

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - 3 July 2018

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	June 2018

InvestSefton update

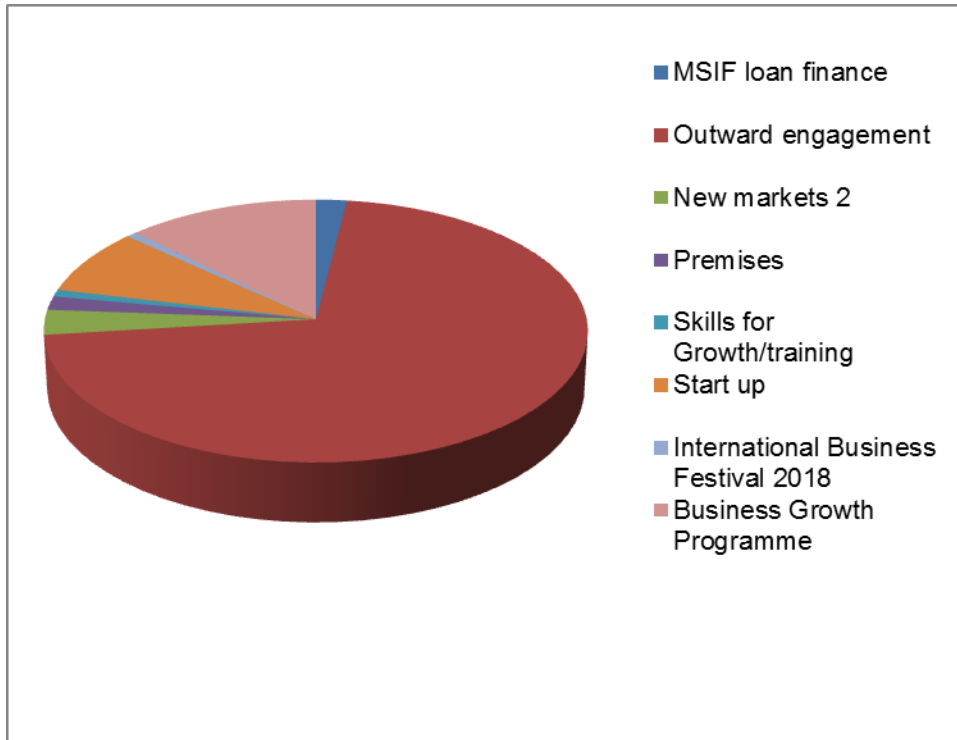
Sefton Growth Hub/ ERDF Business Growth Programme

InvestSefton is one of the Liverpool City Region growth hubs working alongside the Local Enterprise Partnership, other local authorities, Chambers of Commerce and The Womens Organisation. This is part of current UK Government funded activities delivered locally by Local Enterprise Partnerships. In Sefton this activity has been merged with the ERDF Business Growth Programme to help provide a more cohesive service to businesses. InvestSefton has been awarded a further 12 month contract until 31 March 2019 to deliver.

Up to 31 May 2018 InvestSefton has engaged with 1,810 businesses, carried out 1,489 diagnostics and brokered 1,737 businesses into other areas of support.

Business enquiries through Sefton Growth Hub continue to rise with the same mix of firms from a range of industry sectors seeking advice, guidance and more intensive support. Key trends emerging include diagnostic and managed referral support from the team in areas such as sales and marketing, including diversification, access to finance, business start-up, intellectual property, selling goods to and access to council services such as procurement and planning. More recently the introduction of the General Data Protection Regulation Act has caused some businesses to seek advice and the response to this is covered under 'Outward Engagement'.

Business referrals into other support areas are shown below:



Outward engagement

InvestSefton responds to spikes in demand by organising business workshops for groups of businesses. The events form a key part of delivery as it allows InvestSefton to reach a wider number of businesses on key topics relevant to their needs. These have recently included a response to the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), a legal act of the European Parliament and the Council that came into force on 25 May 2018.

The GDPR primarily seeks to provide unified and clear rules on stronger data protection that is fit for the digital age, give individuals more control of their personal information processed by companies and ease law enforcement. GDPR orchestrates the harmonisation of data protection law across the EU. The new regulation will also affect non-European companies that offer goods or services to, and or monitor the behaviour of, European Union residents, and therefore process any of their personal data.

InvestSefton held two specific GDPR events at which James Brayshaw of Adaptive Communications, a Southport based GDPR expert, talked about how the new regulation will affect businesses. The events were a major success:

- Park Hotel, Netherton-25th April-95 delegates attended of which 55 were individual Sefton Businesses
- Ramada Hotel, Southport-26th April -85 delegates attended of which 63 were individual Sefton businesses

The above events followed a successful Meet the Buyer session with Heron who are undertaking a new health development in Southport. A selection of comments

received from businesses for this, together with those from the April events is provided below:

CJB Energy Services Ltd – *Each time I come to one of these they are excellent. Julie (especially) and the rest of the guys are so helpful and supportive and are helping my business thrive.*

EQE Health Ltd – *Excellent opportunity – thanks Julie.*

Plughole Planters – *Thanks for a great event and ongoing support.*

Waterloo Electrical Supplies Ltd – *Very good to attend a meet the buyer event and see what happens and is expected of us.*

Yvonne Holland – Have just started computer lessons – one to one sessions. My email was hacked in 2014 and lost all confidence.

United Automation Ltd – It would be good to have a follow up after a trial period to discuss problems/success and share experience.

Eledigital – Good event, essential for me and supporting my new business.

John H Boston Ltd – Nice to know Sefton has a department to help businesses (whether new or established)

Karen Potter -Estate Agent – Thank you for a well -run event.

InvestSefton also organised a Financial and Professional services event in Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre on 27th April. This was attended by 33 delegates from 15 Sefton businesses who received a presentation from the Isle of Man Government on new investment opportunities.

A Sefton Economic Forum is arranged for 8th June. The event will focus on business and investment growth and the panelists are:

- Tony Evans – Journalist, author and former football editor of the Times
- Peter Moore – Head of Commissioning, Sefton Council
- Rob Capleton – International Business Festival, Liverpool Vision
- Robin Tudor – Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Feedback on the event will be provided in the next update.

InvestSefton's Growth Hub provides an overarching support service for businesses of any size or sector in the borough and blends this into its ERDF programme which is restricted to SMEs who undertake business to business activities. The ERDF Business Growth Programme is the subject of an extension to March 2022 and InvestSefton led the consortium on a new expression of interest (EoI) submitted on 31 April by the Combined Authority. The EoI is now being appraised by the Ministry

of Housing, Communities and Local Government with a decision expected by mid - July 2018.

Case studies

Cabinet Member recently visited two businesses supported by InvestSefton; details below:

Jack Hodson Ltd a family owned business which has been trading in Sefton since 1966; the company expanded from Canal Street to a modern production and office facility in Aintree Business Park in March, and the company is flourishing. Jack Hodson founded the company and ran it with his wife until retirement. Three generations of the Hodson family work in the business, which is now run by Jack's two sons, Peter and John Hodson. The business is the 'go to' national supplier of security-related electronics for police vehicles, and participates in frameworks for the fitting of cameras, lightbars and security measures to marked and unmarked police vehicles.

The business works for a number of police regions in the UK in England and Wales, and has won market share from its competitors. The business employs 26 staff. They have introduced a number of innovations in relation to workflow and processing vehicles faster, reducing waiting times and cost. They also commissioned a local manufacturing business to work with them in designing housings for vehicles.

The business has been supported by InvestSefton and Sefton@Work for a number of years, and is currently being assisted under the Sefton Business Growth Programme. They have an in-house training programme, and hire staff from the local area. One Sefton@Work referral joined the business 14 years ago and continues to be an important part of the workforce



Peter & Jack Hodson showing Cllr Atkinson a Police car fit-out

Churchill Sheds, an owner-managed business, based in Netherton. The business began trading as a partnership in February 2016, and employs 4 staff and casual labour temporary staff at peak periods. The company manufactures purpose-built sheds, industrial barns, office units and workshops for businesses, the hospitality sector, and rural producers. The company build specialist products such as Dutch Barns and bespoke wooden hospitality bars

Trade comes from a variety of sources, including on-line marketing, signage, and passing trade to their Dunnings Bridge Road estate which includes industrial flooring suppliers, a wood merchants, roofing centre and builders merchants. All products feature 100% tanalised (pressure treated) rot-resistant frameworks to ensure longevity. The business is seeking to develop their product range, for cabins and workshops. A development undertaken recently for Age Concern was for office space, and a developer commissioned a cabin for a care home development.

Under the Business Growth Programme InvestSefton has supported the business with locating and bidding for public contracts, with Councils and the NHS, registration on The Chest and Contracts Finder portals, and using the Planning Portal to source work. The business is committed to sustainability, and is being supported with developing a bespoke Social Value and Sustainability policy to help with bidding for contracts.



L/R Back Dave Riley Churchill Sheds, Cllr Atkinson – front Julie Swarbrick, Ian Williams, Churchill Sheds showing the company's outdoor bar product

Access to Finance

InvestSefton provides a range of support for businesses seeking finance, loans, grant and venture capital through banks and financial institutions such as Merseyside Special Investment Fund (MSIF). The team has supported a number of MSIF applications and they are included in the following fund update for Sefton:

- Sub £100k loan fund-5 x businesses for the total value of £365,000 (cumulative total is 61 x businesses for the total value of £2.2m)
- 3 x Regional Growth Fund applications drawn to the value of £321,000 in Sefton and a further 3 offered (£174k)
- 9 x Start up loans drawn to the value of £174,000 in Sefton-the second highest area outside of Liverpool.

Inward Investment update

- The Mersey Reach project (Chancerygate) has submitted a revised S73 application following consultation with the local community and ward members. This is currently subject to formal consultation with an expectation that the application will be considered on 4th July. Funding is still progressing as planned. There is early interest in the scheme from local businesses that are looking for c. 20,000-30,000 sq ft units, both would result in job creation.
- Atlantic Park-the planning application for a 105,000 sq ft B8 building, plus a decked car park will be determined in May and is likely to be a Delegated Decision. The SIF application was submitted to consultants for appraisal in March, with the results of this expected sometime in June 2018. Discussions are ongoing regarding further development on the site.
- InvestSefton continues to provide ongoing support for regeneration opportunities, including Bootle Town Centre, Crosby Town Centre, Southport Business Park, Southport Town Centre amongst others. Enquiries are also being managed for various food and beverage operators, including the potential redevelopment of the Old Roan PH discussed below.
- InvestSefton lead's the operational single inward service for the city region (Chairing the Group), utilising ERDF funding through the Place Marketing Project and represents the group on the Internationalisation working group. The Business Development Manager led the project extension bid for the recent Priority 3 ESIF call.
- The Business Development Manager is Sefton Council's nominated lead for LCR Digital Infrastructure programmes and will help coordinate Sefton's input for a LCR Local Full Fibres Network bid for funding. The draft framework for this has now been presented to Chief Executives and further information will be provided to Cabinet Member.
- The Department of Investment and Trade funded Key Account Manager (KAM) is now in place and has commenced engagement with Sefton businesses. Currently engaged with Greencore (Sushi San), Huber Packaging and Stork Cooperheat.
- The Business Development Manager is a member of the **International Business Festival 2018** Local Sounding Board. As part of this InvestSefton will be working with the Festival Team and local businesses to maximise benefits from this event for Sefton. A number of actions and activities are being planned including securing 20 free tickets with the InvestSefton team providing one to one support to those selected. The Invest Sefton team has arranged workshops and other engagement to encourage local business participation including the aforementioned Sefton Economic Forum on 8th June. A postal marketing mail out (funded by the IBF) has gone out to some 850 Sefton businesses inviting their participation in the festival. The IBF team advised that outside of Liverpool the most interest has come from Sefton businesses.

- The BDM is working with 'The Extraordinary Club' to create a new Creative and Digital Incubator in St Hughs, Bootle Town Centre. Information was shared at the previous CM Briefing and an introduction made to Cabinet Member. The BDM is supporting the development of the proposal and looking at potential revenue streams to enable this to be delivered.

Tourism Update

Business Tourism

- So far in 2018/19, part way through the first quarter, three conferences have been converted worth around £1m to the local economy. These events will bring approx. 1900 bed nights to the destination
- Four Live enquiries were added to the system in the same period, which if confirmed, would provide an economic impact IRO £1.4m.
- In terms of conferences that have taken place since January, we have hosted eight events in total. These events brought IRO £4.07m into the local economy and generated around 3575 bed nights.
- We have confirmed attendance at the TUC main conference in Manchester and The Meetings Show in London, in order to hopefully generate more enquiries. A review of exhibition attendance is underway to make best use of resources.

Events

Southport Festival, 11th, 12th & 13th May

- This event is a partnership between Southport BID, Sefton Council, Southport Contemporary Arts and the private sector. This event is now in its third year. It is a town wide event which includes Arts, Jazz, Folk, Literature, Poetry, Comedy and Visual Arts. There are numerous venues that take part including – The Atkinson, Wesley Street, Town Hall Gardens, Bars & Restaurants.
- Additional activity for 2018 included Arts & Crafts on Mermaid gardens, a live music stage on Chapel Street, Pif Paf cycles on the Town Hall Gardens and a Viking exhibit.
- A full evaluation of the event will take place, however footfall statistics for the weekend of the festival showed an increase with a number of businesses reporting increases in sales also.

Food and Drink Festival 1st, 2nd & 3rd June

- The event was a great success attracting over 36,000 visitors over 3 days
- There were 55 Street Food Traders, 45 Producers and 18 Bars

- The Children's Festival was a particular highlight and featured arts and crafts, slime and sand art workshops, sports activities, storytelling and princess dress up.

Southport Air Show 6th, 7th & 8th July

- There will again be a programme of night flying on the Friday including a fireworks finale. Gates will open at 6.30pm, flying displays from approximately 7.30pm and Fireworks at 10pm
- Confirmed aircraft include the Red Arrows (Friday only), Typhoon (Sunday only) plus the Battle of Britain Memorial Flights, Tigers Army Parachute Display Team
- This year's supported Charities include RAF100, Sefton4Good and The Air Cadets.
- Tickets sales are increasing steadily, sales are currently up on 2017.

British Musical Firework Championships 28th, 29th & 30th September

- The 7 new competitors are all confirmed and have been fully briefed on the event, all music selections have been submitted.
- Ticket sales once again are up on last year to date, with the seating area proving popular

Destination Marketing

- The seasonal marketing campaign tender was placed on The Chest and was won by Viv-id. They will manage the summer, autumn and winter/spring campaigns. The summer campaign is about to commence (a mix of radio and digital activity).
- The visitsouthport.com search engine optimization (SEO) contract was placed on The Chest and awarded to the incumbent. The April website hits were down on 2017 (April was a cold / wet month) but May figures were substantially (23.8%) up.
- Visitor Guide – distribution of the 50,000 guides is well underway, demand is strong and printed stocks will have been exhausted by mid-July. We will then rely on the digital version.
- Southport Restaurateurs Association – membership remains static at 27. Local advertising (press and digital) is underway.
- Visitor Passport – 60,000 copies printed and in distribution (via coach hosts, local accommodation providers and conference organisers).
- Conferences – Southport attending Meetings Show and TUC congress to promote the destination.

- Golf – Demand for Sefton courses (and accommodation) remains strong after The Open. England's Golf Coast packages are performing well - Golf green fees £102,991.85 (7% up on this time last year). Accommodation booked through EGC £54,759.78 (11% up on this time last year). EGC is a separate partnership organisation.
- Recent PR activity has secured coverage in a VisitBritain 'Manchester and North' campaign, coverage for Food & Drink Festival and secured 'familiarisation' visits from three journalists who will then produce features for their respective media (magazine, radio and blog).

Southport Market and Tourism Operations

- The Southport Pier works as part of the CCF continues to progress, the first new leisure unit is complete and ready for handover with the structural paining nearing completion.
- Works will soon begin on the seaward shelter, end pavilion along with new access with project completion due end of 2018.
- Trading conditions at Southport Market continue to be tough, mirroring the high-street nationally. Work continues to secure new traders with advertising campaigns taking place in sector led print along with paid Facebook advertising. Pro- active sales also takes place in order to secure the quality of traders required.

Growth Project Updates

Bootle Access and Connectivity Study

Atkins has been appointed to deliver the study through the Transport Framework. This is progressing in line with the programme with the Draft baseline report expected early June 18 and the final stage 1 scoping report expected early Aug 2018;

Bootle Town Hall Complex

Commercial assessment on the viability of the building to be reported in the next Cabinet Member's brief and details are still awaited from the consultants GVA.

A meeting was held with Hugh Baird Management Group to initiate discussions on a joint project. The discussions were a very positive start and will form one of the options within the Bootle Town Hall complex.

Coffee House Bridge

Discussions are progressing regarding the development of this site in conjunction with Safe. Sefton MBC, following procurement, have appointed Hydrock to conduct the ground investigations.

Regeneration Team

The three members of the team, attended APM training in Manchester. The course has given them all the same basic knowledge of Project Management and a sound basis for on-going training.