

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
(REGENERATION AND SKILLS)**

Cllr Christine Howard	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	March 2024
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**EMPLOYMENT & LEARNING**

**Sefton@work General Performance Data for January 2023**

The following table illustrates data from the Way to Work Esf project together with the SIF funded project activity which was commenced in October 2023 after the cessation of European Social Funding.

<b>Data Description</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Figures</b>								
Total Clients accessing service for ESF Ways to Work support	1 <sup>st</sup> January 2016 – 30 <sup>th</sup> September 2023	5,296								
Clients accessing service post ESF	From 1 October 2023	383								
New clients accessing service this month	January 2024	78								
New clients registering by age	January 2024	<table border="0"> <tr> <td>16-24</td> <td align="right">17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>25-49</td> <td align="right">41</td> </tr> <tr> <td>50+</td> <td align="right">13</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Not yet known</td> <td align="right">9</td> </tr> </table>	16-24	17	25-49	41	50+	13	Not yet known	9
16-24	17									
25-49	41									
50+	13									
Not yet known	9									
Welcome Appointments made	January 2024	21								
Male Participants	Since 01/01/2016	59.4%								
Female Participants	Since 01/01/2016	40.6%								
Other Participants	Since 01/01/2016	0.1%								
Participants with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016	32.7%								
Participants without basic skills	Since 01/01/2016	30.9%								
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	2,164								
SIF Ways to Work Starts on Programme	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	184 39								
SIF W2W contracts Male	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	67.4% 64.1%								
SIF W2W contracts Female	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	32.6% 35.9%								
SIF W2W clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/10/2020 January 2024	44.0% 48.7%								
SIF W2W clients without basic skills	Since 01/10/2023 January 2024	38.6% 51.3%								
Footfall (Face to Face contact) (subcategory of Overall Service Demand)	To January 2024	629								
Overall Service Demand	To January 2024	1,429								

## **Sefton@Work Relocation**

Sefton@Work's relocation to new premises in Bootle Strand has gone smoothly with no service interruption across delivery programmes. There are still some finishing touches and resources to arrive to maximise the use of the space but will be fully completed by end February. Planning is underway to host a celebration event on the 14<sup>th</sup> March to mark the official launch of the new premises and celebrate 20 years of delivery of employment programmes to Sefton residents.

## **Mental Health & Wellbeing**

After the success of the last Fit for Success course delivered by Sefton@Work another is now scheduled with Active Sefton to start at the end of February. The course was designed to promote a positive mindset and includes class-based activities in Water Sports such as rafting, kayaking, dragon boating for team working and confidence building. Following completion of the course clients will be offered a 3-month gym pass at Sefton Leisure Centres to continue their wellbeing pathway.

## **Construction & Warehouse Routeway**

2 Routeway into Construction & Warehousing courses took place in both Jan & Feb combining confidence building/wellbeing with practical skills and qualifications that clients can take forward to construction/warehouse employment opportunities. The training provider delivered the 4-day programme to 2 separate cohorts of 12 Sefton@Work clients.

## **New Employment opportunities**

A growth sector employer has approached us to manage ongoing recruitment for vacancies in civil engineering and fibre-optics work. They have contracts across the North West and are struggling to staff them due to skills shortages. In January we delivered a routeway into the sector which included training for Street-Works Operatives roles, Safe Working in Civils and Underground Safety roles. 8 long term unemployed clients attended in total and 4 have since been employed by the employer.

## **Early Years Sector Careers Event**

Sefton@Work supported an SMBC Early Years Careers Event at SCLS on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2024. The event was aimed at people who are considering a career working with children and in response to the Early Years New Entitlement. The Early Years Team have also offered to meet Sefton@Work advisers in Feb and deliver an information session that will assist clients who are interested in the sector. Funding to support additional events in future is being sourced from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

## **Consolidating Partnerships with Local Employers**

Sefton@Work's mission to enable more residents to access sustainable employment cannot be achieved without sympathetic local employers. In order to acknowledge the value that our local employers deliver for our clients, a new Employer Partnership Agreement has been launched. This initiative aims to strengthen Sefton@Work's relationship with local employers by acknowledging their commitment to local employment, the support they give to our clients and the opportunities they offer to vulnerable people who may not otherwise be able to demonstrate their talents in conventional recruitment processes.

It is planned that our Employer Liaison Officers will visit all our committed employers over the next months to present them with a framed 'Employer Partnership Certificate' which has been endorsed and signed by the Chief Executive of Sefton Council as a token of thanks and recognition.

### **Social Value**

Sefton@Work met with A E Yates Ltd who have the contract to repair Southport Pier to discuss their social value policy and to foster a commitment from A E Yates to maintain a long-term relationship with SMBC and Sefton@Work, supporting ongoing social value and employment initiatives beyond the immediate 12-month Pier construction project or any potential future work.

We are working with A E Yates to commit to hiring a percentage of their workforce from Sefton, prioritising unemployed residents and care leavers and implement a targeted initiative to actively recruit them, ensuring they have ringfenced opportunities within the company. The company has signed the Caring Business Charter, as the Service requests all contractors to do who are successful in achieving Council contracts.

### **Recent Client Case studies**

#### **Client - J**

J was not claiming any out of work benefits as his wife was working and financially supporting the family including their young children. He is originally from Nigeria and has lived in Sefton for approximately 2 years. His English Language skills were very good, but he felt he needed support when completing formal job applications. He had been applying for many jobs and had been successful in gaining interviews, but these did not materialise into jobs.

J had over 20 years experiences working within the administration, business support and customer service sectors. J was hoping to find full-time sustainable employment within these roles and has previously attended The Digital Inclusion Course to help support him with his job search and job applications.

His advisor suggested he consider a placement on a Sefton@Work Routeway scheme with Citizens Advice in a volunteer Customer service Role. He agreed to this and together they completed an application form. After an interview J was successful in gaining a place. Attending the Routeway placement helped J with his confidence whilst he continued to apply for other administrative roles.

After several months volunteering, J was successful in gaining an interview with Sefton Council Children's Services Department for a Business Support Assistant role. He felt the interview went well and was very pleased to be offered the role subject to references. J's advisor assisted in chasing up his references and he started employment with the Council in November 2023.

During his journey with Sefton@Work J informed his advisor that his family was struggling financially with only one income, so his advisor was able to issue him with a foodbank voucher, a cost-of-living package and also shared details of the Community Pantry which offers families a free evening meal every Monday & Tuesday evening. This assistance was available to J as part of Sefton@Work's commitment to the Child Poverty Strategy. J was also supported via our

employability fund when he started employment with travel costs and suitable work clothes.

### **Client N**

When N first came to Sefton@Work the majority of her work experience had been in the Retail sector and had been largely fragmented and temporary. N was looking for work which could offer her some reliability in terms of pay and something that was sustainable over the longer term to fit around her childcare needs.

N was considering a role within the social care sector but lacked any formal training and qualifications. Her adviser explained that a Health and Social Care course was due to start with a local provider that covered all aspects of care, and she welcomed the opportunity to enrol.

She completed the training, enjoyed the course, and was supported with travel costs from Sefton@Work's employability fund. After completing the qualification, N was successful in gaining several interviews by employers and was offered a variety of care roles. Unfortunately, N did not accept a position, as she was concerned about the reliability of hours in relation to her childcare, and proximity to her home.

Her Sefton@Work adviser encouraged her to speak with employers about her concerns and negotiate on more flexible hours, as the employers clearly saw her potential and the lack of applicants in this sector is a major factor. N took some convincing on this negotiating approach from her adviser as she needed to increase her sense of value and worth which did not come readily to her. However, she did take these concepts on board and when she was interviewed by Medline for a support worker vacancy, she was pleasantly surprised when she was offered guaranteed hours to suit her family needs. She was very excited when they offered her a position pending DBS and references. Her adviser completed a 'Better Off Calculation' to reassure N she would be better off financially.

N started her new role as an SEN Support Worker in late November 2023.

N's journey from unemployed retail worker to a successful SEN support worker highlights the importance of tailored support, flexible training options, and community collaboration in empowering individuals facing career transitions, especially those with unique challenges like childcare constraints. This case study emphasises the significance of addressing barriers systematically to facilitate successful career retraining and uplift the lives of individuals seeking meaningful employment.

## **NEET REDUCTION AND EARLY INTERVENTION SERVICE**

### **December 2023 Performance on NEET and Not Known**

The data for our monthly performance for NEET and Not Known is cleansed 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 who are Not in Education, Employment or Training.

The following outlines the progress made by the Service in December 2023.

Table 1 – Current NEET 16-17 Performance (Dec 2023)

Area	NEET	Not Known (NK)	Combined NEET/NK
	3.4%	0.2%	3.6%
Halton	5.3%	0.4%	5.6%
Wirral	3.3%	2.3%	5.6%
St Helens	4.9%	0.9%	5.8%
ENGLAND	3.1%	2.9%	6.0%
NORTH WEST	4.1%	1.9%	6.0%
Knowsley	5.3%	2.1%	7.4%
Liverpool	5.3%	3.6%	8.9%

- Sefton has the lowest Combined NEET & NK % across the LCR
- Sefton is performing better than the NW and England NEET & NK Combined (- 2.4% below NW average and – 2.4% below national average)
- Sefton is ranked 2<sup>nd</sup> lowest in December 23 among its nominate group of Statistical Neighbour councils.
- At 0.2%, Sefton’s NK has decreased by 0.2% year on year, this is 2.7% below the national average and 1.7% below the NW.
- 26.97% of the NEET and NK cohort are in vulnerable group (58 out of 215)
- NEET at 3.4% in December 23 for our 16/17-year-olds has increased by 0.59% (41yp) year on year, however this is 0.7% below the regional average of 4.1% and nationally we are 0.3% higher than the average of 3.1% however the England Not Known is 2.9% with statistically a proportion being in NEET.
- Sefton is 0.2% below statistical neighbours 16-17 NEET average which is 3.6%
- Our current 16/17 cohort is 5912, 215 of whom are NEET. Although we have 33 additional young people in our NEET cohort, the total cohort size has increased by 207 year on year.

### Year on Year Comparisons

Academic Age 16-17 Actual NEET	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	2.82%	2.48%
<b>2023/24 Actual NEET %</b>	<b>3.42%</b>	<b>2.82%</b>
Difference	<b>0.59%</b>	<b>0.34%</b>
2023/24 Actual NEET figure	202	161
2023/24 Total Cohort	5912	5705

Academic Age 16-18 Actual NEET	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	3.99%	3.59%
<b>2023/24 Actual NEET %</b>	<b>4.45%</b>	<b>3.99%</b>
Difference	<b>0.46%</b>	<b>0.40%</b>
2023/24 Actual NEET figure	387	341
2023/24 Total Cohort	8700	8545

Academic Age 16-17 Not Known	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	0.37%	0.55%
<b>2023/24 Not Known %</b>	<b>0.22%</b>	<b>0.37%</b>
Difference	<b>-0.15%</b>	<b>-0.19%</b>
2023/24 Not Known figure	13	21
2023/24 Total Cohort	5912	5705

Academic Age 16-18 Not Known	Dec-23	Dec-22
2022/23 Previous Performance	1.21%	1.24%
<b>2023/24 Not Known %</b>	<b>1.05%</b>	<b>1.21%</b>
Difference	<b>-0.16%</b>	<b>-0.03%</b>
2023/24 Not Known figure	91	103
2023/24 Total Cohort	8700	8545

### Care Experienced Young People (In borough)

As part of the NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service offer, Career Connect support 56.7% (105 young people) of the care experienced young people cohort, these are those living in the borough. The Virtual school support those living outside of the borough (i.e. 70 young people)

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

Age	NEET	%	EET	%	Total
16	7	23%	23	77%	30
17	8	22%	28	77%	36
18	17	43%	22	47%	39
	32	30%	73	70%	105

- 15 young people 16-17 are NEET, which is 9.9% of the total cohort (i.e. 66)
- 70% of the overall cohort are NEET and 30% are EET.

It is important to note that the Cared for Children and Care Experienced young people cohort has increased year on year so there are more young people to support in this group. EET outcomes have increased by nearly 8.5% compared in 2022.

**2023 Year 11 Leavers** - The current position for 16 yr. old EET has dropped from 90% to 85% (5% decrease) This equates to 4 young people who have dropped out of EET.

A working group has been set up with Youth Justice, Career Connect and the Virtual School to identify ways in which we can work together to improve attendance and

engagement, provide careers advice and guidance and plan for post 16 transition, for young people in and out of borough who are NEET or at Risk of becoming NEET.

### **September Guarantee and Activity Survey**

The September Guarantee forms part of the Raising the Age of Participation (RPA) statutory guidance 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.

The final figures reported by Career Connect to the DfE on 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024 for those young people who were in EET from September 2023, shows that 96.6% (3048) of our young people progressed into learning meeting RPA. Of the 96 not meeting the RPA, 27 are employed with no training.

Data recorded as at 31<sup>st</sup> Jan 2024

Activity	Number	%
Meeting the Duty to Participate	3048	96.6%
Not Participating	96	3.0%
Temporary Break from Learning	5	0.2%
Working towards Participation	6	0.2%
Total	3155	100%

### **Case Studies**

M is female aged 17 and attended Hugh Baird College but due to a late start, didn't settle in very well and has left her course. M suffers from a panic disorder and has been struggling with the expectations of the course and with social interactions. M has been NEET for 4 months now. Career Connect referred her to Active Sefton, and she now goes to the gym once a week and is feeling much better in herself. Although M has her English Language GCSE, she wants to also achieve her Maths so that she can go back to college this September. Career Connect contacted Smart Training who deliver Functional Skills L2 Maths, but M needed a laptop to be able to access the training. Career Connect applied to Tameside Community Computer CIC who collects and recondition Laptops. This application was successful and M picked the laptop up in December, she awaits a start date for Smart Training and will commence the course at the end of February.

Young person 17 years old – living in semi-independent housing and has been previously cared for (not in Sefton). She has SEN and learning barriers as well as mental health issues. Career Connect have supported her with employability and confidence skills and helped her to apply for a vacancy at the Lakeside Restaurant, they also accessed their own organisation's Beneficiary Grant Fund to buy her interview clothes. The Career Connect coach has helped in practising mindfulness techniques and after some months of concentrated work, the young person attended this job interview and was successful in getting the job.

K, young male has been NEET for 14 weeks. He had multiple barriers including confidence, motivation, and school attendance issues. K was previously identified as Sefton RONI at Litherland High School and offered early intervention support, but he refused the support at that time and engaged little in the school process. Career Connect engaged with K's parents through several phone calls and 3 home visits. Several options were discussed with the family concentrated more on personal self-development programmes in the first instance and a range of providers including Talent Match, Prince's Trust Fire Service Programme and Hugh Baird Prince's Trust offer. After some time, Career Connect arranged to meet with K and his parent to call into Hugh Baird in the evening to have a look around as it would be quieter, and K would be able to get a better feel of the College. They completed the walk around and arranged for a further visit to meet with the Prince's Trust team. The 2<sup>nd</sup> meeting took place and K registered for the course; K was invited for a taster day first which he attended. K is currently on programme with the Princes Trust and is now looking at future courses/programmes for when it ends.

## **The Caring Business Charter**

### **Current Activity**

The Charter Co-ordinator (a young person with experience of care herself) is currently working with **43** Active Employers, and **65** employers have signed the Charter. To date, there have been **62** referrals from partners and the following positive outcomes have been achieved for our young people:

- **9** have been supported into full time employment, **4** of whom are in apprenticeships.
- **2** have moved back into full time education to improve their qualifications.
- **1** is currently on a personal development programme with the Princes Trust.
- **8** are being supported by Sefton@Work through the DWP Restart Programme
- **1** young person is undertaking a "Find your Purpose" intervention with Sefton@work.
- **1** young person has just completed his CSCS course with Sefton@work and has been offered a work experience with Dowhigh Construction
- **16** young people attended the Careers Market Place held during National Care Leavers Week in October 2023.

As part of the Charter and to promote the offer, the Sefton Beacon is circulated to over 100+ stakeholders/partners monthly. The Beacon also promotes all Sefton Council and Sefton School Apprenticeship opportunities which are shared with the Leaving Care Team to identify suitable young people.

### **Multiply Programme – Voluntary Sector Delivery**

Following a compliant procurement strategy, the following organisations were commissioned to deliver informal engagement and learning under the Multiply Numeracy programme:

- Acronym Community Empowerment (ACE)
- Award Solutions
- Merseyside Expanding Horizons (the Big Onion)



- Phoenix Community & Youth Project
- Rotunda
- The Inclusion Network

All VCS organisations delivering Multiply on behalf of the Council will be responsible for direct engagement through existing and new participants that will support the increase of referrals to our Adult and Community Learning Service. To date, 82 participants have been supported to increase their numeracy skills through the VCS route.

As Year 2 is due to end on 31<sup>st</sup> March 2024, we are currently preparing to re-tender for Year 3 delivery which is due to commence on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2024.

## **INVEST SEFTON**

### **Growth Hub**

InvestSefton is one of the Liverpool City Region Growth Hubs working alongside the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (CA), Growth Platform, other local authorities, Chambers of Commerce and The Women's Organisation. The total value for delivery in each of the LA areas is £20,000 compared to the £50,000 of previous years. **Government has announced that Growth Hub funding has been extended until September 2023 but await news of any replacement funding. InvestSefton delivered the Growth Hub contract in Sefton meeting its contractual requirements which included exceeding output targets for the number of businesses assisted.**

### **UKSPF Shared Prosperity Funding**

**Place Based Business Support-** Sefton's allocation is £782,414, which includes c.£23k top-sliced monies for central co-ordination and website development via Growth Platform. The GFA has now been issued and should be signed-off by the time of CM briefing. The project has been given a new delivery brand name- **Business Support Service** and a steering group chaired by Sefton has been established.

**Business Start-up support-** This will now be delivered via the aforementioned Place Based Business Support programme. InvestSefton commissioned support for start-ups via competitive tender for a £80,000 contract. Following evaluation this was awarded to:

- **Merseyside Expanding Horizons (MEH) & Safe Regeneration-** This is a Bootle based partnership led by MEH who manage the Big Onion in Bootle Strand shopping centre and Southport Town Hall. The Big Onion facility is equipped with co-working spaces, meeting rooms, presentation facilities, and high-speed internet connectivity, and offers an incubator hub to up to 20 new start businesses. Within Southport, they use a prime location in the Town Hall. Safe Regeneration run incubator units in Bootle from the St Marys Complex, this is their main delivery location. Both were

part of the previous LCR Enterprise hub funded under ERDF until 30 June 2023.

**Town Centres business support**-Similarly, the team also went to open market for a business support sustainability commission worth £60,000. Following evaluation this was awarded to:

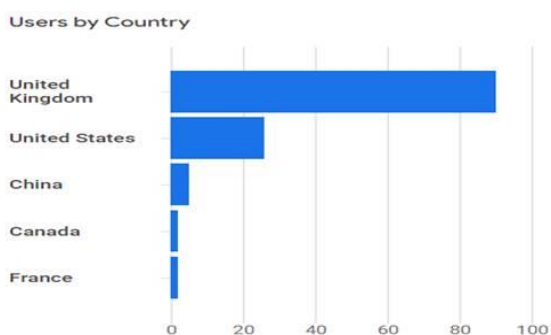
- **Groundwork Cheshire, Lancashire & Merseyside**-Groundwork is a Merseyside based national organisation with a team of professional in-house consultants and associates with a variety of technical expertise including energy auditing, carbon management and environmental training. These are supported by the Director of Business who has over 25 years' experience delivering public funded environmental / low carbon business support projects to businesses, including delivery of the SRB 6 funded Sefton Business Environment Association. Specialisms include delivery of sustainability support and action plans through Groundwork Sustainable Business Membership scheme. The team has previously worked with Groundwork under SRB projects in south Sefton.

The team is also developing a brief to commission a Consultancy Framework to help augment existing business adviser support in niche areas based on demand recorded by the Advisers and officers.

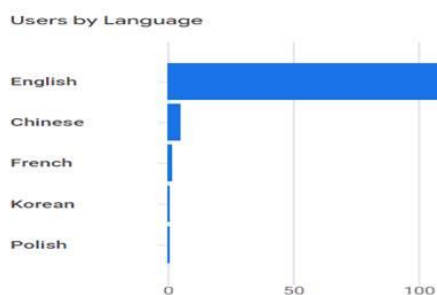
### Business engagement

- From Friday 2<sup>nd</sup> to Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024, the website had 132 unique sessions.
- The most visits were on Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb;
- Since the new website went live on Monday 30<sup>th</sup> March 2020 until Thursday 8<sup>th</sup> Feb 2024, the site has had a total of **72,066** unique sessions;
- Post this week have mainly been around promoting our upcoming events - Sefton Huddle for digital, creative and tech businesses (22<sup>nd</sup> Feb) and a Cyber Security Workshop on the 13<sup>th</sup> March;
- InvestSefton twitter page has 1616 followers;
- Sefton Huddle Facebook page has 25 members.

Country of origin of the website user is broken down as follows:



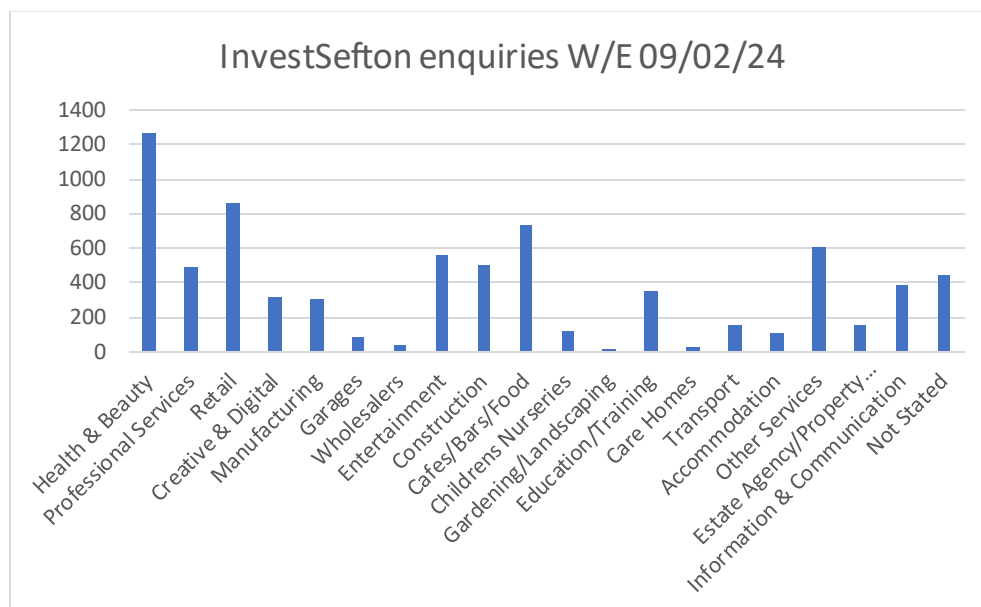
Language of the website user is broken down as follows:



## Business Enquiries

Since March 2020 InvestSefton has handled 7,543 enquiries from a wide range of businesses.

Breakdown by type of business is provided as of 9 February 2024:



Total enquiry numbers from 13<sup>th</sup> March to date:

Year	Total Enquiries
13 <sup>th</sup> March 2020- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 21	3740
1 <sup>st</sup> April 21- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 22	1325
1 <sup>st</sup> April 22- 31 <sup>st</sup> March 23	1413
1 <sup>st</sup> April 23 – to date	1065
<b>Total</b>	<b>7,543</b>

## Sefton Economic Forum 7 December Lakehouse, Crosby

Some 91 people from 76 businesses (including 24 women business owners) attended the winter Economic Forum. The forum offered a diverse range of speakers covering the latest economic trends, growth at LJL Airport and insights into how businesses can use professional athlete coaching and mentoring techniques in their workplace.

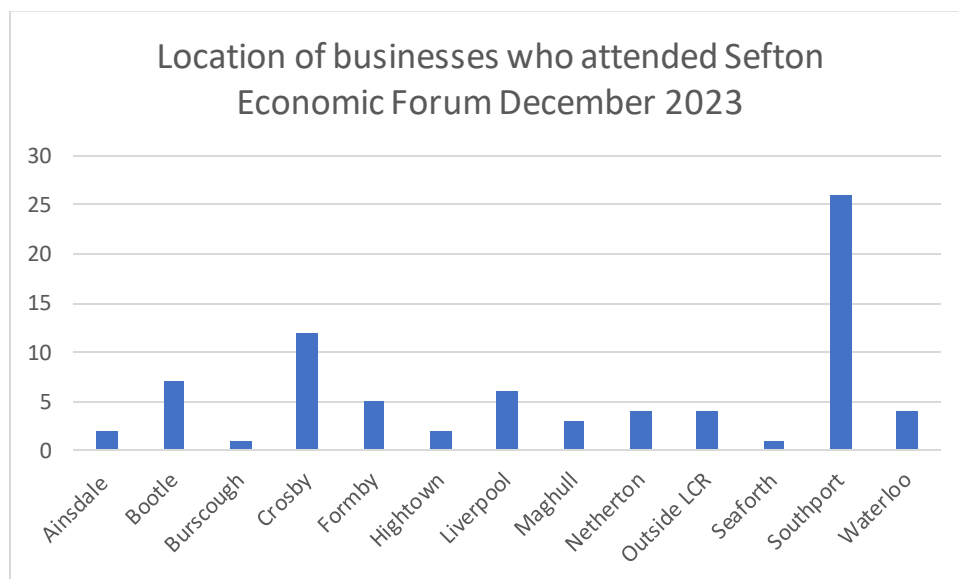


## Feedback

*“Elevate EBP – loved the meditation guy, will try the breathing exercises*

*Innovation Consulting – thought the Danny Donachie talk was right up his street, he was really into meditation”*

*“Christian Spence talk was very popular with most businesses, very easy to understand and interesting”*



## Case studies

The team continues to engage with businesses as part of its 1:1 delivery support. Recent case studies below:

Maintenance Services company based in Bootle offering Commercial Gas Electric and Maintenance Services. The business was incorporated in 2022 by Management staff from the demised Lockwood's Maintenance Services Limited retaining some of the staff and many customers of the former company. Clients include Southport College, Southport FC, Mitie Group and Sovini. The Business is looking to grow and is seeking new clients, growth opportunities and staff recruitment. InvestSefton Programme supported the business by providing free access to a range of workshops and events to enable them to develop their network and gain new business.

IT provider based in Southport are a managed service who provide additional services including VOIP telephone systems and IT systems audits. The Business is looking to increase its recurring monthly revenue through its consulting service offering or managed service support. InvestSefton supported the Business by reviewing its Website and SEO, comparing to local competitors as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personas for the business services.

An award-winning family run bed and breakfast based in Southport which has 10 rooms available to book. The business looks after a range of guests from overseas golfers to local businesses who use it for regional staff travelling into the area. The owner is keen on sustainability and has long been involved in visitor economy groups for Southport. Following the announcement of the new convention centre he was appointed the Sustainability champion for the centre with a goal to improve the sustainability of other local businesses in the area. InvestSefton has supported the business in a number of areas.

A bed and breakfast based in Southport. The current owners took over the hotel in 2016 and since then have had to face the challenges of covid shutdowns, the local conference centre closing and now the cost-of-living crisis. The Business aims to try to increase occupancy levels by improving their website and marketing activities. InvestSefton supported the business by reviewing its website and SEO and comparing them to national competitors as well as providing the business with an understanding of the separate buyer personas for their venue.

## **REGENERATION**

### **Southport Town Deal**

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 and Water & Light Show**

The Marine Lake Events Centre project is progressing on site with enabling and services diversion works being carried out in advance of the proposed demolition programme for this key site. The £73M Marine Lake Events Centre secured planning approval in April 2023, and work is progressing with the project team to deliver this key Town Deal project.

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 ongoing. United Utilities technical approval received for the drainage diversion works.
- Condition surveys of adjacent properties complete
- Completion of RIBA Stage 4 Design work and works packages being priced up.

The enabling works and main contract works will be procured separately. Currently major utilities diversion works are taking place on site, and this will take 10-12 weeks to complete. The Council is now in the process of procuring the main contractor with a start date later this year once the enabling and demolition works are complete. [Vital work to begin near Marine Lake Events Centre \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/news/2023/11/20/vital-work-to-begin-near-marine-lake-events-centre)

### **Enterprise Arcade**

The Enterprise Arcade has just moved forward with its next key milestone with the appointment of the contractor Skyline who started work 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. This project is being showcased at Sefton Huddle event in February 2024 to share with wider stakeholders. [Works begin on huge creative hub project in heart of Southport \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/news/2024/01/24/works-begin-on-huge-creative-hub-project-in-heart-of-southport)

### **Les Transformation de Southport**

The first phase of transportation improvements, focusing on the area around Southport Market – Kings Street, Market Street, Eastbank Street. Market Street and Eastbank Street is progressing with further detailed design work. Further consultation is proposed with local businesses to share the details and minimise disruption. Work is anticipated to commence in 2024. This exciting project should help transform this area of the town centre by updating and improving the quality of the public realm and improving directional signage.

### **Building a Better Customer Experience**

This key training programme has been operation for a year now and is progressing well.

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.

### **Southport Cove – The Esplanade**

An Exclusivity Agreement is now in place with GSL the team behind the Cove Resort proposals for the Esplanade site in Southport. The agreement gives GSL 18 months to work on the details of the scheme and prior to agreement from the Council on any future lease arrangement for development of the site. During the 18 month period GSL will be expected to progress planning and all matters relating to delivery of the project on this site.

### **BOOTLE**

#### **Bootle Strand Repurposing**

On 7<sup>th</sup> December 2023 Cabinet considered the 5 year Business Plan for Bootle Strand Shopping Centre and transformation project including agreement to progress RIBA Stage 3 for the £20m levelling up funding, approved in March last year. 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.

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, undertake selective demolition of part of the centre, provide a new town square and landscaping proposals for the town centre. The appointed contractor will accommodate requirements for the proposed 2024 events programme at Salt and Tar, including Tom Jones and Status Quo concerts in August [Status Quo set to rock all over Bootle \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/news/status-quo-set-to-rock-all-over-bootle) and comedy weekender in May ([Gary Delaney and Seann Walsh to take the stage at this year's Comedy Weekender in Bootle \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/news/gary-delaney-and-seann-walsh-to-take-the-stage-at-this-year-s-comedy-weekender-in-bootle)). The construction programme will be adjusted to take account of this to maintain momentum through the demolition period.

#### **Bootle Regeneration Strategy**

Work is ongoing to develop and inform this strategy from a range of sources. The recent Bootle AAP preferred options consultation 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.

People can find out more about the Bootle Strand scheme on the Council's website [Bootle Strand \(sefton.gov.uk\)](https://sefton.gov.uk/news/bootle-strand)

## **CROSBY**

### **Crosby New and Existing Library at Waterloo**

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 Crosby Village and in addition the Council's Cabinet has given consideration as to how refurbishment of the existing Library in Waterloo can be progressed as separate scheme.

Cabinet considered a report in December 2023 which provided an update on the Crosby Village outline business case. Scheme A new design team will now work on details for a revised library and health hub scheme and a detailed Full Business Case will be prepared in parallel to the new design for consideration by members later this year. A planning application was submitted in September 2023 for works to Crosby village car park and an outline planning application for the new library which is awaiting determination.

## **AINSDALE ON SEA**

### **Ainsdale Coastal Gateway - Ainsdale Beach Improvement Works**

Following conversations with residents, community groups and previous wider consultation on this area, the Council announced in 2023 that it would be looking to develop an updated vision for the coastal gateway in response to the feedback received. 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. This vision work is being finalised and will be reported back to members. ([Council shares next steps for Ainsdale-on-Sea \(sefton.gov.uk\)](#))

### **Ainsdale Toilet Refurbishment and Changing Places Toilets**

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 grant funding requirements.

### **Former Sands Public House, Shore Road, Ainsdale.**

Sefton Council went out to the market for the former Sands Public House in Ainsdale (Opposite Pontins) following soft market testing that indicated a sufficient level of interest to encourage a formal marketing of the site. Sefton is considering and 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 continues (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 2023 Cabinet considered the next stage of work to bring this centre into full Council ownership, including continuing negotiations with outstanding owners. Recently a further two additional properties have been acquired and a renewed effort are underway to bring the remaining ownerships into Council control. Parallel to this process, agents have been appointed continue to market the site to support the



Council's ambitions for change and redevelopment of this site. Expressions of interest are continuing to come forward, lines of enquiry explored further with the market, and members are being updated on progress.

## **MAGHULL**

### **Maghull Health Park**

Mersey Care are working closely with Sefton Council to develop plans for a Mental Health Digital Research Centre at Maghull Health Park. Building on the significant investment in the site to date - Europe's largest concentration of complex secure mental health services and sector leading clinical excellence for serious mental illness - Phase 1 of this health park development will look to bring forward a world class Mental Health Digital Research Centre, a landmark centre of excellence for digital mental health research in Sefton.

The proposals under development include 300,000sqft of medical research, technology and data-based occupier space which will anchor the development of a new regionally significant 10 ha Health Park for investors, innovators, clinicians, and academics to revolutionise the future of mental health care, research and digital innovation, including immersive and interactive spaces, augmented reality labs and research accommodation. The site forms part of a wider city region bid for Life Sciences Investment Zone funding which aims to develop and life sciences cluster in the region building on significant assets within the region the proposal will safeguard 1800 jobs currently on site and develop new jobs, training, research and product development opportunities as well as attracting private sector investment.

## **TOURISM**

### **Events**

#### **Southport Food & Drink Festival – 31<sup>st</sup> May, 1<sup>st</sup> & 2<sup>nd</sup> June**

- The closing date for applications was Friday 16<sup>th</sup> February and the response has been incredible.
- Applications are being shortlisted and successful businesses will be notified shortly.
- Infrastructure is being secured and any contracts that have finished are being re tendered via The Chest NW
- Children's Entertainment

#### **Southport Air Show – 13<sup>th</sup> & 14<sup>th</sup> July**

- Tickets are now on sale using See Tickets.
- Trader booking forms have been sent out and there has been a great response with most of the available pitches already being taken.
- The Flying Display Management has been secured by the tender process and it has been awarded to TSA Consulting.
- TSA have proceeded to obtain costs for aircraft displays and the military allocation will be announced at the end of March/beginning of April.
- The Traffic Management and Medical cover are due to be advertised for tender on the Chest NW.

- The Comms Management, WIFI and box office staffing are also being tendered.
- A new PA company has been awarded the contract – they are called HG1 Communications.
- The Armed Forces are securing ground assets for the Military Village.
- We are hoping to have a larger STEM presence at the event and BAE Systems have shown an interest in attending with the possibility of sponsorship.

### **British Musical Fireworks Championship – 20<sup>th</sup> & 21<sup>st</sup> September**

- Tickets are now on sale using See Tickets.
- The competitors briefing and site visit will take place on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> February at Victoria Park. The Competition Clerk and head judge will also attend to talk through the rules of the competition.
- Infrastructure is being secured.
- The PA system is being tendered via the Chest NW along with medical cover, Traffic Management and Comms Management

### **MLEC**

- United Utility Diversion now on site, works expected to last around 12 weeks.
- Procurement of the demolition and enabling contractor has been completed, contract to be awarded in the next 14 days.
- Procurement planning for the main contractor is underway and will commence shortly to ensure programme delivery.
- Off the back of the success of the Southport Learning Trust Primary School Hoarding Design Event in November – SLT CEO Ian Raikes requested all primary school students who did not attend the event receive the same training. Southport Convention Bureau has trained 60 year 11 students who are career champions to deliver the training. We will be supporting the students to deliver the first couple of events scheduled for March.
- Gardiner & Theobald & Southport Convention Bureau represented the MLEC Project Team at the Sefton Child Poverty Strategy Conference where we explained how youth are consideration in every aspect of the MLEC project both through construction phase and the finished visitor destination.
- After the success of the Christmas Eve Boxes Appeal partnered with Compassion Acts of Southport a further a schedule of events are planned to incorporate as follows, an Easter Egg Appeal for an event on 23<sup>rd</sup> March, 'Back to School Kits' – School bags and contents. These will add value to the free school uniform service provided by Compassion Acts Uniform Hub, in readiness for their busy months of July and August. A further Christmas Eve Box event will take place in December.
- Gardiner & Theobald and Southport Convention Bureau met with Fletchers Solicitors – Responsible Business Manager, Reece Hobson Adams to identify ways to align collaboration for Social Value activities. We connected Fletchers with contacts to extend their reach for inclusive internships and to increase their environmental focus.

- To support International Women's Day on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March, we will be presenting to all Year 11 female students from The Southport Learning Trust at Edge Hill University. The theme is #inspireinclusion.
- Partnered with Invest Sefton and the appointed training delivery partner contractor Groundworks, a sustainability introductory event will take place on Tuesday March 12<sup>th</sup> at The Waterfront Hotel, Southport. The event is designed to target accommodation businesses to help prepare them for securing business for MLEC. Sustainability is a key buying criterion for conference and event organisers, and it is critical that as a destination in a competitive environment that Southport acts.
- Accommodation is an essential part of the Conferencing and Events offer and whilst the opening of MLEC is a couple of years away conversations with conference buyers and event organisers are ongoing. 60 businesses will have the opportunity to work on a 1 to 1 basis to write a bespoke sustainability policy and action plan assisting them to boost their business credentials and secure more business.

### **Salt & Tar**

After successful pilot year plans are in place to deliver an exciting full year of events, the large-scale music event including Tom Jones has already been announced along with The Comedy Weekender. The full events programme will be announced soon. The key activities currently taking place include:

- Working with contractors to finish off site infrastructure, signage and design look and feel
- Finalised events calendar plan for 2024
- Organising press launch
- Organising public launch
- Procuring key suppliers to support operations for the next 3 years
- Driving marketing and promotion for Status Quo and Comedy ticketed events
- Improving way finding around site
- Involvement with Bootle regeneration subgroups to ensure Salt and Tar is worked into development plans
- Engaging with Sefton learning to progress with the trainee container kitchen idea
- Networking with the local community attending groups and workshops