

# CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	January 2023

## Port Access

- The new double track section of the rail line at the Port entrance has been operational since September 2021. Improvements to signalling 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.
- There is little change in the progress of the Port of Liverpool Access scheme. 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 in their latest update, from July 22, 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 was agreed and the Council is currently on target to achieve the agreed spend. 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 and beyond to ensure there are no delays in delivery. This programme will be agreed by the LCRCA in February 2023 and will shortly be reviewed and agreed with Cabinet Member.
- **Low Carbon Strategy:** 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 completed and the outcome will be shared, initially with Members. This will seek to provide a The Council is seeking a report, the aim of

which will be to provide a quantification of the current transport related carbon position for the Council and a future trajectory for reductions towards Net Zero. The consultants are also identifying the next steps, which will include an engagement exercise. 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 walking infrastructure plan is being developed. Proposals for stakeholder engagement will be presented to the Consultation and Engagement Panel in early November. A number of engagement sessions have already been held with specific interest groups and some initial plans developed for helping inform the engagement process.
- **Southport Eastern Access:** 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 work is now progressing on both schemes 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. Some further engagement to ensure that local Members, businesses and residents are sighted on the proposals and have an ability to shape them is planned for January -February.
- **A59 Junctions:** 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 have been undertaken with local Ward Members and Maghull Town Council on the details of both schemes and further consultation with the wider public is programmed.
- **Scarisbrick Avenue:** In Southport, improvements to Scarisbrick Avenue in conjunction with the Townscape Heritage Initiative have been completed, including the installation of lighting. Some defect works are planned for completion in January / February 2023.
- **Southport Town Deal:** Design work on the first phase of public realm project identified within the Southport Town Deal (*Les Transformation de Southport*) has begun. Targeted consultation with local businesses has been completed and comments are being incorporated within the detailed design.
- **Crosby Town Centre:** 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. Discussions are ongoing with relevant authorities over the potential phasing of the works.

- 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 was approved some months ago and will updated and submitted to Cabinet Member for approval in January.

### **Sustainable Transport**

- **Crosby Coastal Park:** The proposals for a new pedestrian and cycle route through Crosby Coastal Park were not approved by the Council's Planning Department despite the public consultation indicating overall support. The perceived safety issue which was cited as the reason for refusal has been further examined and several alternative options examined with a preferred solution developed. Some further engagement has been held with representatives from the coastal Forum, residents' groups, and Ward Members. Further meetings are planned which could help shape further plans. The LCRCA have indicated that there is a limited extension to the funding window which allows time for a modified scheme, which addresses the Planning Committees concerns to be submitted to Planning. A procurement exercise has previously been completed and may have to be updated prior to works commencing should planning approval be granted. Habitat improvement works will also be delivered as part of the scheme subject to approval.
- **Formby By-pass:** The Department for Transport has confirmed that the funding secured through tranche 2 of the Active Travel Fund can be used for proposals to improve the cycle and walking facilities on part of the Formby Bypass. The design has been completed and agreed with Active Travel England, and tenders invited. Works are programmed to commence in January 2023 and completed Spring 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 is 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.
- **School Streets:** 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 and a dedicated officer, seconded from Sustrans, has recently commenced the selection and engagement work.
- **Green Bus Corridor:** 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. Initial meetings have been held with the Council and information provided to the consultant.
- **Great Georges Road:** A finalisation to the previous cycle lane scheme along Great Georges Road has been agreed and the designs are being completed.

- **Ainsdale Car Park:** In conjunction with the Green Sefton team the design and procurement for a new car park at Ainsdale Beach is progressing, with an expected bids to undertake the civils works expected to commence in February with completion of July 2023, prior to the school holiday season.

## **Highway Development Control**

### **Planning Applications**

- The team continue to process large numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with the recent turnover in staffing resources, increased by the fact that no suitable applications were received for the vacant senior highway development engineer post. The applications include sites identified in the Local Plan and continue to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department. A total of 128 applications have been responded to in October and November 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 – 45
  - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 2 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 – 26
  - 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 82 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 are to be completed through the Term Maintenance contracts by February 2023.

### **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 collaborating closely with colleagues in network management and planning to ensure that the plans are being adhered to.

## **Highway Asset Management**

### **Winter Maintenance**

- As of 21<sup>st</sup> December, we have gritted the carriageways on 20 occasions and the footways 12 times.
- We are in the process of a re-stock of our salt supplies, following the recent prolonged cold spell, and will be back to full capacity for the New Year.
- Regular updates will be provided throughout the season to monitor expenditure, as we have done in previous years.

### **Street Lighting LED retro fit scheme**

- The total energy reduction, up to the end of November, on the LED scheme is 2,244,371.69 KWH with a carbon reduction of 486.00 TC02e
- The scheme programme has now been revised to concentrate on high wattage lamp replacement, which will realise energy savings earlier than first anticipated.

### **Traffic signals LED retro fit scheme**

- Discussions are on-going with the appointed contractor to start the Traffic Signals LED scheme, with a proposed start early in the New Year.
- This scheme will also reduce energy consumption and provide carbon savings, as well as reducing on-going maintenance costs.