

## **Cabinet**

**18 February 2013**

### **210 THE DEVOLUTION OF MAJOR TRANSPORT SCHEMES FUNDING AND THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT ASSURANCE FRAMEWORK**

A report by the Interim Director of Technical Services informed that in the next spending review the Department for Transport (DfT) was proposing to devolve funding for major transport schemes to local areas. This necessitated the establishment of a Local Transport Body (LTB) to oversee the process, guided by an Assurance Framework, which was to be agreed by the DfT in respect of the governance and management arrangements of the LTB.

Councillor H Smith introduced the report and informed that the DfT had proposed a significant change in the way major transport scheme funding was to be allocated. Currently Central Government had to approve all schemes over £5m. The Government was proposing that from 2015 local transport bodies were established, essentially to take over the decision making role of the DfT with regard to major scheme funding, and would be able to decide how to spend the money on priorities that best suited their local needs, without Whitehall approval. The City Region Cabinet, the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and the Integrated Transport Authority had agreed that the LTB would cover the established City Region geography. The Cabinet noted that £35.5million, with a contingency of +/- 33%, had been allocated to the Liverpool City Region (LCR) LTB over a four year period from 2015/16.

The Interim Director's report set out the requirements that the DfT had made with regard to the devolution process, as although it was devolving funding decisions to the LTB, it still required established DfT processes and methodologies to be followed.

The Interim Director's report asked the Cabinet to note the progress made to date on the development of the LTB, and consider and endorse the draft Assurance Framework because this Assurance Framework was required in order for the LTB to be formally constituted and to establish its powers. This document had to be submitted to the DfT by the end of February 2013, and therefore, due to the short timescales, agreement was being sought for the Chief Executive to be granted delegated authority to oversee this process and approve its submission.

Appendix 1 to the report set out the draft of the Assurance Framework. Councillor Smith directed Members to Section 5.2 of the report which summarised the main points. Councillor Smith informed that this Framework was the subject of report across all City Region networks and constituent local authorities/organisations.

Councillor Smith reported that the LCR Cabinet had agreed, in principle, that the LTB would be composed of the Leaders and the Mayor of Liverpool City Council, the Chair of the ITA and the Chair of the LEP. Wirral Council had been asked to nominate representatives and the Cabinet was asked to consider the nomination of the Leader of the Council as Wirral's representative, and the Streetscene and Transport Services Portfolio Holder as the deputy, for appointment to the LTB. Any nominations must be referred to Council for endorsement or otherwise.

Councillor Smith also reported that the LTB would be advised via a Senior Officer body called the Transport Advisory Group. This Group had already started work on a transparent methodology against which to score candidate schemes. Appendix 4 to the Interim Director's report detailed the prioritisation methodology and Councillor Smith asked the Cabinet to endorse this approach. It was noted that there would also be a wider stakeholder Group to provide input into this process.

The Cabinet was informed that the Council would also need to sign up to a legally binding agreement with Merseytravel regarding the establishment of the LTB as it would be acting as the accountable body.

The Cabinet noted that a prioritised list of major schemes for the City Region must be submitted to the DfT in July 2013. Post July, a shorter list of schemes would be developed and brought forward for approval by the LTB, with schemes being delivered from April 2015 onwards. Officers were asked to provide follow up information on the issues covered at appropriate intervals.

Councillor P Davies reported that the Interim Director of Technical Services, Chris McCarthy was attending his last Cabinet meeting as he was leaving the employment of the Council shortly. He thanked Mr McCarty for all of his hard work, for helping to get the Council through some challenging times and wished him well for the future.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the progress to date in the development of the LTB be noted;**
- (2) the Council be recommended to endorse the nomination of the Leader of the Council as Wirral's representative and the Cabinet Member for Streetscene and Transport Services as a deputy on the LTB at its next meeting;**
- (3) the draft Assurance Framework and its associated principles, as set out in Appendix 1 of the report, be endorsed ahead of its submission to the DfT;**
- (4) the Chief Executive be granted delegated authority to oversee minor, editorial processes to the draft Assurance Framework (based on issues arising from the approvals process within partner organisations) and its submission to the Department for Transport by the end of February 2013 be approved;**
- (5) the approach with regard to the scheme prioritisation methodology be endorsed;**
- (6) the Interim Director of Technical Services, in conjunction with the Acting Director of Law, HR and Asset Management/Interim Head of Legal and Member Services be authorised to sign up to a legally binding agreement with Merseytravel as the accountable body for the LTB; and**
- (7) follow-up information on the above issues be provided for the Cabinet, at appropriate intervals.**