

Sefton Public Engagement and Consultation Panel

**Meeting held on Friday 4th February 2022
Remote Meeting**

Present:

Cllr Leslie Byrom (CBE) (Victoria Ward) - Chair
Cllr Denise Dutton (Harrington Ward)
Cllr Tony Brough (Ainsdale Ward)
Cllr Greg Myers (Norwood Ward)
Cllr Jan Grace BA (Hons) MRes PGDip SRN (Victoria Ward)
Cllr John Fairclough Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Linaker Ward)
Jackie Sutton – Merseyside Fire Service
Georgia Ribbens – Young Advisor Lead for Sefton CVS
Nigel Bellamy – Sefton CVS
Andy Dunsmore Team Leader Strategic Transport Planning & Investment Team
Jayne Vincent - Consultation & Engagement Lead, Sefton MBC
Fiona Caplan – Southport Access for Everyone (SAFE)
Sharon Eaton – Strategic Admin Support, Sefton MBC

Apologies:

Cllr Paulette Lappin (Chair)
Wendy Anderson – Healthwatch Sefton
Lyn Cooke, Head of Communications and Engagement, CCG

The reports presented to the Public Consultation and Engagement Panel can be found here: [Sefton Council](#) – Link to Consultation & Engagement Panel Papers – 4th February 2022

	Action
1. Welcome and Apologies Apologies: Cllr Paulette Lappin, Lyn Cooke and Wendy Anderson	
2. Declarations of Interest No declarations of any disclosable pecuniary interests or personal interests were received.	
3. Minutes of the Previous Meeting That the Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th January 2022 are a true and proper record.	

<p>4. Matters Arising</p> <p>Jayne Vincent informed Panel that the annual report was shared with Cabinet Members at the request of Cllr Lappin</p>	
<p>Item 5 - Feedback and Evaluation report - Crosby Coastal Park new cycleway and footway</p> <p>• Outcome of the consultation - Andrew Dunsmore</p> <p>The council were successful in securing some funding from the LCR and Europe Union Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) which is about sustainable transport and habitat improvements. The scheme involves the construction of a new cycle/footway route and some habitat improvements to Crosby Coastal Park.</p> <p>The decision was made with Cabinet Members support that it would be sensible to seek some sort of consultation with members of the public and with anyone who may potentially use or be affected by the proposed route so that the Council could shape their plans before submitting the scheme for planning permission</p> <p>The initial consultation took place between 21st May-4th July 2021. Due to Covid-19 restrictions, it was an online consultation which was also accessible on the 'Transport' related pages on Sefton Council's website. In addition, posters were on noticeboards across the Coastal Park and in Potters Barn Park. Leaflets were delivered to residential properties and businesses affected by the proposed route. Information about the proposed plans were also available on the Council's social media pages and a focus group was also set up.</p> <p>Following the initial consultation, concerns were raised by Ward Members, the Seafront Residents Action Group, Crosby Coastal Forum and residents on Westward View and Endsleigh Road. Subsequently a further consultation in the form of letter explaining design changes and inviting further feedback took place between October and November 2021 with the residents of Westward View and Endsleigh Road.</p> <p>In addition, due to the concerns raised by some Ward Members a report was compiled for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee Meeting (Regeneration and Skills) which took place on 9th November 2021. The proposals were discussed at the Informal Cabinet Policy meeting on 13th January and Cabinet Members subsequently recommended that the scheme is progressed to planning based on the recommendations/design changes listed:</p>	

- Section of the route at the rear of Endsleigh Road removed due to privacy concerns.
- Section of the route along Westward View amended to accommodate safety issues due to the current parking by residents.
- Increase width of shared facilities due to safety concerns
- Cycle only and segregated routes in areas of high demand due to safety concerns
- Delineation of the cycle only sections with a buff-coloured surface to minimise conflict between cyclists and pedestrians
- Improved signing
- The use of decorative lighting

A Planning Application has been submitted for full planning approval on Monday 17th January 2022.

Future engagement:

- As part of the planning process there will be a formal consultation process, which will offer the chance for further engagement.
- A further tailored letter will be sent to residents on Westward View and Endsleigh Road who responded to the first letters sent.
- All Focus Groups will be informed of the planning process and directed to the result section on YSYS.
- An overview of all findings will be posted on YSYS, in the We Asked/ You Said/ We Are Doing format.

Cllr Fairclough commented that it was an interesting consultation result and that the plans were amended during the consultation process reflecting the concerns received from residents and other interested parties.

Cllr Myers stated that it was a very good consultation over a difficult subject where there was a lot of strong feelings. Cllr Myers asked about the response given in connection to equal weighting. The response was “the consultation was agreed with the panel with no proposals agreed to give weighted scores” – is that saying that the residents are asking for greater weighting – and the Council’s response is that it wasn’t considered because it was done in consultation with this Panel Cllr Myers also questioned why the Panel didn’t give additional weighting to the residents as they are more likely to be more impacted by any changes – therefore there should be a slightly different weighting. Was this

considered or is that something that should be considered in the future.

Jayne Vincent cannot recall a discussion around weighting at the Panel but will refer to the minutes of that meeting to see if that was the case.

Cllr Myers thanked Jayne but reiterated that the response given to the residents was unhelpful.

Nigel Bellamy said he doesn't believe the term weighting was ever used. Some schemes affect everyone in the same way and others affect pockets of people, so it is important to respond to those affected. Nigel agreed with Cllr Myers that weighting should be considered in the future.

Andy agreed with Cllr Myers point and that the response could have been reported differently. They weren't seeking a consensus to move the scheme forward but did report that over 60% were in favour of the proposals. However, it may have been better to report how many of the 60% were local residents/business's and how many were from the wider area.

Cllr Myers said that this issue was raised because it is a matter for the Panel to think about.

Cllr Grace commented that as a cyclist who uses the seafront often, she was pleased by some of the feedback around things that had changed e.g., the width of the cycle path and the different coloured surface to prevent conflict between cyclists and pedestrians because that is a problem around Burbo Bank and appreciates that it is an emotive subject which was initially not popular but now more people are coming to look forward to the changes which she feels is in response to the consultation.

Jayne mentioned that she had sent the Panel a response from the Seafront Residents Action Panel and asked about the next stages and wonders about timescales for that and although it is usually 6 weeks, and in view of the feedback received, whether it is worth considering extending the 6 weeks for the formal consultation and will there be time before that process to let interested parties know that it is due to start?

Secondly regarding the formal process and the proposal, will there be an equality impact assessment also – the feedback from the pre-consultation would help with the equality impact assessment to look at those issues the interested parties have/may raise.

Andy responded that the timescale is something that his planning colleagues will be leading on – the current expiry date is end of March so between now and then they are hoping to have the

Jayne Vincent

Panel members

consultation, interested parties have already been written to but he will get the actual dates shared.

Andrew
Dunsmore

Jayne suggested that when they are ready to start the formal consultation on the website, they should also publish the draft EIA so that people can see what has been considered so far, then when the formal consultation is completed, it will help with the full EIA when it goes for decision.

Item 6 - Feedback and Evaluation report – Southport Cycling & Walking

• Outcome of the consultation - Andrew Dunsmore

The government has a significant travel fund to promote scheme to encourage walking and cycling, the ambition being that people who travel short distances by car, consider walking or cycling, this is all part of trying to reduce the carbon footprint as a response to climate change and is something that is supported by LCRCA and by Sefton as a council through our Climate Change Emergency Plan. The government offered tranche 1 in summer 2020 which came with significant restrictions in terms of when the money had to be expended the principle being to take advantage of the fact fewer cars on the roads because of lockdown. The LCRCA were approached with several schemes, of which two were identified, Southport and Bootle. The money was secured for Southport tranche 1 which introduced a north-south cycle route which was implemented. However, the scheme had to be completed within 8 weeks of securing the funding which didn't allow enough time for any consultation.

The government made tranche 2 money available, and the combined authority thought that there was merit in extending the Southport scheme – northwards and southwards so effectively they chose a route based on the routes that were submitted for tranche 1. This time the government stated that the LCRCA must consult with the people and had to publish consultation proposals by a certain date, which had to be done before bringing the proposals to Panel. The conditions were that we had to demonstrate broad support for our proposals and take on the views of the local MP and then to feed that back to the LCRCA and Department of Transport (DfT).

The Tranche 2 Consultation went live in the summer of 2021 which was an online consultation although there was engagement with various organisations, schools, and key stakeholders in the area.

The consultation process involved:

- Focus Groups
- Young Advisors Research
- Your Sefton Your Say/Your Streets online questionnaire
- On request stakeholder meeting

In addition, a range of engagement materials and comprehensive communications package were developed.

The outcome of the consultation was shared with Overview and Scrutiny on 9th November. A report was produced for Cabinet Members to consider.

Analysis of the results shows that the average age of those who completed the questionnaire were 50+ yrs. There were not many responses from a younger age group which is something that needs further work on. It was also noted that a number of people who completed the questionnaire said no to every question.

The decision was taken that there is not broad support for either cycle route in Southport however discussions have taken place with DfT and the LCRCA to look at alternative proposals and are awaiting formal approval. The alternative scheme is improving cycle facilities on the Formby Bypass because the aspiration is to create north south cycle routes and strengthen and improve those routes already established.

The government have now set up an organisation Active Travel England and their job is to review any proposals that LA's come up with to make sure that they meet the standards – so the proposed alternative routes for Tranche 2 are now subject to scrutiny from Active Travel England.

The consultation was aimed at trying to get a consensus from people and the feedback that we had we couldn't show broad support, so we are now looking at ways of securing the funding rather than sending it back to the combined authority.

Lessons learned are:

- engaging with the wider community to try and get feedback representative of everyone. If the same process is used again - putting it on the website and inviting people to respond -there is a danger that we are missing out on a section of the public or are we reflecting the views of people who are either in favour of something or very much against and this is a discussion that the DfT have been having.
- Looking at other ways of consulting people - the government are also looking at other ways of consulting with people which may be rolled out nationally and are suggesting that LA's look at polling.

Cllr Fairclough stated that for many years the ambition has been for the public, where possible, to look at walking and cycling for health benefits rather than using the car for short journeys, 40% of car journeys are less than 2 miles. In the past cycle lanes have been introduced, unfortunately few of them join up with some cycle lanes ending at the end of a street and begin again 100 or so yards further on. The Tranche 1 situation where there was insufficient time for consultation did cause some angst with people which in turn has created a feeling with some people of anti-cycle paths because they were not consulted. These feelings of angst resurfaced when Tranche 2 was announced which this time required broad support and Tranche 3 requirement is just to consult the local community.

Cllr Fairclough feels that it is about educating and consulting with as many people as possible because this is about the climate emergency and about getting people to get out walking and cycling for their health benefits and that is the message we need to get across. There is a need to consult and get a more demographic spread of the consultation responses so the Council can fully understand what those responses are.

Cllr Grace agrees with Cllr Fairclough, it is a huge educational process that is needed around climate emergency.

Cllr Dutton asked Andrew if there was any noticeable difference in responses between Crosby and Southport in relation to age as he had stated that there was an age disparity, and can he clarify that.

Cllr Dutton also asked about the timescales and cost implications of polling and where would the funding come from.

Andrew agreed to look back at the results in relation to age groups but thinks that they were a little bit younger than Southport responders. But the general age group who respond to online questionnaires tend to be older you don't get many below 30. There is a real challenge how to reach out to under 30's.

In terms of polling and the costs associated with it, it is assumed and understood that any consultation will be met by any money the Council receives. The online survey is relatively easy to deliver but sending leaflets out to people does have a cost implication which we have to do because not everyone has access to the internet. Regarding polling and the costs this hasn't been investigated yet, but it is something that will be considered for schemes going forward as the government are asking us to consider this process.

Andrew
Dunsmore

Andrew
Dunsmore

Cllr Dutton commented that she assumes that all the ward councillors affected are being kept informed and up to date.

Andrew said that hopefully Active Travel England will review their plans quickly and then if the DfT gives the go ahead for this scheme letters will go out to all the ward members, MPs, and Cabinet members of the three wards affected.

Cllr Myers agreed that there was a lack of input to the consultation from the younger generation which is something that needs to be looked at in terms of how to engage with this sector of the public.

Georgia Ribbens's team were approached to deliver a consultation to Greenbank and Birkdale High Schools in Southport which involved asking the young people how they travelled to school with the emphasis on whether they cycled or walked and why they travelled in this way. They received approx. 20 – 30 responses via an online focus group and an online questionnaire and the issues that were raised were around safety when cycling on the roads and parents were unhappy with their children cycling to and from school especially in the winter months when mornings and evenings are dark. There were fewer young people walking and cycling from Greenbank with issues raised around Cambridge Road. A report was produced which won an award from the National Young Advisers Charity for their work completed.

Jayne Vincent asked Andrew how he proposes to keep in touch with the stakeholders now going forward?

Andrew replied that he will wait for the response from DfT that the alternative approach has been accepted, then write initially to all ward members, the MP and then target all the stakeholders that are involved which may be a letter drop.

Andrew requested a meeting with Jayne outside of this meeting to discuss further.

Cllr Brough agreed with Cllr Fairclough that it was unfortunate that there was no consultation around Tranche 1 which then affected the Tranche 2 consultation, and in future will endeavour to get the consultation better aligned with people and hopefully get a better response, his feeling is that the negativity wasn't from car drivers in general, it was from those people who were going to be directly affected by the imposition of the cycle lanes as they were the people asking why their area and how would they get into and out of their homes, or have to make significant detours to get into and out of their homes and it was this group that contacted him. He feels that the second proposal is a step in the right direction and hopefully there will be more consultation with elected members to see if there is a way through to a more acceptable package that still delivers some of the outcomes that are hoped to be achieved.

Andrew
Dunsmore

Andrew Dunsmore
/Jayne Vincent

Fiona Caplan wished to emphasise to the Panel that herself and her group SAFE are not against cycle lanes and that there is a place for cycle lanes to be used without unduly impacting on members of the community. Regarding Georgia's consultation she felt that it is extremely disappointing that between the 2 schools, to only have 20 responses and if somebody like Georgia and the group that she represents, specifically engaging with schools only got 20 responses, then that is extremely disappointing.

Fiona also mentioned that as far as disabled people are concerned, they are going to be disproportionately affected by cycle lanes in certain places and there are problems with the cycle lanes in the town centre and disabled people don't feel safe to go into the town centre anymore because of the increased number of cycles. It is acknowledged that something needs to be done due to climate change and trying to encourage people not to use their cars, but it is going to be difficult to do because people are conditioned to get into their car and not just disabled people who have to but other people also.

Cllr Fairclough thanked the Panel for the supportive comments. He commented that one of the things with having discussions with young people is to make sure that they understand what it is that the Council are trying to do.

Cllr Dutton highlighted that apart from trying to engage with younger people there is a need to engage with the businesses that may be affected by the proposed route.

Jayne Vincent commented that there is a lot of data from Crosby consultation that we already have which may help us with the draft Equality Impact Assessment for any next stages e.g., the feedback from SAFE from a people with disabilities perspective as one of the protected characteristics – for consideration in the next stages.

Any Other Business

No other business was mentioned.

6. Date of next meeting -

Friday 11th March 2022, 10.00 a.m. Venue – Remote via Microsoft Teams.