

# CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	January 2020

## Strategic Transport

### Port Access

- The programme of multi-modal interventions is continuing including rail infrastructure requirements. Work on the doubling of the rail line into the Port has been delayed several times and should now be delivered in 2020. Subsequent improvements to signals at Earlestown West have also been delayed but are also expected to be delivered by the end of 2020.
- Highways England provided a newsletter update and held public information sessions at two venues in October. All the comments received have been included and are available to see on the website - <https://a5036portofliverpoolaccess.commonplace.is/about>. The formal consultation is being scheduled for 'the first half of 2020', but no firm dates have been shared with the Council. Formal notices have been served on the Council to secure entry to sections of Rimrose Valley in order to complete a range of ground investigation and environmental surveys, starting early in 2020. Subject to obtaining all the necessary approvals, Highways England has indicated a possible start of construction in late 2022.

### 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.
- Works have continued on the construction of the new slip roads at junction 1 of the M58 motorway with the earthworks and drainage on the northern side of the motorway largely complete. Giddygate Lane will be formally stopped up in early January to enable the remaining earthworks to be completed on the southern side. The works have also included the completion of the first phase of the Maghull – Kirkby cycle track. If the scheme remains on programme, then the slip roads should be operational in April 2020. The slip roads and associated land will then be transferred to Highways England. The Contractor, John Sisk and Sons, are committed to leaving a positive legacy and have completed some playground surfacing works at a local school and some improvements in Lunt Meadows wildlife reserve. They also received a very impressive score in the most recent assessment under the Considerate Constructors scheme.

- On the North Liverpool Key Corridor scheme. Liverpool City Council 'descoped' the remaining works from Osborne and appointed Kings (who had previously been the principal sub-contractor, as main contractor). The new footway on the eastern side has now been formed following the diversion of all the necessary cables and much of the traffic management is being removed. In January, works will focus on the completion of the remaining sections of central reserve and the carriageway widening. The carriageway surfacing will be the last operation within this section. Much of Regent Road has been resurfaced within the Sefton section although further works are planned in the vicinity of a building in poor condition (once it's been strengthened) and on the section between Millers Bridge and the dock entrance.
- Liverpool City Council have experienced some delay in securing the land currently occupied by Wildthang and Lookers. The new Wildthang facility is being constructed is nearing completion. Once completed, the building will be occupied, allowing the relevant section of the existing building to be demolished and carriageway widening to be undertaken. The City Council have confirmed that the highway works in this area will be by Kings, following on from the current works.
- Work continues on the sustainable transport intervention proposals for Years 3-6 as part of the City Region programme. Sefton has three schemes in 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. The various licenses and land agreements necessary to facilitate the cycle improvements are still progressing with agreement reached on a number. The scheme on Buckley Hill Lane (to relieve Edge Lane) is nearing completion. Delays have been experienced as a result of stats diversions, but these have been completed. Planning approval for the Maghull to Kirkby cycle route has been granted and part of the works delivered (see above). Tenders have been received for the for the Southport scheme and an assessment is ongoing. Approval to commence the works has been secured from the SUD team at the city region. The junction works at the 5 lamps junction will be delivered in conjunction with a cycle improvement scheme on Great Georges Road, for which a consultation exercise has been planned. Information is expected to be available in February.
- Grant funding for the development of Outline Business Cases for the Southport Eastern Access and the Maritime Corridor projects was approved by the CA in June and Offer Letters have now been received and signed. Atkins have been appointed under the Council's TTSS framework to undertake the Maritime Corridor scheme and have completed modelling works. Work has commenced on the compilation of the Business Case and arrangements have been made with Network Rail for discussions over proposals for the Heysham Road Bridge. Traffic counts have been ordered for the Southport Eastern access work. These will be undertaken in January.
- Works on the major junction improvement at the Dover Road junction on the A59 Northway started in July, initially with the stats diversions. AE Yates have been appointed to deliver the main contract and the main works commenced in November with a view to achieving completion by spring 2020.

## **Local Transport Schemes**

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2019/20 was agreed with Cabinet Member in June 2019 and an update report has been compiled for approval in the first week in January 2020.

## **Sustainable Transport**

- The European Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) funding for two major cycling schemes was approved in December 2018. The design of a new, inland pedestrian and cycle route at Crosby Coastal Park, which will avoid the issue of wind-blown sand on the promenade, has largely been completed with works programmed to be delivered together with the Great George's Road scheme. Similarly design work is progressing on the Coastal Road cycle route. This will be delivered as part of the Southport East-West links with a view to starting delivery in Autumn 2019.

## **Highway Development and Design**

### **Planning Applications**

- The highways development control service continues to process significant numbers of planning applications despite ongoing challenges associated with availability of staff. This includes applications for sites identified in the Council's adopted Local Plan. This continues to involve close liaison with case officers from the planning department. Considerable time and effort has been spent on assessing major applications for a new supermarket on Meols Cop Road, Southport and the Land East of Maghull proposals.

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

- There has been a consistently high level of 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 - 33
  - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 8 but developers continue to be followed up on these matters
  - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 0
  - No of submissions awaiting technical approval - 8
  - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 5

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

- The numbers of this type of applications remains high, generally due to the approval of planning applications for Local Plan sites. The team are currently managing 58 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.

- In terms of Minor Works agreements, a revised Minor Works process has been approved by Cabinet Member. One Minor Works scheme has been completed, with a further two scheduled for delivery and a third awaiting payment from the developer before it can be delivered.

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

- English Coastal Path – Liaison with Natural England and Green Sefton is continuing and on site route feasibility reviews are almost completed. Green Sefton are closely involved in this project with available time charging to cover staffing resources and overheads. Natural England's programme is to publish the report identifying the route and the margin in early 2020.
- We are advising on the preparation of one Schedule 14 Application for up to eight additional PROWs associated with the St Luke's Church Road scheme. The St Luke's Church Road application is ongoing with contract negotiations with landowners. One landowner has signed the agreement and negotiations are continuing with the other three. The Planning Inspectorate has imposed a 12 month deadline to consider this application.
- Seven Definitive Map Modification Orders have been made to update the Definitive Map and these are currently being consulted on.
- Legal Event Modification Orders for Southport and Bootle have been made. The Definitive Map and Statements for these areas have been updated and given a new Relevant Date.

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

- The team is continuing to work closely with the Planning Department to provide 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 continuing 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**

- This part of the team continues to support the development control function and the delivery of strategic transport investment schemes, such as potential major schemes and the STEP programme.
- Current schemes include:
  - A59 Northway/Dover Road junction improvements – supervision and contract administration of a scheme to improve capacity and improve accessibility along the A59 through Maghull, at the Dover Road/Liverpool Road South junction. The main project commenced on site in November 2019 following static diversion works.

- Various cycle improvement schemes to link the eastern side of Southport (Kew area) to the town centre and seafront and the Maghull to Kirkby cycle route, all funded through the STEP programme.
- Site supervision of the A565 Buckley Hill junction improvements is ongoing with an anticipated completion in early 2020 following delays associated with stats diversions.

### **Permit Scheme**

- There has been an influx of work related to superfast broadband rollout by BT. Regular performance meetings are being held to try and ensure, as best we can, that work is completed to the correct specification and in accordance with the permit regulations.
- Discussions are on-going with our software provider to ensure that we are ready to move to the new street manager permitting system on 1<sup>st</sup> April.

### **Winter Service**

- Financial updates are now being provided on a regular basis to monitor expenditure.
- To date (08/01/20) we have gritted the carriageways on 19 occasions and the footway on 4 occasions.
- Discussions are on-going regarding the extension of the current forecasting & bureau Merseyside contract for the final optional 12 months.

### **Street Lighting**

- New faults are still being received daily from the public which continue to be recorded and processed accordingly. The Contractor is currently performing well against their target KPI's.
- Emergency Call-out cover has been arranged with the Contractor for the Christmas Shutdown period.
- Subject to available funding there are proposals to complete some further trials of different manufactures LED lanterns in the New Year.

### **Traffic Signals**

- The LCR joint Traffic Signal Maintenance Contract continues to function well across the city region.
- The LCRCA UTC Communications upgrade project remains ongoing however there have been some recent delays due to both BT and Siemens which now mean completion is forecast for March 2020.

### **Highway Maintenance**

- The delivery of the Highway Maintenance programme remains ongoing with carriageway resurfacing projects continuing. All district road schemes are now complete. The remaining schemes which are on the KRN are due to commence in February 2020.

- A new Contract for the construction of vehicle dropped crossings has just been awarded and will commence in January 2020. The existing Contractor has been successful in retaining the Contract.

## **Cleansing Services**

### Leaf Clearance:

The street cleansing operation was completed by mid-December with some 800 tonnes of leaves sent to a composting unit for soil conditioning. The operation to remove leaves was hampered this year by the weather conditions which saw particularly wet weather making it very difficult to collect leaves from roads and pavements. However, all operatives persevered, and the annual process has now added approximately 1 additional percentage point to the overall rate of recycling within Sefton.

It should also be noted that Sefton is the only City Region Council that composts its leaves for soil conditioning.

### Christmas & New Year Collections & Street Cleansing Activities:

A revised collection service operated over the festive period, with notification of the changes published on the Councils' website and in local media. Normal services refuse services resumed on Tuesday 7<sup>th</sup> January 2020. The service operated very effectively across the whole period due to the support of supervisory staff undertaking driving duties during the closedown.

Street Cleansing from December 23<sup>rd</sup> to January 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020, operated on a skeleton service to meet the needs of Councils efficiency savings and budgetary process. Any issues identified by public or elected members were dealt with as quickly as possible, within the limited resources available. Street litter bins and shopping areas were prioritised during this period to reduce street litter, and to support the commercial districts.

### Events.

Cleansing Services has completed its 2019 events calendar, including various Christmas lights switch-on events throughout the Borough. Cleansing activity at all events has been delivered to a very high standard with many compliments received from organisers and visitors alike. Cleansing Services eagerly looks forward to participating in the "Borough of Culture" events in 2020.

### Environment Bill 2019.

As previously notified to members, the above bill was not formalised due to the dissolution of Parliament and the subsequent general election. The new Government has indicated in the Queens speech in December that it will resurrect the Bill, and that it intends to press ahead with compulsory food waste collections from 2024. It is also still deciding whether to enact other legislation around collection cycles and frequencies for bins (grey/brown/green), and also whether to insist that Councils are prevented from charging for certain services such as green (garden) waste, and also additionally and potentially prevent charging for bulky item collections.

Sefton has taken the lead in the City Region over food waste and a group of senior officers from all City Region Councils are formulating a report to the February meeting of the MRWA (Merseyside Waste & Recycling Authority) containing proposals on the

'way forward' for food waste collections within the City region. This Committee will be apprised of details as they are emerging.

## **Burials & Cremations**

### New Software - Plotbox

The 'Go-live' date was due at the end of 2019. However, data migration has proved to be more complex than was expected. This led to the data 'sign-off' only taking place in late December 2019. As such, the introduction of the new system has been postponed until the end of the financial year in March 2020. It is vitally important when dealing with data which has to be correctly stored for very long periods of time that any system changes are undertaken in a robust manner. As such, it is felt that the additional time provided to ensure that the system fully meets all of the required standards can and will be used to its best effect.

### Benchmarking & Recognition

Benchmarking within the Burials & Cremation service is undertaken via APSE (the Association for Public Sector Excellence). Since the opening of a new private sector facility in Burscough a few years ago, the Council service has had to review all operations and seek new ways of generating income and reducing costs, in order to meet the required budgetary provision for the service. Performance scores are used by APSE to recognise such performance improvement and also identify those services deemed as 'best performers' from across the country.

As such, we are pleased to announce that Sefton Council Burials & Cremation Service has been nominated and recognised for both the '**most improved service**' and the '**best performer**' categories within the APSE Benchmarking service.