

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	January 2021

Strategic Transport

Port Access

- Work on the doubling of the rail line into the Port has been delayed several times but the first phase of this has now been completed and the second phase is due to be completed by summer 2021. Subsequent improvements to signals at Earlestown West have also been delayed and are being incorporated into the works associated with transferring the control of signals from Warrington to Manchester.
- The Port of Liverpool Access scheme being proposed by Highways England has been significantly delayed. It is now expected that the formal consultation will not take place until late 2021, which will affect the potential date for Highways England to submit their application to the Planning Inspectorate.

LTP and Growth Plan

- Sefton is continuing to work with the LCR Combined Authority/Merseytravel and the other local authorities on the delivery of the transport capital programme. In response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and an increased focus on active travel measures, work has started on the development of an Low Carbon and Active Travel Strategy for the Borough.
- Work is substantially complete on the North Liverpool Key Corridor scheme. Some re-surfacing of a section of Regent Road close to the Port entrance is being completed this financial year.
- Work is continuing on the sustainable transport intervention proposals for Years 3-6 as part of the City Region programme. Sefton has three schemes in the programme, amounting to almost £3m of allocated funding. This consists of three phases of improvements on the A565, in Seaforth, Waterloo and Thornton, as well as a cycle route between Maghull and Kirkby and East-West cycle improvements in Southport. The scheme on Buckley Hill Lane (to relieve Edge Lane) was completed in spring 2020. The first phase of the Maghull to Kirkby cycle route was completed in conjunction with the M58J1 scheme and the second phase started on site before Christmas 2020. The Southport E/W Link scheme is due for completion before the end of the financial year. The proposals on Great Georges Road and at the 5 lamps railway bridge have been approved and will start on site early in the New Year.

- The Outline Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor projects were submitted to the Combined Authority (CA) in the autumn. The CA is providing some initial further funding this financial year to start the preparation of Full Business Cases for both schemes.
- Improvements to the junction of the A59 Northway with Damfield Lane, the next stage in a series of improvements along the A59 Northway, are planned to start early in 2021. Design work has started on the junction at Kenyons Lane, the next junction to be improved.
- In Southport, additional funding from the Government is being used to deliver the required re-construction of parts of Marine Drive and improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative. Both are due to start this financial year.
- Funding provided by Central Government through the Combined Authority from Tranche 1 of the Emergency Active Travel Fund is being used to deliver new cycle routes in Bootle and Southport town centres. The route in Southport has generated considerable comment. The comments have been responded to and additional information provided on the Council's Active Travel website. The funding for Tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund schemes has been confirmed and schemes are being developed. Public consultation is being planned for early in 2021.
- Proposals for a 'Liveable Neighbourhood' area in Southport are being developed in conjunction with the active travel charity Sustrans. Consultation is being held with Ward Members, local residents, businesses and schools.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2020/21 was agreed with Cabinet Member in June.

Sustainable Transport

- The European Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) funding for two major cycling schemes was approved in December 2018. The design of a new, inland pedestrian and cycle route at Crosby Coastal Park, which will avoid the issue of wind-blown sand on the promenade, has largely been completed. Consultation will be carried out and planning approval will be required with works programmed to be delivered in 2021. Work on the Coastal Road cycle route is being delivered in conjunction with the Southport East West Cycle Links scheme and this started in summer 2020 and will be completed by the end of the financial year.

Highway Development and Design

Planning Applications

- In October to December 2020, the team processed 253 planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with availability of staff and the impact of the pandemic. This includes applications for sites identified in the Council's adopted Local Plan. This continues to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department.

Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- Submissions for s38 agreements have continued requiring the subsequent processing of these at times, lengthy and complex applications, particularly following the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites.
- The report is as follows: -
 - No of live s38 and current developments subject to a s38 application – 37 taking in to account new and adopted sites.
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 and developers continue to be followed up on these
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 2
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval - 7
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 2

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application remains high, generally due to the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 66 live s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.
- In terms of Minor Works agreements, 2 were completed between October and December, there are 6 current Minor Works schemes on going, with a further 6 awaiting payment from the developer before they can be delivered.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- England Coast Path/Coastal Access – Natural England has published the report identifying the route and the margin and have completed the public consultation period. The report and consultation responses will be submitted to the Secretary of State in early 2021 for consideration. Liaison with Natural England and Green Sefton is continuing and work is on-going to ensure Sefton is legally able to deliver the establishment works in house.
- Definitive Map Modification Orders for ten routes have been prepared following the consideration of a Schedule 14 Application from Formby Parish Council. The Orders will be made and published in early 2021, depending on England's lockdown status. IPROW and Central Government have advised that making Orders during national lockdown is not best practice.

Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning

- The team is continuing to work closely with the Planning Department to provide a strategic approach to development to ensure that the necessary new transport infrastructure is in place to support new developments coming forward in future years.
- The team is continuing to request construction traffic management plans for new developments so that we can manage the highway network efficiently and effectively with minimum disruption to users of the highway and with the

important benefit of highway safety. Once plans have been agreed, the team is working closely with colleagues in network management and planning to ensure that the plans are being adhered to.

Highway Design

- During what has been a challenging time, especially with expenditure timescales for this financial year on a number of projects, this team has continued to provide the design and delivery of strategic transport investment schemes, including major highway schemes, STEP programme schemes and provide assistance in the planning and development of future strategic schemes led by the STPI team. In addition, the team continues to support the Development Control function undertaking transport assessments, technical approvals and the design and delivery of some Highways Act s278 and minor works schemes.
- The team also has responsibility for the revenue and capital bridge maintenance programme and has managed the maintenance scheme on Hightown station footbridge as well as a number of minor bridge maintenance schemes.
- The main current schemes currently being undertaken by the team include:
 - A59 Northway/Damfield Road junction improvements – design, procurement and supervision of the scheme to improve capacity and improve accessibility along the A59 through Maghull, at the Damfield Road junction with the installation of a new signal junction. The works are due to start in January with an anticipated completion of March 2021.
 - Great Georges Road walking and cycling improvements - design, procurement and supervision of the scheme, which also includes the waterproofing of Waterloo Bridge. The works are due to start in January with an anticipated completion of March 2021.
 - The Kirkby to Maghull cycle route scheme - design, procurement and supervision of the STEP programme scheme. The start date was delayed due to issues with obtaining access, but works commenced in December 2020 and will continue until March 2021.
 - The Crosby Coastal Park scheme cycle route scheme - design, procurement and supervision of the STEP programme scheme. Consultation and detailed design will commence in January, in conjunction with the Green Sefton Team with a provisional start on site in Summer 2021.
 - Design and delivery of the Emergency Active Travel routes in Bootle and Southport. Both schemes had initial infrastructure installed during the summer but the availability of additional materials from January will see further improvements installed over the coming months.
 - Dibb Lane bridleway improvement scheme - this was substantially complete prior to the Christmas shutdown with some minor follow up works required in the New Year. Initial reports over the festive period suggest it has been well used since opening.
- The team are also undertaking the post completion administration of the substantially complete East West Links cycle route scheme and the A59

Northway / Dover Road junction improvements. There are still some works remaining on the Coastal Road which could not be completed prior to Christmas. As these are weather dependent, they will be probably not be completed until Spring 2021.

Highway Maintenance

Traffic Signals

- The LCR joint Traffic Signal Maintenance Contract continues to function well within Sefton and other authorities within the City Region.
- The LCR CA UTC Communications upgrade project remains ongoing and forecast completion is now March 2021 and not November 2020, with the delays being attributed to COVID19 & BT. However, the majority of Sefton sites are now live with new broadband connections.
- A new Traffic Signals Life Cycle Plan is still being developed.
- Traffic Signal Team are currently in the process of arranging for the current UTC systems to be transferred to a hosted solution, which will enable greater access and flexibility for staff whilst there working at home (Due to COVID19).

Street Lighting

- New faults continue to be received daily even through the Christmas close down period via the internet/email from the general public which are recorded and processed accordingly. Due to the Christmas break The Contractor is currently under pressure to meet some of their KPI targets so with this mind and although KPIs will be monitored Low Services damages will remain suspended for some KPI targets however, this will be under constant review which we feel is within the spirit of the contract.
- Street Lighting LED Conversion Business Case – This is proceeding through the approval process with a view to final approval and inclusion in the capital programme to be considered in March 2021.
- The 2020/21 Street Lighting Capital and Revenue programmes are currently ongoing and at this time can see no reason why they will not be delivered on time and within budget.
- The new Street Lighting Life Cycle Plan is well under development and hopefully will be completed very shortly.

Carriageway Resurfacing

- Completion of whole programme by the end of March 2020 anticipated.

KRN /DfT Additional funding.

- Additional works programmes have been agreed and we are in discussions with our Term Maintenance contractor to accommodate completion dates. Whilst, no works are on site, we anticipate completion of all works by the end of March 2021.

Highway Inspections

- We are currently experiencing a backlog in relation to inspection of defects reported by the public. In order to deliver these as efficiently as possible the

non-urgent reports are being inspected at the same time as the scheduled (3 monthly) inspections.

Permit Scheme

- We are still dealing with a significant amount of both utility and highway works in the borough and expect this to continue for the remainder of this financial year, as a minimum. We continue to monitor these works, with the available resources that we have, to ensure that we undertake our statutory duties.
- The lockdown arrangements place additional burden on staff resources as works promoters will use this opportunity, whilst roads are less congested, to undertake additional works.
- There are still some minor issues with the transition to the new street manager permitting system, which we are discussing with our software supplier, as and when they arise. This is not preventing us from undertaking our tasks, but this can be time consuming, ensuring that the systems are working correctly.

Winter Service

- To date (06/01/21) we have gritted the c/ways on 22 occasions and the f/ways on 9 occasions, with further gritting and potential snow predicted for the forthcoming 5 day forecast period.
- Regular financial updates are now being produced to monitor expenditure.
- The new joint Liverpool City Region tender for forecasting and bureau services is due to be published this month, with the contract being awarded in April for a July commencement.

Bike to Work Scheme

In its previous format, the scheme operated using face to face interaction, so it was suspended in March when the staff involved began working from home. A revised process was then developed for staff and suppliers, operating on a remote, largely electronic basis. The revised scheme was launched in late July and has been operating successfully since then. To the end of December, 63 formal applications to enrol on the scheme have been processed, and those staff have been provided with a Unique Agreement Reference number. In addition to formal applications, there have been 74 general enquiries in relation to the scheme.

Cleansing Services

- Cleansing Services have completed the roll out of the new Sacks to Bin service across the South of the Borough. The project is bedding in well and has proven successful. This initiative will hopefully help towards a reduction in fly tipping, vermin and detritus on the highway and ensure a cleaner, safer environment for residents.
- Communal Bin Project. We will hopefully begin the project of installing the Communal Bins for areas in the South of the borough in the coming months. Progress will continue with purchasing of equipment and mapping out locations. Updates will be provided on a regular basis.
- Collections over the shutdown period were all complete. A small number of roads had to be pushed over to Saturday 2nd January due to sheer volumes but

both North & South performed extremely well to complete the roads in record time, an excellent achievement.

- SMART Covid testing sites. Cleansing are providing support to all 3 testing stations across the borough. We are collecting clinical waste and arranging delivery to accredited site for incineration. Further discussions are currently being held with colleagues in Education as secondary schools will be conducting testing on site. We will arrange collections for all schools requiring assistance.
- Street Cleansing have now completed the recruitment process for the 9 Operatives to assist with the Street Cleansing Operation. These staff have now started and are helping with the weeding programme. We are still to employ Kickstart staff, hopefully this will be progressed in the very near future, however at this stage we are not sure if Lockdown may force a delay.
- Leaf Fall programme is complete across the across the borough. This year Cleansing collected an unprecedented 705.00 tonnes of leaf fall across the borough. The project was again successful having adopted previous methods of collection utilising skips and large vessels.
- Concerns regarding current Covid position continuing to affect the service. Staff shielding and self-isolation will affect staff across the borough.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

- Replacement programme vehicles for Cleansing and Green Sefton have started to be delivered and will continue to arrive over the coming months.
- Christmas shutdown operation was successfully completed. Staff in T&VM worked tirelessly to keep the fleet on the road for Cleansing and all Sefton Services working throughout the period.
- The new Fleet Management system has been purchased via Procurement. Work continues to enable the switch from Tranman to Pentagull over the coming months with a go live version predicted to be May.