

Report to:	Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)	Date of Meeting:	9 th November 2021
Subject:	Sefton Economic Strategy update		
Report of:	Head of Economic Growth and Housing	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member Regeneration & Skills		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

To update members on this ongoing work and advise on the progress of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (Dec 2019) , the associated Covid-19 Recovery plan and plans to refresh and update the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan to take effect from April 2022

Recommendation(s):

That Members note:

- (1) The report and provide feedback
- (2) The progress of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan approved by Cabinet Member in December 2019 and the associated Covid-19 Recovery Plan
- (3) Work underway to refresh and update the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan to take effect from April 2022

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To update members on this ongoing work and advise on the progress of the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (Dec 2019), the associated Covid-19 Recovery Plan and work underway to refresh and update the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan to take effect from April 2022

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

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?**(A) Revenue Costs**

None

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</p> <p>Consultation co-ordination activities were previously undertaken by existing staff within existing budgets</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Equality Implications:</p> <p>The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.</p>

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable: Inclusive growth is the 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. This work has been prioritised in the Recovery Plan.</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Inclusive Growth is the core objective of the strategy framework including a focus on 'People' to better connect economic opportunity to the lived experience of residents; Investing in education, skills and employability is also one of 7 key objectives. This work has been prioritised in the Recovery Plan.</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services: Reconfiguring public services and community led delivery and generating new sources of finance to support growth are two of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>
<p>Place – leadership and influencer: Repositioning and reprofiling Sefton is one of the 7 key objectives for the strategy. This work has been prioritised in the Recovery Plan.</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform: Reconfiguring public services and community led delivery and generating new sources of finance to support growth are two of the 7 key objectives for the strategy. This work has been prioritised in the Recovery Plan.</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: Delivering new development and infrastructure, Creating and growing local, private and social enterprise and securing new inward investment are three of the 7 key objectives for the strategy. This work has been prioritised in the Recovery Plan.</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment: Creating and growing local, private and social enterprise is one of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener: Under Delivering new development and infrastructure reference is made to the mitigation of any adverse environmental impacts as a result of economic regeneration growth; the strategy also focuses on attracting new cleaner greener investment for Digital, particularly the roll-out of ultrafast broadband. The work directly links to Sefton Council's Digital Strategy.</p>

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD.....) and the Chief Legal and Democratic Officer (LD.....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

A full public engagement process was undertaken between March and May 2018 and reported to O&S Regeneration and Skills on 27 July 2018. Further work including consultation with partners and stakeholders has since been completed and the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan has been updated accordingly. Work has now started on refreshing and updating the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan to take effect from April 2022.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Approval for the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy was delegated to Cabinet Member Regeneration & Skills on 26 July 2018. Following more intensive work by officers the Sefton Economic Strategy Action was approved by Cabinet Member on 28 November 2019.

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- (1) Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan (December 2019)
- (2) Sefton Economic Recovery Plan
- (3) Sefton Economic Recovery Plan (Appendices)

Background Papers:

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet Member – Regeneration & Skills approved the Sefton Economic Strategy (SES) Action Plan on 28th November 2019. **(Appendix 1)** This final approval had previously been delegated by Cabinet at its meeting of 26th July 2018. The Plan was the culmination of two major pieces of evidence gathering and work focussing on Sefton's economy:
 - The Sefton Economic Assessment, a factual statement of the borough's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats.
 - Framework for Action, or the building blocks of the Strategy.
- 1.2 This followed extensive borough wide consultation and asked people what they thought was important for Sefton now and in for the future. Over 5,000 people took part and the information helped to develop the Vision for Sefton 2030.

- 1.3 Following consultation with the Public Engagement Panel work then started on the development of the SES Action Plan, the third and final element to a suite of documents that sets out key priorities.
- 1.4 The intention is to make the SES Action Plan a working document that will be periodically reviewed in terms of its progress and performance at key stages. This would enable us to share its findings and progress, with our partners, businesses and communities. Members will recall that there were three foundation pillars to the Strategy – **Place, People and Productivity** and that there were thematic areas for action:

Priority Action Area (PAA)	Thematic Area
PAA1	Development and infrastructure
PAA 2	Business Growth & Enterprise
PAA 3	Inward Investment
PAA 4	Education & Employment
PAA 5	Reconfiguring public services
PAA 6	Generating new finance
PAA 7	Promoting Sefton
*PAA 8	Recovery (Covid-19 specific)

SES Action Plan update

- 1.5 Work is underway to update and refresh the SES Action Plan including:
- Reviewing its 7 Priority Actions Areas (PAAs), consider whether they are still fit for purpose and meet the Council's overall vision and strategic objectives
 - Merging PAAs where there is crossover and alignment of activities
 - Introducing a New PAA-Health & Wellbeing
 - Taking stock of new LCR Combined Authority economic data sets including job furlough, GVA, Productivity and business openings/closure information for Sefton. Reviewing emerging LCR Prosperity Plan.
 - Reviewing economic data gaps for Sefton e.g, granular data for town centre to inform recovery actions; sector data; commercial market demand data etc
 - Sefton Import & Export performance (link to emerging Freeport opportunity)
 - Covid dashboard monitoring
 - Alignment with Sefton Economic Tracker and labour market data
 - Agreeing evidence required to provide robust evaluation of SES Action Plan
 - Future reporting; format and frequency
 - Embracing Climate Change and net zero action plan ambitions.
 - Further alignment with Sefton's Digital Strategy
- 1.6 After very recent testing in lieu of the pandemic officers are keen to ensure the SES Action Plan offers its full value and relevance in terms of the right strategic actions. The Strategy is currently undergoing a detailed review and with the new Covid-19 actions added is still fit for purpose. It is envisaged that the economic data sets that underpin the Strategy will help show demonstrable improvements in the economy. Members will be consulted on this ongoing work with the aim to have a revised and updated SES Action Plan ready for April 2022 launch.

2. Covid-19 economic impact

- 2.1 In January 2020 Officers had started developing a performance framework to help measure the impact of each of the 7 thematic areas. However, as we are all aware the Covid-19 pandemic outbreak in March 2020 required a complete change in direction and strategy as the Council became engaged in a series of emergency measures to help support Sefton's residents, communities and businesses throughout various lockdowns and associated Government tiers of control.
- 2.2 This included the establishment of an Economy Cell led by the Head of Economic Growth and Housing and including representation from a range of services covering Planning, Housing, Economic Development and Regeneration; Business and Inward Investment (InvestSefton), Planning, Tourism, Employment & Skills (including Sefton @ Work) and representation from Public Health, Public Protection and Corporate Resources.
- 2.3 While the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan remains fit for purpose and the foundation for building economic activity, it was inevitable that the pandemic would impact on planned projects. Therefore, a further Priority Action Area was added- **Recovery*, which has focus on new Covid-19 emergency response measures including some of the key projects previously identified in the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan.
- 2.4 Members received a presentation from the Head of Economic Growth on 9th March 2021 setting out achievements and outcomes against PAA8 recovery plan objectives. These have been updated up to October 2021 in item 4 below and will be accompanied by a verbal presentation from the Head of Economic Growth & Housing.

3. Sefton Economic Recovery Plan

- 3.1 In November 2020 the Council produced a Strategic Recovery Plan. **(Appendices 2 & 3)**. Its purpose is to provide leadership and highlight opportunity and corral our many stakeholders into collective and collaborative action at a borough level. Members will be aware that the plan before Covid-19 was to build on a range of exciting projects to tackle head- on the long-standing economic issues that has held back growth in Sefton's communities, town centres and business sectors. These issues mean that the pandemic's impact is even more keenly felt, and we have had to revisit and rethink our plans to grow Sefton's economy.
- 3.2 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is currently developing a new Plan for Prosperity for the LCR . This is in response to a change in direction from Government who are moving away from the Pre-Covid Local Industrial Strategy (LIS) approach they originally favoured. Officers will work closely with the CA to ensure alignment with Sefton's refreshed Economic Strategy Action Plan, most notably to support bids for future funding.

4. Progress to date

- 4.1 Members will recall the last presentation to this meeting on 9th March 2021. In addition to the attached suite of documents it was felt Members would be most interested in how the plans have further progressed and, in particular, the results and outcomes of a wide range of activities in response to supporting the Sefton economy, its residents, communities, businesses and key sectors since the briefing in March. Members will be aware of much of this work through weekly Sitrep updates and key highlights are summarised below:

Recovery Plan/Growth Projects	Progress/outcomes
Business Grants (Local Restrictions Support Grants/Additional Restrictions Support Grants)	
Sefton Small Business Support Grants	£32,840,000 paid to 3,284 recipients
Retail/Hospitality/Leisure Grants	£17,170,000 paid to 926 recipients
Local Restrictions Grant (Closed/Tier 2/3 restrictions/Sectors)	£435,421 paid to 307 recipients
Local Restrictions Grant (Closed) Addendum	£2,788,272 paid to 1,816 recipients
Wet led pubs grant support	£102,000 paid to 102 recipients
Local Restrictions Grant (Closed) Addendum	£4,592,033 paid to 1,988 recipients
Closed Business Lockdown payment	£9,207,000 paid to 1,992 recipients
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open)	£2,045,556 paid to 467 recipients
Local Restrictions Support Grant (Closed) Addendum - 16 Feb to 31 Mar 21	£4,763,656 paid to 1973 recipients
Restart Grants - Non Essential Retail	£2,008,826 paid to 1,194 recipients
Restart Grants – Hospitality, Leisure, Accommodation, Sports & Personal Care	£13,021,494 paid to 1,853 recipients
Discretionary Business Grants	£2,237,500 paid to 340 Sefton recipients
Taxi Drivers Grant Round 1	£262,000 paid to 2,620 recipients
Taxi Drivers Grant Round 2	£648,400 paid to 3,242 recipients
LCR Hospitality & Leisure Grant fund (Round 1)	£407,500 paid to 231 recipients
Round 1 Top up Grant	£1,476,910 paid to 219 recipients
LCR Hospitality & Leisure Grant fund (Round 2-expanded & Top up	£282,156 paid to 154 recipients

LCR Local Business Support Grant (Round 3)	£1,921,500 paid to 476 recipients
Round 3 Top up Grant	£3,027,287 paid to 726 recipients
LCR Care Provider Grant fund	£520,000 paid to 149 recipients
Total value	£97,613,018
LCR Trading On Scheme	Project launched 25 th October worth £1.4m for Sefton InvestSefton is currently delivering this scheme which has a closing date of 12 November, after which all applications will be appraised.
Sefton Business Grants team	A new Business Grants team has been recruited under InvestSefton to support the Trading on Grant scheme and assist in post assurance checks on all schemes delivered
Media	MySefton news site: https://mysefton.co.uk/2021/08/05/sefton-businesses-supported-with-97-7-million-in-grant-payments-throughout-pandemic/ The Comms team has produced a video which can be watched here: https://youtu.be/_c0_O6VpYN4
<div style="background-color: #008080; color: white; padding: 5px;"> <div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-between; align-items: center;"> investsefton Sefton Council </div> <div style="display: grid; grid-template-columns: repeat(3, 1fr); gap: 10px; padding: 10px;"> <div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> 23,000 <small>grant payments made</small> </div> <div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> £97.7 million <small>paid out to Sefton businesses</small> </div> <div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> More than 2,600 <small>businesses updated after each gov announcement</small> </div> <div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> £41.8 million <small>in Business Rates Retail discounts for 2020-21</small> </div> <div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> 27,000 <small>requests answered by the Business Rates team</small> </div> <div style="background-color: white; border-radius: 10px; padding: 10px; text-align: center;"> 4,000 <small>enquiries dealt with by the InvestSefton team</small> </div> </div> <p style="font-size: 0.8em; margin-top: 5px;"> We've also supported businesses with practical support: ■ Issuing PPE ■ Support for Covid-19 workplace testing ■ Helping hand for the re-opening of the retail, hospitality and personal care sectors </p> </div>	
Regeneration Projects	
Marine Lake Events Centre & the Light Fantastic	<p>The Marine Lake Events Centre combined with The Light Fantastic is the anchor project of the Southport Town Deal. The project will see the current Southport Theatre and Convention Centre replaced with a brand-new flexible events centre capable of holding large scale conferences, esports and entertainment events.</p> <p>The Town Deal Board have allocated £33.3 million towards the project while The Combined Authority have also in principle allocated £20m. A £3.5m funding bid to Arts Council England has also been submitted.</p> <p>Work continues with the detailed design and full business case; the delivery team have been procured to support the Council to ensure that a full planning application is submitted by Spring 2021. Procurement for the full design team will commence shortly</p> <p>It is hoped the works will start on site in late 2022 with the new events centre expected to be completed in 2025.</p>

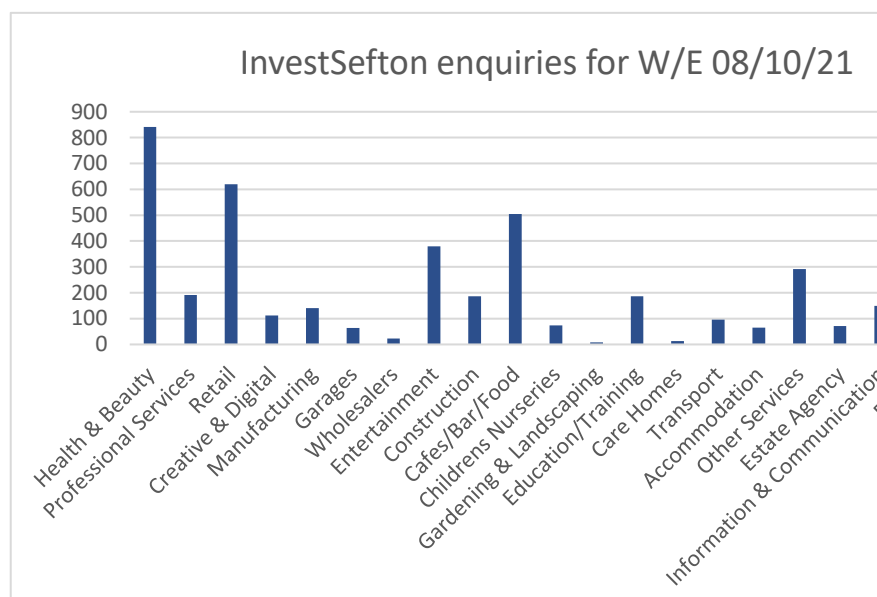
Southport Market	<p>Southport Market is now open after undergoing a £1.4m refurbishment. The failing mixed goods market is now a food and drinks market with a flexible events space.</p> <p>All funding has been secured from external sources. Since opening on the 22nd July tens of thousands of customers have visited the market purchasing hundreds of thousands of products.</p> <p>Further work is planned for 2021 that includes the completion of the events space to bring it in line with the look and feel of the rest of the market, children's play area and a new outdoor seating space.</p>
The Enterprise Arcade, Southport	<p>Part of the recently successful Southport Town Deal programme is The Enterprise Arcade which received £1.5m of town deal funding. The Town Investment Plan identified the regeneration and transformation of Crown Buildings into Southport's first flexible office space; designed to act as an incubator and flexible/co-working space for start-up businesses with the purpose of nurturing the growth of the creative digital and technology led business base which already exists in the town but currently has no identifiable geographic focus.</p> <p>Key objectives of the project include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support the diversification of the local economy • Deliver refurbished floorspace to create a business incubator and meet the needs of new and growing businesses through flexible, experiential workspaces • Increase the number of business in the target sector(s) • Support new business starts and encourage entrepreneurship • Support business and provide the right space for them to expand • Support the creation of new jobs and training opportunities • Act as a hub for businesses and innovation in Southport, facilitate the networks and connectivity to support a thriving business ecosystem • Drive private sector investment and help to deliver a new Creative, Digital and Tech led district • Help retain younger people in Southport • Help ensure greater integration between education and business <p>In a break away from traditional office space and embracing the move towards flexible and hybrid working The Enterprise Arcade will be a 'Place for Pioneer's', playing a part in Sefton's and the City Regions Economic Recovery Plan. The benefits being seen in an outward looking resilient economy, underpinned by the infrastructure which connects the whole of the Liverpool City Region.</p> <p>https://standupforsouthport.com/new-enterprise-arcade-in-southport-to-provide-vital-space-for-start-up-businesses/</p>

Southport Visitor Attractions	<p>Officers are continuing engagement with Southport Pleasureland in relation to the sites transformation and investment linked to the most recent lease. Covid-19 has slightly delayed some planned investment; however, work has now started on the Viking Golf attraction for a 2022 opening.</p> <p>Southport Cove continues to progress with detailed planning pre app discussions having taken place. The required next steps are now being developed and implemented.</p> <p>This project will improve the quality of customer experience, create a consistent level of outstanding service which can be associated with a 'Southport standard' across different settings and build confidence and aspiration for all those involved in public interaction to allow them to be advocates for the town</p>
Building a Better Customer Experience	<p>This project will improve the quality of customer experience, create a consistent level of outstanding service which can be associated with a 'Southport standard' across different settings and build confidence and aspiration for all those involved in public interaction to allow them to be advocates for the town</p>
Crosby Village	<p>Sefton Council also submitted a £19m Levelling Up fund bid for Crosby Town Centre for a new library and health hub. A decision is expected later this year and the bid was developed and supported by a number of key town centre stakeholders.</p> <p>Sefton Council has launched a public consultation on proposals to regenerate Crosby town centre this September on proposed new access routes and highway improvements ahead of development of the Green Car Park site in the centre. This will explore views on improvements to the car parks and junctions in the town as well as better access for people walking and cycling. Key junction improvements are also proposed at the junction of the A565 Liverpool Road/The By-Pass and the B5193 Islington/ Coronation Road/Church Road junction which will be reconfigured to enable traffic to move more freely around the edge of the town centre and access parking.</p> <p>Investment and development interest continue within Crosby Village with recent proposals for a residential development at Central Buildings site expected to start Oct/Nov 2021 and a new residential development at Telegraph House in development. Vacancy rates have reduced from pre-covid position reflecting a more localised market demand.</p>
Bootle Strand	<p>The Strand Shopping Centre feeds directly into the key priority of ensuring retail remains a core function of Bootle Town Centre. Despite the challenging retail market and Covid-19 impacts affecting trading performance, the Council is firmly committed to taking a long-term investment perspective. The Council is driving forward plans with analysis of how best to repurpose this key town centre asset and is currently undertaking a detailed analysis of delivery and investment options possible to realise its ambitions to transform Bootle.</p> <p>Bootle Canalside has progressed this year following site acquisition and demolition to create a new public space next to</p>

	<p>Bootle canal. An August Bank Holiday music and activity event was held and was well attended, positively received and also enabled consultation with the local community on what they would like to see happen to this site.</p> <p>Sefton have also submitted a £16m Levelling Up Fund Bid in June 2021 for Bootle Canalside for a new Canalside event and activity space and high-tech, virtual reality leisure proposal. A decision is awaited later this year and was supported by a number of key town centre stakeholders and EFC. If approved it will enable the next stage of Bootle's transformation and place-making to progress and enable further improvements to the Canalside area for the community including improved access, diversifying the town centre and helping the local economy to recover.</p> <p>The above work will also inform the emerging Bootle Area Action Plan which is shortly to go out to public consultation on key issues and options for the wider Bootle area including the town centre. This will help deliver the aspirations set out within the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework which put the Strand Shopping Centre at the heart of town centre regeneration and place making. The Council bought the Strand to catalyse and take control of the re-development of Bootle Town Centre and bringing local assets back into local ownership. The work to explore the potential for the redevelopment of the Strand will help to improve the offer for Bootle residents and other key town centre users which in turn will help revitalise and regenerate the town centre and support wider commercial and residential investment in the area.</p>
Crosby Lakeside	<p>Work to refurbish Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre continues on-site for this key coastal facility and gateway which is anticipated to complete by Spring 2022. In February 2021, Cabinet approved the formation of a wholly owned Sefton Council hospitality company to operate the newly refurbished facility and have appointed a new Managing Director to assist with the facility fit out and operational management the leisure facilities have continued to operate during the building work programme.</p>
Cambridge Road	<p>Work is almost complete to refurbish this Grade II Listed community learning facility in Cambridge Road. Investment in the building will see a refurbishment of the ground floor facilities including a new reception area and café and a reconfiguring of the former school hall as a new flexible area for teaching. The Community Learning Hub will also benefit from new IT infrastructure and will be fully WIFI enabled as a result of the investment, while the first floor of the building will also benefit from improvement works. Work will also include repairing and enhancing the building's original features, with external improvements to the roof, windows, brick and stonework. The investment works will improve the external envelope and the energy efficiency of the building whilst also reducing running costs. The work is being undertaken by a locally based contractor with extensive experience in the refurbishment of important listed buildings, whilst providing social value to the users of the centre and the immediate community. Work is anticipated to complete later this year</p>

Business Support & engagement	
Website and events	<p>Dedicated Covid-19 webpages on www.investsefton.com established within 24 hours of March 2020 lockdown and regularly updated; has had over 46,000 unique sessions as at 1st October 2021 and rising</p> <p>The origin accessing the website are as follows: UK (81.1%) China (7.2%) U.S (3.1%) Indonesia (2.6%) and India (1%).</p> <p>The team is now planning the redevelopment of www.investsefton.com to ensure it continues to meet business needs and demand</p> <p>InvestSefton has so far hosted 4 virtual webinars and 2 face to face events in 2021 on a range of topics with both public and private sector partners:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 7 Feb -Search Engine Optimisation;45 businesses attended • 25 May-EU transitioning following Brexit;20 businesses attended • 15 June- EU transitioning following Brexit;6 businesses attended • 17 June Business branding attended by 30 businesses • 28 September-Business health check attended by 20 businesses-Bootle Town Hall • 14 October-Access to Finance attended by 20 businesses <p>The team is working with the Good Business Festival to deliver events in December 2021 and March 2022 https://thegoodbusinessfestival.com/</p> <div style="display: flex; align-items: flex-start;">  <div style="margin-left: 20px;"> <p>New Normal event 28 September- Bootle Town Hall</p> <p>20 businesses attended InvestSefton and Liverpool Chamber of Commerce's first face to face event in Bootle since pre-Covid. The event was delivered by Moorcroft's Solicitors a Liverpool based law firm with many years experience and specialising in both private and commercial law. The event focussed on: The challenges of remote working particularly::</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Employment law and HR – what you need to know • Compulsory Covid-19 vaccinations for staff – can employers insist on them? • How to support staff and yourself • Other HR related topics </div> </div>
Business enquiries	InvestSefton supported Business Rates during the first month of the delivery of the Small Business Grant and the Retail, Leisure and Hospitality Grants, handling over 1,740 recorded calls with a

further 400 unrecorded due to the volumes of demand. The team is receiving record numbers of enquiries. InvestSefton has handled **4,434 enquiries** from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as at 8th October 2021.



Of these, 1,767 were in connection with Rates and business grant payments/ Furloughing staff/self- employed scheme or Discretionary Business Grants. The remaining 2,667 are of a general business support nature including business start-up and property searches. As can be seen in the above graph most enquiries have come from businesses services such as high street retailers, including cafe's, hair/beauty salons but other sectors are also emerging as owners seek what support will be available in the event of ongoing restrictions.

Business case studies

Richardson's Healthcare Ltd, a 2019 winner of the Queens Award for Enterprise has continued its exporting success despite Brexit. The Bootle based company has been awarded a major contract with a US company to supply its pressure reducing medical operating table mattresses to one of the worlds largest medical device companies.

The contract valued at 1m dollars per year will create 6 new jobs and help secure 22 existing jobs. Managing Director Michael Gould commented. *" I can't deny that Brexit has been very challenging for our company, with goods held up for weeks in warehouses waiting to be cleared. Covid was also a blow because elected surgery was cancelled, and the bulk of our product are used in operating theatres. The market post covid lockdown has exploded with hospitals throughout the world trying to play catch up. This new US contract will give us a very solid base in the United States, and we expect further large contracts to follow"* he further commented *" The Queens Award for Enterprise has given our company real legitimacy in the eyes of large overseas potential customers and has been a big help in expanding our overseas sales"*

	<p>Owner managed health and safety consultant based in Blundellsands. The business specialises in project management services for the construction industry, specifically in relation to compliance with Construction Design and Management Regulations (CDM). Due to the effects on the business of Covid, they are now looking to diversify and start bidding for public sector contracts as a first-tier supplier managing agent, outsourcing construction works to local contractors. InvestSefton supported the business by providing training on using the contracts finder portal and reviewing documentation for a housing tender.</p>
	<p>Sole trader graphic design and digital marketing business located in Thornton. Services include web design, graphic design, marketing materials and hand drawn illustrations for use in logos, website and marketing literature. The business is looking to develop its customer base further. InvestSefton supported the business by undertaking a customer base review to enable targeted marketing to both existing and new customers.</p>
	<p>Audio product manufacturer based in Southport specialising in DAC's and phono stages products that improve the quality of sound production from digital devices including phones, televisions, speakers and headphones. The Customer base is global with products being sold direct to consumers through Amazon and via a global network of distributors and audiophile specialist shops. The business is looking to improve their Digital Marketing. InvestSefton supported the business by researching suitable funding to finance attendance at an international trade expo as well as brokering an introductions for a University Graduate placement.</p>
	<p>LCR Growth Platform support</p> <p>InvestSefton is supporting LCR Growth Hub and its partners with a range of business support products open to Sefton businesses:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> •Help to Grow Management programme being delivered by Universities all over the Country. In Liverpool its being delivered by University of Liverpool Management School. Two cohorts are up and running. Taking expressions of interest for next cohort scheduled for the new year. Dates to be confirmed. •Race to Net Zero government campaign in the lead up to COP26. Details on www.businessclimatehub.org Want SMEs to sign the Net Zero pledge to commit to reduce their carbon emissions. All on the website. Growth Platform has a marketing campaign pack if anyone wants it. It has been shared with all Growth Hub partners already to communicate with their businesses and encourage participation. •High Growth Programme Approved. Working with CA to get account management element up and running.

	<p>•LCR Finance Hub has had funding approval. This will be co-funded by the CA and the Growth Platform and provide new access to finance for businesses.</p>
Inward Investment	<p>Development continues at Mersey Reach with Phase 2 of the scheme well under, completion expected Feb 2022. The last remaining unit on Phase 1 has been taken by the InvestSefton supported business CNC Robotics. https://www.pesmedia.com/cnc-robotics-funding-23122020/</p> <p>Ongoing dialogue with RLAM related to the development of Atlantic Park that could see c. 600,000 sq ft of new employment floorspace created with an investment of up to £60m, and the potential to support the creation of over 1,000 new jobs.</p> <p>Continued work to support the development of Land North of Formby Industrial Estate, with the landlord having identified a preferred development partner.</p> <p>Working in conjunction with Regen Team with both private investors and end users to support the development of Southport Business Park.</p> <p>Engaged with Santander, who have now taken on office space on Atlantic Park to serve as their hub for Sefton. Discussions ongoing relating to the future development options for their existing site.</p> <p>Working with the Regeneration Team to bring forward the Enterprise Arcade project as part of the Southport Town Deal programme.</p> <p>L51 Campus-Aintree https://lbdaily.co.uk/planners-approve-new-70m-merseyside-tech-hub/</p> <p>113 Liverpool Road-Crosby - The refurbishment of this building to create managed workspace with ancillary café/restaurant has now started on site with new steelwork in place for the new mezzanine floors to the front building and services established around the site</p> <p>.</p>
Public Health	<p>Public health continues to support healthy economic recovery and development in Sefton by working with our colleagues across the council and in partnership with external organisations in public, private and voluntary sectors. This has included supporting key sectors such as education and social care to prevent and manage spread of Coronavirus, as well as providing advice and guidance to private sector employers to contain outbreaks of Coronavirus and maintain safe working practices.</p>

	<p>Understanding and responding to the wider health needs of employers, people in work and people not in work has also continued, including through ongoing preventative mental wellbeing support delivered through commissioned services and in partnership with NHS and beyond. This is also a key priority in Sefton Integrated Care Partnership.</p> <p>Following a deep-dive report into child poverty and the impacts of the pandemic, the public health team has supported development of a successful Child Poverty Event, which attracted high quality input and interest from system leaders, and which represents an important first step to developing a new Child Poverty Strategy, which aims not only to alleviate current risk of poverty for children and their families, but also seeks to identify local actions to disrupt patterns of continuing poverty in adulthood and drive healthy and equitable economic development in Sefton.</p>
Public Protection	<p>Although the specific Coronavirus legislation has now been repealed the control of Coronavirus transmission in the workplace remains a health and safety at work matter. The pandemic is not over and although formal restrictions have been relaxed, we continue to advise businesses with regard to their covid risk assessments and the control of any outbreaks in the workplace. The Food Standards Agency has introduced an 18-month recovery plan for the food and drink sector to support them in re-opening their businesses following the lockdown and our Food and Safety Team are implementing this recovery plan locally in Sefton. The plan requires that in addition to responding to complaints from the public and requested for advice from businesses (approximately 150 per month), there will be a risk-based inspection programme incorporating 1500 unannounced formal full inspections of business undertaken to ensure compliance with food law.</p>
Southport Town Deal bid	<p>£37.5m bid approved for Southport including plans for the new Marine Lake Events Centre Enterprise Arcade business incubator, Light Fantastic spectacular light show in the Marine Lake, Public Realm enhancements and an employment and skills development project "Building a Better Customer Experience"</p>
Employment & Learning	<p>Sefton @ Work continues to deliver the Ways to Work employment support project, in partnership with the 5 other LAs in the city region. Funding to extend the scheme has been secured and this should allow the operation to continue into 2023. The premises on Stanley Road have been open for client access by appointment since September 2020 with a fully approved COVID RISK management plan in place. At present a blended service is in operation, with in-person access available together with remote, digital contact available for clients. However, there is a growing need to fully re-open the service to provide more COVID-safe in-person support to meet demand from residents/ stakeholder partners and plans for full re-opening are being developed.</p> <p>To date, the cumulative impact of Ways to Work in Sefton has included the following:</p>

Total Clients accessing service	3,858
Footfall(ie. people using Sefton@work remote facilities & premises)	45,896
W2W contracts Male	58.1%
W2W contracts Female	41.9%
W2W with self declared Disabilities/Health Conditions	1,363
W2W without basic skills	1,306
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	1,725
No. of interviews with clients	17,424

Sefton@work has also now begun delivery of the government's RESTART employment programme. This is aimed at those who have been claiming Universal Credit for a minimum of 12 months and need sustained assistance to increase their employability and enter and sustain employment. Referrals are made via Jobcentreplus and since commencement, volumes have increased month on month. Refurbishment work to the Sefton@work premises at Stanley Road has allowed further space to be made available for the Restart scheme in a manner that is Covid secure. Further premises in Southport have also now been sourced within the Atkinson centre. These rooms will be occupied by both Sefton@work and Sefton Community Learning Service to allow for a more joined up approach for residents.

The funding obtained from the Merseyside Violence Reduction Partnership to provide paid work placement for young people known to the Youth Offending team has now concluded and Sefton@work has taken part in evaluation of this scheme as an exemplar of best practice. Further negotiations to make a future application for a second round of funding are ongoing.

Sefton@work continues to act as a Gateway organisation for the government's Kickstart scheme. This allows smaller companies to offer paid temporary employment to young people aged between 18 and 24 who are claiming Universal Credit. The scheme has been beset with delays and structural blockages which have not allowed us to optimise this opportunity within Sefton. However, Sefton@work has continued to work very pro-actively with local Jobcentreplus staff and 35 Kickstart jobs have been filled. The Chancellor recently announced an extension to Kickstart, which would allow employers to access the scheme through to mid-2022.

Sefton@work is also delivering another ESF funded project called Positive Inclusions. This project incorporates a strand of support for young people deemed to be vulnerable and this is largely targeted towards young Care Leavers and Looked after children. The project aims to improve employability and raise aspirations

and there is a flexible budget to purchase a range of additional support measures to benefit young people and remove practical barriers. The project also includes a strand of activity to support older workers displaced from their jobs through COVID-19.

Sefton Community Learning Test & Learn Pilot for People with Lived Experience of Care

This pilot project is funded as part of the devolved Adult Education budget from the LCR CA. Its focus is on re-engaging young adults who have experience of care and have been NEET for a sustained period (12 months or more). Working alongside the Council's Leaving Care team to identify active NEET care leavers, the Service is in process of recruiting a specialist learning mentor to work with care leavers aged over 19 to engage them in a range of activities to identify and address barriers to learning. The project will design and create a range of bespoke learning courses, taster days, workshops and virtual events (online, blended and immersive technology) to encourage and increase participation and achievement. Each learner will have access to an online 24-7 self-serving platform to further developing e-learning on all aspects of job search, creating a flexible and adaptable learning experience in a dynamic and interactive way. This blend of technology will be used to encourage care leavers to access education, gain qualifications and ease learners into the norms and expectations of the world of work. Through Sefton@work, it will provide more employment pathways through live local vacancies, Kickstart, Routeways and the Council's apprenticeship programmes. This pilot will strengthen the links between partnership agencies and employers so they understand the issues and potential barriers care leavers face so they can be better supported when accessing training or employment opportunities and sustaining them.

NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Programme

The Career Connect team for Sefton continue to provide a range of services to support our young people. The following highlights reflect the position for August:

- **Academic Age 16-17 Combined NEET and Not Known Indicator** At 3.84% this is a reduction of 1.11% compared to August 2021 this is 56 young people
- **Academic Age 16-17 Actual NEET** has seen a reduction of 36 young people. (at **3.16%**)
- **Academic Age 16-18 Actual NEET** 16-18-year olds reduction is 62 young people of who 26 are 18 year olds. (at **3.94%**)
- We have **160** more 16/17 young people continuing and sustaining **in learning** than in August 2020. In learning for 16-18 year olds as also increase by **1.83%**.
- In August the team has further increased home visiting and face to face working transitioning back to the 'business as usual' model.

- In August Career Connect had **1,118** meaningful interventions with **612** young people supporting intensively the right young people at the right time. Early identification of vulnerable groups and 'risk of NEET' are also important to ensure priority is given to these young people to provide information, advice and guidance to enable a positive transition into EET.
- September Guarantee **arrangement to ensure that all 16- and 17-year-olds are offered learning by the end of September**, a suitable place in education or training, including in schools, colleges or work-based training by local authorities. This is a cohort of **5,798** in Sefton and includes year 11's who are educated in Sefton as well as residents. Currently Sefton have confirmed 5,708 learning offers and a further 90 offers for young people are needed. The team is focused on securing these offers and feeding them into the performance data.
- Career Connect 's own Apprentice under contractual social value measures started in July. This young person is a Sefton client supported through Sefton@work and referred by them. They have settled in well.
- Career Connect has also supported the Council's Looked After Council Apprenticeships recruitment – identifying young people with engaging, supporting applications, preparation, interview skills, support and hand- holding to interview etc

Sefton Community Learning Service update

Current Enrolments have significantly improved during September, compared with the same period in 2020 with promotional activities high on the Service's agenda. To date, 228 learners have started 245 learning aims. There are an additional 40 new learners due to commence courses over coming weeks who do not feature yet in these calculations.

Arts and craft courses have proven to be the most popular area of learning, with a waiting list of more than 60 learners wanting to enroll onto future classes to be arranged shortly. The Service is in the process of booking additional courses to accommodate this extraordinary demand and will undertake further tutor recruitment for this area.

75 learners also enrolled on Family Learning courses at the Canalside event over the August Bank holiday weekend. This provided an excellent opportunity to engage with the local community, promote courses and raise the profile of the Service. The Service also attended Southport Food and Drinks Festival and has plans to attend the Carla Lane event Sunday 26th September.

By contrast, Enrolments on some IT courses have been slow, with some courses marked by extremely low numbers. The Service is evaluating this unforeseen trend but will aim to retain skilled IT tutors wherever possible. A number of courses are now being reviewed to make them more attractive to learners and meet their

	<p>changing needs. A similar pattern has been reported across other LA community learning providers and may relate to a greater need within the community for activity related to mindfulness and wellbeing rather than digital skills.</p> <p>The next round of Examinations is due to take place at the end of September, providing learners with the opportunity to re-sit exams from last year.</p> <p>The Service is working with People First to deliver a bespoke IT course for learners with low to moderate learning difficulties. The course will provide basic office admin skills, understanding how to use different devices and staying safe online; supporting individuals to develop skills and take more control over their own lives.</p> <p>The learning rooms secured alongside Sefton@work in Southport Atkinson and at Victoria Park will allow classes to have a more consistent delivery space in the town after some years and will to ensure the learning offer is available and visible to all Sefton residents.</p> <p>Refurbishment works are ongoing at the Cambridge Road site. There is as yet no agreed date for the Service to re-open its operations at the Centre, and will continue to operate learning delivery in outreach venues across the community for an extended period. This provides a challenge for the service as more community venues open and utilise their premises for their own purposes, potentially reducing the availability of suitable delivery locations for community learning until Cambridge Road can be re-occupied.</p> <p>The Employment and Learning team have co-designed with Education Excellence a Post 16 Pathways Partnership Group. This is a network grouping of schools' representatives, colleges, training providers and employment support providers which is aiming to improve the quality and availability of careers guidance and promote collaborative working to improve Sefton's young people and adult's employability and ability to meet their potential.</p> <p>Sefton@work has improved connectivity and intelligence with the Planning team to ensure that where applications capable of producing social impact through local jobs, placements, work experience etc are followed up and appropriate conditions and plans put in place. This has resulted in several planning consents this year having employment and training conditions attached to them, which Sefton@work is working with the applicants to implement.</p>
<p>Planning</p>	<p>Work underway to prepare the Bootle Area Action Plan (AAP), which will be a new development plan document aimed at securing the transformation of Bootle with a 20-year vision. AAP Member and Officer working group established with support from the wider corporate Bootle Transformation Member and Officer Reference Groups. The Bootle AAP Issues and Options document is due to go to Cabinet for approval for consultation on 7 October 2021. Turleys appointed to drive forward the engagement on the AAP. MHCLG design code pilot funding of £50,000 was secured to explore how design can be a</p>

	<p>regeneration catalyst in Bootle and support the wider transformation objectives. This work was undertaken over the summer and the findings submitted at the end of September. This work will inform the merging Bootle AAP.</p> <p>Confirmation that the Council has passed its housing delivery test for the second year running, which demonstrates that the Council is meeting its housing targets. The next results are due in the New Year. The Council continues to be able to demonstrate a strong supply of land for housing.</p> <p>A review of the planning-led recovery measures aimed at assisting with economic recovery is demonstrating that they have had considerable success and playing a vital role in attracting investment in the Borough. This is demonstrated by a 40% increase in planning applications, with an estimated value of £60M to the economy. The Council has received national recognition for its innovative approach and tangible achievements.</p> <p>The service has continued to perform well and exceed national targets on the speed and quality of decision making, despite all staff working from home, and is in the process of reviewing a number of supplementary planning documents aimed at providing further clarity on a range of issues aimed at introducing greater efficiencies and more ability to respond to new challenges with the aim of securing more investment.</p>
<p>Housing</p>	<p>Homelessness-</p> <p>Finding B&B accommodation is becoming increasingly challenging due to the continuing high demand for holiday accommodation currently. In addition to this, the rolling monthly block booking with the Scarisbrick Hotel of 10 rooms cannot be renewed. The hotel has declined to accept bookings beyond 30 September 2021 for homeless households. We suspect that this decision was made as a consequence of placements made by Liverpool Council that caused issues for the hotel resulting in a blanket refusal to accommodate homeless households from all Council's.</p> <p>Sefton Housing Options continue to not place anyone without a Priority Need into Emergency Hotel Accommodation and are using the 7-night Shelter (Sit-Up rooms/Pods) to accommodate Anyone presenting to the Council or sleeping rough. Light for Life Rough Sleeper Service continue to inform the Council that this move has not had an impact on rough sleeping figures and that there are currently only two people sleeping rough, who are being worked with intensively to resolve.</p>

	<p>Licensing- Over 3,600 Housing licence applications have been received, many as a result of street surveys identifying unlicensed properties-While this suggests that licensing is already having a positive impact in improving property standards and management it also means that landlords will be employing local gas safe & electrical engineers to carry out their checks and issue safety certificates; generating additional business for these companies. Officers are re-commencing inspections of licensed premises, as restrictions are lifting.</p> <p>Housing construction-The Brownfield Land Fund was announced by Government in the March '20 budget with £45m of the fund will be allocated directly to the Liverpool city region. The funding is expected to deliver land suitable for at least 3,000 and preferably 4,000 homes and start on site by 31st March 2025 at the latest.</p> <p>A call for private sector projects by the Combined Authority saw 8 Sefton schemes being submitted for consideration. The CA has assessed these bids and is currently taking recommended schemes through the approval process. Final stage approval of shortlisted schemes will be made by the Combined Authority at the end of November.</p> <p>Sandway has also submitted scheme proposals to the CA as part of the commissioned projects funding route and these are currently being assessed by the CA.</p> <p>Housing Strategy Refresh (2022 – 2027) – Work is currently being undertaken to refresh Sefton’s current Housing Strategy. The development and publication a refreshed strategy would help reflect upon the successful implementation of a range of housing priorities over the past 5 years. Additionally, new strategic housing goals and Sefton’s adopted 2030 Vision, alongside numerous national policy and legislative changes, mean that a refreshed & robust strategy is essential for the delivery of local authorities’ housing functions over the coming years.</p>
Regeneration	<p>Sefton was allocated RHSS ERDF Funding in June 2020 and a further allocation in March 2021 of Welcome Back Funding (totalling £588K) to support the safe re-opening of town centres and attracting the public back into town centre areas including coastal areas where the visitor economy was particularly affected by covid impacts.</p> <p>Expenditure to date has focused on safe re-opening following CV19 lockdowns and tier restrictions including public messaging, social media campaigns, business advice and reinforcing social distancing. Remaining funds allocated are to focus on events and activities to attract people back into town centres and particularly coastal visitor town centre locations affected by the pandemic.</p> <p>Specific interventions include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communications and public information activity to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely. (Social media, communications and publicity material,

	<p>posters emphasising “shop safely shop local” and social distancing messaging, floor vinyl’s, adverts, sanitiser stations and marking pavements)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business-facing awareness raising activities to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely. (advice and guidance regarding safe opening and social distancing, business information packs and updates on guidance and operating customer facing activity, media and social media information and advice) • Temporary public realm changes to ensure that reopening of local economies can be managed successfully and safely. (Temporary road closures and pavement use to ensure social distancing, planters to enable social distancing space for public.) • Public space enhancement and temporary improvement measures. • Events and activities to attract people safely back into town centres and visitor locations, including Xmas activities/events...
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