

CABINET PORTFOLIO SUMMARY REPORT

REPORT OF	Councillor Stuart Whittingham
CABINET PORTFOLIO FOR	Highways And Transport
CO-ORDINATING CHIEF OFFICER	Mark Smith, Head Of Environment & Regulation

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report is an update from the Cabinet Portfolio Holder to Members of the Council on matters relevant to his portfolio.

1. MAINTENANCE PROGRAMMES FOR 2014/15, INCLUDING THE POTHOLE REPAIR FUND

The highway maintenance part of the Council's Capital Programme is now completed with the exception of one scheme at Kings Parade, New Brighton which requires preparatory work to the surface this year ahead of surface treatment early in 2015/16, and a number of footway treatments which are underway.

The programme of pothole repairs is continuing with approximately 2,000 potholes having been filled already, and there are now four crews working; one in each of the four Constituency Areas. Details of the streets being treated and the numbers of pothole filled or to be filled have been published on the Council's website, and this will be updated in January when we submit our quarterly progress report to the Department for Transport (DfT).

2. HIGHWAY SERVICES CONTRACT

Contract performance targets have been successfully achieved for the second quarter of the year, and I am impressed that the level of complaints attributable to the term contractor's activity in the first six months has dropped from 38 last year, under the old contract, to 14 during the same period this year.

The contractor and ourselves have prepared well to deliver the highways winter gritting service, and with the contractor using the same driver resources used in the previous contract, familiarity with gritting routes, equipment and procedures with a few improvements to arrangements, has meant that the service has been as effective as in recent years. The construction of the new salt storage dome at the Cleveland Street depot is progressing and should be available for operations from February 2015.

3. MAJOR SCHEME SUBMISSION – DOCK BRIDGES

The technical appraisals and outline business case for the replacement of two of the Docks Bridges are now complete, and recommendations have been made to the Board of our key partner, Peel Ports, and a report will be presented to my Cabinet colleagues at our meeting on 15 January 2015, in order to approve the recommended option and the Council's funding contribution to the project, prior to the submission of the full Major Scheme Business Case to the approval body in May 2015.

4. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND

Merseytravel are to report to partners, including ourselves, in the near future regarding their proposals for an LSTF revenue programme for 2015/16. Although the Liverpool City Region (LCR) bid to the DfT was unsuccessful, the ambition is to continue to operate an LSTF revenue programme throughout Merseyside using the £1.6m contingency fund which was provided across the lifetime of the LSTF project, as well as any underspend which is returned from partner authorities. Given the success of the Wirral element of the programme I am keen that we maintain an active role in any 2015/16 programmes to maximise benefits for Wirral residents.

5. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION GROWTH DEAL

Wirral have recently submitted a programme of schemes as part of the Sustainable Transport Enhancements Programme (STEP). £13.8m of funding is available for the first 2 years of the 6 year growth deal, with £41.4m available to the Liverpool City Region over the entire programme. Partner authorities have submitted detailed programmes for the first 2 years and indicative programmes for the latter 4 years.

Wirral have submitted schemes totalling £1.7m out of the £13.8m available for the first 2 years and overall, partner authorities have requested £19m of funding against the £13.8m. Merseytravel will be carrying out a prioritisation exercise to evaluate the cost benefits of the proposals prior to reporting their recommendations to the Local Enterprise Partnership.

6. STREET LIGHTING STRATEGY DELIVERY

The project to convert almost 7,000 of Wirral's higher energy burning street lights to LED lanterns with remote monitoring capability is now underway. Specialist support to assist in developing the £4.3 m value project specifications have been appointed, and I am also pleased that the Council has secured an interest free loan of almost £2.5 m for the project, which will reduce the revenue budget impact of repaying the capital borrowing by approximately £100,000k. The project is expected to be carried out, and completed, within 2015/16.