

Overview
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

DATE: Tuesday 17th January, 2023

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Southport

Member

Councillor
Councillor Dowd (Chair)
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Corcoran
Councillor Dodd
Councillor Hansen
Councillor Chris Maher
Councillor Myers
Councillor Page
Councillor Sir Ron Watson
Councillor Webster

Substitute

Councillor
Councillor Killen
Councillor O'Brien
Councillor Danny Burns
Councillor Sathiy
Councillor Grace
Councillor Anne Thompson
Councillor Waterfield
Councillor Thomas
Councillor Prendergast
Councillor Richards

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser
Senior Democratic Services Officer
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If you have any special needs that may require arrangements to facilitate your attendance at this meeting, please contact the Committee Officer named above, who will endeavour to assist.

We endeavour to provide a reasonable number of full agendas, including reports at the meeting. If you wish to ensure that you have a copy to refer to at the meeting, please can you print off your own copy of the agenda pack prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

2. Declarations of Interest

Members are requested at a meeting where a disclosable pecuniary interest or personal interest arises, which is not already included in their Register of Members' Interests, to declare any interests that relate to an item on the agenda.

Where a Member discloses a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest, he/she must withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest, except where he/she is permitted to remain as a result of a grant of a dispensation.

Where a Member discloses a personal interest he/she must seek advice from the Monitoring Officer or staff member representing the Monitoring Officer to determine whether the Member should withdraw from the meeting room, including from the public gallery, during the whole consideration of any item of business in which he/she has an interest or whether the Member can remain in the meeting or remain in the meeting and vote on the relevant decision.

3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting

(Pages 5 - 14)

Minutes of the meeting held 8 November 2022

4. Update on the Progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy - Presentation

Presentation by the Executive Director of People

5. Sandway Homes Limited - 2021/22 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies

(Pages 15 - 34)

Report of the Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services

6. Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2021/22 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies

(Pages 35 - 44)

Report of the Executive Director of Place

7. Sefton Economic Strategy

(Pages 45 - 104)

Report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)

- 8. Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan** (Pages 105 - 132)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer
- 9. Cabinet Member Reports - October 2022 to January 2023** (Pages 133 - 176)
Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer

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OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

MEETING HELD AT THE TOWN HALL, BOOTLE ON TUESDAY 8TH NOVEMBER, 2022

PRESENT: Councillor Dowd (in the Chair)
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)
Councillors Corcoran, Chris Maher, Myers, Page,
Sir Ron Watson and Webster

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Atkinson, Hardy and Fairclough

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Hansen and Councillor Moncur, Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing.

19. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.

20. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meeting held on 28 September 2022 be confirmed as a correct record.

21. SOUTHPORT MARKET - 1 YEAR REVIEW

The Committee considered the report of the Executive Director of Place that provided an overview of the performance of the Southport Market during the first year of operation, focused on the period during the financial year 2021-2022.

The report indicated that Cabinet at its meeting on 3rd September 2020 approved the delivery of a fully refurbished Market Hall with a focus on food and drink incorporating a flexible events space that would support the wider visitor economy; that the new Market opened in July 2021 after undergoing the £1.4m refurbishment (funded totally from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Town Deal Acceleration Fund); and that the Market now had a central bar, 8 hot food units, 2 cold food units, a butcher and events space to the rear.

The conclusions outlined in the report were that:

- since opening in late July 2021 the Market had been a great success; that by the year ending in 21/22 it had met its business

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- plan targets in an 8-month trading period; and that the food and drink offer had exceeded expectations
- the events space had hosted a number of large-scale events such as the Christmas Extravaganza and had been booked for private bookings
- the new Market had had a catalyst impact with many long-term empty units in the Market and King Street becoming occupied by new independent businesses, with a number of commercial sales in the area
- lessons had been learned over the first year with regards to the number of traders, operational hours and procedures and the market would continue to evolve and improve over the next two years. Many other local authorities had visited the market and requested meetings in order to learn and implement their own food markets with Southport Market being used as a good practice case study
- the people of Southport had embraced the Market and that it had brought people back into the town centre and continued to generate great reviews
- the next 6-12 months and beyond would be challenging for the hospitality industry; that there would be increased costs and a reduction in consumer spend and that it was expected this would impact future trading in the Market, as with all other hospitality businesses. Mitigation measures had and were being put in place
- The Project has delivered 1,600 m² of refurbished floorspace; the creation of 10 new businesses; 1 business being safeguarded; and over 30 jobs created

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Congratulations were extended to Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills and the staff involved in the regeneration of the Southport Market
- The potential to introduce a loop system or other system in the Market to assist the hearing impaired who were attending meetings at the venue
- Contingencies and marketing strategies in place if visitor numbers to the Market reduce due to the cost-of-living crisis
- Incentives to customers such as reward cards or early bird menus
- Doubts about the viability of the scheme without access to external grant funding
- A concern was raised about the promotion of the venue being called a market when it was not; and it was suggested that this may cause confusion
- Other retail and food outlets in the vicinity of the Market welcomed its opening due to increased footfall in the area

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- The potential pedestrianisation of the area in the vicinity of the Market
- Assurance was sought on the accuracy of the figures in the table within the report detailing the 2021/22 final outturn. This assurance was given
- The revenue costs to the Council as part of the operation of the Market

RESOLVED:

That the report providing an overview of the performance of the Southport Market during the first year of operation, focused on the period during the financial year 2021-2022, be noted.

22. FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT TO OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY 2021-2022

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) advising that the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 previously required that arrangements be made to review and scrutinise the exercise by the Council as a Lead Local Flood Risk Authority of its flood risk management functions and coastal erosion risk management functions; that following the cessation of this requirement, the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had requested that an annual Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management review be submitted to it.

The report indicated that the Annual Review covered the 12-month period from September 2021-2022 and detailed the following key areas:

- Information on flooding & erosion incidents experienced over the last year.
- Work progress relative to our legislative responsibilities as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), Riparian Owner and Coastal Authority.
- Work progress relative to our own actions set out in our Local Flood Risk Management Strategy (LFRMS) 2022-2030.
- Overview of annual finances

The report concluded by seeking the Committee's comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing.

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- The total flood incidents (all types) reported between Oct-2021 and Sep-22 being 20 and it was noted that this was a reduction of 58 incidents on the previous year
- How inland surface water flood events were measured

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- Interim and enabling works to deliver the Crosby Flood and Coastal Defence Scheme and plans in place to continue to seek funding for the scheme
- Early interventions to clear small watercourses, such as Dobb's Gutter, to prevent later, longer-term flooding problems

RESOLVED:

That the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management annual report be noted.

23. GREEN SEFTON ANNUAL REVIEW 2022

The Committee considered the report of the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) that provided an update on the progress of Green Sefton's operational delivery over the last year, and setting out the strategic work programme, in line with the Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan for the next year; and which proposed a refresh of the Vision and Service Plan and sought the Committee's comments on these documents for submission to the Cabinet Member - Health and Well Being and the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

A copy of the Green Sefton Annual Review 2022 was attached as an appendix to the report.

Mark Shaw, Green Sefton Service Manager, made a presentation to the Committee and highlighted the work undertaken by his service during the past year which included:

- Partnership work with others, and the update of the Volunteer Handbook
- The public sharing of the Service Plan, and workload management
- The delivery and formal opening of Bootle golf course driving range
- In Bloom successes
- The introduction of a new coast PSPO
- Contributions to the Climate Change Working Group
- Responses to extreme weather events
- Successful bids for external funds, and developed and delivered improvement projects
- Development of income through innovation and business case approaches
- Performance tracking and responses to increasing complaints, and a start on defining service standards possible

Mr. Shaw also identified activity to be undertaken in 2023 which included:

- Development and exploration of new funding bids, such as for Botanic Gardens Heritage Lottery
- Delivery of further improvement schemes, such as Crosby coastal defences (interim works)

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- Seek to increase in staff capacity, apprenticeships and training
- Adoption of the Tree, Allotment, Playing Pitch/ Football Development and Nature Conservation Strategies
- Start replacement of fleet and machinery
- Continue to develop the Coastal Gateways
- Tender for investment at Southport Golf
- Development of a Strategic Vision for our places in the future
- Promotion of changes to overall Landscape Management
- Publish the standards of what can be achieved within resources available
- Lead of key aspects of the Climate Action Plan
- Revisit Service Strategy, and workload management

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Workload and mitigation measures to reduce complaints
- The re-designation of some locations as tourist areas rather than sites of environmental importance
- Unusual weather events would become less unusual and measures needed to be put in place to mitigate such climate change issues
- Environmental impacts did matter to our communities and there was a responsibility to tackle these
- Natural Alternatives, Green Sefton's own long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs was commended; information was sought on whether the programme could be expanded and how it was funded; and whether added social value of the programme could be quantified and factored into the funding formula
- Air quality improvements pursued by the Council helped to improve the health benefits of local residents
- The Member Development Steering Group had agreed to a module on climate change being made available to all Members of the Council

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the Green Sefton Annual Review 2022 be noted;
- (2) Members be requested to submit any comments they may have on the current Service Vision to 2030 and Service Plan directly to the Cabinet Member Health and Well Being and the Cabinet Member - Locality Services; and
- (3) Mark Shaw be thanked for his informative presentation.

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24. DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP – UPDATE ON RECOMMENDATIONS

Further to Minute No. 17 of 21 September 2021 the Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet.

A table attached to the report set out each recommendation and an accompanying update on the action taken to implement each recommendation.

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- A concern was expressed about residents who did not have access to ICT equipment, including affordability reasons; and about residents who lacked the appropriate ICT skills to access the ever increasing services in the digital world
- subject to assurances that the actions identified in the report were continued and became “business as usual” operational matters then there was no requirement for the Committee to receive further update reports on this matter

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Digital Inclusion Working Group and approved by Cabinet be noted; and
- (2) no further update reports be submitted to the Committee subject to assurances that the actions identified in the report are continued and become “business as usual” operational matters.

25. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23, SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS AND KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that sought views on the Work Programme for 2022/23; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; that sought views on the establishment of a Working Group to review the topic of the adoption of a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the Borough and to seek input from Sefton’s representatives on the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority; that updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; and seeking consideration of the views of the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services in response to a request of the Committee concerning the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council’s Enforcement Activity Working Group.

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Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following matters:

- a suggestion was made that the recommended review of the adoption of a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the Borough be dealt with by an informal meeting of the Committee rather than establishing a Working Group to review the topic. Comments were also raised as to the informal meeting, if agreed, should be held remotely or in-person and what time of the day the meeting should take place
- a comment was made that for adequate scrutiny to take place then background information on items contained in the Forward Plan needed to be disclosed; the Forward Plan item relating to Sandway Homes was cited as an example, but other Council wholly-owned companies were equally as relevant; and it was alleged that wholly-owned Council companies imposed charges for the copying of documents requested and that it was considered that this was unfair. Councillor Dowd, Chair of the Committee indicated that the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board had earlier that day considered a report which allowed Members to carry out effective scrutiny of council companies; and that the extract for each company, including Sandway Homes, would be considered by the respective individual Overview and Scrutiny Committees in the next cycle.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed;
- (2) a review of the adoption of a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the Borough be dealt with at an informal meeting of the Committee rather than establishing a Working Group to review the topic;
- (3) the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to canvas the views of Members on whether the informal meeting referred to in (2) above should be held remotely or in person; and at what time of the day the meeting should take place;
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted; and
- (5) the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be requested to submit their comments in response to a request of the Committee concerning the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 17 January 2023.

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26. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - SEPTEMBER 2022 - OCTOBER 2022

The Committee considered the report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer that included the most recent reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills.

Councillor Hardy, Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- Operation Banger, a multi-agency plan, activity over the Halloween and bonfire night period
- Work undertaken with Ward Councillors to identify their Christmas tree and Christmas Lighting needs
- Significant increases in demand for welfare reform services such as foodbanks and the Emergency Limited Assistance Scheme
- The establishment of warm hubs across the borough
- Equalities work across the borough
- the operation of the Homes for Ukraine scheme in Sefton
- Sefton library service and the successful award of funding
- Christmas pantomime production of Aladdin at the Atkinson
- The approval by Cabinet of Sefton's Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027); and the Council's house building programme
- Praise offered by the DLUHC's Homelessness and Rough Sleeper Advisor, Alastair Reeves, to Sefton for the provision of its homeless service

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- Anti-social behaviour incidents and whether the figures have increased or decreased on previous years
- the Homes for Ukraine scheme
- the availability of grants for organisations to establish warm hubs in the borough
- support for groups undertaking work in the community such as attending pantomime productions at the Atkinson and the Little Theatre

Councillor Atkinson, Cabinet Member – Regeneration and Skills presented her report and highlighted the following issues:

- the great work undertaken by the Sefton Adult Learning Service. Concern was expressed that since the demise of the Champion Group newspaper the advertising facility to provide details of the courses on offer had been lost
- Sefton events programme
- Closure of the Southport Theatre and Convention Centre

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- The positive work associated with the Regeneration, Growth and Investment Programme
- The successful opening of the new Lake House centre
- The successful first year operation of the refurbished Southport Market
- Updates on the levelling-up fund bids

A Member of the Committee asked a question concerning the Southport Pier restoration and associated funding issues.

Councillor Fairclough, Cabinet Member – Locality Services presented his report and highlighted the following issues:

- Catering and Building Cleaning Services
- Burials and cremations
- Sefton ARC and Careline
- Waste Management and Street Cleansing, including weed control, street cleansing provision, fly-tipping and service improvements since 1st April 2022
- Strategic transport and delays to the National Highways proposal to build a road through Rimrose Valley as part of Port access
- LTP and Growth Plan; and the help the Overview and Scrutiny Committee could give by scrutinising proposals within the Plan. It was indicated that officers would be requested to prepare a report for submission to the Committee
- Southport eastern access
- Winter maintenance
- Street lighting LED retro fit scheme
- Traffic signals LED retro fit scheme

Members of the Committee asked questions/commented on the following issues:

- The potential to install “subterranean super-bins” similar to those used in Europe and recently introduced by Liverpool City Council
- Congratulations were extended to the Burials and Cremations team who had received a high standard of recognition from the Federation of Burial and Cremation Authorities (FBCA) for Southport Crematorium
- Consultation and engagement with local residents in areas with high incidents of rear entry fly-tipping in an effort to combat the problem

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) That the update reports from the Cabinet Members for Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills be noted; and

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- (2) Councillors Atkinson, Hardy and Fairclough be thanked for their attendance at the meeting.

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|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee- Regeneration and Skills | Date of Meeting: | 17 January 2023 |
| Subject: | Sandway Homes Limited - 2021/22 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director Corporate Resources and Customer Services | Wards Affected: | All Award |
| Cabinet Portfolio: | Communities and Housing | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | N/A |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

The aim of this report is to allow members to carry out effective scrutiny of council companies which gives a level of assurance that both the Council's interests and the services or products provided by companies to our residents, are safe and well managed and offer good value for money.

Recommendation(s):

That Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) consider the content of the report in respect of Sandway Homes Limited;
- (2) provide feedback on key issues arising and advise on further information that would support the scrutiny review in future years;
- (3) provide feedback on current performance (operational and financial) and how this supports the council's strategic aims and ambitions and aligns with the objectives and reasons for setting up the companies; and
- (4) seek clarification or additional information from officers as appropriate within the meeting in order to carry out the scrutiny function

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The recommendations will support the effective and transparent governance of the councils 3 wholly owned council companies and best practice.

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Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Key financial issues and implications are included within the body of the report

(B) Capital Costs

Key financial issues and implications are included within the body of the report

Implications of the Proposals:

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| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): Any resource implications arising are included in the body of the report | |
| Legal Implications: There are no legal implications arising | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | Y |
| Have a neutral impact | N |
| Have a negative impact | N |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Y |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

The council's 3 wholly owned companies were set up with specific objectives that would support the delivery of the council's core purpose. These objectives are set out in the body of the report and between the 3 companies contribute to the delivery of each element of the council's core purpose

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|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: |
| Place – leadership and influencer: |
| Drivers of change and reform: |

| |
|---|
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: |
| Greater income for social investment: |
| Cleaner Greener |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6993/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5193/22.) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Engagement and information provision was sought from each of the 3 companies in the production of this report

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contact Officer: | Stephan Van Arendsen |
| Telephone Number: | |
| Email Address: | Stephan.VanArendsen@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The council aims to ensure that the governance of its wholly owned companies meets best practice within the sector. As information and guidance becomes available then the council's approach will similarly evolve.
- 1.2. The next step in the governance cycle is to provide members with a review of performance for the previous financial year. As such this report provides that for Sandway Homes Limited.
- 1.3. Members should be aware that as part of the continual drive to ensure that best practice is followed a self assessment for each of the council's company's is currently being undertaken against the Local Partnerships document 'Local Authority Company Guidance Document'- this review will be led by the council's Monitoring Officer. This document has helped inform the areas to be reported within this report.

2. Aims of the Annual Report

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- 2.1. The aim of this report is to allow members to carry out effective scrutiny of council companies which gives a level of assurance that both the Council's interests and the services or products provided by companies to our residents, are safe and well managed and offer good value for money by;
- a. Challenging the suitability of their business plans and objectives in meeting the needs of the council, service users and residents
 - b. Testing the financial benefits to the council and economic benefits to the community
 - c. Reviewing the outcomes and achievements of commercial operations against their original plans
 - d. Testing whether the value of the Council's investment into these vehicles is being protected and public funds are not exposed to excessive risk ; and
 - e. Checking that responsible business standards are met.

3. **Expected Outcomes**

- 3.1. In considering the following detail, the key outcome will be to provide effective scrutiny of Sandway Homes Limited to give a level of assurance that both the Council's interests in and the services provided by the company to Sefton residents are safe, well managed and offer good value for money. This report is provided for consideration following all 3 companies being the subject of review at the recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

4. **Sandway Homes Limited**

What are the council's objectives for the Company?

Within the approved Cabinet report of October 2017 that considered the Business Case for the creation of Sandway Homes the following detail was provided:-

The overriding objective for the Housing Development Company is:

- (1) to generate a better financial return on land assets and a revenue stream for the council,*
- (2) for the council to be seen to directly contribute to the need for 11,000 new homes in the Borough,*
- (3) to provide good quality homes that meet market needs.*

There is an overwhelming need for good quality homes within Sefton to build on the good quality stock already in existence, to tackle some of the economic barriers that will enable our youngest to remain within the Borough and to provide choice to new residents whom want to move to the Borough – whether that is to take advantage of Sefton's unique coast line, or to work in the City Region as the port expands and economic activity increases in line with our growth ambitions.

We have listened carefully, through the Vision 2030 we understand that creating environments for resilient people to thrive, grow, live and age well in addition to being able to work and play all results in shaping a greater sense of place. This in turn improves life chances and economic prosperity for our residents; the Council must play its part on leading this agenda. The advent of a housing development

company will make a significant contribution to the choices and diversity our residents both would like and would benefit from.

The aims of the project remain as:

- *Increase the economic success of those citizens who purchase and/or occupy a dwelling acquired from the Housing Development Company;*
- *Provide distinctive homes within the Borough;*
- *To invest the revenue stream in Sefton's public services, whilst also pro-actively managing the reduction in central government grant;*
- *Identify funding sources for the Housing Development Company (Capital and Revenue) which may in turn determine which delivery models are viable and sustainable;*
- *Safeguard and preserve the quality of the customer experience for those whom use Council Services and access the assets we own, operate and or run;*
- *Place make, meaning shaping fair, open, respectful and resilient communities where everyone is able to play their part and contribute positively;*
- *Assist and make a positive contribution to the availability of houses within the Borough.*

These aims and objectives remain those that the council wishes the company to work towards.

Council Governance Arrangements

The council is committed to maintaining robust and transparent governance arrangements that:-

- Reflect best practice in the sector;
- Would stand up to external scrutiny and inspection; and
- Ensure that the company can operate effectively and also that the council's role as shareholder can be discharged to protect the Council's position (financially).

In its role as shareholder, the Council in 21/22 once again received an updated Business Plan for Phase 1 of the company's operations- with all detail being in the public domain. This plan reflected a full refresh of each area of company business that took account of:-

- The appointment of the company's new Managing Director; and
- The economic and market circumstances that had changed following the global pandemic.

This revised business case was approved by Cabinet in October 2021 . As part of this report, members were advised on the delivery timescales of each of the 3 sites in Phase 1 of operations, the number of units that would be delivered, value and timing of capital receipts, forecast dividends to the council from Phase 1 and the level of peak debt that would be required to deliver this first phase.

On that latter point, following the review it was deemed that the peak debt required by the company from the Council would need to increase from £5.1m to £8.3m. This revised business case was approved by Cabinet, subject to the provision of a robust and clear exit plan containing options that could be enacted should difficulties materialise within the company. This was provided by the company and

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reported to Cabinet in December 2021- following this the revised business case was approved.

Also, during the year, a risk in respect of the company was added to the council's Corporate Risk Register which is considered at each meeting of Audit and Governance Committee. This reflected not any change in circumstance or detail, but was a reflection of scale of the company, the risks that are being managed within it and the council's financial exposure. At each meeting of Audit and Governance Committee, one risk is selected for presentation to members and the risk in respect of Sandway Homes has been considered by the committee.

During the year a full review of the company's governance arrangements and the interface with the Council was conducted. This was a joint piece of work between the council and the company, with an external legal firm, Anthony Collins commissioned to review current arrangements and make recommendations that would ensure that best practice would be followed. This work was completed largely in year with approval by the Board at the start of 22/23- this was subsequently presented to the Council's Cabinet for approval in July 2022.

In addition, the council is also making use of the local partnerships 'Local Authority Company Review Guidance' to conduct a self assessment of current operations- this will take place during 22/23 and be reported to cabinet with detail of any proposed governance recommendations. This is being led by the Council's Monitoring Officer.

The Council's shareholder representative on the Company's Board is the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities- this role acts as an observer at each Board meeting.

During the year, in addition to the formal board meetings, the shareholder representative, Council Chief Executive and s151 Officer meet the chair of the board and managing director before each meeting to consider the latest developments within the company, review the detail of the board pack and gain insight into progress in delivery of the business plan and understanding of financial position and risks.

The council is therefore in receipt of each Board pack and also receives the monthly monitoring information produced by the company's managing director- it is this information that informs the council's investment board reports as per financial procedure rules.

Following the end of the financial year 21/22, the council side engagement with the company will be supplemented and led by the Assistant Director -Economic Growth and Housing who will be supported by the Senior Manager-Housing which will provide additional capacity and expertise. The Chief Executive and s151 Officer will continue to provide advice and support to the company and will continue to attend pre- board meeting briefings and will offer similar support and engagement to each of the council's company's in order that there is sufficient oversight. This will reflect recommended best practice.

Governance arrangements in place for the company in 2021/22

Sandway Homes Limited is a private company limited by shares incorporated in England and Wales under the Companies Act 2006 and is wholly owned by Sefton Holding company which in turn, is a wholly owned company of Sefton Council. The company was formed in 2018.

Collectively, the company's Memorandum and Articles of Association, Shareholder Agreement, Business Plan(s) and other related documentation regulates the relationship between the Council and the company and ultimately determine the operational framework for the company / Board to follow when running the company's affairs.

The objectives of the Sandway Board are:

- To support the set up and subsequent delivery of the company;
- To oversee the sourcing of specialist assistance (e.g., construction, tax, and legal advice) as required to assist the delivery of the company.
- To support the procurement and appointment of any private sector development partner.
- To identify and optimise financial resources (e.g., internal reserves and borrowing opportunities) to invest into the delivery mechanism.
- To implement and deliver the initial Phase 1 Business Plan and budget estimates for the company.
- To provide guidance to the company on the wider housing market to ensure the most effective product is being delivered.
- Identify further opportunities for expansion of the company.
- To be responsible for the effective management of the company.
- Report on progress quarterly to the Shareholder and Council representatives / other committees as required.

More specifically the role of the Sandway Board Members is as follows:

- To understand the strategic objectives, implications and outcomes of initiatives being pursued.
- To agree the risk appetite of the Board and what level of risk is not acceptable.
- Appreciate the role and significance of the objectives of wider stakeholders and the Shareholder.
- Be an advocate for and committed to the agreed outcomes to ensure the delivery of Phase 1 and subsequent Business Plan's.
- Bring specialist knowledge to Sandway, whilst at the same time taking collective responsibility for company outcomes.
- Provide effective and appropriate challenge to delivery to ensure assurance is gained.
- Alert the Board to initiatives and opportunities coming forward to assist in the delivery of the programme.

Board Membership

In accordance with the Articles of Association for the Company, each Non-Executive Director is appointed as a director in accordance with the following:

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- a term of 3 years; and
- for a maximum of 2 terms, equating to a tenure of 6 years in total.
- Subject to sections 168 and 169 of the Act, the Shareholders may remove any or all Directors at any time (with or without reason) by ordinary resolution.
- The Shareholder may appoint a person as a Director either in substitution for a Director it has removed or to fill a casual vacancy.

During 2021-22 business plan period, the portfolio of local councillors was reviewed, and as such Cllr Greg Myers replaced Cllr Diane Roscoe in June 2021. In addition to Cllr Myers there remained Company Chair (Graham Kean), Gwynne Furlong and Glenn Rowson. Given the infancy of the company, sub-committees are yet to be established, however each Board Member has an allocated portfolio of responsibility to support operational matters which directly relates to their own area of professional expertise.

Dates of Board meetings and summary of content

Board meetings take place quarterly and for the 2021-22 Business Plan period, the majority of Board meetings were still held remotely due to seasonal 'peaks' of Covid-19 and some restrictions being in place until the latter part of the financial year. The Board met in June, September, December and March, and monthly management meetings continued to take place with the Management Team. Board pack review meetings are held with the Shareholder (S151 Officer / Council Chief Executive / Shareholders Representative) prior to the full Sandway Board where items are reviewed, and any changes / additional information requests are submitted. The company provides reports on performance and risk to the monthly management meeting in addition to Board. As the company has evolved, reporting content has been enhanced / incorporated to reflect the stage of the business plan (i.e., inclusion of sales and further stress testing). The standard Board agenda is as follows:

- Declarations of interest / Quorum / Minutes of last meeting / Matters arising and schedule of resolutions

- **Managing Director Report**

The purpose of the Managing Director report is to provide an overview of key Company activity within the quarter including Shareholder / Stakeholder liaison (Homes England and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), as well as company matters including audit and risk / HR and staffing / programme performance and priorities for the next quarter. Construction of Meadow Lane and Barton Close commenced in Q4 2020-21, hence scheme performance is also covered within this main report.

- **Finance Report**

The Finance report covers the latest business plan position, including spend and income for the period / in-period movements and the latest projected business plan position. The Finance report also contains stress-testing as required to ensure that potential risk relating to sales performance and programme changes are applied to the business plan and assessed accordingly.

- **Sales Report**

The 2021-22 period witnessed the commencement of construction and sales reservations of new homes. The sales report was introduced to provide Board / Shareholder with sight of the sales dashboard and overall sales performance so as income can be scrutinised accordingly. The sales report includes details on sales values as per the latest release of homes within the period, and anticipated sales completion dates. In addition- a quarterly horizon scan of interest rates / housebuilder performance and Sandway marketing statistics are provided as part of the sales report so as wider economic factors are considered as part of the Board's forward planning and risk management.

- **Balanced Scorecard**

The Board of Directors / Shareholder have set key performance indicators for the Company against the Phase 1 Business Plan in the form of a balanced scorecard. These are divided into five key themes which are further broken down into performance objectives. The Scorecard has been an evolving document since its Company inception and provides key performance indicators (KPI) across the following areas:

1. **Financial**

Monitoring the income projections v's performance of the Company each quarter in relation to income (including grant and sales income and Shareholder dividend)

2. **Sales and Marketing**

Providing KPI monitoring on total reservations / reservation rate / sales periods and completions. These KPI's also consider the wider Company brand and marketing strategy.

3. **Customer satisfaction**

This KPI is due to become part of the monitoring system as the Company moves into sales completions during the next business plan period (2022-23). More specifically it will cover overall satisfaction with the conveyancing period and also with the property.

4. **Social value**

This indicator monitors the impact of Sandway projects on maximising spend in local supply chains, as well as monitoring local work / job opportunities / apprenticeships being created, and the wider community benefits being driven by the Company.

5. **Health & Safety**

This key performance indicator monitors Contractor performance on site and general Health and Safety across the projects and the business.

Interface with Council

Sandway has formal lines of communication and reporting mechanisms in place which feed into the wider Audit & Risk management processes within the Council. The company's specific interface with the Council is defined within the Sandway / SMBC Shareholder's Agreement which specifically requires the following:

- Statutory accounts are submitted by the Company on a quarterly basis
- Updated management accounts and any variances in projected spend are reported on a quarterly basis.

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- Sales performance information and risk analysis is submitted as part of Company reporting process
- That the Company provides an annual exit strategy, providing the Council with a risk mitigation plan should any of the inherent delivery risks associated with residential property development crystallise.

During the 2021-22 Business Plan period, the company continued to provide the Council with the relevant board reporting information, and a full Cabinet update was provided in October 2021, followed by the submission of an exit strategy in December 2021. The Cabinet update provided a revised business plan position based on programme performance factoring in delays associated with Covid-19 and associated economic un-certainty.

Review of governance arrangements either in year or planned for next year

In addition to the external review of governance arrangements previously detailed, Sandway was the subject of an internal audit review during Q4 2021-22, which concluded in March 2022. This was to provide assurance that risks are being adequately managed and addressed in respect of the systems of Governance and risk management processes deployed by the company. In addition, the audit was undertaken to provide an overall opinion on the strength of internal control within the Council, which is reported on and provided by the Chief Internal Auditor, as part of the Internal Audit Annual Report.

The scope of the audit reviewed the following area of Governance:

- Company formation and Constitution requirements are complied with including:
 - o Articles of Association
 - o Certificate of Incorporation
 - o Statutory Books (registers)
 - o Role of Company Secretary
 - o Annual Return and Accounts
- Corporate obligations are being met, including:
 - o Annual Accounts
 - o Effective internal controls including
 - Budgetary controls
 - Division of duties
 - Policies and procedures
 - Codes of conduct
 - o Accounting records
 - o Board meetings
 - o Insurance arrangements

Audit findings and audit opinion were based on information obtained and sample testing undertaken during the review, with unbiased professional judgement made throughout the audit process. Areas of good practice identified included:

- The high level of experience and expertise of the Company's Board of Directors in the housing field to ensure effective decision making.

- The Senior Management team providing relevant and up to date information on a regular basis to both the Board, and the Shareholder (the Council), and;
- Board and Management Team meetings and content being in accordance with an agreed schedule, and compliant with legal requirements.

Recommendations have been incorporated into a management action plan which the senior management team are currently working to establish and implement.

Internal and external audit arrangements

As the Company progresses into the 2022-23 Business Plan period, an external auditor will be appointed to develop a full audit plan for the Company which will incorporate the following three key strands:

- Governance – ensuring that the Company maintains robust risk management processes that support the business and allows them to be fully innovative whilst ensuring efficient use of public funds.
- Financial – to provide assurance around the procurement process, and to review the mechanisms that Sandway has in place to protect assets and public funds, financial planning and business plan assumptions.
- Customer- focusing on the sales process, customer journey, complaints handling and overall services provided to customers.

Key Objectives for the Company as per the Business Plan in 2021/22

The company Business Plan (BP) is operational up to 2025 and provides a framework against which the company operates and a baseline for financial information to be reported to the Shareholder. During 2021-22, the company continued to develop the operational requirements of the business, which underpin the plan, including policies and processes, key performance indicators and an enhanced reporting framework to ensure adequate governance and assurance around construction, sales and risk was provided to the Shareholder. The key strategic objectives and purpose of the Sandway Business Plan are summarised below, along with a statement which captures the related activity for the 2021-22 period:

- To purchase land from Sefton Council which will assist with the delivery of 11,000 much needed new homes in the Borough by 2030.

Following a robust site acquisition process with SMBC, three brownfield sites with a total land value of £2.23m have been acquired by the company to deliver 141 homes. In June 2021, the company also secured SMBC Cabinet approval for work to commence on business plan development for a further 3 sites that could form part of a Phase 2.

- Generate a capital and revenue income from its investments and to generate financial profits to return to the Shareholder.

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The company is required to generate financial profits (by way of a Shareholder dividend) to the Council via the sales receipts achieved from Phase 1. As part of the yearly business plan update which was provided to SMBC Cabinet in October 2021, the company confirmed a projected dividend of £1.35m.

In addition to the acquisition of land, the company is obliged to satisfy Section 106 payments associated with planning requirements, which will add a further £232k of revenue to the Council for investment into key services. The first tranche of payments are due in the subsequent business plan period (Q1 2022-23).

- Provide good quality, distinctive homes that meet market needs and aspirations within the Borough.

The homes being delivered on Sandway sites include 10 well designed and spacious house types ensuring that they appeal to a wide range of customers and income profiles. Space standards within the homes are in accordance with or in excess of nationally described space standards (NDSS) , and there is consistency in design of all affordable and open market homes.

- Provide suitable housing developments that make best use of land acquired from Sefton Council, providing housing products that meet market demands, and affordable housing that fulfils planning approval obligations.

In November 2021, Sandway successfully registered as a Help to Buy Developer, ensuring that Government loans were accessible on a % of plots for first time buyers to help them onto the property ladder. In addition to Help to Buy, affordable homes (shared ownership and affordable rent), are also included on all Sandway sites. By 31st March 2022, three of the eligible homes had been reserved for Help to Buy.

During 2021-22, sale contracts with Registered Provider, Together Housing were agreed for the acquisition of 25 properties for affordable housing with deposits of £380k received in February 2022. These contracts support the overall financial performance of the business plan, whilst ensuring that the Company provides mixed tenure homes across all Phase 1 sites.

- Realise social value for the wider community in which the company operates including the creation of employment opportunities within Sefton, including for apprentices

The company has actively encouraged local employment through their Main Contractor which has resulted in several Sefton residents (including site managers / labourers) employed to work on the Company's first phase of development. This was achieved during 2021-22 by working alongside Sefton@Work to assist with the recruitment of local residents into jobs. Local Sefton Estate Agent (Abode) have been retained to provide sales management on Phase 1 of Sandway sites.

Sandway worked with LJMU to provide an internship opportunity in August 2021 for a Finance Undergraduate. The company has more recently signed up to the SMBC Caring Business Charter and is looking to provide a placement for a Sefton

resident to take up an apprenticeship as an Administration Assistant. As part of the Kickstart initiative, Barnfield were also able to provide an apprenticeship to a local young person during 2021-22 as a site labourer who had been identified as someone not in education, employment, or training (NEET).

- Engagement with wider community

During 2021-22 Sandway and partners proactively engaged in a volunteering project via the local Woodvale Community Centre, assisting in making woodland paths winter safe. In addition, the company provides regular updates to communities living near to Sandway sites and have implemented a resident relationship management system for those residents most affected by works carried out on site.

Sandway will continue to work with local schools to raise awareness of the number of opportunities available within the construction and development sector, which will include site visits and attendance at dedicated careers events.

- Establish and operate the company as efficiently as possible

Alongside the delivery of Phase 1 and associated business operations, the company also commenced liaison with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority in February 2022, to secure pre-development funding for a further phase of brownfield sites within the Borough. The delivery for these sites is subject to a further business case submission to SMBC, and the agreement of additional loan facilities / revolving credit which will be based on the performance of Phase 1.

- To maintain ethical and environmental standards in the specification, development, and construction of properties.

Sandway is committed to reducing energy consumption, minimising pollution and partnering with environmentally sustainable organisations. Phase 1 main contractor Barnfield are a certified Considerate Contractor which is an industry recognised code of best practice in relation to how they respect local community, care for the environment and value their workforce. Waste has been further minimised on site utilising timber frame construction, eliminating the requirement for a large volume of materials to be stored on site. Specification and design are consistent across all of the Company's house types.

Review of Performance 2021/22

"For the year ending March 2022, the company was entitled to exemption from audit under section 477 of the Companies Act 2006 relating to small companies. The members have not required the company to obtain an audit of its accounts for the year in question in accordance with section 476. The directors acknowledge their responsibilities for complying with the requirements of the Act with respect to accounting records and the preparation of accounts. The draft accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime."

Summary as per annual accounts

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The annual accounts for Sandway for year-end 31st March 2022 are reflective of the company transitioning into the early construction phase of its phase 1 development programme. The main activity within the period was associated with pre-construction design fees, construction payments, grant income / deposits for properties under construction, management fees and on-costs associated with phase one sites and business operations. The company continued to pay their main contractor Barnfield Construction certified construction valuations each month.

During the 2021-22 business plan period, it was essential for schemes within Sandway's Business Plan to navigate through supply chain and labour shortages brought about by the Covid-19 pandemic, particularly in relation to building supplies such as timber frames and bricks. As such, a contract Deed of Variation with Barnfield Construction was agreed in January 2022, which provided an extension of time to the contractor, at no further cost to the company.

- **Deferred Income**

The in-year deferred income amounted to £918k, this comprised of the following:

Plot reservations

At the year-end there were no properties due to be completed for sale. The first plot completions are forecast for Q1 of 2022/23 financial year. Sandway continued to receive income in the form of plot reservation fees totalling £18.5k representing 21 plot reservations (including 3 Help to Buy), which reflected 100% of the available plots having been reserved off plan.

Registered Provider income

In addition, deposits were received from Together Housing Group for the commitment to purchase 25 affordable plots across both Meadow Lane and Barton's Close sites. Deferred income received relating from Together Housing Group amounted to £388k.

Grant Funding

A drawdown claim for grant funding for Buckley Hill Lane was prepared and submitted in the financial year, this equated to £512k and was added to the deferred income in year.

- **Loan**

The original Business Plan assumed that peak debt of £5.1m would be reached in December 2021. Due to the delays associated with the programme and more specifically sales periods, the Company submitted a revised business plan to Cabinet in October 2021 seeking an increase in the loan agreement from £5.1m to £8.3m which was subsequently approved following the submission of an agreed risk and exit strategy. The company continued to make drawdowns against the loan agreement to the value of £5.16m during the financial year, with the amount owed to the shareholder on 31st March 2022 being £6.74m. Interest payable against the loan was £49k in year.

- Company overheads

Overheads for 2021-22 remained in line with the revised business plan presented to Cabinet in October 21. The overheads in year include Sandway employees and company non-executive directors. The company employed 4 full time employees during the year and 4 non-Executive directors. The company continue to engage SMBC service level agreements for services such as finance and IT support.

What will be shown in Council accounts?

All the below transactions will have corresponding entries within the SMBC financial statements:

- Grant Funding – Sandway Homes prepared a claim drawdown for expenditure incurred within the financial year to the value of £512k. The payment was processed after the year end and has created a SMBC Debtor in the Sandway accounts. The debtor was fully paid in April 2022.
- Land – The commitment to purchase land from SMBC shows a creditor of £2.23m in the balance sheet. This will be repaid in accordance with the original phase 1 business plan approval.
- Loan agreement – In year loan drawdowns amounted to £5.61m bringing the total loan balance to £6.74m in the financial statements.
- Income Statement transactions – invoices relating to interest charges, salary recharges, commercial service and other admin services have been raised by SMBC and will appear as creditors in the Sandway accounts.

Assessment of financial performance- is this on track as per Business Plan?

Despite the evolving economic un-certainty, by 31st March 2022, the company remained on track to deliver the agreed returns and proposed dividend of £1.3m which was uplifted from the previously reported £1.1m (in October 21 Cabinet report). This is due to be paid to the shareholder in March 2025. At the year end the company had drawn £6.74m of the agreed loan facility, leaving headroom of £1.56m.

Is the company financially sustainable and resilient and what are the key issues arising?

As of 31st March 2022, the company remained financially sustainable and resilient, notwithstanding the key risk which continue to be monitored by the Board and Management Team:

- Completion of schemes at Meadow Lane and Barton Close

The total value of contractually committed schemes in the Phase 1 plan is £11.93m. By March 2022, the payments to date included in 'WIP' was £5.78m, which means there is £6.15m of contractual payments outstanding for the two committed schemes. Whilst the company remains financially stable, cashflow is

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heavily predicated on sales income, and this will continue to be a significant consideration for the Company in the next period.

The value of the forecast sales within the business plan, exceeds the contractual payments relating to completion of the first two sites. The company also negotiated a revised programme of sectional completions as part of the deed of variation so as homes which are reserved are prioritised for completion.

- Guaranteed maximum contract price- Buckley Hill Lane

The company was able to secure guaranteed maximum price contracts for the two live sites; Meadow Lane and Barton's Close which limited the amount of risk relating to material price increases and other associated construction costs. At the year end the company had not yet entered a committed construction contract for Buckley Hill Lane, which was due to available headroom within the business plan and the ability to commit to a further contract until sales income on the other two sites was achieved.

In addition, there has continued to be an exceptionally long lead-in for service diversions, which has prevented the Contractor from being able to agree sub-contractor package prices. If final costs are too high, the Company may need to re-tender the scheme which would have time implications for the business plan. Whilst sales prices have increased from earlier business plan projections, clearly any increase in cost will need to be considered and the business plan stress tested accordingly.

- Open market sales

House prices have continued to rise during the 2021 business plan period, which the company has looked to maximise as part of its sales strategy, with 100% of all available homes being reserved off plan by the end of March 2022.

Reservations were anticipated to remain strong during 2022-23, however rising interest rates could make sales more challenging towards the end of the period, and the company will need to review its sales strategy accordingly. Due to long build lead times, there is a risk that property prices will begin to stabilise, affecting the price achieved on Buckley Hill Lane plots, which will need to be reviewed in line with the agreed margins and internal rate of return.

- Un-sold plots

Released plots across the first two sites – Meadow Lane and Barton's Close have been well received. At the year end, all the available released plots were reserved (21 homes), and 25 affordable plots were in contract. It is expected that all remaining open market plots (22 homes) will be reserved prior to build completion. Should any plots remain un-sold for a period of 6 months+ post completion, the company would seek approval to dispose of any stock plots in accordance with the exit strategy.

Key areas of risk during the year

How is risk managed within the company, what is the role of the board and key officers?

The Sandway Board has overall responsibility for the company's approach to risk management and internal control. This includes the following:

- Ensuring the design and implementation of appropriate risk management and internal control systems that identify the risks facing the company and enable the board to make a robust assessment of the principal risks.
- Determining the nature and extent of the principal risks faced and those risks which the organisation is able to take to achieve its strategic objectives (determining its "risk appetite");
- Agreeing how the principal risks should be managed or mitigated to reduce the likelihood of their incidence or their impact.
- Monitoring and reviewing the risk management and internal control systems, and the management's process of monitoring and reviewing, and satisfying itself that they are functioning effectively, and that corrective action is being taken where necessary; and
- Ensuring sound internal and external information and communication processes and taking responsibility for external communication on risk management and internal control.

What are the key risk areas identified – how were these mitigated?

The key areas of risk for the 2021-22 business plan period were associated with the on-going impact of Covid and associated material and labour shortages on site. This led to significant risks being identified with both cashflow and sales completions, hence the Company undertook a full review of the business plan and made recommendations to the Shareholder accordingly. These were subsequently taken to SMBC Cabinet in October 2022 for consideration.

The risk mitigations required both an increase in loan facility from SMBC, (reflective of the value of works on site and delayed sales periods) and also that the contract position with Barnfield was re-negotiated by way of a deed of variation, so as payment for works moved to a sectional completion programme (i.e. payment made for each plot based on completion as opposed to the completion of the full site.)

These risk mitigations ensured that the Phase 1 programme remained on track to achieve its first unit completions in Q1 2022-23.

Are the arrangements for risk management appropriate?

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The Company has appointed the Council's Internal Audit team to provide Internal Audit services. A annual internal audit plan is currently being developed and the first audit was completed in Q4 2021-22. This will provide assurance as to management, governance and processes within the company and financial performance;

What arrangements are in place re Fraud, Bribery, and corruption?

Sandway has a range of policies which set out expectations for employee and Director conduct. This includes policies for Gifts & Hospitality, Declaration of Interests and Disciplinary Procedure to ensure that dealings of the Company and those associated with it are beyond reproach and not influenced by the acceptance of inappropriate inducements and provide a framework for good governance regarding conflicts of interest.

Employees are required to declare interests and register gifts and hospitality in writing to the Managing Director. Directors are also required to formally declare any interests or gifts and hospitality which are reviewed as part of the statutory registers during meetings of the Board.

Sandway's Procurement Policy and associated Financial Delegations assign responsibility and provides adequate management oversight, providing a framework for ethical business and good purchasing practices.

In addition, Sandway has adopted a Modern-Day Anti-Slavery Policy which complies with all applicable anti-slavery and human trafficking laws, statutes, regulations, and codes in force and reflects Sandway's commitment to acting ethically and with integrity in all business relationships.

How does the council gain assurance as to the internal control arrangements for the company?

The company provides assurance to the Council via the following mechanisms:

- A comprehensive risk register for the Phase 1 Programme, is reviewed by the Company's Board at each meeting. If risks meet an agreed threshold, they are escalated to the Shareholder representative and the Council for consideration. These may then be included on the Council's Corporate Risk register if they fit within the escalation framework that has been agreed by Audit and Governance Committee.
- A detailed update report is produced by the Company's Managing Director in addition to a full progress report for each MMU / Board Meeting. This provides full visibility of all aspects of the company's business operations, financial performance and risks. These reports are shared with both the Shareholder representative and the Council in advance of each Board meeting in order that full visibility of all aspects of the business is obtained.
- During 2021-22, the company commenced a programme of recruitment and now employs a full time Managing Director, Head of Business Operations, Financial Controller and Graduate Trainee. This places less reliance on external consultancy support and direct oversight on company matters.

- Sandway has appointed the Council's internal audit team to provide an initial audit for 2021-22. External auditors will be appointed in the next business plan period, and a comprehensive annual audit plan will be agreed to provide further assurance and an annual review of internal controls.

Evaluation of performance in 2021/22 compared to Council objectives for setting up the company and approved Business Plan for the year

In terms of the objectives for the company that were approved by Cabinet in 2017, these remain valid and the company continues to work towards them. As reported previously, in 2021/22, there was the full refresh of the Business Plan and exit plan that were approved by cabinet and these suggested that over the 3 sites in Phase 2:-

- 141 houses would be delivered
- A capital receipt for the 3 sites in Phase 1 totalling £2.2m would be received by the council in March 2024
- A dividend of £1.3m would be received by the council from Phase 1 in March 2025.

This position at the end of the financial year remains what the company is working towards.

Sales in respect of the first 2 sites that have been developed namely Meadow Lane and Bartons Close, are progressing well, which support the view from the company which has been communicated to the council that these sites will deliver the quantity of homes and financial return that the council has approved. The first completions are due before the end of July 2022

The third site at Buckley Hill Lane, is yet to start development. In light of current market conditions, especially as a result of national inflation, the delivery of this site will require careful and detailed monitoring and reporting back to cabinet. Discussions are to be held by the company with the main contractor, Barnfield Construction in September/October 2022 with a view to agreeing the value of the contract for development. The business plan has an assumption as the value of this contract that takes account of inflation however any variation from this could impact the overall dividend due. At this stage it is too early to revise any estimates as increased costs due to inflation are often offset by higher sales prices if they can be accommodated by the market, but this will be the key activity during the year that will determine and influence the financial performance from Phase 1.

In terms of overall performance in year therefore, it is reported and can be considered that the 2 sites at Meadow Lane and Barton's Close are progressing as detailed in the approved Business Plan. As would be expected as work has yet to commence or indeed the contract value with the main contractor has yet to be agreed in respect of Buckley Hill Lane this remains a risk however discussions are planned to agree the timeline for development and contract value in accordance with the overall Plan- if there are any material variations to that in the Business Plan these will be reported to cabinet.

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What are the Delivery and Improvement Plans for 2022/23

2022/23 will be a key year for the company in the delivery of the first 3 sites in its Phase 1, as completions progress throughout the year at Meadow Lane and Barton's Close and the final contract value for Buckley Hill Lane is agreed.

The outturn report to this Overview and Scrutiny meeting represents the first time that a comprehensive and consolidated annual report has been produced for members and this will continue from this point on.

As with previous years, an update on this current business plan will be presented to Cabinet for approval in Autumn of 2022. This detail and the financial forecasts contained it will inform the council's Medium Term Financial Plan for the next 3 years and budget report that will be considered by full council in March 2023.

As has been stated in previous cabinet reports any material variations to the approved business plan will be reported back to members for decision at the earliest opportunity.

At the Cabinet meeting of 3 September 2020, members approved that Sandway Homes Limited be granted approval to develop a phase 2 business case in respect of three sites. To support this work a grant application for £1.033m has been made to the Combined Authority to support development work up to the pre-planning stage in respect of the following two sites:-

- Former Bootle High School site, Browns Lane, Bootle; and
- Land to the rear of Bentham Drive, Southport

This bid has been approved by the Combined Authority and following decision was approved by Full Council in July 2022 in accordance with Financial Procedure Rules. This funding will come to the council in the first instance before a back to back legal agreement with the company is agreed. It is anticipated that work on these business cases will be complete in during 2023 so although a governance report is not expected in 2022/23, if the work is completed in advance of this date it may come through in year.

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|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee- Regeneration and Skills | Date of Meeting: | 17 January 2023 |
| Subject: | 2021/22 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies - Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) | | |
| Report of: | Executive Director (Place) | Wards Affected: | All Wards |
| Cabinet Portfolio: | Regeneration and Skills | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | N/A |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

The aim of this report is to allow members to carry out effective scrutiny of council companies which gives a level of assurance that both the Council's interests and the services or products provided by companies to our residents, are safe and well managed and offer good value for money.

Recommendation(s):

That Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- (1) consider the content of the report in respect of the SHOL;
- (2) provide feedback on key issues arising and advise on further information that would support the scrutiny review in future years;
- (3) provide feedback on current performance (operational and financial) and how this supports the council's strategic aims and ambitions and aligns with the objectives and reasons for setting up the companies; and
- (4) seek clarification or additional information from officers as appropriate within the meeting in order to carry out the scrutiny function

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The recommendations will support the effective and transparent governance of the councils 3 wholly owned council companies and best practice.

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Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

Key financial issues and implications are included within the body of the report.

(B) Capital Costs

Key financial issues and implications are included within the body of the report.

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

Any resource implications arising are included in the body of the report.

Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications arising.

Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications arising from this report specifically. Equality impacts and mitigations for the company are addressed via the strategy and business plan for years beyond the period to which this report relates.

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will:

| | |
|---|---|
| Have a positive impact | Y |
| Have a neutral impact | N |
| Have a negative impact | N |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Y |

There are no environmental implications arising from this report specifically. Sustainability and environmental impacts and mitigations for the company are addressed via the strategy and business plan for years beyond the period to which this report relates, and are to be reported separately.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

The council's 3 wholly owned companies were set up with specific objectives that would support the delivery of the council's core purpose. These objectives are set out in the body of the report and between the 3 companies contribute to the delivery of each element of the councils core purpose.

| |
|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: Inclusivity will remain at the heart of the company's vision and values, in respect of both the physical and experiential offer to residents and visitors. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above, inclusivity will be at the heart of the company's vision and values, in respect of both the physical and experiential offer to residents and visitors. Moreover, the company will offer quality employment and career opportunities for local people in the hospitality sector. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: Projected future returns to the Council, as sole shareholder of SHOL, will provide revenue to contribute towards service provision. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: The physical and experiential offer of the company will support enhancement of sense of place across the borough. The vision and strategy of the company closely aligns with the 2030 vision and the Place-based strategies of the Council. |
| Drivers of change and reform: The enhancement of physical assets, the offer to customers, and the approach to employment and career opportunity, will all support change across the borough and in this sector particularly. |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: The company will support economic prosperity and resilience through the offer of quality employment and career opportunities for local people in the hospitality sector. |
| Greater income for social investment: The strategy and business plan for future years outline the significant intended contribution of the company in respect of social value. |
| Cleaner Greener: All projects and operations will align with the highest environmental standards, reflecting the council's focus on climate emergency. |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.6993/22) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5193/22) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Engagement and information provision was sought from each of the 3 companies in the production of this report

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
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Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 The council aims to ensure that the governance of its wholly owned companies meets best practice within the sector. As information and guidance becomes available then the council's approach will similarly evolve.
- 1.2. The next step in the governance cycle is to provide members with a review of performance for the previous financial year. As such this report provides that for SHOL.
- 1.3. Members should be aware that as part of the continual drive to ensure that best practice is followed a self assessment for each of the council's company's is currently being undertaken against the Local Partnerships document 'Local Authority Company Guidance Document'- this review will be led by the council's Monitoring Officer. This document has helped inform the areas to be reported within this report.

2. Aims of the Annual Report

- 2.1. The aim of this report is to allow members to carry out effective scrutiny of council companies which gives a level of assurance that both the Council's interests and the services or products provided by companies to our residents, are safe and well managed and offer good value for money by;
 - a. Challenging the suitability of their business plans and objectives in meeting the needs of the council, service users and residents
 - b. Testing the financial benefits to the council and economic benefits to the community
 - c. Reviewing the outcomes and achievements of commercial operations against their original plans
 - d. Testing whether the value of the Council's investment into these vehicles is being protected and public funds are not exposed to excessive risk ; and
 - e. Checking that responsible business standards are met.

3. Expected Outcomes

- 3.1. In considering the following detail, the key outcome will be to provide effective scrutiny of SHOL to give a level of assurance that both the Council's interests in and the services provided by the company to Sefton residents are safe, well managed and offer good value for money. This report is provided for consideration following all 3 companies being the subject of review at the recent meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board.

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4. SEFTON HOSPITALITY OPERATIONS LTD

What are the council's objectives for the Company?

Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) was established during the financial year 2021-22, following the approval of the Full Business Case for the revitalisation of the hospitality offer at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre (CLAC).

Aims for the company included, but were not limited to, the quality of the offer at CLAC for residents and visitors alike, along with the financial sustainability of the asset. Through delivery of the hospitality offer through SHOL, this was intended to remove the requirement for a financial subsidy from the Council to CLAC of circa £250,000 per annum. Furthermore, in the longer-term, the business would be expected to deliver a dividend to the council as shareholder.

Moreover, the council's objectives for the company included focus on assets and opportunities beyond CLAC, bringing sector-specific experience and expertise to enable maximisation of the offer to communities and to visitors across Sefton. Opportunities progressed in 2021-22 included at Southport Market and at Ainsdale beach.

The council's objectives for the company also particularly included focus on the creation of sustainable and high-quality employment and career opportunities in the sector. This ethos is shared by the company as a key component of the offer to current and prospective employees to ensure the attraction, development and retention of talent from the local area. The council's objective is for these opportunities to offer a real living wage or better, with no mandated zero-hour contracts. These objectives in respect of employment and career opportunities for local people particularly align with the council's core purpose.

Council Governance Arrangements

The Full Business Case for CLAC was approved and implemented, as part of the £3.6m refurbishment of the venue. These capital costs were funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Oversight of this ongoing construction project has remained with the council, with SHOL undertaking an important role in design finalisation and fit-out of the venue that it will operate from Summer 2022 as a leaseholder.

The three-year Business Plan for SHOL, for 2021-22 to 2024-25, was also reviewed and approved by Cabinet during the financial year, with monthly updates on financial and other measures of performance against that business plan presented monthly to the Executive Leadership Team by the Executive Director (Place) who works closely with the Chair of SHOL to ensure an effective working relationship between the council and the company. However, the Chair was not appointed until the second quarter of 2022, so this engagement during 2021-22 was between the Executive Director and the company's Managing Director. The Executive Director (Place) provided ongoing updates on progress with the company and key projects to the Shareholder Representative throughout the year.

Governance arrangements in place for the company in 2021/22

During 2021-22, the governance arrangement of the company comprises reporting from the Managing Director to the Executive Director (Place), with ongoing support from the Finance Manager. However, given status of the projects and the challenges of attracting and recruiting a suitably experienced Chair, the final intended structure of the board was not in place during 2021-22. The board directors during the year comprised the Managing Director, and the Finance Manager, with support from the Executive Director and from the Shareholder Representative.

For the financial year 2022-23 onwards, the board of the company will comprise the Chair, one Non-Executive Director, and the Managing Director of SHOL. The Chair will continue to report to the Shareholder Representative and continue to receive support where beneficial from the Executive Director (Place).

Governance arrangements will be consistent with other council-owned companies, with their establishment and progression supported by the council's legal team.

The Chair will schedule board meetings throughout 2022-23, and will undertake a review of board structure and composition during the year to ensure effectiveness of both the board itself and its governance arrangements to support the growth and success of the company.

Key Objectives for the Company as per the Business Plan in 2021/22

During 2021-22, as per the Business Plan, the company projected a loss of £178,350. It was also the case that the annual subsidy from the council to CLAC of £250,000 per annum would be removed, and this was implemented across 2021-22 and 2022-23 in line with the Council's approved overall budget for those years.

Other key objectives related to the recruitment of a team to support delivery of the projects and operation of the assets, particularly The Lake House adjacent to CLAC.

The published Business Plan for 2021-22 to 2024-25 included work on vision, values, and long-term strategic objectives for the company. While no fundamental changes to the council's core objectives are expected, it may be that the company (with a Chair and new management team in place since that previous Business Plan) do revisit some of this strategic work for the next iteration of the Business Plan for the years 2023-24 to 2025-26.

Review of Performance 2021/22

It should be noted that there were no operations of note by the company during the

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financial year 2021-22. Costs incurred related to company set-up, input into the projects at Southport Market, Ainsdale beach and The Lake House at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre, but operations commenced from the Spring of 2022. It is therefore early to measure company performance for that financial year, with 2022-23 offering greater opportunity for review of performance following the opening of the Lake House and the (Almost) full year of operations elsewhere.

There were delays to the opening of the Lake House adjacent to CLAC, which impacted the Business Plan for 2021-22. These delays to the council-led project were outside SHOL control, due to contractor failure and replacement on the project. Financial objectives were achieved via deferred spend and costs given these delays at CLAC. This included recruitment, most of which was delayed to the Summer of 2022.

Financial Performance 2021/22

The Company is in the process of producing accounts for 2021/2022 which will need to be filed at Companies House by 31 December 2022. Due to the limited trading undertaken by the company, the gross expenditure for the year was less than £150,000 (mainly relating to company set up costs and the Managing Director's pay) and income was less than £10,000 (relating to the concession at Southport Market). Net expenditure was therefore less than £140,000.

As the Company has undertaken limited trading during 2021/2022 the accounts of the Company will not be consolidated into the Group Accounts on the grounds of materiality.

Key risks for the business particularly relate to cost inflation, which is placing significant cost pressures on the hospitality sector and will do so to the company. This will be a focus area for the board at both a strategic and a financial reporting level.

The impact of the cost of living crisis on disposable income also has the potential to impact the business in terms of visitor numbers and revenues – the competitiveness of the SHOL offer in an increasingly challenging marketplace will be an area of ongoing focus for the board and for the management team.

Key areas of risk during the year

As above, cost inflation and the cost of living crisis have the potential to impact margins and revenues respectively. The role of management will be to manage cost and maximise revenues to ensure delivery against the company's business plan, reporting to the board (and in turn to the council) on an ongoing basis.

Project delivery in new hospitality venues is also a key area of risk, as exemplified by the delays at the CLAC project, which although outside the control of SHOL did delay the opening of the Lake House. The risk of delay given challenges in the

construction sector was exacerbated by the lack of direct control over the contract itself. This risk was mitigated by the close and collaborative working relationship between the company and the council. The capture and application of lessons learned for future projects will also be a key mitigation.

People also remains a risk, in an increasingly competitive and challenging environment for the hospitality sector. The business will be heavily focused on the attraction, development and retention of the quantity and quality of people needed to deliver the offer as well as the high standards that reflect the brand of the company. The quality of the employment offer to workforce, in terms of terms and conditions, is a key mitigant of this risk, as is the creation and retention of an organisational culture and set of values that people want to join and stay a part of.

Notwithstanding the mitigants above, these remain residual risks to the company at the year end, which will be monitored on an ongoing basis by the board and by the shareholder. Risk reporting to the board will be via an up-to-date Risk Register, a copy of which will be shared with the council as shareholder.

Following the appointment of the SHOL board chair during 2022-23, company policies will be put in place in terms of such areas as ethics and business integrity, procurement, bribery and anti-corruption. These will be board-approved and while applicable to the hospitality sector specifically, they will reflect the council's obligations and expectations and will be consistent where applicable with other council-owned companies.

Evaluation of performance in 2021/22 compared to Council objectives for setting up the company and approved Business Plan for the year

Performance in 2021-22 has been in line with the Council's objectives and approved Business Plan for the year. However, it should be noted that the company was only formed part way through that year, with significant operations only commencing during 2022-23. That year will provide greater measure of progress and performance.

What are the Delivery and Improvement Plans for 2022/23

During 2022-23, the company will delivery an updated Business Plan that includes that year but also the three subsequent financial years. That Business Plan will be underpinned by a revised strategy for the company, reflecting the learning from the year 2021-22 and the early parts of 2022-23, as well as the changing macro-environment in which the company is operating. This updated strategy and business plan will include:

- Financial Plan for the current and three subsequent financial years – including recognition of the changing marketplace in which the company is operating
- Governance structures and key policies – reflecting the new board of the company following appointment of the Chair and Non-Executive Director

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- Key performance indicators – financial and other measures of success of the company
- Vision and values – to be updated to reflect the changing marketplace as well as the leadership of a new Chair and management team
- Risk Register – including but not limited to the risk items identified herein.

This updated strategy and business plan was published in December 2022.

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|---|----------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Report to: | Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration & Skills) | Date of Meeting: | 17 th January 2023 |
| Subject: | Sefton Economic Strategy | | |
| Report of: | Assistant Director: Economic Growth and Housing | Wards Affected: | (All Wards); |
| Portfolio: | Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | Yes | Included in Forward Plan: | Yes |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To update members on the outcome of the Sefton Economic Strategy consultation and next steps

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet Members:

- (1) Note the outcome of the Sefton Economic Strategy 2022 consultation and next steps
- (2) Receive future updates on progress for the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To update members on this key decision and advise on next steps including receiving future updates on progress of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

Do nothing and update the existing Economic Recovery plans-this was rejected as officers also needed to update and factor in the prevailing cost of living crisis into its economic planning for the borough. To have delayed this work would not have provided officers with the necessary economic data and evidence base on which to develop an up-to-date strategy framework which could help prioritise delivery to businesses, residents and communities.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

There are no direct revenue costs associated with the recommendations in this report.

The cost of this work is £19,880 (including £5,000 contingency) to be met by existing consultancy budget. The work was commissioned to Mickledore who were retained following their commission on previous Covid-19 Recovery planning and investment prospectuses for Bootle and Southport.

(B) Capital Costs

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Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

Consultation co-ordination and ongoing delivery activities is being undertaken by Economic Growth & Housing staff within existing budgets

Legal Implications:

None

Equality Implications:

The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated as shown in the Equalities Impact Assessment

Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

| | |
|---|-----|
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | No |
| Have a negative impact | Yes |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |

The Sefton Economic Strategy will have an associated action plan and some of the delivery activities (e.g new development, business expansion, inward investment) will have a negative impact on the footprint of the Sefton borough. These include direct emissions which result from the redevelopment of any vacant sites as well as long-term carbon emissions from each new building / operation created.

However, the development of sites and buildings will be required to go through the planning system which will help to minimise the carbon impact of the building by applying the nationally required environmental standards.

Economic growth will also impact businesses and transport negatively, but this could be minimised by adopting green policies e.g., green growth where companies use green renewable energy, use electric vehicles, low carbon options. InvestSefton works closely with the LJMU Eco Innovatory Centre who provide expert support to businesses seeking to reduce energy costs and introduce low carbon solutions to their operations. The team has already referred over 40 Sefton businesses for support.

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| <p>Protect the most vulnerable:</p> <p>Social Inclusion and Access for all is a core objective of the strategy framework to set a direction for action so that the impacts of economic growth reach many more of Sefton's residents including the most vulnerable</p> |
| <p>Commission, broker and provide core services:</p> <p>The Strategy Framework will help in identifying key priorities for action including services that require direct delivery or sub-contracting and commissioning</p> |
| <p>Place – leadership and influencer:</p> <p>Regenerated Places is a core objective of the strategy framework, and the council is already active in this work in terms of delivering area action plans, covid recovery plans and promoting Sefton a place to attract visitors and new inward investment.</p> |
| <p>Drivers of change and reform:</p> <p>The Strategy framework provides a platform to prioritise and develop support economic interventions where they are most needed and allows the council to refresh and update areas of work that require change and reform.</p> |
| <p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: -this is the overarching objective of any Sefton economic strategy and the four key objectives-Employment & opportunities for work; Business Growth and Investment; Social Inclusion and Access for all and Regenerated Places- are all geared to help maximise sustainable economic growth that will benefit residents, businesses, and communities in Sefton.</p> |
| <p>Greater income for social investment:</p> <p>Opportunities for supporting income for social investment will be covered under the strategy's core objectives of Business Growth & Investment and Social Inclusion & Access for all</p> |
| <p>Cleaner Greener</p> <p>Under Regenerated Places reference is made to the mitigation of any adverse environmental impacts because of economic regeneration growth; the strategy also focuses on attracting new cleaner greener investment. e.g. Digital, particularly the roll-out of ultrafast broadband.</p> |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7075/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5275/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

The Strategy has been the subject of extensive external consultation with businesses, stakeholders, community groups/charities and residents.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- (a) Sefton Economic Strategy Consultation results
- (b) Sefton Economic Strategy-final version approved by Cabinet 03.11.22

Background Papers:

The following background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet can be accessed on the Council website:

[Sefton Economy](#)

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Members will be aware that the Sefton Economic Strategy was last produced in 2018 and delegated approval for the subsequent Action Plan to Cabinet Member Regeneration & Skills. The Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan was approved by Cabinet Member Regeneration & Skills in December 2019.
- 1.2 The delivery of the Action Plan was almost immediately disrupted in March 2020 with the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic and part of the emergency response was the production of the Council's Sefton Strategic Recovery Plan to help the council prioritise its emergency support activities.
- 1.3 Members will recall presentations in at both March and November 2021 to this meeting from the Assistant Director (Economic Growth & Housing) which updated on economic performance, Covid business support, employment support and ongoing regeneration projects. These were well received and Member may also be aware that the Council received the North West regional award for Covid response from the Federation of Small Businesses which was co-ordinated by InvestSefton.
- 1.4 Sefton has since commissioned Mickledore to undertake further work in the refresh and repurposing of the Sefton Economic Strategy 2022. This followed previous well received work undertaken by Mickledore during the pandemic which resulted in a Covid-19 Response report and Sefton Prospectuses outlining key opportunities for attracting new inward investment with a specific focus on Bootle and Southport.
- 1.5 Members will also recall that an update of the Sefton Economic Strategy was a recommendation of the initial Local Government Association review in 2019 and its more recent assessment in 2022. The initial work focussed on the economic evidence base on which the strategy could be updated and refreshed.

2 Sefton Economic Strategy Consultation

- 2.1 Sefton Council's Economic Growth & Housing service led the public consultation exercise which started on 20th July and ended on 17th August. Proposals for consultation were approved by the Sefton Public Engagement & Consultation Panel on 15th July. The draft

evidence base report was circulated (on two occasions) to over 2,600 businesses, developers/investors with a link to an online survey-in addition:

- A dedicated Council webpage and on-line consultation portal was produced
- The consultation report and questionnaires were also produced in easy read formats
- Several Sefton Communications tweets/press and social media releases on a weekly basis

2.2 Specific face to face briefings and online consultation forums included:

- *Sefton Economic Forum-15 July attended by over 100 business delegates*
- *Sefton in Mind-27 July attended by over 10 representatives*
- *People First Merseyside-11 August attended by over 20 Board members*
- *Sefton Partnership Board-15 August attended by over 15 board members*

2.3.1 The report was circulated to a wide range of internal and external groups, networks, and organisations to maximise reach including:

- Sefton Council members and MPs
- Sefton CVS
- Community organisations
- Sefton Council Senior Leadership Board
- LCR Combined Authority
- LCR Growth Platform/Local Enterprise Partnership
- Industry sector groups/boards
- LCR Local Authorities
- Chambers of Commerce
- Southport BID
- Federation of Small Businesses
- Marketing Southport
- Housing Associations
- FE/HE Colleges

4. Results

4.1 **A summary of the results can be seen in Annex A.** In total, 192 people took part in the survey. Of these, 60.4% were members of the public who live in Sefton and 27.6% were local businesses. Several other stakeholders and organisations also submitted responses to the consultation outside of the survey that have been factored into the analysis. These included responses from LCRCA, People First Merseyside and Youth Advisors, among others.

4.2 Overall, there was support for the chosen themes: **Employment and Opportunities for Work, Business Growth and Investment, Regenerated Places, and Social Inclusion and Access for All.** Generally, there was agreement that the themes work well together due to their interconnectedness, but that ***growing and investing in business is the starting point for the other themes to follow from.***

4.3 The survey asked respondents to rate the themes and **corresponding key issues based on how important they are to them. On average Employment and Opportunities for Work** was rated the highest.

4.4 Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to answer qualitative questions. The comments have been analysed and summarised to represent the frequently recurring key

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points and combined with feedback taken from consultation sessions and individual contributions outside of the survey. Key issues included **parking and transport, sustainability, and support for both the younger and older generations.**

5. Qualitative results

5.1 Overall, there was generally positive support for the choice of themes. A frequent comment was that business growth is the starting point for success in the other three thematic areas, and the interconnectivity between the themes should be highlighted in the strategy. A recurring theme was sustainability. In their response, LCR Combined Authority suggested that the **Net Zero theme** could flow throughout the whole strategy.

5.2 The following thematic comments appeared frequently throughout the consultation:

5.3 Employment and Opportunities for Work

- More opportunities for training and reskilling to fill vacancies.
- Provision of advice and guidance, and opportunities for employment and gaining skills particularly for school leavers and young people
- Ensure that messaging around public sector employment does not come across as negative.
- Focus on boosting private sector employment that will automatically reduce public sector role.

5.4 Business Growth and Investment

- Support for SMEs to grow. Suggestions include financial support, community events, advertising via networks etc.
- Concerns raised about the lack of affordable, usable office space and employment land available in Sefton.
- Emphasise Sefton's growing sectors in the strategy e.g. Southport's technology industry opportunities, help for Sefton's digital & creative businesses, Financial, professional & business services

5.5 Regenerated Places

- Concerns raised about the unregulated growth of private accommodation in tourist areas, and growing unaffordability of housing.
- Prioritise attractive town centres that will attract and retain young people.
- Focus on making tourist areas and town centres accessible for all local residents by creating sustainable local transport hubs.
- The strategy needs to consider the sustainability agenda.
- More green spaces around Sefton.

5.6 Social Inclusion and Access for All

- Consider the environment, sports, recreation facilities etc. and how these can impact health and wellbeing in Sefton.
- Emphasise how deprivation impacts health inequality and consider the infrastructure needed to improve this e.g. schools, healthcare facilities etc. Address the impact health inequality has on economic activity rates.
- Consider how town centres need to adapt to manage the impacts of an ageing population.

6 Sefton Economic Strategy 2022

6.1 The consultation feedback was analysed and, where applicable, fed into the final Sefton Economic Strategy approved by Cabinet on 3rd November 2022. **A copy of the strategy can be seen in Annex A.**

6.2 Key headlines are as follows:

Economy & Income levels

- At a local authority level, Sefton records economic data which is **generally favourable compared to the North West Region although slightly less so nationally.**
- Whilst at headline levels, Sefton may appear to be an area of average economic performance, **the local authority does have areas of severe deprivation.**
- When income is considered, Sefton has a number of areas where income is in the lowest 10% in England and a few in the highest 10%.
- Even these figures mask the scale of deprivation. One area of **Bootle is now ranked as the 28th most deprived in terms of income across England (out of 32,844 areas) and its ranking is falling (ranked 197th in 2007).**
- Income deprivation is not only a serious issue at an individual / family level – a concentration of low levels of **income undermines the entire local economy reducing disposable income which can be spent in the area and creating challenges for the Local Authority in terms of income (lower Council Tax revenues) and expenditure (social support mechanisms) resulting in reduced opportunity for discretionary investment by the Local Authority.**

Business Activity

- One issue impacting on local income is the range of businesses and employment opportunities in Sefton. Sefton has continuously and significantly created fewer businesses (per working age population) than England as a whole. **The gap was the narrowest in 2020 although even in this year Sefton created 21% fewer businesses per working age person than England.**
- Year-on-year under-performance in business creation undermines the wealth creation potential in the area and whilst this is a City Region wide issue, it is something that is monitored at a Local Authority level.
- It is possible that some private sector start-up activity has been crowded-out by the extent of public sector employment, but whatever the cause, in the majority of Wards within Sefton, the proportion **of public sector employment is higher than the average for England.**
- In 3 Wards within Bootle and Maghull (Ford, Derby and Sudell) the proportion of employees employed by the public sector is **>50%. Many public sector jobs also remain relatively low paid**
- Whilst some work can be undertaken to stimulate private business start-up and investment, it is certainly the case that the public sector has been an important employment generator in Sefton. **And as public sector employment is decentralised from London, Sefton can be presented as a contender for Government relocations.**

Out-Commuting

- In common with many LCR local authorities, Sefton has high levels of out-commuting. **46% of Sefton's working residents earned their income from outside the Borough at the time of the 2011 census (the last published data). Whilst out-**

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commuting as a percentage of the workforce is not the highest of the local authorities in LCR, the number still represents a significant proportion of residents.

- **Over 12,000 net out commuters travelled to work in Liverpool, with high levels also travelling to Knowsley (-920) and Warrington (-840).** Sefton did receive net in commuters from Wirral (+724) and West Lancashire (+256).
- However, train borne out-commuting fell dramatically during the pandemic. Changing work patterns lasting from the impacts of the national lockdowns provide the possibility of a reset. **It is likely that many residents will have reconsidered their previous commuter lifestyle. There is the potential for a future reset to increase earning and retained spending in the area.**
- Whilst working patterns have returned towards previous trends in 2022, it will be important to monitor how changing working patterns impact the number of people choosing to out commute from Sefton in the future and whether this returns to previous levels.

Employment & Skills

- Media commentary describes the ageing population at a national level. According to ONS population projection data, the issue will be more acute in Sefton with projections suggesting a decline of 5,663 in people aged 16-64 (still used as a proxy for 'working age' despite changing retirement ages). This represents a shrinkage of 3.5% in the available workforce. **This has a double impact because as the workforce is shrinking, those in need of adult social care is likely to increase as a result of the same ageing demographic trends.**
- The scale of change is expected to be greater in Sefton than in England as a whole. **Estimates beyond 2038 (when the situation is expected to ease) are somewhat speculative since the population that will be within the working age group by this date have not yet been born.**
- Economic development policies of the next decade are likely to include a focus on the attraction and retention of talent and this has **implications for housing and the creation of attractive locations to both live and work**
- **Data available from the annual population survey in 2021 shows that overall skill levels in Sefton have been improving.** The number of people of working age in Sefton achieving NVQ level 4 and above has been increasing whilst the number of people with no skills has been declining. In 2021, 54,500 people in Sefton had qualifications up to NVQ4+ whilst 20,900 people achieved NVQ1 or lower.
- **Sefton and England are comparable in terms of the proportion of the working age population with no skills.** There has been a downward trend since 2012, although Sefton saw a slight jump between 2019 and 2021 likely to have been impacted by the pandemic.
- Covid-19 had a very significant impact on employment despite national government intervention. **The impact of a lockdown on the visitor economy and the hospitality industry was particularly severe. Despite concerns about Sefton's resilience given the importance of the visitor economy, Sefton has out-performed the national picture when claimant count levels are considered with a less pronounced impact of Covid-19 on out of work benefits and a more rapid recovery than England as a whole.**

- **At the peak of the pandemic Sefton reached 11,945 people claiming out of work benefits, but this figure has dropped significantly to 7045 in 2022.** This does however remain **13.4% above pre pandemic levels** and in many cases the pandemic's impact has been extremely serious at an individual level.
- Comparing Sefton to the UK against a 2013 index of 100, in 2022 Sefton's total out of work claimant count stood at 91.3 versus 113.6 in the UK. **Even during the lockdowns in 2020 Sefton performed better, with an index score of 154.8 compared with 185.3 in the UK on average.**
- At a Sefton wide level skills and employment data can be viewed in a positive light although, as ever, **the average figures mask areas of severe deprivation.**

Place

- Economic development is increasingly about place – employment and a living environment at the confluence of transport routes and growth creates a critical mass of activity and generates ideas and opportunity.
- Key to this critical mass is the work / life balance and this can be measured in terms of residential demand. **Sefton has a strong demand for new housing provision and the house price affordability ratio is lower than elsewhere in the LCR as a whole with a ratio of 6.8 versus 5.5 (although recently affordability is slightly ahead of Wirral at a Local Authority level).** These ratios indicate the strength of demand although clearly unaffordable housing is now a significant problem for many residents seeking to access the housing ladder.
- **There is a clear need for additional housing provision and to create a mixed variety of properties including both affordable properties in areas of high demand and more aspirational housing in areas of income deprivation.** This priority is reflected in Sefton's emerging Housing Strategy which focusses on ensuring that housing needs are met over the next 5 years through the provision of the right type of housing in the right locations. The Council will achieve this through closer working with private sector providers and social landlords, as well as through the direct provision of high-quality housing for both outright sale, intermediate home ownership products and social rent in areas where demand is highest. **Recent employment land studies also suggest that there is a shortfall of available land against current demand.**

Disparities in Sefton

- When setting out an economic narrative for Sefton it is important that the story of the Borough is told in sections. At a Local Authority level, for many economic measures, average performance is unremarkable but this masks fundamental issues.
- When data is presented at a Sefton level the case for intervention is often lost. Sefton has some areas (**Lower Level Super Output Areas**) in the **10% least deprived in the country** – but double the average proportion in the most deprived. These are generally (but not exclusively) in the south of the Borough.
- On average measures, such as resident income, Sefton records average resident incomes (2021) at **3% higher than the North West average and this is clearly a misleading story in terms of the key economic narrative.**
- Data and interventions can be more strongly aligned to the requirements of place. **Sefton is not a one size fits all Authority but nor is it as simple as a north / south split.**

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7.0 Conclusions

7.1 The strategy will focus on four key thematic objectives:

- **Employment and Opportunities for Work**-Continued work on pathways into work and skills & development activity underpins the entire strategy and is likely to be increasingly important given economic challenges, the changing nature of employment and the ageing demographic
- **Business Growth and Investment**-Sefton has a number of core private and public investments which can generate greater opportunities for local business growth and more start-up activity and smaller scale inbound investment – all broadening the business base, key sectors and employment opportunities
- **Regenerated Places**-An improved environment to live, work and attract visitors and investment is a key pillar of the strategy – but the ambitious investment programme can, itself, create opportunities for local business, help develop supply chains and create employment and skills development programmes
- **Social Inclusion and Access for All**-It is clear that any 'trickle down' benefits of economic growth do not reach all communities without proactive work to enable access to employment and wider services. Extreme deprivation undermines communities and also undermines the ability of the Local Authority to work on wider initiatives.

Action Plan

7.2 During consultation a recurring theme discussed focussed on the need to have a robust, evidence based and measurable action plan to track progress against the above the four key thematic objectives .To this end Mickledore have been retained, within the parameters of the current arrangement, to support this work in conjunction with the Economy Cell led by the Assistant Director (Economic Growth & Housing) and Cabinet Member Regeneration & Skills. It is proposed that the strategy be divided into two sections:

- Evidence base**-this sets out the economic data evidence base. While data changes the key underlying issues for the economy in terms of jobs, business growth, attracting new investment and regeneration in Sefton remains the same. Most Local Authorities are now updating their economic data on two/three yearly cycles as a standard evidence base.
- Action Plan**-This will set out what council services will deliver under each of the four key thematic objectives. The Action Plan will provide an easy-to-read framework that will allow internal team members to understand the progress of each action outlined in the strategy. This will allow individuals to ensure targets are being met, as well as provide them with a working document that can be updated as progress is made. This will also ensure ownership of the actions and a better understanding for each individual/ team of their contribution to the overall Strategy objectives. There will also be regular reporting points to members.

8.0 Next Steps

8.1 Next steps are as follows:

- Further consultation with the Health and Wellbeing board in January 2023, to ensure that key aspects of Health and Wellbeing objectives are integrated in the development of specific actions and projects.

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- Ensure that Net Zero and Sustainability links are identified in the relevant actions.
- Production of a detailed Performance framework in the form of an Excel Spreadsheet which will include all the actions necessary to deliver the objectives of the strategy. The framework will identify elements such as:
 - The department responsible for the delivery of each of the 4 key actions, namely-*Employment and Opportunities for Work, Business Growth and Investment; Regenerated Places, Social Inclusion and Access for All*
 - The teams within the department leading on specific projects
 - Timelines and Milestones to be achieved
 - Links to any supporting data/ metrics/document/ evidence produced by the teams
 - A Red/ Amber/ Green rating against the progress of the project/ action/Potential remedial action
 - Production of an updatable Summary Dashboard (1 page) which could be used with stakeholders, such as the overview and scrutiny committee. This Dashboard will be a simple visual representation of the progress made by a specific date.

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REPORT:

Sefton Economic Strategy – Consultation Summary

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OVERVIEW

Overview of Consultation Response

Sefton Council are seeking to update Sefton's Economic Strategy to reflect the changing economic situation following the Covid-19 pandemic. As part of the process, a consultation took place to allow members of the public, local businesses and any other organisations to have their say on the content and themes that will shape the strategy.

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A consultation survey was published on the Sefton Council website for 4 weeks. In total, 192 people took part in the survey. Of these, 60.4% were members of the public who live in Sefton and 27.6% were local businesses. Several other stakeholders and organisations also submitted responses to the consultation outside of the survey that have been factored into the analysis. These included responses from LCRCA, People First Merseyside and Youth Advisors, among others.

Overall, there was support for the chosen themes: Employment and Opportunities for Work, Business Growth and Investment, Regenerated Places, and Social Inclusion and Access for All. Generally, there was agreement that the themes work well together due to their interconnectedness,

but that growing and investing in business is the starting point for the other themes to follow from.

The survey asked respondents to rate the themes and corresponding key issues based on how important they are to them. On average Employment and Opportunities for Work was rated the highest. The results of the quantitative questions are presented in this report.

Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to answer qualitative questions. The comments have been analysed and summarised to represent the frequently recurring key points and combined with feedback taken from consultation sessions and individual contributions outside of the survey. Key issues included parking and transport, sustainability, and support for both the younger and older generations.

The results of this consultation will feed into the final Sefton Economic Strategy.



QUALITATIVE RESULTS (i)

Comments on the proposed 4 themes and key data findings.

Overall, there was generally positive support for the choice of themes. In particular, a frequent comment was that business growth is the starting point for success in the other 3 thematic areas, and the interconnectivity between the themes should be highlighted in the strategy.

A recurring theme was sustainability. In their response, LCRCA suggested that the Net Zero theme could flow throughout the whole strategy.

The following thematic comments appeared frequently throughout the consultation:

Employment and Opportunities for Work

- More opportunities for training and reskilling to fill vacancies.
- Provision of advice and guidance, and opportunities for employment and gaining skills, particularly for school leavers and young people.
- Ensure that messaging around public sector employment does not come across as negative. Focus on boosting private sector employment that will automatically reduce public sector role.

Business Growth and Investment

- Support for SMEs to grow. Suggestions include financial support, community events, advertising via networks etc.
- Concerns raised about the lack of affordable, usable office space and employment land available in Sefton.

- Emphasise Sefton's growing sectors in the strategy e.g. Southport's technology industry opportunities.

Regenerated Places

- Concerns raised about the unregulated growth of private accommodation in tourist areas, and growing unaffordability of housing.
- Prioritise attractive town centres that will attract and retain young people.
- Focus on making tourist areas and town centres accessible for all local residents by creating sustainable local transport hubs.
- The strategy needs to consider the sustainability agenda.
- More green spaces around Sefton.

Social Inclusion and Access for All

- Consider the environment, sports, recreation facilities etc. and how these can impact health and wellbeing in Sefton.
- Emphasise how deprivation impacts health inequality and consider the infrastructure needed to improve this e.g. schools, healthcare facilities etc. Address the impact health inequality has on economic activity rates.
- Consider how town centres need to adapt to manage the impacts of an ageing population.



QUALITATIVE RESULTS (ii)

Any other key issues consultees felt should be an area of focus for Sefton.

Below is a summary of comments that appeared frequently throughout the consultation:

Regeneration and Sustainability

- The issue of parking was the most frequently occurring comment on the key issues question of the survey. Consultees asked for more parking options, that are affordable with electric charging points.
- Improve the quality of Sefton's tourism offering, including green tourism.
- The need for more green spaces was strongly supported.
- More even distribution of investment outside of tourist areas that will make Sefton more attractive.
- Use high quality marketing to promote Sefton as a place to work, visit and live.
- Include a focus on the sustainability agenda in the strategy.

Business

- Provide support to small businesses. Suggestions included:
 - Support to take on apprentices
 - Support to compete against larger companies
 - Local community business hubs to share best practice and network

Inclusivity

- Improved disabled access across Sefton.

- Consideration for the elderly in the strategy. Suggestions include employment/reskilling opportunities and social/support groups.
- Consideration of digital inclusion.
- General agreement that one size does not fit all across the borough due to large disparities between areas.
- Ensure public transport is accessible by all.
- Educate employers about learning difficulties, mental health and physical needs. Promote organisations that support these people into work.

Education and Employment

- Prepare children for working/adult life from school age.
- Provide employment support and opportunities for young people and focus on retaining young people to start their careers in Sefton.
- Consider links between education and R&D between Sefton and Liverpool City Region.
- Understand local employment opportunities generated by the Port.



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS (i)

Ranking of Themes

Participants of the consultation survey were asked to score each of the four suggested themes out of 1-5 depending on how important they regard them to be, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

When taking the mean score for each theme, the theme that ranked as most important was **employment and opportunities for work** with a score of 4.55. 130

respondents (68.4%) ranked this theme as 5, the highest level of importance.

However, the difference between the 4 themes is small. The lowest ranking of the 4 was **social inclusion and access for all** with a mean score of 4.12. 101 respondents (52.6%) scored this theme a 5 for importance.



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS (ii)

Employment and Opportunities for Work

The respondents were then asked to rate key issues relating to each theme from 1-5 associated with the level of importance the issue has for them, with 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest.

The issue with the highest average score was to **deliver a range of progression pathways to better connect Sefton's young people with opportunities in the local labour market and make successful transition to the adult world of work**. 118 respondents (61.5%) rated this as a 5, the

highest level of importance.

Second was to **deliver accessible learning for residents of all ages to gain the skills required by our employers and move into or move up in work**. This is also related to gaining skills and opportunity for progression.

When ranking all 25 key issues from across the 4 themes against each other, 4 out of 5 of the Employment and Opportunities for Work key issues appear in the top 10. Therefore, this is clearly an area of high importance for consultees.

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|--|---------------|
| 1 | Deliver a range of progression pathways to better connect Sefton's young people with opportunities in the local labour market and make successful transition to the adult world of work. | 4.16 |
| 2 | Deliver accessible learning for residents of all ages to gain the skills required by our employers and move into or move up in work | 3.91 |
| 3 | Provide support for people with disabilities or poor health to reach their full potential in learning and work. | 3.90 |
| 4 | Develop innovative partnerships with employers to deliver better quality careers and improve progression routes for Sefton residents, prioritising the most vulnerable such as care leavers. | 3.89 |
| 5 | Provide advice and support for workless and inactive people disconnected from the labour market to enter sustainable, decent work. | 3.84 |



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS (iii)

Business Growth and Investment

Survey respondents rated 7 key issues relating to Business Growth and Investment between 1-5 based on the level of importance to themselves.

The key issue with the highest average score was to **provide more support for businesses of any size or sector (including social businesses) seeking to grow and create new jobs**. 102 respondents (53.1%) rated this key issue as a 5.

Closely followed in second was to **focus more support on retaining existing companies, helping them to grow in the borough**. This also received 101 votes for 5 (52.6%). Therefore, it is evident that the survey respondents would like to see business support to promote growth.

Almost all of the key issues within this theme received a relatively high average score with small differences in score between each one, with 3 ranking in the top 10 out of all of the themes.

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Provide more support for businesses of any size or sector (including social businesses) seeking to grow and create new jobs | 4 |
| 2 | Focus more support on retaining existing companies, helping them to grow in the borough | 3.99 |
| 3 | Promote Sefton to seek and attract new inward investment opportunities | 3.89 |
| 4 | Focus support on businesses trading in Sefton's town centre's | 3.84 |
| 5 | Support Sefton businesses seeking to secure local supply chain opportunities from large public sector contracts | 3.83 |
| 6 | Deliver support to create new opportunities for people wanting to start their own business | 3.8 |
| 7 | Develop adequate land and business premises for employment to meet the borough's needs | 3.47 |

QUANTITATIVE RESULTS (iv)

Regenerated Places

The Regenerated Places theme was scored on average as the 3rd most important of the 4 themes in the survey. The top key issue within this theme was **using vacant and underutilised floorspace to support other uses. (e.g. vacant shops /offices etc)**, with 103 respondents (53.6%) scoring the importance as a 5.

including housing that people can afford. 104 respondents (54.2%) rated this as a 5. Therefore, providing space for living and working is a high priority.

Also important according to the average scores are key issues relating to improving town centres and local attractions. Scoring lower were key issues related to sustainability.

Closest behind this with an average score of 3.96 was to **provide a mix of different housing types and tenures,**

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|--|---------------|
| 1 | Using vacant and underutilised floorspace to support other uses. (e.g. vacant shops /offices etc) | 4.00 |
| 2 | Provide a mix of different housing types and tenures, including housing that people can afford. | 3.96 |
| 3 | Creating quality outdoor environments in our town centres which support health and wellbeing for different age groups (Younger/Older People) and support diversity. | 3.82 |
| 4 | Marketing Sefton's excellent visitor destinations, quality attractions and events to enhance the growth of the Borough's economy and boost its status as a place to work, live and do business. | 3.79 |
| 5 | Providing town centre's with a diverse range of services and uses to support the business and residential communities around them. e.g. health & social care, more social business opportunities | 3.76 |
| 6 | Undertake housing led regeneration in less popular parts of the borough where our oldest housing stock is found. | 3.72 |
| 7 | Encourage and celebrate local cultural, heritage and local identity. | 3.49 |
| 8 | Encourage town centre living to help create diversity and support local economic resilience | 3.37 |
| 9 | Developing a shared drive to net zero and climate adaptation for all who work and live in Sefton and ensure we avoid negative impacts on our most disadvantaged communities | 3.32 |
| 10 | Moving away from car based to more sustainable travel transport and encouraging active travel throughout the borough | 3.10 |



QUANTITATIVE RESULTS (v)

Social Inclusion and Access for All

The theme of Social Inclusion and Access for All was rated as the least important theme overall by respondents to the survey. The individual key issues all ranked low in comparison to all 25 key issues in the survey.

The issue with the highest average score within the theme

was **supporting sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing through both policies and delivery of economic development projects**. 95 respondents (49.5%) rated this issue as a 5 for importance.

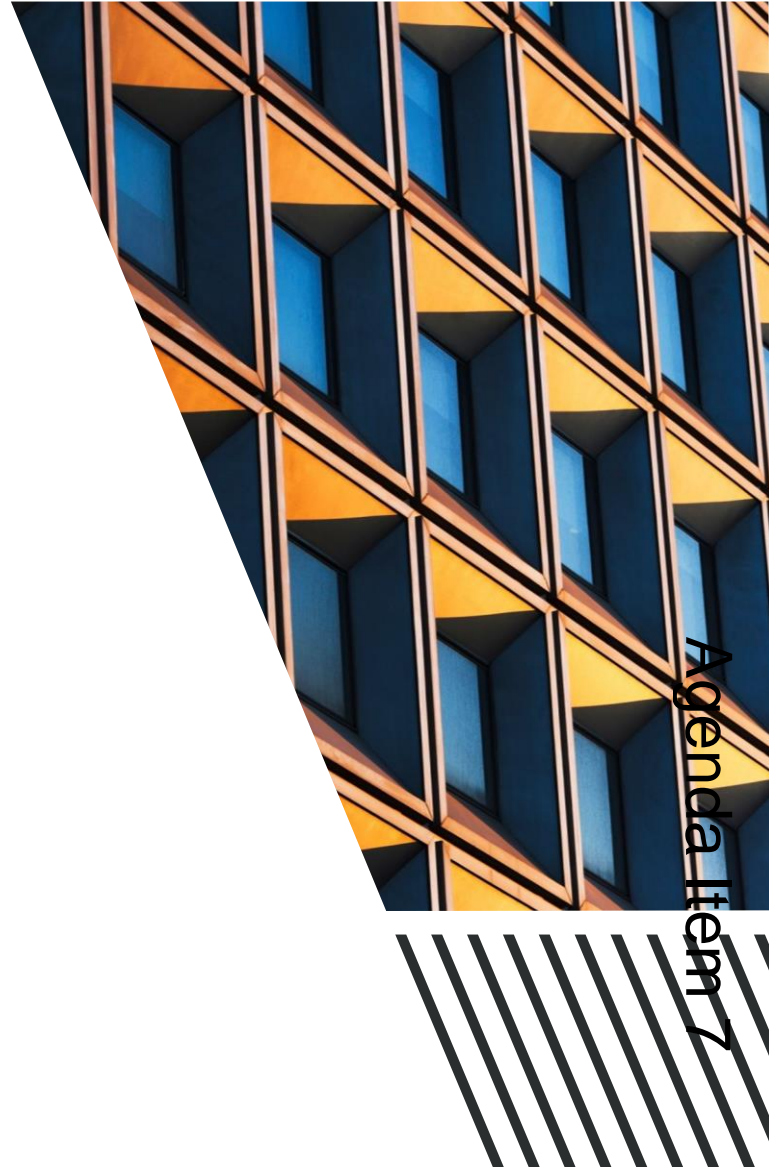
| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Supporting sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing through both policies and delivery of economic development projects | 3.86 |
| 2 | Ensuring equality and diversity is central in all our activities to help support a more inclusive, creative, and innovative economy | 3.54 |
| 3 | Ensuring the benefits of digital transformation and inclusion across all Sefton's communities and businesses | 3.53 |

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Sefton Economic Strategy Update

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Sefton Council's work in supporting the growth of the Borough's economy over the last decade in particular, has ensured that we have remained resilient, attractive and diverse. Our Growth and Strategic Investment Programme – which continued apace through (and despite) the pandemic – means we are now delivering the early phases of our exciting regeneration plans. These commitments will – both in isolation and in what they stimulate – be worth hundreds of millions of pounds to the local economy. We will of course strive to take full advantage of the many opportunities to support the wider development of the local economy, but we recognise that there are challenges to address. We intend to achieve economic growth that works for all Sefton residents. This document provides a basis for the clarification of our commitment to sustainable and inclusive economic growth for the Borough of Sefton.

Everybody recognises that the recent period has been characterised by such seismic shocks, disruption and instability to the global, domestic and local economies, and the Strategy responds to this changing landscape at the local level. It updates and replaces the Sefton Economic Strategy adopted only recently in 2019, and its associated Action Plans, to which the ink had barely dried before the pandemic hit in 2020. The Sefton Recovery Plan in November 2020 provided an immediate analysis and pathway out of the worst of the pandemic. And this October 2022 updated Sefton Economic Strategy reinforces the best and most relevant of what we have said before, and provides a new narrative following the post pandemic research and collaboration with partners.

But Sefton Council has continued to provide leadership and direction, pursuing a robust town centre focussed regeneration strategy, partnership working to bring forward some of our larger scale and complex strategic employment sites, promoting an embedded business support programme engaging with existing businesses to survive and thrive, ensuring over £100m in business support grants were provided to our businesses through the pandemic, investing directly in regeneration and infrastructure, including employment and skills.

Sefton's economic growth ambitions will not happen in isolation, and we will continue to work closely with our Liverpool City Region neighbours, the Combined Authority, Growth Platform/Local Enterprise Partnership and other partners in the private, public and voluntary sectors to help nurture growth and new investment and to support other ambitions relating to social value, climate change and tackling health and economic inequalities.

We must look forward together to ensure Sefton remains an attractive proposition for inward investment, and indeed a desirable place to live, work, and play. Consultation has helped to shape our Strategy, and through this, strong endorsement of its focus on four key thematic objectives emerged, namely:



FOREWORD

- Employment and Opportunities for Work
- Business Growth and Investment
- Regenerated Places
- Social Inclusion and Access for All

The Sefton Economic Strategy and associated Action Plans will focus on these, and therefore will remain a working document. We will be reviewing progress and performance in many stages, enabling us to share our findings and update the measure the Borough's progress. We will also use this to demonstrate to Government the scale of the task and the evidence of tangible projects and programmes which can make a very real difference at the local level to our communities.

The key message remains one of aspiration. We are ambitious for the economy of Sefton, our businesses, and our people. We would be delighted to hear from you if you have any comments on our projects and activities. For

further information please contact Stuart Barnes Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth & Housing) at stuart.barnes@sefton.gov.uk

This is our roadmap to supporting people, place and productivity within a vibrant local economy where our existing business are helped to grow, new businesses are established and thrive, our residents have the skills needed to access the jobs of the future and we collectively support places across all parts of the Borough that we can be proud of.

Cllr Marion Atkinson
Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Skills



CHAPTER 1:

Introduction



61.6%: 99.19

104.19

86.72

72

INTRODUCTION

Sefton

Sefton is a Local Authority in the Liverpool City Region (LCR) stretching from Bootle in the south to Southport in the north and encompasses other settlements including Crosby, Formby and Maghull. The borough is home to 275,000 people and nearly 8,000 businesses.

Sefton provides employment for around 75,000 people but also benefits from excellent connectivity to neighbouring conurbations including Liverpool and Manchester. This connectivity has also resulted in Sefton attracting a number of workers who commute to these nearby destinations. Sefton's coastal location results in a strong visitor economy and to the south port activities, the digital sector is supported by cross-Atlantic fibre links, many professional services firms operate in Sefton and the area also has unique mental healthcare activities which has stimulated some wider public and private sector investment.

In recent years, Sefton Council has worked towards securing investment for projects revitalising Southport Town Deal and Bootle Strand although the area includes numerous areas of deprivation, and the area has a strong relevance to the government Levelling Up Agenda.

The Project

In December 2019 Sefton Council published the Sefton Economic Strategy (SES) Action Plan. This plan followed on from the Local Economic Assessment that was developed into the Economic Framework for Sefton.

The SES Action Plan was published shortly before the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result of the very scale changes on the UK economy and the importance of the visitor economy to Sefton, there was a need to update the original plan. As part of the consideration of changes since 2019 it was also necessary to consider several other large economic drivers created through aspects such as Brexit, the outbreak of the war in Ukraine and the supply chain pressures which have been completed by all these factors.

Covid-19 originally led to the publication of the Sefton Strategic Recovery Plan. Sefton Council are now seeking to update the original SES Action Plan in order to reflect the changing economic situation over the past 3 years. This strategy will therefore build on the original findings with updated evidence, themes and actions that were taken to public consultation in Summer 2022.

Mickledore

Mickledore is an economic development advisory business based in Warrington and has worked with Sefton Council previously. In the recent past, Mickledore was engaged to assist with Sefton's Strategic Recovery Plan. Mickledore also undertakes some work at a Liverpool City Region level.

More widely, Mickledore has developed economic strategies for clients across the country and various inward investment strategies.



INTRODUCTION

Sefton Vision 2030

The strategy is aligned with the Sefton Vision 2030 and wider existing strategies and work on the Digital agenda and Climate Change. The strategy also aligns with Sefton work on Child Poverty; Housing; Climate and to some extent Health & Wellbeing. Work has also been undertaken to ensure that the document is also aligned with the LCRCA who were consulted.



CHAPTER 2:

Evidence



Introduction

An extensive investigation into the evidence took place to update the data used in the SES Action Plan. This data was analysed to identify any key issues for Sefton, and to highlight any changes that may have occurred following the Covid-19 pandemic.

The key evidence points are presented in this report and were used to establish the key themes that form the updated strategy. These were taken to public consultation in Summer 2022.

Sefton's Economic Performance

At a local authority level, Sefton records economic data which is generally favourable compared to the North West Region although slightly less so nationally.

In December 2021, 77.4% of people in Sefton were economically active. This is 0.9 percentage points higher than the North West average, but 1 percentage point lower than nationally.

This is a recurring picture across the key indicators. Sefton performs slightly better than the North West but worse than nationally for the percentage employed as managers and professionals (33.2%), people qualified with NQ4 and above (39.1%) and gross weekly pay for residents (£586.70).

Sefton records a worse position than the national averages for workless households and working age people claiming out of work benefits. Specifically, in December 2020 15.8% of households in Sefton were workless, 2.2 percentage points higher than nationally. 4.3% of Sefton's working age population claimed out of work benefits in 2022, 0.4 percentage points higher than nationally.

Selected core economic statistics- Sefton

| Variable | Sefton | NW England | National (GB) |
|---|--------|------------|---------------|
| Economically active (Dec 2021) | 77.4% | 76.5% | 78.4% |
| Percentage households workless (Dec 2020) | 15.8% | 15.5% | 13.6% |
| Percentage employed as managers or professionals (Dec 2021) | 33.2% | 32.1% | 34.2% |
| Qualified NVQ4 or above (2021) | 39.1% | 38.5% | 43.5% |
| Gross weekly pay for residents (2021) | £587 | £578 | £613 |
| Claimant count (out of work benefits) working age population (2022) | 4.3% | 4.4% | 3.9% |



EVIDENCE

Income Disparity

Whilst at headline levels, Sefton may appear to be an area of average economic performance, the local authority does have areas of severe deprivation.

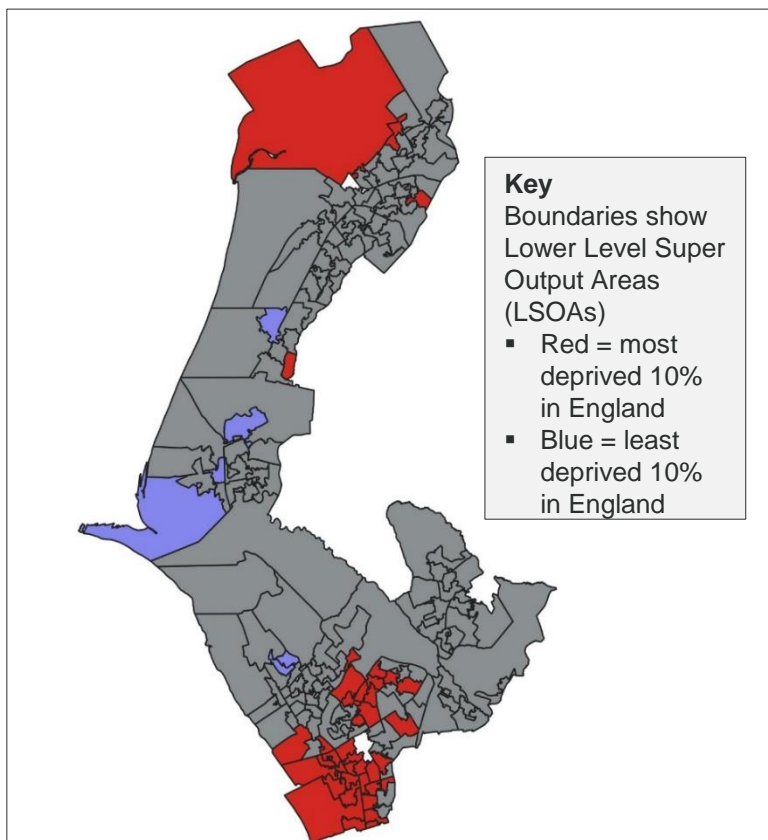
Deprivation is measured in a number of ways illustrated at a local level (Lower Level Super Output Areas) by the Indices of Multiple Deprivation. LSOAs typically contain the same amount of people and as a result the large shaded area to the North of the borough contains a similar number of people as the more densely populated areas.

When income is considered, Sefton has a number of areas where income is in the lowest 10% in England and a few in the highest 10%. The red areas on the map indicate the areas that are among the most deprived 10% in England, and the blue areas indicate the least deprived 10%.

Even these figures mask the scale of deprivation. One area of Bootle is now ranked as the 28th most deprived in terms of income across England (out of 32,844 areas) and its ranking is falling (ranked 197th in 2007).

Income deprivation is not only a serious issue at an individual / family level – a concentration of low levels of income undermines the entire local economy reducing disposable income which can be spent in the area, and creating challenges for the Local Authority in terms of income (lower Council Tax revenues) and expenditure (social support mechanisms) resulting in reduced opportunity for discretionary investment by the Local Authority.

Map of areas of Income Deprivation - Sefton



Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2019 (DLUHC)



Business Activity

One issue impacting on local income is the range of businesses and employment opportunities in Sefton.

In fact, more generally, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) has a low level of business density when considered at a national level. The highest ranked local authority in the City Region is ranked 292 out of 374 local authorities. The average number of businesses in the UK per 1,000 working age people is 66 but in Sefton this figure is only 49.

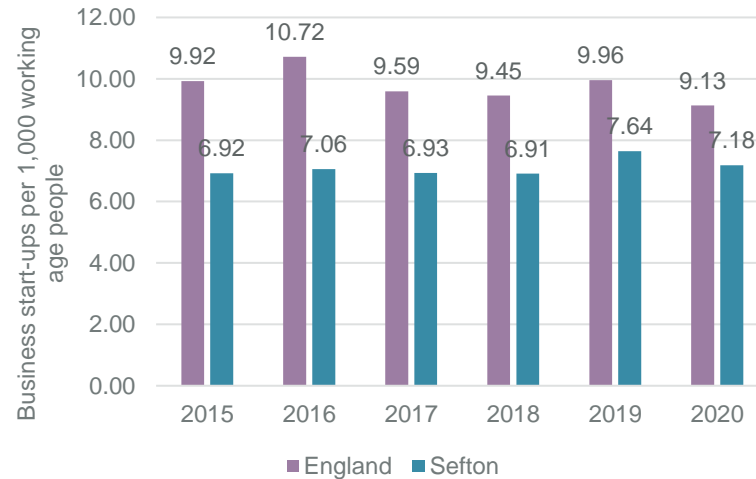
Business Density (business units / 1,000 working age residents) – rank out of 374 Local Authorities



Sefton has continuously and significantly created fewer businesses than England as a whole. The gap was the narrowest in 2020 although even in this year Sefton created 21% fewer businesses per working age person than England.

Year-on-year under-performance in business creation is undermining the wealth creation potential in the area and whilst this is a City Region wide issue, it is also an indicator that can be influenced at a Local Authority level.

Business Start-ups (business units / 1,000 working age residents)



EVIDENCE

Business Activity cont.

It is possible that some private sector start-up activity has been crowded-out by the extent of public sector employment, but whatever the cause, in the majority of Wards within Sefton, the proportion of public sector employment is higher than the average for England.

In 3 Wards within Bootle and Maghull (Ford, Derby and Sudell) the proportion of employees employed by the public sector is >50%.

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 While it is certainly the case that the private sector has been an important employment generator in Sefton – albeit many of the public sector roles within the Borough are likely to be poorly paid. And as public sector employment is decentralised from London, Sefton can be presented as a

Percentage of Public sector employment by Sefton Ward

| Ward | Percentage of employment public sector |
|------------------------|--|
| Ford | 61.9 |
| Derby | 60.5 |
| Sudell | 57.1 |
| Kew | 39.9 |
| St Oswald | 38.4 |
| Linacre | 38.3 |
| Manor | 30.6 |
| Sefton Average | 24.6 |
| Ainsdale | 23.6 |
| Birkdale | 23.0 |
| Harington | 22.6 |
| Litherland | 19.1 |
| Meols | 18.4 |
| Park | 17.3 |
| Church | 17.3 |
| England Average | 16.8 |
| Blundellsands | 15.8 |
| Netherton and Orrell | 14.5 |
| Cambridge | 13.8 |
| Victoria | 10.7 |
| Duke's | 10.5 |
| Molyneux | 10.4 |
| Ravenmeols | 7.2 |
| Norwood | 4.7 |

Higher propensity for public sector employment than average



Lower propensity for public sector employment than average



Out Commuting

In common with many LCR local authorities, Sefton has high levels of out-commuting. 46% of Sefton’s working residents earned their income from outside the Borough at the time of the 2011 census (the last published data). Whilst out-commuting as a percentage of the workforce is not the highest of the local authorities in LCR, the number still represents a significant proportion of residents. This data will be up-dated upon the release of the new census in 2021.

12,000 net out commuters travelled to work in the Liverpool pool, with high levels also travelling to Knowsley (-920)

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Percentage Out-commuting LCR (% of working residents)

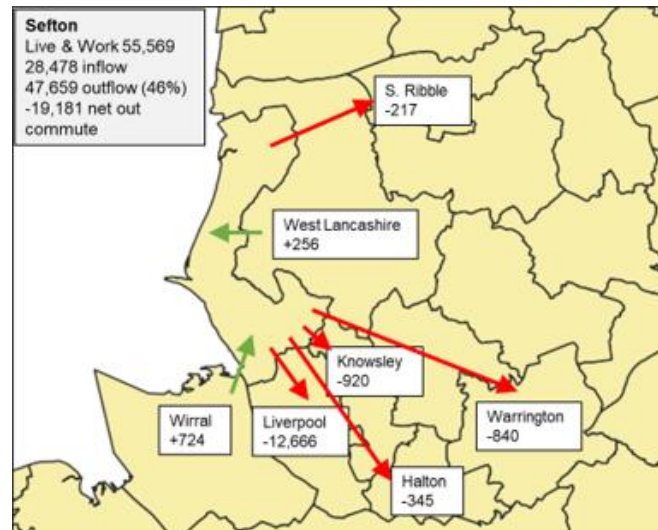
| | Percentage |
|------------|------------|
| Knowsley | 65% |
| St. Helens | 52% |
| Sefton | 46% |
| Halton | 46% |
| Wirral | 37% |
| Liverpool | 30% |

and Warrington (-840). Sefton did receive net in commuters from Wirral (+724) and West Lancashire (+256).

Rail data (overleaf) suggests generally increasing out-commuting over the last two decades.

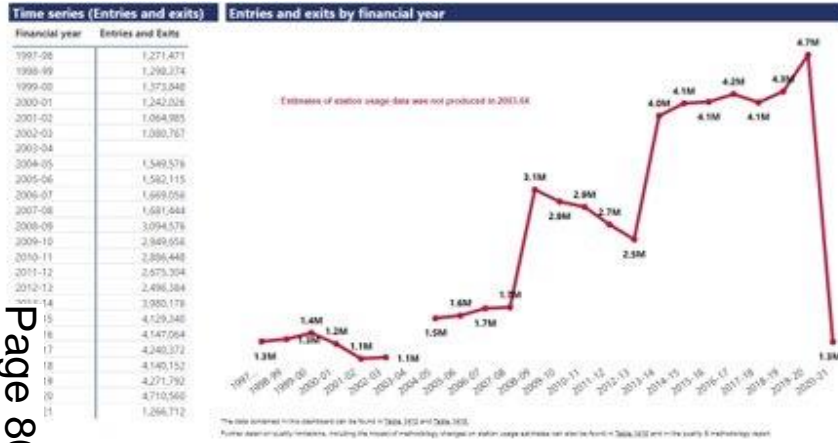
However, train borne out-commuting fell dramatically during the pandemic. Changing work patterns lasting from the impacts of the national lockdowns provide the possibility of a reset. It is likely that many residents will have reconsidered their previous commuter lifestyle. There is the potential for a future reset to increase earning and retained spending in the area.

Net commuting flows Sefton (>100)

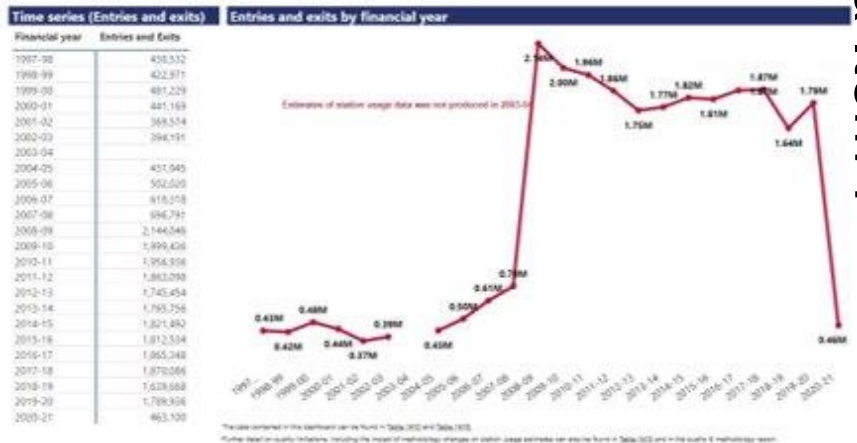


OUT COMMUTING CONT.

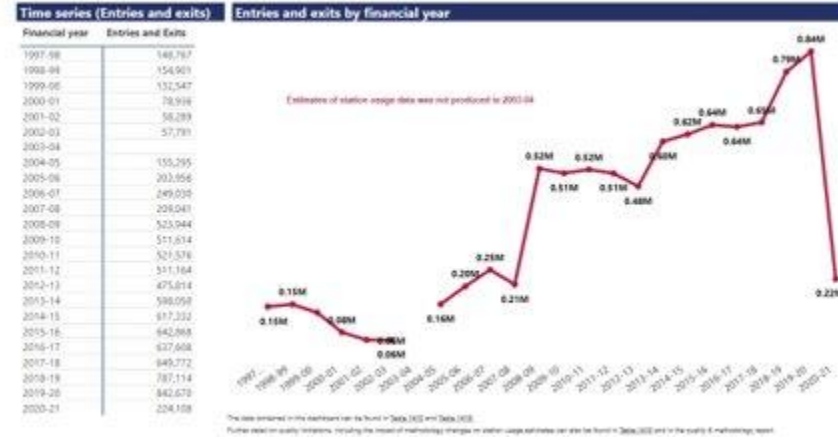
Southport station usage



Maghull Station usage



Combined Bootle station usage (New Strand / Oriel Road)



The station usage graphs show that the number of entries and exits has been increasing in all 3 Sefton stations (Southport, Maghull and Bootle) since 2004-05- (3 stations used as illustrative), reaching a peak in 2019-20. In that year there were 4.7m entries and exits at Southport station alone.

The Covid-19 pandemic caused a severe drop off in the number of people passing through Sefton's stations, as would be expected due to national lockdown restrictions. For example, Southport station saw only 1.3m entries and exits in 2020-21, a reduction of over 72%.

Whilst working patterns have returned towards previous trends in 2022, it will be important to monitor how changing working patterns impact the number of people choosing to out commute from Sefton in the future and whether this returns to previous levels.



Securing a Workforce in the Future

A reconsideration of commuting activity by Sefton residents is likely to be a highly relevant metric for the Sefton economy in the future.

Media commentary describes the ageing population at a national level. According to ONS population projection data, the issue will be more acute in Sefton with projections suggesting a decline of 5,663 in people aged 16-64 (still used as a proxy for 'working age' despite changing retirement ages). This represents a shrinkage of 3.5% in the available workforce. This is a double impact because as the workforce is shrinking, the need for adult social care is likely to increase as a

result of the same ageing demographic trends.

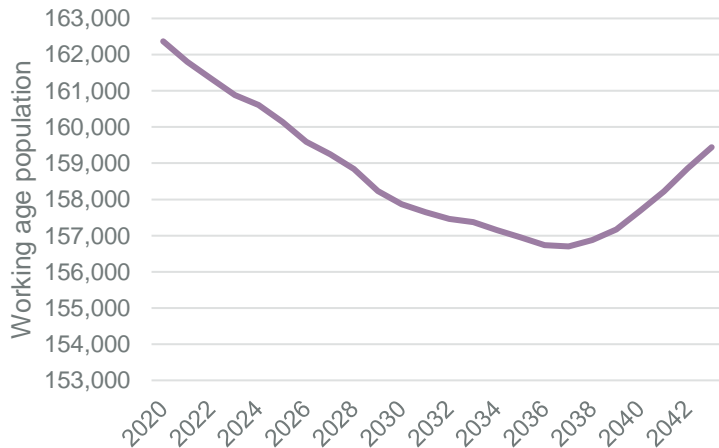
The scale of change is expected to be greater in Sefton than in England as a whole.

Estimates beyond 2038 (when the situation is expected to ease) are somewhat speculative since the population that will be within the working age group by this date have not yet been born.

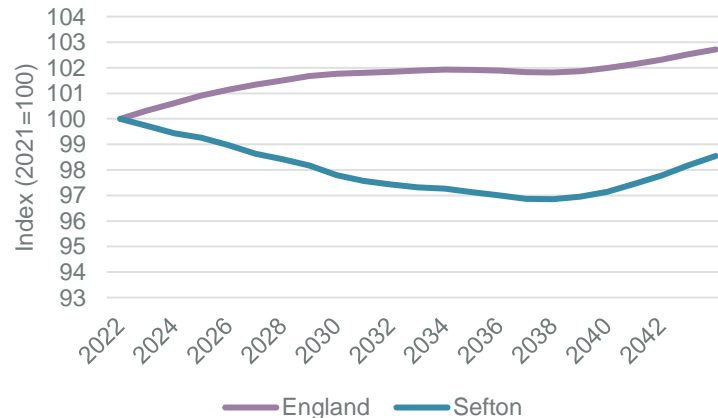
Economic development policies of the next decade are likely to include a focus on the attraction and retention of talent and this has implications for housing and the creation of attractive locations to both live and work.

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Projected population aged 16-64 time series 2020-2042



Index of projected change in population aged 16-64 for Sefton and England



Source: ONS Population projections

EVIDENCE

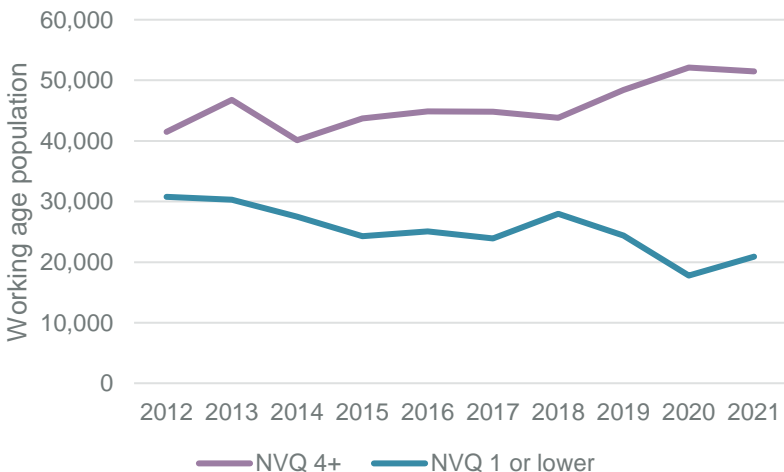
Workforce and Skills Availability

Driving improvements in resident incomes in the future are likely to be strongly influenced by improvements in productivity and the attraction of more knowledge intensive businesses. This shift can only be achieved if the skills of the workforce enables these shifts in the economy.

Data available from the annual population survey in 2021 shows that overall skill levels in Sefton have been improving.

The number of people of working age in Sefton achieving level 4 and above has been increasing whilst the number of people with no skills has been declining. In 2021,

Working age population skills achievement

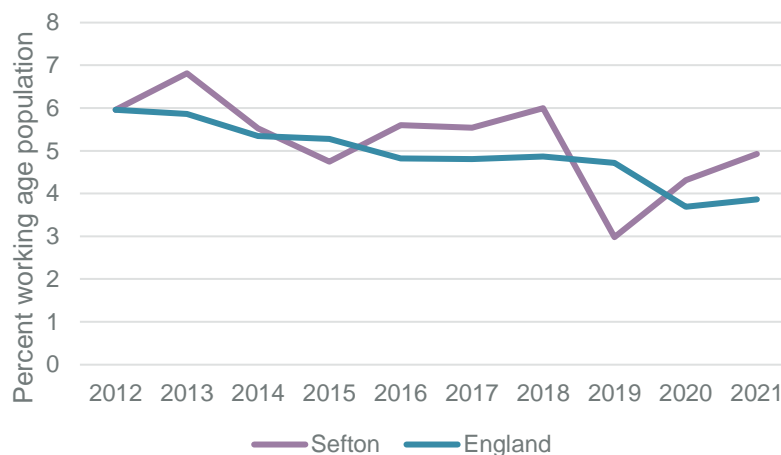


54,500 people in Sefton had qualifications up to NVQ4+ whilst 20,900 people achieved NVQ1 or lower.

Sefton and England are comparable in terms of the proportion of the working age population with no skills. There has been a downward trend since 2012, although Sefton saw a slight jump between 2019 and 2021 likely to have been impacted by the pandemic.

In addition, according to experimental ONS data the area is mid-ranked in terms of the workforce at risk of a loss of employment due to automation (129th of 354 Authorities ranked).

Proportion of working age population with no skills



EVIDENCE

Workforce and Skills Availability cont.

Covid-19 had a very significant impact on employment despite national government intervention. The impact of a lockdown on the visitor economy and the hospitality industry was particularly severe.

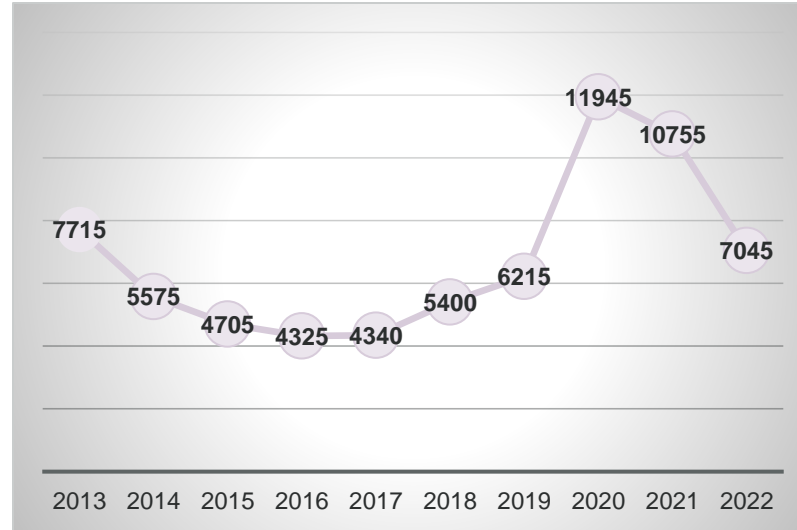
Despite concerns about Sefton's resilience given the importance of the visitor economy, Sefton has out-performed the national picture when claimant count levels are considered with a less pronounced impact of Covid-19 on out of work benefits and a more rapid recovery than England as a whole.

At its peak of the pandemic Sefton reached 11,945 people claiming out of work benefits, but this figure has dropped significantly to 7045 in 2022. This does however remain 113.6% above pre pandemic levels and in many cases the pandemic's impact has been extremely serious at an individual level.

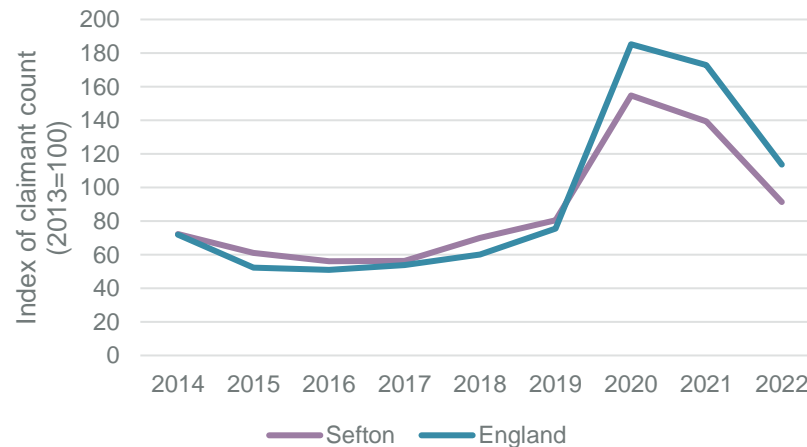
Comparing Sefton to the UK against a 2013 index of 100, in 2022 Sefton's total out of work claimant count stood at 91.3 versus 113.6 in the UK. Even during the lockdowns in 2020 Sefton performed better, with an index score of 154.8 compared with 185.3 in the UK on average.

At a Sefton wide level skills and employment data can be viewed in a positive light although, as ever, the average figures mask areas of severe deprivation.

Total out of work claimant count Sefton



Total out of work claimant count Sefton v England index (2012=100)



EVIDENCE

Economic Development and Place

Economic development is increasingly about place – employment and a living environment at the confluence of transport routes and growth creates a critical mass of activity and generates ideas and opportunity.

Key to this critical mass is the work / life balance and this can be measured in terms of residential demand. Sefton has a strong demand for new housing provision and the house price affordability ratio is lower than elsewhere in the LCR as a whole with a ratio of 6.8 versus 5.5 (although recently affordability is slightly ahead of Wirral at a Local Authority level). These ratios indicate the strength of demand although increasingly unaffordable housing is now a significant problem for many residents seeking to access the housing ladder.

There is a clear need for additional housing provision and to create a mixed variety of properties including both affordable properties in areas of high demand and more aspirational housing in areas of income deprivation. This priority is reflected in Sefton's emerging Housing Strategy which focusses on ensuring that housing needs are met over the next 5 years through the provision of the right type of housing in the right locations. The Council will achieve this through closer working with private sector providers and social landlords, as well as through the direct provision of high quality housing for both outright sale, intermediate home ownership products and social rent in areas where demand is highest.

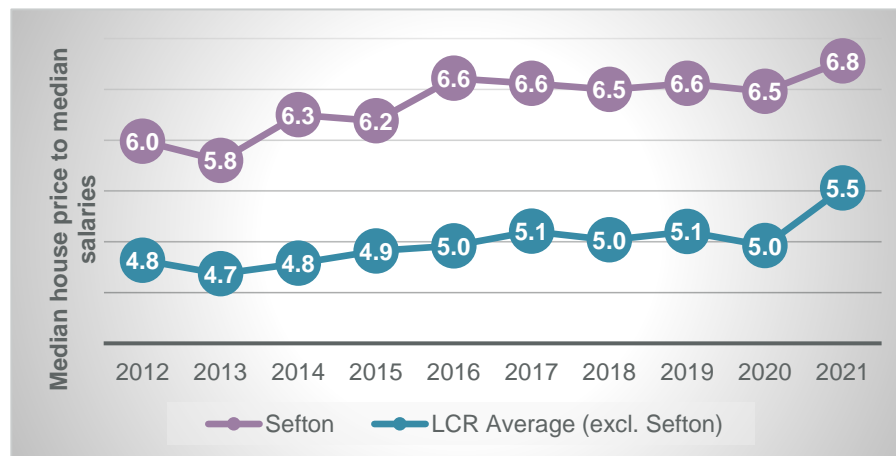
Estimated employment Land Need (based on completions) 2012-37

Recent employment land studies also suggest that there is a shortfall of available land against current demand.

| | B1 | B2 | Small Scale B8 |
|----------------------------|-------|-------|----------------|
| Sefton | 24.2 | 15.0 | 9.5 |
| LCR (plus West Lancashire) | 235.7 | 437.3 | 118.2 |

Source: GL Hearn SHELMA for LCR 2018

Housing Affordability ratio – Sefton & LCR



Source: Housing data DLUHC



EVIDENCE

Economic Development & Place cont.

Recent employment land studies also suggest that there is a shortfall of available land against current demand.

There is a need to provide employment land but with a focus on land which can accommodate higher employment density space especially where higher value employment can be created. Land constraints in
on suggest that demand for large floorplate uses
lower employment densities should be resisted.

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EVIDENCE

Disparities within Sefton

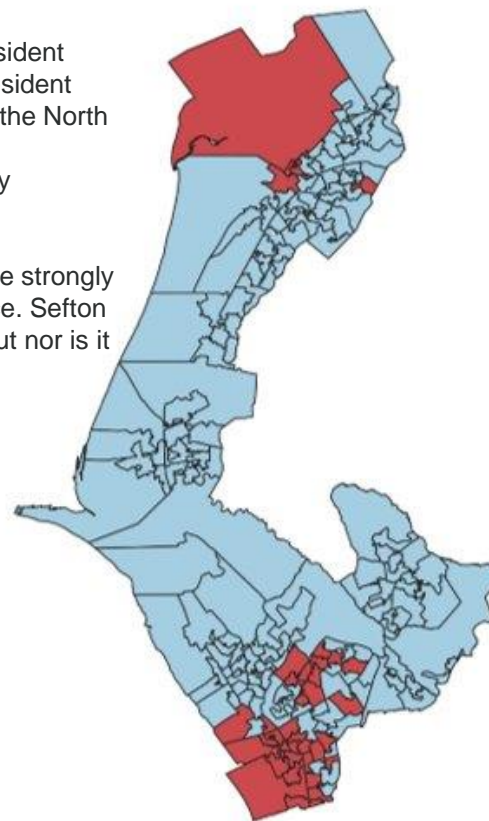
When setting out an economic narrative for Sefton it is important that the story of the Borough is told in sections. At a Local Authority level, for many economic measures, average performance is unremarkable but this masks fundamental issues.

When data is presented at a Sefton level the case for intervention is often lost. Sefton has 233 areas (Lower Level Super Output Areas) in the 10% least deprived in the country – but double the average proportion

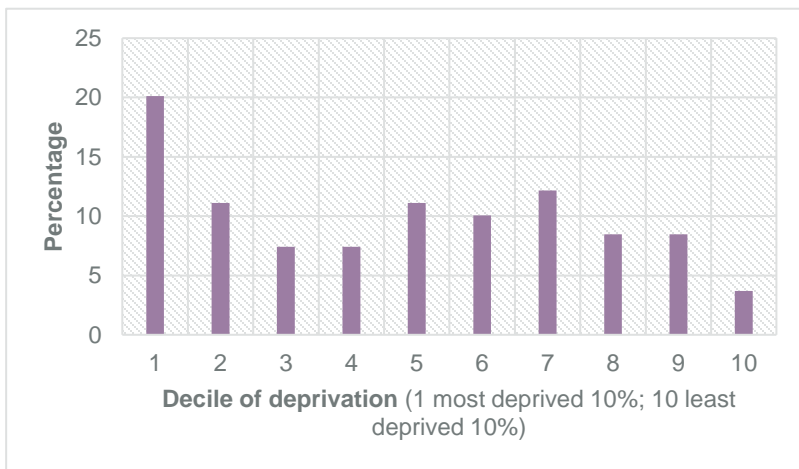
in the most deprived. These are generally (but not exclusively) in the south of the Borough.

On average measures, such as resident income, Sefton records average resident incomes (2021) at 3% higher than the North West average and this is clearly a misleading story in terms of the key economic narrative.

Data and interventions can be more strongly aligned to the requirements of place. Sefton is not a one size fits all Authority but nor is it as simple as a north / south split.



The distribution of deprivation in Sefton – percentages of areas in different levels of deprivation. Map shows Sefton areas in the 10% most deprived in England



The Four Themes

Following the review of the updated evidence for Sefton, the analysis led to the establishment of four key themes that shape Sefton's updated economic strategy.

These themes are:

- Employment and opportunities for work

- Business Growth & Investment
- Social inclusion and access for all
- Regenerated places

These themes along with 25 corresponding key issues were taken to public consultation. The results of the consultation are discussed in the following chapter.



CHAPTER 3:

Consultation



Overview of the Consultation

Between 20th July and 17th August 2022 Sefton Council's Economic Growth and Housing Service led a public consultation to gather views on the updated evidence and proposed themes.

A draft evidence report was produced and circulated to over 2,600 businesses and developers/investors with a link to an online survey. In addition, the report was circulated to a wide range of internal and external groups, networks and organisations, and several specific face to face briefings and online consultation forums took place.

The face to face briefings and online consultation forums included:

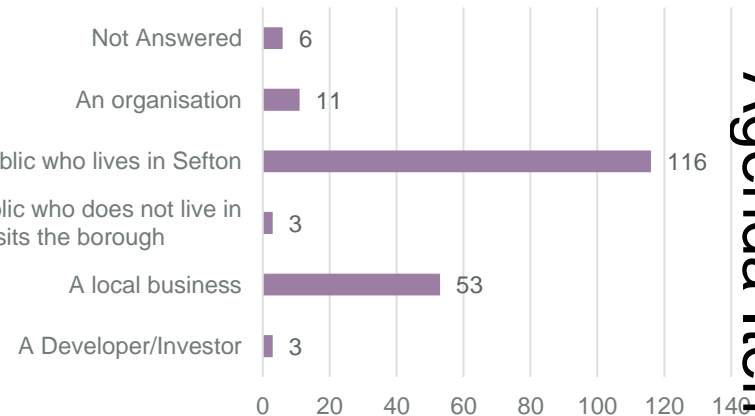
- Sefton Economic Forum-15 July attended by over 100 business delegates
- Sefton in Mind-27 July attended by over 10 representatives
- People First Merseyside-11 August attended by over 20 Board members
- Sefton Partnership Board-15 August attended by over 15 board members

To further increase public engagement the details of the consultation were shared on social media, and an easy read version of the evidence report and survey were produced. Equality questions were included within the survey to gain insight on the views of specific groups.

In total, 192 people completed the survey. Of these, 60.4% were members of the public who live in Sefton and 27.6% were local businesses. The survey produced quantitative results that have been analysed to understand the importance of the chosen themes, and several corresponding key issues, to the people, businesses and organisations of Sefton.

Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to answer qualitative questions. The comments have been analysed and summarised to represent the frequently recurring key points and combined with feedback taken from consultation sessions and individual contributions outside of the survey.

Sefton Economic Strategy Consultation Survey Respondents



Quantitative Results

Participants of the consultation survey were asked to score each of the four suggested themes out of 5 depending on how important they regard them to be, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

When taking the mean score for each theme, the theme that ranked as most important was **employment and opportunities for work** with a score of 4.55. 130 respondents (68.4%) ranked this theme as 5, the highest of importance.

However, the difference between the 4 themes is small. The lowest ranking of the 4 was **social inclusion and access for all** with a mean score of 4.12. 101 respondents (52.6%) scored this theme a 5 for importance.

The respondents were then asked to rate key issues relating to each theme from 1-5 associated with the level of

importance the issue has for them, with 5 being the highest and 1 the lowest.

The issue with the highest average score was to **deliver a range of progression pathways to better connect Sefton's young people with opportunities in the local labour market and make successful transition to the adult world of work**. 118 respondents (61.5%) rated this as a 5, the highest level of importance.

When ranking all 25 key issues from across the 4 themes against each other, 4 out of 5 of the Employment and Opportunities for Work key issues appear in the top 10. Therefore, this is clearly an area of high importance for consultees.

The full tables of rankings for each theme can be found overleaf.

Sefton Economic Strategy Consultation Survey – Ranking of Themes



Employment and Opportunities for Work

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|--|---------------|
| 1 | Deliver a range of progression pathways to better connect Sefton's young people with opportunities in the local labour market and make successful transition to the adult world of work. | 4.16 |
| 2 | Deliver accessible learning for residents of all ages to gain the skills required by our employers and move into or move up in work | 3.91 |
| 3 | Provide support for people with disabilities or poor health to reach their full potential in learning and work. | 3.90 |
| 4 | Develop innovative partnerships with employers to deliver better quality careers and improve progression routes for Sefton residents, prioritising the most vulnerable such as care leavers. | 3.89 |
| 5 | Provide advice and support for workless and inactive people disconnected from the labour market to enter sustainable, decent work. | 3.84 |

Business Growth and Investment

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Provide more support for businesses of any size or sector (including social businesses) seeking to grow and create new jobs | 4 |
| 2 | Focus more support on retaining existing companies, helping them to grow in the borough | 3.99 |
| 3 | Promote Sefton to seek and attract new inward investment opportunities | 3.89 |
| 4 | Focus support on businesses trading in Sefton's town centre's | 3.84 |
| 5 | Support Sefton businesses seeking to secure local supply chain opportunities from large public sector contracts | 3.83 |
| 6 | Deliver support to create new opportunities for people wanting to start their own business | 3.8 |
| 7 | Develop adequate land and business premises for employment to meet the borough's needs | 3.47 |

Regenerated Places

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|--|---------------|
| 1 | Using vacant and underutilised floorspace to support other uses. (e.g. vacant shops /offices etc) | 4.00 |
| 2 | Provide a mix of different housing types and tenures, including housing that people can afford. | 3.96 |
| 3 | Creating quality outdoor environments in our town centres which support health and wellbeing for different age groups (Younger/Older People) and support diversity. | 3.82 |
| 4 | Marketing Sefton's excellent visitor destinations, quality attractions and events to enhance the growth of the Borough's economy and boost its status as a place to work, live and do business. | 3.79 |
| 5 | Providing town centre's with a diverse range of services and uses to support the business and residential communities around them. e.g. health & social care, more social business opportunities | 3.76 |
| 6 | Undertake housing led regeneration in less popular parts of the borough where our oldest housing stock is found. | 3.72 |
| 7 | Encourage and celebrate local cultural, heritage and local identity. | 3.49 |
| 8 | Encourage town centre living to help create diversity and support local economic resilience | 3.37 |
| 9 | Developing a shared drive to net zero and climate adaptation for all who work and live in Sefton and ensure we avoid negative impacts on our most disadvantaged communities | 3.32 |
| 10 | Moving away from car based to more sustainable travel transport and encouraging active travel throughout the borough | 3.10 |

Social Inclusion and Access for All

| Rank | Key issue | Average score |
|------|---|---------------|
| 1 | Supporting sustainable improvements in health and wellbeing through both policies and delivery of economic development projects | 3.86 |
| 2 | Ensuring equality and diversity is central in all our activities to help support a more inclusive, creative, and innovative economy | 3.54 |
| 3 | Ensuring the benefits of digital transformation and inclusion across all Sefton's communities and businesses | 3.53 |

Ranking of Key Issues

The tables above display the results of the ranking of key issues by theme. They have been ranked by their average importance score. The key issues highlighted are the 10 themes with the highest average score for importance overall.



CONSULTATION

Qualitative Results

Overall, there was generally positive support for the choice of themes. In particular, a frequent comment was that business growth is the starting point for success in the other 3 thematic areas, and the interconnectivity between the themes should be highlighted in the strategy.

Mickledore contend that whilst this is undoubtedly the case, economic growth over the last 3 decades suggest that only proactive or policy initiatives ensure that this interconnectivity can take place and that it is not an automatic result.

A recurring theme from contributors was sustainability. In their detailed response to the strategy, LCRCA suggested that the Net Zero theme could flow throughout the whole strategy.

Under the theme of *Employment and Opportunities for Work* a common suggestion was that there should be more opportunities for training and reskilling, and advice and guidance for employment for both younger and the older populations. In particular, several respondents would like to see young people more prepared for working life from school age.

The strategy could also consider links between education and R&D between Sefton and Liverpool City Region given that for the most part the R&D assets of LCR are outside the Local Authority area.

Regarding *Business Growth and Investment*, consultees sought more support for SMEs ranging from financial support, to events and networking spaces. Concerns were raised about the lack of affordable and usable office space/employment land in Sefton and requests to emphasise Sefton's growing sectors to achieve greater investment aims.

The consultation highlighted that under *Regenerated Places*, people in Sefton would like town centres and tourist areas to be more attractive, green and accessible for people to live, visit and work. However, many suggested that investment should be more evenly distributed outside of tourist areas. Two of the most common comments were related to transport and the lack of accessible green spaces across the local authority.

Comments relating to *Social Inclusion and Access for All* were frequently associated with health and wellbeing, and particularly how this impacts the disparity in opportunities across Sefton. There was general agreement that there cannot be a one size fits all approach for the whole of Sefton. Another key concern was how Sefton will adapt to manage the impacts of an ageing population including reskilling and social/support groups. Concerns were also raised about disability access and digital inclusion.



CONSULTATION

Conclusion

It appears from the responses that the consultation exercise reached a wide range of people and that the participation was reasonably strong. There has been support for the approach taken by the Council with qualitative points which have been useful in strengthening some of the themes raised.

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CHAPTER 4:

Conclusions





Employment and Opportunities for Work

Continued work on pathways into work and skills & development activity underpins the entire strategy and is likely to be increasingly important given economic challenges, the changing nature of employment and the ageing demographic



Business Growth and Investment

Sefton has a number of core private and public investments which can generate greater opportunities for local business growth and more start-up activity and smaller scale inbound investment – all broadening the business base and employment opportunities.



Regenerated Places

An improved environment to live, work and attract visitors and investment is a key pillar of the strategy – but the ambitious investment programme can, itself, create opportunities for local business, help develop supply chains and create employment and skills development programmes



Social Inclusion and Access for All

It is clear that any 'trickle down' benefits of economic growth do not reach all communities without proactive work to enable access to employment and wider services. Extreme deprivation undermines communities and also undermines the ability of the Local Authority to work on wider initiatives.



CONCLUSIONS

SES Action Plan – Previous Strategy

This strategy provides an update to the Sefton Economic Strategy (SES) Action Plan that was published by Sefton Council in December 2019. Following on from the Local Economic Assessment and the Economic Framework for Sefton. That Plan incorporated over-arching and interdependent strategies and policies at a national, sub-regional and local level.

Page 96
The SES Action Plan (from the previous strategy) put forward a Framework for Action. This framework established 3 key themes that link with economic and inclusive growth challenges in Sefton. These were:

- **Places** - giving priority to new housing and commercial development, the regeneration and revitalisation of Sefton's towns and broader investment in place-making and low carbon activities.
- **Productivity** - recognising that the priority of creating more jobs, more businesses and business growth in Sefton should be balanced with action to improve the quality of work and how much it pays.
- **People** - putting Sefton's residents at the heart of the economic Framework and equipping them with the skills and confidence needed to participate in a tough labour market and make a positive contribution to Sefton's economy.

These themes remain highly relevant to the update and have not changed as a result of the recent economic headwinds. In some cases, in particular in the people theme, the selection is even more relevant now than at the time it was drafted.

Following on from this, the SES Action Plan established seven broad action areas that together set up the strategy for Sefton's inclusive Economic Growth. These are set out below with each action's objective and key themes of priority actions:

1. **Development and Infrastructure:** To secure the delivery of new development in Sefton which supports economic growth including the creation of new employment and the delivery of major regeneration projects and improving and maintaining existing infrastructure.
2. **Business Growth and Enterprise:** To grow the business base through creating and growing new local, private sector and social enterprises; To embrace growth and ambition across the business base and provide more focused intervention to realise potential where it is considered greatest, which include key opportunity sectors and target geographies.
3. **Inward Investment:** To secure new inward investment targeting higher productive sectors.



CONCLUSIONS

4. Education and Employment: Sefton Council and its partners and stakeholders need to invest in the borough's future talent pool to ensure young people get a good start in life and can access sustainable employment opportunities offering progression pathways to higher levels of pay and job satisfaction; Education-industry engagement facilitated to match the supply of skills to employer demands, and lifetime learning needs to be embraced to provide opportunities for reskilling and upskilling to meet changing skill need.

5. Page 97
Configuring Public Services: To build a critical mass of self-sustaining community-led enterprises delivering services and managing community assets in Sefton, which are creating jobs and bringing new social investment to the borough.

6. Generating New Finance: To generate new sources of income and external resources to Invest in Sefton, and ensure that these resources are sustained in the long-term.

7. Promoting Sefton: To change internal and external perceptions of Sefton so that the Borough's strengths, qualities and ambitions are increasingly recognised and there is a shift away from any negative perceptions.

Economic Changes since the SES Action Plan

Since the publishing of the SES Action Plan in December 2019, several large events have taken place that have had

an impact on the economic situation at a local, national and global level.

The most significant of these is the Covid-19 pandemic, which caused the UK to be in and out of lockdowns throughout 2020 and 2021. The immediate impact of the lockdowns were the rise in people claiming universal credit due to loss of employment, and the closure of many businesses that were not able to survive the effects of the pandemic. There were also huge impacts to people's health and wellbeing.

As the lockdowns have ended and life has returned to relative normality, it is important to reflect on the lasting impacts of the pandemic, and subsequently how it has shaped lives and local economies in the long term.

At a national level, the Office for Budget Responsibility has suggested that Covid-19 has resulted in a permanent 2% scarring on economic output. This scarring is likely to have been most focused on business-to-consumer service activities such as hospitality.

At a local economy level, one of the biggest long term changes is the shift in working patterns. It is now much more common for companies to offer fully remote or hybrid working. This has had a variety impacts of including changes to commuting patterns, uses of transport, footfall in town centres and work-life balance priorities.



CONCLUSIONS

In addition, the pandemic, in combination with the UK exit from the EU on 31st January 2020 and the invasion of Ukraine by Russia in February 2022, has had a knock-on effect on the cost of living in the UK. By summer 2022 the UK was experiencing supply chain discontinuity which in turn has created inflation and a cost of living crisis that is forecast to get worse throughout the winter into 2023 due to the rising cost of energy bills and food. Citi Bank have forecast the UK inflation will hit 18.6% by as early as the end of 2023 (although official estimates are lower).

These three major events have also had an impact on trade patterns, which affects businesses, employment and investment.

The Updated Strategy

As a result of these major economic dislocations, Sefton Council sought to update the SES Action Plan to reflect changing priorities for the residents and businesses of Sefton.

Therefore, following the analysis of the updated evidence the strategy has been based around the four themes (employment and opportunities for work, business growth & investment, social inclusion and access for all, and regenerated places). They follow on from the original priorities of the SES Action Plan, but they also allow for the strategy to reflect economic shifts that have occurred in Sefton since 2019. The reasons for the choice of themes

are:

Employment and Opportunities for Work

In the short term, unemployment arising post Covid-19 remains above the pre-pandemic levels. Over the longer term, there remain areas of high worklessness in Sefton or areas where only low skilled opportunities exist.

Whilst skills levels have been improving in Sefton, the proportion of people in the borough with no skills remains higher than the UK average.

There is a need to continue projects in pathways into work and to continue the work on upskilling in both the young and adult populations. This time intensive work is recognised as a key priority for the local economy and underpins wider work on the attraction of investment and social inclusion. The wider work on the regeneration of places is one of the initiatives that can help create the employment opportunities.

Business Growth and Investment

LCR as a whole records a low business density compared to the UK average and this is an area where Sefton can influence outcomes at a local level. There were 49 businesses per 1000 working age people in Sefton in 2020, and a lower than average business start-up rate. The strategy can provide a greater focus on start-up activity as well as continuing to encourage investment more generally.



The Updated Strategy cont.

In addition, Sefton is reliant on the public sector for much of its employment. Encouraging private sector investment will temper this reliance – and broaden the diversity of employment reducing the risk that continued budget difficulties for the public sector erodes jobs and incomes. Greater local employment opportunities are likely to be filled by residents who are otherwise commuting into neighbouring Authorities (especially Liverpool City Centre).

Page 99
There are opportunities for growth. The digital and creative sectors and business services generally have both generated significant new businesses for the Borough whilst significant opportunities exist which can further drive business opportunities – the very significant mental health campus at Maghull has drawn in new mental health related businesses and the Port of Liverpool offers an opportunity for growth of the economy, albeit with a need to better connect the local (and particularly deprived) communities into those opportunities and to improve the carbon footprint of the activity.

Regenerated Places

Continued investment in places is recognised as an important pillar of any economic strategy creating the infrastructure and land & property that can enable business growth, investing in assets that support the visitor economy, reinvesting in local assets and public realm to create an improved living environment, and ensuring that there is a mixed residential offer to offset unaffordability pressures and

attract greater numbers of working age residents.

As part of the government's current policy of Levelling Up, the Levelling Up White Paper was produced. The White Paper set out the 6 types of capital (see diagram overleaf) which, when addressed, can create opportunities for upwards spirals in economic prosperity. The approach includes the improvement in the physical capital of an area – although only as part of a wider strategy.

This economic strategy for Sefton highlights the need for skills, employment and place-based investment as the foundations for a strengthening economy.

Social Inclusion and Access for All

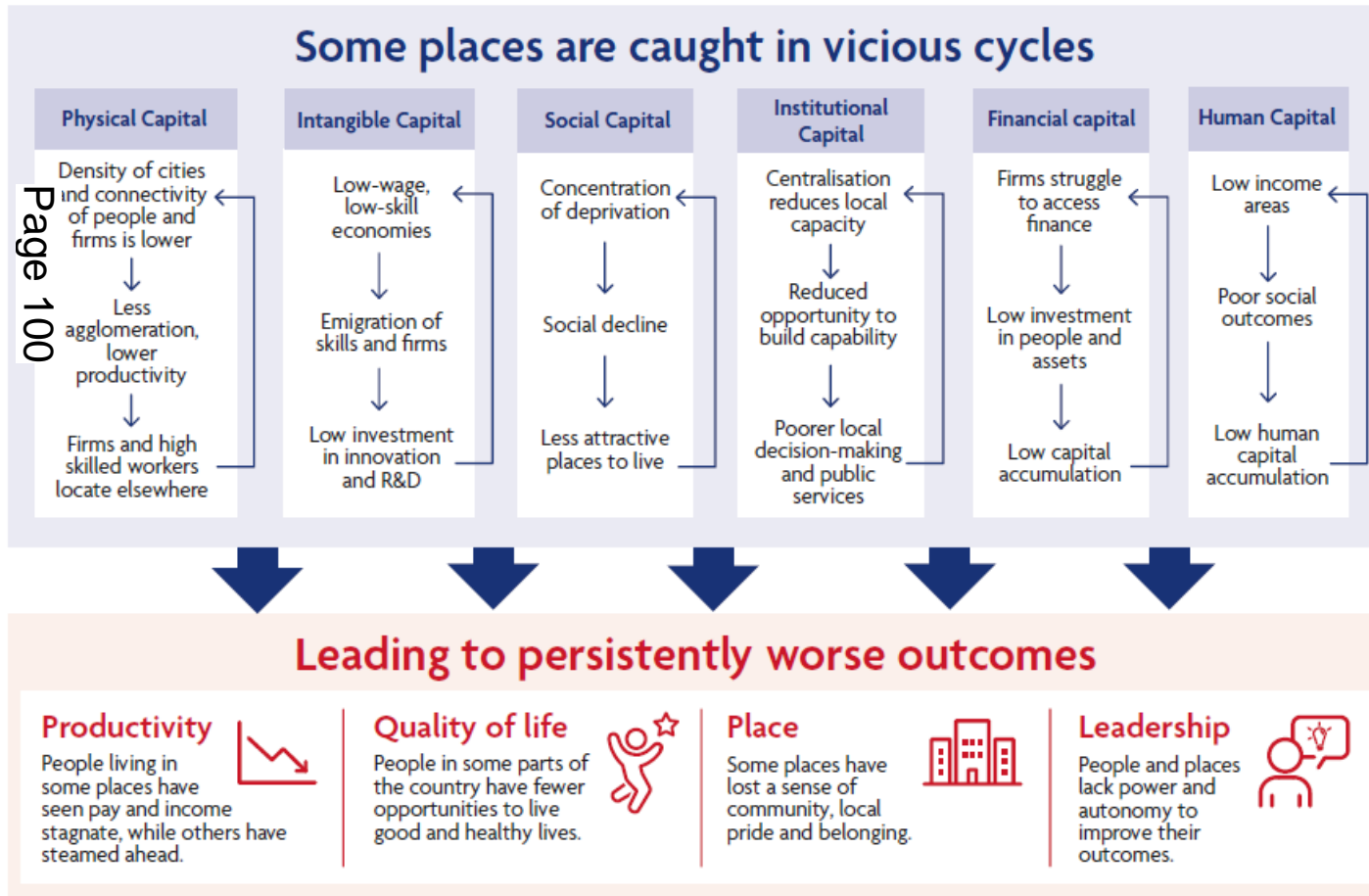
It is clear that there remain high levels of deprivation in parts of Sefton, and wide disparities between LSOAs across the borough. The continuous cycle of low income and poverty undermines potential for stronger economic growth and impacts financially on the Local Authorities ability to further address issues. The key initiative in tackling deprivation is the continued efforts to increase access to work.

Improvements in levels and the quality of employment will be important to balance against the wider economic / social challenges of an ageing population and the burden that this will create for the Council.



CONCLUSIONS

Six capitals of local economies – taken from the UK Government Levelling Up White Paper 2022.



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CONCLUSIONS

In General

The conclusions from the public consultation are that there is overall positive support for the four chosen themes and that they represent the most important priorities for people in Sefton post-Covid. There was also a recognition that there is an interlinkage between the themes.

Many of those consulted believe that growing and investing in businesses is the starting point for Sefton to be successful at providing employment opportunities, regeneration and to Page 101 creating an inclusive economy. Employment and opportunities for work was rated as the most important theme to those that responded to the survey. It is recognised that there is a need for work within communities to ensure that local residents are able to secure the employment opportunities created by new and growing employers.

Upon reflection of the previous strategy, evidence and consultation, it was decided that it was appropriate to reduce the number of themes and actions to set up a more manageable strategy that addresses the current key issues and puts Sefton on the pathway for a successful future.

The following Actions chapter breaks down the themes by key issues and current projects/programmes that Sefton Council are undertaking to act on them. Each theme has

measurable objectives. Many of the actions relate back to the original actions in the SES Action Plan.

Current Economic Outlook

The wider macro economic environment in the UK has appeared to have worsened during the preparation of this strategy in 2022. Supply chain dislocation has created inflationary pressures which are eroding business competitiveness and uncertainty is limiting any further investment and growth. Inflation is likely to impact on consumer spending in late 2022 and 2023 and this will, again, impact on those sectors of the economy reliant on discretionary consumer expenditure.

Sefton will not be immune from the wider economic pressures and it is likely that deprived communities will face the greatest problems in terms of inflation on basic household items.

The strategy, based on employment pathways and training linked to business start-ups and smaller scale incremental business investment offers an approach to address some of the issues locally. It will also be important to ensure that the place based investments underway are directly linked into creating the maximum local impacts – in terms of contracts, supply chains, employment and skills.



CHAPTER 5:

Actions



ACTIONS

The specific actions are part of a separate document being developed by the relevant departments of the Council in response to this strategy

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| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) | Date of Meeting: | 17 January 2023 |
| Subject: | Work Programme 2022/23, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan | | |
| Report of: | Chief Legal and Democratic Officer | Wards Affected: | All |
| Cabinet Portfolio: | Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2022/23; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee; to consider the views of the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services in response to a request of the Committee concerning the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council’s Enforcement Activity Working Group; and to update on issues associated with the reporting on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Digital Inclusion Working Group .

Recommendation: That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2022/23, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) the Committee considers items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 3 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the work programme referred to in (1) above;
- (3) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted;
- (4) consideration be given to the views of the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services in response to a request of the Committee concerning the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council’s Enforcement

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Activity Working Group;

- (5) no further updates be provided on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Digital Inclusion Working Group; and
- (6) the presentation by the Chief Executive of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority on the Service Delivery Plan 2022/23 be made to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 7 March 2023.

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2022/23 and identify scrutiny review topics which would demonstrate that the work of the Overview and Scrutiny 'adds value' to the Council.

The pre-scrutiny process assists Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues before making formal decisions.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

No alternative options have been considered as the Overview and Scrutiny Committee needs to approve its Work Programme and identify scrutiny review topics.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

There are no direct financial implications arising from this report. Any financial implications arising from the consideration of a key decision or relating to a recommendation arising from a Working Group review will be reported to Members at the appropriate time.

(A) Revenue Costs – see above

(B) Capital Costs – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|--|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): None | |
| Legal Implications: None | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate | |

emergency implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Work Programme will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: None directly applicable to this report. |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of reports, as referenced in the Work Programme, relating to the review of Winter Service and Operational Plan; the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2019/20; the Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services; and Green Sefton 2019/20 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020/21. |
| Place – leadership and influencer: None directly applicable to this report. |
| Drivers of change and reform: None directly applicable to this report but reports would be submitted to the Committee detailing how the Council is leading on beneficial changes to be made with reference to United Utilities charging policies and new houses being sold as leasehold. |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of a report in the Work Programme relating to the Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth |
| Greater income for social investment: None directly applicable to this report. |
| Cleaner Greener: None directly applicable to this report but the Committee would be made aware of such issues via the receipt of reports, as referenced in the Work Programme, relating to the review of Winter Service and Operational Plan; the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2019/20; the Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services; Green Sefton 2019/20 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2020/21 together with the implementation of recommendations arising from the Shale Gas Working Group. |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

This report is not subject to LD and FD comments. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from this report will be included in those reports as appropriate.

- Assistant Director of Place (Operational In-House Services)
- Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)
- Assistant Director of Place (Communities)
- Assistant Director of Place (Highways and Public Protection)
- Assistant Director of Place (Commercial Development)
- Cabinet Member – Locality Services
- Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services

(B) External Consultations

- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority
- Sefton CVS
- Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority

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Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|--|
| Contact Officer: | Paul Fraser |
| Telephone Number: | 0151 934 2068 |
| Email Address: | Paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2022/2023
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

Introduction/Background

1. WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

1.1 The proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2022/23 is set out in **Appendix 1** to the report. The programme has been produced in liaison with the appropriate Heads of Service, whose roles fall under the remit of the Committee. The Work Programme was approved by the Committee on 28 June 2022.

1.2 The Work Programme has been produced based on items included in last year's Programme.

1.3 Members are requested to consider whether there are any other items that they wish the Committee to consider, that fall within the terms of reference of the Committee. The Work Programme will be submitted to each meeting of the Committee during 2022/23 and updated, as appropriate.

1.4 Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2022/23

The Work Programme indicates that a presentation will be made to this meeting of the Committee by the Chief Executive of the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority about the Service Delivery Plan 2022/23. The new Chief Executive has very recently taken up her new position and is not yet in a position to make the presentation to this meeting. Accordingly, it is recommended that the presentation be made to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 7 March 2023.

2. SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2022/23

2.1 It is usual practice for the Committee to appoint a Working Group(s) to undertake a scrutiny review of services during the Municipal Year.

2.2 However, at its meeting held on 28 June 2022 the Committee agreed to a fresh approach to the operation of the Committee during 2022/23 by making arrangements for two additional informal meetings to be held:

- The week commencing 10 October 2022 to focus on Locality Services and to consider an update on the Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services and the Green Sefton 2021/2022 Annual Report, Service Vision 2030, and Service Plan 2022/23; and
- The week commencing 6 February 2023 to focus on Housing and to consider reports on Leasehold House Sales and an update on the operation of Sandway Homes.

This new proposal would obviate the need for the Committee to establish Working Groups as short reviews of services could be undertaken by all Members at informal meetings.

2.3 However, at its informal meeting held on 20 October 2022 the Committee considered a report about Weed Control, Street Cleansing Provision and Waste Containment Consultation.

2.4 Following consideration of the report the informal meeting resolved that the Committee be requested to consider the establishment a working group to review the adoption of a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the Borough and to seek input from Sefton's representatives on the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority.

2.5 The Committee, at its meeting held on 8 November 2022 agreed that a review of the adoption of a strategic approach for waste containment/disposal across the Borough be dealt with at an informal meeting of the Committee rather than establishing a Working Group to review the topic; and that the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer be requested to canvas the views of Members on whether the informal meeting referred to should be held remotely or in person; and at what time of the day the meeting should take place.

The Chief Legal and Democratic Officer has canvassed the views of Members and it has been agreed that a remote, informal meeting of the Committee take place at 6.30 p.m. on 23 January 2023 to consider the topic.

3. PRE-SCRUTINY OF ITEMS IN THE KEY DECISION FORWARD PLAN

3.1 Members may request to pre-scrutinise items from the Key Decision Forward Plan which fall under the remit (terms of reference) of this Committee. The Forward Plan which is updated each month, sets out the list of items to be submitted to the Cabinet for consideration during the next four-month period.

3.2 The pre-scrutiny process assists the Cabinet Members to make effective decisions by examining issues beforehand and making recommendations prior to a determination being made.

3.3 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has requested that only those key decisions that fall under the remit of each Overview and Scrutiny Committee should be included on the agenda for consideration.

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- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at **Appendix 2** for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as shaded.
- 3.5 Should Members require further information in relation to any item on the Key Decision Forward Plan, would they please contact the relevant Officer named against the item in the Plan, prior to the Meeting.
- 3.6 The Committee is invited to consider items for pre-scrutiny from the Key Decision Forward Plan as set out in Appendix 2 to the report, which fall under the remit of the Committee and any agreed items be included in the Work Programme referred to in (1) above.

4. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

- 4.1 As Members will be aware, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees considered a report on the guidance produced by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government relating to Overview and Scrutiny in Local and Combined Authorities following on from the Communities and Local Government Select Committee's inquiry into Overview and Scrutiny.
- 4.2 The Overview and Scrutiny Management Board and the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees all agreed the recommendations contained in the report, one of which being that updates on Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee (LCRCAO&S) be included in the Work Programme report considered at each Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting.
- 4.3 In accordance with the above decision, information on the LCRCAO&S is set out below.
- 4.4 **Role**

The Overview and Scrutiny Committee was established by the Combined Authority in May 2017 in accordance with the Combined Authorities Order 2017.

The role of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee is to:

- Scrutinise the decision and actions taken by the Combined Authority or the Metro Mayor;
- Provide a 'critical friend to policy and strategy development;
- Undertake scrutiny reviews into areas of strategic importance for the people of the Liverpool City Region; and
- Monitor the delivery of the Combined Authority's strategic plan.

4.5 Membership

The Committee is made up of 3 elected Members from each of the constituent

Local Authorities of the LCR Combined Authority, along with one elected Member from both the Liverpool City Region Liberal Democrat Group and the Liverpool City Region Conservative Group.

Sefton's appointed Members are Councillors Hansen, Howard and Waterfield. Councillor Howard is Sefton's Scrutiny Link.

4.6 Chair and Vice-Chair

The Chair and Vice-Chair of the LCRCAO&S cannot be Members of the majority group. Councillor Steve Radford, a Liberal Party and Independent Group Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Chair for the 2022/23 Municipal Year; and Councillor Pat Moloney, a Liberal Democrat Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Vice-Chair.

4.7 Quoracy Issues

In the past a high number of meetings of the LCRCAO&S have been inquorate.

The quorum for meetings of the LCRCAO&S is 14, two-thirds of the total number of members, 20. This high threshold is not set by the Combined Authority but is set out in legislation.

4.8 Meetings

Information on all meetings and membership of the LCRCAO&S can be obtained using the following link

<https://moderngov.merseytravel.gov.uk/ieListMeetings.aspx?CId=365&Year=0>

4.9 The last meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 1 December 2022. The Committee considered the following items:

- Development of the Next Local Transport Plan for the Liverpool City Region
- Work Programme Update

4.10 The next meeting of the Committee is scheduled to be held on 19 January 2023.

4.11 The Committee is requested to note the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

5. EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S ENFORCEMENT ACTIVITY WORKING GROUP

5.1 At its meeting held on 28 September 2022 the Committee considered a report updating on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group. The recommendations had been approved by both Cabinet and Council.

5.2 The Committee resolved (Minute No.15) that:

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- (1) the report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations formulated by the Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Working Group and approved by Cabinet and Council be noted;
- (2) the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services be requested to give further consideration to the implementation of the recommendations referred to above and report their findings to the next meeting of the Committee; and
- (3) a further update report be submitted in six months.

5.3 In accordance with resolution (2) above the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services were contacted for their views.

5.4 The views of the Cabinet Members are set out below:

“Prior to and since the recommendations of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Working Group on the Effectiveness of Council Enforcement were reported to Cabinet and approved by Council in November 2021, the Cabinet Member – Locality Services and the Cabinet Member – Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services have been working with officers to explore how the problems of littering, fly-tipping and rear entry dumping could be better addressed and what resources might be needed to do so.

The Cabinet Members consider that a combination of education, enforcement and engineering measures are required, alongside reversing some of the resource reductions in the Street Cleansing, Waste Management and Environmental Enforcement services that were necessary to balance the Council's budget following significant reductions in government funding since 2010.

In 2021, Council approved £500k of additional revenue investment for “street scene activities including enhancements relating to the removal of fly tipping, street cleansing and weed removal”. A decision was taken in 2021 to await the recommendations of the Working Group before permanently allocating this resource, and in the meantime to temporarily use the resource for enhanced street cleansing, including intensive weed removal in worst affected areas.

In 2022, having received the Working Group's recommendations and assessed the impact of the £500k reinvestment within the Street Cleansing and Waste Management Service, a decision was taken to permanently allocate all of the £500k to Street Cleansing and Waste Management Services. Consideration was given to allocating some of this funding to enforcement and education, but it was considered that the £500k was insufficient to deliver the required level of improvement in street cleansing, a very significant increase in uniformed enforcement officers and a high-profile publicity campaign.

Since then, the Cabinet Members have continued to work with officers to

understand the nature and scale of resources needed to deliver the recommendations of the Working Group, and remain committed to delivering against those recommendations, as soon as the Council’s budgetary position allows”.

6. DIGITAL INCLUSION WORKING GROUP

6.1 As Members will be aware, at its last meeting held on 8 November 2022, the Committee considered a report setting out progress made against each of the recommendations contained in the Digital Inclusion Working Group final report. This was the fourth update reported to Committee.

6.2 It was agreed that no further update reports be submitted to the Committee subject to assurances that the actions identified in the report are continued and become “business as usual” operational matters.

6.3 Contact has been made with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, Sefton CVS and the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) who have responsibility for implementing the recommendations. All have confirmed that the actions identified in the report are continued and have become “business as usual” operational matters.

6.4 Sefton CVS have advised that in the areas of work that are relevant to them they will continue to deliver as “business as usual” in the context of the following information:

| Recommendation | Update |
|---|---|
| Using the Poverty Modelling and Digital Inclusion “Mosaic” data, areas of high unemployment be targeted to enable those Sefton residents excluded from the labour market to develop their ICT skills to improve their opportunities for gaining future employment | <p>Our Include-IT Mersey (Building Better Opportunities) D.I. project is in the process of being extended post-ESF/Lottery funding, through the UK-SPF from April 2023.</p> <p>Annual funding and volumes are lower than the current equivalent annual amount through BBO (59% in 2023/24, rising to 76.5% in 2024/25); and funding/volumes have to be split across boroughs in line with UK-SPF funding allocations (Sefton 16.79% of LCR). Therefore volumes are proportionally lower compared to previously and, importantly, are relatively low in relation to the continuing scale of the issue.</p> <p>Current approximate targets (TBC with the LCR CA) are for only 35 Sefton participants in 2023/24 and 45 in 2024/25. We will, however, endeavour to exceed these by as much as possible within the funding constraints.</p> |

We also plan to continue the volunteer-led digital surgeries (drop-ins) currently in

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operation across the borough through the current BBO project (again, subject to agreement by the LCR CA), which will assist many more Sefton residents with basic digital skills and knowledge over the coming two years; providing a place that people can go to get support with using their digital devices.

Given the modest volumes our funding is likely to be able to support, additional basic digital skills provision through, for example, Sefton Adult Learning Service would be beneficial.

If further opportunities arise for a roll out of the IncludeIT project and to support the objectives of recommendation 2 then Sefton CVS be requested to consider such roll out to the priority areas identified within the Poverty Modelling and Digital Exclusion document
Digital Inclusion research

We will continue to target/ deliver in the priority wards in the Bootle, Netherton and Southport areas. We will explore potential for delivery in the Ravenmeols ward, subject to the fit of the population demographics in terms of digital exclusion with UK-SPF delivery priorities.

VOLA recently undertook a research project for the LCR CA to map community-based DI provision across the LCR, including Sefton. We liaised with relevant Sefton MBC Officers:

- As part of the planning process to ensure the fitness for purpose of the survey/ proposed data to be captured, to ensure that it met Sefton MBC needs, in addition to those of the LCR CA;
- And in undertaking the research itself, capturing Sefton Library Services and Adult Learning Service DI provision, as well as sense-checking the responses in terms of respondents.

Prior to this LCR research commission by the CA, Sefton MBC was intending to undertake its own, similar research into the same subject. Through our liaison, the relevant council officer was happy to use the results/info/ data from our research rather than duplicate effort.

The final report and online map of DI services is soon to be published by the LCR CA, which we will share with Sefton MBC, along with the background data.

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Digital connectivity in community-based facilities

VOLA will be running a grants programme through the UK-SPF aimed at improving and/or creating community (VCFSE sector) facilities where people can go to 'get online'.

The aim of the programme will be to provide funding and support to:

1. Upgrade outdated and poor quality digital kit and/or improve broadband connectivity where current connections are poor;
2. Increase capacity, by providing funding to purchase more devices, where current facilities are insufficient to meet demand; and
3. Target neighbourhoods where there is currently a lack of community based digital facilities to help local community-based organisations to set up new drop-ins.

Priorities and investment decision will be driven and informed, in part, by the recent DI research that VOLA undertook for the LCR CA. CVS Funding Officers will be involved in the assessment of applications and a LA Officer will be asked to sit on the Steering Group along with the Sefton CVS' CEO.

The same % borough splits will apply as for Include-IT Mersey project above (Sefton 16.79% - as set by UK-SPF). £219k will be distributed in grants over the funding period.

The first grant application round will run from January to March 2023 to meet UK-SPF year 1 spend targets, with 4 further rounds over 2023/24 and 2024/25 financial years.

The LCR CA has requested that the maximum grant amount will initially be set at £10k for round 1 (can/will be reviewed for future rounds).

Assuming an average grant award of £10k, this will result in 22 grants being distributed across Sefton. Ultimately, more than 22

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may be achieved if the average grant award is lower than £10k. Equally, if the maximum grant level is increased in years 2 or 3, it could possibly be slightly lower.

I hope you and Sefton MBC agree that this is very much welcomed investment into community-based DI facilities in the borough.

- 6.5 It is therefore recommended that no further updates be provided on the implementation of recommendations arising from the Digital Inclusion Working Group.

APPENDIX 1

Overview
& Scrutiny



OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) WORK PROGRAMME 2022/23

| Tuesday, 17 January 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport | | |
|--|---|--|
| No. | Report/Item | Report Author/Organiser |
| 1. | Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2020/21 | Michelle Williams (liaising with MRWA) |
| 2. | Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth | Stuart Barnes |
| 3. | Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy | Andrea Watts |
| 4. | Cabinet Member Update Reports | Paul Fraser |
| 5. | Work Programme Update | Paul Fraser |

| Tuesday, 7 March 2023, 6.30 p.m., Budget Meeting - Town Hall, Bootle | | |
|---|--|--------------------------------|
| No. | Report/Item | Report Author/Organiser |
| 1. | Data on weed control operations since April 2022, at the end of the season | Michelle Williams |
| 2. | Cabinet Member Update Reports | Paul Fraser |
| 3. | Work Programme Update | Paul Fraser |

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2023 - 31 MAY 2023

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

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:-

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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.

Dwayne Johnson
Chief Executive

APPENDIX 2

FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS

| Item Heading | Officer Contact |
|---|---|
| Adoption of the Safer Sefton Together Strategy | Steven Martlew steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk |
| Adoption of the Domestic Abuse Strategy | Steven Martlew steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk |
| Bootle Regeneration Strategy | Heather Jago heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4619 |
| Enterprise Arcade | Keith Molloy |
| Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy | Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk |
| Procurement of Fleet and Machinery for Green Sefton | Mark Shaw mark.shaw@sefton.gov.uk |
| Emergency Temporary Accommodation Project | Allan Glennon allan.glennon@sefton.gov.uk |
| Pre-Procurement Report for Land Based, Coastal Remote Sensing Services | Paul Wisse paul.wisse@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2959 |
| Council Housing Business Plan | Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842, Alistair Malpas alistair.malpas@sefton.gov.uk |
| Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents and Planning Information Notes | Ian Loughlin ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3558 |

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SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|--|----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Adoption of the Safer Sefton Together Strategy A report to seek the adoption of the Safer Sefton Together Strategy 2023-2026 | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | No | 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 | Officers and key stakeholders | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Meetings and emails | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Adoption of the Safer Sefton Together Strategy | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Steven Martlew steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk | | | |

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|---|----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Adoption of the Domestic Abuse Strategy A report seeking the adoption the Domestic Abuse Strategy 2022-2027 | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | No | 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 | Officers, user groups, key stakeholders | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Emails, Meetings, interviews, focus groups, questionnaires. | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Adoption of the Domestic Abuse Strategy | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Steven Martlew steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk | | | |

Agenda Item 8

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Bootle Regeneration Strategy Update and review Bootle Regeneration Strategy (Strand transformation related). | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/01/2023 to 02/02/2023. Reason: delayed feedback on Levelling Up Funding bid | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | Yes | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | Derby; Linacre | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | Members, Ward Councillors | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Via briefings and meetings (e.g. Members Reference Group). | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Bootle Regeneration Strategy | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Heather Jago heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4619 | | | |

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Enterprise Arcade To determine the Agreement to Lease with the preferred operator | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/02/2023 to 02/02/2023. Reason: due to ongoing engagement with operating partner | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | Yes | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | Dukes | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills, Town Deal Board, | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Meetings, emails and briefings | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Enterprise Arcade | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Keith Molloy | | | |

Agenda Item 8

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|---|----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy Strategy for equalities, diversity and inclusion for Sefton, with emphasis on the Council as an employer as well as a commissioner of goods and services, and as a place leader. | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | No | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | All Wards | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Executive Director | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | Range of internal and external | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Via Corporate Equalities Group and range of internal and external consultation and engagement | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Stephen Watson stephen.watson@sefton.gov.uk | | | |

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|---|-----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Procurement of Fleet and Machinery for Green Sefton Capital renewal approval is to be sought for the replacement of essential fleet and machinery | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | Yes | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | All Wards | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | None | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | None | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Procurement of Fleet and Machinery for Green Sefton | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Mark Shaw mark.shaw@sefton.gov.uk | | | |

Agenda Item 8

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

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|---|--|----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Emergency Temporary Accommodation Project To seek approval of the Emergency Temporary Accommodation Project business case. | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 05/01/2023 to 02/02/2023. Reason: Work is continuing on the business case | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | No | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | Blundellsands; Cambridge; Church; Derby; Dukes; Kew; Linacre; Litherland; Victoria | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Executive Director | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | Council Officers | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Meetings; Emails | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Emergency Temporary Accommodation Project | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Allan Glennon allan.glennon@sefton.gov.uk | | | |

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|--|----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Pre-Procurement Report for Land Based, Coastal Remote Sensing Services To seek Cabinet approval of this pre-procurement report to invite tenders through an Open procurement procedure, for the provision of a land based coastal remote sensing services to collect a range of datasets to support sustainable coastal management decisions The total contract value is £5m | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 2 Feb 2023 | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | No | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | Ainsdale; Blundellsands; Cambridge; Church; Dukes; Harington; Linacre; Manor; Ravenmeols | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | Procurement team | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Email correspondence | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Pre-Procurement Report for Land Based, Coastal Remote Sensing Services | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Paul Wisse paul.wisse@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 2959 | | | |

Agenda Item 8

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|--|-----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | Council Housing Business Plan The development of a robust and financially viable Business Case and Business Plan for Council Housing in Sefton. This Business case is intended to identify a programme of Council housing to bring forward future social housing & identify a series of recommendations for implementation by the Council to support a new Council Housing Programme | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 9 Mar 2023 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 02/02/2023 to 09/03/2023. Reason: Internal discussions are on-going regarding the proposal | | | |
| 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 | Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing, Sandway Homes, Chief Officers from Finance, Economic Growth and officers from Housing, Planning & Finance have been consulted. | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Internal consultation on the development of the business case has taken place, guided by our consultants Ark Ltd. Externally, Sandway Homes have also been consulted. | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Council Housing Business Plan | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842, Alistair Malpas alistair.malpas@sefton.gov.uk | | | |

APPENDIX 2

SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

| | | | | |
|---|--|----|------------------|-----|
| Details of Decision to be taken | <p>Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents and Planning Information Notes</p> <p>Approval is sought to adopt the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and Information Notes that support policies in the Sefton Local Plan: Affordable and Supported Housing SPD; Conversion to Flats and Houses in Multiple Occupation SPD; House Extensions SPD; New Build Homes SPD; Social Value (Employment and Skills) in Development SPD; Contributions towards Education Provision: A Guide for Developers Information Note; and Recreational Pressure from Development Information Note. Once adopted they will replace existing relevant guidance and be used in development management.</p> | | | |
| Decision Maker | Cabinet | | | |
| Decision Expected | 25 May 2023 | | | |
| Key Decision Criteria | Financial | No | Community Impact | Yes |
| Exempt Report | Open | | | |
| Wards Affected | All Wards | | | |
| Scrutiny Committee Area | Regeneration and Skills | | | |
| Lead Director | Head of Regeneration and Housing | | | |
| Persons/Organisations to be Consulted | Members, officers, Registered Providers, Developers, specific stakeholders, general public. | | | |
| Method(s) of Consultation | Discussions with Cabinet Member for Planning and Council officers. Draft SPDs and Information Notes approved by Cabinet Member for publication and public engagement using website, emails, social media, press | | | |
| List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker | Adoption of Supplementary Planning Documents and Planning Information Notes | | | |
| Contact Officer(s) details | Ian Loughlin ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3558 | | | |

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Agenda Item 9

| | | | |
|--------------------------------------|--|----------------------------------|-----------------|
| Report to: | Overview and Scrutiny Committee - (Regeneration and Skills) | Date of Meeting: | 17 January 2023 |
| Subject: | Cabinet Member Reports – October 2022 to January 2023 | | |
| Report of: | Chief Legal and Democratic Officer | Wards Affected: | All |
| Cabinet Portfolio: | Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills | | |
| Is this a Key Decision: | No | Included in Forward Plan: | No |
| Exempt / Confidential Report: | No | | |

Summary:

To submit the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for the period October 2022 to January 2023.

Recommendation:

That the Cabinet Member - Communities and Housing; Locality Services; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element); Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills reports relating to the remit of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

Reasons for the Recommendation:

In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

No alternative options have been considered because the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.

Agenda Item 9

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

Any financial implications associated with the Cabinet Member report that are referred to in this update are contained within the respective reports.

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

Implications of the Proposals:

| | |
|---|-----|
| Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets): | |
| Legal Implications: | |
| Equality Implications: There are no equality implications. | |
| Climate Emergency Implications: | |
| The recommendations within this report will | |
| Have a positive impact | No |
| Have a neutral impact | Yes |
| Have a negative impact | No |
| The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors | Yes |
| There are no direct climate emergency implications arising from this report. Any climate emergency implications arising from matters referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time. | |

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

| |
|---|
| Protect the most vulnerable: None directly applicable to this report. The Cabinet Member update provides information on activity within Councillor Atkinson's, Fairclough's, Hardy's, Moncur's (relating to Green Sefton) and Veidman's portfolios during a previous two/three-month period. Any reports relevant to their portfolio considered by the Cabinet, Cabinet Member or Committees during this period would contain information as to how such reports contributed to the Council's Core Purpose. |
| Facilitate confident and resilient communities: As above |
| Commission, broker and provide core services: As above |

| |
|--|
| Place – leadership and influencer: As above |
| Drivers of change and reform: As above |
| Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: As above |
| Greater income for social investment: As above |
| Cleaner Greener: As above |

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Cabinet Member Update Report is not subject to FD/LD consultation. Any specific financial and legal implications associated with any subsequent reports arising from the attached Cabinet Member update report will be included in those reports as appropriate

(B) External Consultations

Not applicable

Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

| | |
|-------------------------|---------------------------|
| Contact Officer: | Paul Fraser |
| Telephone Number: | 0151 934 2068 |
| Email Address: | paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk |

Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Cabinet Member – Communities and Housing
- Cabinet Member – Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element)
- Cabinet Member - Locality Services
- Cabinet Member – Planning and Building Control – To follow
- Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills

Agenda Item 9

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 In order to keep Overview and Scrutiny Members informed, the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board has agreed for relevant Cabinet Member Reports to be submitted to appropriate Overview and Scrutiny Committees.
- 1.2 Attached to this report, for information, are the most recent Cabinet Member reports for the Communities and Housing, Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; Regeneration and Skills and Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) portfolios.

Agenda Item 9

| CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 17th January 2023) | | |
|--|-------------------------|---------------|
| COUNCILLOR | PORTFOLIO | DATE |
| Patricia Hardy | Communities and Housing | December 2022 |

Neighbourhoods and Partnerships

Operation Banger was a success in 2022. Neighbourhoods and Cleansing officers worked in partnership with Merseyside Police, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and One Vision Housing to coordinate the removal of potential bonfire sites, and to deliver diversionary activities.

This year there were a reported 23 secondary fires on Bonfire night, an increase on last year but well below the pre covid numbers we were dealing with. There were only three incidents of violence involving fireworks across the period and Anti-Social behaviour was up slightly on last year. The Youth Team successfully engaged with 320 young people and community members across North Park, Derby Park, Irlam Road and South Park during the Bangor period. They also supported Active Sefton with their Bangor period Park Nights across the Borough.

The Neighbourhoods team worked with colleagues in Green Sefton to review the Living Christmas trees across the borough. Unfortunately, the living trees have failed to establish successfully, and we have replaced all of them with cut trees. Neighbourhood officers have worked with ward councillors to ensure that sufficient funds are made available for the installation and lighting of the trees.

New agility equipment has now arrived and is due to be installed near the Lake House, Crosby Coastal Park, before Christmas. This equipment was requested to replace the outdoor gym equipment which had to be removed a few years ago.

Discussions have been on going with colleagues in highways to tackle the historic issue of parking around the beach in Formby in the summer months. Initial ideas are to install bollards on key junctions where double yellow lines already exist to stop parking on the kerb. The aim of the project is to ensure traffic flow around key junctions and roads.

Cost of Living / Welfare Reform

Food bank

| 1st April 2022 – 1st November 2022 | South Sefton | Southport |
|------------------------------------|--|---|
| Total Vouchers received | 3946 | 1181 |
| Adults Fed | 4973 | 1602 |
| Children Fed | 2935 | 865 |
| Total Fed | 7908 | 2467 |
| Crisis Type | Low income – 2910 vouchers presented 5832 people fed | Low income – 631 vouchers presented 1284 people fed |
| Family Type | Single 2298 vouchers presented 58.24% | Single 577 vouchers presented 48.86% |
| Age group | 25-64: 4376 | 25 – 64: 1378 |

Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator

The newly recruited officer has been out to meet Foodbanks and Pantries to understand their needs and issues. He will continue to build a picture of the support available for residents and identify any gaps in provision. He will be asking groups to share their data so that we can truly understand demand across the borough.

He has started to look at ways that the services **Page 137** sustainably maintained and will be organising meetings with possible suppliers soon.

Holiday Activity Fund Agenda Item 9

New guidance and application documents have been introduced to make the application process simpler and more stringent for providers. There is now a page on the Sefton website where providers and parents/ carers can access information about HAF. Going forward all children will be cross referenced against the free school meal database to ensure eligibility.

Twenty providers were funded to deliver sessions to 1052 eligible children throughout the Christmas holidays. The provision was spread across the borough and ranged from community groups, charities, and schools to sports and performing arts camps. Less providers can operate at Christmas due to staffing etc, but trips and themed Christmas events were funded instead.

Hate Crime

Online training is ongoing. This is free to staff working or volunteering in Sefton. Face to face sessions have also been delivered for Bootle One Stop Shop staff, Sefton Council elected members, and are being arranged for One Vision Housing staff and for service users from New Directions.

Equalities

The new Disability staff group and LGBT staff group have had their third meeting membership is growing. The Diverse Ethnic Background group and Women's Network continue to meet regularly. The Liverpool City Region equality group have met to discuss a calendar of events that will be celebrated by all City Region authorities.

As mentioned in the previous report, the Council is now a member of Inclusive Companies and will be signing up to the Disability Impact Pledge shortly.

Anti-Social Behaviour

The smell of Cannabis in homes is an increasing issue making up almost 40% of the current caseload. The team will be launching an awareness campaign in early 2023 highlighting the issue and how residents can deal with and report their cases to the team. To support this campaign and to help officers gain evidence for prosecution we have purchased some evidence gathering equipment.

Youth Service

SYMBOL had its first Face to Face session in over two years, it was held at Bootle Town Hall and was well attended by young people. The event included work for the Hope Hack project which is partnership work with the Violence Reduction Partnership across the Liverpool City Region.

HOMES FOR UKRAINE PROGRAMME

Homes for Ukraine Scheme

The new Resettlement Team continues to support the community integration of Ukrainian guests in Sefton and maintaining good sponsor/guest relationships. Longer term plans and associated pathways for accommodation are almost complete. This will mean a more consistent approach to how we are working with guests and hosts and ensure we are achieving good outcomes for them.

School impact

For the period 1 March to 11 November 232 guests have arrived in Sefton forming 156 household groups. There are 73 children between the age of 3-17 who are part of this group total.

Of the 73 children that have arrived all have offered a place at school or referred to Further Education settings.

Schools that have accepted Ukrainian children under the HfU scheme are located across the borough. Guests often request for their children to attend a school where they have other family or friends already in attendance.

Funding to support Ukrainian children in schools has received by the Education Excellence Department for the Department for Education (DfE) and has been allocated to schools.

Resource Update

The welcome centre in Crosby (Crosby Ukrainian Hub) continues to be a focal point for Ukrainian refugees in Sefton, and in some cases beyond Sefton. A new manager and assistant have begun making some changes to operations there and are looking at increasing the number of activities available there. They are also looking at developing their own English language classes.

Adult Education have provided information about pathways for Ukrainians to become teachers. Many guests are highly qualified and are interested in teaching. There is a programme that open to anyone 19+ living in Liverpool City Region. It will start during December this year and will comprise of the Level 3 Teaching and Education, Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding and British Values. On successful completion of the programme individuals will have the opportunity to apply for a level 5 qualification, which normally costs £8,000, and if they are successful, the cost will be included as part of the training package.

DWP are looking at opportunities for employment that the Eurovision Song Contest coming to the Liverpool City Region could bring for Ukrainian guests.

The Resettlement Team have taken up their new positions and are receiving additional training to upskill them as part of their induction. The whole team attended mediation training delivered by an external provider during November. This will give the officers new techniques and strategies in mediation, which they can when working with guests and hosts.

Accommodation

Routes to finding longer term accommodation, beyond staying with hosts is underway.

There is increasing demand for information about how to access housing and this is being shared through the hub currently. A new referral process to access advice from the Homeless Prevention Officer has been developed and discussions have taken place with Property Pool Plus about registering guests.

A suite of further assistance for guests moving into their own accommodation is being costed. This may include bond scheme, rent in advance, furniture packages, moving costs, etc. All costs would be covered by the Homes for Ukraine tariff.

Other updates

A top up to the thank you payments has agreed and will be in place in December. This is something that other local authorities have implemented both regionally and nationally to assist hosts with increasing energy prices over the winter months.

LIBRARY & INFORMATION SERVICES

Successful funding application realises £585,000

Following a lengthy funding application, Sefton Library Service is officially Sefton's first National Portfolio Organisation (NPO), awarded by Arts Council England, as part of a three-year national investment in arts and culture. Sefton is one of only two local authorities in the North West to receive NPO status, and the funding secures the program for a further 3 years.

Agenda Item 9

The Library Service will receive £195,000 per year from 2023-2026 to deliver its partnership project — ‘At the Libraries’ — a series of artist-led happenings, events, commissions and interventions in Sefton’s libraries.

Since 2017, the programme has targeted social isolation by bringing artists and other creatives into the library space to rethink the creative and civic role libraries play within our community. Over the years, artists have worked with community members to produce a host of ingenious and wonderful projects, including creating a fully functional ceramic dinner service with Aliyah Hussain; cooking up everything from sauerkraut, to foraged blackberry jam doughnuts with Gregory Herbert and Niamh Riordan, and exploring sound and radio waves with Shortwave Collective and Andrew PM Hunt.

Thanks to its increasing popularity and quirky successful projects, Arts Council England has now awarded the project National Portfolio Status, meaning the project will be able to explore its full potential with local people and expand its work into Bootle, Netherton, Crosby and Southport libraries.

The World Re-Imagined

Sefton Libraries were delighted to be part of the UK-wide art project The World Reimagined, and hosted the six amazing learning Globes made by Sefton schools.

The project invited the public to explore the UK’s relationship with the Transatlantic Trade in Enslaved Africans, its impact on UK society; and how we can take action to make racial justice a reality. There were 10 sculpture trails across 7 UK cities, including one across the Liverpool City Region.

Local schools took part in The World Reimagined learning programme and created small globes as part of the wider sculpture trail. They were display at Crosby Library, from September until the end of October, and then passed back to the local schools who helped design them.

Sefton’s six globes were designed and created by: Christ Church CE Primary, Newfield Primary, Valewood Primary, King’s Leadership Academy (the Hawthornes), Peterhouse School and St Oswald’s CE Primary.

Libraries become warm hubs

To support council activities to provide warm hubs for residents in need, each library will provide teas/coffees and soup 1 day at week on a rota basis. The service is utilising council warm hubs funding to purchase consumables and any equipment needed to provide the hubs. Library staff have agreed to organise the hubs at their sites until March 2023.

Communications

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

THE ATKINSON

Theatre Programme

Literary influences have characterised recent theatre highlights – productions have included the dramatisation of Helen Forrester’s novel *Twopence to Cross the Mersey*; a staged radio play of *The Hound of the Baskervilles*; the hilarious recreation of Julia Donaldson’s children’s book, *Room on the Broom* and Chapterhouse Theatre’s rendition of the Dickens favourite, *A Christmas Carol*.

Aladdin brings some Christmas magic to our Theatre: the Atkinson’s pantomime season enjoyed great success with its production of *Aladdin*, featuring Patsy Kensit as the Genie. Building on the success of previous years, the whole schedule sold-out. The Atkinson Development Trust funded tickets for a small selection of local groups – organisations across Sefton in receipt of tickets included Talbot Street Wellbeing Centre, Fostering

Ganzflicker: during November Edge Hill University funded a 10 ten-day event at The Atkinson, as part of the annual *Being Human* festival. Event organiser Dr Reshanne Reader created a series of interactives to explore the Ganzflicker phenomenon. Ganzflicker is a way of inducing hallucinations by looking at a flickering image. Reshanne's exhibition enabled visitors to experience Ganzflicker imagery in several different ways, including on screen, through mechanical interactives and 'hypnobuckets' and she recorded people's experiences as part of her research.

Tate Liverpool Project: the LCR Culture Working group and Tate Liverpool are co-ordinating an offer of educational artwork sessions through a regional tour of their Art Explora mobile museum. The infrastructure at Netherton Activity Centre meets the technical requirements for the vehicle, and local schools in the Netherton area will be invited to visit during Spring 2023.

Exhibitions Programme

GROUND - Young Artists project

The Atkinson is supporting a creative opportunity for Young Artists aged 16-24 living in the Liverpool City Region. Entitled 'Ground', the project will explore young people's opinions and feelings around Climate Anxiety. The project will be produced in partnership with Theatre in the Rough, a multi-disciplinary producer of original artistic works.

Ten young artists have been invited to create new work in collaboration with the non-human world. This project will result in a new collaborative film installation to be shown at The Atkinson in March 2023, alongside a publication of participants' original work.

Southport Library

The Library continues to welcome new visitors as part of Sefton's Warm Spaces programme, offering hot refreshments and friendly conversation in support of people in need.

Other news

Southport BID Christmas Events & Activities: the Atkinson was a landmark on The Gingerbread Family Trail, hosting a giant gingerbread model called 'Daina', who was named by Holy Trinity Primary School to celebrate the diversity of their school.

Late-Night Shopping: the Atkinson held a Late-Night Shopping event on 1st December featuring a showcase of stalls from local makers & independent artists, in addition to its own shop gifts. The wonderful Atkinson Wellbeing Choir serenaded visitors with a selection of carols in the foyer, whilst a curatorial "arty-party" tour of the galleries offered an insight into our permanent collection and visiting exhibitions. Festive treats were provided at the Great Little Place Café and further performances delivered by Southport Strings.

Culture Awards: an art therapy group based in Sefton has been shortlisted in the Liverpool City Region Culture & Creativity Awards 2023. Creative Balance offer workshops targeted at young children and deliver sessions across the Borough. They have been shortlisted for the People's Choice and Arts Organisation of the Year categories with the winners announced in March.

Bees: *Lancashire Life* published a feature on a new project which has seen the installation of bee hives on the Atkinson's roof.

Wi-Fi: Replacement WiFi points have been installed to provide more reliable public internet access in key areas such as the foyer, café, library and galleries.

Communications

Events promoted via the Council website, The Atkinson website, The Atkinson social media, through the press and Liverpool City RePage 141

HOUSING

Damp Mould and Condensation (DMC)

I am sure colleagues will have been saddened to learn about the circumstances surrounding the tragic death of Awaab Ishak from mould inhalation whilst living in a property rented by registered provider Rochdale Boroughwide Housing.

In the wake of these tragic events I have directed officers to carry out a review of housing enforcement in the borough:

- Review of the Housing Enforcement Policy – the policy will be update to ensure that it is clear that it covers all tenures, rather than being solely related to private sector
- Review of the ‘service request pathway’ – the Housing section of the Council Website is being updated to ensure that Registered Provider tenants are clear on how they can make a service request
- Communication Campaign – a comms campaign using the Council’s comms channels will be run over winter, linking to the guidance on the Council’s website and other resources that will help. This will be repeated every winter in subsequent years.
- Staff Training and Equipment – all staff training relating to the Housing Health and Safety Ratings System (HHSRS) and equipment requirements have been reviewed by the Service Manager and found to be up to date. Should there be staff changes HHSRS training will be provided as a priority as has always been the case. We are also seeking to identify specific training relating to DMC where this needs to be strengthened.
- Data – officer are currently reviewing data from the last 3 years relating to DMC cases and looking at how these were dealt with at the time to see where improvements can be made, including how cases are recorded on our system.
- Registered Providers – In addition to above we are also asking the major Registered Providers in the borough to feedback on actions they have taken in response to the Rochdale case.
- Risk Based Approach – in order to better manage future service requests during periods of peak demand we are mapping previous DMC hazards to identify property hotspots across the borough. There is also the potential to look at including something specific to DMC in the private sector stock modelling survey due to be done next year.
- Staff Guidance – the Council and CCG has a number of staff members who regularly go into resident’s homes, for example health visitors and social workers. In order to ensure that we are making the best use of all opportunities to identify risks relating to mould we propose to issue guidance to frontline staff.

Housing Strategy (2022 – 2027)

Following approval of Sefton's new Housing Strategy by Cabinet on 3rd November 2022 work is progressing to finalise the Action Plan which details all of the actions which will ensure that we deliver against the objectives and vision set out in the strategy document. The Action Plan will help to build upon the previous housing priorities and address the significant local and national housing challenges that Sefton's residents face over the coming years.

As colleagues are aware the new strategy carries forward the key themes and housing priorities from Sefton's previous strategy which have been reviewed and continue to remain relevant in this new version.

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

This continuity ensures that the new strategy builds on the success of the previous one, however, our communities face a number of key challenges which have emerged since the adoption of the previous strategy. This is where the Action Plan plays a critical role in outlining the specific initiatives to meet the vision for housing in the borough in the challenging operating environment that we are currently seeing. I will be meeting with officers early in the new year to review the draft Action Plan document which will ultimately be published on the Council's website so that all our residents and stakeholders are clear on the commitments we have made.

In order to monitor delivery of the new strategy I have directed officers to produce an Annual Monitoring Report that will also be published on the Council's website.

Extra Care Housing

As colleagues are aware the Council has a target to deliver 1306 new Extra Housing units before 2036. Work continues to progress on a number of schemes, including a scheme to develop 91 Extra Care Homes and 67 for Affordable Rent which has now commenced on a site off Hawthorne Road in Bootle. Following the granting of planning consent the proposed development of 90 Extra Care Homes, 40 for Affordable Rent and Council facility providing 8 short-term assessment units at Sandbrook Road in Ainsdale is progressing well.

Private Sector Housing

Enforcement and Licencing

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

Over 3,600 licences have now been issued under the current schemes, which is 600 more than the estimated number of properties that would require a licence at the start of schemes almost 5 years ago. The team continue to enforce against those landlords that have still failed to apply for a licence and against landlords that are in breach of licence conditions and have served 7 Final Civil Penalty fine notices since our last report (fines averaging at £2,200).

There have been 80 requests for service relating to poor housing standards issues since 21st October 2022 . The majority have been dealt with informally, however 13 cases have resulted in formal action. 1 property has been closed with the service of an Emergency Prohibition Order. 12 other properties have required formal notices in relation to serious health & safety hazards (6 regarding electrical safety issues and 6 lacking smoke alarms). Awareness raising and enforcement of the Minimum Energy Efficiency Regulations (MEES) has commenced within the Selective Licensing area. Following a data cleansing exercise, 62 privately rented properties have been identified as failing to meet these Regulations by being rated F or G on their Energy Performance Certificate. The owners of these properties are currently being contacted to inform them of their legal duties. Enforcement action will be the next step if the premises are not thermally improved to meet legal requirements.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues, and there have not been any unauthorised encampments since the previous update report.

Rough Sleepers & Homeless services

In December 2021, Public Health approved funding that would see one of Sefton's commissioned homeless hostel's Sit-Up areas transformed into separate bedrooms with ensuite facilities. Sefton operates a nightly Crash Bed and Sit-Up service across the entire year to prevent and relieve any rough sleeping in the borough. It is one of Sefton's ambitions to move away from using communal dormitory spaces to a position where each person can be offered their own bedroom for the evening. This was particularly important during the Covid pandemic and as a result of Public Health being given funding to transform services in order to make them more resilient to future pandemics, Sefton's homeless services were granted funding in order to transform the Sit-Up room in Bosco Society's House on Merton Road.

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I am pleased to report to colleagues that the work to the former Sit-Up room is largely complete with only the drainage for the ensuite left to complete. The rooms themselves are now in use with Housing Options or the Rough Sleeper Service able to refer any people found sleeping rough, or at risk of rough sleeping, into them on a nightly basis.

As you can see from the below photographs, each room has a fold-away bed, which allows for the rooms to be fully cleaned each morning. Each room has its own window allowing for natural ventilation to take place in order to prevent airborne transmission.



Rough Sleeper Initiative funded Hospital In-Reach Service

One of the initiatives that Sefton received Rough Sleeper Initiative funding for was the Hospital In-Reach service. This service will look to deliver a borough wide model that works across the two major hospitals that cover the borough and provide support to those people.

The aim of this service is to provide support to clients placed within hospitals in order to;

- engage with and assess those patients who have presented as homeless and ensure that there is accommodation wherever they need to return to, whether that is Sefton, or elsewhere.
- training for key hospital staff in Homeless Reduction Act and what local homeless resources exist (to make the hospital staff Homeless Champions).

- ensure that follow-up appointments are kept, which therefore reduces further presentations at A&E, where there are further clinical needs on discharge
- attend Frequent Attenders meetings across Southport/Aintree hospitals with the aim of reducing volume of presentations from our client group

This service is delivered by Light for Life and the overall success of the health model used by Light for Life is due to the ‘physical’ presence of Light for Life services in the hospital. This is a service not delivered by email or telephone, as with some other services who use the same title, but in person.

This model allows the Light for Life staff to form a ‘relationship’ with the patient before they are discharged. As such ‘contact’ is not by way of a phone call or an email or in some other depersonalised virtual model but by being ‘present’ with the hospital staff and ‘present’ with the patient.

This model both engages and enables the client to have the confidence to continue this therapeutic relationship once they have left the ward which, based on the data available, stops their repeated readmission of this, perhaps their most ‘complex and costly clients’.

Feedback from Southport hospital is that the service has been extremely well received as hospital staff aren’t caught dealing with people’s homelessness issues and the service prevents future presentations at A&E.

Council Housing Programme

Business Plan – A draft of the Business Plan has now been reviewed by officers and comments returned to the consultant with an updated draft expected before Xmas. The Business Plan focuses on an initial 3-5 year phase to build a sustainable initial stock of Council owned housing through working with Sandway Homes, with a medium to long term options for growth beyond this point. I look forward to the document coming to Cabinet for approval early in the New Year.

Management Agent – The final parts of the Tender Documents are being completed before the Christmas break with a view to starting the procurement of the Management Agent early in January. It is anticipated that the Management Agent will be in place by April and will then shadow the onboarding of the first properties at Buckley Hill Lane in January 2024.

Buckley Hill Lane – Officers from the Housing Team have been liaising with Sandway to update the valuation reports for the properties to be acquired at Buckley Hill Lane. This is required in order to make a grant application to Homes England to deliver affordable homes on the site. The updated scheme proposal will be brought to full Council in the Spring.

Brownfield Land Funding

There are currently two brownfield land funding opportunities available to bring brownfield sites forward for residential development:

| Funding Stream | Administrator | Amount | Delivery Requirements |
|-------------------------|------------------------|--------------------|--|
| Brownfield Land Fund | LCR Combined Authority | £60m | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Start on site required by March 2025 • Benefit Cost Ratio of 1 or above • Grant Rate £15k per unit |
| Brownfield Land Release | One Public Estate | £160m (nationwide) | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release for housing by |

| | | | |
|--------|--|--|--|
| Fund 2 | | | March 2026 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Benefit Cost Ratio of 1 or above • Grant Rate £10k per unit • Council owned land only |
|--------|--|--|--|

Brownfield Land Fund (BLF)

As reported in my last report Sefton has had projects totalling **£7,072,409** previously approved for funding in the borough, and a further three schemes with a total additional grant investment in the borough of **£4,755,000** were approved by the Combined Authority in November.

This means that there has now been a total of **£11,827,409** of Brownfield Land Funding allocated in Sefton and if these schemes are brought forward over 800 new homes that wouldn't have otherwise come forward will be built.

Brownfield Land Release Fund 2 (BLRF2)

As I reported in my last update the next bidding window for the BLRF2 will open in the spring 2023 and I have asked officers to look at what council owned sites can be put forward for support to ready them for sale for new housing. Officers have met with the Combined Authority and One Public Estate about the fund and potential sites for inclusion in future bids.

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| CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) | | |
|--|---|------------------|
| Councillor | Portfolio | Period of Report |
| Marion Atkinson | Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills | January 2023 |

INVESTSEFTON UPDATE

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. Output requirements have also been scaled down accordingly. Latest targets and results below:

| 16th May 2022 to 31st March 2023 | Overall Target | Sefton Total Figures |
|---|----------------|----------------------|
| Number of unique businesses receiving light touch intervention | 250 | 283 |
| Number of unique businesses receiving medium intensity intervention | 90 | 75 |
| Number of unique businesses brokered and introduced to Growth Platform Programmes | 20 | 17 |

- The team is very much on track to meet or surpass these targets having already exceeded the light touch interventions with a **further 23 assists**.

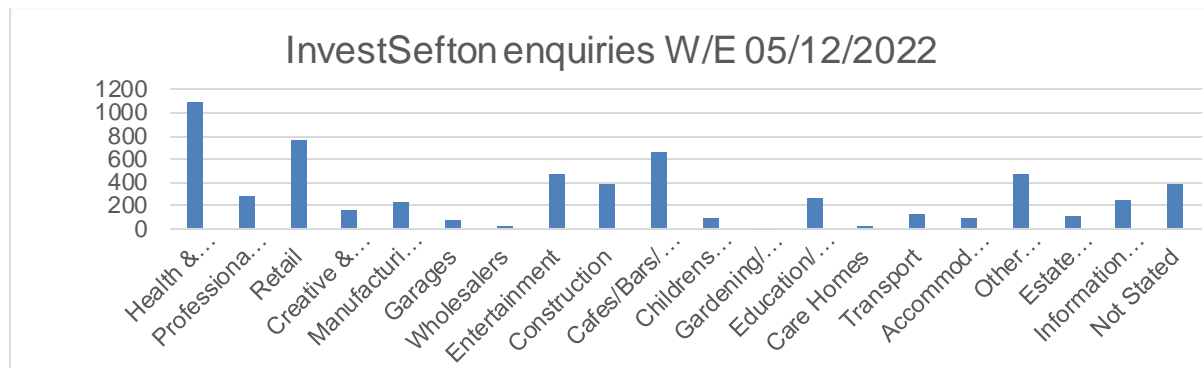
Business engagement

- www.investsefton.com is updated regularly with the latest guidance and news from Government, Growth Platform, Sefton Council, and other sources of help for businesses.
- Since 30th March 2020 until Thursday 1st December 2022, the site has had **63,766** unique sessions. From Friday 25th November to Thursday 1st December 2022 the website has had 156 sessions.
- Average time spent on the website in the past week was 57secs. The devices used were as follows: Desktop 61.5%, Mobile 35.9% and Tablet 2.6%. The Top two pages visited were home and starting a business. The top five countries of origin accessing the website are as follows: UK (65.3%), USA (14.1%), China (13.5%) Mexico (1.9%), and Canada (0.6%)

Business enquiries

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- Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled **6,001** enquiries from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 5th December 2022.



Total enquiry numbers from 13th March to 2nd December 2022:

| 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- to date | 971 |
| Total | 6,036 |

Cost of Living-support to businesses

- The team has contributed to a Cost-of-Living factsheet for businesses which will be published on various channels and issued to businesses. A copy is embedded below



Cost of Living
Support fact Sheet f

Case studies

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

Formby based Commercial and Residential Designer. The business was originally located in London and wanted to relocate to Merseyside. InvestSefton undertook property searches on behalf of the business to facilitate the move to Formby, as well as providing opportunities to upskill and Network at InvestSefton events.

Brighton-Le Sands company that specialises in trenching work for laying utility services. The Business undertakes a variety of projects from new Commercial units to domestic extensions. The business recognises that the office could work smarter as well as the need to develop contacts. InvestSefton supported the business by exploring options for

Personal Staff development as well as researching local business contacts and networking opportunities.

A new owner managed leisure centre based in Birkdale Town centre in an old warehouse building. The centre offers a climbing and assault course facility for children and adults, along with gym and café/bar which is open for hire in the daytime and evenings for corporate events, parties etc. The business is looking at ways to reduce energy costs. InvestSefton programme supported the business by assisting with the development of a Net Zero plan as well as reviewing business planning and financial management systems to reduce operating costs.

A restaurant and bar located in Crosby. The business is in the process of expanding, taking a lease on nearby premises with the intention of opening a cocktail bar and grill. The concept of the Workshop is a New Orleans inspired restaurant with elements of classic French cuisine. The expansion is currently being funded through profits but progress is slow and this method of financing is putting a strain on the business finances. InvestSefton supported the business by assisting them with an application for Finance and liaising with Business Rates to resolve an outstanding issue.

Webinars/Events

- InvestSefton's webinars and events have become a useful vehicle for engaging with businesses on a one-to-many basis. The team has started the planning and development of events and workshops covering a wide range of demand-led themes.

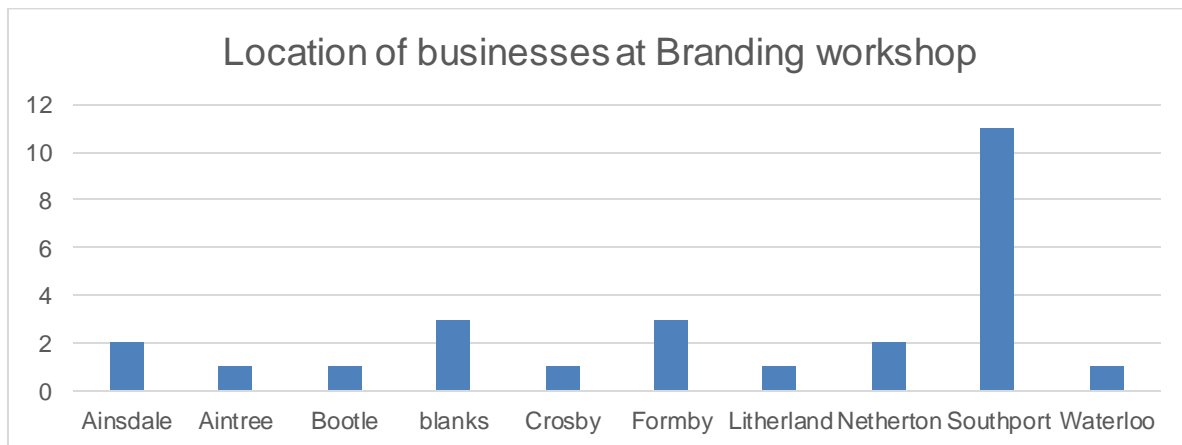
Better Branding Through Storytelling event 17th November 2022 Southport Eco Centre



- Some 31 delegates from 26 Sefton businesses attended InvestSefton's 'Better Branding through Storytelling' event at Southport Eco Centre. Sarah Jackson from Hatter's Digital Agency Ltd led the presentations and talked about branding, personal branding and what platforms to use
- Julie Swarbrick from InvestSefton talked about the support the team can provide while Gareth Wilson provided an overview on Sefton@Work and how they can help businesses with recruitment.

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- Feedback from the businesses:
 - *Informative and connecting*
 - *Opens up new ideas*
 - *The content was interesting and engaging*
 - *Educational and insightful*
 - *Did you find the event useful? 100% Yes*
 - *Helped me to understand what is needed to improve*
 - *Great insights, you wouldn't get from a book*
 - *Thanks for the business support, very helpful and interesting*
- 31 delegates, 9 Female delegates, 26 individual Sefton businesses attended
- 28 evaluations were completed



Sefton Economic Forum 8th December 2022 **The Lake House, Crosby**

- It was standing room only at the Lake House, Crosby on 8th December when it hosted InvestSefton's Sefton Economic Forum which attracted some 123 people.
- The event was once again well received and has become the premier business networking event in the borough.
- There were five excellent speakers from the Bank of England, Department of International Trade, British Intellectual Property service, Liverpool John Lennon Airport and the Capital Grant Fund updating on business opportunities, grant funding, the local economy and the growth of the Airport.
- Councillors Atkinson and Lappin also accepted the Federation of Small Businesses award which Sefton won for best NW Council response to Covid support for businesses. The event was chaired by James Brayshaw from Adaptive Communications in Southport.
- Some 69 business delegates attended including 26 women business owners who were able to enjoy talking to the Sefton Marketplace of some 20 business support providers including InvestSefton, Liverpool John Moores University, Sefton@work, Elevate EBP, Sefton CVS, Manufacturing Technology Centre, BIPC, LCR Growth Platform, LCR Capital Grant Fund, Scale up support from Edge Hill P&I Centre and Skills for Growth



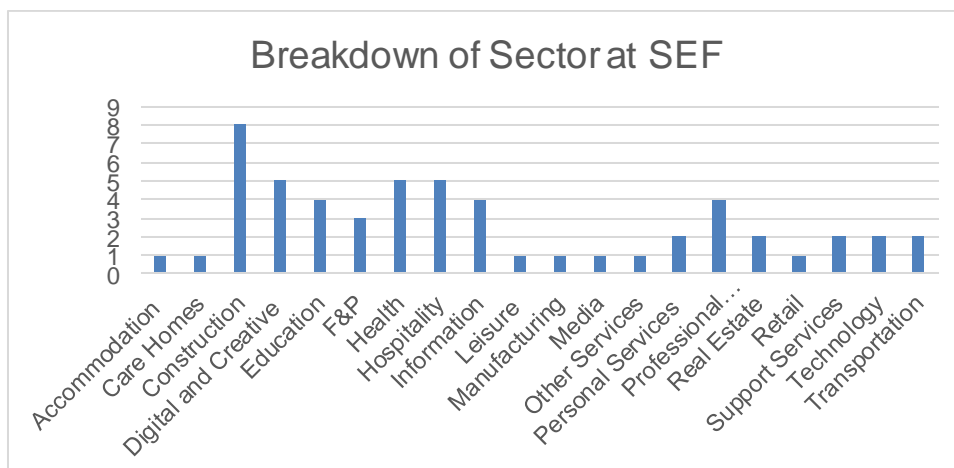
Picture Courtesy of Ray Farley Photography

Feedback -From the businesses

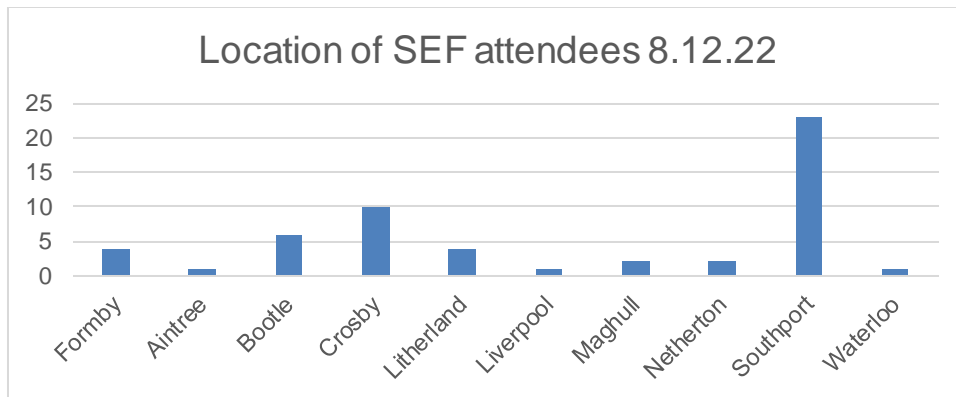
- *“Opens up the mind to opportunities”*
- *“All really, really good information”*
- *“Fantastic range of speakers, extremely insightful”*

The Marketplace

- LCR Finance Hub – *great speakers and great attendance*
- Department of International Trade– *Thank you for inviting me to the event, very informative and have learnt a lot I can pass back to my team.*
- 69 delegates attended: 26 Female delegates, 56 individual Sefton businesses attended. 20 evaluations were completed



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LCR Fair Employment Charter

- The team is promoting the LCR Fair Employment Charter which is delivered by the Combined Authority. The aim is to establish a Fair Employment Charter for Liverpool City Region, which would celebrate fair employment practices where they were in place and drive-up standards elsewhere. The intention was to recognise good quality and effective practice in fair employment and build the broader case amongst other employers for them to consider changing their practices.
- The application process is robust and is overseen by a panel including trade unions, employers and a range of HR specialists. Applications are also vetted by Local Authorities as part of the process. To date the following Sefton businesses have achieved aspiring business accreditation:
 - Elevate EBP
 - Parkhaven Trust
 - Sovini
 - Access Point

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING UPDATE

Funding Updates

- A paper to agree Continuation funding for Ways to Work will be presented to the LCR CA Investment Board in March 2023. This will endorse the drawing down of SIF funding, a portion of which will flow into Sefton to cover Sefton@work salary costs for the interim period between the end of European Social Fund and the commencement of the employment and skills strand of UK Shared Prosperity Funding in March 2024.

Sefton@work

Sefton@work General Performance Data for November 2022

| Data Description | Range | Figures |
|---------------------------------|------------------|---|
| Total Clients accessing service | Since 01/01/2016 | 5,444 |
| New Clients accessing service | November 2022 | 111 |
| New clients registering by age | November 2022 | 16-24 18 25-49 71 50+ 19 Unknown 3 |

| | | |
|---|-----------------------------------|--|
| W2W contracts Male | Since 01/01/16 November 2022 | 57.9% 51.3% |
| W2W contracts Female | Since 01/01/16 November 2022 | 42.0% 46.0% |
| W2W contracts Other | Since 01/01/16 November 2022 | 0.1% 2.7% |
| Positive Inclusions Male | Since 01/01/21 November 2022 | 68.8% 75.0% |
| Positive Inclusions Female | Since 01/01/21 November 2022 | 30.7% 25.0% |
| Positive Inclusions Other | Since 01/01/21 November 2022 | 0.5% 0.0% |
| ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions | Since 01/01/2016 November 2022 | 32.3% 7.3% |
| Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround) | Current Active Total | 23 |
| People leaving programmes (into jobs/self-emp/training) | Since 01/01/2016 | W2W & PI + 200 from other programmes Total 2,070 |
| | | |
| Ways to Work Starts | Since 01/01/2016 November 2022 | 4595 35 |
| Positive Inclusions Starts | Since 01/01/2021 November 2022 | 204 4 |
| | | |

End of Year Video

- Staff have produced a video to highlight some of the work conducted over 2022 across all the service areas which form a part of Employment & Learning. The video can be uploaded onto websites either as a composite or 2.2in stand-alone elements for each service area.

[Christmas 2022 Year in Review \(canva.com\)](https://www.canva.com)

Southport accommodation

- Staff have now moved out of the Atkinson and into temporary accommodation to be co-located with other agencies in Southport.
- The Restart staff are working in an agency called Humankind that also deliver DWP programmes for workless people, so there is good synergy for clients in this arrangement and this is working well. However, this agreement is only a trial and has only been made for a period of three months to allow for some breathing space for other accommodation, preferably within Council premises, to be obtained.
- The ESF funded staff for Ways to Work in Southport are located for timed sessions within the Light for Life organisation for a similar three-month period.

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Caring Business Charter Project

- The post of co-ordinator for the project has now been filled and the post holder has commenced with the team. She is being line managed within the Employer engagement team of Sefton@work and she is settling in well.
- Work on a roles and responsibility protocol with internal partners is being progressed to ensure that all stakeholders are aware that Sefton@work's main responsibility will be for liaising with signatory employers and securing suitable opportunities to meet demand, together with provision of monitoring the progress of the project.
- The co-ordinator will act as advocate on behalf of the employer and the participant where necessary. We expect that primary responsibility for the recruitment and targeting of care experienced people and ensuring their retention within opportunities will remain with the referring partner.
- A project implementation plan is also being produced, with input from the Co-ordinator.

Promoting Women in the Workforce

- Following on from earlier discussions with Cabinet Member, it has been agreed that the service should undertake some actions to promote the fuller engagement of women of working age in our services. At this preliminary stage there are some emerging themes for further investigation we intend to take forward in 2023:
 - Recovering from Covid - Understanding and managing stress and wellbeing and why women have not returned to the workforce.
 - The changed landscape for women and carers entering employment in Sefton. Gathering information on support and childcare measures and recent changes. The service has already purchased improved systems for individual "Better Off" calculations featuring variables such as childcare fees.
 - Women into Key Growth Sectors in Sefton. Dialogue with named employers (eg. Network Rail among others) to better understand their approach to gender balance in the workforce and assist with recruitment and customized pathways to entry
 - Working for Yourself. Entrepreneurship and practical skills for business. Turning Community Learning into Self Employment

Relocation project into the Bootle Strand Centre

- The budget for the re-fit is funded through external means from the Restart contract as a relocation for Sefton@work Bootle operations was part of our contract agreement with G4S.
- The overall target deadline for the re-fit is to have this completed by end March 2023, with the service fully relocated in the following quarter of 2023. This now seems a very challenging timescale but unless we are obliged to alter this, we will continue working towards this date.

Sefton Adult Learning Service



Performance update
Year to Date Comparison

| | Target | 18/19* Aug to Mid Nov | 20/21 Aug to Mid Nov | 21/22 Aug to Mid Nov | 22/23 Aug to Mid Nov |
|--------------------------------------|--------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Total number of learners | 2000 | 831 | 257 | 437 | 701 |
| Total number of unique learning aims | 2940 | 1098 | 340 | 527 | 866 |

| SSA | Learners | | | | Learning Aims | | | |
|--|----------|-------|-------|-------|---------------|-------|-------|-------|
| | 18/19 | 20/21 | 21/22 | 22/23 | 18/19 | 20/21 | 21/22 | 22/23 |
| 01-Health, Public Services and Care | 7 | 7 | 132 | 146 | 7 | 7 | 136 | 149 |
| 02-Science and Mathematics | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 8 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 03-Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care | 0 | 18 | 10 | 34 | 0 | 18 | 10 | 34 |
| 06-Information and Communication Technology | 138 | 5 | 21 | 84 | 162 | 5 | 21 | 105 |
| 07-Retail and Commercial Enterprise | 71 | 8 | 8 | 40 | 80 | 8 | 11 | 45 |
| 08-Leisure, Travel and Tourism | 31 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 37 | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| 09-Arts, Media and Publishing | 206 | 31 | 70 | 169 | 223 | 33 | 85 | 185 |
| 10-History, Philosophy and Theology | 0 | 15 | 17 | 50 | 0 | 15 | 17 | 53 |
| 11-Social Sciences | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 7 | 0 |
| 12-Languages, Literature and Culture | 40 | 39 | 28 | 45 | 41 | 39 | 29 | 46 |
| 13-Education and Training | 26 | 11 | 9 | 7 | 26 | 11 | 12 | 12 |
| 14.1-Foundation for Learning and Life | 245 | 92 | 122 | 170 | 373 | 138 | 161 | 200 |
| 14.2-Preparation for Work | 136 | 51 | 33 | 26 | 141 | 66 | 38 | 28 |
| 15 - Business, Administration and Law | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 9 |

* 18/19 Included for comparison as it was the last full year before covid

- From 1st August 2022 the Service has enrolled 741 new learners, who have completed a total of 944 learning aims. The data shows that the number of learning aims has significantly increased compared with the same period last year, however, it has still not returned to pre-covid levels.
- Community Learning courses make up the majority of learning activities so further work is required to increase the number of learners starting and achieving qualifications for us to fully meet our targets.
- To increase learner numbers, arrangements have been made for the new course prospectus to be distributed to 70,000 homes in L20, L21, L22, L23, L30 L31 areas.
- An additional 2,000 prospectuses have been distributed to 40+ partners and outreach locations across the borough with a further 80 going out in Hampers via colleagues in Sefton Localities and Early Help services.

The conclusion of 2021/22 progression survey:

- 100% of all learners were contacted following the completion of learning, this resulted in a 63% survey completion rate of those that completed the survey 69% indicated that they have progressed into a positive outcome.

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| Cohort | Total | |
|-----------------------------|--------------------|------|
| | Learners in Survey | 1393 |
| Contacted | 1393 | 100% |
| Completed Survey | 884 | 63% |
| Progression Outcomes | | |
| Education | 343 | 39% |
| Employment | 244 | 28% |
| Voluntary Work | 20 | 2% |
| Unemployed | 270 | 31% |
| Other | 7 | 1% |
| Positive Outcomes | | |
| | 607 | 69% |

Staff Training and Development

- OFSTED Nominee and shadow nominee training took place 18th November.
- Governors Learning walks were conducted 8th and 12th Dec. These were felt to be very helpful by learners and tutors.
- LCR CA Quality assurance bootcamp training will take place on 12th and 13th December and is being hosted by Sefton. AEB funded organisations from across the Liverpool City Region will attend.
- Mental Health Training for Managers and Leaders sessions will take place on 19th December. This will be a key part of our plans to improve our wellbeing and pastoral care for learners.

Pathways to Teaching Programme

- The Service has commenced recruitment on to this much-awaited new Programme. It will offer places to individuals who are interested in teaching as a career path in the adult education sector.
- Applicants need to hold a relevant vocational and/or academic award in their chosen subject area together with suitable qualifications in English, they need to reside in the LCR area, be aged over 19 years and either be workless or earning under the threshold of £19,305. Applications from people seeking to retrain from various backgrounds are most welcome.
- The project will deliver a package of teaching, learning and assessment to Liverpool City Region adult learners as part of a Pathways to Teaching in Adult Learning initiative aimed at growing the local adult learning workforce.
- On completion of the programme, participants can progress to a Level 5 Certificate in Education (Post – Compulsory Education and Training).
- From this Level 5, participants can then progress to “top-up” to a degree and /or on to a Level 7 Post Graduate Certificate in Education at a University.
- There are 5 candidates expected to join the project in Sefton, with more places still available.

Street Food Test and Learn Pilot

- Preparations are underway to commence the test and learn pilot project in January. This will be linked to wider development connected to events in the Sefton marketing calendar and the Bootle Canalside initiative.

- For the test and learn element, there will be a combination of activity with both intergenerational family learning and preparation for employment in food and drink as pathways.
- The service has been working with the National Catering Association (NCASS) commission to ensure their expertise can be drawn upon.
- To meet the requirement of the funding with the LCR-CA the service will need to recruit 60 learners through the combination of family learning and employment pathway, to be completed by end July 2023.

Multiply

- The opportunity for voluntary and community agencies to access Multiply funding through the service was published on the Chest in line with the Council's contract procedure rules. The deadline for responses has now been extended to allow more time for potential applicants to respond.

NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Service

Headlines

- The following are the headlines for the main performance measures for the Service for October 2022:

Performance summary: LCR comparison

- Sefton has the lowest % for Not Known and NEET & NK Combined across all Local Authority Areas and is below the England and north-west averages

Performance Summary: North-West comparison

- Sefton is performing better than North West for the NEET and Not Known Combined measure reported to government

Performance Summary: National comparison

- Sefton remains in the same position as October 2021 ie - ranked 3rd best in the country from 152 Local Authorities
- Sefton has reduced the Not Known % compared to September 21 with Sefton ranking 2nd best in the country, moving up from 3rd position.
- Sefton NEET has however increased by 0.05% (ie 29 more young people aged 16 and 17 are NEET now than in October 21) and the complexity of some of their issues is increasing and requires more intensive support
- We are seeing an increase in NEET rates within the SEND group for 16- and 17-year-olds in 2022.

| | NEET | NK | Combined | Current NEET Rank | Current NK Rank | Current Combined Rank |
|--------------|--------------|--------------|---------------|-------------------|-----------------|-----------------------|
| Sefton | 2.90% | 0.50% | 3.40% | 39 | 151 | 150 |
| Halton | 3.60% | 1.40% | 4.90% | 25 | 141 | 138 |
| St. Helens | 4.30% | 2.90% | 7.10% | 12 | 127 | 119 |
| NORTH | 2.80% | 9.10% | 11.90% | | | |

Agenda Item 9

| | | | | | | |
|----------------|--------------|---------------|---------------|----|----|----|
| WEST | | | | | | |
| Wirral | 2.50% | 12.30% | 14.80% | 51 | 54 | 52 |
| ENGLAND | 2.20% | 15.00% | 17.20% | | | |
| Knowsley | 4.30% | 30.10% | 34.40% | 11 | 18 | 18 |

Partnership working across Sefton Services and Stakeholders

- In November, Career Connect participated in meeting with the representatives from the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. This is part of the Supporting Families programme meeting looking at how strategic partners are embedding within whole family working.
- The Career Connect team has also been Involved in preparing data and offering input to **the Council's Ofsted Annual Conversation** regarding NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service contribution to support and outcomes for young people.
- **Sefton Council Caring Business Charter for care experienced young people.**
The Charter represents a commitment from local business and partners to offer high quality opportunities to young people who have experience of the care system. Some businesses have committed to guaranteed interviews for care experienced young people or work experience, while others have committed to paid roles and apprenticeship. Protocols are being put in place
- Career Connect chairs **Sefton's NEET Case Conference working group.** There have been 10 meetings over 18 months with 40 "stuck" cases being discussed and actioned by stakeholders. The outcomes of this work have been very positive, with 85.7% of cases moving into Participation in education, employment and training as a result. The group's Purpose is to target and plan individual pathways around Sefton's cohort of young people from 16-18 who are NEET. The group is expected to identify creative solutions to each young person's situation and through Collaborative approaches remove barriers and address problems. 75% of the cases coming to the group have had EHC plans, 90% have had below 30% school attendance at pre 16 phase, 20% have had 0% school attendance. The group has been characterized by lots of learning, networking, and sharing of good practice. Suitability of provision does not seem to be the most pressing issue but rather the comprehensive personal development support and the holistic approaches that are required to sustain medium to long term goals with the young people.
- Career Connect chairs **Preparation for Adulthood SEN group.** This meets 3 times a year and the purpose of the group is to ensure continuous improvement in outcomes for young people aged 14-25 with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) in terms of Community, Health, Independent Living and Employment. It will provide oversight and secure evidence that young people with SEND are receiving appropriate support and progressing into positive destinations in line with the implementation of the SEN Reforms.
- Career connect have participated in LA training on "**Leading for System Change-Early Help**"-delivered by SYSTEMLEADERSHIP NHS NORTH WEST LEADERSHIP ACADEMY. This included:
 - 'Developing a Reducing Parental Conflict Outcomes Framework'.
 - Developing a shared understanding of the impact that parental conflict has on child outcomes
 - Increasing understanding of what child outcomes are, how they're measured, and how they relate to the local context in Sefton.

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- Recognise the roles that different agencies and professionals play in reducing parental conflict across the different contact points in families' lives
- Build consensus in working together to reduce parental conflict and prioritising what matters
- Career Connect also participate in the following Sefton groups:
 - Youth Justice Board
 - Youth Justice Operational Group
 - Early Help Board
 - Corporate Parenting Board - also member of working sub-groups on Aspiration and Transitions
 - Sefton Leadership Collaborative Multi Agency Working Group
 - High Needs Panel
 - Next Steps Panel for Care Experienced young people
 - Placing and Monitoring Group for Children Missing from Education/exclusions etc
 - Youth Justice Risk Meetings

Listening event

- An informal Meet and Greet event promoting the NEET Reduction Service Offer was held in November at Cambridge Road. It was attended by me and offered young people, their parents and carers an opportunity to let commissioners and lead Members know about how the Service has impacted their lives.
- These listening events form part of the communications and feedback arrangements for young people, which were halted during the pandemic. Similar events will be held in early summer of 2023.

TOURISM UPDATE

Destination Marketing

- **Christmas Campaign** – Marketing Southport worked in partnership with Southport BID to promote Christmas in Southport. We concentrated on sub-regional activity to draw visitors into the town via digital and Out of home advertising. The BID concentrated on the local market via leaflet, local radio and digital activity.
- **Design & Campaign Management Agency** – The tender for our 2023 agency was awarded to Gingerhead via The Chest. This will be the 4th year we have worked with them
- **PR** – The contract with our current agency finishes December this year. We went out to a number of agencies for proposals for 2023 and the contract was awarded to Social PR.
- **Visitor Guide** – the 2023 guide design is nearing completion (to go to print mid-January) The print run is 45,000 with the majority going directly to regional distributors and the national TIC network.
- **Southport Restaurateurs Association** – The 2023 guide has been delivered and will be distributed locally, with the visitor guide during February.
- **E-newsletter** - Database stands at circa 50,000 with the addition of 2022 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience.
- **Travel Trade** – advertising has been placed in key travel trade publications. Editorial has been secured alongside all ads to date. We have joined AGTO and CTA to increase our communication with GTO's and coach companies. A Southport

Agenda Item 9

Showcase (mini exhibition) is being held on 24 April next year. Invitations have gone out to local Marketing Southport members to exhibit at the event. We will be attending BTTS at the NEC in March having a stand directly opposite Liverpool.

- **Golf** – 2022 has been a very busy year for international visitors and the England's Golf Coast shoulder season package. We have recently held a meeting between EGC, Southport Golf Tours and tourism to ensure cooperation between the three partners and a golf activity plan is being produced. The EGC website will sit as a micro-site within Visitsouthport when the new site is launched in 2023.
- **Marketing Southport** – membership currently stands at 104 (106 this time last year). The next Marketing Southport board meeting is to be held in March. An annual report will be produced in January.
- **Eurovision** – MS is plugged into LCR planning and activity around Eurovision. More detailed information will be available in January. We will of course be looking to engage with local businesses to ensure we maximise available opportunities.

Events

- The dates for 2023 have been announced as follows:-
 - Food & Drink Festival - 2nd – 4th June
 - Air Show - 9th & 10th September
 - The British Musical Fireworks Championship - 22nd – 23rd September.
 - Budgets for the 2023 events are being finalised
 - Procurement of infrastructure and event planning has started

A new 2023 events programme is being devised for Bootle at Salt and Tar, this will include:

- Comedy Weekender in May 2023 with comedians such as Jason Byrne, Jo Caulfield and Scott Bennett, Chris McCausland, Daliso Chaponda, Nina Gilligan and Brendan Riley.
- A large scale music event spread across July, Red Rum Club confirmed to date with over 2,600 tickets sold and more major acts to be announced
- Planning has commenced around other events such as a food and drink festival, winter wonderland etc..

Marine Lake Events Centre

- The MLEC project continues to make good progress, RIBA Stage 3 is now complete
- ASM Global have been selected as the preferred operator, the biggest events venue operator in the world. It is planned for the Agreement for lease to be signed by January 2023
- The procurement of the build contractor is complete with all submissions scored and checked, with a view to appoint by January 2023 to carry out demolition and enabling works.
- The Contractor will then work with us on Stage 4 looking at appointment of main works in October 2023
- Full planning application submitted.
- Government for Town Deal funding now confirmed with full business case approval.
- Planning to be on site Q1 2023.

REGENERATION, GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

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

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2

- Sefton Council submitted two levelling up funding bids in August 2022 for Bootle and Crosby. Totalling £30.3 million, both bids are designed to help regenerate these areas, tackle local deprivation, enhance and/or provide new facilities to serve the local communities and support the creation of investment and employment opportunities in the two town centres. Initial indications suggested a decision would be made by December 2022 however DLUHC have recently advised the decision will be made early 2023 for the remaining £2.1 billion LUF of the fund.

Bootle Town Centre

- The Council is progressing plans for a repurposed Strand Shopping Centre and further work and development of Bootle Canalside:

Bootle Canalside

- Re-branding of Bootle Canalside to “SALT AND TAR: MADE IN BOOTLE” has been released (referring to the town's rich industrial heritage, with the Brotherton's Tar Distillery on Hawthorne Road and the area's historic link to the salt trade. Detailed plans to provide an attractive entertainment complex with covered areas, bars, food outlets and canal-side access are being progressed and the project is scheduled to be completed for opening in Spring 2023. The below press release refers:
- [Bootle Canalside events area to be branded 'Salt and Tar' - My Sefton News Channel](#)

Strand Transformation

- January's Cabinet - latest Business Plan for The Strand presented, which sets out how re-purposing The Strand will create an enhanced and more diversified town centre, support the growth of a night-time economy and deliver new amenities needed by local people and businesses. Among the proposed changes are better retail provision and the introduction of alternative uses including health, education, and technology. Additionally, the adjacent Canalside site will continue to be developed, along with the introduction of new green corridors and improvements to The Strand's public spaces. The report includes the three-year Business Plan for the Strand Shopping Centre, an overview of the emerging vision for the future of the Strand, and of the Levelling Up funding bid submission. The Government is now expected to announce the outcome of the Levelling Up bidding process early in 2023.

SOUTHPORT

Southport Town Deal

- Work continues on the delivery of Southport Town Deal. This year has seen the approval of the business cases for funding the projects in accordance with the Town Deal bid submission requirements.
- Business cases have been approved for:
 - Southport Enterprise Arcade
 - Les Transformation de Southport (Public Realm enhancement) Phase 1

Agenda Item 9

- Building a Better Customer Experience
- Marine Lake Events Centre and Water and Light show which was approved in December 2022.
- MLEC Business Case was the final project funding approval needed for the whole scheme which will now progress forward into delivery (as stated above). Overwhelming support has already been shown for the transformational project, which will see a brand new state of the art events centre and accompanying water and light show built on the site of the former Southport Theatre. See press statement here- [Sefton's Marine Lake Events Centre business case praised by Government - My Sefton News Channel](#)

The Enterprise Arcade, Southport

- Refurbishment of one of Southport's central town centre buildings next to Southport Market for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project. This will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport.
- Cabinet approved plans to transform the Crown Buildings into a high tech, collaborative and affordable workspace for small businesses, dubbed the 'Enterprise Arcade.'
- Forming part of the Southport Town Deal, £1.5 million has been earmarked for the regeneration and transformation of Crown Buildings, eventually creating a purpose-built hub for individuals, freelancers, enterprises, and independent professionals who are taking their first steps into setting up their own business.
- The Enterprise Arcade project is a key project within the Southport Town Deal programme to kickstart the previously untapped digital, creative and technological sectors within the resort.
- Design work is continuing for the project and the process of appointing contractors to carry out the works will be completed early in the new year with works starting later in 2023.

Les Transformation de Southport

- The business case for this project was submitted to Government in March 2022 following endorsement by the Town Deal Board and approval by Sefton Cabinet. The business case has been accepted by central Government and Sefton Council are progressing with the next stage of the project.
- This involves the delivery of the first phase of the improvements, focussing on the area around Southport Market, and the development of the proposals for future phases.
- The Town Deal will provide the funding for the first phase of the works and the business case will be used to pursue funding options for the future phases of the project.
- Public consultation and engagement was undertaken this year in February and March 2022 , with follow up consultation in November including key businesses in the area likely to be affected. This concluded support for the first phase of work from residents, businesses and young people (through the schools' responses) for many aspects of the Town Deal proposals. Works will start to be implemented early in 2023 with the main programme of work commencing in the autumn after the summer season to avoid disruption.

Building a Better Customer Experience

- Following approval of the business case for this training project earlier this year by the Council and Town Deal Board, training providers have agreed activity to be delivered to support the hospitality sector in Southport at a crucial time. Training provision through Sefton Adult and community Learning and Southport College will start in 2023.

CROSBY

Crosby Town Centre Regeneration

- Sefton Council is awaiting the outcome of a decision on the submitted Crosby LUF bid in August 2022. The £10.3 million bid for Crosby Town Centre underpins the programme of regeneration ambitions of the local community set out in the Crosby Investment Strategy. The proposals will enhance the viability and vitality of Crosby town centre and support local businesses by helping to attract more residents and visitors. The proposal if approved will build a new learning, skills, health and well-being hub, library and GP/community health care. It will be a place for people to both work and develop skills within Crosby. Levelling Up Fund resources would also allow for a significant upgrade of the main gateways into the town centre, better pedestrian and cycle access and new electric vehicle charging points in car parks, while also fund on the appearance of public spaces.
- Work is continuing to prepare a planning application for highway and parking works linked to support access and accessibility in Crosby.

Crosby Lakeside

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

Carnegie Library, Crosby.

- Preplanning consultation is underway on the Grade II listed Carnegie Library following investment interest. Local restaurateurs Moose Coffee are to partner in this exciting project – returning home to Crosby with a new flagship eatery. A new digital hub is also proposed in the former library building, providing accessible digital resources, meeting rooms and co-working desks. Consultation undertaken in December returned a positive response from the local community. More details can be found here - [Former Grade II Listed Carnegie Library reimagined as family restaurant and digital hub - My Sefton News Channel](#)

AINSDALE ON SEA

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

- Sefton Council have gone out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) earlier this year, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site.
- External Agents were appointed to ensure maximum visibility for the opportunity both local and nationally and formal marketing took place in summer 2022 generating several formal expressions of interest. The marketing remains 'live' and the opportunity continues to be made available to other parties subject to progress with and conclusion of consideration of the current submissions.
- Brochure can be seen here: [Former Sands PH Marketing Brochure](#)
- Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills; and Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#)

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Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way

- Following Cabinet agreement to acquire the current leasehold interests in this centre by agreement and to bring it into full Council ownership, negotiations with owners are continuing.
- Approximately 50% of the interests have now been acquired and brought into Council control.
- A review of an agreed shortlist of options for this site is now complete and will inform the best approach for this site once in Council ownership including how it can support the wider neighbourhood and community.
- Consultation on site development options with Cabinet and local ward councilors, which has helped inform the option appraisal shortlist being assessed.
- Cabinet member support will be sought to progress with a Compulsory Purchase Order for this site.
- Members will consider in 2023 the next stage needed to bring all outstanding ownerships into Council control and seek views from the market on potential interest.

| CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) | | |
|--|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| Councillor | Portfolio | Period of Report |
| John Fairclough | Cabinet Member Locality Services | January 2023 |

Port Access

- The new double track section of the rail line at the Port entrance has been operational since September 2021. Improvements to signalling at Earlestown West are included in the works associated with transferring the control of signals from Warrington to Manchester, which is not due to happen until 2029.
- There is little change in the progress of the Port of Liverpool Access scheme. National Highways have confirmed that they are concentrating on updating their traffic modelling to take account of the impact of changes in traffic patterns resulting from Covid. They have confirmed in their latest update, from July 22, that ‘this detailed and important work is likely to take approximately 12 months to complete’ and therefore they will not be in a position to publish an updated project timeline, including when they intend to formally consult the local community and the wider general public their proposals, until this traffic modelling work is completed. The statutory public consultation needs to be undertaken in advance of the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate. This is unlikely to take place until late 2023 at the earliest.

LTP and Growth Plan

- Sefton is continuing to work with the LCR Combined Authority/Merseytravel and the other local authorities on the delivery of the transport capital programme. Following the Government announcement of £710m over the next 5 years for the Liverpool City Region from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, the programme for 2022/23 was agreed and the Council is currently on target to achieve the agreed spend. The settlement provides a significant uplift in funding for transport infrastructure, particularly for highway maintenance, with a resulting pressure on staff resources. Recruitment for new staff to help deliver the programme is ongoing.
- Consideration has been given to a programme for 23-24 and beyond to ensure there are no delays in delivery. This programme will be agreed by the LCRCA in February 2023 and will shortly be reviewed and agreed with Cabinet Member.
- **Low Carbon Strategy:** In response to the Council’s climate emergency declaration and an increased focus on active travel measures, work is continuing on the development of Low Carbon Transport Strategy for the borough. Some initial baselining work has been completed and the outcome will be shared, initially with Members. This will seek to provide a The Council is seeking a report, the aim of

Agenda Item 9

which will be to provide a quantification of the current transport related carbon position for the Council and a future trajectory for reductions towards Net Zero. The consultants are also identifying the next steps, which will include an engagement exercise. Progress is also being made on the development of an Active Travel and E-mobility Strategies for the Borough.

- In order to identify potential improvement to the Councils walking and cycling network a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan is being developed. Proposals for stakeholder engagement will be presented to the Consultation and Engagement Panel in early November. A number of engagement sessions have already been held with specific interest groups and some initial plans developed for helping inform the engagement process.
- **Southport Eastern Access:** The preliminary design of the schemes to be included in the Full Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor has been completed and discussed with Active Travel England. The detailed design work is now progressing on both schemes and the final drawings will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. Part of the Maritime Corridor scheme is likely to be funded from the Levelling Up Fund, following the success of the transport bid. There is some pressure to have the scheme delivered as soon as the FBC is approved, and therefore procurement options are being examined. Some further engagement to ensure that local Members, businesses and residents are sighted on the proposals and have an ability to shape them is planned for January -February.
- **A59 Junctions:** Design work is continuing on improvements the junctions at Kenyon's Lane and at Hall Lane on the A59 Northway, these will be developed in the context of a wider improvement of the cycle route between Switch Island and Robins Island. A package of funding including Government grant funding for improvements to traffic signals, developer contributions and Sefton transport capital programme will be used to deliver these improvements. ATE are supportive of the project and are encouraging the Council to consider the link to the wider communities and the potential for improvement east and west on the A59. Discussions will have been undertaken with local Ward Members and Maghull Town Council on the details of both schemes and further consultation with the wider public is programmed.
- **Scarisbrick Avenue:** In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been completed, including the installation of lighting. Some defect works are planned for completion in January / February 2023.
- **Southport Town Deal:** Design work on the first phase of public realm project identified within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) has begun. Targeted consultation with local businesses has been completed and comments are being incorporated within the detailed design.
- **Crosby Town Centre:** Works has commenced on the detailed design of the highway works which will support the development proposed for the Green Car Park which is subject the Levelling Up Fund. The works are aimed at reducing severance and improving access to the town centre. Discussions are ongoing with relevant authorities over the potential phasing of the works.

- Initial work has also been commissioned to review access to the Strand in Bootle, in order to help shape initial work associated with the re-imagining of the centre.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2022/23 was approved some months ago and will updated and submitted to Cabinet Member for approval in January.

Sustainable Transport

- **Crosby Coastal Park:** The proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle route through Crosby Coastal Park were not approved by the Council's Planning Department despite the public consultation indicating overall support. The perceived safety issue which was cited as the reason for refusal has been further examined and several alternative options examined with a preferred solution developed. Some further engagement has been held with representatives from the coastal Forum, residents' groups, and Ward Members. Further meetings are planned which could help shape further plans. The LCRCA have indicated that there is a limited extension to the funding window which allows time for a modified scheme, which addresses the Planning Committees concerns to be submitted to Planning. A procurement exercise has previously been completed and may have to be updated prior to works commencing should planning approval be granted. Habitat improvement works will also be delivered as part of the scheme subject to approval.
- **Formby By-pass:** The Department for Transport has confirmed that the funding secured through tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund can be used for proposals to improve the cycle and walking facilities on part of the Formby Bypass. The design has been completed and agreed with Active Travel England, and tenders invited. Works are programmed to commence in January 2023 and completed Spring 2023.
- Revenue funding has been received from the Active Travel Fund for the development of projects capable to improving cycling and walking throughout the borough. Works is currently progressing the A59 cycleway, the remainder of the A565 corridor to complement the improvement to the links identified above, junction on the A565, including Woodvale and the development of a Local Walking and Infrastructure Plan to compliment the City Region Strategic Plan.
- **School Streets:** Consultation work has been undertaken on three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. Funding has been secured to develop other school streets initiatives throughout the borough and a dedicated officer, seconded from Sustrans, has recently commenced the selection and engagement work.
- **Green Bus Corridor:** The LCRCA have commissioned consultants to commence works on the Green Bus Corridor, which includes the consideration of proposals for Bus Priority and active travel on the No 53 bus corridor which includes Stanley Road. Initial meetings have been held with the Council and information provided to the consultant.
- **Great Georges Road:** A finalisation to the previous cycle lane scheme along Great Georges Road has been agreed and the designs are being completed.

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- **Ainsdale Car Park:** In conjunction with the Green Sefton team the design and procurement for a new car park at Ainsdale Beach is progressing, with an expected bids to undertake the civils works expected to commence in February with completion of July 2023, prior to the school holiday season.

Highway Development Control

Planning Applications

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the recent turnover in staffing resources, increased by the fact that no suitable applications were received for the vacant senior highway development engineer post. The applications include sites identified in the Local Plan and continue to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department. A total of 128 applications have been responded to in October and November 2022.

Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites.
- The report is as follows: -
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 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 – 26
 - 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 82 live s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- England Coast Path/Coastal Access - the delivery of the establishment works are to be completed through the Term Maintenance contracts by February 2023.

Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning

- The team is continuing to work closely with the Planning Department to provide a strategic approach to development to ensure that the necessary new transport infrastructure is in place to support new developments coming forward in future years.

- The team continues to request construction traffic management plans for new developments so that we can manage the highway network efficiently and effectively with minimum disruption to users of the highway and with the important benefit of highway safety. Once plans have been agreed, the team is collaborating closely with colleagues in network management and planning to ensure that the plans are being adhered to.

Highway Asset Management

Winter Maintenance

- As of 21st December, we have gritted the carriageways on 20 occasions and the footways 12 times.
- We are in the process of a re-stock of our salt supplies, following the recent prolonged cold spell, and will be back to full capacity for the New Year.
- Regular updates will be provided throughout the season to monitor expenditure, as we have done in previous years.

Street Lighting LED retro fit scheme

- The total energy reduction, up to the end of November, on the LED scheme is 2,244,371.69 KWH with a carbon reduction of 486.00 TC02e
- The scheme programme has now been revised to concentrate on high wattage lamp replacement, which will realise energy savings earlier than first anticipated.

Traffic signals LED retro fit scheme

- Discussions are on-going with the appointed contractor to start the Traffic Signals LED scheme, with a proposed start early in the New Year.
- This scheme will also reduce energy consumption and provide carbon savings, as well as reducing on-going maintenance costs.

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| CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT | | |
|--|-----------------------|---------------|
| Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) | | |
| <i>COUNCILLOR</i> | <i>PORTFOLIO</i> | <i>DATE</i> |
| Ian Moncur | Health and Well Being | December 2022 |

GREEN SEFTON

Overview

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

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

To start to address this, an increase in revenue budget was approved by Full Council as part of the budget setting process for an additional £200k into the management of play areas / facilities from 2022/23 onwards (increasing the budget from £45k per year), and for several of the actions from the Coast Visitor Action Plan for the delivery of those actions on a permanent basis with a further £300k annual uplift – to include additional daytime and evening ranger staff, a full time Community Ranger for the Coast, increased litter management at key gateways, ongoing provision of temporary toilets at beach entrances, and a communications plan to encourage appropriate visitor behaviour.

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

- the 500k Countryside Stewardship Higher Tier funding for conservation works over the next 5 years along the coast was accepted in February 2022
- a major bid for Botanic Gardens is in early development, with a Task Group set up (chaired by Cabinet Member, and with ward councillors and community reps), and approval to consult publicly given at the Consultation and Engagement Panel in March 2022. Further, a successful pre-development bid to the HLF has provided resource and capacity to lead and deliver this consultation in Winter 2022, and to undertake the required surveys and analysis etc, all in order to be able to make a bid in 2023. In the last quarter, a consultant has been appointed to give capacity and expertise to launching this consultation in November, and further efforts are taking place on the pre-development work to understand the scale and scope of the project also.

Agenda Item 9

- consultation has been completed for the allocation of 'legacy' monies left for Hesketh Park in a residents will, and cost estimate / details for priority projects have been developed and a contract is being drafted with the trustees to formalise this suite of projects to be developed and delivered
- Cabinet gave formal approval to seek tenders for the future investment in Southport Golf Links in March 2022. Tenders for both the While House Café building, and the course itself are now in development, and should be launched by the time of publishing this report
- the FCERM team continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partner agencies on seeking capital monies to reduce flood risk.

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

What is performing well

The 2022 Annual Review was presented to an Informal meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny (regeneration and skills) committee in October, and with a formal presentation at the November meeting. This was well received, and outlined some of the successes for the service in the last year, and also explained some of the challenges. A narrated version of the presentation has been uploaded on the website here: www.sefton.gov.uk/greensefton

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

Highlights from the last quarter include:

- The service continues to work in partnership with many other organisations, partner agencies, and of course fundamentally our communities – supporting around 40 'Friends of', In Bloom and other volunteer groups, together with 300+ sports clubs and leagues that utilise our facilities;
- The service co-ordinated the In Bloom competition again this year, with 37 awards being received, and Southport winning Gold, and its category for Large Coastal resort
- The development of a Coast and Visitor Areas PSPO was a new item added to the services work programme this year – approved at Full Council in July, this will enable better management of visitor behaviour, and address anti social behaviours in the designated locations. Officers are now in discussion with other land owners and the emergency services to ensure a 'one coast/ one sefton' approach to rolling this out, incl engagement and enforcement.
- Bootle Driving Range is now operational and exceeding initial expectations, albeit with some operational challenges that the service are learning from
- The Visitor Action Plan for 2022 has been reviewed. The Multi Agency Group with other landowners and emergency services etc. continued to meet over the summer, and included a pre, mid, and post season briefing will all coastal ward councillors.

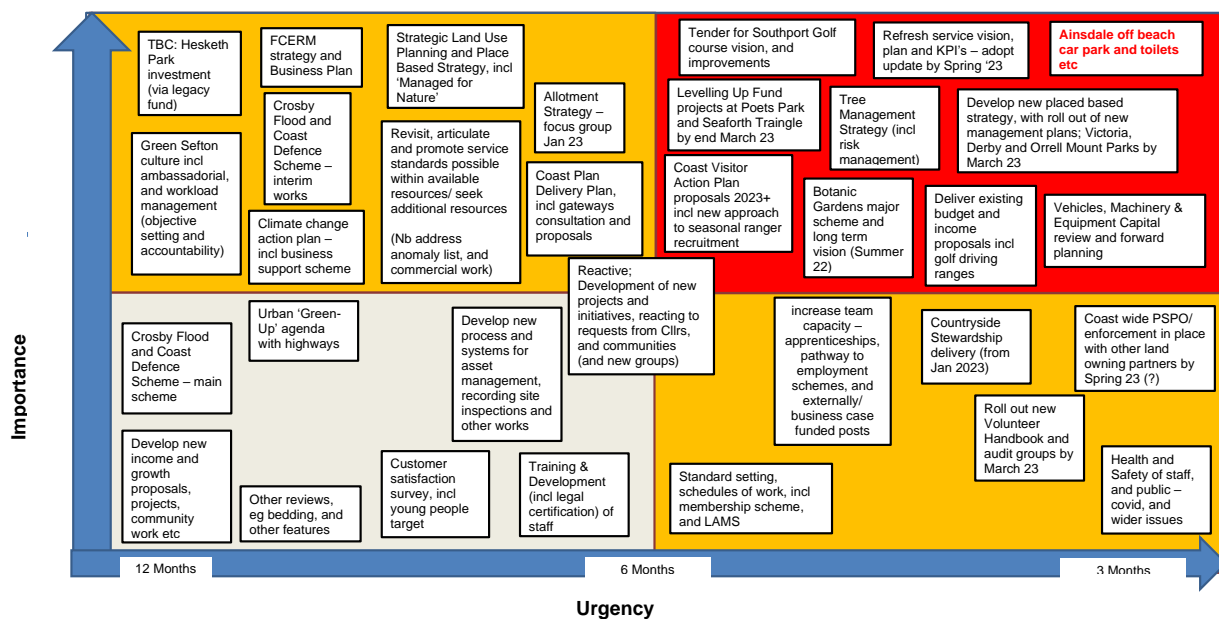
What requires improvement and what action is being taken

Overall work programming

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

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

GREEN SEFTON STRATEGIC WORKLOAD MATRIX – as presented to O+S Oct/ Nov 22, and updated 25.11.22
(to be reported to Cabinet Member on a regular basis, and updated through the year)



Working with Volunteers

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

The action taken to address this is to refresh the Volunteer Handbook – this guiding document introduces volunteers to setting up a group, however it also now goes much further in terms of setting out expectations to be placed on volunteers about their Policies and Procedures expected of a group, including Equality and Diversity, Safeguarding, and

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overall Code of Conduct – both in terms of the way volunteers treat each other, and also about how they deal and interact with Council officers.

The first draft of this refresh was discussed with Cabinet Member at the April 2022 meeting, and following comments received (including those from CVS, legal and personnel colleagues), the final version was approved by Cabinet Member in September. This has now been shared with all volunteer groups, with a request that they sign up to the updated document, and expectations contained therein.

Defining Standards

As part of addressing some of the frustrations from the community referred to above, we have also instigated a piece of work to define our maintenance service standards that we are currently resourced to provide. This is initially being prioritised on the inland parks and greenspaces maintenance aspects of the service, but team leaders are working up thoughts on defining standards across wider areas too. The first draft of this new document was shared with Cabinet Member at the April 2022 meeting, and final amendments are being made before releasing this in the coming months.