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Summary of Sefton's Local Economic Assessment

LEA Executive Summary

Introduction

The world in which Sefton and the wider Liverpool City Region function is very different to that of even a decade ago. Continued rapid globalisation has brought wide-reaching implications for economic structures and ways of working. The business recession from 2007 and the public sector cutbacks which are only just beginning, have presented new challenges to Sefton's economy and to local prosperity. Across both private and public sectors, the search to identify new opportunities is accelerating, based on the Borough's endowment of business, skills, and property, and its offer of a coastal location immediately to the north of Liverpool, with a mix urban, semi-urban and rural environments.

This Local Economic Assessment (LEA) provides a timely, evidence-based and objective economic assessment of Sefton and places within it. Identifying new opportunities, and formulating effective responses to these, will need to draw on a common understanding of the present position and challenges, and a shared aspiration, and will involve new ways of working across locally-based organisations and networks. The broad aims of the LEA are to provide a sound understanding of the economic conditions in the area, economic linkages, comparative strengths and weaknesses of the local economy, challenges and opportunities, and key barriers to growth in future. This evidence base will provide the foundations for the Borough's forthcoming Sustainable Economic Development Strategy (SEDS), which will set out Sefton's priorities, strategic objectives and associated action plans for the next 10-20 years.

The LEA document has been prepared by SQW, working closely with a Steering Group at Sefton MBC. In addition to the analysis of secondary datasets and documentation, the LEA development process has involved a business survey with 800 companies in the Borough and five workshops which were attended by around 120 participants. Sefton MBC will hold a formal consultation on the LEA document during May and June 2011, with a view to informing the development of a draft SEDS by mid-summer 2011.

Key findings

Sefton lies to the North of Liverpool along the Irish Sea coastline, and forms part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Enterprise Partnership geography. ***Sefton has strong economic linkages with Liverpool***, especially in terms of commuter flows, with almost one-third of Sefton's employed residents working in Liverpool. Conversely, employers in Sefton tend to rely on the local labour supply (over three-quarters of workers in Sefton also live in the Borough). Economic linkages elsewhere, for example in terms of commuting flows to

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cities such as Manchester and Preston, or the extent to which businesses serve markets outside of the LCR area, are much lower.

Sefton is not a homogenous Borough in terms of its socio-economic characteristics: rather, ***it includes a varied mix of places in terms of social structures, economic performance, roles and functions.*** In broad terms, the Borough can be grouped into three distinctive geographies:

- ***North Sefton***, which includes ‘England’s Classic Resort’ of Southport, and is characterised by tourism and retailing activities (which typically pay low wages), niche sectoral strengths in residential care, management consulting, public relations, digital and creative, and wider professional and business services a strong residential property and quality of life offer, and good educational attainment. However, the area also experiences employment land constraints, energy capacity issues, transient populations, housing affordability issues and weak transport links (east-west).
- ***Central Sefton***, which contains places such as Maghull, Crosby and Formby (often acting as dormitories for residents working elsewhere in the Borough and in Liverpool). Central Sefton can be characterised as having a good housing and quality of life offers, high educational achievements, and some of Sefton’s more resilient district centres, but also suffers from housing affordability, accessibility and employment land supply issues.
- ***South Sefton***, which includes Bootle, suffers from high levels of deprivation, child poverty and inter-generational worklessness. Educational achievement of residents and life expectancies are also low, combined with a poor quality housing offer. The area is home to strategic employment sites running along the Dunning’s Bridge Road Corridor (although not all land meets potential investors requirements) and the Port of Liverpool, which presents major opportunities arising from the Post Panamax proposals and the potential for wider supply chain/complementary activities.

The current position of Sefton on key economic indicators, in relation to Liverpool City Region and nationally, is summarised in Table 1, and the diversity in deprivation and affluence across Sefton is shown in Figure 1. At local level, two of Sefton’s Lower Super Output Areas (LSOAs) are in the 1% most deprived in England in 2007 (in the Linacre ward in South Sefton), while two LSOAs (close to Formby in Central Sefton) are in the 5% least deprived in England. Averages for Sefton reflect the overall picture for the Borough, and have to be used where data are unavailable at more local levels, but they inevitably conceal the diversity and intensity – good or bad – of economic conditions at the local level.

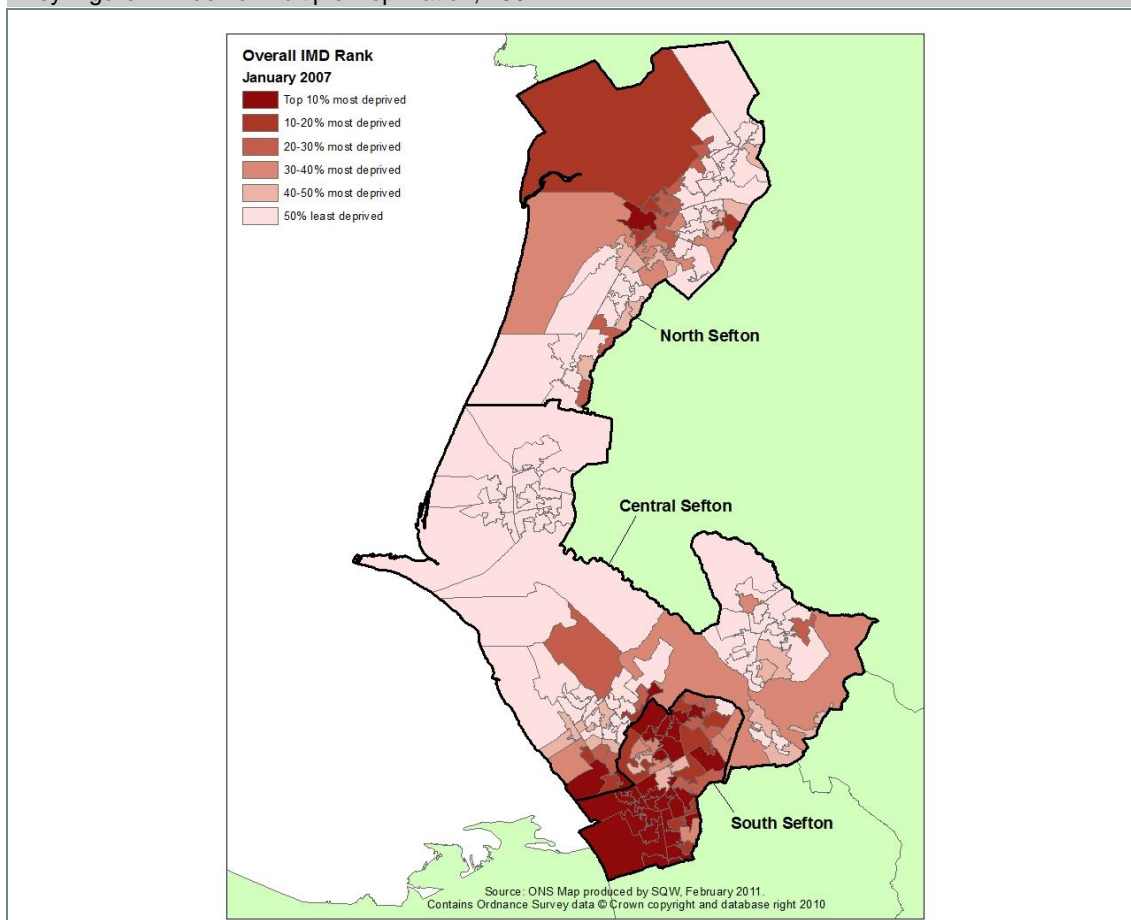
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Table 1: Key Statistics

| Indicator | Sefton's Position | | | Date (latest data) | Sefton's Performance compared to LCR/Merseyside average | Is the gap with the national average narrowing or widening? | | |
|---|--|---------|------------------------------|--------------------|--|---|---|---|
| | Rate/Percentage | Value | Ward variation | | | | | |
| GVA per head | NA | £11,900 | NA | 2008 | Weak: Sefton is 81% of Merseyside average | ↓ | Widening since 1995 | ↓ |
| Gross Disposable Household Income | NA | £13,700 | NA | 2008 | Strong: Sefton 107% of Merseyside average | ↑ | Widening since 2000 | ↓ |
| Working age population | 59% of total population | 160,300 | NA | 2009 | Weak: Sefton is 3pp < than LCR | ↓ | Widening since 1992 | ↓ |
| Population aged 20-34 years | 15% of total population | 42,300 | NA | 2009 | Weak: Sefton is 4pp < LCR | ↓ | Widening since 1992 | ↓ |
| Number of businesses and density | 49 per 1,000 WAP | 7,800 | NA | 2009 | Strong: 41 per 10k WAP in LCR | ↑ | Gap remains | = |
| Businesses with 10, fewer emps | 84% | 7,372 | NA | 2008 | Similar: Sefton 2pp more firms of 1-10 emps | = | Gap remains | = |
| Business start-ups | 46 per 10k WAP | 775 | NA | 2009 | Similar: Sefton has 2 per 10k WAP more | = | Gap remains | = |
| Claimant count | 4.7% of resident popn | 8,032 | 98 - 937 | Nov-10 | Strong: Sefton is 0.6pp < LCR | ↑ | Gap closed in 2000s, now reopened | ↓ |
| NEET population | 6.4% of the 16-18 yrs | 548 | 1% - 12% | Mar-11 | Strong: lowest rate compared to all other LCR districts | ↑ | Gap remained over last 12 months | = |
| JSA claimants | 4.4% of resident population aged 16-64 | 7,550 | 1.5% - 10.7% | May-10 | Strong: JSA rates across LCR: from 4.2% to 6.1%; Sefton towards lower end of range | ↑ | Gap closed in 2000s, now reopened | ↓ |
| Notified JC+ vacancies | 60 per 10k WAP | 1,012 | 0 - 203 | Nov-10 | Weak: Fewer vacancies per 10k WAP than LCR (88) | ↓ | Widening gap in rate since 2004 | ↓ |
| Employment rate/level | 68.3% of popn 16-64 | 114,500 | NA | Jul 09-Jun 10 | Strong: LCR average is 64.8% | ↑ | Widening gap since 2005 | ↓ |
| Jobs (number) | NA | 104,000 | NA | 2010 | NA | | NA | |
| Private sector employees (number) | 71% | 64,400 | NA | 2008 | Weak: 74% private sector employees in LCR | ↓ | Widening gap since 2003 | ↓ |
| Earnings (workplace, gross annual, full time workers) | NA | £22,359 | NA | 2010 | Weak: LCR ranges from £22,215 to £26,374; Sefton towards lower end | ↓ | Gap with UK since 2004 – not closing | = |
| Employees in KIBs | 8.3% | 7,817 | 27 to 3,458 employees (ward) | 2006-8 (3 year av) | Similar/weak: LCR average is 8.9% | ↓ | Little change in gap since 2006, continued to be relatively weak | = |
| WAP with Level 4+ qualifications | 26.2% | 44,300 | NA | 2009 | Strong: LCR average is 25.0% | ↑ | Little change in gap since 2004 - continued to be relatively weak | = |
| WAP with no qualifications | 13.0% | 22,000 | NA | 2009 | Strong: LCR average is 16.5% | ↑ | Gap has widened since 2004, but narrowed again in 2009 | ↑ |

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Key Figure 1: Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2007



Source: ONS

Overall competitiveness and future prospects

In 2009, Sefton's economy generated around £2.8bn in economic output (measured in Gross Value Added), which accounted for 15% of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) total. Sefton is home to 273,000 people (18% of the LCR total) and around 104,000 jobs (16% of the LCR total). During the 1990s, local GVA grew more quickly than in the wider LCR: the national economy was growing and the number of jobs (in the public sector in particular) expanded rapidly in Sefton. However, the evidence suggests that **economic growth in the Borough plateaued after 2000**, whilst the LCR and UK continued to grow. **The gap in GVA per head between Sefton and the UK widened** and, by 2008, GVA per head in Sefton stood at £11,900. This represents 81% of that for the LCR and only 56% of the UK average.

According to the Competitiveness Index, Sefton was ranked as less competitive than other districts in the LCR (except Knowsley) in 2010. Liverpool (on which many of Sefton's residents depend for employment) is **highly vulnerable to public sector cuts**, and **Sefton is less resilient in terms of its ability to withstand and respond to shocks** as the resilience of its business base is limited (in terms of relative concentration of low-growth sectors hit by the recession, and dependency on local markets) and community resilience (for example the proportion of the population

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that can contribute to the economy, occupations and earnings of workers). These factors threaten Sefton's economic recovery from the recession. Indeed, economic projections¹ suggest that, under a 'business as usual' scenario following the recession, employment rates in Sefton will be unlikely to return to 2005 (pre-recession) levels until 2027, whereas LCR and the UK would recover a decade earlier.

People and Communities

Sefton's population of 273,000 accounts for 18% of the LCR total population. The majority of residents in Sefton are white UK nationals (98%), a higher rate than in the LCR and nationally (2009/10 figures).

- ***The working age population (WAP) forms 59% of the total population***, which is lower than in the LCR and UK. This means that, in terms of the productive potential of its residents, Sefton is at a slight disadvantage.
- ***Like LCR, Sefton has seen a fall in its population base since the early 1990s.*** Sefton has however seen a much stronger decline in WAP – and critically in young adults – over this time period compared to the LCR and UK averages. Consultees suggested that this is related to students not returning after graduation, in turn linked to a lack of suitable job opportunities/earning potential and housing affordability, at least in some parts of the Borough. The fall in young adults is expected to continue in future, and again has important implications for the productive potential of Sefton's economy (in terms of employment and enterprise).
- In 2007, ***Sefton was ranked as the 83rd most deprived LAD in England, although above all other LADs in the LCR area*** (and its ranking has improved in the recently released 2010 IMD). However, the data ***mask significant variation*** within the Borough and the experience of different places across Sefton is polarised: over one third of LSOAs in Sefton are in the 10% most deprived in England (hotspots of severe deprivation evident in South Sefton around Bootle and the port, the North around Southport), while the Borough also contains two LSOAs in the 5% least deprived in England.
- On average, the proportion of children in poverty in Sefton is below the national average, but again there is considerable variation across the Borough, with ***pockets of pronounced child poverty in South Sefton*** in particular. In-work poverty is becoming increasingly important as the proportion of families in low paid jobs increases.

¹ Produced by Cambridge Econometrics on behalf of The Mersey Partnership in 2009

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- ***Residents in Sefton have a slightly lower life expectancy and higher level of long-term illnesses*** than the averages for England. Differences in life expectancy across the Borough are significant. As a consequence of poor health, Incapacity Benefit claimant rates are high in some parts of Sefton.

Business Enterprise and Growth

In 2009, there were approximately 7,800 active enterprises in Sefton, 20% of the LCR total. The businesses were spread across North, Central and South Sefton, but business density in Sefton (expressed in relation to WAP, this is an indicator of competitiveness) is below the national average.

Since 2004, the number of businesses in Sefton has increased slightly (by 5% or 360 enterprises), but the rate of growth in business stock has lagged behind all other LADs in LCR and the UK. The size distribution of businesses in Sefton broadly mirrors that of the LCR and UK, with 84% of firms employing 1-10 members of staff.

Key messages arising from the secondary data analysis and business survey were:

- ***Decisions by Sefton-based businesses tend to be taken locally:*** the majority of businesses surveyed have their HQs in Sefton, and have located their business in the Borough because of family ties.
- ***Economic output is dependent upon public administration, education and health sector, all now at risk of major budget/employment cuts:*** Banking, finance and insurance, distribution and hotels and restaurants account for a large number of business units in Sefton, but the public administration, education and health sector generates the highest share of GVA.
- ***Sefton's businesses have high ambitions for growth, but this might take the form of 'jobless growth':*** In the next 10 years, 35% of businesses surveyed expect their employment to increase and 44% expect turnover to increase – a small proportion of firms aspire to be 'high growth'. As increases in turnover do not necessarily equate to increases in job opportunities, there will be a need to seek out additional ways of generating employment, including new enterprise.
- ***Sefton's businesses are experiencing barriers to growth:*** the main barriers to business growth are: access to finance to invest/innovate, increasing market competition and the wider economic climate, emphasising the need for businesses to maintain their competitiveness.
- ***Businesses in Sefton have a relatively low propensity to trade further afield, and/or export their products and services:*** 58% of firms reported that Sefton

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and the LCR provided their 'main markets', leaving them dependent upon local demand and prices.

- ***Enterprise and survival rates have been strong compared to the LCR average, but have dipped during the recession:*** Sefton has a higher business start up rate than the LCR average, but under-performs against the national average. The Borough performs fairly well on business survival.
- ***Fewer of Sefton's workers are employed in Knowledge Intensive Businesses (KIBs), with implications for earnings, innovation and productivity levels:*** compared to the LCR, Sefton has a slightly higher share of businesses in KIBs, but a lower share of employees. The Borough under-performs the UK on both measures.

Work and Skills

Sefton has ***consistently outperformed national levels of educational achievement since 2005***, but importing pupils from outside the Borough helps disguise very low attainment levels (especially in numeracy and literacy) among residents in some wards. Sefton also has a ***higher proportion of residents qualified to degree level or above*** compared to the LCR average (but below the UK) and this level has increased over the last five years. The Borough also has ***a higher share with no qualifications*** compared to the UK average, but this shows signs of improvement.

At an aggregate level, Sefton's ***employment rate is considerably higher*** than the LCR average, but the deficit with the UK has widened since the onset of the recession. However, Liverpool is a strong pull for employed residents, with West Lancashire also important, especially for those in higher level occupations. Within Sefton, entrenched and inter-generational ***unemployment and worklessness remain major issues***, especially in South Sefton. The recession brought about a sharp increase in the number of benefit claimants (latest figures show an increase by 3,300 on the 2007 figures of 4,700). There are real concerns amongst partners in Sefton that a series of 'waves' of redundancies from the public sector will hit the Borough harder than elsewhere in the UK and that it will be increasingly difficult to re-engage the workless in coming years – especially those who did not find employment when the local economy was relatively strong.

Despite this, and perhaps surprisingly, the number of NEETs appears to be falling. Also, a higher proportion of those who are economically active in Sefton want a job compared to LCR and the UK. On the demand side, Sefton has a lower proportion of vacancies per head of the population, and over the last five years the number of jobs created by the private sector in Sefton has fallen. Businesses saw a general

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improvement in economic conditions as the key factor that would encourage more recruitment and benefit Sefton's workless population.

The ***main driver of Sefton's economic under-performance is low productivity***. The GVA generated by each job in Sefton is only 76% of the UK level and this gap, attributable both to overall sectoral composition and to the mix of activities and occupations within these sectors, has widened over the last twenty years. ***Sefton has a relatively large share of jobs in lower productivity (and therefore lower paid) sectors*** such as public administration, defence, health, distribution, hotels and restaurants: and the ***productivity of workers in each of these sectors is also slightly below their national counterparts***. Overall, the jobs filled by workers in Sefton are at a ***lower occupational level*** than the UK average, while the Borough 'exports' many residents working in higher level occupations to Liverpool.

As a result, earnings in Sefton are below the national average, and ***workplace earnings are particularly low***. A 'low skills equilibrium' exists in some parts of Sefton, with low value added, low skills and low wage employment. This presents a real challenge: policies seeking to raise incomes will need to consider related issues, including housing market/affordability, encouraging workless people back into employment, and the ability to 'rebalance' the economy towards higher value added activities.

Preconditions for sustainable growth – infrastructure, development, energy, utilities and the environment

A review of the available evidence around the competitiveness of Sefton's key enabling infrastructure, energy, utilities and environmental assets identified the following headline messages.

- ***Commercial land and property, and retail provision***: Sefton has 382,000 sq m of office space, 581,000 sq m of factories and 441,000 sq ft of warehousing. Although the rateable value (RV) for factory space is similar to the national level, RV for offices is less than half the national figure. The evidence suggests a shortage of employment land in and around Southport, and also a need for more employment land close to the Port of Liverpool. Retail provision is differentiated across Sefton by quality and type of offer, with a good supply of both convenience and comparison stores. Retail space is concentrated in Bootle (ranked 285th nationally in terms of retailer demand) and Southport (ranked 53rd).
- ***Housing***: Sefton's stock has increased on average by 481 new dwellings (net of demolitions) each year since 1986/87: recent projections indicate that the Borough will require a similar level of new build through to 2027. Affordable

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housing completions have varied year-on-year, but since 1999 these have represented approximately 30% of all completions.

- **Transport and connectivity:** Overall, Sefton enjoys a strong and effective transport system with reasonable access to the national strategic network. However, east–west links across the Borough are notably less good than north-south connections. Sefton currently has a reasonably competitive broadband offer with a good mix of suppliers and products, but there is some concern that the current Next Generation VDSL broadband roll-out plan indicates that only two of Sefton’s ten telephone exchanges (Birkdale and Formby) will be upgraded to offer much faster downstream speeds.
- **Energy and Utilities:** The electricity network in Sefton is generally adequate for current needs, although provision of <2 MVA at 33kV for new connections has created capacity issues in north Sefton, in particular for Southport Business Park. Sefton has the potential to play a major role in both wind energy and biomass, although local planning issues will need to be addressed. Sefton is also expected to make a modest contribution through anaerobic digestion of farm biogas and solar photovoltaics.
- **Environmental Sustainability:** Sefton Council has a Coastal Defence Strategy as well as Shoreline Management Plans in place, for effective management (by SMBC and partners) of the Borough’s 21 miles of coastline. River flooding is the main source of flood risk in the Borough, linked to the River Alt and River Crossens.
- **Carbon emissions:** Per capita CO₂ emissions in Sefton have been consistently below those for the City-Region and England in recent years, but the gap narrowed between 2005 and 2008. Sefton generates less domestic waste than other districts in Liverpool City-Region, and this is continuing to reduce: Sefton also leads the way in recycling activity in LCR.

Key issues, opportunities and choices

Government spending had been a significant driver of economic growth in Liverpool City Region, and over the last decade, Sefton has benefited from substantial public sector job creation and regeneration funding. Going forward, the picture for investment and drivers of growth will look very different. The Coalition Government aims to ‘rebalance the economy’ to ‘*create a fairer and more balanced economy, where we are not so dependent on a narrow range of economic sectors, and where new businesses and economic opportunities are more evenly shared between regions*

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*and industries*², with the private sector seen as a key driver of future economic growth.

In March 2011 the Government published its Budget through to 2016 and 'The Plan for Growth', which set out many objectives with implications for Sefton and its future economic competitiveness – including the need to increase the skills and flexibility of the labour force, the importance of private sector growth, exports and attracting inward investment, business start-ups and expansion, and opportunities around low carbon.

Implications for Sefton's Sustainable Economic Development Strategy

The evidence presented in the Sefton LEA report sets a series of headline challenges and opportunities across the different thematic areas. Economies are made up of inter-related functions, linked together by business trading and investment, individuals' spending decisions, information and culture. In developing local policy, linkages and trade-offs between thematic issues need to be appreciated, and priorities for any interventions linked to a clear rationale and objectives. Strategic decisions should also be informed by a vision for the scale of ambition and the growth that the key economic actors in the Borough seek to achieve, and also from consideration of the implications of *not* acting.

There is, for example, a significant growth opportunity for Sefton in the Port of Liverpool and the wider developments which will be needed to realise the vision for the Liverpool SuperPort. This has the potential to create a large number of much-needed jobs for local residents, but successful development will also create competition for limited land, and tensions with regard to transportation priorities, the environment and carbon emissions. The scale and location of future housing developments across the Borough should also be considered in relation to economic aspiration. Current recommendations to the Council are based on a minimum net new housing requirement of 480 homes per annum, which is similar to the average completions rate achieved in the recent past: this would be consistent with a continued fall in population and workforce, which could have a negative impact on the Borough's 'productive potential' and GVA generation.

These and other inter-related policy areas need to be thought through further in order to establish priorities. In Table 1, below, we show a 'spectrum' of choice for stakeholders and policy-makers for some of the key 'tricky issues'. These are intended as a basis for discussion, encouraging debate on where the Borough is now positioned, and where it aspires to be in 10-20 years. In reality, the degrees of choices under the Sustainable Economic Development Strategy for Sefton (SEDS) will

² BIS (2010) Local Growth White Paper: realising every places' potential.

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be subject to many constraints: an additional – and highly important – factor will be to agree the role and extent of local influence. The degrees of freedom for exercising choice and influencing Sefton’s position will vary substantially across the different issues, and it will be important to focus on those areas where the potential influence, and therefore benefit, is greatest.

Table 2: Key headline issues, opportunities and choices for Sefton

| Issues & the spectrum of choices for policy-makers and stakeholders | |
|---|---|
| Dormitory, supplying high quality labour Growth driven through integration with wider economies | Growth driven from <u>within</u> the Borough. enterprise, inward investment Reinvestment |
| To what extent should Sefton’s future economic growth be based on employment opportunities generated locally versus providing a high quality of life offer and good connectivity to other key employment nodes in order to attract wealthy commuters? | |
| Focus on specialised sector opportunities e.g. maritime/logistics/ Finance etc | Diverse, ‘balanced’ economy and sectoral structure |
| Should Sefton’s economy in the future be highly specialised sectorally or should it seek to diversify into a broader range of areas? | |
| Balance growth spatially & transform Bootle | Growth focused on key growth areas (e.g. Central/North Sefton) |
| Should Sefton focus on re-balancing economic growth spatially across the Borough, or focus efforts on growth areas that are likely to generate greater returns on investment? | |
| Focus on wealth generation and quality/value of jobs | Maximise number of jobs, inclusion and engaging workless |
| To what extent should Sefton adopt a growth and wealth focused vision versus one that is more aligned with inclusion and regeneration principles? | |
| Proactive leadership | Reactive approach |
| Does Sefton currently have the requisite leadership and capability to successfully deliver a step change in its economic performance? Do Sefton’s leaders want to shape future change or respond to change? | |

Source; SQW 2011

Going forward: key issues and priorities for SEDS identified through the LEA

Those consulted during the development of this LEA took the near-unanimous view that Sefton **should set its ambitions for economic growth higher** than in the past and **be more proactive in enabling and encouraging economic growth**. Partners are keen that the SEDS provides a clarity of vision on economic growth issues: this will need to be supported by strong business and political leadership to champion the SEDS vision and objectives.

Ten key issues and related priorities were highlighted for SEDS at the workshops.

- **Prioritising opportunities and an integrated approach to delivery** - seen as the key to effective strategy-setting. The objective will be to create the conditions for desirable forms of development, enabling growth across

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different dimensions: employment land in the right places, energy supply, utilities, supply of right types of housing in right places (including affordable housing to retain young adults and families).

- ***Attracting and retaining higher value occupations*** - building critical mass in potential growth areas, including Bootle.
- ***Rebalancing the economy from the public to private sector*** - a major challenge, and a priority. This will require more focus on business starts and business growth, especially in the short-term, before the potential employment benefits from the transformational interventions can be realised. High growth firms are important for the local economy, but they will not always directly create new employment.
- ***The Port is a major opportunity and priority***, in particular for value-added logistics hubs. There are issues around land supply (appropriate types of land in the right places), and potential tensions relating to conflicting land uses which will need to be addressed, before jobs and supply chain opportunities can be realised.
- ***Health and social care*** are also potential drivers of growth – their current scale, and forthcoming reorganisations, will present opportunities for private sector growth and create new jobs, including many for school/college leavers: many of these will, however, be relatively low paid.
- ***The cost to the public purse of deprived communities is high*** – the hidden costs of doing nothing will need to form part of the argument for selective interventions.
- ***Local FE Colleges, and links into HE, should be key elements in SEDS***, including encouraging better links between FEIs in Sefton and with HEIs outside the Borough, training providers and businesses to ensure the supply of skills meets the needs of employers. This will encourage young people to stay in the area – and to build their careers in Sefton.
- Economic profiling should be used to inform Sefton's ***profile for inward investment*** – in which sectors/types of business could the Borough offer an advantage, what are the key factors that might attract these sectors/types of business to the area, how should the offer be put together and presented? Workforce/skills availability and the range of housing opportunities with city centre access are also likely to be important.

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- Underpinning and related to all these factors: ***a fundamental change in cultures and attitudes towards education, learning and enterprise*** is required, with actions at different levels, and different approaches, to show the range of possibilities, and how individuals can realise their potential.
- A ***communication strategy*** will be needed to underpin this pro-active approach, highlighting Sefton's 'brand identity', what it offers to growing firms, its positioning within LCR, and key selling points to potential inward investors.

Sefton MBC has a key enabling role, and the capacity to develop and coordinate approaches in many of these priority areas. But achieving the step-change partners are looking for in local economic performance will need real and effective partnership working, and leadership from business as well as the Council. Changing local conditions, life-chances, and perceptions will also require visible joined-up working, between Sefton Council, business and other public and third sector partners.