

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	November 2022

BUSINESS SUPPORT AND INVESTMENT

Federation of Small Businesses Local Authority awards:

Sefton Council scoops North West title for backing small businesses

The council's work supporting businesses during the pandemic recognised at FSB's first-ever Local Government Awards

Sefton Council has been awarded a prestigious 'best in the region' award for its support for the local small business community.

Sefton beat local authorities from across the Northwest to scoop council of the year in the COVID-19 Support and Recovery category - testament to its fantastic work supporting businesses during the pandemic.

It was among 250 councils in England who entered the inaugural Local Government Awards run by FSB, the UK's 's biggest business representation group, ultimately emerging triumphant!

FSB's inaugural Local Government awards, sponsored by Maybe, were aimed at celebrating and recognising those that had made the biggest impact on local SMEs during the Covid crisis and beyond.

At a virtual online final on Friday, 14 October, Sefton Council was named as the North West regional champion, with judges being impressed by the council's work to help the local small business community.

Cllr Marion Atkinson, Sefton Council's Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills, said: "During the COVID, our Invest Sefton and Business Rates teams paid out a total of over £100 million in grants to hundreds local businesses to support them through the pandemic, so I am delighted that work has been recognised through this FSB award.

Cllr Paulette Lappin, Sefton Council's Cabinet Member for Regulatory Compliance and Corporate Services said:

"It was an unprecedented time and I am so proud of the way our teams adapted quickly to enable them to provide so much this financial and practical support to local businesses."
Cheers

Phil McCabe, FSB Development Manager for Merseyside and Cheshire, said he was pleased Sefton Council's hard work had been recognised amid a high-quality field of entries from local councils.

“It is really pleasing to see Sefton Council rewarded for its hard work and effort to help local SMEs through what has been a very challenging couple of years.

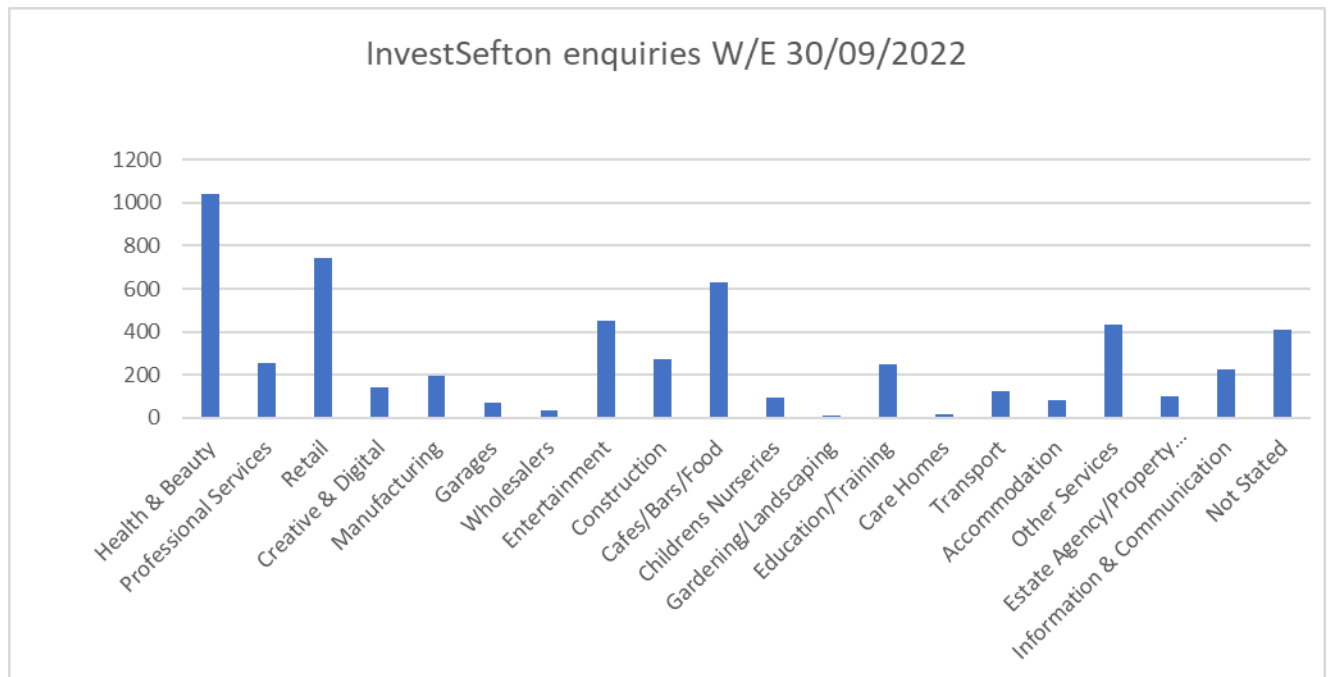
“Both the quality and quantity of entries from this region and beyond was incredibly high so Sefton should feel very proud to be among the winners. We look forward to continuing to work with Sefton - and all our other business-supporting councils - to ensure we can build a vibrant and strong local SME community.”

Website

- InvestSefton website is updated regularly with the latest guidance and news from Government, Growth Platform, Sefton Council and other sources of business support. Since Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 29th September 2022, the site has had 61,274 unique sessions.
- From Friday 23rd to Thursday 29th September 2022 the website has had 292 sessions.
- Average time spent on the website in the past week was 45 seconds.
- The devices used were as follows: Desktop 55.1%, Mobile 42.5% and Tablet 2.4%.
- The Top two pages were home page and starting a business.

Business enquiries

- Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled **5,656 enquiries** from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 30th September 2022.



Total enquiry numbers from 13th March to date:

Year	Total Enquiries
13 th March 2020- 31 st March 21	3737
1 st April 21- 31 st March 22	1326
1 st April 22- to date	593
Total	5,656

Sefton Growth Hub targets

16th May 2022 to 31st March 2023	Overall Target	Sefton Total Figures	Sefton % Overall
Number of unique businesses receiving light touch intervention	250	231	92%
Number of unique businesses receiving medium intensity intervention	90	60	67%
Number of unique businesses brokered and introduced to Growth Platform Programmes	20	10	50%

- The team is well on track meeting its Local Growth Hub targets despite the ongoing disruption and impact caused by the pandemic and cost-of-living crisis. We are also preparing a cost-of-living business support factsheet with other council services.

Case studies

Waterloo based company established in 2015. The business has suffered badly due to both Brexit and covid lockdowns as around 95% of its business was related to the hospitality industry. The business has now repositioned itself and is becoming a specialist in the supply of multimedia virtual tours using 360/3d imaging photography, video and audio. InvestSefton assisted the business with the preparation of a business plan to make them investment ready and enable them to purchase additional equipment.

Crosby based business that designs, builds and installs up market bathrooms. The business took premises in November 2020 to offer a high-end showroom experience but needed to complete installation of fittings due to various Covid lockdowns. InvestSefton supported the business with completion of a business plan and financial projections to enable them to secure finance to complete the showroom.

Southport based business that provides teaching techniques for Plasterwork. The business was established in 2016 and has steadily increased turnover and investment in buying premises in September 2021 to locate to a specialist centre. The Business has good growth potential, but the Directors want to enhance their personal skills and put growth strategy in place to take the business forward. InvestSefton supported the business by working with them to develop and implement their growth strategy as well as providing managed referrals for finance and business skills workshops.

Inward Investment

- Industrial units at the new Biz Parks Estate on Dunningsbridge Road are now available for viewings. The site has 15 new units from 1,500 square foot up to 6,000

square foot (units can be combined if needed up to 12,000 square foot), suitable for trade counter/warehouse use. Further details here: [Commercial Property for sale, to rent and for let UK \(avisonyoung.co.uk\)](https://www.avisonyoung.co.uk)

- **Mersey Reach, Bootle**-This development is close to completion. Invest Sefton continue to attend the marketing meetings with the landlord and agents to ensure we are up to date with new companies moving in and can offer appropriate support and to work with any Sefton based companies that are expanding. Despite uncertain market conditions, enquiry levels remain high with units under offer to public and private sector organisations. Interest has also been shown by existing Sefton SMEs with negotiations ongoing. An official launch of the site is scheduled for late November 2022.
- **Atlantic Park, Bootle**-In conjunction with planning, a meeting was held with the planning agents representing the owner to discuss development plans for this site. The intention is to develop the site in 3 phases. With planning permission now granted to demolish 3 of the existing 4 buildings (including Big Foot, the largest building currently on site), a planning application for phase 1 is imminent.
- **Southport Business Park**-Ongoing work to support investment in the site. Work with interested local end users and developers is gaining momentum.

No3 Southport Business Park (Former Paymentsshield House) – Building works to meet the demand for smaller units to attract occupiers has now been completed with heads of terms already agreed on several of the units.

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

Sefton@work Funding and Service Succession

UK Shared Prosperity Funding for employment support and SIF “gap” funding

- A request has been made to the LCR CA for SIF (strategic investment finance) funding to allow continuity for Sefton@work during the “gap” year between funding programmes following the end of ESF (European Social Fund)
- This request for SIF will need to come forward for a formal decision by the Investment Board in the New year of 2023.
- In the interim period, we have been asked to work with the LCR-CA team to provide a range of information about the monitoring and reporting and governance arrangements we have in place for the Ways to Work programme.
- A review exercise is expected within the next few months to identify the most appropriate priorities from Ways to Work to be taken forward under the UKSPF from 2024 onwards as UKSPF is approximately £10m per year less than previously received into the LCR from European funding.
- The review will also need to reflect parallel activity delivered through the LCR -CA's own Households into work project.

Sefton@work General Performance Data for August 2022

Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	5,057
New Clients accessing service	August 2022	116
New clients registering by age	August 2022	16-24 37 25-49 44 50+ 24 Unknown 11
W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16 August 2022	58.1% 43.6%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16 August 2022	41.8% 56.4%
W2W contracts Other	Since 01/01/16 August 2022	0.08% 0.0%
Positive Inclusions Male	Since 01/01/21 August 2022	67.0% 54.5%
Positive Inclusions Female	Since 01/01/21 August 2022	32.4% 45.5%
Positive Inclusions Other	Since 01/01/21 August 2022	0.6% 0.0%
ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016 August 2022	1,530 8
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	11
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	W2W & PI + 200 from other programmes Total 1,998
Ways to Work Starts	Since 01/01/2016 August 2022	4,475 39
Positive Inclusions Starts	Since 01/01/2021 August 2022	176 11

Sefton@work - Restart

- Sefton@work has made changes to the client journey for Restart to improve the delivery of the initial stages of joining the programme.
- These are now yielding welcome improvements for clients with a much higher rate of success in attachments. We are now seeing results of 85% of new clients joining the programme within 15 days and 97% within 30 days, exceeding the customer service KPIs laid down in the contract.
- Our changes have included a new protocol for the segregation of the pre and initial engagement process to the new trainee staff who are able to provide a key focus on this area and concentrate solely on success of their 2-way engagements prior to the initial appointment.
- Our Job start rate is above target with job outcome/retention rate currently at 89% against target. This ranks Sefton as 4th in our supplier list for the whole of the North-West for restart.
- Advisers are now attending the local JCP offices 1 day per week to engage with those clients who have failed to attend their first 2 initial appointments at the Sefton@Work sites. Weekly meetings are also in place with JCP nominated staff to discuss any problematic cases or to flag up those that may be unsuitable or need to be withdrawn from the programme.
- Debate continues with DWP about the suitability of some clients to enter Restart. There are clients who are referred on to Restart who technically meet the eligibility criteria but whose personal circumstances are such that they may be unable or

unlikely to benefit. This includes people with chronic health conditions, particularly mental health, people who are very close to state retirement age and some others. Sefton@work staff continue Advocacy with DWP for these clients to ensure they are able to access support that meets their needs.

- Rate of Clients moving into employment remains steady with advisers working intensively with those who are ready to match them to local vacancies, utilising our employer liaison team and local events such as the Jobs Fairs and employer open days.
- The job outcome rate for those remaining in work, reaching the earnings milestones continues to increase and although July is currently at 72%, the overall programme rate to date is 87%. Staff work with those who fall out of employment intensively to help them return rapidly and understand the sustainability issues they have faced.
- Sefton Adult Learning Service continue to support Restart by delivering a 2-day Preparation for Employment course to support those who need additional support with their motivation, CV and Interview Skills and can benefit from group activity to build their confidence.
- Staff are reporting more frequent instances of clients reporting they are facing growing and severe financial hardship across all support programmes. For those on Restart, the service is considering some new interventions be able to respond with some assistance to assist people to remain engaged in Restart above and beyond the current help with travel expenses.

Sefton@work Staffing

- Concentrated effort has been made to overcome some of the staffing shortage issues faced by the Service over the last few months to ensure we are closer to the full staff cohort.
- The establishment of trainee advisory positions has been extremely positive and the three trainees are now in position and have started both their training framework and their supervised caseload for certain processes within Restart.
- Upon completion of their qualifications, the trainees' grading will be reviewed, meaning professional qualifications will mean an uplift in pay & progression
- The post of Co-ordinator for the Caring Business Charter is also underway and will be line managed via Sefton@work through the Employer Liaison function.

Positive Inclusions Update

- This ESF project has allowed Sefton@work to provide targeted and intensive support to a range of groups who are deemed very far away from the labour market.
- Under the young person element, we have worked with colleagues across the Council to ensure they can refer looked after young people from the age of 16, people known to the youth justice teams and the SEND team.
- Sadly, this project will end in March 2023 and there no plans for its extension under UK Shared Prosperity Funding or any other measure.
- We will certainly miss this capacity in Sefton after this point as it does not appear likely that we can continue with this intensive support into the future.
- We intend to produce a "Lessons Learned" evaluation for this project as it concludes over the next six months.
- Engagement activities for 16-24s are to be delivered in partnership with Adult Learning and an external vocational training provider through end September and into October.
- ILM funding from Positive Inclusions has been identified to extend existing placements within the Sefton@work workforce and we have also engaged with Autism Ventures for a new placement for a young person in their Me-Cycle project, who has now started and is doing well.

- Additional headroom is still available, and placements are continuing to be set up to match individual clients needs but the period of placement will be shorter as we reach the end of the funding period.
- Career Connect have made a number of referrals of longer term NEET clients into Positive Inclusions but it has not been possible to match these young people into employer placements due to the complexity of issues they are facing.
- Further referrals are being sought from the Youth Justice team as this referral route has proven to be the most successful for this project.

Aspiring Instructors 2022

- Initial meetings have now been held with Active Sefton who are leading on the initiative this year and an outline timetable for commencement agreed with DWP. This will see recruitment begin in autumn 2022 and the course delivery will be scheduled to complete in time for sessional work opportunities in the spring of 2023.
- The offer is likely to change from previous years as capacity and access at Crosby Lakeside cannot be guaranteed in the same way as previous intakes and the Adult Learning element will need to be re-evaluated to ensure we are in line with compliance requirements for this academic year.

Sefton Adult Learning Service

New Academic Year

- The Service has now commenced most of its curriculum offer for the first half of the new term with many classes are now underway from Cambridge Road together with other sites being retained.
- Prior to start of the term, the Service received a pleasing upturn in numbers of enquiries and booking a from learners but despite this, but enrolments have still not completely recovered to the same levels prior to Covid-19.
- The 2022/23 prospectus has gone live generating 175 email enquiries and 234 bookings taken via this method, with a further 35 waiting to undertake initial assessments for ESOL courses where demand is particularly strong. However, tutor availability for this area remains problematic.
- The Service hosted a very successful open-day on 31st August for local residents to visit the centre and take part in free workshops and demonstrations. Individuals had the opportunity to enrol directly onto a course whilst at the centre. "Save the date" invites also were circulated to partners and stakeholders. A pre-announcement banner was included in the Champion newspaper along with the annual wrap-around including e-posters and leaflets to advertise the open-day.

Promotional work

- The following summer events were attended by the Service:
 - Bowersdale Funday - 50 learners took part in our Aromatherapy and Bird-Box workshops
 - Rimrose Valley Community Celebration - 55 individuals completed learning activities on the day
 - Southport Flower Show
 - Thornton Family Fun-day

Engagement Activities

- DWP Updated all Work Coaches on Service programme and provision.
 - Crosby Health Hub – The Service was invited to take part and provide an update to staff and long-term unemployed claimants regarding Health and Wellbeing support.
- ASDA Working alongside Asda's Community Champion the Service engaged with shoppers to promote courses.

To further target specific cohorts, the Service is creating individual promotional material for the following areas:

- Health and wellbeing
- Family learning
- Employability
- Digital

Quality

- In preparation for any forthcoming Ofsted inspection, all the service's internal documentation (including Learner Handbook, Individual Learner Plans, Policies and Procedures etc) are currently being reviewed and updated for the new academic year.
- Self-assessment processes have also been instigated and specialist support from HOLEX as the sector adult education organisation is under consideration.
- Support for nominee awareness training is also available funded by the LCR-CA Adult Education unit.

Ukrainian Support

- As part of the Ukrainian Operational Group, Adult Learning staff are working with other Council departments to advocate for Ukrainian families on specific issues of childcare sufficiency and investigate funding so individuals can progress on to ESOL Provision.

Workforce sufficiency issues

- The Service, along with all similar LA learning services across the City Region, continues to experience difficulties in attracting and retaining trained tutors, despite recruitment being open and ongoing and a "grow our own" CPD exercise for maths tutors under Multiply being authorised.
- A new approach is under consideration to convert some of the posts which are currently established as sessional positions into more substantive jobs, especially in areas such as English, maths and ESOL where shortages are so critical.

Multiply Numeracy initiative

- Multiply, the government's national adult numeracy initiative is part of the UKSPF (UK Shared Prosperity Fund) portfolio and is linked to the Levelling up agenda. While other aspects of People and Skills delivery have been rolled forward into year 3 of the UKSPF plan, Multiply will now need to be delivered before end March 2023 in order for the Liverpool City Region to meet its targets.
- Sefton Adult Learning has accordingly received a grant offer for Multiply from the LCR-CA for the sum of £89,000, which incorporates an element of engagement work to be commissioned out to voluntary grassroots groups, family and community learning, adult skills, and continuous professional development.
- The CPD element forms part of a city region wide initiative to "grow" the bank of trained and available maths tutors.
- The family learning element of Multiply is being worked up to offer an element of maths homework club support for parents in a number of schools.
- Discussion about the options for delivery of the voluntary/community element (approximately £67k) are ongoing. We have already met with Sefton Citizens Advice and it is felt an option to enable them to add value to the debt casework they are already undertaking across Sefton would be most helpful in the current financial climate affecting our communities.
- Activity such as this under Multiply would need to be monitored using AEB registration processes and would be based upon the voluntary/community sector group undertaking engagement activities that lead to agreed numbers of new learners commencing on maths/numeracy related classes with the Service within the initial six-month period.

Cambridge Road Centre

- Discussions continue with proposed partners who are looking to take up rental agreements for some of the upper floor spaces. We have not yet finalised agreements with Immersive Interactive but they have continued to be engaged and are open to delivering a range of complimentary works to support our learning programmes in addition to co-location.

NEET Reduction & Early Intervention Service

NCCIS NEET & Not Known Combined Measure for August 2022

NEET/Not Known – Age 16-17

The latest published data from August 2022 confirms the following position:

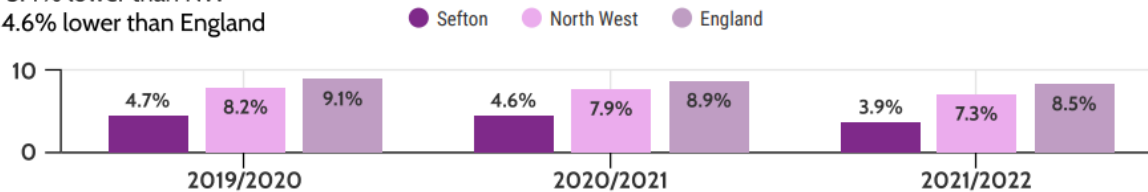
Area	August 2022	July 2022	August 2021
Sefton	3.73%	3.76%	3.84%

16-17 NEET and Not Known % Sefton yearly average comparison with regional and national data

Sefton showing a reduction of -0.8% from 2019

-3.4% lower than NW

-4.6% lower than England



- At 3.73% the Sefton NEET and Not Known combined indicator has improved by -0.11% in comparison to August 2021, it has also improved by -0.03% since July 2022. It is -2/3% below North West average (6%) and -6.4% below England average (10%)
- Sefton is ranked the lowest in the Liverpool City region for the NEET and Not Known for 16-17
- Year on Year improvement – Sefton has reduced NEET by 0.1% and NK by 0.1% compared to August 2021
- Our NEET (only) rate at 3.1% has reduced by -0.1% year on year. This is -0.6% below the regional average of 3.7%
- At 0.6% Sefton's Not Known (only) has reduced by -0.1% year on year. This is -1.7% below the regional average of 2.3%
- Age 16 (full cohort of young people in this year group is 2792), shows that 61 young people (2.18%) are currently NEET, and 10 young people (0.36%) are Not Known to the service
- Age 17 (full cohort of young people in this year groups is 2859), shows that 115 young people (4.02%) are NEET and 25 young people (0.87%) are Not Known

SEN NEET

The SEN group has been hard hit by Covid and our latest data indicates that we are improving for the full cohort of 16-24 year olds and we are outperforming our statistical neighbours. However, for our 16-17 year cohort, participation in learning is lower and continues to decrease resulting in higher NEET numbers for younger SEN people

- For statistical neighbours all ages 16-24 SEN, Sefton is ranked highest for "in learning" and lowest for combined NEET & NK.
- However for 16-17 year olds, we are ranked 6th for In Learning and 6th lowest for combined NEET and Not Known measures

- Sefton has the highest performance in the LCR for in learning for 16-17 year-olds and 2nd highest for the 16-24 group.
- This picture is replicated elsewhere across the LCR and in the statistical neighbours' group and by these comparisons, although Sefton 's position has not improved, it is still outperforming against key comparators.
- 8% of the 16-24 SEND cohort are also in another vulnerable group **(50 of the 624)** indicating these young people are facing multiple challenges
- SEN 16-24 Not Known measure has **reduced by -0.5% year on year to 1.6% This is -22.2% below the NW average at 23.8%**
- NEET SEN 16/17 Year-olds has **increased by 1.9%** in comparison to June 21. This is an increase of 4 young people.

Care Experienced Offer

- Within the year 11 cohort for Care experienced young people (ie 48 young people) being supported by Career Connect, 26 of these live within the borough of Sefton and 22 live out of borough. This is particularly important as supporting young people out of borough when they may be across the country in different placements proves a persistent challenge in this area of work.
- **There were 48 care experienced young people exiting year 11 in 2022. Of these 41 are in learning or work or training and classed as EET with (23 of these in borough and 18 out of borough)**
- **7 care experienced young people exiting year 11 in 2022 are NEET with 2 of these living in borough and 5 out of borough)**

Year 11 leavers September Destination	Total Cohort	NEET	%	EET	%
2018	32	4 (2)**	12.5%	28	87.5%
2019	32	8 (5)**	25.5%	26	75.0%
2020	35	1 (1)**	2.85%	34	97.15%
2021	46	9 (7)**	19.6%	37	80.4%
2022	48	7 (5)**	14.6%	41	85.4%
** living out of Sefton					

Re-contracting Plans for 2023 onwards

- The current contract with Career Connect is in its final stage and will expire on 2nd June 2023, at which point no further extension of the existing arrangements are expected.
- Officers in Employment and Learning are therefore working with the Council's Legal and Procurement teams to plan a route-map to a new tendering exercise. Given the expected scale of the contract, the procurement exercise to identify the most suitable supplier moving forward will take some months.
- The impact of this work is felt across different parts of the Council. In recognition of this, it is expected that a targeted consultation exercise will need to be undertaken prior to publication of a tender specification to ensure all Sefton's priorities are reflected and the tender yields successful application from suitably qualified suppliers. Given the success we have had with the current supplier, it will be our prime objective to ensure the improvements made in terms of NEET rates can be consolidated and service delivery improved upon in the context of current economic uncertainty.

Building Better Customer Experience – Southport Town Deal

- This is a project within the Southport Town Deal being operated by Employment & Learning. The project funding, ringfenced within the Town Deal business plan is for a total of £200k and will be the only element of revenue project funding under Town Deal.
- The project is focused on providing training to help improve the quality of the customer experience in a range of different settings across Southport using new and innovative, inclusive approaches.
- There are three complimentary strands of activity, with funding being given to Southport College to deliver a modular programme of “bolt-on” training packages to students in the College and many of the local employers they engage with, a strand with Adult Learning which will focus on training for volunteers and other community members in line with events in the Town and a third which will focus on inhouse workforce development using the Council’s online platform.

TOURISM

Business Events

- The weekend 28th -30th October sees the return of Lambretta Club of Great Britain (scooters). Hosting their event across three venues in Southport two of which are Sefton owned venues.
- The event hosts a social night Friday and Saturday night in The Prince of Wales and on Saturday a trade show at Dunes Leisure Centre and a custom Scooter display at Southport Market.
- The event brings 800 -1000 visitors to town filling up hotels and guest houses and attracting spend within bars, restaurants and retail. A total forecasted economic impact of £922,000.
- The event previously took place at Southport Theatre and Convention Centre but through the service proactively working with the client the event has been retained within the town despite closure of STCC.
- With the formal announcement of the MLEC operator ASM Global sales planning sessions are taking place to formalise a marketing and sales plan to build the sales pipeline for opening in 2026 and following years.
- A detailed plan and activities will be formulated and shared in subsequent months. As part of this meetings have taken place with further planned with key accommodation partners who will be involved in supporting the sales and marketing plan.
- In partnership with Gardiner & Theobald businesses were invited to attend an MLEC presentation information session at Southport Market on the 6th of October. There were four sessions throughout the day giving the opportunity for businesses to view the development materials and ask questions. The sessions were attended by mainly accommodation businesses.
- Continuing to support local guesthouses with business support, reviewing accommodation occupancy for the summer and forecasts for the coming months. Hotels and guesthouses have enjoyed another good year of occupancy but forecasts are down as consumers fear to commit with cost of living crisis. Accommodation providers are keen to remain price competitive but face their own financial challenges.
- Planning continues with Southport College and Stanley High School to host an educational event as part of the Social Engagement commitment for the MLEC project. There will be approximate 15 Stanley High School pupils and 25 Southport College students attending the event. In addition to presentations by the professionals in the MLEC project team, Southport College are hosting a tour of their design facilities.

- As part of the SIF funding for the wider Liverpool City Region Southport Conference Bureau is working with Liverpool Conference Bureau to formulate a number of leisure experiences which can be enjoyed by conference delegates across the region. Further working together is also required for the Eurovision event planned for 2023.

Events

The British Musical Fireworks Championship 2022

- The event took place with Sunday being cancelled due to high winds.
- Friday & Saturday commenced as planned and Saturday was sell out.
- Five companies competed over the 2 days and the winners, 'Optimum Fireworks', were announced at the awards ceremony which was held on the Sunday at the Southport Market.
- The Sunday competitors will automatically be invited back to compete in 2023.

2023 Events

The dates have been announced as follows:-

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

Marketing

- Autumn Campaign – Step 8 of our 2022 campaign is underway, primarily digital via social media, website and e-newsletter.
- Design & Campaign Management Agency – The tender for our 2023 agency is currently on The Chest with a decision and award to be made in November.
- PR – The contract with our current agency finishes December this year. We have gone out to a number of agencies for proposals for 2023.
- Visitor Guide – the 2023 guide design and advertising sales are currently underway. With the demise of The Champion, we have had to move advertising sales to Wirral Media. We do not yet know what impact this change will have on sales. The print run is 45,000.
- Southport Restaurateurs Association – The 2023 guide is currently being designed with delivery due just before Christmas. Print run will again be 10,000.
- E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 50,000 with the addition of 2022 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience.
- Travel Trade – advertising has been placed in key travel trade publications. Editorial has been secured alongside all ads to date. A Southport Showcase (mini exhibition) is being held on 24 April next year. Invitations have gone out to local Marketing Southport members to exhibit at the event.
- Golf – 2022 has been a very busy year for international visitors and the EGC shoulder season package. Headline figures: 1,500 bed nights, value £200,000 with an average room rate of £133.

- Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 104 (108 this time last year). The next Marketing Southport board meeting is to be held on 22 November. A half year report will be produced in time for this meeting. We are also producing an updated version of the membership document.

Tourism Operations

Southport Market

- Summer trading at the market was strong, this is in the face of several challenges for the hospitality industry as a whole. The current cost of living crisis is impacting on the whole industry, especially midweek business;
- The Market continues to attract new trader interest, hot food units are still full and a waiting list is in operation for incoming traders;
- The Market continues to host a number of paid and free events to attract further footfall into Southport;
- A number of community groups and partnerships continue to use the events space free of charge thus helping the local community.

Kings Gardens

- Extensive work is continuing in Kings Gardens, these works are being funded by Sefton's Kings Gardens contingency fund;
- Work is underway on all of the Victorian shelters and benches within the Gardens.

Southport Pier

- Phase 1 of the deck replacement has now been completed; the Pier remained open throughout the works;
- It is now planned to replace the remaining full deck of the Pier, starting later this year. It is expected to cost circa £3m. Cabinet agreed to this on 1st September. Work has begun on design and specification along with professional team and contractor appointments.

Marine Lake Events Centre

- The MLEC project continues to make good progress, RIBA Stage 2 is complete, and RIBA Stage 3 is nearing completion;
- ASM Global have been selected as the preferred operator, the biggest events venue operator in the world;
- ASM are now involved in the design process helping shape the final internal layout (for example kitchens, kiosks);
- The procurement of the build contractor is underway, with a view to appoint by December 2022;
- Full planning application submitted, aiming for December planning committee;
- Business case has been submitted to Government for final approval of Town Fund;
- Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has also confirmed £20m allocation at their last Board meeting;
- Planning to be on site Q1 2023.

REGENERATION, GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

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

Levelling Up Round 2

- Sefton Council submitted two levelling up funding bids in August 2022 for Bootle and Crosby. Totalling £30.3 million both bids are designed to help regenerate these areas, tackle local deprivation, enhance and/or provide new facilities to serve the local communities and support the creation of investment and employment opportunities in the two town centres.
- These have been previously reported, but given a decision from Government is still awaited, for completeness details are shared again below:

Bootle LUF

- The Bootle bid is for £20 million to underpin a major regeneration scheme to transform Bootle town centre, focused on the iconic Bootle Strand I the heart of the centre. Additionally, a large area of unused land alongside the Leeds-Liverpool Canal will be transformed into green spaces for local communities to use. This will support more healthy lifestyles, activities and events and improvements to the overall environment;
- The development will also contribute to a more diverse and better-quality town centre with new food and drink, culture, arts and entertainment spaces. A hi-tech gigabyte fast digital hub, education and training, business support and a new integrated health and social care hub will all be available on the high-street. This will complement, refresh and improve the retail and town centre services currently available and on which local people rely;
- The investment will drive the growth of night-time economy, attract more visitors and drive inward investment from new businesses. This will enable Bootle to re-build after having been one of the boroughs hardest hit in the UK by the Covid pandemic.

Crosby LUF

- The £10.3 million bid for Crosby Town Centre underpins the programme of regeneration ambitions of the local community set out in the Crosby Investment Strategy. The proposals will enhance the viability and vitality of Crosby town centre and support local businesses by helping to attract more residents and visitors;
- The proposal if approved will build a new learning, skills, health and well-being hub, library and GP/community health care. It will be a place for people to both work and develop skills within Crosby;
- Levelling Up Fund resources would also allow for a significant upgrade of the main gateways into the town centre, better pedestrian and cycle access and new electric vehicle charging points in car parks, while also fund on the appearance of public spaces;
- Sefton is a Category 3 (least priority) for Levelling Up funding however has been lobbying hard for support for these key projects;
- [Council submits Levelling Up bids despite being judged alongside 'prosperous' Cambridge & Windsor - My Sefton News Channel](#)
- A decision is expected later this year;
- Work is continuing in preparing a planning application for highway and parking works linked to a Combined Authority funding award to support access and accessibility in Crosby. The planning application will include an outline for the use of the Green Car Park in Crosby for the proposed Library and Health facility. The planning application will be submitted early in 2023 with works to start later in the year subject to all approvals being in place.

Bootle Town Centre

- The Council is progressing plans for a repurposed Strand Shopping Centre and Bootle Canalside following completion of Phase 1 works to the Bootle Canalside event and activity space;
- **Strand Transformation** – work is progressing to scope out the next stage of work for this phased repurposing programme should a decision be made on the outcome of the LUF bid submitted earlier this year. Options for the future development and

operational arrangements of this key town centre asset, including investment market considerations and delivery strategy are being assessed. This will enable members to reach a view on the best approach for delivery of the Strand repurposing programme. This has included a review of current market conditions and cost inflation for this key town centre asset and service centre. The Strand continues to provide support and warmth to the communities who depend on it throughout the year;

- The Strand repurposing forms a key component of the delivery of the Bootle Area Action Plan which is going through the key issues and options consultation stage at present. A review of Bootle employment land and premises is currently underway and will conclude at the end of December to help inform the plan with the decision on the preferred options to come forward later in 2023;
- **Bootle Canalside** -members approved the business case for Bootle Canalside for the next phase of works earlier this year to help complete site development as a key events and activity space for the benefit of the local community;
- The main elements of the work still to be completed relate to the canal edge works to open up the boundary between the site and the Leeds Liverpool Canal, and to finalise the utilities infrastructure required to service the site. Design and implementation to date has slowed due to the need to agree the works with the Canal and Rivers Trust however discussions are progressing well to agree all works proposed for the canal edge;
- The Council has entered into an agreement with the Nationwide Caterers Association (NCASS) which providing consultancy support to develop and support a street food pilot project based at Bootle canal-side but reaching across Sefton, to support job creation, entrepreneurship and the local community. Further details of how this pilot will work will be brought to a future meeting and is based upon the success of a similar model in Birmingham;
- Ongoing design review, branding and marketing are being investigated at present to develop the site identity and help with promotion and event marketing.

SOUTHPORT

Southport Town Deal

- Following the Southport Town Deal allocation of £37.5m business cases have been submitted for all of the projects in the programme in accordance with the Town Deal bid submission requirements.
- Business cases have now been approved for:
 - Southport Enterprise Arcade
 - Les Transformation de Southport (Public Realm enhancement) Phase 1
 - Building a Better Customer Experience
- The business case for the Marine Lake Events Centre was submitted in August 2022 as agreed with DLUCH, ongoing dialogue continues on the details of the proposal and a decision is expected toward the end of this year;
- Programme Management for Town Deal continues including monitoring and evaluation for programme delivery and output measurement for reporting purposes to Government.

The Enterprise Arcade, Southport

- Refurbishment of one of Southport's central town centre buildings next to Southport Market for a new business hub is a key Town Deal project. This will be the first ever purpose-built workspaces for start-up creative and digital businesses in Southport;
- Cabinet approved plans to transform the Crown Buildings into a high tech, collaborative and affordable workspace for small businesses, dubbed the 'Enterprise Arcade;'
- Forming part of the Southport Town Deal, £1.5 million has been earmarked for the regeneration and transformation of Crown Buildings, eventually creating a purpose-built hub for individuals, freelancers, enterprises, and independent professionals who are taking their first steps into setting up their own business;

- The Enterprise Arcade project is a key project within the Southport Town Deal programme to kickstart the previously untapped digital, creative and technological sectors within the resort;
- Design work is continuing for the project and the process of appointing contractors to carry out the works will be completed early in the new year with works starting later in 2023.

Les Transformation de Southport

- The business case for this project was submitted to Government in March 2022 following endorsement by the Town Deal Board and approval by Sefton Cabinet. The business case has been accepted by central Government and Sefton Council are progressing with the next stage of the project;
- This involves the delivery of the first phase of the improvements, focussing on the area around Southport Market, and the development of the proposals for future phases;
- The Town Deal will provide the funding for the first phase of the works and the business case will be used to pursue funding options for the future phases of the project;
- Public consultation and engagement was undertaken in February and March 2022 which concluded there was a lot of support from residents, businesses and young people (through the schools' responses) for many aspects of the proposals. The next stage of work will involve further consultation with businesses directly affected in early November, on the works to be implemented next year.

Building a Better Customer Experience

- Following approval of the business case for this training project earlier this year by the Council and Town Deal Board, work is underway with identified training providers to deliver this programme of activity to support the hospitality sector in Southport as part of the Town Deal programme. This is being led, as alluded elsewhere within this report by Employment and Learning Service colleagues.

Marine Lake Events Centre – see Tourism update above.

CROSBY

Crosby Town Centre Regeneration

- In addition to the work to explore the potential of Levelling Up Round 2 support for Crosby Village work is progressing on the Central Buildings site development by Plus Dane Group for a mixed residential and commercial scheme. Planning approval has also been secured for Telegraph House, Moor Lane, Crosby for a mixed use development containing commercial and community floorspace at ground floor and 72 residential apartments on upper floors. The Council is supporting engagement with the CA on Brownfield Land Fund opportunities for this project.

Crosby Lakeside

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

AINSDALE ON SEA

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

- Sefton Council have gone out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) earlier this year, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site;

- External Agents were appointed to ensure maximum visibility for the opportunity both local and nationally;
- Formal marketing took place early summer 2022 generating several formal expressions of interest;
- Late Summer 2022 interested respondents asked to provide more detail to enable formal evaluation of the submissions;
- The marketing is to remain 'live' and the opportunity continues to be made available to other parties subject to progress with and conclusion of consideration of the current submissions;
- Brochure can be seen here: [Former Sands PH Marketing Brochure](#)
- Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills](#); and [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#)

Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way

- Following Cabinet agreement to acquire the current leasehold interests in this centre by agreement and to bring it into full Council ownership, negotiations with owners are continuing;
- Approximately 50% of the interests have now been acquired and brought into Council control;
- A review of an agreed shortlist of options for this site is now complete and will inform the best approach for this site once in Council ownership including how it can support the wider neighbourhood and community;
- Consultation on site development options took place in 2021 with Cabinet and local ward councilors, which has helped inform the option appraisal shortlist being assessed;
- Site clearing has also taken place over the summer to Sandbrook Way to address resident concerns about weeds and appearance of the area.