

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	March 2023

INVESTSEFTON UPDATE

- Whilst InvestSefton remains focussed on business growth and sustainability, economic recovery still remains very much central to this as businesses continue to face increasing economic pressures, including cost of living, materials, supply chain and energy costs across a range of sectors. The team is working with other city region support organisations such as the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Growth Platform and Enterprise Hub (start-ups), New Markets (accessing new business sales markets) and a range of other providers to support Sefton businesses.
- The European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Business Growth Programme is in its final phase of delivery with concerns over its replacement, United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Funding (UKSPF), not providing anywhere near enough financial resource for the city region. However, the LCR Combined Authority has indicated that it is looking to directly commission Local Authorities for continued support although this needs to be firmed up. The LCR Combined Authority is also leading a review of business support on which InvestSefton is closely engaged.

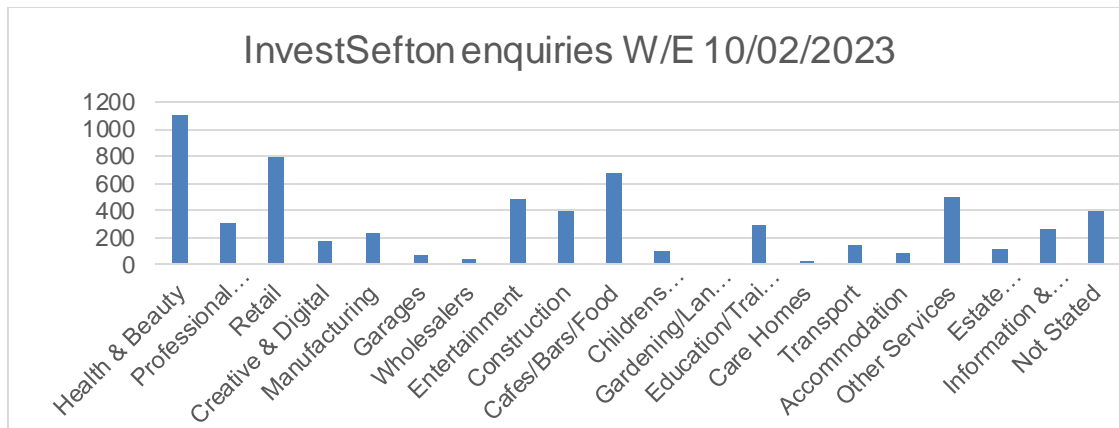
Business Engagement

www.investsefton.com is updated regularly with the latest guidance and news from Government, Growth Platform, Sefton Council, and other sources of help for businesses. Below are some key statistics on site usage:

- From Friday 3rd to Thursday 9th Feb 2023, the website had 136 unique sessions.
- The most visits this week were on Thursday between 9am and 4pm.
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 26th Jan 2023, the site has had a total of **65,034** unique sessions.
- InvestSefton twitter page now has 1,581 followers.
- Average time on the website has doubled to over 2 minutes per session.

Business Enquiries

- Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled **6,238** enquiries from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided below as of 10th February 2023:



Case Studies

The team continues to engage with businesses as part of its 1:1 delivery support. Recent case studies below (Names have been anonymised for confidentiality):

- An owner managed security company based in Bootle. The Company offers CCTV and security alarm installation and monitoring services, and solar powered systems for customers looking to reduce energy and carbon output. They also offer guarding personnel for sites etc and special protection operatives for dignitaries and VIP's. The business is also looking at opportunities for installing EV charging posts and bollards. The business is looking to grow and increase its market share. InvestSefton assisted the business with the preparation of a marketing letter to engage agents and developers as well as showing the business how to identify opportunities on LCR planning portals, intelligence on agents and developers.
- Restaurant based in Crosby Village. The business is now looking to expand and open two new units, again in Crosby but offering a "small plates" type of menu and Coffee shop. The business is looking for funding to support its planned growth. InvestSefton supported the business with the Preparation of a business plan to complement accountant prepared projections to ensure they were investment ready.
- Property management and lettings company based in Southport. They manage both commercial and residential lettings as well as a portfolio of properties for a landlord in Southport. They are growth orientated and are also sourcing properties for overseas investors in Hong Kong, who are looking to buy in the UK. InvestSefton assisted the business with planning and online/offline marketing strategy including Eco Energy schemes as well as providing them Networking opportunities at events and workshops.
- **IKEA opened a Plan & Order Point in Aintree, Liverpool** in December. The Plan & Order Point is a smaller store dedicated to kitchen and bedroom planning, where customers can visit for home furnishing advice and expertise to help design their ideal space. The opening comes as part of the retailer's ongoing transformation to become more accessible and sustainable for customers shopping with IKEA in the Northwest of England.

Networking Group for Digital, Creative and Tech Businesses

- The development of a networking group for digital, creative and tech businesses has commenced – these networking groups will be held three times per year. In the first instance the team intends to host the networking meetings at the

Atkinson in Southport. The aim is that hosting it in Southport will benefit the Enterprise Arcade development and the LCR connectivity project. However, the team will review this and consider whether to vary the location or consider additional resource to set up additional networking groups in other areas of the borough.

Network Dates

- 23rd February 2023 – 11-1pm
- 8th June 2023 – 11-1pm
- 2nd November 2023 – 11-1pm
- 1st February 2024 – 11-1pm

REGENERATION, GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

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

Levelling Up Fund (LUF) Round 2

- Sefton Council submitted two levelling up funding bids in August 2022 for Bootle and Crosby. Totalling £30.3 million, the two bids were not within the approved list of Round 2 projects announced by DLUHC for the remaining LUF funding pot.
- Sefton is aware that there is likely to be a third round (LUF Round 3), however, timescales and criteria for submission have yet to be announced and members yet to decide whether to progress with any future bidding round processes. Notwithstanding the LUF announcement, work is continuing to explore other options for delivery of these two key projects.

BOOTLE

Bootle Town Centre

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

Salt 'n' Tar Made in Bootle

- Final elements of work to the rebranded 'Salt 'n' Tar site next to Bootle canal to enable the site to be used as an attractive entertainment complex with covered areas, bars, food outlets and canal-side access nearing completion for opening in Spring 2023 for a range of events. (see press release link: [Bootle Canalside events area to be branded 'Salt and Tar' - My Sefton News Channel](#))

Strand Transformation Programme

- Following January's Cabinet consideration of the Strand Business Plan which sets out how re-purposing The Strand will create an enhanced and more diversified town centre, support the growth of a night-time economy and deliver new amenities needed by local people and businesses, work is progressing to explore options for the next phase of work.

SOUTHPORT

Southport Town Deal

- Work continues on the delivery of Southport Town Deal. This year has seen the approval of the business cases for funding the projects in accordance with the Town Deal bid submission requirements including the Marine Lake Events Centre and Water and Light show which was approved in December 2022.
- Work is now progressing with delivery including construction contract tendering and appointment to ensure delivery by the Towns Fund end date of 31st March 2026.

The Enterprise Arcade, Southport

- Refurbishment of Crown Buildings in Southport's town centre 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, and forms part of the Southport Town Deal.
- Design work is continuing for the project and the process of appointing contractors to carry out the works will be completed early in 2023 with works starting on site later in 2023.

Les Transformation de Southport

- The first phase of transportation improvements, focussing on the area around Southport Market – Kings Street, Market Street, East Bank Street – is progressing detailed design work with the main programme of work commencing in the autumn after the summer season to avoid disruption.

Building a Better Customer Experience

- Following approval of the business case for this training project in 2022 by the Council and Town Deal Board, training providers are now underway to support the hospitality sector in Southport at a crucial time. Training provision through Sefton Adult and Community Learning and Southport College started this February 2023.

CROSBY

Crosby Town Centre Regeneration

- Sefton Council is assessing the next steps for this key project including options for delivery following the Crosby LUF bid not being supported.
- Work is continuing to prepare a planning application for highway and parking works linked to support access and accessibility in Crosby.

Crosby Lakeside

- Practical completion for Crosby Lakehouse has been achieved with final checks being undertaken. Work to finalise the Bunkbarn aims to complete in August 2023.
- SHOL continue to offer improved hospitality offer for the site.

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.
- Sefton is assessing responses and undertaking due diligence. Marketing will continue.
- Brochure can be seen via following link: [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

- In February Cabinet agreed the next stage of work to bring it into full Council ownership including ongoing negotiations with outstanding owners.
- Cabinet agreed to progress appointing agents to explore the market in the site in order to support the Council's ambitions for change.

EMPLOYMENT & LEARNING UPDATE

FUNDING UPDATES

Ways to Work Continuation Funding

- Sefton@work has recently been in consultation on this issue with the Strategic Investment Fund (SIF) Investment fund team from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR-CA). The funding for the continuation phase (i.e., Sept 23 – March 24) has been approved and a paper will go through to the next LCR - CA Board on 3rd March for formal confirmation of this. However, some questions remain about the allocation of the SIF funding per area, but we are working on the basis that the full amount requested by Sefton will be made available.

UK Shared Prosperity Fund (UKSPF) Employment and Skills

- UKSPF funding for Employment and Skills will only be available from the year 2024/25. The amount ringfenced for the LAs to undertake a successor to Ways to Work, referencing the UKSPF requirements, is £7.5m. Further consultation will be ongoing on the composition, objectives, focus and culture of the required service. The LCR-CA team has stated they do not wish to impose a model of delivery upon the LA's and officers will be fully involved in project design.

SEFTON@WORK UPDATE

Sefton@work General Performance Data for January 2023

Data Description	Range	Figures	
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	5,388 (figure reduced due to GDPR compliance)	
New Clients accessing service	January 2023	177	
New clients registering by age	January 2023	16-24	44
		25-49	106
		50+	23
		Unknown	4

W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16 January 2023	58.0% 61.0%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16 January 2023	41.9% 39.0%
W2W contracts Other	Since 01/01/16 January 2023	0.1% 0.0%
Positive Inclusions Male	Since 01/01/21 January 2023	67.6% 20.0%
Positive Inclusions Female	Since 01/01/21 January 2023	31.9% 80.0%
Positive Inclusions Other	Since 01/01/21 January 2023	0.5% 0.0%
ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016 January 2023	32.5% 20.3%
ESF clients without basic skills	Since 01/01/2016 January 2023	30.6% 26.5%
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	22
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	W2W & PI + 200 from other programmes Total 2,155
Ways to Work Starts	Since 01/01/2016 January 2023	4682 59
Positive Inclusions Starts	Since 01/01/2021 January 2023	207 5

Closedown of ESF Positive Inclusions Project

- This project is due to conclude operations from April 2023 and has previously received an Impact Report on this project highlighting how it has supported a wide range of cross-Council objectives connected with vulnerable young people, including those with care experience.
- Arrangements have already been put in place to manage this closedown, in particular the closure of the remaining Intermediate Labour Market (ILM) placements. ILM participants have been given additional support with job search and others are moving into full time further education.
- Staff assigned to this project will be migrated across to Ways to Work funding until the end of that programme and their costs will be picked up within the SIF continuation monies described above.

Final performance outputs for Positive Inclusions at this stage are:

- Under the funding stream for young persons, we have already achieved all targeted starts and the programme is now closed for new referrals. 13 Jobs/training outcomes are awaiting evidence to justify in a final claim before contract end, but we are confident this will be met.

- Under the funding stream for older persons including 50 plus, we have achieved all forecasted starts, and this is also now closed for new referrals. Evidence for 18 Jobs/training outcomes remain outstanding before contract ends but we are confident this will be also met.

Mental Health Support

- In response to the rising number of clients who are presenting to the Service with depression, anxiety and low mood conditions, Sefton@Work will be offering its popular Think Differently, Cope Differently sessions at Sefton Adult Community Learning (SACL) Cambridge Road centre from Wednesday 1st March. This will be the first time following COVID-19 we have been able to offer these opportunities and we expect the take-up to be positive. The course is made up of the 5 ways to wellbeing and is aimed at those with poor mental health, lack of confidence, motivation and mindset. Learners will be encouraged to enrol for courses with SACL as part of their ongoing health and wellbeing and progression from these sessions.

Outreach in the Community

Sefton@Work is increasing its presence in community venues and now have weekly outreach in the following areas/venues:

- SACL to have a visible twice weekly presence in the Cambridge Road foyer but also with staff dropping into classes to promote support available, employment and to ensure learners are fully aware of their progression options.
- Adviser based in Light for Life in Southport 2 days a week to promote Sefton@Work support and engage with clients onto the ESF programmes.
- Outreach in JCP weekly and staff attend Bootle, Crosby and Southport JCP once per week to build relations with the work coaches who make referrals.
- Attending Netherton Family Wellbeing weekly to promote support available and benefits of employment to service users.
- Outreach surgery at Talbot Street Family Wellbeing (Southport) weekly to promote support available and benefits of employment to service users.
- Outreach surgery Litherland Family Wellbeing weekly to promote support available and benefits of employment to service users.

Aspiring Instructors 2023

- Staff from Sefton@work and Sefton Adult Community Learning (SACL) have worked with colleagues in Active Sefton to help them promote the Aspiring Instructors 2023 project. Two recruitment and engagement days were held in the Cambridge Road centre to promote this during January. The project has now commenced, but with only one activity routeway as a watersports routeway is not available this year. 7 people have joined the programme. The age profile of these participants is much older than on previous years on the programme.

Relocation Project into the Bootle Strand Centre

- A License to occupy has now been signed off by the Head of Economic Growth and Housing. This guarantees a generous rent-free period, and it is our intention to undertake refurbishment of the Unit during this rent-free period.

- Sefton@work staff have been engaging with Procurement colleagues to engage a qualified organisation through a public sector framework to act as QS, scheme designer and employer's agent with contractors. Plans are in production at present for the detailed works. Once received, we will immediately move to procure a contractor capable of undertaking the shopfitting works in line with Procurement regulations.

Supporting Eurovision Promotions 2023 and Recruitment Pop Up Shop

- Sefton@Work has opened a pop-up shop in partnership with JCP in The Strand from 15 February. The shop will be open two days a week (Wednesday and Thursday 10am-2pm) until early April. Our team will be promoting all available learning and employment opportunities during the Eurovision Festival. Radio Merseyside will run free adverts to promote the pop-up shop concept. Sefton@Work is offering a "Barista Routeway" to our clients with a pilot course starting 15 February for two days, and again 22 February for two days, including practical experience in the cafe at The Big Onion in The Strand. All 12 Clients pre-booked on are guaranteed interviews with employers for hospitality roles. This will also link in with the Eurovision festival as it is expected that the industry will need more staff to cope with the visitors to the city. Adult Community Learning is working alongside this offer to provide more courses of interest to those entering employment in this sector and the expectations that learners will register for a wide range of opportunities as a result of Eurovision promotions.

Sefton@work Case study – Employer Advocacy in a Struggling Sector

- The Client was referred to Sefton@Work from JobcentrePlus having been unemployed for more than 3 years. Her unemployment had partly been due to having ongoing health problems with her knee. The client was eager to return to a childcare role as this was a sector she had previously trained in and something she really enjoyed. However, she initially felt that her mobility restrictions would be a major barrier and finding a sympathetic employer with a role suitable for her mobility issues would be a major barrier.
- Sefton@work has over the past few months been engaged in discussions with a number of childcare employers and has been assisting colleagues from Early Years in preliminary investigations connected with workforce sufficiency in childcare and its impacts.
- Using sector contacts, Sefton @Work identified a suitable role for the client as an After School Practitioner, the role was part time 17.5 hours per week and was within reasonable travelling distance from the client's home. After support with rebuilding her CV and confidence building about interview techniques and after several visits with her adviser, she was offered an interview. The client was successful at interview and was delighted to start her new role.
- However, some weeks into the post, the client began to experience increased pain and relayed this to her Sefton@work adviser. Her main worry at this stage was that she was reluctant to ask for further help from an employer who had already been very amenable, but she worried she would be forced to give up the job and the potential impact this might have on her benefits if she did so. She asked Sefton@Work to support her in raising her concerns with the employer and an advocacy plan was drawn up. Sefton@Work approached the employer on the client's behalf and explained the issues she was having with her mobility alongside the fact she wanted to continue her employment.

- Taking this on board the employer made changes to the client's working duties so she would not have to climb stairs on a regular basis. They were supported to access a government scheme to provide her with adapted workplace equipment to assist with her mobility problems as they were very keen for the client to remain in the role. From their perspective, our client had flourished as a new employee, they were delighted with her progress, and she had created a great relationship with the children she was working with. The employer was also very aware of the challenges they faced filling places with suitable applicants such as our client.
- Without the support from Sefton@Work the client felt she would have been unable to stay in the role and is delighted to be working with children again. The in-work aftercare support provided a lifeline for her and the employer.

Caring Business Charter Project


- Initial visits have been conducted with most of the signatory employers and their offers are now being worked up in more detail to allow colleagues across Children's Services, virtual school and others to make referrals and ensure take-up is achieved.
- A Summary of the offers received to date is included here:

Business Offer	Number of Offers
Apprenticeships (will be bespoke for an individual following placement or taster)	10
Traineeships	3
Full time/part time jobs	10
Work Experience	16
Mentoring	11
Taster days	16
Work Placements	8
Presentations to small groups/classes	9
Training courses	2
Site Visits	11
Volunteering	1
Mock Interviews	6

- This is very much a Cross - Council initiative and our role within Sefton@work focuses on the generation and clarification of the employer offers and the ongoing advocacy and communication with the employers. Staff have been circulating the offers in the form of a newsletter which has been called the Beacon, which has been circulated as an appendix.
- Project staff are also working with central comms team to produce an overall Communications plan which will be available shortly.
- The recently adopted Council Motion related to people with Care Experience will inform the backdrop and context of this provision.

SEFTON ADULT LEARNING SERVICE UPDATE

Service Performance – to January 2023

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- From the 1st of August the Service has enrolled **996** new learners (to the end of January 23) who have enrolled onto 1,427 learning aims. The above data shows that the number of learner aims continues to grow and surpass the same period compared with last year. However, take-up from learners has still not yet returned to pre covid levels.
- Community Learning provision continues to make up the majority of learning activities across the year to date. Further work is needed to increase the number of new learners accessing the service and community learning learners progressing onto qualification bearing classes.
- A marketing strategy review is currently underway investigating alternative methods to improve the reach to potential new learners across the borough including increased social media presence and refreshing the website.
- The Service is working closely with DWP, Sefton@Work and Active Sefton to deliver joint events, all of which have focused on increasing learner numbers.
- Over 50s jobs fair event held at Cambridge Road on 27 January - 16 providers onsite engaging with 20 DWP clients booked in every 15 mins.
- DWP Huddles – throughout January the service continues to attend and engage with DWP clients located at various JobcentrePlus centres. Of those engaged, 17 have been referred for Initial Assessments for English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) and 1 for English.
- Following a slight delay, the Aspiring instructors programme has now started. We have 7 learners who are currently taking part in a fully funded training programme in the leisure and fitness industry.

Multiply – Government Adult Numeracy Initiative

- Work has progressed to secure contracts for the VCS element of Multiply to agree arrangements with suitable organisations capable of delivering engagement activities to promote numeracy and lead to registrations of new learners for the service. The short procurement exercise was concluded, and four contractors have now been engaged. As a result of ongoing delays in government, this element of activity had been identified for the full year's duration but needed to be telescoped down to three months. Contract management of the

Multiply organisations is being conducted directly through the Employment and Learning contracts team.

- Since mid-January, 4 of the Multiply Providers have delivered 7 numeracy related sessions and have supported 30 new learners to access this provision. Sessions have been delivered in Cambridge Road, The Big Onion in Bootle Strand, Waterloo Centre, Crosby Library, Sean's Place and Phoenix Community Youth Project in Southport. These are as follows:
- **Transform Lives Company – 1 engagement with 4 learners**
Activity Content focused on reducing the impact of the cost-of-living crisis including home budgets, allowing learners to understand that they do have more control over their spending. As learners are in receipt of benefits, they are feeling the cost-of-living crisis more than others. By showing them how to properly understand their expenditure pattern (prioritising bills/borrowing/household etc) it gives them a deeper understanding of where they can make changes. Over the next couple of sessions, the focus will be on home energy use and cooking on a budget.
- **Expanding Horizons (The Big Onion) – 1 engagement with 5 learners**
Feedback has been positive. A new session will be delivered on 21st February and 7 learners have already signed up. Sessions are spread over 3 days and are around various aspects of money management: personal, business and in work. They are flexible and meet the needs of the learner. Four additional sessions have been scheduled for end of Feb and throughout March, 2 of these will be in the Strand and two will take place in Southport Town Hall.
- **Phoenix Community & Youth Project – 2 engagements with 6 learners**
Sessions are held around Southport area and are aimed at supporting learners to manage household budgets, balancing weekly/monthly income and expenditure, opening bank accounts and financial literacy. Additional courses will run during Feb/March.
- **Rotunda – 3 engagements with 15 learners**
Rotunda have delivered a Money Maths short engagement across 3 community venues, i.e. Waterloo Centre, Crosby Library and Sean's Place in Bootle. Learners have been able to apply their new skills to help manage their household budgets, understand their utility bills especially around unit price comparisons. Rotunda have received a significant amount of interest through word of mouth and have registered new learners for courses to be run end of February and throughout March, an additional 15 learners will be expected to participate in a further two programmes.

Children's University

- The Cambridge Road centre has been verified by the Children's University as a Public Learning Destination for Family Learning Programmes – The Children's University is a school led project that rewards children for their extracurricular learning and for it to count, they can only get their Passport to Learning stamped at a valid Learning Destination, of which we are now recognised as one. We hope the success of this will attract families into the service.

Quality Assurance Improvement Visit

- The Service took part in a Quality Assurance Improvement Visit commissioned by LCR-CA, spanning 2 days. This involved a team of 2 active OFSTED inspectors who met with senior managers, governors, stakeholder, tutors, and

learners. Classroom lessons were observed to carry out joint scrutiny with managers and tutors; documents were reviewed and discussed including aspects of leadership and management, quality of education, personal development and behaviour and attitudes with learners and managers. A visit report has been received and overall, with action points raised for future consideration but no major quality concerns raised.

- Some of the findings from the report include:
 - *“The curriculum that is offered is well planned, and most courses meet learners’ needs. These courses are flexible and delivered at time to fit in with learners’ commitments. For example, a mentoring lesson has been rearranged to another day to fit in with childcare commitments of learners.*
 - *Tutors are experienced and knowledgeable and manage the learning of a wide range of learners’ abilities in each class and support them in making progress. Learners improve their confidence and communication skills and enjoy meeting new people at the centre.*
 - *Learners have access to high quality resources and additional online resources to support, consolidate or extend their learning in their own time. These resources help learners to catch up if they have missed a session.*
 - *As part of the service quality improvement plan, actions are currently underway to further improve the quality of the service.”*

Adult Learning Feedback, Case studies and Comments

- **Feedback from Awarding Body:**

Ascentis Annual Quality Assurance review informal feedback highlighted how well the service’s quality assurances processes are managed, including a recognition that the documentation reviewed at the visit was excellent and some of the best seen by the Inspector.

- **Case Study: Dan’s story...**

“I studied Food Safety and Spanish at Sefton Community Learning Service. Due to covid I had been unemployed for 2 years. Whilst visiting the Community Pantry I noticed there was a jobs fair in the main hall recruiting for The Lake House at Crosby Marina. The services Community Engagement Officer persuaded me to complete an application form and I was offered an interview. Pleased to say I got the job! A part time post working in the tapas container in Ainsdale and also at the Lake House. After the summer season had come to an end, I started preparing working in the main kitchen. I had only been working there for a couple of months when I received my first promotion to Chef de Partie and now I’m working full time.

- **Comments from Learners**

- *“Great course brilliant location. Such a great teacher, Feel I have learned so much” – Spanish for Beginners.*
- *“It has helped me to think about the interview, C.V., and body language that I never thought of before. So, I would recommend this course” – Preparation for Employment.*
- *“After losing my husband a couple of years ago, I joined the course with my sister-in-law. I would never have joined anything like this without my husband giving me the confidence to do so. The course has changed my life so much” – iPads for Beginners.*

New Information Advice and Guidance Strategy

- The Service is in process of producing a strategy for Information, advice and guidance and an Action plan. The focus will be to ensure that learners have access to good quality advice and information they can use to plan their learning and their future goals including progression learning and moving into employment or other personal goals. The strategy recognizes the good practice already within the Service including the Matric accreditation and will provide a platform to progress and further improve these arrangements with employer encounters and input for our learners to feature as we move forward.

NOT IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT OR TRAINING (NEET) REDUCTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE UPDATE

Service Performance

(As the January 23 figures were not available at time of writing, the figures below are for December 2022).

Area	NEET	Not Known	Combined
Sefton	2.80%	0.40%	3.20%
Wirral	3.50%	1.10%	4.60%
Halton	4.40%	0.50%	4.80%
St Helens	4.20%	0.90%	5.10%
NORTHWEST	3.40%	2.40%	5.80%
ENGLAND	2.70%	3.30%	6.00%
Knowsley	5.00%	1.60%	6.50%
Liverpool	4.60%	5.60%	10.20%

- Sefton had the lowest NEET, Not Known, and Combined rates across the LCR area.
- We are currently performing better than the Northwest and England combined averages (-2.6% NW and -2.8% England).
- At 0.4%, our Not Known rate has been reducing by an average of 0.2% year on year.
- In December 2022, the total cohort of 16- and 17-year-olds was 5,703.

Age	Cohort	NEET	NK
16	2902	63 (2.17%)	6 (0.12%)
17	2801	98 (3.50%)	15 (0.54%)

- 36% (66 out of 182) of the 16-17 Not in Education, Employment, or Training (NEET) and Not Known cohort are in one or more of our vulnerable groups.
- Sefton are currently the best performing LA within the LCR for SEN 16/17 and 16/24 in learning.
- Although we have seen a slight increase in our NEET figures in comparison to December 2021 (21 young people – 0.34%), this is primarily due to our SEN figures increasing and our teen mums. This increase has also been recorded nationally and is due to the impact of Covid, long term disengagement and an

increase in isolation which is preventing some of our young people moving into positive outcomes.

National Apprenticeship Week (6-12th Feb)

- Career Connect attended events at Southport and Hugh Baird Colleges and targeted 92 Children in Care and Care Experienced young people both NEET and EET, this also included evening calls and follow ups.
- On Thursday 16th February, an event was also held at Cambridge Road, with the LA Apprenticeship Team and Sefton@work will also be in attendance. CV workshops and employability sessions were, and 10 young people registered to attend.

NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service Re-contracting

- In accordance with the Council's contract Procedures, an invitation to tender has now been uploaded on to the Chest Procurement portal. Completed returns from bidders need to be back with the Council by mid- March and thereafter scoring and evaluations of bids will be undertaken.

TOURISM UPDATE

Destination Marketing

- **Design & Campaign Management Agency** – The tender for our 2023 agency was awarded to Gingerhead via The Chest. This will be the fourth year we have worked with them. They are currently in the process of reviewing all 2022 activity and are preparing the campaign plan for 2023.
- **PR** – The contract with our current agency finished December 2022. We went out to a number of agencies for proposals for 2023 and the contract was awarded to Social PR. Early face-to-face and Teams meeting have been held and work is underway on the initial news releases and journalist invitations.
- **Visitor Guide** – the 2023 guide has been completed and delivered to national, regional and local distribution points.
- **Southport Restaurateurs Association** – The 2023 guide has been delivered and is in the process of being distributed locally, with the visitor guide.
- **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 continues to be placed in key travel trade publications. Editorial has been refreshed in January and space has been secured alongside all ads to date. We have joined The Association of Group Travel Organisers and Coach Tourism Association to increase our communication with Tour Operators and coach companies. A Southport Showcase (mini exhibition) is being held on 24 April year. Invitations have gone out to local Marketing Southport members to exhibit at the event. We will be attending British Tourism and Travel Show at the NEC in March having a stand directly opposite Liverpool.
- **Golf** – We have recently held a meeting between England's Golf Coast, Southport Golf Tours and tourism to ensure better co-ordination between the three partners and a golf activity plan is being produced. Initial figures (advance bookings) for 2023 indicate it could be busiest year ever for EGC. After some

discussion and thought the EGC website will be refreshed this year but continue to stand alone rather than as a microsite within the new Visitsouthport site.

- **Marketing Southport** – membership currently stands at 104 (106 this time last year). The next Marketing Southport board meeting is to be held in March. An annual report is being finalised and will be circulated to all Marketing Southport members this month (February).
- **Eurovision** – We are plugged into LCR planning and activity around Eurovision. Detail continues to flow through from Liverpool. We are engaging with local businesses to ensure we maximise available opportunities.

Events

- The dates for 2023 Southport Events have been announced as follows: -
 - Food & Drink Festival - 2nd – 4th June.
 - Air Show - 9th & 10th September.
 - The British Musical Fireworks Championship - 22nd – 23rd September.
 - Procurement of infrastructure and event planning has started.
- A new 2023 events programme is being devised for Bootle at Salt and Tar, this will include:
 - The Salt and Tar Comedy Weekender will take place from Friday 26th May until Sunday 28th May.
 - **Friday 26th May** - Big Comedy Presents Chris McCausland, Nina Gilligan and Patrick Monahan with Host Brendan Riley.
 - **Saturday 27th May** – An afternoon of entertainment for the whole family with Comedy Bingo and one of the best children’s entertainers in the country Martin Bigpig Mor’s.
 - **Saturday 27th May – Evening** Bingo Nights Presents Disco Bingo Eyes Down for a fabulous night of fundraising for a local charity/community group (TBC) with this truly interactive event. Disco Bingo is exactly what it says on the tin, A full night of traditional style Disco and Bingo but with a modern twist!
 - **Sunday 28th May – Afternoon** An afternoon of entertainment for all the family with Comedy Bingo and star of Britain’s Got Talent Steve Royle.
 - **Sunday 28th May – Evening** Big Comedy Presents Jason Byrne, Jo Caulfield and Scot Bennett with Host Brendan Riley
- A marquee will be installed on the events site, capable of holding 500 people, it is anticipated the food and drink part of the site will be open to the public for the weekend. Tickets to go on sale week commencing 20th February.
- Work continues with Sound City and Live Nation on a Bootle Music Festival taking place on the 8th, 9th, 15th and 16th July, the first act Red Rum Club has been confirmed and is sold out with 3,000 ticket sales.
- We are working in partnership with NCASS on several large-scale food and drink events, the first of these will be in the summer and initial naming/branding work has commenced. One of the first events will be themed around a food and drink social.

Marine Lake Events Centre (MLEC)

- The procurement of the build contractor is complete, the appointment will be announced in the coming weeks, the contractor will first of all carry out demolition and enabling works subject to planning permission.
- The Contractor will then work with us on Stage 4 looking at appointment of main works in October 2023.
- Full planning application submitted and will be taken to The April planning committee.
- Social value forms an important part of the MLEC project, activity has already commended.

Social Value Activities to Date

- In November 2022 Sefton, and consultants from the MLEC project team including G&T, AFL, AECOM, CBRE and IPW, hosted an engagement session with students from Southport College and two local high schools (Stanley School and Meols Cop). There were circa 30 pupils in total at the afternoon event. The session involved a presentation from the team on the importance of the construction industry, an overview of the MLEC project, the consultants involved and their roles. The students were then split into groups for a 'break-out activity' to look at local sites and discuss their ideas for projects, what consultants they would need, what local interferences there might be etc. This was followed by a short Q&A session and pupils from Stanley School and Meols Cop were invited to have a tour of the Southport College facilities.
- The wider MLEC attended Meols Cop School to conduct mock interviews for Year 11 students. Each team member interviewed up to 7 students for circa 20/30 mins each over the day – circa 4 hours interviewing overall.
- Alongside roughly 30 other local professionals and employees, the volunteering exercise was to enabling year 11 students to have a mock job interview where we discussed their work experience, their education and grades, their hobbies / interests / skills and future aspirations. Each student was paired with someone who was based in the industry that they were keen to pursue a career in. In total, the group interviewed the whole Yr 11 year group which was roughly 170 - 180 people.
- A number of the MLEC team will repeat the exercise at Hugh Baird and Bootle Schools in the coming months