

### **Appendix 3 – General Objection Themes and Officer Responses.**

- Cost of the project and/or that the money should be used on other issues.

Officer response: A full business case will be undertaken for the project in accordance with the requirements of the LCRCA City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Gateway Process . As part of the business case, the Department for Transport's Active Mode Appraisal Toolkit (AMAT) will be used to understand the cost and benefits of the project which, when considered alongside other evidence presented within the business case, will be used to assess the project's value for money (VfM).

The VfM will be independently appraised against the criteria within the Liverpool City Region National Local Growth Assurance Framework, to ensure the project represents good value and that public money is being allocated in an appropriate manner. Consideration will be given to any significant non-monetised benefits (recognising that not all benefits of an active travel project can be given a monetary value and are therefore excluded from the AMAT appraisal). These could include economic, social and environmental benefits afforded by the project. Furthermore, the appraisal will be cognisant to the degree to which the project is able to meet local and city region policy objectives, as defined within the strategic dimension of the business case.

If the project is shown to represent good value, funding then will then be sought from appropriate grant funding opportunities, secured via the LCRCA, and ring-fenced for investment into transport. These grants are not eligible to be used to fund Wirral Council Services.

- Anticipated lack of use of the project by cyclists, based on references to existing active travel routes.

Officer response: Use of active travel routes is heavily dependent on the five core principles set out in Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 (i.e. routes should be "Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable, and Attractive") which have been a fundamental part of the design of this project to help maximise future demand. It is also not considered representative to use information or observations from existing routes as a method to assess likely demand arising from the proposed route, which is longer, higher quality and will be more connected to key destinations than any recently delivered routes. It should also be noted that this route will be a key strategic link in the development of the boroughs Core Active Travel Network (CATN), which is the delivery element of the 'Places for People' strategy.

Forecasts of potential usage using national guidance and local information will be a fundamental part of the future business case work as per Department for Transport/Active Travel England requirements.

In addition the 2023 Sustrans 'Walking and Cycling Index 2023' report for the Liverpool City Region states that 62% of residents would be helped to cycle more if cycle routes were physically segregated from traffic and pedestrians. The project will provide a significant high quality segregated link between Birkenhead and Liscard in line with national guidance and local demand.

Other research from elsewhere in the UK also supports growing demand for active travel infrastructure and the benefits it can bring (see links in Background Papers at end of this report).

It should also be recognised that the project is not solely about providing for cyclists. The design will offer improved facilities for pedestrians of all abilities (including wheelers) to encourage shorter distance travel on foot. The design also allows for local public realm improvements and increased amounts of seating to assist people who need resting places, or simply places to meet. These features are also in line with the findings of the 'Walking and Cycling Index 2023'

- Impact on road capacity, the impact on other road users and that this would create congestion and impact emergency services and other operational usage.

Officer response: The project is intended to help encourage more shorter journeys by active travel modes in a safer environment, reducing reliance on private cars for the same journeys. It could be anticipated that increases in walking and cycling could reduce use of private cars and improve public transport journey times. . Whilst the road layout of the 'corridor' will change, motor vehicles will still be able to use the corridor motor vehicle and access all properties.

The emergency services, Merseytravel and Wirral Council's Waste and Recycling team have all been consulted on the project, as have all business along or near the route. Some concerns were raised by Merseyside Police regarding safety, security and parking management which have been noted and will be considered further in conjunction with the Police at detailed design stage. Other operational comments focused on ways the detailed scheme design can enable operational access for commercial, waste and emergency vehicles and work to promote bus service reliability as well as accessibility at stops. No objections were received from key operational stakeholders to the project nor were fundamental issues raised in relation to operational matters or congestion. All matters raised are considered to be issues for the detailed design work to address.

- An alternative route should be used or that an existing route existing or was being duplicated.

Officer response: Previous work done to identify the route as part of the wider Liverpool City Region Active Travel network (LCRCA Local Cycling

Walking Infrastructure Plan) identified this route as a key part of a future network. This work would have considered the five core principles set out in Local Transport Note (LTN) 1/20 (i.e. routes should be “Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable, and Attractive and included assessing existing or potential alternatives, with the chosen route predicted to enable the highest amount of active travel. This is due, in part, to the route running through the middle of the urban area so close to residential, business and education settings.

- Matters of safety, with some specific points regarding pedestrian/cycle interaction, especially in ‘shared spaces’ and with specific regard to people with specific accessibility needs.

Officer response: The scheme is designed to comply with current standards (especially the LTN 1/20 principles i.e. routes should be Coherent, Direct, Safe, Comfortable, and Attractive and Inclusive Mobility design guidance) and ongoing advice from Active Travel England both directly and via their recently published design tools. In addition, the design has been subject to an independent Stage 1 Road Safety Audit which is the appropriate stage for this level of project design. Further stages of safety audit would be undertaken should the design of the scheme progress. The findings of the recent ‘Walking and Cycling Index’ also continue to show demand for more and improved Active Travel infrastructure, including space from cycling separate from motor traffic and pedestrians.

The consultation responses and the findings of all of the technical assessments (ATE design tools and safety audit) would be used to support the next stages of design and therefore continue to work to address any safety concerns at detailed design stage. The project would be subject to further detailed design review and Road Safety Audit process up to and beyond implementation. It is worth noting that some safety issues identified at this (outline design) stage would be addressed by detailed design as the proposals are not sufficiently detailed to address matters of precise location of street furniture or surface material type and visual demarcation.

The consultation has underlined that there are a wide range of accessibility needs that need to be carefully considered in the design process. These needs vary and there is no single solution that can address all interests so carefully engagement and design will be required in progressing from outline to detailed design. At detailed design stage reference will be made to best practice from elsewhere in the UK (and possibly Europe) to help identify solutions to issues raised that may vary from location to location along the route.

Following the consultation ending, the design team have engaged with the Royal National Institute of Blind People (RNIB) both locally and nationally and have committed to undertake further discussions with the RNIB and other appropriate user groups as the project design progresses. We have

also used RNIB advice to help advise on the content for consultation material for other projects.

Further understanding of issues affecting blind or partially sighted people was gained from a workshop held by Placed (see Appendix 5) and it is intended that this format of engagement continues throughout the process alongside direct engagement with the RNIB.

As part of the detailed design process we would invite stakeholders with an interest in accessibility needs to meet on site to discuss issues arising and design solutions.

- Impact on and/or loss of parking for residents, businesses and visitors.

Officer response: The current scheme design has been updated based on, based on comments received to the original 2020 design to incorporate more parking and minimise potential displacement . A parking study was undertaken along the route and this has been refreshed to inform this design process. Further consideration of any parking issues will feed into the detailed design stage and updated parking surveys will be undertaken.