

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	September 2022

Strategic Transport

Port Access

- The new double track section of the rail line at the Port entrance has been operational since September 2021. Improvements to signals at Earlestown West are included in the works associated with transferring the control of signals from Warrington to Manchester, which is not due to happen until 2029.
- The Port of Liverpool Access scheme being proposed by National Highways remains significantly delayed. National Highways have confirmed that they are concentrating on updating their traffic modelling to take account of the impact of changes in traffic patterns resulting from Covid. They have confirmed that ‘this detailed and important work is likely to take approximately 12 months to complete’ and therefore they will not be in a position to publish an updated project timeline, including when they intend to formally consult the local community and the wider general public their proposals, until this traffic modelling work is completed.. The statutory public consultation needs to be undertaken in advance of the DCO application to the Planning Inspectorate. This is unlikely to take place until late 2023 at the earliest.

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. Following the Government announcement of £710m over the next 5 years for the Liverpool City Region from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement, the programme for 2022/23 which was approved by the CA is in delivery. The settlement provides a significant uplift in funding for transport infrastructure, particularly for highway maintenance, with a resulting pressure on staff resources. Recruitment for new staff to help deliver the programme is ongoing.
- Consideration has been given to a programme for 23-24 to ensure there are no delays in delivery. This programme will be agreed with Cabinet Member and the LCRCA in the Autumn.

- In response to the Council's climate emergency declaration and an increased focus on active travel measures, work is continuing on the development of Low Carbon Transport Strategy for the borough. Some initial baselining work has been undertaken and a consultation exercise regarding the strategy is being developed. Progress is also being made on the development of an Active Travel and E-mobility Strategies for the Borough.
- In order to identify potential improvement to the Councils walking and cycling network a local cycling and
- The preliminary design of the schemes to be included in the Full Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor has been completed and discussed with Active Travel England. The detailed design process will now be completed for each scheme and the final drawings will be included within the Full Business Case submission as requested by the LCRCA. Part of the Maritime Corridor scheme is likely to be funded from the Levelling Up Fund, following the success of the transport bid. There is some pressure to have the scheme delivered as soon as the FBC is approved, and therefore procurement options are being examined.
- Design work is continuing on improvements the junctions at Kenyon's Lane and at Hall Lane on the A59 Northway, these will be developed in the context of a wider improvement of the cycle route between Switch island and Robins Island. A package of funding including Government grant funding for improvements to traffic signals, developer contributions and Sefton transport capital programme will be used to deliver these improvements. ATE are supportive of the project and are encouraging the Council to consider the link to the wider communities and the potential for improvement east and west on the A59. Discussions will shortly be undertaken with local Ward Members and Maghull Town Council on the details of both schemes
- In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been substantially completed although the Contractor will return to site in September to complete some lighting works, some paving and remedials.
- The business case for the movement, access and public realm project within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) was approved . Consultation on the proposals has been completed and results appraised. The design work and scheme development work is being programmed.
- Works has commenced on the detailed design of the highway works which will support the development proposed for the Green Car Park which is subject the Levelling Up Fund. The works are aimed at reducing severance and improving access to the town centre.
- Initial work has also been commissioned to review access to the Strand in Bootle, in order to help shape initial work associated with the re-imagining of the centre.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2022/23 has been approved.

Sustainable Transport

- The proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle route through Crosby Coastal Park were submitted to Planning but not approved despite the public consultation indicating overall support. The perceived safety issue which was cited as the reason for refusal has been further examined and a number of alternative options examined. As the LCRCA have indicated that there may be a possible extension to the funding window, then it is likely that a modified scheme will be submitted to Planning. A procurement exercise has previously been completed and may have to be repeated prior to works will commence if and when approval is granted. Habitat improvement works will also be delivered as part of the scheme should approval be granted,
- The Department for Transport has confirmed that the funding secured from tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund can be used for proposals to improve the cycle and walking facilities on part of the Formby By Pass. The design has been agreed with Active Travel England, the new government body to support cycling and walking schemes, the design completed and view sought from the MPs and Ward Members. The works are likely to commence in late 2022 and completed by March 2023.
- Revenue funding has been received from the Active Travel Fund for the development of projects capable to improving cycling and walking throughout the borough. Works I currently progressing the A59 cycleway, the remainder of the A565 corridor to complement the improvement to the links identified above, junction on the A565, including Woodvale and the development of a local Walking and Infrastructure Plan to compliment the City Region Strategic Plan. Initial discussions have been held with interest groups as part of the e\ryly engagement.
- Consultation work has been undertaken on three School Street Pilot schemes in Southport. Funding has been secured to develop other school streets initiatives throughout the borough.
- The LCRCA have commissioned consultants to commence works on the Green Bus Corridor, which includes the consideration of proposals for Bus Priority and active travel on the No 53 bus corridor which includes Stanley Road.

Highway Development and Design

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Planning Applications

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the recent turnover in staffing resources. These include applications for sites identified in the Local Plan and continues to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department. A total of 150 applications have been responded to in June and July 2022.

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 – 38
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 1 where the developer appears to have ceased trading
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 0
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval – 12
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 1

Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements

- The numbers of this type of application also remains high, including the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 61 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.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- England Coast Path/Coastal Access The delivery of the establishment works through the Term Maintenance contracts have begun on site with a planned completion by October 2022.

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 continues 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

- The team has continued to provide the design and delivery of strategic transport investment schemes, including active travels and to provide assistance in the planning and development of future strategic schemes led by the STPI team, with a number of schemes at various stages of delivery. Currently the Scarisbrick Avenue Public Realm works are substantially completed, tenders have been received and appraised for the Crosby Coastal Park whilst designs are progressing on a number of other projects including junction improvement schemes on the A59, Ainsdale Car Park, Crosby Town Centre, Great Georges Road phase 2 and Birkdale Village.
- In addition, the team continues to support the Development Control function undertaking Transport Assessments and Technical Approvals for the Highways Act S38 and S278 submissions and the design and delivery of some Highways Act S278, including the Lydiate Lane roundabout and minor works schemes.
- The team also has responsibility for the revenue and capital bridge maintenance programme and is managing the maintenance schemes on Hightown station footbridge and Hillside station bridge as well as a number of minor bridge maintenance schemes. Further funding has been secured to enable an assessment to be undertaken of the strategically important Miller's Bridge over the railway.

Operational In-House Services

Catering & Building Cleaning Services

The Catering Service have prepared and supplied a total of 9,314 packed lunches during the summer food programme to support Sefton families in need of this service. This is an increase of over 3,000 on the provision supplied last year and demonstrates the scale of uptake.

The programme is managed and co-ordinated by the Catering Service Managers and the lunches produced by our own school meals kitchen staff who are mainly 'term-time only' employees. Each year we have been delighted by the number of staff who make themselves available to work during their holiday period and the level of commitment shown.

The demand has been high this year but collectively the team have ensured that our freshly made lunches are ready and distributed to multiple sites across Sefton in time for collection by the families in the designated centres.

The team have received many compliments about the quality and efficiency of the service which is excellent feedback.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance

Over the previous 12 months, the service has successfully renewed many of the fleet vehicles for both Waste Management and Green Sefton, replacing older euro IV & V vehicles with the latest euro VI engines, helping to reduce carbon emissions boroughwide.

The service is currently trialling alternative fuel vehicles in some service areas to review options that would further reduce emissions in the future and contribute towards the Council's net-zero carbon target.

Transport & Vehicle Maintenance have successfully undergone an internal audit of all processes ensuring continued compliance with the Operators' Licence, essential to delivering services with fleet vehicles in excess of 7.5 tonnes. We have continued to maintain our Operator Compliance Risk Score at the highest level, due to our high level of maintenance and administration.

The service has enrolled two apprentices, one based with the workshop and one within the transport administration office.

The MOT testing facility continues to be successful, currently operating 20% above the national average for testing.

School Crossing Service

The School Crossing Service is currently preparing for start of the new school year.

The service currently has:

84 School Crossing Sites across the Borough. It provides cover for children and adults who require assistance crossing the road.

Historically School Crossing Patrol Services across the Country have issues with recruitment. It is an ongoing issue due to the demographics of the role, term time, part time in most cases, 1.5 hours per day. There are also issues with working outdoors, sometimes in inclement weather conditions.

For the second quarter of this year the service has provided approximately 96% of cover across all locations, which is exceptional given the recruitment issues. This amounts to 5,566 kerb hours of cover for both children and adults across the Borough.

Requests for new sites are processed within 1 week. Schools are informed of any vacancies in advance to ensure continuation of cover. Patrols undergo a retraining programme every 2 years. Sites are risk assessed annually and a robust supervisory schedule is in operation, allowing staff to keep in touch with Management and discuss any concerns or requests.

Patrol staff undergo medicals at the start of their employment and annually for those aged 65 and over. This is due to potential sensory ability deterioration in this group of adults. This measure was agreed together with the Joint Trade Unions to protect and support staff within this demographic. The measure has proven to be a vital tool in identifying health issues for staff both personally and work related. The annual medicals for those aged 65 and over have returned to face-to-face, which is far more beneficial for this cohort of staff, after being held remotely for the last two years due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

The service is taking part in a pilot scheme working with colleagues in Strategic Support and Sefton Council for Voluntary Service (Sefton CVS) which is an independent registered charity with a borough-wide brief to assist and support voluntary community and faith sector activity across Sefton. They have developed a community insight tool to identify and capture what our communities are saying and what issues are important to them in their area. As

valued members of the community School Crossing Patrols are very much in tune with local people and what their views are about where they live. These will be anything from street lighting, vandalism, litter, dog fouling to how safe they feel at night in their community etc. Whether it be adults, children, or anyone in the community. Patrols are asked to report any issues they are made aware of to Management. The issues are input into the community insight tool. Following this, the information will be reviewed to identify any themes occurring within the community and what could be done to make improvements for everyone's Health & Wellbeing.

The School Crossing Service will imminently undergo a review of its current structure to ensure it is meeting objectives and providing the support necessary to all staff.

Burials and Cremations

The service restructure is complete and fully implemented. A realignment of vacant posts has provided a moderate saving on salary budgets enabling the service to employ a business support apprentice which supports the local economy of Sefton.

Thornton Crematorium has recently seen an uplift in bookings, primarily due to a cremator fire at Liverpool Council's Anfield Crematorium which reduced their operating ability. The service has coped well with the increased demand placed upon them.

Sefton ARC & Careline

The Service has recently taken delivery of three new patrol vehicles to replace outdated fleet. The mobile guarding service has recently recruited an additional 6 patrol staff which were core funded vacancies and reduces the reliance upon agency operatives.

Refurbishment work at the ARC building for 2 ground floor offices and toilets is due to commence shortly which is a much-needed improvement to a dated location. Recruitment to the vacant post of Sefton ARC Service Manager is in process.

Careline:

Careline continues to meet call response times and is preparing for an imminent move onto a Cloud-based platform which will significantly improve the operation of the Careline. It is anticipated that the move should take no more than 12 weeks and once in place, it will allow the team to become more streamlined, improving efficiency and enabling us to move forward and drive further improvements.

The service has recently began a series of meeting with Adult Social Care to review the service offer that is currently in place and ensure it continues to be fit for purpose.

Specialist Transport Unit

A review of fleet continues, options being reviewed which will be financially viable and the inclusion of electric vehicles will also be considered however, infrastructure for recharging across the Borough needs to be a factor.

Waste Management

The service has recovered well from operational issues experienced earlier in the year.

Staff representatives participated in a working group to review current rounds and devised some re-balancing options which have proved beneficial. There continues to be on-going work for further route optimisation, always with the aim of having the least impact on

residents. None of the changes implemented so far have required a collection day change and have therefore been seamless to residents.

Strategically, the Assistant Director continues to attend the LCR Strategic Waste Partnership for future planning regarding the implementation of the waste related aspects of the Environment Act 2021.

Street Cleansing

The weed control programme commenced its fourth annual spray in early August. An inspection process is underway to ensure evidence of 'die back' of weeds approximately 10-14 days following scheduled spray. The prevalence of weeds continues to be a challenge boroughwide

The service has begun to deliver a more comprehensive rear entry clearance programme which has included full vegetation removal in addition to fly tipping clearance. This is resource intensive and incurs increased costs but provides a much more comprehensive outcome.

Sadly, in some locations, residents have not valued the excellent outcome and have continued to fly tip within days of the work being undertaken. The cycle of fly tipping and removal with such swift repetition is very difficult for the service to sustain within current resource levels. Many residents view it almost as a 'service' and a significant 'step change' in terms of education, behavioural change and appropriate enforcement action where necessary, will be the future direction required to effect change.

Green Sefton

The service continues to work in partnership with many other organisations, partner agencies, and of course fundamentally our communities – supporting around 40 'Friends of' groups, In Bloom and other volunteer groups, together with 300+ sports clubs and leagues that utilise our facilities.

The service has undertaken significant formal consultations recently including an overall customer satisfaction survey for the service, and site / project specific consultations such as for Ainsdale Beach gateway, Hesketh Park and the proposed Coast and Visitor Areas PSPO.

The development of a Coast and Visitor Areas PSPO was a new item added to the services work programme this quarter – following the formal approval at Full Council, this will enable better management of visitor behaviour, and address anti-social behaviours in the designated locations.

Bootle Driving Range is now operational and exceeding initial expectations.

A new Visitor Action Plan for 2022 is being enacted. The Multi Agency Group with other landowners and emergency services etc. also resumed in March.