

ECONOMY REGENERATION AND HOUSING COMMITTEE**19 OCTOBER 2022**

REPORT TITLE:	DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR TRANSPORT PIPELINE – BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL GATEWAY
REPORT OF:	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report seeks approval to accept grant funding of up to £1,582,500 from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to support the development of the Birkenhead Central Gateway Programme. The report also notes the approved slippage of £1,092,129 from 2021/22 development funding grant award. The development funding will support key regeneration projects including Argyle Street, Dock Branch Park, Hind Street and Woodside.

The acceptance of the development funding will support all five themes of the Wirral Plan 2021-26: Inclusive Economy, Safe & Pleasant Communities, Sustainable Environment, Brighter Futures and Active & Healthy Lives.

This matter affects the Birkenhead and Tranmere Ward and the Rock Ferry Ward.

This matter is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Economy, Regeneration and Housing Committee is recommended to:

- (1) Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to
 - (a) accept grant funding of up to £2,674,629 to support the development of the Birkenhead Central Gateway Programme allocated to the Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority; and
 - (b) commence the necessary pre-development work to achieve the outputs set out in Table 1 of this report.
- (2) Recommend to the Policy and Resources Committee that the Capital Programme be amended so that the £2,674,629 grant funding allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority be allocated to the development of the Birkenhead Central Gateway Programme.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 To enable the development of the transport projects to continue which will support the delivery of several key catalyst projects and neighbourhoods identified in Birkenhead 2040, the Levelling Up Fund (LUF) programme and the wider regeneration of the Left Bank.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Council achieves development and delivery of transport and regeneration schemes within the Borough as part of a Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) wide programme of schemes and interventions.
- 1.3 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'.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The Council could decide to not accept the funding. This is not considered to be an appropriate option given that the delivery of the Argyle Street, Dock Branch Park, Hind Street and Woodside projects are catalyst transport projects in Birkenhead 2040 and the LUF programme. Supporting sustainable and active travel is in line with the Council's commitment to addressing the climate emergency, improving the health of Wirral's residents and encouraging alternative modes of transport to the private car.
- 2.2 The funding could be used for other purposes. This is not considered an appropriate option as it would not meet the terms of the grant funding agreement, as the funding is specifically to support delivery of the Argyle Street, Dock Branch Park, Hind Street and Woodside projects. Should the funding be used for other purposes the Council would be in breach of the conditions which the grant funding is subject to.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

LCRCA Transport Pipeline and City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement

- 3.1 Pool 1 of the Transport Pipeline was agreed by the LCRCA in March 2021. This consisted of 20 projects across the City Region which align with strategic priorities, were considered to deliver significant benefits for the city region and are deliverable between 2022/23 and 2026/27. The pipeline of schemes was developed using an evidence led approach and the schemes were commissioned with the intention of supporting their development and delivery, subject to the availability of funding. This agreed pipeline helped shape both the priorities in the LCRCA City Region Sustainable Transport (CRSTS) bid and LCRCA LUF submission.
- 3.2 From April 2021, the LCRCA has been in discussions with the Department for Transport (DfT) regarding the transport capital funding and as part of this process, £5.6m capacity funding was allocated to the LCRCA from the DfT to develop the

pipeline projects and a further £11.1m was made available by the LCRCA to meet the total development requirements. In September 2021, the LCRCA submitted a prospectus to the DfT as part of the Comprehensive Spending Review. After reviewing this document, the LCRCA was awarded, subject to business case, an indicative £710m from CRSTS in October 2021 to fund capital transport interventions between 2022/23 and 2026/27.

- 3.3 The LCRCA has allocated development funding to constituent Local Authorities to support the development of projects within the approved programme. In 2021/22 the Council was awarded and accepted £1,460,900 of development funding. The Council has now been allocated a further £1,582,500 for 2022/23 to support the delivery of the Birkenhead Central Gateway Programme. £1,092,129 of slippage has been approved from the 2021/22 programme. Within the wider Birkenhead Central Gateway programme the key regeneration projects include Argyle Street, Dock Branch Park, Hind Street and Woodside.

Birkenhead Central Gateway Programme

- 3.4. In summary the projects for which the grant relates are set out below;

Argyle Street -Argyle Street is part of the LCRCA Levelling Up Fund Programme and the aim of the projects is to deliver connectivity and public realm improvements at Argyle Street including the Argyle Street/Conway roundabout.

Dock Branch Park

Dock Branch Park is an iconic, catalytic and transformational project for Birkenhead's regeneration included in the Birkenhead Central Gateway programme and involves the creation of a new active travel corridor linking three key developments areas being Wirral Waters, Birkenhead Town Centre and Hind Street.

Hind Street Movement Strategy

The development of a movement strategy to support the removal of the Birkenhead flyovers is a critical project to enable the development of the Hind Street Urban Village development, supporting the delivery of the Local Plan.

Woodside

Woodside is part of the CRSTS programme and the aim of the project is to deliver connectivity and public realm improvements including;

- Reconfiguration of the Woodside Gyratory;
- Realignment/Relocation of Bus Turnaround;
- Investment in Public Realm and Wayfinding; and
- Delivery of New and Improved Walking and Cycling Infrastructure.

Placemaking

This project sees funding to support the delivery of a behaviour change campaign and to support the further development of the Birkenhead 3D model to be used to support public and stakeholder consultation on regeneration and transport schemes.

Scheme Outputs

- 3.5 The conditions of the Grant Funding Agreement specify that the funding needs to be spent by no later than the 31st March 2023. The Council will be expected to achieve the outputs set out in Table 1;

Table 1: Scheme Outputs

Scheme Name	Outputs
Argyle Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of RIBA 2 design for Argyle Street• Completion of RIBA 2 design for Argyle Street/Conway Street roundabout
Dock Branch Park	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of RIBA 3 design for Dock Branch Park North• Completion of RIBA 3 design for Dock Branch Park South
Hind Street	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Update to Wirral Traffic Model and building of detailed junction models using LINSIG software
Woodside	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Completion of RIBA 2 design
Placemaking	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Behaviour change campaign advertisements• Flythrough for 3D model
Resourcing	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Argyle Street Project Manager Resource• Dock Branch Park Project Manager Resource• Hind Street Project Manager Support• Cross Programme Highways Resource<ul style="list-style-type: none">(i) 0.5 FTE Traffic Engineer(ii) 0.5 FTE Structures(iii) 0.5 FTE Maintenance

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Birkenhead Central Gateway Development Funding for 2022/23 is a sum of £1,582,500.
- 4.2 £1,460,900 of development funding had previously been awarded to the Council for the 2021/22 financial year. This was accepted in November 2021.
- 4.3 Table 2 sets out the breakdown of the 2022/3 funding across the programme including details of approved slippage from the development funding allocation from 2021/22.

Table 2: Financial Breakdown of 2022/23 Birkenhead Central Gateway Development Funding

Scheme Name	Slippage from 2021/22	2022/23 allocation	Total Funding 2022/23
Argyle Street	£150,000	£345,000	£495,000
Dock Branch Park	£608,472	£525,000	£1,133,472
Hind Street	0	£300,000	£300,000
Woodside	£300,000	0	£300,000
Placemaking	£33,657	0	£33,657
Resourcing	0	£412,500	£412,500
Total	£1,092,129	£1,582,500	£2,674,629

5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council is required to enter into a grant funding agreement with the LCRCA the precise form of which will be settled by the Director of Law and Governance.
- 5.2 Following scheme delivery the Section 151 Officer will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the funding was defrayed in accordance with the grant conditions.
- 5.3 In accordance with the Council’s Constitution any amendment to the Capital Programme requested by a Committee or officer in excess of £500,000 is reserved to Policy & Resources Committee.
- 5.4 On 30 June 2021 Policy and Resources Committee resolved in the context of a report in relation to Active Travel Funding - Tranche 1, Tranche 2 and Local Authority Capability Funding amongst other matters, that it noted “the significant overlap between the terms of reference of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee and requests that these committees work jointly with Economy Regeneration and Development Committee leading on active travel issues which affect major regeneration master plan projects and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to lead on all other transport, active travel and road safety strategy and schemes. Officers are asked to liaise with the Chairs of both committees on all transport planning to ensure that the work programmes are always agreed...”
- 5.5 A report on this subject matter will be considered the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee at its meeting of 20 October 2022 and its views will be made known to the Policy and Resources Committee when it considers the recommendations from Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 Existing staff resources in Legal Services will be used to finalise the grant funding agreement.
- 6.2 Existing staff resources will be used for the development work, supplemented by external support where required.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 The Council recognises that risk management is essential in good decision making and is a critical element of good governance. The Council continually develops its risk management processes to manage risk proactively and effectively. The Council has recently established a dedicated Project Management Office (PMO) to support the Regeneration and Place Directorate. The PMO will have oversight of the FHSF Movement Schemes programme and will ensure that it is aligned with the Council's corporate policy to managing risk. Programme risk registers will be developed and these will be updated throughout the programme lifecycle in order to assist the Council in identifying, controlling and managing risk. The project risk register will set out actions to mitigate the key risks, and the risks and proposed mitigation measures will be actively monitored by the Regeneration and Place Programme Management Office and reported as appropriate.
- 7.2 Failure to deliver the required outputs of the development funding would result in a failure to support the delivery of the priorities of the LCRCA and have reputational impact on Wirral and the LCR. Consequently, this could result in the loss or clawback of funding or impact on future funding decisions and awards.
- 7.3 Due to the current macro-economic situation, there is a significant national increase in costs. If this impacts on the projects included within Table 2, the projects will be scaled down to ensure the total cost does not exceed the grant available.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 This Committee and relevant ward members have been engaged regarding the schemes outlined in section 3.4 and will continue to be engaged as the development work progresses. The Active Travel Members Working Group will be engaged as the scheme designs are progressed and appropriate stakeholder and public consultations will be undertaken. The schemes were all included in the Birkenhead 2040 Framework consultation undertaken in Spring 2021.
- 8.3 Wirral Council has a statutory consultation process that is required for the undertaking of work on the adopted highway which will require public consultation, objections to which would be considered under the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution.
- 8.4 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.

8.5 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 these programmes develop.

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 delivery may need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 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 and sustainable 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 in England and provide opportunity to improve green spaces and biodiversity.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Delivery of the schemes supported by this development funding will help promote more active and sustainable travel and less use of the private car so will help provide equality of accessibility for local residents and businesses, help reduce local congestion and improve safety for vulnerable roads users as well health and air quality.

11.2 Sustainable travel is at the heart of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Local Plan. In this context that the schemes contained in the Birkenhead Central Gateway are part of a wider regeneration programme to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy to benefit local residents.

- 11.3 The project supports the reduction in energy consumption as it will support the Cool 2 target of ‘a complete transition to fossil fuel free local travel by around 2030’ and helps fulfil the actions within the Climate and Emergency Action Plan.
- 11.4 The Birkenhead Central Gateway programme will contribute to the LCR Pathway to Net Zero Carbon. Building 600km of new and upgraded cycling and walking routes across the LCR over the next few years to support modal shift is identified as part of the Pathway the LCR needs to follow to achieve net zero. Two-thirds of LCR journeys are less than 3 miles, currently half of those are undertaken by car.
- 11.5 Through any future procurement exercises the Council will be looking to maximise further social value activity through creation of local employment and training.

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APPENDICES

None

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>

Birkenhead 2040
<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/business/regeneration/birkenhead-2040-framework>

City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Prospectus
<https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/LCR%20Sustainable%20Transport%20Settlement%20Prospectus.pdf>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
OFFICER DECISION NOTICE DEVELOPMENT FUNDING FOR BIRKENHEAD CENTRAL GATEWAY	18/11/2021
OFFICER DECISION NOTICE LEVELLING UP FUND	17/02/2022