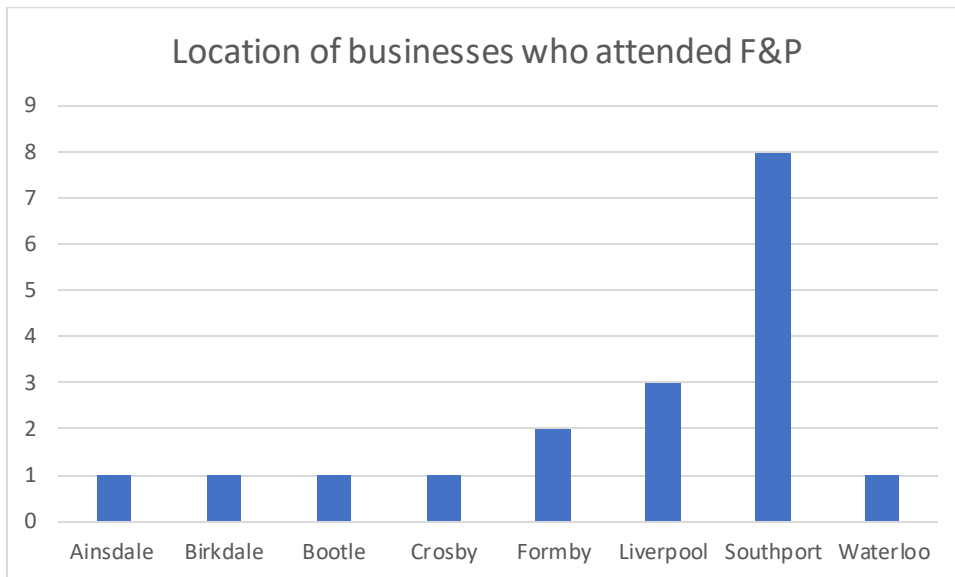
Clayton Architecture – intro to relevant companies would be great

LCR Angel Network – Good mix of content and audience

SB&P – very useful event today – thank you

Total Recruitment Solutions Ltd – Please keep me on the mailing list, today's session went well and we welcome more invites.

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Games Development Network event

InvestSefton assisted in the first ever Games Development Network (GDN) to be held event in Southport's Waterfront Hotel on 22 May. Hosted by GDN and LCR Growth Platform, the event was aimed at city region games developers including presentations from Southport based Fallen Planet studios and a Metaverse developer specialising in virtual world gaming. The event attracted **over 60 delegates** and helped as a pre-cursor to **InvestSefton's own networking group event on 20 June -Sefton Huddle** which meets three times pa and was established in light of the borough's growing digital and tech businesses.

Case studies

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

Bootle business that offers advanced nurse practitioner services. The Business identified that private medical treatment is a rapidly growing market and has taken a 5-year lease on a property to enable them to provide their specialist services. The Business needs to apply for funding to enable it to undertake extensive alterations to the property to secure CQC approval. InvestSefton supported the business to draft a business plan and cashflow to support the loan application.

Southport based sole trader with an established web design business. In addition to build, he hosts and provides Drone services via upshot photos engaging with businesses such as Cobalt Housing and IFI Audio. The Business is looking to grow its customer base and wants to engage with larger developers where aerial drone footage could be used to market developments. InvestSefton supported the Business by providing access to free workshops and events to enable the business to upskill and develop its customer base through Networking opportunities.

Marquee hire and event dressing business based in Aintree. Due to Business Growth the Business has regularly had to hire a van to transport equipment to venues. In order to reduce costs and improve reliability the business is looking to purchase a van but needs to

generate funds in order to do so. InvestSefton supported the Business with the development of a Business Plan and Cashflow forecast to support.

Vehicle recovery and transport business based in Bootle. Most of the work for the business comes through an agency and they need to provide a quote to the agency before any work is awarded. The business wants to promote itself better and is looking to introduce a website and begin regular social media activity to generate more direct enquiries. InvestSefton supported the business by reviewing their marketing approach and assist with queries and improve the use of AI, including Chat GPT.

Richardsons Healthcare of Bootle has achieved a remarkable feat by clinching not just one, but two prestigious Royal Awards for Enterprise. Following their 2019 triumph with the Queen's Award for Enterprise for their outstanding exporting, Richardsons has once again made headlines with their latest achievement. On May 6th, it was announced that the company has been honoured with the King's Award for Enterprise, recognising their exceptional growth in exporting.

Specialising in the manufacture of specialist operating table mattresses and accessory pads for leading medical device companies worldwide, Richardsons has established a strong presence in key markets such as the United States, various European countries, and even extending to regions as distant as China and Australia

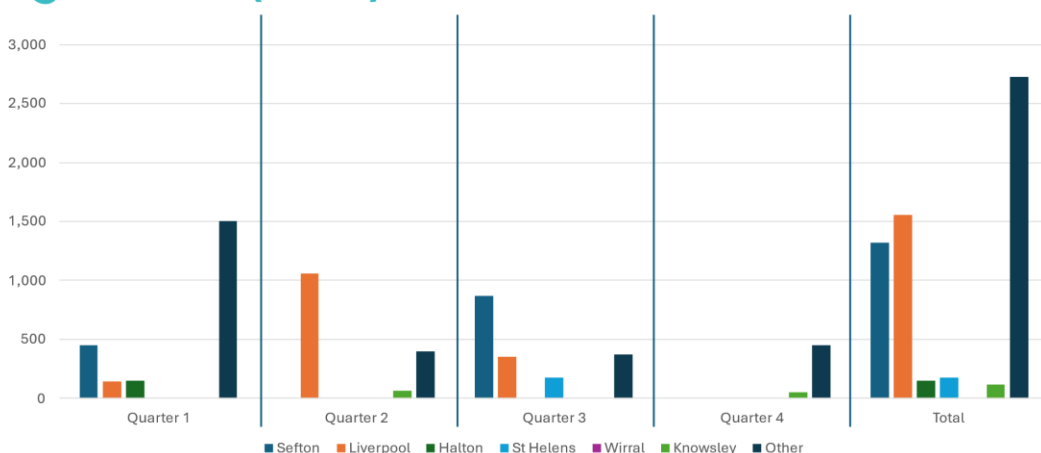
InvestSefton has assisted the company with their application on both occasions as well as providing support to them over many years.

Access to Finance

Merseyside Special Investment Fund (MSIF)

InvestSefton works closely with MSIF and their subsidiaries helping Sefton businesses to access a wide range of loan, equity and start-up funding. Officers also sit on the MSIF quarterly Partners board to discuss performance and the latest report for May 2024 shows **Sefton second only to Liverpool in terms of take up and investment.**

Investment Level by Borough by Quarter (£'000)



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TOURISM

Events

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

- The Southport Food and Drink Festival took place on the 31st May until the 2nd of June
- The Event was a huge success with tens of thousands of visitors, this was the biggest Food and Drink Festival since its creation.
- There were also record numbers of Sefton based businesses at the event.
- The knock-on effect of the show was evident with The Towns Car parks full and the town centre notably busy.
- Work will commence soon to plan how the 2025 event will evolve and be bigger and better.

Southport Air Show – 13th & 14th July

- Tickets are now on sale with the event only a few weeks away.
- The Flying Display is bearing completion, it has proved much more difficult this year to obtain the quality aircraft that is required and expected.
- Work continues on the build of the event to ensure it is delivered to the highest quality and safely.
- New teams have also been procured to deliver the traffic management plan.

British Musical Fireworks Championship – 20th & 21st September

- Tickets are now on sale and are continuing to sell well.
- The competitors briefing and site visit has taken place at Victoria Park. The Competition Clerk and head judge also attended to talk through the rules of the competition.
- Infrastructure is being secured.

MLEC

- United Utility Diversion now complete, ahead of schedule and the works also stopped through the key trading period in the Easter holidays.
- DSM have been selected to carry out the demolition and enabling works after a competitive procurement process.
- DSM have been on site carrying out inspections, survey work and planning conditions work. Site mobilisation is expected in the next couple of weeks with works completed by the start of 2025.
- Procurement planning for the main contractor is underway and a contractor will be appointed this summer ready to start the main works in 2025.

Salt & Tar

- Operational work for the music weekender for Tom Jones and Status Quo, Tom Jones has sold out for both nights with ticket sales for Status Quo selling well.
- A 3rd artist for the Thursday will be announced shortly.

- The Comedy weekender took place over the May Bank Holiday weekend, it was deemed a success with hundreds of people visiting the event. Work is underway on a bigger comedy event for 2025.
- The summer socials are continuing to help grow the exposure of the site.

REGENERATION

Southport Town Deal

A range of projects continue to be progressed as part of the 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 services diversion work. The major utility diversion work has now been completed on budget and ahead of programme.

DSM have been selected as the preferred contractor for the demolition and enabling work contract for MLEC and will be fully mobilised on site shortly with visible demolition work taking place late summer.

DSM will contact residents prior to the main demolition works commencing to ensure any disruption is kept to a minimum, with ongoing communications and engagement throughout the works.

The Council is now in the process of procuring the main works contractor with a start date later this year and once the enabling and demolition works are complete. The main works tender is live with returns due back later this month. The main works programme is anticipated to commence in 2025.

More information can be found here [Vital work to begin near Marine Lake Events Centre \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/vital-work-to-begin-near-marine-lake-events-centre)

Site hoardings will provide key project information along with the children's work from a recent design competition. There will also be QR code links to the website and project updates. Footage from time-lapse cameras will also be available.

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 and have progressed well with clearing and stripping out the building.

Refurbishment of the main building is anticipated to complete in late autumn and anchor tenant negotiations going well.

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.

Les Transformation de Southport

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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 the appointment of Balfour Beatty to finalise the proposals and detailed programme. The project team are preparing for an Autumn commencement (after the summer season).

Further consultation is proposed with local businesses to share the details and minimise disruption over the summer period. Work is anticipated to commence later in 2024. This project will help transform this area of the town centre by upgrading and improving the quality of the public realm and directional signage.

Building a Better Customer Experience

This key training programme has been operation for a year now and is progressing well and on target to deliver the project outputs.

As referenced in the Employment and Learning update above, Sefton@Work are engaged with Southport College and Adult and Community Learning for the delivery and roll out of the customer facing training.

The interactions with employers have been positive with more asking for follow on sessions for their workforce. Southport College is also developing Level 2 Apprenticeship programmes in response to the demand. The training modules developed are unique for each of the businesses and tailored to suit their needs and helping to create a cohesive messaging across Southport.

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. Work is progressing preparing the information required for planning.

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. Work is now progressing with Vinci the appointed contractor, to prepare undertake enabling works, surveys and ground investigations in preparation for partial demolition of the Strand to create a new town square, landscaping and repurposing of the former M&S unit.

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 2024 [Status Quo set to rock all over Bootle \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk). The construction programme will be adjusted to take account of this to maintain momentum through the demolition period.

As part of the project, tenants directly affected have been assisted to relocate to other units within the Strand to ensure these businesses continue to thrive and grow and are able to continue to support and deliver services to the community in Bootle.

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

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 future of Crosby including consideration of the refurbishment of the existing Library in Waterloo as separate scheme.

Planning approval for works to Crosby village car park and an outline planning application for the new library was approved earlier this year. Junction improvement works around Crosby Village have been undertaken to improve safety, accessibility and connectivity.

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, is looking 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 when the next stage is complete. ([Council shares next steps for Ainsdale-on-Sea \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://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 at Ainsdale, Victoria Park, Dunes and Litherland Sports Centre. Work is now complete for all four facilities and final handover and registration underway. Some external works to Ainsdale block will complete after the summer due to ecological and habitat considerations.

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

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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 have resulted in two further acquisitions over the last year.

Parallel to this process, agents 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 kept 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.

Early development work is underway for a 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. This includes research and digital innovation, immersive technologies and interactive spaces, augmented reality labs and research accommodation.

The site forms part of the approved City Region Health and Life Sciences Investment Zone approved earlier this year. The zone status will help develop a life sciences cluster in the region building on significant assets within the region. The Maghull 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.