

NETWORK MANAGEMENT PLAN

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report outlines the key elements of the Council's first Network Management Plan and seeks endorsement of the principles set out in the document. The Plan is intended to set out the processes that the Council employs to meet the Council's duty under the Traffic Management Act 2004.
- 1.2 Whilst there is no statutory requirement to develop a Network Management Plan, it is considered that having such a plan will enable the authority to ensure it is actively working to make the most efficient use of its existing road network to support economic and community development across the borough. It will also fully demonstrate to the Government Office North West how the Council is complying with its duty through an assessment of current processes and the identification of performance targets and areas for improvement. The plan documents existing procedures and working practices and sets out action plans and improvement areas to enable the authority to comply with the requirements of the Traffic Management Act and the associated Network Management Duty. A copy of the proposed Wirral Network Management Plan is attached as Appendix 1.

2.0 BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004 introduced a Network Management Duty on local traffic authorities, which came into effect in January 2005. Section 16 of the Act sets out the requirement of the new duty as follows;
- (1) *"It is the duty of a local traffic authority to manage their road network with a view to achieving, so far as is reasonably practicable having regard to their other obligations, policies and objectives, the following objectives: -*
- (a) *Securing the expeditious movement of traffic on the authority's road network; and*
- (b) *Facilitating the expeditious movement of traffic on road networks for which another authority is the traffic authority."*
- 2.2 Members should be aware that the Council already has systems in place to control the impact of traffic and road works on the efficient operation of the highway network and is largely successful in that respect. Examples would include the establishment of a traffic sensitive route network, annual processing of 50,000 notices relating to public utility and road works in the Borough and various co-ordination meetings to mitigate the impact of these works.
- 2.3 Guidance on the Network Management Duty, published by the Department for Transport, makes it clear that the duty applies to the whole authority and requires consideration of anything that affects the coordination or regulation of the flow of traffic, not just the activities of the highways department and third parties. For example, if an authority allows a contract for refuse collection on a route in rush hour, it would be expected to demonstrate that due regard had been given to the duty beforehand.

- 2.4 Monitoring the implementation of the Duty in local traffic authorities will be through the Local Transport Plan Progress Report structures, therefore in keeping with national best practice the five Merseyside district authorities agreed to develop Network Management Plans in two parts. Part A is a common strategic section for Merseyside and Part B is a local plan for each authority but based on a common layout.
- 2.5 Part A principally draws together the policies and strategies relevant to the Network Management Duty from the Local Transport Plan previously approved by the Council. Consequently it has not been reproduced with the report but is available from the Network Traffic Management section and can be viewed in the electronic Council Library.
- 2.6 The draft Wirral Network Management Plan Part B document covers the following key elements:
- ***Introduction and Equality of Travel Opportunities***

This section of the Plan outlines the background to the Traffic Management Act and Network Management Duty. It also summarises the consideration and needs of all road users.
 - ***Corporate and Departmental Objectives, Local Transport Plan and Key Stakeholders***

In this section, the document outlines the joint working arrangements that have been developed both at a regional, sub-regional and local level and sets out the Council's statutory responsibilities, highway assets and departmental outcomes framework. Detail is also provided on the LTP's key priorities.
 - ***Performing the Network Management Duty; Management and Co-ordination, Monitoring and Control, Communication and Marketing and Technology***

This section of the Plan outlines co-ordination and planning of all streetworks activities and summarises the co-ordination groups, which have been established to ensure that internal and external works are fully co-ordinated across the Borough. It also summarises the Travelwise campaign including details on travel plans and provision of travel information. Details are also provided on technology used to comply with the Network Management Duty including our traffic signal control centre and extensive CCTV coverage.
 - ***Appendices – key contacts, network management hierarchy, height and weight restrictions etc.***

The appendices set out, amongst other things, the key contacts of the Councils and its Partners with regard to the planning and co-ordination of streetworks associated with the Duty and the wider implications of the Traffic Management Act.
- 2.7 Progress against targets and improvement actions set out in these sections will be closely monitored to ensure that they contribute to improved network management and that they are effective in helping the Authority to meet its obligations under the Network Management Duty.
- 2.8 Under the new national performance framework, a performance indicator (NI 167) has been developed to directly measure how well authorities are performing in meeting their network management duties. Our performance on this indicator, which

measures the average journey time per mile during the morning peak, will be regularly updated and reported through the LTP progress reports to the Council's Streetscene and Transport Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.9 The authority must be able to demonstrate and provide evidence to the Secretary of State for Transport, that it has made suitable arrangements and has implemented procedures and measures to comply with the requirements of the Network Management Duty. If the Secretary of State is not satisfied that the authority is performing satisfactorily, he may serve an intervention notice on the authority, generally to request additional information. He may also serve an intervention order to make provision for the appointment of a traffic director to oversee and direct the approach of the authority to comply with the duty at the authority's expense.

2.10 It is recognised that the Wirral Network Management Plan is a working document and contains a comprehensive action plan to direct future actions and provides a framework for monitoring progress. Annual reports will be submitted to Cabinet Member on progress with the action plan.

3.0 FINANCIAL AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

3.1 The cost of the Plan's development process will be met from existing resources and budgets. However, the resource implications and further enhancements required to promote the Network Management Duty will need to be revisited when further parts of the Act are endorsed in the future.

4.0 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS

4.1 When considering effective network management the definition of traffic includes all types of vehicles as well as all other road users such as pedestrians and cyclists, and includes vulnerable users such as the elderly and disabled.

5.0 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no specific Community Safety implications arising from this report.

6.0 LOCAL AGENDA 21 IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The effective management of the highway network and the reduction of congestion will reduce the environmental impact of traffic and reduce pollution.

7.0 PLANNING IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no specific Planning Implications arising from this report.

8.0 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS

8.1 There are no human rights implications arising from this report.

9.0 ANTI-POVERTY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no specific Anti-Poverty implications arising from this report.

10.0 SOCIAL INCLUSION IMPLICATIONS

10.1 There are no specific Social Inclusion implications arising from this report.

11.0 LOCAL MEMBER SUPPORT IMPLICATIONS

11.1 This report has implications throughout the Borough.

12.0 ACCESS TO INFORMATION ACT

12.1 The Traffic Management Act 2004 document has been used in preparing this report.

13.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That

- (1) the report be noted and the authority's approach to the Network Management Duty including the Draft Wirral Network Management Plan be endorsed; and
- (2) the Director of Technical Services be authorised to finalise the Wirral Network Management Plan in consultation with the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services.

DAVID GREEN, DIRECTOR
TECHNICAL SERVICES