

**OFFICER DECISION
10 March 2023**

REPORT TITLE	SUSTAINABLE URBAN DEVELOPMENT WORK PACKAGE 7: PRICE STREET – WALKING AND CYCLING INFRASTRUCTURE UPGRADES BIDSTON AND ST JAMES WARD
REPORT OF	LEAD COMMISSIONER TRANSPORT

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers objections and expressions of support received regarding the proposed walking and cycling infrastructure upgrades on Price Street in the Bidston and St James ward.

The Price Street scheme has been developed as part of Work Package 7 of the European Union's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) with match funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Transforming Cities Fund. The total funding for this Work Package 7 programme amounts to £2,893,522 of investment with £1,318,560 being allocated to the Price Street scheme.

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;
- A prosperous inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations; and
- Safe, vibrant communities where people want to live and raise their families.

The purpose of this scheme is to create an environment that is safe for both pedestrians and cyclists and to help embed walking and cycling as part of new long-term commuting habits.

This matter affects the Bidston & St James Ward.

This matter is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Director of Regeneration and Place is recommended to approve the proposed walking and cycling upgrades on Price Street as set out in Appendix 1 of this report for implementation.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 1.1 This project is designed in accordance with the latest cycling design guidance to create an environment that is safe for both walking and cycling and to help embed walking and cycling as part of new long-term commuting habits and is funded via the European Union's European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) Sustainable Urban Development (SUD) with match funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) Transforming Cities Fund.
- 1.2 Officers have considered the objections and expressions of support received during the consultation period and have provided comprehensive responses but consider that the scheme proposal should be progressed as it is in line with the latest DfT design guidance for cycle schemes, the objectives of the funders and supports the delivery of the Wirral Plan 2021-2026.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 Allocate the funding to a different scheme in the Borough. This is not considered appropriate as the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, which is the accountable body for the funding, has advised that the funds cannot be transferred to an alternative scheme and even if this was an option, the end date for the expenditure of the grant would mean there was not sufficient time to progress an alternative scheme.
- 2.2 Remove the Price Scheme from the Work Package 7 programme and return the £1,318,560 of funding to the LCRCA as the accountable body for the funding. This is not considered an appropriate option as failure to deliver against the approved programme could result in reputational issues for the Council and the LCRCA in terms of demonstrating commitment to active travel which could result in future funding allocations being reduced.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Work Package 7

- 3.1 The Price Street scheme has been developed as part of Work Package 7 (WP7) of the ERDF SUD, Priority Axis 4 and Priority Axis 6, with 50% match funding from the LCRCA Transforming Cities Fund to support and enable increased levels of walking and cycling in the Borough. The funding for the WP7 programme amounts to £2,893,522 of investment. £1,318,560 of that programme is identified for Price Street. Other schemes within the WP7 Programme include Birkenhead Road active travel scheme, habitat improvements at Bidston Moss and pedestrian and cycle priority crossings to the entrances as part of the Millers Quay development on Dock Road.
- 3.2 The deadline for delivery of WP7 and claiming the funds is the end of June 2023. The Council is unable to use the funding for any other purpose. The

timescales for construction mean that a swift resolution of consideration of the consultation responses will put the Price Street scheme in the best position to be delivered within the requirements of the funding deadlines. If the scheme is not delivered, the Council would lose the opportunity of investment and would be at risk of clawback from the claims of work undertaken to date to bring the schemes to this stage, the sum involved being approximately £133,000.

- 3.3 The purpose of this scheme is to create an environment that is safe for both pedestrians and cyclists and to help embed walking and cycling as part of new long-term commuting habits.
- 3.4 The proposed walking and cycling infrastructure upgrades on Price Street are designed in accordance with the latest cycling design guidance (LTN1/20 - Cycle Infrastructure Design) to create an environment that is safe for both walking and cycling and to help embed walking and cycling as part of new long-term commuting habits.
- 3.5 A further £400,000 was secured from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement annual allocation to the Council to improve the junction of Price Street and Duke Street to include cycle features and controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at each crossing point.
- 3.6 The objective of the EU ERDF SUD Priority Axis 4 is 'supporting the shift Towards a Low Carbon Economy in all sectors' as part of the LCRCA bid for the funding this was specifically to implement walking and cycling schemes to reduce the dependency on car-based journeys. Following the publication of the latest guidance for the implementation of walking and cycling schemes the introduction of segregation provides an increased confidence for users of active travel modes.

Price Street Scheme

- 3.7 The only current facility for active travel on Price Street is a modal filter on the western side of Cavendish Street, although this does not include dropped kerbs which would provide facilities for cyclists to continue on Price Street. Cyclists would need to cross Cavendish Street and proceed along Price Street on the carriageway.
- 3.8 The proposals for walking and cycling infrastructure upgrades on Price Street to form a quiet street include:
 - 1) Beaufort Road / Price Street - A new 3 metre wide, two-way, segregated cycleway along Beaufort Road with a "Tiger Crossing" incorporating a pedestrian zebra and cycling crossing facility. This will connect to the new off-road cycling and walking facility currently under construction at Beaufort Road / Wallasey Bridge Road. The Beaufort Road / Price Street junction will be upgraded to improve / provide walking and cycling facilities.

- 2) Cavendish Street / Price Street - A modal filter (a road closure using landscaping and bollards) will be installed on Price Street adjacent to the Church of Our Lady of the Immaculate Conception. Low-level planting, paving and lighting will be used to provide a pleasant space for residents to move through that is not dominated by vehicular traffic. Access will be restricted for all vehicular traffic. A “Tiger Crossing” incorporating a pedestrian zebra and cycle crossing facility will be provided at the junction of Cavendish Street.
- 3) Duke Street / Price Street - An upgrade of the existing traffic signal junction at Duke Street/Price Street to include cycle features and controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at each crossing point.
- 4) Tree Planting - Many of the trees along Price Street have been damaged and lost over the years. The scheme plans to replace and provide new trees to help turn Price Street into a tree lined avenue.

Drawings for scheme proposals can be found in Appendix 1 of this report.

- 3.9 Public consultation was undertaken from 23rd November to 21st December 2022 with local residents, landowners, and businesses via the Have Your Say website, a report of the responses can be found in Appendix 2. Consultation has also been undertaken with the Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Merseytravel and Wirral’s Active Travel Forum including the Royal National Institute of Blind People. Letters with plans were delivered to residents and businesses found within the vicinity of the scheme, informing them of the proposals.
- 3.10 During the public consultation period, 20 objections and 71 expressions of support were received. These concerns, all objections and expressions of support received during the public consultation and an officer response to each are summarised in Appendix 3 of this report.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Price Street schemes has an allocated budget from the WP7 programme of £1,318,560. As part of the grant fund agreement the money is claimed by the Council in arrears.
- 4.2 A further £400,000 was secured from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement annual allocation to the Council to improve the junction of Price Street and Duke Street to include cycle features and controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at each crossing point.
- 4.3 The ongoing maintenance costs would be included within existing highway maintenance programme. Discussions are continuing to take place with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority regarding future highway maintenance funding allocations from the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement.

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 1972 and the Traffic Management Act 2004.

5.2 On 26 January 2022 the Economy Regeneration & Housing Committee resolved that:

- (1) *A Deed of Variation be entered into by the Council to accept £2.89 million of funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to deliver 6.65 kilometres of walking and cycling infrastructure upgrades and 5.15 hectares of habitat improvements as part of Phase 1 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - the Sustainable Urban Development Green Sustainable Travel Corridors Programme;*
- (2) *Amendments be made to the individual phase programmes, if required, in consultation with Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Chairs and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committees, having due regard to any issues that may arise during design or consultation stages of projects; and*
- (3) *The necessary procurement process to appoint external contractors to undertake the necessary highway works associated with Phase 1 of the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan - the Sustainable Urban Development Green Sustainable Travel Corridors Programme be carried out.*

5.3 The effect of resolution 2 was to delegate authority to the Director of Regeneration and Place. That is clear from the committee report of the 26 January 2022 in that at paragraph 7.7 it provided that:

“There is also a risk of objections being received to the schemes during the consultation process. Should objections be received it is proposed that these are considered by the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Chairs and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committees.”

5.4 In line with resolution 2, the results of the consultation were discussed with the Chairs and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committees at the Active Travel Members Working Group on the 8 February 2023. The feedback from members enables the Director of Regeneration and Place to determine the next steps in this matter.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 Schemes within Work Package 7 have been added to the Council's Capital Programme. Existing staff resources, supplemented with external consultation support as appropriate has been used for development of the scheme.

6.2 There are no ICT or asset implications.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Failure to deliver the Price Street scheme would be viewed negatively by the LCRCA and may impact future funding allocations.

7.2 The deadline for spending the Work Package 7 funding is the end of June 2023. Failure to deliver the Price Street scheme within the delivery timescales would leave the Council open to the risk of claw back of funding. As with all highway schemes there is the risk that due to unforeseen circumstances once works commence on site the programme is required to be extended. The current programme from the contractor identifies the works can be completed within the required timescales, however officers are currently in discussions with the LCRCA with regard to the possibility that this deadline could be extended, or the scheme moved to an alternative future funding programme should the situation arise that would result in the deadline for funding be exceeded.

7.3 Failure to deliver the Price Street scheme within the delivery timescales would leave the Council open to the risk of claw back of funding for design work already undertaken. Work undertaken to date to develop the Price Street scheme could be clawed back by the WP7 programme and to date that cost is approximately £133,000. Confirmation would be required if the scheme was moved to an alternative future funding programme whether the development costs could also be transferred.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 A pre-consultation email was sent to Ward Councillors, Chairs and Vice-Chairs, Spokespersons on the 7 July 2022 providing information on the scheme. On the 17 November 2022 Ward Councillors, Chairs and Vice-Chairs were advised of the intention to proceed to consultation and on the 23 November 2022 an email was sent confirming the start of public consultation. A further email was sent on the 14 December 2022 advising of the upcoming deadline for consultation comments.

8.2 Public consultation on the Price Street scheme was undertaken from 23rd November to 21st December 2022 with local residents, landowners, and businesses via the Have Your Say website. During the public consultation period, 20 objections and 71 expressions of support were received and a report of the responses via Have Your Say can be found in Appendix 2. A

summary of all the consultation responses, along with an officer response to each is summarised in Appendix 3 of this report.

- 8.3 Consultation has also been undertaken with the Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Merseytravel and Wirral's Active Travel Forum including the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB). Letters with plans were delivered to residents and businesses found within the vicinity of the scheme, informing them of the proposals.
- 8.4 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 have been engaged as Work Package 7 programme has developed.
- 8.5 The Members Active Travel Working Group have been engaged regarding the Price Street scheme on the 6 October 2022, 8 December 2022 and also the results of the consultation were discussed with the working group on the 8 February 2023.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and published. 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 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.
- 9.3 Whilst there are no equality implications arising from this report, the associated actions arising from the delivery may further need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge.
- 9.4 An Equality Impact Assessment has been completed and this is published at <https://www.wirral.gov.uk/communities-and-neighbourhoods/equality-impact-assessments>

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

- 10.1 Delivery of active travel projects will enable increased numbers of journeys to be undertaken by sustainable modes, especially for local journeys, therefore reducing residents' 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, particulate matter and Carbon Dioxide helping to tackle climate change and improve air quality.

- 10.2 Gear Change Cycling Strategy produced by Government in Summer 2020 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 Sustainable travel is at the heart of the Birkenhead 2040 Framework and emerging Local Plan. In this context that this scheme it is part of a wider programme to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy to benefit local residents. The proposed improvements to Price Street will have a positive impact on removing barriers to active travel and encouraging a switch from motorised for short journeys.
- 11.2 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'.
- 11.3 Gear Change, the Governments Cycling Strategy, 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 1 Price Street Scheme Drawings Ref Nos.

100105630-MMD-02-PS-DR-C-0101
100105630-MMD-02-PS-DR-C-0102
100105630-MMD-02-PS-DR-C-0103

Appendix 2 Price Street Objections and Expressions of Support Report from the 'Have Your Say' website.

Appendix 3: Price Street Officer responses to Objections and Expressions of Support

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/>

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Economy Regeneration and Development Committee Item 71	26 January 2022