

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT		
Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Street Scene and Transportation	July - August 2011

1. Thornton Switch Island Link

A briefing note on the progress of the Statutory Orders process for the Thornton to Switch Island Link was provided to Leaders early in July. A report was also presented to Overview & Scrutiny (Performance and Corporate Services) Committee on 12 July 2011. The key issue to be addressed before the Compulsory Purchase Order and Sides Road Order can be published is the acquisition of land owned by the Forestry Commission (part of the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs). Officers from Strategic Transportation Planning Unit, Legal Services and Capita Symonds Property Management have been pursuing the completion of an agreement as a priority action. Heads of Terms for an agreement are in the process of being agreed and a response from the Forestry Commission is expected by 29 July 2011. This should enable the agreement to be finalised and steps taken toward agreeing a completion date. Once a completion date has been agreed, the reports authorising the making of the Orders can be taken to Cabinet and an Orders Publication Date can be confirmed.

Negotiations with other land owners are also proceeding alongside the Orders process.

2. Port Master Plan and Port Access Study

The public consultation on the Mersey Ports Master Plan – A 20 year Strategy for Growth has been taking place between 6 June and 5 September. Two exhibitions have been held in Sefton, at Crosby Civic Hall on 21 June and at Bootle Town Hall on 21 July. The basis of a Sefton Council response to the Master Plan consultation has been prepared and is being reported to Cabinet Members Regeneration and Housing, Transportation and Environment and to Planning Committee. The response recognises the potential economic value of the Port expansion proposals, but also identifies the need to address the resulting environmental impacts on local communities.

Stage 2 of the Port Access Study is also nearing completion and is expected to be published early in September. The study has assessed the future transport requirements of the Port, including the impacts of potential Port expansion and identifies short term and long term packages of transport interventions as a means of accommodating transport access to and from the Port. A non-technical summary of the study is being prepared, which will be made widely available once completed.

3. LTP3

Sefton is continuing to work with Merseytravel and the other Merseyside authorities on the delivery of the LTP3 implementation programme. Sefton's LTP programme addresses the transport priorities approved by Cabinet on 3 March 2011. An update of the 2011/12 LTP Capital Programme (report dated 8 July 2011) was recently reported to Cabinet Member.

4. Local Transport Schemes

Work on delivery of the LTP Capital Programme for 2011/12 is underway, with numerous schemes in the design process and some commencing construction.

The Linacre Lane/Hawthorne Road junction improvement scheme has been completed. Four local safety schemes are commencing design and the proposals for the Formby Bypass/North End Lane junction will be reported to Formby Area Committee in September. The improvements to the Hicks Road junction as part of the A565 Route Management Strategy are being implemented during the summer holidays and the proposals for the College Road junction are planned for implementation later this financial year, subject to Area Committee approval in September. Proposals to improve the entry junction to the retail park on the A59 in Aintree are also being taken forward this financial year.

5. Local Sustainable Transport Fund

We were informed on 5 July that the cross-boundary bid with West Lancashire Borough Council to support the visitor economy across the two authorities had been successful securing £1.55m over the next 4 years. The success of the bid was reported to Cabinet on 21 July and Cabinet Member – Street Scene and Transportation on 22 July. The funds secured will be used to:

- Allow the continued operation and expansion of the Southport Cycle Hire Scheme. The funds will also allow further marketing of the scheme to promote cycle maintenance and increased usage. The aim being to further build the scheme to achieve self sufficiency at the end of the funding in 2015.
- Allow the reopening of the Kew Park and Ride site for the school summer holidays and then weekends up until the first weekend in October. Will also allow for improved signage and marketing for this period.
- Provide a staff resource through one officer directly employed by Sefton Council to develop & promote the visitor offer. The officer will coordinate the activity, liaise with the private and community sector participants and raise the profile of the area as somewhere to visit if you want to walk, cycle and enjoy wildlife. Will also include a specific community development component to be delivered by a partnership of Sefton CVS and West Lancashire CVS. The CVS led element consists of a multi-agency approach, using their existing networks of community organisations to engage local people, especially those in deprived neighbourhoods, to enable them to use the leisure opportunities available in the area and encourage more sustainable travel.
- Provide a series of small scale infrastructure improvements to aid access to local centres and attractions by sustainable means. When working with local businesses we would aim to achieve a 50/50 contribution split between the business and the project.
- Further develop leisure routes and facilities - Sefton and West Lancashire currently offer a variety of popular and well used opportunities for leisure walking and cycling. As part of the bid proposal to support the visitor economy, the activity to develop and promote the visitor offer described above will seek to make the most of these existing resources.

However, there is also a need to improve the condition of the existing infrastructure in places and to provide new routes to fill gaps in the network and provide links between the different elements of the existing network.

- The bid led by Merseytravel which concentrated on access to employment opportunities has also been successful in securing £4.88m from the fund with the elements of the scheme in Sefton totalling £725k. The details of this project will be reported to Cabinet Member during August

6. Procurement of Highway Maintenance Contracts.

Contracts were approved for award at Cabinet on 26 May. At the time of writing this report all contracts have been issued by our Legal Department to all contractors for their signatures. Early indications suggest a reduction in rates which will benefit the Council and go some way to counteract the reduction in the highway management budget. The Ground Maintenance contract has been issued to ensure the highway grassed areas are cut as soon as practical.

7. Additional Government “Pothole” Funding

The authority has been allocated £613,000 to help to deal with the effects of the severe winter. Discussions have taken place and Cabinet Member kept informed. As discussed with Cabinet Member, the larger patch programme has delivered circa £300k worth of repairs to date and we are on target for completion by end of September in line with the DFT requirements. Undertaking larger patch repairs will hopefully negate this effect and result in more robust and longer lasting maintenance. Regular update reports will be shared with Cabinet Member.

8. Micro Asphalt and Surface Dressing

Problems were experienced with the delivery of these programmes during financial year 2010/11. Some sites remained uncompleted and some required remediation work. Whilst some of this can be put down to poor weather at key times last summer and the extreme weather experiences last winter, nevertheless, the contractors are obliged to undertake all necessary remedial works at their own expense. Micro Asphalt Contractors have completed all defect works with a small percentage of lining still to be finished. The 2011-12 works programme are due to start in August 11 and will take 6 to 7 weeks to deliver subject to weather conditions.

9. Winter Service Consultation

The consultation period has now expired and responses are currently being reviewed by the Network Department and are to be reported to Members in due course following completion of the report at the end of August 11.

10. Winter Service Procurement

Sefton has taken the lead in procuring weather forecasting and supporting bureau services for Merseyside. The pre-qualification questionnaire process has been completed with tenders due back on 9 June. Results will be reported to Cabinet Member in due course.

11. Blue Badge Scheme

The Department for Transport are beginning to progress the proposals to amend the Blue Badge scheme and officers in Sefton are involved in a number of working groups which will progress the details of the changes.

The amendments to the scheme which include the establishment of a national Blue Badge Database to assist with enforcement, a more secure badge design which will be centrally printed and distributed and the introduction of an on-line application form through Directgov are due to be implemented on 1 January 2012. There will be a charge for this service and to enable authorities to meet this cost it is also proposed to increase the maximum that can be charged for a Blue Badge from £2 to £10. The above will be the subject of a series of reports through Cabinet Member over the coming months

12. Parking Enforcement Contract

The above contract is due for renewal in April 2012 and work has started to commence the tender process for the contract which will run for 5 years.