



Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee

Date:	Wednesday, 20 September 2023
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Birkenhead Town Hall

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AGENDA

- 1. WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**
- 2. APOLOGIES**
- 3. MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members are asked to consider whether they have any disclosable pecuniary interests and/or any other relevant interest in connection with any item(s) on this agenda and, if so, to declare them and state the nature of the interest.

- 4. MINUTES (Pages 1 - 14)**

To approve the accuracy of the minutes of the meeting held on 24 July

2023.

5. PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question/statement by the deadline for submission.

5.1 Public Questions

Notice of question to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, 15 September to the Council's Monitoring Officer via this link: [Public Question Form](#) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 10.

For more information on how your personal information will be used, please see this link: [Document Data Protection Protocol for Public Speakers at Committees | Wirral Council](#)

Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your question by the deadline for submission.

5.2 Statements and petitions

Notice of representations to be given in writing or by email by 12 noon, 15 September to the Council's Monitoring Officer (committeeservices@wirral.gov.uk) and to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Order 11.1.

Petitions may be presented to the Committee if provided to Democratic and Member Services no later than 10 working days before the meeting, at the discretion of the Chair. The person presenting the petition will be allowed to address the meeting briefly (not exceeding three minute) to outline the aims of the petition. The Chair will refer the matter to another appropriate body of the Council within whose terms of reference it falls without discussion, unless a relevant item appears elsewhere on the Agenda. If a petition contains more than 5,000 signatures, it will be debated at a subsequent meeting of Council for up to 15 minutes, at the discretion of the Mayor. Please telephone the Committee Services Officer if you have not received an acknowledgement of your statement/petition by the deadline for submission.

5.3 Questions by Members

Questions by Members to be dealt with in accordance with Standing Orders 12.3 to 12.8.

SECTION A - KEY AND OTHER DECISIONS

6. WIRRAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN (Pages 15 - 54)

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- 7. FESTIVE DISPLAY POLICY (Pages 55 - 78)**
- 8. TREE, HEDGEROW AND WOODLAND STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE (Pages 79 - 96)**

SECTION B - BUDGET AND PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 9. ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY & TRANSPORT COMMITTEE BUDGET AND BUDGET MONITORING REPORT (Pages 97 - 106)**

SECTION C - WORK PROGRAMME / OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

- 10. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 107 - 114)**

Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this committee can be found at the end of this agenda.

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ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Monday, 24 July 2023

Present: Councillor EA Grey (Chair)

Councillors S Foulkes G Davies
G Jenkinson N Graham
P Jobson Jason Walsh
V Wilson A Brame
M Booth

19 **WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION**

The Chair welcomed attendees and viewers to the meeting and reminded everyone that the meeting was webcast and retained on the Council's website for two years.

20 **APOLOGIES**

Councillor Anne Ainsworth sent apologies. Councillor Angie Davies was in attendance as substitute.

21 **MEMBERS' CODE OF CONDUCT - DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Members were asked to declare any disclosable pecuniary interests and any other relevant interest and to state the nature of the interest. There were no declarations of interests.

22 **MINUTES**

Cllr Naomi Graham asked that the climate emergency action plan be updated to include protecting vulnerable residents from heatwaves and flooding. The Chair asked that the public question relating to Fender Way be amended to 'had not reported any problems' and reference to Director of Regeneration and Place be changed to Director of Neighbourhood services. Reference to 'it was noted that these issues are reserved should be changed to 'resolved'. The chair also asked that the statement that 'the council had no intention of taxing people to the point of poverty' include that the council has 'no intention of introducing roadblocks, cameras or other restrictions'.

Resolved – that the minutes of the meeting held on 19 June 2023 be approved as a correct record with the above amendments.

23 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

23.1 Public Questions

The Chair advised that 17 public questions had been received.

Catherine Evans asked a question relating to Low Traffic Neighbourhoods, stating that she had submitted a Freedom of Information request regarding the trial LTN for Grange Road West and suggested that the response was not comprehensive. Ms Evans requested that the Council scrap LTN.

The Chair responded to say that the Grange Road Scheme was due to be implemented using an experimental Traffic Order which would be in place for 18 months. Feedback would be welcomed from businesses. During the development of the scheme to date the Council engaged with businesses, and prior to the public consultation also undertook a separate consultation for local businesses. There is significant evidence to demonstrate that increasing pedestrian and cycling activity can boost a second consultation has just ended on the 19th July and therefore until the feedback from this has been reviewed it would be inappropriate to pre-determine the outcome and recommendations regarding the scheme.

A question was read on behalf of Keith Randals, who asked if an Equality Impact Assessment had been conducted in respect of the cessation of maintenance on Hoylake Beach.

The Chair responded to say that an Equality Impact Assessment was carried out before the Cabinet Member Decision to pause spraying and raking was taken, and an EIA will definitely be part of the process of deciding a final beach management plan for Hoylake Beach.

A question was received from Linda Ferrie who asked what proposals will the Council have for enforcing the 20mph speed restrictions, who was going to enforce these restrictions and by what means.

The Chair responded to say that the Police are the only people who can enforce speed restrictions and the Council work closely with Merseyside Police, noting that Merseyside Police support Road Safety work the Council are undertaking.

Anthony Pritchard asked a question regarding 20 mph zones, asking if the committee considered that consultation regarding the 20mph scheme, carried out October / November 2022, was fair and inclusive of all Wirral residents.

The Chair responded to say that consultations on 20mph are carefully done in line with legal requirements and are promoted via multiple channels including the local press, social media, emails to residents and the Council website.

Catherine Kelly asked a question relating to 20 mph zones, stating that this could have an impact on carers, district nurses, and emergency services. Ms Kelly asked the chair to confirm what risk assessments had the Council carried out pertaining to people waiting in their homes for carers as well as confirming whether any consultations had taken place with Home Care Agencies.

The Chair responded to confirm that an equality impact assessment was carried out before the recommended 20mph policy was agreed by the committee and subsequently by Full Council.

Charlotte Smith asked a question relating to the removal benches along the prom at Hoylake refurbishment and to accommodate buses/coaches during the Open. Has the council ever considered an Equality Impact Assessment in making this decision and noted that in her opinion the council is in breach of the Equality Act 2010 by not providing temporary seating to accommodate people with disability/mobility needs.

The Chair responded to say that she had been informed that the benches were in need of refurbishment and repair to keep them safe and fit for use.

Elaine Revans asked a what was the Councils opinion on keeping the 20mph limits to necessary areas such as around schools and nurseries whilst allowing drivers to exercise common sense in 30mph areas and could the Council provide the sources of the statistics from their own research for accidents and fatalities in the Wirral zones they are targeting for the new restriction.

The Chair responded to say that 20mph zones were not introduced to reduce pollution but to reduce road danger and numbers killed and seriously injured. The Chair also noted that it would be helpful to explain the benefits of 20mph more and confirmed that officers are working on this right now.

Rosie Evans asked a question stating that the Birkenhead 2040 Framework clearly stated that the Wirral Council's preference for the Birkenhead tunnel is to become not for cars but public transport only and asked if the Council would be engaging with the Liverpool City Region, as owners of the tunnel, to facilitate a feasibility study.

The Chair responded to say that the Council are not aware of any immediate proposals from the LCR for changes to the Birkenhead tunnel. Any proposals would have to be led by the LCR as owners of the asset and would

be subject to comprehensive feasibility studies and consultation with all affected parties. The Chair also noted that, the 2040 Framework recognised that the Queensway tunnel provides strong strategic highway links that are essential for the flow of people and goods but does note that the infrastructure has a lifespan which naturally requires its renewal, replacement, or change of use in the future to extend the economic life of the tunnel.

Derek Holmes asked why could the Council send out letters to residents to let them know about the Open Golf, not one letter was sent out about the Beach Management consultation.

The Chair responded to say that letters were sent to residents close to the golf event who were likely to be disrupted by it. Letters cannot be sent to all people that use the beach as it is an open space available to all Wirral residents and visitors and that would be too many people to write to.

Colin Roper stated that The Department of Transport plans to close all its managed train companies' ticket offices across the Country. He also stated Mersey Ferries have become cashless, and many of the street parking machines in Birkenhead and beyond have also become cashless. Mr Roper asked what initiatives are the Council taking to protect the use of cash on the Wirral, ensuring the public can use it to travel and park.

The Chair responded to state that she would ask officers to respond to Mr Roper's concerns and that they are shared with the LCRCA, who are responsible for the tunnels, ferries and local trains.

Sandra Richards asked a question relating to 20mph zones, stating that the zones will increase fuel usage and asked as the Committee is charged with environmental matters, how did it justify the fact this decision would adversely affect pollution, or is this a plan to stop private car ownership. Had a risk assessment been undertaken in respect of this and are these risks covered in the Council's public indemnity insurance.

The Chair responded to say that there is evidence that reduced speeds reduce fuel use unless people drive erratically. Risks are assessed for all policy decisions and with evidence that 20mph is much safer than 30mph, the council believe it will be of benefit in reducing risk.

David Felton asked a question relating to 20mph zones, asking what is the exact number of people needed to object, or the exact proportion of respondents required, to stop further MPH zones from being introduced?

The Chair responded to state that the decision to proceed with 20mph was made by elected members of the Council before the recent local elections. It was not raised as a concern at the local elections and many of us received messages of support for 20mph. The Chair noted that the figures showed that

during consultation 0.002% of residents opposed 20mph zones and that consultation objections are always taken seriously and if valid, they are acted upon.

Dermot Bolger stated that numerous surveys, including a recent 2023 IMF survey on Public Perceptions of Climate Mitigation Policies, indicate that the vast majority of everyday people do not want to pay for climate mitigation policies. Mr Bolger asked if the Council planned comprehensively survey the Wirral public to ascertain if they support climate policies and if the public do not support such policies, will the council withdraw from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Five Year Climate Action Plan.

The Chair responded to confirm that she very much supported the idea of comprehensive engagement with residents on the issue of climate change and climate change policies and asked for greater urgency in communicating with residents across the city region.

Monika Skinner asked if the Council planned to be upfront about the medium to long term target in regard to private car ownership.

The Chair responded to state that Wirral has a close working relationship with the rest of the Liverpool City Region. However, the city region is not alone in wanting to enable as many people as possible to choose to travel by public transport and active travel, noting that the aim was to give people more choice.

Jeremy Cook asked a question relating to 5G, asking if the Council claimed that the real nature of the 5G deployment process underway in Wirral is one of telecommunications only.

The Chair responded to state that the answer was, yes.

The Chair read out a question on behalf of Sally Scott, who asked how many Councillors had undertaken training in environment issues, asking for the list of carbon literate councillors to be made public and that Council consider increasing its climate communications with the public and greater levels of public consultation beyond just 'Have your Say'.

The Chair responded to state that the list will be updated and made available, and the Climate Emergency team will consider your suggestions for increased communications and engagement.

23.2 Statements and petitions

The Chair advised Members that 4 petitions had been received.

Councillor Jason Walsh presented a petition on behalf of residents of Thornton Avenue and the connected Thornton Road slip road, Higher

Bebington, who requested that modal filters are positioned within the avenue restrict traffic flow in both roads. They petitioned for this as a more effective solution to traffic conditions than restricting the speed limit to 20mph.

A petition was received from Amanda Parker in relation to sewage dumping in New Brighton, asking Committee that action is taken by the Secretary of State for Environment to stop the sewage dumps by United Utilities into the local river.

A petition was received from Lee Mathie in regards to restrictions at Kings Parade New Brighton which only referred to motor caravans. The petition asked why such restrictions are not applied to other classes of motor vehicles and requested somewhere designated for motor caravans.

A petition was also received from Mark Skillicorn in relation to the use of weed killer spraying.

23.3 Questions by Members

Councillor Graham Davies asked a question regarding Heswall Primary School and traffic calming measures. Cllr Davies stated that a petition had been submitted by a constituent but no response had been received.

The Chair stated that a response should have been prepared for this and that she would ask officers to look into this further.

24 BIRKENHEAD TOWN CENTRE MOVEMENT SCHEMES

The Lead Commissioner for Strategic Transport and Technology presented the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place, stating that the report provided an update on the Phase 1 consultation undertaken regarding the town centre movement schemes at Conway Street/Europa Boulevard and Grange Road Charing Cross/Grange Road West and sought approval to delegate authorisation to the Director of Neighbourhoods to consider the outcome of the Phase 2 consultation and make the decision regarding the implementation of the schemes.

The report also sought approval for the acceptance of a further allocation of £1,625,000 of Active Travel Tranche 3 funding to support the delivery of the Conway Street/Europa Boulevard scheme. The Conway Street/Europa Boulevard scheme and the Grange Road/ Charing Cross/Grange Road West projects are part of the council's Future High Street Fund (FHSF) programme.

The Conway Street/Europa Boulevard scheme also has an allocation of Active Travel Tranche 3 Funding.

The projects were both critical components of the regeneration of Birkenhead town centre, aiming to make the town centre more attractive through supporting improved accessibility and increasing active and sustainable travel movements.

Members queried various aspects of the scheme, raising some concerns as to schemes being dislocated and lacking in ambition, and were informed that an Active Travel Vision Document would be coming to Committee later in the year, and that a full detailed infrastructure plan was being developed. Members also noted that applications for grants needed to be in line with government policy and criteria in order to be feasible. Members also shared frustration that the deadlines for applying for funding were tight, suggesting that there was less time for consultation.

Members discussed each scheme and car parking, asking if a full assessment for car parking spaces will be undertaken. Also considered was the impact of anti-social behaviour on the scheme as well as making the public realm dementia friendly.

A motion was then put by Councillor Max Booth, Seconded by Councillor Vida Wilson that,

In reference to option 2.1 and in light of the committee not seeing the phase two consultation results, the Director of Neighbourhoods is requested to seek an extension of time beyond the 31st of March 2024 funding deadline. This will accommodate for a time whereby the ECET committee can analyse the phase two consultation responses during the ECET committee meeting scheduled to take place on the 20th of September 2023

A vote was had and the motion was lost (4:8)

On a motion by the chair, seconded by Councillor Steve Foulkes. The motion was then voted on and agreed (8:4). It was therefore,

Resolved – that,

1. The outcome of the Phase 1 consultation regarding the Conway Street/Europa Boulevard and the Charing Cross/Grange Road/Grange Road West scheme and associated officer comments which are included with Appendix 1 – 4 of this report be noted;

2. Delegated authority regarding the implementation of the Conway Street/Europa Boulevard scheme and the Grange Road/ Charing

Cross/Grange Road West scheme be given to the Director of Neighbourhoods, following consultation with the Ward Members, Chair and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee and the Environment, Transport and Climate Emergency Committee regarding the objections and expressions of support received during the Phase 2 consultation;

3. £1,625,000 of additional Active Travel Tranche 3 Funding to support the delivery of the Conway Street/Europa Boulevard scheme be accepted.

25 **LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY - FIVE YEAR CLIMATE ACTION PLAN 2023/25**

The Chair presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, which contained as an appendix the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – Five Year Climate Action Plan.

Members were informed that report was approved by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority on 14 July 2023. The report sought Combined Authority approval for the Liverpool City Region Five Year Climate Action Plan, and identified actions for the Combined Authority to lead, enable or champion to 2028. These actions would contribute towards the decarbonisation needed in the Liverpool City Region to reach net zero carbon by 2040 or sooner, as well as delivering multiple co-benefits.

Members discussed various aspects of the plan, including the recycling priority action, food waste and numbers using their cars for short journeys. Use of Hydrogen and innovative technologies for transportation were also debated by the committee.

Members were informed that thought had been put into the language used in the document and how it could be made as easy as possible for residents to get on board. It was noted that the footprint of Liverpool City Region was large and diverse, and queried what could be done as a local authority, noting that more localism and involvement by citizens could be incorporated to deliver the strategy.

Resolved – that the priority actions be endorsed.

26 **2023/24 BUDGET MONITORING FOR QUARTER ONE (THE PERIOD TO 30 JUNE 2023)**

The Senior Finance Business Partner presented the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services, which set out the financial monitoring information for the Council as at Quarter 1 (30 June) of 2023/24.

The report provided Members with an overview of budget performance, including progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 saving programme and a summary of reserves and balances, which enabled the Committee to take ownership of the budgets and provide robust challenge and scrutiny to Officers on the performance of those budgets.

At the end of Quarter 1, there was a forecast adverse position of £0.500m on the Committee's proposed revised net revenue budget, of £65.840m. The revised net revenue budget included an increase of £0.870m in Quarter 1, which is still subject to Council approval. This position was based on activity to date, projected trends in income and expenditure and changes to Council funding.

Members discussed the impact of the upcoming enforcement policy and love Wirral Policies and the adverse variance due to car parking charges being delayed. Also requested was more detail in the revenue table, which goes down to £6m and a request was made to break this down in future reports. Members also queried the variance due to the West Kirby Wall and were advised that the information contained in the report was the most up to date.

Resolved – that,

- 1.the Directorate forecast adverse position of £0.500m presented at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- 2. the allocation of additional £0.870m funding from the increased council budget of £2.000m, subject to Council approval be noted;**
- 3. the progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme at Quarter 1 be noted**
- 4. the forecast level of reserves and balances at Quarter 1 be noted.**
- 5. the forecast capital position presented at Quarter 1 be noted**

27 **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT PERFORMANCE REPORT**

The Director of Neighbourhood Services presented the report which provided a performance report in relation to Environment and Climate Emergency, and Highways and Infrastructure. The report was designed based on discussion with Members through working group activity in 2021. Members requests have been incorporated into the report presented at this committee meeting.

Members discussed missed bin collections and poor recycling rates and noted that public feedback in regard to highways maintenance was poor. It was

noted that the date reflected a full week of industrial action and poor weather conditions that went into mid-January and that recycling performance is static.

Members were also informed that surveys do tend to get negative results, but that the network is in reasonably good condition, however there is slippage on residential roads and pavements. Member also discussed cycling and car free days, noting that funding had been requested from the City Region to promote car free days. Members also queried the tree strategy and noted the offer of free trees through the garden waste strategy.

Resolved – that the report be noted

28 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Head of Legal Services presented the report of the Director of Law and Governance and advised Committee that they were responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

Resolved – that the report be noted.

The Chair informed Committee that this would be the Director of Neighbourhoods final committee meeting and thanked her for her drive and energy, not just in Wirral but across the City Region. The Director of Neighbourhoods thanked Members for their support.

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Monday, 24 July 2023

23.4 Answers to supplementary questions

Charlotte Smith

Staying with the theme of the prom at Hoylake Beach, it has come to light that a section of the beach very close to the prom has been closed off with netting. This is the area where it is understood where poisonous hemlock was growing way out of control and impeded onto the prom. Passers by are in danger of being brushed against this poisonous plant. Indeed, a local volunteer with Hoylake Beach community was stung by this hideous dangerous plant when replacing the recently criminally vandalised netting and came out in a rash.

Who authorised the erection of the netting around this dangerous plant? And would the Environmental Chair and Committee now agree with me that in the light of this unfortunate event and other documented cases of dogs and other people being poisoned and stung by dangerous plants on the beach and near the prom, that it is time to stop playing politics with Hoylake beach and that serious consideration be given to the welfare of humans and animals, and the Equality Act 2010, by mechanically raking all of Hoylake amenity beach from King's Gap slipway to the new lifeboat station, and making it accessible for everyone to use again?

Answer Wirral Council can confirm that it received a report on Monday 10th July from a resident who had been involved in doing some repair/replacement work to the netting on Hoylake Promenade. The volunteer reported suffered a skin reaction which they identified as being caused by brushing against Hemlock Water-Dropwort that was very close to the railings on the Promenade. While the Council would not in any way downplay this, from research it is not entirely certain that this rash was caused by this one particular plant. All the information available to Council Officers suggests that Hemlock Water Dropwort is not a touch-sensitive plant. Council Officers have spoken to Natural England for their view on how to manage this plant, including possible removal. Natural England's preferred option was that signage should be put in place and that the plant should not be removed. Given the proximity of this particular plant to the railings, that signage would take time to develop, as well as being conscious that the Open Golf Championship would start imminently (16 July) Officers from the Councils

Parks & Countryside Service did take the decision to temporarily put orange netting around this plant. This was to prevent golf visitors and residents from picking the flowers from this plant, as it was in full flower at that time. Now these plants have finished flowering they are naturally starting the dying back process. Having reflected on this, Officers are unlikely to use temporary fencing in subsequent management of the Hemlock Water Dropwort. Moving forward our preferred option is to look at the possible use of signage, with one option being that this would be used seasonally and only in place when the risk was considered to be at its greatest. Hemlock Water Dropwort is a very common native plant that can be found through out the country and while dangerous if ingested it is not normally harmful in any other way.

Elaine Revans

Can the Chair please comment on the fact that whilst trying to drive 20mph I found that both in my car and on my motorbike that I'm being tailgated and that it is putting me at increased risk?

Answer Rule 126 of The Highway Code states that 'tailgaiting is dangerous, intimidating and can cause collisions, especially when driving at speed. Keeping a safe distance from the vehicle in front gives you time to react and stop if necessary. Dangerous and careless driving offences, such as tailgaiting, are enforced by the police. We work with Merseyside police on the roll out of 20mph.

Cllr Graham Davies (Member Question)

Was anything done by this committee after Hannah read her question out to you in March, and will the committee act on my suggestions for Heswall Primary [for traffic calming measures] before a child gets hurt or worse?

Answer When the question was read at the 14 March 2023 meeting, reference was made to a petition but this has not yet been submitted. A petition was submitted for Heswall Primary School during the 14 March 2023 meeting, by the then Councillor Collins. This is a live petition and work is being undertaken by officers.

The Network Operations Manager and Road Safety Strategy Manager met with yourself, Councillor Sullivan and residents outside Heswall Primary School on 11 July 2023. Where an update was provided on the actions taken to date:

Improvements to signage including roundels painted on the carriageway, additional signage including 20mph signs and school crossing patrol flashing warning light. An additional Vehicle Activated Sign has been arranged by officers. Pavements in the locality have been improved and footprints to direct the school community to cross with the School Crossing Patrol are being refreshed ready for the new school term. In addition to this, officers coordinated education campaigns with Merseyside Police (Kids Court) and continue to work with the school to offer support. These measures are being monitored

and reviewed and the work continues and a full response will be provided for the live petition.
Officers will be assigned the petition when it is submitted.

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ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Monday, 20 September 2023

REPORT TITLE:	WIRRAL ROAD SAFETY PLAN
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

This report provides a further update on progress made in planning, funding and implementing the recommendations of the Road Safety Working Group as requested by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on 7 September 2021.

This report also sets out Wirral's Road Safety Plan 2023 – 2027, following the adoption of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy in November 2022.

One of the key themes in the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 is to provide safe and pleasant communities. Making the borough's roads safer for cyclists, pedestrians and other road users helps to meet the key priorities set out within the current Wirral plan.

The services carried out will take place across all Wards.

This report involves a Key Decision

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

- a. Note the update on the recommendations of the Road Safety Working Group as set out as appendix A to this report.
- b. Approve the Road Safety Plan 2023 - 2027 as set out in appendix B to this report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To ensure the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is further updated on the progress, planning, funding and implementation of the recommendations agreed by the Road Safety Working Group and to set out future Road Safety Plans for development and implementation.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The resolution of this committee was to progress a road safety update report, there are no other options considered.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Liverpool City Region has adopted a Road Safety Strategy, working to a target of no avoidable collisions by 2040.
- 3.2 The strategy is underpinned by a Safe Systems Model which sets out that all elements of a road system (vehicles, infrastructure, speed limits, road users and post-collision care) work together to prevent collisions and the tragic outcomes resulting from a collision.
- 3.3 The strategic outcomes for Road Safety in the Liverpool City Region are:
- A reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions working to a target of no avoidable collisions by 2040;
 - Creating the conditions for more people to make safer journeys on foot or by bicycle and enabling more children to walk to cycle to school; and
 - Contributing to improved air quality and reducing climate changing CO2 emissions.
- 3.4 As a representative of Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, the Council has an important role, alongside stakeholders, to develop programmes and interventions to improve road safety within the borough.
- 3.5 The actions contained within the Road Safety Working Group update, as set out in appendix A of this report has been integrated into the Road Safety Plan as set out in appendix B and illustrates how Wirral Council will translate the Liverpool City Region strategy into action locally.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 In addition to the human suffering, there is a cost to society for road collisions. The Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy sets out these costs. The average cost of a fatal road casualty is over £2 million. The implications of health-related costs and dangers associated with low level of activity (including active travel) are well documented.

- 4.2 The delivery of this plan will utilise existing revenue, grant funding and staffing budgets. The total allocated budget is around £400,000.
- 4.3 Delivery of capital road safety / active travel related programmes will be funded by City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) grant funding for 2023/24 which is £2,160,000 as reported to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on the 14 March 2023. The allocation is a component of the CRSTS and must be used in year to fund transport capital improvement schemes.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has statutory duties as defined by the Highways Act 1980, Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, Road Traffic Act 1988, Local Government Act 2000 and the Traffic Management Act 2004 to maintain, manage and improve the highway.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources in the Neighbourhood Services directorate will be utilised in the delivery of the road safety plan and coordinate activities with key stakeholders and partners.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to undertake the identified recommendations listed in appendix A and appendix B, could result in the Council not meeting its legal duties as referred to in paragraph 5.1 of this report.
- 7.2 Failure to undertake the identified recommendations would also result in a failure to support the aspirations of the Road Safety Working Group and delivery of the priorities of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Transport Plan. Consequently, this could result in the loss or clawback of funding.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Wirral Council has a statutory consultation process that is required for the undertaking of work on the adopted highway which will require public consultation, objections to which would be considered under the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution or by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee once a level of objections have been reached exceeding the current scheme of Delegation number.
- 8.2 Some of the identified schemes will be subject to the requirements of a Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) process.

- 8.3 The initial statutory advertising process for the TRO proposals will require publication of notices at all sites affected by the proposals and in the press with an appropriate objection period. All Party Spokespersons and Ward Councillors will be informed.
- 8.4 Legal notices and maps of the areas affected by the TRO will be prepared as part of the consultation process.
- 8.5 As a representative of Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, the Council was involved in the development of the Liverpool City Region Strategy. The Council's continued involvement enables it to consult and engage with key representatives.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 An Equality Impact Assessment – EIA, has been compiled. A copy can be found at: - <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The updates to the recommendations set out in appendix A and appendix B of this report generally have environmental benefits. Many of the Local Journey and Network Management projects are aimed at improving access to the highway network which will help to support better air quality across the borough and also enable a greater number of journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes, therefore reducing residents' reliance on the private car and reducing carbon emissions. Other projects will improve environmental safety for highway users by encouraging safe, active travel and promotion of road safety awareness.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 It is considered that the updates to the recommendations listed under appendix A and appendix B support the principles of community wealth building. As the recommendations move into the delivery phase, all opportunities to secure community wealth and social value e.g. through Council contracts will be explored.
- 11.2 Updates to the recommendations listed under appendix A and appendix B support the principles of green and sustainable travel, by making the road network safer and reducing reliance on the private car in favour of active and sustainable modes of transport.

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APPENDICES

Appendix a - Road Safety Working Group 2023 Update
 Appendix b – Wirral Road Safety Plan, 2023 – 2027

The PDF files may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact rhianhughes@wirral.gov.uk if would like these documents in an accessible format.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

The Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy,
 The Highways Act 1980,
 The Road Traffic Regulations Act 1984, RTRA
 The Road Traffic Act 1988, RTA
 The Local Government Act 2000
 The Traffic Management Act 2004, TMA
 National Roads Policing Strategy 2022-2025
 Governments Road Safety Statement, 2019

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in accordance with Section (C) of its Terms of Reference, “in relation to traffic management and transport and as traffic authority, including but not limited to public passenger transport and the co-ordination of transport for service users, traffic orders and rights of way issues.”

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee ROAD SAFETY WORKING GROUP - FINAL REPORT	16 March 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee ROAD SAFETY UPDATE	7 September 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee ROAD SAFETY WORKING GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS UPDATE	20 January 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT SETTLEMENT COMBINED AUTHORITY TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRAMME 2023/24	14 March 2023

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

No	Recommendation	Progress / Planning	Funding	Implementation
1	Link the road safety strategy into the Community Safety Strategy	Complete	N/A	Completed 2023
2	Wirral Council to explicitly adopt a Safe Systems/ Vision Zero approach to Road Safety	Liverpool City Region strategy adopted November 2022. Wirral Road Safety Plan to be taken to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in September 2023.	N/A	In progress 2023
3	Wirral Council to adopt a short-term aim of an average reduction in KSI	Quarterly KSI key performance management results to be reported to Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. Merseyside Road Safety Partnership currently exploring targets in line with new LCR strategy.	N/A	In progress 2023
Page 21	The working group requested that officers look at reducing speed limits on all main roads and ensure consistent speed limits, avoiding small sections with higher limits	Project brief in development with view to review existing speed limits on all 'A', 'B' and strategic 'C' classified roads, appointing specialist advisors. Focus initially has been on actions 5&6.	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	In progress 2024/25
5	20mph zones are introduced in all areas that are predominantly residential, retail, or educational.	Phase 1: Implementation stage: 15 areas in 2022/23 with an expected completion date Summer 2023. Phase 2: Funding approved CRSTS programme for 2023/24 . Public consultation is set to begin in Summer 2023.	Combined Authority Transport Plan / City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	In progress 2022/23 - 2024/25
6	Engage with other authorities that have implemented 20mph zones and link in with organisations such as Sustrans and Living Streets to share best practice	Engagement with neighbouring authorities and stakeholders including 20's Plenty For Us Campaign Group to be completed as part of 20mph speed limit feasibility study. Officers have established links with Sustrans through involvement in developing Liveable Neighbourhoods. Desktop research for reports produced by Bristol City Council and Wales to inform communications plan and roll out.	Combined Authority Transport Plan / City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	Completed April 2022

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

7	Consistent use of speed limit signs and use of existing street furniture columns where available.	Project brief in development with view to review existing speed limits on all 'A', 'B' and strategic 'C' classified roads, appointing specialist advisors. Focus initially has been on actions 5&6.	Combined Authority Transport Plan / City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	In progress 2024/25
8	Use physical speed reduction methods such as chicanes where compliance is poor and residents are in support of this	Monitoring and evaluation approximately 12 months from first implementation of phase 1 20mph to determine if any additional features are required. Meanwhile where there is a known collision record, locations will be assessed as part of our annual local safety review and included within our capital programme.	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	On-going 2024/25
Page 22 9	Deliver the School Streets programme Wirral Wide	Three permanent schemes in Wirral. Remaining three schools are being trialled via the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order. Growing list of requests from members of public, schools and Councillors. Enforcement powers applied for to trial at 1 school, awaiting outcome from Parliament. Future schemes have been Identified in indicative City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2024/27	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	In progress 2021/22- 2022/23
10	Ensure adequate funding for Road Safety Educational type schemes as well as Road Safety Officer Training	Restructure within the Road Safety Team to create a new Road Safety Strategy Manager post with responsibility for identifying funding streams in partnership with senior managers. Addition of two new Team Leaders and the introduction of an externally funded Active Travel Officer.	Existing Revenue & external funding	Complete 2022
11	The working Group requests that crash sites involving young people/cyclists and all major junctions to be audited on bike and on foot	All KSI sites are audited in connection with Merseyside Police. For any new major highway improvements, the relevant road safety audit is undertaken.	N/A	Ongoing

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

12	Ensure all elected members have regular opportunities for road safety training, similar to the carbon literacy opportunities currently available.	To date, elected members were invited to observe virtual road safety Senior Road User sessions and training sessions regarding LTN1/20 technical guidance for active travel which prioritises safety for users. Further training will be offered	N/A	Ongoing
Page 23	Guarantee ongoing interactive consultation/engagement with residents, campaigners and all elected members	The existing consultation process involves publication of notices in the press, display of notices on site, delivery of letters to properties affected, engagement with Ward Members, Party Spokespersons, and various agencies / groups. As part of recent schemes including School Streets we have utilised the councils Have Your Say portal and social media channels and we will continue to adopt this approach. The Active Travel Members working group has been established and will be meeting in January 2022. The existing Active Travel Forum will be relaunched in the Spring with a drive to increase membership and wider stakeholder engagement. The LCR also have established an Active Travel Forum which is open to all residents	N/A	Ongoing
14	Agree a percentage reduction in KSIs and /or collisions/all casualties and have regular updates to committee using an agreed dashboard and standard national comparison data.	Quarterly KSI key performance management results to be reported to Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. Merseyside Road Safety Partnership currently exploring targets in line with new LCR strategy.	N/A	2022/23 Ongoing
15	Officers to work with schools to add signage to junctions where schoolchildren cross, in order to raise awareness among drivers that children are likely to be crossing	This recommendation conflicts with recommendations by the working group to reduce street clutter. Initiatives such as School Streets, Liveable Neighbourhoods, Safer Routes to School consider the wider area and journeys to / from schools.	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	Recommendation not progressed, alternative options ongoing

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

16	Seek all opportunities to secure additional funding and designate officer responsibility	Restructure within the Road Safety Team to create a new Road Safety Strategy Manager post with responsibility for identifying funding streams in partnership with senior managers. Officers working cross directorate to secure funding to support priorities as part of integrated approach to placemaking and regeneration.	Existing Revenue	Ongoing
17	Use all available highways and infrastructure spending with a view to improving road safety as an absolute priority	Officers reported to Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in March 2022 with recommendations as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme for 2022/23, and next 4 years indicative programme, together with evidence-based justification for recommended hierarchy	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	Complete Mar-22
Page 24 18	Lobby Government for additional funding and any necessary powers needed to improve road safety	Officers can support Members with lobbying local changes. For national changes, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority provide opportunities for individual highway authorities to respond to consultations on changes to legislation relating to road safety and invite submissions to bid for specific funding. Council working as part of Mersey Dee Alliance and have submitted bids for funding as part of Fiscal Stimulus Package/Cross Border recovery deal which includes bid for additional funding for high quality active travel infrastructure.	N/A	Ongoing
19	Develop a pipeline of projects that can be brought forward for implementation when funding opportunities arise	Limited resources prevent development of preliminary scheme concepts and optioneering for future projects. We are exploring options to strengthen this area. Officers working cross directorate on this to secure additional funding from the Combined Authority and that pre development of schemes is recognised as a priority at the Combined Authority.	City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	Ongoing
20	Work with partners, including and especially Merseyside Police, on more and better enforcement of road safety	Road Safety Team work closely with partners in Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, identifying key locations for enforcement and through the Joint Agency Group (JAG) meetings. The Community Safety Strategy includes Road Safety as a key strand. Workshops	N/A	Ongoing

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

		for enforcement activity taking place 2023.		
21	Work with Police Crime Commissioner in regard to item 20	PCC attends Merseyside Road Safety Partnership board and existing teams have established links.	N/A	Ongoing
22	Lobby for additional support from the Safer Roads Watch scheme	Wirral Council's road safety team take a leading role in SRW in Wirral. Great progress is being made over 70 volunteers across 11 groups and improvements to streamlined back-office processes, supported by MRSP. Support from local police is increasing.	Existing Revenue & City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement	Complete / Ongoing
Page 25	Deliver further on active travel networks and LTNs with improved consultation of local communities	Officers are currently working with Sustrans and local stakeholders, including schools and residents, to codevelop and design a Liveable Neighbourhood (incorporating a school neighbourhood cluster) in Bebington to develop a business case which could be used to secure future funding	Sustrans	2022/23 - 2023/2024
	Adequately fund our outreach and education activities, as a supplement to speed reduction, engineering for safer roads and better enforcement	Restructure within the Road Safety Team to create a new Road Safety Strategy Manager post with responsibility for identifying funding streams in partnership with senior managers	Existing Revenue	Complete
25	Continue to deliver engagement via our communications team regarding the data showing how walking and cycling benefit local businesses and the local high street.	Promotion of walking and cycling, including the promotion of improvements to infrastructure. Recent coverage includes School Streets, cycle training provision, Eastham cycle way, School Crossing Patrol recruitment etc. Introduction of the Active Travel Hub on public facing Have Your Say website.	N/A	Ongoing

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

26	Increase road safety information on existing council social media channels which already have engaged and large audiences	Continue to raise awareness of road safety on social media accounts. Including School Crossing Patrol recruitment, Safer Roads Watch, School Streets, Brake Road Safety Week, Mind Your Business Project for local employers. Visibility Campaign launched 2021/22 across the borough.	N/A	Ongoing
27	All road safety comms and documents to avoid the use of “accidents” and use more blame neutral terms such as “crash” or “collision”	Officers have been briefed on this and are implementing.	N/A	Complete
Page 26	All council policies and decisions to seek a reduction in car use	All staff requested to complete Climate Emergency training. Council policies to seek a reduction on car use have been incorporated into the Climate Emergency Action Plan with reports to the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	N/A	Ongoing
	29	Promote active travel and awareness of the benefits to health, well-being, air quality, reduced GHG emissions, reduced noise pollution – as well as road safety	All staff requested to complete Climate Emergency training. The new Local Road Safety Plan for Wirral will incorporate safe, sustainable travel and link to local and national policies. Introduction of the Active Travel Hub on public facing Have Your Say website.	N/A
30	Align road safety with our Environment and Climate Emergency Action plan and well as the new LCR Road Safety Strategy	This action is underway. Refer to action 1 and 2	N/A	In Progress 2022/23
31	Work with Public Health and Children’s Services especially schools to achieve road	Restructure within the Road Safety Team to create a new Road Safety Strategy Manager post with responsibility for developing links with colleagues.	Existing Revenue	Ongoing

Appendix A – UPDATE ON ROAD SAFETY WORKSHOP GROUP RECOMMENDATIONS 2023

	safety targets			
32	Fund the additional staff that will likely be required to deliver these actions and save lives.	Restructure within the Road Safety Team to create a new Road Safety Strategy Manager. Addition of two new Team Leaders and the introduction of an externally funded Active Travel Officer.	Existing Revenue & External funding	Complete 2022

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Wirral Road Safety Plan 2023- 2027

Foreword to be included.

Background

Merseyside Road Safety Partnership adopted the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy¹ in November 2022. Wirral's Road Safety Plan sets out how we will translate the Liverpool City Region Strategy into action locally.

Merseyside Road Safety Partnership (MRSP) is a collaboration of Merseyside Police, Merseyside Local Authorities (Wirral, Knowsley, Sefton, Liverpool, and St Helens) Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. This core partnership is supported by National Highways, Driver and Vehicle Standards Agency (DVSA) and Police and Crime Commissioners Office.

The overarching vision for the Liverpool City Region strategy is that it is unacceptable for deaths and serious injury to occur on the transport network. The strategy is underpinned by a Safe Systems model. Within this model, all elements of the road system, including vehicles, infrastructure, speed limits, road users and post-collision care, work together to minimise risks on the network. This is a cross departmental, multi partnership approach to preventing death and serious injury on the road network.

The strategic outcomes for Road Safety in Liverpool City Region are:

- 1) A reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions working to a target of no avoidable collisions by 2040
- 2) Creating the conditions for more people to make safer journeys on foot or by bicycle and enabling more children to walk or cycle to school.
- 3) Contributing to improved air quality and reducing climate changing CO² emissions.

In January 2021 a cross party working group of elected members held several workshops to look at road safety within Wirral. The working group set thirty-two recommendations for council officers to focus on, from the widespread roll out of 20mphs limits and School Streets to working with partners and delivering road safety interventions. These recommendations were accepted as policy by the Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in March 2021.

The recommendations, along with the strategic vision set by Liverpool City Region and actions contained within Wirral's Community Safety Strategy, Wirral's Climate Emergency Action Plan form the basis of this plan.

¹ <https://merseysideroadsafety.org/liverpool-city-region-road-safety-strategy/>

The National Roads Policing Strategy 2022-2025 focuses on 'Policing Our Roads Together', the 4 key pillars of activity are, preventing harm and saving lives, tackling crime, driving technology and innovation, and changing minds. We will continue to support and work in partnership with Merseyside Police on these shared goals.

Travel (by cycle, walking, wheeling or motorised vehicle) on our road network is essential for our everyday lives. An effective and safe transport system is essential to support our communities, for people to access employment and education services, leisure activities and to assist driving economic growth and we need to continue to support the ongoing increase in sustainable and active travel as part of our Climate and Environment Emergency.

Despite improvements there is still much more to be achieved and delivering on the Road Safety Working Groups 32 recommendations and improving road safety with our stakeholders, continues to be an essential priority in Wirral.

As a representative of Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, Wirral Council have an important role, alongside other key agencies to deliver local proposals to improve road safety within the borough.

There is a long-term focus and commitment to road safety across the Liverpool City Region and in Wirral. It is important that we set regular review periods to track progress, collision data, changes in legislation, emerging best practice, availability of resources etc. This road safety plan spans 2023 – 2027 to enable this review to take place. This road safety plan will be continually monitored, the action plan, which details our delivery programme (page 21 onwards) will be updated annually.

Wirral Data

Road traffic collision casualties (of all severities) within Wirral, have been on a decline between 2017 to 2021. There is still a great deal of work to be done nationally, regionally, and locally and the impact on our society cannot be underestimated. The adoption of the Vision Zero Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy sets the continued focus locally.

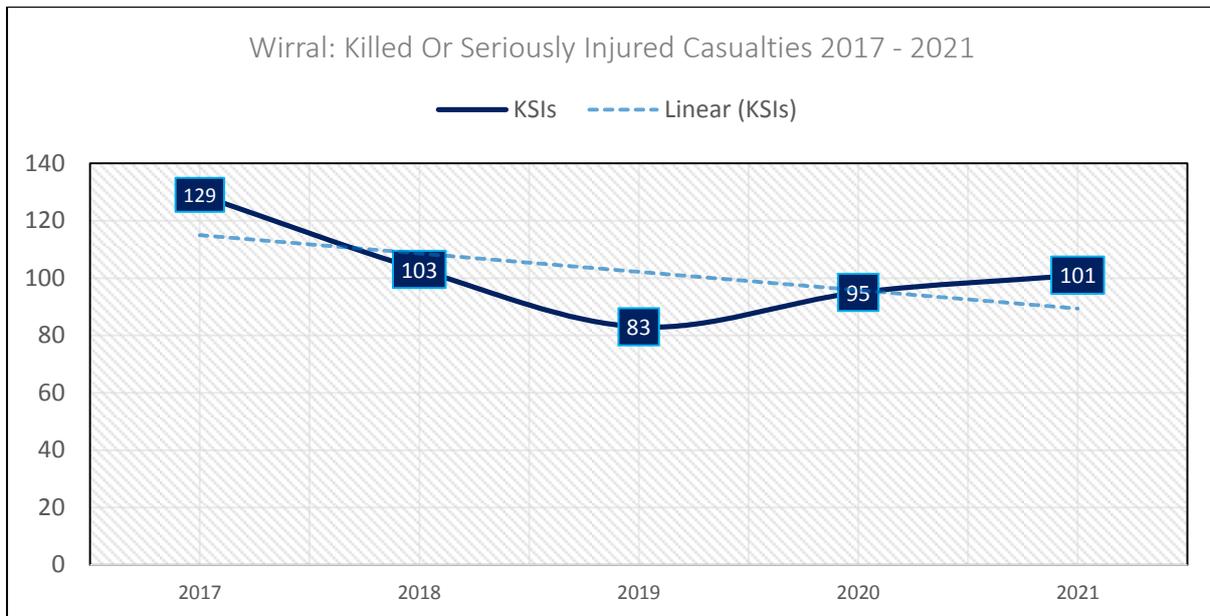


Figure 1: Data provided by Merseyside Road Safety Partnership showing the number of people killed or seriously injured on Wirral's roads between 2017 and 2021

This chart shows the numbers of people killed or seriously injured between 2017 to 2021. The numbers of KSIs had been reducing between 2017 to 2019 and then begin to increase. This plan sets out how we can use the available resources and partnership working to influence this trend.

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) recognises that driving for work is one of the most dangerous things workers will do² and that a third of all road traffic collisions involve someone who is at work at the time. This has significant wider implications on other road users who share the road network.

Research into areas of deprivation and the over representation in collision stats is well reported Nationally³ This needs to be considered within the action plan for road safety. An Equality Impact Assessment is required for this report.

²

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/employer/index.htm#:~:text=Hazards%20that%20can%20cause%20harm,fatigue%20and%20distraction>

³<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-casualties-and-deprivation-factsheet-england/reported-road-casualties-great-britain-casualties-and-deprivation>

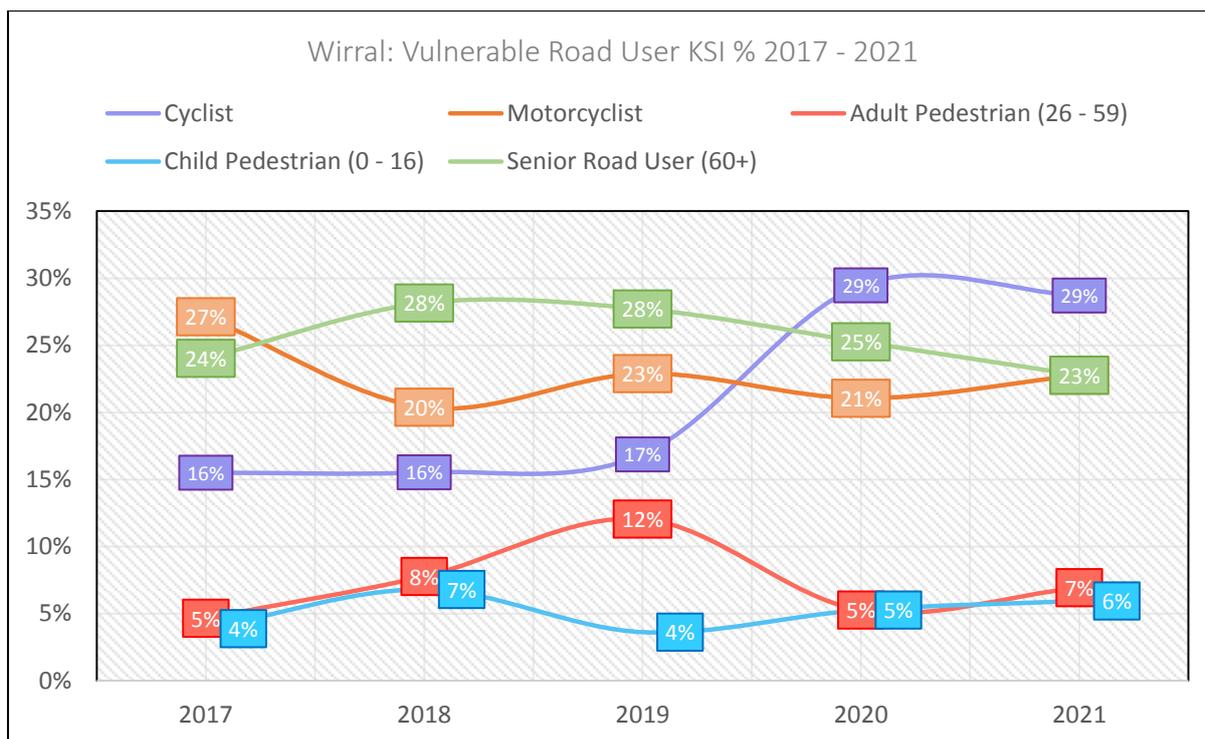


Figure 2: Data provided by Merseyside Road Safety Partnership showing the percentage of road users killed or seriously injured between 2017 and 2021.

Almost a third (29%) of Wirral casualties across 2020 and 2021 were cyclists. The council need to continue to develop engineering, education (for drivers and cyclists) and enforcement measures to improve safety outcomes. There are an increasing number of cyclists on the roads⁴ and this has corresponded with an increase in cyclist KSIs.

This Road Safety Plan details how the council will work with our stakeholders to prevent and reduce collisions in line with the casualty data, using the Safe Systems model and emerging behaviour change models.

⁴ [Walking and cycling statistics, England: 2021 - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/walking-and-cycling-statistics-england-2021).

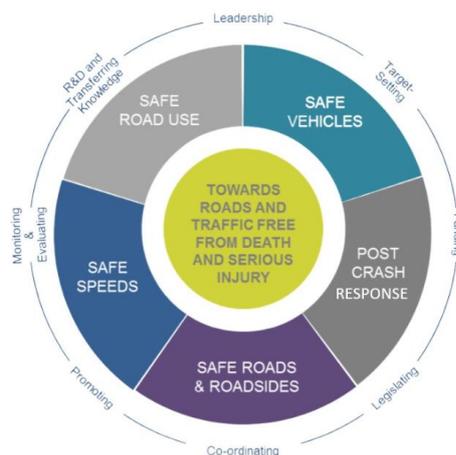
Safe Systems

'The Safe System is an approach to road safety management, based on the principle that our life and health should not be compromised by our need to travel.' Brake Road Safety Charity

The Liverpool City Region (LCR) have made a commitment to Vision Zero, which is based on the key principle that deaths and serious injury are not acceptable on our roads.

Within the Safe System, there are five core pillars which work together to minimise risk:

- 1) Safe road use
- 2) Safe vehicles
- 3) Safe Speeds
- 4) Safe Roads
- 5) Post collision response



Source: Loughborough University Design School Safe System Course, 2017, with PACTS modifications, 2022

Wirral's Road Safety Plan should be read in conjunction with the Liverpool City Region Strategy and follows the framework of the Safe Systems Pillars.

Nationally, best practice in applying Safe Systems approach is ongoing. Wirral Council are involved in these discussions as a member of Road Safety GB. This is a development area nationally, which we are monitoring.

PILLAR 1: SAFE SPEEDS

The speed at which a vehicle is traveling is a key factor in the likelihood of a collision taking place, as well as the severity of the resulting impact (Wegman et al., 2008).

According to estimates, reducing the average speed across the UK's road network by just 2 mph could prevent 200 deaths annually (Taylor et al., 2000). It's important to note that speed is not only a concern for cars, but also for motorbikes, bicycles, electric scooters, and e-bikes. The faster these vehicles move, the greater the risk of a collision and the more severe the consequences are likely to be.

Establishing appropriate speed limits plays a critical role in the Safe Systems Model. Speed is widely recognised as one of the main factors in fatal collisions.

The control of speeds in built up areas, where there are increased interactions between road users, is a priority for Wirral Council. It is important from a road safety perspective and in our approach to increase the numbers of people choosing active modes of transport, such as walking and cycling.

'The speed at which vehicles travel on our roads have a direct impact on the risk and safety of those who share the network. If a pedestrian is hit by a vehicle at 20mph, they are about five times less likely to be killed than if it had been travelling at 30mph. A reduction in speed is fundamental to reducing road danger' Liverpool City Region Strategy

Without enforcement powers, effective management of speed limits is not something we can achieve alone, and a partnership approach is required. We share local intelligence with Merseyside Police via established networks including Joint Agency Group (JAG), Merseyside Road Safety Partnership and Transport Advisory Group (TAG)

Speed Awareness Courses are provided for eligible drivers coordinated by Merseyside Police. This course is an alternative to prosecution, but the focus is on improving drivers' awareness, knowledge and making them safer drivers.

We work closely with our partners in Merseyside Police on the maintenance of static and mobile camera enforcement locations and continue to educate and engage via our communications and education interventions.

There are several technological advances in speed management, including Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA). This in-car safety system aims to increase speed limit compliance. Promotion of this in-car technology and how to use it effectively can be delivered via our education and outreach programmes such as Engage and Mind our Business.

The action plan at the end of this document, captures all activities which contribute towards the Safe Speeds pillar. The activities captured below should not be seen as isolated projects as each intervention influences the other pillars, this is evidenced within the action plan.

20mph Limits

In 2023 we launched an ambitious programme for reducing speeds near most schools, residential areas, and retail areas. The introduction of 20mph speed limits will be delivered in phases across several years, subject to consultation and funding.

The 20mph engagement and communication plan supports the roll out across Wirral. The opportunity for schools, businesses, and members of the community to become champions within their community is an integral part of this campaign and how we work together with stakeholders on improving road safety within their local communities.



Figure 3: Resources to support the roll out of 20mph

Safer Roads Watch

The Safer Roads Watch initiative empowers communities to work alongside us to reduce speeds in their neighbourhoods. To date, we have 11 active Safer Roads Watch Groups in Wirral with a total of 70 Volunteers.

Volunteers are provided with training, support, and equipment to undertake this important role. The road safety team coordinates volunteers, equipment and the roadside operations and has worked with Merseyside Police to streamline the back-office functions, resulting in drivers receiving an information pack about their driving within 3-4 days of the offence. We have worked with Merseyside Police to improve and streamline the back-office functions. This is currently the largest scheme operating across the Liverpool City Region.

This year alone, 500 drivers have been detected speeding by our Safer Roads Watch volunteers. This is up from 350 for same period in 2022 and well on the way to passing last year's total of 750. Of the drivers detected, 1.8% have been detected speeding a second time, potentially early indication of a positive behavioural change in drivers.

Speed indicator devices have been installed on the highway network to support volunteers who are giving up their time to improve road safety in their communities.

Kids Court

Wirral Council, Merseyside Police, local schools work collaboratively to educate drivers on speeding. Junior Travel Ambassadors from Heswall Primary School asked challenging questions to drivers who opted to attend a kid's court. Whilst this intervention does not replace enforcement, the drivers commented about the impact it had on them and how it had made them think about their driver behaviour. It is an example of how partnership working can address road safety concerns in the local community.



Figure 4: Junior Travel Ambassadors from Heswall Primary School question a driver identified by Merseyside Police as speeding.

PILLAR 2: SAFE BEHAVIOUR

Our outreach programmes seek to influence road user behaviour by educating, training, and encouraging road users to use the roads safely.

In 2022, significant changes were made to the Highway Code.⁵ The introduction of the road user hierarchy places the greatest responsibility on larger vehicles, to reduce the danger, or threat that they pose to other road users. The Highways Code is clear about the need for all road users to look after our own safety, and the safety of others. We need to continue to educate road users on these changes.

The Governments Road Safety Statement⁶, a lifetime of road safety, 2019 references a 'lifelong learning approach to road safety'. It describes road safety as a life skill, and the importance of introducing building blocks of knowledge and skills at a young age. Our road safety education programme is blended with active travel and sustainable travel messages to help reduce the reliance on private car.

We receive a growing number of requests for increasing parking restrictions near schools and increased enforcement (Civil Enforcement Officers & via Merseyside Police). The requests are unsustainable and require a longer-term solution which encourages safe, sustainable and active travel in the journey to and from school via education and behaviour programmes. The approach focuses on schools working towards Modeshift Accreditation, an online travel plan toolkit which provides a comprehensive travel plan tool. This has allowed us to work in closer partnership with schools and key agencies on delivering behaviour change programmes to address parking and safety concerns holistically.

Capital funding for schemes such as Safer Routes to Schools, Pedestrian Access Improvements and funding ring fenced for School Streets can address barriers to walking, cycling and scooting. See safe streets for more information.

⁵ <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/the-highway-code-8-changes-you-need-to-know-from-29-january-2022>

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/road-safety-statement-2019-a-lifetime-of-road-safety>



Figure 5: Wirral Council's introduction of 5 and 10 minute walking zone to increase the numbers of people walking, cycling and scooting. Pictured Wirral Council Active Travel Officer, Sustrans Engagement Officer and pupils from Brackenwood Infant Primary School.

Delivery within Educational Settings

The Road Safety Team provides a range of educational input which are developmentally appropriate and linked to the national curriculum.

- Early Years settings are offered our Walkwise pack and continuous provision example materials to help educators introduce the concept of road safety through play and experiential learning.
- Children in Upper Key Stage 2 attend our classroom-based sessions. Here we introduce the critical thinking skills and risk assessment mind-set that they will need to complete independent journeys to and from school. We discuss the increased responsibility they now have and provide them with strategies to stay as safe as possible as a pedestrian, cyclist and whilst travelling in-car.
- Secondary Schools are offered an active travel resource to continue the message of safe active travel once pupils have reached Year 7. The presentation, complete with lesson plan and session notes enables teachers to teach an informed lesson and handle discussion confidently. We also offer sessions for Year 10 pupils relating to peer pressure and passenger behaviour.
- Junior Travel Ambassadors are elected within the school to deliver peer-to-peer behaviour change initiatives and campaigns (active travel promotion,

speeding/parking surveys, writing and visiting residents etc.) The Junior Travel Ambassador scheme gives pupils ownership over their environment and an opportunity to make real improvements for their school community.

- Free cycle training is funded via Department for Transport (DfT) grants with the contract managed by Liverpool City Region. We work closely to ensure that schools are taking up the free places. We will continue to monitor and deliver and ensure it links to wider programmes for maximum benefits e.g., school streets schools, where new infrastructure is installed.
- We continue to deliver Modeshift STARS, a national accreditation scheme that recognises schools who have shown an excellence in promoting cycling, walking, scooting including park and stride. The aim is to reduce private car use on the journey to and from school for the benefits to individuals and the local environment.
- An Active Travel officer post has been created and sits within the road safety team, their primary focus is on delivery of Modeshift STARS and School Streets.
- As part of a commitment to encourage active travel and reduce vehicles on the school run, practical playground-based sessions will be piloted to encourage scoot to and from school or even used in a park and stride approach.
- Promotion and awareness raising of Walk to School Weeks, Brake Road Safety Weeks as well as locally created initiatives such as Bling Your Ride and Choose Your Shoes-days create a fun engaging element and encourage those who can walk, cycle and scoot to school (where distance or competing demands are not an issue). Where suitable we set up Park and Stride sites as an alternative to ensure inclusivity.
- Introduction of a 'parking around schools' toolkit for school to use, with digital assets and physical banners for the school gates.



Figure 6: Banner distributed to local schools to help spread the message about parking in the vicinity of schools

- Transition from Primary to Secondary school is an important time for children as they encounter different risks and challenges in their independence. By proactively and positively approaching this with schools, children and parent / carers could, in some cases, reduce a reliance on private car to secondary school. This is a growing developmental area over the next few years.

- Working in partnership with Merseyside Fire and Rescue Service, learner drivers and new drivers in Years 12 and 13. For this age group, Virtual Reality technology is used as a basis for an immersive educational experience. This is a developmental area. Pupils are encouraged to consider their responsibilities as a driver on themselves and the people who share the roads.

Learning to Drive

Our lifetime learning approach continues when learners are taught to drive. Approved Driving Instructors (ADIS) within the Engage driver training programme undertake enhanced training and attend regular training sessions and seminars. We have created a suite of resources for Driving Instructors to utilise in their lessons which can be accessed via a member's area of a public facing website. Educational input is then delivered by the ADI to the learner, topics include vulnerable road users, speed, peer pressure, driving under the influence, fatigue etc. This scheme is growing and recently Greater Manchester Road Safety Partnership joined the scheme.

Road Safety for Businesses

The Mind Your Business programme has successfully engaged with Wirral businesses over the years, we regularly send newsletters with key campaigns to all registered businesses and invite them to annual event.

Seventy representatives from local businesses attended our latest Mock Trial event. The focus of the session was on changes to the Highway Code and sharing the roads with other road users (including those classed as more vulnerable). Feedback from these events is always very positive and an effective way to impart the latest knowledge and guidance to managers. The importance of a well-managed and communicated road safety policy is communicated to employers can positively influence the way their staff are using the roads. Events like these are funding dependent but allow us to share knowledge across Wirral. This is especially important when we consider the involvement of 'people driving for work' in collisions on the network⁷.

The Council works closely with local businesses to support with education and awareness raising, through theory sessions, vehicle maintenance and lunch time engagement with staff. We need to continue to educate drivers on sharing the road with other road users and promote the take up of safe, active travel. This is a key development area for us over the next few years to refresh our Mind Your Business project and the delivery mechanisms.

7

<https://www.hse.gov.uk/roadsafety/employer/index.htm#:~:text=Hazards%20that%20can%20cause%20harm,fatigue%20and%20distraction>



Figure 7 Mock Trial with local businesses in 2023

Bikesafe

Merseyside BikeSafe is designed to improve rider skills and help lower the number of motorcycle rider casualties. Additional training and assessment can reduce the risk of being involved in a collision and help riders to become safer and more competent. This collaborative approach is delivered by Merseyside Police, Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) and the Royal Society for the Prevention of Accidents (ROSPA). Wirral Council's Road Safety team provide the venue and clerical running of the programme, including the finances to ensure the programme continues to be delivered effectively.

Road Safety for Senior Road Users

Drive Safely for Longer was a flagship driver assessment initiative for drivers aged 60+. Wirral Council ran the administration for the Liverpool City Region programme until funding ceased. We delivered driving assessments for over 2500 drivers across the region, which included checks for eyesight, driving document and vehicles (road worthiness). We are exploring opportunities to progress the scheme.

Safely for Longer delivers interactive workshops for all road users aged 60+ covering road safety topics such as: sharing the roads with cyclists and pedestrians, changes to the highway code, driving whilst impaired, speeding, fatigue. We also support with considering a plan for driving retirement, so this can be proactively managed. Coping strategies such as using their bus pass to travel

(where suitable) maintaining health and fitness which is critical for safer drivers and walking and cycling. This programme continues to be delivered.

Cycle Training

Cycle training is made available via the Liverpool City Region for adults and for families. We regularly promote this at community events, through Mind Your Business programme and via social media.

Close pass engagement with members of the public, raises the awareness of the importance of leaving enough space for cyclists, when overtaking.

Communications and Engagement

Wirral council work on national awareness campaigns and share campaign calendars with Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, this allows us to undertake targeted enforcement campaigns, education campaigns.

In 2023, Wirral council invited Project EDWARD (Every Day Without A Road Death) who platform good practice in road safety in the UK to visit our Safer Roads Watch Scheme and see the operation in practice. We also coordinate local activity with local police teams and central Roads Policing Teams. Other campaigns include National Highways, Department for Transport, Brake Road Safety Week, Road Safety Great Britain etc.

Enforcement for safe behaviours

It is acknowledged that in a perfect world, we would not need to enforce incidents of dangerous or inconsiderate parking. However, enforcement is required to help create safer environments for people to walk, cycle or scoot. Some drivers make poor decisions which create risks for other road users and deter people from making a shift away from the private car.

Whilst all road users should abide by current UK legislation and the advice provided within the Highway Code, we also recognise that some individuals may be prosecuted where their driving falls short of what is legally acceptable. Wirral council can enforce contraventions of waiting, loading and parking restrictions however many elements of legislation rely on other bodies for effective enforcement.

In 2023, an application was made to the Secretary of State for Wirral council to have powers to enforce moving traffic offences at Greenleas Primary School, the first School Street launched in Wirral.

We will continue to work very closely with our partners especially Merseyside Police and assist in the detection of road crime. We support the use of driver education courses where such cases meet the criteria, as an alternative to formal prosecutions – as this provides a significant opportunity to re-educate and influence future driving behaviour on our roads.

The action plan at the end of this document, captures all activities which contribute towards the Safe Behaviours pillar, they should not be seen as isolated projects as each intervention influences the other pillars, this is evidenced within the action plan.

PILLAR 3: SAFE VEHICLES

The Safer Vehicles pillar looks to reduce road danger by focusing on vehicles which present the greatest risk on our roads. The Liverpool City Region Strategy references a report from the University College London (UCL) Centre for Transport Studies⁸, where 1 in 3 road deaths involve someone driving for work. The study estimates that 39% of pedestrians killed were hit by a working driver.

Mind Your Business is a project we have delivered within Wirral for several years (see safe Behaviours). The project enables us to raise important issues in relation to vehicles but also the maintenance and roadworthiness of vehicles in connection with their business.

Merseyside Police undertake roadside stops on vehicles on the network and in addition Wirral Council's Road Safety Team coordinate operations on the network with Merseyside Police and the DVSA. These operations involve stopping vehicles and engaging with the drivers, inspecting vehicles and driver documents. These operations set the expectation of road worthy vehicles.

A development area is to promote the Euro NCAP safety ratings where higher star rated vehicles have an important role in lowering the risk of tragedy if a collision occurs. We will also promote Intelligent Speed Assistance (ISA) and other developments in technology to drivers across Wirral.

The action plan at the end of this document, captures all activities which contribute towards the Safe Behaviours pillar, they should not be seen as isolated projects as each intervention influences the other pillars, this is evidenced within the action plan.



Figure 8: Project report produced by our funders Road Safety Trust for a 2-year educational project for van and taxi drivers.

⁸ https://www.ucl.ac.uk/civil-environmental-geomatic-engineering/sites/civil-environmental-geomatic-engineering/files/final_report_ward_christie_walton_dec_2020.pdf

PILLAR 4: SAFE STREETS

Each of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) partner authorities is required by the LCR to develop their own capital programme which, when combined, form a Liverpool City Region wide Implementation Plan.

Demand for road safety improvements is high and the Council continues to receive numerous requests for improvements to the transport network from the members of public, Council Members and other stakeholders. Requests cover a wide range of measures from major highway improvements, traffic calming, pedestrian crossings, reduced speed limits, signage, footway provision and other road safety measures. Such requests are assessed based on investigations into road casualty data and also in line with the priorities and recommendations identified by the Council's Road Safety Working Group.

The effective delivery of the council's City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement CRSTS programme contributes to the following strategic objectives of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy outcomes:

- A reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions working to a target of no avoidable collisions by 2040;
- Creating the conditions for more people to make safer journeys on foot or by bicycle and enabling more children to walk and cycle to school; and
- Contributing to improved air quality and reducing climate changing CO2 emissions

At the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee on the 14 March 2023, the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan (CATP) programme for 2023/24 as well as the indicative recommended CRSTS CATP programme for 2024-2027 was approved. In addition to larger scale projects, funding has been identified for Safer Routes to Schools, Pedestrian Access Improvements and future School Streets funding.

School Streets have been a key development area for the Council over the last couple of years. With three schemes now permanent, we have an additional three schemes in the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order phase, for a period of 18 months. These schemes are supported by our education programme, as detailed in Safe Behaviours pillar and our Active Travel Officer. There is a demand to grow the School Streets programme and this is dependent on funding and our application to the Secretary of State for enforcement powers.

Officers are currently working with Sustrans and local stakeholders, including schools and residents, to codevelop and design a Liveable Neighbourhood (incorporating a school neighbourhood cluster) in Bebington to develop a business case which could be used to secure future funding.

Please refer to the section on Safe Speeds as this is a key element of Safe Streets.

The Road Safety Working Groups made several recommendations which relate to the Safe Streets pillar. These recommendations continue to be developed. The

action plan at the end of this document, captures all activities which contribute towards the Safe Streets pillar, they should not be seen as isolated projects as each intervention influences the other pillars, this is evidenced within the action plan.

PILLAR 5: POST COLLISION RESPONSE

It is acknowledged that post-collision care is an integral part of the Safe System. This is largely down to the individual's best opportunity for recovery if they receive medical treatment. In addition, ongoing physical and psychological support for the individuals and those who have also been affected.

Through Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, we work closely with organisations such as RoadPeace and Aftermath.

In addition to ongoing data analysis on collisions, processes are in place to exchange vital information between Wirral Council and Merseyside Police in the event of a fatal collision.

The promotion of technology such as What 3 Words⁹ could assist the public in being able to guide emergency services to the site of any collision and reduce the delays. What 3 Words is an easy way to identify precise locations, as every 3m square has been given a unique combination of three words.

Programmes such as BikeSafe, help educate riders on how to assist injured riders if they are involved in a collision and help with survivability.

The action plan at the end of this document, captures all activities which contribute towards the Post Collision Response pillar, they should not be seen as isolated projects as each intervention influences the other pillars, this is evidenced within the action plan.

⁹ <https://what3words.com/pretty.needed.chill>

Action Plan

The Road Safety Delivery Plan will be renewed and refreshed annually.

For each action, the corresponding Safe System pillar has been identified to ensure that work is ongoing across the model and this is always being reviewed in line with best practice and emerging technologies and behaviour change models.

- 1) Safe road use
- 2) Safe vehicles
- 3) Safe Speeds
- 4) Safe Roads
- 5) Post collision response

Ref	Wirral Road Safety Plan 2023-2024	Detail	Safe Speeds	Safe Streets	Safe Vehicles	Safe Behaviour	Post Collision
1	Pre-School Education support	Support / Resources for preschool pupils to set foundation knowledge 'skills for life'					
2	School Based Education Programme	Safe Active Travel programmes delivered within educational setting (Year 5/6, Year 7, Year 12 &13)					
3	Tackling parking and poor driver behaviour around schools	At least one school is patrolled by a Civil Enforcement Officer and /or is visited by the CCTV camera enforcement vehicle daily am and pm. Merseyside Police regularly support and attend schools. Links to behaviour change work (Actions 2,4,5,6,7) to break the cycle of car use / poor driving through engagement / education Collaborative intelligence events with Merseyside Police, NSL for improved outcomes at delivery level					
4	Spotlight on Schools: Enforcement & Interventions	Partnership Sessions coordinated by Road Safety Team with Civil Enforcement Officers and Merseyside Police. Linked to Action 3					
5	Modeshift STARS	Support schools with accreditation process, delivery of activities and interventions tailor made to the school linked to actions 1-12					
6	Scooting Stars	Develop pilot initiative for Primary Schools to promote the benefits of scooting to/from school in favour of private car. Social value funding provided by existing council enforcement agent and parking enforcement contractors.					
7	Junior Travel Ambassadors	Pupils deliver peer to peer education on safe, active travel. Supported by Council road safety team, solutions tailored to their school					

8	Coordination of Cycle training within schools	Coordinating and monitoring take up of Bikeability cycle training to ensure all schools are offered free cycle training and it links to wider programmes e.g., school streets schools, where new infrastructure is installed.					
9	Continue pilot of Own the Ride	Enhanced training for secondary school pupils with a theory session and practical element.					
10	Comms & campaign calendar schools	Road safety & Active Travel comms calendar forms the basis for promotional days, encouragement and campaign awareness for schools includes Bike / Walk to school initiatives, Car Free Days, Road Safety Weeks etc					
11	School Crossing Patrol Service	Management of the school crossing patrol service encouraging safe active travel on journey to and from school					
12	Kids Court activities	Linked to actions 2 & 3, Kids Court activities within targeted schools and partners.					
11	Transition Project development	Transition from Primary to Secondary school is an important time for children as they encounter different risks and challenges in their independence. Proactively and positively approaching this with schools, children and parent / carers could, in some cases, reduce a reliance on private car to secondary school					
12	School Streets	Continue to support 3 permanent School Street Schemes. 3 Schools still in the Experimental Traffic Regulation Order phase. Future funding has been identified within the indicative City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement programme for 2024/27 (subject to enforcement powers, funding for Active Travel Officer & Modeshift STARS)					
13	Engage Young Driver Programme	Driving Instructors within the engage driver training programme undertake enhanced training and attend regular training sessions and seminars. They pass these educational inputs to learners in-car. Topics include vulnerable road users, speed, peer pressure, driving under the influence, fatigue etc.					

14	Mind Your Business Programme	Support and resources for local businesses to educate and collaborate on road safety responsibilities. Review and refresh current scheme					
15	Bikesafe (motorcyclists)	Merseyside BikeSafe is designed to improve rider skills and help lower the number of motorcycle rider casualties. Continue to provide support and partnership working and promotion.					
16	Safer for Longer programme (60+)	Interactive workshops for all road users aged 60+					
17	Cycle Training for Adults	Coordinating and monitoring take up of Bikeability cycle training linked to wider programmes, education programmes targeting the key risks as identified in the collision data through all outreach programmes, including via businesses, senior road user programmes etc					
18	Introduction of widespread 20mph limits	Roll out of comms and engagement plan. Phase 1 implementation stage 15 areas in 2022/23 with an expected completion date Summer 2023. Phase 2: Funding approved CRSTS programme for 2023/24. Public consultation is set to begin in Summer 2023.					
19	Partnership development work with stakeholders	Improving road safety in Wirral is a partnership approach with key stakeholders. From data-sharing to collaboration in education, training and enforcement. Continual development of partnership via Merseyside Road Safety Partnership, JAG etc					
20	Collision Data analysis	National and regional data analysed via Merseyside Road Safety Partnership. Looking at emerging trends, enforcement, and the relationship between areas of deprivation and road traffic collisions.					
21	Safe Systems Best Practice	Ensure up to date knowledge on development area and reflect any significant information within the annual action plan.					
22	Maintenance of camera sites (static and mobile) to support speed enforcement	Helping to reduce speed across the borough with sites maintained					

23	Minibus Driver Training Programme	Education programme for staff transporting children and young people within the borough					
24	Safer Roads Watch Programme	The Safer Roads Watch initiative empowers communities to work alongside us to reduce speeds in their neighbourhoods. Continue the support, provision of resources, coordination, and monitoring to grow the scheme in Wirral.					
25	Community engagement programme (Dr Bike, Bike marking, Car Free Day etc with partners)	Opportunities and outreach safe, active travel in community settings to address key casualty groups.					
26	Continual communications and marketing programmes with key stakeholders	Topics include, but not limited to: messaging around Highway Code, 20MPH roll out, Close Pass, Visibility, EuroNCAP, What 3 Words, skills and training etc					
27	Seek and align funding opportunities	Seek ongoing funding and make good use of funding to direct capital schemes and revenue activity					
28	CRSTS programme for 2023/24 Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	Reported to ECET Committee 14 March 2023, item 72. Local Safety Schemes, Active Travel improvements and Traffic signal and pedestrian facility improvements. Modeshift STARS and Schools education programme to feed into Safer Routes to School funding and Pedestrian Access Improvements					
29	Indicative recommended CRSTS CATP programme for 2024-2027.	Reported to ECET Committee 14 March 2023, item 72. The effective delivery of the council's CRSTS CATP programme contributes to the following strategic objectives of the Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy outcomes:					
30	By Ours Project Low Traffic Neighbourhood	Sustrans lead on public consultation and initial concepts for Bebington By Ours.					
31	Civil parking enforcement	Helping to ensure compliance for parking related issues.					

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ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

REPORT TITLE:	FESTIVE DISPLAY POLICY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to introduce a new policy for festive display permits, which aims to streamline and standardise the process while minimising potential liability and risks to the Council.

This report deals with the key aspects of the proposed policy, its benefits, and the mechanisms through which it will address existing challenges and enhance the Council's capacity to manage festive displays effectively. For proportionality, this report will deal only with any material changes to the current guidance/application processes.

The recommendation supports the Wirral Plan priority 'Safe and Vibrant Communities': 'Working for safe and vibrant communities where our residents feel safe, and are proud to live and raise their families'.

This matter affects all wards within the borough. The matter is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

1. Approve the recommended new Festive Display Policy (policy document provided in Appendix 1).

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 Festive displays hold an integral place in Wirral's communities, bringing joy and vibrancy during the celebratory seasons. However, the increasing complexity and scale of such displays necessitate a comprehensive and transparent approach in managing them. By establishing a clear and well-defined policy, the Council reaffirms its commitment to facilitating festive displays in Wirral while upholding the principles of responsible governance and prudent risk management.
- 1.2 The proposed policy will provide a structured framework that ensures due diligence, adherence to relevant guidance, and compliance with legislative requirements during the evaluation and approval of festive display permit applications. The proposed policy not only aligns with the Council's practices and best industry standards but also offers a clear rationale for decision-making, promoting fairness, consistency, and transparency in the Council's interactions with applicants and the public.
- 1.3 The management of festive displays by the Council is a discretionary service and there is currently no formalised or agreed policy for how the Council manages festive display applications and installations. Although the operation of festive displays is governed through broad guidance and legislation (notably the Section 171 - Highways Act 1980), the absence of a formalised policy has led to inconsistencies in how they are administered and managed across the borough. This has led to inefficiencies, ad-hoc and reactive processes, and poor risk and issue management, often resulting in extra cost to the Council.
- 1.4 In the last 10 years, the number of regular applications for festive displays has risen from 10 to 18 (80% increase), whilst the available officer resource within the Council's street lighting team responsible for managing them has decreased significantly.
- 1.5 In addition to the number of festive display applications, the scale of each display has increased, as has the operating period (much earlier and beyond the 'festive' season). Despite broad efficiencies in lighting equipment and technologies over the last 10 years, the total kilowatt hour usage across all displays has increased significantly. In some cases, displays have seen a 600% increase in energy usage over this period.
- 1.6 These increases have placed pressure on the street lighting team in terms of administering, managing, and monitoring the installations at a time when resources are limited. The approval of a festive display policy will

allow for better resource management and allocation to facilitate robust processes.

- 1.7 The proposed policy will enable the operational service to allocate its limited resources and plan effectively, whilst recouping some of the operational costs. This way, festive displays can be built into business-as-usual resource allocation, and this will limit any risks associated with current processes. In addition, the policy is fair and clear on non-compliance and approval of this policy will give the service greater powers for enforcement where necessary.
- 1.8 The policy will serve to improve transparency of process and decision making for display organisers and gives clear and defined policy principles which they will have to adhere to. A standardised approach will give parity across all groups on how they are assessed and managed by the Council.
- 1.9 The recommended policy (as set out in Appendix 1) will bring together national guidance and legislation governing festive displays and introduce new local policy principles. This option represents a balance between managing Council resources and supporting organisers with their festive displays. Material policy content includes:
 - Introduction of 50% payment by festive display community groups towards the Council's energy usage costs.
 - Introduction of a submission deadline and cut off.
 - Limited festive display sizes/scale.
 - Defined operating period.
 - Transparent policy on non-compliance and enforcement.

2 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

2.1 Do nothing

2.2 This option would see the service continue 'as is' in the way it manages festive display permits. The absence of a formalised policy means the service will continue to operate in an ad-hoc and inefficient manner, incurring costs and increasing risk associated with assessing applications and inspecting installations. It is also noted that the approach to submissions and quality of information supplied by display organisers is varied, increasing time taken to assess applications.

2.3 Increased cost recovery

2.4 This option introduces all of the policy principles as in the recommended option; however this policy would introduce further measures, including:

- Being 100% responsible for their energy costs and administration. This option would require display organisers to provide the details of a 'Meter Point Administration Number' (MPAN) on their application. This is applied for directly to the energy provider. This is used to meter electric usage of displays on an 'unmetered' supply. This would allow energy usage for each display to be measured and billed. Organisers would pay the energy provider directly.
- Limiting the total number of displays across the borough to reduce administration costs.

3 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

3.1 Application Process

If approved by the Council, festive displays are provided and installed by local community groups at their own cost, usually financed by local fundraising activities during the summer preceding the festive period. The Council has a duty to assess festive display applications in line with prevailing guidance and legislation to ensure they are fit for purpose, legal, and safe. As the displays are affixed to Council owned street lighting columns, the Council retains liability as the permitting authority. Each display also requires an inspection by the Council to ensure that the displays represent what was issued under the permit, adhere to legislation and best practice, and that they are safe. In the absence of a policy, current processes allow for sporadic submissions, ad-hoc processes and unforeseen pressures on resource. Limited officer resource to administer,

manage and monitor these installations increases such risk but a standardised policy would provide the required mitigation by defining and limiting the submission date. This would allow the service to forecast and adequately resource this process during this known period and build this in as part of business as usual.

3.2 Limit Display Sizes and Operating Periods

3.3 Wirral Council has declared a Climate Emergency. It has been observed over the last 10 years that the scale of festive displays has increased as has the energy consumption. In addition, displays are now operating long before and beyond the festive period, with some displays present throughout the year. This has also increased the time it takes to assess and inspect each application, placing a prolonged pressure on the street lighting team as well as the increased energy consumption and cost.

3.4 The recommended policy will limit display sizes to a baseline of what each operator has previously applied for (their last full application). For new displays, a proportionate assessment and judgement will be made in line with guidance, legislation, and available resource. The policy will also limit the operating period to the festive period, being the end of November to the end of the first week in the following January, after which installations will be removed from Council property.

3.5 The Council also advocates for the use of smart technologies that allow for festive displays to be switched off or dimmed during the day to reduce day burning hours.

3.6 This will serve to reduce the operating pressure on the street lighting team to a defined period but will also limit energy consumption resulting from festive displays.

3.7 Financial

3.8 The Council currently meets 100% of the energy cost for festive display installations as well as unforeseen costs associated with Council intervention where there is no choice (i.e. removal of equipment). In addition, the Council incur costs with administrating, inspecting, and monitoring each display. To recoup some of this cost at a time when they Council is facing unprecedented financial difficulty, this policy proposes that operators contribute 50% of their energy costs of their displays.

3.9 This will be calculated using information that is already required for a festive display application. The displays are essentially 'plugged into' the Council's street lighting assets via an 'unmetered supply' and the Council

is required to calculate the energy costs for each individual display using the information provided by installers on the type, power etc. of equipment included in the display and the prevailing energy price so that the Council can make an annual return to the energy provider comprising all energy usage and thus price owed. Under the recommended policy officers will calculate the cost attributable to the specific display applied for, at source, using the current energy price tariff and assess what the 50% contribution will be. As a guide, the average energy cost per display in 22/23 was £880, so a 50% contribution would be £440. However, this is purely indicative, as energy usage and costs for 22/23 ranged from less than £100 to over several thousand for some of the larger displays.

3.10 Permits will only be issued once full payment has been made.

3.11 Enforcement

3.12 Non-compliance with legislation or the terms of a permit mean the Council sometimes has no choice but to intervene. For example, where installations have not been removed once the permitted period has passed or non-permitted installations are erected. Historically, enforcement action has been disparate and open to challenge in the absence of a formalise or agreed policy. A policy would give weight and justification for any decision to take enforcement action against non-compliance, supported by member approval.

4 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The implementation of a festive display policy presents an opportunity to recoup a proportion of the cost incurred by the Council for energy costs. The Council will still bear the cost of 50% energy as well as costs associated with the management, monitoring and inspection of displays.

4.2 The total cost the Council for festive display energy in 2022/23 was approximately £17,600 so, indicatively, if display installations and tariffs remained unchanged, approximately £8,800 in revenue savings could be accrued under the recommended policy in future years.

5 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Section 178 of the Highways Act 1980 enables the Highway Authority (Wirral Council) to control the erection of apparatus on or over the

highway, including seasonal decorations, by way of a permit. This policy sets out how consent can be obtained, the standards that must be met and the general conditions that will apply for any prospective organisers looking to install festive displays within the public highway in Wirral.

- 5.2 The delivery of festive displays are governed by national legislation and guidance relating to objects on the highways, health and safety regulations, obtaining necessary permissions permits, ensuring electrical safety, addressing accessibility and environmental concerns. Liability for accidents, public disturbance, and environmental impact are addressed in the festive display policy.

6 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The resource requirements to implement a new festive display policy will be minimal as it serves to streamline and improve an already existing process. Additional resource will be required to support organisation pre-implementation, and this will be supported by the Neighbourhoods Engagement team.
- 6.2 I.T. support will be required to develop a new landing page for festive display information and signposting for new payments.

7 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Managing risk is a central theme of the 'Well-managed Highway Infrastructure: A Code of Practice'. Highways Operational Services manages its street lighting assets in line with this risk-based approach as outlined in the Council's Highways Infrastructure and Asset Management Strategy. This aims to identify likely risks that will prevent the Council in achieving its objectives and providing a proportionate response to mitigate or reduce its impact.
- 7.2 The recommended policy aims to address the risks surrounding the installation of festive displays on Council owned assets (street lighting), ensuring a robust and standardised process is delivered to assess, inspect, manage and monitor any operation on street lighting assets. This includes liability risks (e.g. injury or damage), financial risk associated with unforeseen costs or fines, and operational risk associated with unplanned works and lack of resources.

8 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 To support the development of a festive display policy, the service facilitated a focus group on 12 July 2023 with festive display organisers from each of the borough's four parliamentary constituencies; with four groups invited and three attending. The aim of the focus groups was to:

- Give groups an opportunity to tell us why they operate festive displays.
- To discuss what works well and what could be improved in the relationship/interface between festive display groups and the Council.
- To discuss policy proposal ideas and gather feedback.
- To give groups a chance to give any other feedback on their experiences and thoughts around festive displays.

8.2 Key takeaways from the focus group include:

- Need to improve group/Council interface with better response and potentially a dedicated point of contact.
- Groups share limited resource to install displays so need some flexibility in period to erect installations.
- Groups receptive to a deadline for application submission
- Groups receptive to contributing 50% energy costs, however they would not welcome paying 100% energy costs or liaising directly with an energy supplier as this would create additional resource burdens and would push some groups to walk away.
- Groups would like a one-stop-shop landing page on the Council website with all festive display permit resources available.
- Groups would welcome a standardised process.
- Groups receptive to limiting display sizes to previous years and the display period, with sufficient time allowed to remove installations.
- Groups would like the option to request display size increases after a certain number of years.
- Groups approached the application for festive displays differently and their knowledge of requirements differed in some areas.

8.3 Energy Costs

- 8.4 One of the key items for discussion was the proposal for organisers to pay 100% of their energy costs and to administer the payment directly with an energy provider. There is a precedent amongst other Councils (e.g. Cheshire West and Chester) to require organisers to apply for their own 'Meter Point Administration Number' (MPAN) which would allow for the displays to be metered and measured by the provider, with each group responsible for paying the energy provider directly for what they use. The focus group expressed that this would not be acceptable and would likely push some groups not to deliver festive displays owing to the additional administrative burden.

8.5 Pre-Implementation

- 8.6 The Council has also committed to offering a pre-implementation workshop with any festive display organisers ahead of any new policy being brought forward. These will take place in spring 2024.

9 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 The equalities impact assessment for this report can be found here: <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The festive display policy aims to address climate implications through minimising energy usage through limiting display sizes and operating this period. The Council also encourages the use of smart technologies that will reduce the occurrence of daytime burning of festive displays.

11 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

- 11.1 Festive displays can strongly support community wealth by stimulating local businesses, artisans, and tourism through increased foot traffic and festive events. Collaborative partnerships for display creation foster community cohesion, while temporary job opportunities arise during installation and maintenance. Festive displays also promote community

identity and pride, encouraging residents to take an active role in their area's appearance. This policy will support the continued delivery of festive display and, when strategically approached, amplify economic growth, enhance social bonds, and contribute to community well-being.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Festive Display Policy & Application Criteria 2023-24

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Highways Act 1980
Wirral Council Climate Emergency Action Plan
Highways Infrastructure and Asset Management Strategy 2020

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee in accordance with section (b) of its Terms of Reference, in relation to all highways matters and as highway authority, street authority, bridge authority, including but not limited to public open spaces, street furniture on the highway and open spaces or parts of open spaces immediately adjacent to the highway.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Na	na

FESTIVE DISPLAY POLICY & APPLICATION CRITERIA 2023

INTRODUCTION

Policy Objective

Wirral Council supports for the provision of festive displays in the borough, both to encourage community and commercial activity in our town and villages centres during the festive season.

Section 178 of the Highways Act 1980 enables the Highway Authority (Wirral Council) to control the erection of apparatus on or over the highway, including seasonal decorations, by way of a permit. This policy sets out how consent can be obtained, the standards that must be met and the general conditions that will apply for any prospective organisers looking to install festive displays within the public highway in Wirral.

Guidance Notes for Festive Display Organisers and Contractors

General

No decorations, cables, supports or other attachments are to be fitted to Wirral Council apparatus (e.g. lighting columns) without the prior written consent of the Council. Such consent will be in the form of a permit following a successful application.

A new application will be submitted each year containing all required information. Previous organisers should not use a duplicate or copy of a previous application as this may result in refusal or delay of your application.

In certain cases, the Council may grant a permit for up to three years for established and experienced festive display organisers, subject to specific terms and conditions (e.g. annual submission of electrical testing and integrity reports) and **no change** to the festive display installation over the permit period. Organisers will have to tick this option on their application.

All associated costs for the equipment purchase, installation/erection, maintenance, and removal of approved displays and/or plant, equipment and Traffic Management requirements are the sole responsibility of the festive display organiser. Wirral Council will not be obliged to reimburse any cost element for any display. Any costs incurred by Wirral Council due to non-compliance of our permit conditions will be recharged to the display organiser.

Operating Costs and Supply

Wirral Council will meet 50% the cost of energy associated with organised festive displays. Festive display organisers will be responsible for the other 50% of the energy costs associated with their displays.

Energy costs will be calculated using the information submitted by the applicant on the equipment to be installed during that season and the operating period, days and hours for each display. A total kilowatt hour (KWh) usage will be determined for each display and this will be multiplied by the Council's current per unit energy cost. 50% of this will then be charged to the display organisers. Approved application permits will not be released before this payment has been made in full.

Payments will be accepted online using the Council's 'Make a Payment' function, made for a 'Highway Permit'. [Make a payment | wirral.gov.uk](https://www.wirral.gov.uk)

Wirral Council may have to install a termination unit within the column to accommodate controls for additional supplies (this is a chargeable service).

Contingency

It is the sole responsibility of the organiser to secure sufficient contingent budget so as to address any unforeseen risks or issues. For example, any remedial work due to failed installations or health and safety risks.

Wirral Council will not be responsible for any cost relating to the display and, in any event where the Council has no choice but to intervene, all costs will be recharged to the display organiser.

Operating Period

All displays shall be **installed no earlier than the first week of October** and energised **no earlier than the last weekend of November**. Displays are to be **de-energised by the second week of January** and completely removed from Council property **no later than the second week of February** (at the organisers expense). Leaving any fixings or structures of the festive display up throughout the year is not permitted.

Where practicable, organisers should ensure displays will not be energised during the day (“day burn”). The Council considers the use of smart technology that allows for displays to be switched off during the day as best practice.

Failure to adhere to this operational period and guidance may result in Council intervention with any costs incurred recharged to the display organiser. Where displays have to be removed by the Council, they will be retained in storage and only made available for collection once the cost of this work has been met by the display organiser.

Fixings and Attachments

- No attachments are to be made to any bracket arm or extension fitted to a lighting column
- Holes must not be drilled into any lighting columns
- The Organiser will be held responsible for any damage to the painted finish or galvanising of lighting columns
- No overhead spans above the highway are to be used without the prior written consent of the Council. Such consent will be in the form of a permit.
 - Applications to use a new overhead span or an existing overhead span must be supported by appropriate test/examination certificates for each anchorage point.

Where a permit is granted to use the street-lighting electrical supply, this shall only be done by connecting a 16A “Commando” plug into an existing matching socket on a column. The connection shall only be used to supply the single festive feature mounted on that column. The use of adaptors or other arrangements to supply any light or feature other than that on the supporting column is strictly prohibited. If no existing socket is available, the organiser may request, through the application, additional sockets to be installed. If approved, the Council will use their own supplier to install the socket (this is a chargeable service).

Size of Displays

Due to the increase in number of festive display organisations and installations, the Council will limit the size and scale of festive displays under this policy.

The baseline for this limit will be the organisations previous years application. This means display organisers cannot add any additional installations above and beyond their previous application.

For new organisations or festive displays in new locations, the Council will make a reasonable and proportionate judgement on the size of the display within that application based on multiple factors, including:

- Organisers history and experience
- Size of the display in context to the location, setting and its environment
- Health and safety
- Risk management
- Existing street lighting infrastructure, and
- Available resource and capacity to administer, inspect, manage and enforce the festive display

Safe Clearances

No decoration or support shall project over the road or within 0.5 metres of the kerb and at a height of less than 5.8 metres above the road surface. At least 2.5 metres headroom shall be maintained over any pedestrian area.

Pedestrian areas that are accessed by emergency services or delivery vehicles shall maintain a clearance of 5.8 metres above the road surface.

Electrical Requirements

It is a legal requirement that everyone undertaking electrical work is competent to undertake the works required and does not cause any danger to themselves or others. If you employ staff (including contractors) to carry out works beyond their level of knowledge and expertise, then you may be liable for any damage or danger that occurs as a result.

Only suitably qualified persons shall be allowed to remove the access covers from lighting columns for the purpose of operating the Double Pole Isolator in the base compartment.

The maximum rating of BS88 fuse to be fitted in the fuse way protecting the decoration socket is 6 Amp. The removal or insertion of the main fuse from the cut-out shall only be carried out by a Competent Person having the correct level of G39/1 authorisation (Scottish Power ERG39 Certificate).

Where the Contractor does not have persons approved to the correct level of G39/1, the removal or insertion of the main fuse from the cut-out shall only be carried out by the Council's lighting team. The cost of this work will be charged to the Organiser.

Electrical supplies shall only be taken from the external socket IP66 socket provided.

Within 5 working days of the festive displays being energised a copy of the Electrical Test Certificate or Portable Appliance Test (PAT) for each circuit from each socket shall be sent to the Council at festivedisplays@wirral.gov.uk. This is the responsibility of the display organiser.

Insurance

Any organisers of festive displays within the public highway must indemnify Wirral Council against any claim for loss, injury or damage whether to persons or property or both in any way caused by or connected with their installation. Any applicant must demonstrate evidence of insurance cover against third party claims to give cover up to £5,000,000 for the above purpose.

Maintenance Requirements

Organisers of festive displays must maintain their decorations in good repair at their own expense.

Organisers must also arrange for a daily visual inspection of their decorations to ensure that they are safe and have not been damaged. A log must be kept of these inspections, a copy of which can be requested at any time from the Council.

Organisers must ensure that adequate "Competent Persons" are available at all times for Emergency attendance within two hours of being requested.

The Council reserves the right to disconnect and remove any or all equipment that is considered to be unsafe or dangerous. The cost of this work will be recharged to the organiser.

The Council will not accept any responsibility for vandalism or accidental damage. If the Council have no choice but to intervene and remove any installations as a result of damage or an act of vandalism, the Council will make every effort to recover any decorations attached but will not be responsible for any loss or damage. The cost of this will be recharged to the organiser.

Traffic Management

The Contractor must provide, install and maintain Traffic Management at their own expense to comply with the requirements of the Traffic Signs Manual 2009 – Chapter 8 "Traffic Safety Measures and Signs for Road works and Temporary Situations"

The Contractor shall equip all vehicles employed on the installation, maintenance and removal of decorations with amber flashing lights in accordance with Section 05.3 of the Traffic Signs Manual – Chapter 8

Staff engaged in installation maintenance and removal of decorations must at all times wear high visibility clothing yellow, fluorescent retro reflective clothing complying with BS EN 471 (Class A, Appendix G minimum)

No placing or removal of cones and/or obstruction of two-way traffic flow will be permitted Monday to Saturday from 07.30 to 9.30 & from 16.30 to 18.30.

Health & Safety

We follow guidance from the Institution of Lighting Professionals when assessing your application to install Christmas lighting or decoration(s).

You must comply with the Construction (Design and Management) Regulations issued by the Health and Safety Executive.

Non-compliance

Non-compliance with any aspect this policy and the terms of a permit, including the payment of any incurred costs to the Council, may result in a termination of the current permit or the refusal of any future applications by the operator.

APPLICATION PROCESS

Application Form

Process

The Council will not contact previous organisers directly ahead of the festive display period for the purpose of completing an application. Any prospective organisers of festive displays in Wirral can either download an application form from the Council's website or email a request for an application form to festivedisplays@wirral.gov.uk.

Application forms will only be accepted in digital format and must be returned to festivedisplays@wirral.gov.uk by the **31st August or the next working day if this falls on a non-working day**.

All application forms must be completed with the correct information as required within the guidance and this policy. Those which are not accepted will not be granted a permit to operate.

A decision on all applications and cost will be made and communicated no later than the **30th September or the next working day if this falls on a non-working day**. Permits will be issued once a payment for 50% energy costs has been completed.

Under this policy, the approval of one application does not set a precedent for others and cannot be compared like for like. All applications will be assessed on their own merit and on a case-by-case basis in line with this policy.

A process map has been provided in **Figure 1**

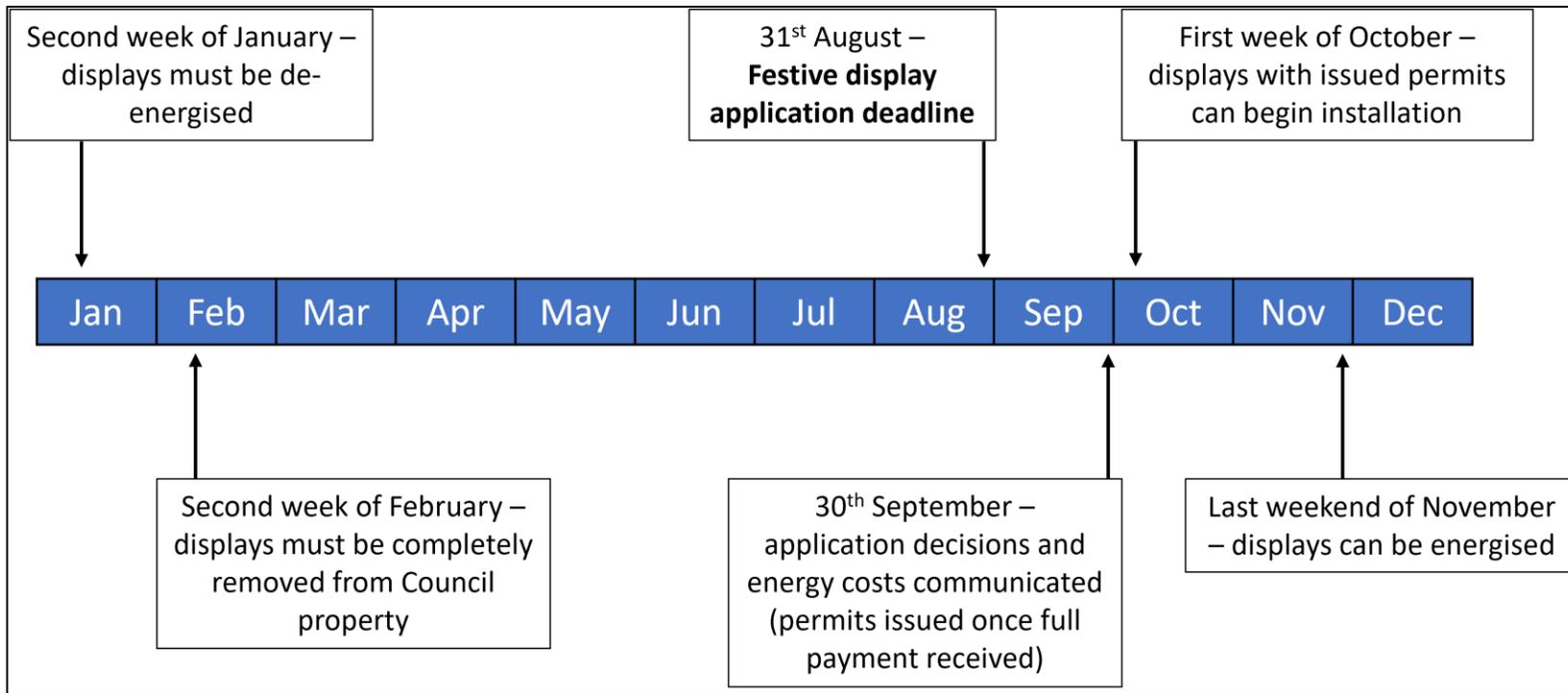


Figure 1: Festive Displays application and operational timeline

Summary of Information Requirements

The below provides a summary of information required as part of the application process.

Part 1 – Contact Information

- Contact Details of display Organiser: Address, phone number and 24-hour emergency contact details.
- Contact Details of display Contractor: Address, phone number and 24-hour emergency contact details.

Part 2 – General Requirements

- 2(1) Copy of public liability insurance certificate
- 2(2) Contractor's Method Statement and Risk assessments
- 2(3) Completed Part 5 SEASONAL DECORATIONS SCHEDULE
- 2(4) Provide details as a supplement to Part 5 SEASONAL DECORATIONS SCHEDULE. If no tree lights, then mark N/A.
- 2(5) Provide details and certificates as a supplement to Part 5 SEASONAL DECORATIONS SCHEDULE. If no overhead spans, then mark N/A.

Part 3 – Electrical Requirements

- 3(2) Provide list of operatives and evidence of their competency E.g., Electrician Registration Card, MEWP Operator Certificate, Chapter 8 Training Certificate
- 3(4) If part 3-3 'Is the Contractor G39 approved' has been answered Yes then copy of approval certificate for each individual is required.

Part 5 – Seasonal Decorations Schedule of Equipment

- 5(1) Give name of street on which the streetlight is located
- 5(2) Give the individual column number onto which the decorations are attached. This number should be marked on the front of the columns in a yellow square. If number not visible the closest property number or landmark shall be given.
- 5(3) Give number of features to be attached to each individual streetlight
- 5(4) Provide weight of each feature. This information will be available from the manufacturer's catalogue (for rope lights coiled around columns this can be considered as zero.)
- 5(5) Provide windage details for each feature. This information will be available from the manufacturer's catalogue (for rope lights coiled around columns this can be considered as zero.)
- 5(6) Provide details of fixing method for each feature i.e. clamps, tie-wraps etc. used to attach the features to lighting columns
- 5(7) Provide details of power consumed by each feature. This information will be available from the manufacturer's catalogue.
- **5 Tree mounted decorations:** Location of tree, is it existing or temporary, if temporary, give installation method. Location of power supply source. What is electrical load.
- **5 Overhead Spans:** Location of spans, number of fixing points, test certificate numbers, electrical load. Location of power supply source.

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ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

REPORT TITLE:	TREE, HEDGEROW AND WOODLAND STRATEGY PROGRESS UPDATE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES

REPORT SUMMARY

In response to the Environment and Climate Emergency declaration by Wirral Council in July 2019, a Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy was approved in July 2020.

The overarching aims of the strategy are to protect, regenerate and care for Wirral's existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands. To plant more trees and hedgerows. To create a framework for decision making and establish a prioritised action plan to 2020 to 2030. The strategy supports the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 and its priorities for a sustainable environment.

This report provides the second update on the Council's progress in the delivery of the strategy, covering the 2022/2023 planting season.

Progress of the actions is summarised within this report and full details are provided within Appendix 1.

The report looks ahead to priority actions for the next 12 months, which includes a revision to the strategy.

This matter is not a key decision but affects all wards within the Borough.

RECOMMENDATION/S

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is requested to:

1. Note the progress of the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy 2020 to 2030.
2. Endorse the priority actions for 2023/2024.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 Trees, hedgerows and woodlands not only improve biodiversity, but they also capture and store carbon, help prevent flooding, reduce air pollution, regulate temperature, improve visual amenity, increase a sense of place for our communities and research shows that trees improve the physical and mental well-being of those that live around them.
- 1.2 The Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy sets out Wirral's vision for how the treescape will be managed now and in the future and provides a framework for the improved provision and protection of these habitats to meet the needs of local people and help the natural environment to recover, adapt and thrive.
- 1.3 The successful implementation of the Strategy will help to deliver the objectives of the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan, Local Nature Recovery strategies, the Wirral Pollinator Strategy and the forthcoming Biodiversity Strategy.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 This report provides Committee with an update on Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy which was approved in July 2020 in response to the Environment and Climate Emergency declaration. The options of not acting or delaying actions have not been considered as this would not respond to the Council's declaration or ensure the Council meets its priorities set out in the Wirral Plan.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Strategy Development

- 3.1 Trees, hedgerows and woodland provide numerous benefits for people, nature, climate and the economy, but they are also at risk from pests and diseases, climate change and development pressure. To manage these risks and maximise the ecosystem services that trees provide, a strategy is required to set out how the local treescape will be managed now and in the future. As well as the emergence of new threats and the declared environment and climate emergency, the unprecedented focus on trees and woodlands in national government policy led to a greater need for an effective strategy within Wirral.
- 3.2 To maximise widescale adoption and create a true sense of co-ownership, the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy was developed in partnership with a network of stakeholders including community groups as well as local and national organisations. The strategy sets out its purpose, scope, governance and required outcomes, as well as detailed management policies, actions for securing future tree stock and includes a robust commitment to community involvement.

Strategy Aims and Vision

- 3.3 The vision of the strategy is to plant over 210,000 trees in the ten-year span. In doing so replacing many times over the number of trees unavoidably lost. The trees that are planted will see Wirral's tree canopy cover doubled by the time they are fully grown. To adopt the principle of "the right tree for the right place" in order to ensure the most resilient tree population possible. To establish a clear picture of Wirral's tree stock and its benefits and work constructively with individuals and groups to deliver the vision.
- 3.4 The four overarching aims of the Strategy are:
1. To protect, regenerate and care for Wirral's existing trees, hedgerows and woodlands.
 2. To plant more trees on the principle of the 'right tree for the right place' and encourage appropriate natural regeneration.
 3. To plant, restore and maintain hedgerows in rural and urban landscapes.
 4. To provide a framework for decision making and establishing a prioritised action plan for 2020-203 and a model for many years beyond that.

Progress in 2022/23

- 3.5 Continued implementation of the Council's Tree Risk Management System. A total of 11,185 tree inspection records and 3,131 work orders completed between 1st April 2022 and 31st March 2023.
- 3.6 Completed drive-by of all highways to ensure the highways tree inventory is up to date and accurate.
- 3.7 Completed review of the Parks & Countryside estate to ensure the Parks & Countryside tree inventory is up to date and accurate.
- 3.8 Completed review of operational assets estate to ensure the tree inventory is up to date and accurate.
- 3.9 Procurement of new tree management software to help improve contract management and performance as well as improve efficiency for tree inspectors and reduce administration for officers. The software also allows for improved access to the Council's tree inventory and tree data for all council staff and the public and allows improved monitoring of the council's treescape.
- 3.10 Completed i-Tree Eco Study in partnership with Forest Research which details the structure and composition of Wirral's tree population, and the ecosystem services the trees provide. It was also the first i-Tree Eco project to include measures of social and cultural values of trees.
- 3.11 Recruitment of a Trees and Woodland Community Officer who will work closely with local communities and stakeholders to develop and deliver projects and events that inform and inspire people to value, protect and enhance tree, hedgerow and woodland provision in Wirral.

- 3.12 Continued membership to Mersey Forest which led to £23,610.14 of grant funding for woodland planting during the 2022/2023 planting season.
- 3.13 A total of 21,040 trees planted in the 2022/23 planting season. Details of the planting are presented in Appendix 1.
- 3.14 Circa 3,600 additional trees planted during the 2022/2023 season to replace those lost in planting seasons 2020/21 and 2021/2022.

Priorities for 2023/2024

Review of Tree Strategy

- 3.15 As part of the 3-year review process, the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy will be refreshed in 2023/24 to ensure it continues to deliver on its aims, remain relevant in relation to local and national policy and address emerging priorities.
- 3.16 The refreshed strategy will include a new chapter on Trees and Development to provide information and advice on the standards expected from new developments including new planting and replacement planting guidelines. A new chapter will also be incorporated to detail the commitment to natural regeneration and the steps which will be taken to achieve successful natural regeneration. The Strategy will be updated to include the most up to date national and local policies. Case studies of community projects/activities will also be incorporated within the refreshed version to encourage more community engagement.

Establishment of Planting

- 3.17 Due to the periods of drought experienced in the last two growing seasons, the number of watering visits required for newly planted heavy standards per season has had to be increased. This increased pressure has reduced our current capacity to add additional street and parkland trees to the watering schedule. As such, the provision of heavy standards (large sized tree) in the 2023/24 season will be limited, this is to ensure our watering programme can accommodate all standard trees planted within the last three years without compromising their establishment. While the provision of new standards will be restricted in 2023/24, all standards lost over the last three seasons will be replaced as a priority. The capacity for the watering schedule to accept new trees will be reviewed annually.
- 3.18 We do not have a watering programme for sapling planting (the very small trees less than 60cm in height). Due to the volume of saplings, planted each year, it is not practicable to do so. However, young trees will adapt to natural conditions, and the provision of woodchip and mulch encourages more water retention. In addition, watering encourages roots to grow towards the soil surface rather than down towards groundwater, so it is better to allow saplings to adapt naturally. During periods of drought, newly planted saplings will suffer but to combat the drier conditions now experienced each year, these trees can be overstocked accepting that greater losses will occur and/or replacements can be provided each season at a much lower cost than the replacement of heavy standards.
- 3.19 Despite the restriction of planting heavy standards during the 2023/24 season, the annual planting target is still expected to be met through the continued provision of

new hedgerows, woodland planting and provision of free trees to Wirral communities.

Wirral Tree Wardens

- 3.20 Wirral Council has recently been appointed by the Tree Council to act as co-ordinator for the Wirral Tree Wardens. Over the next year, a hub at Dibbinsdale Local Nature Reserve will be established to facilitate Wirral Tree Warden meetings, citizen-led science projects, planting events and other borough wide tree activities.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The nature of the report is to monitor progress of the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy, therefore there are no financial implications from the report.
- 4.2 Over £130,000 has been secured through the Mersey Forest for the planting and establishment of eight woodlands in the first three planting seasons (2020/21, 2021/22 and 2022/23) and further Trees for Climate applications will be submitted in the coming months to secure additional woodland funding for 2023/2024 season.
- 4.3 A total of £85,857.40 was secured through the DEFRA Woodland Creation Acceleration Fund for the recruitment of a Trees and Woodland Community Officer for two years.
- 4.4 Delivery of tree planting not eligible for grant funding has been supported by the Climate Emergency budget allocation.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council has a clear duty of care under both civil and criminal law for the health and safety of those on or near Council land and has potential liabilities arising from the falling of a tree or 5 branches, therefore sufficient tree risk management and maintenance is essential in adhering to those duties.
- 5.2 There are no direct legal implications from the establishment and delivery of the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy, however, its implementation ensures that the desired outcomes are achieved for all, and the resources applied have the maximum effect.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no staffing implications arising directly from this report.
- 6.2 The tree team who drive the implementation of the Strategy consists of five permanent members of staff comprising: two Tree Inspectors, two Tree Management Officers and one Senior Trees and Woodland Manager. In addition, a Trees and Woodland Community Officer has been recruited for two years.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 In adopting the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy 2020 to 2030, the Council has committed to achieving its aims. A failure to demonstrate action would present a reputational risk and a missed opportunity to support the Environment and Climate Emergency Action Plan, Pollinator Strategy and future Biodiversity Strategy.
- 7.2 The failure to manage and maintain the trees planted so far as part of the Strategy also poses a reputational risk. Other UK local authorities have received criticism in the last 12 months for carrying out mass planting schemes and not ensuring their establishment by implementing follow up maintenance works. As one of the priorities for the coming year, focus will be given the re-stocking of newly planted woodland and hedgerow sites, replacement of failed heavy standards and reduction in new heavy standards to alleviate pressure on the watering programme.
- 7.3 There are serious public safety risks from falling branches, collapsing and windthrown trees, which can lead to litigation, financial penalties and costs associated with insurance claims. Therefore, effective tree maintenance, which is a key part of the Strategy is vital to mitigate and reduce the risks of a tree related incident from occurring.
- 7.4 Emerging pests and diseases and the impacts of extreme weather conditions are also a serious threat to Wirral's tree population which reduces the benefits they provide and can lead to further economic burdens if not managed. The Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy allows for the creation of more diverse tree population to increase resilience and supports the monitoring and management of affected trees.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 To ensure quality and consistent engagement, a Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Community Engagement Policy and Action Plan has been created. The engagement policy sets out the principles that will support successful collaboration across the Borough, ensuring key stakeholders have a platform to influence and take part in the delivery of the Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland strategy vision including planting. In addition, a Tree Statutory Advisory Board has been established to advise and support the Strategy delivery. This Board brings together key local stakeholders, other council department representatives alongside external advisory organisations who drive ongoing momentum and the oversight needed to ensure the Strategy delivers its aims.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.
- 9.2 An equality impact assessment has been reviewed and found to be valid. It can be found at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/wirral-tree-strategy-equality-impact-assessment-july-2020.pdf/download?inline>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy will play a key role in tackling the environment and climate emergency in Wirral helping to achieve 'net zero' carbon emissions by 2030. Alongside carbon sequestration, trees, hedgerows and woodlands also help provide a nature-based solution to build resilience against storm water management and air pollution. In addition, they support an abundance of wildlife including mammals, birds, amphibians, flora, and pollinators. As such, this Strategy will help towards the target of a 20% 'net gain' in biodiversity across all council land.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Trees provide many social and economic benefits, but poorly managed trees can present public health risks. The Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy allows us to identify risks, highlight areas for investment, and plan appropriate management. By demonstrating a strong commitment towards trees for the long-term, the Strategy also allows new opportunities for Wirral to secure external funding for tree and hedgerow planting. It has allowed the establishment of stakeholder networks and steered existing enthusiasm towards a unified vision of doubling Wirral's tree canopy.

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy Planting Schedule to Date (July 2023)
Appendix 2 Tree Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy Metric Progress to Date (July 2023)

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy 2020-2023
Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy Community Engagement Policy 2021-2030
Wirral I-Tree Eco Technical Report

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee in accordance with Section 5.2 (a) and (k) of its Terms of Reference.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions:-

- (a) in co-ordinating the response to cross-cutting sustainability issues such as reducing carbon emissions, air quality issues, climate change response, improving resource efficiency and developing sustainable energy.

- (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy 2020-2030 - Cabinet	June 2020
Tree Management and Inspection Update - Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	January 2022
COVID-19 Memorial Woodland - Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	March 2022
Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy Progress Report 2022 - Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	July 2022

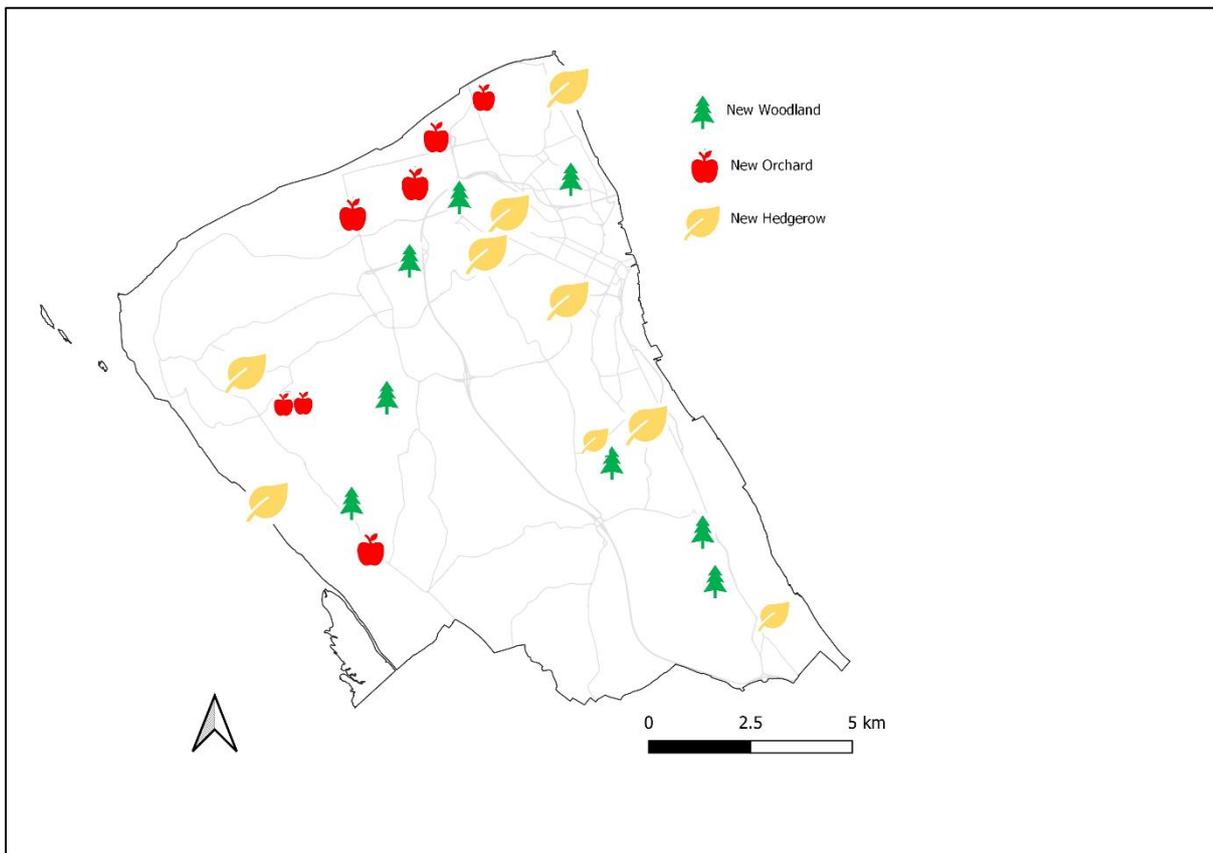
APPENDIX 1

Wirral Council

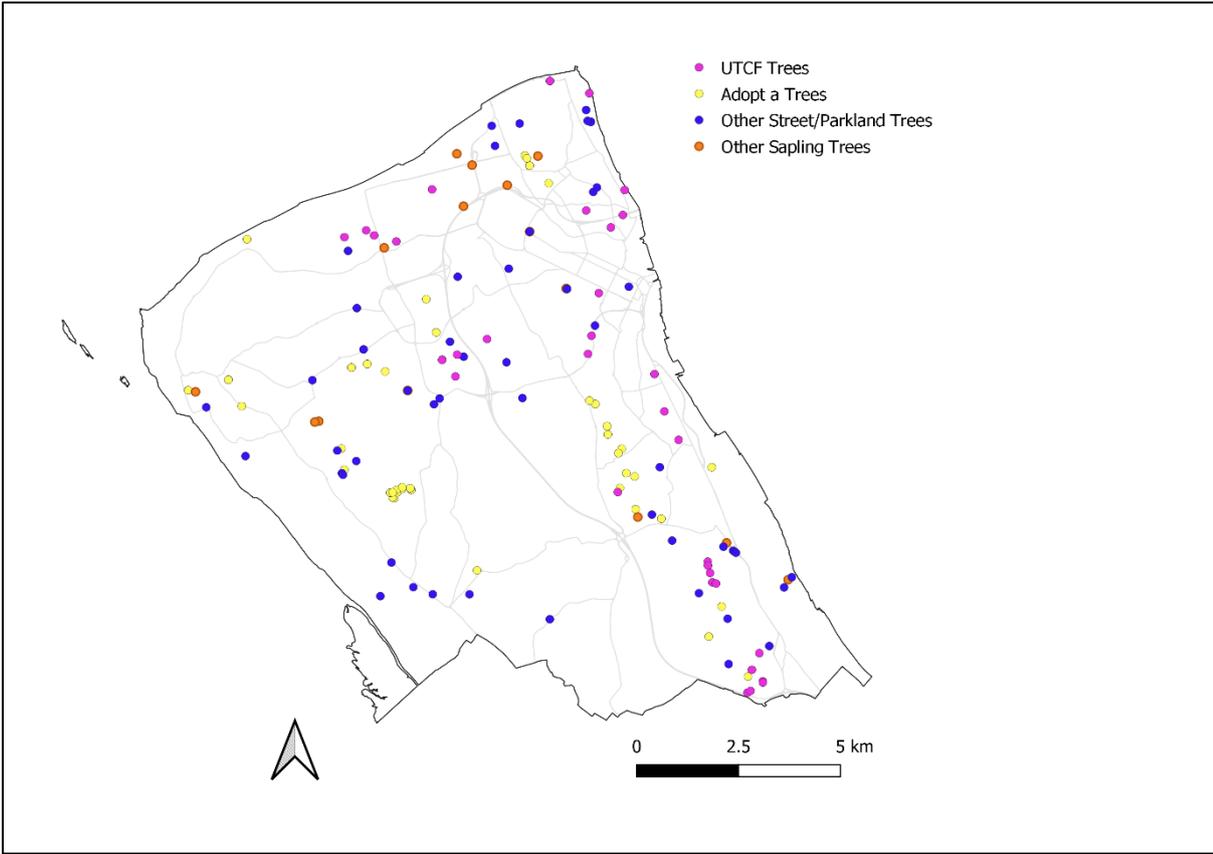
Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy

Planting Completed in 2022-2023 Season

A total of 10,752 trees were planted and a further 10,288 given away to Wirral residents between November 2022 and end of March 2023. Of those planted, a total 549 extra heavy standard street/parkland trees were planted as part of the Forestry Commission's Urban Tree Challenge Fund. A total of 13 street tree pits were reinstated and planted with heavy standards in Birkenhead as part of the UKSPF fund. A total of 40 heavy standard parkland trees were planted adjacent to Carr Bridge Road play area as part of the Levelling Up Parks Fund. Two new Trees for Climate woodlands were created in Central Park and Upton Park. In addition, over 600 metres of hedgerow, seven new community orchards and a new arboretum was created.



Insert 1: 2022/2023 Planting Highlights



Insert 2: 2022/2023 Planting Highlights



Photograph 1: Trees for Climate Woodland Upton Park



Photograph 2: Levelling Up Parks Fund Planting Carr Bridge Road



Photograph 3: Arboretum Arrowe Country Park



Photograph 4: Free Tree Giveaway Event Royden Park



Photograph 5: Royden Park Community Orchard

APPENDIX 2

Wirral Council

Tree, Hedgerow and Woodland Strategy

Strategy Metric

Aim 1: To protect, regenerate and care for Wirral's existing tree, hedgerows, and woodland					
Ref. No	Outcome	Action	Indicator	Reporter	
1	Support a survey of all Wirral's trees to form a single data base.	Recruitment of two full-time permanent tree inspectors to carry out rolling cyclical inspection of the Council's tree stock.	Completion to Council tree inventory.	Nicola Wallbank	
Progress to date: Complete					
2	Support a comprehensive review of Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs) and conservation areas.	Desktop review of all existing TPOs and assessment of their enforceability. Site inspections and revised evidence base for confirmed TPOs following desktop review	Number of TPOs reviewed annually.	Matt Parkinson & Rob Rainford	
Progress to date: Desktop review methodology has been devised, but the review was delayed during migration of new IT systems for planning. Review expected to commence in early 2024					
3	Review, strengthen and implement enforcement policies to ensure protection of existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows.	Implementation of legislation, policy, and best practice guidance to avoid and enforce loss or damage. Apply and enforce planning Conditions for the protection of new and existing trees, hedgerows, and woodland	Number of reported incidents of tree loss or damage from vandalism that have occurred annually. Number of tree related planning enforcement notices issued	Nicola Wallbank and Steve Lacey	

		where applicable.	annually.	
Progress to date: Ongoing action - Six reported incidents of vandalism in 2021 and three in 2022				
4	Establish the overall value of Wirral's trees, to show what condition and size they are, and how much they benefit the environment and ecosystem. Establish the overall value of Wirral tree population and describe its profile in quantitative, qualitative, and functional terms.	Measure, map and project ecosystem services (carbon storage, air purification, water purification, pollination, local climate regulation, noise regulation and access nature) using EcoserveR or I-Tree.	Annual projection of cumulative carbon sequestration rates of new woodland.	Nicola Wallbank
Progress to date: Wirral's I-Tree Eco Study now complete which provides current ecosystem service provision, new tree management software (TreePlotter) will provide ecosystem service data for individual trees which will be combined with calculations from woodland carbon code assessments for inclusion in future carbon budget performance reports.				
5	Establish a cycle of tree risk assessment and update management and action plans on an annual basis.	Rolling cyclical inspection of the Councils tree stock.	Number of sites inspected annually.	Nicola Wallbank
Progress to date: Ongoing action –most recent cyclical inspection of highways trees completed in early 2023, latest inspections now taking place on operational asset and park and countryside sites. Total 11,185 tree assets inspected in 2022/23				
6	Use and evaluate the Council's Tree Risk Assessment Management tool in making decisions.	Implementation of risk assessment matrix.	Number of LA codes produced annually.	Nicola Wallbank
Progress to date: Ongoing action – 1,916 LA codes issued in 2022/23				
7	Implement an Ash dieback policy and pre-empt or manage any other diseases that will adversely affect Wirral' existing, replacement and new tree cover.	Deliver communications to internal and external stakeholders regarding identification and management of Ash dieback. Application of risk assessment matrix	Number of Council owned trees felled because of Ash dieback per year.	Rob Rainford

	on incidences of Ash dieback and other diseases.			
Progress to date: Ongoing action -total of 30 trees removed to date as a result of Ash Dieback				
8	Deliver a training program for staff within the affected service areas on the value of trees, TPO's and the tree strategy vision.	Delivery of presentations and email bulletins to internal colleagues.	Number of colleagues who attend Tree Strategy webinars per year. Number of Tree Strategy bulletins sent per year.	Nicola Wallbank, Matt Parkinson and Rob Rainford
Progress to date: Training programme to commence in 2023/2024				
9	Improve communication channels between WBC and residents.	Consultation with residents, Councillors and internal colleagues regarding tree works where required and feasible. Creation of Public Consultation Strategy for new planting.	Annual response rates to public online consultation surveys.	Matt Parkinson and Rob Rainford
Progress to date: Ongoing action - First customer satisfaction survey published between 24 th August and 23 rd September 2021 with 10 responses. Community engagement policy has been created and a further customer satisfaction survey will take place by the end of 2023				

Aims 2 and 3: To plant more trees on the principle of the 'right tree for the right place' and encourage appropriate natural regeneration. To plant, restore and maintain hedgerows in rural and urban landscapes.				
Ref. No	Outcome	Action	Indicator	Reporter
10	Establish a robust partnership and	Creation and implementation of a	Number of annual	Nicola Wallbank

	community engagement programme to put the strategy into practice.	Community Engagement Policy and Action Plan.	community planting and maintenance events.	
Progress to date: Ongoing action - Engagement policy and action plan has been created. Total of 10 community planting events and 5 school planting events took place between November 2022 and April 2023				
11	Establish a working partnership with private, community and charitable owners of land, businesses, and local developers in the management of trees, hedgerows and woodlands, contributing to an increased canopy/tree cover across Wirral and the establishment of new copses and hedgerows.	Implement Mersey Forest membership and partnership agreement. Engage with external partners to identify suitable land for planting and help facilitate both tree sourcing and planting.	Annual net gain of trees, hedgerows and woodland.	Nicola Wallbank Council and partner
Progress to date: Ongoing action - Net gain of 66,599 trees since July 2020				
12	Establish and support local tree nurseries on Wirral to provide future tree stock that will be climate resilient and offer appropriate planting for Wirral's environment. This will include schools, community groups and volunteers collecting seeds and cuttings of suitable trees and growing them on.	Identify suitable nursery sites and delivery partners across the Borough. Facilitate and support nursery set up and establishment.	Number of trees of local provenance planted annually on Council or partner land.	Nicola Wallbank
Progress to date: All woodland and hedgerow plants are sourced from only suppliers that raise trees from seed sourced and grown solely within the UK. A recent grant application has been submitted to the Forestry Commission to fund the recruitment of a qualified individual to conduct a comprehensive study of land within the Wirral area, identify existing stands and design and implement appropriate seed stand/species strategies. In addition, grants are being sought to establish a micro community tree nursery at Dibbinsdale LNR to enable the delivery of community workshops on seed collection and growing.				
13	Ensure all opportunities are taken to plant new, climate resilient trees and hedgerows to support wildlife and	Apply the 'selection criteria' defined within the 'Urban Tree Manual' when implementing all new planting.	Annual change in taxonomic diversity of Council trees (to be	Nicola Wallbank

	public amenity value and encourage appropriate natural regeneration.		review once latest street tree survey is completed on Insight)
Progress to date: Ongoing action – indicator values not yet available			
14	Create a cross-disciplinary working group, involving key representatives from within or outside the organisations whose decisions have an impact on local trees.	Creation of a Tree Strategy Advisory Board (TSAB) and work programme.	Production of a public evaluative report every three years on progress in achieving the strategy, in partnership with the cross-disciplinary working group.
Progress to date: TSAB has been created and the public evaluative report is due by the end of 2023			
15	Where relevant, ensure plans for new building or development make provision for retaining existing trees, space for natural regeneration and for increasing the numbers of tree and hedgerows in line with targets for increasing canopy/tree cover.	Continued application of relevant planning legislation and policy and implementation of future statute such as biodiversity net gain principles.	Number of tree related biodiversity units gained through off-site provision Nicola Wallbank
Progress to date: Preparations for forthcoming biodiversity net gain roll out are underway			



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 20 September 2023

REPORT TITLE:	BUDGET REPORT
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF NEIGHBOURHOODS

REPORT SUMMARY

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the budgets within the remit of the Committee in respect of the in-year position and the anticipated pressures for future years that are being considered within the Medium Term Financial Plan.

The Council is required to set a balanced budget each year and sets a Medium Term Financial Plan which considers the future pressures and savings options that will be taken forward to result in a balanced budget position.

The Council faces a challenging financial outlook due to inflationary and demand pressures alongside the previous significant reductions in Government funding and uncertainty around the future financial settlements.

This report provides an update for the Committee on those budget areas within its remit, including any forecast overspends reported in the first quarter and potential pressures in both the current and future years.

The Committee is asked to note the report and endorse any proposed actions to mitigate the in-year position.

This is a key decision and affects all wards.

The report contributes to the Wirral Plan 2021-2026 in supporting the organisation in meeting all Council priorities.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport committee is recommended to:

1. Note the report.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Regular monitoring and reporting of the revenue budgets and savings achievements enables decisions to be taken in a timely manner, which may produce revenue benefits and will improve financial control of Wirral Council.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Policy & Resources Committee has previously determined the budget monitoring process and this report details the agreed course of action.
- 2.2 In striving to manage budgets, available options have been evaluated to maintain a balance between service delivery and a balanced budget.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 At the meeting on 27 February 2023, the Council agreed a net revenue budget for 2023/2024 of £366.6m to be met by government grants, council tax, and business rates. This report sets out an updated revenue financial position for the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

Quarter 1 Forecast Revenue Outturn Position

- 3.2 Table 1 presents the forecast outturn as a net position, i.e. expenditure minus income. Favourable variances (underspends) are shown as negative values and adverse variances (overspends) are shown as a positive value.
- 3.3 At the end of Quarter 1, there was a forecast adverse variance of £0.500m against the Committee's revised net revenue budget of £65.840m, which is equivalent to a variance of 1% from the annual budget.

TABLE 1: 2023/24 REVENUE BUDGET & FORECAST OUTTURN

	Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
			(+ Adv / - Fav)	
	£000	£000	£000	%
Environment (including Parks and Open Spaces)	6,304	6,304	0	0%
Highways Management and Infrastructure	6,357	6,857	500	8%
Recycling and Waste	30,137	30,137	0	0%
Transport Levy	23,043	23,043	0	0%
Net Committee Expenditure	65,840	66,340	500	1%

Notes:

* Budget figures assume agreement to a budget amendment of £0.870m as agreed at Policy and Resources committee on 12th July. However, this is still subject to Council approval which will be confirmed in October 2023.

Updates in revenue position since Quarter 1

- 3.4 There are risks linked to additional in year pressures within the following areas. These additional pressures and any potential mitigating actions are being explored and will be reported back to Committee in the Q2 monitor report.
- A projected shortfall in income received from developers, which is currently based on income received to date. This is due to a reduction in housing developers commencing construction work because of the current macroeconomic conditions in relation to supply chain costs, inflation, and rising interest rates. However, the position could improve if developers commence work later in the financial year and work is currently being undertaken to maximise income generating opportunities within Highways and infrastructure.
 - There is a risk due to a shortfall in enforcement income, as this will not be achieved until the policy is agreed and implemented.
 - There are potential pressures within Parks and Environment. These relate to premises and maintenance, water charges, transport maintenance and shortfalls against income targets following COVID-19.

Progress on delivery of the 2023/24 savings programme.

- 3.5 Table 2 presents the progress on the delivery of the 2023/24 approved savings as at quarter 1. For savings rated as Amber, an equal amount of temporary in-year mitigation has been identified to cover any shortfalls which may occur. For saving rated as red, a bid will need to be made from the contingency fund set up for non-achieved savings at the end of the year.
- 3.6 In terms of savings, £0.400m of the £0.485m savings targets are either delivered or on track to be delivered, representing 82% of the total savings target with a further 18% or £0.085m anticipated to be delivered through alternative means. The table below summarises the progress by Directorate:

TABLE 2: SUMMARY OF PROGRESS ON DELIVERY OF 2023/24 SAVINGS

Directorate	Approved Saving £m	Green £m	Amber £m	Red £m	Mitigation £m
ECET	-0.485	-0.400	-0.085	0.000	-0.085

Updates in savings delivery since Quarter 1.

- 3.7
- **Introduction of an environmental enforcement scheme** – The saving of £0.150m. The saving will be delivered once the policy documents have been

agreed, although the full year effect of the saving will not be reflected this financial year.

Mitigating Measures.

- 3.8 It is imperative that the Council report a balanced position at the end of the financial year.
- 3.9 As per the '2023/24 Budget and Budget Monitoring Processes Report', which was presented to P&R and all Service Committees in June, the Committees will be responsible for containing net expenditure within their overall budget envelope and not overspending. Where an adverse variance is forecast, each committee will be required to take remedial action, with detailed plans and timeframes, to bring the budget back in line and ensure that overspends are mitigated.
- 3.10 Where a committee has taken all possible steps for remedial action and is unable to fully mitigate an overspend, this must be reported to the Policy and Resources Committee who will then take an organisational-wide view of how this adverse variance will be managed. There must be immediate action agreed to ensure a deliverable, balanced forecast position can be reported, and this will be monitored on a monthly basis by the Policy and Resources Committee Finance Sub-group.
- 3.11 The Policy and Resources Committee has ultimate responsibility for taking any necessary steps required to ensure a balanced budget position is delivered. The Section 151 Officer will be responsible for ensuring that any budget actions, proposals and mitigations are achievable and legal.
- 3.12 The quarter 1 position highlights £0.500m of forecast adverse variances for which as yet no mitigation has been identified. Committees and the relevant Chief Officers will need to agree remedial action to address these variances to ensure a balanced position can be presented at the end of the year.
- 3.13 The service will aim to maximise opportunities to capitalise staffing costs. Income generation opportunities will be sought within Parks and Cemeteries to mitigate the overall position. In addition to this expenditure will be delayed until next financial year where possible and mitigation will also be sought from staffing vacancies and non-essential expenditure.

Medium Term Financial Plan

3.14

Environment (including Parks and Open Space)

There are significant one-off pressures in year and in 2024/25 linked to an obligation to remove abandoned boats at Heswall Shore.

Highways Management and Infrastructure

There is an ongoing pressure linked to proposed parking charges at new sites. This proposal was incorporated into the budget in 2021/22 but has not yet been implemented and a decision relating to this will be informed by the parking strategy.

In addition to this there are pressures linked to footway maintenance. Any capital from Department for Transport focused on carriageways. Footways have deteriorated over the past 20 years, resulting in more footway claims, more enquiries, and increased repairs to respond to these pressures.

Recycling and Waste

There are additional pressures associated with the Waste Contract. However, these total increases have not been confirmed yet as they will be linked to projected CPI rates in April 2024. The Waste Levy will also increase in 2024 and Merseyside Regional Waste Authority (MRWA) will confirm the figure later in the year.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This budget report that provides information on the forecast outturn for the Council for 2023/24 and future years. The Council has robust methods for reporting and forecasting budgets in place and alongside formal Quarterly reporting to Policy & Resources Committee, the financial position is routinely reported at Directorate Management Team meetings and corporately at the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT). In the event of any early warning highlighting pressures and potential overspends, the SLT take collective responsibility to identify solutions to resolve these to ensure a balanced budget can be reported at the end of the year and for future years.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council must set the budget in accordance with the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and approval of a balanced budget each year is a statutory responsibility of the Council. Sections 25 to 29 of the Local Government Act 2003 impose duties on the Council in relation to how it sets and monitors its budget. These provisions require the Council to make prudent allowance for the risk and uncertainties in its budget and regularly monitor its finances during the year. The legislation leaves discretion to the Council about the allowances to be made and action to be taken.

5.2 The provisions of section 25, Local Government Act 2003 require that, when the Council is making the calculation of its budget requirement, it must have regard to the report of the chief finance (s.151) officer as to the robustness of the estimates made for the purposes of the calculations and the adequacy of the proposed financial reserves.

5.3 It is essential, as a matter of prudence that the financial position continues to be closely monitored. In particular, Members must satisfy themselves that sufficient mechanisms are in place to ensure both that savings are delivered and that new expenditure is contained within the available resources. Accordingly, any proposals

put forward must identify the realistic measures and mechanisms to produce those savings.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 At this time, there are no additional resource implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there will be resource implications, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Council's ability to maintain a balanced budget for 2023/24 is dependent on a stable financial position. That said, the delivery of the budget is subject to ongoing variables both positive and adverse which imply a level of challenge in achieving this outcome.

7.2 In any budget year, there is a risk that operation will not be constrained within relevant budget limits. Under specific circumstances the Section 151 Officer may issue a Section 114 notice but that position has not been reached at the present time.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Consultation has been carried out with the Senior Leadership Team (SLT) in arriving at the governance process for the 2023/24 budget monitoring process and budget setting process. This report will also be shared and reviewed by the Independent Panel.

8.2 Since the budget was agreed at Full Council on 27 February, some proposals may have been the subject of further consultation with Members, Customer and Residents. The details of these are included within the individual business cases or are the subject of separate reports to the Committee.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

9.2 At this time, there are no further equality implications as these have already been identified for the proposals agreed and submitted. However, where the budget is unbalanced and further proposals are required, then there may be equality implications associated with these, and these will be addressed within the relevant business cases presented to the Committee.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report has no direct environmental implications; however due regard is given as appropriate in respect of procurement and expenditure decision-making processes that contribute to the outturn position.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 In year activity will have incorporated community wealth implications. Consideration would have taken account of related matters across headings such as the following:

- **Progressive Procurement and Social Value**
How we commission and procure goods and services. Encouraging contractors to deliver more benefits for the local area, such as good jobs, apprenticeship, training & skills opportunities, real living wage, minimising their environmental impact, and greater wellbeing.
- **More local & community ownership of the economy**
Supporting more cooperatives and community businesses.
Enabling greater opportunities for local businesses.
Building on the experience of partnership working with voluntary, community and faith groups during the pandemic to further develop this sector.
- **Decent and Fair Employment**
Paying all employees a fair and reasonable wage.
- **Making wealth work for local places**

REPORT AUTHOR: Sarah Cox
(Senior Finance Business Partner)
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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1 – Breakdown of Revenue Spend

TERMS OF REFERENCE

This matter is being considered by the Policy and Resources Committee in accordance with section 1.2(b) provide a co-ordinating role across all other service committees and retain a 'whole council' view of [budget monitoring].

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Policy & Resources Committee Report 14 Jun 23: 2023/24 Budget and Budget Monitoring Processes Report.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
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Policy and Resources Committee	12 July 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	14 June 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	18 January 2023
Policy and Resources Committee	09 November 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	13 July 2022
Council	28 February 2022
Policy and Resources Committee	15 February 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	22 October 2020
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	3 December 2020
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	1 February 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	16 March 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	14 June 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	7 September 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	15 November 2021
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	20 January 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	1 March 2022

Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	20 June 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	20 October 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	30 November 2022
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	30 January 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	14 March 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	19 June 2023
Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee	24 July 2023

Appendix 1 – Breakdown of Revenue Budget Monitoring

		Budget	Outturn	Variance		Adv/ Fav
		£000	£000	(+ Fav / - Adv) £000	%	
Environment (including Parks and Open Spaces)	Flood Management	598	598	0	0%	
	Parks & Countryside	4,918	4,918	0	0%	
	Tree Management	788	788	0	0%	
Highways Management and Infrastructure	Design & Commissioning	53	53	0	0%	
	Highways & Infrastructure	517	517	0	0%	
	Highways Maintenance & Street Lighting	6,445	6,445	0	0%	
	Highways Service Support	389	389	0	0%	
	Network Management	-579	-579	0	0%	
	Network Operations	-468	32	500	-107%	Adverse
Recycling and Waste	Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority Levy	17,521	17,521	0	0%	
	Waste & Street Cleansing	12,615	12,615	0	0%	
Transport Levy	Regeneration Strategy and Transport	23,043	23,043	0	0%	
Surplus / (Deficit)		65,840	66,340	500	1%	Adverse



ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

20 SEPTEMBER 2023

REPORT TITLE:	ENVIRONMENT CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF LAW AND GOVERNANCE

REPORT SUMMARY

The Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, in co-operation with the other Policy and Service Committees, is responsible for proposing and delivering an annual committee work programme. This work programme should align with the corporate priorities of the Council, in particular the delivery of the key decisions which are within the remit of the Committee.

It is envisaged that the work programme will be formed from a combination of key decisions, standing items and requested officer reports. This report provides the Committee with an opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year. The work programme for the Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is attached as Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

The Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to:

- (1) note and comment on the proposed Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee work programme for the remainder of the 2023/24 municipal year.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 To ensure Members of the Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee have the opportunity to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 A number of workplan formats were explored, with the current framework open to amendment to match the requirements of the Committee.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The work programme should align with the priorities of the Council and its partners. The programme will be informed by:

- The Council Plan
- The Council's transformation programme
- The Council's Forward Plan
- Service performance information
- Risk management information
- Public or service user feedback
- Referrals from Council

Terms of Reference

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee has responsibility for parks and open spaces, highways management and infrastructure, coastal protection and flood defence and environment and waste matters. It is the Committee that leads on behalf of the Council in responding to and matters concerning the Climate Emergency. The Committee is also responsible for the overview and scrutiny of flood risk management and coastal erosion management functions.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions:-

- (a) in co-ordinating the response to cross-cutting sustainability issues such as reducing carbon emissions, air quality issues, climate change response, improving resource efficiency and developing sustainable energy;
- (b) in relation to all highways matters and as highway authority, street authority, bridge authority, including but not limited to public open spaces, street furniture on the highway and open spaces or parts of open spaces immediately adjacent to the highway;
- (c) in relation to traffic management and transport and as traffic authority, including but not limited to public passenger transport and the co-ordination of transport for service users, traffic orders and rights of way issues;

- (d) in relation to parking, including on and off-street parking and civil parking enforcement;
- (e) in respect of parks, open spaces, countryside management, allotments, playgrounds and cemeteries, including arboricultural, gardening and warden services;
- (f) in relation to the management of authorised and unauthorised sites and encampments, this to include all activities necessary or incidental to the Council's performance of its responsibilities in relation to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers;
- (g) in relation to waste and as waste collection authority, litter authority, including but not limited to dealing with litter, street cleansing, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling, and the Council's relationship with Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority (MRWA) as the joint waste disposal authority;
- (h) as coast protection authority and lead local flood authority;
- (i) in respect of emergency planning and community resilience (infrastructure and contract services);
- (j) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
- (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.
- (l) in respect of Section 9JB of the Local Government Act 2000, the functions to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management and of coastal erosion management functions which may affect the local authority's area.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 This report is for information and planning purposes only, therefore there are no direct financial implication arising. However, there may be financial implications arising as a result of work programme items.

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. However, there may be legal implications arising as a result of work programme items.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

6.1 There are no direct implications to Staffing, ICT or Assets.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 The Committee's ability to undertake its responsibility to provide strategic direction to the operation of the Council, make decisions on policies, co-ordinate spend, and maintain a strategic overview of outcomes, performance, risk management and budgets may be compromised if it does not have the opportunity to plan and regularly review its work across the municipal year.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 Wirral Council has a legal requirement to make sure its policies, and the way it carries out its work, do not discriminate against anyone. An Equality Impact Assessment is a tool to help council services identify steps they can take to ensure equality for anyone who might be affected by a particular policy, decision or activity.

This report is for information to Members and there are no direct equality implications.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct environment and climate implications.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report is for information to Members and there are no direct community wealth implications.

REPORT AUTHOR: Anna Perrett
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee Work Plan

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Wirral Council Constitution
Forward Plan
The Council's transformation programme

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Standing Item	



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

WORK PROGRAMME 2023/24

Contact Officer/s: Anna Perret/Joe D'Henin

KEY DECISIONS – On forward plan to be scheduled October 2023 – January 2024

Item	Lead Departmental Officer
Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy	Mike Cockburn - October
Weed Treatment Provision	Matthew Humble - October
Highways winter maintenance	Simon Fox - October
Active Travel Strategy	Julie Barnes - December
20mph Zones Phase 2 - Consideration of Objections and Officers Responses	Simon Fox – December
Highways Infrastructure and Asset Management Strategy (Including Vehicle Crossing Policy and Highways Routine and Reactive Maintenance Policy)	Simon Fox/James Roberts - December

ADDITIONAL AGENDA ITEMS – WAITING TO BE SCHEDULED

Item	Approximate timescale	Lead Departmental Officer
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Wirral Air Quality Strategy	December	Mike Cockburn
Smoke Controls areas	December	Jennifer McKeown
Parking Strategy	December	Julie Barnes/Steve Atkins -
Creation of Public Bridleway on North Wirral Coastal Defence Access Road	TBC	Simon Fox
Bin provision briefing note	Sept	M Cockburn
Fair access to green spaces	Dec	M Cockburn
Eco Schools	Dec	M Cockburn
Sustrans	TBC	
Flood Risk Update	TBC	Neil Thomas
Car Free Day	TBC	Briefing notes
Sat Nav update	TBC	Briefing notes
West Kirby Marine Lake Update	TBC	M Cockburn
Blue Flag Beaches	TBC	M Cockburn

STANDING ITEMS AND MONITORING REPORTS

Item	Reporting Frequency	Lead Departmental Officer
Budget Monitoring	Every Cycle	Sarah Cox
Performance dashboard	Commencing July 2023	Jason Gooding
Carbon Budget	Annually in June	Andrew Snow

Performance Report		
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WORK PROGRAMME ACTIVITIES OUTSIDE COMMITTEE

Item	Format	Timescale	Lead Officer	Progress
Working Groups/ Sub Committees				
Car Parking Charges	Working Group	Nov 2020	Simon Fox	Completed
Road Safety	Working Group	Jan-Feb 2021	Simon Fox	Complete
Hoylake Beach	Working Group	Feb 2021	Colin Clayton/Neil Thomas	Completed
Climate Emergency	Working Group	December 2020	Mike Cockburn	Completed
Active Travel	Working group	December 2021	Julie Barnes	Ongoing
Task and Finish work				
Allotment provision Task & Finish	Workshop and Report	October 2020	Alex Davidson	Complete
Referral From Council				
Motion - Protecting Residents from Flood Risks	TBC			
Motion – Equal Pavement Pledge	TBC			
Training				
Biodiversity training for committee/all members		TBC		

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Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee – Terms of Reference

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee has responsibility for parks and open spaces, highways management and infrastructure, coastal protection and flood defence and environment and waste matters. It is the Committee that leads on behalf of the Council in responding to and matters concerning the Climate Emergency. The Committee is also responsible for the overview and scrutiny of flood risk management and coastal erosion management functions.

The Committee is charged by full Council to undertake responsibility for the Council's role and functions:-

- (a) in co-ordinating the response to cross-cutting sustainability issues such as reducing carbon emissions, air quality issues, climate change response, improving resource efficiency and developing sustainable energy;
- (b) in relation to all highways matters and as highway authority, street authority, bridge authority, including but not limited to public open spaces, street furniture on the highway and open spaces or parts of open spaces immediately adjacent to the highway;
- (c) in relation to traffic management and transport and as traffic authority, including but not limited to public passenger transport and the co-ordination of transport for service users, traffic orders and rights of way issues;
- (d) in relation to parking, including on and off-street parking and civil parking enforcement;
- (e) in respect of parks, open spaces, countryside management, allotments, playgrounds and cemeteries, including arboricultural, gardening and warden services;
- (f) in relation to the management of authorised and unauthorised sites and encampments, this to include all activities necessary or incidental to the Council's performance of its responsibilities in relation to Gypsies, Roma and Travellers;
- (g) in relation to waste and as waste collection authority, litter authority, including but not limited to dealing with litter, street cleansing, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling, and the Council's relationship with Merseyside Recycling & Waste Authority (MRWA) as the joint waste disposal authority;
- (h) as coast protection authority and lead local flood authority;
- (i) in respect of emergency planning and community resilience (infrastructure and contract services);
- (j) providing a view of performance, budget monitoring and risk management in relation to the Committee's functions; and
- (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.
- (l) in respect of Section 9JB of the Local Government Act 2000, the functions to review and scrutinise the exercise by risk management authorities of flood risk management and of coastal erosion management functions which may affect the local authority's area.

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