



ECONOMY REGENERATION AND DEVELOPMENT COMMITTEE
29th SEPTEMBER 2021

REPORT TITLE	LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOODS:
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval for officers to work with Sustrans, the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) and local stakeholders to co-develop and design a 'Liveable Neighbourhood' in Bebington, and to produce a business case which could be used to secure future funding to be used to deliver the required infrastructure.

The main objectives of a Liveable Neighbourhood are to:

- Create high-quality public spaces that prioritise people over cars;
- Encourage more people to take journeys on foot, cycle or other active transport modes, reducing their carbon footprint;
- Create low-traffic areas and remove rat running;
- Provide opportunities for better social connections, thriving local economies and more sustainable living; and
- Give people the say in the design of their streets and foster more active and empowered communities.

The Wirral Plan 2021-2026 sets out the Council's vision to secure the best possible future for our residents, defined by the community prosperity we create and supported by our excellent people and services. This proposal directly supports the following key themes within that plan:

- A cleaner, greener borough which celebrates, protects and improves our environment and urgently tackles the environmental emergency; and
- Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families.

This matter affects the Bebington ward.

This matter is not a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATION

The Economy, Regeneration & Development Committee is requested to:

- (i) Authorise Officers to work with Sustrans and local stakeholders, including schools and residents, to co-develop and design a Liveable Neighbourhood (incorporating a school neighbourhood cluster) in Bebington, and to produce a business case which could be used to secure future funding;
- (ii) Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Director of Neighbourhood Services, Chair and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee and the Environment, Transport and Climate Change Committee, to implement any temporary test/trial schemes which arise from the stakeholder co-development programme; and
- (iii) Note that a further report will be brought forward to Members for approval of the business case, the submission of any funding application and installation of any permanent Liveable Neighbourhoods infrastructure.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council achieves the development and delivery of active travel schemes within the Borough as part of a Liverpool City Region (LCR) wide programme of schemes and interventions to address the impact of traffic dominance on the lives of residents and reduce known detrimental effects on resident's health, their environment and quality of life.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Council supports schemes which will deliver increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the emerging Local Plan and to support actions required to address the Climate Emergency and the target in the Cool2 Strategy to 'a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030'. Currently two thirds of all journeys in the Liverpool City Region are 3 miles or less but more than half of these journeys are taken by car.
- 1.3 To ensure that the Council benefits from the funding that is available to Sustrans via the Freshfield Foundation to co-develop a business case to which will place us in a strong position to access further funding via the LCRCA, the Department for Transport (DfT) or other funders.
- 1.4 To ensure that the Council benefits from the experience and expertise that an organisation like Sustrans can offer. Sustrans are a registered charity with a vision of *"a society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone"*.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council could not accept the offer to work with Sustrans. This is not considered to be an appropriate option given that supporting active travel is in line with our commitments to address the climate emergency, improve the health of our residents and encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.
- 2.2 The funding identified for the project could be used for other purposes. This is not an option as the funding is not provided directly to the Council. The £2.2 million funding has been provided to Sustrans from the Freshfield Foundation specifically to develop an LCR wide Liveable Neighbourhood programme. Sustrans are proposing to work with all 6 LCRCA authorities over a 2 year period. Liveable Neighbourhood programmes have already started to be delivered by Sustrans in Sefton, Liverpool and St Helens.
- 2.3 Other geographical areas in the Borough have been considered however using Sustrans' selection and prioritisation criteria and GIS data mapping, each of the areas were investigated for suitability and impact and Bebington was suggested to be the most appropriate location for the proposed project. Additional local information highlighted in previous years by members, residents, schools and local stakeholders was also considered in the decision making including issues regarding road safety, accessibility to schools and rat

running through local streets. Appendix 1 sets out further detail regarding the selection process.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Sustrans is a national charity, established in 1977, who want to make it easier for people to cycle and walk. Their vision is a society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone and their mission is to make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
- 3.2 Sustrans have approached the LCRCA with a proposal to work with all 6 districts to develop Liveable Neighbourhoods. (These programmes also sometimes called Low Traffic Neighbourhoods). The main objectives of a Liveable Neighbourhoods programme are to:
- Create high-quality public spaces that prioritise people over cars;
 - Encourage more people to take journeys on foot, cycle or other active transport modes, reducing their carbon footprint;
 - Create low-traffic areas and remove rat running;
 - Provide opportunities for better social connections, thriving local economies and more sustainable living; and
 - Give people the say in the design of their streets and foster more active and empowered communities.
- 3.3 Sustrans have secured revenue from the Freshfield Foundation to work with all 6 LCR districts. The Freshfield Foundation has its roots in the Liverpool City Region and most of the funds it distributes in grants come from the sale of the Littlewoods Organisation which was based in Liverpool.
- 3.4 Sustrans and Freshfield Foundation began working together in 1999. Through the LCRCA, Wirral have previously worked with Sustrans to develop Bike Life, the UK's largest attitudinal assessment of cycling, of which LCR became one of the 14 UK areas involved, launching their first biennial report in 2020.
- 3.5 The Bike Life report highlights that nearly two thirds (64%) of those surveyed agreed that restricting through-traffic on local residential streets would make their area a better place to live and work, while 63% thought streets outside schools should be closed to cars during drop off and pick up times.
- 3.6 The Bike Life report also revealed:
- Cycling trips across Liverpool City Region saved 18,000 tonnes of greenhouse gas emissions last year. Cycling took 29,000 cars off the LCR roads each day.
 - Whilst the majority of residents never cycle (70%), 30% would like to start.
 - Half of residents agree that too many people are driving in their neighbourhood.

- 3.7 The LCR wide Liveable Neighbourhood programme is proposed to be delivered in 2 tranches, with each lasting 18 months. Each tranche is structured as below:
- Inception and scoping to identify the appropriate locations;
 - 3 School Neighbourhood Projects; and
 - 3 Liveable Neighbourhood Projects building on the groundwork developed with the schools.
- 3.8 The scoping reports have been completed by Sustrans and these are included as appendices – Appendix 1 is the Local Neighbourhoods Scoping Report and Appendix 2 is the Schools Scoping Report.
- 3.9 The approach to the Liveable Neighbourhood programme and School Neighbourhood programmes are grounded in community consultation. Sustrans aim to deliver a project which has:
- extensive community engagement above and beyond statutory consultation requirements;
 - trialled and tested designs endorsed by the communities they serve; and
 - future capital spend opportunities that are evidenced and based on community need.
- 3.10 The aims and objectives of the Liveable Neighbourhood and School Neighbourhood programmes have natural alignment with a number of local policies and strategies, such as Wirral emerging Local Plan, Wirral 2025 and the LCRCA Local Journeys Strategy. Schemes are considered to be placemaking schemes and not solely a transport scheme.
- 3.11 A 'liveable neighbourhood' will typically describe an approach that creates low traffic, low speed neighbourhoods. Using 'modal filters' on roads that aren't the main roads, it creates barriers to cars whilst still allowing people walking or cycling to benefit from direct access. People wishing to drive will still be able to get to their front doors, businesses or any key location in the area in the car but they may have to travel slightly further than before. (A modal filter is a traffic management measure that stops vehicles passing but allows people travelling on foot and by bicycle through. Modal filters can be designed in many different ways from a simple row of bollards to more complex designs including seating, planting and play equipment).
- 3.12 The aim of a Liveable Neighbourhood is to improve the area is to remove traffic that is 'rat-running' through communities and to make short journeys attractive by other means rather than the car. It aims to make a neighbourhood have increasingly low levels of motorised traffic as less people choose to travel through the area who are not local residents or accessing a destination in the area.
- 3.13 Two thirds of all journeys in Liverpool city region are 3 miles or less but more than half of these journeys are taken by car. The impacts of this traffic dominance on the lives of local people are widespread, impacting on their

health, environment and quality of life. To reduce these negative impacts there is a need to change the streets used by local people for local journeys to make them more convenient for walking, cycling and using public transport than using cars. This project seeks to demonstrate a scalable model for applying the changes in a pilot neighbourhoods with the potential that this approach could be rolled out more widely in the borough.

3.14 During the Liveable Neighbourhood programme Sustrans are proposing to engage and work with local residents and districts to co-develop proposals to design exemplar neighbourhoods that respond to local issues, creating healthier and safer places for people to live, work and play. The community engagement will be delivered in the following stages:

- Stakeholder & Partner Engagement and data gathering;
- Co-discovery (finding the problems and being issue led);
- Co-development (working together to look at assets and possibilities);
- Co-Design (designing solutions, that work for local people); and
- Project trials (test, refine and celebrate before implementation).

3.15 The development of School Neighbourhoods will be the initial driver to the project and the community engagement tool that leads into the wider programme of liveable neighbourhoods. Experience from previous projects delivered by Sustrans has shown that the school gates see a cross-section of the community and are an excellent source of local intelligence. Initial schools engagement will allow a better understanding of the interest and perceptions for the viability of interventions both outside the school gates and neighbourhood wide.

3.16 By working with schools early on in the process, it is proposed to set the scene for more comprehensive neighbourhood proposals by:

- Gaining community confidence by addressing safety concerns expressed by many children, parents and local residents;
- Start to introduce Liveable Neighbourhoods concepts to the wider community;
- Create local reference points and areas of activity that aid local understanding and a desire for change; and
- Making visible change happen, through early interventions and comprehensive behaviour change programme.

3.17 The project is developed in 5 phases:

Phase 1: Street Classification

Members of the local community work together to co-create a map which identifies the streets that should be used by vehicles to travel through and those that should only be used for local car trips. This, combined with early data analysis and the feedback from the online surveys and 'on the ground' engagement form the basis of a 'Filtered Neighbourhood' plan.

The outcomes of these workshops are then further developed by engineers at Sustrans and Districts. Key considerations include the availability of parallel routes (spacing between through routes) and potential inconvenience to local car journeys, as well as the location of schools, parks and other community destinations.

Phase 2: Filter Locations

Co-design workshops with residents focussing on the locations and type of modal filters that would be suitable and the design for the trial are then developed by Sustrans designers. The proposed filter locations are designed to:

- Remove through traffic from the neighbourhood cells;
- Ensure every destination remains accessible by car;
- Minimise the number of filters; and
- Create new valuable public space.

Phase 3: Design

Based on community feedback a 'vision plan' is developed and agreed by stakeholders to ensure that meets the stated aims of the project and takes into account of the views of members of the community.

Phase 4: Trial

A trial is launched and monitoring commences to assess the impact on travel, air quality and safety. Based on the data collected and on the feedback from the community, it will be possible to make changes to the trial scheme once it is on the ground.

The community engagement and trials are expected to be completed by the end of Spring 2022.

Phase 5: Business Case Development

Following completion of the community engagement Sustrans will continue work with communities and schools on celebration and demonstration events alongside the production of comprehensive business cases which subject to a further decision by members could enable further funding to be secured to implement the proposals.

It is expected that this could be completed by Summer 2022.

- 3.18 Transport for London have delivered a similar Liveable Neighbourhood programme. The flagship scheme in Waltham Forest has highlighted how such schemes are not simply transport related, but help communities to build back better, improve life expectancy, retail economies and thriving high streets, and create more inclusive places improving social connectivity and creating better environments.
- 3.19 The flagship filtered neighbourhood approach in Waltham Forest has been found to have removed 44% of traffic from residential streets. The number of journeys as a total reduced as people chose alternate routes and switched

from car use to walking and cycling. The evidence found that people were walking 30 mins more a week on average and 10 mins more a week cycling.

- 3.20 Gear Change: One Year On, published by the Department for Transport in July 2021 provides a review into the progress made towards achieving the goals of the Gear Change walking and cycling plan. It recognises that *“Low Traffic Neighbourhoods have been perhaps the most contested element of our recent cycling and walking programme”*. The report states that the data from schemes shows that where schemes have been implemented there are significant reductions in traffic, and significant increases in cycling and walking.
- 3.21 The Gear Change: One Year On report also states that common concerns regarding low traffic neighbourhoods (LTNs) that they displace traffic to other roads, but says that in most cases this is not happening. It acknowledges that sometimes it does happen at the beginning as travel patterns are adjusted, but as schemes have been in place for longer that councils are reporting reductions in traffic on most of the roads around the LTNs. LTNs are cited to work because the people living in them change their travel behaviour – taking fewer short local journeys by car and walking or cycling more. This takes local traffic away from the surrounding roads too. On those roads, the reduction in these local car journeys in most cases can be seen to outweigh any increase caused by the diversion of longer-distance car journeys by people passing through.
- 3.22 Gear Change: One Year On highlights that changes in travel behaviour don't happen overnight but that the longer a scheme is in place, the greater its effect and Government state that such schemes must be given enough time to prove – or disprove – themselves.
- 3.23 The report also provides details regarding other concerns often raised regarding local traffic neighbourhoods with regard to increases in emergency service response times – stating that data is not shown to evidence this and schemes are shown to benefit public safety and schemes have shown to have halved road injuries in their area. Other research has shown that low traffic neighbourhoods reduce street crime, increasing safety by putting more pedestrians and cyclists on the streets and are socially inclusive.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Liveable Neighbourhood programme is being funded by the Freshfield Foundation as part of a Liverpool City Region wide programme. The funding has been given directly to Sustrans by the Freshfield Foundation and is not funding directly received by the Council.
- 4.2 There is no direct cost to the council for Sustrans to undertake the community engagement, co-development and design of the Liveable Neighbourhood Programme in Bebington, or for the production of a business case. By accepting the offer of support from Sustrans the Council is receiving specialist

behaviour change and technical/engineering design and advice at no cost, which would have a financial value if the Council wished to procure directly.

- 4.3 The proposal does not include any capital funding for delivery of permanent infrastructure – any further funding applications to implement a scheme would be subject to a separate report to members.

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 and the Traffic Management Act 2004. Any project trials delivered as part of the programme would require technical approval the Interim Assistant Director – Highways & Infrastructure to ensure these statutory duties were complied with.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

- 6.1 The project will be governed by a joint project team be led by the Sustrans team and involving officers from the LCRCA. Existing staff resources across both Neighbourhood Services and Regeneration and Place Directorate will support the project.
- 6.2 Sustrans shall act as the data controller for the scheme, Officers will support the draft of the Data Protection Impact Assessment, privacy statement and data sharing agreement. The Council and Sustrans will agree on preferred data sharing requirements and Wirral Council will provide Sustrans with data handling security protocols prior to sharing.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to accept the offer of support from Sustrans to develop the Liveable Neighbourhoods programme could be considered as failure to support the delivery of the priorities of the LCRCA and have reputational impact on Wirral and the LCR. Consequently, this could impact on future funding decisions and awards.
- 7.2 Government objectives set out in 'Gear Change', the Department of Transport (DfT) strategy and policy document for active travel released in July 2020 set out that the DfT's vision for cycling and walking to 'revolutionise active travel' and as part of that the Government ambition is that "*there will be less rat-running and many more low-traffic neighbourhoods*". Failure to adhere to the Gear Change strategy and associated technical guidance LTN1/20 may result in the Council failing to meet the standards set by the soon to be established Active Travel England body. This new body will assess Wirral's performance with respect to sustainable travel outcomes, particularly cycling and walking and this will be taken into account when considering further funding allocations.

- 7.3 Failure to secure participation and support from the local community and stakeholders. Sustrans are experienced in the delivery of similar successful projects. Using this experience proposals will be co-developed with local stakeholders including ward members, local residents, business and schools. Proposals may not be unanimously received however co-development should minimise this and all stakeholders will have the opportunity to play an active role in identification of issues and scheme development. Prior to implementation of any permanent measures further consultation would be undertaken and some of the proposals may also be subject to the requirement of a Traffic Regulation Order(s), and delivery may be dependent on resolving objections to proposals during consultation.
- 7.4 There are no financial risks to the authority with this stage of the project as funding to co-develop and design is provided by the Freshfield Foundation.
- 7.5 Undertaking the community engagement stage, project design and business case development may lead to raising the expectations of local residents and stakeholders as there is not guarantee of future funding. However, it is considered that by undertaking this advance consultation and project development that this would result in any future funding bid having a high chance of success and Government and the LCRCA place a considerable amount of emphasis in assessing funding applications on deliverability. Projects which have been highly developed generally stand a much better chance of success.
- 7.6 Participation in the scheme may have a negative impact on local businesses. Evidence shows that making changes that are good for walking and cycling are also good for local businesses. Local people who walk and cycle spend more in local shops than those who drive as they visit more often and cumulatively spend more.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Bebington Ward Councillors were invited to a briefing session with Sustrans on 4th August 2021. The slides from this presentation are included as Appendix 3.
- 8.2 Further consultations will be undertaken in accordance with the following guiding principles:
- It should be at a time when proposals are at a formative stage;
 - Must include sufficient reasons for particular proposals to allow those consulted to give intelligent consideration and an intelligent response;
 - Those consulted should be made aware of the factors that are of decisive relevance to the decision;
 - Adequate time should be given for consideration and response;
 - The product of the consultation should be conscientiously taken into account by the decision makers in finalising their statutory proposals/ when the ultimate decision is taken.

- 8.3 The Wirral Active Travel Forum is a formally constituted group which meets quarterly with interested public and private organisations and individuals, to support active travel as a simple, low cost and effective way for people to access life opportunities whilst increasing levels of physical activity in their day to day life. Membership of this group is open to all and the forum will continue to be engaged as this project develops.
- 8.4 Members will recall at their meeting on the 4th March 2021 it was agreed to establish an Active Travel Working Group to support the work of this committee. The newly formed Active Travel Members Working Group will also be engaged as these project develops.
- 8.5 There are 5 main opportunities for stakeholders to engage as part of the Liveable Neighbourhood project:
- 1) Initially the project team run an online and face to face community engagement to identify the issues people face in the area
 - 2) Once this data is collected, through a series of workshops the community are asked how they would like to see these issues solved.
 - 3) A summary of the consultation and design process and the plans for the liveable neighbourhood trial are then sent to every residential and business property in the area before a trial commences.
 - 4) People are able to comment on the plans through the online engagement tool and via email and ask questions ahead of the trial.
 - 5) The resulting designed scheme are to be trialled for a minimum of 6 months. This trial will also act as a consultation period. At the end of the trial the Council will produce a consultation report detailing how the trial has been received by the community along with any changes to the design as a result of the feedback.
 - 6) If there are any major changes from the trialled scheme to the design of the permanent scheme these elements will also be consulted on before implementation. This will include statutory consultation in line with the Council's constitution as required.
- 8.6 Stakeholder mapping will be undertaken at multiple levels e.g. strategic (elected members) to local (seldom heard voices). Sustrans will work closely with the council to identify local stakeholders, Voluntary, Community and Social Enterprise (VCSE) sector groups, organisations and community leaders, and use these connections to reach the people that they engage with. There will be an emphasis on reaching marginalised sections of communities.

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. Whilst there are no equality implications arising from this report, the associated actions arising from the project may need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge.
- 9.3 The Council has an obligation under the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality duty (Sect 149 2011) to show due regard to the duty and show due regard to mitigate any negative impacts that may affect people with protected characteristics under the Act. The Director of Regeneration and Place recognises that this decision may have an impact on those who would wish to access certain locations by motor vehicle and other modes of transport. Where applicable details of any restrictions and alternative routes would be published and an equality impact assessment would be undertaken. An example EIA from work Sustrans have undertaken elsewhere has been attached as Appendix 4.
- 9.4 Sustrans are continually developing new and innovative ways to engage with communities during Covid-19, however they recognise that the need for meaningful face to face engagement to reach seldom heard voices cannot be replaced by digital methods alone. Sustrans have a suite of interventions that can be adapted to varying levels of lockdown and would seek to work with Wirral teams at the earliest opportunity to find mutually agreeable solutions.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 The project will enable increased numbers of journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes, therefore reducing resident's reliance on the private car and reducing carbon emissions. Increasing cycling and walking will help combat climate change. By encouraging and enabling people to travel more on foot and by cycle instead of private car harmful emissions will be reduced. Promoting active travel can result in reduced emissions of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO₂), particulate matter (PM) and CO₂ helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.
- 10.2 Gear Change identifies that mode shift to active transport is one of the most cost effective ways of reducing transport emissions and that meeting the targets to double cycling and increasing walking would lead to savings of £567million annually from air quality alone and prevent 8,300 premature deaths each year and provide opportunities to improve green spaces and biodiversity.

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Wirral Liveable Neighbourhood Area Scoping Report

Appendix B: Wirral Schools Scoping Summary

Appendix C: Presentation to Bebington ward members

Appendix D: Example EIA for Lambeth Council

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Gear Change Plan for Cycling and Walking – Department for Transport July 2020

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycling-and-walking-plan-for-england>

Gear Change Plan One Year One– Department for Transport July 2021

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/1007815/gear-change-one-year-on.pdf

Cycling Infrastructure Design Local Transport Note 1/20

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/cycle-infrastructure-design-ltn-120>

Sustrans Bike Life Report Liverpool City Region

<https://www.sustrans.org.uk/bike-life/bike-life-liverpool-city-region/>

Wirral Liveable Streets Consultation Summer 2020

<https://wirralliveablestreets.commonplace.is/comments/5ee10851c9dc0f515e52f007>

Sustrans report November 2019

[Common misconceptions about active travel investment - Sustrans.org.uk](https://www.sustrans.org.uk/common-misconceptions-about-active-travel-investment)

Waltham Forest – Mini Holland Design Guide

[untitled \(enjoywalthamforest.co.uk\)](https://www.enjoywalthamforest.co.uk/)

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
None	