

## Sefton MBC – Action Plan for Employment 2014/15

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### Recommendation from Overview & Scrutiny Review of Employment, with progress notes:

- (1) **Actively supports and confirms the value of the proposed Member Reference Group for Economy, and requests that update reports on the work of the Member Reference Group are submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services)**

**Summary Progress Report** on Member Reference Group to be forwarded to Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration) twice a year.

- (2) **Welcomes a holistic, authority-wide high-level strategy/policy that enables all Council assets to be organised in an effective way to contribute to regeneration and reduce the potential for ‘silo working’, thereby identifying regeneration as a cross-cutting theme across all Council activity, and requests the Director of Built Environment to bring forward a Place-Based Regeneration policy for members to consider**

A draft policy, entitled “**Shared Prosperity – A Draft Policy**” is attached – Annex 1 – for pre-scrutiny, with comments and opinions to be supplied to Cabinet Member – Regeneration.

It should also be noted that Cabinet (27th March 2014) approved an **Asset Disposal Policy**, including development principles guiding disposal and investment. “In considering the timing and nature of the disposal the Council will seek to ensure that its asset disposals complement the objectives for the economic development and regeneration of an area.”

- (3) **Director of Built Environment and the Director of Corporate Services are requested to develop a Social Value Policy, underpinning the exercise of all the Council’s powers including procurement, regulation and employment which would authorise specific obligations to be placed on providers relating to local jobs, skills and supply, and work toward publishing a set of ethical business statements that demonstrate the Council’s commitment**

The LCR Employment & Skills Board approved a **Charter for Jobs & Skills through Procurement** in May 2013.

The latest version of the Charter and the first **annual review** of the implementation of the Charter are attached, with case studies and a progress report for each district – Annex 2.

Sefton Council adopted a new **Procurement Strategy** in July 2014 which adopted the principles of the LCR Charter, and included new objectives including “To support the local economy, business and voluntary sector through transparency of opportunity, support and education” - see

<http://moderngov/documents/s54459/Enc.%201%20for%20Procurement%20Strategy.pdf>

Outcomes for the Strategy include:

- “Delivering a strong range of engagement with SME’s to show we are ‘Open for Business’ in order to encourage and support businesses leading to successful contract awards”
- “Social Value consideration being placed at the heart of our procurement planning as we aim to gain added value from procurement through securing employment, learning and skills outcomes as well as local supply chain engagement by our larger contractors”.

A more detailed **Social Value** policy statement is in preparation and will show how these outcomes can be achieved using the purchasing, investment, planning and other powers of the local authority, while remaining compliant with UK and European competition law.

In the meantime, the Council’s **Economy & Tourism Service** (through InvestSefton) has taken a proactive approach to targeting new opportunities at local suppliers, and helping them improve their offer the Council:

- Analysing existing corporate spend to better understand the balance of local and non-local supply
- Monitoring the new corporate Contract Register to alert local suppliers to upcoming requests for quotations
- Supporting companies who are not yet doing business with the Council or who have tried and been rejected for any reason, to become “fit to bid”.

Recent events include:

- Four 'Doing Business with Sefton' events in September 2014, organised between InvestSefton and the Council’s Central Procurement Unit.
- Two more held after Sefton Economic Forum on 25th November at Aintree Conference Centre.

The events are designed to encourage local businesses to bid, particularly small and micro businesses. We are also raising awareness of the move to risk-based sourcing, which is less onerous for suppliers in terms of paperwork and process (tender threshold at £70k increased to £172K for goods and services). We have targeted iProc suppliers and Sefton businesses registered on the Chest, in addition to an e-mail to 1,700 Sefton companies.

We are also using some recent tendering opportunities to engage with Sefton businesses:

- Merseytravel have asked for assistance with promoting a broader supply base £250M+ framework of consultancy opportunities including Project Management, PR campaigning, Engineering and Safety Environment
- Halton Council has asked for assistance in promoting a £250M+ framework for Specialist Transport services to the Sefton transport operators we worked with on the Sefton framework
- InvestSefton and Sefton@Work advisors are following up businesses who attended the September Doing Business events. About half of the 84 delegates had not previously sought assistance with public procurement
- Two PC-based workshops are scheduled for 11 December, because 55 of the Doing Business delegates asked for training in how to use The Chest.

This is an ongoing programme of work and further reports will be made to the Cabinet Member – Regeneration in due course.

- (4) The Director of Built Environment is requested to include a high-level employment, skills and local supply objective within the Local Plan to provide justification for specific conditions and policies relating to the maximisation of local benefit from proposals for development and change of use**

The Draft Local Plan for Sefton includes these over-arching policies – (emphasis added):

Policy SD2 (Principles of Sustainable Development):

- Objective 3 – To promote **economic growth, tourism and jobs creation** and support new and existing businesses
- Objective 4 – To **meet** the diverse **needs** for homes, jobs, services and facilities, **as close to where they arise as possible**
- Objective 6 – To make the most of the value of **the Port** to the local economy and jobs, while making sure that the impact on the environment and local communities is mitigated
- Objective 8 – To improve **access to services, facilities and jobs**

Policy MN2 (Housing, Employment and Mixed Use Allocations) includes a policy on Strategic Employment Locations, which are sites along Dunnings Bridge Road, land east of Maghull, land north and south of Formby, and extension to Southport Business Park:

- Development of the Strategic Employment Locations must provide high quality business parks. In particular, new developments should maximise **job outputs (including job opportunities for local people)**, and incorporate high quality design and layout.

Policy ED1 (The Port and Maritime Zone) includes a policy on Port Expansion requiring planning permission:

- Planning conditions and/or legal agreements will be used to ensure appropriate compensation, mitigation, infrastructure and appropriate local **economic, environment and community** benefits are secured and provided.

A number of other policies are supportive of job creation and local economic growth, for example, for town centres, the coast and for infrastructure.

- (5) The Director of Built Environment is requested to undertake a detailed investigation (with external expert assistance as necessary) on how to embed detailed obligations and operational targets and compliance regimes, proportional to the task, within planning consents and development agreements**

Heads of Economic Development and Planning are having ongoing discussion as to how to secure this objective within the planning system. The National Planning Policy Framework is in this respect more restrictive than in previous years, and reduces the scope for linkage between employment objectives and the normal operation of the planning system.

As regards the use of local labour by contractors, there are inherent difficulties in stipulating the use of local unemployed people in contracts because both UK government and the European Union may regard it as anti-competitive and a restrictive practice. However, the Council has had some success (through Sefton@Work) in negotiating voluntary employment agreements with investors, and placing obligations on planning applicants via planning conditions or s106 agreements. An example from an ongoing negotiation with a retailer (identity withheld) is attached as [Annex 3](#)

- (6) The Director of Built Environment is requested to work through the Sefton Employment and Skills Partners Group to align all partners' employer engagement to ensure that all businesses across the Borough are given comparable opportunities to achieve our shared Employment, Education and Training objective**

Sefton Employment & Skills Partners Group continues to meet six-weekly. Its membership comprises Sefton MBC, Skills Funding Agency, Jobcentre Plus, Hugh Baird College, and Sefton Training Providers Network. The Partners Group has a rolling work plan.

The principle focus for the Group in the last year is preparing for **port-related expansion**:

- BE Group have been commissioned by the Council to produce a Business Survey of the Maritime Cluster to profile demand and generate leads. Data on nearly 800 companies has been collected by structured telephone interviews, covering the Port estate, companies in the Maritime Cluster, and geographically across south, mid and north Sefton. This will create a valuable database of employers intentions, allowing for better informed business engagement.
- Joint action to develop a single joined-up offer to companies in the Maritime Cluster. The Partners signing the data Sharing Protocol will design a Prospectus promoting a wide range of investment, business, employment and skills support, and target that offer precisely on the needs of the Maritime Cluster.
- The Survey, Business Engagement, Prospectus and associated awareness-raising activity with jobseekers and young people is spelled out in the latest version of the Maritime Action Plan – attached as [Annex 4](#).

- (7) The Council, a representative of Hugh Baird College, Southport College and other Further Education providers within the Borough is invited to update the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) annually on the progress of their proactive work in reducing NEETs in the Borough, including the use of all available evidence to identify NEET hotspots, preparation of intervention targets to reduce numbers in these areas, together with agreed robust systems for monitoring and evaluating the impact of joint interventions; and progress with other prevention/diversion measures including studio schools**

Update provided to Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration & Environmental Services) on 18<sup>th</sup> March 2014 with a detailed report on young people Not in Education, Employment or Training.

- 8) The Sefton Employment and Skills Partners Group is invited to develop a holistic approach to the education, training and employment needs of young people in**

**transition from school to work, and bring forward a strategy and plan for tackling youth disengagement and long-term youth unemployment**

Partners are working across Liverpool City Region as well as in Sefton to improve opportunities for young people:

- LCR Employment & Skills Board has secured £5.9m of Youth Contract Underspend to deliver a Youth Employment Gateway. Sefton@Work will deliver this contract in Sefton. Summary of Gateway attached as Annex 5.
- Further youth employment funding will be available via the new ESF programme for the city region, and the EU's Youth Employment Initiative, which are match-funded to years 2 and 3 of the Gateway.
- In Sefton, there has been a joint appointment to the new post of Post-14 Education Training & Employment Officer. His role is to develop and implement policies for NEETs, and help with the transition of school-leavers to adult labour markets.

**(9) The Director of Older People, in consultation with the Director of Built Environment, is requested to advise the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) how Adult Community Learning can help to extend Digital Inclusion to hard-to-reach groups and to maximising opportunities for individuals to be trained up, ready for employment**

**(10) The Head of Corporate Finance and ICT is requested to develop an integrated Strategy for Digital Inclusion**

One of the principal elements of the Welfare Reform changes has been the move from manual face-to-face applications for benefits to a Digital by Default model. Partners have sought to be accommodating to this area of need by opening access to IT facilities. This has been accompanied by a range of training in Information Communication Technology (ICT) competencies by 3TC, a Sefton based charity aiming to offer access to ICT, Sefton@Work and various community organisations. Indeed a number of public sector bodies have extended access, such as One Vision Housing who offer ICT training to their tenants.

In addition the Universal Credit Delivery Partnership Agreement between the Council and DWP involves our partner organisations Arvato and CAB providing support to benefit claimants on how to access services online. The DWP's Digital by Default approach will continue, particularly as the roll out of Universal Credit gathers pace, so it is important we continue to ensure that access is available across the Borough. There will be a dedicated partner workshop, facilitated by 3TC, to be held in the next couple of months to review access to ICT. This will also feed into a broader digital inclusion strategy by Sefton Council, which is likely to propose the adoption of the national framework, GO-ON, announced earlier this year. This will be a holistic approach focussed around key areas:- the Council internally; residents as customers; work with partners; work with communities and community organisations, and the economy and business sector. The area relating to economy and business will be key to accessing funding opportunities through GO-ON and other funding bodies.

Sefton@Work, along with a number of other partners in the Borough has provided Digital Inclusion support in response to demands from residents needs assistance to cope with the rapid digitisation of processes affecting benefit claims and dealing with enquiries or problems related to benefits. For many people on low incomes who have no broadband connection or PC at home, the conversion of such services to a completely digital interface presents huge challenges.

Not only is there a significant group of people in Sefton who have no digital access at home and therefore rely on public provision but it also raises basic and functional skills challenges to people unused to engaging with the world in this way. In addition, to help with instigating benefit claims, the digital inclusion training on offer through Sefton@Work covers applying for a bank account, personal security while online, using the internet to make savings, online application techniques and social media used by employers.

- (11) The Employment Development and Development of Local Town Centres and Economies Working Group recognises the excellent work already being undertaken by the “Family Comes First” Team in Sefton and that an annual report be submitted to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) to provide an update on the Team’s progress in supporting Sefton’s families**

A recent performance report on Families Come First is attached – [Annex 6](#). It details Sefton@Work’s role in supporting a multi-agency delivery plan to help more adults into work and programmes to build up their employability skills.

- (12) The Sefton Employment and Skills Partners Group is requested to maximise employment opportunities in relation to future and emerging growth sectors such as the SuperPort, Visitor Economy, Knowledge Economy and Low Carbon Economy**

Overall performance on Sefton’s Economic Strategy is reported in a twice-yearly Performance Monitoring Report. The draft & unpublished April-September 2014 Report is attached as [Annex 7](#). This summarises action on investment, jobs and international trade for the LCR growth sectors in Sefton:

- **SuperPort** – business engagement underway with maritime cluster (see rec. 6 above). Employment Potential Study commissioned.
- **Low Carbon** – REECH programme extended, with additional REECH into Business programme engaging with 40 businesses. Support for local supply chain to access RSL build contracts via Fusion 21.
- **Tourism** – successful ballot for Southport Business Improvement District, to be underpinned by offer of business support, recruitment & training services to the 800 BID members. Coastal Communities Fund Round 3 application in preparation for additional investment including apprenticeships/waged placements in BID employers

- **Knowledge Economy** – plans for Professional Sefton network to engage with our Professional & Financial Service sector.

**(13) The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership is requested to customise its employment and skill forecasts to match Sefton’s specific needs and to inform the work of the Sefton Employment and Skills partners**

The LCR Employment & Skills Board has appointed a **Labour Market Intelligence Team**, which is engaged in producing Skills for Growth Agreements for ten sectors of the local economy. These include forecasts of supply and demand for jobs and skills. The LMI Team is available for bespoke analyses, and Sefton officers will continue to make ad hoc use of their capability. See <http://www.lcrskillsforgrowth.org.uk>

**(14) The Employment Development and Development of Local Town Centres and Economies Working Group commends the excellent work undertaken by Sefton@Work and InvestSefton in attracting new business to Sefton, supporting existing businesses already operating in Sefton and the day-to-day guidance, support and advice available to the residents of Sefton**

Sefton@work has subsequently achieved the Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence Award, and all InvestSefton advisors are now accredited to the SFEDI National Occupational Standard For service-level activities and outputs, see the Performance Monitoring Report ([Annex 7](#)).

**(15) The Director of Built Environment is requested to submit a six-monthly Performance Monitoring report to the Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Environmental Services) Committee, reporting progress made against each of the recommendations set out in the report**

A Performance Monitoring Report on the Council’s Economic Strategy is submitted to the Cabinet Member – Regeneration every six months. The Cabinet Member has agreed that the Report should in future go to Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration) for pre-scrutiny, and to provide comments and feedback to the Cabinet Member. The recommendations contained in this Employment Action Plan will be referenced to the appropriate part of the Performance Monitoring Report.

**(16) The Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Tourism is requested to develop an action/implementation plan for each of the agreed recommendations, including timescales and milestones for completion**

This document.

**(17) The Head of Corporate Commissioning and Neighbourhood Co-ordination is requested to submit six monthly monitoring reports to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Performance and Corporate Services) and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Environmental Services) in relation to the impact on Sefton’s Community of Welfare Reform**

A report on the cumulative impact of Welfare Reform on Sefton was received by Cabinet on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2014. Monitoring Reports will be submitted to Overview & Scrutiny for pre-scrutiny.

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## Annexes

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1. Shared Prosperity – A Draft Policy, Head of Economy & Tourism, January 2015
3. Charter for Jobs & Skills through Procurement – First Annual Review, June 2014
4. Sample s106 Employment Agreement
5. Maritime Action Plan, Sefton Employment & Skills Partners Group, June 2014
6. Youth Employment Gateway – Summary
7. Families Come First – Performance Report, Director of Children’s Services, 2014
8. Draft Fourth Performance Monitoring Report (April-September 2014), Director for Built Environment