

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

Summary:

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

Recommendation(s):

That Cabinet Members:

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

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

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

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

Do nothing and update the existing Economic Recovery plans-this was rejected as officers also needed to update and factor in Covid-19 and recession impacts into its economic planning for the borough. To have delayed this work would not have provided officers with the necessary economic data and evidence base on which to produce an Action Plan which could help prioritise delivery to businesses, residents, and communities.

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

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

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):	
Consultation co-ordination and ongoing delivery activities is being undertaken by Economic Growth & Housing staff within existing budgets.	
Legal Implications:	
None	
Equality Implications:	
The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated as shown in the previous Equalities Impact Assessment	
Impact on Children and Young People:	
Prevailing economic conditions will inevitably have an impact on children and young people and the implications of these will be captured under some of the key strategic objectives and subsets. The SES is also seeking to align with other council work in this space, most notably the Child Poverty Strategy. The services involved in the implementation of the SES are all actively engaged in promoting and progressing the Caring Business Charter as well.	
Climate Emergency Implications:	
The recommendations within this report will	
Have a positive impact	No
Have a neutral impact	No
Have a negative impact	Yes
The Author has undertaken the Climate Emergency training for report authors	Yes
The Sefton Economic Strategy has an associated action plan and some of the delivery activities (e.g new development, business expansion, inward investment) will have a negative impact on the footprint of the Sefton borough. These include direct emissions which result from the redevelopment of any vacant sites as well as long-term carbon emissions from each new building / operation created.	
However, the development of sites and buildings will be required to go through the planning system which will help to minimise the carbon impact of the building by applying the nationally required environmental standards.	
Economic growth will also impact businesses and transport negatively, but this could be minimised by adopting green policies e.g., green growth where companies use	

green renewable energy, use electric vehicles, low carbon options. InvestSefton works closely with external providers of expert support to businesses seeking to reduce energy costs and introduce low carbon solutions to their operations.

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

Contribution to the Council's Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable:
Social Inclusion and Access for all is a core objective of the strategy framework to set a direction for action so that the impacts of economic growth reach many more of Sefton's residents including the most vulnerable.

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

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

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

Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:
This is the overarching objective of any Sefton economic strategy and the four key objectives-Employment & opportunities for work; Business Growth and Investment; Social Inclusion and Access for all and Regenerated Places- are all geared to help maximise sustainable economic growth that will benefit residents, businesses, and communities in Sefton.

Greater income for social investment:
Opportunities for supporting income for social investment will be covered under the strategy's core objectives of Business Growth & Investment and Social Inclusion & Access for all.

Cleaner Greener:
Under Regenerated Places reference is made to the mitigation of any adverse environmental impacts because of economic regeneration growth; the strategy also focuses on attracting new cleaner greener investment. e.g. Digital, particularly the roll-out of ultrafast broadband

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

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

(B) External Consultations

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

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

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

Background Papers:

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

Background

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

Governance & reporting

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

Strategic objective	Sub-sets
Business Growth & Investment	

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

1.4 The reporting timetable is as follows:

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

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

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

2.0 Summary of progress

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

(i) Crosby New Library Project

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

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

(ii) Bootle Area Action Plan

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

3.0 Economic Dashboard

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

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

4.0 Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan-Key highlights

Business Growth & Investment- Contact mike.mullin@sefton.gov.uk

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

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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



Business engagement-www.investsefton.com

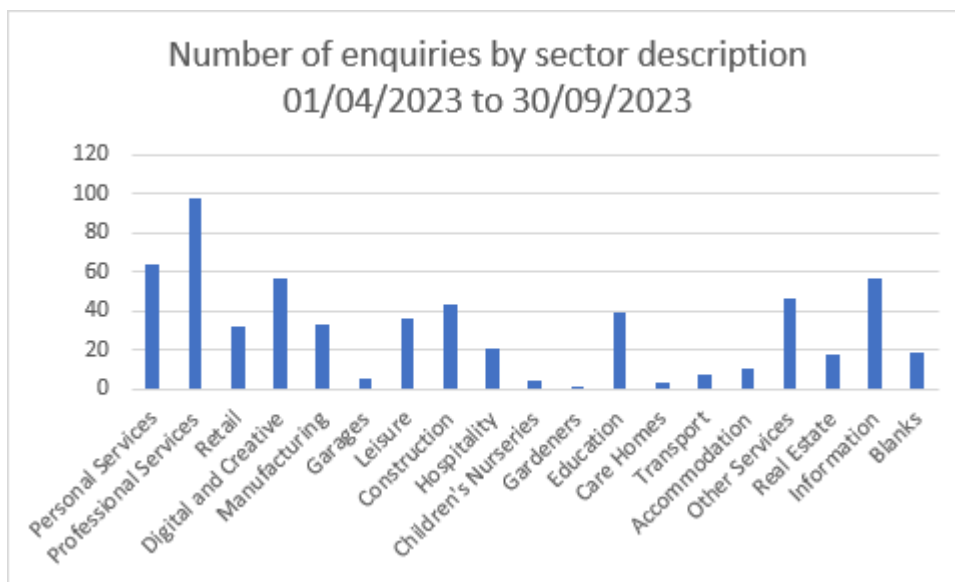
4.4 Since the outbreak of the Covid-19 pandemic www.investsefton.com until 30 September 2023 has received over 70,000 unique single session visits. For the same period InvestSefton's twitter feed had 1,611 followers with some 2,600 businesses on the team's regular mailing lists strengthening the council's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

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

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

Business enquiries

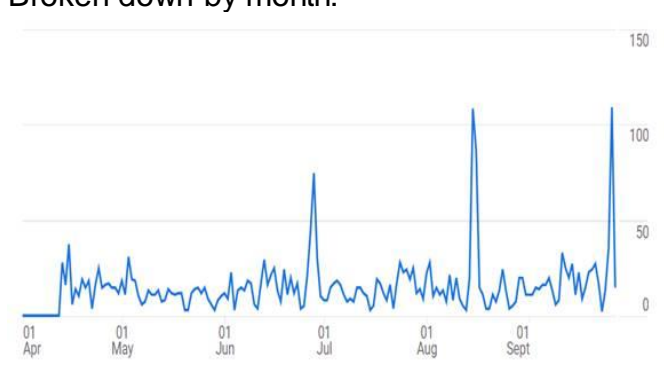
4.6 During the same period InvestSefton received some 7,200 enquiries. From April 2023 to 30 September the team has dealt with 600 unique business enquiries from new and existing businesses looking to start, expand or relocate in the borough. The following diagram shows business enquiry breakdown by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



www.investsefton.com visits

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

Broken down by month:



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

Broken down by country:

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

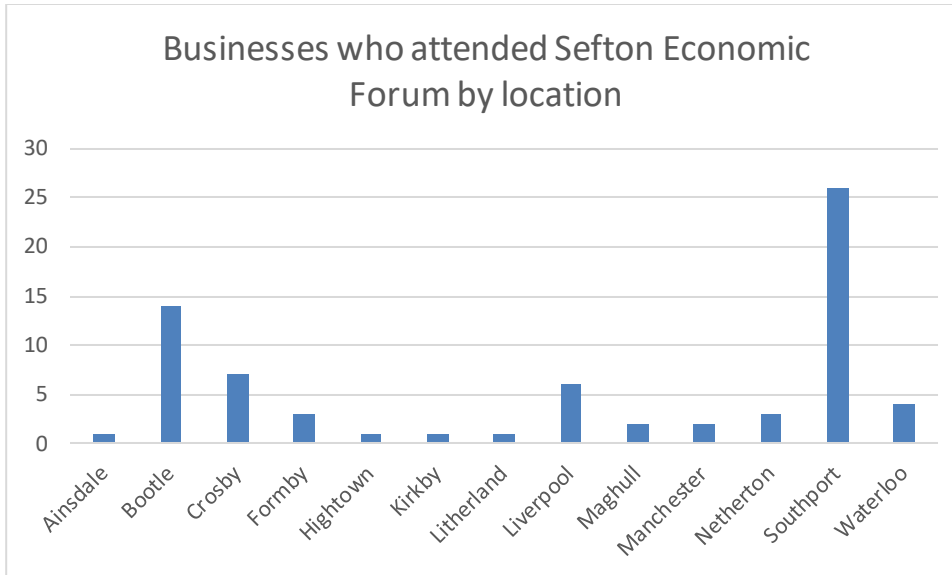
Sefton Economic Forum /Business events & workshops

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

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

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









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

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

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

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

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

Future Funding

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

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

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

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

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

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

Inward Investment

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

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

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

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

- **Key Account Management**

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

- **GSI Information Management**

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

5 Employment & Access to Work (Contact: Claire.maguire@sefton.gov.uk)

Sefton@work- Ways to Work continuation/interim funding

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

Ways to Work – UKSPF funding for 2024/25

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

LCR-CA Mayoral Young Persons Guarantee

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

Sefton@work General Performance Data for October 2023

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

Sefton@work Service Updates

Sefton@work Relocation

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

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

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

Voluntary Routeway

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

Mental Health Awareness Raising

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

Digital Inclusion

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

New Employment opportunities

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

New Agreement with Citizens Advice

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

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

Client Feedback

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

Social Value – Sainsbury’s Southport recruitment

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

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

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

National Recognition for Social Mobility

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

Sefton Caring Business Charter Update

5.15 The team has chosen to roll out the Charter project using a number of implementation methods, including:

- A Launch event in Summer 2022 to acknowledge the Charter signatories
- Ongoing Recruitment of Companies and Stakeholder partners to the Charter via Sefton@work, Invest Sefton, Procurement, the Growth Programme and the Southport Town Deal
- Industry standard account management principles adopted for the Charter secure regular updates to Employers and regulate the currency of opportunities

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

The Impact of the Charter

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

Summary of Current Live Opportunities by type of Offer

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

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

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

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

Sefton Adult Community Learning Service

General performance Update

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



Performance update

Year to Date Comparison

August to Mid November

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

* 18/19 was the last full year before covid

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

Communication and Events

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

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

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

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

The aim therefore is to :

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

Measured Objectives

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

Expected Outcomes

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

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

Pathways to Teaching Project

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

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

Multiply numeracy provision

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

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

New Test and Learn Pilots for 2023/24

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

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

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

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

SACL Case-study

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

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

Level 3 Award in Education (Pathway to Teaching)

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

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

NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service

September 2023 Performance

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

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

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

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

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

Year on Year Comparisons

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

September Guarantee

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

Year 11 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 3,160

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

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

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

Year 12 September Guarantee Performance – total cohort 2,920

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

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

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

- **Case Study - Parent Feedback**

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

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

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

6 Regenerated Places-Contact: heather.jago@sefton.gov.uk

Southport Town Deal

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

Marine Lake Events Centre & Water and Light Show

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

Some of the key milestones achieved to date include:

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

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

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

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

Southport Market

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

Enterprise Arcade,

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

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

Les Transformation de Southport

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

Building a Better Customer Experience

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

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

Bootle Strand Repurposing

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

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

Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works

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

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

Ainsdale Toilet Refurbishment and Changing Places Toilets

- 6.12 In addition to the above the contract for the refurbishment of Ainsdale toilets including the provision of a changing places toilet started on site in October. This forms part of a wider programme of work for the installation of four Changing Places toilets (Ainsdale, Victoria Park, Dunes and Litherland Sports Centre.) Work is anticipated to complete in Spring/Summer 2024 to comply with funding requirements.

Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.

- 6.13 Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) in 2022, following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site.
- 6.14 Sefton is assessing responses received and carrying out further discussion with parties who have expressed an interest as part of ongoing due diligence. Marketing of the site will continue in the interim. Marketing Website link: [Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale, Ainsdale, PR8 2QD | Property to rent | Savills](#) and [Shore Road, Ainsdale, PR8 | Fitton Estates](#)

Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way

- 6.15 In February 2023 Cabinet agreed the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Two further properties have recently completed and a renewed effort to bring in the remaining ownerships outstanding is progressing.

6.16 Cabinet agreed to progress appointing agents to explore the market for this site, in order to support the Council's ambitions for change. Work is ongoing, however initial expressions of interest from the market are positive and the results are being considered by officers and members. Details of the marketing brochure can be found here: [Sandbrook Way, Ainsdale PR8 3RW - Keppie Massie](#)

7 Housing- Contact: lee.payne@sefton.gov.uk

7.1 Sefton continues to deliver on its housing development targets in 22/23, with over 700 new homes (net) completed this year. Additionally, the future 'pipeline' of housing sites remains positive, based on schemes that are onsite and with planning consent in place in 23/24 and beyond. This delivery is positive against a backdrop of challenging economic conditions with higher interest rates and very high construction inflation affecting this sector, in particular and set to continue over the short and medium term.

7.2 The Housing Team continues to work across a range of departments both internally and externally to help deliver homes across a range of tenures to facilitate growth. Particularly affordable housing in high demand areas, and aspirational housing to enable individuals and families settle and thrive.

7.3 On Sandway Homes' developments at Hey Farm Gardens (Barton's Close, Crossens) and Sandy Brook (Meadow Lane, Ainsdale) of the 53 completed market homes 70% are now owner occupied, with only 7 open market plots remaining for sale. All the 25 Affordable Homes (including 11 shared-ownership houses) are now occupied by their new tenants.

A key project for the Housing Team relates to the Council Housing programme. The team is working closely with Sandway Homes on a range of sites to deliver the first Council owned and managed social homes in almost two decades. At Buckley Hill Lane, Netherton development will commence next month (Nov 23) and see the first market homes delivered in late summer 2024 with the Social-Rented homes being delivered in early 2025. Further sites identified for Sandway's future development programme, ensures that further Council homes will be delivered in the near future to help meet people's housing needs.



7.4 Housing development and regeneration schemes continue right across Sefton, from Bootle to Maghull and from Formby to Southport. These large-scale developments offer homes across a range of tenures and ensure that the key themes and priorities in Sefton Housing Strategy are successfully implemented. Additionally, regeneration opportunities in Bootle and Southport Town Centres are being used as a catalyst to help boost housing delivery and improve the quality of existing homes and neighbourhoods within these localities. Working alongside Planning and Regeneration Teams to deliver on schemes such as the Bootle Area Action Plan, Southport Town Deal & extending Selective and Additional Licensing schemes in the privately rented sector. These will all assist unlocking land for new homes alongside improving housing conditions in existing neighbourhoods.

8 Tourism-Contact: mark.catherall@sefton.gov.uk

8.1 The tourism service continues to deliver a wider range of services across Sefton that includes:

- Destination Marketing
- Major Events
- Conferences and Sales
- Salt & Tar
- Seafront Operations
- Southport Market
- Visitor Economy Strategy
- Visitor Economy led regeneration projects such as MLEC

8.2 There have been several highlights over the last quarter with major activity at salt and tar, major events and the MLEC.

8.3 Salt & Tar – Salt and tar is a new emerging events space in Bootle, infrastructure works are nearing completion. However, in July a music weekender was held to officially trial the site and launch the Salt & Tar venue. Working in partnership with Sound City and Live Nation a 3-day music weekender was planned and implemented at Salt and Tar in July 2023. With a 3,000-capacity making use of the whole site the event had 3 headliners supported by local bands: The Lathums (sold 1,800), Red Rum Club (sold 3,000) and Cast (sold 1,300).

8.4 This was the first major event to take place on Salt and Tar, even though the site was not 100% complete. The event should be deemed as a major success attracting over 6,000 people over the weekend, visitors came from all over the region with many coming from Bootle, Sefton, Liverpool City Region and much further such as Cumbria. Strand shopping centre have also reported a positive increase of 13.8% to their footfall figures compared to the same weekend last year.

8.5 Due to the high profile of the event the social media interaction on the Salt and Tar channels grew rapidly leading up to and during the event. Also, many of the visitors from outside The City Region had not been to Bootle before, this demonstrates the power of events to attract and change perception.

8.6 The Marine Lake Events Centre is progressing with key milestones being met, when finished the £73m venue will generate over £18m to the local economy and attract an additional 500,000 visitors to Southport.

8.7 Some of the key milestones achieved to date include:

- Appointment of Kier Construction to undertake the work under the pre-construction service agreement.
- Site Hoarding installed.
- Utility disconnections completed and major utility diversion orders processing. United Utilities technical approval received for the drainage diversion works. Legal work to progress the Section Agreement underway.
- Condition Surveys of adjacent properties progressing
- Completion of RIBA Stage 4 Design work. Works packages now being priced up.

8.8 The 2022 Tourism STEAM figures have now also been calculated, the 2022 season was another strong season for Sefton, Key highlights include:

- Visitors number up 33% to 7.6m
- Total employment up 30% to 6,111
- Economic Impact up 38% to £594m

9. Planning-Contact: ian.loughlin@sefton.gov.uk

9.1 The Planning service delivers a wide range of regulatory performance indicators and the for the purposes of the economic strategy these focus on increased employment floorspace for industrial and storage uses; social value opportunities generated from planning applications and contributions to new employment. There is also a shared Sefton KPI with housing for new net dwellings built per annum.

9.2 Planning works closely with other teams across the council to help ensure that while regulations are adhered to, every opportunity to support economic growth is maximised and this is evident in the way joint developer/business meetings are held alongside Regeneration, employment, and business support officers. The council has gained a reputation for business friendly, and this is reflected in the way enquiries are handled.

9.3 There is no target in the Local Plan for amount of employment floorspace development of number of jobs provided. However, reference can be made to previous years for comparison where an increase of previous years should be the aim. The figure for 2021/22 was lower than in previous years (at just 2,500m²). However, data for 2022/23 has shown a tenfold increase.

9.4 The data of the number of jobs secured on new employment development can be difficult to ascertain and in many cases this information is not provided. However, the Council have recently approved a Social Value (Employment and Skills) from Development SPD which should help secure this data in a timely and consistent manner. The service works closely with Sefton@work to help maximise local job opportunities for residents

- 9.5 The SPD sets out that proposals of a certain scale (i.e. new housing of 30+ homes, certain commercial development of 1,000m² floorspace) must be supported by an Employment and Skills Plan, which will be secured by legal agreement and monitored for implementation.
- 9.6 The target of 640 net additional dwellings is the Local Plan average annual requirement for 2012-2030, although the government's standard methodology figure has 587 homes for Sefton. In recent years the Council have comfortably met its housing delivery target.

10 Social Inclusion & Access for all

Equalities-Contact: paul.mcann@sefton.gov.uk

- 10.1 A Corporate Equality Group (CEG) has been newly established to support the Council with its commitment to integrate Equality and Diversity throughout its services and to help secure its vision of creating stronger, more resilient communities (Sefton Vision 2030). CEG will monitor the council's performance in relation to equality and diversity and KPIS focus on communications and engagement, improving employment rates and business support for people in disadvantaged areas, reviewing equality and diversity data and engaging with the LCR Race Equality Monitoring group.
- 10.2 The Council has produced and launched its Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy 2023-27. InvestSefton meeting with the LCR's new Director of Race Equality Group in November to discuss business engagement with Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic business groups.
- 10.3 As reported under Business Growth and Investment, work has also been commissioned to Sefton based MEH/Safe Regeneration to provide business start-up support to individuals seeking to become self-employed and/or start their own business. Specific focus areas include town centres and people from disadvantaged areas and special characteristic groups.

Sustainable Travel-Contact ; lee.davies@sefton.gov.uk

- 10.4 The Low Carbon Transport Strategy has several specific areas of working being progressed to refine the council's baseline. Based on the approved consultation plan the team is now bringing together drafts and materials needed to deliver an inclusive consultation.
- 10.5 The Maritime Corridor is the next stage of this work and will include engagement on the preferred designs in July to September 2023. The Southport Eastern Access Business Case is progressing well and will be the subject of further consultation in August to October 2023. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is in development and plan for engagement have been approved by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel. Wider developments are being progressed by the LCRCA around bus reform and green bus routes. Moving Buses Forward consultation is live until the 3rd of August.

Net Zero/Low Carbon-Contact: stephanie.jukes@sefton.gov.uk

- 10.6 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have set a target of net zero for all parts of the economy to be net zero by 2040. This will require all Sefton businesses to halt the use of gas, diesel, oil and only use energy from renewable resources by 2040.
- 10.7 Examples within this Action plan includes (TBC) On transport - Complete Phase 2 of 'State of Freight' investigation into a future zero carbon freight solution, ensuring that this is aligned with our Freeport goals of decarbonisation and good jobs to deliver outcomes including last mile ZE deliveries and reduce trips, scope options for mechanisms to seek to support decarbonisation of freight, and develop a freight strategy and that connects Freeport locations in a net zero manner
- 10.8 On buildings - Identify high-opportunity zones as areas for groups of home/business owners to plan retrofits together or create low carbon communal/district energy schemes and smart networks. On Industry - a series of targets around the following.
- To effectively transition to net zero, our industrial base will need cost-effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage technologies alongside efficiency and storage technologies alongside efficiency improvements in process and delivery systems improvements in process and delivery systems.
 - On Clean Energy - Progress the Phase 3 development activities related to Mersey Tidal (LCR Year 1 action plan review SE6) and commence Phase 4 activity to Consent a UK first of a kind (FOAK) Tidal range scheme.
 - On Natural Environment - Develop a pipeline and identify potential funding for pilot innovative and sustainable agricultural projects, such as urban farming, greenbelt agroecological farming, carbon capture etc. Other issues pertinent to business - MEES Regulations applies to non-domestic rented properties, by 1/4/23 must have an EPC rating of E as a minimum to be able to be rented, plans for this to increase over time (possible EPC D by 2025, EPC C by 2028 and EPC B by 2030) Investment in green technologies e.g. building retrofit, EV charging, Heat pump installations will help to generate local jobs and training opportunities.
- 10.9 InvestSefton has also allocated UKSPF to provide business sustainability support in town centres Sustainability is high on the agenda for conference buyers and events/exhibition organisers and with this in mind it is critical that as part of the planning process for the Marine Lakeside Events Centre (MLEC) opening 2026 that as a destination Sefton begins to build the sustainability offer. The project will measure the business carbon footprint, design an action plan to reduce and produce a sustainability policy.

Health & Wellbeing-Contact: helen.armitage@sefton.gov.uk

- 10.10 This is a new subset introduced to the economic strategy and reflecting it's importance in terms of sustaining and growing a healthy economy. The dashboard provides a wide range of health determinants drawn from both the Public Health performance and Child Poverty Accountability and progress frameworks.

- 10.11 It is important to note that indicators reflecting population status and inequalities in outcomes such as median income, child poverty, school readiness, and spatial measures of deprivation are highly correlated with population health outcomes and inequalities.
- 10.12 During Quarter two there were no published updates to these indicators from open access data sources. At the start of this period a successful, largescale event was held to stimulate development and implementation of actions to improve children's prospects in education, training and employment. A conference summary has been shared with attendees. This period also saw the launch of 'We're Here', which is a long-term promotion of different sources of advice and support for mental health and wellbeing. Feedback from members of the public has reflected genuine appreciation from people in need.
- 10.13 The process of recommissioning Sefton's Living Well Sefton integrated health and wellbeing service continues, which includes a social prescribing offer supporting people who are struggling with welfare, debt, and other cost of living concerns. Quarter two also saw the launch of a parallel service for children and young People - 'Happy 'n' Healthy', and finalisation of a pilot of a community-led childhood respiratory support service. An anticipated outcome of both services is an increase in parents' ability to maintain and participate in employment and training secondary to reduced childcare responsibilities.
- 10.14 Unfortunately, there have been delays which have prevented the publication and dissemination of academic insight work into the experiences of parents and children who currently experience poverty in Sefton. This throws an important light on the many trade-offs between work, caring, benefits and health behaviours that families must make, and the final report will be available for SES leads to study and learn from shortly.
- 10.15 The introduction of the socio-economic duty and shared learning events have presented the opportunity for possible joint working with Salford Council on suggested actions from the Childhood Poverty Strategy such as poverty-proofing checklist with broad applicability to a range of organisations and services. Planning is also underway for the next Child Poverty Conference Event on the theme of Places in January 2024, as well as microsite to host and share best practice and foster collaboration. Upcoming professional development opportunities will support new policy development for example on Health Impact Assessment.

Digital-Contact: helen.spreadbury@sefton.gov.uk

- 10.16 Members will be aware that the council also has an existing digital strategy which has been aligned with the economic strategy demonstrating clear synergies and shared objectives. Key highlights include:

- Social value scheme for connectivity identified as the Strand in Bootle and technical scoping completed, link in place, further work to be completed on public Wifi and work in final stages for corporate connection for Sefton at Work
- Education teams now represented at board level, including representation from Schools Trust and Hugh Baird College; Social value lead from ITS linked to board and connection made to Sefton@work team to enhance local offer in Bootle
- Significant work completed in libraries including a tablet loan scheme and the provision of digital meeting rooms and digital newspapers ; Databank pilot underway, in partnership with Good Things Foundation to provide free data to refugees, plans in place to expand this to support the tablet loan scheme.
- Mini digital survey launched with businesses who attended the workshops, results currently being collated – these will be shared at the next digital and skills board meeting.; Dedicated digital page on InvestSefton site, frequently updated.
- 1:1 support to businesses who are looking at digitalisation continues to take place, during the last quarter a business has received support to switch to using financial accounting software.
- Team is encouraging Sefton business leaders to join apply for one of the new LCR Cluster Groups-Digital & Creative, Advanced Manufacturing and Health/Life Sciences -Deployment of cloud telephony completed, and project closed; ICT Client represented and involved with ICB digital forums, Sefton group now established to move this forward M365 upgrade complete and monthly updates automated
- TECS web page development - will include short videos of a day in the Life of a Telecare Installer and of a Minor Works Technician to promote both services and TEC equipment. ASC front door development and ASC prescribing teams have been invited to produce short promotional videos with two completed and another team is scheduled to produce an additional one in October.
- Telecare service will switch over to ELMS system by Sept 23 – all data and equipment required for switch has been completed/ordered, working with Ethitech to progress this.
- Improved version of Street Lighting process is complete; go-live is pending completion of automated process by Agilisys.
- Air Quality Sensors installed at 7 locations in Sefton, as part of LCR traffic signal upgrade project, and adjacent to 3 schools, as part of School Street Pilots. Sensors provide real time AQ data and could potentially be used to determine traffic light strategies/sequences for reducing pollution.