

# CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - 2 March 2020

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

## **GROWTH & INVESTMENT PROGRAMME UPDATES**

### **Growth and Investment Programme Update**

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

### **SOUTHPORT**

#### **Southport Town Deal**

Work continues to develop the Southport Town Deal funding bid. A first stage “readiness checklist” submission was made in December 2019. The Town Deal Prospectus requires all bidders to establish a Town Deal Board the first meeting of which took place on 15<sup>th</sup> January, the 2<sup>nd</sup> on 25<sup>th</sup> February. The Board will oversee the development of the Town Deal Investment Plan which is to be submitted later this year. Agenda and Minutes will be available on the Council’s website. Board members are also included.

#### **Southport Market**

Proposals for the refurbishment of this Council owned facility are in progress. 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 to both local residents and visitors to Southport. It is anticipated that this business model will, contrary to national trend in retail, 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 secured from the Combined Authority to help deliver the wider Southport Investment Framework.

**Southport Townscape Heritage Initiative** – A Townscape Heritage Bid submitted in June 2019 was approved in September 2019 for just under £1.7m. with additional funding expected from the private sector. 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 increase the levels of economic activity within the target area. Recruitment of key delivery staff is ongoing and discussions with a significant number of potential grant applicants has commenced.

### **CROSBY VILLAGE**

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

Following the unsuccessful bid for the first round of Future High Street Funding in 2019, 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.

## **BOOTLE TOWN CENTRE**

**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 investment 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.

**Bootle Town Centre** – Discussions are ongoing with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority regarding the future of Bootle Town Centre and additional town centre resources that could be accessed for progressing the Bootle Town Centre Investment Framework. The recently established Combined Authority Town Centre Commission aims to provide expertise and research for the benefit of town centres across the region.

## **CROSBY LAKESIDE**

Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre is located at the southern end of Crosby Coastal Park. Sefton's coastline is an extensive natural asset which contributes to the unique character of the borough. This needs to be carefully managed and a balance achieved between the requirement for resident and visitor use with the need to protect the natural habitat. This project fits with the Sefton Coast Plan that identifies those areas most capable of managing visitor use – key coastal gateways – which can help to protect from further damage the more vulnerable areas and those of high natural habitat quality.

The southern end of Crosby Coastal Park, where Crosby Lakeside is located, has been identified as one of these key coastal gateways as part of the gateway to the Mersey Estuary, sitting alongside the internationally renowned Antony Gormley's "Another Place" Iron Men statues.

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.

In November 2019, Cabinet approved proposals for the Council to fund a significant £3.1million refurbishment and enhancement of the hospitality facilities. 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 and discussions are ongoing.

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 took place in January 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. A session has taken place with the lake user groups and a follow up session is anticipated in March.

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.

## **AINSDALE**

### **Ainsdale Coastal Gateway**

Following consideration by the Consultation and Engagement Panel in February 2020, consultation on the future vision for Ainsdale-On-Sea from March to September 2020. It will look at the operational requirements for visitor management as well as the vision for the wider area. Results be available at the end of this year.

### **Ainsdale Neighbourhood Centre, Sandbrook Way**

Following consideration by Council in February 2020, members have agreed to appoint advisors to explore acquiring by agreement the existing leasehold interests in this centre to bring it into Council ownership. The Centre has had a number of issues over recent years relating to its condition and appearance, as well as the anti-social behaviour it attracts. The Council wish to explore options for this centre and how it can support the wider neighbourhood more positively. Once in Council control the options for the future of this Centre can be then be explored.

### **Cambridge Road - Sefton Community Learning Centre**

In February Cabinet approved funding for the refurbishment and improvement of the Community Learning Centre in Cambridge Road. The £1.3m refurbishment fund will enable the continuation and expansion of the service in the area and enable the improvement of this Grade II Listed Building. This will be funded through a mix of Combined Authority Skills Capital Funding, a small contribution from Sefton Council. It is anticipated that works will be complete by March 2021. The service will continue to operate throughout the refurbishment albeit in different locations throughout the borough.

## **INVESTSEFTON UPDATE**

### **ERDF Business Growth Programme**

In Sefton, Growth Hub activity is merged with the ERDF Business Growth Programme to help provide a more cohesive service to businesses. The programme was the recent subject of an independent performance assessment for the period Jan 2015-Dec 2019 which generated some outstanding outcomes.

### **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 Advisers 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.

**An InvestSefton event took place on 14 November 2019 in Hugh Baird College. The theme was 'Intellectual Property-It's not Rocket Science' and was facilitated by IPO specialists Glenville Walker. Delegates learnt how anything a business produces or provides holds intellectual property, what IP covers and the different types of IP rights from copyright to patents and trademarks. Some 13 delegates from 12 Sefton businesses attended the event including three women business owners. Feedback included:**

*"Very Useful"*

*"Very Informative"*

*"Easy to understand in practical terms"*

*"Informative and great speakers"*

### **Sefton Economic Forum - 24 January 2020**

The Vincent Hotel, Southport was the venue for the most recent Sefton Economic Forum - the borough's premier business flagship event. The breakfast time meeting attracted **115 business delegates** to hear from Brian Sloan (Deputy Agent Bank of England), talking about the local economy and economic forecasts; Paul Stowers (Head of NW Region International Trade/Northern Powerhouse) updated on overseas trading opportunities for business while Matt Parish (Director/Head of Liverpool FC Foundation) presented on the club's many community initiatives in the area. The forum was chaired by Shirley Hunter of Bootle Base Energy services.



SEF Panel-Vincent Hotel

**Of the 115 delegates, 55 individual Sefton businesses attended including 36 women business delegates.** Some of the feedback received included:

*"First class balance and speakers"*

*"Great networking opportunities"*

*"These events get better and better, InvestSefton excelled themselves today"*

The event also had the popular marketplace of business support providers including InvestSefton; LCR Growth Platform; Sefton@work, University of Liverpool Graduates programme; UK Clean Growth/Eco-Innovatory programme' LCR Manufacturing Fund, New Markets; Merseyside Special Investment Fund; Active Workforce; LCR Activate; Sefton Council Corporate Learning Centre; Liverpool Chamber Export support; University of Liverpool Leadership school. Businesses can visit each of the providers in a relaxed and friendly setting with much business being conducted both before and after the Forum.

Immediately following the SEF, a 'Digital Marketing Strategy workshop' was held and **31 delegates from 31 Sefton businesses stayed** to listen to InvestSefton's Business Growth Adviser and Blue Cow Digital who feature as a case study later in this report. The aim was to help businesses develop a digital marketing strategy to boost their on-line presence in web marketing, email, and social media channels in mediums such as Facebook, LinkedIn, Twitter and Instagram. Feedback included:

*"well organised and informative"*

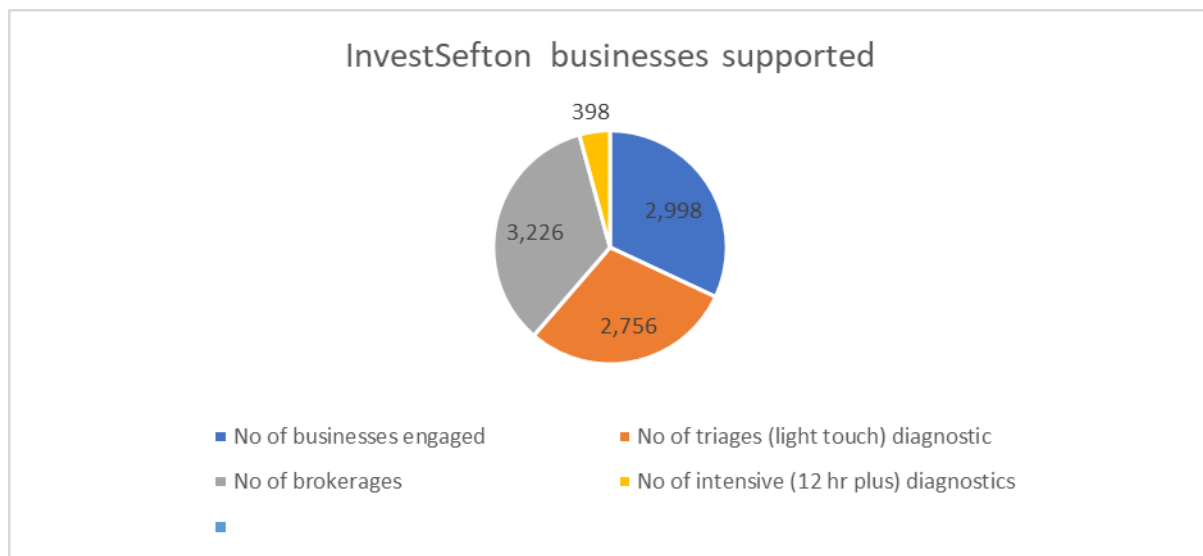
*"Great group working and speaking to other businesses:*

*"Good networking, learning from others and making connections:*

*"very informative, lots of info and knowledge "*

*"user friendly and interactive "*

## Business engagement

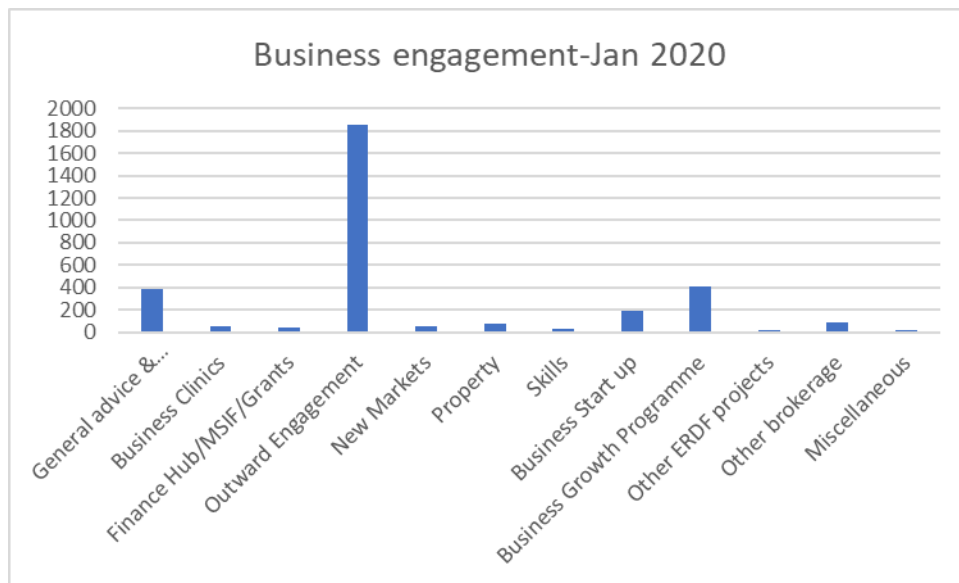


Since the start of its Growth Hub contract in April 2016 InvestSefton has:

- Engaged with 2,998 businesses
- Provided triage (light touch diagnostic) to 2,756 individual businesses
- Initiated over 3,326 brokerages and provided 398 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 to 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 3 January 2020)



The CRM system is subject to fluctuations:

- General advice and information relates to a wide range of business enquiries through the Sefton Growth Hub = **389**
- Business Clinic relates to individual mentoring at the Atkinson but does NOT include numbers attending events which are captured separately in outward engagement = **51**
- 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 = **43**
- 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 = **1,857**
- New Markets is a specific ERDF programme offering subsidised commercial support to businesses = **53**
- There have been **77** specific sites and premises enquiries
- Workforce development; Skills for Growth Fund and employment refer to general enquiries to LCR wide funding= It should be noted that InvestSefton and Sefton@work already work closely on local referrals not included here = **32**
- 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 = **194**
- The ERDF Business Growth Programme is InvestSefton's prime ERDF assisted initiative for Sefton SMEs = **407**
- Other ERDF projects include LCR 4.0; LCR Activate, LCR Manufacturing and the Eco-Innovatory providing support for key sectors and low carbon activities = **24**

- Other brokerage (**63**) and Miscellaneous (**11**) refer to enquiries not specified in other support programmes and include Trade/export, Growth Service and Chamber of Commerce activities = **66**

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

### **EU Transitioning**

The Council's EU Exit group has now reverted to monthly updates following the cessation of Operation Yellowhammer. 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.

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 **60 responses**. In mid-December InvestSefton sent a brief questionnaire to over 1,600 Sefton based businesses asking them how exiting the European Union is currently affecting and might also impact on their business in the future. They were also asked if they would be willing to be part of a separate EU Exit mailing list.

Only 11 responses were received. Some of the businesses have specifically confirmed they do not want to receive future mailings about EU exit. InvestSefton mailings, events and workshops are well received and it is rare for a Sefton business to ask for themselves to be removed from a mailing list. The low number of responses is not surprising and reflects similar feeling from businesses across the LCR who are also being asked to take part in similar surveys, there appears to be a general consensus amongst the business community that survey responses are not going to solve any problems and, in any case, there is still great uncertainty on how EU Exit will impact on small businesses who make up the vast majority of firms in Sefton and the city region. This is further evidenced by the low number of views EU Exit issues on InvestSefton's Twitter account which are significantly less than other business tweets.

The team has also used its event evaluations to receive feedback on how EU exit could affect their business and some of the comments received include:

*"Uncertainty over tariffs and trade barriers due to a bad deal.*

*"we deliver services in the EU – loss of uncertainty and increase in cost/Uncertainty decreasing spend by public and companies on events. Also, for European events may be seen as easier to use EU companies"*

*"businesses are unsure whether to invest – unsure about future financial markets/Families and businesses feel more comfortable when there is less uncertainty in financial markets – need to educate businesses on the importance of financial planning/Yes*

*"Clients lacking confidence/Port of Liverpool and Ireland, key critical coupled with a business healthy city and regions"*

*"Yes, but confidence is returning"*

*"Not yet, but if my customers face hard times, so will I "*

*"Transfer of data...I Deliver training to 10 teachers, issues over freedom of movement"*

*"importing resin from Europe could be a major issue for my business"*

### **Business Visits**

I undertake quarterly visits to businesses assisted through InvestSefton's business support programmes. This recently included a visit to Service Electrical Distributors in Kingfisher Business Park, Bootle with Peter Dowd MP and InvestSefton team member Colin Hickey



*This is essentially a newco incorporated in February 2019 by Marc Redfern who has many years' experience in Electrical Wholesaling. The Company is the vehicle for Marc to now establish and build his own business having spent considerable years working for a major electrical wholesaler in Merseyside.*

*Business operates from rented premises on Kingfisher Business Park and via Marc's contacts has immediately established a viable business, forming 'partnerships' with the likes of Sovini Property Services where they will supply*

*all electrical requirements for their portfolio of social housing. Initial funding has been from personal injection with Company awaiting confirmation of SEIS HMRC approval to attract further investment.*

*Initial sales projections have been exceeded and MD has identified that there may be additional finance needs above SEIS receipts.*

*Invest Sefton will continue support through update of business plan for finance application and local networking opportunities. The company employs 7 local staff in Bootle.*

### **Business Friendly Sefton**

Sefton Council's Economic Growth and Housing Service has won the Most Sustainable Outcome award from the Institute of Economic Development (IED), the **UK's leading independent professional body** representing economic development and regeneration practitioners in local and regional communities.

The award was given for the Council's 'Business Friendly' strategy for supporting new sustainable development and maximising the social, economic and environmental benefits in the borough – and includes input from all its incumbent services for planning, business growth and inward investment; employment and skills; regeneration, visitor economy and housing.

The award recognized the approach undertaken by InvestSefton which has developed a range of growth and investment projects including Mersey Reach, a £20 million prime urban logistics development serving Sefton and the wider Liverpool City region area; and the related Planning Development Agreement which saw a requirement for the developer, ChanceryGate, to enter into an employment charter with the Council to ensure that local residents had the maximum opportunity to benefit from resulting employment and training opportunities through Sefton@Work.

The Council's planning, InvestSefton and Sefton@Work teams have worked collaboratively to deliver maximum impact for the borough. When completed Mersey Reach will create over 300 new full-time jobs, a total investment value of £20 million and generate £5.5 million GVA additional impact. The development exhibits many sustainable measures, all secured through a detailed planning process.

IED Chair Bev Hurley said: "We would like to congratulate Sefton Council on winning our Most Sustainable Outcome award for 2019. The initiative harnessed a multi-agency approach and built in a local economic benefit to every aspect. The judges were particularly struck by the genuinely integrated approach to the project and the sustainable outcomes that are starting to be achieved through it. Among the stand-out aspects was the increasing innovation in sustainable heat solutions and ability to use clean technology to drive local economic gain as well as an environmentally-sustainable solution." Sefton Council's Economic Growth and Housing Service award success was announced at the IED Annual Awards 2019, staged as part of the IED Annual Conference in London, on 4<sup>th</sup> December.



## **Business Promotion**

The Business Friendly Sefton group has devised a 'Open for Business' flyer produced by Jon Kearney (Comms) and Kris Swift (InvestSefton) that will be distributed to all business rates payers in Sefton in March 2020. The flyer summarises all key services and can also be used for wider promotional purposes.

Partner arrangement with the LCR **Business Post** which included Sefton have 6 full page inserts in the monthly publication distributed directly to 2,000 business and political leaders with 8,000 bulk dropped to key business locations across the region. The feedback has been positive and contributions from across all key services has made the publications more cost effective. Moreover, it is the first time Sefton has had any concerted serial publications in over 12 years and the articles have certainly helped the Council raise its profile to the business and wider economic development community. InvestSefton and Communications will review further impact with the BFS Group and consider whether there is appetite for a further arrangement. Part of this review will be to examine alternative promotion through more localised media publications.

## **LCR Flexible Growth Fund**

The Growth Platform launched its new city-region Flexible Growth Fund for Capital expenditure Items – i.e. Property, Plant & Machinery, Computers and Software etc. The fund is available to Businesses of all sizes undertaking Investment which will lead to 'step change' in terms of growth. The Maximum Loan is £1M but there is no lower limit and it is anticipated that the majority of approvals will be in £200K - £1M Band. Brief details below:

- Interest at 2%/BR – Interest differential will be subject to State Aid Rules and Applicants have to prove they cannot obtain Commercial Rate Finance elsewhere
- Targeting 'LCR Priority' Sectors – Digital, Creative & AI, Advanced Manufacturing, Health & Life Sciences, Clean Growth, Visitor Economy and Business & Professional Services
- Application has to create jobs and there has to be 'social impact' – MSIF can guide applicants
- Easy Access by submission of Expression of Interest which is followed by Full Application
- Fast Decision – indicative 6-8 weeks from receipt of all paperwork including Plan and Financial forecasts

The Fund has an initial Investment period of 3 years, but it is an 'Evergreen' Fund whereby repayments can be re-invested in further loans once initial £20M has been exhausted. InvestSefton will seek to direct eligible Sefton businesses to the new fund. The CA is also developing a new grant fund via St Helens Chamber which they hope will be available in April 2020. InvestSefton has already well-established links with the Chamber dating back to when it ran Regional Growth Fund grants in 2015/16.

## **Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan**

Following approval on 29 November the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan was subject to an on-line and electronic launch post Purdah. The plan was circulated to 40+ consultees who asked to be kept informed, key partners and stakeholders. The plan can be viewed alongside the accompanying Economic Assessment and framework documents at <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/your-council/plans-policies/sefton-economy.aspx>

## **TOURISM UPDATE**

### **Business Tourism**

- Half way through the last quarter of 2019/20 we have confirmed eight events this fiscal year worth approximately £5.1m to the local economy, bringing in 11,110 bed

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

- In this fourth quarter we have added six new provisional bookings which, if converted would be worth IRO £4.6m and bring 10,020 bed nights.
- 40 enquiries have been generated so far in this financial year, worth a potential £20.8m to the area.
- 16 events will take place over 2019/20 worth around £10.3m and generating 22,400 bed nights to the destination.
- We have committed to The Meetings Show for 2020 attending alongside the Liverpool City Region and exhibiting at International Confex later this month as a partner on the Delegate Wranglers stand. The ongoing campaigns with Mash Media and The Delegate Wranglers are serving us well and we relaunched Delegate News as Talk Southport earlier this month. The transition from Southport Conferences (our outwardly faced brand) to Meet Southport in ongoing with the new MeetSouthport.com website platform to launch shortly.
- The new Conference and Sales manager is now in post and is leading on potential new subvention models along with securing additional conferences for the next three years as part of the SIF Businesses events project.

#### Destination Marketing

- Spring destination advertising campaign planning underway. Campaign will consist of radio, digital, outdoor advertising, PR & guerrilla marketing activity.
- Ongoing 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 delivered and in distribution via online and traditional agency activity.
- PR campaign for spring being planned, will feature an 'Easter Egg Hunt' on the Pier. Two journalist visits planned for spring.
- Marketing Southport current membership stands at 119.
- A familiarisation trip for coach operators & group travel organisers is being planned around the British Musical Fireworks Championship.
- Targeted ads (with complimentary editorial) have been booked with coach and group travel publications.
- New advertising contract with agency underway to support conference activity.
- The Eating Out Guide has been delivered and being distributed via hotels, guesthouses, caravan parks etc.
- New design and marketing company appointed for 2020 after a tendering process on The Chest. Gingerhead, a Liverpool based agency, won the tender.

#### Events

#### **Southport Food & Drink Festival – 29<sup>th</sup> – 31<sup>st</sup> May**

- The closing date for applications was Friday 7<sup>th</sup> February
- With the event being so popular applications were shortlisted based on the menu, company location and look and feel of the stall/unit
- Numbers of stalls selected are as follows: -
  - Producers 51
  - Street Food 54
  - Bars 15
  - Exhibitors 8
  - Coffee 3
- As previous years there will be an entertainment marquee with musicians playing throughout the day and a children's area with various activities

### **Southport Air Show – 12<sup>th</sup> & 13<sup>th</sup> September**

- The event will take place as a two-day event
- The tourism team are evaluating several ticket options in order to drive admission numbers and increase income
- Military aircraft will be announced at the end of March, with civilian aircraft options are being explored
- The Red Arrows are yet to confirm if they are doing UK air shows this year

### **British Musical Fireworks Championship – 25<sup>th</sup> – 27<sup>th</sup> September**

- The seven competitors have now been agreed, these will be announced shortly, that will allow tickets to go on sale.
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### **Borough of Culture**

- A Nightingales Song takes place across Sefton – Friday 13<sup>th</sup> March – Waterloo Town Hall, Saturday 14<sup>th</sup> March – Bootle Town Hall, Sunday 15<sup>th</sup> March – The Atkinson, Southport.
- This is a series of projections on each building bringing together the spectacular nature, fauna and flora of the Sefton coastline, with its history and present-day stories. Each of the three projections is a self-contained chapter of a three-part story, focussing on the particular aspects of each location, whilst linking outwards to Sefton and beyond. It will be a tale of magic and wonder, of myths and wondrous creatures, of ships and sailing, of peoples past and present.

### **Tourism Operations**

#### Southport Market

- Trading within the market has struggled over the last several months, resulting in only a handful of traders remaining. Every effort has been made to encourage new traders, without success. Outdoor market traders failed to take up vacant units within the market, as high street retail continues to follow a downturn in trading.
- Work continues to look at future options for The Market Hall, options will be presented to Cabinet in due course.

#### Outdoor Markets

- We are working towards delivering our Outdoor markets for 2020, outdoor market traders are keen to trade in Southport and Formby. The first market will be at Easter unless the weather is fair and allows us to start earlier, giving us the opportunity to increase revenue.
- We intend to purchase more gazebos for the 2020 season, again, with the intention of increasing revenue.

#### Seafront

Bollards are now in place throughout the Seafront at strategic points, diminishing the risk of unauthorised Traveller encampments. As a result of the bollards, Tourism didn't have any legal action cases against Travellers in 2019.

#### Southport Pier

- Plans are being finalised for the new pier beach access, Tourism are expecting plans for the design in the near future, the costs were incorporated into the pier redevelopment work that was completed late last year.
- Work continues on the Promenade railings. The railings are being taken back to bare metal with sections being replaced where required, the process should be completed by the end of March
- The Victorian Shelter on the Marine Lake at Albany Rd junction, is pencilled in to be overhauled in March at a cost of £6000.00

### **EMPLOYMENT AND LEARNING UPDATE**

#### **Sefton@work General Performance Data**

<b>Data Description</b>	<b>Range</b>	<b>Figures</b>
Total Clients accessing service	Since 01/01/2016	3,870
Footfall (instances of people using Sefton@work facilities & premises)	Since 01/01/2016	34,631
	December 2019	301
New clients registering by age	December 2019	16-24 15
		25-49 34
		50+ 11
W2W contracts Male	Since 01/01/16	57.5%
	December 2019	67.0%
W2W contracts Female	Since 01/01/16	42.5%
	December 2019	33.0%
W2W with Disabilities/Health Conditions	Since 01/01/2016	1,023
	December 2019	16
People leaving the programme (into jobs/self-emp/training)	Since 01/01/2016	1,043 W2W 200 outcomes for Other programmes <b>Total 1,243</b>
No. of interviews with clients	Since 01/01/2016	13,161
	December 2019	125

Training attended	Since 01/01/2016	870
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### **Sefton@work – working with employers**

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

- 92 new opportunities (some multiples) have been managed in the period. Numbers are generally lower at this time of year because companies prefer to wait until after Christmas. However, contrary to trend this is a 30% increase on last year at this point.
- 123 face to face meetings have been held with business to promote the service and capture opportunities, resulting in 13 vacancies from this activity.
- Sectors advertising with the service this period has included a cluster of Engineering and Trade opportunities, with a number being higher level roles
- SMBC cleaner recruitment is continuing
- Care and direct payments / support worker jobs have been advertised by families and individuals
- Sefton Citizens Advice has offered 3 new starts on a routeway placement for clients
- *Other opportunities offered in partnership with providers have included:*
  - Security and SIA license applications
  - CSCS cards for construction sites access
  - Santander Traineeships
- A Business friendly leaflet will go out with business rates bills in March to 7,000 businesses promoting Sefton@work.
- The collaborative project with Sefton Community Learning for Debenhams continues and DWP has now provided benefit calculations for participants.
- 11 at risk staff completed the SACL tailored course for Debenhams which included IT qualifications and will be extended to include interview skills sessions.
- Reflections upon this work for Debenhams are likely to lead to the production of a jointly offered “redundancy pack” later in 2020.

Sefton@work Employer liaison team has met with the local leads for Be More, previously known as the Apprenticeships Hub. Much of this activity will promote the Be More website which will provide IAG / careers advice and guides ' resources about working in specific sectors, highlight Good news stories from apprentices and employers and advertise apprenticeship vacancies.

The BE MORE teams have focus in 2 areas which are: IAG in schools and communities intended to raise awareness of Apprenticeships to all ages including adults and Employer Engagement across all boroughs. They also arrange the levy transfer from large organisations to local SMEs. They have requested leads from Sefton@work to broker Apprenticeships and support our companies to find the right training provider.

There will be another LCR Skills Show in 2020, with the same focus as that in 2019. However, we have lobbied for a Sefton event which could target both young people and adults as we did last year and this is under consideration

Discussion have also taken place with Sandways Homes to identify the potential for employment and skills agreements with housebuilder companies and their suppliers to be implemented as part of their business model.

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

An extremely successful Celebration of Achievement event was held on February 7<sup>th</sup> at Bootle Town Hall with more than 120 people in attendance. Members of Sefton Council’s Cabinet, the MP for Bootle and the Council’s Chief Executive were all in attendance. More than 23 employers from a wide range of sectors from all parts of the Borough attended and many received a certificate of appreciation to mark their commitment to working with Sefton@work to enable local workless residents to get into the workforce. Many ILM participants attended alongside their ILM host employers and dozens of Sefton@work clients came along. A number of case histories were captured to highlight the breadth of the work of the Service and the barriers faced by clients and an extremely moving video was created capturing some of these stories. 17 Council departments and teams who have hosted placements, offered work trials or supported our clients also received thanks and recognition.

### **Promotions -Business Post Feature on Employment and Learning**

The Business Post feature on employment and learning was included in the December edition. It was well received, and a number of contacts have been made with the services as a result.

### **Adult Community Learning Service**

#### **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 employer’s needs. Delivery has now commenced using Sefton@work premises.

##### Blended Learning pilot

A procurement exercise has been launched to identify and purchase a new blended learning IT platform which will be used for this pilot.

Interim reports on progress of the Test and Learn pilots will need to be provided to the LCR CA in February 2020.

### **Spotlight on Outcomes for Unemployed Learners**

The following tables highlight the progress achieved by the Community Learning Service in responding to the requirements of the AEB (Adult Education Budget) in targeting an increasing proportion of activity towards the needs of unemployed workers and helping them to move closer to work. The percentage of learning aims being undertaken by unemployed learners has risen over the years from 13 – 64%. The rate of progress of our unemployed learners moving into work has increased from 11 – 18%, which is an extremely positive improvement.

#### **Learning Aims and Unemployed Learners**

	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
<b>Total Learning Aims</b>	2107	2985	2913
<b>of which by Unemployed Learners</b>	270	1184	1871

<b>% by Unemployed Learners</b>	13%	40%	64%
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### **Positive Progression**

	<b>16/17</b>	<b>17/18</b>	<b>18/19</b>
<b>Education</b>	34%	34%	37%
<b>Employment</b>	11%	12%	18%
<b>Voluntary Work</b>	7%	3%	8%

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

Following the approval by the CA in December of the SIF Skills Capital application for Cambridge Road, a project team has been pulled together to drive this forward. Assistance with project management has been offered through the Regeneration team and it is expected that the Project will be delivered in-house via the Council's Property services team.

The Approvals process has been followed to successfully secure the match finance from the Council. The project budget will be £1.3m with 90% of this being from the CA Skills Capital grant.

Detailed survey work is currently underway which will lead into the production of the project specification to go out to tender. While the project does not have a specific conservation focus, as it is a listed building, we will need to ensure that sufficient care is taken to ensure its heritage value is protected while allowing it to become a modern learning environment.

It is expected that the tender exercise to identify the lead contractor would happen in May, works on site would commence after the exams have been completed in June 2020 and would be ongoing until approximately end of January 2021.

During the works, the Service is preparing for a full decant of the building and a schedule of relocation is being worked up at present to identify suitable accommodation for the permanent staff group. Ongoing service delivery of courses will require careful planning to ensure our targets are met and the team is pursuing dialogue with a number of partners to secure this.

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

#### **Aspiring Instructors 2019**

Planning is underway to commence a new intake for the programme in 2020, with the intention that numbers on the programme will be increased. A successful submission was made to DWP to seek a community grant to cover additional costs. Additional pathways will be made available for this year and AEB funding can be used for those participants who are eligible for the support. The recruitment process will commence with Open days as in previous years. Since this year's course will take place in parallel with the developments at Crosby Lakeside other centres will be used across the Borough in addition to Crosby.

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

Green Sefton, Sefton@Work and SACL have delivered a pre-employment programme to support the recruitment of 19 seasonal posts with Green Sefton, expected to be required in early Summer 2020.

Sefton@work has:

Arranged meet the employer event for possible work placements and seasonal jobs for  
**54** People booked onto the event.

**35** of these attended the sessions to find out more about the opportunities but not all of those who attended wished to take part in the training.

**13** Attended SACL for Basic Skills assessment and 3 of these failed the level required to continue onto accredited training that had been scheduled. **10** people proceeded and completed the training with all application forms delivered to Green Sefton on Monday 10 February.

All completers were eligible for guaranteed interviews to be held at Sefton@Work. Green Sefton will offer placements in advance of the job starts.

Advocacy is ongoing on behalf of the 3 clients who failed their assessment to go on a placement to prove their practical competency.

**SACL** has:

Enrolled 13 participants on an Introduction to Customer Service course of which 10 learners progressed to a Level 1 Award qualification in the subject. At this stage all 10 appear to have met the requirements of the qualification, this will be verified when the work has been passed by the awarding body EV.

All learners who participated in the programmes of study as identified below completed and passed the expected outcomes:

- 9 of the group then went on to participate in an Introduction to First Aid
- 10 of the group participated in an introduction to Health & Safety
- 10 of the group participated in a two-day programme that included application forms and interview skills

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

#### **Performance at December 2019**

At the end of 2019, 172 young people in Sefton were NEET representing **3.14%** of the 16/17 population, which compares very favourably both with the statistical neighbours and within the LCR. The Combined NEET and Not Known Indicator charts for LCR for December 19 are given below. In summary, this indicates:

- Sefton achieve better than the North West NEET/NK combined measure
- Sefton are performing better than the England NEET/NK combined measure
- Sefton's combined rank is the highest in LCR at 120 out of 151 LA's at 3.7%

Area	16-17 year olds NK	16-17 year olds NEET	16-17 year olds Combined NEET & NK	Current NK Rank	Current NEET Rank	Current Combined Rank
Sefton	0.50%	3.20%	3.70%	140	45	120
Halton	0.30%	4.30%	4.60%	144	16	94
Wirral	1.80%	3.30%	5.10%	84	42	78
NORTH WEST	2.50%	3.30%	5.80%	-	-	-
St. Helens	1.10%	4.80%	6.00%	113	7	57
ENGLAND	3.50%	2.60%	6.10%	-	-	-
Knowsley	1.40%	6.20%	7.60%	101	1	31
Liverpool	3.90%	4.80%	8.70%	37	6	22

#### ***NCCIS data Dec 2019***

*Rankings are national comparisons 1-151 where 1 equals worst performance and 151 equals best in that indicator*

#### **Preventative Support Delivered to Year 11 young people**

In 2019 there were 3005 Sefton school leavers completing Year 11. Schools identified young people via a Risk of NEET Indicator (RONI) that identifies young people in school who have risk factors for becoming NEET. This high-risk cohort was then targeted for interventions by Career Connect staff ensuring support with progressions. Of those identified as 'at risk of NEET' there was a total of **255** young people supported by Career Connect. **233** of these



RONI young people moved into education or learning with **91%** achieving a positive destination which was an increase of **6%** compared to 2018 leavers which achieved **85%**.

### **Spotlight on Vulnerable Groups, SEND and Care Leavers**

This data shows that SEND Sefton 16-17 In Learning % is highest out of the Statistical Neighbours Data and the overall cohort 16-24 Sefton has the 2<sup>nd</sup> highest performance.

Sefton also has the highest volume of 16-17 LDD in Learning in the Liverpool City Region



SEND 16/17 NEET has reduced by 5.2% from 8.1% in December 18 to 2.9% in December 19.

1. **Sefton Statistical Neighbour 16-17 NCCIS Care Leaver EET %** - 4th Highest Performance (out a total of 8) although cohort numbers shown in brackets and with the exception of Lancashire the other areas data numbers are considerably low for Care Leavers.

Sefton 16-17 Care Leavers in EET % December 19 at **79.3%** is higher than North West **75.1%** and National **72.7%** Averages.

The following factors have had a positive influence on performance in Sefton:

- Many of our Local schools have continued to offer support to more vulnerable young people in year 11 through the RONI.
- Career Connect has negotiated closer partnership arrangements with the Virtual School to better support looked after young people.
- Career Connect are committed to supporting the Huddle Meetings in South Sefton and have developed new networks with other partners to support families. This has also led organically to further partnerships outside the meetings, this has improved outcomes for young people.
- Career Connect have secured funding from the Violence Reduction Partnership for a small pilot. This funds an additional coach 2 days a week until end of March for 13-16 year olds whose families/friends are involved in violent crime or who are at risk of offending. 4-6 sessions are to be delivered with measurable outcomes and the hope is that there may be additional funding to extend this into the 2020/21 financial year.

### **Career Connect Social Value – Creation of Apprenticeship position targeted to vulnerable groups**

The new apprentice started with the company on 20<sup>th</sup> January. This young lady is 17 year old and was formerly NEET and a YOS client still on a YOS order until end of November 2020. She is receiving close supervision but is settling in well.

### **Southport Town Deal**

As a key pillar of preparations for the Southport Town Deal, a Skills, Education, Employment & Enterprise task group has been established. The focus of this group will be the challenge to connect opportunities in relevant sectors of importance in Southport with younger people and those who wish to return to work. The issue of “youth flight” and the extent to which decisions can be influenced to build a whole life career in the town will also be prioritised.