



# Site and history



Existing view of the site

**The site on Southport's Promenade is part of the cultural and social history of the seaside town. The project ambition will deliver a transformational project for Future Southport**

## Where is site located?

The new MLEC will be on the site of the existing Southport Theatre and Convention Centre (STCC) adjacent to the Bliss Hotel and within the Promenade Conservation Area. The MLEC will replace the former STCC which closed its doors in 2020. The Water and Light Show installation is proposed on a floating structure within the Marine Lake, facing the proposed new building.

## What is the site history?

The STCC included three event spaces: a c1,600 seat theatre auditorium, the Floral Hall Ballroom and The Waterfront Suite which was the main conference meeting space capable of hosting around 700 people in a theatre style. The original Floral Hall opened in 1932 and the theatre was added in 1973 alongside the conference facilities. Over time the building has been heavily adapted and significantly extended to the extent that despite some remaining original interior features, the Floral Hall is now largely subsumed within the current STCC except for the western part of the building facing the Marine Lake.

The different phases of the development of STCC and its neighbouring buildings is illustrated on the plan below.

### Key phases

- The Floral Hall (1930)
- Two Storey Extension (Estimated between 1930 and 1955)
- Two Storey Extension (Estimated between 1930 and 1955)
- Floral Hall Extension (Estimated between 1955 and 1973)
- The Southport Theatre (1973)
- Bliss Hotel (2008)
- Promenade Road Entrance (2005-2010)



## Why are we proposing a new events centre?

STCC is no longer considered fit for purpose as a modern, sustainable or commercially viable events centre.

Some of the reasons behind the proposals for redevelopment are:

- Large parts of the STCC are in poor condition falling behind modern standards
- An inefficient layout for event organisers including problems with internal levels and entrances
- A variable condition and quality of decoration across the facility due to the incremental development over time
- Technical issues including poor sightlines in the theatre, limited acoustical variability, poor stage facilities
- The building's services are at the end of their lifespan
- There is opportunity for the new building to better address Marine Lake frontage and provide lakeside activation.

Overall, these reasons made the former venue unattractive to event organisers and audiences in recent years. Audiences have fallen from 165,500 in 2012 to just over 50,000 in 2019, a reduction of around 70% and this was further affected by the coronavirus pandemic. Over this period, other events and business venues in the region and wider UK have invested and competition to hold high-profile events and theatre productions has increased.

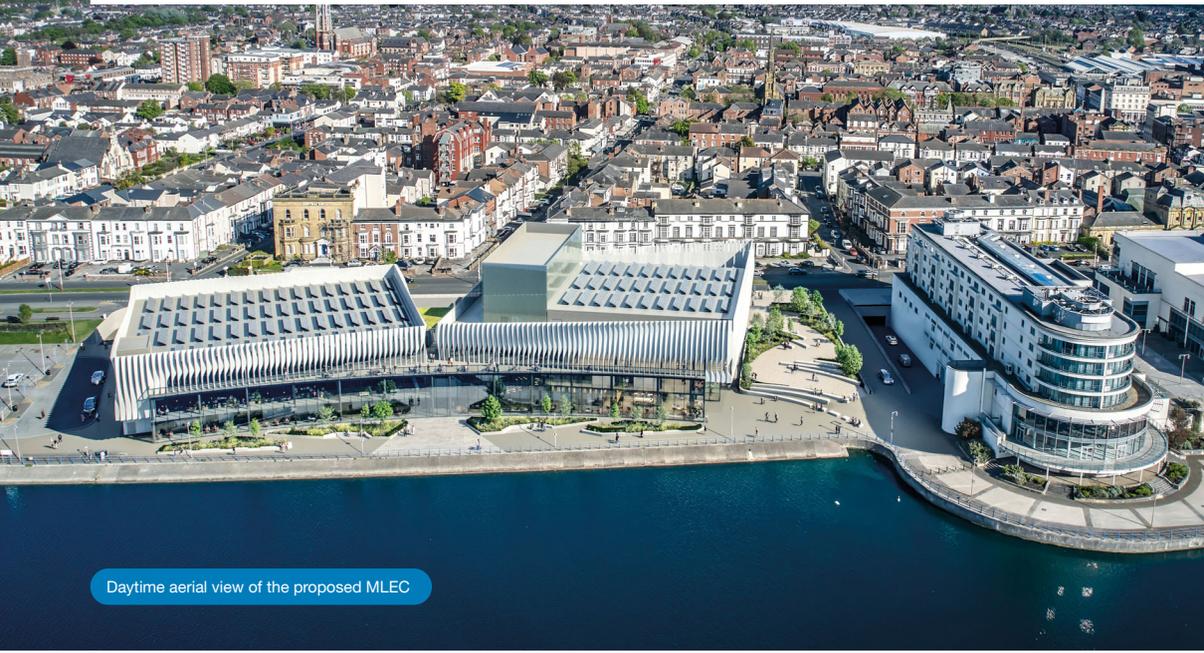
### Existing site photos of the STCC



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# The vision



Daytime aerial view of the proposed MLEC

## The Marine Lake Events Centre will enable Southport to compete on a national level to secure major events and conferences

### The vision

The Marine Lake Events Centre or MLEC was named following consultation with local school children in 2020 and will be able to accommodate a range of events for people of all ages, helping to “make Southport cool” as requested by local school children.

The new MLEC will provide a number of features which will re-establish the venue as a leading business, entertainment and events destination. This will attract a range of events from music concerts, comedy shows, theatre shows and pantomimes, dance shows, sports, national and regional conferences and trade exhibitions, consumer shows or product launches to award ceremonies, weddings, banquets, parties or Christmas spectacles.

### Creating a new destination for Southport

The new building will be set within attractive public space with landscaping along the Marine Lake frontage and between the new building and the Bliss Hotel which will significantly improve the experience of this part of the Promenade.

#### The proposed plans include the following:

- A theatre/ auditorium with flexible space to hold 1,200 capacity all seated or 1,500 partially seated and standing; and exhibition hall with space to accommodate between 1,000 and 2,400 people.
- A ‘Strictly Come Dancing’ style movable “Harlequin Liberty Ballroom” sprung dance floor for installation in either the theatre or exhibition hall
- Leading digital technology to attract a wider range of shows and events
- Additional breakout facilities for smaller group use and a VIP / Hospitality Lounge
- A signature restaurant and café space for visitors and community alike
- New high-quality public space and landscaping to create attractive and safe spaces to meet, play and relax in the day and the evening
- Accessible internal and external spaces ensuring an inclusive approach such as step free access and seating/rest points within the public realm
- A viewing balcony offering views of the Marine Lake
- Improvements to the surface car park to the North.

#### Proposed Ground floor Concourse Area



#### Proposed Ground Floor Lobby with Café



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# The vision



View at dusk from Marine Lake to proposed MLEC and Water and Light Show

## The Water and Light Show on the Marine Lake will be the first of its kind in the UK with the potential to attract 288,000 visitors a year

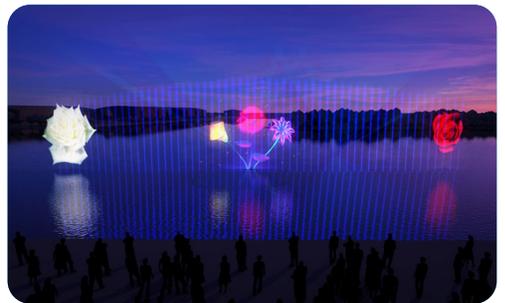
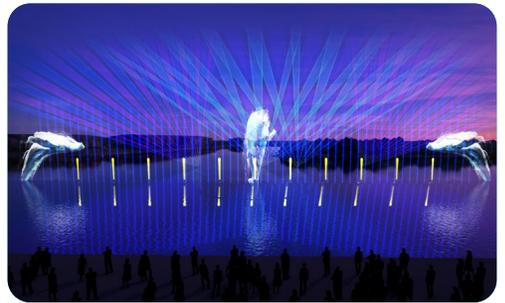
The Marine Lake Water and Light Show will provide a unique, purpose-built entertainment attraction on the lake that will help to attract events and visitors to the MLEC, the waterfront area and will set Southport apart from other seaside towns.

The Water and Light Show will display a number of different shows created by jets of water and a “misting water screen” that can be projected onto with light and images. This will be built on a floating structure located within the Marine Lake. The after dark shows would include attractive coloured lighting and laser display.

The light shows will change and vary throughout the year and there may be opportunities for local artists or schools to be involved in creating the stories or themes displayed in the shows. The times of the shows are not yet fixed but looks to include regular shows run on the hour in the evenings with each display running for around 8 minutes. The shows are likely to be weather dependent with the ambition of running year-round.

**The images below present an idea of how the shows may look. A video animation of the proposed Water and Light Show is available to view at [yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/futuresouthport/](http://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/futuresouthport/)**

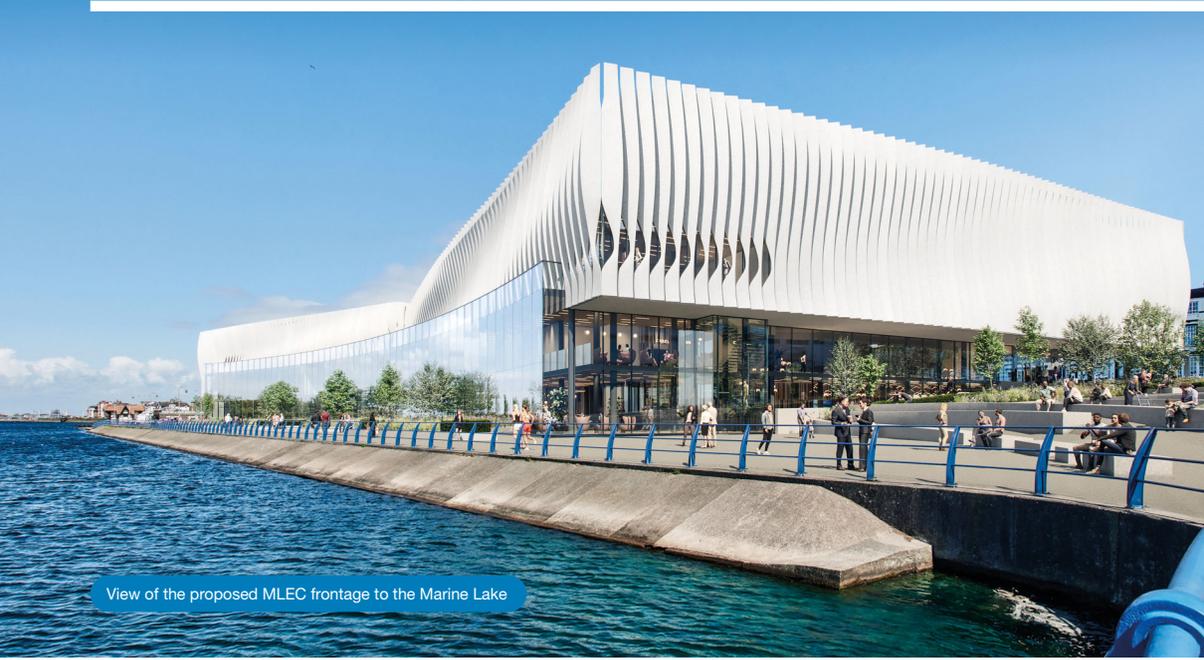
### Video stills of the proposed Water and Light Show



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# Design



View of the proposed MLEC frontage to the Marine Lake

## Design Concept

The architectural language of the new centre is inspired by creating a meaningful connection between the two most key valuable assets of Southport:

1. Southport's Natural Assets (Water and Birdlife)
2. Southport's Coastal Architectural Heritage (Art Deco)

By converging the principles and essences of the Art Deco Style and the majestic forms and patterns created by Southport's natural life, we have created an architectural solution that is highly symbolic, stylish and sophisticated for the people of Southport and beyond.

## Preserving Our Legacy

One of the key factors driving the interior design of the MLEC was to explore how we could preserve and creatively repurpose the more valuable design artifacts of the former STCC.

Artistic impressions below show how some of the artifacts could be repurposed and re-interpreted for the New Marine Lakeside Exhibition Centre.

**Please tell us which features you'd like to see re-purposed in the new building?**



Taking inspiration from the murmuration forms created by Southport's Birdlife



Exploring 3D architectural forms derived from Southport's Architectural and Natural Assets



Evolving elevation of the building form



Floral Hall Glazed Dome

Art Deco Ceiling Pendants

Art Deco Pattern Vent Grilles

Original Gold & Teal Deco



Proposed Ground floor Concourse Area



Proposed Ground Floor Lobby

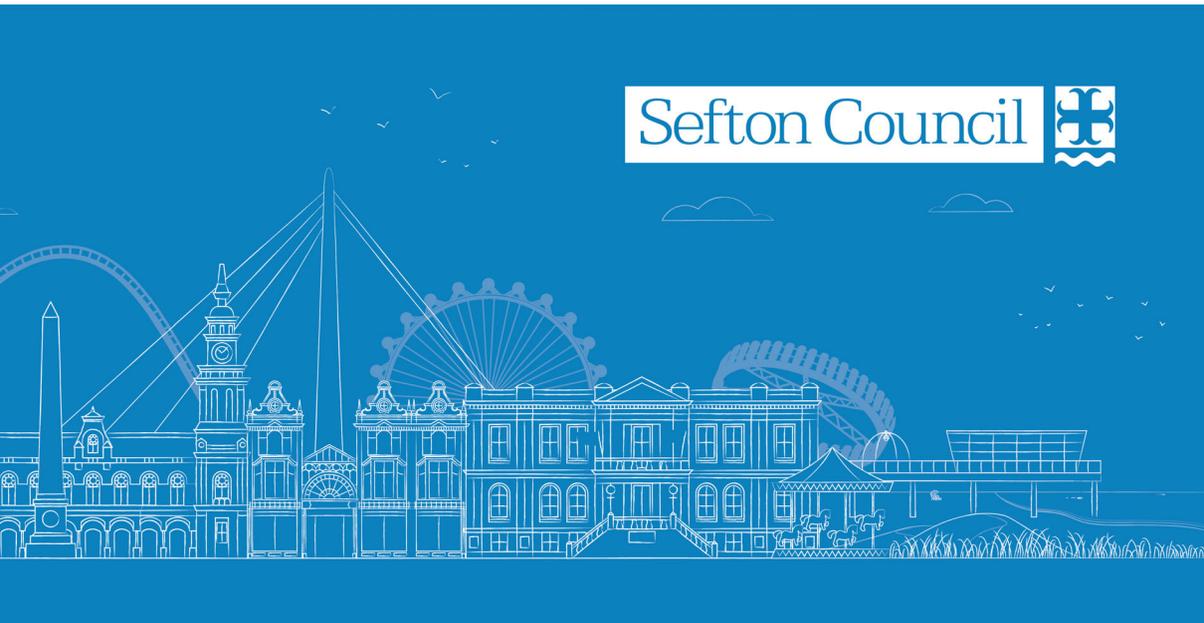


Vintage Lighting Equipment

Vintage Film Projection Equipment

Floral Hall Sprung dancefloor timbers

Original Event STCC Photography



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# Design

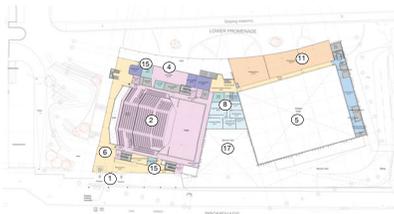


Proposed view of the theatre space within the new MLEC

## Plans



Lower Promenade Floor Plan



Promenade Floor Plan



Second Floor Plan

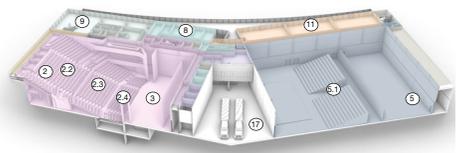
### Colour Key

- Theatre
- Exhibition
- Foyer
- Production
- Restaurant
- Cafe
- Breakout
- Operation
- Kitchen
- Toilets
- MEP Plant
- Service Yard

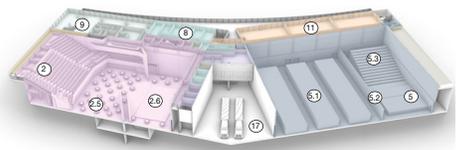
### Key Features

- ① Entrance
- ② Theatre Auditorium
- ③ Fixed Seating
- ④ Retractable Seating
- ⑤ Removable Seating
- ⑥ Banqueting tables
- ⑦ Dance Floor
- ⑧ Standing Event Floor
- ⑨ Stage
- ⑩ VIP Lounge
- ⑪ Exhibition Hall
- ⑫ Exhibition stands
- ⑬ Operable Wall
- ⑭ Mobile Retractable Seats
- ⑮ Foyer
- ⑯ Crew Canteen
- ⑰ Dressing Rooms
- ⑱ Restaurant
- ⑲ Cafe
- ⑳ Breakout
- ㉑ Staff Change
- ㉒ Office
- ㉓ Kitchen
- ㉔ Toilets
- ㉕ MEP Plant
- ㉖ Service Yard

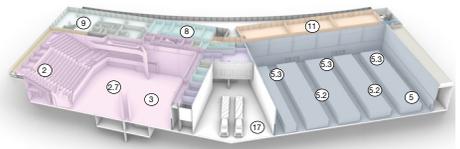
## Event space configurations



Mode 1: 1,200 capacity all seated theatre and 1,000 capacity exhibition hall.



Mode 2: Circa 800 Capacity Banquet / Ballroom Dancing Hall with exhibition hall sub divided into two.



Mode 3: 1,500 max capacity partial seating and standing mode with exhibition hall subdivided into three.

Promenade Elevation



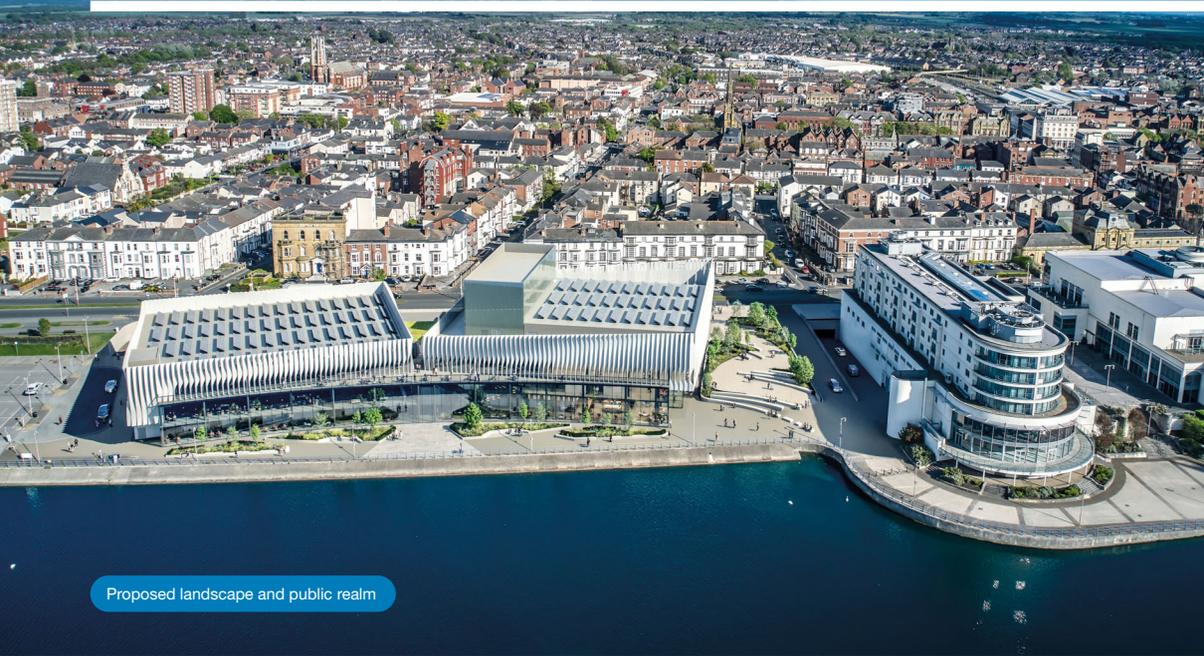
Lower Promenade Elevation



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# Landscape and access



Proposed landscape and public realm

## New high-quality public space and landscaping to create attractive, accessible and safe spaces to meet, play and relax in the day and the evening

The MLEC provides an opportunity to improve the public realm around the Promenade and Lower Promenade as well as pedestrian connections to the town centre. The landscape masterplan displayed shows how high quality public spaces will be designed to activate, animate and green the space around the proposed MLEC and along the Marine Lakeside.

A brand new terrace and an accessible, step-free route linking the Promenade with the Lower Promenade will provide safe and inviting spaces for rest, work and play as well as the setting for pop-up events.

New planting will green the spaces, with seating terraces enabling visitors to take in the views of the Marine Lake. The introduction of the Water and Light Show will encourage the waterfront area to be used for social interaction with seating areas within the public plaza.

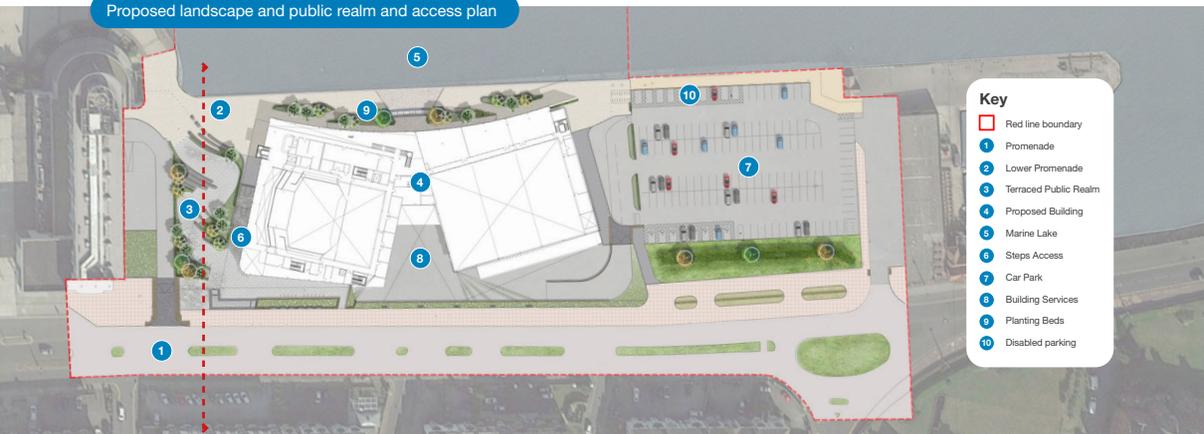
The design also considers night time use of the space through a lighting strategy and increased use and activity around the MLEC during the day to increase natural surveillance and safety.

## Access and sustainable travel

The MLEC benefits from a sustainable town centre location, close to Southport train station and to local bus stops. The plans promote pedestrian and cycle connectivity and access for all and include:

- New cycle facilities for employees and visitors
- New dedicated taxi drop-off within the existing car park, close to the MLEC entrance
- Retention and improvement of the existing surface car park with additional disabled parking bays and the introduction of electric vehicle charging points
- Retention of existing drop off areas on the main Promenade
- A new vehicle ramp to provide access to the existing Bliss Hotel car park and service yard. This will reduce the number of vehicles using the Lower Promenade in front of the building, enabling pedestrian priority in the landscaped area fronting the lake.

Proposed landscape and public realm and access plan



Proposed landscape section



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# Sustainability and climate change



View from Marine Lake to proposed MLEC

## Sefton Council is committed to reducing carbon emissions to net zero by 2030

The proposals are being developed to contribute to this aim both in terms of the scheme design and through the demolition and construction plan to the future operation and management of the new building.

The design principles at this stage are looking at the following measures:



**Energy efficiency** – the building will be all-electric site (no gas) and aims to comply with the Government's new (Part L 2021) Building Regulation which requires an average of 28% less CO2 emissions over current standards. Heating and cooling systems will be delivered by heat pumps and Solar Panels (PVs) on the roof.



**Biodiversity Net Gain** – the scheme will seek to achieve 10% net gain against the current site baseline by increasing planting within the new public realm areas and along the waterfront promenade.



**Embodied Carbon** – the building design aims to reduce embodied carbon by creating a simple built form, creating an efficient structure and using lower-carbon materials where possible. A pre-demolition audit of the existing building is being undertaken to maximise the potential re-use as possible (paving, bricks, railings and doors).



**A sustainable travel plan** – The town centre location of the site and the proposed travel plan encourages visitor and employees to travel to and from the site using sustainable transport such as public transport, bikes and walking.



**Charging Infrastructure** – Electric Vehicle ('EV') charging points are to be installed in the existing surface car park. Cable ducts will also be installed to increase EV provision in the future.



**Construction and demolition** – A construction management plan will be agreed with Sefton Council which will demonstrate how the construction process will be managed including reuse and recycling of materials where possible.

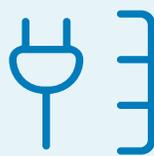
The future operator of the building will also be required to include measures such as:



Eliminate the use of single-use plastics wherever possible



Have a detailed sustainability strategy and policy in place



Create Sustainable Events Reports on energy consumption, waste generation and travel.

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# Key benefits



Proposed view along the Promenade

## The MLEC and Water and Light Show will provide a number of local benefits for Southport

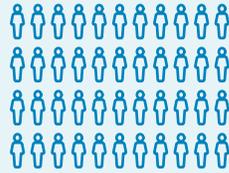
The MLEC scheme will provide a high quality, distinctive entertainment and business events venue capable of providing great experiences to audiences and users. MLEC will be anchor for the regeneration of Southport's town centre waterfront and will greatly add to the cultural fabric of town.

**515,000 visits**  
**£17.7m annually**



Approximately **515,000 visits** to both the MLEC and Water and Light Show each year

Additional spending by visitors worth **£17.7m** annually supporting a wide range of local businesses and services



**354**

Significant construction spend of around **£59.5m** supporting **354 jobs** during construction



**200 additional jobs**

Around **200 additional jobs** in a variety of roles including a range of **on-site and off-site roles** (managerial, finance, administrative, event management, operations, technical roles, stewarding and security and many more)

**Regeneration of the waterfront** area through a brand-new building and public space

Seeking to appoint an operator on a **new long-term lease**



A boost the town's hotel and hospitality sector with nearly **60,000 additional overnight stays** from conferences and events



A total of around **£6.9m annually** of Gross Value Added (GVA)



**Training and skills** provision for **young people** and **residents** through the construction process and once the **MLEC** opens its doors



The **MLEC and Water and Light Show** will help to promote Southport to a wide range of potential **visitors and audiences** across the UK

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# Next steps



Proposed internal view of the MLEC cafe

## Thank you for visiting the exhibition today, please leave us your comments and feedback



### You can:

Complete a **feedback form** at the event today



Email us at

[contact@southportmlec.info](mailto:contact@southportmlec.info)



Freephone

**0808 168 8296** for a call back from the project team



Visit

[yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/futuresouthport/](http://yourseftonyoursay.sefton.gov.uk/futuresouthport/)

All the feedback that you leave with us today or submit using the ways set out below, will be considered by the project team before a planning application is submitted to Sefton Council.

The feedback will be provided in a Statement of Community Engagement which will be submitted with the application later this summer.

There will be a further opportunity to comment on the plans once the planning application has been submitted.

## Next steps and project programme

The indicative timeline of recent project milestones and the next steps is provided in the timeline.



## Delivery

The project forms part of the Southport Town Deal which secured £37.5 million funding in 2021 and follows the success of Southport Market, which opened its doors last year. The project has also secured £2.3 million funding from Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. The project team are preparing to submit a detailed business case to the Government later this year, which will enable funding to be released for the project.



Please submit your feedback by  
**Friday 10<sup>th</sup> June 2022**

Sefton Council

