

REPORT TITLE:	LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY LIGHT EMITTING DIODE TRAFFIC SIGNALS - GRANT FUNDING AGREEMENT
REPORT OF:	SENIOR NETWORK OPERATIONS MANAGER

REPORT SUMMARY

Grant funding has been accepted by the Assistant Director for Highways and Infrastructure in conjunction with the S151 Officer as per paragraph 2d of Part 3C of the Constitution. It is recommended that the council will utilise the grant funding sum of £654,918 in 2023/24 from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to facilitate the upgrading of the Council's traffic signals to Light Emitting Diode, and the replacement of corroded traffic signal poles at sites receiving the Light Emitting Diode upgrade. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority has established a framework agreement for the light emitting diode signal upgrade works with Yunex limited and the council will utilise Yunex for the delivery of works pursuant and subject to the terms of the framework agreement.

This report aligns with two themes within the Council Plan 2023-2027:

- Working together to protect our environment.
- Working together to create safe, resilient and engaged communities.

The matter affects all wards as work under the agreement may be undertaken across the borough.

The decision to accept and disburse the agreed funding is a key decision.

RECOMMENDATION

1. Note the intended spend of grant funding already accepted by the S151 officer as per paragraph 2d of Part 3C of the Constitution as detailed in this report.
2. Following project delivery the Section 151 Officer is required to sign a declaration confirming that the funding was defrayed in accordance with the grant conditions.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASON/S FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1 Wirral's traffic signal assets require upgrading from filament lamps to light emitting diode LED type optics.
- 1.2 The grant funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is required to carry out the upgrade of Wirral's traffic signal asset. There is no other relevant funding stream currently available.

2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 2.1 The council could decide not to spend the grant funding and not progress with the light emitting diode traffic signal upgrade. This is not considered an appropriate option as it would compromise the Council's ability to meet statutory obligations and result in risks set out in section 7.0. It could also result in future grant funding allocations being reduced against wider transport and regeneration programmes.

3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 The various filament lamps, used in traffic signals, ceased to be available in 2023. Any lamp failures after that could result in the traffic signals being switched off for safety reasons.
- 3.2 Since 2008/9 all new traffic signal installations in Wirral have been installed with LED optics, together with all upgrades or renewal of existing sites.
- 3.3 Approximately one-third of Wirral's traffic signal asset currently requires upgrading. The grant funding will be used to pay for the services of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority traffic signal maintenance contractor Yunex to replace old filament lamps to light emitting diode type optics.
- 3.4 The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority is using part of the Transforming Cities Funding project to finance this work, which was approved by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority on 19 March 2021, to upgrade all the non-LED traffic signal sites in the Liverpool City Region. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority carried out a procurement exercise resulting in the award of a contract to Yunex to carry out the work across the region. Wirral Council has executed an access agreement with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority which will enable the council to procure the necessary works from Yunex.
- 3.5 During 2022/23 a sum of £982,378 was accepted under an initial grant-funding agreement and the work funded by the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority project has increased the percentage of Wirral's traffic signals with LED optics from 37% to 67%. The further funding that is subject of this report will enable the remaining sites across Wirral to be upgraded to LED.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The traffic signal light emitting diode upgrade will be funded from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority grant funding agreement. Wirral Council will receive grant totalling £654,918 in 2023/24. There are no other financial implications as the grant funding can be slipped into 2024/25 financial year. Approximately 70% of the Council's traffic signal asset has already been upgraded. No further funding is currently available.

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 The council is required to enter into a grant funding agreement with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority who would be the accountable body for funding allocated for the implementation of the works. The Director of Law and Corporate Services will arrange for the arrangements set out within this report to be reflected in a formal Grant Funding Agreement between the Council and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority. Following project delivery the Section 151 Officer will be required to sign a declaration confirming that the funding was defrayed in accordance with the grant conditions.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: STAFFING, ICT AND ASSETS

- 6.1 There are no implications for Staffing, ICT or Assets, with the upgrades leading to an improved Traffic Signal asset.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

- 7.1 Failure to agree and sign the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority grant funding agreement to accept the grant funding for the traffic signal light emitting diode upgrade would lead to the loss of grant funding and add a budget pressure in the Neighbourhoods directorate budget which would require an alternative proposal to source the funds from elsewhere.
- 7.2 Failure to complete the light emitting diode signal upgrades could result in reputational issues for the council in terms of deterioration of its traffic signal asset. This could potentially further lead to an increase in collisions on the public highway, increased insurance claims and have a negative financial impact.
- 7.3 There are no identified risks associated with the grant funding as it can be carried over and spent in the next financial year. Approximately 70% of Wirral Councils traffic signal asset has already been upgraded, the remainder should be upgraded and completed within the first 6 months of 2024/25.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

- 8.1 Engagement has been undertaken with the council's Procurement and legal teams at all stages.
- 8.2 There are no statutory consultation requirements as part of the agreement.

8.3 The Chair and respective Party Spokespersons on the Council's Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee have been briefed and appraised of the proposed decision and its background.

9.0 EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

9.1 The 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. There are no direct equalities implications arising from this report and no Equality Impact Assessment has been produced in respect of this proposed decision. Equality implications are embedded with the council's procurement procedures from application to contract award and monitoring. Consequently, any activities associated with this decision may result in preparation of their own individual Equality Impact Assessment.

10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS

10.1 The traffic signal light emitting diode upgrades will have a positive implication for the environment and climate emergency as they require less energy to operate and have a longer life expectancy reducing maintenance costs and resource consumption. Where possible redundant materials such as steel signal poles will be recycled.

10.2 The light emitting diode traffic signal upgrade programme will support Wirral's 'Cool 2' strategy target of 'leaner use of energy' as the replacement light emitting diode traffic signals are more energy efficient and will reduce the council's overall energy demand.

11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS

11.1 Through any future procurement exercises associated with the light emitting diode traffic signal upgrade the council will seek to maximise further social value activity in local communities wherever possible.

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APPENDICES

None

BACKGROUND PAPERS

Light Emitting Diode Traffic Signals Framework Access Agreement – signed.
Liverpool City Region Combined Authority Grant Funding Agreement – signed.

SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

Council Meeting	Date
Chief Officer Decision – Light Emitting Diode Traffic Signals Grant Funding Agreement	8 June 2022