

# Business Builds Community

In recognising that times are tough for both businesses and individuals, the launch of Sefton Council's new Sefton Integrated Business Support project (SIBS) couldn't have come at a better time.

**D**espite strong economic growth over the past decade, the gap between the less favoured neighbourhoods and the rest remains. Thanks to £2.3m of funding made available through the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, Sefton is able to offer a full support service to business and budding entrepreneurs within the community – providing opportunities for those working to improve not only their own futures, but those of their wider community.

## Where can businesses find help?

SIBS services are available through outlets in Bootle at The Investment Centre, Southport Business &

Investment Centre, and Maghull. This ensures that the access and delivery of the scheme is centred in the areas that it is primarily designed to assist, and as such best meets the communities' needs. The project will also benefit from the existing direct links to the Stepclever programme (see page 41) which provides Local Enterprise Growth Initiative funding for business growth in six wards in north Liverpool and south Sefton (Derby and Linacre wards).

SIBS serves both businesses and individuals in the community. The aim is a local delivery chain linking opportunity with need embracing a number of activities:

**Start up Sefton** – Providing support to residents seeking

self-employment and new businesses (trading for less than 12 months) with dedicated one-to-one support. The project co-ordinates and tracks the 'customer journey' through pre- and post-start-up periods, working closely with existing local support agencies.

### **Business Investment and Aftercare**

The Invest Sefton brand will promote existing and emerging inward investment opportunities in Sefton and work closely with new investors through The Mersey Partnership. This also includes an aftercare service for both growth businesses and major employers in Sefton to help maximise new re-investment and job opportunities.

