

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	26 July 2018
Subject:	Sefton Economic Strategy Framework		
Report of:	Executive Director	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 :

- (1) Update members on the outcome of the consultation process of the Sefton Economic Strategy
- (2) Seek agreement to delegate approval of the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy and associated action plans to Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills

Recommendation(s):

That Members:

- (1) Note the outcome of the consultation process of the Sefton Economic Strategy
- (2) Delegate approval of the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy and associated action plans to Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

To update members on progress with this Key Decision and, to allow further time to align this work with the Council's Growth Programme, seek agreement to delegate approval of the final version and associated action plans to Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills

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

None

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

£66,872 revenue was approved from the Growth Budget and Investment and Employment Team Budget to fund the development of both the Economic Assessment and Strategy Framework for Sefton. Following invitation to tender process the work was awarded to Regeneris Consulting.

(B) Capital Costs

None

Implications of the Proposals:

<p>Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):</p> <p>Consultation co-ordination activities was be undertaken by existing staff within existing budgets</p>
<p>Legal Implications:</p> <p>None</p>
<p>Equality Implications:</p> <p>The equality Implications have been identified and mitigated.</p> <p>(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)</p>

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

<p>Protect the most vulnerable:</p> <p>Inclusive growth is the 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</p>
<p>Facilitate confident and resilient communities</p> <p>Inclusive Growth is the core objective of the strategy framework including a focus on ‘People’ to better connect economic opportunity to the lived experience of residents; Investing in education, skills and employability is also one of 7 key objectives</p>
<p>Commission, broker and provide core services:</p> <p>Reconfiguring public services and community led delivery and generating new sources of finance to support growth are two of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>

<p>Place – leadership and influencer:</p> <p>Repositioning and reprofiling Sefton is one of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>
<p>Drivers of change and reform:</p> <p>Reconfiguring public services and community led delivery and generating new sources of finance to support growth are two of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>
<p>Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity:</p> <p>Delivering new development and infrastructure, Creating and growing local, private and social enterprise and securing new inward investment are three of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>
<p>Greater income for social investment:</p> <p>Creating and growing local, private and social enterprise is one of the 7 key objectives for the strategy</p>
<p>Cleaner Greener</p> <p>Under Delivering new development and infrastructure reference is made to the mitigation of any adverse environmental impacts as a result of economic regeneration growth; the strategy also focuses on attracting new cleaner greener investment for Digital, particularly the roll-out of ultrafast broadband.</p>

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD.5217/18.....) and Head of Regulation and Compliance (LD4441/18.....) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Businesses

Developers

Investors

Professional Intermediaries & Networks e.g. Chambers of Commerce; Federation of Small Businesses; Professional Sefton

Other Liverpool City Region Local Authorities/Chief Executives

Combined Authority

Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership & Sector Boards

Liverpool City Region Employment & Skills Board

Prime Contractors & Supply Chains

Members of Sefton Leadership Collaborative, including Further Education, CCGs,
Sefton Council for Voluntary Services

The ten Parishes

Organisations with insight into residents of Working Age especially Jobseekers, People on Low Incomes, and Equality Groups

Transport Providers/Commissioners

Any other relevant groups/organisations

Internal consultees:

Elected Members

All members of SLB & Programme Board

Yammer (Sefton Council)

Sefton Business Friendly Group

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

(Please delete as appropriate and remove this text)

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Appendices:

The following appendices are attached to this report:

- (1) Draft Sefton Economic Strategy Framework (March 2018)**
- (2) Sefton Economic Strategy Consultation report**

Background Papers:

There are no background papers available for inspection.

1.0 Background

1.1 Cabinet Member – Regeneration authorised the preparation of an Economic Assessment and Economic Strategy for Sefton at her meeting of 1st September 2016 and consultants Regeneris were appointed by open competitive tender on 10th October 2016.

1.2 In 2016 the council carried out a borough wide consultation and asked people what they thought was important for Sefton now and in for the future. Over 5,000 people took part and the information helped to develop the Vision for Sefton 2030. People told us what was important and this included:

- Looking after our town centres
- Having houses that people can afford to buy or rent
- There needs to be more jobs for people

1.3 The Sefton Economic Assessment, a factual statement of the borough's strengths and weaknesses, opportunities and threats, was approved by Cabinet Member – Regeneration at her meeting of 9th March 2017. The Cabinet Member also approved at the same meeting the preparation of a draft Strategic Framework for Action, or the building blocks of the Strategy.

2.0 Consultation exercise

2.1 Business and Public consultation started on 8 March and ended 4 May 2018; an extra week was added to allow for known late responses and letters of representation. The purpose of the consultation was to inform stakeholders of the Council's Economic Assessment, and to consult (seek views) on the draft Framework for Action, the building blocks of the Sefton Economic Strategy. The focus for the consultation was the actions arising from the findings of the Assessment:

- Creating more higher quality and better paid local jobs
- More people in work and in more productive jobs
- Strengthening the skills base to deliver economic growth and benefit communities
- Deliver new housing and employment land to enable growth
- Improve the digital infrastructure and extend its benefits
- Improve transport infrastructure for growth and sustainability
- Tackle health and well-being challenges experienced by some of Sefton's communities
- Make more of Sefton as a place to live, visit and invest in.

2.2 A stakeholder analysis was completed, which guided priorities for the consultation. The consultation methods were matched to the stakeholder analysis, and to the level of consultation. Focus groups in the north and south of the Borough were proposed to capture the views and input of job seekers and adults with learning disabilities on the key themes. The consultation plans were presented to the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel on the 17th November, 2017.

2.3 The following process was used:

- The draft Sefton Economic Strategy document (**Appendix 1**)
- A standard version questionnaire (on eConsult, hard copy and distributed to libraries)
- An Easy Read version of the questionnaire
- Information to the InvestSefton Business Mailing List (c.3,700), directing them to the on-line questionnaire
- A Business Focus Group

- Focus groups in the north and south with Sefton@Work clients
- A Focus group with StrandbyMe attendees
- A Focus group with People First (Adults with learning disabilities)
- Information on the Sefton Council website and intranet
- Information on social media

3.0 Results

3.1 A copy of the full consultation report is attached as **Appendix 2**.

3.2 The consultation received an excellent response with a total of **189 returns** received through focus groups, online surveys, telephone contacts and written returns. This is a **65% increase** on a similar exercise carried out in 2014. The strategy's focus on Inclusive growth, which encompasses wellbeing, housing and infrastructure helped generate a larger response from **residents (49%)** and **Sefton's business community (30%)**. There was also a good geographical split with more **north Sefton responses (47%) than in 2014**.

3.3 The vast majority of respondents (91%) across all modes of engagement agreed that our Economic Strategy should focus on the three broad aims of **People, Place and Productivity**. Although online surveys provided many shorter responses, the more detailed and qualitative information we received came from the resident and business focus groups and these have been vital sources of intelligence in identifying recurring themes that Sefton should focus on for the coming period. The themes that have been expressed more frequently and strongly include the following:

- Sefton's strategy needs to make our **relationship with the Liverpool City Region** clearer and identify where Sefton's strengths should be at the sub-regional level. This includes a clearer outline of the **alignment with City region strategies** and policies that will impact our plans for Sefton. e.g. LCR Growth Strategy; Skills, Growth, SHELMA, BEIS Clean Growth; Northern Powerhouse. A similar approach should be undertaken with regard to national policies such as the government's Industrial strategy and Apprenticeship reforms.
- The Council should develop a **Business Growth and investment** policy; There should be stronger reference to the Council's **Framework for Change-Growth objectives**
- More support for businesses and start ups across the borough; While there is a need to do more to develop business growth and **attract inward investment**, we should also recognise and celebrate the borough's achievements and successes in these areas
- Stronger reference should be made to Southport Business Improvement District and its links to the Council
- The introduction of focus on **Sefton's Digital and Creative sector** was broadly welcomed and should be developed into key actions e.g. Business incubators; Investment in fast broadband internet connectivity in town centres
- Many Sefton residents continue to need **personalised assistance** to enter and sustain meaningful work that lifts them out of the benefit system
- We need to ensure that more effective **support is available for our vulnerable young people** to help them make the transition from learning in schools or college into sustainable careers
- Sefton should **recognise and celebrate good local employers** willing to give opportunities to workless residents and vulnerable young people
- Stronger reference to **Southport/Manchester rail link** and subsequent economic opportunities
- Sefton should focus effort on ensuring that all residents have **access to second chance learning opportunities** to enable them to achieve their economic potential.

- **Improved transport connectivity** and **better signage** in the borough
- Sefton needs to secure the biggest impact in terms of **job creation, training and placements** for residents through the use of **Social Value** . This means greater leverage through Planning, Licensing and Commissioning of services across the Council and partners generating opportunity for local residents and businesses
- Stronger reference to **Bootle, Crosby and Southport Investment strategies**; more information on plans for other areas should also feature e.g Maghull, Formby
- Stronger reference to **Skills development, the Apprenticeship levy, Enterprise and Post 14 student work experience and Further/Higher Education establishments** and their role in the Strategy.
- More understanding about what **inclusive growth** means to those in marginalised groups
- Develop and improve **affordable housing opportunities to help retain younger people in Sefton**
- **Allay any fears** over the Planning system becoming too relaxed in efforts to attract new inward investment
- **Make better use of Council's own assets** including town halls, libraries , CPOs
- Better understanding of **third sector opportunities** arising from the reconfiguration of public services and community led development
- Being clearer about what our **current economic strengths** are and what our potential for future development could be

3.4 The totality of the response broadly confirms the original Objectives of the Sefton Economic Assessment approved by Cabinet Member in March 2017. These are listed on page 2 under Consultation but can be summarised as follows:

- More higher quality and better paid jobs
- More local people in work, upskilled and working in more productive jobs
- Increased housing and employment land to deliver growth
- Improve Sefton's fast broadband and digital infrastructure; create more digital/creative business and employment opportunities
- Improve strategic rail links and transport infrastructure for future growth including signage; coast and town centres
- Tackle health and well-being challenges in Sefton communities
- Make more of Sefton as a place to live, work, visit and invest in

4.0 Key opportunities & Priority actions

4.1 The Focus groups provided insight to both resident and business thinking on the key opportunities and actions arising from the strategy. Key themes included:

- **Health & Wellbeing** was the top priority for the People First and Strandbyme groups, noting that good health is a conduit to gaining work, **developing skills and increasing job prospects**; Education & Skills for people of all ages together with **better paid jobs** was also a key factor
- **Businesses need to better understand the specific needs of those with health conditions**, special needs or disabilities seeking work and how they can be valuable assets to the workplace
- Focus groups with workless residents principally highlighted the reducing support from national sources and their reliance upon locally driven services. This was particularly felt in the context of Universal Credit as “ digital by default”
- Having **faster internet access** also featured strongly in discussions

- Businesses identified key thematic areas for action; **business growth, more sustainable start-ups; new investment and innovation; job creation, skills; physical regeneration in Sefton's coast, town centres; transport infrastructure and support for the social economy.**
- **Greater collaboration at city region level;** maximising external funds for the benefit of Sefton businesses and residents e.g. European; Devolution monies
- Firm up on agreed priority actions already agreed in Strategy but ensure they are both **deliverable and measurable;**

4.2 Those respondents who have requested to be kept advised of the final version and action plan will also be placed onto a database in line with GDPR. The Strategy is intended to provide a clear framework for action to assist the Council with its ambitions for:

- Business Growth & Investment
- Business Generation & Enterprise Culture
- Sector Development
- Nurturing new Growth Clusters
- Place Marketing and Inward Investment
- Town Centre Investment Strategies and Frameworks
- Post-Inspection Revision of the Local Plan (2017), including Land Availability for Housing and Employment
- Infrastructure Planning
- Strategic Transport Planning and Scheme Identification
- Workforce Development & Skills
- Employability and Inclusive Growth
- Public Sector Reform and the Council's Transformation Programme
- Social Value in Commissioning and Procurement

4. Regeneris Consultants have completed the first two phases of the contract (Assessment and draft strategy). Officers will work with Regeneris to finalise the report. The key next steps are:

- Update Cabinet on 26 July
- Present final consultation report to Public Engagement & Consultation Panel -14th September 2018
- Revise and produce final Sefton Economic Strategy based on key findings and feedback from the consultation exercise
- Present Final report to Cabinet Member before release
- Share final report and key actions with those respondents who have asked to be kept informed
- Build into Council's Growth Programme