

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

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

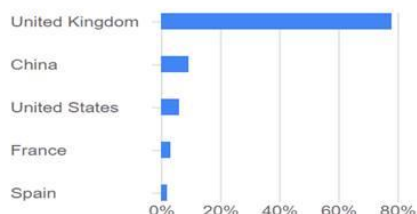
INVESTSEFTON UPDATE

InvestSefton is the Council's business growth, enterprise and inward investment service. It provides support to all Sefton businesses with a specific focus on small to medium sized businesses via current external funded European and Government programmes-these are due to end on 30 June and are being replaced by UK Shared Prosperity Funding.

Business engagement

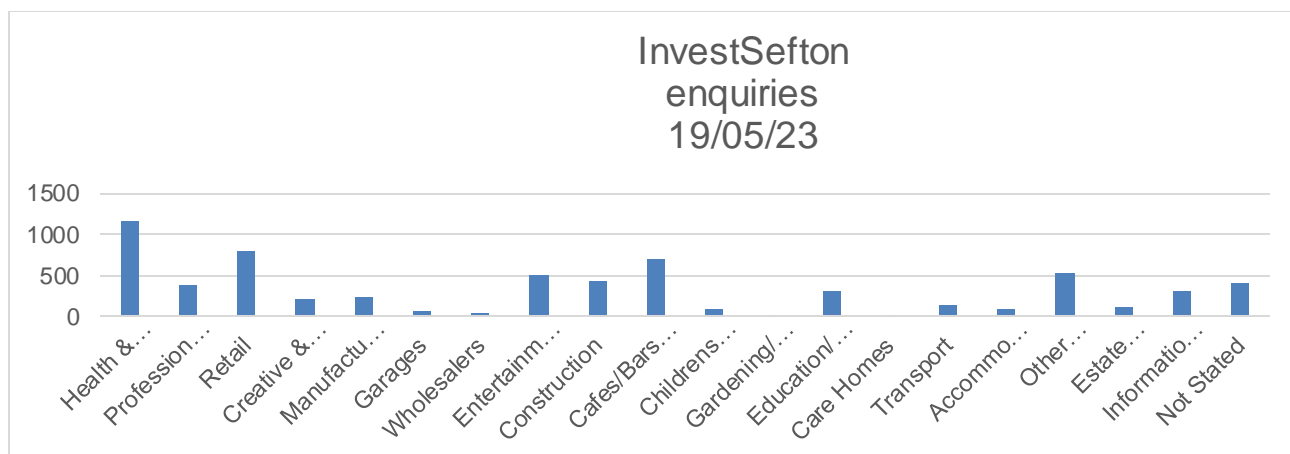
Website

- From Friday 12th May to Thursday 18th May 2023, the website had 96 unique sessions
- For the same period 84.8% were new and 15.2% were returning visitors.
- The greatest number of visits this week were on Wednesday.
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30th March 2020 until Thursday 18th May 2023, the site has had a total of **67,376** unique sessions.
- Posts on the website this week have included our upcoming Economic Forum and some free digital workshops delivered by LJMU.
- Twitter posts have included the economic forum and marketplace.
- InvestSefton twitter page now has 1601 followers.
- Country of origin of user of the website is broken down as follows:



Business enquiries

Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled **6,657** enquiries from a wide range of businesses. Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 19th May 2023:



Total enquiry numbers from 13th March 2020 to 19th May 2023:

Year	Total Enquiries
13 th March 2020- 31 st March 21	3740
1 st April 21- 31 st March 22	1325
1 st April 22- 31 st March 23	1413
1 st April 23 – to date	179
Total	6,657

UKSPF Shared Prosperity Funding & other planned activities

Sefton is to receive £805,920 for Place Based Business Support (PBBS) and IRO£98,000 Town Centre business centre funding. The team is awaiting confirmation of top sliced funding for project co-ordination which has been agreed at LCR level. A summary of recent progress is as follows:

- PBBS will effectively replace LCR ERDF activities with effect from 1 July and Grant Funding Agreements are awaited shortly. InvestSefton has submitted its proposed delivery plan which will primarily focus on triage support from the Business Growth Officers; 1:1 support through the advisers and one to many activities such as events/workshops, Sefton Economic Forum, Sefton Huddle (Digital) and Business, Professional & Financial services networks.
- PBBS Business Start-up element. The preference here is to deliver on a LCR-wide basis and with the exception of Wirral (who sub-contract to their Chamber of Commerce) all 5 LAs are seeking to commission.
- InvestSefton had an away session on 11 May and identified several priorities including Digital; Marketing & Engagement (creation of a dedicated post); maximising business growth from regeneration programmes; Inward Investment opportunities in Ashworth site; Key Account Management of foreign owned and large companies; supporting the council's equality and diversity agenda.

- The team is also looking to commission locally for UKSPF business support in town centres and is currently developing a brief with a focus on start-ups, retail innovation and business events. The team will keep CM updated on this work.

Case studies

The team continues to engage with businesses as part of its one-to-one delivery support.

Recent case studies below:

Bootle based business specialising in natural and synthetic wigs and hair systems for men, women and children. The business offers off-the-shelf ranges, and bespoke hair systems for people suffering from alopecia and baldness from £1k upwards via a dedicated clinic as well as offering wigs to local hair salons. The business is looking to bid for public sector framework contracts with the NHS. InvestSefton supported the business by researching NHS supply chain opportunities as well as assisting the business with the tendering process.

Digital Marketing Agency based in Southport. The Business has managed to access **BeMore** skills funding from Liverpool LCR and is looking to work with Sefton in delivering training and hopefully grow the client base. InvestSefton assisted the business by reviewing their presentation slides and co-hosting a workshop which also supported other Sefton businesses.

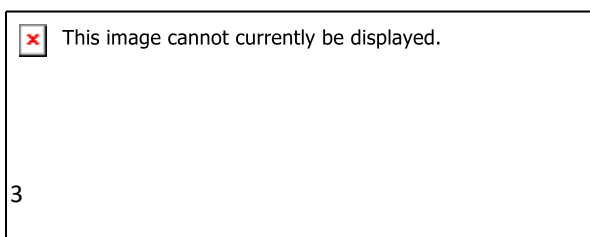
A trauma-informed mental wellness and community development institute based in Litherland. Through partnerships with local charities, they have received funding to deliver courses to beneficiaries most in need of support including veterans, victims of abuse and the homeless. InvestSefton supported the business by reviewing their current slide deck which they use for presentations and recommending improvements to more clearly describe their offering to businesses.

Food trailer business primarily based in Southport. The business specialises in Caribbean food and in addition to having the food trailer is looking to partner with local restaurants to provide sauces and guidance on more authentic Caribbean food. The business is also looking to attend food festivals and take on bookings for corporate events. The business needs to improve its understanding of its future business position. InvestSefton supported the business by creating a business cashflow that reflects new planned business activity including a review of their current pricing.

Business Events

InvestSefton's webinars and events have become a useful vehicle for engaging with businesses on a one-to-many basis. The team has set in place an events calendar for 2023, the most recent of which was the **Business, Professional and Finance event held at Southport and Birkdale Sports club on 27th April:**

- 33 delegates attended
- 14 female delegates attended
- 28 individual businesses attended



- 18 evaluations were completed

Businesses listened to Colin Hickey who gave a talk on the relaunched financial and professional services networking group. Mark Borzomato presented on the financial opportunities available from River Capital. This was the first financial sector meeting since before the pandemic and delegates are pleased that the team is initially planning to hold 2 of these each year while also inviting the group to other network opportunities such as the Sefton Economic Forum. Some of the comments received are shown below:

“First time I have been along, interesting networking opportunity with excellent speakers, will attend regularly going forward.”

“Nice event, good set-up. Be good to hear about 1-5 year plans for Sefton at the event.”

“Absolutely fantastic event, it’s only my second one but it won’t be the last one.”

LCR Business & Enterprise Board

Plans are underway to establish a new LCR Business and Enterprise Board under the Metro Mayor. The LCR-CA is leading on this and have asked LAs to promote the concept to encourage greater geographical coverage and diversity representation. InvestSefton is pushing this out through its various channels and advisers. Several local business leaders have already expressed interest. <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/growing-our-economy/new-business-and-enterprise-board-for-liverpool-city-region/>

Inward Investment

Mersey Reach Bootle

Invest Sefton continue to work with the owner and agents to ensure we are up to date with new companies moving in and can offer appropriate support. Despite uncertain market conditions, enquiry levels remain high with units under offer to public and private sector organisations. **Mersey Care have taken a lease on the largest unit available in Phase 2 (c. 30,000 sq ft).** 7 units still available ranging from 4,047 – 8,982 sq ft.

Southport Business Park

Ongoing work to support investment in the site, working alongside Regen colleagues.

- No3 Southport Business Park (Former Payment Shield House). Invest Sefton/Regen viewed the units and the property brochure can be found [here](#).
- Agents for Seabank House, (former Experian building) are in discussions with one interested purchaser.
- Development plans from Southport based security systems supplier progressing with agents now appointed to negotiate heads of terms.
- **Interest from a local electronics company in building 20,000 sq ft (10,000 floor space) unit progressing.**

EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING

SEFTON@WORK

Sefton@work General Performance Data for April 2023

Data Description	Range	Figures
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	5,367
New Clients accessing service	April 2023	70
New clients registering by age	April 2023	16-24 24 25-49 27 50+ 17 Unknown 2
New Registrations – NEET 1.3 clients only	April 2023	12
W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16 April 2023	58.1% 37.9%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16 April 2023	41.9% 62.1%
W2W contracts Other	Since 01/01/16 April 2023	0.1% 0.0%
Positive Inclusions Male	Since 01/01/21 April 2023	67.6% Now closed
Positive Inclusions Female	Since 01/01/21 April 2023	31.9% Now closed
Positive Inclusions Other	Since 01/01/21 April 2023	0.5% Now closed
ESF clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016 April 2023	31.2% 13.8%
Supporting Families (new project replacing Turnaround)	Current Active Total	28
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	W2W & PI + 200 from other programmes Total 2,256
Ways to Work Starts	Since 01/01/2016 April 2023	4,858 39
Positive Inclusions Starts	Since 01/01/2021 April 2023	207 Project now closed

European Social Fund Audit exercises

The Service has taken part in two ESF audit exercises over recent weeks. These are an Article 127 inspection on Ways to Work and an Article 125 inspection on Positive Inclusions project. Both these processes have placed significant requirements on project staff. Feedback from the auditors has now confirmed that both inspections have been completed with no outstanding issues flagged as cause for concern or risk of potential financial clawback. Given the scope and scale of the projects, this is a considerable achievement and reflects the dedication and precision of our compliance and monitoring staff.

Sefton@work

Accommodation - Bootle Strand

Since the relocation/refit project is being funded via the DWP Restart budget, it will be imperative for us to be fully operational and wholly relocated in good time before the Restart

project funding starts to wind down. The current contract end date is September 2024, but there is an option for extension of this for a further two years.

Quality Assurance

Preparations are underway for the 2023 Matrix 3-yearly review, which is a government endorsed measure for information, advice and guidance in employment work. There are two new units in addition to the existing award criteria which focus on health and wellbeing. These will highlight the service's offer in terms of promoting mental and emotional wellbeing for both clients and staff.

Preparation work is also well advanced for the Customer Service of Excellence Assessment (CSE) which is taking place on 14th June 2023.

Service Delivery Responses

Sefton@Work has launched a pop-up job shop in Bootle Strand for added visibility of the service offer but also to deliver some guided group job search sessions for our digitally disadvantaged clients. In addition to this we will be offering digital learning alongside Sefton Adult Learning and trailing the forthcoming relocation as news for clients.

A comprehensive short course called Evolving Mindset has been sourced by Sefton@Work to offer support and learning related to attitudes surrounding employment, with the focus being on interview techniques and anxiety management. This course is run by mental health practitioners. Participants will also be supported after the course by their employment advisor. The Employer Liaison team will also secure interviews for participants with local employers. The aim is to promote positive mental health among our clients furthest from the labour market to move along their employability journey.

Virtual Jobs Fairs are being delivered by Sefton@Work's Employer Liaison Team on an ongoing basis and these are themed events to bring employers in with vacancies in specific sectors to share with clients, such as Social Care or Hospitality.

The Voluntary Sector Routeway Programme has been redeveloped by Sefton@Work for clients with little or no work experience or employer references to gain important skills and confidence. This will give clients access to tailored, unpaid work experience within the voluntary sector. We have, throughout April, secured placements with various SMBC Departments across SMBC, Citizens Advice (includes their trainee adviser programme) and the HM Passport Office.

Refocus on Restart

Feedback from G4S has flagged some concerns that our projected expenditure to support clients with additional barriers is underspending in relation to forecasts developed prior to the pandemic. To address this, the service has undertaken a range of new diagnostic assessments around current client barriers to progression and has embarked on a suite of new actions to respond to client needs in a more dynamic way. These include the following:

Working with Council departments to source bespoke Interventions for Restart clients such as a programme to tackle mental health, wellbeing, social inclusion and mindset with the Leisure service.

Enhanced Job Support Package for Restart – enhanced support for those of our most disadvantaged clients transitioning into work to make the move more affordable due to the impact of the cost-of-living crisis. This will include some support with workwear, travel support, vouchers for food shopping while adjusting to new budget and childcare (where appropriate).

Sefton@Work continues to find that clients are having issues with childcare availability and cost, not just for starting work but also to allow time to focus on learning and job seeking activities. The childcare market directly impacts opportunities for many parents (mostly women) to take regular paid employment and reduction in places remains a concern. Sefton@work has secured regular dialogue with early years/childcare sufficiency teams in the Council to better understand this changing picture and address some workforce retentions and recruitment challenges.

Cost of Living and the increased use of foodbanks also remain major issues for Sefton@Work staff dealing with clients in hardship impacting on client stress levels, anxiety and general wellbeing.

Employer Engagement

Sector Based Academies have taken place at Sefton@Work in April and more are planned. May seen us working with a local employer who has Production Operative roles. Learning will include Basic Health and Safety, Manual Handling, Behaviour in the Workplace/Team working and Equal opportunities. Guaranteed interviews for all who complete.

In partnership with Sefton Adult Community Learning & DWP/JobcentrePlus, Sefton@Work is hosting another 50Plus Jobs Fair on 28th June. This is to support the needs of our older client group and collect feedback from those clients around the difficulty of moving into work in the face of employer attitudes about older workers.

Marketing & Communication

We have launched Sefton@Work quarterly newsletter ([Sefton@Work Flash Extra – Issue 01 April 2023](#)) to promote our services and successes to residents, partners and employers.

Caring Business Charter Project

Sefton@work has been called upon to lead on the delivery of actions to support the Charter and significant work and time from the whole team has been put into developing systems and processes for this project since its launch last Summer.

We have instigated an Operational Panel cycle of meetings with key representatives from Childrens Social care, education, leaving care and Career Connections. This is making good progress and is a forum for us to highlight the required steps to be taken to ensure young the engagement of young people is maintained, so they can participate in positive experiences to widen their horizons.

The Charter co-ordinator (herself a young person with experience of care) is making good progress and is working well through her personal development programme and growing in confidence. She is doing well in ensuring the continued engagement of the employers.

A summary of the opportunities currently available through the Charter is as follows:

Charters agreed with Employers at launch but whose specific offers remain outstanding	22
Breakdown of Potential offers	
Offer of tailored Apprenticeships	11
Traineeships	3
Full/part -time employment	8
Work Experience placements	20
Mentorship	13
Taster days	16
Work placements	9
Training courses offered by employer	4
Site visits	11
Volunteering	2
Mock interviews	7
Presentations	12
Total offers at present:	116

Sefton Adult Community Learning Service

The Service has enrolled 1,332 new learners this academic year though to the end of May who have enrolled on 2,101 learning aims. The data shows that the number of learning aims continues to grow and surpass the same period as last year, however, it has still not yet returned to pre covid levels. In the typical pattern for our Service where we aim to reach people who are new to learning, Community Learning (ie. non-formal and without accredited qualifications) continues to make up most of the activities this year. Further work is needed to increase the number of new learners accessing the Service and Community Learning learners who choose to progress through to qualification-bearing courses. The Service continues to revise its delivery plan to maximise the opportunities for learners to start a qualification before the end of the academic year. Many of these opportunities will be promoted at events through the coming weeks.

Events and Promotion

- Staff continue to source new ways of advertising in the wake of The Champion having gone into receivership. We have met with three different suppliers and marketing agencies to identify new ways to promote qualifications and increase course bookings.
- Work is underway to develop a Service specific micro-website, to be accessed via the Council main website.

- Discussions are also being held with 'Me Learning' suppliers to investigate online booking options for potential learners to enrol remotely on to new classes with the Service for next year.

Promotional events include:

- Comedy weekender 27-28th May at Salt & Tar, Bootle.
- Food and Drink Festival 2-4th June at Victoria Park, Southport
- Music Festival 10th June at Lock & Quay Bootle
- Parent forum 16th June at Christ Church Waterloo
- Waterloo Music festival 17-18th June at Crosby Marina
- Business Forum and Market Place at Formby Hall and Bootle Cricket Club

General performance Update:



Performance update
Year to Date Comparison
 1st August to 24th May

	Target	18/19* Aug to May	20/21 Aug to May	21/22 Aug to May	22/23 Aug to May
Total number of learners	2000	1695	547	968	1332
Total number of unique learning aims	2940	2557	1035	1417	2101

SSA	Learners				Learning Aims			
	18/19	20/21	21/22	22/23	18/19	20/21	21/22	22/23
01-Health, Public Services and Care	54	24	297	233	54	31	320	269
02-Science and Mathematics	8	0	0	0	8	0	0	0
03-Agriculture, Horticulture and Animal Care	32	59	90	118	32	67	94	124
06-Information and Communication Technology	315	78	105	208	384	80	180	342
07-Retail and Commercial Enterprise	186	15	14	67	267	15	20	84
08-Leisure, Travel and Tourism	103	3	0	0	124	3	0	0
09-Arts, Media and Publishing	376	108	194	345	420	141	259	435
10-History, Philosophy and Theology	0	28	43	89	0	30	48	103
11-Social Sciences	0	0	5	0	0	0	5	0
12-Languages, Literature and Culture	101	90	64	142	124	149	65	160
13-Education and Training	37	20	22	32	42	20	27	41
14.1-Foundation for Learning and Life	357	207	186	282	706	375	340	464
14.2-Preparation for Work	365	108	50	60	396	124	59	70
15 - Business, Administration and Law	0	0	0	9	0	0	0	9

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

Multiply – National Numeracy initiative

Evaluative sessions have been held with the Multiply providers contracted to deliver lower level numeracy skills and awareness in Year 1. The main improvement identified needs to be an uplift in the conversion rate of learners taking part in Multiply engagement sessions who then come forward and register for Community Learning provision with the Service.

The following table gives an overview of the first round of delivery, which was undertaken in under three months between January and March 23.

Anticipated Project Outputs	Anticipated Volumes	ACE	EXPANDING HORIZONS	PHOENIX	ROTUNDA	TLC	Actual	Shortfall
No of local residents participating in numeracy courses	150	23	45	9	35	13	125	-25
no of adult numeracy courses run in through Multiply	30	tbc	7	5	9	2	23	-7
No of courses developed in collaboration with employers		0	6	0	0	2	8	8
Anticipated project Outcomes								
No of adults achieving maths qualification up to and including L2	13		0	0	0	0	0	-13
No of adults participating in maths qualifications and courses up to and including L2	44	23	0	0	0	0	23	-21
No of adults participating, acquiring and evidencing skills through non qualification provision, or towards a qualification including online learning	44	23	45	9	35	13	125	81
No of adults supported to increase their numeracy skills and improve their use of maths in their daily lives, at home and work	46	23	45	9	35	13	125	
Referrals								
Starts		11	1	0	0	8	20	

Our aim is to launch a second procurement call via the Chest as swiftly as possible to call for new tenders for Multiply. We expect the new delivery contracts to be valued under £20k and to cover delivery from July 23 to end December 23 to allow some time for evaluation/mop up before the year ends, with a clear expectation about the progression rates of people coming into provision with the Adult Learning Service. We believe that the additional time afforded to providers in this round will lead to better outcomes and many more opportunities for more meaningful engagement with the Service.

NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service

April 2023 Data

Academic Age 16-17 Combined NEET & NK Indicator (national requirement)	
Previous Performance April 2022	3.47%
Current Performance April 2023	3.17%
Difference	-0.30%
Current NEET & Not Known Figure	181
Current Total Cohort	5712

Academic Age 16-17 NEET (national requirement)	
Previous Performance April 2022	3.01%
Current Performance April 2023	2.91%
Difference	-0.11%
Current NEET & Not Known Figure	166
Current Total Cohort	5712

Academic Age 18 NEET (local requirement)	
Previous Performance April 2022	3.73%
Current Performance April 2023	3.92%
Difference	0.19%
Current NEET & Not Known Figure	335

Current Total Cohort	8539
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We have seen a reduction of 17 young people move out of NEET into EET this month, mainly due to increased evening work being made available and intensive work with our 16-year-olds in Year 11. Tracking and Not Known rates continue to improve year on year, and Sefton has consistently tracked below the North West and England averages.

Vulnerable Groups Spotlight

Career Connect are currently undertaking the final assessment of this year's current Year 11 vulnerable young people. In total, **24** of our **156 SEND** clients have still not received a formal offer for September. Staff will continue to seek engagement with these 24 young people to ensure they have an offer of learning before the new academic year begins.

There are currently **232 Risk of NEET (RONI)** young people who are being targeted through enhanced transition support to help them move into EET in September. This is a key element of the preventative element of the contract with Career Connect and has been identified as a crucial element in how we have improved our performance over the last few years.

The outcomes for young people supported by Youth Justice have been positive and since

Positive Progression Outcomes Young People supported by Youth Justice team– 1/4/22 – 31/3/23	
Apprenticeships	8
Employment with Accredited Training	9
Employment without Training	31
Full Time Education	38
Other Training & Learning	18
Total	104

April 2022 **104** have now successfully moved into EET, as follows:

The outcomes into employment gained for this group reflect a very effective collaboration between Youth Justice, Career Connect and Sefton@work which could be worthy of more concentrated evaluation to gain insights into this model of working and its potential to improve performance in other vulnerable groups.

Current Activity

To raise awareness of the Sefton Caring Business Charter, Career Connect has agreed to commence tracking of care experienced young people from an earlier point this year, and this will include NEET and EET young people. The aim of this is to ensure that all young people are aware of the opportunities through the Charter and to encourage them to sign up to at least one opportunity.

In addition and as part of their Pledge to the Charter, Career Connect as a charter Employer will be holding 2 employability sessions over the summer for care experienced young people. This will include a visit to their Head Office in Liverpool city centre, with motivational talks, taster sessions, mock interviews and CV workshops.

National Volunteer Week 1st – 7th June (<https://volunteersweek.org/>)

Next week is National Volunteer Week (1st – 7th June), Career Connect has been working in partnership with the Volunteer Centre Sefton to deliver an introductory activity for our young people interested in finding out more about volunteering.

The Centre will be holding an informal session for 16–19-year-olds and the event will take place at Sefton CVS at 1pm Thursday 1st June. The session will give young people an insight into opportunities in Sefton and how these can be of benefit for their future aims and goals, Career Connect will be promoting this to our NEET cohort 16+ through social media and Newsletter.

REGENERATION, GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATE

The Regeneration Service continue to lead and support the Growth and Strategic Investment Programme on delivery of a number of key Council priority projects and external partner projects as well as externally funded programmes. The current status of these is outlined below.

BOOTLE

Bootle Town Centre

- The Council is progressing plans for a re-purposed Strand Shopping Centre and further work and development of Salt n Tar Canalside event space in Bootle.

Salt and Tar: Made in Bootle:

- Bootle's new food and drink event space is in its final stages of transformation. The site contractor has commenced work to construct scaffold-style platforms which will consist of a small stage and event viewing area and finalisation of work to open onto the canal, working alongside the Canal and River Trust.
- A detailed events programme started in May with the Comedy Weekender which was very positively received by both local residents and visitors to the area. Top comedians including Jason Byrne, Jo Caulfield and Scott Bennett performed at Salt and Tar on Sunday 28th May as part of the Spring Bank Holiday event.
- A further Music event has been scheduled for 7th -9th July. Tickets have already sold out for local band Red Rum Club who are headlining on Saturday 8th July but there are still tickets available for Sunday 9th July, when Cast top the bill. Further details can be found in the attached article :[Tickets still on sale for this month's Comedy Festival at Salt & Tar in Bootle \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/news/tickets-still-on-sale-for-this-months-comedy-festival-at-salt-tar-in-bootle)

Strand Transformation Programme

- Sefton has been successful in securing £20m Capital Levelling Up Funding to support the first phase of the re-purposing shared with members in January's Cabinet report, through the Department of Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC). In May Cabinet considered a report to accept the capital levelling up funding being offered.
- The Council is now proceeding with development of the more detailed designs for phase 1 to enable a planning application to be prepared and submitted later this year and with a view to commencing partial demolition work on site in early 2024.
- Engagement with key stakeholders has taken place with those directly affected by this first phase of work and will continue throughout the project delivery phases.
- Discussions with highways and public protection regarding any potential road closures required to support delivery are ongoing to enable the demolition works in phase 1 to commence in early 2024.

SOUTHPORT

Southport Town Deal

- Work is ongoing in delivering the Southport Town Deal programme in accordance with the approved business cases agreed with the Towns Fund.

Marine Lake Events Centre

- The largest and most significant project in the programme is the £73M Marine Lake Events Centre and Water and Light show. This secured the next stage of approval following planning approval in April 2023 and a programme of demolition and enabling work is planned to start in the summer. Once demolition and enabling works are complete, the main works will commence, this is planned for January 2024.
- ASM Global announced as operator.
- Construction project is still due for completion in late 2025 with ASM then doing final fit out.
- Kier Construction appointed to undertake the demolition and construction work. Article refers: [Sefton appoints leading UK construction group to work on MLEC project](#)

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 finalised for the construction contract element and project management consultant has been appointed and contract documents are in preparation to allow contractor tendering early summer 2023 with works starting on site later in 2023.
- In May Cabinet approved a report which agreed £224,000 toward work on the building's structure as well as the location of IT provision and connections. Article refers: [Cabinet to consider Southport's Enterprise Arcade update \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#)

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 with detailed design work completed for the main programme of work commencing in the autumn after the summer season to avoid disruption. Consultation on the final designs work remains ongoing to ensure full account of all stakeholder views in the final elements of the design.

Building a Better Customer Experience

- New learning modules have now been developed by Southport College and will be piloted amongst their existing learners.
- Southport College will utilise their existing resources in delivering the modules and, as it is still in its early stage of development, performance monitoring will take place once delivery is imbedded.
- In relation to Equality, Southport already has embedded a range of strategies in place to ensure equal access for all but will take up the offer from the Council to test out some of the modules with a range of focus groups.

- The focus groups will identify any diversity that may be flagged up within the modules in relation to physical, visual, hearing needs etc of the client group and also consider issues around cultural awareness within customer care and interaction.
- Southport are currently engaging with a range of employers and linking in with Invest Sefton, they are also keen to sign up to the Caring Business Charter.
- Regular meetings have been scheduled to track progress and performance.

CROSBY

Crosby Town Centre Regeneration

- Cabinet approval in May to progress to full business case along with further design work to be approved prior to project procurement and delivery.
- 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 ongoing.
- Bunkbarn construction has started. Completion is due in late summer with opening in September 2023.
- SHOL continue to offer improved hospitality offer for the site.

Carnegie Library, Crosby

- Pre-planning consultation was undertaken in December 2022, returning a positive response from the local community. Planning Consent has now been approved for these proposals. More details can be found here :[Former Grade II Listed Carnegie Library reimaged as family restaurant and digital hub - My Sefton News Channel](#).
- The developer will now provide a programme for the proposed works linked to the lease requirements agreed with the Council.

AINSDALE ON SEA

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

- Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) in 2022, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site.
- Sefton is assessing responses and undertaking due diligence. Marketing will continue.
- 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

- 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. Appointed agents have completed seeking expressions of interest from the market and the results are being considered by officers and members.
- Details of the marketing brochure can be found here: [Sandbrook Way, Ainsdale PR8 3RW - Keppie Massie](#)

TOURISM

Business Tourism

- MLEC – with the demolition and enabling works commencing in July this presents an opportunity for local businesses to benefit. Details of Marketing Southport accommodation members will be shared with the construction contractor Kier for onward distribution to their sub-contractors.
- The priority for the conference Bureau is to build the sales pipeline for MLEC opening in 2026. Working with the preferred operator ASM Global and key stakeholders, information will be co-ordinated by the end of 2023 on important elements such as such as meeting room layouts, capacities, Audio Visual plans, capabilities to feed into sales collateral for promotion at exhibitions in 2024.
- Southport Conference Bureau is leading on behalf of the Sefton Client Team on Social Value alongside Project Management team Gardiner & Theobald. The social value schedule of activities with Kier has been agreed with reporting measures in place. The MLEC professional team took part in a Litter Pick around Marine Lake in April and partnered with Waterfront Hotel collected in excess of 40 Easter Eggs to donate to Cambridge Road Community Kitchen.
- Support of accommodation providers has delivered results with Sunnyside Guest House winning for the second year at the Liverpool City Region Tourism Awards, in the Guest House category. They have also qualified for Visit England Excellence Awards <https://www.visitbritain.org/business-advice/awards/visitengland-awards-excellence-2023-finalists> taking place in London on 7th June. Eden Warehouse Apartments won the self-catering category, the first time Southport has won in this category. Eden Warehouse is a newly recruited business to Marketing Southport last year. Efforts will continue for next year to support as many businesses as possible to submit an application. The awards help to raise the profile of quality accommodation to promote to conference organisers and is therefore an important piece of work.
- Feedback from accommodation providers for Eurovision highlighted that Eurovision did not deliver tangible business benefit into Southport. Many accommodation providers reported a 'quieter than usual' weekend. A full report of Southport accommodation is in the process of being co-ordinated.
- Aglow International held their first in person conference at The Prince of Wales 19th - 21st May. Almost 500 delegates attended the first 'in person' event since 2019

staying in hotels and guest houses across the resort worth £467,000 to the local economy. The event has received positive feedback from both the organisers and delegates with provisional dates being discussed for 2024.

Destination Marketing

Summer Campaign – agreed and signed off by the Board. It consists of radio (both FM and digital), Out Of Home (37 large format digital billboards across the northwest), website updates, e-newsletter and other digital activity (Facebook and Google PPC).

PR – Two journalist visits planned for June (Reach plc (Echo, MEN, Birmingham Mail) and Lancashire Life).

Visitor Guide – the 2023 guide has been completed and delivered to national, regional and local distribution points. Local stocks are all out with distribution points.

Southport Restaurateurs Association – The 2023 guide has been delivered and has, again, been delivered too all local stockists / distribution points.

E-newsletter - Database stands at circa 52,000 with the addition of 2022 data and regular newsletters are sent to this audience (the latest being for Easter).

Travel Trade – Advertising continues to be placed in key travel trade publications. Three pieces of editorial have been written and free additional space for this has been secured with all ads booked to date. A Southport Showcase was held on 24 April at The Waterfront Southport. The event was attended by 35 coach operators, Group Tour Operators' and tour planners. Feedback from the event was very positive.

Golf – We continue to work with England's Golf Coast and Southport Golf Tours to ensure better co-ordination between the three partners and a draft golf activity plan has been produced.

Marketing Southport – membership currently stands at 105, which has remained constant since last year after some movement. MerseyRail are now a member.

A Marketing Southport Board meeting was held on 6 June, with the next to take place in September.

A Member meeting took place on 23 May at which last year's annual report was covered along with this year's activity and an update on MLEC.

VisitSouthport Website – The new VisitSouthport website launched on 25 May.

Familiarisation Visit – a trip was organised for five of the Marketing Liverpool team on 25 May. Feedback was very positive.

Events

Southport Air Show - 9th & 10th September

- Tenders for infrastructure and services have been procured and orders are now being placed to secure these.
- We have received confirmation that the Red Arrows will only be appearing on the Saturday due to the dates clashing with the Great North Run.

- The Typhoon is not currently due to appear, again due to a clash with the Scottish Air Show but negotiations are taking place to try and secure a display for the Sunday only.
- The armed forces will be in attendance on the ground with their recruitment teams along with various assets yet to be confirmed.
- The Pier will be shut due to refurbishment meaning there will be no Pier Viewing tickets available this year.
- Trade bookings are picking up with 43 secured – it is hoped that more will be received in the coming months.
- Infrastructure quotes are in and orders are being placed.
- The catering concession tender is now on The Chest NW.
- Event plans are currently being updated and will be sent to the Sefton Events Safety Advisory Group for comments in due course.

The British Musical Fireworks Championship – 22nd & 23rd September

- The event will be taking place over 2 nights with 3 competitors each night.
- Competitor lists have now been finalised.
- Infrastructure quotes have been received and orders are being placed.
- Pre-Event entertainment has been booked for each night.
- The presentation ceremony will take place at The Southport Market after the event on Saturday 23rd September.

Tourism Operations

MLEC

- Planning approval was achieved in April, which now allows the project to commence on site. There are several pre-commencement conditions that are currently being completed to allow demolition and enabling works to commence.
- As per the PCSA agreement with Kier Construction they will undertake all demolition and enabling works.
- Enabling and demolition work is planned to start in July, subject to discharge of conditions.
- Once demolition and enabling works are complete the main works will commence, this is planned for early 2022.

Southport Pier

- The Pier remains closed due to health and safety concerns with further damage to decking after visual inspection.
- A full structural survey has been commissioned.
- External support has been appointed to lead on Cost Management, Project Management, and other key services.

Seafront

- Work to revamp Southport Kings Gardens is almost complete, Victorian shelters, and benches have been brought back to new condition, work continues on the bins and lampposts.