

ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

Wednesday, 18 September 2024

Present: Councillor EA Grey (Chair)

Councillors M Booth J Williamson
G Jenkinson R Pitt
A Brame V Wilson
S Foulkes N Graham
G Wood

Apologies Councillors G Davies

17 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.

18 APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham Davies.

19 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.

Councillor Steve Foulkes advised that he was the Chair of the Liverpool City Region Transport Committee and that this does not impair his judgement with regard to any decisions at this committee.

Councillor Gill Wood informed the committee that she was the Deputy Cabinet Member for Net Zero for the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority.

20 MINUTES

The Chair noted that item 11 the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee performance report made reference to data being shared with Members as a percentage but clarified that Members would like the raw data.

With this correction it was:

Resolved – That the minutes of the meeting held on 15 July 2024 be approved and adopted as a correct record.

21 PUBLIC AND MEMBER QUESTIONS

21.1 Public Questions

The Chair confirmed that three public questions had been received.

Stephanie Thompson attended the committee meeting to ask a question about the monitoring of forever chemicals or PFAS at wastewater treatment works and along the river Mersey. The Chair responded that this was an important issue and echoed the concerns raised. The Chair noted that she would be happy to push for monitoring of PFAS along the river Mersey and requested that this be added to the committees work programme so that updates could be provided to Members.

A question was received from Janice Minchin in relation to clearing grass from West Kirby Lake. The Chair reported that a written response would be provided within 10 working days.

Lindsey Whittle asked a question about active travel improvements in Wirral West and the timescales within which they might be delivered. The Chair directed the questioner to the consultation on the draft Core Active Travel Network and urged them to respond with their views regarding the routes and timescales as feedback from residents was critical.

21.2 Statements and petitions

Councillor Mark Skillicorn attended the meeting and presented a petition on Hillbark road and adjoining side roads which requested that traffic calming, and speed reduction measures be introduced as well as requesting the removal of the national speed limit on sections of the road.

21.3 Questions by Members

Councillor Gail Jenkinson asked a question about the impact on the Council's carbon budget, biodiversity net gain and tree and clean air strategies of building on the greenbelt. The Chair responded that all Members had instructed officers to create a local plan that was brownfield only and that there was no desire to see greenbelt built on.

HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN

The Senior Highway Maintenance Street Light Manager introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which presented and recommended approval of the Council's Highway Infrastructure Asset Management (HIAM) Performance Plan for 2023-27. The Plan brought together previous Performance Management Framework (PMF), Communications Strategy, Risk Management and Asset Data Information Plan. The Performance Plan provided clear details of how the Highway and Infrastructure would be managed, monitored, communicated and how risks would be assessed to deliver the outcomes outlined in the Policy and Strategy.

In response to Member queries about the performance measures set out in the report, particularly in relation to killed and seriously injured (KSI) and road traffic accident (RTA) injuries, the Senior Highway Maintenance Street Light Manager informed the committee that the targets and criteria in the plan were based on the Liverpool City Region criteria and that the Council must measure in the same way as other boroughs so that data could be compared. The Assistant Director: Highways and Infrastructure clarified that the council could introduce local targets in line with vision zero but must continue to capture the regional data.

Members commented on the monitoring of resurfacing work and whether the fact that vehicles were becoming larger and heavier had been factored into future plans. The Senior Highway Maintenance Street Light Manager confirmed that many roads were constructed with structural concrete as they were old tram roads, but officers were aware that flexible roads may suffer more deterioration and that there were maintenance programmes that were proactive in identifying such roads. Furthermore, all surface treatments were quality checked after 12 months to ensure that the required standards had been met.

The Senior Highway Maintenance Street Light Manager acknowledged that the surface treatments used were weather dependent and that this could cause disruption to residents if works could not go ahead as advertised. Members suggested that information could be shared with ward councillors to help advise residents.

Resolved – That

- (1) the Highway Infrastructure Asset Management Performance Plan 2023-27, as set out in Appendix 1 to this report be approved**

(2) the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to make any non-substantive revisions or amendments to these documents as are necessary to align with the Council's corporate objectives or with legislative changes.

23 **REVIEW AND UPDATE OF THE HIGHWAY NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN**

The Assistant Director: Highways and Infrastructure introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which provided Members with an update on the highway Network Management Plan (NMP). The NMP outlined the Council's approach to the Network Management Duty placed upon it by the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA). The aim of the TMA was to improve overall network performance. The updated plan reflected a full review to the local network arrangements, changes in national and local priorities as well as any legislative changes.

Members highlighted the importance of emergency services getting through the roads when necessary and that a lot of the roads in the borough were built prior to the amount of traffic present today and how the plan would be implemented on narrowed roads. The Assistant Director: Highways and infrastructure informed the committee there had been an increase in vehicles having to park partially on the pavement to ensure there was room for traffic to move through and that work would be done with local communities to identify the best way forward.

In response to Member queries regarding the removal of the flyover at Queensway tunnel The Assistant Director: Highways and infrastructure advised that traffic modelling was ongoing and that officers were clear on what the network management duty was whilst still moving the volume of traffic.

Members sought clarification on the powers of the Council in instances of abandoned vehicles and vehicles for sale taking up priority parking spaces on the highway. The Assistant Director: Highways and infrastructure informed the committee that the Council works with the police closely on obstructions on the highway and have been able to remove vehicles previously. It was further clarified that the Council has the resources to remove vehicles being sold on the highway if they were not fully taxed and legally able to be on the road.

The Chair noted that sat nav's were directing vehicles on roads not designed for through traffic and queried whether the Council could work with sat nav companies to direct traffic onto main roads instead. The Assistant Director: Highways and infrastructure advised that Members would receive a briefing note on the matter but ultimately sat nav's used an algorithm that would direct traffic onto popular routes and whilst companies could reset the algorithm to

make the required changes, but it would revert once traffic opted to use the route again.

Resolved – That the draft highway Network Management Plan, as set out in Appendix A to this report be approved and the Director of Neighbourhood Services be authorised to finalise any further minor changes in consultation with the Chair and Spokespersons of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee.

24 **BY OURS BEBINGTON LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD**

The Lead Commissioner: Strategic Transport and Technology introduced the report of the Director of Regeneration and Place which asked the Committee to note the work undertaken by Sustrans on the Bebington “By Ours” Liveable Neighbourhood Project and sought approval for the Director of Regeneration and Place to work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to investigate funding opportunities for further development and delivery of the By Ours proposals.

The By Ours project was a community project in which residents, businesses and schools took the lead on re-designing their own streets. The project had been led by Sustrans and had been funded from the Freshfield Foundation, a grant making trust, in conjunction with the LCRCA, to develop a Liverpool City Region (LCR) wide Liveable Neighbourhood programme. It was reported that the estimated cost of the project was £10m with a benefit cost ratio of 1.59-2.2 which was between medium and high value for money however no budget had been made available by the Freshfield Foundation.

Members welcomed the level of consultation that had been undertaken by Sustrans, noting the high level of engagement and co design element of the project and suggested it be used as a consultation model for future projects.

It was noted by Members that there was currently a spending freeze in place at the Council and that it was important to manage residents’ expectations. The Lead Commissioner: Strategic Transport and Technology informed the committee that the project was scalable and that small areas of the project could be undertaken if funding was made available.

Members placed on record their thanks to former Councillor Christina Muspratt for her hard work in laying the foundations for what later became this piece of work.

Resolved – That

- (1) the development, design and consultation work undertaken by Sustrans in the delivery of the 'by ours' project as detailed in the Bebington feasibility report as attached as appendix 1 be noted;**
- (2) the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to seek appropriate funding opportunities for further development and delivery of the by ours proposals.**

25 **'SINGLE USE PLASTIC' AUDIT FINDINGS AND PROPOSAL TO UPDATE THE COUNCIL'S CURRENT 'SINGLE USE PLASTIC' POLICY**

The Climate Emergency Officer introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which reviewed the effectiveness of the Council's 2018 'Single Use Plastic' policy. An internal audit of all Council buildings currently in use had been undertaken to identify any single use plastics used and procured by the Council. The findings of the audit found a range of Single Use Plastic items being used.

The report enabled the Council to commit to embed Single Use Plastic reduction into the Council's procurement practices. This would involve working with suppliers to provide alternatives to Single Use Plastic products and raise awareness of Council staff and the wider borough surrounding the dangers single use plastics have to health and the local environment.

In response to Member queries, the Climate Emergency Officer confirmed that some vending machines did have plastic water bottles, but that work was being undertaken with procurement to correct this. The Climate Emergency Officer explained that vending machines with plastic toys had also been identified and that the duty managers of leisure centres where they were located had agreed for them to be removed.

Resolved – That

- (1) the findings of the Wirral Council 'Single Use Plastic' audit be noted.**
- (2) the updated Single Use Plastic Policy be approved.**

26 **AIR QUALITY IMPLEMENTATION PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2024**

The Air Quality Manager introduced the report of the Director of Neighbourhood Services which provided the first update on the progress on the Air Quality Implementation plan for the Wirral Air Quality Strategy 2024-28. It also provided an update on the Air Quality Status report (ASR) for 2024,

which incorporated actions taken during 2023 to improve air quality, and an update on monitoring results for air pollution during 2023. Progress of the development of the implementation plan, how it would be governed and an overview of progress with actions for 2024 was summarised within the report.

In response to Member queries about air quality near schools, the Air Quality Manager reported that air quality monitoring sites were specified by technical guidance from the Department for Environment, Food, and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) which requires monitoring near roadsides or buildings and did not have the resources available to offer more bespoke monitoring, but that officers were keen to work with voluntary organisations to access further funding.

Members noted that Liscard, Poulton and Upton wards were already close to breaching air quality national targets and that work would need to be done on the ground to make a positive change to the air quality.

Resolved – That

- (1) the progress in 23/24 contained within the ASR be recognised**
- (2) the latest air quality monitoring results for 2023 be acknowledged**
- (3) the actions contained within the AQ implementation plan and governance routes be endorsed.**

27 **WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chair introduced the report which enabled Members of the Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to contribute to the delivery of the annual work programme.

Resolved – That the Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee work programme be noted.