

Overview  
& Scrutiny



MEETING: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)

DATE: Tuesday 16th January, 2024

TIME: 6.30 pm

VENUE: Town Hall, Bootle

**Member**

Councillor  
Councillor Dowd (Chair)  
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)  
Councillor Corcoran  
Councillor Harvey  
Councillor Lloyd-Johnson  
Councillor Christine Maher  
Councillor McKee  
Councillor Catie Page  
Councillor Sir Ron Watson  
Councillor Webster

**Substitute**

Councillor  
Councillor Killen  
Councillor O'Brien  
Councillor Halsall  
Councillor Waterfield  
Councillor Dodd  
Councillor Grace  
Councillor Richards  
Councillor Thomas  
Councillor Prendergast  
Councillor Anne Thompson

COMMITTEE OFFICER: Paul Fraser  
Senior Democratic Services Officer  
Telephone: 0151 934 2068  
E-mail: paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk

**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.**

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# **A G E N D A**

## **1. 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.

## **2. Apologies for Absence**

## **3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

(Pages 5 - 12)

Minutes of the meeting held on 7 November 2023

## **4. Update on the Progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy**

Presentation by Andrea Watts, Executive Director of People

## **5. Serious Violence Duty**

(Pages 13 - 82)

Report of the Assistant Director of People (Communities)

## **6. A Cultural Strategy for Sefton**

(Pages 83 - 120)

Report of the Executive Director of People

## **7. Southport Market - 2 Year Review**

(Pages 121 - 130)

Report of the Executive Director of Place

- |            |  |                      |
|------------|--|----------------------|
| <b>8.</b>  | <b>Sefton Economic Strategy Update</b>   | (Pages 131 -<br>188) |
|            | Report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)  |                      |
| <b>9.</b>  | <b>Sandway Homes - 2022 / 23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies</b>                                | (Pages 189 -<br>208) |
|            | Report of the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing)  |                      |
| <b>10.</b> | <b>Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022 / 23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies</b> | (Pages 209 -<br>220) |
|            | Report of the Executive Director of Place  |                      |
| <b>11.</b> | <b>Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan</b>                              | (Pages 221 -<br>244) |
|            | Report of the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer   |                      |
| <b>12.</b> | <b>Cabinet Member Reports - November 2023 to January 2024</b>  | (Pages 245 -<br>316) |
|            | 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 7TH NOVEMBER, 2023

PRESENT: Councillor Dowd (in the Chair)  
Councillor Howard (Vice-Chair)  
Councillors Corcoran, Harvey, Lloyd-Johnson,  
Christine Maher, McKee, Catie Page and  
Sir Ron Watson

ALSO PRESENT: Councillors Atkinson and Hardy

#### 18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Webster (and her substitute member Councillor Anne Thompson) 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 19 September 2023 be confirmed as a correct record.

#### 21. BOOTLE REGENERATION STRATEGY - PRESENTATION

The Committee received a presentation from Stephen Watson, Executive Director of Place, that updated on the Bootle Regeneration Strategy (the Strategy). Mr. Watson highlighted the following issues:

- Introduction and context relating to the site; and the Phase 1A-C site plan.
- The vision statement that the repurposing of the Strand would catalyse development of a more sustainable and resilient town centre that provided improved opportunities for local communities, residents and businesses; and that it would increase pride and raise ambition across Bootle whilst improving perception and brand beyond Bootle. The principles of "people first", "connected", "resilient" and "green" were referred to along with the outcomes of improved resident wellbeing, inclusive growth, a connected and integrated town centre and a sustainable repurposed asset. A framework for success (including principles to test options and

# Agenda Item 3

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

shape evaluation criteria against) were also described relating to economic, social, environmental and commercial activity.

- Scheme design overview which included retail being the main focus of the centre; the waterside regeneration; phase 1 demolition; the Salt and Tar operation; and future phases of development/activity
- Stakeholder engagement and consultation. Details were provided on activity and events at the Information Centre, the Stakeholder Engagement, Communications and Consultation Plan, and that the consultation process would be ongoing. The positive results of the demolition planning application consultation were also detailed and which included engagement with occupiers, residents and the community
- Key milestones relating to the demolition planning application being finalised and submitted in early October 2023; and the anticipated planning decision regarding the main works application being approved in July 2024.

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

- A concern was raised that the Council was progressing with the scheme in which the full financial consequences were not known and how key outturn revenue costs would be identified and addressed.
- The people first approach and how the use of spaces and accessibility could better connect with the town centre to other assets.
- How the business engagement consultation included market traders.
- Views received from constituents was wholly supportive and that the scheme proposals were very much welcomed.
- High streets were currently struggling and the Strand was in effect Bootle's high street; and that as part of the ambitious proposal there was a need to anticipate market and trading conditions in the long-term.
- The potential for positive educational impacts to arise from the scheme.

RESOLVED:

That Stephen Watson be thanked for his informative presentation.

## **22. FLOOD AND COASTAL EROSION RISK MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT**

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

# Agenda Item 3

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

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 2022-2023 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 indicated that in January 2023, the government announced its decision to implement Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 in England to better control flooding and wastewater discharges; that sections 18 and 19 of Schedule 3 stated that the SuDS Approval Body (SAB's) adoption duty did not apply to a drainage system which had been designed for a single property or publicly maintained roads; that currently, no further guidance on funding arrangements, dates of enactment etc had been published; and that this would require additional resource within the Council to undertake the various aspects of this role, though it was unclear what level was required and where funding would come from to support this.

The report sought the views of the Committee on:

- the need for future annual reports to be submitted as it was no longer a requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010; and
- comments for submission to the Cabinet Member - Health and Wellbeing.

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

- the implementation in Wales of Section 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010; and could lessons be learned from Welsh authorities on its implementation and commercial implications.
- Flooding issues in Ince Blundell and the alleged poor response from the Council's contact centre when dealing with residents' requests for help.
- The involvement of developers in ensuring that drainage approval was sought from a SuDS Approval Body before construction on their projects commenced.

# Agenda Item 3

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

- The use of water butts as a simple but effective way to store rainfall to help to protect drainage systems; and how this could be promoted with residents.
- funding to deliver the Crosby Flood and Coastal Defence Scheme.
- The large number of Risk Management Authorities the Council had to engage with and was this overly bureaucratic.
- The number of riparian owners in Sefton.
- The reasons why Maghull seemed particularly badly affected by flood reports and the continuing work to investigate this problem.
- The 'Merseyside Partnership Quick Win' fund and recommended projects made by Sefton.
- Birkdale allotment flooding issues.
- Gully cleansing activity to help resolve highway drainage issues.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Flood and Coastal Erosion Risk Management Annual Report be noted;
- (2) the future potential need for additional resources if Schedule 3 of the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 is implemented be noted; and
- (3) annual reports be no longer submitted to the Committee as it is no longer a requirement under the Flood and Water Management Act, 2010 but that instead, the Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services be requested to submit an annual summary.

### **23. GREEN SEFTON ANNUAL REVIEW 2023**

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 new Service Vision 2030, and updated Service Plan for the next year.

The report concluded that the service had performed well under ongoing challenging circumstances over the last couple of years, as resources available clearly did not allow for service delivery to meet public, Councillor, nor the Services own expectations; that notwithstanding this, the Service had achieved many successes during the past year; and that the Service Vision, Service Planning and new key performance indicators, together with the workload matrix system detailed in the report, were all proving a useful tool to manage priorities.

The Committee was requested to review the proposals contained in the report and Annual Review and consider the submission of comments to the Cabinet Member - Health and Well Being and the Cabinet Member - Locality Services.

# Agenda Item 3

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

A copy of the Green Sefton Annual Review 2023 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:

- Undertook major consultation for Botanic Gardens Improvements and adopted Orrell Mount Park masterplan.
- Delivered the Parks Levelling Up scheme.
- Delivered the Coast Visitor Action Plan and continued to work in partnership with other landowners and emergency services.
- In Bloom success.
- Enacted the Coast PSPO.
- Contributed to the Climate Change Working Group.
- Responded to extreme weather events, climate changes, and other (e.g. bird flu).
- Successfully bid for external funds, developed and delivered improvement projects.
- Hesketh Park Legacy scheme approved.
- Developed concessions.
- Adopted a refreshed Service Vision, and Service Plan.

Mr. Shaw also identified activity to be undertaken in 2024 which included:

- Develop new funding bids, such as Botanic Gardens Heritage Lottery.
- Deliver further improvement schemes, such as Crosby coastal defences (interim works).
- Increase staff capacity, apprenticeships and training.
- Adopt the Tree, Allotment, Action Plan Nature Conservation Strategies.
- Start replacement of fleet and machinery.
- Continue to develop the Coastal Gateways.
- Support the development of the SCLP Board and contribute to wider regional activities.
- Publish the standards of what can be achieved within resources available.
- Promoting changes to overall Landscape Management including BNG, LCR works, Trees for Climate and more.
- Develop a Strategic Vision for our places in the future.
- Lead of key aspects of the Climate Action Plan.
- Update key performance indicators to track performance.

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

- The Green Sefton service was a service provided by the Council that had a direct impact on all communities.

# Agenda Item 3

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

- Community activity and involvement associated with improvements to Poet's park.
- The marketing and PR around the bold move to rebrand the Green Sefton service.
- How the Green Sefton service publicised its many good new stories via social media and a dedicated corporate communications team member.
- How successful was the consultation and engagement with public, coastal landowners and partners in the development of the Coast and Visitor Areas Public Space Protection Order (PSPO).
- Problems associated with waste and refuse at the Formby National Trust site.
- Natural Alternatives, Green Sefton's own long-running inclusion programme for adults and young people with additional needs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report on the Green Sefton Annual Review 2023 be noted; and
- (2) Mark Shaw be thanked for his informative presentation.

### **24. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24, 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 2023/24; the identification of any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; that updated on arrangements for the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre; and updated on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

The Senior Democratic Services Officer advised that since the preparation of the agenda Merseyside Recycling and Waste authority had been in touch indicating that they could facilitate a visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre on Monday, 15 January 2024.

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

- Concern was expressed that reports were not submitted on time in accordance with the Committee's work programme; and particularly in respect of reports about Southport Market and Sandway Homes.
- Mention was made of Cabinet's recent approval of amendments to the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol which should ensure that strategies and plans were submitted to Overview and Scrutiny prior to consideration by Cabinet.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the

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

report, be agreed;

- (2) (A) the reports on the Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies; Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle Regeneration Strategy); Southport Market; and Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee to be held on 16 January 2024; and
- (B) the Committee's concerns be placed on record that the reports referred to in (A) above were not submitted in accordance with the work programme timescales and that the Committee expects that the reports will be submitted to the next meeting;
- (3) approval be given for the visit to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and informal meeting of the Committee to be held on Monday, 15 January 2024; and
- (4) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

### **25. CABINET MEMBER REPORTS - SEPTEMBER 2023 TO NOVEMBER 2023**

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

- Sefton Council Economic Growth and Housing service being nominated for the team of the year at the Institute Economic Development Annual Awards 2023.
- Salt and Tar music festival being nominated in the the Best New Festival and Best Small Festival categories at this year's UK Festival Awards

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

- Reasons for the poor attendance at the 'Getting Back into Work' event held on 13 September 2023.
- A comment was made that the Visitor Guide should have been ready for print and circulation in October 2023 rather than January 2024.

# Agenda Item 3

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

- Success for Ukrainian learners achieving ESOL Speaking and Learning Entry Level 1.
- Issues associated with Southport Pier including structural reports; ongoing work with regards to detailed cost and survey work; the appointment of a contractor following the procurement process; the contract specification and terms and conditions; and when would information be known on funding gaps to deliver required works.

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

- The success of the neighbourhoods team and partners in respect of “Operation Banger” during the bonfire night period.
- The Christmas light switch on and the Mayor’s toy appeal.

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

- The Supported Housing (Regulatory Oversight) Act and its impact on the supported housing and the older person’s housing sector.
- Funding streams for Christmas lights.
- Deadlines for donations to the Mayor’s toy appeal; and how personal donations could be made to the appeal.
- The Hate Crime Joint Action Group; and the great work undertaken by Hate Crime Community Ambassadors to promote hate crime awareness.

A Members of the Committee indicated that he wished to ask questions of the Cabinet Member – Locality Services who was not in attendance at the meeting. The Chair, Councillor Dowd advised that the Member could email the Cabinet Member directly seeking responses; and such responses could then be circulated to Committee members either via email or by inclusion on the next agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) 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; and
- (2) Councillors Atkinson and Hardy be thanked for her attendance at the Committee.



# Agenda Item 5

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Tuesday 16 January 2024
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Adult Social Care)		Tuesday 23 January 2024
	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Childrens Services & Safeguarding)		Tuesday 30 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Serious Violence Duty		
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director of People (Communities)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Communities & Housing		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

The serious violence duty came into force in January 2023 and requires specified authorities to publish a strategy by January 2024 to prevent and reduce serious violence. The work in preparing the strategy on Merseyside has been coordinated by the Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner. The purpose of this report is to update members on the work undertaken so far this year and seek views on the draft strategy.

## Recommendation(s):

- (1) Members note the contents of the report
- (2) Make any suggestions for change to the strategy and/or local delivery plan

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

The Serious Violence Duty is a statutory duty placed on relevant authorities of which Sefton is one. It is essential that members understand the work being undertaken to reduce and prevent serious violence.

# Agenda Item 5

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

There are no alternative options

## What will it cost and how will it be financed?

### (A) Revenue Costs

£101,161.68 – labour costs 2023/24

£122,302.81 – non-labour costs 2023/24

This funding has been retained and managed by the Office for the Police & Crime Commissioner to coordinate and deliver the duty across Merseyside.

### (B) Capital Costs

## Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
Within existing resources	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
Sefton is a relevant authority and is therefore statutorily required to deliver the duty.	
<b>Equality Implications:</b>	
The Equality implications have been considered as part of the strategic needs assessment carried out by the Office for the Police & Crime Commissioner and have been mitigated within the strategy.	
<b>Impact on Children and Young People: Yes</b>	
Much of the preventive work is focused on Children and Young people as we know they are, particular vulnerable children and young people, most likely to become involved in serious violence.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
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
The Duty will have a neutral impact on the climate.	

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Some of the most vulnerable members of our community are victims of serious violence and this strategy and delivery plan will serve to protect them.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The strategy and delivery plan places a huge emphasis at coproduction with our communities to make them more aware of and more resilient to serious violence
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.7492/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5592/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Meetings, strategy groups, consultation focus groups, emails

## Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Steve Martlew
Telephone Number:	0797388996
Email Address:	steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk

## Appendices:

Appendix 1 – Serious Violence Timeline

Appendix 2 – Merseyside Serious Violence Draft Strategy v1

# Agenda Item 5

## Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

### 1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 Following public consultation in July 2019, the Government announced that it would introduce legislation relating to a serious violence duty. This aimed to ensure that relevant services work together to share information to target interventions, where possible through existing partnership structures, to prevent and reduce serious violence within their local communities. The Government also announced that it would amend the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to ensure that serious violence is an explicit priority for Community Safety Partnerships and by making sure they have a strategy in place to explicitly tackle serious violence.
- 1.2 Whilst the guidance does not specify a particular partnership to lead, given the categories classed as “Serious Violence” are contained within the Community Safety Strategy, it makes sense that the Safer Sefton Together (SST) is the partnership lead body for Sefton.
- 1.3 The Duty requires partners to understand the causes and consequences of serious violence, focusing on prevention and early intervention. There is a requirement to focus on root causes relevant to the local area and produce a Strategic Needs Assessment with contributions from Partners. This assessment will support local areas to prepare and implement a Serious Violence Strategy, with the ambition to prevent and reduce violent crime through tangible actions. The guidance offers case studies from partnerships that have already developed this area of work. Partners expected to form part of the strategic network include Police, Local Authorities, Fire Service, Health agencies, Youth Justice Services, Voluntary and Community Sector, Schools, and local Prisons.
- 1.4 Serious violence relates to homicide, domestic abuse, as well as all violence against the person including gun and knife crime. Partners have the flexibility to include alcohol related crime, modern slavery and violence towards women and girls if this is relevant to their area. In addition, partnerships need to focus on areas of criminality where threats are inherent, such as county lines and drug dealing territories.
- 1.5 At a Merseyside level it was agreed at strategic level that domestic abuse will not form part of the serious violence definition for the purpose of the Duty. The scale of domestic abuse cannot be underestimated, and the partnership recognise the impact of these incidents on victims, survivors, and their families, and will continue to support the pre-existing mechanisms in place across the region to oversee and govern activity to prevent domestic abuse and protect victims. The partnership will also continue to ensure preventative activity is directed at addressing underlying risk factors which are shared between domestic abuse and serious violence, to ensure a whole-systems approach to reducing risk and harm.
- 1.6 There is an expectation for partners to share data from a number of sources to develop a local picture. The Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 enables permissive information sharing.

- 1.7 Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs) are not a specified authority under the Duty but have an important convening role and will be expected to carry out several functions relating to the Duty. In particular PCCs will have a role in convening partners, utilising their unique position as being responsible for the totality of crime and police in a force area. The 5 Local Authorities (LA's) agreed for the Merseyside PCCs office to coordinate the production of the Serious Violence Strategic Needs Assessment and the production of a pan-Merseyside Serious Violence Strategy. The small amount of new burdens funding that accompanied the duty was partly used to fund a Coordinator post within the PCCs office.

## **2 Work to date**

- 2.1 Appendix 1 is a timeline of the work undertaken within the last year.

### **2.2 Readiness Assessment**

The Home Office commissioned Crest Advisory to work with each Police & Crime area to assess their readiness for the duty. Crest carried out a number of local workshops and assessed the Merseyside area as Ready & Engaged and working towards mature. It also assessed the risk of serious violence in Merseyside as

- Violence Severity – High
- Violence Vulnerability – Extremely High

- 2.3 As part of their readiness assessment work, Crest identified a need to support the relevant authorities across Merseyside to facilitate stronger co-production across existing governance structures. These workshops took place in July 2023.

### **2.4 Consultation**

In September 2023 a consultation exercise to understand the perception of the problem, causes and consequences was undertaken. The consultation also sought to understand respondents awareness of prevention work and views on ways to improve this, as well as developing an understanding of what prevention means to different people. A universal consultation questionnaire was available to residents across Merseyside. Hosted by Liverpool City Council there was questionnaire for adults (18+) and children 11+. The links were promoted through social media and through the school network. In addition we carried out targeted engagement with cohorts identified as particularly vulnerable in the Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA).

- Youth Justice Cohort
- Turnaround Cohort
- Youth Connectors Cohort
- Making A Difference Group
- Younger Care Experienced Group
- New Beginnings Group
- Uniformed Groups
- Commissioned Youth Providers

# Agenda Item 5

There were only 139 respondents to the universal questionnaires (adult and school) this poor response was replicated across the other Merseyside LA's. Unfortunately this means that the consultation response is not statistically reliable. The focus groups provided much richer feedback and this has been incorporated into the strategy.

## 2.5 Draft Strategy

The draft strategy (Appendix 2) was received on 8 December 2023 with initial feedback requested by 22 December 2023 so the version could be sent to the designers for a more polished version to be produced by 8 January 2024.

Members will note the strategy is very high level, very text heavy and requires a significant design work to make it more reader friendly. The version we are expecting from the designers in January 2024 will contain more photographs, infographics etc.

## 2.6 Local Delivery Plan

Members will be most interested in what this means locally for Sefton communities. The first draft of the Delivery Plan is currently being developed and will be mapped against the high level strategic aims of the strategy but also cross referenced to the priorities contained within the Safer Sefton Together Strategy 2023-26 and will be reviewed through 2024.

There is no additional funding for LA's to deliver the duty and therefore the delivery plan will reflect the work already underway in preventing and reducing serious violence in our Communities.

## 2.7 Strategy Launch

The strategy will be launched by the Police & Crime Commissioner on 9 February 2024.

## **3. Review & Governance**

3.1 The duty requires relevant authorities to annually review their strategy and delivery plan. Given the tight timescales encountered in implementing the strategy a full review will take place in 2024 and provide an opportunity for Overview & Scrutiny members to take an active part in that review.

3.2 The governance for the strategy and delivery plan will rest with the SST partnership.

## Serious Violence Duty – Milestones and Timeline 2023-24

Milestone	Activity	Timeframe	Resource/Responsible
<b>Serious Violence Duty (SVD) becomes law</b>		January 2023	
<b>Merseyside readiness assessment</b>	Completed and submitted to Crest Advisory (MVRP)	January 2023	MVRP Time
<b>OPCC Advertises Merseyside SVD coordinator roles</b>	Recruitment begins	March 2023	OPCC
<b>SVD workshops</b>	Run by Crest Advisory Service attended by Steve Martlew	March-April 2023	SMBC Time
<b>Crest Advisory Readiness Assessment Due</b>	Review of Crest Advisory Readiness Assessment for Merseyside in conjunction with local assessment	April-May 2023	Crest Advisory SMBC Time
<b>OPCC Appointment of SVD Coordinator</b>	Meet with new coordinators	April-May 2023?	OPCC/SMBC
<b>Notify Comms teams of deadline for publishing Strategy</b>	Senior Responsible Organisations (SRO) Reps to notify comms leads and plan for January 2024 publication of strategy on websites	April-May 2023	SROs and their respective comms teams
<b>MVRP Publish Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA)</b>	<b>Review MVRP SNA</b> for any addition data required for Sefton. Are there any new Information Sharing Agreements required?	May-June 2023	MVRP SMBC Time
<b>Workshop 1 – with strategic leads – SRO &amp; 1 Strategic Lead (Crest Advisory Support Work)</b>	Strategic advice and support to Merseyside to facilitate stronger co-production across existing governance structures.	5 July 2023	MVRP Crest Advisory SMBC Time
<b>Workshop 2 – with strategic leads – Strategic Lead (Crest Advisory Support Work)</b>	Strategic advice and support to Merseyside to facilitate stronger co-production across existing governance structures.	13 July 2023	MVRP Crest Advisory SMBC Time
<b>Consultation on development of Strategy:</b>	Consultation on perception of the problem, causes and consequences. As well as awareness of prevention work and views on ways to improve this, as well as developing an	September 2023	LCC to host the pan-Merseyside survey on their website and their digital team will be monitoring demographics to increase engagement throughout the period of consultation. All SST partners to

## Serious Violence Duty – Milestones and Timeline 2023-24

Milestone	Activity	Timeframe	Resource/Responsible
	<p>understanding of what prevention means to different people. Universal Consultation as well as targeted engagement with cohorts identified as particularly vulnerable in the SNA.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• LCC-led formal consultation.</li> <li>• Youth Justice Cohort</li> <li>• Turnaround Cohort</li> <li>• Youth Connectors Cohort</li> <li>• Making A Difference Group</li> <li>• Younger Care Experienced Group</li> <li>• New Beginnings Group</li> <li>• Uniformed Groups</li> <li>• Commissioned Youth Providers</li> </ul>		participate and support facilitation/access to participants experts by experience.
<b>Draft Strategy</b>	MVRP to circulate the draft strategy Feedback by relevant authorities to be with MVRP	8 December 2023 22 December 2023	MVRP SMBC Time
<b>SST Review</b> of Strategy before publishing	Partners to provide any feedback as part of feedback process above	January 2024	SST Partners time
<b>Report to O&amp;S Committee</b>	Share strategy with O&S Committee before final strategy published	January 2024	SMBC Time
<b>Strategy Design</b> and Easy Read / Child Friendly Version Produced	Submission of content to designer by	22 December 2023	MVRP
	Copy circulated to relevant authorities for review by	8 January 2024	MVRP
		12 January 2024	SMBC Time



## Serious Violence Duty – Milestones and Timeline 2023-24

Milestone	Activity	Timeframe	Resource/Responsible
	Feedback from relevant authorities on final amendments by		
<b>Deadline</b> for SV Strategy to be published on all Senior Responsible Organisations' websites	All SROs to publish copy of the Strategy on their websites.	31 January 2024	SRO Comms teams
<b>SST Conference</b> – Launch of SV Strategy	Launch Event 10.00 – 15.00 Venue to be confirmed	9 February 2024	<b>£££</b> Funding for Conference – Venue hire/refreshments? SST Partners' time
<b>Review of SV Strategy</b>	Annual review of strategy required under SVD Guidance	April 2024 - December 2024	SST Partnership
<b>Deadline for reviewed SV strategy to be published on SRO websites</b>	All SROs to publish copy of the Strategy on their websites if any amendments made	January each year	SMBC Time

### Notes on the strategy

SVD Guidance states that the strategy should set out:

- Local Arrangements
- Multi-agency response to drivers identified in SNA
- Proposed actions - Measurable
- Consideration of joint-funding or investment
- How the partnership focuses on early intervention and prevention (and what this means to people in Sefton)

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## **STRATEGY TEMPLATE**

**Police Crime Sentencing and Courts Act 2022**

**Serious Violence Duty**

**Strategy**

**Merseyside**

**\*Include high resolution logos from across each Specified and Relevant Authority.**

# Agenda Item 5

**Foreword:**

\*Foreword to be drafted by PCC.

## Introduction

## National Context

### 2018

In April 2018, the Government published its Serious Violence Strategy in response to increases in knife crime, gun crime and homicide across England. The strategy called on partners from across different sectors to come together and adopt multi-agency public health approach to tackling and preventing serious violence at a local level.

### 2019

In March 2019, the Home Secretary announced £100 million Serious Violence Fund to help tackle serious violence. Of this, £35 million was invested in Violence Reductions Units (VRUs) in 18 police force areas deemed worst affected by serious violence (including Merseyside), to build capacity in local areas to tackle the root causes of serious violence. Since 2019, VRUs have been backed by £225 million and are now established in 20 areas. Hotspot policing is another critical part of the local and national approach to preventing serious violence and the same 20 police force areas supported by VRU funding have also received funding through the Grip programme to boost police forces capacity to take a data driven approach to tackling serious violence.

### 2022

On 28th April 2022, the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts (PCSC) Act received Royal Assent. The PCSC Act introduced several measures to tackle serious violence, including a new Serious Violence Duty (the 'Duty') which sets out that partners including the police, fire and rescue, health, local authorities, youth offending teams and probation services, must work collaboratively and share data and information in order to put in place a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence.

### 2023

On 31st January 2023, the Serious Violence Duty commenced.

# Agenda Item 5

Serious Violence is complex and multi-faceted, and with an estimated cost of over £185.4 million to the Merseyside region, partners have both a moral responsibility to protect and prevent further harm to communities as well as a fiscal imperative to do so<sup>1</sup>. These lower-volume, higher-harm types of violence pervade society, causing significant harm to communities. However, **violence is preventable**, and this underlines the importance of partners working together in adopting a Public Health, Whole Systems Approach to violence reduction. It is within this context that the Government have introduced the Serious Violence Duty (“the Duty”).

## What is the Duty?

The Duty commenced on **31<sup>st</sup> January 2023** and is one of many provisions included within the Police, Crime, Sentencing and Courts Act 2022 (“the PCSC Act”, introduced to Parliament in March 2021<sup>2</sup>), forming a key part of the Government’s commitment to reduce and prevent serious violence.

It places a Duty on public bodies (known as Specified and Relevant Authorities) to collaborate and plan to prevent and reduce serious violence, ensuring relevant services work together to share data and knowledge, and target interventions to prevent serious violence altogether.

Under the Duty, partners must work together to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur in their local area, the causes of that violence, and use this evidence-based analysis to develop a local Strategic Needs Assessment (SNA) and prepare and implement a strategy to prevent and reduce serious violence locally.



This strategy has been produced to comply with the legislative requirements, setting out how public bodies operating in the local policing body area of Merseyside will collaborate locally to ensure a co-ordinated approach to preventing and reducing serious violence. It sets out the agreed definition of serious violence and the

<sup>1</sup> [Economic and Social Costs of Violence on Merseyside: A report for Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, Liverpool John Moores University.](#)

<sup>2</sup> [Police, Crime, Sentencing, and Courts Act 2022.](#)

partnership arrangements which have been agreed locally to lead on the delivery of the Duty. It also provides an executive summary of the serious violence SNA produced by the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP), details of the consultation activity to engage communities, and the bespoke actions that have been agreed by the partnership to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Specified and Relevant Authorities are referred to as the 'partnership' within this strategy, and include:

- Merseyside Police
- Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service
- Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board
- Probation.
- Youth Offending Teams.
- HMP Liverpool
- HMP Altcourse.
- Wirral Council
- Liverpool City Council
- Sefton Council
- Knowsley Council
- St Helens Council

## **What does this mean for Merseyside?**

It means that partners, including police, probation, youth offending teams, fire and rescue authorities, health, and local authorities, are now required by law to work together to prevent and reduce serious violence. Whilst this is a new legal responsibility, preventing serious violence and harm has always been a priority for partners in Merseyside, and this new law

“this new law will support partners to work together in the most effective way.”

“this new law will simply let partners work together better”

“this new law will simply allow partners to improve how they work together”

“and under this new responsibility, partners can improve how they work together”

Table above

## **Definition of Serious Violence**

For the purposes of the Duty, Merseyside have adopted the local definition of serious violence used for data recording purposes by Merseyside Police and subsequently adopted by the MVRP. This ensures consistency across the region in relation to understanding demand and impact and aligns with the existing partnership focus on violent offending in public spaces. The local definition is:

Include the below definition in an infographic:

# Agenda Item 5

## **“All knife crime or firearms enabled offences, including the following categories:**

- Attempt murder
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm (wounding with intent to do GBH (S18 Assault), causing bodily injury by explosion or torture)
- Business and personal robbery
- Threats to kill
- Assault with injury
- Racially or religiously and other form of hate aggravated assault with injury
- Assault with injury on a constable
- Rape
- Sexual assault against a female
- Sexual assault against a male
- Endangering life
- Homicide

## **Non-knife crime or firearms-enabled offences:**

- Homicide plus attempt murder
- Assault with intent to cause serious harm (wounding with intent to do GBH (S18 Assault), Causing bodily injury by explosion or torture)
- Arson with intent to endanger life
- Assault with injury on a constable (only including cause GBH with intent to resist, prevent arrest, wounding with intent to do GBH and wounding with intent)
- All other robbery”

## **Include below in infographic:**

Within the above definition, Merseyside Police recorded **45,543** serious violence incidents in 2022/23. This is a 3% reduction on the previous year.

## **Domestic Abuse**

Locally, the partnership agreed at strategic level that **domestic abuse will not form part of the serious violence definition for the purpose of the Duty**. The scale of domestic abuse cannot be underestimated, and the partnership recognise the impact of these incidents on victims, survivors, and their families, and will continue to support the pre-existing mechanisms in place across the region to oversee and govern activity to prevent domestic abuse and protect victims. The partnership will also continue to ensure preventative activity is directed at addressing underlying risk factors which are shared between domestic abuse and serious violence, to ensure a whole-systems approach to reducing risk and harm.

Pre-existing mechanisms, set out below, lie at the heart of the Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and its wider programme of work.

\*Include definition of domestic abuse as per Domestic Abuse Act 2021 and the local strategies and governance structure in place to provide reassurance of the work underway to tackle domestic abuse and sexual violence\* - *or include in appendix.*



# Agenda Item 5

Include in infographic - Whilst a shared definition of serious violence brings consistency, this will not prevent the local partnership from focussing preventative activity on other areas of violence outside the scope of the definition, however the local partnership acknowledge that this activity will not be the subject of the Duty. (Include this in a box within design).

# Agenda Item 5

## Purpose:

### Vision & Core Function:

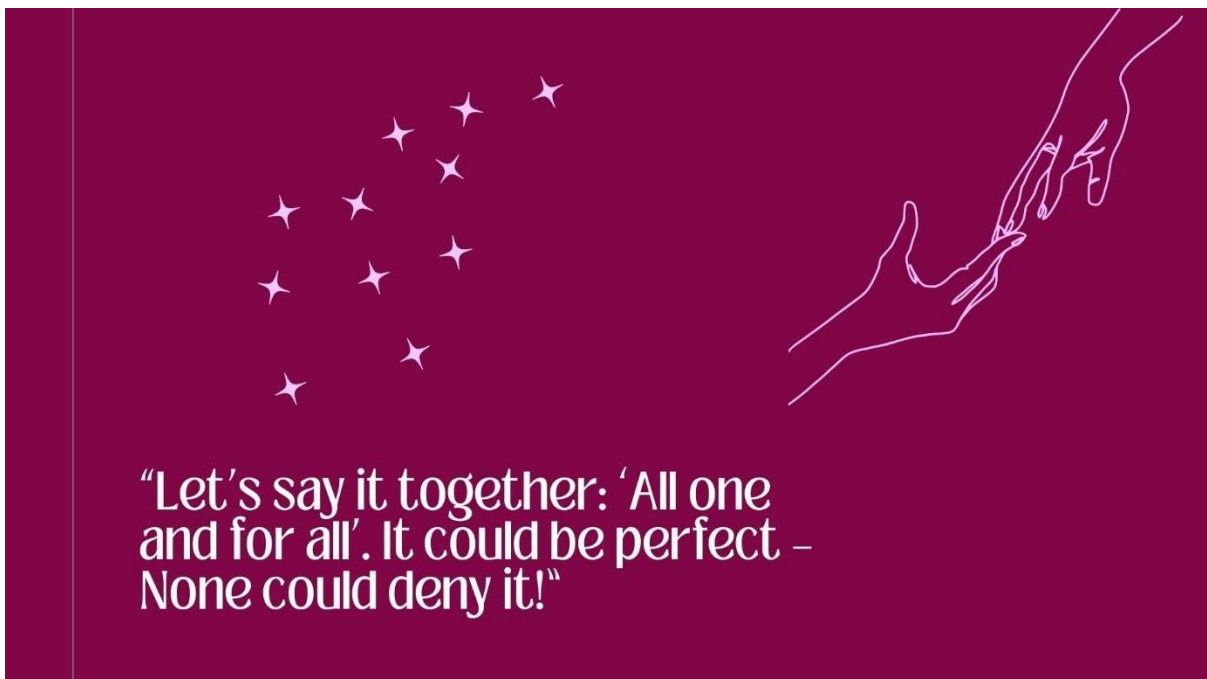
#### Vision:

**Violence is preventable, not inevitable.** Aligning to existing partnership visions, objectives, and deliverables, we want to create a safer, stronger, Merseyside, where communities are free from violence and the fear of violence.

*Community cohesion is at the core of our vision.*

Community cohesion fosters a sense of belonging – connecting individuals to a place, a group, and a community. This promotes positive interactions within a local area, which can enhance feelings of safety. It improves how communities feel about where they live, cultivates positive feelings towards others, including towards statutory services, and most importantly improves overall wellbeing.

To create a safer, stronger, Merseyside, we pledge to empower our communities to actively participate in matters that affect them and that they care about, providing support and capacity building to enable meaningful and mutually beneficial engagement.



With thanks to the children and young people at St Margaret Mary's, as well as the wider family and community members in Knowsley, who powerfully articulate the true power of people in contributing to a society free from violence and the fear of violence.



## [The True Power of People - YouTube](#)

### **Core Function:**

**We want the prevention and reduction of serious violence related risk and harm to be everyone's responsibility.** We recognise that the causes and consequences of serious violence are complex and require well-coordinated approaches with clear policy directives and interventions that are implemented across all relevant partners at a local level.

As a partnership, we will provide strategic direction, coordination, and leadership across Merseyside to embed and integrate a multi-agency, whole systems, public health approach to serious violence prevention. **Working closely with key stakeholders and communities, we will create a culture which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration** – advocating for a system where everyone feels included and understands their role, and the role of others, in supporting communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.

## **What does this mean for Merseyside?**

It means that partners and communities will work together to make Merseyside a safe place to live, visit, and work. Everyone will understand what they can do to support people who are affected by serious violence. It also means that as a partnership, we will be creating opportunities for people who are affected by serious violence so that they can tell us what is really needed to prevent serious violence from happening altogether.



# Agenda Item 5

## Public Health Approach

Include quotes as infographics / large texts to visualise the page

“Violence is a public health issue because living without fear of violence is a fundamental requirement for health and wellbeing. It’s also a public health issue because violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing and is strongly related to inequalities.”

“A public health approach to violence prevention seeks to improve the health and safety of all individuals by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of violence”.

To deliver the aims and objectives of this strategy, the local partnership will collaborate and plan within a whole-systems, public health framework, to support the implementation of effective policies, processes, and interventions which seek to prevent and reduce serious violence.

Adhering to a public health approach, the partnership will seek to align delivery across multiple tiers of intervention; primary (interventions to prevent violence from happening in the first place), secondary (interventions to address risk factors and prevent an emerging problem becoming established), and tertiary (managing an ongoing problem to reduce harm, focussed on reducing offending and reoffending) to address risk factors and build resilience across different stages of the life course:



The life course approach, championed locally by the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership, addresses health and social needs across all stages of the life course when developing universal and targeted violence prevention policy and activity.

<sup>3</sup> [Homepage - Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership \(merseysidevrp.com\)](http://merseysidevrp.com)

In doing so, this strategy will have a strong emphasis on addressing the root causes of serious violence, whilst integrating a strengths-based model of delivery which focuses on identifying the strengths, as well as the needs, of communities, to build upon and strengthen protective factors to reduce serious violence at a population level more effectively.

We will adapt evidence of what works locally to direct resource allocation to areas of high demand, need, and vulnerability, coordinating and aligning sustainable preventative approaches across geographical and organisational boundaries. This will promote progressive cultural change, encouraging whole systems to think and act more innovatively, and work together to achieve shared outcomes through local integrated delivery plans, pooled resources, and expertise to embed long-term change.

## **Why a Public Health Approach?**

“Violence is not something that just happens, nor is it normal or acceptable in our society. Many of the key risk factors that make individuals, families, or communities vulnerable to violence are changeable, including exposure to adverse experiences in childhood and subsequently the environments in which individuals live, learn and work throughout youth, adulthood, and older age. Understanding these factors means we can develop and adopt new public health-based approaches to violence. Such approaches focus on the primary prevention of violence through reducing risk factors and promoting protective factors over the life course”<sup>4</sup>

“Violence is a major cause of ill health and poor wellbeing as well as a drain on health services and the wider economy. However, it is preventable using measures that save much more money than they cost to implement. Interventions, especially those in early childhood, not only prevent individuals developing a propensity for violence but also improve educational outcomes, employment prospects and long-term health outcomes. Abuse in childhood increases risks of violence in later life, but also risks of cancer, heart disease, sexually transmitted infections, substance use, and a wide range of health conditions that are currently stretching health care resources.”

## **Our Approach: (below included an infographic to minimise text heavy summary)**

### **1 - Defining the problem**

It is important that we understand the extent and nature of serious violence within our local communities, including identifying who or where may be most vulnerable to serious violence.

- Effective multi-agency data sharing is critical to this, and we will continue to work with partners to improve the quantity and quality of the data we collect to develop our understanding of serious violence and the burden it imposes on individuals, families, communities, and wider society.

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<sup>4</sup> [Violence-prevention.pdf \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](#)



# Agenda Item 5

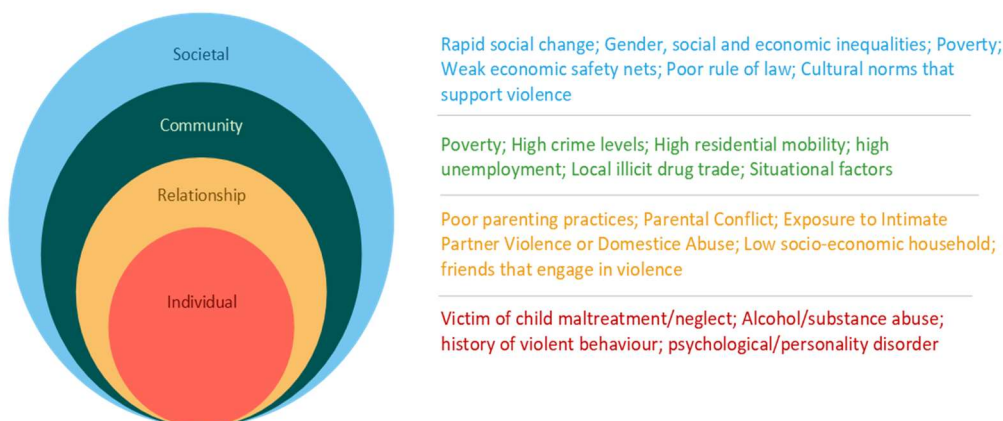
- To truly understand the nature of serious violence, we must also ensure that the voices and lived experiences of our communities are central to our approach, and we will continue to work with and for our local communities to develop our understanding of local drivers.
- Identifying the societal costs of violence also serves as a useful starting point to demonstrate the 'size of the problem' to policy makers, providing an evidence base for investing in preventative activity at strategic and operational level. Using the current cost analysis commissioned by MVRP and produced by Liverpool John Moores University, we can begin to understand the longer-term impact of investment on preventing the realisation of the costs of violence and reducing the future economic burden.

## 2 - Identifying risk and protective factors:

There exists a wide range of interconnected factors relating to individuals, their relationships, and the communities and societies in which they live, which may increase ('risk factors') or decrease ('protective factors') vulnerability to violence. Identifying these factors and understanding the complex cumulative impact of risk and protective factors on victimisation and perpetration of serious violence is key to our approach as it enables us to identify at risk populations and target resource allocation to meet local demand or need.

- We will continue to work with key stakeholders and our communities, remaining cognisant to changing political landscapes, to understand existing and emerging factors. This will involve working closely with the MVRP Evidence Hub, as well as with the Integrated Care Board who are developing a violence and injuries dashboard to identify patterns and understand the risk factors to violent crime.

### The ecological framework: examples of risk factors for violence at each level



5

## 3 - Develop and evaluate interventions

<sup>5</sup> <https://www.who.int/groups/violence-prevention-alliance/approach>

It is important that we understand the impact of our partnership approach on preventing and reducing serious violence. Considering evidence of impact does not mean we will suppress innovation; however, we will ensure the right balance between delivery with strong evidence of impact whilst creating the conditions to support partners in developing the evidence base for delivery which may have good potential.

- Using evidence-based resources, we will continue to develop and embed approaches which are known to deliver the highest impact for populations at risk of, or already involved in, serious violence.
- Whilst quantitative data is fundamental to evaluating effectiveness, we will also work closely with our key partners and communities to understand what works, where, and for whom, so that we can ensure strategic and operational activity is responsive to need at a hyper-local level.

## 4 - Implementing effective policy and programmes

It is important that we monitor and evaluate the impact and cost-effectiveness of partnership activity over the short, medium, and longer term when implementing processes and interventions which seek to prevent and reduce serious violence related risk and harm. This enables us to build upon our understanding of 'what works' and crucially 'what doesn't work'. Not only does this reduce harm to communities by ensuring maximum impact, but it also makes the case for investing in preventative activity and provides partners with an evidence base to prioritise resources more effectively in the long-term.

- This will involve working closely with the MVRP to build the evidence base on 'what works' at a local level, utilising the many evaluations which have been conducted by Liverpool John Moores University at whole system and intervention level to identify how we can work at scale to deliver improved outcomes for our communities.

### **What does this mean for Merseyside?**

There are some factors which make people more vulnerable to serious violence. This means that some people may be more likely to be a victim or perpetrator of serious violence and may also be more likely to witness serious violence. It also means that certain places may have more serious violence than others.

A public health approach means that we will work together to understand these factors and work out how we can address them by stepping in early to prevent serious violence from happening altogether. Where serious violence may have already happened, it means preventing violence from getting worse to reduce the risk and harm to individuals, families, and communities.

**Local examples of embedding a Public Health Approach.**

# Agenda Item 5

Since 2019, the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership have been embedding a public health ‘whole systems’ approach to tackling the root causes of serious violence – seeing violence as preventable, not inevitable – and the evidence shows it’s already having an impact.

The MRVP takes a multi-pronged approach. At strategic level, the MVRP provides leadership on the public health approach to violence reduction across Merseyside through a multiagency co-located delivery team and steering group, developing localised policy, practice, and targeted communications to support system change and capacity to prevent violence.

The MVRP also funds a suite of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to prevent violence with a focus on early intervention, life course, place-based, and community led approaches, delivered across five key priority areas: early years, education, health, whole family approaches, and preventing offending, with all decisions informed by the best available evidence.

Blue light datasets from the Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group (TIIG) provide the basis for all decision making. This data provides insight into demand, informing where and what interventions are prioritised. It’s also used to monitor and evaluate the performance of interventions to measure success. This work is led by the MVRP’s Evidence Hub who have been embedded within the team for the past two years and whose work has been invaluable - driving improvements in processes, data capture, and evidence identification. This has all helped to further deepen the MVRP’s understanding of the serious violence landscape in Merseyside and the approaches needed to continue to reduce serious violence. This evidence-based approach is further enhanced by the frequent sharing of best practice, ideas and learning with local partners and other Violence Reduction Units, as well as also using external data sources.

Key achievements:

- A peer education programme - Merseyside Youth Association’s Mentors in Violence Prevention – which provides young people with the language and framework to explore and challenge the attitudes, beliefs and cultural norms that underpin gender-based violence, bullying and other forms of abuse, while building resilience and promoting positive mental health. By supporting a ‘whole school’ approach to early intervention and prevention of bullying, harassment and risky behaviours, this programme empowers pupils to identify and communicate concerns with both peers and school staff.
- Nearly 300 professionals from 13 different organisations receiving training to identify the underlying causes of offending to help ensure people with neurodiverse conditions get the support they need to prevent them from reoffending. This training was the result of research carried out by The Brain Charity to better understand the local landscape and potential for criminal justice reform for neurodiverse people across the region – read the report [here](#).
- Support for children born during the Covid-19 pandemic to help ensure they were ready to start school. With insight from the MVRP Evidence Hub, key hotspot areas were selected to receive targeted early years interventions,



including Reading to Bump, Monkey Bob, and Look Say Sing Play, which seeks to deliver improved long-term population health outcomes.

- One of the first organisations in the country to hold a gambling harms event, featuring case studies and input from counselling services and senior police officers to highlight the breadth and scope of gambling-related harms, with a focus on prevention, early intervention, and treatment.

These results are testament to the strong partnership and collaborative approach adopted by the MVRP and the tireless work of the many organisations involved, all of which are committed to ensuring Merseyside is a place where people can live, work, and visit free from violence and fear of violence.

## Spotlight:

Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Probation Service

Recognising the role that high quality employment and training opportunities can play in preventing prison leavers and those on probation from reoffending, the MVRP has forged strong links between the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) and the Probation Service with a focus on co-location. This includes being the first VRU in the country to have a member of DWP staff seconded into the core team. This move has reaped significant results. Through DWP Prison Work Coaches (PWC) working part-time in Probation Service offices, ex-offenders now have direct access to training and employment opportunities

This work has been recognised as good practice at a roundtable with the Minister for Social Mobility & Youth Progression, Mim Davies MP, and Damian Hinds MP, Prisons & Probation Minister. It was also shortlisted for a national award for innovative partnership at the APCC-NPCC conference and other areas of the country are keen to replicate this model.

## Local Partnership Arrangements

As a partnership, we want the prevention and reduction of serious violence related risk and harm to be everyone's responsibility. Building on existing partnership infrastructure, strengths, and capabilities, we will create a system which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration so that everyone understands their role, and the role of others, in supporting communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.

Ensuring the principles of a public health approach are the golden thread through strategic, operational, and tactical delivery lies at the heart of our approach, and this strategy will provide the framework for partners to work together to implement whole-systems approaches to addressing serious violence. The public health approach is underpinned by community consensus, which recognises that the community's engagement in the serious violence response is essential, and the partnership will collaborate and co-produce with key stakeholders, including communities, to create a safer, stronger Merseyside.

# Agenda Item 5

Using the 5 C's principles, the partnership will work to deliver a shared vision which addresses and responds to the specific needs of the local community, establishing Merseyside as a place where people are free from violence and the fear of violence, and where there are meaningful opportunities for all. We will empower local communities, sustainably building skills, resilience, and resource to tackle serious violence, ensuring that diverse voices and perspectives within the community are not only heard, but amplified.<sup>6</sup>

By building our awareness on issues that are impacting our communities, we are better able to form a sustainable feedback loop to inform and focus partnership activity and improve the multi-agency approach to preventing and reducing serious violence. It will also enable the partnership to build effective and consistent approaches to serious violence communications, ensuring key messages are targeted and outcomes focussed so that partners and communities understand the actions being taken to prevent and reduce serious violence. This will play an important role in guiding the strategic direction of the partnership and should be underpinned by a shared set of values and behaviours.

## Core Principles of Our Approach:

**Innovative and Strengths Based** → To ensure that our approach is responsive to the specific needs of the local community, building upon the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections, and potential in a community to prevent and reduce serious violence.

**Apolitical and Tailored to Local Need** → To support a cultural shift around embedding a public health approach to serious violence prevention within organisational and partnership ways of working, ensuring resilience against any potential for the funding environment to change our focus.

**Inclusive** → To empower diverse voices and perspectives within the community, providing us with a broader perspective on local serious violence issues and expertise that only those most impacted by serious violence can offer, including people with lived experience.

**Meaningful** → To ensure that stakeholders, especially members of the community, can see their input within the local approach to serious violence, through robust feedback loops and direct involvement in key decisions around the design and delivery of activities.

**Aspirational** → To ensure greater alignment between organisations and communities, supporting communities to develop new skills to ensure that work on serious violence prevention is sustainable, delivered by communities, as well as ensuring that existing community work is amplified, well-resourced, and valued.

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<sup>6</sup> [A whole-system multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

**Trauma Informed** → To understand that different life experiences can shape our behaviour and opportunities and ensure this is reflected in our interactions with partners and communities and influences our decision making.

**Whole Systems** → To develop a coordinated approach to tackle the root causes of violence, building capacity across organisations and communities so that everyone understand their role and contribution to the prevention serious violence.

**Sustainable** → To develop cultural and financial sustainability, ensuring policies, processes, and funding models are focussed on improving population health outcomes to embed long-term change and are unaffected by political and contextual changes.

- Collaboration – A collaborative approach requires those who understand the broader implications of violence to generate a collective understanding across all partners within the local system.
- Co-production - The approach and workstreams undertaken locally to prevent and tackle violence should be informed by the multi-agency perspectives of all partners.
- Co-operation in data and intelligence sharing – Data and information sharing is a key enabler for all multi-agency approaches.
- Counter narrative development – Work with community members to create opportunities for development and the option to pursue alternatives to criminal activities. Partnerships should help to support positive aspirations and promote positive role models.
- Community consensus - Community consensus lies at the heart of a place-based multi-agency approach to serious violence prevention. The approach must be with and for local communities, it should empower them to actively participate and get involved in tackling issues that affect them collectively. This is essential for legitimacy and for any 'new' work being carried out by partners (particularly statutory work) to be seen as valid by communities

\*Include examples of effective co-production locally as spotlights

Liverpool SV forum? Jill/Susan to review if you think this is appropriate?

Probation Service User Forum? Mary/Jayne to review if you think this is appropriate?

# Agenda Item 5

**We will:**

To embed whole-systems, cultural change, we are committed to reviewing strategic, operational, and cultural assets available within the region to understand where we can build upon what is working well, as well as how we can use the Duty as an opportunity to add value to and compliment existing activity. We are also committed to working with communities to develop a coordinated and consistent approach to communications, empowering communities to actively participate in matters that affect them, supporting participatory approaches which meaningfully involve communities in the design, delivery, and evaluation of serious violence prevention work.

**What does this mean for Merseyside?**

This means that

**Governance and Accountability:****Merseyside Strategic Policing and Partnership Board**

Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner, as lead convener for the Duty, will lead on supporting Specified and Relevant Authorities implementation and compliance with the Duty at a local level due to their responsibility for the totality of policing in their area, as well as services for victims. The Merseyside Strategic Policing and Partnership Board (MSPPB), chaired by the Police and Crime Commissioner, will act as the governance mechanism for delivery of the Duty and the Commissioner will collaborate with the local partnership to provide strategic leadership, coordination, and support to ensure compliance and delivery of the action plans contained within this strategy.

The MSPPB brings senior leaders from all the partner organisations together to focus on key policing and community safety issues across Merseyside and ensure the priorities set out in the Commissioner's Police and Crime Plan are being delivered. The Board acts as an oversight body for several existing sub-groups which focus on improving the effectiveness of the response to policing and community safety issues, including serious violence. Serious Violence Duty Senior Responsible Officers are key members of the Board and work across the partnership to ensure a safer Merseyside.

(Include in box within the design to make the strategy more visible?).

**Serious Violence Duty Tactical Oversight Group**

There is an established Tactical Oversight Group which drives local delivery of the Duty, including membership from representatives from each of the Specified and Relevant Authorities and the wider partnership. The Group enables knowledge and information exchange, dissemination of operational learning, and maximises opportunities for collaboration and co-commissioning to enhance the service being

delivered to communities. Using the Duty SNA, localised Strategic Intelligence Assessments, and consultation outputs, the Group seeks to understand implementation and impact to promote and maintain a high level of operational assurance that partnership activity is achieving anticipated outcomes. Membership is dynamic and we will continue to ensure that all partners to have an equal voice in decision making, identifying where there may be gaps in expertise and creating opportunities for partners to collaborate to embed serious violence outcomes in delivery and governance.

## **What does this mean for Merseyside?**

This means that there are processes in place for us to make sure that we are achieving what we say we are going to do to prevent and reduce serious violence. If we are not seeing a reduction in serious violence and our communities do not feel safe, we will continue to work together to understand what else we can do to support our communities.

## **Interdependencies**

Local partnership arrangements were agreed to minimise adding complexity to the current landscape, recognising the effective partnership work already embedded across the region to address violence and vulnerability. There are multiple interdependencies and multi-agency strategies established nationally and locally that deliver on the objectives of this strategy, and the partnership are committed to ensuring alignment and consistency in approach. The below is not an exhaustive list but visualises strategies implemented by statutory partners which play a crucial role in preventing and minimising the impact of serious violence locally.

# Agenda Item 5



## What does this mean for Merseyside?

This means that there already lots of plans in place locally and nationally to prevent and reduce serious violence. However, we will be working together over the next two years to make sure that we can work together better to establish Merseyside as a place free from violence and the fear of violence.

## Serious Violence in Merseyside (Summary of the Strategic Needs Assessment of Violence)

In order to identify the kinds of serious violence that occur, and so far as it is possible to do so, the causes of that serious violence, the Duty requires that the partnership work together to establish the local SNA – identifying the drivers of serious violence acting in the local area and the cohorts of people most affected or at risk.

The SNA, produced by the MVRP, has been used as a baseline product by the local partnership to meet the requirements of the Duty. It is a living document which provides an evidence-based, public health assessment of serious violence across Merseyside, within the definition set out above.

Specifically, the SNA:

- Highlights the prevalence of serious violence in Merseyside using multiple data and information sources to identify risks and opportunities for prevention.
- Provides an overview of the local context, as well as takes steps to identify the areas and populations most affected.
- Identifies the drivers of serious violence, as well as the risk and protective factors for violence in Merseyside. This includes an assessment of the impact of the cost-of-living crisis.
- Explores perceptions of serious violence and wider health determinants through continued youth and community engagement efforts to provide a holistic understanding of serious violence as experienced by individuals, families and communities.
- Highlights the estimate cost of serious violence in Merseyside.

## **Context:**

Include the below in a concise infographic to visualise the context of Merseyside.

- Home to almost 1.5 million people, Merseyside comprises five boroughs, Knowsley, St Helens, Sefton, Wirral, and the city of Liverpool.
- Using the Index of Multiple Deprivation, two of Merseyside's Local Authorities are among the 10% most deprived in England. Knowsley (ranked 3) and Liverpool (Ranked 4). St Helens is ranked at 40, Wirral at 77 and Sefton at 89
- The most densely populated areas of Merseyside are found in Liverpool, in the wards of Walton South, Wavertree South, Kensington, Anfield East, and Toxteth Park.
- Knowsley continues to house the highest number of 0–15-year-olds.
- Liverpool sees the highest number of young adults (16-34), most older adults (35-64) are spread across Sefton and St Helens, and those of retirement age (65+) are spread across Sefton and Wirral.
- There are more females than males in Merseyside, with the highest percentage of female residents in Knowsley (52.2%).
- Liverpool has the largest LGB+ community in Merseyside, at 4.42% of the population which is higher than the England and Wales average of 3.2%; the smallest is Knowsley at 2.32%. Liverpool also has the largest community of people whose gender identity is different from what as registered at birth, at 0.69% of the local population.
- Considering ethnicity and race, the Local Authority with the highest proportion of White British residents is St Helens at 96.5%, followed by Sefton (95.8%), Knowsley (95.3%, a reduction from 98% in 2021/22), Wirral (95.2%), and Liverpool (84.0%).
- Within Liverpool, Toxteth Park ward is the most diverse area with 30.3% of residents identifying as White British. Interestingly, a very specific MSOA within this ward is 8% White British (E00176718), with 67.6% of residents identifying as Black, Black British, Black Welsh, Caribbean or African.
- As of July 2022 there are 171 Traveller caravans in Merseyside, 70 in Sefton, 56 in St Helens, 25 in Wirral, 20 in Liverpool, and 0 in Knowsley.
- 5% of the residents across Merseyside were born outside the UK. This percentage is significantly higher in Liverpool, in which 14.9% were born outside the UK. The top countries of birth are Poland, Northern Ireland, Wales, the Middle East, China, and EU countries.



# Agenda Item 5

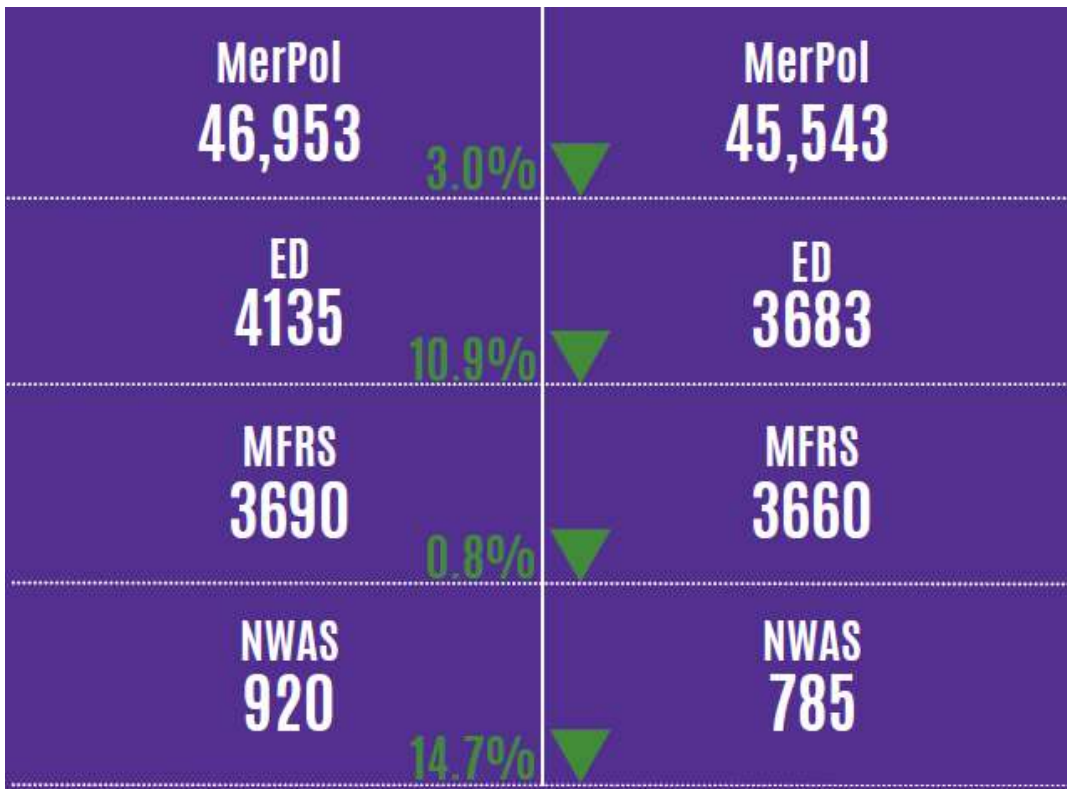
- There are two Her Majesty's Prisons (HMP) in Merseyside, HMP Liverpool and HMP Altcourse. HMP Liverpool is a Category B local prison, receiving sentenced and remand adult male prisoners. For historical reasons it is known locally and indeed beyond as Walton prison, and it is situated to the North of the City Centre. The prison has the capacity to hold up to 870 males. HMP Altcourse is a Category B local prison, receiving sentenced and remand adult male prisoners as well as young offenders, from the Cheshire and Merseyside courts. The prison can accommodate up to 1,164 males and all are housed across seven house blocks.
- Almost 60% of the prison population are held in HMP Altcourse, whilst just over 40% of the prison population are held in HMP Liverpool.
- Most of the prison population are White British Nationals and are aged between 30 – 39.
- Most of the prison population have been sentenced, with a significant proportion also on remand.
- Both prisons received a 'good performance' rating on the annual prison performance rating.

## Extent:

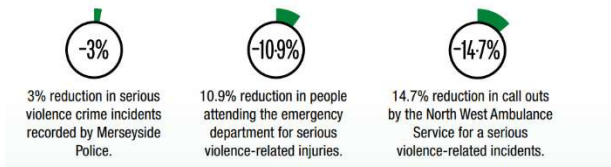
Merseyside Police, Emergency Departments, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the North West Ambulance Service all recorded a reduction in incidents linked to serious violence from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

**2021/22**

**2022/23**







Include the stats like this? With the addition of FRS data.

- Merseyside Police data reveals that the highest number of serious violence offences fall into the category of Violence Against the Person (87%), followed by Violence Without Injury (58%). 0.05% of incidents are recorded as homicides, 0.5% are linked to firearms, and 3.6% are linked to knives/bladed articles.
- Stop & Search data reveals that the main residential for those stopped and searched was Liverpool (48%). The main Act cited was Misuse of Drugs Act (79%) and the main object found was controlled drugs (71%).

## Nature:

- Police: Merseyside Police data reveals that the Local Authority with the most recorded Serious Violence incidents is Liverpool (39%). Serious violence incidents were fairly consistent throughout 2022/23, with a slight peak in May (11%).
- Ambulance: The highest percentage (40%) of North West Ambulance Service and Emergency Department patients reside in Liverpool.
- Fire: Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service saw 3,660 deliberate fires in 2022/23. The peak months include August (16%), April (13%) and July (13%). Liverpool sees the most deliberate fires (37%), followed by Wirral (22%). 1.4% linked to OCG activity and 0.3% domestic abuse.
- The SNA highlights specific 'high crime high harm' areas within Merseyside, the majority of which are in Liverpool, followed by Wirral, Sefton, and St Helens. Knowsley does not have a 'high crime high harm' area. 38% of homicides occurred in Liverpool, with peaks in October and August.
- Prisons: Drug offences and violence against the person are the most common recorded offence across both prisons. (HMP Altcourse, 268 drug offences and 315 violence against the person) (HMP Liverpool 210 drug offences and 200 violence against the person)

**Include the below on its own page**

High Crime High Harm Hotspots

# Agenda Item 5



Using the Cambridge Crime Harm Index, Merseyside Police identified 12 High Crime High Harm (HCHH) areas across the region. These HCHH areas make up just 0.5% of the force area but are responsible for 23% of serious violence crime and its associated harm.

Patrols are deployed to these identified HCHH areas to carry out normal police duties as well as a targeted response to serious violence. Results show that there has been a 54% reduction in serious violence within these areas, compared to a 31% reduction forcewide (when compared to the same period in 2021). This response has seen a positive impact on other crime types too, for example, Burglary Residential has decreased by 25% forcewide but has decreased by 49% in the HCHH areas. This supports the importance of implementing place-based approaches, by targeting resources to areas of high demand, need, and vulnerability.

## Who is involved in serious violence in Merseyside?

- Where age is recorded, those involved in serious violence are most often aged between 20 – 35 years old.
- Across all BlueLight datasets, where gender is recorded, those involved in serious violence are mainly male.
- When looking at victim and perpetrator profiles using Merseyside Police data, victims of serious violence were mostly female, and suspects were mostly male.
- The North West Ambulance Service and Emergency Department report that the peak ages for those requiring medical assistance for serious violence incidents are from 15-19 years to 35-39 years. The peak age for ED attendances specifically is 20-24 years, compared with 30-34 years for NAWAS. 60% of ED attendees for serious violence incidents were male. Of the people attending a Merseyside based ED with an assault injury, the relationship between victim and suspect was unknown. Of cases where it was known, the majority said the suspect was a stranger, 4.5% said their attacker was an acquaintance or friend.

## What have our local communities told us about serious violence?

**Community consensus lies at the heart of the local partnership approach to preventing and reducing serious violence.** To embed a truly place-based, multi-agency, public health approach to serious violence prevention, we recognise the importance of working with and for our local communities, empowering them to actively participate in matters that affect them and that they care about.

In adopting a strengths-based approach, we want to support our communities to co-design solutions, ensuring their voices are at the heart of decision-making processes at a local and central Government level. In developing this strategy, we have delivered a series of consultations over the past 12-months to understand how violence affects our communities, to establish what we can do as a partnership to improve feelings of safety amongst our communities and minimise the fear of violence.

**What does this mean for Merseyside?**



## **What did we do?**

Whilst we engaged **universally** with our communities' pan-Merseyside, we recognise the importance of engaging with members of our community who may be in receipt of the services and support that the agencies and bodies involved in this partnership provide, and who also may be particularly vulnerable.

Adopting a two-tiered approach, we delivered **targeted** consultation at 'place' and 'organisational' level. This enabled us to develop our understanding of the nature and causes of violence in different populations, whilst broadening our understanding of the localised nuances within and between local authorities. These insights have enabled us to develop meaningful and achievable actions which will be taken forward by the partnership over the short, medium, and longer-term, to ensure responsiveness to local need.

## **Universal**

### **Who did we speak to?**

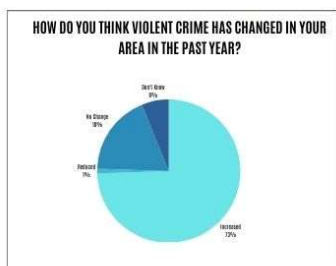
We engaged over 750 people from across Merseyside.

### **What did they tell us?**

# Agenda Item 5



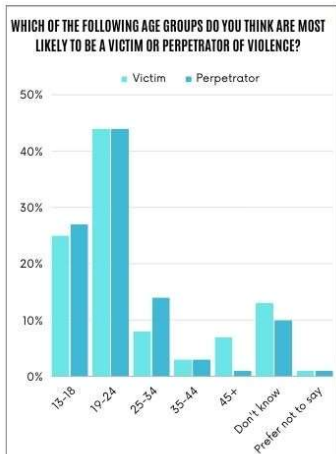
## 750+ RESPONSES PERCEPTIONS



### WHAT DOES OUR DATA TELL US?

Merseyside Police, Emergency Departments, Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, and the North West Ambulance Service all recorded a reduction in incidents linked to serious violence from 2021/22 to 2022/23.

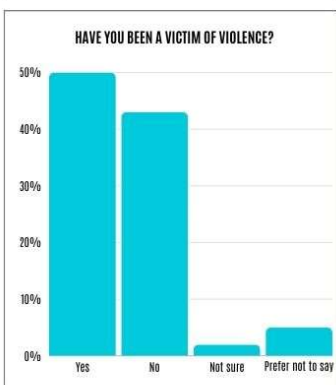
- 3% reduction in the number of serious violence incidents recorded by Merseyside Police.
- 10.9% reduction in the number of attendances at Emergency Departments for serious violence related incidents.
- 0.8% reduction in deliberate fires attended by Merseyside Fire and Rescue Services.
- 14.7% reduction in ambulance call outs by the North West Ambulance Service for serious violence related incidents.



### WHAT DOES OUR DATA TELL US?

Individuals involved in serious violence as victim or perpetrator are most often aged between 20 - 35 years.

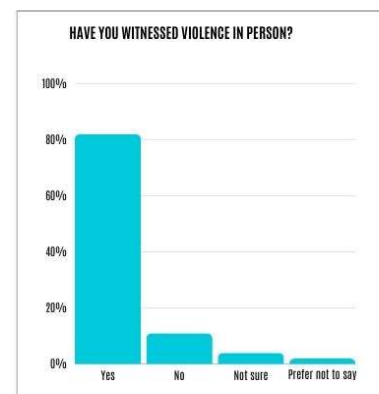
- The North West Ambulance Service and Emergency Department report that the peak ages for those requiring medical assistance for serious violence incidents are from 15-19 years to 35-39 years.
- The peak age for Emergency Department attendances specifically is 20-24 years, compared with 30-34 years for North West Ambulance Service.



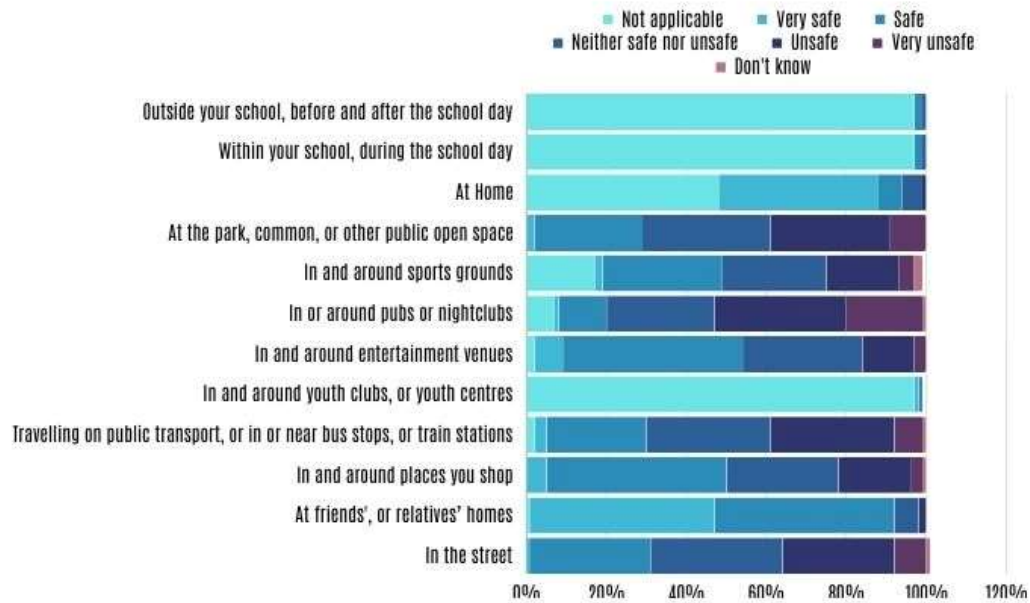
If you've been affected by crime, you can contact Victim Care Merseyside for free, confidential, non-judgemental advice and support.

[HTTPS://WWW.VICTIMCAREMERSEYSIDE.ORG/](https://www.victimcaremerseyside.org/)

Merseyside residents witnessed violence mostly in the day time other than in the city or town centre, where violence was witnessed more frequently at night.



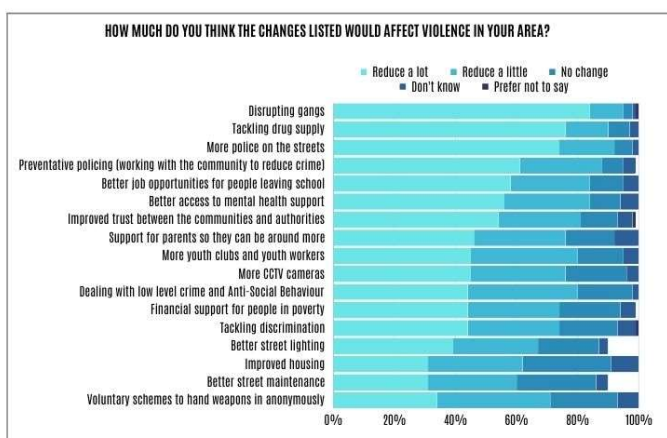
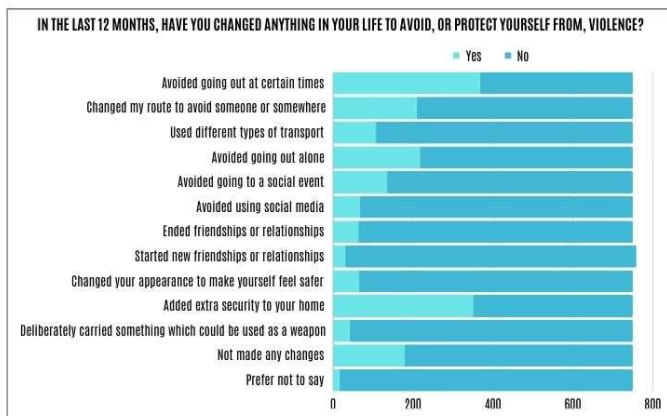
## HOW SAFE OR UNSAFE DO YOU FEEL FROM VIOLENCE IN THE FOLLOWING LOCATIONS?



Merseyside residents told us that they feel least safe in or around pubs or nightclubs, at the park, common, or other open public spaces, and when travelling on public transport, in or near bus stops, or train stations.

# Agenda Item 5

## IMPACT



Merseyside respondents prioritised policing initiatives overall as solutions which they felt would make the biggest reduction in violent crime where they live. In order of priority, solutions included:

- Disrupting gangs.
- Tackling drug supply.
- More visible policing.
- Preventative policing.

However, improving job opportunities for people leaving school, better access to mental health support, and improved trust between communities and authorities were also considered effective ways to reduce violent crime.



## Targeted

### Who did we speak to?

Community Safety Partnerships, Prisons, and the Probation Service, in collaboration with statutory and third-sector partners, delivered a series of targeted consultations with:

- Young people who have experience of the care system
- Families of children with additional needs
- Victims of violence
- Young people receiving support from the youth justice system
- Young people in alternative education settings
- Ethnic minority communities
- LGBTQ+ communities
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- People in prison
- People on probation

The below provides a snapshot of the views, needs, and experiences of the communities that we spoke to. Local authority specific reports are contained within the appendix to this strategy and provide a more in-depth assessment of the nuances within and between each locality.

### Experience

- There was a general acceptance amongst community groups that violence is inevitable, as well as a view that violence and gang involvement has become normalised.
- Difficulty establishing healthy relationships can increase vulnerability to violence and exploitation, particularly for people with experience of the care system who can find it difficult to establish healthy boundaries.
- Young people open to the youth justice system reported experiencing stigmatisation as a result of their involvement in offending behaviour.
- People from Ethnic Minority Groups felt that it was true that people from certain ethnic minority groups are perceived as more likely to commit violence and are treated different as a victim of violence.
- Young Adults in Prison felt that living in deprived areas with established gangs increases susceptibility to involvement in serious violence as criminal behaviour becomes normalised.
- Families of children with additional needs spoke of isolation and loneliness.
- Filming of attacks by peers increases propensity for a more violent attack.

### Drivers of serious violence

- Poverty and deprivation, alcohol use, drug use and supply, unmet mental health needs, lack of access to employment, education, and training opportunities, protection, gang membership, money, retaliation, and the impact of social media were all major driving factors for serious violence.
- Communities recognised the danger of being involved in a gang and the relationship between gang membership, drugs, and serious violence.

# Agenda Item 5

- In prison violence is mainly linked to gang related community violence. However, various risk factors can increase vulnerability to gang exploitation in prison, including substance misuse problems, poor mental health, and low self-esteem.
- Neurodiversity was a common factor identified as contributing to increased susceptibility to involvement in serious violence as victim or perpetrator.

## **Services:**

- There is a lack of understanding and awareness of neurodiversity and how this impacts behaviour and interactions between authorities and community members, including a lack of understanding on the relationship between neurodiversity and child on parent violence.
- Systems, processes, and services in place to support families with children with additional needs are fragmented, with inconsistent communication to raise awareness of referral pathways and access to available support.
- There is a pressing need to improve relationships with statutory services, particularly the police, to build trust and confidence amongst communities.
- Communities expressed difficulty in accessing services and there was a consensus that services offered are not always responsive to local need.
- Victims and their families were not always satisfied with criminal justice outcomes, often feeling that outcomes are too lenient. They also called for better understanding and awareness on enforcement and criminal justice tactics.

## **Solutions:**

- Localised and accessible support.
- Interventions which address risk and protective factors (including poverty, drug misuse, gang involvement, mental health needs) and are tailored to local need.
- Policies, processes, and interventions to address the impact of implementation on inequalities and disproportionality.
- Increased police visibility.
- Improved access to free education, employment, and training opportunities.
- Interventions which integrate young people from out of area to break down barriers in a risk managed environment.
- Consistent and coordinated support and communication to increase visibility of partnership assets which communities can access.
- Multi-agency support to enable early intervention and prevention, including coordinated referral pathways.
- Improved offer of whole family support.
- A co-ordinated, quality assured toolkit for use within educational and community centres around violence prevention education.



## Strategic Priorities and Objectives

Taking account of the SNA and consultation with communities and partners, the local partnership has agreed the following strategic priorities, actions, objectives, and actions, which we will take forward through this strategy over the next 12 months to prevent and reduce serious violence:

### Priority 1: People

As a partnership, we want to ensure that individuals, families, and communities, are supported to be free from violence and the fear of violence.

#### Objectives

**Work together to identify individuals, families, and communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence, and intervene to reduce risk and harm**, ensuring responsivity to identified need and a focus on addressing the root causes of serious violence. This involves bringing about long-term cultural, behavioural, and attitudinal change through challenging the acceptance of norms which promote violence as being inevitable.

**Taking a multi-agency approach, partners will target resources on prevention and early intervention, rooted in evidence on ‘what works’ to prevent and reduce serious violence.** Using evidence-based resources, the partnership will commission and embed interventions across the region which are known to deliver the highest impact for people at risk of, impacted by, or already involved in, serious violence.

**Partners will provide timely, coordinated support, and monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of interventions so that risk is reduced.** Monitoring and evaluating is key to a public health approach to reducing violence, as it feeds back into our understanding of what works to reduce violence most effectively (WHO, 2017a). Not only does this reduce harm to communities by ensuring maximum impact, as well as uncovering what does not work, it also enables partners to prioritise resources more effectively in the long-term.

**Ensure that the experiences, strengths, and needs of individuals, families, and communities are understood and that these views are clearly recorded so that co-production is central to the multi-agency approach.** This will lead to greater alignment between organisations and communities and empower citizens to contribute towards a society free from violence and free from the fear of violence.

### Priority 2: Places

As a partnership, we want to work collaboratively with key stakeholders, including our communities, to establish Merseyside as a place where people feel safe to live, work, and visit.

#### Objectives

# Agenda Item 5

**Use information effectively to understand the prevalence of serious violence in their area to inform multi-agency strategy, planning, and actions, including targeting of resources in places and spaces to meet local need.** This will ensure resource, intervention, and harm recovery efforts are targeted at priority hotspots where serious violence occurs.

**Embed a strengths-based approach which focuses on identifying the strengths or assets, as well as the needs, of communities, to prevent and reduce serious violence.** Adopting a strengths-based asset approach values the capacity, skills, knowledge, connections, and potential in a community, enabling the partnership to build upon and strengthen protective factors in a community to more effectively reduce violence at a population level.

**Partners will collaborate to ensure consistent delivery of key messages relating to serious violence, empowering communities to build their resilience and confidence to prevent and respond to serious violence.** The partnership is continuously striving to inform, consult, involve, collaborate, and empower key stakeholders and communities, using data in communications to support open and honest conversations about the extent of serious violence in Merseyside.

**Partners will take ownership of embedding strategic and operational delivery at hyper-local level, ensuring action plans are dynamic and adapt to changing risk and need.** This will enable partners to truly embed whole-systems, place-based multi-agency approaches which seek to improve long-term outcomes of the 'whole place' and not just individuals, whilst recognising that the impact of serious violence may be different in each local authority.

## **Priority 3: Partnerships**

As a partnership, we want the prevention and reduction of serious violence related risk and harm to be everyone's responsibility, creating the right conditions for partners and communities to collaborate to take effective, co-ordinated action.

### **Objectives**

**Partners embed whole-systems, public health approaches to preventing serious violence at hyper-local level, with effective oversight and governance mechanisms to deliver improved outcomes.** Ensuring the principles of a public health approach are the golden thread through strategic, operational, and tactical delivery, facilitating an understanding of the interoperability within and between organisational and geographical boundaries to integrate preventative action which tackles the root causes of serious violence.

**Increase the effectiveness of partnerships at preventing/tackling serious violence, creating a system which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration.** Partners collaborate to ensure efficient allocation of resources to maximise impact and reduce silo working and duplication, including coordination of funding decisions and agreement to invest and pool resources for the long-term.

**Engage in critical reflection to challenge and support practice to act upon system learning more habitually, promoting continuous improvement in the multi-agency approach for communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.** Increasing public trust and confidence in the multi-agency approach to preventing and reduce serious violence related risk and harm.

**Improve multi-agency data sharing and governance to enhance capacity and capability of the partnership in preventing and reducing serious violence related risk and harm.** Supporting collaborative efforts across the partnership to enhance data capability and embrace evidence driven approaches to implementing public health interventions which address the root causes of serious violence. Using this understanding, partners will be better equipped to ensure responsivity to local need through the targeting of interventions and resources.

**Commit to ensuring trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership at all levels.** Ensuring partners have access to training and support so that they are confident, knowledgeable, and understand the impact of serious violence on health and wellbeing.

## **Action to Prevent and Reduce Serious Violence**

The results of the SNA and consultation with partners and communities has been used by the local partnership to formulate and prioritise bespoke actions to prevent and reduce serious violence, that the partnership will take forward through this strategy. Actions are aligned to thematic priorities (people, places, and partnerships) and are set out under several key workstreams, including:




- Governance and collaboration.
- Data sharing.
- Evidence based and system learning.
- Targeted interventions and local implementation.
- Access to education, employment, and training.
- Training and awareness.
- Accommodation.
- Enforcement.
- Communications.

The below strategic actions are pan-Merseyside actions and have been arrived at through consultation, planning, and a review of local action plans to identify how we can use the Duty as an opportunity to bring about cultural change, encouraging partners to think and act more innovatively when collaborating to prevent and reduce serious violence. However, we remain committed to ensuring that we implement processes, systems, and interventions as locally as possible, whilst also understanding that some of the partners subject to this strategy may be better equipped to lead on driving change across the whole system. Please therefore see the appendix for localised delivery plans which have been developed by Specified and Relevant Authorities, highlighting detailed actions at strategic, operational, and tactical level. The actions contained within this strategy and within the localised delivery plans are closely aligned to thematic priorities and will be governed and overseen through



# Agenda Item 5


the local partnership arrangements set up under the Duty. This will enable us to remain firm in our commitment to embed change across a whole system by delivering improved outcomes for a whole 'place', whilst enabling us to embed a public health approach which takes account of the localised nuances within and between local authorities.

PEOPLE

PRIORITY: PEOPLE	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><b>Work together to identify individuals, families, and communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence, and intervene to reduce risk and harm.</b></p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people aware of and accessing support and intervention</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people are identified who are at risk of or in need of support.</li> <li>• More people are aware of and protected against serious violence risks.</li> <li>• Reduced repeat involvement in serious violence, either as perpetrator or victim.</li> <li>• Fewer people exposed to/witnessing serious violence</li> <li>• Decrease in risk and increase in protective factors</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced financial cost of serious violence</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will proactively identify populations and places susceptible to serious violence and intervene early to ensure appropriate interventions (universal and targeted) are in place to reduce serious violence offending, reoffending, as well as to build desistance for people on probation.</li> <li>• We will continue to develop and improve the quality of support provided to victims and witnesses to mitigate the impact of serious violence and vulnerability. This will involve working across the partnership to identify those at risk of repeat victimisation, employing an early help approach to minimise risk and harm.</li> <li>• We will continue to develop and support the implementation of interventions which address underlying risk and protective factors, to ensure a holistic approach to preventing and reducing serious violence by targeting resources to areas of high demand, need, and vulnerability. This</li> </ul>




	<p>includes developing interventions which address thinking, attitudes, and behaviours which lead to serious violence offending.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work across the whole system, including working closely with partners making referrals, to strategically map risk and protective factors and early indicators which are shared across multiple population health concerns e.g., serious violence, radicalisation, poor health. This will enable us to develop ‘one system’ to identify risk factors and support joined up efforts to provide those most at risk with appropriate support.</li> <li>• We will build consultation and feedback into partnership activities and timelines to ensure stakeholders and communities are engaged in:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ Initial consultation on co-production</li> <li>○ Development of the strategy, as well as annual consultation and feedback at the point of strategic review</li> <li>○ Intervention commissioning, including feedback to beneficiaries as well as communities/ organisations who do not fall within the commissioning plan</li> <li>○ Delivery plan, including consulting stakeholders to identify opportunities for joint working</li> <li>○ Commit to providing feedback to stakeholders and ensuring feedback loops are in place when planning all consultation with stakeholders</li> </ul> </li> <li>• We will co-produce with communities in some way across the whole of Merseyside, not just in hotspots, to ensure equality of voice.</li> </ul>
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<b>PRIORITY: PEOPLE</b>	
 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	<p><b>Taking a multi-agency approach, partners will target resources on prevention and early intervention, rooted in evidence on ‘what works to prevent and reduce serious violence.</b></p>
 KPIs	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services offered reflect local and national best practice.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduced risk of serious harm.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Decrease in risk and increase in protective factors.</li> <li>• Enhanced offer of whole family support</li> <li>• Improved health outcomes associated with wider determinants</li> <li>• Reduced health inequalities.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term change in attitudes and behaviours which contribute to a culture where serious violence occurs</li> <li>• Reduced financial cost of violence</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Using evidence-based resources, we will commission and embed interventions across the region which are known to deliver the highest impact for people at risk of, or already involved in, serious violence. This will involve working closely with the Violence Reduction Partnership to ensure decision making is informed by the wealth of local evidence on ‘what works’ at primary, secondary, and tertiary level.</li> <li>• We will continue to provide high quality interventions and targeted support for people under supervision, including people in prison and people on probation, who have unique needs, to improve outcomes across a range of areas, including accommodation, education, employment, and health, and address the thinking, attitudes, and behaviours that lead to reoffending.</li> <li>• We will ensure there is sufficient provision of evidence-based interventions and effective partnership arrangements in place to support the transition from custody to community, maximising opportunities to deliver the Short-Term Sentence Function (SSF). The SSF is an enhanced approach to sentence management and is primarily needs focussed with the intention of improving the continuity of provision from custody into the community.</li> <li>• We will continue to support and commission whole family approaches to preventing and reducing serious violence, including providing support for people in prison to initiate and maintain family ties whilst in custody. By whole family, we mean that we will triage family members for their individual needs, but interventions are concurrently delivered. Improving simultaneous access and availability of support for all family members in need, we can maximise and sustain the impact of interventions.</li> <li>• We will continue to deliver and develop educational programmes (universal and targeted) to engage and prevent serious violence, including working closely with the Merseyside Violence</li> </ul>


	Reduction Partnership and Safer Schools Officers to develop a suite of trauma informed preventative interventions for use within educational settings.
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**PRIORITY: PEOPLE**

 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>Partners will provide timely, coordinated support, and monitor and evaluate the implementation and impact of interventions so that risk is reduced</p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people aware of and accessing support and intervention.</li> <li>• Services offered reflect local and national best practice</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved referral and referral pathways for people who are at risk of or in need of support.</li> <li>• More people are aware of and protected against serious violence risks</li> <li>• Decrease in risk and increase in protective factors.</li> <li>• Coordinated referral and support for the most vulnerable.</li> <li>• Improved health outcomes associated with wider determinants.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People feel safer.</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will establish a robust system for monitoring and evaluating the effectiveness of strategic and operational processes and interventions, supporting the partnership to measure impact in the absence of significant funding required for robust evaluation. This will include regular reviews of policies and procedures, review of performance data, and consultation with partners and communities to understand the impact.</li> <li>• We will continue to build the local evidence base on ‘what works’, collating and sharing best practice spotlights, to develop a repository of local evidence.</li> </ul>






	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will conduct a mapping exercise to increase the partnerships' awareness of the occurrence and effectiveness of strategic and operational assets in place across the region to prevent and reduce serious violence, and use the output to inform our collaboration and planning going forward, ensuring resources are targeted effectively to reduce risk and harm felt by communities as a result of violent offending in public spaces.</li> <li>• We will establish clear referral pathways and ensure that statutory and third sector partners are equipped with knowledge of the referral processes, making it easier for partners to connect people most in need to other services and resources which address public health needs and risk and protective factors for serious violence (e.g., mental health services, drug and alcohol treatment, housing services, and employment and education opportunities).</li> <li>• We will work across the whole system to raise community awareness of the support available to those involved in, or impacted by, serious violence. This will include raising awareness of wider interventions as well as criminal justice and enforcement activity (such as Out of Court Disposal processes) to provide victim reassurance.</li> <li>• We will work across the whole system to monitor and evaluate levels of engagement and attainment in disproportionately represented groups open to services, including those open to the Youth Justice System, to develop improvement, including for children with an Educational Health Care Plan, children with SEN, children permanently excluded from school, out of court disposal cases, and children released under investigation.</li> <li>• We will work closely with partners to understand the impact of school exclusion policies on serious violence, including monitoring the extent of school exclusion in the youth justice system cohort, as well as the extent of additional support provided to children with Special Educational Needs, ensuring that every child with an Educational Health Care Plan has this reviewed on an annual basis.</li> </ul>
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PRIORITY: PEOPLE	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><b>Ensure that the experiences, strengths, and needs of individuals, families, and communities are understood and that these views are clearly recorded so that co-production is central to the multi-agency approach.</b></p>



	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Community engagement and co-production is a priority.</li> <li>• Community voice embedded in strategy to inform action planning at a local level.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More people demonstrating positive engagement with services referred to.</li> <li>• Individuals, organisations, and communities work together to prevent serious violence.</li> <li>• Individuals, families, and communities are supported to feel safe.</li> <li>• Communities challenging acceptance of violence.</li> <li>• Reduced fear of violence within the community.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Long-term change in attitudes and behaviours which contribute to a culture where serious violence occurs.</li> <li>• Co-production is habitual.</li> <li>• People feel safer</li> <li>• Increased reporting of serious violence.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will conduct a strengths-based asset mapping assessment and use the output of this to inform planning and collaboration to prevent and reduce serious violence, focussing on what is important to local communities and how system partners can help to build and expand the assets and resources within communities, including those which are led by communities for communities.</li> <li>• We will work across the whole system to drive a cultural shift around co-production to embed it within organisational and partnership ways of working as ‘business as usual’, ensuring that the views and needs of those most impacted by serious violence feed into strategic and operational planning, delivery, decision making, and review.</li> <li>• We will develop a consistent system of collaboration between workstreams, to keep operational approaches the same and ensure strategic join-up around who is engaged, how they are engaged, and priorities for engagement.</li> <li>• We will amplify the voices of those most impacted by serious violence, ensuring meaningful opportunities for communities to actively participate in matters that affect them and that they care about, particularly those who may not always be listened to.</li> <li>• We will utilise and build upon the success and impact of existing lived experience forums such as Liverpool City Council’s Serious Violence Forum and the Service User Forum which is part of the</li> </ul>


	strategic governance across the Probation Service, to develop and embed a permanent lived experience forum as part of the governance structure under the Duty to ensure that experts by experience can positively influence decision making at the highest level.
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**PLACES**



<b>PRIORITY: PLACES</b>	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	Use information effectively to understand the prevalence of serious violence in their area to inform multi-agency strategy, planning, and actions, including targeting of resources in places and spaces to meet local need.
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved identification of hotspot locations and trends to better target resource and intervention.</li> <li>• Ensure a coordinated, adaptable approach to the targeting of organised crime groups by the partnership.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk of serious violence in hotspots is reduced.</li> <li>• Resource, intervention, and harm recovery efforts targeted at priority hotspots where serious violence occurs</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mature model of early identification embedded to respond to emerging need and risk to prevent and reduce serious violence.</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will review practical interventions, working closely with Designing Out Crime Units, to ensure regeneration plans effectively work to prevent serious violence and the opportunities for crime within the built environment.</li> <li>• We will continue to implement place-based approaches, using multiple data sets to identify the High Harm / High Crime hotspot locations across Merseyside where serious violence occurs and</li> </ul>


	<p>ensure these areas are subject to intensive support, including enhanced police visibility / patrolling, targeting of interventions to provide support and advice to those most in need, and continued efforts to problem solve with key partners to reduce risk and harm.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to build upon data capability and digital resources to develop integrative systems which identify any areas of Merseyside at risk of becoming a hotspot for Serious Violence, overlaying crime and environmental data, to intervene early and mitigate emerging risk. We will develop innovation in the way that this is visualised to support partners in embedding effective policies, processes, and interventions across the whole system.</li> <li>• We will continue to establish and build on learning from the roll out of the multi-agency partnership tactic called Clear, Hold, Build, which has been designed and part-funded by the Home Office to rescue and regenerate areas most affected by serious and organised crime.</li> <li>• We will work with Merseyside Police and Local Authority licensing teams to ensure there are suitable systems in place to deal with repeat issues of serious violence at locations.</li> </ul>
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PRIORITY: PLACES	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>Embed a strengths-based approach which focuses on identifying the strengths or assets, as well as the needs, of communities, to prevent and reduce serious violence.</p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved understanding, recognition, and use of community assets.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved visibility and awareness of partnership assets to prevent and reduce serious violence, including awareness of operational programmes and initiatives.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strengths-based approaches embedded and contribute to driving change and system level transformation at a local level.</li> </ul>




	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will conduct a strengths-based asset mapping assessment which identifies, describes, and visualises strategic, operational, and community assets that are available within the Merseyside region to support the partnership and communities in preventing and reducing serious violence. This will be used as an empowerment tool to build upon existing capacity, empowering meaningful co-production with communities to understand and respond to their concerns and ideas.</li> <li>• In line with building upon tangible and intangible assets within the community, we will ensure that serious violence prevention and reduction remains a priority for Community Cashback and participatory budget schemes, providing communities with the skills, tools, and resources to deliver their own serious violence work, sustainably amplifying the wider system coming together.</li> </ul>
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**PRIORITY: PLACES**

	<p>Partners will collaborate to ensure consistent delivery of key messages relating to serious violence, empowering communities to build their resilience and confidence to prevent and respond to serious violence</p>
	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Shared understanding of current opportunities to build and develop communications capacity.</li> <li>• Consistent and aligned communications plans across the partnership to deliver key messages, improving perceptions of safety.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increased local community awareness of serious violence and risk mitigation.</li> <li>• Coordinated and consistent messaging which builds awareness of the local approach to serious violence prevention.</li> <li>• Increase the partnerships' awareness of the occurrence and effectiveness of prevention and intervention activities implemented across the region to tackle serious violence.</li> <li>• Increased community cohesion through communities working together to address serious violence related concerns.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Communities are equipped with the tools to build confidence and resilience in preventing and responding to serious violence.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will map and review current communications approaches, identifying examples of best practice and opportunities to engage communities with the serious violence agenda using an aspirational, strengths-based approach.</li> <li>• We will develop innovative ways to communicate the important role of public health approaches to serious violence prevention and to evaluate their effectiveness to provide future whole systems approaches that will support efforts across Merseyside.</li> <li>• We will raise awareness on the impact of serious violence on individuals and develop a strengths-based approaches which challenge the acceptance of norms which promote violence as being inevitable, highlighting the tangible and intangible partnership and community assets which can support in bringing about long-term cultural, behavioural, and attitudinal change.</li> <li>• We will develop coordinated and consistent messaging, which is targeted and outcomes focussed, to build awareness of the local approach to serious violence prevention, instilling trust and confidence in the work being done by the partnership to tackle and prevent serious violence.</li> <li>• We will share positive news with communities to further strengthen community resilience and provide transparency around activity undertaken to impact on serious violence.</li> <li>• We will ensure that messaging is tailored to local need and shared at hyper-local level through various channels, informed by data and community insight to understand how to consult communities where fear of violence may be a bigger problem than the actual threat of violence.</li> <li>• We will act as champions within our own organisations to deliver key messages relating to serious violence to embed a public health approach to serious violence prevention.</li> <li>• We will create a communication and campaign strategy with long-term and intermediate objectives to guide how the partnership will inform the community, co-produced with communities.</li> <li>• We will develop our understanding of how visible the partnership is to key population groups.</li> <li>• We will support the community to develop new skills to ensure that work on prevention and reduction is sustainable and allow the community to deliver interventions and their own serious violence work, ensuring existing work done by community members and groups is amplified, well-resourced, and valued.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will champion the positive contribution made by communities to counteract the risk and harm felt as a result of violent offending in public spaces, and support community asset approaches which build community cohesion.</li> <li>• We will enhance our connectivity to communities, considering all partnership activity in terms of its inclusivity and accessibility, identifying and removing barriers to participation and ensuring that we build opportunities for engagement so that hat partnership engagement is held at times and places where individuals and groups can attend and participate.</li> </ul>
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<b>PRIORITY: PLACES</b>	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>Partners will take ownership of embedding strategic and operational delivery at hyper-local level, ensuring action plans are dynamic and adapt to changing risk and need.</p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Hyper-local strategy and action plans developed tailored to local need, with robust accountability and governance structures at hyper-local level to drive key actions.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Localised strategies and approaches implemented.</li> <li>• Ensuring that local delivery to reduce serious violence is underpinned by mature co-production with communities, particularly those who are most adversely affected by violence.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy and delivery embedded at hyper-local level in response to local need.</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to ensure that the priorities and actions contained within this strategy align with the wider strategic and political context, and form part of an ongoing process of review and co-production with key stakeholders, including local communities, to support local ownership of the strategy and ensure that it is implemented as intended.</li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To monitor the impact of multi-agency public health approach to serious violence prevention, we will continue to use community insight data where possible to better understand impact, community confidence, and levels of reassurance, enabling us to adapt to changing risk and need.</li> <li>• We will ensure this strategy is owned at place, meaning that we will drive the actions contained within this strategy through local place-based strategic, tactical, and operational partnerships, to ensure that decision making is kept as local as possible and that we are able to respond to localised nuances within and between local authorities which may see the impact of serious violence differ.</li> </ul>
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**PARTNERSHIPS**

<p><b>PRIORITY: PARTNERSHIPS</b></p>	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p>Partners embed whole-systems, public health approaches to preventing serious violence at hyper-local level, with effective oversight and governance mechanisms to deliver improved outcomes.</p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Alignment across local and national strategies and delivery plans to ensure a symbiotic approach.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners demonstrate a comprehensive understanding of the public health approach and translate this into practice, recognising the link between serious violence and wider determinants of health and embed serious violence outcomes into planning and delivery.</li> <li>• Partners are confident and equipped to implement proactive, preventative approaches to serious violence, as opposed to implementing solely reactive approaches.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners work together to enable cultural change and achieve a sustainable approach to tackling serious violence.</li> </ul>






	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Effectiveness of oversight and governance of serious violence prevention work locally, including an understanding of the senior leadership structure, funding landscape, and interoperability between partners at all levels to support a whole system, public health approach to serious violence prevention.</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will develop our understanding of existing governance arrangements for strategic and operational serious violence prevention work, identifying interoperability with cross cutting local and national strategies, delivery plans, operating systems, and existing partnerships.</li> <li>• We streamline governance mechanisms and establish clear lines of reporting and accountability to deliver improved outcomes through a multi-agency, public health approach, ensuring the right people have a seat at the table to drive long-term, sustainable change to processes, systems, and interventions, and reflect this in revised partnership terms of reference where appropriate.</li> <li>• We will review how the partnership supports the workforce to embed multi-agency, public health approaches, and develop a programme of training for the whole system so that partners have the right skills, knowledge, and working conditions to embed a public health approach to serious violence prevention, enabling improved and earlier identification of populations and places vulnerable to the impact of serious violence.</li> <li>• We will work collaboratively with partners to develop and deliver training and awareness raising of what is available in the community to prevent serious violence offending and reoffending, including what assets are available to support with resettlement for prison leavers and people on probation.</li> </ul>

<b>PRIORITY: PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><b>Increase the effectiveness of partnerships at preventing/tackling serious violence, creating a system which fosters shared ownership, accountability, and mutually beneficial collaboration</b></p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Specified and relevant authorities feel included and understand their role, and the role of key stakeholders, in supporting those at risk of involvement in serious violence.</li> <li>• Partners demonstrate shared ownership, accountability, and collective responsibility in preventing serious violence.</li> </ul>


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners are aware of the funding landscape and assets across partnerships to deliver against serious violence strategic priorities, ensuring alignment of relevant funding streams.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners are demonstrating maturity in co-production, engaging key stakeholders and communities in the Serious Violence Duty programme, including co-design and delivery of strategy and intervention.</li> <li>Partners more effectively coordinate funding decisions and investments.</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved joint working, decision-making, and commissioning.</li> <li>Resources are targeted effectively, maximising impact, and reducing duplication.</li> <li>Improved co-commissioning arrangements, including longer-term pooling of resources and agreement to invest for the long-term.</li> </ul>
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will deliver against a shared vision, and collaborate to ensure that partners understand their role, and the role of others, in violence prevention, including a common understanding of what the local multi-agency approach is currently and what each organisation’s role within the collaboration is or can be.</li> <li>We will continue to work collaboratively with partners to target delivery of services, maximising co-commissioning opportunities, to achieve the priorities set out in the Duty Strategy and deliver shared outcomes. A key focus in the first phase of strategy mobilisation is to explore co-commissioning opportunities between partners to reinstate the local evidence-based practice of the Departure Lounge in HMP Liverpool.</li> <li>We will strive to develop serious violence and public health outcomes focussed funding models, prioritising making greater resources available for prevention, and reflecting this within grants and commissioning contracts to move beyond payment for activity to investment in longer-term population outcomes</li> <li>We will develop our understanding of the funding landscape to identify funding streams available across the partnership which can be used to resource serious violence prevention activity, highlighting where we can pool budgets, and where funding streams enable longer-term funding which is not restricted to financial year funding cycles.</li> </ul>


	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will develop a coordinated, regional approach to serious violence across Prisons and Probation, aligning partnership work across the Duty strategy and Regional Reducing Reoffending Plans. This is an area of specific focus as we understand there are a number of people held in prison locally who are from out of area, thus requiring us to further join up efforts at regional level.</li> </ul>
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<b>PRIORITY: PARTNERSHIPS</b>	
 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><b>Engage in critical reflection to challenge and support practice to act upon system learning more habitually, promoting continuous improvement in the multi-agency approach for communities at risk of, or affected by, serious violence.</b></p>
 <p>KPIs</p>	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners have a shared vision and are committed to actively engaging and sharing learning across the partnership.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Improved capacity for partners to share and act upon data and system learning more habitually.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Partners work together to enable cultural change and achieve a sustainable approach to tackling serious violence.</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>We will conduct an asset mapping assessment of strategic and operational serious violence prevention work to enable the partnership to facilitate a deeper understanding of the existing multi-agency response to serious violence at whole-system and intervention level, identifying gaps and opportunities to deliver improved outcomes. The output will be part of a broader iterative process of continual system learning which will be driven by the Tactical Oversight Group.</li> <li>We will collaborate to share learning and examples of good practice that other partners can adopt, which we will collate and present in the form of an iterative toolkit which will be regularly updated and published on the Police and Crime Commissioners website, supporting the partnership in sharing advice, expertise, and intervention awareness to address local serious violence issues.</li> </ul>




	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will continue to work closely with the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to develop system learning and sustainably embed a public health approach at whole-systems and intervention level, building on the evidence legacy from the work undertaken to date to inform and sustain ongoing violence prevention policy and activity.</li> <li>• We will build a shared understanding on current opportunities to evaluate and quality assure the impact of interventions, using our collective resources and expertise to support organisations to develop more robust evaluation of projects through applications to the Youth Endowment Fund and other local evaluation partner opportunities, and provide organisations with income generation support to sustainably resource initiatives.</li> <li>• We will work across the partnership to prepare for national HMICFRS inspections relating to serious violence, and review and act upon any recommendations and areas for improvement.</li> <li>• We will establish a multi-agency response structure and framework to support the whole system in preventing and responding to serious violence and emerging risk, empowering communities to sustain serious violence preventative activity.</li> </ul>
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**PRIORITY: PARTNERSHIPS**

 <p>STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES</p>	<p><b>Improve multi-agency data sharing and governance to enhance capacity and capability of the partnership in preventing and reducing serious violence related risk and harm.</b></p>
	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners have an increase understanding of the nature, extent, and impact of serious violence and related risk factors, using shared data and intelligence to identify support pathways and target resources.</li> <li>• Serious Violence analysts meet regularly.</li> </ul> <p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improved individual data capacity and capability to support partnership understanding of population and pathway needs.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Partners have a better understanding of population need and risks, population receives more appropriate referral and support.</li> <li>•</li> </ul> <p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Resources are targeted effectively, maximising impact, and reducing duplication.</li> <li>• Improved multi-agency data sharing with improved system-wide governance.</li> </ul>
 <p>STRATEGIC ACTIONS</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will establish a Serious Violence Analyst network, comprising of analysts from across Specified and Relevant Authorities, to enable us to support individual data capacity and capability and provide a 'one picture' of the truth.</li> <li>• We will establish a Data Protection / Information Governance Network among data leads in partner agencies to improve data sharing, providing reassurance on legislation and compliance around what can be shared, unblocking barriers, developing information and data sharing agreements to enable effective sharing of data.</li> <li>• We will continue to work across the partnership to improve the quantity and quality of data we collect, ensuring training is in place to support front line professionals in accurately recording serious violence offences and injuries within the definition set out in this strategy.</li> <li>• We will build our data capability across the partnership to improve joint working to identify populations and places most susceptible to serious violence, including identification of risk and protective factors operating at a local level, as well as to enable an effective flow of information and intelligence to support rehabilitation and resettlement planning for high-risk populations.</li> <li>• We will further develop our understanding of causal factors driving in-prison violence to inform resettlement and welfare services for prison leavers moving from custody to the community, and to mitigate the impact of in-prison violence on communities.</li> <li>• We will ensure processes and information sharing agreements are in place to facilitate the sharing of multi-agency data and information to inform the ongoing development of problem profiles and strategic needs assessments which we will use to inform resource allocation to maximise impact for communities.</li> <li>• In the long-term, we will work towards developing a system which enables us to track patients presenting to Emergency Departments, to develop an understanding of emerging and repeat risk</li> </ul>

	<p>and vulnerability, as well as to understand the impact of interventions on repeat victimisation and/or perpetration.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will support the development of the Violence and Injuries Dashboard being developed by the Integrated Care Board, to develop our understanding of violent injuries and associated population health risk factors. We will ensure that this complements and supports the work of the Trauma and Injury Intelligence Group Data Hub.</li> </ul>
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PRIORITY: PARTNERSHIPS	
 STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES	<p><b>Commit to ensuring trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership at all levels.</b></p>
 KPIs	<p><b>Short Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners demonstrate trauma informed awareness</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Medium Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All partners become trauma informed organisations, ensuring trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership at all levels so that staff can identify early indicators of trauma and adversity and prevent retraumatizing those who are most vulnerable.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Long Term</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Trauma informed practice is embedded across the partnership.</li> </ul>
 STRATEGIC ACTIONS	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• We will work embed trauma informed training across the workforce to ensure partners at all levels are trauma informed and embed trauma informed practice. To support this, we will undertake a review to identify which partners have undertaken appropriate training and enrol staff where gaps are identified.</li> <li>• We will develop multi-agency relationships and partnership working to embed a trauma informed approach across all partners, increasing access to a range of expertise for communities presenting with the most complex needs, developing an asset-based approach to community development.</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We will develop our understanding of neurodiversity in the criminal justice system, including understanding how neurodiversity may serve as a driving factor for vulnerability to serious violence, to establish how we can embed a cohesive offer across the partnership to minimise serious violence related risk and harm which is linked to neurodevelopmental needs.</li></ul>
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# Agenda Item 5

## **Understanding Impact**

The three key success measures for the prevention and reduction of serious violence, as mandated by the Home Office, are:

- A reduction in hospital admissions for assaults with a knife or sharp object.
- A reduction in knife and sharp object enabled serious violence recorded by the police; and
- Homicides recorded by the police.

Whilst the above measures provide valuable insight into the impact of policies, processes, and interventions on recorded offences and reported injuries, as you will see from the action plan above, we are keen to understand the wider impact that our partnership activity has on mitigating risk and harm caused by local serious violence issues.

In adhering to a public health framework, we are committed to embedding a long-term approach to the prevention and reduction of serious violence, and therefore whilst we acknowledge that there will be some impact in the short-term, we anticipate much of our impact to be over the medium to longer-term. However, we cannot underestimate the importance of reviewing short term measures to maximise longer-term outcomes. By understanding short term outputs, we are able to act quicker to positively impact longer-term change, using evidence on what works within our local context to adapt to changing risk and need.

## **Measuring Impact**

Whilst measuring impact against three key success measures is important, we are committed to understanding the lived experiences which sit behind the data to develop a holistic understanding of the effectiveness and efficacy of our partnership approach.

Our data tells us that serious violence is on a downward trend, however, we know that the harm and impact felt by our communities as a result of violent offending in public spaces is increasing. As such, we will ensure that whilst impact is measured through quantitative offence and injury data, we will place a strong emphasis on obtaining qualitative feedback from key stakeholders and communities regarding what's working, where it's working, and for whom.

Where possible, we will seek to develop processes and systems to enable tracking over the longer-term, to identify where preventative action has realised positive outcomes for populations through reduced risk and harm, as well as reducing future economic burdens by investing to save. This will also enable us to develop a solid performance framework, which looks at implementation and impact indicators, to create a clear understanding of the key contextual factors working to create the intended impact, and how we can adapt to embed long-term financial and cultural sustainability to serious violence prevention work.



## **What have we done so far?**

As a region, we are relentless in our commitment to preventing and tackling serious violence, to minimise the harm caused to individuals, families, and the wider community.

Prevention is at the core of our approach, and we are steadfast in embedding a public health approach to tackling serious violence, investing in processes and interventions which seek to **prevent serious violence from happening altogether**.

Working in a preventative way enables us to work together in partnership to understand and address risk and protective factors which make populations and places more susceptible to serious violence, and over the past few years we have collectively supported a cultural shift towards being proactive instead of reactive – “There comes a point where we need to stop just pulling people out of the river. We need to go upstream to find out why they are falling in”.

To embed whole systems, change, this has required the commitment from partners at the most senior level, ensuring that prevention underpins and guides the partnership response to serious violence at a hyper-local level. It also requires strong co-production with communities to ensure that work on prevention and reduction is sustainable and responsive to local needs, concerns, and aspirations, supporting communities to deliver interventions and their own serious violence work which is well-resourced and valued.

Locally, we have seen some powerful examples of partners working together to prevent and reduce serious violence within a public health framework, as set out below, with examples of participatory approaches which actively involve community members in the design, delivery, and evaluation of serious violence prevention work. However, we recognise that this is only the start, and we are committed to continuing a positive trajectory to influence whole system change to support the implementation and embedding of a public health approach to violence prevention.

From investing in our staff to ensure that they have the right training, skills, and working environment to embed long-term public health approaches, to creating meaningful and impactful opportunities for co-production with communities, as well as developing a robust evidence base to inform preventative policy and activity, we will continue to empower partners and communities to have direct involvement in key decisions which impact them and which they care about.

There is no doubt that we can more effectively prevent and reduce serious violence by working together, pooling our collective knowledge and expertise to respond to local need, demand and vulnerability – bolstering community cohesion and increasing feelings of safety.

## **Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership**

Merseyside is one of several areas allocated funding by the Home Office since 2019 to establish a multi-agency violence reduction unit. Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership (MVRP) aims to take a whole system public health approach to prevention

# Agenda Item 5

that complements existing multi-agency partnerships and brings together partners to develop a coordinated approach to tackle the root causes of violence. The MVRP provides strategic leadership on the public health approach to violence in Merseyside through policy, practice, and targeted communication. MVRP also funds a suite of primary, secondary, and tertiary interventions to prevent violence with a focus on early intervention, life course, place-based, and community led approaches. MVRP works across five priority areas: early years, education, health, whole-family approaches and preventing offending.

## **Trauma Informed Training**

Trauma is a global public health crisis according to the Centre for Disease Control and its prevention and should therefore be a priority for everyone. Being 'Trauma Informed' requires an understanding that different life experiences that shape the options available to us and our way of being and we can use this understanding to influence our interactions and decisions, both in work and in our daily life.

The Merseyside's Violence Reduction Partnership have developed (and evaluated) a multi-agency in-person training package to support Public Services in embedding Trauma Informed Practice. These trauma informed training sessions are being run across all 5 boroughs in Merseyside, with a focus on supporting public and third sector organisations to understand how psychological trauma can impact individuals. This in turn provides mechanisms as to how they can support individuals they come into contact with, whilst also ensuring that they consider the implications for their individual services.

Training takes place over 4 separate sessions and on consecutive weeks, with an emphasis on a multi-agency approach. Over these four sessions, practitioners gain an understanding of the neuroscience as to how individuals learn and develop, providing them with tools to best meet the needs of individuals and their communities. With a focus on the neuroscience of how we learn, the rationale is clear regarding the delivery of training over a number of sessions, practitioners learn then practice the techniques provided, thus embedding the Trauma Informed principles. Practitioners feel empowered to support their clients in the most appropriate manner and also to deliver change across their organisations.

'To promote a culture embedding the Trauma Informed Principles, we need to develop a multi-faceted response with the 6 Trauma Principles at the core. Organisations don't change behaviour, people do. We need to create a sense of Awareness, Desire, Knowledge, Ability and Reinforcement'. (Hiatt et al 2006).

## **Merseyside Police Preventative Policing Strand.**

In 2021, Merseyside Police invested in a new Prevention Strand which brings together a number of key teams including the Community Engagement Unit, a new Rural Wildlife and Heritage team, the Early Help team, and the Missing Persons Unit, as well as a Prevention Hub, to help officers and staff deliver prevention across Merseyside. This strand has instilled a whole force approach to prevention through shared responsibility and collaborative effort and bolstered two-way engagement with communities to encourage community involvement in local policing activity. Not only

has this strand helped to reduce harm and offending, it has also created the conditions for partners to work together identify people and places of highest demand, ensuring effective problem solving approaches and interventions are implemented to address risk and protective factors in populations and places.

## **Safer Schools Officers**

Merseyside Police Safer Schools Team work with schools to keep young people safe. Every day Safer Schools Officers are interacting and engaging with the young people of Merseyside in non-police related environment. They provide safeguarding and pastoral support, as well as personal, social and health education. They help to tackle truancy and instances of bullying, creating, and maintaining positive relationships with the school and young people. Safer Schools Officers also assist in early identification and support for victims and vulnerable individuals, working with schools and partners to improve outcomes for all, intervening early to prevent unnecessary criminalisation.

## **Operation Interface**

A co-ordination cell that enhances police activity across the force relating to 3 distinct areas of Policing; Project Medusa, which focuses on County Lines drug activity and associated vulnerabilities; Project Adder, working across partnerships, ensuring more people are signposted to drug treatment providers and Operation Target, providing a focus on preventing serious violence and knife crime, affecting young people.

## **Operation Blue**

Enhanced approach to Test Purchase operations focusing on preventing the sale of knives / weapons to underage individuals.

## **Evolve – Clear, Hold, Build**

Merseyside Police is rolling out a multi-agency partnership tactic called Clear, Hold, Build, which has been designed and part-funded by the Home Office to rescue and regenerate areas most affected by serious and organised crime.

The three-phase initiative, known locally as EVOLVE, uses a combination of targeted high-visibility police operations and covert policing tactics alongside activity from partners and input from residents to protect our communities and prevent organised crime groups from operating.

## **What?**

The strategy sees police ruthlessly pursue gang members using all available powers and tactics to clear an area; continue activity to hold the location, so another gang can't take control in the vacuum; and then work with residents and partners to build the

# Agenda Item 5

community into a more prosperous area where people would love to live, work and visit and one less susceptible to being exploited by organised crime groups.

## **Where?**

EVOLVE projects are taking place in areas of Wirral, Liverpool, Knowsley and Sefton.

## **When?**

This is a long-term project and work will be continuous.

## **Why?**

Implementing this holistic approach will make it more difficult for organised crime groups to operate. It will disrupt their activity and their incomes, and will help to protect those living, visiting and working in Merseyside. It will also assist those vulnerable to manipulation by gangs. By working together and listening to residents' needs, EVOLVE will regenerate areas blighted by serious and organised crime and will allow residents to reclaim their communities, building long-term resilience against organised crime groups and help prevent future threats to safety.

## **How?**

Partners will work closely to share information and identify hot spots that need regeneration as well as targeted activity to remove and disrupt organised crime groups. In addition, partners will provide advice and services, in particular to those in need of assistance who may struggle to access help. Areas that will be focussed on include: the living, working and recreational environment for residents, opportunities for young people, help with employment, assistance to access funding, health issues, crime prevention and security advice.

Events will also be held with community groups that will provide opportunities for input from residents to determine how partners can best help and support communities.

## **Who?**

Partners involved in EVOLVE include Merseyside Police, Merseyside's Police and Crime Commissioner, local councils, Merseyside Fire and Rescue, housing associations, health services, schools, colleges, local businesses, community groups and residents.

## **SAFE Taskforce – Liverpool**

SAFE stands for Support, Attend, Fulfil, Exceed. The SAFE Taskforce is a group of mainstream secondary schools working together with other multi-agency structures and local experts to support young people at risk of serious violence and re-engage them in their education. The interventions will help:

**Support** young people with challenging behaviour.

**Attend** school regularly.

**Fulfil** their potential.

**Exceed** their expectations.

The Department for Education has allocated £3.7 million of funding over a 3-year period for the Taskforce to invest in, and commission school focused interventions to reduce involvement in serious violence and improve attendance at school. It will also help with behaviour in school and within the community and improve social and emotional regulation and wellbeing.

**Intervention 1 – SAFE Workers:** The implementation of SAFE workers in 11 schools who will provide 1-1 mentoring and support to the referred young person, working both in and out of school with the pupil and their family for a period of around 6 months.

**Intervention 2 – Data Sharing Hub:** The building of a data-sharing hub that will bring together information from multiple agencies that work with families and young people across the city. The information will include schools, social services, family support and police.

**Intervention 3 – ELSA:** The implementation of Emotional Literacy Support Assistants (ELSAs) in schools and training school staff in trauma-informed practice.

**Intervention 4 – Cognitive Behavioural Approaches through Sport:** The intervention involves 13 schools and offers a 12-week engagement programme for selected pupils to explore 'Choice Theory' and cognitive behavioural approaches through Sports sessions delivered by Liverpool School Sports Partnership Foundation. These engagement sessions will then lead to an extra-curricular offer including signposting to community sport plus an expedition.

**Intervention 5 – Girls Out Loud:** A 4-session programme to girls exploring the following key areas: Social Media & Me, Friendship Fix, Mental Health and Choices & Consequences.

**Intervention 6 – Speech & Language Therapy Training:** A training programme for school SENCOs delivered by Speech & Language Therapists from Alder Hey. The SENCOs will follow an 11–16-year-old specific programme and can opt to work towards the ELKLAN accreditation.

# Agenda Item 5

## **Date for review/annual review mechanism**

This Strategy document will be reviewed annually, with the next review due by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2025.

Progress of this strategy, the objectives set out within it and the local action plan, will be reviewed at least quarterly through the Merseyside Strategic Policing and Partnership Board and Serious Violence Duty Tactical Oversight Group.

## **Summary of Annual Assessment of Progress**

This section will be applicable 12 months after the local Strategy is produced and will provide a summary of the annual assessment of the partnership's performance against the previous years' strategy.

Format to be as follows: 'Year 1 Actions – What has been achieved – What has been the impact? E.g., using performance monitoring report outputs/outcomes, consultation feedback etc., - Year 2 Actions e.g., what are our learning points, what are we going to build on and how are we going to do that?'

# Agenda Item 6

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview & Scrutiny Committee	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 January 2023
<b>Subject:</b>	A Cultural Strategy for Sefton		
<b>Report of:</b>	Locality Team Manager, Communities Dept.	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member - Cllr. Hardy (Communities & Housing)		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

A steering group comprising Council officers, and representatives from the creative and voluntary sector, has been working towards the development of a Cultural Strategy for Sefton.

A draft strategy document has been prepared using the evidence base from consultation and engagement activity.

Further engagement between January to March 2024 is proposed to develop an Action Plan, with objectives for delivery between 2024 and 2030. This will be co-produced between the Council and wider representation from cultural stakeholders.

Once the Action Plan is completed any outstanding elements of the strategy document will be finalised, leading to the publication of a final strategy from which the activities will commence.

## Recommendation(s):

(1) That the committee notes the progress towards the development of the Cultural Strategy for Sefton

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To progress with the Action Plan January to March 2024 that will complete the Cultural Strategy.

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

N/A

# Agenda Item 6

**What will it cost and how will it be financed?**

**(A) Revenue Costs**

N/A

**(B) Capital Costs**

N/A

**Implications of the Proposals:**

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
<b>Equality Implications:</b>  There are no equality implications.	
<b>Impact on Children and Young People: Yes</b>  The strategy will have a positive impact on Children & Young People in supporting opportunities for cultural engagement.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>  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

**Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:**

Protect the most vulnerable: the promotion of positive cultural interventions and their benefits for healthy living will support people at risk of cultural exclusion
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: targeted cultural opportunities will promote social inclusion and celebrate community identity
Commission, broker and provide core services: not applicable
Place – leadership and influencer: the proposals will promote cultural opportunity as an



influential element in the development of Regenerated Places
Drivers of change and reform: not applicable
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: not applicable
Greater income for social investment: not applicable
Cleaner Greener: not applicable

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7486) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5586) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

To date, the development of the strategy has included the following consultation & engagement activity:

An online public survey via the *Your Sefton Your Say* portal – 444 responses. It should be noted that over half of the responses came from the north of Sefton and there would be value to continuing further engagement in the south of the borough.

Interviews with key stakeholders – 32 interviews including Council representation, higher education, public sector representatives, culture sector governance, funding bodies, and local cultural organisations

Culture and community sector workshops – 50 participants from local community and cultural organisations. This cohort would provide the basis for developing a recommended Cultural Partnership, ensuring that Sefton artists and cultural groups are engaged in our development activity towards Borough of Culture and beyond.

Children & Young People engagement – engagement took place with Sefton's Young Advisors, and other youth groups such as the Atkinson's Young Curators, MYA SPACE and YKids. Ongoing engagement with young people is recommended to ensure their voice is included in our cultural planning.

Minority Voices – responses were received from MENCAP, Sefton Access for Everyone (SAFE), Southport African Caribbean Heritage Association (SACHA) and the Sefton Partnership for Older People. It is proposed that further discussions are held to gain wider participation in ongoing planning.

## Implementation Date for the Decision

Immediately following the Committee.

# Agenda Item 6

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark Snaylam
Telephone Number:	07718195545
Email Address:	mark.snaylam@sefton.gov.uk

## **Appendices:**

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- 1) Draft Culture Strategy document
- 2) Culture Strategy Appendices

## **Background Papers:**

There are no background papers available for inspection.

### **1. Introduction/Background**

Sefton Council with Sefton Culture Steering Group are developing a new cultural strategy for the Borough. The strategy will be aligned to wider Sefton partnerships and articulate the positive ways in which cultural engagement can help the Borough achieve its Vision for Year 2030. The strategy will reflect the cultural context for Sefton and will respond to wider local needs. The strategy will be a key step in Sefton's planning towards LCR Borough of Culture celebration in 2025.

The purpose of the Strategy is to:

- Develop a shared vision for culture in Sefton.
- Support development of the local infrastructure for culture and creative engagement.
- Strengthen relationships between Sefton and the wider professional sector for culture and creativity.
- Reveal, celebrate and promote opportunities for cultural and creative participation across the Borough.
- Provide a strategic context in support of stakeholder bids for external funding.

### **Consultation support**

Support for the strategy development has been externally funded via Shared Prosperity Fund. A full procurement exercise was undertaken to appoint consultant support, with Counterculture LLP the successful candidate. They are an Arts Council approved Consultant for Change.

The steering group provided a wide range of information and mapping as significant background material for Counterculture's analysis. The consultants' research features analysis of Sefton's economic profile including culture and creative sector, audience profiling, asset mapping and policy context.

### **Consultation & engagement**

A summary of the consultation & engagement activity to date is itemised above and within the Strategy document.

# Agenda Item 6

Further engagement between January to March 2024 is proposed to develop an Action Plan, with objectives for delivery between 2024 and 2030. This will be co-produced between the Council and wider representation from cultural stakeholders.

This will lead to the publication of a final strategy from which the activities will commence.

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## SEFTON CULTURAL STRATEGY

### CONTENTS

**FOREWORDS** – Cabinet Member, Chief Executive and Steering Group – to follow

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY** – to follow

#### **1.1 INTRODUCTION**

1.2 What is Culture?

1.3 Why Do We Need A Cultural Strategy?

1.4 Why now?

1.5 Research and Consultation

#### **2.0 FINDINGS & INSIGHTS**

2.1 Place and Time

2.2 Spaces and Places

2.3 Creative People and Organisations

2.4 Taking Part in Culture

2.5 Cultural Ecology

2.6 Cultural Funding

2.7 SWOT Analysis

#### **3.0 STRATEGY**

3.1 Aims and action areas:

- Culture Leads
- Creativity Everywhere
- Creativity Thrives
- Dynamic Landscape
- Children and Young People

## 3.2 Roles

- Council
- Cultural Partnership

## 3.3 Next Steps [to follow] :-

- Continued Consultation;
- Cultural Partnership
- Visioning
- Action and Investment Plan;
- Borough of Culture

## **ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS** – to follow

- Names of Steering Group
- Other important info/people etc

## 1.1 Introduction

In 2021, as Sefton began to emerge from the Covid19 pandemic, Sefton's Elected Members were invited to share examples of creative and cultural activity happening in their wards. Each conversation leading to another, revealed Sefton's lively - but largely hidden - creative life.

Self-organised, place-focussed, imaginative cultural activity is being made in community hubs, by groups of neighbours, gardeners, cultural groups, visual artists, theatre-makers, composers, performers, authors, crafters and organisers. All are responding creatively and making things happen in their neighbourhoods in different ways. A snapshot includes:

- an outstanding symphonic wind orchestra in Maghull
- RHS award-winning community horticulture in Bootle
- craft groups decorating Formby's alleyways
- passionate local heritage research in every township
- innovative inter-generational performing arts, led by young people
- community rock choirs and guitar groups
- an outdoor arts Viking Festival
- online clowning and puppetry with Japanese artists and older participants from across Sefton based in Ainsdale
- a contemporary circus and visual arts studio in Bootle Strand

A Cultural Strategy Steering Group, comprising council, creative and voluntary sector representatives, was formed with the purpose of shaping a new Sefton Cultural Strategy that would nurture this groundswell of diverse creative activity and bring together this community-led culture with the major regeneration opportunities.

## 1.2 What is culture?

Culture and creativity, of course, mean different things to different people.

For the purposes of the consultation the terms culture and creativity were defined as:

- the arts - art & crafts, music, drama, film, dance, literature, digital media
- heritage, built environment and natural environment
- sport in terms of its role in events, social identity and heritage

## 1.3 Why do we need a cultural strategy?

In the public survey, residents were asked to describe culture in Sefton in 3 words.

Replies suggested many positive concepts, including the diversity and variety of Sefton's community-led offer, and the natural landscape.

Green, vibrant, varied  
Variety, inspiring, entertaining  
Unique, eclectic, stimulating  
Diverse, enjoyable, historic  
Varied, artistic, welcoming  
Great natural areas  
Coastal, community, varied  
Attractive, interesting, stimulating  
Community-driven offer  
Healthy, happy living

Other responses highlighted issues around awareness, ambition and focus.

No cohesive advertising  
Needs more oomph  
Hard to find  
Under the radar  
Aims too low  
All about Southport  
Low cost, low priority, badly advertised  
Lacking, disappointing, uninspiring  
Hidden, parochial, limited  
Underfunded, narrow, unfocused  
Limited, narrow, unambitious  
Dance is invisible  
Not enough music  
More arts please  
Not inclusive enough

This suggests the challenges in participation in cultural life for local residents, cultural audiences and creative people around cohesion, ambition, inclusion and communication.

A cultural strategy is needed to provide a shared vision and a clear plan for everyone engaged in the cultural life of Sefton, that will address these and other challenges.



## 1.4 Why now?

Sefton's **Vision for 2030** consists of 8 shared aspirations that will create a confident and connected Borough in which culture and creativity has a clear and vital role to play.

Key within this is the aspiration for Sefton to be “known for its cultural scene”, a vital part of making this a desirable place to live. With 46% participation - lowest third in UK; lack of visibility for local creatives, and little available for young people (including older young people) there are few “scenes” to tap and much development needed to achieve this goal. In terms of “something for everyone” there is a wide gap between large-scale events and small group activities (at both of which Sefton excels) in engaging our community in culture. The role of culture in Sefton is also underutilised in relation to sustainability, community cohesion and wellbeing.

A Cultural Strategy is needed to harness this potential and make clear progress against a timeline set out by this vision. Evaluation of Sefton's Borough of Culture in 2020 highlighted the need for a place-based strategy and clear governance, for more effective delivery and enhanced place-making.

Since then, Sefton has secured investment for major regeneration projects with cultural delivery and opportunity at their core: once-in-a-lifetime investments that will have huge long term impact and enable unparalleled change.

There is an opportunity to create richer cultural lives for all of Sefton's communities. Sefton's Year as Borough of Culture in 2025 will provide the ideal catalyst.

## 1.5 Research and Consultation

Sefton Council appointed CounterCulture PLC in June 2023 to conduct research and consultation to build on this informal knowledge and bring together an Evidence Base to which a Cultural Strategy could respond.

This included:

- Desk Review of key local and national policy, strategy and cultural trends
- 32 in-depth interviews with key stakeholders including Council officers and elected members, HE, public sector representatives, funding bodies, cultural and community organisations.
- 3 Culture and Community Sector Workshops, involving a total of 50 participants
- Children & Young People's consultation including a short online survey and conversations with Children & YP groups.
- A short survey aimed at key inclusion organisations and groups

In addition, an online public survey was distributed via the *Your Sefton Your Say* portal, with 444 responses. Together with community intelligence, local knowledge and stakeholder opinion, this forms a robust Evidence Base of research and consultation data on which to base a strategic response [Appendix].

# Agenda Item 6

Sefton Cultural Strategy – Revised Draft 15/12/2023

However, the Steering Group felt the Children and Young People’s consultation did not achieve the level of engagement or quality of data necessary for the strategy to fully reflect the wants and needs of local young people under this key area of action. Children and Young People’s voice must be at the centre of the next stages of development and delivery of the Strategy.

**For Findings and Insights**            **go to page 7**

**For Strategy**                            **go to page 27**

**For next steps**                        **go to p 32 [to follow]**

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## 2.0 FINDINGS/INSIGHTS

Findings and insights drawn from the data are organised under six headings:

- Place and Time: which sets out the immediate local context
- Cultural Assets: places, spaces, collections and archives
- Creative People: the people who make culture
- Taking Part In Culture: audiences
- Cultural Ecology: the relationships between these elements
- A concluding SWOT analysis draws together the key findings in summary

### 2.1 Place and time

#### 2.1.1 Many Places

95% of Sefton's 276k residents live in urban and suburban locations:

- Bootle, Seaforth & Litherland and Netherton in the South;
- Crosby, Hightown and Formby in the centre;
- Aintree and Maghull to the East
- the Victorian resort town of Southport and its surrounding suburbs in the North.
- Villages like Lunt and Sefton pepper outlying semi-rural areas.

Each place has its own distinct character and neighbourhood culture, with very different histories, identities, demographics, spaces, geography and amenities coming into play. Many townships sit on a linear route that hugs the coastline, but connectivity between places, especially between the East and North, and to and from rural areas, is difficult, and these parts of the borough do not share this sense of coastal identity.

The “many-centred-ness” or “polycentricity” strongly influences what is available for local people to take part in. This isn't unique to Sefton, but it is very striking, especially in determining what people identify as their community, which tends to be hyperlocal, rather than “Sefton”.

In a place made up of many places, that is distinguished by lots of people doing small things, there is opportunity to develop high quality neighbourhood cultural offers. However, what is on offer can become diffuse and difficult to navigate. The challenge is to create shared focus, and a mechanism for collaboration, to bring this together as more than the sum of its parts.

## 2.1.2 Sefton is a Borough of Contrasts

Sefton is a Borough of Contrasts not only in landscape and character.

Significant inequalities pervade. In some areas, clustered in the South of the Borough and in Southport, people face challenges around income, employment, housing, education and quality of life. Some neighbourhoods are in the 1-10% most deprived in the UK. In 2019, Sefton ranked 89 out of 317 for the most deprived English local authorities (1 being most deprived).

[ONS Indices of Deprivation 2019]

The widest gap in life expectancy in any local authority in the North West is found between the most and least affluent communities in Sefton. (14.1 years males / 12.3 years females)

In 2020/21 almost one in six Sefton children lived in relative poverty: 1 in 6 nursery and primary school age pupils; 1 in 5 secondary schools age pupils and almost half of pupils attending special educational needs schools were receiving free school meals. In our lowest-income communities there is a significant education attainment gap, which begins in early years but most evident at Key Stage 4 (lowest 1/3 local authorities).

[The Education Policy Institute, 2020, *Child Poverty Strategy*]

There is a significant role for Culture in the work needed to address these inequalities by improving life chances, quality of life and health and wellbeing. This is well documented and clearly recognised by the voluntary sector. There is opportunity to bolster good work, increase its impact and develop new initiatives through joined-up working, and by more effectively embedding culture into key council strategies.

## 2.1.3 Orbit of Liverpool

Sefton borders Liverpool at Bank Hall/Bootle, with Aintree to the east merging into Liverpool suburbs. The vibrancy of the city - and ease of reaching it by train for leisure or work - is part of what makes Sefton an attractive place to live.

At the same time, local cultural life can be overshadowed by the sheer combined heft of Liverpool's arts institutions. Talent and energy can be consumed by the bigger cultural players. Local work, outside of institutions, can be seen as lower quality or status. Things that happen in Sefton are often perceived to belong to the city.

The challenge is to turn this proximity to Sefton's advantage by:

- working in equitable partnership with leading cultural organisations to widen opportunities for Sefton communities and creatives
- taking a seat at the table with city region partners
- taking the lead where Sefton is best placed to do so

## 2.1.4 Changing cultural ecology

Significant new capital infrastructure is being developed that will create a huge shift in cultural capacity in terms of space and scale.

The **Southport Town Plan** will radically develop Southport's cultural and digital infrastructure. The centrepiece is the new Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC) which includes the 'Light Fantastic' water, light and sound show in the adjacent Marine Lake, unique in the region:

- £37.5 million Town Deal Funding
- £19.7 million Council Investment
- projected 500,000 visitors to the local area
- £18 million to the local economy annually

### In Bootle:

- £20 million Levelling Up Funding secured to progress the transformation of Bootle town centre
- Area Action Plan to realise long-term vision for town
- Public consultation is underway to embed creativity and education in the redevelopment of the Strand
- Salt & Tar events space on Bootle canal-side piloted its first comedy and music weekenders. A diverse music offer drew local, regional and international audiences. 6,000 tickets sold for the music festival produced in partnership with Sound City
- Investment in the venue is supporting collaboration with Bootle community and cultural organisations

### Pipeline development:

- A coalitional approach developed to create change in the Poet's Streets neighbourhood, led by Housing Associations
- Growing out of its creative enterprise hub, SAFE Regeneration's scheme for mixed-use development adjacent to the canal has creative community at its core

These are major shifts in the cultural capacity of our biggest towns Southport and Bootle. There will be significant opportunity, and perhaps also challenge, to use these spaces to:

- welcome local people, who may have low incomes
- utilise co-production in programming
- create opportunity for local artists and creative organisations
- support the talent/employment pathway for local young people
- ensure that all Sefton's people benefit
- create new opportunities for the future role of the Atkinson

## 2.2 Spaces and Places for Culture

### 2.2.1 Cultural Buildings

Sefton has a number of eminent cultural buildings and spaces including both civic and community-owned spaces, with two major new assets in development. Events and participatory activities happen in community-owned spaces including music in pubs, bars and school and church venues.

But dedicated buildings and spaces for creative activity are limited and unevenly spread. This is a major factor affecting local cultural capacity in key areas:

- There is limited range of regular, visible cultural offers for local audiences
- Some places lack a space that offers civic or cultural focus
- Individual artists can become isolated due to lack of workspace: proximity to other creatives generates opportunity, collaboration and capacity
- Creatives and groups have difficulties in finding spaces to both make and present work
- Spaces that are available can present issues with location, accessibility, infrastructure, technical support and cost
- Pop up and ‘meanwhile’ spaces create vibrancy but lack longevity - talent and audiences nurtured need to be retained, and mobilising spaces is resource intensive
- Significant gaps include rehearsal and performance spaces, production facilities, artists studios and making spaces
- A gap exists for a midscale music venue

### 2.2.2 Heritage

Local heritage and history are popular hooks for many of the audiences living in Sefton. This is reflected in the public survey as one of the areas where people wanted to see more and better future cultural delivery.

*“Let’s celebrate our local cultural history and how it translates into the present.”*

Sefton’s 585 listed buildings, 13 scheduled monuments and 5 registered historic parks inspire people to participate in heritage walks, talks, digital research and exhibitions.

Extraordinary Heritage Buildings include:

- Bootle Town Hall (Grade II listed)
- Southport Pier
- Southport Town Hall (circa 1850)
- Lord Street (early 19th Century)
- Plaza Cinema (1938)
- Old ChristChurch Waterloo (Grade II listed)
- Linacre Mission (late 19th Century)

The local history archive at Crosby Library contains thousands of maps, photos, books, microfiche and cine film, and is under constant request for research access. These assets are a key source for revealing untold histories, inspiring creative responses to Sefton’s distinct and sometimes unconventional stories.

Work is needed to:

- develop the archive as a more public facing facility linked to participatory projects and volunteering
- explore difficult, unusual and hidden histories
- work with groups who do not usually engage with heritage
- create digitally and innovatively

### 2.2.3 Landscape and outdoor spaces

Sefton’s extraordinary coastline and green spaces are perhaps its strongest - and definitive - cultural asset:

- Coastline - significant and rare habitat, rich in human as well as natural history: neolithic footprint, Viking invasions, Victorian botany, tragic shipwrecks and sea rescue, civil aviation, world war stories
- Canal system through South and East of Borough, green lung in urban spaces and link to industrial past
- Parks, gardens and community green spaces are key sites for grassroots engagement and community stewardship

Landscape and green spaces are both site for cultural engagement and subject matter for creative practice and have hosted:

- Public Art of national significance Antony Gormley’s *Another Place* at Crosby Beach
- Community music festivals and outdoor theatre
- Major Events - Southport Flower Show, British Musical Fireworks Championship, Food & Drink Festivals

There is significant local appetite for more outdoor cultural activity and opportunity but access and programming must be designed around the need to safeguard and preserve the delicate ecosystem of the coast in particular.

The coastal context, too, makes visible the impact of climate change and drives home the necessity to ensure all local cultural programming is as “green” as it can be.

National context: Key local landowners National Trust and Canal & Rivers Trust are major partners or direct commissioners of cultural activity in other areas. Nationally, strategic agreements have been made to develop role of culture and natural environment (eg MOUs between Arts Council England and Forestry England/AONBs)

There is opportunity to develop a distinctive model of cultural programming that brings together culture, environment and wellbeing. This would:

- promote responsible use of the fragile environment
- enhance visitor experience out of season and lead footfall away from areas at risk
- increase young people's engagement, volunteering and "nature on prescription"
- enrich engagement through ambitious creative commissioning in response to the urgent themes the coast makes visible - migration, seasonal change and the climate emergency
- create a model of best practice to embed environmentally responsible event/festival production and creative programming across all sectors

## **2.3 Creative People and Organisations**

### **2.3.1 Professional Artists and Freelancers:**

Creatives and cultural producers living and working in Sefton include theatre-makers, visual artists, authors, poets, dancers, singers, classical and contemporary musicians, cultural educators, digital artists, film makers, heritage professionals, curators, directors, producers and technicians and other freelancers.

They are made up of:

- established creatives achieving international acclaim based in the Borough all their lives
- relocating or returning to the Borough
- employed full-time or part-time freelance, often with portfolio careers
- young creatives living at home whilst studying creative subjects at: Hugh Baird College (Bootle), Edge Hill (Ormskirk), Southport College, KGV (Southport) Runshaw College (Leyland) or Hope, LJMU and University of Liverpool
- young creatives studying elsewhere in the UK with potential to return to Borough

Unlike the borough's Everyday Creatives, these arts professionals tend to be less visible within local cultural life, often making work for audiences outside Sefton, with creative practices and networks focussed in Liverpool. Only 7 Arts Council England Developing Your Creative Practice (DYCP) grants have been awarded to local artists since 2021 (compared with 80 in Liverpool), which may indicate lack of traction in practices or careers, or insufficient skills/confidence in writing applications.

### **2.3.2 Creative Industries in Sefton**

Main sectors represented from research is based around technically driven digital businesses; film, TV and photography; publishing and architecture.

They are:

- are primarily micro businesses



- 2,500 workforce
- contribute over £90m to the economy annually

As with artists, the growth of activity in the Borough is affected by Liverpool's more established sector, supported incubators/workspaces/hubs/clusters. High Street regeneration projects will develop new alternative local hubs for Creative and Digital Industries (Southport's Enterprise Arcade, Bootle Strand).

### 2.3.3 Organisations

Sefton's **independent professional cultural organisations** include:

- music companies
- professional theatre companies
- community arts companies and social enterprises
- a community arts hub
- one established studio group
- youth arts organisations
- community-managed heritage buildings
- 2 community-owned independent cinemas

None of these organisations receive core funding. Stop/start resourcing through project grants hinders ambition and creative risk-taking. Economic conditions are currently particularly difficult for the creative sector.

Some arts companies are place-based, but others find more opportunity to produce their work outside the Borough. Few diverse-led organisations.

There is a gap for a larger-scale/funded professional performance producing company – and opportunity to host or incubate new theatre, live/outdoor arts or dance companies.

## 2.3.4 Sefton Council

The Atkinson is Sefton's principal centre for the arts and is one of the most visited cultural destinations in the region. Its museum celebrates the heritage of Sefton and attracts schools from across the North West to see the Mrs Goodison Egyptology collection. In addition to its outstanding collection of Victorian art, the exhibition programme regularly features work by contemporary artists such as Robert Mapplethorpe, Chila Burman and Gordon Cheung. Its performing arts programme hosts a comprehensive selection of music, comedy, theatre from both professional companies and local performing groups.

Sefton's six public libraries deliver an annual programme of activities based upon universal library offers for reading, digital inclusion, information, and health & wellbeing. Its programme for children & younger people features story & rhymetime sessions for literacy development and its Summer Reading Challenge continues to achieve some of the best participation levels in the North West. The local history service promotes its physical and digital archives through project work, publications and heritage talks. The At The Library programme is delivered in partnership with Rule of Threes and is now a designated National Portfolio Organisation with the Arts Council.

In addition to its food & beverage offer, Southport Market is steadily becoming a popular venue for cultural entertainment. It hosts live music, comedy, films, family and community activities.

**2.3.5 Liverpool-based cultural partners** frequently active in Sefton include Collective Encounters and NPOs Open Eye, Writing on The Wall, Liverpool Biennial and Sound City.

## 2.3.6 Voluntary, Community and Faith Sector

Sefton's VCF sector, in all its diversity, is well-positioned to be a key partner in cultural delivery:

- anchor organisations with serious cultural ambitions, working with professional artists, and using arts and creativity to deliver their core social impact work
- small community groups offering creative opportunities in their neighbourhoods
- civic societies and heritage groups

The VCF sector:

- recognises the relevance of arts and heritage activity to delivering social outcomes
- reaches some of the least-engaged and highest-need communities
- brings expertise in co-production bringing lived experience into service design
- is supported and networked through Sefton CVS

## **Collectively Sefton’s Creative People and Organisations reflected their priorities as:**

- a seat at the table
- improved spaces, and support to access them
- co-operative working, sharing of skills and networks
- structured talent development
- shared information platforms: cultural directory/ clash calendar/co-ordinated communications plan
- producing and commissioning opportunities: to be able to make new work
- practical specialist advice: funding, bid-writing, business support, mentorship, contracts
- advocacy - visibility and value of professional creatives, and creative practice

These kinds of organisations are essential to Sefton’s future cultural development and should be properly engaged and supported as equal partners. Building their collective capacity to respond to local need and opportunity; and to develop programmes that meet the appetites of local audiences is a priority.

There is opportunity to:

- support a shift from small project-based activity to collective and sustained cultural programming
- map and join up activity around artforms and audiences to support collective marketing and audience development; fill gaps and increase quality
- support and underpin the sector through continued precarious times
- support and advocate for good practice in fair pay for artists

## **2.4 Taking Part in Culture**

**2.4.1** According to the *2019 Taking Part* survey, Sefton’s cultural participation is 46%, within the lowest third of Local Authority areas for cultural engagement. footnote

Reasons for this will be varied and nuanced, but include:

- Survey responses include: Lack of awareness 45% Cost 35% Transport 19%
- Cost of Living impacts - the single biggest barrier across income brackets
- Relevance, quality and consistency of the cultural offer in the Borough
- Perception
- the appeal of public cultural programmes that are available in the Borough
- big calendar fixture events may not be affordable to many local people
- grass-roots activities focussed on specific interests
- Inconsistent “public programme” offer

## 2.4.2 Audiences

Audience segmentation shows that:

- Sefton households are mainly moderately or low-engaged, with broad tastes and preferences for heritage, mainstream and popular activities
- 35% of overall households' cultural engagement is likely to be driven by family-focussed activities
- the “average” hides the contrasts in cultural access & likelihood of engagement
- households in South Sefton and parts of Southport, where inequalities are severe, are least likely to be taking part
- this needs consideration in building the cultural offer equitably and effectively: low-cost, close-to-home offers will be key.
- pockets of highly-engaged households in other areas, with preferences for classical artforms, theatre and galleries

[Audience Agency, 2023, *Sefton Area Profile Report*]

Consultation showed that residents wanted:

- more outdoor arts and events, festivals, local history and music (“big names” and “cooler bands”)
- more ambitious programming, to raise audience expectations and create demand
- anchor council spaces - the Atkinson and Libraries - to be open for different/longer hours, to meet local need, working families and young people; and contribute to Southport’s weekend vibrancy

**“We need a more modern and forward-looking set of programming and projects to be the engine for culture, connection and community.”**

[Sefton Council, 2023, *Your Sefton Your Say Culture Strategy survey*]

There is opportunity to:

- build shared audience development strategies, requiring research, and consistent offers
- raise the level of ambition of what is available, utilising Borough of Culture
- increase participation through high quality neighbourhood programming, using assets including Libraries, VCF and independent arts organisations and on high streets (Sefton has one of the highest proportions of residents living near High Streets in the UK)
- use shared audience data to develop better understanding of who is engaged and who is not, borough-wide and hyper-locally

## 2.4.3 Visitor Economy

Within the Liverpool City Region Sefton is ranked 2nd after Liverpool in terms of visitor numbers. The value of tourism in Sefton is currently estimated at £594 million. In

2022, there were almost 7 million-day visitors to Sefton, with 770,000 visitors staying within the borough. This supported 6,111 Sefton jobs in the tourism sector.

[North West Research STEAM data 2022]

As well as coast and seaside town the visitor offer includes festivals, weekenders, sporting events and shows mostly outdoors. Sefton has a number of nationally and internationally important attractions, including :

- major international sporting events - Aintree Grand National; The 2026 Open Golf hosted at Royal Birkdale Club
- the Southport Flower and Air Shows, British Musical Fireworks at Victoria Park
- Antony Gormley's *Another Place* at Crosby Beach

The tourism strategy will be refreshed in 2025 presenting an opportunity for greater alignment of culture and visitor economy, as will the major regeneration projects in Bootle and Southport. This should lead to the development of a year-round offer with visitors staying longer in the borough.

### 2.4.4 Volunteering

Volunteering is a significant part of local cultural participation in Sefton and makes an essential contribution to local cultural life.

- there is “a culture of volunteering”, supported by Sefton CVS (SCVS)
- a large, structured programme supporting council provision within The Atkinson, Libraries Service and Green Sefton
- volunteering plays a vital part in sustainability of community cinemas, parks and green spaces, environmental groups and community arts activities.
- over-reliance on volunteering activity can limit the scope and scale of cultural provision, and may not be sustainable in under-resourced communities.

Sefton could build on this strength through collective work to:

- capture the scale and value of cultural volunteering in Sefton
- support volunteering by underrepresented communities
- further develop the role of volunteering in creative ageing
- improve training, progression routes and paid support/co-ordination
- ensure voluntary sector jobs and paid artist employment opportunities are not displaced by volunteering

### 2.4.5 Everyday Creativity

Distinct from Community Arts or CICs providing participatory activities, “Everyday Creativity” relates to creative activities that people do for their own enjoyment, alone or in self-organised groups. It can be a hobby, or a side-hustle, and can lead to or sit alongside professional creativity.

[Centre for Cultural Value, 2023, *Supporting Everyday Creativity*]

Consultation shows high levels of individual participation, from community opera to bedroom DJs, yarn-bombers to large scale, established amateur theatre and a huge number and variety of creative groups.

Their wants and needs include:

- access to spaces
- modest funding opportunity
- increasing members, especially those willing to be organisers
- skill development

There is opportunity to:

- support the capacity and increase the inclusivity of groups
- develop the role of Everyday Creativity in wellbeing, social prescribing and active ageing

## Widening Participation

### 2.4.6 Children and Young People

Children and young people and their cultural opportunities are universally confirmed as a high priority.

Young people's cultural assets include:

- a dedicated Youth Arts facility co-producing creative work with young people and professionals
- music studios based in schools
- core work in Libraries with Early Years, Children's Literacy and summer activities
- private dance, drama and musical theatre schools and music tuition
- Northern Morris dance groups
- brass bands
- partnership projects led by Curious Minds
- film education at community cinemas
- after-school arts clubs and groups
- VCF projects such as Bootle Children's Literary Festival delivering programming both in and out of school
- Sefton's music service is active across the Borough. Applications to deliver the Music Hub were in consideration at the time of writing
- Cultural and Creative FE and HE courses with links to universities

Young people stated that they value:

- coast and green spaces, festivals and libraries
- the role of culture in supporting their wellbeing and social skills
- sharing creative energy and experiences with others
- expanded horizons - meeting "professionals like writers and directors" and "people with different stories to tell"

and that they want:

- more places to go - creative social spaces
- more face-to-face, offline social interaction
- more evening activities for late teens aged 15-18
- culture to be affordable for young people and families

For aspiring Young Creatives, the talent pipeline goes cold after Further/Higher Education, and they need:

- guidance and support to access employment opportunities in the creative industries.
- apprenticeships, placements and mentoring
- direct access to artists as role models and as sharers of practice

“There are not many places for young people to go which drives them to the streets. We are sometimes asked to leave early if we are not with an adult  
“ I wanted to be a dancer / choreographer but when I graduated it just felt too competitive – if I’d had more career guidance or mentoring I may have continued.”

This is a challenging starting point. Years of enforced austerity has whittled down youth provision; schools find it harder to deliver cultural education; families cannot afford the cultural treats that used to be calendar fixtures; young people feel set adrift on leaving FE/HE. Sefton’s educational attainment gap is significant: cultural access and cultural education have been proven to bridge this. Without large cultural venues, to underpin a strategy to support Cultural Education Sefton will need a different new local approach.

opportunities include:

- building on existing cultural apprenticeship programmes, to make it possible for more young people to begin and establish creative careers in Sefton
- new and expanded partnerships with the NHS, Early Years and Voluntary sector
- working with existing cultural spaces increase their relevance and appeal to young people and supporting youth-led activities within them
- enabling young people to take the lead in designing the models of cultural programming that will best meet their needs
- investing in Sefton’s LCEP, which has a wide membership and vision but requires resourcing to be able to achieve its ambition
- supporting joined-up, borough-wide thematic programming to address key focus areas

New strands of work could include:

- targeted programmes to train, develop and sustain local professional artists and creatives in work with young people, and in schools
- working with youth service and voluntary sector partners to create new youth led spaces and commissioning opportunities for artists to work with young people within communities

# Agenda Item 6

Sefton Cultural Strategy – Revised Draft 15/12/2023

Further consultation with children and young people is planned to co-produce the specific action plans related to this area of work.

## 2.4.7 Creative Ageing

24% of Sefton residents are aged 65+ (ranked 24th out of 309 local authorities).

Cultural engagement can support one of the key priorities for ageing well, which aspires for: Older people will stay active, connected and involved by being part of strong communities in which they are important.

[Sefton Health & Wellbeing Board, 2020, *Sefton Health & Wellbeing Strategy: Living Well in Sefton 2020-25*]

Consultation revealed that for many people post-pandemic re-engagement has not been realised, with prevailing apprehension around leaving the security of the home environment. A significant number of older people are also carers. Many are at risk of social isolation.

Need for:

- clear information about Covid safety
- participants to feel that cultural participation is available to them, including targeted outreach
- physically accessible and dementia-friendly venues and activities
- in some communities free and low-cost activity

Opportunities include:

- Developing and supporting meaningful volunteering programmes
- Opportunities for older artists who may not have pension security to be able to practise and continue to earn a living beyond conventional retirement age

## 2.4.8 Arts and Health

23% of the Borough's residents identify as having a disability or chronic poor health.

[Sefton Council, 2023, *Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Health*]

Cultural engagement has a significant role to play in tackling the challenges presented by health inequalities in the Borough. Living Well Sefton works with community and cultural organisations to support and fund small project activity to promote mental wellbeing. A number of creative programmes, such as shared reading across the borough offer light touch early intervention and prevention, and signposting. MerseyCare's Life Rooms in Bootle and Southport runs regular creative courses in support of better mental health.

Social prescribing is supported by initiatives such as Active Sefton, Living Well Sefton, Brighter Living Partnership, May Logan Centre and Netherton Feelgood Factory. Link-workers operate in partnership with GP practices by connecting people to cultural activity in their communities – horticulture, reading groups, arts & crafts. There is a



need to ensure that the organisations, often small, delivering the activities are sustainable, and have capacity to meet increasing demand and expectations.

The new NHS Merseyside and Cheshire Integrated Care Board, creates an opportunity for strategic working with the Place lead for Sefton to integrate the role of culture across co-ordinated services planning.

## 2.4.8 Underrepresented Communities

Global Majority, sanctuary-seeking, LGBTQI and disabled communities are under-represented as both creatives and audiences in Sefton's cultural life. Whilst consultation highlighted libraries as safe spaces for learning and participation, perhaps as a consequence of consistent, targeted work, more work is needed to increase representation in mainstream cultural spaces .

22% (61,134) of Sefton residents identify as disabled (19% in the North West and 17% in England).

[Sefton Council, 2023, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment / Health]

Sefton has a low proportion of residents from minority ethnic groups, with 95% of the population being White British, higher than rates seen across Liverpool City Region 92%, the North West 87% and England 79% (9.8%)

[Sefton Council, 2021, People & Place Profile]

Groups are heavily reliant on volunteers, and as with wider sector need development support. Groups voiced the need to to travel to Liverpool to meet day-to-day their cultural needs. 87% of LGBTQ+ respondents felt there were few places where they can socialise and meet people like themselves.

[Sefton Council, 2023, *Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-2027: A Borough for Everyone*]

opportunities could include:

- targeted participation, training and skills development opportunities
- interventions to support increased visibility and inclusion in creative spaces and programmes
- developing cultural offers that ensure people from all backgrounds see themselves in programming, year-round
- consistent year-round co-produced representation in programming :not limited to special events for national calendar moments

## 2.5 Cultural Ecology

“An ecological approach concentrates on relationships and patterns within the overall system, showing how careers develop, ideas transfer, money flows, and product and content move, to and fro, around and between the funded, homemade and commercial subsectors. Culture is an organism not a mechanism”  
John Holden *Ecology of Culture, 2014*

A cultural ecology analysis describes the connections and relationships between different elements of cultural life. John Holden describes four different functions that are needed for culture to thrive in any place.

“**Guardians**” look after heritage assets. In Sefton there is a healthy mix of sectors and organisations; many with established relationships with each other:

- council services – the Atkinson Museum & Collections, Libraries & Archives, Green Sefton
- landowners/stewards of the natural landscape
- local historic and civic societies and community owned/managed Heritage buildings
- community groups safeguarding particular cultural identities, traditions and languages.
- classical music companies
- community heritage projects

The “**Guardians**” role is the most developed and established, reflecting community interest and knowledge in local history, and is a strong underpinning for the ecology.

“**Platforms**” are where present-day culture is seen and shared. They are key to generating a “scene” and drawing audiences across and into places. At Sefton’s present cultural platforms are not as plentiful or well-distributed as either audiences or creatives need and want.

- major new large-scale platforms for Southport and Bootle will significantly increase capacity for performing arts and events
- particular gaps in the East of Borough
- difficulties finding, accessing and affording suitable space
- grassroots spaces would benefit from investment and co-ordination
- festivals are a developing strength
- there is scant visual arts infrastructure, apart from the Atkinson’s galleries
- opportunities in green spaces, libraries, meanwhile and long-term use of empty property in high street regeneration and the church estate

“**Connectors**”, bring people together to make things happen, support talent, create opportunity, gather resources from within and outside a place. Connectors can be organisations or projects; or individuals - artists themselves, curators, promoters, producers, entrepreneurs in any sector and can be paid, freelancers or volunteers.

Sefton’s “Connectors” include:

- Community organisers at a hyperlocal level

- “Performers’ Network” supporting everyday creativity and community arts
- Taking Root in a connector role for community green spaces
- At The Library NPO programme, artist-led, focusing on socially-engaged practice
- Scrapyard Studios, artist-led, focussing on female and non-binary musicians and freelancers
- SAFE Regeneration in its hub and with its festival and events production

In Sefton, without the capacity brought by bigger institutions there is particular need to develop the connecting and producing role:

- at an individual level - local work opportunities for freelancers, so that they become more visible and viable.
- new talent - skills and capacity development via apprenticeships, traineeships, and FE/HE links
- dedicated Connector role/brief at a delivery level within local authority structure
- Cultural Partnership to set a vision, co-ordinate resources and plans at a strategic level

## **Nomads**

“Nomads” are local residents - the creatives and audiences, who generate and participate in the cultural life of a place.

## **Artists**

- there are creatives making work in every art form and discipline
- there are too few opportunities to move around the Borough to make or present work
- few ‘scenes’ to tap into and “Platforms” are not easy to access
- early career creatives need to build a track record of small projects or commissions, and establish peer networks: the foundations of a viable creative career
- the first 2 years out of education is crucial, especially for creatives from low-income backgrounds/communities
- artists need continued support and opportunity through the whole of their career

## **Audiences and Participants**

- low audience engagement is a key indicator that the ecology is not thriving as it might.
- investment in Platforms (spaces and programmes) and Artists will support audience development and opportunities for audiences
- targeted, co-produced approaches to ensure better representation of and by diverse communities

## **2.6 Cultural Funding**

Sefton is a Levelling Up for Culture Area

Levels of cultural grant investment are low:

# Agenda Item 6

Sefton Cultural Strategy – Revised Draft 15/12/2023

- NLHF investment into Sefton is in the bottom third of Local Authorities. (“Heritage Places” Methodology, 2023) footnote
- in the 3 years prior 2020, the ACE funding investment into Sefton was just £2.32 per capita pa. (Priority Place Methodology, 2019).footnote
- from 2021 – 2023, Sefton organisations received only 12 successful Project Grants totalling £289k - 5.37% of ACE’s investment in LCR through this scheme (ACE, Dec 2023), an indicator of levels of cultural capacity.
- there has been recent success in attracting significant capital grants (Towns Fund, Levelling Up) and revenue funding (NPO) and larger NLHF projects.

There are opportunities to improve the investment profile through:

- strategic consortia funding (Place Partnership, Creative People and Places)
- collegiate place-based approaches to corporate and philanthropic giving, building on the Sefton Hive crowdfunding model
- support for local artists, organisations and groups to design their projects with greater ambition, bid-writing and impact evaluation

## 2.7 SWOT ANALYSIS

<b>STRENGTHS</b>	<b>WEAKNESSES</b>
<p>Voluntary Sector: reach to most vulnerable; strong VCF engagement in culture; “Culture of volunteering”</p> <p>Outstanding coast and green spaces as community assets, visitor destinations,</p> <p>Established calendar of large-scale outdoor events</p> <p>Signs of emergent creative clusters of creative activity in Bootle, Waterloo and Southport</p> <p>Co-production principles as a Council mode of practice and methodology within wider sectors</p> <p>Everyday Creativity</p> <p>Heritage and local history assets</p> <p>Council: Elected member engaged and supportive Alignment of strategies with what culture can deliver</p> <p>Large civic museum and arts centre</p> <p>Library service with 6 libraries and partnership NPO to deliver creative work to support most vulnerable communities</p>	<p>Inconsistent public arts/cultural offers - most regular activity is group-based and participatory</p> <p>Low levels of cultural engagement across Borough as a whole; likely to be lower in areas still experiencing deprivation</p> <p>Too few dedicated spaces for:</p> <p>Performance or exhibition;</p> <p>Young people to take part in culture; studios/production//rehearsal</p> <p>Limited Library and Atkinson opening hours</p> <p>Lack of opportunity and low profile of professional artists and creatives</p> <p>Commissioning opportunities are rare</p> <p>Lack of consistent cultural opportunities for young people</p> <p>Small organisations:</p> <p>Limited capacity to collaborate beyond immediate locality/issue</p> <p>Stop/start-project based resourcing; inconsistent quality and ambition;</p> <p>Information &amp; Advocacy: visibility and value of the creative role; people don't know what is happening</p> <p>Low levels of cultural investment</p> <p>Capacity to generate or respond to opportunity, or develop pipeline projects</p> <p>Lack of value placed on culture in terms of social impact</p> <p>Lack of value placed on creative and cultural professionals and expertise</p>

<b>OPPORTUNITIES</b>	<b>THREATS</b>
<p>Regeneration Projects as catalysts for local cultural growth as well as economic opportunity</p> <p>Borough of Culture 2025 as opportunity to galvanise ambition and partnership working</p> <p>Polycentricity: growing neighbourhood programming - focused responses to local needs, community-led activity</p> <p>Spaces: improving neighbourhood and civic infrastructure for culture; unlocking empty spaces for cultural use</p> <p>Cultural Landscape:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Environment</li> <li>• Cultural commissioning</li> <li>• Outdoor Arts</li> <li>• Wellbeing</li> <li>• Climate sustainability as a USP</li> </ul> <p>Shared audience development work</p> <p>Young People: pipeline for talent development underpinned by regeneration projects</p> <p>Collaboration and collegiate working Joined up approaches, cohering existing activity and filling gaps</p> <p>Cultural Partnership: to set a vision, co-ordinate resources and plans at a strategic level</p> <p>Liverpool: working with leading cultural partners to increase opportunities for Sefton communities and creatives</p> <p>Engaging strategic partners with a cultural focus including Edge Hill University and the Integrated Care Board</p>	<p>Cost of living crisis a barrier to cultural engagement</p> <p>Places and communities “left behind” due to uneven opportunity for investment</p> <p>Perceived value of cultural activity may remain low with some decision makers and communities</p> <p>Becoming parochial: - need to maintain outward links. Pride in individual places rather than Sefton as a whole Borough</p> <p>Artists and creatives forced to find opportunities elsewhere</p> <p>Capacity and sustainability of small organisations in difficult economic times</p> <p>Young people and creative talent leave</p>

## 3. Strategy

### 3.1 Aims and Action Areas

#### Culture Leads

**Aim: Sefton is ready to seize current opportunities for culture-led change, and generate new ones.**

Through major regeneration projects, arts programmes, community-led activity and artists' practices, culture and creativity is already changing Sefton's places, spaces and community life. Sefton will build the capacity to grasp these opportunities with vigour and impact.

[Tourism and visitor economy here]

A Cultural Partnership enables strategic collaboration towards collective goals, new channels for investment, ambitious commissioning, strategic audience development and communications. Sefton Council's role in convening, networking and advocating for culture is expanded, bridging directorates. Galvanising all of our creative communities, Sefton's Borough of Culture year in 2025 will build borough-wide ambition and capacity, with long-term legacy.

#### Creativity Everywhere

**Aim: Everyone in Sefton can take part in a rich and varied cultural life, whatever their age, whatever their means and wherever they live**

A place made up of many places, Sefton will turn polycentricity to its advantage through diverse and ambitious neighbourhood culture in high streets, parks and community venues. Town Centres and Neighbourhoods have a vibrant and visible cultural life. Confident, consistent cultural programming celebrates different identities and heritage and builds positive new narratives and an authentic sense of place. Local people and organisations can make ambitious things happen in their communities. A constellation of spaces are created, improved or unlocked for creative uses. Regeneration projects build local creative capital and Libraries are cornerstones of delivery. Creative programmes respond to local needs and reach and support the most vulnerable. Borough-wide themes strengthen connections between different spaces, projects and communities.

## **Creativity Thrives**

### **Aim: Creative People and organisations achieve their full artistic potential**

Sefton's creative people find all the opportunities, spaces, resources, networks and development they need in the borough. Artists and creatives are trusted and valued as agents of positive change in their communities. They lead, shape and imagine as well as deliver cultural programmes. Professional artists can make new work, make a living and build audiences for their creative practices throughout their career. Local exhibition, performance and commissioning opportunities provide springboards to national and international success. Cultural entrepreneurs and creative industries build innovative businesses, and form clusters that generate dynamic new activity. Everyday creativity flourishes with bespoke organisational support, communications channels and social prescribing infrastructure that connects local people with groups.

## **Dynamic Landscape**

### **Aim: Sefton's outstanding landscapes and green spaces engage local people and visitors in a new model of culture, climate action and wellbeing**

Sefton develops and embeds exemplar practice in environmentally responsible cultural production and creative programming. Local people are deeply connected with the natural landscape and the exceptional, fragile coastline is better safeguarded, protected and understood. Sefton's coastal and green spaces host and inspire ambitious contemporary commissioning, and bring people together at festivals, outdoor arts programmes, participatory projects and community events. Heritage programming celebrates the "culture of the coast" and supports wellbeing through climate action, volunteering and "nature on prescription".

## **Children & Young People**

### **Aim: From early years to creative careers opportunities for Children and Young People run through Sefton's cultural life "like Rock".**

Creative offers for Early Years and Families are joined up across places and partners to ensure there is access to high quality activities for every family in Sefton. Sefton's LCEP collaborates to strengthen cultural learning opportunity in all Sefton's schools supported by trained and talented artists and creatives. Young people have places to go, feel welcome in all of Sefton's cultural spaces and take the lead in designing relevant and engaging creative things to do. A talent pipeline establishes clear progression routes from education into employment in culture, tourism, or creative practice.



## 3.3 Roles

Achieving the aspirations outlined here will require - and enable - a more dynamic and collaborative relationship between council and community in relation to culture.

A strengths-based approach is a way of working that Sefton has embraced with the voluntary sector, with good outcomes for local communities. This should now be adopted to cultural and creative work: seeing the potential in what already exists, valuing good practice, supporting local creative capital and organisational growth.

### Role of the Council

The current role of the council in relation to culture is multifaceted, encompassing venue management, stewardship, community development, event promotion and production, place leadership and destination marketing.

If Sefton is to respond to its new opportunities with ambition there is a need for the council to build its capacity to increase its “connector” role.

This will include:

- convening and administering the Cultural Partnership
- creating/providing capacity or resource to develop pipeline projects
- facilitating and enabling in relation to spaces including its own cultural venues and empty spaces
- identifying opportunities for culture and cultural opportunity
- championing Sefton’s culture within the Liverpool City region
- consultation and data

“You are doing the right thing in asking, and this should continue as the answers will keep changing, and agility to catch the mood and the desires of your residents will be important”

[Sefton Council, 2023, Your Sefton Your Say Culture Strategy survey]

### Strategic Advocacy and Policy

A number of core council strategies are due to be renewed in 2024-5, presenting a chance to ensure the potential of culture to contribute to future strategic direction is fully integrated across different policy areas:

- Identify potential for cultural commissioning within major capital projects
- Directly commission and fund activity within clear policy

Commitment is needed at a sufficiently senior level to take decisions, activate opportunity and bridge and co-ordinate working across People and Place directorates.

## **Cultural Partnership**

Sefton is naturally a collaborative place, and there are strong local precedents of Place-based partnerships focussed on areas of collective strategy.

This principle should now be applied to culture, through the initiation of a Borough-wide, cross-sector Cultural Partnership that will provide collaborative leadership and enable partners and stakeholders to shape, support and deliver the goals of the strategy.

This kind of partnership is vital if Sefton's cultural ecology is to become better connected, be authentically representative and achieve critical mass.

## **Purpose**

The purpose of the Cultural Partnership is to create strategic capacity and connectivity and practical action:

- enable more open and collaborative relationships
- ensure better representation of different sectors and communities
- support greater ambition quality and creative risk
- joint programming and joined up approaches to arts, heritage and culture
- provide advocacy for culture
- provide structure and capacity to respond to and generate pipeline of opportunity
- open up new possibilities for funding and investment

## **Terms of Reference and Membership**

The Cultural Partnership should be independently, rather than Council chaired.

In the first instance it is proposed that the Cultural Partnership Membership builds on the initial Cultural Strategy Steering Group. However, the first task is to review and expand membership to better reflect both the cultural and creative sector and the wider communities of the Borough.

The group should include representation from:

- Senior Council Leadership with representation from decision-makers at both People and Place Directorates
- Health and Education
- Youth representation – via youth organisations, or young people supported to participate
- lead Voluntary Sector Organisations with commitment to culture
- independent Arts, Heritage and Culture organisations
- leaders from diverse and under-represented groups

# Agenda Item 6

Sefton Cultural Strategy – Revised Draft 15/12/2023

Membership should include diverse perspectives, different artforms and representation from different areas of the Borough.

Proposals for Membership and Draft Terms of Reference are in preparation

**ENDS.**

DRAFT

## 3.4 Next Steps – to follow

### Continued consultation

### Cultural Partnership

### Visioning/ Action Planning

### Borough of Culture 2025

- BOC recommendations
- Catalyst not a pageant
- Key feedback and wants from consults
- Issues with 2020
- Opportunities - investment
- long term step change in what we
- Small grassroots neighbourhood based projects in a year of activity with collective celebration

# Agenda Item 7

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	Tuesday 16th January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Southport Market - 2 Year Review		
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director (Place)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	Dukes;
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member – Regeneration & Skills		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

Southport Market was repurposed into a Food and Drink Market and opened in July 2021; the paper outlines its year 2 performance, particularly in the context of economic conditions affecting the sector and venues including, but not limited to, Southport Market.

## Recommendation(s):

(1) That Committee note the report

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To ensure Committee visibility of the performance of the Market, and the internal and external factors affecting the operation.

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

N/A

## 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.

### (B) Capital Costs

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

## Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>
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# Agenda Item 7

There are no resource implications with the review. All other resource implications are contained in the agreed business case.

## Legal Implications:

There are no legal implications with the review. All other resource implications are contained in the agreed business case.

## Equality Implications:

There are no equality implications. As with all areas of the Economic Growth and Housing service, the Council's strategy and action plan for Equalities, Diversity and Inclusion are considered and implemented where applicable.

## Climate Emergency Implications:

The recommendations within this report will

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

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: N/A

Facilitate confident and resilient communities: The new market offer provides a high-quality experience and provides a destination for local communities to use and enjoy

Commission, broker and provide core services: N/A

Place – leadership and influencer: The Council directly contributes to an improved visitor destination as part of The Southport Development Framework creating further confidence in Southport that could lead to further private sector investment. The Market project has key strategic linkages to the Southport Town Deal.

Drivers of change and reform: Providing a long-term sustainable future for Southport Market creating a new diverse use meeting the expectations of residents and visitors.

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: This allows for a number of new small business start-ups creating additional employment and sustainable business growth.

Greater income for social investment: N/A

Cleaner Greener: The operation contributes to Sefton's aims to becoming Carbon Neutral.
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## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD7485) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5585) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Early consultation was conducted with existing Market traders along with a wider consultation exercise, results of this was included in the full business case.

## Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the "call-in" period for the Minutes of the Meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mark Catherall
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 2315
Email Address:	mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk

## Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

## Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

# Agenda Item 7

## 1. Background

- 1.1 The original design of the venue and operation for the new Market Hall was to have a central bar serving all drinks while also being responsible for managing the floor such as cleaning, pot wash and other operational duties.
- 1.2 It was envisaged there would be 8 hot food kitchens, 2 smaller dessert units and Blackhurst butchers being retained in the front unit.
- 1.3 As with all food markets it is important that the offer continues to evolve and never stays still - in the first year of operation there was a small number of unit changes that now sees the market operating 7 hot food kitchens, 1 desert offer and the main bar. This is supplemented by two small units available for daily hire (non-food).
- 1.4 In the second year of trading we have not seen any change in the business mix with all traders still trading, with many of the original traders still operating in the market despite the continuing pressure in the hospitality sector.

## 2. Independent Review

- 2.1 It is of critical importance to continue to review the performance of hospitality venues, so in year 1 several mystery visits took place to ensure the quality of the market of high quality. In year 2 hospitality experts Hotel Audit undertook a Customer Experience and operational view of the Market.
- 2.2 Hotel Audit specialise in hospitality operations, brand standards, customer experience and finance, the resulting findings offered a review of operational and financial performance and offer an unbiased customer experience insight.
- 2.3 The main recommendations from the review are as follows:

**Revenue should be forecasted and measured daily and reported weekly for actions to be taken reacting to any changes to expected demand.** - *Response - Financial data is reported monthly with a month-on-month performance measurement. Further detailed weekly turnover figures are reported and checked.*

**Daytime customers typically want good coffee and an environment which is conducive for conversation with the option of food as a secondary driver. Currently the Market has a very poor coffee product, and the music is played too loud for people to talk either face-to-face/ part of a group or on the phone.** – *Response – Work is underway to look at how the front of bar is redesigned to resemble a coffee offer to customers as they walk into the market. The redesign would also allow for the bar operator to invest in improved coffee machines and increase the offer.*

**Utilise a vacant unit for guest food partners with a stipulation that they are not currently operating in the Market, and they have a short-term residency with a recommended maximum duration of 2 weeks.** – *Response – This is*



*already being implemented, the recent crumble pop up is a good example. We have two small units but as part of a design review one of these units may change into a unique seating booth area.*

**More energy should be targeted towards establishing a calendar of events with a focussed approach ensuring the partners are consulted and each event fully costed** – *Response - Events in the back space now regularly sell out. There has also been a marked increase in private bookings.*

**With the Market now being in operation for over 12 months it would be wise to review current marketing performance across all channels** – *Response - a hospitality marketing agency has now reviewed the website and socials. A 12-month marketing strategy has now been produced and continues to be rolled out through year 3 along with retained content creators and agency.*

- 2.4 In conclusion the review noted that “Southport Market, situated away from Lord Street, appears like a gem amongst .... buildings, retail units and independent shops and its kerb appeal draws customers to its entrance giving the impression that the Market is single handed attempting improve the area and complement Lord Street rather than compete against it.”
- 2.5 It also noted The Market as it currently exists, given its location, has to work harder to attract footfall than the more popular food and drink areas of Southport and confidence should be high that this can be achieved. Whilst there will be benefit from the Southport Town Deal project *Les Transformations de Southport*, which includes plans to widen the pedestrian paths on King Street and part-pedestrianise Market Street, changes must be made to ensure the Market doesn't get left behind when more investment pours into the area and new hospitality venues become established.
- 2.6 At its foundation, the Market (in concept and delivery), is a great venue and unique in its offering in Southport however the focus now should be on addressing the outcomes and recommendations of this report to ensure it becomes operationally sound and becomes, organised so that it can address weaknesses such as midweek daytime trade and respond to comments continually highlighted by guest feedback.

### **3.0 Financial Performance**

- 3.1 Food traders and the bar pay a turnover rent rather than a set rent measured on square footage; this arrangement is now common practice in many food markets and allows the landlord to be rewarded the more successful the operation becomes. It also importantly allows new start-up businesses breathing space to become established and to build up a robust cash flow.
- 3.2 The agreed income targets for the operation consists of turnover rent, service charge, general rents, Outdoor markets, and any utility recharges.

# Agenda Item 7

- 3.3 Expenditure is made up several budget headings that are required such as salaries, marketing and events, utilities, repair and maintenance along with consumables.

## Year 1 v Year 2 (Food and Drink Performance)

	<b>Year 2</b>
<b>Food</b>	+45.48%
<b>Drink</b>	+29.37%
<b>Total</b>	+38.32%

\*Year 1 trading commenced from 21<sup>st</sup> July 2021

- 3.4 The trading period for year 2 was for a full 12 months while year 1 was condensed due to a July 2021 opening. However, year 2 has seen significant growth in food and drink total turnover. It should be noted that venues will usually see a dip in turnover in year 2 compared to the opening months of a new venue such as a food market. According to the National Restaurants Association (2023), 60% of hospitality venues are reported to fail in year one, and 80% are reported to fail within the first five years – with failure rates increasing in 2022 and 2023 given current economic conditions.

## Year 2 Food and Drink Rental Performance v Business Plan Targets

	<b>Target</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Total</b>	£323,000	£331,307	-£8,307

Includes recharges

- 3.5 The year 2 total turnover rents and recharges have exceeded the business plan target by £8,307.
- 3.6 For year 2 there was also a target of £113k for outdoor markets, that was based on current outdoor market achieved before Covid-19. Due to resource and operational issues the outdoor markets have not been possible to resurrect.
- 3.7 The Southport Markets were relocated to King Street and Market Street once the Market Hall relaunched. However due to the increasing costs of road closures and diversions required they were no longer financially viable. Following on from this work began with The Makers Market, the leading artisan outdoor market businesses in the North West. After several months, The Makers Market also pulled out of Southport due to viability issues. Therefore, in year 2 none of the outdoor market income has been achieved.
- 3.8 To try and make up for the shortfall paid events and hire in the event space has been a major focus for the team. Income from these activities in year 2 was £26,489, this is compared to £7,652 in year one, up 28%.

## Year 2 Expenditure v Business Plan Targets

	<b>Target</b>	<b>Outturn</b>	<b>Variance</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>	£435,000	£541,013	£106,013

3.9 The table above shows the year 2 expenditure outturn was over £106k than forecasted in the business plan. The main reason for this variance is utility costs, the current budget for all utility costs for the market is £83,000, with actual expenditure in year 2 being £183,424 resulting in over £100k non budgeted spend due to the spiralling costs of all utilities compared to when the business plan was agreed in 2020. In year 3 this additional utility pressure is being met centrally, but the tourism budget absorbed the increase in year 2. These pressures are affecting all venues across the sector and are expanded upon in section 4 of this report.

## Year 2 Actual v Business Plan

	Target	Outturn	Variance
<b>Income</b>	£437,000	£357,796	£79,204
<b>Expenditure</b>	£435,000	£541,013	£106,013
<b>Total</b>	-£2,000	£183,216	£181,216

3.10 The reason the end of year variance can be explained by:

- Circa £100k utility pressures
- Circa £85k lost income on outdoor market targets

## Revised Year 2 Actuals V Business Plan

	Target	Outturn	Variance
<b>Income</b>	£437,000	£357,796	£79,204
<b>Expenditure</b>	£435,000	£423,648	£-11,352
<b>Total</b>	-£2,000	£65,852	£67,852

\*Expenditure excludes utility pressure and salary for major events

\*Variance income due to outdoor markets not taking place.

## **4 Continuing Sector Pressures**

4.1 The trading environment for the hospitality sector in year 2 saw significant changes and challenges due to cost-of-living crisis. It has been well documented that the hospitality sector has and is facing spiralling costs such a utilities and consumables with both having a direct impact on The Market. The Council's report on the performance of Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited outlined the significant impacts of current economic conditions across the sector, and it is appropriate to repeat some of those key considerations here as being relevant to Southport Market.

4.2 As stated earlier, according to the National Restaurants Association (2023), 60% of hospitality venues are reported to fail in year one, and 80% are reported to fail within the first five years – with failure rates increasing in 2022 and 2023 given current economic conditions. The challenges of opening a new hospitality venue at any time are exacerbated by increasing cost pressures affecting sector-wide profitability, with venues such as Southport Market seeing more than 100% increases in energy bills during the period, and wages increasing sector wide in a

# Agenda Item 7

post-Brexit environment (notwithstanding the Council's continued commitment to paying a Real Living Wage or better).

- 4.3 According to the Office for National Statistics (October 2023 - [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)), the price of gas and of electricity remains 60% higher and 40% higher respectively than it was in October 2021. These inflationary pressures affect the sector and the venue in two fundamental ways. Firstly, these lead to much higher energy costs than anticipated in the original business case or the previous business plan. Secondly, they impact consumer spend as all households feel the pressure of the cost of living crisis, affecting business and venue revenues as discretionary spend by customers is affected due to other priorities. Similarly, food and non-alcoholic beverage prices increased by 0.1% between September and October 2023 (Source: ONS, October 2023). This leads to an annual rate of increase of 10.1% in the twelve months to October 2023, down from 12.2% in the twelve months to September 2023, and from a recent high of 19.2% increase in the twelve months to March 2023, the highest annual rate for more than 45 years.
- 4.4 The most recent ONS data reaffirms the severity of cost inflation pressures on the sector – including but not limited to Southport Market – and anecdotally there remains clear visibility of pressures on hospitality venues across the sector, across the Liverpool City Region and beyond. However, as above this data suggests easing in inflationary pressures for the sector. October 2023's easing in food and drink price increases was driven by downward price movements for 9 of the 11 classes considered in the most recently monthly data, including particularly dairy and vegetables.
- 4.5 Nevertheless, the price of food in October 2023 remains around 30% higher than October 2021.
- 4.6 These pressures have significantly affected the costs incurred by Southport Market during the period of operations to date, and in turn have affected consumers and therefore revenue.
- 4.7 According to Deloitte (Q3 2023) there are marginal increases (0.4%) in discretionary spending, with the most notable quarter-on-quarter growth being in non-essential spend areas such as holidays, hotels, restaurants, and going out categories. There are many and varied views on outlook for the future of the hospitality sector (Deloitte [2023] use the term “prolonged recovery”), but these forecasts and the slow easing of cost inflationary pressures are expected to support recovery in the hospitality sector over the coming years, despite continued short-term challenges.
- 4.8 Southport is feeling the above impacts, it also has further pressures on the visitor economy due to the close of the STCC while it undergoes rebuild
- 4.9 Despite the above concerns, The Market has started to trade strongly in year 3. However it is too early to tell if this will carry on throughout the year with July and August being a hard trading month due to weather and the continuing cost of living crisis.



4.10 Given its assets such as Southport Market, its shareholding in Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited, and the importance of the sector to Sefton's economy, the Council will continue to monitor and evaluate market conditions and outlook for the industry on an ongoing basis. Moreover, in the case of the Market and all SHOL venues, management of operations will be as proactive as possible in respect of both driving revenue and managing costs. Driving revenue particularly includes events that activate the space and drive footfall, while continuing to reflect the venue's role in its community.

## 5. Events

5.1 The events space to the rear of the Market continues to be a great success, the team have put on multiple sell out events throughout year 2 with thousands of tickets sold for Easter events, themed nights and Christmas extravaganza events.

5.2 The space is also used for free events along with large numbers of private bookings.

5.3 The space is also always offered free of charge for community events. Also, throughout year 2 working with partners we have been looking at how the market can be utilised to help tackle issues within the community. A free comedy bingo social in the winter months has been taking place providing a warm space and to help with isolation.



# Agenda Item 7

## 6. Conclusions

- 6.1 Overall year 2 of the market has been successful in achieving its business plan numbers for the food and drink, despite economic and sector conditions. The pressures of the utility costs and outdoor markets should be noted, and the year 3 business plan targets will be amended accordingly.
- 6.2 **The events space continues to improve with income 28% up year on year, with the overall market up 38% turnover year on year.**
- 6.3 Year 2 has seen the impacts of the cost-of-living crisis, and inflationary pressures, as outlined in section 4. This is also continuing into year 3 with the summer season for Southport forecasted to be underperforming compared to recent summers.
- 6.4 There is a need to continue to monitor expenditure. Costs such as utilities are almost completely outside the control of the venue. However, steps have already been taken to reduce spend in other areas such as consumables without impacting on the overall quality. .
- 6.5 Lastly small improvements will need to be implemented going forward such as an events bar, improved coffee offer, new and improved stage and looking at other operational improvements. These continuous improvements will be sustained on an ongoing basis as the venue works to continue to drive footfall and deliver a positive customer experience and repeat business.
- 6.6 It is recommended to review year 3 business case targets, considering the continued utility pressures and limits on outdoor markets until Market Street and King Street public realms works are completed. A revised Business Plan for Southport Market will be developed and presented to the Cabinet Member in due course.

# Agenda Item 8

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration & Skills)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan		
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director: Economic Growth and Housing	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	Yes	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	Yes
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

To update members on progress with Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle's Regeneration)

## Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet Members:

- 1) Note and provide comment on progress with Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle's Regeneration)
- 2) Receive future updates on progress for the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan including a planned review and refresh in 2024.

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To update members on this key decision and advise on progress and future planned activities arising from the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle's Regeneration).

## 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 Covid-19 and recession impacts 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 produce an Action Plan which could help prioritise delivery to businesses, residents, and communities.

## What will it cost and how will it be financed?

# Agenda Item 8

## (A) Revenue Costs

There are no direct revenue (other than staffing) costs associated with the implementation of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan. Costs for the planned review and refresh have been accounted for and will be met from the existing InvestSefton budget.

## (B) Capital Costs

None

### Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>	
Consultation co-ordination and ongoing delivery activities is being undertaken by Economic Growth & Housing staff within existing budgets.	
<b>Legal Implications:</b>	
None	
<b>Equality Implications:</b>	
The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated as shown in the previous Equalities Impact Assessment	
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b>	
Prevailing economic conditions will inevitably have an impact on children and young people and the implications of these will be captured under some of the key strategic objectives and subsets. The SES is also seeking to align with other council work in this space, most notably the Child Poverty Strategy. The services involved in the implementation of the SES are all actively engaged in promoting and progressing the Caring Business Charter as well.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
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 has 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 external providers of expert support to businesses seeking to reduce energy costs and introduce low carbon solutions to their operations.

InvestSefton also commissioned Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside to provide business sustainability support to businesses in Sefton town centres including developing green action plans to support reduction in carbon emissions.

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:

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.

Commission, broker and provide core services:

The Strategy Framework will help in identifying key priorities for action including services that require direct delivery or sub-contracting and commissioning. This includes commissioning on business start-up support and the business sustainability work.

Place – leadership and influencer:

Regenerated Places and Business Growth & Investment are core objectives of the strategy framework, and the council is already active in this work in terms of delivering area action plans and promoting Sefton as a place to support business growth, attract visitors and new inward investment.

Drivers of change and reform:

The Strategy framework provides a platform to prioritise and develop economic interventions where they are most needed and allows the council to refresh and update areas of work that require change and reform.

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.

Greater income for social investment:

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.

Cleaner Greener:

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

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD 7474/23) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD5574/23) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

# Agenda Item 8

## (B) External Consultations

The Strategy framework has previously been the subject of extensive external consultation with businesses, stakeholders, community groups/charities and residents. This work continues in conjunction with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority by aligning Sefton objectives with those of the LCR Economic Opportunities work. Ongoing work is also discussed and presented at Sefton Economic Forum events.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Mike Mullin
Telephone Number:	07929 787436
Email Address:	mike.mullin@sefton.gov.uk

### Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- (a) Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan dashboard-Q2 (July-September 2023)

### Background Papers:

Background papers, which are not available elsewhere on the Internet can be accessed on the Council website: [Sefton Economy](#)

### Background

- 1.1 On 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2022 Sefton Council Cabinet approved the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy for publication. It also noted further work scheduled for 2023 on the development of an associated Action Plan and appropriate monitoring points. Cabinet also gave authority to the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing), in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Skills, to approve the Action Plan and Monitoring Reports as set out under the recommendations.
- 1.2 Members of this Committee received an update on 17 January 2023. Cabinet Member (Regeneration & Skills) subsequently approved the proposed process and method for implementing the Action Plan at her March 2023 CM briefing on 5<sup>th</sup> April 2023.

### Governance & reporting

- 1.3 A repurposed Sefton Economy Cell group of officers from across a range of services, led by the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth & Housing), meet quarterly to report on progress with each of the four strategic objectives and subset themes and activities. Officers update a dedicated dashboard which serves as an action plan. A copy of the dashboard is shown as **(Annex A)** and provides snapshot of performance of the strategic Objectives and subsets as follows:

Strategic objective	Sub-sets
Business Growth & Investment	

# Agenda Item 8

<b>Employment and access to work</b>	
<b>Regenerated Places</b>	<i>Growth &amp; Strategic Investment Programme Housing Planning Tourism</i>
<b>Social Inclusion &amp; Access for all</b>	<i>Equality &amp; Diversity Sustainable Travel Net Zero/Low Carbon Health &amp; Wellbeing Digital</i>

1.4 The reporting timetable is as follows:

<b>Economy Cell meeting</b>	<b>Dashboard update deadline</b>	<b>CM Regeneration &amp; Skills Briefings</b>	<b>CM Regeneration &amp; Skills/O&amp;S Regeneration &amp; Skills</b>
		<b>Monthly</b>	
<b>9 June</b>			
<b>7 September</b>	<b>4 October 2023</b>		<b>16 January 2024</b>
<b>30 November</b>			<b>7 November</b>
<b>18 January 2024</b>	<b>7 February 2024</b>		<b>5 March 2024</b>

1.5 Members may be aware that Sefton has been nominated in two categories for the 2023 Institute of Economic Development awards and reached the final 3 in both:

- Team of the Year-Exceptional economic development teams who have gone above and beyond in ensuring the smooth running and effective delivery of economic development functions in their organisations-**Economic Growth & Housing Service**
- Most Innovative Project of the Year-Innovative economic development projects which have pushed the boundaries beyond traditional approaches and delivered additional beneficial outcomes as a result of the innovation-**Salt and Tar, Bootle**

## 2.0 Summary of progress

While Annex A provides a snapshot of performance including a RAG rating and narrative for the quarter reporting period, it is worth reflecting in more detail some of the key achievements including specific work areas requested by members:

### (i) Crosby New Library Project

Sefton Council announced it is pursuing the futures of both Crosby Village and Waterloo Library as two separate schemes in August 2023. Sefton Council is committed to the exciting and innovative project in Crosby Village to help secure a successful and robust future for the village. In December 2023 Cabinet considered an update report on the outline business case. The planning

# Agenda Item 8

application was submitted in September for works to Crosby village car park and an outline planning application for the new library is awaiting determination.

## (ii) **Bootle Area Action Plan**

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

### **3.0 Economic Dashboard**

3.1 Annex A provides members with a summary of quarter 2 (Jul-Sept 2023) economic performance against each of the four key strategic objectives and sub-sets. Each dashboard is updated by relevant project leads listed in the table who provide Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) progress (where applicable) and a Red/Amber/Green traffic light status and a short commentary and summary narrative.

3.2 For quarter 1 (Apr-Jun) all projects (with the exception of Health and wellbeing which is amber) were recorded as green with good progress being made against some significant economic challenges in certain cases. For Quarter 2 the position remains the same and the narrative has been expanded in the report below to include some examples of progress against each objective and sub-set.

### **4.0 Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan-Key highlights**

#### **Business Growth & Investment- Contact [mike.mullin@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:mike.mullin@sefton.gov.uk)**

4:1 Support to business continues to be delivered by InvestSefton in partnership with a wide range of public and private sector bodies including Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Growth Platform. European Regional Development Funding finally ended on 30 June 2023 and InvestSefton concluded the LCR Business Growth Programme which they delivered to Sefton businesses. In total they delivered:

<b>Output</b>	<b>Target -June 2023</b>	<b>Actual</b>	<b>% variance</b>
No of Businesses receiving support	460	445	-3.26
No of new businesses supported	72	72	0
No of new Jobs created	309	336.16	+8.79

4:2 The only variance was the number of businesses support which dropped during the Covid-19 Pandemic when the team had to focus its attention on delivering

grants which were not classed as eligible under EU regulations. However, the overall target was still within the 5% threshold set by DLUCH. Members will recall that InvestSefton and Business Rates received the 2022/23 NW Federation of Small Businesses award for best local authority response to supporting businesses.



*Figure 1 Sefton Councillors Atkinson and Lappin and Peter Dowd MP receiving FSB award.*

- 4.3 The programme aimed to support businesses who were previously excluded from public sector support or may not have been aware of it. Some of the businesses (names anonymised) supported since April 2023 include:

**Electrical contractors who are based in Maghull** and specialise in solar panels as well as undertaking general electrical works both commercial and domestic. The business plans to establish themselves in the Northwest and North Wales for solar panel installations and battery storage, working with an increasing number of developers and local councils through tender opportunities. InvestSefton supported the business by undertaking a website audit and content review to improve the customer experience when visiting the website and to enable the business to provide a clear message of the services it provides.

**A Martial Arts Academy based in Southport town centre** and offers sports and martial arts activities for adults, children and people with disabilities and special educational needs. The academy is looking to broaden its service offer and expand membership. This includes bidding for Lottery and other grant funding, engaging with more schools and working with doctor's practices as part of the NHS social prescribing scheme. InvestSefton supported the business by undertaking a digital marketing review and recommending changes as well as research on charities and trusts for Grant applications, including excluded groups.

**A Property Management & Property Service business based in Southport.** The business works with private investors looking to make money in the short and longer term. This includes renovating and refurbishing large period properties for resale. The business is Growth orientated and is looking to expand its services for landlords by working with Eco Energy schemes to implement works that will make the premises more attractive for resale/rental. InvestSefton Programme supported the business by researching Eco Energy schemes and helping the business to develop a Net Zero plan.

# Agenda Item 8

**A beauty and treatment business based in Crosby** that provides education, skills and certification in various aspects of beauty including makeup, skincare, hair styling and cosmetic procedures. Alongside training the business also has its own beauty and treatment centre and is now expanding to supply the industry with modern uniforms having created a line of uniforms themselves. As this is a new area for the business, they are looking for support with commercialising this venture. InvestSefton supported the Business in its planning to understand its position following expansion, through a review of services offered and pricing of services as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personals for their new workwear across different sectors.

**A chauffeur driven limousine and prestige vehicle hire business based in Aintree.** The business has been trading for 20 years and provide services for wedding, airport transfers and corporate clients, as well as prom nights for schools. The business is looking to supplement its services with minibuses which will be used for school contracts. They are also looking to apply for an Eco Stars fleet recognition accreditation. InvestSefton assisted the business with the process of tendering and bidding for schools' contracts as well as supporting them with the application for Eco Stars fleet management for a green fleet accreditation.

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

Phil Porter meeting Michael Gould, MD of Richardson's Healthcare in Bootle, a previous winner of the Queens award for Enterprise-International Trade



**Business engagement-[www.investsefton.com](http://www.investsefton.com)**

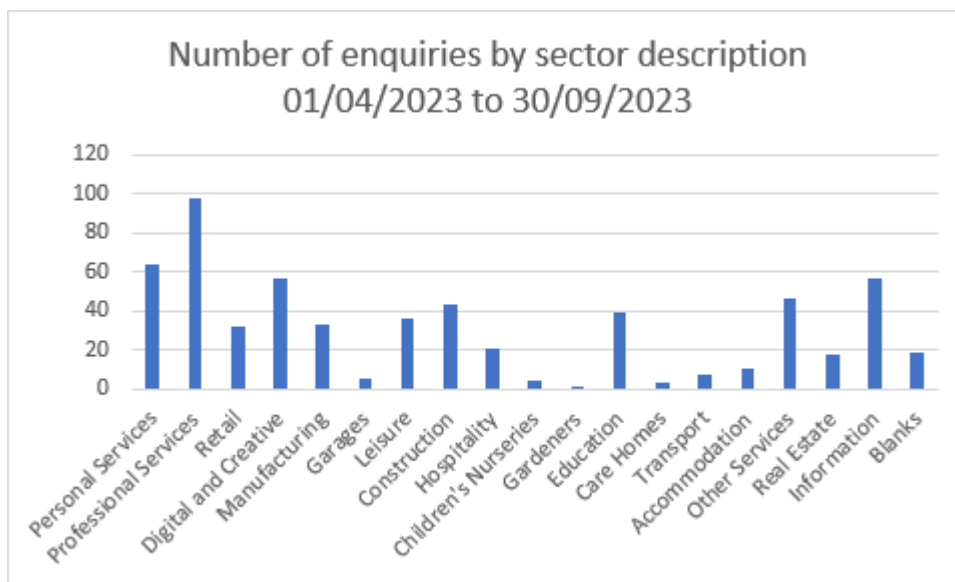
4.4 Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic [www.investsefton.com](http://www.investsefton.com) until 30 September 2023 has received over 70,000 unique single session visits. For the same period InvestSefton's twitter feed had 1,611 followers with some 2,600 businesses on the team's regular mailing lists strengthening the council's overall business reach.

More recently a new Facebook page for Sefton digital and technology businesses - Sefton Huddle, attracted 24 members.

4.5 While the site attracts mainly UK users it has also received visits from USA, Brazil, Spain, China, Portugal, Poland, Serbia and Russia. Some visits are driven automatically by 'Bots' (including phishing) most sessions index the site for large search engines such as Google and attract views by potential inward investors. There is also strong possibility that some of the US visitors will be Sefton ex-pats with a connection to the borough.

## **Business enquiries**

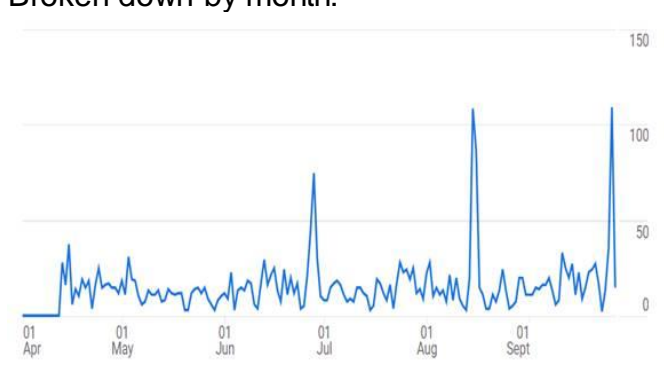
4.6 During the same period InvestSefton received some 7,200 enquiries. From April 2023 to 30 September the team has dealt with 600 unique business enquiries from new and existing businesses looking to start, expand or relocate in the borough. The following diagram shows business enquiry breakdown by sector for the first two quarters of 2023:



[www.investsefton.com](http://www.investsefton.com) visits

Number of visits to website from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023- 27<sup>th</sup> September 2023 = **2,400**

Broken down by month:





# Agenda Item 8

Peak months tend to be the lead up to when InvestSefton events are being held.

Broken down by country:

COUNTRY	USERS
United Kingdom	1.6K
United States	380
India	87
China	54
Ireland	37
Germany	20
France	19

## Sefton Economic Forum /Business events & workshops

4.7 Business events and workshops are a significant feature of InvestSefton's one to many approach to supporting Sefton businesses. At the heart of this is the popular Sefton Economic Forum (SEF), the borough's premier networking which consistently attracts upwards of 100 businesses on each occasion. Held twice a year in Lakeside and Formby Hall, each event is chaired by a rotating private sector chair and speakers include the Bank of England, leading UK Economists, business support delivery agencies and Government departments and an array of interesting and high-profile business speakers.

4.8 Accompanying the events is the SEF Marketplace with some 40+ business support organisations taking small stand space to provide a wide range of help to businesses including employment/training, business leadership, low carbon advice, access to finance and a range of other help.

4.9 The June Sefton Economic Forum attracted 120 businesses to Formby Hall chaired this time by Cara Leach, Marketing Manager of Marine FC. The Assistant Directors presentation on regeneration projects was also well received prompting great interest from businesses who were amazed at the depth of the council's broad range of developments across the borough.














The above graph shows the location of each delegate business including interest from outside Sefton.

A summary of other events held between January-September 2023 is shown below:

<b>Date</b>	<b>Event/Venue</b>	<b>Comments</b>
27 Jan	Business roundtable with Peter Dowd MP and Cabinet Member R&S, Lakeside 	Attended by 16 Sefton businesses with focus on post Covid support needs
23 Feb	Launch of Sefton Huddle Digital & technological business network, Southport & Birkdale 	New Sefton Huddle proves popular as a networking event for digital, creative and tech businesses - Stand Up For Southport
23 Mar	Health is Wealth workshop, Maghull Cricket Club	30 delegates from 22 businesses attended delivered in conjunction with PACT Mentality and Active Sefton

# Agenda Item 8

		
<p>27 Apr</p>	<p>Business, Professional and Finance event Southport, and Birkdale Sports club</p> 	<p>38 delegates from 28 Sefton businesses attended delivered in conjunction with River Capital/Merseyside Special Investment Fund</p> <p><a href="https://mysefton.co.uk/2023/04/13/sefton-business-networking-group-for-financial-and-professional-sectors-relaunched-this-month/">https://mysefton.co.uk/2023/04/13/sefton-business-networking-group-for-financial-and-professional-sectors-relaunched-this-month/</a></p>
<p>15 June</p>	<p>Sefton Economic Forum, Formby Hall</p> 	<p>120 businesses attended in conjunction with Marine FC, Innovate UK and Christian Spence UK Economist; Stuart Barnes Sefton MBC</p>
<p>29 June</p>	<p>Sefton Huddle Digital &amp; technological business network , Marine FC Crosby</p>	<p>Attended by 35 businesses in conjunction UK Innovate Edge</p>

		
<p>20/2 1 Sept</p>	<p>Cyber security workshops/Lakeside and Formby Hall</p> 	<p>This interactive session I gave businesses a greater understanding of the cyber risks they are likely to face and how to reduce these risks, including Phishing, passwords, networks, malware and social media; Live demonstrations and real-world examples</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ask the cyber expert Q&amp;A</li> <li>• Developing an action plan</li> <li>• Certificate of completion</li> </ul> <p>60 businesses attended both events</p>

## Future Funding

4.9.1 European funding has effectively been replaced by the Government's UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) which is co-ordinated by LCR Combined Authority. InvestSefton has been allocated £782,414 for the new Place Based Business Support Programme branded locally as the Business Support Service. It has also been allocated £98,000 to provide specific business support in Sefton town centres. This will be delivered by InvestSefton offering fully funded advice to businesses and a gateway to other support until 31 March 2025.

4.10 This includes flexible support to businesses of any size from any sector, including a specific focus on those that offer maximum return in terms of key economic outputs including job creation, growth & productivity. InvestSefton support will include:

- to 1 advice & guidance to any business of any size or sector
- 1 to many support including business events and workshops
- Production of business diagnostic and action plans
- Brokerage into national and other LCR UKSPF programmes (e.g., Decarbonisation, Export, Supply Chain)
- Key account and relationship management of SMEs and larger businesses
- Inward investment activity & investor development
- Access to finance including grants and loan.

# Agenda Item 8

- Finding sites and premises to start, expand or relocate businesses across the LCR
- Key business sectors & clusters support
- Point of contact and referral to other council departments
- Pre-start and start up support.
- Business Sustainability support

4.11 The team has commissioned work for business start-up and business sustainability support in Sefton and with a special focus on town centres. The commissions have been awarded to:

- **Business Start-up support**-Merseyside Expanding Horizons and Safe Regeneration Partnership
- **Business sustainability support**-Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside

## Inward Investment

4.12 The team supports a wide range of local inward investment activity in terms of managing interest in company relocations to Sefton and a range of larger expansion projects including those connected to the council's Growth & Strategic (GSI) Investment programme, foreign owned companies, developers, and existing major employers.

4.13 Much of the work is commercial in confidence but a summary of that which is in the public domain, over the past six months, is provided below:

- **Mersey Reach**  
The Council is continuing to support Northwood Investments market Phase 2 of Mersey Reach Business Park in Dunning's Bridge Road, providing advice and guidance to existing tenants and prospective occupiers. In Spring 2023, following support from InvestSefton, a global car part supplier opened a UK distribution centre at Mersey Reach, employing 10 staff.
- **Land North of Formby**  
Working with planning colleagues, InvestSefton is supporting the development of an assigned employment site on Formby Bypass, to the north of the existing Formby Business Park. InvestSefton are liaising with the developer's project management team providing inward investment support, sector knowledge and assisting with site enquiries.
- **Atlantic Park**  
The team continue to work with owners RLAM to market the site. A planning application has been submitted to develop pre-let and speculative units from 43,000 sq. ft to 210,000 sq ft. Expressions of interest from Sefton-based businesses and inward investment proposals have been supported by InvestSefton and submitted to RLAM for consideration.
- **Southport Business Park**  
Alongside Regeneration colleagues, InvestSefton is supporting investment in the site, generating interest through proactive marketing. This involves advising

potential occupiers on development processes with the aim of delivering projects that provide employment opportunities for residents and business rates revenue for the Council. Current schemes in the pipeline include relocation of a Southport based construction firm and expansion of an existing occupier.

- **Key Account Management**

Recent activity includes inward investment support to an Irish-US data centre operator with plans to create 50+ skilled jobs in Bootle and assisting a Southport based manufacturer with expansion plans that will create employment opportunities and secure the ongoing presence of the business in Sefton.

- **GSI Information Management**

Through a real-time shared IT system set up and administrated by InvestSefton, senior officer relationships with businesses, developers and investors are logged and accessible to management teams, improving sharing of information between departments and increasing service efficiency.

## **5 Employment & Access to Work (Contact: [Claire.maguire@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:Claire.maguire@sefton.gov.uk))**

### **Sefton@work- Ways to Work continuation/interim funding**

- 5.1 Sefton has now received a draft grant offer letter for the sum of £688,000 SIF for 6 months for the continuation of Ways to Work after the expiry of the European Social funding at the end of September 2023 through to end March 2024, when UKSPF begins to be implemented. This grant has now been approved by the Council and Sefton@work has commenced implementation of the new scheme.

### **Ways to Work – UKSPF funding for 2024/25**

- 5.2 The Liverpool City Region UKSPF investment plan incorporates resource for providing assistance to people out of the workforce to re-enter work (referred to as workstreams E33 and L2) and for assistance with large scale recruitment or redundancy. However, this funding will only cover support for people who meet the government's definition of economically inactive, so some service users may not be eligible. A delivery plan has now been completed and supplied to the LCR-CA investment team for their consideration and to commence the CA's scrutiny and approvals process.

### **LCR-CA Mayoral Young Persons Guarantee**

- 5.3 Following a proposal from LCR Growth Directors group, this scheme will now be largely operated through the LA employment services. In effect, the Ways to Work service will be undertaking this scheme via the structure to be funded by SIF/UKSPF as there is insufficient finance to operate this as a stand-alone scheme. Sefton is expecting to receive a share of this funding allocation to distribute to employers in the form of employer grants and wage incentives for recruitment of eligible young people who will need to have been workless for a period of six months to qualify. The Sefton@work team is devising appropriate processes and documentation to support this project and will supply this to the LCRCA for their sign-off.

# Agenda Item 8

## Sefton@work General Performance Data for October 2023

Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service for ESF support	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016 – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	5,296
Clients accessing service post ESF	From 1 October 2023	89
New clients registering by age	October 2023	16-24 24 25-49 37 50+ 18 Unknown 10
SIF W2W contracts Male	Since 01/10/2023 October 2023	66.7% 66.7%
SIF W2W contracts Female	Since 01/10/2023 October 2023	33.3% 33.3%
SIF W2W contracts Other	Since 01/10/2023 October 2023	0.0% 0.0%
SIF W2W clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/10/2020 October 2023	54.2% 54.2%
SIF W2W clients without basic skills	Since 01/10/2023 October 2023	39.6% 39.6%
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	30
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	ESF, LCR SIF + 200 from other programmes <b>Total 2,355</b>

### Sefton@work Service Updates

#### Sefton@work Relocation

5.4 The shopfitting work programme has now been completed and the next phase has been embarked upon to relocate the service from its Stanely road base in Bootle into the Strand. This includes the renovation of the external areas and windows and the installation of new signage. A furniture package is also under order, including a bespoke enquires and registration desk which will be custom-made for the Service to accommodate needs of disabled clients.

5.5 The relocation project plan reflects arrangements for communications with service users, stakeholders and referral agencies and there will be a period of transfer of operations and final snagging etc. The team is expecting the full transfer of services across to the new Unit will take place early in the New Year 2024.

5.6 The team has been meeting with corporate communications colleagues to formulate a plan for the entire relocation project to include signage around the Strand, opening events in early February 2024, videos for existing clients and referral partners.

## **Voluntary Routeway**

5.7 The Voluntary Routeway Programme offers placements to those who need experience to enhance their CVs or easing back into the world of work. Placements were recently offered within SMBC School Meals, Sandway Homes, Sefton Libraries (Formby & Crosby), Green Sefton, Sefton CAB, Sefton Adult Community Learning, Sefton@work, Citizens Advice Bootle and Citizens Advice Southport. This programme responds to the needs of our long term excluded client groups who are struggling to enter the labour market through mainstream recruitment processes. 18 clients in total started their 10-week part-time placement at the end of September and benefitted from an accredited 2-day pre-placement course delivered by SACL. Clients have been provided with any uniforms required and all travel expenses will be reimbursed.

## **Mental Health Awareness Raising**

5.8 Planning is underway for a course to be run in December for a 2-day mental health/wellness course to cover confidence and self-esteem techniques to help clients stay positive over the Christmas period. It is planned that clients will also be issued with a fortnightly bus pass to coincide with the time S@W is closed over Christmas. A booklet will also be provided of all free events/activities happening over Christmas to help people with positive mood. This aims to encourage clients to be more active and build confidence during a time which many report feeling overwhelmed and stressful, especially in combination with managing a low income.

## **Digital Inclusion**

5.9 Following the success of wave 1.2 of the Digital Inclusion Initiative in partnership with LCR & Lloyds we will be hosting another 4 sessions with over 40 residents booked in to attend to complete a short digital intervention and receive a tablet with 6 months data.

## **New Employment opportunities**

5.10 A key growth sector employer has approached Sefton to manage ongoing recruitment for vacancies in civils and fibre-optics work. They have contracts across the North-West and are struggling to staff them due to skills shortages. Sefton@work is looking at developing a routeway into this sector which will include training for Street-Works Operative, Safe Working in Civils and Underground Safety and keen for us to promote this to the females.

## **New Agreement with Citizens Advice**

5.11 Due to a rise in issues with debt and housing the team have been working with CAB to arrange for them to deliver advice and casework on site in the new premises, allowing priority access to Sefton clients but also to the wider community as a co-located offer. Once concluded, the team will capture these



# Agenda Item 8

new working arrangements in an agreement in line with a draft protocol for co-location and outreach which will be place as a cornerstone of the operational plan for the new premises.

## **Client Feedback**

5.12 The team has recently published results of client feedback for September and October in line with commitment to customer service excellence. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from clients. The team has published the results via website and socials and also have the presentation playing on the screen in the reception of the Bootle office or via this link: [https://www.canva.com/design/DAFyylsRrGk/j459K5PDZa78D2eMIP2IQ/edit?utm\\_content=DAFyylsRrGk&utm\\_campaign=designshare&utm\\_medium=link2&utm\\_source=sharebutton](https://www.canva.com/design/DAFyylsRrGk/j459K5PDZa78D2eMIP2IQ/edit?utm_content=DAFyylsRrGk&utm_campaign=designshare&utm_medium=link2&utm_source=sharebutton)

## **Social Value – Sainsbury’s Southport recruitment**

5.13 The recruitment effort has begun for a new Sainsbury's store due to open in Meols Cop early 2024 with around 150 additional, new jobs being created. Working with Southport JCP, Sefton@Work and SACL, the council will deliver relevant sector-based training for clients applying for the opportunities with guaranteed interviews. To date 11 Sefton@Work clients have attended the training at SACL. Sefton@Work is also organising a recruitment open-day early for Sainsbury's in November to encourage other applications to its positions, particularly those from vulnerable groups. Southport Town Hall is to host this event and are expecting a big response from the level of initial interest received. This work has resulted from an employment and training plan secured with Sainsbury's connected to their conditions for planning permission to open the new site which was put in place some years ago.

The online newsletter contains several case studies which can be viewed here:

[Flash Extra Issue 02 - July 2023 \(canva.com\)](#)

## **National Recognition for Social Mobility**

5.14 Sefton@work has been shortlisted as a finalist in the 2023 national awards from Inclusive Companies, in the Social Mobility category. This is a prestigious award from a groundbreaking national agency which highlights diversity and equalities issues. Sefton@work is shortlisted alongside some international concerns and household names from across all sectors.

## **Sefton Caring Business Charter Update**

- 5.15 The team has chosen to roll out the Charter project using a number of implementation methods, including:
- A Launch event in Summer 2022 to acknowledge the Charter signatories
  - Ongoing Recruitment of Companies and Stakeholder partners to the Charter via Sefton@work, Invest Sefton, Procurement, the Growth Programme and the Southport Town Deal
  - Industry standard account management principles adopted for the Charter secure regular updates to Employers and regulate the currency of opportunities



- The appointment of a Co-ordinator post seconded into Sefton@work, with the post holder having lived experience of care.
- Establishment of a cross-sectoral Case Conferencing Group for Matching Referrals into opportunities
- Regular production of a Charter news bulletin called the Beacon with a circulation to all schools, training providers and colleges and all departments in the Council
- Introduction of an annual Careers Market Place event – with **21** ringfenced jobs for post 16 young people

## The Impact of the Charter

- 5.16 The Charter Co-ordinator (a young person with experience of care herself) is currently working with **41** Active Employers, and **62** employers in total have signed the Charter. To date, there have been **58** referrals from partners and the following positive outcomes have been achieved for young people:
- **9** have been supported into full time employment, **3** of whom are in apprenticeships.
  - **1** has a pending interview with Childrens Social Services for an apprenticeship.
  - **2** have moved back into full time education to improve their qualifications.
  - **1** is currently on a personal development programme with the Princes Trust.
  - **6** are being supported by Sefton@Work through the DWP Restart Programme
  - **1** young person is undertaking a “Find your Purpose” intervention with Sefton@work
- 5.17 The latest issue of the Beacon was circulated on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2023. The current circulation list stands at **201** recipients and the document are also uploaded on to the Schools portal so that designated teachers and careers staff can access the live opportunities and refer eligible young people.

## Summary of Current Live Opportunities by type of Offer

Activity	Description	No of Employer offers
<b>Taster Days</b>	Spending 1 – 2 days in an employer setting learning different aspects of the business being shadowed by a member of staff. Potential to move on to an offer of a structured work experience.	20
<b>Structured Work Experience</b>	Opportunity for young people to gain a better understanding of what the business is and what they do. Each opportunity will vary in content and duration. They can start with a taster day, which could lead onto structured work experience.	19

# Agenda Item 8

<b>Site Visits</b>	Groups or accompanied individuals are invited to visit the site to see what the working environment is like before committing to a taster/placement or choosing this career direction. Visits may be short (1hr) or may take place over several hours depending on the company and the group size.	14
<b>Presentations</b>	Companies willing to offer interactive presentations about their business sector and their own experiences of working in the sector. They can offer careers advice about ways into a specific career. Delivered to groups in schools, colleges, or referral partner settings	15
<b>Work Placements</b>	Structured work placements will help young people gain even more experience in the career that they are interested in. They can choose to do a work placement after you have either done a taster day or some work experience.	11
<b>Mentoring Support</b>	Business owners have agreed to offer mentoring support face to face or remotely via teams, to support small groups of people with motivation, confidence, and aspiration. Delivered to groups in schools, colleges, or referral partner settings	14

- The Jobs Fair/ Career Marketplace was hosted at Sefton Adult and Community Learning Centre in Cambridge Road on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A range of 21 ring-fenced jobs, apprenticeships and structured work placements were available on the day. In addition, young people had access to our partner services including financial advice, work benefit calculations, budgeting, debt management and mental health support. There was also support from our Sefton@work, our NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. **15** partners attended and **16** young people attended the event. **1** young person was offered an apprenticeship and **2** have been offered guaranteed interviews and future taster days with an employer.
- As part of the Careers Marketplace, we ring-fenced 21 vacancies for our care experienced young people, with a range of employers including Sefton Council Apprenticeship Team, Sefton Carers, New Directions, Michail Hotel & Leisure, Autism Initiatives, Chapel House Motors, Fun4Kidz, Heron Foods, Millmead Optical Group, McDonalds, KFC, Ransted Education and Wyndson's World of Shoes. These vacancies are still live or on extended application period and have been circulated to key partners for them to promote to their young people, who will each be offered a guaranteed interview if they chose to make an application. Support to complete applications is available through both Sefton@work and Career Connect.
- The Council has entered into a 1-year Employment and Enterprise pilot project with Merseyside Expanding Horizons Big Onion project, based in the Strand Shopping Centre. This pilot will support up to 10 care experienced young people to enable them to access and sustain employment or self-employment opportunities. The package of support includes a person-centred approach to

enable participants to safely explore entrepreneurialism and business start-up. The pilot includes a range of key skills such as confidence building, team-working and workplace communications as well as specific skills including business planning, customer service and managing finance.

## Sefton Adult Community Learning Service

### General performance Update

5.18 The table below indicates the year-to-date figures for this academic year from August 2023. It is notable that while the number of learners still needs to increase, there is a pattern of a majority of learners, progressing through more than one learning aim, showing confidence in service and progression from one to onto another. 2023/24 shows a slight reduction in the number of learners on this time last year but continues to show that of the learners engaged they are positively progressing into 1 or more learning aims on this time last year.



#### Performance update

*Year to Date Comparison*

*August to Mid November*

	Target	18/19*	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total number of learners	2000	831	863	284	437	660	614
Total number of unique learning aims	2940	1098	1127	404	527	783	796

*\* 18/19 was the last full year before covid*

5.19 The Progression survey is now complete this indicates that 97% of learners successfully completed a course with Sefton Community Learning Service and 85% of learners progressed into employment, on to further education or voluntary work.

### Communication and Events

5.20 The 2024 Spring prospectus is finalised and 3,000 have been ordered for distribution. Throughout the month of December, 16,000 will be delivered door-to-door focusing on the Bootle area. Digital copies have gone live and information on new courses has been circulated to all partners.

5.21 The Service is looking to increase the number of learners to its core qualification courses, namely English, Maths, Digital Skills, Employability, and ESOL. Therefore, we are looking to place greater emphasis on digital channels to achieve the service's aims, having utilised other parts of the marketing mix previously

5.22 The focus on digital engagement channels will see a very deliberate approach to reach audiences that have otherwise proven difficult to reach, (in particular younger learners in their twenties) and will be underpinned by the introduction of a new Community Learning Service section of the Sefton Council website, which will in turn incorporate a new booking system via the MeLearning system currently used by the Corporate Learning Centre.

# Agenda Item 8

5.23 The new approach to promoting the service, is also effectively a launch for its new look site and a streamlined booking process.

The aim therefore is to :

- Launch the new look site with an online booking system
- Manage the Culture shift to this digital -first approach in the promotion of service and its courses.

Measured Objectives

- Increase number of tutors and learners with available capacity in the autumn term
- Increase number of learners for core qualification subjects for Spring 2024 term
- Create a baseline for digital campaigns for compared purposes with future campaigns
- Social media advertising the Christmas Fair on 2nd December, enrolment days 2 & 4th December and 4 & 5 January for courses starting 9th January 2024.

Expected Outcomes

- Greater awareness levels of the service among Sefton communities
- Increased take up of courses, especially for core subjects
- Increase tutor recruitment from more diverse backgrounds

To further increase the visibility and profile of the service, some 20+ events were and are to be attended in November and December.

## **Pathways to Teaching Project**

5.24 Following the success of the 2022/2023 Pathways to Teaching Pilot, Liverpool City Region has agreed to fund a second year of activity. To date there are 5 learners on programme, and all have successfully completed and achieved their community learning element and progressed onto the Level 3 Education and Training course. Early indication shows it is a strong group of learners so we are confident of a high completion rate across the group.

5.25 The Pathways to Teaching Celebration event for the initial pilot took place on the 8th of November. It was a great celebration and a fantastic way to conclude the project.

## **Multiply numeracy provision**

- 5.26 The following VCS organisations were successful in securing Multiply grant awards for the delivery of innovative maths interventions:
- Merseyside Expanding Horizons “ Big Onion”
  - Acronym Community Empowerment
  - Phoenix Youth and Community Centre
  - The Inclusion Network
  - Rotunda

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

## **New Test and Learn Pilots for 2023/24**

- 5.28 This year there have negotiated 3 new pilots for Test and Learn, as follows:

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

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

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

## **SACL Case-study**

### **Learner Journey, Level 3 Award in Education (Pathway to Teaching)**

- *The Level 3 Award in Education and Training course was exactly the kind of opportunity I had been looking for to re-train and re-establish myself in employment. I've always enjoyed working with people in an educational setting so training to become a community learning tutor seemed like a natural progression from my previous experience. Training at Sefton Community Learning Service (SCLS) has been a great experience for me. I have really enjoyed the opportunities the course has provided. Our course tutor Jayne and all the staff have been very supportive throughout. After completing the course, I have now moved onto the next step and I'm really looking forward to working at SCLS, delivering programmes to assist other adult learners towards attaining successful outcomes. Look out for my 'Origami for Beginners' course in January 2024. Hope to see you there!*

### **Level 3 Award in Education (Pathway to Teaching)**

- *My New Year's resolution was to make more time for myself and what better way to do this than learning a new skill. I came across Sefton Community Learning Service (SCLS) on social media and signed up for the Level 3 Award in Education*

# Agenda Item 8

*which is a post 16 and adult teaching qualification. I previously taught craft workshops so know that I enjoy sharing knowledge and interacting with people. On completion of my qualification, I applied for a job as sessional tutor at SCLS and was successful. I really like the community spirit here and I am looking forward to delivering a wide variety of classes and meeting more learners*

## NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service

### September 2023 Performance

- 5.29 Performance nationally for September contains high levels of Not Known destinations as this is the time of the year when young people are in transition to either Post 16 provision or moving into year 2 of their learning at College or school.
- 5.30 The data for our monthly performance for NEET and Not Known is facilitated locally by Career Connect and verified with government sources using the NCCIS database which each LA is required to update monthly. This forms part of the tracking element of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. The purpose of this tracking is to identify, target and support those young people at an early stage as possible so they can benefit from early support to re-engage them and divert them away from longer term exclusion from learning and work.
- 5.31 The significant variation in the rate of Not Known across the LCR LAs for this time of year indicates that part of the reason Sefton's performance continues to be successful relates to the timely flow of information between Career Connect and schools, colleges or providers allied with early intervention and prevention support able to be implemented as swiftly as possible to the groups that require it.
- 5.32 These significant variations in Not Knowns can be seen in the table below which highlights the comparison between NEET/NotKnown rates across the Liverpool City Region.

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

Area	NEET	NK	Combined	Current NEET Rank	Current NK Rank	Current Combined Rank
Sefton	3.00%	8.50%	11.50%	2	2	1
Halton	3.20%	8.30%	11.50%	3	1	1
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	<b>2.40%</b>	<b>22.60%</b>	<b>25.00%</b>			

# Agenda Item 8

St. Helens	3.70%	29.80%	33.50%	4	3	2
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>32.60%</b>	<b>34.60%</b>			
Knowsley	4.50%	30.90%	35.40%	5	4	3
Liverpool	5.60%	66.60%	72.20%	6	5	4
Wirral	2.20%	86.20%	88.40%	1	6	5

- Sefton and Halton have the lowest combined NEET/NK % across the LCR area, North West and England.
- Although Sefton is ranked 1<sup>st</sup> with Halton, their cohort is considerably smaller than Sefton's (Sefton is 5819, Halton is 3255).
- Sefton 16-17 NEET/NK is -13.5% which is below North West and – 23.1% below England.
- 10.46% of the 16-17 NEET and Not Known cohorts are within one or more of Sefton's vulnerable groups (70 out of 669), this low figure within our cohort demonstrates that working with our young people earlier helps us to identify and support those who are NEET or at risk of NEET earlier.
- Although Not Knowns has increased by 1.8% year on year, we remain 14.1% below NW and 24.1% below England national averages for the same period.

## Year on Year Comparisons

The tables below show our year-on-year comparison in relation to Academic Age 16-17 NEET and combined NEET/NK and our Academic 18 NEET (local target)

<b>Academic Age 16-17 Combined NEET /NK</b>	<b>Sep-23</b>	<b>Sep-22</b>
2022/23 Previous Performance	9.38%	9.49%
2023/24 16-17 Combined NEET and NK %	11.50%	9.38%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>2.12%</b>	<b>0.12%</b>
2023/24 16-17 Combined NEET and NK figures	669	534
2023/24 16-17 Combined Cohort Figure	5819	5696

<b>Academic Age 16-17 Actual NEET</b>	<b>Sep-23</b>	<b>Sep-22</b>
2022/23 Previous Performance	2.69%	2.06%
2023/24 Actual NEET %	2.96%	2.69%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>0.27%</b>	<b>0.63%</b>

# Agenda Item 8

2023/24 Actual NEET figure	172	153
2023/24 Total Cohort	5819	5696

Academic Age 16-18 Actual NEET	Sep-23	Sep-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	3.24%	2.73%
2023/24 Actual NEET %	3.18%	3.24%
<b>Difference</b>	<b>-0.06%</b>	<b>0.51%</b>
2023/24 Actual NEET figure	274	277
2023/24 Total Cohort	8612	8552

NEET Joiners and Leavers	Sep-23	Sep-22
Total number of NEET Joiners	128	138
Total number of NEET Leavers	48	37

- NEET for 16-17 has increased by 19 young people in comparison to September 22 however, the overall cohort has increased by 123 young people.
- 18-year-old NEET has decreased by 3 young people year on year
- We had 10 fewer NEET joiners at 128 compared to 138 in September 2022 and 11 more NEET leavers which confirms that we placed 48 NEET young people into EET compared to 31 last year.
- **Care Experienced Young People (In borough)**

5.33 As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service offer, Career Connect support 55% (95 young people) of the care experienced young people cohort, these are those living in the borough. Virtual school support those living outside of the borough (ie 76 young people)

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

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
16	3	11.5%	23	88.5%	26
17	4	13%	27	87%	31
18	20	53%	18	47%	38
	27	28%	68	72%	95

- . There are currently 7 young people 16-17 who are NEET, 12% of the total cohort (57)
- 72% of the overall cohort (95) are EET and 28% are NEET.
- To support in and out of borough NEET and at risk of NEET care experienced young people, a working group has been set up with Youth Justice and Virtual School to identify how we can work together to improve attendance and engagement, provide careers advice and guidance and plan for post 16 transition.



## September Guarantee

5.34 This is the Statutory Duty on all local authorities to ensure that all young people in school Year 11 and Year 12 have an appropriate offer of education, employment, or training by the end of September each year. Appropriate offers must include working towards an accredited qualification. Last month, Career Connect completed 1,200 home visits and contacted 887 young people by phone as part of the tracking of 8,000 young people from September

### Year 11 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 3,160

Sefton Performance		%
Offers Made	3124	98.8%
No Offers Made	36	1.2%

5.35 Of the 36 young people who did not meet the guarantee for September:

- 10 are in employment without training to Level 2
- 4 are not participating due to personal circumstances.
- 5 have made applications and are awaiting outcomes.
- 7 did not apply.
- 10 are currently uncontactable – due to change of address or other causes and Career Connect will continue to attempt contact if possible.

### Year 12 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 2,920

Sefton Performance		%
Offers Made	2774	95%
No Offers Made	146	5%

Of the 146 young people who did not meet the guarantee for September:

- 23 are in employment without training to Level 2
- 10 are not participating due to personal circumstances.
- 6 have an offer proven inappropriate at this time.
- 10 have made applications and are awaiting outcome.
- 17 have not applied for any course of learning
- 80 are currently uncontactable, due to change of address or other.

- **Case Study - Parent Feedback**

- This Client has been NEET since October 2021 due to ongoing mental health condition; they are now 20 years of age and through the continued support from their Personal Adviser they have now secured an offer and started a course with the Princes Trust. Through the Career Connect client survey questionnaire, the following response was received from the client's parent.

*I would personally like to thank Paul Cooke & his team on behalf of my daughter XXX XXX & myself for the consistent support Paul offered which finally led to my daughter being offered a place on the Prince's Trust course. This has potentially changed XXX's life for the better as after a long illness XXX was basically bedbound & struggling with severe mental health issues when I reached out for*

# Agenda Item 8

*their help, that lead to the engagement of Paul & his team, due to his continuous & consistent approach staying in touch offering advice & opportunities to XXX she eventually found the confidence to do the Prince Trust 12 week course.....As her mother witnessing the transformation from the first day she started the course to 12 weeks later seeing her growth not only in her confidence but the overall impact this has had on her life in general it is truly amazing, Thank you so much*

## **6 Regenerated Places-Contact: [heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk)**

### **Southport Town Deal**

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

#### **Marine Lake Events Centre & Water and Light Show**

The Marine Lake Events Centre is progressing with key milestones being met, when finished the £73m venue will generate over £18m to the local economy and attract an additional 500,000 visitors to Southport. Work progresses on the Marine Lake Events Centre following securing detailed planning approval in April 2023.

Some of the key milestones achieved to date include:

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

Work is progressing on progressing the main contract work in early 2024.

6.2 6<sup>th</sup> September 2023 - Southport Conference Bureau and Regeneration Team hosted a careers event at Southport Market for 180, Year 9 Meols Cop High School students. The morning session of the event gave students the opportunity to hear about the exciting opportunities connected to the MLEC project and the wider Town Deal regeneration projects.

6.3 30th November 2023 - Women in Construction session with Hugh Baird College with members from the project team (AFL, Sefton, G&T, IPW, CBRE and Kier). The session shared information on women's roles in construction, career routes and challenges and was well received.

#### **Southport Market**

Southport Market continues to operate successfully and contribute to the vitality of the town centre with the range of food and drink on offer at the market and flexible events space. One of the first Town deal projects to be completed, the market has attracted thousands of customers to date and continues to attract visitors from Southport and beyond.

## **Enterprise Arcade,**

The Enterprise Arcade has just moved forward with its next key milestone with the appointment of a contractor with work anticipated to start in Jan 2024. Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project and will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport

Design work is finished for the construction contract and the contractor is due to start in the new year.

## **Les Transformation de Southport**

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

## **Building a Better Customer Experience**

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

The pilot of the Building Better Customer Experience Training with Southport College has now been completed, in total 68 learners participated in the pilot including existing learners currently enrolled at the college and employees of a local business. The feedback received during and after the pilot programme was exceptionally positive and Southport College are now proposing to roll the course out to larger cohorts to meet demand. Training for volunteers and workless people through Sefton's Adult & Community Learning service is also proposed as part of this pilot programme. Southport College have collaborated with 27 businesses north of the borough, they have also delivered focus groups with a range of learners and feedback was very positive, learners felt that the modules covered a range of topics which have enhanced their skills and increased confidence levels.

## **Bootle Strand Repurposing**

- 6.4 On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Cabinet considered the 5-year Business Plan for Bootle Strand Shopping Centre and transformation project including agreement to progress to the next stage with the £20m levelling up funding approved in March 2023. A key catalyst project for Bootle's wider regeneration, this decision marks a major milestone in progressing this complex project whilst also keeping the Strand open to support the community that rely on its shops and services.
- 6.5 A shop unit has been opened up in the Strand (Former Durham beds unit) by one of the main entrances to share the emerging plans for the Strand , secure feedback from the public and share the proposed first stage of demolition work which was granted planning approval December 2023.
- 6.6 The £20m DLUHC funding will assist with the first phase of delivery work which will include and build on the Salt and Tar events space. Following the announcement of Sir Tom Jones playing there in August 2024, the construction programme will be adjusted to take account of this to maintain momentum through the demolition period. An operational manager has been appointed to manage

# Agenda Item 8

the site and organised the marketing, trader recruitment and site logistics for the Festive Food and Drink Market event and fair 8-10 December 2023 including supporting The Strand with their Christmas event with use of the site for a fairground and taking on a stewardship role on the day.

## **Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works**

- 6.10 Following conversations with residents, community groups and previous wider consultation on this area, the Council announced earlier this year that it would be looking to develop an updated vision for the coastal gateway in response to the feedback received.
- 6.11 The Council have appointed a specialist planning and development consultancy to undertake a feasibility study for the coastal gateway. The consultant, Turley, will look at all assets at the site, including The Sands, Toad Hall, Council operational bases, and options for their development.

Further details can be found here - [Council shares next steps for Ainsdale-on-Sea \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk)

## **Ainsdale Toilet Refurbishment and Changing Places Toilets**

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

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

- 6.13 Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) in 2022, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site.
- 6.14 Sefton is assessing responses received and carrying out further discussion with parties who have expressed an interest as part of ongoing due diligence. Marketing of the site will continue in the interim. Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills](#) and [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#)

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

- 6.15 In February 2023 Cabinet agreed the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Two further properties have recently completed and a renewed effort to bring in the remaining ownerships outstanding is progressing.

- 6.16 Cabinet agreed to progress appointing agents to explore the market for this site, in order to support the Council's ambitions for change. Work is ongoing, however initial expressions of interest from the market are positive and the results are being considered by officers and members. Details of the marketing brochure can be found here: [Sandbrook Way, Ainsdale PR8 3RW - Keppie Massie](#)

**7 Housing- Contact: [lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk)**

- 7.1 Sefton continues to deliver on its housing development targets in 22/23, with over 700 new homes (net) completed this year. Additionally, the future 'pipeline' of housing sites remains positive, based on schemes that are onsite and with planning consent in place in 23/24 and beyond. This delivery is positive against a backdrop of challenging economic conditions with higher interest rates and very high construction inflation affecting this sector, in particular and set to continue over the short and medium term.
- 7.2 The Housing Team continues to work across a range of departments both internally and externally to help deliver homes across a range of tenures to facilitate growth. Particularly affordable housing in high demand areas, and aspirational housing to enable individuals and families settle and thrive.
- 7.3 On Sandway Homes' developments at Hey Farm Gardens (Barton's Close, Crossens) and Sandy Brook (Meadow Lane, Ainsdale) of the 53 completed market homes 70% are now owner occupied, with only 7 open market plots remaining for sale. All the 25 Affordable Homes (including 11 shared-ownership houses) are now occupied by their new tenants.

*A key project for the Housing Team relates to the Council Housing programme. The team is working closely with Sandway Homes on a range of sites to deliver the first Council owned and managed social homes in almost two decades. At Buckley Hill Lane, Netherton development will commence next month (Nov 23) and see the first market homes delivered in late summer 2024 with the Social-Rented homes being delivered in early 2025. Further sites identified for Sandway's future development programme, ensures that further Council homes will be delivered in the near future to help meet people's housing needs.*



# Agenda Item 8

- 7.4 Housing development and regeneration schemes continue right across Sefton, from Bootle to Maghull and from Formby to Southport. These large-scale developments offer homes across a range of tenures and ensure that the key themes and priorities in Sefton Housing Strategy are successfully implemented. Additionally, regeneration opportunities in Bootle and Southport Town Centres are being used as a catalyst to help boost housing delivery and improve the quality of existing homes and neighbourhoods within these localities. Working alongside Planning and Regeneration Teams to deliver on schemes such as the Bootle Area Action Plan, Southport Town Deal & extending Selective and Additional Licensing schemes in the privately rented sector. These will all assist unlocking land for new homes alongside improving housing conditions in existing neighbourhoods.

## **8 Tourism-Contact: [mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk)**

- 8.1 The tourism service continues to deliver a wider range of services across Sefton that includes:

- Destination Marketing
- Major Events
- Conferences and Sales
- Salt & Tar
- Seafront Operations
- Southport Market
- Visitor Economy Strategy
- Visitor Economy led regeneration projects such as MLEC

- 8.2 There have been several highlights over the last quarter with major activity at salt and tar, major events and the MLEC.

- 8.3 Salt & Tar – Salt and tar is a new emerging events space in Bootle, infrastructure works are nearing completion. However, in July a music weekender was held to officially trial the site and launch the Salt & Tar venue. Working in partnership with Sound City and Live Nation a 3-day music weekender was planned and implemented at Salt and Tar in July 2023. With a 3,000-capacity making use of the whole site the event had 3 headliners supported by local bands: The Lathums (sold 1,800), Red Rum Club (sold 3,000) and Cast (sold 1,300).

- 8.4 This was the first major event to take place on Salt and Tar, even though the site was not 100% complete. The event should be deemed as a major success attracting over 6,000 people over the weekend, visitors came from all over the region with many coming from Bootle, Sefton, Liverpool City Region and much further such as Cumbria. Strand shopping centre have also reported a positive increase of 13.8% to their footfall figures compared to the same weekend last year.

- 8.5 Due to the high profile of the event the social media interaction on the Salt and Tar channels grew rapidly leading up to and during the event. Also, many of the visitors from outside The City Region had not been to Bootle before, this demonstrates the power of events to attract and change perception.



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

8.7 Some of the key milestones achieved to date include:

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

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

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

## 9. **Planning-Contact: [ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk)**

9.1 The Planning service delivers a wide range of regulatory performance indicators and the for the purposes of the economic strategy these focus on increased employment floorspace for industrial and storage uses; social value opportunities generated from planning applications and contributions to new employment. There is also a shared Sefton KPI with housing for new net dwellings built per annum.

9.2 Planning works closely with other teams across the council to help ensure that while regulations are adhered to, every opportunity to support economic growth is maximised and this is evident in the way joint developer/business meetings are held alongside Regeneration, employment, and business support officers. The council has gained a reputation for business friendly, and this is reflected in the way enquiries are handled.

9.3 There is no target in the Local Plan for amount of employment floorspace development of number of jobs provided. However, reference can be made to previous years for comparison where an increase of previous years should be the aim. The figure for 2021/22 was lower than in previous years (at just 2,500m<sup>2</sup>). However, data for 2022/23 has shown a tenfold increase.

9.4 The data of the number of jobs secured on new employment development can be difficult to ascertain and in many cases this information is not provided. However, the Council have recently approved a Social Value (Employment and Skills) from Development SPD which should help secure this data in a timely and consistent manner. The service works closely with Sefton@work to help maximise local job opportunities for residents

# Agenda Item 8

- 9.5 The SPD sets out that proposals of a certain scale (i.e. new housing of 30+ homes, certain commercial development of 1,000m2 floorspace) must be supported by an Employment and Skills Plan, which will be secured by legal agreement and monitored for implementation.
- 9.6 The target of 640 net additional dwellings is the Local Plan average annual requirement for 2012-2030, although the government's standard methodology figure has 587 homes for Sefton. In recent years the Council have comfortably met its housing delivery target.

## 10 Social Inclusion & Access for all

### Equalities-Contact: [paul.mcann@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:paul.mcann@sefton.gov.uk)

- 10.1 A Corporate Equality Group (CEG) has been newly established to support the Council with its commitment to integrate Equality and Diversity throughout its services and to help secure its vision of creating stronger, more resilient communities (Sefton Vision 2030). CEG will monitor the council's performance in relation to equality and diversity and KPIS focus on communications and engagement, improving employment rates and business support for people in disadvantaged areas, reviewing equality and diversity data and engaging with the LCR Race Equality Monitoring group.
- 10.2 The Council has produced and launched its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-27. InvestSefton meeting with the LCR's new Director of Race Equality Group in November to discuss business engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic business groups.
- 10.3 As reported under Business Growth and Investment, work has also been commissioned to Sefton based MEH/Safe Regeneration to provide business start-up support to individuals seeking to become self-employed and/or start their own business. Specific focus areas include town centres and people from disadvantaged areas and special characteristic groups.

### Sustainable Travel-Contact ; [lee.davies@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:lee.davies@sefton.gov.uk)

- 10.4 The Low Carbon Transport Strategy has several specific areas of working being progressed to refine the council's baseline. Based on the approved consultation plan the team is now bringing together drafts and materials needed to deliver an inclusive consultation.
- 10.5 The Maritime Corridor is the next stage of this work and will include engagement on the preferred designs in July to September 2023. The Southport Eastern Access Business Case is progressing well and will be the subject of further consultation in August to October 2023. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is in development and plan for engagement have been approved by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel. Wider developments are being progressed by the LCRCA around bus reform and green bus routes. Moving Buses Forward consultation is live until the 3rd of August.

### Net Zero/Low Carbon-Contact: [stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk)



# Agenda Item 8

- 10.6 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have set a target of net zero for all parts of the economy to be net zero by 2040. This will require all Sefton businesses to halt the use of gas, diesel, oil and only use energy from renewable resources by 2040.
- 10.7 Examples within this Action plan includes (TBC) On transport - Complete Phase 2 of 'State of Freight' investigation into a future zero carbon freight solution, ensuring that this is aligned with our Freeport goals of decarbonisation and good jobs to deliver outcomes including last mile ZE deliveries and reduce trips, scope options for mechanisms to seek to support decarbonisation of freight, and develop a freight strategy and that connects Freeport locations in a net zero manner
- 10.8 On buildings - Identify high-opportunity zones as areas for groups of home/business owners to plan retrofits together or create low carbon communal/district energy schemes and smart networks. On Industry - a series of targets around the following.
- To effectively transition to net zero, our industrial base will need cost-effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage technologies alongside efficiency and storage technologies alongside efficiency improvements in process and delivery systems improvements in process and delivery systems.
  - On Clean Energy - Progress the Phase 3 development activities related to Mersey Tidal (LCR Year 1 action plan review SE6) and commence Phase 4 activity to Consent a UK first of a kind (FOAK) Tidal range scheme.
  - On Natural Environment - Develop a pipeline and identify potential funding for pilot innovative and sustainable agricultural projects, such as urban farming, greenbelt agroecological farming, carbon capture etc. Other issues pertinent to business - MEES Regulations applies to non-domestic rented properties, by 1/4/23 must have an EPC rating of E as a minimum to be able to be rented, plans for this to increase over time (possible EPC D by 2025, EPC C by 2028 and EPC B by 2030) Investment in green technologies e.g. building retrofit, EV charging, Heat pump installations will help to generate local jobs and training opportunities.
- 10.9 InvestSefton has also allocated UKSPF to provide business sustainability support in town centres Sustainability is high on the agenda for conference buyers and events/exhibition organisers and with this in mind it is critical that as part of the planning process for the Marine Lakeside Events Centre (MLEC) opening 2026 that as a destination Sefton begins to build the sustainability offer. The project will measure the business carbon footprint, design an action plan to reduce and produce a sustainability policy.

**Health & Wellbeing-Contact: [helen.armitage@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:helen.armitage@sefton.gov.uk)**

- 10.10 This is a new subset introduced to the economic strategy and reflecting it's importance in terms of sustaining and growing a healthy economy. The dashboard provides a wide range of health determinants drawn from both the Public Health performance and Child Poverty Accountability and progress frameworks.

# Agenda Item 8

- 10.11 It is important to note that indicators reflecting population status and inequalities in outcomes such as median income, child poverty, school readiness, and spatial measures of deprivation are highly correlated with population health outcomes and inequalities.
- 10.12 During Quarter two there were no published updates to these indicators from open access data sources. At the start of this period a successful, largescale event was held to stimulate development and implementation of actions to improve children's prospects in education, training and employment. A conference summary has been shared with attendees. This period also saw the launch of 'We're Here', which is a long-term promotion of different sources of advice and support for mental health and wellbeing. Feedback from members of the public has reflected genuine appreciation from people in need.
- 10.13 The process of recommissioning Sefton's Living Well Sefton integrated health and wellbeing service continues, which includes a social prescribing offer supporting people who are struggling with welfare, debt, and other cost of living concerns. Quarter two also saw the launch of a parallel service for children and young People - 'Happy 'n' Healthy', and finalisation of a pilot of a community-led childhood respiratory support service. An anticipated outcome of both services is an increase in parents' ability to maintain and participate in employment and training secondary to reduced childcare responsibilities.
- 10.14 Unfortunately, there have been delays which have prevented the publication and dissemination of academic insight work into the experiences of parents and children who currently experience poverty in Sefton. This throws an important light on the many trade-offs between work, caring, benefits and health behaviours that families must make, and the final report will be available for SES leads to study and learn from shortly.
- 10.15 The introduction of the socio-economic duty and shared learning events have presented the opportunity for possible joint working with Salford Council on suggested actions from the Childhood Poverty Strategy such as poverty-proofing checklist with broad applicability to a range of organisations and services. Planning is also underway for the next Child Poverty Conference Event on the theme of Places in January 2024, as well as microsite to host and share best practice and foster collaboration. Upcoming professional development opportunities will support new policy development for example on Health Impact Assessment.

**Digital-Contact:** [helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk](mailto:helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk)

- 10.16 Members will be aware that the council also has an existing digital strategy which has been aligned with the economic strategy demonstrating clear synergies and shared objectives. Key highlights include:

# Agenda Item 8

- Social value scheme for connectivity identified as the Strand in Bootle and technical scoping completed, link in place, further work to be completed on public Wifi and work in final stages for corporate connection for Sefton at Work
- Education teams now represented at board level, including representation from Schools Trust and Hugh Baird College; Social value lead from ITS linked to board and connection made to Sefton@work team to enhance local offer in Bootle
- Significant work completed in libraries including a tablet loan scheme and the provision of digital meeting rooms and digital newspapers ; Databank pilot underway, in partnership with Good Things Foundation to provide free data to refugees, plans in place to expand this to support the tablet loan scheme.
- Mini digital survey launched with businesses who attended the workshops, results currently being collated – these will be shared at the next digital and skills board meeting.; Dedicated digital page on InvestSefton site, frequently updated.
- 1:1 support to businesses who are looking at digitalisation continues to take place, during the last quarter a business has received support to switch to using financial accounting software.
- Team is encouraging Sefton business leaders to join apply for one of the new LCR Cluster Groups-Digital & Creative, Advanced Manufacturing and Health/Life Sciences -Deployment of cloud telephony completed, and project closed; ICT Client represented and involved with ICB digital forums, Sefton group now established to move this forward M365 upgrade complete and monthly updates automated
- TECS web page development - will include short videos of a day in the Life of a Telecare Installer and of a Minor Works Technician to promote both services and TEC equipment. ASC front door development and ASC prescribing teams have been invited to produce short promotional videos with two completed and another team is scheduled to produce an additional one in October.
- Telecare service will switch over to ELMS system by Sept 23 – all data and equipment required for switch has been completed/ordered, working with Ethitech to progress this.
- Improved version of Street Lighting process is complete; go-live is pending completion of automated process by Agilisys.
- Air Quality Sensors installed at 7 locations in Sefton, as part of LCR traffic signal upgrade project, and adjacent to 3 schools, as part of School Street Pilots. Sensors provide real time AQ data and could potentially be used to determine traffic light strategies/sequences for reducing pollution.

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Strategic Objective	Business growth & investment
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stuart Barnes
SES Project lead	Mike Mullin
Overall Status	Green

Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Current Status	Progress to date
1 No of outward engagement campaigns targeted at Sefton businesses / No of Sefton businesses targeted	11	2	Green	2 x Cyber security events held
2 No of businesses contacting InvestSefton for Information, Advice & Guidance-Triage system(Phone/email/website)	250	137	Green	Individual enquiries handled -overall volume remains constant and high
3 No of businesses receiving 1:1 support (face to face/diagnostic /action plan)	90	0	Amber	New UKSPF Business support programme started 1 July and team have been providing support to businesses. However LCRCA evidence processes are still being finanlised so we are unable to record figures for this quarter until they are validated. This work will be claimed in Future Quarters.
4 No of businesses attending InvestSefton events/workshops	280	35	Green	Relates to the aforementioned cyber events
5 No of new jobs created	50	12	Green	Jobs created figure is solely through the Inward Investment programme as the new UKSPF Business Support Programme & the Town Centre programme has not started official delivery yet
6 No of jobs safeguarded	n/a	n/a	Green	A new KPI for late 2023
7 No of inward Investment enquiries received	6	5	Green	Companies seeking to relocate to Sefton
8 No of investors/developers receiving support	5	7	Green	Includes Business park owners and developers
9 No of large businesses (including Foreign owned) receiving Key Account Management	12	8	Green	Joint activity with Dept of Business & Trade

10	No of enquiries from Sefton residents seeking to start a business/become self-employed	n/a	12	Green	Work has been outsourced to start 1 October
11	No of new business start-ups created	n/a	n/a	Amber	Work has been outsourced to start 1 October. New start up date will be captured in Q4

**Commentary**

The team has completed its previous European and Growth programme targets with and has now moved on to UKSPF project delivery. This includes commissioning two organisations to deliver dedicated business start-up and business sustainability support across the borough including a specific focus on town centres. Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic www.investsefton.com has received over 70,000 unique single session visits. InvestSefton’s twitter feed has 1,611 followers with some 2,000+ businesses on the team’s regular mailing lists strengthening the council’s overall business reach. More recently a new Facebook page for Sefton digital and technology businesses -Sefton Huddle, has attracted 24 members. 4.6 During the same period InvestSefton received some 7,200 enquiries. From April 2023 to 30 September the team has dealt with 600 unique business enquiries from new and existing businesses looking to start, expand or relocate in the borough. Business events and workshops are a significant feature of InvestSefton’s one to many approach to supporting Sefton businesses. Two events were held this quarter -Cyber Security Workshops- These interactive sessions gave businesses a greater understanding of the cyber risks they are likely to face and how to reduce these risks, including: Phishing, passwords, networks, malware and social media, Live demonstrations and real-world example; Ask the cyber expert Q&A Developing an action plan and Certificate of completion. Some 60 business delegates attended the events in Lakeside, Crosby and Formby Hall. The workshops are part a wider Merseyside Cyber Security Programme, which includes a free 12-month programme of support. Delivered by the Cyber Resilience Centre, partners include Merseyside Police, Merseyside Police and Crime Commissioner and DLUCH. The team has recently produced a fully accessible factsheet for council staff and partners on how best to engage with businesses for consultation purposes. The purpose is to provide guidance for staff who require input from businesses when undertaking consultation with Sefton businesses. The team met with the recently appointed AD with responsibility for council fostering services. She is seeking support from InvestSefton in promoting fostering opportunities to businesses. The team will support this initiative including a dedicated campaign including literature, events and external promotion. The team supports a wide range of local inward investment activity in terms of managing interest in company relocations to Sefton and a range of larger expansion projects including those connected to the council’s Growth & Strategic (GSI) Investment programme, Foreign owned companies, developers and existing major employers. Invest Sefton continue to work with the owner and agents of Mersey Reach in Bootle offering appropriate existing tenant and enquiry support. The site is expected to have full completion of occupying businesses in due course. The team is also supporting Regeneration colleagues on new developments at Southport Business Park and the Enterprise Arcade Enterprise facility in the town centre. A key Bridle Road property has been sold to a US company who are bringing in a global AI client. Approx. 50 jobs (predominantly mechanical & software engineering) which will include local recruitment. Intention to make amendments to site since the granting of existing planning consent will require a new application. Support was also provided to Combined Authority Energy Team to identify Sefton businesses for Industrial Heat & Power Decarbonisation Study. Southport based Ocean Plaza was selected for funded feasibility study. InvestSefton has also set out its new business support and inward investment delivery plan providing flexible support to businesses of any size from any sector, including a specific focus on those that offer maximum return in terms of key economic outputs including job creation, growth & productivity. InvestSefton support will include 1 to 1 advice & guidance to any business of any size or sector; 1 to many support including business events and workshops; production of business diagnostic and action plans; brokerage into national and other LCR UKSPF programmes (e.g., Decarbonisation, Export, Supply Chain); Key account and relationship management of SMEs and larger businesses; Inward investment activity & investor development; Access to finance including grants and loan; Finding sites and premises to start, expand or relocate businesses across the LCR Key business sectors & clusters support; Point of contact and referral to other council departments-start and start up support; Business Sustainability support.

Strategic Objective	Employment and Opportunities for work
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Suart Barnes
SES Project lead	Claire Maguire
Overall Status	Green

	Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Current Status	Progress to date
1	% of expenditure verified for projects which are externally	100%	100%	Green	Final verification for this quarter will be completed in October 2023
2	% of all registered learners are not working (based on individual learning aims)	40.00%	70.28%	Green	There has been an increase in the number of unemployed learners completing learning aims. This is a result of improved promotional activities, partnerships, engagement and activities over the summer period.
3	% of all registered learners are BAME	12.00%	25.66%	Green	The service has seen an increase in the number of BAME learners accessing the service. The service has increased engagement and 'keeping warm' activities to maintain interest over the summer break to maximise 23/24 academic year starts for this cohort. Two new
4	% retention across all Adult Community Learning Courses	90.00%	100.00%	Green	As it is the start of the next academic year, the service has maintained 100% retention this far.
5	% of clients receiving Information, Advice and Guidance are workless or economically inactive with health issues	50.00%	66.70%	Green	We continue to work closely with new clients to engage with them and provide key information, advice and guidance.
6	% of vulnerable people referred into the service from a third party receive targeted support, including subsidised placements	70.00%	81.80%	Green	Third party organisations, both internal and external continue to refer their clients to Sefton@Work to help them in their journey towards employment. The service continues to be successful in engaging with clients with more complex needs.
7	% of clients seeking employability help who move into employment/self-employment or training destinations	30.00%	40.40%	Green	The proportion of clients who are able to move into employment or training outcomes continues to meet targets.
8	Number of young people at risk of becoming NEET receiving early intervention and prevention support	200	425	Amber	Increase in Year 11's due to the time of year and post 16 transition.

9	Remain in the best performing quartile for 16-18 NEET when compared to Liverpool City Region and National Statistical Neighbours.	Yes	Yes	Green	Sefton are currently ranked 1st in the Liverpool City Region, and we are 2nd within our 11 statistical neighbours for 16-18 NEET.
10	Remain in the best performing quartile for 16-18 Not Known when compared to Liverpool City Region and National Statistical Neighbours.	Yes	Yes	Green	Sefton are currently ranked 1st in the Liverpool City Region, and we are 2nd within our 11 statistical neighbours for 16-18 Not Known.

**Commentary**

Performance across the three service areas for Employment and Access to Work are proceeding well. Contract management processes are in place to oversee all the provision, and these allow for early indication of challenging circumstances and corrective actions to be implemented where necessary to avoid risks of under-achievement. Sefton@work is progressing through an important transition point during this year which sees the end of European structural funding on 30th September 2023, which has supported the service for many years through to a transition funding period where staff salaries and basic running costs will be supported through Single Investment Funding (SIF) coming from the LCR-CA. This transition will occur from October 23 through to March 24. During this time also, we will be undertaking the relocation of the service from its current base on Stanley Road into a unit within the Strand shopping centre. This move will bring improved financial efficiency while also increasing the synergy and alignment of public facing services within Bootle Town centre. The Adult Community Learning Service continues its delivery of second-chance learning opportunities to adults, based within the Cambridge Road Community learning hub and various outreach locations across Sefton. Its funding, targets and performance management plans reflect an academic year cycle, so a new delivery year commenced in August 2023. Adult community Learning Service is also in receipt of funding from LCR-CA for Multiply, the national numeracy initiative which is partly used to contracted out to voluntary and community sector agencies for informal engagement activity. The NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service was re-commissioned in June 2023 with Career Connect being the winning tender after a fully compliant public procurement exercise. The main focus of this contract is to deliver the Council's statutory duties regarding 16- and 17-year-old young people, but also incorporates additional assistance for vulnerable groups which adds value to the work of a number of teams across Childrens Social Care and education.



Strategic Objective	Regenerated places-GSI
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stuart Barnes
SES Project Lead	Heather Jago
Overall Status	Green

Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Current Status	Progress to date
1 Bootle Town Centre			Green	A range of projects are being delivered to support Bootle town centre . This includes submission of the planning application in October 2023 for the first stage of work to implement the £20M levelling up funded proposals for Bootle Strand repurposing. Phase 1 will include selective demolition, creation of a new town square on Stanley Road, repurposing of the former M&S unit and creation of a new digital tech hub and education centre. A new shop unit has opened within the Strand with further details of the proposals including the next stage of consultation on Bootle Area Action Plan - 'Our Future, Our Bootle' to set out a vision for Bootle for the next 20 years. In addition Salt n Tar meanwhile use and events space hosted a munber of events this summer with a music event and comedy weekender and future events are in the planning process following positive feedback from events held to date.
2 Southport Town Centre (Town Deal)			Green	Southport Town Deal programme continues to remain on track with the demolition work due to commence on for the Marine Lake Events Centre following securing planning approval earlier this year and appointment of Keir Construction to undertake enabling and demolition work. The Enterprise Arcade project is in the final stages of contractor appointment with the aim of starting on site on site in the Autumn. Les Transformation de Southport public realm programme is also progressing with contractor appointment for Phase 1 - Kings Street/Market Street and EastBank Street. Finally 'Building a Better Customer Experience' training programme for the hospitality sector is progressing well, with the first cohort of students through Southport College. Southport Townscape Heritage Initiative is progressing well with and has levered in £1m of private sector investment into Southport.
3 Crosby Town Centre			Green	Work is moving forward on the proposed new Crosby village library with the submission of a planning application in September. Sefton Council have confirmed progression of both the existing and new library sites.
4 Ainsdale			Green	Consultants appointed to undertake a feasibility study and develop an updated vision for the coastal gateway in response to feedback from the community. This will look at all assets in the area including The Sands, Toad Hall, Council operating bases and options for their development. Work is also continuing on Ainsdale neighbourhood centre in Sandbrook Way to acquire remaining property interest and bring this site into one single ownership. Market testing is also ongoing for this site to clarify market demand.
5				

Commentary

Sefton's Growth and Strategic Investment programme continues to develop a series of key projects and initiatives across Sefton to deliver Sefton's economic strategy. This includes development and delivery of a series of key projects and programmes across the borough, the combination of which will help improve Sefton as a place to live, work and visit. The programme aims to maximise the amount of public and private sector being brought into the borough from a range of sources to help aid delivery, including Town Deal, Levelling Up funding and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. In addition the project development and delivery seeks to maximise social value outcomes through procurement and ensure equality and inclusion form part of both how and what is delivered.

Strategic Objective	Regenerated places housing
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stuart Barnes
SES Project lead	Lee Payne
Overall Status	Green

	Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Current Status	Progress to date
1	Social Housing Completions	150	159	Green	Target achieved in 22/23 - pipeline looking healthy
2	Net additional dwellings per annum	640	705	Green	Target achieved in 22/23 - pipeline looking healthy
3					
4					
5					

Commentary
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Housing growth targets in the borough were met in 22.23 and the pipeline of potential completions for 23.24 looks positive based on schemes that are onsite and planning consents that are in place. However, market conditions remain challenging with high interest rates and high construction costs. It remains to be seen how this affects the delivery of new housing . The Housing team continues to work closely with colleagues in Planning to facilitate growth, particularly affordable housing in high demand areas, and aspirational housing. Market concerns have provided opportunities in this regard and we have worked successfully with two RPs to purchase open market sale units on a number of sites in the borough where demand from private purchasers for open market sale has dropped. These properties will be made available as low cost home ownership products.

Strategic Objective	Regenerated places planning
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stuart Barnes
SES Project lead	Ian Loughlin
Overall Status	Green

	Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Current Status	Status	Progress to date
1	Approval of Social Value (Employment and Skills) from	May-22	Approved	Green	adopted May 2023
2	Net additional dwellings per annum	640	705	Green	Figures for 2022/23.
3	Floorspace (m2 ) developed for employment (by type (B1, B2, B8)	increase	26,476m2	Green	Figures for 2022/23.
4	Number of jobs (full-time equivalent) created on	increase	n/a	Amber	Figures for 2022/23.
5	% of qualifying development proposals that are supported by an Employment and Skills Plan	100%	tbc	Amber	New requirement

Commentary
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There is no target in Local Plan for amount of employment floorspace development of number of jobs provided. However, reference can be made to previous years for comparison where an increase of previous years should be the aim. The figure for 2021/22 was lower than in previous years (at just 2,500m<sup>2</sup>). However, data for 2022/23 has shown a tenfold increase

The data of the number of jobs secured on new employment development can be difficult to ascertain and in many cases this information is not provided. However, the Council have recently approved a Social Value (Employment and Skills) from Development SPD which should help secure this data in a timely and consistent manner. The SPD sets out that proposals of a certain scale (i.e. new housing of 30+ homes, certain commercial development of 1,000m<sup>2</sup> floorspace) must be supported by an Employment and Skills Plan, which will be secured by legal agreement and monitored for implementation.

The target of 640 net additional dwellings is the Local Plan average annual requirement for 2012-2030, although the government's standard methodology figure has 587 homes for Sefton. In recent years the Council have comfortably met its housing delivery target.

Strategic Objective	Regenerated places tourism
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stuart Barnes
SES Project lead	Mark Catherall
Overall Status	Green

Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Current Status	Progress to date
1 Increase Visitor numbers (both day and staying) by 2% year on year,	5,882,340	7,676,000	Green	2022 Visitor numbers have grown substantially, this was due to a strong offer, increased destination marketing and comprehensive events programme. It should be noted this is still below pre covid levels.
2 Increase Visitor Economy economic impact by 2.5% year on year,	£440m	£594m	Green	Large growth in economic impact due to increase in visitor numbers and continued inflation. It should be
3 Increase Visitor Economy total employment by 2% year	4795	6,111	Green	Large growth in visitor economy employment due to
4 Securing new multi-day business events ready for the Marine Lake Events Centre opening	2023/24 Onwards	tbc	Green	Will commence in 2024
5				

Commentary
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The 2022 visitor economy figures for Sefton shows a strong growth and continued recovery from covid where Southport's visitor economy was adversely impacted. The 2022 figures are still below pre-covid numbers especially visitor numbers and especially staying visitors. 2022 was a strong year for visitor economy in Sefton with a strong events programme, additional destination marketing activity and many people staying in the UK for day and overnight trips. The 2023 figures will be available in July 2023, sector intelligence is highlighting 2023 as a difficult and uncertain time for tourism. The securing of new multi-day business events for the Marine Lake events centre will not commence until 2024.



## Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan

Strategic Objective	SI Equal&Diversity
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stephen Watson
SES Project lead	Paul McCann
Overall Status	Green

Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Current Status	Progress to date
1 Business Support and Investment Team to engage with the Corporate Equality Group, attend regular meetings	Rep to attend all CEG meetings		Green	Next meeting of the CEG is on the 17th November
2 Communications and engagement audit, identifying the need for accessible information and engagement	Audit completed		Green	
3 Review Strategy to take account of the socio-economic duty	Strategy review		Green	Adoption of the SED was approved by Cabinet on the 7th September - <a href="https://sefton.gov.uk/mysefton-">https://sefton.gov.uk/mysefton-</a>
4 Improve employment rates and business support for minorities and for people from deprived areas	Under review		Green	UKSPF business and employment support activities are underway and being reported under Business Growth & Investment and Employment & Access to work strands
5 Review existing data capture with regard to protected characteristics and work towards addressing any gaps	Data reviewed		Green	
6 Ensure that decisions are backed by robust equality impact analysis	CEG group to review		Green	
7 Engage with the Race Equality Monitoring Group	Rep to attend all REMG meetings		Green	Next meeting of the REMG is on the 12th October
8				

<b>Commentary</b>
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A Corporate Equality Group (CEG) has been newly established to support the Council with its commitment to integrate Equality and Diversity throughout its services and to help secure its vision of creating stronger, more resilient communities (Sefton Vision 2030). CEG will monitor the council's performance in relation to equality and diversity and KPIS focus on communications and engagement; improving employment rates and business support for people in disadvantaged areas, reviewing equality and diversity data and engaging with the LCR Race Equality Monitoring group.

The Council has produced and launched Its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-27.

InvestSefton meeting with the LCR's new Director of Race Equality Group in November to discuss business engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic business groups. Work has also been commissioned to Sefton based MEH/Safe Regeneration to provide business start up support to individuals seeking to become self-employed and/or start their own business. Specific focus areas include town centres and people from disadvantaged areas and special characteristic groups.

## Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan

Strategic Objective	SI sus travel
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Peter Moore
SES Project lead	Lee Davies
Overall Status	Green

	Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Status	Progress to date
1	The development of the Low Carbon Transport Strategy	2024		Green	Materials for consultation being developed
2	Maritime Corridor Business Case	Mar-27		Green	Due for consultation
3	Eastern Access Business Case Development	Mar-27		Green	Due for consultation
4	Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan	2024		Green	Local knowledge sense check being undertaken
5	Emobility	2024		Green	Local work being undertaken to feed into Liverpool City

<p>Commentary</p> <p>The Low Carbon Transport Strategy has a number of specific areas of working being progressed to refine our baseline. Based on the approved consultation plan we are now bringing together drafts and materials needed to deliver an inclusive consultation as outlined. Maritime Corridor is the next stage of this work and will include engagement on the preferred designs in July to September 2023. The Southport Eastern Access Business Case is progressing well and will be the subject of further consultation in August to October 2023. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is in development and plan for engagement have been approved by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel. Wider developments are being progressed by the LCRCA around bus reform and green bus routes. Moving Buses Forward consultation is live until the 3rd of August.</p>
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## Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan

Strategic Objective	SI net zero
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Stephan Van Arendesen
SES Project lead	Stephanie Jukes
Overall Status	Green

Key Performance Indicators (Please add more rows if necessary)	Target	Achieved	Status	Progress to date
To report on - LCR Combined Authority – net zero/ Climate emergency targets	Plan published summer 2023	N/a	Green	The LCR Combined Authority net zero action plan has been approved July 2023. It is now available <a href="https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR-PathwaytoNetZero-Report-2022--FINAL-compressed.pdf">https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR-PathwaytoNetZero-Report-2022--FINAL-compressed.pdf</a>
Deliver business sustainability support to 60 Sefton	60 businesses	Start date Nov 2023	Green	Council has commissioned Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside to deliver

**Commentary**

The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have set a target of net zero for all parts of the economy to be net zero by 2040. This will require all Sefton businesses to halt the use of gas, diesel, oil and only use energy from renewable resources by 2040.

Details of the actions within this plan will be reported to the next SES meeting. Examples within this Action plan includes (TBC) On transport - Complete Phase 2 of 'State of Freight' investigation into a future zero carbon freight solution, ensuring that this is aligned with our Freeport goals of decarbonisation and good jobs to deliver outcomes including last mile ZE deliveries and reduce trips, scope options for mechanisms to seek to support decarbonisation of freight, and develop a freight strategy and that connects Freeport locations in a net zero manner On buildings - Identify high-opportunity zones as areas for groups of home/business owners to plan retrofits together or create low carbon communal/district energy schemes and smart networks. On Industry - a series of targets around the following;

To effectively transition to net zero, our industrial base will need cost-effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage technologies alongside efficiency and storage technologies alongside efficiency improvements in process and delivery systems improvements in process and delivery systems.

On Clean Energy - Progress the Phase 3 development activities related to Mersey Tidal (LCR Year 1 action plan review SE6) and commence Phase 4 activity to Consent a UK first of a kind (FOAK) Tidal range scheme.

On Natural Environment - Develop a pipeline and identify potential funding for pilot innovative and sustainable agricultural projects, such as urban farming, greenbelt agroecological farming, carbon capture etc.

Other issues pertinent to business - MEEES Regulations applies to non- domestic rented properties, by 1 /4/23 must have an EPC rating of E as a minimum to be able to be rented, plans for this to increase over time (possible EPC D by 2025, EPC C by 2028 and EPC B by 2030) Investment in green technologies e.g. building retrofit, EV charging, Heat pump installations will help to generate local jobs and training opportunities

InvestSefton has also allocated UKSPF to provide business sustainability support in town centres .Sustainability is high on the agenda for conference buyers and events/exhibition organisers and with this in mind it is critical that as part of the planning process for the Marine Lakeside Events Centre (MLEC) opening 2026 that as a destination Sefton begins to build the sustainability offer. The project will measure the business carbon footprint, design an action plan to reduce and produce a sustainability policy.

Strategic Objective	SI health
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Amber

SES Lead
SES Project lead
Overall Status

*Italics = no data update from previous quarter report*

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Achieved	Status
1 <b>18.3%</b> <i>Percentage of under 16s in relative poverty, before housing costs (2021/22)</i>	Reduction	Worse	Amber
2 <b>14.0%</b> <i>Percentage of employees earning below real living wage (2022)</i>	Reduction	Better	Green
3 <b>4.5%</b> <i>Percentage of children in workless households (2021)</i>	Reduction	Better	Amber
4 <b>41.6%</b> <i>Percentage of children(FSM) achieving a good level of development at the end of Early Years Foundation Stage (Reception) 2022</i>	Increase	Worse	Red
5 <b>22.9%</b> <i>Percentage of the population living in the 20% most deprived most unhealthy environments (Access to Healthy Assets and Hazards</i>	Reduction	Same	Amber
6 <b>26.5%</b> <i>Food insecurity (indirect measure) Percentage of population who live in LSOAs scored in the top 20% for risk of food insecurity 2021</i>	Reduction	New indicator	Red
7 <b>£ 445.40</b> <i>Median weekly earnings 2021</i>	Increase	Same	Red
8 <b>63.6 years</b> <i>Healthy life expectancy at birth (2018-20)</i>	Increase	Same	Amber
9 <b>13.0 years</b> <i>Gap in life expectancy at birth (2018-20)</i>	Reduction	Increase	Red

**Commentary**

The indicators above are drawn from the Public Health Performance Framework (8 and 9) and the Child Poverty Accountability and Progress Framework (1-7). It is important to note that indicators that During Quarter two there were no published updates to these indicators from open access data sources. At the start of this period a successful, largescale event was held to stimulate development and term promotion of different sources of advice and support for mental health and wellbeing. Feedback from members of the public has reflected genuine appreciation from people in need. The process concerns. Quarter two also saw the launch of a parallel service for children and young People - 'Happy 'n' Healthy', and finalisation of a pilot of a community-led childhood respiratory support service. delays which have prevented the publication and dissemination of academic insight work into the experiences of parents and children who currently experience poverty in Sefton. This throws an impact introduction of the socio-economic duty and shared learning events have presented the opportunity for possible joint working with Salford Council on suggested actions from the Childhood Poverty Strategy as well as microsite to host and share best practice and foster collaboration. Upcoming professional development opportunities will support new policy development for example on Health Impact Assessment

Margaret Jones
Helen Armitage
Amber

**Progress to date/Comment**

2.3 percentage point drop from 2020/21. Better than England average (19.9%)  
 50% drop since 2019, now in line with England average (12.5%)  
 Sefton's rate is half the national average, but note relative poverty still affects over 1 in 6 under 16s

54% pre-pandemic. Lower than 49% national average in 2022.  
 This proportion is high (affecting over 63 000 people) but is in line with the national average (22.6%)  
 Estimated that over 74 000 people in Sefton live in neighbourhoods of highest food insecurity  
 Only 28 LAs in England record lower median earnings than Sefton in 2021. Significantly worse than England.  
 Similar to England (63.9 years), but obscures large health inequalities that impact those of working age

Second largest gap in England. Average life expectancy at birth in the most deprived section of Sefton's male population is estimated to be 70.5 years (vs 84.1 years in the most affluent areas)

: reflect population status and inequalities in outcomes such as median income, child poverty, school readiness, and spatial measures of deprivation are highly correlated with population health outcomes and inequalities. Implementation of actions to improve children's prospects in education, training and employment. A conference summary has been shared with attendees. This period also saw the launch of 'We're Here', which is a long-term strategy of recommissioning Sefton's Living Well Sefton integrated health and wellbeing service continues, which includes a social prescribing offer supporting people who are struggling with welfare, debt and other cost of living. An anticipated outcome of both of these services is an increase in parents' ability to maintain and participate in employment and training secondary to reduced childcare responsibilities. Unfortunately, there have been a number of trade-offs between work, caring, benefits and health behaviours that families have to make, and the final report will be available for SES leads to study and learn from shortly. Looking ahead, the strategy such as poverty-proofing checklist with broad applicability to a range of organisations and services. Planning is also underway for the next Child Poverty Conference Event on the theme of Places in January 2024, as a first step.

Strategic Objective	SI digital
Report Date	Jul-Sep 2023
Previous Status	Green

SES Lead	Andrea Watts
SES Proj	Helen Spreadbury
Overall Status	Green

Key Performance Indicators	Target	Achieved	Status	Progress to date
1 Infrastructure			Green	Infrastructure board well underway overseeing a wide range of work and activities
2 Training & Skills			Green	Training & Skills board established; skills assessment completed, revised training offer now available to all staff
3 Digital Inclusion			Green	Digital inclusion strategy now completed and published; programme of meetings and activity in place and underway
4 Business Forum			Green	Sefton Huddle (Digi & tech business group) now established and meeting 3times pa across Sefton attracting over 30 businesses per session
5 New Ways of working			Green	DW and deployment commenced across children's services & Adults Care lead; review & refresh of supporting infrastructure now completed
6 Technology enabled care			Green	Wide range of activity underway including TECS E-learning module roll out; Care Home Improvement grants & various initiatives supporting care sector
7 Customer			Amber	CXP activities underway including transfer of 27 from 28 legacy processes from Front office now live; Website upgrade in progress and due for completion in November 2023
8 Smart Cities			Amber	Discussion sessions completed with Intel and review of current activity in Sefton underway. Sefton also testing cyber toolkit for Internet of Things devices
9				

<b>Commentary</b>	
<p>Sefton's Digital strategy work is well underway with boards and sub-groups established and a raft of activity and projects underway-key highlights include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>-Social value scheme for connectivity identified as the Strand in Bootle and technical scoping completed, link in place , further work to be completed on public Wi-Fi and work in final stages for corporate connection for Sefton at Work -Education teams now represented at board level , including representation from Schools Trust and Hugh Baird College;Social value lead from ITS linked to board and connection made to Sefton@work team to enhance local offer in in Bootle - Significant work completed in libraries including a tablet loan scheme and the provision of digital meeting rooms and digital newspapers ;Databank pilot underway, in partnership with Good Things Foundation to provide free data to refugees, plans in place to expand this to support the tablet loan scheme - Two cyber security workshops have been held in September at the Lakehouse in Crosby and Formby Hall, over 30 businesses attended each workshop, The workshop was a jointly delivered by InvestSefton and Cyber Resilience Centre (CRC)- feedback from delegates has been positive. The CRC is a new initiative which has been launched by Merseyside Police, Sefton is the first authority to engage with the CRC. InvestSefton have now introduced the CRC to all other LCR local Authorities. CRC is part of a package of support available to businesses from Merseyside Police . The CRC and Merseyside Police have committed to attend three other events being held by InvestSefton next quarter.</li> <li>Mini digital survey launched with businesses who attended the workshops, results currently being collated – these will be shared at the next digital and skills board meeting.; Dedicated digital page on InvestSefton site, frequently updated.</li> <li>-1:1 support to businesses who are looking at digitalisation continues to take place, during the last quarter a business has received support to switch to using financial accounting software.</li> <li>-Team is encouraging Sefton business leaders to join apply for one of the new LCR Cluster groups-Digital &amp; Creative, Advanced Manufacturing and Health/Life Sciences</li> <li>-Deployment of cloud telephony completed, and project closed; ICT Client represented and involved with ICB digital forums, Sefton group now established to move this forward ;M365 upgrade complete and monthly updates automated -TECS web page development - will include short videos of a day in the Life of a Telecare Installer and of a Minor Works Technician to promote both services and TEC equipment. ASC front door development and ASC prescribing teams have been invited to produce short promotional videos. 2 videos completed and another team is scheduled to produce video in October ;Telecare service will switch over to ELMS system by Sept 23 – all data and equipment required for switch has been completed/ordered, working with Ethitech to progress this. - Improved version of Street Lighting process is complete; go-live is pending completion of automated process by Agilisys</li> <li>-Air Quality Sensors installed at 7 locations in Sefton, as part of LCR traffic signal upgrade project, and adjacent to 3 schools, as part of School Street Pilots. Sensors provide real time AQ data, and could potentially be used to determine traffic light strategies/sequences for reducing pollution</li> </ul>	

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# Agenda Item 9

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee- Regeneration and Skills</b>	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	2022 / 23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies – Sandway Homes		
<b>Report of:</b>	Assistant Director (Place)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	<b>Communities &amp; Housing</b>		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	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;
- (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 Council's three wholly owned council companies and best practice.

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

No alternative options have been considered.

# Agenda Item 9

## 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:

<p><b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b> Any resource implications arising are included in the body of the report.</p>									
<p><b>Legal Implications:</b> There are no legal implications arising.</p>									
<p><b>Equality Implications:</b> 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.</p>									
<p><b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b></p> <p>The recommendations within this report will:</p> <table border="1"> <tr> <td>Have a positive impact</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a neutral impact</td> <td>Y</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Have a negative impact</td> <td>N</td> </tr> <tr> <td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td> <td>N</td> </tr> </table> <p>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.</p>		Have a positive impact	N	Have a neutral impact	Y	Have a negative impact	N	The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N
Have a positive impact	N								
Have a neutral impact	Y								
Have a negative impact	N								
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N								

## Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

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

Protect the most vulnerable
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: SHL adds housing choice within the heart of Sefton's Communities, facilitating confidence
Commission, broker and provide <b>Page 190</b> : Projected future returns to the Council, as sole shareholder of SHL will provide revenue to contribute towards

service provision.
Place – leadership and influencer: Housing is a significant contributor to building a better sense of place.
Drivers of change and reform: Physical infrastructure (housing) is a significant contributor to building a better sense of place.
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: SHL makes a significant contribution to the local economy, both by way of a direct impact to construction and civil engineering jobs, but additionally providing a housing supply and choice for residents wishing to live and work in Sefton and across Merseyside.
Greater income for social investment: SHL has identified opportunities to commission a greater level of social value.
Cleaner Greener: Developments by SHL are compliant with the Building Regulations and other Planning and Habitat regulations meaning sefton builds cleaner and greener.

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7480) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5580) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Engagement and information provision was sought from the board and management of the company in the production of this report.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Stuart Barnes</b>
Telephone Number:	<b>07971090182</b>
Email Address:	<b><u><a href="mailto:Stuart.Barnes@sefton.gov.uk">Stuart.Barnes@sefton.gov.uk</a></u></b>

### Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report.

### Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

# Agenda Item 9

## **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 Ltd for the year 2022/23.
- 1.3 The same process is undertaken in the other wholly owned companies as well, and on an ongoing basis good practice and lessons learned relating to governance are shared between the companies.

## **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 Sandway Homes 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.

## **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.

# Agenda Item 9

## 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, Cabinet in 2022/23 once again received an updated and comprehensive 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, and amends to the Business Plan that resulted from this.

As part of this report in December 2022 Cabinet were advised of changes to 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.

In addition, Cabinet were informed that the council was also making use of the local partnerships 'Local Authority Company Review Guidance' to conduct a self-assessment of current operations-this exercise was completed by the Councils monitoring officer. In March 2023 a governance audit and a financial sustainability audit were undertaken. The results of which were reported to the shareholder and recommendations actioned.

The Councils shareholder representative on the Company's Board in 2022/23 was the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing. This role, and any Council Officers in attendance at Board Meetings act in an observer role only.

During the year, in addition to the formal board meetings, the shareholder representative, Council Chief Executive and s151 Officer met the chair of the board and Managing Director on a regular basis to consider the latest developments within the company, and gain insight into progress in delivery of the business plan and understanding of financial position and risks.

The council also receives the monthly monitoring information produced by the company's head of operations- it is this information that informs the council's internal review and reporting as per financial procedure rules.

## **Governance arrangements in place for the company in 2022/23**

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:

- a term of 3 years: and

# Agenda Item 9

- 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.

In the 2022/23 year, Gywnne Furlong stepped down from the board (and was replaced by Brian Cronin in January 2023).

## Dates of Board meetings and summary of content

Board meetings take place quarterly and for the 2022-23 Business Plan period the Board met in March, June, November and January, 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 (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.

- Sales Report

The 2022/23 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.

- Finance Report

The Finance report covers the latest business plan position, including spend and income for the period / in-period movement. 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.

- **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 (2023-24). More specifically it will cover overall satisfaction with the conveyancing period and 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 annual basis
- Updated management accounts and any variances in projected spend are reported on a quarterly basis.

# Agenda Item 9

- 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 2022/23 Business Plan period, the company continued to provide the Council with the relevant board reporting information, and a full Cabinet update was provided in December 2022. 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 July 2022 Cabinet considered a report outlining governance arrangements for the Sefton Holding Company and Sandway Homes Limited.

The report considered revisions to the Articles of Association of the Holding Company and adoption by Sandway Homes. The report also approved the filing with Companies House, the adoption of an amended Governance Agreement and entry into the Intra-Group Agreement.

The Intra-Group Agreement is focused on how the Council works together with SHC and Sandway Homes as a group but also has the same set of Reserved matters incorporated as in the Governance Agreement, allowing for a complete flowthrough of decision making in a consistent manner.

## Internal and external audit arrangements

Although not a formal requirement, the company undertook an external audit of the 2021/22 financial statements. This company received a clean audit report and accounts were filed with Companies House. Moving into the 2022/23, a further audit will be conducted that will test the company's sales process and income recognition. As the Company progresses into the 2022/23 Business Plan period, an external auditor has been 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 2022/23**

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 2022/23, 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 2022/23 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.

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. At the update in December 2022 Cabinet was advised that due to the adverse operating environment this had been revised to £1,050,475. (This was subsequently revised to £300,888 as at July 2023, again primarily driven by the economic conditions in the UK and the impact on the housing sector both nationally and locally).

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 homes being delivered on Sandway sites include a number of 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.

# Agenda Item 9

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.

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. All 25 properties have now been handed over to Together Housing

*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 2022/23 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.

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*

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 continues to liaise with the Liverpool City Region Combined, to secure pre-development funding for a further phase of brownfield sites within the Borough.

*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 is 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 on some of the houses 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 2022/23**

In 22/23 the company moved to start construction and sales on 2 of the 3 sites, namely Bartons Close and Meadow Lane. These will deliver 30 and 48 properties respectively on each site. Construction on the 3rd site, BHL, 63 units, commenced in December 2023.

Annual accounts have been produced by the company and will be posted to Companies House by the required deadline of 31 March 2024. The accounts have been prepared in accordance with the provisions applicable to companies subject to the small companies' regime. Copies will be provided to members of the committee.

## Summary as per annual accounts

The annual accounts for Sandway for year-end 31st March 2023 are reflective of the company transitioning from the early construction phase of its phase 1 development programme, to successfully delivering and selling new homes. The main activity within the period remained, construction payments, with the first sales completions taking place within the year. Sales Income /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.

## *Plot reservations*

At the year-end the company had delivered 24 open market completions. This was made up of 12 plots at Meadow Lane (Sandy Brook) and 12 plots at Barton's Close (Hey Farm Gardens). This generated £5.9m of Income. Reservations remained strong with all released plots being reserved off plan.

## *Registered Provider income*

In addition, 11 Together Housing plots were completed in year: 5 plots at Meadow Lane and 6 plots at Bartons close. This realised £1.8m of the contract value. Further staged payments relating to the remaining 14 plots were received from Together Housing Group. The balance of the Deferred income received from Together Housing Group amounted to £1.4m.

# Agenda Item 9

## *Grant Funding*

A drawdown claim for grant funding for Buckley Hill Lane was prepared and submitted in the financial year, this equated to £538k 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 did not make any further drawdowns against the loan agreement during the 2022-23 financial year, with the amount owed to the shareholder on 31st March 2023 being £6.74m. Interest payable against the loan was £173k in year.

## *Company overheads*

The overheads in year include Sandway employees and company non-executive directors. The company employed 5 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 £50k. The payment was processed after the year end and has created a SMBC Debtor in the Sandway accounts.
- 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 – 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 2023, 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), more recently updated to £0.3m.

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 2023, 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 (excluding BHL). By March 2023, the value of contractually committed sums had reduced to £2.0m. Whilst the company remains financially stable, cashflow is heavily predicated on sales income, and this will continue to be a significant consideration for the Company in the next period.

- 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 Bartons 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. The company did need to retender for the Buckley Hill Lane scheme which resulted in a much higher construction cost and led to the reduced dividend position quoted above

- Open market sales

House prices have continued to rise during the current 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 2023.

# Agenda Item 9

Reservations remained strong during 2022-23, however rising interest rates would make sales more challenging in the next financial year, 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 March 2023, 75% of plots at Meadow Lane were reserved or completed, similarly at Bartons close 87% of plots were reserved or completed. The company expected that the remaining plots will be reserved as they become available. 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 2022/23 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 on 1<sup>st</sup> December 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.)

Are the arrangements for risk management appropriate?

The Company has appointed the Council's Internal Audit team to provide Internal Audit services with audit work being completed in both 21/22 and 2022/23- recommendations from this work have been provided to both the company and the council (with detail of this being provided to Audit and Governance committee). 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.

# Agenda Item 9

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 2022-23, 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.

## **Evaluation of performance in 2022/23 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 2022/23 and 2023/24, there was a full refresh of the Business Plan and exit plan that were approved by Cabinet. The current position is as follows:

- 141 houses would be delivered in Phase 1
- A capital receipt for the 3 sites in Phase 1 totaling £2.2m would be received by the council in November 2025
- A dividend of £0.3m would be received by the council from Phase 1 in November 2025.

As is the case with the housebuilding sector generally the company has been affected by wider economic issues. Page 206s delayed delivery on the first two

new housing in the borough, and although reservations have slowed they continue to be made.


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.

Because of the economic challenges the third site at Buckley Hill Lane, did not start onsite until Q3 2023/24 year. 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. The contract with main contractor Challenger includes the opportunity to slow down construction in line with the rates properties are being reserved and sold in order to better manage sales risk.

In terms of overall performance in year therefore, it is reported and can be considered that the 3 sites included in Phase 1 at Meadow Lane, Barton's Close and Buckley Hill Lane are progressing as detailed in the approved Business Plan.

2022/23 Delivery Summary:

## **Plot Summary:**

 This image cannot currently be displayed.

## **Revenue:**

### **Meadow Lane (Sandy Brook)**

- Completions: Total 17
- Open Market: 12 plots
- Revenue: £3.07m
- Affordable Housing: 5 plots
- Revenue: £0.95m

### **Barton's Close (Hey Farm Gardens)**

- Completions: Total 18
- Open Market: 12 plots
- Revenue: £2.8m
- Affordable Housing: 6 plots
- Revenue: £0.88m

# Agenda Item 9

## Loan details:

- Drawn Down loan value: £6.743m
- Available Headroom: £1.557m
- Interest Payable: £0.173m

## Construction Contract commitments:

### **Meadow Lane**

- Contract Value: £7.4m
- Balance at Year end: £0.71m

### **Bartons Close**

- Contract Value: £4.2m
- Balance at Year end: £0.2m

### **Buckley Hill Lane**

- Not in contract at year end

## **What are the Delivery and Improvement Plans for 2023/24**

2023/24 will be a key year for the company as the final sales are completed at Bartons Close and Meadow Lane, and construction of properties at Buckley Hill Lane progresses. In addition, proposals for Phase 1A and Phase 2 which are estimated to deliver 474 new homes over 6 sites are currently being prepared with a view to consideration by Cabinet.

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.

# Agenda Item 10

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee- Regeneration and Skills</b>	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	2022 / 23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies - Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL)		
<b>Report of:</b>	Executive Director (Place)	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All Wards
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	<b>Regeneration and Skills</b>		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	N/A
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	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 council's three wholly owned council companies and best practice.

# Agenda Item 10

## **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	N
Have a neutral impact	Y
Have a negative impact	N
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	N

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 three 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 three companies contribute to the delivery of each element of the councils core purpose.

<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>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.</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener: All projects and operations will align with the highest environmental standards, reflecting the council's focus on climate emergency.</p>

## What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

### (A) Internal Consultations

The Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services (FD.7487/24) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.5587/24) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

### (B) External Consultations

Engagement and information provision was sought from the board and management of the company in the production of this report.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	<b>Stephen Watson</b>
Telephone Number:	<b>0151 934 3710</b>
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:Stephen.Watson@sefton.gov.uk">Stephen.Watson@sefton.gov.uk</a>

# Agenda Item 10

**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 Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL).
- 1.3 The same process is undertaken in the other wholly owned companies as well, and on an ongoing basis good practice and lessons learned relating to governance are shared between the companies.

## **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.

# Agenda Item 10

## 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.

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 remained with the council, with SHOL undertaking an important role in design finalisation and fit-out of the venue, known as the Lake House. The venue opened during the financial year 2022-23, in August 2022.

The three-year Business Plan for SHOL, for 2021-22 to 2024-25, was reviewed and approved by Cabinet during the financial year 2021-22, with an update presented to Cabinet during the financial year 2022-23 given the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic and issues with the main contractor on the construction project, which led to delays to opening of the Lake House venue.

The Chair of the company board was appointed in the second quarter of 2022, through whom council dialogue on the performance of the company was undertaken on an ongoing basis.

## **Governance arrangements in place for the company in 2022/23**

A Chair for the company board was appointed in Spring 2022. For the majority of the financial year 2022-23, the board of the company comprised the independent Chair, and two Directors (one an elected member, one a council officer). The previous Managing Director of SHOL was also a company director until leaving the business in August 2022. The Chair reported to the Shareholder Representative, with ongoing engagement and support from the Executive Director (Place).

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

Board meetings were undertaken throughout 2022-23.

## **Key Objectives for the Company as per the Business Plan in 2022/23**

In terms of financial objectives during 2022-23, as per the Business Plan, the company projected a loss of circa £200,000. 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 and the offer of quality employment and career opportunities, in line with the council's values and core purpose.

The strategy for the company remains largely unchanged from the original objectives of the Council upon its formation, as articulated in the Cabinet Report approved in February 2022.

The focus for SHOL remains on being an employer of choice in the hospitality sector. As per previous commitments, this focuses principally on offering full-time, permanent employment opportunities, with all roles paying a real living wage or above (and the Business Plan remains based on this same assumption). These terms and conditions are one part of an attractive and differentiated offer to employees, ensuring that the company attracts, develops and retains staff, particularly from Sefton and from the areas local to the company's venues. This offer has included training and development opportunity, working towards long-term career growth in the hospitality sector, and is complemented by the ethos and core values of the company that should ensure an organisational culture of which employees wish to be a part.

The intention for the company is to offer a quality experience for employees, who in turn will deliver a quality experience for customers – this strategic approach is not uncommon at the “higher end” of many sub-segments of the retail sector. This employment offer also aligns with the core values of the Council and of the borough, and SHOL offers employment opportunity for a number of cohorts, aligned to the Council's priority areas. For example the company is a signatory to the Council's Caring Business Charter, supporting care experienced young people

# Agenda Item 10

with training, work experience and employment opportunity.

## **Review of Performance 2022/23**

The Lake House in Waterloo is clearly an attractive venue in a location that reflects the attractiveness of Sefton's coastline. Through the business plan period the Lake House will form the largest contribution to company performance, and will deliver in accordance with the objectives of the original business case for that project. The opening of the venue in August 2022 was several months later than anticipated, due to delays caused by the COVID-19 pandemic to the project development process, and later due to challenges with previous build contractors, and this has affected outturn performance in the financial year ending March 2023. However, there is opportunity for revenue growth, and with easing cost inflationary pressures over the medium-term, the company and the Council are confident in the exciting future of a venue that has become an important part of the borough's and the region's offer in the hospitality sector.

The unit operated by SHOL at Southport Market did not prove to be financially sustainable, and was closed during the year. The company's early decision and agreement with the council as landlord at the Market enabled minimisation of further losses, while also enabling the Market to ensure continuing of provision within its venue.

The concession operated at Ainsdale during the year was also unsuccessful for the business. Its opening in the Summer 2022 season was delayed due to external factors, but footfall and revenues have also been lower than anticipated. This venue was closed at the end of the 2023 season and will be tendered by the council for 2024.

The business has been successful in the provision of quality employment and career opportunities for local people. As of December 2023, the business employs 45 people at the Lake House and 10 people at the White House. 49% of these employees are Sefton residents, and 100% of employees are residents of the Liverpool City Region. None are on zero-hour contracts (which are still not necessarily uncommon in the sector), and all are paid a real living wage or better. 51% of the workforce is female, and 40% of the workforce across the two venues is under the age of 23. All staff members have received Full Flow Health and Safety training, and all are undertaking a training programme in their relevant area of work. There have been several cases of internal promotion and progression in the business, in accordance with the desire to support career progression for employees in the business and in the sector. There are also employees who have come to the UK from Ukraine, and there are team members who have come to the business through effective working partnership with Sefton at Work – this includes individuals who were not in employment, and individuals who had never been in employment (and are with the business at the time of writing).

Notwithstanding the challenges for any new venue in the hospitality sector (as per the Cabinet Report of December 2023, 60% of new businesses are reported to fail within the first 12 months), the company will continue to take a long-term view on the strategy, business plan, and operation of each of its current and future venues.

A quality employment offer and a sustainable business model will not be deliverable without a stable long-term commitment to the growth of the business and the success of these venues.

## **Financial Performance 2022/23**

Due to the external factors outlined herein, and in the Cabinet Report of December 2023, the company's losses exceeded the business plan, with a loss of £728k incurred during the financial year 2022-23.

## **Key areas of risk during the year**

In respect of the financial year 2022-23 (ending March 2023), there are numerous external factors that have contributed to the outturn performance of the business being lower than forecast in the business plan.

These particularly include the delayed opening of the Lake House due to firstly the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on the project development process and the construction programme, and subsequently the issues with a previous main contractor on the building enhancements work. This meant that the venue opened in late August 2022, several months later than anticipated, meaning that the full-year effect of trade was not achieved, and particularly that the venue was unable to open during the peak summer season, when the proportion of revenue and profit is greatest (particularly for a venue such as the Lake House given its location and outdoor coastal offering).

Moreover, the severe impacts on costs due to inflationary pressures, as experienced across the hospitality sector – this includes huge increases in energy costs beyond those forecasted within the original business case, and significant inflation in all cost of sales. These factors affect the whole sector, including SHOL, and including other council venues such as Southport Market, and reports relating to the Market and the updated Business Plan for SHOL published in December 2023 include further detail on these external factors.

Furthermore, the impact of the cost of living crisis on revenues, affecting footfall and spend per head. These pressures have affected the whole economy, and all of the hospitality sector, and have made the industry increasingly challenging and competitive. Again, these factors affect the whole sector, including SHOL, and including other council venues such as Southport Market, and again reports relating to the Market and the updated Business Plan for SHOL published in December 2023 include further detail on these factors.

The impact of the delayed opening is limited to the financial year 2022-23, but the wider economic pressures and their impacts are still being experienced by the sector to some degree in the short-term, and will be expected to impact the financial years 2023-24 and 2024-25 as well.

Due to these external factors, the performance of the business in financial year

# Agenda Item 10

2022-23 is below the previous business plan.

## **Evaluation of performance in 2022/23 compared to Council objectives for setting up the company and approved Business Plan for the year**

As above, the financial performance of the company did not meet the objectives set in the original business case or previous business plan, given the unexpected external factors identified herein.

However, the annual subsidy of £250,000 per annum from the council to the Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre has been removed. Moreover, the new venue provides an attractive offer at a spectacular coastal gateway, offering positive customer experiences and quality employment and career opportunities.

## **Delivery and Improvement Plans for 2023/24**

These external factors, although easing to some degree, will affect the business in the current and the subsequent financial year as well. The forecast for 2023-24 and for 2024-25 are also therefore below the levels previously anticipated in the original business plan. However, the company and the Council remain committed to the long-term future of SHOL, its venues, and its people. Therefore, the forecasts for 2023-24 and for 2024-25 include the impacts of investment in, and start-up of, new venues. In 2023-24 this includes the non-recurring costs associated with the transformation and the opening of the White House in Southport, and it is assumed in the business plan that there will be non-recurring start-up costs associated with the next growth project for the company.

The improvement in performance of the company over the coming years will derive from:

- Steady economic recovery and improved outlook for the hospitality sector (in accordance with the factors outlined in section 2).
- Continued improvement in performance at the Lake House and at the White House, as reputation and as revenues continue to grow over time.
- Selective growth of the business into new venues during the Business Plan period, as per the Cabinet Report of December 2023. Pursuit of new opportunities will be managed in accordance with the Board's governance procedures, and where applicable in accordance with the Council's financial procedure rules.

The previous business plan anticipated repayment of the shareholder loan, and any dividends, commencing from year 6 of the business (financial year 2026-27 onwards). Although this is outside the period of the Business Plan reported in December 2023, this remains the target for the business and its Board. As previously stated, this will be reevaluated on an annual basis.

The company opened the White House Café in Southport in Spring 2023 (after the end of the financial year 2022-23), and while a smaller venue than the Lake House, the offer is intended to reflect the same focus on quality and customer

experience, proving to be a destination offer for the town, the borough and beyond. As with the Lake House, the company's leadership and operations have enabled the transformation of a previously under-used asset, as the café adjacent to Southport Golf Links (in which the venue is based) had previously been vacant for several years. Transformation of this asset by the business is intended to benefit local residents and communities as well in enhancement of their environment and widening of their local offer.

These same principles will form the basis of a selective plan for future growth of the business, with focus on enhancement of Council-owned assets across the borough, delivering a quality customer experience and continuing to create and sustain quality employment and career opportunities for local people. Governance associated with the company's growth plans and future projects will be managed by the company via its board and governance structures, and where applicable by the Council in accordance with its financial procedure rules. All current operations and future growth plans will consider the continued external economic challenges facing the sector.

The company will also continue to focus on alignment with the wider strategic objectives of the Council as its shareholder, in such areas as climate emergency and outcomes for care experienced young people. The company is, and will remain, an active partner in the communities in which its venues operate.

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# Agenda Item 11

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Work Programme 2023/24, Scrutiny Review Topics and Key Decision Forward Plan		
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	All
<b>Cabinet Portfolio:</b>	Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	No		

## Summary:

To seek the views of the Committee on the Work Programme for 2023/24; to identify potential topics for scrutiny reviews to be undertaken by informal meetings; to identify any items for pre-scrutiny by the Committee from the Key Decision Forward Plan; and to update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Recommendation: That:

- (1) the Work Programme for 2023/24, as set out in Appendix 1 to the report, be considered, along with any additional items to be included and thereon be agreed;
- (2) consideration be given to the inclusion in next year's Work Programme of an invitation being made to the Liverpool City Region Strategic Waste Partnership Manager to attend the Committee to provide details about the changes in waste legislation and what that will mean due to the statutory requirement for the collection of food waste in 2026;
- (3) consideration be given as to whether the Committee would like to select a topic for review at an informal meeting of the Committee;
- (4) 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; and
- (5) the update on the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Overview and Scrutiny Committee be noted.

# Agenda Item 11

## Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To determine the Work Programme of items to be considered during the Municipal Year 2023/24 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:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b> None	
<b>Legal Implications:</b> None	
<b>Equality Implications:</b> There are no equality implications.	
<b>Impact on Children and Young People:</b> There are no direct implications for impacting on children and young people arising from this report. Any impact on children and young people 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.	
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>	
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. However, any 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.
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**

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.

- Executive Director – Place
- Executive Director of Corporate Resources and Customer Services
- 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)

**(B) External Consultations**

Liverpool City Region Combined Authority

**Implementation Date for the Decision**

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	0151 934 2068
Email Address:	<a href="mailto:Paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk">Paul.fraser@sefton.gov.uk</a>

**Appendices:**

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- Overview and Scrutiny Committee Work Programme for 2023/2024 – Appendix 1
- Criteria Checklist for Selecting Topics for Review – Appendix 2
- Latest Key Decision Forward Plan items relating to this Overview and Scrutiny Committee – Appendix 3

**Background Papers:**

There are no background papers available for inspection.

# Agenda Item 11

## Introduction/Background

### 1. WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

1.1 The proposed Work Programme of items to be submitted to the Committee for consideration during the Municipal Year 2023/24 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 27 June 2023.

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

### 1.3 Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services

The Work Programme indicates that an update will be provided on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services. As Members will be aware, the Committee, at its last meeting held on 7 November 2023 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 new Service Vision 2030, and updated Service Plan for the next year. The Committee also received a presentation on this matter.

Members will also be aware that that an informal meeting of the Committee will be held on 15 January 2024 to review the topic of refuse and waste recycling and in respect of this matter, that a visit will be made to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre.

Green Sefton and waste and recycling are two major work streams of Operational In-House Services and as can be noted from the above paragraphs, these topics have been or will be given detailed consideration.

Finally, Agenda item 12 on the agenda for this meeting contains an update from the Cabinet Member - Locality Services on activity covered by Councillor Fairclough's portfolio. The update provides information on all other Operational In-House Services activity relating to:

- Building cleaning
- Catering
- Burials and cremation service
- Transport and vehicle maintenance
- Specialist transport unit
- Sefton ARC

Bearing in mind the comprehensive coverage of Operational In-House Services activity it is recommended that to avoid duplication, a separate update, as detailed in the Work Programme, on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services be not made at this meeting of the Committee.

## 1.4 **Liverpool City Region (LCR) Strategic Waste Partnership**

The LCR Strategic Waste Partnership Manager works on behalf of all the LCR local authorities. The Assistant Director of People (Operational In-House Services) would like to seek the views of the Committee for an invitation to be made to the Partnership Manager to attend the Committee to provide details about the changes in waste legislation and what that will mean due to the statutory requirement for the collection of food waste in 2026. DEFRA have only recently announced the specifics of the proposal so this item could be included on the Work Programme for the next municipal year.

- 1.5 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 2023/24 and updated, as appropriate.

## 2. **SCRUTINY REVIEW TOPICS 2023/24**

- 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 At its meeting held on 20 June 2023 the Committee agreed that any future reviews during the year be dealt with by informal meetings of the Committee rather than via Working Groups.
- 2.3 The Committee agreed that the first review be on the topic of refuse and waste recycling and in respect of this matter arrangements have been made for the visit made to the Gillmoss Recycling Discovery Centre and an informal meeting of the Committee to be held (following the visit) on 15 January 2024.
- 2.4 The Committee's views are now sought on the selection of a topic(s) for consideration by an informal meeting(s) of the Committee.
- 2.5 A criteria checklist for selecting and rejecting potential topics to review is attached at Appendix 2.

## 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.
- 3.4 The latest Forward Plan is attached at Appendix 3 for this purpose. For ease of identification, items listed on the Forward Plan for the first time appear as

# Agenda Item 11

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 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.
- 3.7 In respect of pre-scrutiny the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board at its meeting held on 20 June 2023 noted that often strategies and plans were included on the Forward Plan but that rarely were they submitted to Overview and Scrutiny for comment prior to their submission to Cabinet/Council; and suggested that officers should plan more time into the process for formulating plans and strategies to enable Overview and Scrutiny to have an input and provide comments to Cabinet/Council. This Committee at its meeting held on 27 June 2023 raised similar concerns.

As Members will be aware, a report was considered at the last meeting of the Committee and a recommendation approved that Cabinet be requested to approve changes to the Executive/Scrutiny Protocol and that Executive Directors and Assistant Directors, whose responsibilities fall within the remit of Overview and Scrutiny Committees, be requested to seek the views of the Committees on all strategies and plans prior to submission to Cabinet and Council; and that if it is not possible, due to time constraints, to submit the final strategy or plan for consideration, then an outline or synopsis be submitted to the Committees to allow an oversight of the proposals to be considered and commented upon; and Section 6 of the Protocol relating to pre-scrutiny be amended accordingly.

- 3.8 The report referred to in paragraph 3.7 above was considered and approved by the four Overview and Scrutiny Committees during the September cycle of meetings; and also by Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 2 November 2023.

## **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 Desmond, Hart and Howard. 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 Councillor serving on Liverpool City Council has been appointed Chair for the 2023/24 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://liverpoolcityregion-ca.moderngov.co.uk/mgCommitteeDetails.aspx?ID=365>

4.9 The last meeting of the LCRCAO&S was held on 6 December 2023. The Committee considered the following items:

# Agenda Item 11

- Level Four Devolution and the Deeper Devolution Scrutiny Protocol.
- Development of Long-Term Skills Plan.
- CA Plan 2021-24: Quarter 2 2023-24 Performance Update.
- Work Programme 2023-24.

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




**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE (REGENERATION AND SKILLS) WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24**
**Tuesday, 27 June 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle**

No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
2.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser
3.	Housing Support Services to Vulnerable People – Migration Update	Simon Burnett/Allan Glennon

**Tuesday, 19 September 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport**

No.	Report/Item	Report Author/Organiser
1.	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2023/24	Michelle Williams (Liaising with MRWA)
2.	Southport Market Update	Stephen Watson/Stuart Barnes/Mark Catherall
3.	Riverside Dispersed Accommodation Pilot	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
4.	Domestic Abuse Report	Simon Burnett/Janette Maxwell
5.	Effectiveness of the Council's Enforcement Activity Final Report – Update on Recommendations	Paul Fraser
6.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
7.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

<b>Tuesday, 7 November 2023, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Bootle</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Report/Item</b>	<b>Report Author/Organiser</b>
1.	Flood & Coastal Risk – Annual Report	Michelle Williams
2.	Review of Winter Service and Operational Plan	Peter Moore
3.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth (with a focus on the new Crosby Library project and the Bootle Regeneration Strategy)	Stuart Barnes
4.	Sandway Homes Limited - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephan Van Arendsen
5.	Sefton Hospitality Operations Limited (SHOL) - 2022/23 Outturn Review of Council Wholly Owned Companies	Stephen Watson
6.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
7.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

<b>Tuesday, 16 January 2024, 6.30 p.m., Town Hall, Southport</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Report/Item</b>	<b>Report Author/Organiser</b>
1.	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority – Service Delivery Plan 2023/24	Michelle Williams (Liaising with MRWA)
2.	Update on the progression of the Liverpool City Region Digital Inclusion Strategy	Andrea Watts
3.	Update on Operational Activities delivered via Locality Services	Michelle Williams
4.	Green Sefton Annual Review 2023	Michelle Williams
5.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
6.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

<b>Tuesday, 5 March 2024, 6.30 p.m., - Town Hall, Bootle</b>		
<b>No.</b>	<b>Report/Item</b>	<b>Report Author/Organiser</b>
1.	Sefton Economic Strategy for Growth	Stuart Barnes
2.	Damp, Mould and Condensation in Residential Properties	Stuart Barnes/Lee Payne
3.	Cabinet Member Update Reports	Paul Fraser
4.	Work Programme Update	Paul Fraser

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## APPENDIX 2

### CRITERIA CHECKLIST FOR SELECTING TOPICS FOR REVIEW

<b>Criteria for Selecting Items</b>
▪ Issue identified by members as key issue for public (through member surgeries, other contact with constituents or volume of complaints)
▪ Poor performing service (evidence from performance indicators/benchmarking)
▪ Service ranked as important by the community (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels)
▪ High level of user/general public dissatisfaction with service (e.g. through market surveys/citizens panels/complaints)
▪ Public interest issue covered in local media
▪ High level of budgetary commitment to the service/policy area (as percentage of total expenditure)
▪ Pattern of budgetary overspends
▪ Council corporate priority area
▪ Central government priority area
▪ Issues raised by External Audit Management Letter/External audit reports
▪ New government guidance or legislation
▪ Reports or new evidence provided by external organisations on key issue
▪ Others

### CRITERIA FOR REJECTION

<b>Potential Criteria for Rejecting Items</b>
▪ Issue being examined by the Cabinet
▪ Issue being examined by an Officer Group : changes imminent
▪ Issue being examined by another internal body
▪ Issue will be addressed as part of a Service Review within the next year
▪ New legislation or guidance expected within the next year
▪ Other reasons specific to the particular issues.

# Agenda Item 11

## APPENDIX 2

### SCRUTINY CHECKLIST DO'S AND DON'TS

<b>DO</b>
◆ Remember that Scrutiny <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>◆ Is about learning and being a "critical friend"; it should be a positive process</li><li>◆ Is not opposition</li></ul>
◆ Remember that Scrutiny should result in improved value, enhanced performance or greater public satisfaction
◆ Take an overview and keep an eye on the wider picture
◆ Check performance against local standards and targets and national standards, and compare results with other authorities
◆ Benchmark performance against local and national performance indicators, using the results to ask more informed questions
◆ Use Working Groups to get underneath performance information
◆ Take account of local needs, priorities and policies
◆ Be persistent and inquisitive
◆ Ask effective questions - be constructive not judgmental
◆ Be open-minded and self aware - encourage openness and self criticism in services
◆ Listen to users and the public, seek the voices that are often not heard, seek the views of others - and balance all of these
◆ Praise good practice and best value - and seek to spread this throughout the authority
◆ Provide feedback to those who have been involved in the review and to stakeholders
◆ Anticipate difficulties in Members challenging colleagues from their own party
◆ Take time to review your own performance

<b>◆ DON'T</b>
◆ Witch-hunt or use performance review as punishment
◆ Be party political/partisan
◆ Blame valid risk taking or stifle initiative or creativity
◆ Treat scrutiny as an add-on
◆ Get bogged down in detail
◆ Be frightened of asking basic questions
◆ Undertake too many issues in insufficient depth
◆ Start without a clear brief and remit
◆ Underestimate the task
◆ Lose track of the main purpose of scrutiny
◆ Lack sensitivity to other stakeholders
◆ Succumb to organisational inertia
◆ Duck facing failure - learn from it and support change and development
◆ Be driven by data or be paralysed by analysis - keep strategic overview, and expect officers to provide high level information and analysis to help.

## APPENDIX 2

### KEY QUESTIONS

**Overview and Scrutiny Committees should keep in mind some of the fundamental questions:-**

Are we doing what users/non users/local residents want?
Are users' needs central to the service?
Why are we doing this?
What are we trying to achieve?
How well are we doing?
How do we compare with others?
Are we delivering value for money?
How do we know?
What can we improve?

### INVESTIGATIONS:-

To what extent are service users' expectations and needs being met?
To what extent is the service achieving what the policy intended?
To what extent is the service meeting any statutory obligations or national standards and targets?
Are there any unexpected results/side effects of the policy?
Is the performance improving, steady or deteriorating?
Is the service able to be honest and open about its current performance and the reasons behind it?
Are areas of achievement and weakness fairly and accurately identified?
How has performance been assessed? What is the evidence?
How does performance compare with that of others? Are there learning points from others' experiences?
Is the service capable of meeting planned targets/standards? What change to capability is needed.
Are local performance indicators relevant, helpful, meaningful to Members, staff and service users?

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## APPENDIX 3

## SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN



### FOR THE FOUR MONTH PERIOD 1 FEBRUARY 2024 - 31 MAY 2024

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

# Agenda Item 11

## APPENDIX 3

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

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

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

**NOTE:**

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

**Phil Porter**  
**Chief Executive**

## APPENDIX 3

**FORWARD PLAN INDEX OF ITEMS**

Item Heading	Officer Contact
Procurement of Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service	Steven Martlew steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk
Culture Strategy	Mark Snaylam Mark.snaylam@sefton.gov.uk
Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy 2024-2029	Graham Parry graham.parry@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 3446
Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Procurement of Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service</b> The Assistant Director of People (Communities) be authorised to conduct a procurement exercise for a fully Integrated Domestic Abuse Service with a view to entering a contract for a minimum period of 3 years, plus 2 optional years (1+1)			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	1 Feb 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 04/01/2024 to 01/02/2024. Reason: Work is ongoing on the preparation of the report			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Part exempt (Paragraph 3)			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Assistant Director of People (Communities)			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	Officers, partners and other stakeholders, service users.			
Method(s) of Consultation	Emails, surveys, meetings, focus groups with key stakeholders.			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Procurement of Fully Integrated Community Domestic Abuse Service			
Contact Officer(s) details	Steven Martlew <a href="mailto:steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk">steven.martlew@sefton.gov.uk</a>			

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Culture Strategy</b> To seek approval of Sefton's Culture Strategy and to set up a steering group for the Borough Of Culture 2025			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	1 Feb 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 04/01/2024 to 01/02/2024. Reason: work is ongoing on the preparation of the Strategy			
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	Residents of the borough; Culture Strategy Steering Group			
Method(s) of Consultation	Surveys; Meetings; User groups			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Culture Strategy			
Contact Officer(s) details	Mark Snaylam Mark.snaylam@sefton.gov.uk			

# Agenda Item 11

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

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

## APPENDIX 3

### SEFTON METROPOLITAN BOROUGH COUNCIL FORWARD PLAN

Details of Decision to be taken	<b>Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan</b> Approval of the Phase 1A Business Plan outlining future housing development by Sandway Homes.			
Decision Maker	Cabinet			
Decision Expected	23 May 2024 Decision due date for Cabinet changed from 01/02/2024 to 23/05/2024. Reason: to enable firm costs, rather than indicative costs, to be obtained from a contractor			
Key Decision Criteria	Financial	Yes	Community Impact	Yes
Exempt Report	Open			
Wards Affected	All Wards			
Scrutiny Committee Area	Regeneration and Skills			
Lead Director	Executive Director - Place			
Persons/Organisations to be Consulted	None			
Method(s) of Consultation	None			
List of Background Documents to be Considered by Decision-maker	Approval of Sandway Homes Phase 1A Business Plan			
Contact Officer(s) details	Lee Payne lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk Tel: 0151 934 4842			

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# Agenda Item 12

<b>Report to:</b>	Overview and Scrutiny Committee -(Regeneration and Skills)	<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	16 January 2024
<b>Subject:</b>	Cabinet Member Reports – November 2023 to January 2024		
<b>Report of:</b>	Chief Legal and Democratic Officer	<b>Wards Affected:</b>	(All Wards);
<b>Portfolio:</b>	Communities and Housing; Health and Wellbeing (Green Sefton element) Locality Services; Planning and Building Control; and Regeneration and Skills		
<b>Is this a Key Decision:</b>	No	<b>Included in Forward Plan:</b>	No
<b>Exempt / Confidential Report:</b>	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 November 2023 to January 2024.

## 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(s):

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: (including any Risk Implications)

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.

## 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.

# Agenda Item 12

(A) **Revenue Costs** – see above

(B) **Capital Costs** – see above

## Implications of the Proposals:

<b>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</b>								
<b>Legal Implications:</b>								
<b>Equality Implications:</b>  There are no direct equality implications arising from this report. Any equality implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.								
<b>Impact on Children and Young People: No</b>  There are no direct impacts on children and young people arising from this report. Any implications arising from the consideration of reports referred to in the Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.								
<b>Climate Emergency Implications:</b>  The recommendations within this report will <table border="1"><tr><td>Have a positive impact</td><td>No</td></tr><tr><td>Have a neutral impact</td><td>Yes</td></tr><tr><td>Have a negative impact</td><td>No</td></tr><tr><td>The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors</td><td>Yes</td></tr></table> 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 Cabinet Member reports will be contained in such reports when they are presented to Members at the appropriate time.	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
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							

## 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.

- Assistant Director of People – Communities
- Assistant Director of People – Operational In-House Services
- Assistant Director of Place – Highways and Public Protection
- Assistant Director of Place – Regeneration and Housing

**(B) External Consultations**

Not applicable

**Implementation Date for the Decision**

Immediately following the Committee meeting.

<b>Contact Officer:</b>	Paul Fraser
Telephone Number:	Tel: 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
- Cabinet Member - Regeneration and Skills

**Background Papers:**

# Agenda Item 12

There are no background papers available for inspection.

## **1. Introduction/Background**

- 1.2 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.

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills – 16<sup>th</sup> January 2024)</b>		
<b>COUNCILLOR</b>	<b>PORTFOLIO</b>	<b>DATE</b>
Trish Hardy	Communities and Housing	16 <sup>th</sup> January 2024

## **COMMUNITY SAFETY AND ENGAGEMENT TEAM**

The Executive Director for People and the Community Safety and Engagement team are developing a plan that will see covid memorials in open spaces across the Borough. 5 parks and open spaces have been identified in the 5 township areas. A full consultation has been carried out to gather residents feedback on the plans and locations. At the time of preparing this report there had been over 90 responses.

### **Christmas Activities 2023**

#### **Marian Square - Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November switch on 6.30pm – Event organised by Feelgood Factory and St Oswalds Councillors**

Approximately 300 people attended on the night, residents enjoyed the entertainment consisting of Go Karts, Santas Grotto and DJ. No issues reported.

#### **Hightown - Wednesday 22<sup>nd</sup> November switch on 6.50pm – Event organised by Hightown Parish Council**

Residents enjoyed mulled wine and mince pies at the Hightown Pub followed by music from the Salvation Army band before the Xmas light switch on at 6.50pm and the Village singers led the carol singing, which was enjoyed by all. No issues reported.

#### **South Rd - Thursday 23<sup>rd</sup> November switch on 4.45pm – Event organised by Crosby Housing & Waterloo Town Team**

Approx 350 people attended. The Event had a grotto, market stalls, music and children's entertainment. Loan shark information was available for residents and a visit from Sharkie kept the kids entertained. Children were provided with sausage rolls and 235 selection boxes were handed out in the grotto. No issues reported.

#### **Thornton - Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November switch on 6pm – Event organised by Thornton Parish Council**

Approx 300 people attended. The Nags Head Pub hosted the event and gave out refreshments. Music from Quay Notes Ukulele band, Thornton Community Choir and dancing from Ford Gems Morris Dancers. Face painting for the kids and balloon modelling plus a visit from Santa and the Grinch! Special appearance from the Mayor of Sefton and Deputy Lord Lieutenant. No issues reported.

#### **Bispham Rd - Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November switch on 5.30pm – Event organised by High Park Project & Norwood Councillors**

Around 300 attended, event included carol singers, brass band, Santas Grotto, Christmas messages from the church and a light switch on.

Several of the businesses on Bispham Rd also participated through selling traditional festive food and drink. No issues reported.

# Agenda Item 12

## **Crosby Village - Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November switch on 5pm – Event organised by local business & Blundell Sands & Victoria Councillors**

Approx. 500 people attended this event. 4 children from local primary schools switched the Xmas lights on and the Jacob Billington Trust arranged for local young artists and groups to perform. Activities included fairground rides and visit from Santa. No issues reported.

## **Bootle Strand - Saturday 25<sup>th</sup> November switch on 5pm – Event organised by Bootle Together community group.**

Approx 3000 people attended this event. The event included a fun fair on the Salt & Tar site along with market stalls inside the Strand Shopping Centre and a Santas Grotto and a Christmas Light switch on at the tree on Stanley Rd. 1,000 free selection boxes were given out during the event. Only issue reported was a blown electrical fuse which turned the lights off for a few hours, but this has now been rectified and all lights are working and lit.

### **Community Safety**

A Police Meet and Great session was held for the South Sefton Councillors in Bootle Town Hall on the 10<sup>th</sup> November. Another session will be organised for the Spring and discussions about replicating the event in the North and central areas of the borough are ongoing.

There has not been a full debrief from the Bangor period, however, Merseyside Fire and Rescue have shared their initial statistics with us.



### **Cost of Living / Welfare Reform**

#### **Sustainable Affordable Living Coordinator**

The coordinator has secured training places for Healthy Start uptake via Feeding Liverpool and Dr Naomi Maynard. Libraries have also agreed to host facilitation sessions using their IT Assets which means for those Food Banks & Pantries without IT equipment we can still sign residents up.

Allotment groups have been asked about their relationships with Food Banks and how much produce they donate, from this information we can set a baseline from which we'll be able to implement the Sefton Allotment Strategy, Co-Terminus with that of the LCR Strategy on Sustainable Affordable Food.

# Agenda Item 12

LCR has asked for contributions relating to the City Region Food Strategy which has implications not only for Local Authorities but also for the Combined Authority itself, the Private Sector and the VCF Sector. Pushed out to wider comment from the SAL Network as it affects stakeholders and received feedback from some members which was forwarded back to the LCR.

## **Holiday Activity Fund (HAF)**

All HAF funding has been allocated for our winter provision with 35 holiday camps offering free places this year, compared to 23 in 2022. The funding has created 5,927 individual sessions for young people, and we expect to reach almost 2000 children across the Christmas holidays. Sessions will run from the week leading up to Christmas with most provision taking place during the first week of January. Almost all of our providers are offering four days of face-to-face provision this year with a couple opting to offer two days complimented by activity and food hampers.

The HAF Coordinator continues to work with the leisure team to offer eligible families free swimming – young people in receipt of benefits related free school meals are eligible for one swim during the Christmas holidays and under 8's can bring an accompanying adult for free.

## **Hate Crime**

The Hate Crime JAG (formerly MARAC) meetings continue to take place monthly. The JAG supported a walkabout in the Stanley Road area around the Strand Shopping Centre during National Hate Crime Awareness Week in October. This was in response to reports of street drinkers racially abusing shopkeepers in the area.

## **Equalities**

Two sessions on the Equality Act 2010 and equality impact assessments were held online for elected members as part of their annual training programme.

A submission was made for inclusion in the Inclusive Companies Top 50 Employers list, and although not making the top 50 the Council scored well in their first submission. Feedback will be used to improve our future performance.

## **Anti-Social Behaviour**

David Chambers (ASB officer north) Has resigned and will leave Sefton on 31/12/23. Recruitment for a replacement ASB Officer will take place in January 2024

Temporary work distribution will be:

Simon Evans (Senior ASB Officer North & Central)

Maghull, Waterloo, Aintree, Melling, Little Crosby village, Lunt, Thornton Lydiate Southport, Birkdale, Ainsdale, Formby, Freshfields, Crosby, High town, Ince Blundell,

Raph Munro (ASB officer south)

Netherton, Bootle, Seaforth, Litherland

## **Youth Service**

The team celebrated Youth Work Week (6<sup>th</sup> Nov – 10<sup>th</sup> Nov). The theme this year was Youth Work in Every Place and Every Space. We shared different types of youth work in different places and spaces across social media, using the hashtags #YWW23 #YouthWork #YouthWorkWeek #YWW2023. The National Youth Agency informed us that this Youth Work week was the biggest yet *'with social media activity reaching a whopping 6.2 million people through 8,100 shares and 12,200 campaign interactions across the country and beyond.'*

# Agenda Item 12

## DOMESTIC ABUSE SERVICE

A new service aimed at providing a single point of access to Domestic Abuse victims, their families, friends and colleagues as well as professionals has launched. The Council has commissioned Sefton Women & Children's Aid (SWACA) to deliver the service over a 12 month period. The service provides a helpline (0151 394 1400) 8am-6pm Monday to Friday where trained staff can offer practical and emotional advice and support and link you with a range of services depending on your situation. There is also a series of drop ins, taking place once a week in each of the 3 localities as well as providing therapeutic counselling to those that require it in order to build resilience and aid recovery from the long-term effects of domestic abuse. The service will address a number of the priorities outlined in the action plan accompanying the Domestic & Sexual Abuse Strategy 2023-2028

### Refuge

The new refuge providing accommodation and support to women and their children fleeing Domestic Abuse in Sefton has opened. The refuge is provided by One Vision Housing and the support services are provided by SWACA who have been commissioned by Sefton Council. The refuge provides 5 self contained units that provide a range of bed spaces from 2-5 beds. The refuge also provides accessible accommodation for those women who may have a physical disability. SWACA provide a 24/7 on site support to the residents.

### White Ribbon Campaign

A programme publicising the range of services available to victims of Domestic or Sexual Abuse, including the new Sefton Domestic Abuse Service, took place over the 16 days of action following White Ribbon Day on 25 November 2023.

All information relating to Domestic Abuse can be found on the Council's Domestic Abuse Microsite [Domestic Abuse \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/domestic-abuse)

## LIBRARIES

### **What Stories Make Worlds – Netherton based engagement project**

As part of libraries engagement in Netherton, a new arts engagement project has been delivered based on film. The What Stories Make Worlds project has worked with 20 residents to produce a new work combining 16mm film, photography and sounds collected in the Netherton. The film produced in collaboration with residents is a meditative journey tracking the seasonal changes in the area and exploring the huge array of plant and animal life that lives in Netherton, both on and off the canal. As well as providing suggestions for the content and feel of the film, they also learnt how to film, edit and add special effects to create a 1970's feel to the film – a nod to the creation of Sefton in 1974. This is one a new exploratory way of engaging with residents. The final edit of the film can be found at <https://vimeo.com/859402329> . Password: Netherton

### **Reaching Communities bid success**

The latest libraries bid to the National Lottery Reaching Communities fund has been successful and the full bid amount of £75,000 has been awarded. This bid was to fund the continuation of the Colour of Pomegranates project which provides activities and support to migrant and refugee women in Sefton. The funding is over a 3-year period, with £25,000 allocated each year by Reaching Communities for this project. The funding will not only allow the project to continue, but the artists that have been engaged for the project plan to introduce new themes and activities to match the changing migrant demographic in Sefton. The project team already partner with Venus who run their International Café from Bootle Library, and discussions are underway to explore other opportunities of engaging with the migrant community in new ways.



## **Netherton Library joins the National Databank**

A submission to the Good Things Foundation for Netherton Library to join the National Databank has been approved. This means that free data and sims will be available to residents who can't afford broadband and have no access to the internet. Library staff will issue the free data and manage the process so a sustainable supply of data is available on request. Netherton Library is the latest site in Sefton to become a National Databank site, joining Bootle and Crosby Libraries who piloted the scheme as early adopters

## **£125,000 secured from the Youth Investment Fund**

The Youth Investment Fund have now sent Sefton an offer for funding up to £125,000 to support youth work on the back of replacing the glazing in the community rooms at the Atkinson. Listed Building Consent has already been approved and now a selective tender will be carried out in consultation with the Conservation Officer, to secure an approved supplier of the glazing. Now that the funding is secured, the project has been handed over to The Atkinson for the delivery phase. Once the works have been completed, The Atkinson plans to set up a new youth curatorial scheme and will work with Youth Services to maximise the impact of the scheme.

## **Escape Room Pilot**

Something new happened at Crosby Library in the October half term – an Escape Rooms event. A new event was created to engage with a key target group for libraries: teenagers. The Community Room in the library was taken out of action for the week and during that time converted into a travelling art gallery to fit in with the Escape Room's Halloween themed plot. The staff wrote the scenario, planned and created the clues and puzzles in their own time. In the half term, the event was run over 3 days with 10 sessions, and was fully booked in advance. The project also allowed us to test our new events calendar and self-service event booking system which worked really well. Although the project was specifically targeting teenagers, most bookings were by family groups. The Escape Room has now been dismantled, but it was designed to be boxed up and moved to a new site, so planning is now taking place for it to reappear at Bootle Library and efforts will be doubled to promote it to the target audience. Now the pilot has been successfully delivered when it Once it is ready to be run again, the Youth Team will be contacted to see if it can be used to positively engage with specific groups they are working with.

## **Update on library engagement in Netherton**

- Libraries have undertaken a lengthy period of research and learning around the Netherton area, learning a lot from other community groups and venues and responding to needs which have been communicated by the local community. We're looking to extend the programme out in several ways:
- A screening of What Stories Make Worlds, a community produced short film and soundtrack, was held in the library The project was led by the At The libraries team during a series of 6 workshops. 18 people attended the sessions.
- In October, Netherton library hosted a series of sessions led by Abi Horsfield from Collective Encounters. The group explored placemaking with participants through writing and light-touch performance.
- We are developing an offer for adults which will take the basic structure of a reading group as a means to explore the area through shared storytelling and workshops.
- A regular series of work with younger people, based around movement is planned. Young Families Producer and artist Nicki McCubbing's has worked with the programming team and librarians to build on the library's Young Families programme, responding to the needs and wants of local families gleaned from our research. A regular Tuesday morning slot will see local dance group – Sole Rebel, working Page 253,ing families leading up to a pre-

# Agenda Item 12

Christmas performance. We are also looking to work with families to create simple handmade ceramic items which could be gifted at Christmas, helping to alleviate some of the pressure to go out and buy gifts

## **Formby Library garden developments**

To support the council's green agenda Formby Library have been developing its community garden with some additional funding from Formby Parish Council. The library has now developed new accessible community vegetable planters and have built up a volunteer group to help maintain them. A fruit press has also been purchased and the library hosted its first fruit pressing event which saw residents bring fallen fruit from their own gardens to be pressed for apple juice. This means that instead of being discarded, fallen fruit is utilised and waste reduced.

## **HOUSING**

### **Homelessness**

The council continues to experience significant homeless pressures with approximately 180 households in Temporary Accommodation at the end 2023. This is something that all local authorities are dealing with and is the result of a reduction in the turnover of social housing stock, and rent rises and landlords exiting the private rented sector because of mortgage rises and government policy changes.

I have asked officers to undertake a full and detailed analysis of the causes of the crisis and start to formulate options to help address it. Although the high numbers of homeless cases we are seeing in the borough is shocking I believe that Sefton is well placed to deal with them. We took a decision in 2018 to start Sandway Homes, and the first two sites have now been completed, with the third site having now started.

The benefits of this direct intervention approach are greater than just the 78 new homes for sale and the 25 affordable homes we have built, and the additional 18 council owned properties which are currently being developed. Sandway facilitates the creation of our new Council Housing Programme and officers have formulated plans to for more ambitious direct delivery of a range of council housing in the borough in response to the homeless challenges we face.

Speed of response is key and the actions that are being developed include a number of innovative approaches to ensure that we can address these problems as quickly as possible.

### **Council Housing Programme**

Following the approval of the revised scheme proposal at Buckley Hill Lane the grant application to Homes England is being finalised. It is anticipated that a decision will be known in the new year. The commencement of the Buckley Hill Lane site is an exciting milestone for the Council Housing Programme and I very much look forward to welcoming our new tenants once their new homes are completed.

There is great deal of work to facilitate this which is progressing behind the scenes and legal consultants Freeths are supporting the Council on the details of the draft Development Agreement with Sandway for the purchase of the properties at Buckley Hill Lane and good progress has been made in concluding this. An exciting next step is for them to help us draft the tenancy agreement we will use for our new council housing stock.

Work to onboard our Managing Agent is also progressing well with a full policy review, and work to develop our governance and tenancy engagement approach. Ensure that the voice of the tenant is heard is central to the approach that we are taking with the programme.

## **Property Pool Plus**

I am delighted to report that the new Property Pool Plus Allocations System went live on the 8<sup>th</sup> January. The new system, along with the new social housing allocations policy which it supports ensures that the council is meeting its statutory duty to ensure that social housing is allocated fairly and efficiently.

## **Housing Standards Team**

It is now more than 12 months since the shocking details of the death of Awaab Ishak from mould inhalation in a property in Rochdale. Since this time I have asked officers to undertake a review of the service and as part of this an internal audit has recently been carried out on the damp and mould response of the Housing Standards Team. I am happy to report that this only identified minor areas for improvement and on the whole the team has responded well to the increased pressures put upon it following the report into Awaab's tragic death.

Another major area of work last year was the launch of our new 5 year Selective and Additional (HMO) Licensing Schemes which commenced on 1<sup>st</sup> March 2023.

As at 30/11/23 we have received 2174 licence applications, which is 63% of the expected number of applications. 592 licences have been issued and 304 compliance inspections have been carried out with many landlords seeking to apply for property accreditation.

The team has taken a very strict approach with landlords that provide properties or services that fall below the expected standards and there are currently 4 appeal cases pending at the First Tier Property Tribunal. 2 appeals are against Civil Penalty Notices served for failure to licence properties, 1 for a Civil Penalty served for breach of HMO Management Regulations, and 1 appeal against an Improvement Notice.

There have been 92 requests for service relating to poor housing standards or poor housing management have been received between 1 Nov 2023 and 13 Dec 2023. Where landlords fail to comply with informal action, the team continue to take formal enforcement action. Since 1 Nov 2023 this has included the service of 1 Emergency Prohibition Order, 1 x Prohibition Order, 2 x Improvement Notices and 7 Notices for failure to have smoke alarms fitted.

Work to reduce the number of long-term vacant homes has continued, with responses to 11 new Service Requests relating to problematic empty homes. One Enforced Sale has progressed to auction in December.

Management of the Council's Gypsy and Traveller site continues. There have been no unauthorised Gypsy & Traveller encampments in Sefton in the last quarter of 2023.

## **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 across the borough and I am delighted to report to members that all the legal agreements are now in place for a major Extra Care scheme in Ainsdale. The Riverside scheme on the site of the former Adult Education Centre off Sandbrook Road will provide 90 Extra Care properties, 40 new affordable homes and an 8 bedspace Short Term Assessment Unit for adults with learning difficulties. The Short Term Assessment Unit will be retained by the Council and managed by the Adult Social Care Department.

# Agenda Item 12

The new scheme not only provides much needed specialist and affordable housing in the north of the borough it will also see the empty and derelict former Adult Education Centre demolished and the site brought back into use, something that I understand residents who live close by are delighted to see.

<b>CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT</b>		
<b>Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)</b>		
<i>COUNCILLOR</i>	<i>PORTFOLIO</i>	<i>DATE</i>
Ian Moncur	Health and Well Being	December 2023

## Green Sefton update

### 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 legacy situation still affecting staffing levels availability/ the ripple effect on works/ projects etc.

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 into the peak season of 2023.

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. Further, the unachievable income targets were removed from April 2023, which allows the service to present a balanced budget for 23/24.

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, and the first years work have proved successful attracting regional media attention, and the year two actions are now commencing on site for winter 2023
- 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 from Winter 2022 to Summer 2023, and to undertake the required surveys and analysis etc,

# Agenda Item 12

all in order to be able to make a bid some time afterwards (whenever match funding has been secured). In the last quarter, this consultation has completed and design workshops have taken place with the Task Group to develop and understand the scale and scope of the project, with the outcome of the consultation in mind – all to be reported to Cabinet Member in due course

- 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 has now been signed with the trustees to formalise this suite of projects to be developed and delivered. Officers are now exploring options for Project Management support, and for the future operator tendering for the Conservatory.
- the Ainsdale Beach gateway schemes reached various blockages, and so a paper was presented in June 23 which agreed to pause all, and to seek resources for development of an overall masterplan for the area instead. A consultant has now been appointed, stakeholder engagement is ongoing, and a new 'vision' for the area should be published early in 2024
- Cabinet gave formal approval to seek tenders for the future investment in Southport Golf Links in March 2022. The White House Café reopened in May 23 (with SHOL operating), and the course tender itself remains in abeyance, awaiting capacity and resources to proceed. Meanwhile, it has been noted that a local private golf course is developing an investment plan for their site with a very similar model – a watching brief is to be adopted to learn lessons from their efforts
- An unsolicited Expression of Interest has been received by a group of golfers at Bootle Golf Course who are interested in seeking external funding to renovate, and then operate, the clubhouse building at Bootle Golf Course. Officers are assessing their proposal at the time of writing, and which will be discussed with/ reported to Cabinet Member in due course
- the FCERM team continue to work with the Environment Agency and other partner agencies on seeking capital monies to reduce flood risk. Public consultation on the 'Making Space for Water' project in Churchtown/ Crossens commenced in September, and has now concluded – this will lead to a Planning Application to be submitted shortly, together with a funding bid to the Environment Agency early in 2024.

## What is performing well

The 2023 Annual Review was presented to the Overview and Scrutiny (regeneration and skills) committee 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](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/greensefton)

The 2022 review led to the refresh and launching of the Service Vision in April 2023 which was adopted by Cabinet Member, and included taking on board comments from the O+S Committee, Cabinet Member, and the wider team of Green Sefton.

This has then flowed into revisiting the Service Plan, which was adopted by Cabinet Member in October 2023.

## What requires improvement and what action is being taken

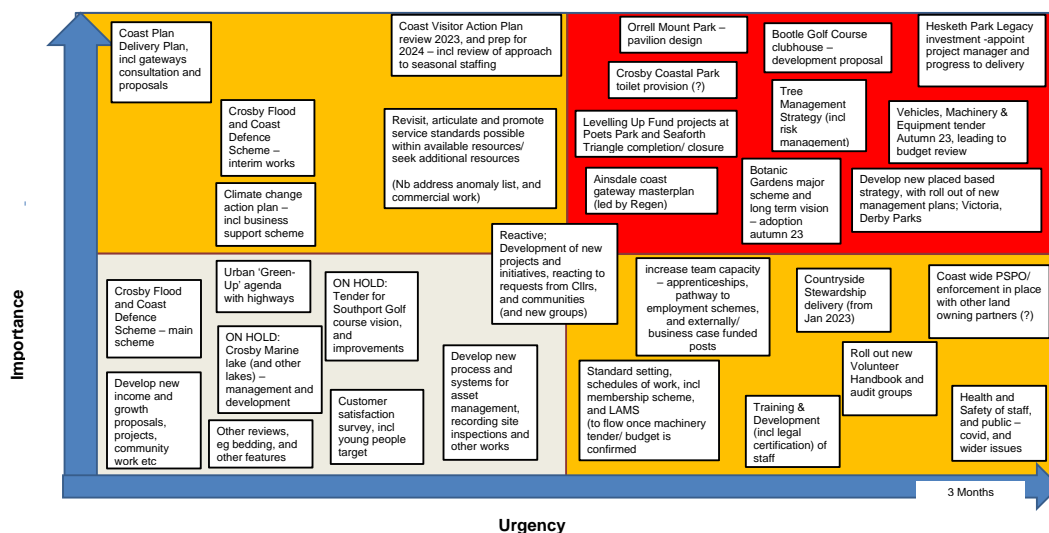
Overall work programming

# Agenda Item 12

The Annual report highlighted the tracking of the services overall performance against the actions contained within the previous Service Plan which was RAG rated over the previous two years. This clearly showed that many actions 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 approach of tracking progress will be replicated moving forwards, measuring progress against the newly adopted Service Vision, and Service Plan

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, as below. 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, 10.2.23, 10.3.23, 25.7.23, 15.9.23**  
(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 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.

# Agenda Item 12

Following discussion with Cabinet Member during 2022, and comments received (including those from CVS, legal and personnel colleagues), the final version was approved in September 22. This has since 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 wider in the coming months, which the upcoming machinery and equipment tender will inform in Winter 23/24



<b>OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY</b> (Regeneration and Skills)		
<b>Councillor</b>	<b>Portfolio</b>	<b>Date</b>
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	January 2024

## **Highway Asset Management**

### **Winter Maintenance**

- As of 15<sup>th</sup> December, we have gritted the carriageways on 10 Occasions and the footways 7 times.
- Officers continue to monitor the weather conditions 24 hours a day and will do so during the shutdown and throughout the remainder of the season.
- Regular spending updates will be provided from January onwards to monitor against the allocated budgets.

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

- The high – wattage bulb replacement scheme is 98% complete with the remainder on track to be done by the end of February 24. The slight delay was due to delivery of materials. This in helping maximise earlier reductions in energy savings to the Authority.
- The updated business case for the LED project is still being worked on by officers. Unforeseen energy and borrowing costs have impacted on the original forecasts.
- Cabinet have now approved a 2-year extension on the Street Lighting Contract. This will allow the LED project to be completed by the incumbent contractor, ensuring continuity of work and greater certainty on future works costs.

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

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

# Agenda Item 12

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

## Highway Maintenance

- Since 1<sup>st</sup> April 2023 which coincides with the start of the new financial year, planned & routine maintenance operations are progressing well and in accordance with allocated programming timeframes.
- To date key maintenance improvements have been completed which include the following:
- Application of footway surface treatments commonly known as “slurry Seal” has been applied to **41,000 M2** of bituminous footways with a spend value of **£130,000.00**.
- Surface treatments in the carriageway known as “Micro Surfacing” has been applied to **50,000M2** of defective carriageway with a spend value of **£385,000.00**.
- Surface treatments in the carriageway known as “Surface Dressing” has been applied to **73,000M2** of defective carriageway with a spend value of **£530,000.00**.
- Resurfacing which involves the removal of one or more surfacing layers in the carriageway has been completed, totalling **83,000 M2** with an invoiced spend value of **£2,646,000.00**. Allocated funds for this financial year are fully committed.
- Routine safety inspections and other maintenance functions such as grass cutting, and drainage renewals continue to operate daily which identifies isolated defects and repairs in accordance with the council’s safety inspection policies and other industry guidelines. The volume and value of work does fluctuate and to date monthly budget spend continues to be in the region of **£160,000.00** to **£180,000.00**.

## Strategic Transport

### Port Access

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

The Transport Secretary confirmed, in March 2023, that the 'A5036 Port of Liverpool Access in the Roads Investment Strategy faces a range of challenges including environmental considerations and ongoing design changes, and so will be developed in RIS 3 (covering 2025-2030) to allow time to ensure stakeholders' views are fully considered' The scheme had previously been in the RIS2. It is understood that modelling and survey work is ongoing. This process is likely to take a further 10 months to complete. There is no firm indication that the scheme will be delivered or further developed under RIS3.

## **LTP and Growth Plan**

- Work is currently progressing on the delivery of all projects set out in Year 2 of the current City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) programme. In discussions with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, it is clear that there is now some flexibility to enable some projects identified for expenditure in Year 2 to be delivered in Year 3 providing works have commenced. It should be noted that the increase in value of the Capital Programme has put some strain on resources. Recruitment for new staff to help deliver the programme is ongoing and the Transport Technical Support Services commission has been relied upon
- The entire current CRSTS programme has been re-baselined by the LCRCA to ensure that the projects originally identified on the list submitted with the Business Case are still capable of delivery within the current programme. It has also revised the funding allocations for each project following consultation with all the local authorities.
- The Year 3 CRSTS scheme has previously been shared with Cabinet Member. The various allocations are now being refined as schemes have been further developed. The programme will be shared with Cabinet Member and then set out in the 2024-25 Transport Capital Programme Report to be forwarded for approval by Cabinet Member in Spring 24.
- The Government have indicated that funding previously allocated to HS2 will be allocated to the Combined and Local Authorities so a larger settlement is anticipated in the next CRSTS programme (CRSTS2) which will provide spending for projects from 2027 onwards. The Department for Transport have indicated that the CRSTS2 package will be £1.581bn, which is over double the current allocation of £710 million between 2022-2027
- To help define these projects that will be included in CRSTS2 the LCRCA are in consultation with all the Local Authorities to understand current programmes and needs. Some analysis work has been completed to review 'access to transport, future housing, health and deprivation and economic development. Some further engagement has been programmed between the Council and LCRCA for early 2024. This will lead to the development of a Pipeline of projects.

# Agenda Item 12

- Work is progressing on the development of the next Local Transport Plan for the City Region. The target date for completion is Autumn 2024.

Development has been impacted by the delay to the DfT providing the current guidelines. All future projects should be developed in accordance with the key themes within the LTP. These include a recognition that transport must support Placemaking and projects must aim to achieve a reduction in vehicle trips whilst growing the alternatives.

- **Low Carbon Strategy:** In response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and an increased focus on active travel measures, work is continuing on the development of Low Carbon Transport Strategy for the borough. Baseline work has been undertaken and a report completed. Plans are currently being refined for member engagement in advance of a wider consultation. The report will provide a quantification of the current transport related carbon position for the Council and a future trajectory for reductions towards Net Zero. Progress is also being made on the development of an Active Travel and E-mobility Strategies for the Borough. WSP have now been engaged to complete an assessment of the Carbon impact of the Capital Programme and to provide advice and instruction on carbon assessment of transport schemes. This work should be completed by late Spring and Early Summer 2024.
- One of the key elements of the **E Mobility Strategy** will be defining the Council's approach to On Street Charging. Some further discussion will be held with Cabinet Member and Cabinet colleagues to help inform the Council's Policy to On Street charging which will help inform resident engagement and focus investment. The LCRCA have submitted a bid for Local Electrical Vehicular Infrastructure (LEVI) funding. If successful, this will enable the Council to roll out new EV infrastructure across Council owned car parks whilst developing proposals for further potential installation.
- In order to identify potential improvement to the Council's walking and cycling network a local cycling and walking infrastructure plan is being developed. Proposals for stakeholder engagement were presented to the Consultation and Engagement Panel in early November. A number of engagement sessions were held with specific interest groups and some initial plans developed for helping inform the engagement process. Detailed plans for further engagement, initially planned with Members, are being developed. It is envisaged that these will follow engagement on the LCTS which hopefully should provide some context to the need for an LCWIP.
- **Maritime Corridor Business Cases:** The detailed design work is now progressing on both schemes and the final details will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. Part of the Maritime Corridor scheme, Phase 1, will be funded from the Levelling Up Fund, following the success of a transport bid submitted by LCRCA.

The amount of Levelling Up Fund allocated to the MC scheme has been increased following a Baselining review. In order to ensure that sufficient work is expended within the timeframe, there is some pressure to progress the scheme to construction.

As such, it is proposed to secure the services of , Balfour Beatty, through the SCAPE framework to complete some Early Contractor Involvement. Balfour's have already completed some feasibility work at no cost to the Council. This has helped define the likely cost and probable construction phasing. Cabinet will be asked to approve Balfour's appointment into the Early Contractor Involvement stage of the scheme which will enable some initial enabling works to be completed and the Target Cost to be established.. Some further engagement to ensure that local Members, businesses and residents are sighted on the proposals and have an ability to shape them has been completed. Analysis work has been undertaken of the responses and those relevant to the Phase 1 scheme have been reported to L&R Committee who have approved the changes to the highway.. Engagement has also taken place with some key stakeholders, including National Highways (for the works on the A5036) and land owners and discussions held with Planning colleagues over the elements of the scheme for which Planning approval will be required. The re-baselining process has led to a revised total . The agreed allocation is £21.2m (MC). There may be some elements of MC which were included in the Outline Business Case which won't be deliverable under the current programme. These elements are likely to be delivered in CRSTS 2.

- **Southport Eastern Access Business Cases:** The detailed design work is now progressing and the final details will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. It is proposed that the same Procurement Route be adopted for the delivery of the project. The feasibility stage of the project is ongoing. Further engagement with local Members, businesses and residents is nearing completion and feedback is being appraised. In order to scope the necessary mitigation measures within the Norwood Ward, some specific targeted engagement with residents and businesses is required. The details of the process are being agreed with Ward Members. Sustrans will also be completing some school engagement work with schools in the area to help ensure that safer routes to schools are considered in the development of the proposals The baselining process has been resulted in £16.8m being allocated in the current CRSTS programme. As with the MC scheme which were included in the Outline Business Case which won't be deliverable under the current programme. These elements are likely to be delivered in CRSTS 2.
- **A59 Junctions and Corridor:** Design work is nearing completion on improvements 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.

# Agenda Item 12

ATE are supportive of the project and are encouraging the Council to consider the link to the wider communities and the potential for improvement east and west on the A59. Discussions have been undertaken with local Ward Members and Maghull Town Council and Lydiate Parish Council on the details of both schemes and further consultation with the wider public has been completed. The works are programmed for delivery in Spring 2024.

- **Scarisbrick Avenue:** In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been completed, including the installation of lighting. Some further correction and enhancement work has been identified and will be delivered in early 2024.
- **Southport Town Deal:** Design work on the first phase of public realm project identified within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) is progressing and should be completed in early 2024. Balfour Beatty have been engaged through the SCAPE framework and are close to completing the Feasibility Stage. Some Value Engineering options are being considered along with a consideration of likely funding available from the CRSTS programme to supplement the £2.5m allocated under Town Deal. Works are programmed to start on site in spring 2024. Careful consideration is being given the delivery programme to minimise impact on trade,
- A hard landscaping report has been completed which sets out the proposed materials to be used. This has been considered by the tourism, consultation, maintenance, Green Sefton and cleansing teams and comments provided and plans reviewed accordingly. The material adopted will then be used in further phases of improvement.
- A report highlighting potential changes to the highway to facilitate improved pedestrian accessibility and public realm to be delivered under subsequent phases has been developed and agreement is being reached to define a second phase of public realm work. This is likely to be centred around MLEC development. No funding has been allocated for the works but proposals for securing funding will be developed.
- **Crosby Town Centre:** The highway works which will support the new library development proposed for the Green Car Park have been substantially completed. Work has also been developed for some paving and public realm enhancement which are likely to be delivered, under the main contract, with works undertaken in early 2024. These works should set that standard for the external works associated with the planned new development. The Planning application for the Hub development has been submitted as a hybrid development. This includes all the traffic and transport work associated with the development. Ward Members, residents and businesses have been kept informed.
- **Bootle Town Centre:** - Work was commissioned to ensure the Strand Service Road can operate from Vermont Way. Further work is progressing with the Strand delivery team to look at the transport implication of the proposed changes. Some of the transport elements are funded from the

Transport Capital Programme. Some Master planning work will be undertaken looking at parking and bus waiting facilities. A series of parking surveys have been commissioned to help determine both current parking provision within the town and current demand. This work has revealed an over provision of car parking spaces across the town.

Some consideration will be given to the potential repurposing of some of the current car parking stock. Meanwhile some consideration is being given to the likely parking provision at the Strand for supporters attending the Bramley Dock and events at the Salt n Tar event space.

## Local Safety Schemes

- The Local Safety Schemes in the Transport Capital Programme include interventions at Northern Road (Gt Crosby), Hawthorne Road and Prescott Road. These schemes have all been subject to consultation and works will be delivered before March 2024. The Prescott Road scheme will be submitted to L&R committee in January, the others have been approved.

## Sustainable Transport

- **Crosby Coastal Park:** Works have been undertaken to provide lighting and an improved surface between South Road, Great Georges Road and the Lake House.
- **Formby By-pass:** Works to deliver an improved cycleway on the A565 south of Woodvale have been completed. Detailed design works are being undertaken on improvements to the junction of the A565 with the Coastal Road at Woodvale. Further design work is continuing on the section from Southport Road and through Ince Woods.
- **Revenue funding** received from the Active Travel Fund for the development of projects capable to improving cycling and walking throughout the borough. Works is currently progressing the A59 cycleway, the remainder of the A565 corridor to complement the improvement to the links identified above, junction on the A565, including Woodvale and the development of a Local Walking and Infrastructure Plan to compliment the City Region Strategic Plan. Further revenue money has been successfully bid for to continue this work and a Grant Funding Offer received.
- **School Streets:** Consultation work has been undertaken on three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. Two of the schemes were formally launched in July and further engagement events have been planned. The further scheme, at Stanley High School is more complicated and will be subject to further consultation development before implementation in early 2024. Funding has been secured to develop other school streets initiatives throughout the borough and a dedicated officer, seconded from Sustrans, has recently commenced the selection and engagement work. A priority list of 10 schools has been chosen for further engagement and four schools are currently engaged with offers made to 1 more.

# Agenda Item 12

- **Green Bus Corridor:** The LCRCA commissioned consultants to develop and appraise options for potential bus priority measures commence works on a number of routes in the City Region, including the No 53 bus corridor which travels between Crosby and Liverpool, passing on Stanley Road. Officers have provided some initial comments and a report is expected shortly setting out the results. An Options Appraisal Report has been completed. The LCRCA are now engaging further consultants to develop schemes based on the initial options. Opportunities for 'quick wins' are also being established.
- **Great Georges Road:** Final design work to complete the previous cycle lane scheme along Great Georges Road has been completed and dates are being established for implementation.
- **Birkdale Village** – Some funding from the CRSTS programme has been established to enable proposals to be developed to improve accessibility in Birkdale. These will be subject to consultation within early 2024.

## Highway Development Control

### Planning Applications

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the vacant senior highway development engineer post and limited staff resources. This has been exacerbated by the backlog from staff leave over the summer and autumn months, increasing demand for non-statutory highway advice prior to formal planning application submissions to the planning department (including the Council's own applications) and requests from developers for meetings and/or further advice some of which are not deemed necessary and create additional workload and delay. There is an impact on timescales for highway responses as a result. The applications include sites identified in the Local Plan and continue to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department.
- A contract with one of the highway framework consultants is being set up to assist with the review of planning applications (particularly junction and area traffic modelling). However, this is only practical for large applications and planning appeals due to the deadlines involved to respond to the planning department and inefficiency that would be created in the highway development control team managing small applications which would not be beneficial.
- A total of 139 applications have been responded to between September and November 2023. This number is based on per planning application and does not include the numerous responses that are provided for a particular planning application (there can be typically up to 5 responses for a major planning application and ones with significant highway issues).



## **Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements**

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites.
- The report is as follows: -
  - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 45
  - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 where the developer appears to have ceased trading.
  - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 0
  - No of submissions awaiting technical approval – 20
  - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up – 1

## **Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements**

- The numbers of this type of application also remains high, including the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 98 live full s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council plus 31 minor s278 agreements. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.

## **Public Rights of Way (PROW)**

- England Coast Path/Coastal Access – A grant application has been submitted to Natural England for a grant to maintain the route for this financial year and work to establish this wider trail partnership is on-going for the long-term maintenance. The grant funding from Natural England is to cover a proportion of the costs for maintaining the infrastructure but not revenue costs associated with staffing. How the maintenance function by Sefton Council will be managed has yet to be determined.
- Definitive Map Modification Applications – there have been no further modification order applications since the previous report and the seven applications submitted by the British Horse Society (BHS) are yet to be determined. Negotiations with the BHS, Sefton Council and two affected landowners have commenced with regards to one of the BHS applications, with a view to dedicating a path along an alternative route to that detailed in the application.
- Section 31 (6) Submissions – the Warden and Fellows of Nuffield College in the University of Oxford has submitted a deposit under section 31 (6) of the Highways Act 1980 for 11 parcels of land in and around the Lunt/Sefton area of the borough. This is currently being reviewed and if it is considered correct the details must be added to the register of Section 31 (6) Submissions for the borough and be made publicly available on Sefton's website.

# Agenda Item 12

## **Statutory Highway Orders**

- Due to the high workload and lack of staff resources there has been limited progress (none in some cases) on completing the statutory highway orders which is set to continue over the coming months. The number of statutory highway orders for the highway development control team to process under the Highways Act is likely to increase as the Department for Transport has advised that they will not undertake retrospective highway stopping up orders for planning approvals under the Town and Country Planning Act where the development works have already been implemented before the application is made to them.
- An application for a section 257 Town and Country Planning Act highway extinguishment Order for a public right of way along Chapel Lane, Melling has been received.
- An application for a section 116 extinguishment Order for a section of highway at Station Road has been received.
- There is a requirement for a Highways Act s228 application for Aldi, Northway to add a missing section of adopted highway from the s278 agreement.
- There will be two further section 228 Highways Act applications including land adjacent to the Holgate, Thornton development off the A565 Southport Road.

## **Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning**

- The team is continuing to work closely with the planning department to provide a strategic approach to development to ensure that the necessary new transport infrastructure is in place to support new developments coming forward in future years. This is very challenging for the East Maghull development site in particular due to the different developers and landowners involved. It may not be possible to provide the full spine road through the site between Poverty Lane and School Lane as there are no statutory highway powers to ensure this happens.
- The team continues to request construction traffic management plans for new developments so that we can manage the highway network efficiently and effectively with minimum disruption to users of the highway and with the important benefit of highway safety. Once plans have been agreed, the team is collaborating closely with colleagues in network management and planning to ensure that the plans are being adhered to.

## **Operational In-House Services**

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

#### **Building Cleaning**

The service continues to perform well both financially and operationally.

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

Two schools are returning to the service from January 2024 and discussions are ongoing with a further school.

## **Catering**

### Financial Position

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

This was due to two factors:

- Food Costs – Food costs continue to rise. Additional budget for food was built into SLA costs with schools but this has proved insufficient to keep pace with increases received and the potential increases that are likely to be received from suppliers during this financial year. The service uses a system of Excel spreadsheets to monitor and control food expenditure in individual kitchens. However, we have not been able to keep pace and adapt to the regular price increases and reduce their impact upon the service.
- Income – Sales built into SLAs were based on 190 trading days, the standard school academic year. However, in the financial year 2023/24, schools will only be open for around 185 days due to when various school holidays fall.

There is an acknowledgement that the increases within food costs in previous years have always been absorbed by the service and not passed on to schools. Due to the significant increases in food costs at this time, driven by the cost-of-living crisis, it simply wasn't possible for the service to meet all costs.

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

### Electronic Communication, Payment and Kitchen Management System

The service has now procured an Electronic Communication, Payment and Kitchen Management System, which will enable a more efficient service delivery approach.

The service currently has manual systems in place for many of its functions such as menu planning, providing allergen information, the recording of food safety data, providing financial information to schools, the production of management information and the ordering of food.

The new system has been rolled out to kitchens during October and November and amongst the many benefits, it will enable the service to better control food costs in individual kitchens.

# Agenda Item 12

## The Council's Obesity Strategy

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

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

## Burials and Cremations Service

Burials and Cremations at present is business as usual. The cremation and burial numbers are steady, and complaints have reduced in the last quarter, which is positive.

## Transport and Vehicle Maintenance

Following the resignation of the previous Transport Manager within Transport and Vehicle Maintenance the service commenced the recruitment process in March of this year for a replacement. The Transport Manager also holds the Vehicle Operator Licence for the Authority which is granted by the Traffic Commissioner.

As soon as the previous incumbent had served notice to leave, the Office of the Traffic Commissioner were contacted with a request for a period of grace to enable the service sufficient time to recruit a suitable replacement candidate.

The Traffic commissioner granted a 3-month period of grace on the condition that a suitable Transport Manager 'with sufficient support' was in post by end of July 2023. Failure to meet the requirements of the Traffic Commissioner would result in the Authorities Operator Licence being revoked.

Recruitment for this post proved difficult as demand for suitably qualified Transport Managers across the country is extremely high given the increased pressures on the haulage industry following both COVID and Brexit.

The first recruitment exercise proved unsuccessful in finding a suitable candidate and the position was readvertised immediately.

The second round of recruitment was successful and the new Transport Manager commenced in post in June 2024. The Operator Licence application was submitted to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner and the reply included a requirement for the new Manager to complete a refresher course in CPC\* Management. This training was implemented and a copy of the refresher qualification was provided to the Office of the Traffic Commissioner.

As all requirements and conditions set out by the Traffic Commissioner were fulfilled, they informed us that from 13<sup>th</sup> July 2023 they have accepted the new applicant as Transport Manager and nominated Operator Licence holder for Sefton MBC.

However, the Commissioner further stated:

***“The Traffic Commissioner would like to direct the Operators attention to the Senior Traffic Commissioner's Statutory Document Number 3 specifically on***

***4/50 guidance within the document. Due to the size of the vehicle authorisation on the licence, 2 Transport Managers are required in place on the licence”.***

Discussions took place with the Office of the Traffic Commissioner in addition to seeking legal advice from Logistics UK (formerly the Freight Transport Association) it transpires that whilst the Council have historically only ever employed 1 named Transport Manager, the Traffic Commissioner can indeed insist on 2 named Transport Managers on the Operators’ Licence to satisfy the Office of continuity and greater support and resource given the breadth of our fleet provision.

## **Specialist Transport Unit**

Marie Gosling is now Service Manager for the STU Service. Officers plan to re-evaluate service provision and meet with colleagues in STU Planning to discuss service level agreements with Adult Social Care and Childrens Services in the near future.

## **Sefton ARC**

A further 3 new cameras have been agreed, funded through Merseyside Police for Kings Gardens Southport.

After meeting with Merseyside Police regarding the effectiveness of CCTV across the borough, they have provided funding for 8 new cameras in total. Additionally, the BID team have provided funding for an additional 4 new cameras throughout the Southport area.

Discussions with Merseyside Police are ongoing to seek any further funding that may be available to upgrade existing cameras on the CCTV network.

School SLA’s have been finalised and will be presented for financial year 2024 via the agreed Schools Portal. This will mean changes to delivering the service as we move to a response model compared to historic patrol services which will result in Sefton ARC being competitive within the current security market.

Implementation of the new service re-structure and roles and responsibilities has concluded and becoming embedded.

## **Waste Management**

Officer attendance at the LCR Strategic Waste Partnership and Senior Officer Working Groups continue. Sefton, along with the rest of the partnership are working closely to plan the implementation of a weekly food waste collections across the LCR by March 2026. This is following the recent Government announcement that a weekly food waste collection service from households and municipal premises must be implemented by that date.

The partnership is currently discussing all options to ensure the service is effective and in place for March 2026. The partnership is also in the process of developing a Zero Waste Strategy for 2040 onwards.

# Agenda Item 12

The current recycling rate across Sefton is around 35%. The Government target for 2020 was for 50% of all household waste generated to be sent for recycling so Sefton continues to fall short of this. By 2035, the Government target is 65% of household waste to be recycled.

The service is reviewing the current recycling provision to ensure that the offer is available to all households as there continues to be low participation from properties who currently receive a sack collection style service.

Additionally, the service is exploring resource availability to improve education, engagement and participation with the aspiration of delivering targeted communication and behavioural change campaigns.

A round optimisation of the collection rounds is currently taking place, this will enable the service to remove inconsistencies across waste collections, presenting balanced rounds and provide greater resilience across the service with standardisation. Round optimisation is an evolving process as house building in the Borough continues.

## **Street Cleansing**

The Street Cleansing Service has adopted a zonal approach to weed removal, with teams deployed in a similar way to the leaf fall programme. This method has proven to be productive and provide greater ownership amongst the staff within their designated area of work.

Feedback from residents has been positive. The external weed control contract continues to be closely monitored for compliance. The season has seen optimum growing conditions with warm and wet weather.

Fly tipping continues to be a blight on the Borough with significant resource being deployed on a daily basis to address the issue.

Regular liaison with colleagues within enforcement features heavily in the day-to-day core works as we attempt to address the issue.

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

COUNCILLOR	PORTFOLIO	DATE
Daren Veidman	Cabinet Member Planning & Building Control	16 January 2024

**Introduction**

- 1.1 The Planning Service is set up to operate the Council’s regulatory functions in relation to the development and use of land.
- 1.2 It comprises the following functions:
  - Development Management
  - Enforcement
  - Building Control
  - Local Plans
  - Heritage and Conservation
  - Trees

These are supported by the Technical Support team.
- 1.3 A key focus as we have worked from home has been looking after staff wellbeing. We have carried out two surveys and devised an action plan. These have been received positively and sickness absence has reduced to 40% of pre-Covid levels.
- 1.4 We recognise the importance of customer satisfaction and the need to understand how our customers feel about the service they receive. We have addressed this with a survey of agents who submit planning applications to us and the overall response is they consider us to be the most efficient planning authority in the Liverpool City Region. We are planning to carry out a comprehensive customer survey in quarter 4 (January – March 2024).
- 1.5 We also know how importance it is to look after staff given most are still working from home most of the time and this is likely to continue. The Management Team have completed Mental Health First Aid training during the past year and some other members of staff have now also completed this training.

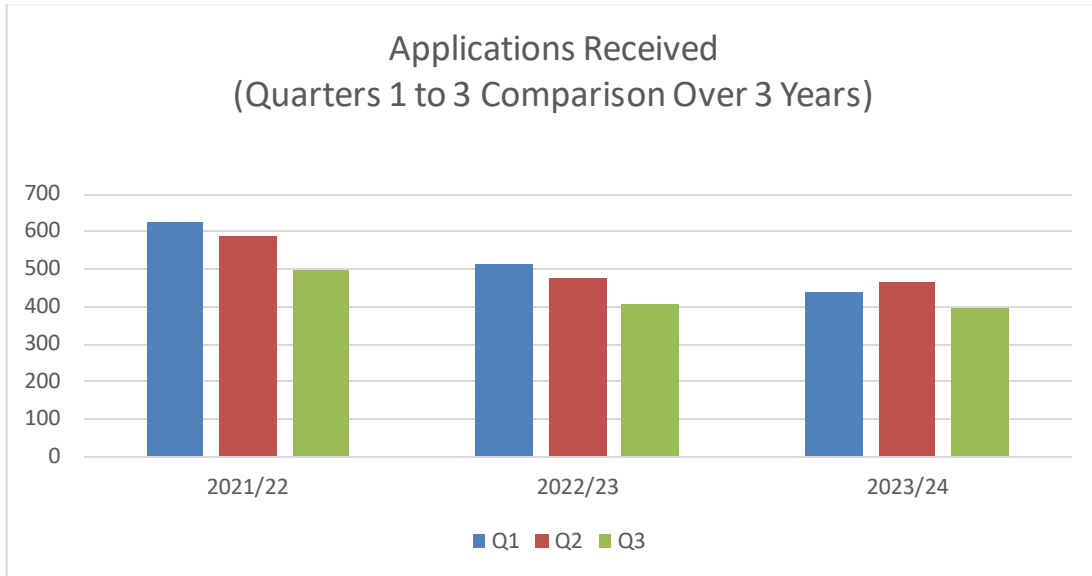
Performance Monitoring

- 1.6 Work has been undertaken to prepare a directorate wide plan, which includes all the departments within the Economic Growth and Housing department, and also a corporate plan for the whole Council. The plan demonstrates the links to Sefton’s 2030 vision and to departmental work themes and identifies performance measures to use in the future. These comprise both national and local targets which best measure Planning Services’ performance and we now use those performance measures in these reports.





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



### Speed of determining planning applications

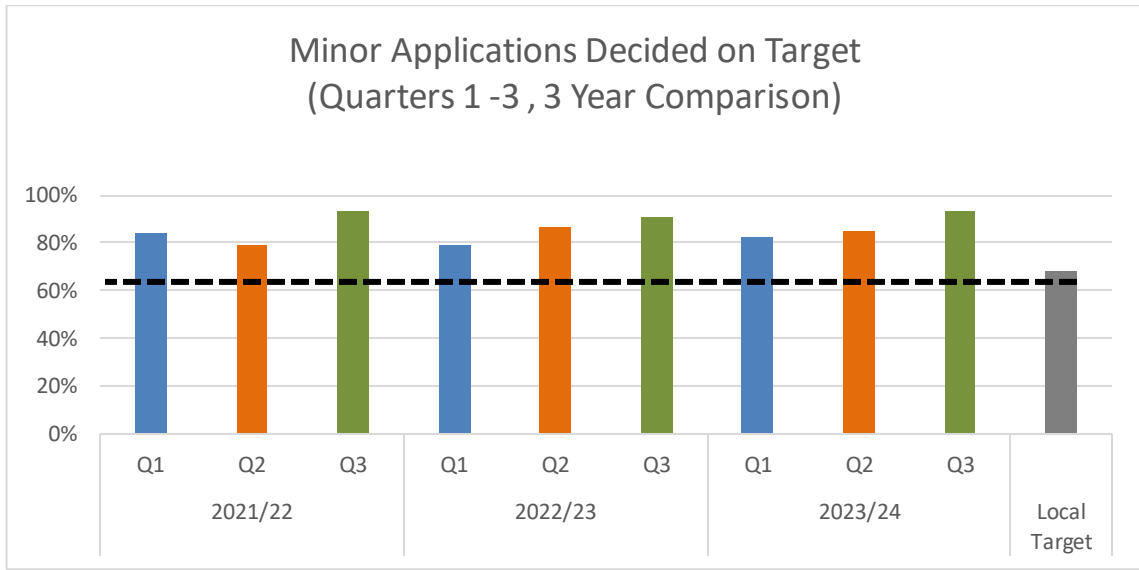
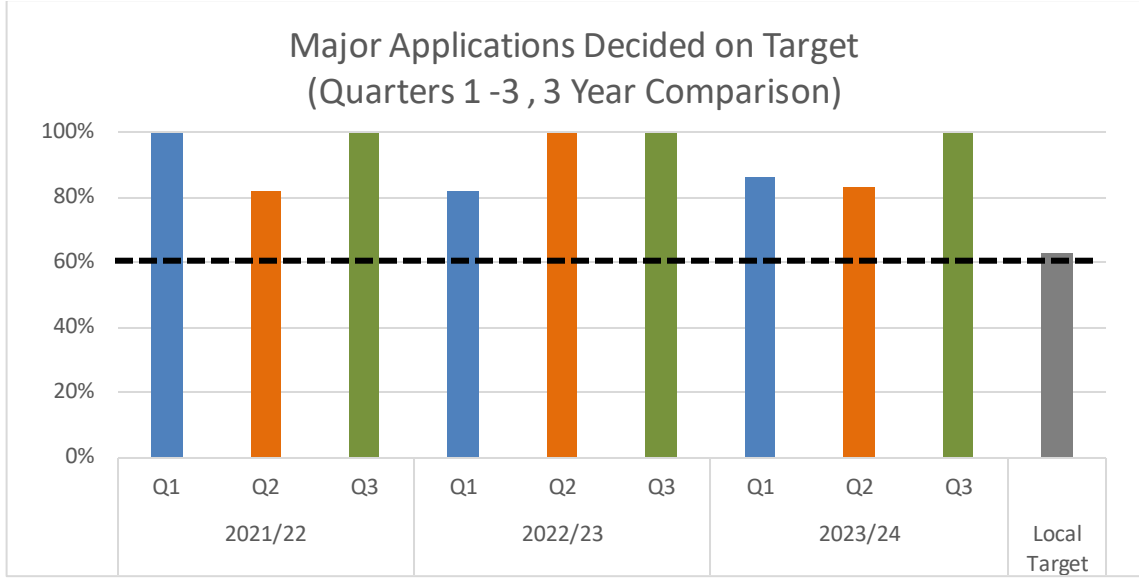
- 2.3 Figure 2.2 shows the major applications decided on target. The figure for Quarter 3 (100%) well exceeds both national (60%) and local (63%) targets.
- 2.4 The vast majority of applications are within the 'minor' and 'other' categories. Figure 2.2 shows an improvement in Quarter 3 in the speed of determination within both categories from Quarter 1 – 'minors' up from 82% to 93%, and 'others' up from 94% to 96%. This is no doubt assisted by an overall decline in the number of applications which has returned to just below pre-Covid levels.
- 2.5 However, the performance needs to be viewed in context. When the numbers of applications were significantly higher during Covid (including April - June 2021), many staff put in extra time – unpaid – to try to maintain previous high levels of performance. Now the applications are easing off, it has enabled the team to take on board many duties which were temporarily put on hold. For example, procedures have been reviewed in a number of areas and this is enabling the team to work more effectively. During this quarter we have provided training on writing reports more efficiently.
- 2.6 The planning process has generally become more complex with an increasing threat of judicial review if procedures are not followed exactly. The team is also preparing for the introduction of a significant new approach - the assessment of Biodiversity Net Gain – which comes into force in January 2024. These factors add time to make sure applications are being assessed fully and properly. We are dependent on consultees replying promptly to enable us to determine applications on time and we have been hampered by slow responses from a number of statutory consultees. We are addressing this matter direct with those consultees.

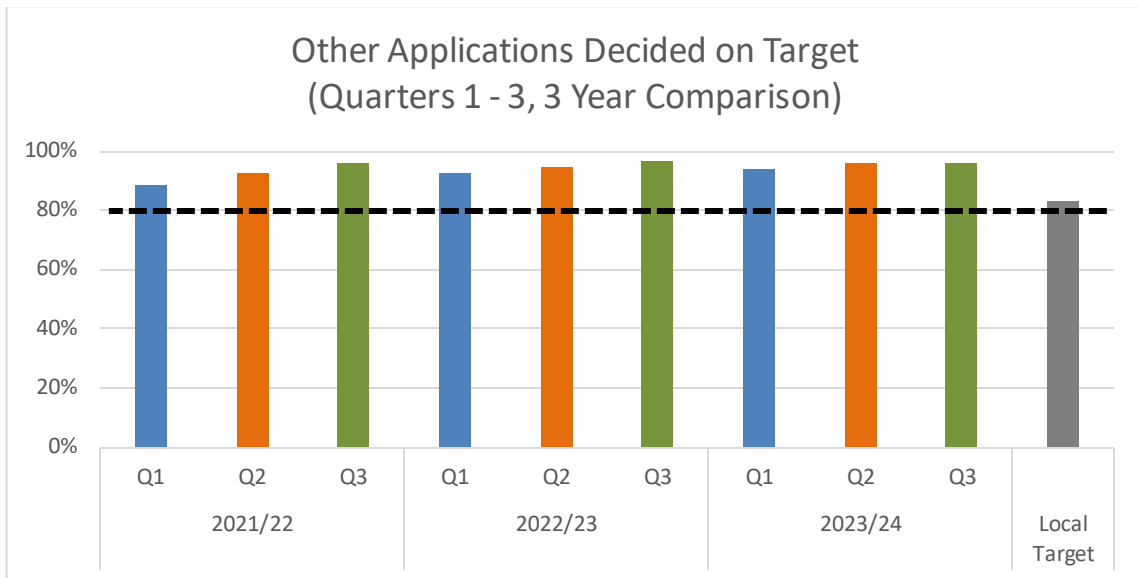
# Agenda Item 12

**Figure 2.2**

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

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





--- National Target

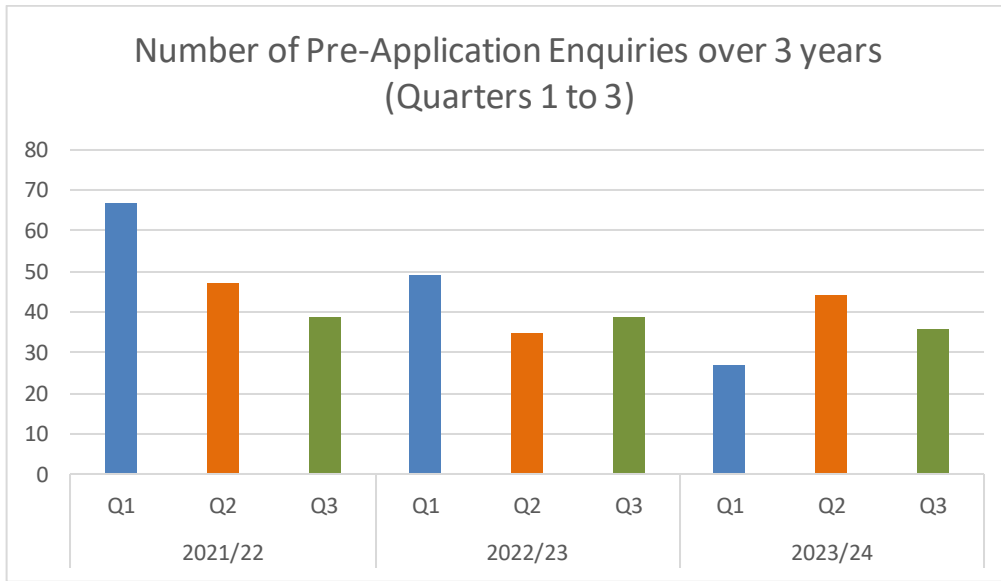
- 2.7 We recruited new staff to help deal with the increase in applications during Covid. In the last quarter the Planning Manager has taken flexible retirement and one of the Team Leaders is covering his days off, reducing capacity within the team. There has also been an increase in staff sickness in Quarters 2 and 3 and this, with continuing maternity leave, has further reduced capacity within the team. The staff recruited during 2021 are now fully settled in and are making a major contribution to the performance of the team. We will continue to keep the staff complement under review.
- 2.8 Overall, performance well exceeds national targets and also our own more demanding local targets. However, we manage to do this through agreeing 'Extensions of Time' (EoTs) with applicants to allow further work to be done on applications to enable them to be approved. On 19<sup>th</sup> December 2023 the Government has announced its intention to consult on the restriction of the use of EoTs and we need to review the how we operate to be prepared for any changes which may be introduced.

### Pre-application enquiries

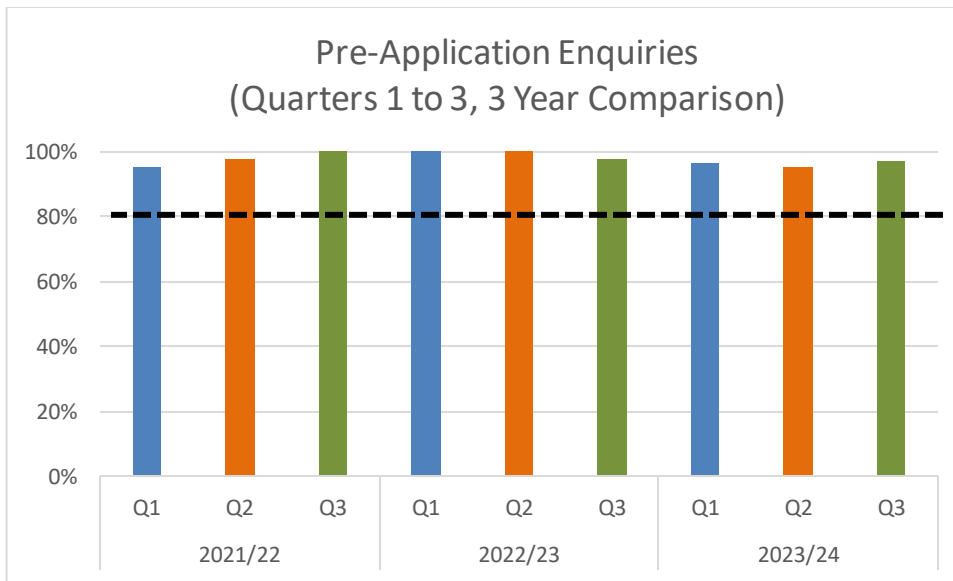
- 2.9 We have one dedicated officer who focuses on responding to pre-application inquiries. The number of inquiries had dropped considerably over the period shown and has been variable over the past three quarters. At its peak, the officer was working in excess of her allocated hours and was responding to inquiries under considerable pressure. The speed in dealing with pre-applications has remained very high and consistently surpasses our target of 80% response rate within 28 days (Figure 2.4). The officer responsible for this area has been able to devote more time to each inquiry and provide a higher quality of response when numbers have been lower, and also takes on a caseload of planning applications when she has spare capacity.

# Agenda Item 12

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



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



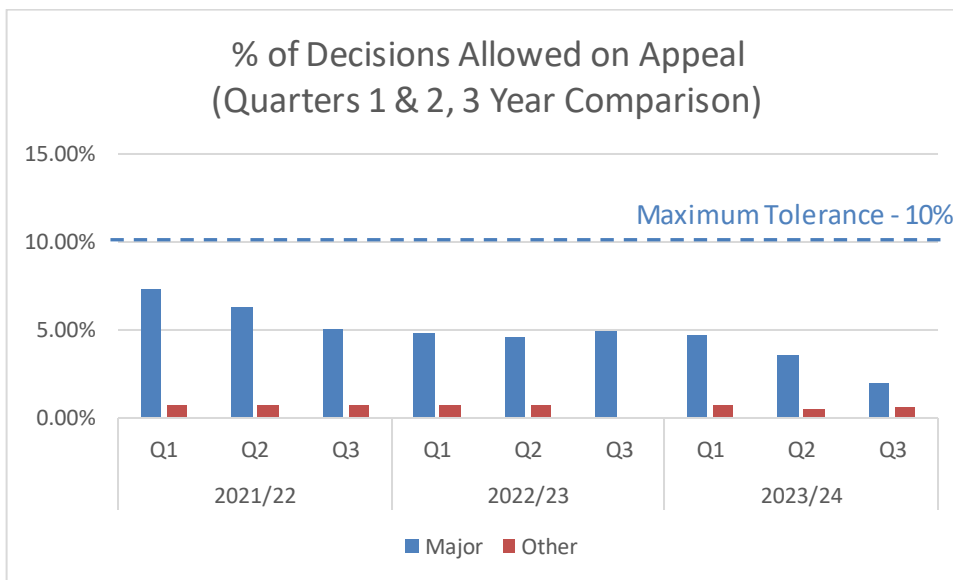
----- Local Target

Proportion of applications allowed at appeal and percentage of applications approved

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

**Figure 2.5**

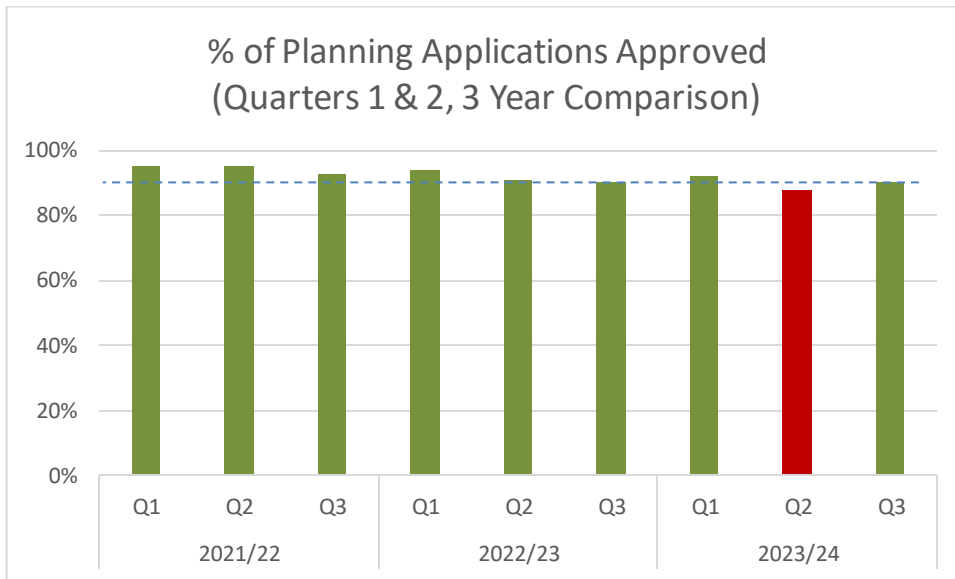
Percentage of decisions allowed on appeal: Quarters One and Two, 3 Year Comparison



# Agenda Item 12

**Figure 2.6**

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



----- Local Target

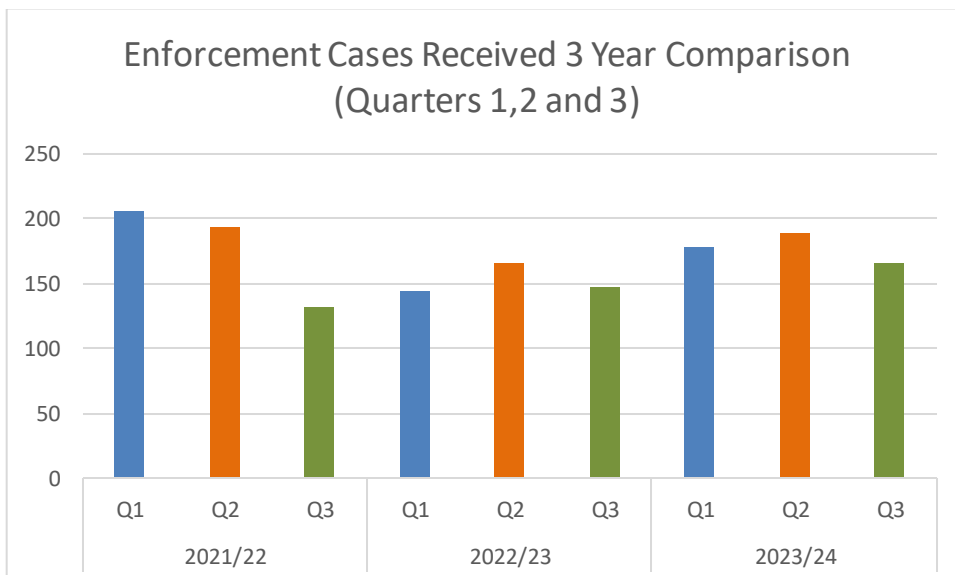
- 2.11 It is still a significant team effort across the Service to assess and determine applications expediently and in line with Government targets.

Enforcement

- 2.12 The number of complaints received has increased over the past three quarters when compared with the equivalent quarters from last year (up from 459 in 2022 to 533 in 2023) - see Figure 2.7 below. There is no obvious explanation for the rise of complaints except that it tends to mirror the amount of development activity taking place.

**Figure 2.7**

Enforcement cases received: Quarters One to Three, 3 Year Comparison



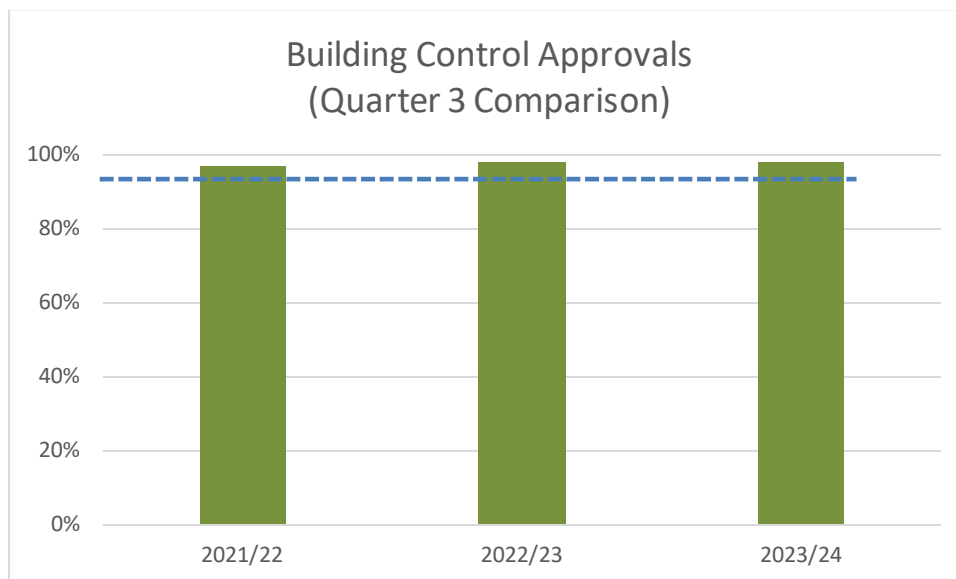
## 3. Building Control

### Performance targets

- 3.1 This section focuses on the Building Control Team's performance in the third quarter of 2023/24 and compares overall performance with the same period from the last 3 years.
- 3.2 The Building Control Team continues to meet its key statutory targets in relation to plan-checking and the carrying out of site inspections, although it is struggling to meet its locally set plan-checking targets due to long-term staff absence and dealing with on-going staffing vacancies. However, in spite of this, the percentage of Building Regulation applications given full or conditional approval, is 98% for Quarter 3 of 2023/24, compared to the locally set target of 95%.
- 3.3 The Team's market share remains just above the national average for local authority building control teams, although over the last 21 months, this figure has reduced, as the recent loss of some key members of staff to private sector Building Control continues to have an adverse effect by them taking key clients with them. An improvement plan has been put in place to address overall performance and once staffing levels are brought back up to the establishment, this should start to take effect.

**Figure 3.1**

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



----- Local Target

### Income and financial performance

- 3.4 Building Regulation income for the previous 3/5 year financial cycle, shows that the Section's costs continue to be covered - in terms of the fee-earning work element. Financial results from the first three quarters of 2023/24 indicate that Building Control income remains on course to meet projected budgetary levels.

# Agenda Item 12

## Safety at sports grounds

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

## Staffing

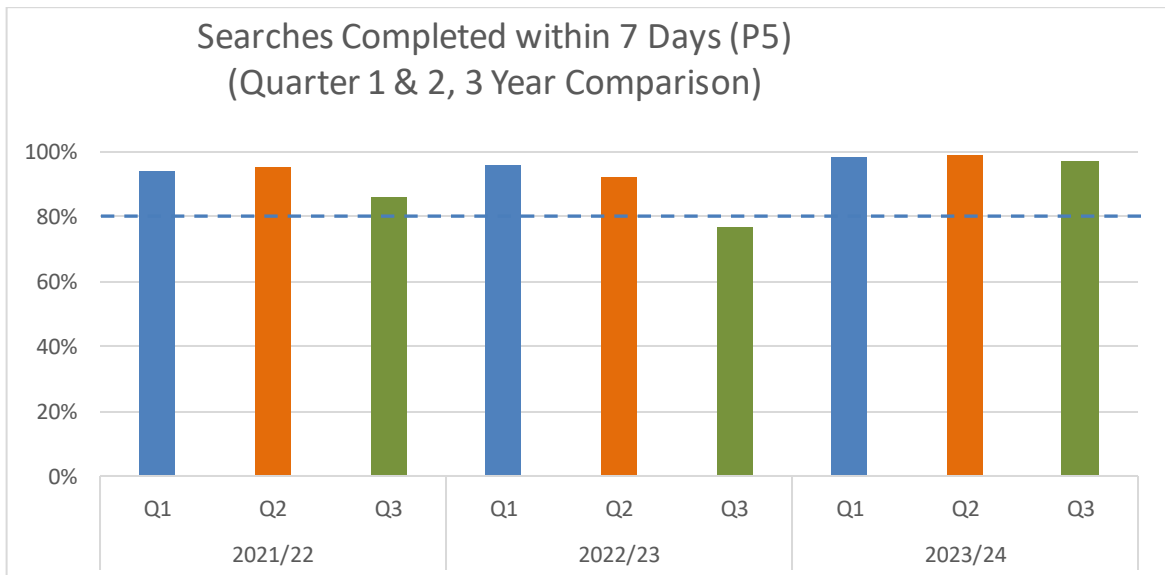
3.6 A vacant Building Control Officer post was filled in early December by an internal candidate, who was a Trainee Building Control Officer being funded by LABC. One of the Building Control Team Leaders has resigned and will be leaving the Authority on 31 December 2023. This post is currently being advertised and it hoped that it will be filled early in the new year. In addition, the Team is also covering for a member of staff currently on maternity leave.

## 4. Technical Support

4.1 Figure 4.1 below shows our performance in quarters one, two and three for the last 3 years. Performance remains above target for all three quarters this year. We are currently running at 17% above target on this indicator.

**Figure 4.1**

Searches completed within 7 days: Quarters One to Three 3 Year Comparison



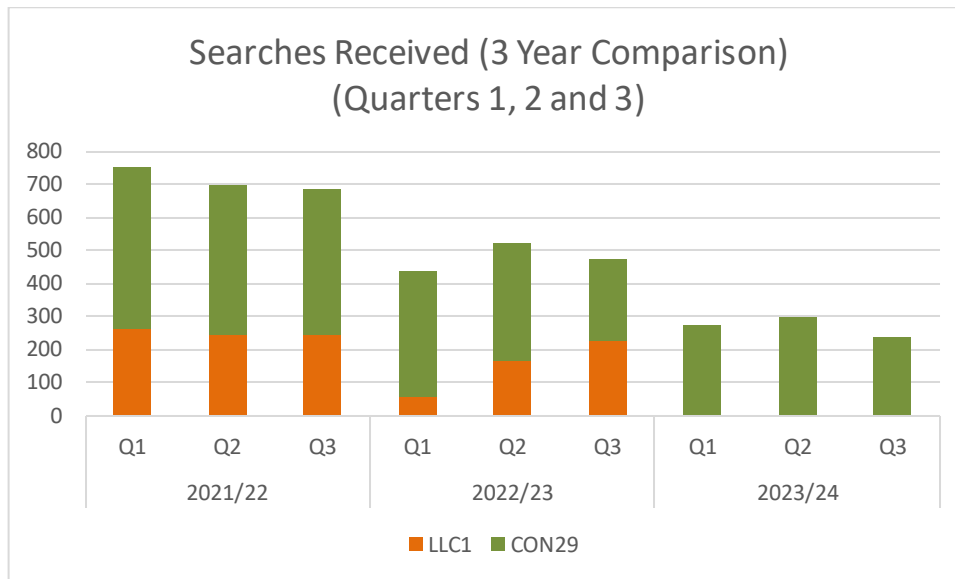
----- Local Target

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



**Figure 4.2**

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



- 4.3 The fall in the number of searches received has significantly reduced the amount of income expected in Q3. The team is currently carrying vacancies and resources have been reallocated to other areas of the team to ensure resilience in service delivery and improvements to how we monitor performance.

## 5. Local Planning

### The Sefton Local Plan

- 5.1 Changes to the plan-making process are included in the Levelling Up and Planning Act which has recently secured royal assent. This will be supported by secondary legislation and regulations that will be published in 2024 which will guide how the next Local Plan will be progressed. A Cabinet recommendation was recently approved to await clarification on the new plan-making system before any decision is made on a new Sefton Local Plan, even though the current Local Plan is now over 6 years old and would normally be expected to be reviewed by now.
- 5.2 The government has indicated that Councils will be allocated a 'wave' in which to commence a new style Local Plan, based on how old their current Local Plan is. Based on these proposals it is likely, subject to confirmation, that Sefton will be expected to commence a new Local Plan under the new system between autumn 2025 and early 2026.
- 5.3 As of 20 December 2023, planning approval has been granted for 76.6% of the total indicative site capacity on Local Plan housing allocations, up from 74.5% last December. The latest approval (1<sup>st</sup> March) on a Local Plan housing allocation was 146 homes on the Waddicar Farm site in Melling. There are current applications with the Council on 4 other Local Plan housing allocations.

# Agenda Item 12

- 5.4 The Council, in its recent Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA), have been able to demonstrate a 8.7 year supply of deliverable housing land. This is much higher than the required 5 year supply required by government guidance. Sefton have also recently passed the latest Housing Delivery Test (published 19 December 2023), having had 142% of the required homes completed over the previous 3 years (to 2021/22).

<b>Year</b>	<b>Homes required</b>	<b>Homes Delivered</b>
2019-20	578	799
2020-21	415	737
2021-22	610	738
<b>Total</b>	<b>1602</b>	<b>2274</b>

## Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) and other policy documents

- 5.5 A number of Supplementary Planning Documents and Information Notes were adopted in 2023. These will now assist in making planning decisions. They are:

- Affordable Housing SPD
- Conversions to Flats and HMOs SPD
- New Housing SPD
- House Extensions SPD
- Social Value (Employment and Skills) SPD
- Contributions towards primary education from development Information Note
- Recreation Mitigation on the Coast Information Note

- 5.6 A number of other SPDs will be progressed during the early part of 2024. These are:

- Developer Contributions to Southport Tourist Infrastructure
- Nature (update)
- Boundary Treatments
- Short Term Holiday Lets

## Liverpool City Region work

- 5.7 The Combined Authority have recently published a draft Spatial Development Strategy. The policy team are co-ordinating a Sefton response.

## Bootle Area Action Plan

- 5.8 To help support the regeneration and transformation of the wider Bootle area a Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP) is being progressed. This will set out a vision, objectives, projects, policies and priorities for the area. This is being led by the Planning Policy Team. To assist with this work, the Council has been successful in securing funding from a range of sources for various aspects of the Bootle AAP. These are:

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

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

5.10 The draft ('Preferred Options') Bootle Area Action Plan has now been written and was approved at Cabinet on 22 June 2023. Public engagement on the Bootle Area Action Plan was undertaken during September to November. The policy team are currently assessing all comments submitted which will be published early in 2024.

#### Other work

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

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

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

5.14 To inform both the Local Plan review and Bootle AAP (see above) the Council commissioned consultants to undertake an Employment Land and Premises Supply assessment. This looks at all of Sefton's allocated and designated employment land, including Bootle Office Quarter. The Council have received a final report which is now approved and available online.

5.15 The Local Plan team have recently completed its second Movers' Survey. This looks at where people moved to newly built homes in Sefton and why. It also looks at what services and facilities they have had to switch because of their move. The initial results can be found at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/5703/movers-survey-report-2022-first-edition.pdf>. This will be updated early in 2024 with the results of the recent survey.

# Agenda Item 12

## 6. Heritage and Conservation

### Heritage at Risk

- 6.1 We are continuing to work towards the removal of the 6 Conservation Areas from the National Heritage at Risk Register. These are Lord Street, Promenade, West Birkdale, North Meols (Southport), Christ Church and Waterloo Park (Waterloo). This includes a number of different work areas including raising their profile through Twitter and Facebook, regeneration funding bids, working with the local community, Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans, taking enforcement and other legal action in relation to a number of derelict sites and listed buildings in these areas, including the major Lord Street Verandah project.
- 6.2 Progress has been made on a number of Heritage at Risk sites including working with colleagues and partners on a number of Council owned Listed Buildings to secure their improvement and long term use and sustainability. This year 2 buildings have been removed from the Heritage at Risk register these are 509-515 Lord Street, Southport and St. Nicholas Fountain, Blundellsands.
- 6.3 This year the Council surveyed 152 of its listed building entries, 27% of the total. This exceeds the target of 20% per year.
- 6.4 In order to help prevent major repairs to historic homes and to help in the cost of living crisis the Heritage team have now published helpful guidance for homeowners in the maintenance of their property. Providing useful bespoke guidance for these important buildings will help prevent deterioration and buildings failing into costly disrepair. Guide to Maintaining Sefton's Historic Homes
- 6.5 In order to help deal with the Climate Emergency and the cost of living crisis the Heritage team have also published guidance for homeowners to help them improve energy efficiency in their historic homes and save money.

### Guide to Improving Energy Efficiency in Sefton's Historic Homes - Digital

### Regeneration

- 6.6 The capital build part of the Southport Townscape Heritage project is progressing, and discussions continue with owners of targeted buildings. The first grant application has now been completed - 509-515 Lord Street. The project restored and repaired a long term vacant grade 2 Listed Building and removed it from the Council's Buildings at Risk Register. The project brought back 2 vacant retail units into use and converted the vacant upper floors into 9 apartments. This was the overall winner at the Sefton Design Awards which took place in October 2023.
- 6.7 The second project has now been completed at 4a Bold Street and works includes a new traditional shopfront and tidying up the verandah. Further grant offers are in place on Bold Street and large scale improvements should be shown over the next 12 months. Discussions are now taking place with the Heritage Fund to extend the project by 12 months.
- 6.8 The learning and skills activities for Southport Townscape Heritage project have been focused on raising awareness of Southport's built heritage and include Heritage skills construction events, guided walks and trails with community groups and schools.

- 6.9 Discussions have taken place on a number of Heritage at Risk sites which are considered to be key strategic sites to find new uses or upgrade them to modern facilities so that they continue to be or find their optimum viable use and save them from further deterioration.

## Policy

- 6.10 Conservation Area Appraisals and Management Plans for 4 Conservation Areas are progressing with public consultation undertaken over the summer. Once the public comments are compiled it is intended to adopt these as background planning documents in January.

## Advice to Development Management team

- 6.11 The number of consultation responses sent in Q1, Q2 & Q3 for 2023 is 310, for the same period in 2022 is 303 and 2021 is 500. The decrease from 2021 is due to removing the buffer zones for consultations so it means that requests for consultation are more targeted.
- 6.12 In addition, this part of the Service continues to assist in various appeals, on-site monitoring and enforcement cases.

## **7. Conclusion**

- 7.1 The past almost four years have been unprecedented for the Council and with significant increases in the numbers of applications and staffing issues it was difficult for a period to maintain a high level of performance. However, staffing levels have improved and numbers of applications have reduced so once more targets are generally being exceeded.
- 7.2 Appropriate technology has been put in place to support staff who mainly work from home, and staff have performed very well. Staff surveys show the service has been able to respond to key issues in order to maintain essential services whilst maintaining staff morale. We continue to hold staff 'away sessions' to bring members of different teams together, as well as helping to integrate those who have joined the Service since the start of Covid and have never known what it is like to be part of a Service working together in one office.
- 7.3 We launched a Planning Services Charter during the last quarter. This sets out our values, our service standards, our priorities and how we are accountable (including reporting to this Committee). It makes clear that if proposals have not gone through our pre-application advice service, we will spend limited time on securing amendments before determining applications based on the scheme submitted to us. This is critical to the Service working more efficiently.
- 7.4 The Planning Service received very positive feedback at our last Agents' Forum in October 2023. This was validated by our Service being awarded "Planning Authority of the Year" by the Royal Town Planning Institute North West Branch in June 2023 and being nominated as a finalist for the national awards in London in November. As part of the same awards, the Chief Planning Officer was shortlisted in the category of 'Inspirational Leader of the Year'.
- 7.5 A new initiative was launched this quarter with a Design Awards competition to showcase the best of design in Sefton over the past 10 years. This has attracted a lot of interest and many high-quality schemes were submitted across multiple categories from best heritage and commercial schemes through to best individual house use extension. A Design Awards

# Agenda Item 12

Evening was held in the Grand Hotel, Southport, on 20<sup>th</sup> October. This was a hugely successful event complimented by many who attended both personally and on social forums.

- 7.6 The Service continues to respond to the unsettled context in which we are currently operating. We will closely monitor the number of planning applications we receive and keep staffing under review in the Development Management team, as well as trying to ensure the Building Control team is well equipped to face its own particular challenges. We are prepared to adapt to further changes on the horizon, in particular the major legislative change introduced by the Levelling Up and Regeneration Act 2023. Further reforms to the planning system were announced in December 2023 and we need to be geared up to respond to the challenges they will present.

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY (REGENERATION AND SKILLS)		
Cllr Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	January 2024

**The Purpose of this report is to provide Members of Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an overview of activity within the Regeneration and Skills Portfolio**

## **INVEST SEFTON SERVICE**

### **External funded programmes**

#### **Growth Hub**

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

#### **UKSPF Shared Prosperity Funding**

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

**Business Start-up support-**This will now be delivered via the aforementioned Place Based Business Support programme. InvestSefton commissioned support for start-ups via competitive tender for a £80,000 contract. Following evaluation this was awarded to **Merseyside Expanding Horizons (MEH) & Safe Regeneration** - This is a Bootle based partnership led by MEH who manage the Big Onion in Bootle Strand shopping centre and Southport Town Hall. The Big Onion facility is equipped with co-working spaces, meeting rooms, presentation facilities, and high-speed internet connectivity, and offers an incubator hub to up to 20 new start businesses. Within Southport, they use a prime location in the Town Hall. Safe Regeneration run incubator units in Bootle from the St Marys Complex, this is their main delivery location.

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

# Agenda Item 12

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

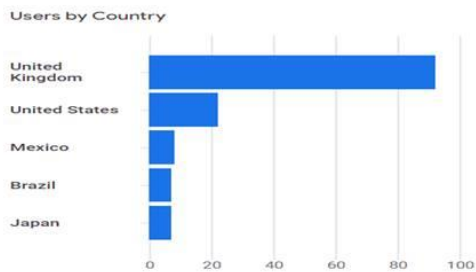
UKSPF business support activities are all underway in Sefton and performance will be reported in future updates.

## Business engagement

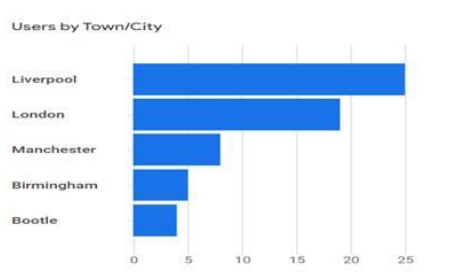
### Business engagement-InvestSefton.com

- From Friday 24<sup>th</sup> to Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the website had 247 unique sessions
- The most visits were on Friday 24<sup>th</sup> November.
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Thursday 30<sup>th</sup> November 2023, the site has had a total of **71,461** unique sessions.
- Posts on the website and twitter this week have included UK Export Finance, Acas advice on employment contracts as well as pushing out our Economic Forum.
- InvestSefton twitter page has 1608 followers
- Sefton Huddle Facebook page has 25 members.

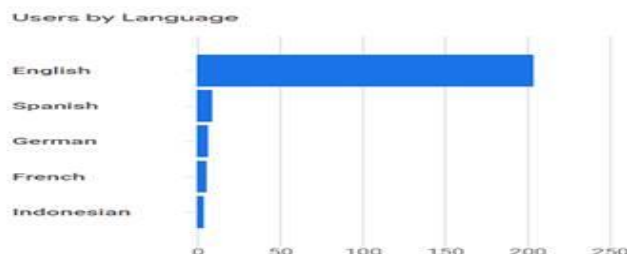
### Country of origin of users



### City of origin users

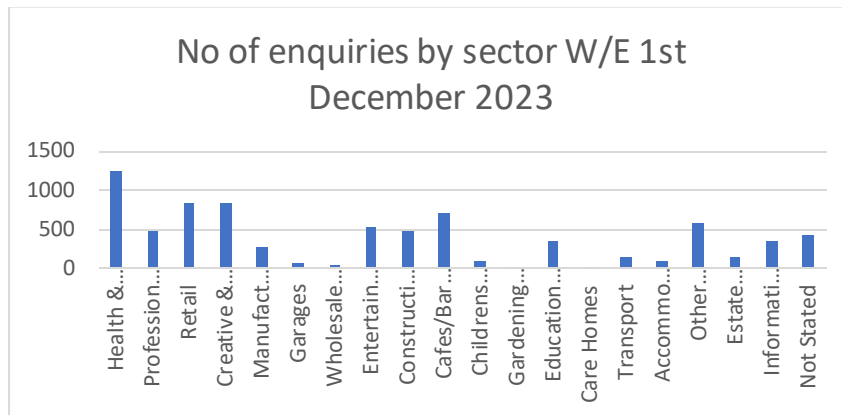


### Users by language:





## Business Enquiries



Year	Total Enquiries
13 <sup>th</sup> March 2020- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 21	3740
1 <sup>st</sup> April 21- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 22	1325
1 <sup>st</sup> April 22- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 23	1413
1 <sup>st</sup> April 23 – to date	864
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,342</b>

## Business consultation & engagement

The team has recently produced a fully accessible factsheet for council staff and partners on how best to engage with businesses for consultation purposes. The purpose is to provide guidance for staff who require input from businesses when undertaking consultation with Sefton businesses. A copy of the PDF is embedded below:



Consulting and Engaging with Busi

## Case studies

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

Crosby based football club - The club has a full 3G pitch at its site with training facilities, stands, a shop, restaurant bar and a function room. The business has a fan base of over 40,000 in the UK and worldwide. The club also has Marine in the Community, a not-for-profit enterprise that works with young people and community groups on initiatives to support sports, social inclusion and career paths in sport both on and off the pitch. The Business wants to develop their presence and access sponsorship opportunities. **InvestSefton supported the Business by assisting them to develop their marketing materials to engage local small businesses in relation to sponsorship opportunities as well as providing them with free access to workshops and networking opportunities.**

# Agenda Item 12

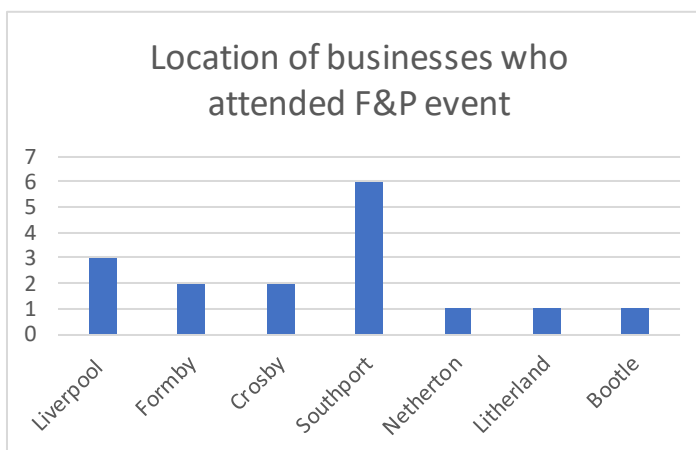
A Bootle business provide a core service of community garden design and management. The Service is reliant on securing funding and bidding for and winning public tenders across the city region. The business has been looking at ways of generating revenue through bespoke garden installations for Private customers but needs support with the process of getting the new services to an operational level. **InvestSefton supported the business in its planning to understand its position following expansion through review of services offered and pricing of services as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personas for their new planned services.**

A sole trader marketing specialist based in Litherland. Her Primary service is marketing consultancy, and she focuses on Charity Comms as her specialism. The Business fills the gap within charities who have a lack of marketing infrastructure. Following a successful integration and training period the business will step back leaving the charity to become self-sufficient. The Business is looking to grow and develop a more sustainable income and look to employ staff but needs more contacts to grow its Business Base. **InvestSefton supported the business by providing free access to a range of workshops and events to enable them to develop their network and gain new business.**

## Webinars/Events

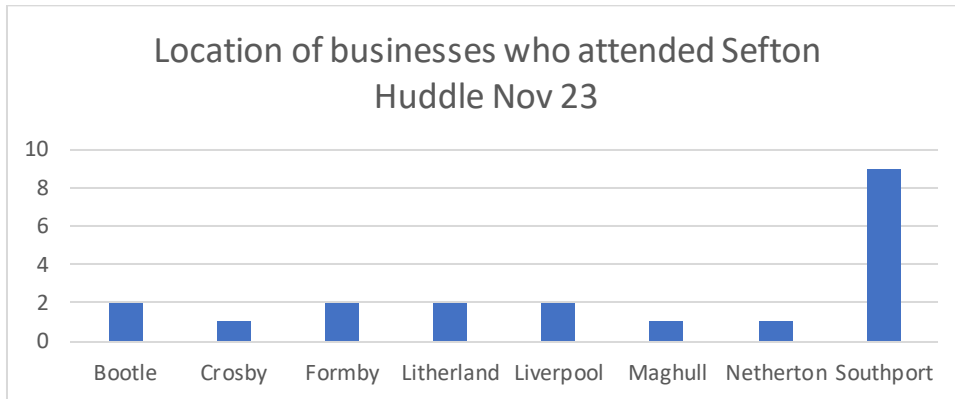
### Financial & Professional Networking Group-19 October 2023

Ken Clark of the NW Bank of England provided the group with latest economic forecasts and how it will affect businesses. InvestSefton Business Growth Adviser Colin Hickey chaired the event which was attended by 18 business delegates of which 6 were women business owners.



## Sefton Huddle- 2<sup>nd</sup> November 2023 at The Park Hotel, Netherton

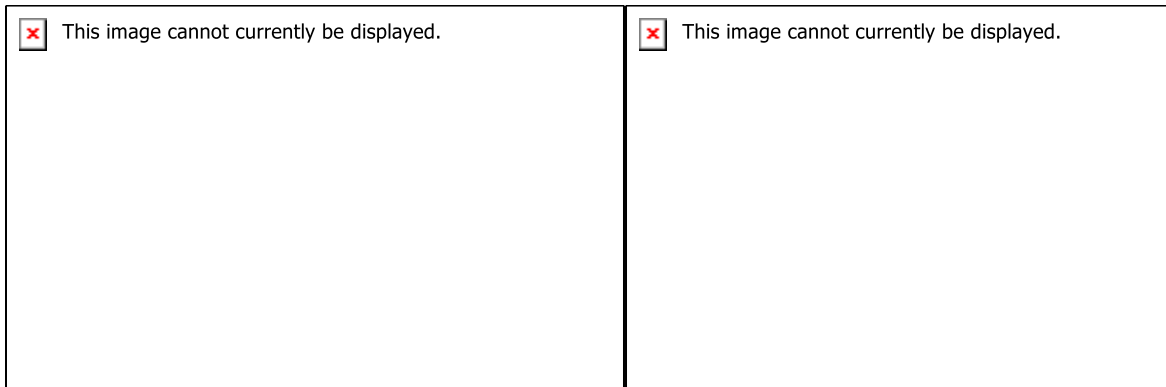
The team arranged the third Sefton Huddle for Sefton's digital and technology-based businesses attended by 21 business delegates of which 6 were women business owners. Andy Kent MD of Angeal Solutions was the main speaker with the title 'Stand out from the crowd – Marketing and developing your brand as a creative business'. The presentation was extremely well received to the extent it ran over time; such was the interest from businesses. Julie Swarbrick, InvestSefton's Business Growth Adviser chaired the event.



# Agenda Item 12

## Sefton Economic Forum 7 December Lakehouse, Crosby

Over 130 people including 72 businesses attended the winter Economic Forum. The forum offered a diverse range of speakers covering the latest economic trends, growth at LJL Airport and insights into how businesses can use professional athlete coaching and mentoring techniques in their workplace.



## LCR Fair Employment Charter

Members may be aware of the Liverpool City Region Fair Employment Charter which celebrates fair employment practices where they were in place and drive-up standards elsewhere. The intention is 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 CA currently have 99 Aspiring Level Organisations who are members of the Fair Employment Charter and of those 13 Organisations employing 6,400 employees are based in Sefton. The link below shows all of LCR Aspiring Level Organisations

<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/fair-employment-charter-aspiring-level/>

Current Sefton based employers who have achieved Aspiring Level accreditation are listed below. Each application goes through a robust evaluation process and is approved by a dedicated independent panel before final endorsement and comment from the council co-ordinated by InvestSefton.

- Access Point, Southport
- Amber Family
- Sefton CVS, Crosby
- Elevate Education Business Partnership, Aintree
- Kindfulness Coffee Club, Bootle
- NLP Liverpool, Blundellsands
- Specialist Sewing, Bootle
- Merseyside Fire & Rescue Service, Bootle
- Sefton MBC
- Parkhaven Trust, Southport
- The Sovini Group, Bootle
- Southport & Ormskirk Hospital
- Office of Nuclear Regulation, Bootle

## EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING SERVICE

### Young Persons Guarantee

This 3 year scheme offers employers grants and wage incentives for the recruitment of eligible individuals. It will now be largely operated through the LA employment services for job creation. In effect, the Ways to Work service will be undertaking the scheme via the structure to be funded by SIF/UKSPF as there is insufficient finance to operate this as a stand-alone scheme. Sefton will be distributing to employers in the form of employer grants and wage incentives for recruitment of eligible young people who will need to have been workless and claiming benefits for a period of six months to qualify.

### Sefton@work General Performance Data for October 2023


Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service for ESF support	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016 – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	5,296
Clients accessing service post ESF	From 1 October 2023	89
New clients registering by age	October 2023	16-24 24 25-49 37 50+ 18 Unknown 10
SIF W2W contracts Male	Since 01/10/2023	66.7%
SIF W2W contracts Female	Since 01/10/2023	33.3%
SIF W2W contracts Other	Since 01/10/2023	0.0%
SIF W2W clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/10/2020	54.2%
SIF W2W clients without basic skills	Since 01/10/2023	39.6%
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	30
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	ESF, LCR SIF + 200 from other programmes <b>Total 2,355</b>

### Sefton@work Relocation

The shopfitting work programme has now been completed and the next phase has been embarked upon. This includes the renovation of the external areas and windows and the installation of new signage. A furniture package is also under order, including a bespoke enquires and registration desk which will be custom-made for the Service to accommodate needs of disabled clients.

# Agenda Item 12

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

The team has been meeting with corporate communications colleagues to formulate a plan for the entire relocation project to include signage around the Strand, opening events in early February 2024, videos for existing clients and referral partners. We are pushing out posts and articles via our website and social media pages and the response has been very positive. See attached link for latest video. [We're moving to a new office!](#) 

## **Voluntary Routeway**

The Voluntary Routeway Programme offers placements to those who need experience to enhance their employment history and gain references. Placements were recently offered within SMBC School Meals, Sandway Homes, Sefton Libraries, Green Sefton, Sefton CAB, Sefton Adult Community Learning, Sefton@work, Citizens Advice Bootle and Citizens Advice Southport. This programme responds to the needs of our client groups who are struggling to enter the labour market through mainstream recruitment processes. 18 clients in total started their 10-week part-time placement at the end of September and also benefitted from an accredited 2-day pre-placement course delivered by SACL. Clients have been provided with any uniforms required and all travel expenses will be reimbursed. Placements will run until the beginning of December.

## **Support for Care Leavers**

In partnership with JobCentrePlus, Sefton@Work organised a Care Leavers recruitment event held at the Cambridge Road centre. Local employers that have signed up to the Caring Business Charter attended. 15 organisations attended and provided opportunities for care leavers with jobs, jobs with training or apprenticeships advertised that they had ringfenced for leaving care or looked after children. There were 22 different vacancies available on the day and 16 care leavers attended. The event was hosted at SACL and we took a holistic approach as we included a range of specialist support services such as Housing Options and Princes Trust. We utilised the immersive room in Cambridge Road and its technology to engage in fun informal learning activities and we invited wellbeing practitioners to offer complimentary therapies.

## **Mental Health for Christmas**

A course ran in December for a 2 day mental health/wellness course to cover confidence and self-esteem techniques to help clients stay positive over the Christmas period. Clients have been issued with a fortnightly bus pass to coincide with the time S@W is closed over Christmas to avoid social isolation and enable them to attend JobCentrePlus if required. A booklet has also been provided of all free events/activities happening over Christmas to help people with positive mood. This aims to encourage clients to be more active and build confidence during a time which many report feeling overwhelmed and stressful, especially in combination with managing a low income.

## **Digital Inclusion**

Following the success of the recent wave of the Digital Inclusion Initiative in partnership with LCR & Lloyds, we will be hosting another 4 sessions with over 40 residents booked in to attend to complete a short digital intervention and receive a tablet device with 6 months data.

## **New Employment opportunities**

A growth sector employer has approached us to manage ongoing recruitment for vacancies in civil engineering and fibre-optics work. They have contracts across the North West and are struggling to staff them due to skills shortages. We are looking at developing a routeway into this sector which will include training for Street-Works Operative, Safe Working in Civils and Underground Safety and keen for us to promote this to the females.

## **New Agreement with Citizens Advice**

Due to a rise in issues with the debt and housing we have been working with CAB to arrange for them to deliver advice and casework on site in the new premises, allowing priority access to our clients but also to the wider community as a co-located offer. Once concluded, we will capture these new working arrangements in an agreement in line with our draft protocol for co-location and outreach which we intend to have in place as a cornerstone of our operational plan for the new premises.

## **Client Feedback**

We have recently published results of client feedback for September and October in line with our commitment to customer service excellence. Feedback has been overwhelmingly positive from clients. We have published the results via our website and socials and also have the presentation playing on the screen in the reception of our Bootle office.

## **Social Value – Sainsbury's Southport recruitment**

The recruitment effort has begun for a new Sainsbury's store due to open in Meols Cop early 2024 with around 150 additional, new jobs being created. Working with Southport JCP, Sefton@Work and SACL, we will deliver relevant sector-based training for clients applying for the opportunities with guaranteed interviews. To date, 11 Sefton@Work clients have attended the training at SACL. Sefton@Work has also organised a recruitment open-day for Sainsbury's held in November to encourage other applications to its positions, particularly those from our vulnerable groups. We used Southport Town Hall to host this event and received a big response from the level of initial interest received. This work resulted from an employment and training plan secured with Sainsbury's connected to their conditions for planning permission to open the new site which was put in place some years ago.



# Agenda Item 12

## Sefton Adult Community Learning Service

The table below indicates the year-to-date figures. It is notable that while the number of learners needs to increase, there is a pattern of a majority of learners, progressing through more than one learning aim, showing confidence in service and progression from one to onto another. 23/24 shows a slight reduction in the number of learners on this time last year but continues to show that of the learners engaged they are positively progressing into 1 or more learning aims on this time last year.



### Performance update

Year to Date Comparison

August to Mid November

	Target	18/19*	19/20	20/21	21/22	22/23	23/24
Total number of learners	2000	831	863	284	437	660	614
Total number of unique learning aims	2940	1098	1127	404	527	783	796

\* 18/19 was the last full year before covid

The Progression survey is now complete and this indicates that 97% of learners successfully completed a course with Sefton Community Learning Service and 85% of learners progressed into employment, on to further education or voluntary work.

## Communication and Events

The 2024 Spring prospectus is finalised and 3,000 ordered for distribution. Throughout December, 16,000 planned to be delivered door-to-door focusing on the Bootle area. Digital copies have gone live and has been circulated to all partners.

The Service is looking to increase the number of learners to its core qualification courses, namely English, Maths, Digital Skills, Employability, and ESOL. Therefore, we are looking to place greater emphasis on digital channels to achieve the service's aims, having utilised other parts of the marketing mix previously, such as advertising in local newspapers (no longer available) and door to door delivery, this is proving difficult and isn't a sustainable approach for the service.

The focus on digital will see a very deliberate approach to reach audiences that have otherwise been difficult to reach, e.g., 19-45yrs+ and be underpinned by the introduction of a new Community Learning Service section of the Sefton Council website, which will in turn incorporate a new booking system via the MeLearning system currently used by the Corporate Learning Centre.

The new approach to promoting the service, is also effectively a launch for its new look site and streamlined booking process. It is also timed to provide an improvement in sign-ups to core subjects for the 2024 Spring term, while also delivering sign-ups and registrations of interest in the meantime.

Our Aim therefore is to

- Launch new look site with online booking system
- Manage the Culture shift to this digital -first approach in the promotion of service and its courses.



## Our measured Objectives

- Increase number of tutors and learners in the autumn term
- Increase number of learners for core qualification subjects for Spring 2024 term
- Create a baseline for digital campaigns to compared against for future campaigns
- Social media advertising Christmas Fair on 2nd December, enrolment days 2 & 4th December and 4 & 5 January for courses starting 9th January 2024.

## Our expected Outcomes

- Greater awareness levels of the service among Sefton communities
- Increased take up of courses, especially for core subjects
- Increase tutor recruitment / appointment

## Events in November

To further increase the visibility and profile of the service, the following events were attended over recent weeks:

- 16th November Volunteer Coordinator's Forum SCVS – promoting service and courses including Southport Town Deal Building Better Customer Experience.
- 17th & 24th November Menopause Café
- 21st November Older workers week DWP Crosby
- 22nd November Local offer jobs fair The Life Rooms, Southport
- 23rd Light Switch on in Waterloo South Road
- Light Switch on at The Strand, Bootle 25th

## Events in December

- 3rd December Christmas Market Lock & Quay – Family Learning Christmas Crafts
- 2nd December hosting the Christmas Fair at the Centre
- 3rd and 10th December attendance at Southport Marketplace – Family Learning Christmas Craft linking to their 'Frozen' theme
- 6th December Winter Health Hub DWP - promoting healthy eating on a budget course
- 8th & 10th December Christmas Market and Soft Launch Salt & Tar
- 9th December Christmas Well-being Event Maghull Town Hall – Family Learning crafts and wellbeing activities.
- 17th December Christmas Fair at Hallie's Hub – Family Learning Christmas Crafts

## Pathways to Teaching Project

Following the success of 2022/2023 Pathways to Teaching Pilot Liverpool City Region have agreed to fund year 2. To-date we have 5 learners on programme, and all have successfully completed and achieved the community learning element and are progressing onto the Level 3 Education and Training course. Early indications

# Agenda Item 12

show it is a strong group of learners so we are confident all 5 will complete the course and potentially become eligible for employment with the service to widen our supply of new tutors.

## Ofsted Inspection

The Service is expecting an Ofsted inspection at some point in the new term. The last inspection was undertaken in June 2017. The Service remains in Ofsted readiness mode. Other LA Services and other AEB funded providers have been inspected in the last few weeks. Once notified, the inspection will be immediate, and this will be the service and wider service priority to respond to, the process will also involve Governors which comprise senior Council officers and Cabinet Members.

## NEET REDUCTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE

### September 2023 Performance

Performance nationally for September contains high levels of Not Known destinations as it's the time of the year when young people are in transition to either Post 16 provision or moving into year 2 of learning. As such, the DfE do not usually count September as valid data as it is deemed as a turbulent month for reporting.

The data for our monthly performance for NEET and Not Known is facilitated by Career Connect and verified with government sources using the NCCIS database which each LA is required to update monthly. This forms part of the tracking element of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. The purpose of this tracking is to identify, target and support NEET.

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

Area	NEET	NK	Combined	Current NEET Rank	Current NK Rank	Current Combined Rank
Sefton	3.00%	8.50%	11.50%	2	2	1
Halton	3.20%	8.30%	11.50%	3	1	1
<b>NORTH WEST</b>	<b>2.40%</b>	<b>22.60%</b>	<b>25.00%</b>			
St. Helens	3.70%	29.80%	33.50%	4	3	2
<b>ENGLAND</b>	<b>2.00%</b>	<b>32.60%</b>	<b>34.60%</b>			
Knowsley	4.50%	30.90%	35.40%	5	4	3
Liverpool	5.60%	66.60%	72.20%	6	5	4
Wirral	2.20%	86.20%	88.40%	1	6	5

The table above shows:

- Sefton and Halton have the lowest combined NEET/NotKnown % across the LCR area, North West and England.
- Although we are ranked 1st with Halton, their cohort of young people is considerably smaller than Sefton (Sefton is 5819, Halton is 3255).
- Sefton 16-17 NEET/NotKnown is -13.5% below North West and – 23.1% below England.
- Our statistical neighbour comparison for 16-17 NEET and NotKnown % ranked Sefton 2nd lowest in September
- 10.46% of the 16-17 NEET and NotKnown cohort are within one or more of our vulnerable groups (70 out of 669), this low figure within our cohort demonstrates that working with our young people earlier through our innovative early intervention offer through Career Connect helps us to identify and support those who are NEET or at risk of NEET earlier.
- Although our NotKnown has increased by 1.8% year on year, we remain 14.1% below NW and 24.1% below England national averages for the same period.

## Care Experienced Young People ( Resident In Sefton)

As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service offer, Career Connect support 55% (95 young people) of the care experienced young people cohort, these are those living in the borough. The Virtual school support those living outside of the borough (76 young people)

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

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
16	3	11.5%	23	88.5%	26
17	4	13%	27	87%	31
18	20	53%	18	47%	38
	27	28%	68	72%	95

- There are currently 7 young people 16-17 NEET, 12% of the total cohort (57)
- 72% of the overall cohort (95) are EET and 28% are NEET.
- To support in and out of borough NEET and at risk of NEET care experienced young people, a working group has been set up with Youth Justice and Virtual School to identify how we can work together to improve attendance and engagement, provide careers advice and guidance and plan for post 16 transition.

# Agenda Item 12

## The September Guarantee

This is the Statutory Duty on all local authorities to ensure that all young people in school Year 11 and Year 12 have an appropriate offer of education, employment, or training by the end of September each year. Appropriate offers must include working towards an accredited qualification.

Last month, Career Connect completed 1,200 home visits and contacted 887 by phone as part of the tracking of 8000 young people from September.

### Year 11 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 3,160

Sefton Performance		%
Offers Made	3124	98.8%
No Offers Made	36	1.2%

Of the 36 young people who did not meet the guarantee for September:

- 10 are in employment without training to Level 2
- 4 are not participating due to personal circumstances.
- 5 have made applications and are awaiting outcomes.
- 7 did not apply.
- 10 are currently uncontactable – due to change of address or other causes and Career Connect will continue to attempt contact if possible.

### Year 12 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 2,920

Sefton Performance		%
Offers Made	2774	95%
No Offers Made	146	5%

Of the 146 young people who did not meet the guarantee for September:

- 23 are in employment without training to Level 2
- 10 are not participating due to personal circumstances.
- 6 with an offer proven inappropriate at this time.
- 10 have made applications made and are awaiting outcome.
- 17 have not applied.
- 80 are currently uncontactable, due to change of address or other.

## Other Updates

- Career Connect have now recruited an apprentice to join the Sefton Team, the young person will be based in Cambridge Road and started their apprentice on Monday 13th November 2023. This was a ring-fenced opportunity and offered to a young person who had been referred to the Caring Business Charter.

- Sefton Career Connect team are participating in the Team Around the School Pilot looking at multi-agency approaches to work with RONI (Risk of Neet Indicator) data and improved engagement in learning.
- The annual Activity Survey will be sent out to Schools in the first week of January. The Activity Survey will help us to begin to monitor next year's September Guarantee offers and prepare our 'at risk of NEET' register to ensure that we target support on learners less likely to have a smooth transition and progression route in place to post 16 learning. It also allows us to identify those young people in years 9 and 10 who may be at risk of NEET so that we can ensure that relevant measures are in place to support them.
- A review of the Caring Business Charter has been prepared, extracts of which are copied below:

## **The Intention**

We recognise that many young people who have experience of being looked after may have additional barriers to address when they are looking to starting their lives as adults. Some may have had experiences that many young people will never need to face. But in Sefton we strongly believe that young people who have had experience of the care system have a vast array of talents, capabilities, and strengths they should be able to optimise as they move forward into adulthood, future careers, and the wider world. The Council aims to provide our young people with some of the practical means to reach their full potential through exposure to the world of work and high-quality careers.

The Caring Business Charter is one method we have chosen in Sefton to work with all our partners to secure good quality opportunities to expand horizons and grow aspirations in our young people and those who work with them. We want our young people to be happy, healthy, skilled, and productive adults who can help grow our economy and make prosperous lives that will contribute to Sefton and their own families in the future.

The Charter will make the most of our involvement in shaping and influencing our economy and represent a truly "One Council" approach. It is a pledge from employers to offer a range of high quality interventions to support care experienced young people in accessing opportunities to gain experience and confidence, make contacts, better understand what is needed to enter and retain sustainable and well paid employment and make informed choices as they go through the education system about who and what they wish to become.

## **Our Implementation choices**

We have chosen to roll out the Charter project using a number of implementation methods:

- A Launch event in Summer 2022 to acknowledge the Charter signatories
- Ongoing Recruitment of Companies and Stakeholder partners to the Charter via Sefton@work, Invest Sefton, Procurement, the Growth Programme and the Southport Town Deal
- Industry standard account management principles adopted for the Charter secure regular updates to Employers and regulate the currency of opportunities

# Agenda Item 12

- The appointment of a Co-ordinator post seconded into Sefton@work, with the post holder having lived experience of care.
- Establishment of a cross-sectoral Case Conferencing Group for Matching Referrals into opportunities
- Regular production of a Charter news bulletin called the Beacon with a circulation to all schools, training providers and colleges and all departments in the Council- please see link
- Introduction of an annual Careers Market-Place event – with ringfenced jobs for post 16 young people

## The Impact of the Charter

The Charter Co-ordinator is currently working with **41** Active Employers. To date, there have been **58** referrals from partners and the following positive outcomes have been achieved for our young people:

- **9** have been supported into full time employment, **3** of whom are in apprenticeships.
- **1** has a pending interview with Childrens Social Services for an apprenticeship.
- **2** have moved back into full time education to improve their qualifications.
- **1** is currently on a personal development programme with the Princes Trust.
- **6** are being supported by Sefton@Work through the DWP Restart Programme
- **1** young person is undertaking a “Find your Purpose” intervention with Sefton@work

## Summary of Current Live Charter Opportunities by type of Offer

Activity	Description	No of Employer offers
<b>Taster Days</b>	Spending 1 – 2 days in an employer setting learning different aspects of the business being shadowed by a member of staff. Potential to move on to an offer of a structured work experience.	20
<b>Structured Work Experience</b>	Opportunity for young people to gain a better understanding of what the business is and what they do. Each opportunity will vary in content and duration. They can start with a taster day, which could lead onto structured work experience.	19
<b>Site Visits</b>	Groups or accompanied individuals are invited to visit the site to see what the working environment is like before committing to a taster/placement or choosing this career direction. Visits may be short (1hr) or may take place over several hours depending on the company and the group size.	14
<b>Presentations</b>	Companies willing to offer interactive presentations about their business sector and their own experiences of working in the sector. They can offer careers advice about ways into a specific career. Delivered to groups in schools, colleges, or referral partner settings	15

<b>Work Placements</b>	Structured work placements will help young people gain even more experience in the career that they are interested in. They can choose to do a work placement after you have either done a taster day or some work experience.	11
<b>Mentoring Support</b>	Business owners have agreed to offer mentoring support face to face or remotely via teams, to support small groups of people with motivation, confidence, and aspiration. Delivered to groups in schools, colleges, or referral partner settings	14

- The Jobs Fair/ Career Marketplace was hosted at Sefton Adult and Community Learning Centre in Cambridge Road on Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> October 2023. A range of 21 ring-fenced jobs, apprenticeships and structured work placements were available on the day. In addition, young people had access to our partner services including financial advice, work benefit calculations, budgeting, debt management and mental health support. There was also support from our Sefton@work, our NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service. **15** partners attended and **16** young people attended the event. **1** young person was offered an apprenticeship and **2** have been offered guaranteed interviews and future taster days with an employer.
- As part of the Careers Marketplace, we ring-fenced 21 vacancies for our care experienced young people, with a range of employers including Sefton Council Apprenticeship Team, Sefton Carers, New Directions, Michail Hotel & Leisure, Autism Initiatives, Chapel House Motors, Fun4Kidz, Heron Foods, Millmead Optical Group, McDonalds, KFC, Ranstad Education and Wyndors's World of Shoes. These vacancies are still live or on extended application period and have been circulated to key partners for them to promote to their young people, who will each be offered a guaranteed interview if they chose to make an application. Support to complete applications is available through both Sefton@work and Career Connect.
- The Council has entered into a 1-year Employment and Enterprise pilot project with Merseyside Expanding Horizons Big Onion project, based in the Strand Shopping Centre. This pilot project aims to support up to 10 care experienced young people by providing an effective employment pathway to enable them to access and sustain employment or self-employment opportunities. The package of support will include a person-centred approach to enable participants to safely explore entrepreneurialism and business start-up. The pilot includes a range of key skills such as confidence building, team-working and workplace communications as well as specific skills including business planning, customer service and managing finance.
- The Charter has featured as a social value ask in a number of Procurement exercises such as the recent NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Service contracting, and the MLEC regeneration programme for Southport Town Deal. This has required all tenderers to sign up to the Charter.

# Agenda Item 12

- Improved partnership working between the key partners, and contribution from the Charter project to the Council's wider Improving Education Training and Employment Outcomes Task group co-ordinated by John Short.
- Corporate parenting staff have secured significant contributions from Charter employers for Christmas celebrations for the young people in the form of gifts and entertainment.

## **Lessons Learned from the Charter**

Over the summer of 2023, the Charter steering group considered our progress across the Council and reflected on some lessons learned to inform future priorities. The key lessons we need to address can be captured as follows:

- Work Readiness needs to be the single biggest issue for all partners as it has been the most common barrier to progress for young people referred into the Charter process. This is exacerbated by gaps in their careers educational guidance and knowledge and is linked to young people's low confidence about their abilities and their frequently constrained ambition for future achievement in the world of work.
- We need to continue to listen to our young people about what they need from the Charter and use our partnership to deliver these needs ( eg the Home repairs sessions)
- We need to ensure our Charter opportunities represent a broad and diverse range of opportunities in line with the interests and requirements of our young people.
- We have some hugely committed employers, willing to work with us in a flexible, responsive and supportive manner to help the progression of our young people.
- We should assess whether there is more the Council can do as an employer to match the commitment seen by some of our stakeholder partners in providing quality opportunities.
- Remuneration for our young people seeking employment needs to align with their financial situation to help them sustain themselves.
- We need to find new ways to target Charter opportunities so that our young people with care experience benefit from them without feeling singled out from their peer group

## **Moving Forward with the Charter**

We have identified a number of key pieces of work we intend to take forward in the next period. These are:

- Working closely with Sefton's Childrens Social Care services to promote their aims to increase the number of our young people in staying-put arrangements after 18 or other more stable placements with foster carers. Making use of Sefton@work to promote fostering as an option for our service users.
- Creating more opportunities for the Voice of Care Experienced People to be heard.



- Offer interventions which could be taken up from an earlier age to build confidence, grow aspirations and increase knowledge about our local labour market.
- Continue to offer Charter events including the following which are in the pipeline and will be delivered in the coming months. These include:

Hugh Baird College and Kier Construction will deliver a Home Repairs workshop for care experienced young people who are living or about to live independently. This has been designed in direct response to needs articulated by our young people. The sessions will focus on domestic repairs & maintenance skills such as fixing kitchen and bathroom sinks, taps, toilets, washing machines etc. All participants will also receive lunch, support with travel and a free goody bag and voucher.

United Utilities will offer care experienced young people aged 15 – 17, the opportunity to participate in a Personal Development Day and a tour of their Lingley Mere Site. Transport and lunch will be provided and there will be an opportunity to meet the staff, gain support with CV production, Interview Preparation and Mock Interviews.

K2 Architects have also offered young people an opportunity to meet with them to understand how a busy architecture practice in Liverpool operates, as well as learning about the different roles available within their company and the wider construction/design sector. After lunch, young people will meet the Company Director and attend a workshop on CVs and interview skills.

## **TOURISM & EVENTS SERVICE**

### **Events**

#### **Southport Food & Drink Festival – 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

- Booking forms for traders are being updated and will be sent out at the beginning of January.
- The different categories at the festival are Street Food, Producers, Exhibitors, Bars, Tea & Coffee.
- Infrastructure is being secured and any contracts that have finished are being re tendered via The Chest NW

#### **Southport Air Show – 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> July**

- Trader booking forms are being updated and will be sent out in January.
- The Flying Display Management is currently out to tender. Once this have been finalised the successful company will start to obtain prices and availability of aircraft.
- The beach will not be used for parking in 2024 – alternative arrangements are being looked in to.
- The crowd line will be moved in from 150m to 50m to utilise the parts of the beach that are in the best condition.
- Infrastructure is being secured with new contracts out to tender via The Chest NW.

# Agenda Item 12

- Liaison with the Armed Forces regarding ground attractions will take place in the New Year.

## **British Musical Fireworks Championship – 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September**

- Applications have been received from 10 companies wishing to participate in the event in 2024.
- The draw has taken place and 6 companies have been selected to compete over the 2 nights.
- The selected companies will attend an onsite briefing early in the New Year. This will include a site visit and the competition rules will be talked over with the Competition Clerk.
- Infrastructure is being secured.

## **Destination Marketing**

- Destination Campaign – The Christmas campaign includes Digital audio (radio), OOH (48 sheet digital sites) social media, website updates and e-newsletter to our database (circa 50,000 contacts). We are working on Christmas in conjunction with Southport BID.
- PR – We have retained our PR agency (Social Communications) after going out for quotes for the 2024 calendar year. Their Christmas release has secured coverage in a number of publications including The Echo, Lancs Live and The Guide
- Visitor Guide – Work is nearing completion on the 2024 guide. This will go to print in January (print costs lower in January than December) Distribution will commence at the end of January.
- Southport Restaurateurs Association – The 2024 guide is complete and delivered. It will be distributed alongside the visitor Guide at the end of January. There has also been a small local radio / digital campaign running through October and into November.
- E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 52,000 with the addition of 2022/2023 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience (the latest being as part of the Christmas campaign).
- Travel Trade – Our stand at British Tourism & Travel Show (March 2024) has been booked. We attended The Group Leisure & Travel Show in Milton Keynes on 5 October, this was on a stand-share basis with Liverpool. It was reasonably successful, and contacts made will be assessed before committing to 2024.
- Advertising continues to be placed in key travel trade publications. Three pieces of editorial have been written and free additional space for this has been secured with all ads booked to date.
- We have renewed our membership with AGTO (Association of Group Travel Organisers) for 2024.
- Golf – We continue to work with England's Golf Coast and Southport Golf Tours to ensure better co-ordination between the three partners and a draft golf activity plan has been produced.
- Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 102 (104 this time last year).

## **MLEC**

- The MLEC project continues to make good progress, RIBA Stage 3 completed March 2023 and Stage 4 completed October 2023.
- ASM Global are the preferred operator, the biggest events venue operator in the world. We are now in the final stages of agreeing Agreement of Lease and Lease.
- The procurement of the build contractor is complete with all submissions scored and checked.
- Procurement of the demolition & enabling works and main contract works progressing.
- Planning approval was received in April 2023, we are now in the process of discharging all pre-commencement conditions
- PCSA and Enabling works package to follow on from Utility Diversions by the Statutory Authorities.
- Hoarding and site set up commenced August 2023
- Utility diversions progressing. Main United Utilities drain diversion technical approvals received, associated Legals and other works are currently in progress and will continue until the end of 2023.

## **MLEC Social Value**

- On the 16<sup>th</sup> November 100 year 5 & 6 students from Southport Learning Trust gathered together at Waterfront Hotel, Southport to design the first phase of images for the MLEC safety hoardings. The location of the event was important to enable the students to visually connect with the project and therefore the task in hand rather than images on a screen.
- The event was hugely successful, and all students were engaged and excited by the project.

The students' designs were based around three themes:

- All the things I love about Southport.
- When I think of a construction project, this is what I see.
- When I visit Southport, I like to see the following nature / animals.

The designs will be applied to the hoardings in due course.

- In partnership with The Uniform Hub at Compassion Acts Southport, we have worked with the MLEC professional team and Southport Accommodation partners to donate 'Christmas Eve' boxes. In just a few weeks a total of 55 boxes were donated and given to families on 15<sup>th</sup> December when collecting uniform items for the new school term for 2024. This is the first time this initiative has been implemented and the hope is to build on its initial success for Christmas 2024.
- Following on from the introductory visit to Hugh Baird two masterclasses have taken place.
- 30<sup>th</sup> November members of Sefton Council and the MLEC professional team presented a session focussed on 'Women in Construction'. The session received positive feedback and there are plans to replicate the session at Southport College.

# Agenda Item 12

- The Convention Bureau has supported several local accommodation businesses with support towards sustainability as part of site visits in preparation of judging from Liverpool City Region Tourism Awards.

## **REGENERATION SERVICE**

### **Southport Town Deal**

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

### **Marine Lake Events Centre and Water & Light Show**

The Regeneration Service continues to provide significant resource and invaluable support to the progress of the many workstreams and activities associated with the delivery of the MLEC, and to manage the financial and audit reporting, deep dive reviews and grant returns to both DLUHC and the Combined Authority.

### **Southport Market**

Southport Market continues to operate successfully and contribute to the vitality of the town centre with the range of food and drink on offer at the market and flexible events space. One of the first Town Deal projects to be completed, the market has attracted thousands of customers to date and continues to attract visitors from Southport and beyond.

### **Enterprise Arcade**

The Enterprise Arcade has just moved forward with its next key milestone with the appointment of the contractor Skyline who will start work in Jan 2024. Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project and will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport. Design work is finished for the construction contract and the contractor is due to start in the new year.

### **Les Transformation de Southport**

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

## **Building a Better Customer Experience**

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

The pilot of the Building Better Customer Experience Training with Southport College has now been completed, in total 68 learners participated in the pilot including existing learners currently enrolled at the college and employees of a local business. The feedback received during and after the pilot programme was exceptionally positive and Southport College are now proposing to roll the course out to larger cohorts to meet demand. Training for volunteers and workless people through Sefton's Adult & Community Learning service is also proposed as part of this pilot programme. Southport College have collaborated with 27 businesses north of the borough, they have also delivered focus groups with a range of learners and feedback was very positive, learners felt that the modules covered a range of topics which have enhanced their skills and increased confidence levels.

## **Southport Cove – The Esplanade**

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

## **BOOTLE**

### **Bootle Strand Repurposing**

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

A shop unit has been opened up in the Strand (Former Durham beds unit) by one of the main entrances to share the emerging plans for the Strand, secure feedback from the public and share the proposed first stage of demolition work which has been granted planning approval December 2023. More details can be found here [Plans approved for next stage of Bootle Strand redevelopment \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/plans-approved-for-next-stage-of-bootle-strand-redevelopment)

The £20m DLUHC funding will assist with the first phase of delivery work which will include and build on the Salt and Tar events space. Following the announcement of Tom Jones playing in August 2024, the construction programme will be adjusted to take account of this to maintain momentum through the demolition period. An operational manager has been appointed to manage the site and organised the

# Agenda Item 12

marketing, trader recruitment and site logistics for the Festive Food and Drink Market event and fair held on 8-10 December 2023 and supporting The Strand Centre with their Christmas event on the 25<sup>th</sup> November.

## **Crosby Lakeside**

The new Bunk Barn at Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre has now been completed and initial information about the accommodation venue is being shared with local schools, clubs and other organisations who might be interested in hiring it for activities.



## **AINSDALE ON SEA**

### **Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works**

Following conversations with residents, community groups and previous wider consultation on this area, the Council announced in 2023 that it would be looking to develop an updated vision for the coastal gateway in response to the feedback received.

The Council have appointed a specialist planning and development consultancy to undertake a feasibility study for the coastal gateway. The consultant, Turley, will look at all assets at the site, including The Sands, Toad Hall, Council operational bases, and options for their development.

Further details can be found here - [Council shares next steps for Ainsdale-on-Sea \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/council-shares-next-steps-for-ainsdale-on-sea)

### **Ainsdale Toilet Refurbishment and Changing Places Toilets**

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

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

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

Sefton is considering and assessing responses received and carrying out further discussion with parties who have expressed an interest, as part of ongoing due diligence. Marketing of the site will continue (Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills](#) and [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#) )

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

In February 2023 Cabinet considered the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Since then further additional properties have now been acquired and a renewed effort to bring in the remaining ownerships is progressing in earnest. Parallel to this process, agents have been appointed to continue to market the site, in order to support the Council's ambitions for change and redevelopment of the site. Expressions of interest are continuing to come forward from the market and members are being updated on progress.

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