



Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee

Date:	Wednesday, 20 September 2023
Time:	6.00 p.m.
Venue:	Committee Room 1 - Birkenhead Town Hall

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AGENDA

11. ADDENDUM - PUBLIC QUESTIONS (Pages 1 - 10)

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Minutes Addendum

Public Questions – Written Responses.

Karl Hunter

As a resident on Higher Bebington and am concerned about the traffic congestion, given we have 3 secondary schools, 2 infant schools and 2 junior schools. This leads to congested roads in the morning and afternoon.

Please could you look into traffic management, such as traffic lights on the junction of Teehey Lane, Teehey Close or pelican crossings along Teehey Lane?

It's difficult to cross with young children on foot in the area as there is only 1 traffic light on Teehey Lane, and another light on Heath Road. There is a traffic island, but often no cars allow pedestrians to cross.

Response

The Council have been working with Sustrans on a project called "By Ours" which has looked specifically at how the streetscape can be improved to make it more attractive for pedestrians and cyclists to access local facilities and access public transport. The project has engaged with the local schools and community groups as well as seeking views of residents and local businesses. This information is currently being analysed by Sustrans and further information on this project is due to be reported to Committee in due course. The Road Safety Team also engage with schools to encourage healthier ways to travel to and from school, including ensuring pupils can access free cycle training and awareness sessions.

Julian Backhouse

In respect to Carbon Literacy knowledge sharing and education within Wirral council and your ongoing efforts to ensure all stakeholders receive fair and balanced information - information that enables especially those in public office to uphold the Nolan principles as well as those who support decision makers with knowledge and influence.

Will the council make available ALL CURRENT and retired, digital and analog Carbon Literacy materials for public scrutiny?

Response

The Council currently commissions a Third-Party supplier to undertake Carbon Literacy training and as a result does not own the materials for publication. All materials are accredited by the Carbon Literacy Project. The Carbon Literacy Project is globally recognised. For example, at the United Nations COP21 Conference in Paris, it was awarded as a TAP100, One of the 100 worldwide Transformative Action Programs.

Whilst propriety rights remain with third parties for the training materials due to licensing/usage agreements, a large a large volume of carbon literacy information, climate and ecological emergency issues papers, briefings and research are publicly

available on the APSE (Association for Public Service Excellence) website. In addition, there is a lot of information on the Council website relating to Carbon Literacy, whilst Officers will be bringing an update to the roll out of carbon literacy training to the next ECET committee.

Charlotte Smith

During my post op recovery for womb cancer, I valued the walk along Hoylake Prom as part of my rehabilitation process. In getting stronger my target was to get as far as the viewing platform which is not far from the new lifeboat station. Imagine my dismay with the overgrown plants and weeds that was attached to the prom railings at the side of the ramp leading to the platform. It made getting up and down the viewing platform extremely difficult given my mobility issues at the time. I have attached photos of this. Can the Environmental Chair please advise when the weeds will be cleared from the railings of the viewing platform so that people with mobility issues or recovering from surgery (like I was and will be again with my forthcoming lung cancer surgery), can easily access and come down from the viewing platform.

Response

Thank you for your question. The site you mention has been inspected by the General Parks Manager for this area who considers that this “platform” can be accessed and observes a few stems coming through the hand rail, however they do not preclude the use of the handrail if any member of public would need to make use of it to assist them entering the platform. If a member of public does not need to use the hand-rail, and is either on foot or a wheelchair user this would not prevent access. The General Parks Manager for this area would be happy to meet the person in question by appointment if required.

Nicki Farrington

With regards to the Festive Display Policy, Greasby, as well as other areas, would like to know why only 4 groups were invited for consultation when the document itself acknowledges that there are 18 groups that this affects?

Whilst the proposals are fair and just in some areas, others such as the dates lights can be illuminated could cause major problems with resources available to make this happen. This may also see many “Switch On” events occurring on the same days, reducing attendance to individuals events (and income), as well as stretching limited resources in making the events happen.

Light Up Greasby, and other groups, would have welcomed the opportunity to discuss the proposals further had they had the chance.

Response

The method of consultation chosen to inform this policy proposal was a focus group. A focus group was chosen as it would allow an in-depth, two-way discussion to take place with existing groups. This format gives ample opportunity for existing groups to share their wealth of knowledge, it also gives Council officers the opportunity to ask

questions directly and gauge the appetite for potential changes. The very nature of a focus group precludes large numbers from participating. One group was chosen from each Parliamentary constituency, based upon factors such as how long they had been established, whether they had recently sought to engage the council on the issue and what type of event they normally hold. The officers responsible for this piece of qualitative research were confident that four invited groups were suitably representative.

From this consultation with representative groups, we understand that many of the festive display organisers share the same electrician resource for installation and switch on events. However, the defined operating period does not determine when displays must be switched on, it is a date from which displays can begin being switched on. There is no requirement for all festive displays to be switched on, on the same day. However, we are open to maintaining some level of flexibility that does not undermine the policy if it is communicated early, pre-agreed and subject to available Council capacity and resource. [response was prepared prior to the meeting. During the meeting, the committee passed a resolution to defer consideration of the Festive Display Policy to a later meeting, to give officers time to consider concerns raised in relation to the policy]

Beverley Aspinall

Could the Chair of the Environment, Climate Emergency Committee please tell me the cost to WBC of removing sand from the pavement and road of North Parade, Hoylake and from the surrounding residential roads, both prior to the installation of green netting along the railings by Hoylake Beach community at their own expense (with the permission of WBC officials) and since its installation, please?

Response

Sand clearance from the roads and pavements in the adjacent Hoylake roads is part of the Council's Street Cleansing contract with Biffa, so there is no specified additional cost to the Council. What a reduction in sand on pavements/roads in this area would do is enable the resources to be used somewhere else or would ensure that other streets were cleansed to schedule. It is difficult to quantify, however reviewing records over the past 2 years, there were 7 requests for sand clearance from Sept 21-May 2022 (when the netting was installed) and 3 requests from June 22-June 23

Malcolm Saunders

Fifty percent of traffic currently exceeds 30mph in urban areas. A much larger percentage will be unable to keep within a 20mph limit. Why is the Council bringing the law into disrepute by criminalising the majority of vehicle users?

Response

Liverpool City Region Road Safety Strategy has a vision to reach zero road traffic collisions by 2040, safe speeds is a key element of this strategy. The stats referenced here could be '50% of car drivers exceeded 30mph limits in

2022, compared to 51% the previous year' see source column I. Unable to find research that indicate 'a much larger percentage will be unable to keep within a 20mph limit'. Drivers should drive to the conditions and within the posted speed limit.

Peter Cunningham

Regarding 20 Mph zones, The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority are pushing for a reduction in the number and severity of road traffic collisions working to a target of no avoidable collisions by 2040; I have done a FOI question and where I live there have been zero recorded KSIs in the past 3 years. Why is the scheme being imposed on my area when that target has already been reached and has been for 3 years?

Response

The objective of the scheme is not just about introducing 20mph speed limits to reduce collisions, it is also about providing much better access to cycling and walking and creating quiet neighbourhoods with lower traffic levels. Local authorities have previously planned transport schemes with vehicle use as a main consideration and this may have encouraged people to use cars. However, the priority now should be to make the road network more attractive for walking and cycling and safer for all road users.

Anthony Newman

Wood Street in Port Sunlight regularly have 44ton lorries trying to enter Unilever They come in via Bolton Road through narrow roads and a tight bend which is not suitable for these lorries. The problem worsens when they have to back out of the factory. Recently a large crane knocked a tree down into a house fortunately not causing severe damage. There are many pedestrians using this area and the 44T vehicles represents a danger to people and property in Wood Street
Could a sign be considered on the A41 onto Bolton Road into Port Sunlight be put up to suggest this is unsuitable for 44T vehicles.

Response

Officers will look into and investigate this matter to determine whether a weight limit prohibition sign is deemed suitable and as part of their investigations will consider safe access/egress issues for Unilever to minimise any potential impacts on highway safety.

Wendy Bennett

Are you aware of the existence of a Beach Covenant (document) dated 1935, which clearly states that Hoylake Beach is to be cleaned and maintained completely clear of all vegetation and obstacles for the benefit of the residents of Hoylake and Meols? Can you confirm that the council intends to honour this Covenant, by clearing and maintaining the current disgusting and potentially hazardous growth on Hoylake

Beach and its access slipways.

Response

The Conveyance of 1935 to the Hoylake and West Kirby Urban District Council (predecessor to Wirral Borough Council), in Clause 6 has a covenant which is a requirement 'at all times to keep the premises hereby granted in good and proper state of repair and condition free from all defects injurious to navigation or the adjacent lands or public interests.' The Council is compliant with this covenant.

Joanne Randles

Did you as Cabinet Member for Environmental Climate Change, or this council, inform Peel Ports (Successors to Mersey Docks) of the cancellation of the Beach Management Plan.

Within the 12th of February 1935 Conveyance (section 1 page 2) which gives Peel Ports legal rights to maintain, use and repair cables.

The Estates Manager has confirmed he has no knowledge of what is happening on Hoylake Beach presently.

My Question is Did you, or this Council advise them?

Response

It would not have been my role as Cabinet Member or in any subsequent role to contact Peel Ports with regards to operational matters as referred to you in your question.

The Conveyance of 1935 allows for the Mersey Docks and Harbour Board to maintain, repair or renew cables that were in existence at the time of the conveyance. That conveyance does not lead to any requirement for the Council to contact Peel Ports in manner that you suggest.

Christine Watson

When did you as the Cabinet Member for Environmental Climate Change or Wirral Borough Council receive in writing from the Board of Trade, permission to cancel the Beach Management Plan.

Section 5, page 3, of the 12th February 1935 conveyance that states that you require their consent. Have you got it?

Response

The conveyance of 1935 of the Hoylake Urban District Council (predecessor to Wirral Borough Council) does not require the consent of the board of trade. In the conveyance only acts that would prejudice navigation require permission from the board of trade.

Supplementary Questions

Stewart Smith

The Chairs response references weather and other factors [that can effect grass cutting schedules], I have been discussing this issue for 4 years now. You can't tell me these conditions have prevailed for the last four years? We are definitely receiving an inferior service on our side of the Wirral, there's no two ways about it.

Response

Thank you for your supplementary question and for confirming that you live in the Claughton Ward, which will allow us to respond more accurately to your enquiry.

As you may be aware the frequency of grass cutting has been reduced over the past 4 years, from 16 cuts per year down to 8. This is to reduce the cost of the service, with the savings made being used to meet budget pressures predominately in the increased cost of care in Childrens Services and Adult Social Care.

There are seven teams for Highway Grass Verges made up of two permanent staff and one seasonal staff member each. Each Team is assigned an area or 'round' to maintain. Each round contains roughly the same area (metres squared) of green space therefore each round should take a similar amount of time to complete as each other. As mentioned in the previous response how quickly a round is completed can be affected by staff absence and machinery repair. All rounds can be affected by the weather, with very wet conditions meaning that little grass cutting can be undertaken.

The 7 rounds in the Wirral can be very roughly described in the following areas.

East Wirral 1	Eastham, Bromborough
East Wirral 2	Spital, Bebington, New Ferry, Rock Ferry, parts of Tranmere
East Wirral 3	Parts of Tranmere, Birkenhead, Claughton, Bidston, Noctorum, Prenton, Oxtan
North Wirral 1	Seacombe, Liscard, Wallasey, New Brighton, Leasowe, parts of Moreton
North Wirral 2	Parts of Moreton, Saughall Massie, Meols, Hoylake, West Kirby, Caldy, Frankby, Greasby
West Wirral 1	Woodchurch, Upton
West Wirral 2	Clatterbridge, Thingwall, Irby, Thurstaston, Pensby, Barnston, Gayton, Heswall

The progress of each round is monitored, and action taken to ensure that rounds do not fall to far behind. The progress of each round is detailed below:-

- East Wirral 1 – On Cut 5 of 8
- East Wirral 2 – On Cut 4 of 8
- East Wirral 3 – On Cut 4 of 8
- North Wirral 1 – On Cut 5 of 8

- North Wirral 2 – On Cut 5 of 8
- West Wirral 1 – On Cut 6 of 8
- West Wirral 2 – On Cut 7 of 8

As you will see the majority of the rounds are on their 5th cut of the season, with East Wirral 2 & 3 being slightly behind on their 4th cut and West Wirral 1 & 2 being ahead on their 6th & 7th Cut. In order to address this, three teams are being redirected to assist East Wirral 2 & 3. The Teams being redirected are West Wirral 1 & 2 and North Wirral 2. As you can see all the rounds have been affected to some extent by the weather this year, while June was very fine, July, August and September have been very wet.

The reason for East Wirral 2 and East Wirral 3 being behind schedule is that this year, in comparison to previous years, the teams have had to collect significantly more rubbish from the verges, causing a delay in them actually being able to start grass cutting. While litter may not be a particular issue on your road, the fact that a significant amount of litter has had to be collected in other areas on the round has caused delay in completing both the East Wirral 2 & 3 Rounds this year.

Moving forward the service will look at the rounds and amend them, to take account of the issue of litter collection, to seek to ensure that each grass cutting round starts and finishes each cut at roughly the same time. But this will continue to be monitored in year to ensure that all areas of the borough receive the same number of grass cuts to their verges.

I can confirm that no ward is given special attention, and that no area is knowingly left behind without action being taken to address any differences that may occur from time to time.

Ken Ferguson

At the last meeting of the committee, you stated that the purpose of the 20mph zones was not to improve air quality, but it was in the interests of road safety, and you cited some pretty grim national statistics, the current Wirral Road Safety Plan issued by the Council indicates that in Wirral in the last 5 years, 25 children have sadly been killed or injured in road traffic accidents. In the same period 107 cyclists have been killed or injured. If road safety is really the overriding aim of your policy, would it not be more logical to ban bikes? Or indeed is the agenda to ban cars? (Original question was about opposition to 20mph)

Response

The current 20mph speed limit proposals are a borough-wide initiative and not just an extension to existing 20mph speed limits or zones within Wirral. The objective of the scheme is not just about introducing 20mph speed limits, it is also about

providing much better access to cycling and walking and creating neighbourhoods with slower traffic. The proposed 20mph speed limits will focus on creating safe and healthy street environments, which work well for all people and help them live active, healthy lives. It is anticipated that bringing in more 20mph speed limits on roads in the borough will provide an improved sense of road safety for all road users and especially those that are more vulnerable. The scheme will hopefully bring about a behavioural change in motorists, which will be beneficial to all road users with no intentions or plans to ban bikes or cars for that matter.

Philip Barton

I did make a freedom of information request to Merseyside police, and between 2017 and 2020 there were 495 offences recorded by cyclists. 56.8% of which (281) went to court against cyclists riding on a footpath. The number of offences recorded for wheelchair users or pedestrians in a cycleway was 0. Today I attended a meeting about the Dock Branch Park project, which incorporates shared space and does not use segregated cycle lanes. We have a situation here where cyclists will be going from the road to the segregated lane to a shared space. Surely, we need a more coordinated response? (Original question about concerns over introduction of cycle lanes on Conway Street and Europa Boulevard schemes)

Response

The design of cycle tracks must consider the guidance provided in the cycle infrastructure design guide Local Transport Note 1/20. This sets out that on urban streets, cyclists must be physically separated from pedestrians and should not share space with pedestrians and that shared use routes in streets with high pedestrian or cyclist flows should not be used. It also states that shared use routes away from streets may be appropriate in locations such as canal towpaths, paths through housing estates, parks and other green spaces. The design of active travel schemes in the borough including Conway Street and Dock Branch have been reviewed by Active Travel England and the council are continuing to liaise with them as the projects develop.

Gillian Homeri

How many of those killed were pedestrians? (Original question asked How many lives are lost in Wirral due to road accidents and how many are seriously injured. Figures relating to injuries and death from 2017 were provided in response)

Response

For the 5-year period between 01/01/2017 to 31/12/2017 there were 137 Killed or Seriously Injured (KSI) road traffic collisions that involved pedestrians with 9 being fatally injured.

Anne Adern

In regard to the 20mph policy you brought in, passed by the Full Council, who did your research? I am hearing time a time again that it wasn't fully researched and you weren't given proper information. I am aware that several parties were involved in

passing it at Full Council, but where do you get your information from? (Original question asked about fuel consumption at 20mph)

Response

On the 1 March 2022, the Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee approved the proposed City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2022/23. As part of this resolution, it was approved to allocate funding towards schemes that meet the priorities identified by the Road Safety Working Group, including the implementation of borough-wide 20mph speed limits.

Following this decision, a feasibility study was carried out to consider the methodology to be applied for introducing 20mph speed limits in residential and suburban district centres across Wirral. Further research has also been undertaken by Council officers using the Government commissioned study on the process and impact evaluation of 20mph speed limits that was published in 2018. In addition, officers used guidance and best practice from '20's Plenty', the National campaign and also our neighbouring authority, Cheshire West and Chester who have introduced 20mph speed limits within their residential areas and schools across the borough.

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