

CABINET MEMBER UPDATE REPORT

Overview and Scrutiny Committee (Regeneration and Skills)

Councillor	Portfolio	Period of Report
John Fairclough	Cabinet Member Locality Services	March 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 has carried out public information sessions about their proposals in October 2019. Notice was served on the Council to facilitate access to the Council's land and Highways England commenced further site investigations and data collection in January 2020. It is now expected that the formal consultation will take place later in 2020, which will affect the potential date for Highways England to submit their application to the Planning Inspectorate.

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 works focussing on the formation and surfacing of the slip roads and the first phase of the Maghull – Kirkby cycle track has been completed. At present, the scheme is expected to be completed on programme and the slip roads should be operational in spring 2020. A handover process has been agreed with Highways England and the slip roads and associated land will be transferred to Highways England. The Contractor, John Sisk and Sons, are committed to leaving a positive legacy and have undertaken projects at a local school and in Lunt Meadows wildlife reserve. They have also achieved a 'very good' score under the Considerate Constructors scheme.
- Works are progressing on the North Liverpool Key Corridor scheme. The new signals at the junction of Millers Bridge/Derby Road junction have been commissioned and the junction is fully operational. The carriageway to the south of the junction is currently being widened and surfaced and works are scheduled to be completed in spring 2020. The works on Regent Road within the Sefton section have largely been completed.

- Work is continuing 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. The scheme on Buckley Hill Lane (to relieve Edge Lane) is due for completion in February 2020, although delays have been encountered as a result of stats diversions. Planning approval for the Maghull to Kirkby cycle route has been granted and the first phase of the works has been completed in conjunction with the M58J1 scheme, and the plans have been completed for the Southport scheme, which is due to start work in spring 2020. 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 is being carried out early in 2020.
- 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 2019. Atkins were appointed under the Council's transport services framework to undertake development of the business cases. Some further traffic count surveys have been commissioned to support the modelling work.
- Works at the major junction improvement at the Dover Road junction on the A59 Northway are continuing and are aimed for completion for the end of March 2020. The Council is working with the contractor to minimise the extent of delay and disruption as much as possible.

Local Transport Schemes

- The Transportation Capital Programme for 2019/20 was agreed with Cabinet Member in June 2019 and an update report was presented 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. Work on the Coastal Road cycle route is being delivered in conjunction with the Southport East West Cycle Links scheme and this is planned to start in summer 2020.

Highway Development and Design

Planning Applications

- In October, November and December 2019, the team processed 198 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.
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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 taking in to account new and adopted sites.
 - No of stalled or no activity (on the part of a developer) – 7 and developers continue to be followed up on these
 - Number of development sites adopted within the last 3 months - 1
 - No of submissions awaiting technical approval - 10
 - Number of new and recent submissions awaiting administrative set up - 3

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 more than 60 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.
- In terms of Minor Works agreements, a revised Minor Works process has been approved by Cabinet Member. There are seven current Minor Works schemes on going, with a further five awaiting payment from the developer before it can be delivered.

Public Rights of Way (PROW)

- England 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 March 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.
- Six Definitive Map Modification Orders have been made to update the Definitive Map and Statement.
- One Dedication Agreement for a new Bridleway at Netherton Lane has been completed.

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 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 with technical approvals and the design and delivery of some Highways Act s278 schemes and the delivery of strategic transport investment schemes, including potential major schemes and the STEP programme.
- The main current schemes include:
 - A59 Northway/Dover Road junction improvements – design, procurement and supervision of the scheme to improve capacity and improve accessibility along the A59 through Maghull, at the Dover Road/Liverpool Road South junction.
 - 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 with completion in early 2020 following delays associated with stats diversions.

Street Lighting

- New faults continue to be received daily from the public which are recorded and processed accordingly. The Contractor is currently performing well against their target KPI's.
- The Street Lighting team have been assessing a number of new LED lanterns / manufacturers. The plan is to trail a number of lanterns before considering a suite of standard lanterns moving forward.
- The 2020 Street Lighting programme is currently being developed.
- A new Street Lighting Life Cycle Plan is also being developed.

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 and forecast completion still remains as the end of March 2020. A number of sites are now live with the new Broadband connections.
- A new Traffic Signals Life Cycle Plan is currently being developed.

Highway Maintenance

- The delivery of the Highway Maintenance programme remains ongoing with the remaining schemes which are on the KRN to be completed in March.
- Due to the recent excessive wet weather there have been a large number of carriageway ponding enquiries. Many of which have turned out to be capacity related and not due to defective infrastructure.
- The 2020 Highway Maintenance programme is nearing completion and again this year will be made up of a combination of preventative treatments and conventional resurfacing.

Permit Scheme

- Cadent Gas have now started their mains replacement programme which involves upgrading 120 km of their low-pressure network in the borough. We are also currently waiting for a programme from BT Openreach on their future fibrecities upgrade plans. We are aware that they are about to start works on the Maghull exchange and we believe that this will be followed by Formby and possibly Ainsdale, Birkdale and Southport. We are managing this increased workload, with the resources that we have, to ensure that work is undertaken to the agreed conditions and specification.
- We are currently waiting on a test system from our software supplier for integration with the new national street manager permitting system. The deadline for implementation is 1st April 2020.

Winter Service

- Financial updates are now being provided on a regular basis to monitor expenditure.
- To date (25/02/20) we have gritted the carriageways on 29 occasions and the footways on 8 occasions.
- Verbal agreement has been given by the 5 authorities in the current Merseyside consortium to extend the winter forecasting and bureau services contract by the final 12 months available. Preliminary discussions have begun for the new contract to include all the LCRCA's, including Warrington.

Cleansing Services

New Software - Plotbox

- Plotbox go-live is due Monday 02 March 2020. The new software is only the service area's second application for registering and booking burials and cremations. The old system was in service for over 20 years and this is a big

change for staff and an important change for the Council and customers. To enable a smooth transition, non-burial and cremation work has been suspended for the first week. Earlier this month we discovered that our existing software provider was in difficulties and the company was rescued by one of its subsidiary partners.