

BRIEFING NOTE TO: Cabinet Member Regeneration and Skills

SUBJECT: Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan- 7 July 2023

REPORTING OFFICER: Stuart Barnes (Asst Director Economic Growth & Housing) Mike Mullin (Service Manager-Business Support & Investment)

1.0 Purpose of Briefing Note

To update Cabinet Member on progress with the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan 2023/24

2.0 Recommendations

That Cabinet Member notes and provides feedback on progress against the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan 2023/24

3. Background

3.1 On 3rd November 2022 Sefton Council Cabinet approved the final version of the Sefton Economic Strategy for publication. It also noted further work scheduled for 2023 on the development of an associated Action Plan and appropriate monitoring points. Cabinet also gave authority to the Assistant Director of Place (Economic Growth and Housing) in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Regeneration & Skills to approve the Action Plan and Monitoring Reports as set out under the recommendations.

3.2 Cabinet Member (Regeneration & Skills) approved the proposed process and method for implementing the Action Plan at her March 2023 CM briefing on 5th April 2023.

4 Governance & reporting

4.1 The Economy Cell meets quarterly and will update the dashboard twice per annum allow time for project leads to capture performance data and recognising the complexity and often lengthy nature of investment and development projects. The table below sets out the process:

Economy Cell meeting	Dashboard update deadline	CM Regeneration & Skills Briefings	CM Regeneration & Skills/O&S Regeneration & Skills
		Monthly	
9 June			
7 September	1 September		
30 November			7 November
18 January 2024	7 February 2024		5 March 2024

4.2 **Cabinet Member will be fully consulted and briefed in advance on the draft reports prior to presentation to O&S Scrutiny.** The Assistant Director of Place (EG&H) will present to O&S Regeneration Committee as with previous Covid related economic updates.

5. Progress to date

5.1 CM will recall that the Strategy and Plan focusses on four key strategic objectives and sub strands:

Strategic objective	Sub-strands
Business Growth & Investment	
Employment and access to work	
Regenerated Places	<i>Growth & Strategic Investment Programme Housing Planning Tourism</i>
Social Inclusion & Access for all	<i>Equality & Diversity Sustainable Travel Net Zero/Low Carbon Health & Wellbeing Digital</i>

5.2 Sefton Economy Cell, comprising officers from a range of council services, is delivering against each of the these objectives, overseen by the Assistant Director of Economic Growth and Housing, supported by Service Manager-Business support & Investment.

5.3 The attached workbook provides a full update on Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), RAG status and commentary. A summary is provided below for ease of reference:

6. Quarter 1 April-June 2023 performance summary

Business Growth & Investment	Overall Status	Green
<p>CM has already seen and agreed Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) which will be delivered by InvestSefton. The team co-ordinated and managed the development of the Sefton Economic Strategy which was approved by Cabinet in November 2022. Business Growth and Investment is one of the four key objectives of the Strategy and InvestSefton is developing a range of activities to help deliver the outcomes shown in the above table. Corporate performance and Sefton Economic Strategy local targets and outcomes have been aligned. InvestSefton remains totally focussed on business growth and sustainability although economic recovery remains very much central to this as businesses face increasing economic pressures including cost of living, materials, supply chain and energy costs across a range of sectors. The team is working with other city region support organisations such as the LCR Growth Platform and Enterprise Hub (start-ups), New Markets (accessing new business sales markets) and a range of other providers. KPIs have been aligned with Corporate Performance reporting and new UKSPF contractual output obligations.</p>		

Employment and access to work	Overall status	Green
<p>Performance across the three service areas for Employment and Access to Work are proceeding well. Contract management processes are in place to oversee all the provision, and these allow for early indication of challenging circumstances and corrective actions to be implemented where necessary to avoid risks of under-achievement. Sefton@work is progressing through an important transition point during this year which sees the end of European structural funding which has supported the service for many years through to a transition funding period where staff salaries and basic running costs will be supported through Single Investment Funding (SIF) coming from the LCR-CA. This transition will occur from September 23 through to March 24. During this time also, we will be undertaking the relocation of the service from its current base on Stanley Road into a unit within the Strand shopping centre. This move will bring improved financial efficiency while also increasing the synergy and alignment for public facing services within Bootle Town centre. The Adult Community Learning Service continues its delivery of second-chance learning opportunities to adults, based within the Cambridge Road Community learning hub and various outreach locations across Sefton. Its funding, targets and performance management plans reflect an academic year cycle, so a new delivery year commenced in August 2023. Adult community Learning Service is also in receipt of funding from LCR-CA for Multiply, the national numeracy initiative which is partly used to contracted out to voluntary and community sector agencies for informal engagement activity. The NEET Reduction and Early Intervention Service was re-commissioned in June 2023 with Career Connect being the winning tender after a fully compliant public procurement exercise. The main focus of this contract is to deliver the Council's statutory duties regarding 16- and 17-year-old young people, but also incorporates additional assistance for vulnerable groups which adds value to the work of a number of teams across Childrens Social Care and education.</p>		

Regenerated Places- Growth & Strategic Investment Programme	Overall status	Green
<p>KPIs focus on regeneration led area plans for Bootle, Southport, Crosby, Maghull and Ainsdale and is reported monthly to the GSI board and CM via Cabinet briefings. Overall projects and programmes remain on track.</p> <p>Ongoing programme management including reporting to DLUHC as per Towns Deal grant requirements, Town Investment Plan and Sefton's role as Accountable Body including ensuring compliance with the Town Deal assurance and performance management. This includes preparation and submission of twice-yearly Monitoring and Evaluation Reports; Submission of an Annual Statement of Grant Usage and Towns Fund Assurance Letter on behalf of SMBC as Accountable Body; and compliance checks as and when required throughout year.</p> <p>The PMO also undertakes the role of administrating the Southport Town Deal Board including arranging meetings, ensuing governance and reporting requirements are adhered to, membership changes recorded, terms of reference and declarations of interest are up to date and Board minutes are loaded onto Mod Gov to demonstrate transparency.</p> <p>Consultation & Engagement</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Progress of the Youth Board / Shadow Board discussions 2. Engagement with Southport Learning Trust schools, Southport Learning Partnership and Colleges (Southport College and Hugh Baird) 3. Review of Future Southport pages – Digital engagement 4. Representatives at the inaugural Sefton Huddle 5. Updating website information. <p>Social value – 5 key themes being developed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Employment related opportunities for key priority groups, in particular; local car leavers and local (30 mile radius) apprenticeships 2) Educational opportunities for the next generation; initiatives with local schools and colleges 3) Innovate ideas & contribution to Sefton's environmental and sustainability goals 4) Use of local supply chain (within 30 miles) 5) Health and well-being initiatives for both the project team and local community 		

Regenerated Places- Housing	Overall status	Green
<p>KPIs focus on social housing completions and net additional dwellings per annum. Housing growth targets in the borough were met in 22.23 and the pipeline of potential completions for 23.24 looks positive based on schemes that are onsite and planning consents that are in place. However, market conditions remain challenging with high interest rates and high construction costs. It remains to be seen how this affects the delivery of new housing. The Housing team continues to work closely with colleagues in Planning to facilitate growth, particularly affordable housing in high demand areas, and aspirational housing. Market concerns have provided opportunities in this regard, and we have worked successfully with two RPs to purchase open market sale units on a number of sites in the borough where demand from private purchasers for open market sale has dropped. These properties will be made available as low-cost home ownership products.</p>		

Regenerated Places- Planning	Overall status	Green
<p>KPIs focus on approval of Social Value (Employment & Skills); Employment floorspace sqm; No of FTE jobs created and % of qualifying development proposals that are supported by an Employment and Skills Plan</p> <p>There is no target in Local Plan for amount of employment floorspace development of number of jobs provided. However, reference can be made to previous years for comparison where an increase of previous years should be the aim. The figure for 2021/22 was lower than in previous years. Data for 2022/23 is being compiled.</p> <p>The data of the number of jobs secured on new employment development can be difficult to ascertain. However, the Council have recently approved a Social Value (Employment and Skills) from Development SPD which should help secure this data in a timely and consistent manner. The SPD sets out that proposals of a certain scale (i.e., new housing of 30+ homes, certain commercial development of 1,000m2 floorspace) must be supported by an Employment and Skills Plan, which will be secured by legal agreement and monitored for implementation.</p> <p>The target of 640 net additional dwellings is the Local Plan average annual requirement for 2012-2030, although the government's standard methodology figure has 587 homes for Sefton. In recent years the Council have comfortably met its housing delivery target. The numbers of dwellings completed during 2022/23 are being compiled, but early indications are that they will exceed 640 again.</p>		

Regenerated Places- Tourism	Overall status	Green
<p>Tourism KPIs focus on increasing visitor numbers, economic impact, total employment and securing multi-day visitor events for the Marine Lake opening. Tourism actual figures are collected annually via the STEAM Model, this work is commissioned via the Growth Platform. A draft report for 2022 is expected this summer. The securing of new multi-day business events for the Marine Lake events centre will not commence until 2024.</p> <p>CM is kept up to date on progress on activities that help drive statistics monthly.</p>		

Social Inclusion- Equality& Diversity	Overall status	Green
<p>A Corporate Equality Group (CEG) has been newly established to support the Council with its commitment to integrate Equality and Diversity throughout its services and to help secure its vision of creating stronger, more resilient communities (Sefton Vision 2030). CEG will monitor the council's performance in relation to equality and diversity and KPIS focus on communications and engagement, improving employment rates and business support for people in disadvantaged areas, reviewing equality and diversity data and engaging with the LCR Race Equality Monitoring group.</p> <p>The Council has produced and launched Its Equality, Diversity, and Inclusion Strategy 2023-27.</p>		

Social Inclusion-Sustainable Travel	Overall status	Green
<p>KPIs focus on Low carbon transport; Maritime Corridor; Eastern access; Local cycling and walking; emobility</p> <p>Work is actively being progressed to gather all the intelligence required to develop a Low Carbon Transport Strategy. This includes commissions to undertake baselining work and to progress work to allow us to move to the next stage. The plans to consult on this strategy have been approved by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel. The Maritime Corridor Business Case is progressing well and has already been the subject of initial public consultation. The next stage of this work will include engagement on the preferred designs in July to September 2023. The Southport Eastern Access Business Case is progressing well and will be the subject of further consultation in August to October 2023. The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan is in development and plan for engagement have been approved by the Public Engagement and Consultation Panel. Wider developments are being progressed by the LCRCA around bus reform and green bus routes. Moving Buses Forward consultation is live until the 3rd of August.</p>		

Social Inclusion- Net Zero/Low Carbon	Overall status	Green
<p>The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority have set a target of net zero for all parts of the economy to be net zero by 2040. This will require all Sefton businesses to halt the use of gas, diesel, oil and only use energy from renewable resources by 2040.</p> <p>Details of the actions within this plan will be reported to the next SES meeting. Examples within this Action plan includes (TBC) On transport - Complete Phase 2 of 'State of Freight' investigation into a future zero carbon freight solution, ensuring that this is aligned with our Freeport goals of decarbonisation and good jobs to deliver outcomes including last mile ZE deliveries and reduce trips, scope options for mechanisms to seek to support decarbonisation of freight, and develop a freight strategy and that connects Freeport locations in a net zero manner On buildings - Identify high-opportunity zones as areas for groups of home/business owners to plan retrofits together or create low carbon communal/district energy schemes and smart networks. On Industry - a series of targets around the following;</p> <p>To effectively transition to net zero, our industrial base will need cost--effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and effective access to clean power, clean hydrogen and carbon capture and storage technologies alongside efficiency and storage technologies alongside efficiency improvements in process and delivery systems improvements in process and delivery systems.</p> <p>On Clean Energy - Progress the Phase 3 development activities related to Mersey Tidal (LCR Year 1 action plan review SE6) and commence Phase 4 activity to Consent a UK first of a kind (FOAK) Tidal range scheme.</p> <p>On Natural Environment - Develop a pipeline and identify potential funding for pilot innovative and sustainable agricultural projects, such as urban farming, greenbelt agroecological farming, carbon capture etc. Other issues pertinent to business - MEES Regulations applies to non- domestic rented properties, by 1 /4/23 must have an EPC rating of E as a minimum to be able to be rented, plans for this to increase over time (possible EPC D by 2025, EPC C by 2028 and EPC B by 2030) Investment in green technologies e.g. building retrofit, EV charging, Heat pump installations will help to generate local jobs and training opportunities</p>		

Social Inclusion- Health & Wellbeing	Overall status	Amber
<p>The KPIs focus youth poverty, employee earnings, Children living in workless households, educational development; deprived communities; food insecurity and life expectancy.</p> <p>The indicators are drawn from the Public Health Performance Framework (8 and 9) and the Child Poverty Accountability and Progress Framework (1-7). It is important to note that indicators that reflect population status and inequalities in outcomes such as median income, child poverty, school readiness, and spatial measures of deprivation are highly correlated with population health outcomes and inequalities. The launch of the Child Poverty strategy in late 2022 will be followed by a largescale event focused on improving children's prospects through reducing and mitigating child poverty. The child poverty lens has helped to catalyse much deeper cross-professional and cross-sector engagement with the complex of and deep-rooted causes of poverty and poor health and revealed more about how health and economic prospects intertwine, and this is especially visible in collaboration between public health, Planning and Regeneration. Other aspects of the accountability and progress framework are 'show and tell' (sharing and disseminating learning and support on poverty reduction), milestones and 'lived experience'. Of particular relevance to the Sefton Economic Strategy Action Plan is the very recent completion of academic insight work into the experiences of parents and children who currently experience poverty in Sefton. This throws an important light on the many trade-offs between work, caring, benefits and health behaviours that families have to make and should prove a useful intelligence resource for other SES leads.</p>		

Social Inclusion-Digital	Overall status	Green
<p>Sefton Council has an established digital strategy and KPIs focus on infrastructure; Training and skills; Digital Inclusion; Business Forum; New ways of working; technology enabled care; Customer and smart cities.</p> <p>Sefton's Digital strategy work is well underway with boards and sub-groups established and a raft of activity and projects underway-key highlights include:</p> <p>Gov Roam deployed across all Council sites alongside public, guest and corporate wifi to support co-location</p> <p>Sefton's Data Centre migrated to Azure Cloud</p> <p>Digital connectivity and inclusion featured in Council's Growth & Strategic Investment programme including business locations in Bootle, Crosby and Southport Government & LCR Digital support training promoted to Sefton businesses; Skills assessment completed and revised training offer now available.</p> <p>Education teams now represented at board level for Digital Skills including Schools Trust and Hugh Baird</p> <p>Digital Inclusion Strategy now completed and established, Refresh of devices and software within Council libraries now complete.</p> <p>Libraries also implementing a lap top loan scheme for residents, databank pilot underway, and digital meeting rooms in development.</p> <p>Sefton business digital and technical networking group established and launched-Sefton Huddle; First meeting attracted 30 businesses with a terms of reference agreed at a pre-launch event following Sefton Economic Forum; events programme via InvestSefton underway; Supported Chambers of Commerce with Local Skills Improvement Programme at Southport College and Digital Board looking at a sector specific survey in due course ;InvestSefton has also supported a wide range of businesses operating in the digital and technology sector and is well connected to LCR wide support from Growth Platform and the Combined Authority</p> <p>Sefton has implemented a raft of digital improvements across the authority as part of its new ways of working including cloud based solutions and upgrades with associated training for staff; this also involves cross-cutting activities for other council and partner led work including Health & wellbeing; inward investment and Net Zero/Climate change; A new Customer Experience Platform and redesign of the Council website is now completed. Sefton is also exploring and developing opportunities offered by Internet of Things Technology such as smart lighting, digital charging hubs and low-cost sensor solutions to monitor environmental factors, improve local transport and improve community safety. Air Quality sensors have been installed at 7 Sefton locations as part of a LCR Traffic Signal upgrade project and adjacent to 3 schools-these can lead to reduced pollution in these areas.</p>		