

# CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - 21 January 2020

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
Marion Atkinson	Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills	January 2020

## **GROWTH AND INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATES**

The Regeneration Team are continuing to develop a range of growth and investment projects identified across the borough and included within the Bootle, Crosby and Southport areas. This includes exploring potential funding sources that might be available to assist with delivery and partnership development opportunities.

### **1. SOUTHPORT**

#### **Southport Town Deal**

Work continues corporately to develop the Southport Town Deal funding bid. This includes a first stage checklist submission all funders need to submit before the end of December 2019. The Town Deal Prospectus requires all bidders to establish a Town Deal Board to oversee the development of a Town Deal Investment Plan to be submitted in Summer 2020. This will allow up to £25M potentially to be allocated to Southport. The other three shortlisted centres within Liverpool City Region are Runcorn, Birkenhead and St Helens all of which are to benefit from this funding source.

#### **Southport Market**

Draft proposals for the refurbishment of this Council owned facility are in progress following consultation in October 2019. Work is progressing to develop a business case which will support the facility and enable a much stronger food and drink offer within the facility. It is hoped the proposals will help improve the attraction of the market and surrounding area to both local residents and visitors to Southport. It is anticipated that this business model will help to generate and drive additional footfall in the town centre and help diversify the current offer in line with the Southport investment strategy. This will look to utilise town centre funding secure from the Combined Authority to help deliver the wider Southport Investment Framework. Southport was one of several bids from across the region.

**Southport Townscape Heritage Initiative** - A Townscape Heritage Bid submitted in June 2019 was approved in September 2019 for a £2.5m scheme (with just under £1.7m provided by the Heritage Lottery Fund). The project focuses on the properties between Lord Street and the Promenade and enhance the quality and strength of the linkages between the town centre and the Seafront and will aim to increasing the levels of economic activity within the target area. Key delivery staff have been recruited and discussions with potential grant applicants has commenced, many of whom have indicated early requirements to invest and take advantage of grant funding. Awaiting formal confirmation of commencement date from HLF.

## **CROSBY VILLAGE**

### **St Modwen Property Ownership**

St Modwen have now disposed of the majority of their interest in Moor Lane, Crosby Village (excluding Telegraph House site) to a London based property company Farcastle Limited who will manage the blocks on Moor Lane that have been refurbished and let on short-term leases. Sefton are continuing dialogue regarding Telegraph House with St Modwen's.

### **Town Centre Funding - CROSBY**

Following Government's refusal to approve first round of Future high Street Fund, the Council is continuing to explore other possible funding sources for town centre regeneration including the second round of FHSF and any further "Stronger Towns" (Town Deal) allocations. The Council are also exploring emerging retail, commercial and town centre research and best practice to help inform implementation of the town centre development framework including how to broaden out the range of retail and non- retail uses on offer and associated access/parking arrangements.

## **2. BOOTLE TOWN CENTRE**

**Bootle Town Hall** – The Council are progressing maintenance work to the existing operational town hall building to ensure it is fit for purpose. The wider town hall complex is proving challenging and officers are exploring options for achieving a viable financial solution that fits with the Council's asset management strategy. Exploratory discussions of potential Heritage Lottery funds are being investigated to try and address the wider complex.

**Bootle Strand** – The Strand Shopping Centre feeds directly into the key priority of ensuring retail remains a core function of Bootle Town Centre, despite the current challenging retail market. The Council is driving development for a re-invigorated Strand Shopping Centre, that looks outward and has a diversified leisure and retail offer whilst maximising its location on the Leeds/Liverpool Canal. In line with the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework, work is progressing to broaden out the offer in terms of non-retail services, leisure, food and the evening economy - exploring the commercial operation and find the right solution for this key asset for Bootle and Sefton, including its contribution to the Council's Growth Programme.

Work is also ongoing on the repair and maintenance work to the Strand Shopping Centre. The Council are continuing to explore opportunities for attracting further investment into the centre, particularly given the decline of the high street retailing in favour of online retailing and continued competition from out-of-centre locations.

**Bootle Town Centre** – Discussions are ongoing with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority regarding the future of Bootle Town Centre and additional resources that could be accessed for progressing the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework in addition to the Town centre Commission funding secured in 2019. This could help to support a range of activities including diversifying the town centre offer, improving access/connectivity within the centre, improving the public realm/open spaces including the canal corridor and also encourage greater engagement and involvement of key stakeholders in the area to help develop and revitalise the town centre.

## **CROSBY LAKESIDE**

Crosby Lakeside is an important Council asset that supports a range of key council priorities, including:

- Providing visitor facilities at a key coastal gateway, with an important role in helping both to attract visitors and contribute to the local visitor economy as well as helping to manage visitors in the most sustainable way (in-line with the Coastal Plan).

- Providing facilities that help support and promote the Council's Health and Well-being priorities, including indoor and outdoor activities with a membership gymnasium and water-based activities.
- Providing residential, activity and education facilities for school's community groups such as the Sea Cadets.
- Increasing accessibility to leisure and recreational services, including for those with disabilities.
- Providing local employment.

This important asset is now 10 years old and in need of significant investment in improvements to secure its long-term future. In November 2019, Cabinet approved proposals for the Council to fund a significant £3.1million refurbishment and enhancement of the hospitality facilities and for the Council to enter in to a Joint Venture (JV) to transform and enhance the hospitality offer. A self-contained, purpose-built accommodation ('bunk barn') with self-catering facilities available on the upper level which will be able to host community groups. External funding will be sought for delivery of this project from LCR CA.

The leisure facilities will remain open for business and operational throughout the duration of the works, any disruption due to construction work will be kept to a minimum.

Communications are ongoing for Crosby Lakeside including regular updates to centre staff as the project progresses. Press releases have been sent out and information has been circulated on the Council's intranet, internet (My View) and on social media. A meeting will take place early in the New Year with key local groups to discuss the proposals with them including the Waterloo & Crosby Coastal Towns Team, Seafront Residents Action Group, Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership, Church Ward Forum, Friends of Waterloo Seafront Gardens.

Further information will be circulated as the design develops and funding secured both internally and externally and further progress reports will come through to Overview and Scrutiny throughout 2020. It is expected that the planning application will be submitted by mid-January 2020.

## **INVESTSEFTON UPDATE**

### **ERDF Business Growth Programme (BGP) evaluation**

The BGP was the subject on an independent evaluation to assess impact on phase 1 delivery (January 2016-December 2018). The work was carried out by Ad Specialists on a city region basis and feedback to date has been really encouraging, including:

- Overall expenditure was within 8% of the forecast in the original Grant Funding Agreement.
- Attainment of outputs was in line with the original Grant Funding Agreement with the exception of the employment increase target. **Actual achievement of this output was 69% of the original target.**
- The programme was highly successful in its aim to engage and support business with little or no previous experience of publicly-funded support. **39% of survey respondents had not accessed free public business support before, and a further 13.5% had not accessed such support for a long time.**

- Businesses are highly satisfied with the support provided – **88% of survey respondents were satisfied or highly satisfied**. This high level of satisfaction was present at each stage in the customer journey from initial registration to completion of support.
- **The most frequently suggested improvement for the next phase of the programme was a more regular follow-up of progress from Advisors**. Businesses clearly value the support from Advisors and would relish the opportunity for longer-term engagement.
- Businesses supported by the programme had a significantly different trajectory over 3 years compared to the wider City Region business base. **BGP companies created 3.23 full-time equivalent (FTE) jobs from 2015/16 to 2017/18 whereas the wider business base didn't create any FTE jobs. BGP companies saw turnover rise by 20.5% whereas turnover rose by just 1% in the wider business base.**
- The programme facilitated the creation of **1,273 net jobs over 3 years generating £60.8M of Gross Value Added for the City Region.**

### **InvestSefton outward engagement**

InvestSefton has now moved its Business Clinics in the Atkinson to a monthly basis, underpinned by themed events run by business experts. The clinics are for anyone thinking of starting or growing their business covering a range of topics such as accessing finance, business ideas, sales and marketing. InvestSefton's Advisors and a mix of volunteer mentors including accountants, and local entrepreneurs are on hand to offer advice and guidance. To date the clinic has hosted over 100 businesses and potential business start-ups through either 1:1's or events.

InvestSefton's most recent events were:

#### **29<sup>th</sup> October -Southport Town hall**

**Cyber attack prevention and artificial intelligence**-A small event attended by 7 businesses including 3 women business owners. Feedback included:

"The support provided was invaluable"

"Would welcome further support on this"

#### **6<sup>th</sup> November-Crosby Lakeside**

**SeftonCrowd funding opportunities**- This was to support the Council's Civic Crowd Funding scheme launched in January. This initiative enables organisations to create local projects to improve Sefton. InvestSefton supported Jayne Vincent (Public Engagement Officer) by promoting to businesses. The event was a success with 27 businesses attending and there has already been some interest shown by InvestSefton businesses in investing in projects including a community café.

The team structures feedback from events in a way to elicit information on immediate or future business needs so Advisors can plan support accordingly. 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.

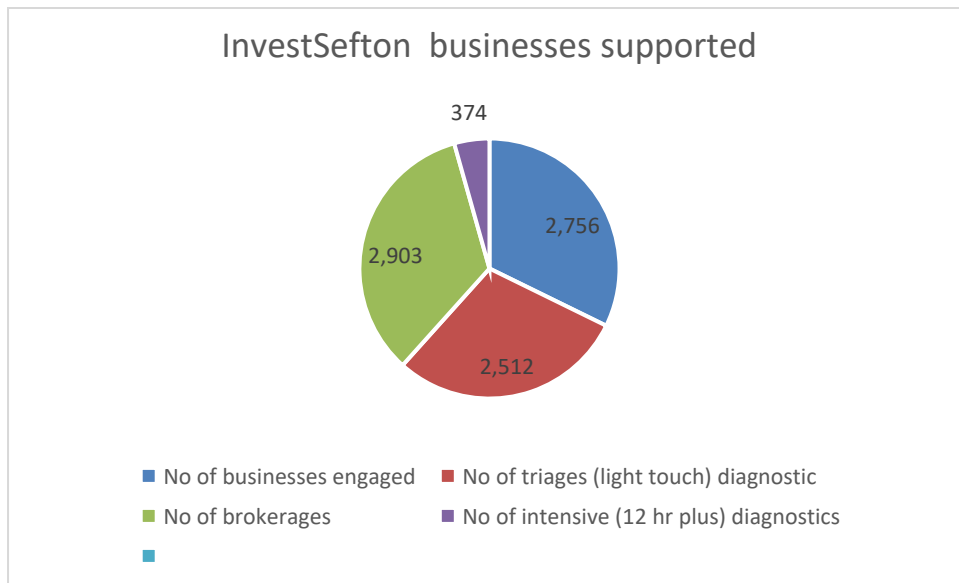
InvestSefton is in the process of updating investsefton.com. This will be a complete refresh including an event management function.

The team promoted **Small business Saturday on 7<sup>th</sup> December**. This event aims to highlight and showcase UK small businesses and independent retailers. InvestSefton adopted the Small Business local authority package including:

- Displaying Small Business logo's on the InvestSefton website and all team member signature emails
- Tweet (once a week)
- Send a mailshot to over 2000 businesses advising them of the campaign
- We will also offer Sefton based small retail businesses the opportunity to be promoted on our twitter account between Monday 2 December – Saturday 7<sup>th</sup> December. This will be branded it small business Saturday so it won't look like we are promoting random businesses.

### Business engagement

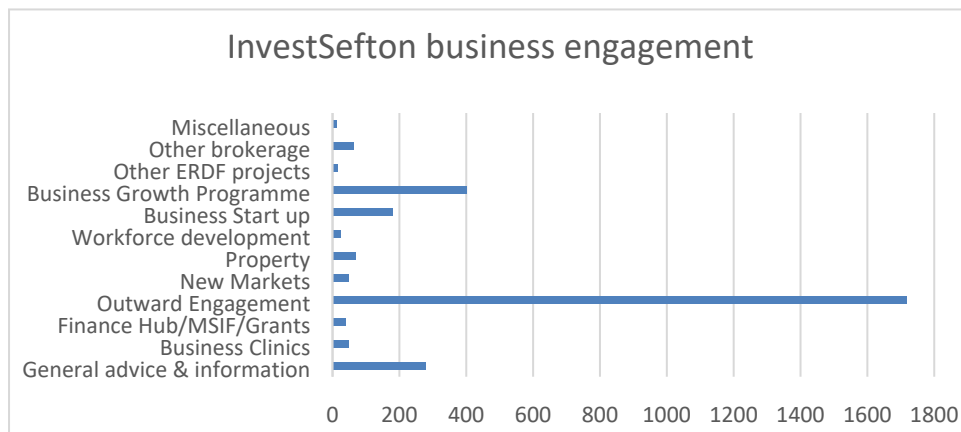
Since the start of the original Growth Hub contract (April 2016) to 7 November 2019 InvestSefton has:



- Engaged with 2,756 businesses
- Provided triage (light touch diagnostic) to 2,512 individual businesses
- Initiated over 2,903 brokerages and 374 intensive diagnostics with businesses

**Diagram 1** illustrates the key areas of engagement recorded through Sefton's Growth Hub on a cumulative basis. Outward engagement in the form of events/social media remains the highest source of engagements with businesses which requires a more proactive approach from the team particularly, through its 'one too many' approach. This is intense ongoing work and the fruits of this are shown in the increased demand for and attendance at workshops and events including Sefton Economic Forum.

**Diagram 1- (Up to 7 November 2019)**



The CRM system is subject to fluctuations and is currently under revision:

- General advice and information relates to a wide range of business enquiries through the Sefton Growth Hub = **279**
- Business Clinic relates to individual mentoring at the Atkinson but does NOT include numbers attending events which are captured separately in outward engagement = **49**
- Finance Hub is managed by Merseyside Special Investment Fund and includes managed referrals to their various funds by the team; it also includes grant enquiries = **39**
- Outward Engagement generates the most significant number of business leads and enquiries and are based on InvestSefton's one to many approach including events/workshops/social media campaigns = **1,719**
- New Markets is a specific ERDF programme offering subsidised commercial support to businesses = **49**
- There have been **69** specific sites and premises enquiries
- Workforce development; Skills for Growth Fund and employment refer to general enquiries to LCR wide funding = **25** It should be noted that InvestSefton and Sefton@work already work closely on local referrals not included here.
- Referrals to the ERDF Enterprise Hub remains strong and the team works closely with the Womens Organisation and their consortium partners which includes Bootle based SAFE. This work includes initial capture of start-up enquiries, some one to one to work and specific enterprise events = **180**
- The ERDF Business Growth Programme is InvestSefton's prime ERDF assisted initiative for Sefton SMEs = **401**
- Other ERDF projects include LCR 4.0; LCR Activate, LCR Manufacturing and the Eco-Innovatory providing support for key sectors and low carbon activities = **17**
- Other brokerage (**64**) and Other referrals (**12**) refer to enquiries not specified in other support programmes and include Trade/export, Growth Service and Chamber of Commerce activities

In all cases enquiries from businesses result in an initial diagnostic from Business Growth Officers with details recorded onto the CRM system.

## EU Exit

The Council's EU Exit group has resurrected meetings following the recent election. Much work has already been carried out on an LCR basis and from a business perspective InvestSefton has been providing regular updates at Sefton Economic Forum briefings from EU Exit experts and ensuring businesses are kept up to date with weekly bulletins from the Department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS). The bulletins are well summarised and offer a range of links for businesses across all sectors. **InvestSefton is looking to arrange a Sefton Economic Forum on 24 January 2020 in the Vincent Hotel, Southport.**

As part of the team's ongoing Growth Hub activities BEIS has asked for weekly feedback from businesses on any issues they face relating to EU exit. To date InvestSefton has collated **over 50 responses.**

## Blue Cow Digital Limited



*Blue Cow Digital Limited is a digital marketing agency based in Southport, which specialises in web design, digital marketing and social media for business. The company was launched in 2018 by James Brayshaw, owner of The Adaptive Comms Group Limited, an independent telecoms and IT company established in 2003 which employs 25 staff, with a turnover of £3million. Blue Cow Digital Limited was developed in response to a growing demand from small-to-medium sized businesses for a 'one stop solution' to managing their online digital presence. The company's services include web site hosting, SEO and graphic design, and bespoke videos for web and social media marketing. Blue Cow Digital Limited has won significant market share. The has business recruited several new creative staff with long-term industry experience, and now has over a*

*100 new business clients, with the potential for repeat business and business growth in 2020, and onwards. InvestSefton has supported Blue Cow Digital Limited on its growth journey, working with their marketing and customer development team on its CRM system, and new market development.*

*James Brayshaw has also collaborated with the Sefton Business Growth Hub, part of Investsefton, by using his experience to facilitate business workshops for other Sefton companies, on digital marketing, and social media.*

*Managing Director James Brayshaw said, "Our long-term reputation and experience in the sector has stood us in good stead, in developing this new digital service offer. Investsefton has a range of funded business support available to Sefton companies. I would encourage businesses of all types who are growth-oriented to contact the Growth Hub, and see how they could benefit."*

## Business Friendly Sefton

The Sefton Business Friendly Sefton group collaborated on the third Business Post one page insert with the November issue focusing on InvestSefton. Jonathan Kearney has produced an excellent narrative which can be viewed at page 7 **[Click to view latest Business Post](#)**

A Business-Friendly Sefton workshop for 30 Council business facing staff took place on 19<sup>th</sup> September to look at four key topics identified by the steering group: Sharing business information; social value; business communications and maximising local employment.

Some of the actions to be taken forward include:

- Developing a shared Business Customer Relationship Management system; ensuring existing systems compatible
- Developing a business welcome pack to all new businesses to Sefton, issued via Business Rates to new occupiers; Kris Swift is co-ordinating with Jonathan Kearney
- Update Council tent cards-business card providing key contacts within the Council
- Ensuring Council work on Social Value is joined up and includes support for local employment and suppliers; development of Policy Action Plan and virtual team
- Developing more good news stories
- The Head of Economy and Growth is looking to develop a Design and Business Awards event in Summer 2020, Aintree Racecourse is a potential venue.

## **Inward Investment update**

### **Mersey Reach**

- Remediation and site preparation works are now complete, with the bund and acoustic fencing in situ.
- The main contractor has been selected and start on site will commence November 2019. Practical Completion for phase 1 is scheduled for August 2020
- There is interest in the site from a number of local businesses ranging from 20,000 - 30,000 sq ft and the team will continue to support attracting new tenants.
- Enquiries from outside of the region have also been received. InvestSefton updated Chancery Gate and their property agents on the funding programme recently announced by the CA and advised how this could support new inward investment enquiries.
- PR opportunities will be developed when appropriate in relation to commencement of works on site and the announcement of end users.
- InvestSefton have introduced Chancery Gate to Sefton@Work to agree the terms of the Employment Charter. Completion of an Employment Charter is necessary to discharge one of their planning conditions. In addition, introductions will be made to known end users for recruitment support via Sefton@work
- This scheme and Sefton's approach to Social Value (as evidenced by this development and relationships with the developer) resulted in a Sustainability award at the Institute of Economic Development.

### **Santander**

- Santander has now received planning consent for its £75m investment at the site in Bootle. InvestSefton will continue to stay engaged with Santander to maximise the opportunity for local business and residents.
- It has facilitated a meeting with Santander's 'Breakthrough Incubator Manager, who is tasked with supporting the development of co-working/incubator space in the new building, with the University of Liverpool Partnership Director about long term skill development requirements and a further meeting was held with the University of Liverpool's Pro-Vice Chancellor for Education regarding future opportunities.

## **TOURISM UPDATE**

### **Business Tourism**

- At the start of the last quarter of 2019/20 we have seven confirmed events worth approximately £5.1m to the local economy, bringing in 11,110 bed nights.



These include the National Pensioners Convention for 2020 (Approx. 800 dels over 3 days), The World Snooker Players Championships 2020 and The Oddfellows Conference 2021.

- 37 enquiries have been generated so far in this financial year, worth a potential £17.24m to the area.
- 15 events will take place over 2019/20 worth around £10.3m and generating 22,400 bed nights to the destination.
- Marketing: Committed to Confex and The Meetings Show for 2020, ongoing campaigns with Mash Media and The Delegate Wranglers, relaunch of Delegate News as Talk Southport and working towards rebrand from Southport Conferences to Meet Southport.
- SIF funding has been secured that will allow increased subvention to be offered to new and existing conferences with the aim of securing additional conferences over the next 2-3 years. The funding has also allowed a new Conference and Sales Manager post to be created.

### **Destination Marketing**

- Autumn destination radio consisted of radio (Smooth FM and Gaydio), digital and PR. The Smooth campaign alone reached over one million people in the north west.
- Work on Visit Southport website continues to ensure it is a highly visible site on search engines. General updating and maintenance ongoing.
- The 2020 Visitor guide has been printed and delivered (50,000 copies). Distribution commences early January via mailing house fulfilment, online and direct mail promotion and displays in key high footfall sites across the north west.
- PR agency for 2020 confirmed as Fido. Meeting held 8 January re destination PR. A further meeting re event PR is to follow later this month.
- Marketing Southport current membership stands at 119, (Central 12 & Southport Bijou Cinema have joined since the last report).
- Planning is underway for a travel trade familiarisation trip in September of this year, targeting high profile / quality GTO's and coach operators.
- Targeted ads (with complimentary editorial) have been booked with coach and group travel publications including; Coach Tours UK, Group Travel World and Group Travel Today.
- Southport will be attending the British Tourism and Travel Show in March. As part of the show, we have submitted an entry for 'Coach Friendly Destination of the Year'.
- The 2020 Southport Eating Out Guide (15,000 copies) has been sent to print with delivery early January.
- Advertising sales for the Visitor Passport are underway, with the piece going to print in February – this is to support travel trade, conferences and local accommodation providers.

## Events 2020

### Food and Drink Festival

- Booking forms were sent out before Christmas to Street Food vendors and Producers to attend the 2020 event.
- The closing date is the 7<sup>th</sup> February and interest has been once again overwhelming.
- Bookings will be confirmed at the end of February.

### Air Show and Fireworks

- Both events are currently being reviewed and alternative ways to increase income and reduce expenditure are being looked at.
- Procurement is taking place to secure or extend contracts for both events.
- A new ticketing system is required due to the contract ending in 2019 – this is currently being procured through the Chest and the new contract should be in place by the end of January.

### Borough of Culture

**Illuminos** - In March 2020 there will be a spectacular celebration of the Sefton Coastline, as part of the Borough of Culture programme. Using the three sites of Waterloo Town Hall (13<sup>th</sup> March), Bootle Town Hall (14<sup>th</sup> March) and The Atkinson, Southport (15<sup>th</sup> March), a trilogy of large-scale video projections will be created on consecutive nights, each a chapter in an interwoven story that connects the coastal towns and people together.

Sefton Council major event dates were announced in December.

### **2020 Major Events Dates**

Food & Drink Festival	29 <sup>th</sup> – 31 <sup>st</sup> May
Southport Flower Show	15 <sup>th</sup> – 18 <sup>th</sup> August
Southport Air Show	11 <sup>th</sup> – 13 <sup>th</sup> September
British Musical Fireworks Championship	25 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> September

### **Tourism Operations**

#### Outdoor Markets

- The Outdoor Markets enjoyed another successful year in 2019 with traders' keen to trade in Southport and Formby.
- The outdoor markets have now ceased and will resume at Easter, sooner if the weather is favourable.
- As part of the Market review the outdoors markets will be looked at to see how improvements can be made and how the markets can grow.

#### Seafront

- Merseyside Fire Service will be carrying out their annual training exercise on Southport Pier in the near future. They will be familiarising staff with the Pier structure, and the drills employed during an incident.
- An extensive maintenance and refurbishment programme for Kings Gardens is being developed, in preparation for the 2020 season.

- Final works continue on the Pier as part of the Southport Coastal Community Fund, it is hoped the final phase (improved access) will be complete by summer 2020.

## **EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING UPDATE**

### **Sefton@work General Performance Data to October 2019**

<b>Data Description</b>	<b>Source and Path</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Figures</b>
Total Clients accessing service	Job seeker/Reg Date (adviser caseload)	Since 01/01/2016	3,801
Footfall (instances of people using Sefton@work facilities & premises)	Clients accessing service at Stanley Road	Since 01/01/2016 October 2019	33,889 648
New Clients accessing service	Job seeker/Reg Date	October 2019	119
New clients registering by age	Job seeker/Reg Date/Age range 16-24/25-49/50+	October 2019	16-24 44 25-49 54 50+ 21
Clients with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Enquiry/W2W/any status/Disability long term health/learning diff	Since 01/01/2016	980
Clients without basic skills	Enquiry/W2W/any status/without basic skills	Since 01/01/2016	1,068
People leaving support into jobs/self-emp/ or training)	All projects	Since 01/01/2016	1,195
No. of interviews with clients	Formal interview with trained adviser	Since 01/01/2016	12,831
Training attended	Training attended	Since 01/01/2016	849

### **Sefton@work – working with employers**

Employer Engagement has continued in this period, with the main outcomes of this activity delivering the following:

- 2 additional vulnerable clients have been placed into ILMs
- 3 Routeway clients have commenced at Citizens Advice
- Emergency First training for employer delivered in conjunction with SACL
- Sector based work academy delivered with independent training provider and DWP
- 56 new opportunities have been managed in the period. These vacancies have included: Retail/Grocery Store, 2 Warehouse staff, a supply company for the Construction Industry, a Distribution company, a Furniture Outlet, wholesale Pet Food Supplies, and a Rope Access Works company (Specialist Height work for tall buildings).

Employment Engagement staff also carry out door to door marketing at this time of year particularly targeting very small employers. They have covered industrial estates throughout the borough to generate new contacts and offer recruitment/HR support packages.

Discussion have also taken place with Sandways Homes to scope out the potential for employment and skills agreements to be implemented as part of the business model.

## **Section 106 employment and skills agreements**

Consultations have been ongoing with Chancery Gate related to the employment and training plan and these have progressed well. The key aspect of this agreement is that the developer has not only been positive about working with us to discharge obligations in the construction phase but also has undertaken to pass identical obligations on to the end users of the project. This is invaluable for our clients.

Sefton@work has also been introduced to the McLaughlin and Harvey, the lead contractor involved in the new Sainsbury's store at Meols cop where a Section 106 employment and skills plan has been included.

## **Promotional Work – Thousand Stars event**

As a means of celebrating the milestone of successfully placing 1000 people into jobs during the Ways to Work project in Sefton, Sefton@work is preparing an event to take place in Bootle Town Hall on February 7<sup>th</sup> 2020. Clients are currently being identified for filming. Employers will also be invited to attend in order for their contribution to be marked. Planning meetings with Comms team have been held.

## **STAR awards 2019**

Both Sefton@work (with Invest Sefton as part of Investment and Employment) and Sefton Community Learning were nominated for STAR awards in the Chief Executives category.

### **Adult Community Learning Service**

#### **4.1 SACL General Service Update**

	October 2019
Unique Learners	762
Enrolments	943
Attendance	87.33%
Pass Rate	99.48%
Venues	34

#### **4.2 Test and Learn pilots**

##### Business Ready digital skills

The Service has successfully completed a recruitment exercise and has appointed a key worker for this pilot project. Delivery arrangements are being put in place including using the facilities at Sefton@work in Bootle town centre to target job-seeking learners and devise programmes that meet employers needs.

##### Blended Learning pilot

A new business case is in development and will need to be agreed with the CA team. This amended delivery plan will be based on the procurement of a bespoke new learning platform and its application within a community learning setting rather than the initial plan which centred upon the appointment of a project co-ordinator.

#### **4.3 Recruitment**

An offer has now been made to appoint a new Site supervisor who will be starting 9<sup>th</sup> December 2019. This will be an important post for the service to help manage building issues which have proven problematic in the past.

#### **4.4 Social Enterprise Support – Community Bistro**

Over the last 3 months SACL has continually supported the Bistro to provide 540 free community meals.

This support has included from referring volunteers, providing Food and Hygiene courses and organising collections from staff and learners. In the period to Christmas the Service will be supporting with requests for food donations to reach a target of 90 Christmas Hampers for local families.

#### **4.5 SIF Skills Capital Bid for Cambridge Road centre**

A bid for SIF Skills Capital was developed and delivered to the LCR CA for assessment in order to meet the deadline on 31<sup>st</sup> August 2019. At its December meeting the Combined Authority approved the bid for the project, which was costed at £1.275m. Officers are expecting to receive an offer letter from the Combined Authority shortly and approvals to accept the grant will be put through the Council's systems in due course. The objective of the refurbishment of this grade 2 listed building will be to provide a modern learning environment for adults, alongside the existing Community Pantry social enterprise and accommodation for Career Connect Ltd. There may be the potential to offer space to other tenants once the project is completed. A key aspect of the project will be the upgrading of the broadband connectivity to the building in order to provide more effective and reliable digital training.

Service Continuity during the refurbishment phase will be of the utmost importance as the Community Learning Service will need to ensure that targets are met to comply with the requirements of the Adult Education Budget revenue grant.

Officers are currently making plans for service continuity and this may involve a greater emphasis placed upon outreach delivery across the Borough with minimal learning activity within the centre when contractors are onsite.

The plans are not expected to affect the operations of the SING Plus organisation, who lease a property immediately adjacent to the Cambridge Road building, but officers will undertake to inform the group about the project once timescales are confirmed.

#### **4.6 In-house Pre-Recruitment Training Programmes**

##### **Aspiring Instructors 2020**

Planning is underway to deliver a programme commencing in February 2020, with the intention that numbers on the programme should be increased. Executive Director is leading on negotiation with DWP to attract additional funding to support this, having been delayed by the general election. The programme for 2020 will benefit from some administrative support supplied through Localities and will target local residents who wish to gain employment in the Leisure, tourism, outdoor education and sports sectors. Community Learning will provide several key inputs during the 16 week course including presentation skills, team working, health and safety etc. Any additional funding from DWP will be used to cover certification and licensing costs associated with specialist coaching qualifications not available through Community Learning.

The Aspiring Instructors programme has been highly successful over the years and has transformed many peoples lives who would otherwise not have had the opportunity to participate in this area of work, many of whom were living with adverse health issues , complex barriers, low skills, poor self-esteem or simply felt they were too old for such an intense programme of activity. While many graduates of the programme have progressed to work within the Council, others have gained employment with notable employers in the fitness, sports and specialist tourism industries. Others, having gained from the confidence and qualifications from the

course have changed direction and found employment in a wide variety of occupational sectors.

Working with our Partners at DWP and MerseyCare, our Aspiring Instructors Course for 2019 was nominated and for the iNetworks Awards Ceremony and won the 'Changing Lives through Opportunities' Award which was given at a ceremony in London.

#### **4.7 Green Sefton Employment Pathway**

Sefton@work and Community Learning have been working with Green Sefton to devise a pre-recruitment package for local residents wishing to access employment in land management, horticultural skills and other aspects of work undertaken through Green Sefton. The programme commences with an open day, where Green Sefton will provide information sessions to pre-screened Sefton@work clients who have expressed a preference for this kind of work. Community Learning will provide a number of sessions related to key workplace behaviours, health and safety awareness etc. Sessions will also be held to outline the Council's recruitment process followed by support with application and interview techniques. Clients who progress satisfactorily will have access to a guaranteed job interview with Green Sefton. This is being run as a trial project and an evaluation report with lessons learned will be produced once completed.

### **5. NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service**

#### **5.1 September Guarantee**

Work on this year's September Guarantee has taken place and based on last year's % figures, the following have been achieved:

The number of Year 11 pupils with an 'offer' recorded for this year is 98.5% which is a 0.1% increase from 2018.

The number of Year 12 with an 'offer' recorded is for this year is 95.4% which is a 0.7% increase from 2018.

#### **5.2 NEET and Not Known**

##### **Academic Age 16-17**

The combined NEET and Not Known figure has been reduced by 9.54%.

NEET has been reduced by 0.74% and Not Known by 8.80%.

EET has improved by 9.54%

##### **Academic Age 16-18**

NEET has been reduced by 1.03% and Not Known by 3.26%.

EET has improved by 4.27%

In addition, the number of 16-17 young people entering learning opportunities has increased by 10.08% and by 5.06% for 18 year olds.