

# Equality Analysis Report.

## Details of proposal:

The Sefton Economic Strategy (SES) 2022 is an update, refresh and re-purposing of SES 2019. It also builds on the work of the Sefton Strategic Recovery Plan (Economy) produced in May 2021 and sets out the Council's Economic priorities to help lead the recovery process from the COVID-19 pandemic. The plan will set our Sefton's strategic priorities for:

1. Employment and opportunities for work
2. Business Growth & Investment
3. Social inclusion and access for all
4. Regenerated places

The strategy consultation document provides an economic evidence base which looks at all aspects of the Sefton economy including trends for business, employment, and the wider borough economy. The strategy will form the basis of an economic framework and associated action plan for delivering specific projects and programmes. This will be achieved by working collectively and collaboratively with partners and stakeholders, which intend to create positive outcomes for individuals and communities.

## Consultation undertaken

Sefton Council's Economic Growth & Housing service led the public consultation exercise which started on 20th July and ended on 17th August 2022.

Proposals for consultation were approved by the Sefton Public Engagement & Consultation Panel on 15th July 2022. The draft evidence base report was circulated (on two occasions) to over 2,600 businesses, developers/investors with a link to an online survey-in addition:

- A dedicated Council webpage and on-line consultation portal was produced

- The consultation report and questionnaires were also produced in easy read formats
- Several Sefton Communications tweets/press and social media releases on a weekly basis

Specific face to face briefings and online consultation forums included:

- Sefton Economic Forum-15 July attended by over 100 business delegates
- Sefton in Mind-27 July attended by over 10 representatives
- People First Merseyside-11 August attended by over 20 Board members
- Sefton Partnership Board-15 August attended by over 15 board members

In total, 192 people took part in the survey. Of these, 60.4% were members of the public who live in Sefton and 27.6% were local businesses. Several other stakeholders and organisations also submitted responses to the consultation outside of the survey that have been factored into the analysis. These included responses from LCRCA, People First Merseyside and Youth Advisors, among others.

Overall, there was support for the chosen themes: Employment and Opportunities for Work, Business Growth and Investment, Regenerated Places, and Social Inclusion and Access for All. Generally, there was agreement that the themes work well together due to their interconnectedness, but that growing and investing in business is the starting point for the other themes to follow from.

The survey asked respondents to rate the themes and corresponding key issues based on how important they are to them. On average Employment and Opportunities for Work was rated the highest.

Survey respondents were also given the opportunity to answer qualitative questions. The comments have been analysed and summarised to represent the frequently recurring key points and combined with feedback taken from consultation sessions and

individual contributions outside of the survey. Key issues included parking and transport, sustainability, and support for both the younger and older generations.

Where appropriate, information from the consultation undertaken is included in the sections below:

### **Ramifications of Proposal:**

The whole population of Sefton will be affected. Economic impacts affect all people who live, work, visit and study in the borough.

The Sefton Economic Strategy will set both a framework and associated action plans purpose is to help ensure that our priorities and delivery is effective across the whole of the borough.

The strategy does highlight that there are potentially groups of people who have been particularly impacted by the economic downturn mostly attributed to the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic but also including long-standing issues that have affected the economy and who are likely to continue to be impacted by the cost-of-living crisis.

- People who work key sectors affected by the pandemic such as the Hospitality Leisure, Health and social care and town centre Retail sectors
- Lower skilled and lower paid workers (because of the employment opportunities in the industries affected)
- Female members of the workforce, particularly those who have left employment or are reliant upon childcare provision
- People who are long-term unemployed or furthest away from the labour market
- People who have lost their jobs because of the pandemic and have not returned to the workforce at their previous level of earnings
- People with disabilities or health conditions affecting their ability to engage with the labour market
- Young people looking to transition into work from education or training

- People living with mental health conditions
- People who are under-employed and seeking full employment with improved pay and terms and conditions

The Sefton Economic Strategy provides a framework on which to develop focussed actions to help address, where possible, the issues raised by respondents under each of the four thematic objectives:

- 1 Employment and opportunities for work
- 2 Business Growth & Investment
- 3 Social inclusion and access for all
- 4 Regenerated places

The report will be measured by a series of targeted outcomes and reported to Cabinet and Overview & Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration & Skills).

### **Are there any protected characteristics that will be disproportionately affected in comparison to others?**

The protected characteristics under the Equality Act 2010 are:

- Age
- Disability
- Gender Reassignment
- Marriage and Civil Partnership
- Race
- Religion or Belief
- Sex
- Sexual Orientation
- Pregnancy and Maternity

#### **Age**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy (Employment & Access to work) are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of age, with specific initiatives included to support younger people.

We also recognise that older people seeking employment may be affected and we have put in place some provision to ensure they

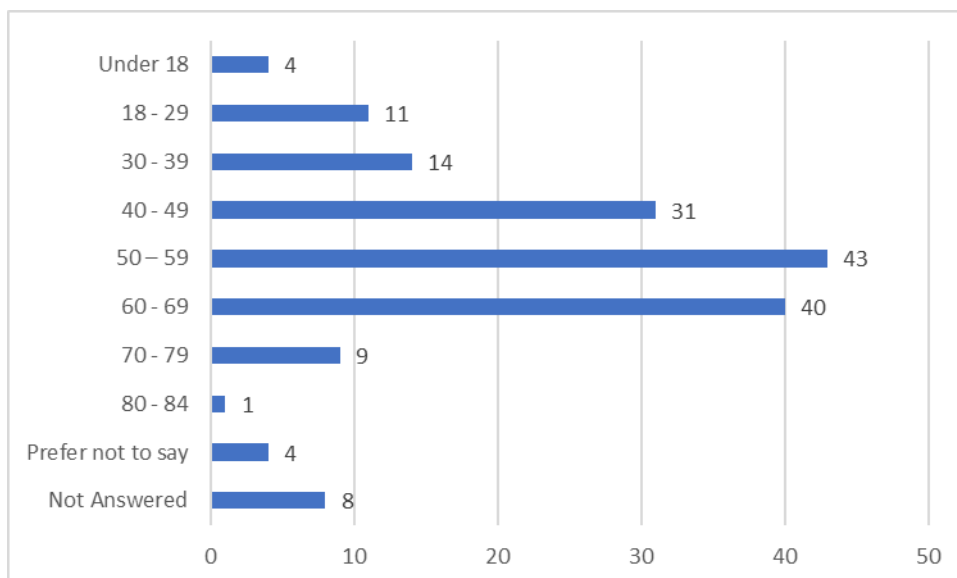
have access to assistance including advice and guidance from Sefton@work

A potential barrier may be access to and the availability of information about the Strategy and any planned actions/activities arising from it. Any marketing of these initiatives may need to be targeted to ensure that demographics are aware of these initiatives and can access the opportunities available. This includes information and guidance to people affected by the cost-of-living crisis.

The strategy recognises that people in the workforce may be affected by government changes to the state retirement age and the need for older workers to continue in employment for longer than they may have previously expected

## Results

Of the 192 respondents 157 people provided their age profiles.



Some 55% of respondents were in the aged 50-79 age profile possibly reflecting the age demographic of the borough while 36.4% were below the age of 50, encouragingly nearly 10% were under the age of 29 including 2.4% under the age of 18. This is an actual increase of the 2018/19 consultation and reflects the more focused work, including face to face focus groups, carried out with people across Sefton.

We also gave people the opportunity to receive follow up support in areas such as self-employment, starting or growing a business.

34 people responded to this and have been contacted by InvestSefton .

Sefton Young Advisers provided feedback from 6 people in their group. They provided the following insights:

Employment and training- First aid training should be mandatory in colleges; Careers fairs in schools are a great vehicle for meeting employers; Sefton CVS provide great links to career opportunities.

Entering work- Need to be taught about tax etc at an early age; Apprenticeships do not pay enough; lacking confidence and know- how on starting a business.

What has worked, what could be better? Supportive teachers when applying for university; always having a careers advisor available in year 11; Designated time in school in year 11 to go through career planning; Higher paid apprenticeships; Support for smaller businesses to take on young people more locally; Education on employment rights; Standardised career advice in all schools/colleges; Barriers to less wealthy students getting into top Universities; More information on roles that do not require university education.

Top 3 improvements-

- 1) Understanding of the needs and more support for young people who are unsure what they want to do at 16/18 when doing GCSE's or A-Levels.
- 2) More exposure to roles that are less well known.
- 3) Improved access to career support that isn't in school/college.

### **Disability**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of disability.

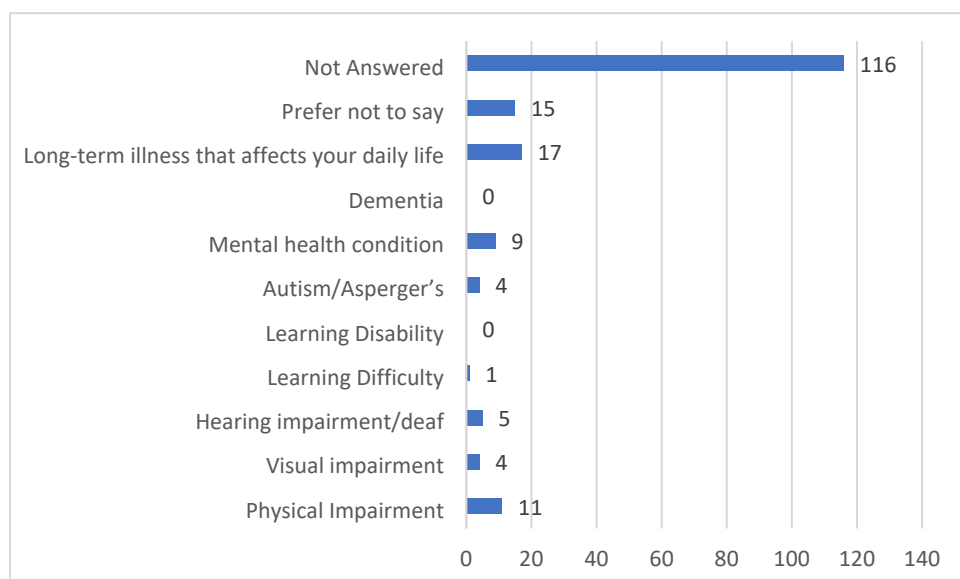
Any specific initiatives included within the Strategy action plan will support people with disabilities and should create a positive impact on this characteristic.

People with disabilities or long-term conditions face much higher levels of worklessness than others. A potential barrier may be

access to and the availability of information about the Strategy and any planned actions/activities arising from it. This includes people with learning disabilities or learning difficulties who may require additional support to appreciate what opportunities are available. Having information in accessible formats will help to ensure being able to access the opportunities. Involving the support of Advocacy Groups can also help with the engagement of the recovery approach.

People who have lost their jobs because of COVID-19 may also be experiencing poor mental health and its impact is likely to increase the demand for mental health services. People who have been displaced in this way may experience a lack of confidence about returning to the workplace or to a new area of work outside their experience. The training schemes can support this, as can guidance and support to employers on creating proactive approaches to risk assessment for staff, including physical and mental health which can support the return to work/employment.

We recognise that poor mental health can affect significant numbers of people of any age and any background (evidenced by the reported increase among young people – and we expect that all activity arising from this Strategy will reflect this changing landscape and incorporate additional measures to address this.



49 people responded to the question on disability. The highest received was from those with a long-term illness that affects their everyday lives while 5.5% had a mental health condition.

Some of the comments received from people who responded to the survey were directly related to disability and social inclusion. Feedback included better disabled access and Changing Places toilets, consideration for those unable to walk or cycle due to limited health and better links between tourist and shopping locations in Southport for those unable to drive.

The spread of responses also reflects the breadth of the consultation exercise including focus group meetings with:

- Sefton in Mind-27 July attended by over 10 representatives
- People First Merseyside-11 August attended by over 20 Board members

A specific issue for people within this group characteristic is access to job opportunities and advice on how employment can affect disability benefits. Sefton Council is seeking ways in which to address this and improve and the employment rate among people with ill health and conditions

The timely consulting of people within this group characteristic on new building developments was also raised. A Presentation to People First Merseyside is being arranged by officers involved in the current plans to refurbish Bootle Strand.

### **Gender reassignment**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of gender reassignment.

A potential barrier may be access to and availability of relevant information on national and local support for gender-reassignment, both within the Council and other organisations (employers). Therefore, additional monitoring of this protected characteristic may be required.

Results -

One person who responded to the survey mentioned discrimination but didn't provide any detail. This is a data gap which we will review.

Sefton@work will continue to aid this group in responding to the practical barriers which some people face in terms of providing



accurate identification documentation with which to enter employment.

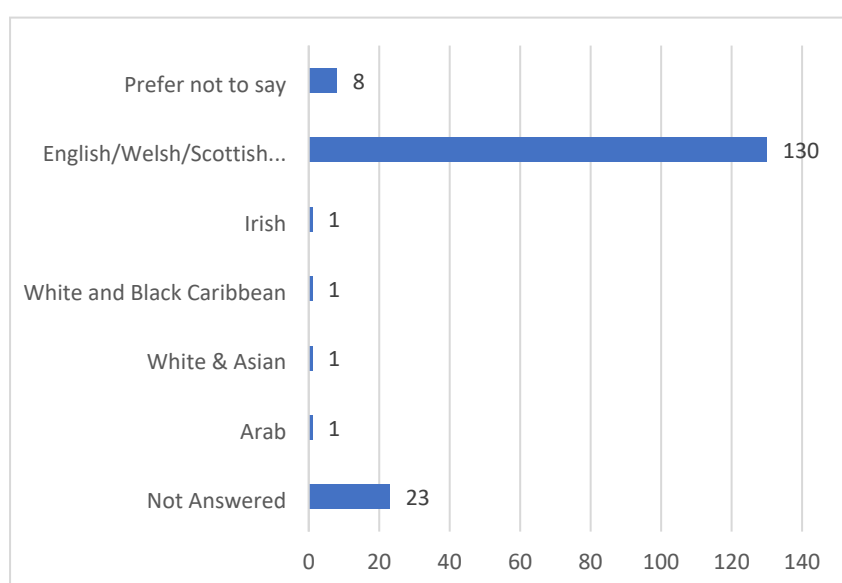
### **Marriage and Civil Partnership**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy will provide positive impacts for all members of the community and fully includes individuals within the protected characteristic of marriage and civil partnership. We will promote equality and diversity in recruitment with all employers we work with.

### **Race**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of race, however the following should be considered:

- A potential negative impact may occur for individuals/communities where English is not their first or second language and therefore inadvertently lack engagement with the recovery approach and may need support to understand national/ local guidance.
- Largely mobile population and some of the population may have lower literacy levels and less access to education - who are more likely to miss information about the recovery and training and employment opportunities.
- There may be concerns around the impact in immigration status.



142 people responded to this question of which the vast majority (130) are of English/Welsh/Scottish/Northern Irish/British origins. 31 people did not or preferred not to say.

Where appropriate information in appropriate languages and in accessible formats can be available to mitigate and barriers.

Work with employers to ensure that they have access to up to date, relevant Government guidance, equalities and promote opportunities for all Sefton communities

The Council and partners will ensure communication is effective, clear and where appropriate translated in other languages. They will also work closely with trusted organisations and individuals, in a culturally appropriate and sensitive way to ensure that recovery is experienced across all of Sefton.

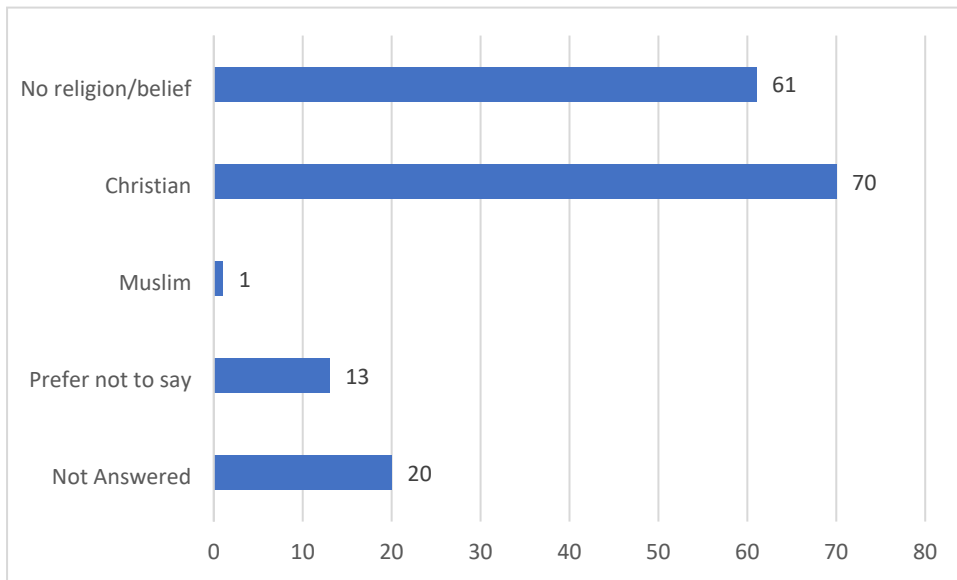
- Irish Community Care <http://iccm.org.uk/contact/>
- Sefton CVS BME Community Development Project
- Migrant Workers Sefton Community Charity

Sefton @work provides support with translation and interpreter service for jobseekers

Sefton Adult Learning Service is a key provider of English as Second Language training for all adults aged over 19 in Sefton.

### **Religion and Belief (includes no belief)**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy will provide positive impacts for all members of the community and fully includes individuals within the protected characteristic of religion and belief.



There were 145 responses to the religion and belief question of which 70 people stated they are Christians; 1 was Muslim while 33 preferred to not say. Some 61 people are of no religion or belief.

### **Sex**

We recognise there are some sectors of our labour market where employment of males or females dominate and there is unequal representation of the sexes, both across the workforce and within managerial structures. We aim to ensure that all our activity will promote equality of access and opportunity and will take relevant action to encourage more diverse recruitment and progression wherever possible.

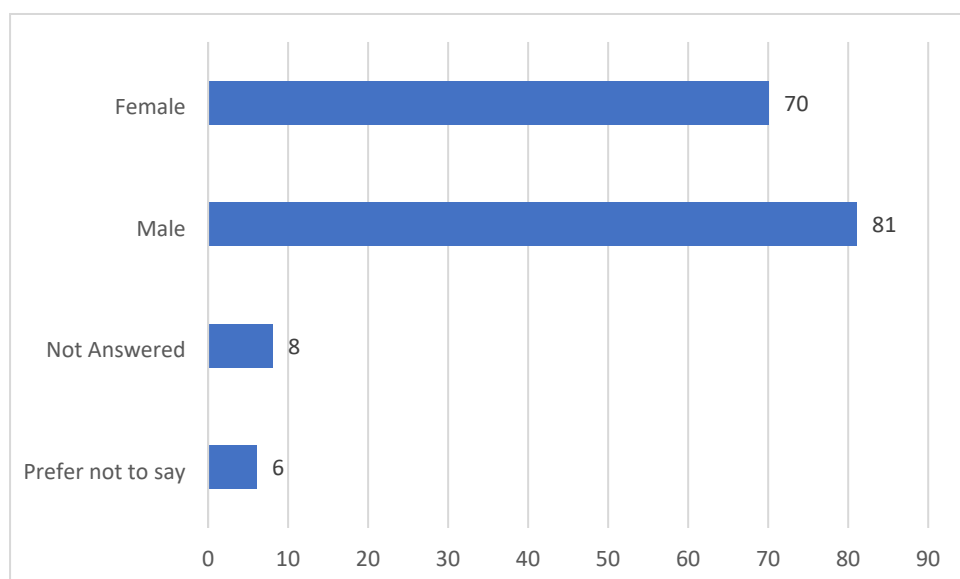
#### Results -

There were 157 responses to the question on sex.

While 8 people did not answer and 6 preferred not to say, there were slightly more males (49.1%) than females (42.4%) who confirmed their gender.

From the survey results there doesn't appear to be any themes directly relating to sex, however, a potential barrier may be access to and the availability of information about the Strategy and any planned actions/activities arising from it. Any marketing of these initiatives may need to be targeted to ensure that both men and women (including those furthest away from the labour market) are aware of these initiatives and can access the opportunities available.

Positive promotion to support and encourage women, and in particular older women to re-enter the labour market will be undertaken to address the changes in the labour market which have been monitored through evidence during the post-pandemic period.



While 8 people did not answer and 6 preferred not to say, there were slightly more males (49.1%) than females (42.4%) who confirmed their sex.

From the survey results there doesn't appear to be any themes directly relating to sex, however, a potential barrier may be access to and the availability of information about the Strategy and any planned actions/activities arising from it. Any marketing of these initiatives may need to be targeted to ensure that both men and women (including those furthest away from the labour market) are aware of these initiatives and can access the opportunities available.

Positive promotion to support and encourage women, and in particular older women to re-enter the labour market will be undertaken to address the changes in the labour market which have been monitored through evidence during the post-pandemic period.

### **Sexual Orientation**

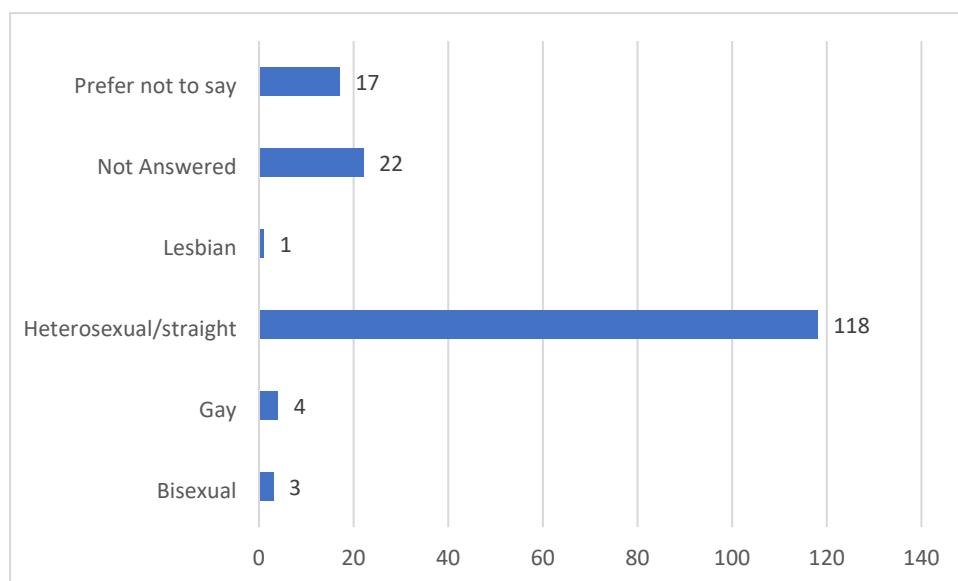
The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy are likely to have a positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to the protected characteristic of sexual orientation.

A potential barrier may be access to and availability of relevant information on national and local information on sexual orientation, both within the Council and other organisations (employers). Therefore, additional monitoring of this protected characteristic may be required.

The Strategy will be delivered in the context of the work undertaken by the Council and its partners related to the NAVAJO standard of access for all LGBTQi plus groups

Results -

There were 143 responses to the question on sexual orientation.



Sefton Council has further strengthened its work in this area through the Corporate Equality Group. This will be an excellent sounding board for consultation exercises and providing both guidance and challenge where applicable.

Sefton Council has more recently outlined several goals to further equality throughout the council which will have positive knock-on effects for the wider borough and its communities. This includes:

- Increased awareness and engagement across the whole organisation; improved communications, increased time for staff to attend dedicated engagement events & groups.
- Increased engagement with partners and communities including website revitalisation to ensure inclusivity in related areas is explicit (e.g., of Navajo feedback).

Mandatory online training – continued promotion and scrutiny to drive completion rate (and sustain it).

- Policy of zero tolerance on staff abuse to be drafted and displayed at all public-facing locations.
- Recruitment advertising – ensure explicit inclusivity and avoidance of unconscious bias to improve quality and consistency. Blind applications, interview panels, etc – finalise process points as previously identified.; Navajo assessment feedback and action plan.
- Establishment of Racial Equality Monitoring Group (REMG), as per recommendations of April '22 Motion.

### **Pregnancy and maternity**

The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy will provide positive impacts for all members of the community and fully includes individuals within the protected characteristic pregnancy and maternity.

We will ensure that employers are signposted to relevant sources of information and support, so they are aware of best practice in this area. We will also provide guidance and signposting for individual community members on their rights in relation to pregnancy and maternity in the context of employment and training.

### **Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?**

The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

### **Is there evidence that the Public Sector Equality Duties will be met?**


The Equality Act 2010 requires that those subject to the Equality Duty must, in the exercise of their functions, have due regard to the need to:

1. Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Act.
2. Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.
3. Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Act explains that having due regard for advancing equality involves:

- Removing or minimising disadvantages suffered by people due to their protected characteristics.
- Taking steps to meet the needs of people from protected groups where these are different from the needs of other people.
- Encouraging people from protected groups to participate in public life or in other activities where their participation is disproportionately low.

Further work is required on analysing data gaps and identifying any further key trends from the survey results. The objectives of the Sefton Economic Strategy will provide positive impacts for all individuals and communities. The aims to create inclusive communities and foster good community relations, building aspiration and confidence.



Key initiatives within the approach are focused on involving communities, giving them a voice, and supporting them to be involved in decision-making. Therefore, this is likely to be a further positive impact on individuals and communities with regards to community cohesion.

A potential barrier may be access to and the availability of information about the Strategy and any planned actions/activities arising from it and having information in accessible formats will help to ensure them being able to access the opportunities. Involving the support of Sefton@work, Sefton CVS, the Carers Centre, Advocacy Groups and VCF Networks can also help with the engagement of the recovery approach.

Sefton Council's Economic Growth and Housing service will work collaboratively with communities, businesses, educators, and training providers to ensure that it grows its workforce with the right skills, from those furthest away from the labour market to those most recently displaced due to the pandemic and provide training and apprenticeship opportunities for transitional careers and new skill development.

Sefton Council will drive and promote Social Value through procurement, both as a Council

and through shared values with our partners and investors to help create equality of opportunity. To this end a Planning development social value policy for employment and skills is being produced.

Information will be available in accessible formats and alternative languages, where appropriate, to mitigate any barriers where information needs to be in different ways so it can be understood and therefore inadvertently lack engagement with the Recovery approach.

Partnership working is important to the recovery and the Sefton Economic Strategy builds on the strong, well-established partner relationships in Sefton, to further develop local initiatives for wider social good. These strong relationships will help foster good relations between individuals and communities, helping to create awareness of the programme and specific initiatives so that they are accessible to all.



## **What actions will follow if proposal accepted by Cabinet & Council?**

It is proposed that the strategy be divided into two sections:


1. Evidence base-this sets out the economic data evidence base. While data changes the key underlying issues for the economy in terms of jobs, business growth, attracting new investment and regeneration in Sefton remains the same. Most Local Authorities are now updating their economic data on two/three yearly cycles as a standard evidence base.
2. Action Plan-This will set out what council services will deliver under each of the four key thematic objectives. The current draft took account of the key objectives (7 in total) in 2018/19 and compared with the priorities identified for 2022. It is recognised that delivery of these priorities will be ongoing and require associated performance indicators. Actions will also be continually reviewed considering the impacts of the current cost of living crisis on the Sefton economy.

The Sefton Economic Strategy consultation helped shape the following key conclusions and key focus areas:

Continued work on pathways into work and skills & development activity underpins the entire strategy and is likely to be increasingly important given economic challenges, the changing nature of employment and the ageing demographic. Provision of second chance learning opportunities further supports the entry of potentially disadvantaged groups into employment and promotes the inclusion and diversity of the workforce.

Sefton has several core private and public investments which can generate greater opportunities for local business growth and more start-up activity and smaller scale inbound investment – all broadening the business base and employment opportunities.

An improved environment to live, work and attract visitors and investment is a key pillar of the strategy – but the ambitious investment programme can, itself, create opportunities for local business, help develop supply chains and create employment and skills development programmes.



It is apparent that any 'trickle down' benefits of economic growth do not reach all communities without proactive work to enable access to employment and wider services. Extreme deprivation undermines communities and undermines the ability of the Local Authority to work on wider initiatives. Further work in this space includes:

- Further consultations and engagement with individual characteristics will take place as part of the ongoing development and individual work programmes.
- Engage with key partners to further understand the issues and mitigations of protected groups, for example People First, Sefton CVS, Migrant Workers Sefton Community Charity, Equal Voice (BME) Network, Sefton Carers Centre, Embrace Network and In Trust Merseyside
- Further consideration of the marketing and communications needed for the Sefton Economic Strategy will be accessible and targeted, where appropriate.
- Continue to promote access to learning and business growth from our emerging evidence and best practice across the system.
- Ensuring that key actions are overseen and monitored by the Economy Cell and report accordingly to the Senior/Executive management of the Council.
- Communicating across all communities and businesses on progress of performance against the Sefton Economic Strategy.