

# CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills) - 18 September 2018

| Councillor      | Portfolio                           | Period of Report |
|-----------------|-------------------------------------|------------------|
| John Fairclough | Cabinet Member<br>Locality Services | September 2018   |

## Strategic Transport

### Port Access

- The programme of multi-modal interventions is continuing including rail infrastructure requirements, promotion of coastal and inland shipping, short term highway improvement measures and options for long term major highway improvement. Work on the doubling of the rail line into the Port and improvements to signals at Earlestown West are scheduled to be completed by March 2019.
- A new rail freight service between the Port of Liverpool and Mossend (Glasgow) was launched in May 2018. Three trains per week will run in each direction. This is the first inter-modal service for about 10 years since Freightliner ceased their service in 2007. A new regular transatlantic container service started at the Liverpool 2 deep-water container terminal in July 2018. The service has been switched from Felixstowe to Liverpool on a temporary basis. At the same time, Maersk Line's South American transatlantic service, Colombia Express, will also start calling at the Port of Liverpool.
- The judicial review of the options consultation process for the major highway scheme is scheduled to be heard on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2018. The Chief Executive has submitted evidence on behalf of the Council.
- Highways England has continued with the design and assessment of their preferred option. The Council has advised Highways England that it considers that work on the scheme should be suspended until the Judicial Review has been concluded and has not granted access to Council owned land. Requests for information are being dealt with as requests under the Environmental Information Regulations. Highways England is planning the statutory consultation with the local community and key stakeholders for autumn 2018, although the exact date is not yet determined. If the statutory consultation takes place in autumn 2018 as programmed Highways England hope to be able to submit their application to the Planning Inspectorate in summer 2019.

### 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.

- The development of the M58 Junction 1 scheme continues although the start of construction has been delayed because the Council does not yet have access to the land. The Council successfully negotiated the withdrawal of the single objection to the Compulsory Purchase Order, which has now been signed by the Secretary of State. Once the notices have been signed by Highways England, they can be issued to the relevant parties. The Council continues to seek acquisition by agreement and is also discussing with landowners' representatives the possibilities of securing early access to the land. This has been agreed in principle but the details are being finalised. Highways England have approved all of the necessary departures and the Safety Audit Work has been undertaken. Acquisition of one of the plots of land in Sefton's section of the scheme has been completed and the other plot will be secured through the CPO process. Vesting of the site should take place in October.
- Works are progressing on the A565. Works within the Sefton section of Derby Road have been re-scheduled to enable static diversions, but are expected to start in autumn. The works along Regent Road are continuing. The scheme is programmed for completion in 2019.
- Maghull North station has been completed and opened in June 2018.
- Work continues on the sustainable transport intervention proposals for Years 3-6 as part of the City Region programme. Sefton has three schemes approved as part of 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. Schemes for the A565 in Thornton and on Buckley Hill Lane (to relieve Edge Lane) and improvements to Southport East West cycle links are planned for delivery this financial year.
- The traffic modelling and options testing for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor projects is continuing. The forecasting work for the Southport Eastern Access scheme indicates that there should be a viable business case. City Region funding is being used for both projects and strategic outline cases for both projects are expected to be completed in the autumn.
- The programme of Local Growth Fund schemes on the Key Route Network includes proposals for a major junction improvement at the Dover Road junction on the A59 Northway. An outline design has been prepared, some site investigation has been completed and discussions with the main landowner are ongoing.

### **Local Transport Schemes**

- Delivery of the Transportation Capital Programme for 2018/19 is continuing following approval of the programme by Cabinet Member in June 2018.

### **Sustainable Transport**

- The Combined Authority is still waiting to hear whether the bid for the European Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) fund submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) in February 2018 has been approved. A decision was expected in the summer.

- Proposals for a new, inland pedestrian and cycle route at Crosby Coastal Park, which will avoid the issue of wind-blown sand on the promenade and proposals for a major upgrade of the Coastal Road cycle route were included in the bid.

## **Highway Development and Design**

### **Planning Applications**

- Since the beginning of June 2018 the team has processed 237 planning applications. This includes applications for sites identified in the Council's adopted Local Plan. This has involved liaising closely with case officers from the planning department. The team are currently assessing a number of applications including some of the local plan sites such as land east of Maghull, Brackenway, Lydiate Lane, Bankfield Lane and others.

### **Section 38 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements**

- There has been a considerable increase in submissions and 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 - 27
- No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) - 10
- Number of development sites adopted within the last 6 months (March 2018 to June 2018) -4
- No of submissions awaiting technical approval - 6
- Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 3

### **Section 278 Highways Act 1980 legal agreements**

- There is an on-going increase in the numbers of these type of applications generally due to the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. Whilst a number of these schemes have been completed in the last period, a number of new applications have also been received.
- The team are currently managing 55 live s278 HA 1980 highway works schemes in various stages of development on behalf of the Council and with values exceeding £1.5m. The successful delivery of these schemes is dependent on close liaison with the Legal, Finance and Planning Departments.

### **Public Rights Of Way (PROW)**

- Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP) 2 – Ongoing negotiations with the Liverpool City Region and other neighbouring Authorities
- English Coastal Path – On site route feasibility reviews commenced with Natural England and a final year claim submitted of £5,400 of which covers officer time incurred on the project
- Green Sefton are now closely involved in this project with available time charging to cover staffing resources and overheads. Consideration is also being given to some stewardship responsibilities in the longer term.
- Advising on the preparation of two Schedule 14 Applications for up to nine additional PROW's.

- St Lukes Church Road claim has been submitted to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee which all being well, will mitigate the potential for a major Public Inquiry for which the Council would have to bear associated costs

### **Strategic Highways Development and Future Planning**

- The team is continuing to take a lead in managing the transportation issues involved with the Land East of Maghull and this is ongoing with a submitted masterplan document now under consideration.
- The team is continuing to work closely with the Planning Department on new initiatives to ensure a 'One Council' 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 seeing more developments affecting the daily operation of the highway and as such, at the request of the Planning Committee, we are asking to see more construction traffic management plans 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.

### **Design**

- This part of the team is also supporting the delivery of the Step programme  
Current schemes include:
- Feasibility study for Southport Eastern Accesses – to improve the connectivity to Southport Town Centre and the seafront
- A59 Port Capacity – a scheme to improve capacity along the A59 through Maghull, on its approach to Switch Island
- Various cycle improvement schemes to link the eastern side (Kew area) to the centre of Southport and a scheme to link the borough boundary at Kirkby to Maghull.

### **Permit Scheme**

- The third year review of the Permit scheme has been completed and published in accordance with legislative requirements. Permit fees levels have been analysed and evidence is such that a revision to those fees is appropriate. Part of this process includes consultation with interested parties. The consultation period ended on Friday 31<sup>st</sup> August 2018. A subsequent report will be presented to Cabinet Member and Cabinet in due course.

### **Winter Service**

- The annual consultation with Elected Members has been completed. The revised policy and operational plan will be presented to Overview & Scrutiny (Regeneration & Skills) Committee on 18<sup>th</sup> September.

### **Street Lighting**

- The Councils new Street Lighting contractor is continuing to deliver services to a high standard which is reflected in the early KPI reports. There is currently no backlog of faults which are being responded to within 5 working days.
- New faults are still being received daily from the public which continue to be recorded and processed accordingly.

## **Traffic Signals**

- The LCR joint Traffic Signal Maintenance Contract continues to function well across the city region.
- The Council has entered into an Agency Agreement with the LCRCA to facilitate the delivery of the UTC Communications upgrade to digital along the KRN. This project is being funded 100% by the Combined Authority

## **Highway Maintenance**

- All works for general maintenance, resurfacing, weed spray and grass cutting continue to be delivered with no relevant operational issues

## **Cleansing Services**

- Green garden waste collections have been severely affected by the hot, dry and sunny summer. In July this year we collected some 600 tonnes less garden waste than we collected in July 2017. However, following the recent rainy conditions and continuing warmth and intermittent sunshine, we are hopeful that collection tonnages for August and September should be higher than previous years.
- In an effort to improve recycling rates in 'weekly sack collection areas', and also to combat dumped bags of waste at gated entries and the issue of 'spillages' in many terraced streets, tighter systems are being introduced to improve the visible and amenity value of the environment in these collection areas. Many sacks are currently placed in the wrong position, or are left outdoors after a collection has occurred, or are not tied or secured properly leading to spillage in the streets. Whilst crews have a brush and shovel for spillage all too often vermin or birds spread the contents of the split bags across a wide area which hinders the collection of the spillage. Crews will be sticking bags that are open/incorrectly presented or dumped outside gate entries. This will then be investigated and any evidence found will be passed to enforcement colleagues for 'fixed penalty' notices or prosecution, the stickered bags will then be collected.
- The recent long spell of hot weather has also seen litter bins across the Borough needing additional collections due to the increased volume of waste generated from both the increased number of visitors and also residents and families spending more time outdoors. Over the summer period so far we have collected almost double the tonnage of previous holiday periods. It should be noted that all litter bin waste is sent for recycling and re-use.
- The Cleansing operation is continuing to re-schedule refuse and recycling collections in 'difficult to access' roads and streets. However, the issue is becoming increasingly difficult as more cars and inconsiderate parking of cars prevents access to the standard size refuse collection vehicles. This results in either having to re-send the original collection vehicle, or a smaller vehicle, to collect the missed bins. An exercise is being undertaken in conjunction with colleagues in the Highways Section to review TRO's (Traffic Regulation Orders) to see if the use of double yellow markings, or similar deterrents, can alleviate some of the problems.

- The Cleansing operation has again recruited additional “temporary” staff to remove weeds/leaves and assist with the general cleansing operation in known or identified ‘grot spots’. This scheme provides valuable work experience for unemployed people who have been unemployed for in excess of nine months, and all operatives live within the Council boundaries. The aim is to upskill these staff and get them back into the ‘work routine’ with a view to making them more flexible, adaptable and employable within the labour market in the future.
- The Cleansing operation has helped to deliver a range of successful events and shows throughout the summer. To date, the operation has provided services and assistance to the Food & Drink Festival, Formby Festival, Air Show, Southport Flower Show, Bootle Festival, Tall Ships, etc. All have been successful in benefitting local residents and visitors alike that see Sefton Council staff delivering such efficient services across a wide and varied range of events. There is just the Fireworks event in late September to conclude this year’s major events.

## **Cemeteries and Crematoria**

### Cremation Regulations 2017 Update

In 2017 the regulations under which the crematoriums in Sefton operate were amended (updates). The main change was the introduction of new application forms (Form 1, 2 and 3) from 06 April 2018. In order to facilitate this amendment, the Authority’s preliminary application form has been changed and updated with the new service area branding.

### New Software

The service area has a statutory duty to maintain records (e.g. burial, cremation and grave registers) in perpetuity. Since 2000 records have been stored electronically on bespoke software. However, this software is no longer compatible with the current ICT infrastructure and is now also not being supported. A procurement process is currently being undertaken for a new bespoke system and it is planned that a new system will be in place before the ‘busier’ period commences this winter coming.

### Cremator Maintenance

Cremation is permitted and monitored via the ‘Environmental Permitting Regulations’. Regular maintenance is essential to meet the permit’s statutory requirements. Maintenance of Southport Crematorium’s cremators was procured (through open competitive tender) via the cremator supplier and a contract is in place until 2020. This maintenance contract was to be extended to the new cremators at Thornton Garden of Rest, where the same supplier was awarded the supply contract (again through open competitive tender) in 2016. However a framework now exists for cremator maintenance, which was not previously identified at the time of supply. The framework will now be considered, but due to late identification, a contract waiver secured this year’s essential maintenance.

### Accredited non-traditional coffins now accepted for cremation

After completion of a programme of rigorous testing, non-traditional coffins (such as, ‘green’ coffins e.g. willow or sea-grass) manufactured by members of the FFMA or CCSA, are now accredited for cremation at Sefton’s two crematoriums. This will now provide an enhanced service for bereaved families and undertakers alike.

### Former Office at Thornton Garden of Rest

The process to lease out the former cemetery office (until spring 2020) has begun. A cemetery-related business will be sought, e.g., stone mason, florist or funeral director.

The building is currently part-occupied by the grounds contractor until spring 2020. After this period the building and depot will be considered for disposal/lease.

#### Bootle Cemetery – Section 106 works

Work to protect graves on the corner of sections has been completed, and a number of further options are being considered and discussed with elected members and site users.

#### Duke Street Cemetery

£8k of ward funding was granted for improvement works, including signage, planting, flower beds, and works to improve the entrance. All works are continuing and it is expected that all shall be completed over the coming month.