



## **ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE**

**WEDNESDAY 18 SEPTEMBER 2024**

<b>REPORT TITLE</b>	<b>BY OURS BEBINGTON LIVEABLE NEIGHBOURHOOD</b>
<b>REPORT OF</b>	<b>DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE</b>

### **REPORT SUMMARY**

This report asks Committee to note the work undertaken by Sustrans on the Bebington “By Ours” Liveable Neighbourhood Project and seeks approval for the Director of Regeneration and Place to work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to investigate funding opportunities for further development and delivery of the By Ours proposals.

The By Ours project is a community project in which residents, businesses and schools take the lead on re-designing their own streets. The project has been led by Sustrans and has been funded from the Freshfield Foundation, a grant making trust, in conjunction with the LCRCA, to develop a Liverpool City Region (LCR) wide Liveable Neighbourhood programme.

Sustainable transport and the creation of high-quality places is a long-standing priority for the Council and is reflected in the Council Plan 2023-2027 and the Places for People Strategy which was adopted earlier this year. The recommendations contained in this report directly support the key priority within the Council Plan to “play our part in addressing the climate emergency and protecting our environment” and “to work across communities with community, voluntary and faith organisations and partners to improve all residents’ life chances”.

It also supports the “Promoting independence and healthier lives”, “Protect our environment” and “Safe, resilient and engaged communities” themes of the Council Plan.

This matter affects the Bebington ward.

This matter is a not a Key Decision.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

The Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is recommended to;

1. Note the development, design and consultation work undertaken by Sustrans in the delivery of the 'By Ours' project as detailed in the Bebington Feasibility Report as attached as Appendix 1;
2. Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to work with the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) to seek appropriate funding opportunities for further development and delivery of the By Ours proposals.

## **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION**

- 1.1 To ensure that the Council achieves the development and delivery of active travel schemes within the Borough. To support the delivery of the Places for People Strategy and the LCR wide programme of schemes and interventions to address the impact of traffic dominance on the lives of residents, in order to reduce known detrimental effects on resident's health, their environment and quality of life.
- 1.2 To ensure that the Council supports schemes which will deliver increased levels of sustainable travel as set out in the draft Local Plan, the Places for People Strategy 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'. Currently two thirds of all journeys in the LCR are 3 miles or less but more than half of these journeys are taken by car. The impacts of this traffic dominance on the lives of local people are widespread, impacting on residents' health, their environment and quality of life.
- 1.3 To ensure that the Council benefits from the financial support that has been made available to Sustrans via the Freshfield Foundation to co-develop a high-level business case and evidence base which can support the Council to seek further funding opportunities via the LCRCA, the Department for Transport (DfT) or other funders. The work undertaken by Sustrans has provided a draft package of scalable proposals for the Council to consider, with a view to provide benefits to an area within the borough.
- 1.4 To ensure that the Council benefits from the experience and expertise that an organisation like Sustrans can offer. Sustrans has worked closely with residents, schools and community groups to co-develop proposals that support place making whilst also improving local journeys to shops, schools and employment. Sustrans is a registered charity with a vision of "a society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone".

### **2.0 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 2.1 The Council could decide not to consider the study and supporting evidence provided by Sustrans. This is not considered to be an appropriate option given that supporting active travel is in line with our commitments to address the climate emergency, improve the health of our residents and encourage alternative modes of transport to the private car.
- 2.2 The Council could decide not to use the study as an evidence base to seek further funding – this is not considered an appropriate option as the report contains a wealth of information and resident and stakeholder feedback which the Council can benefit from in order to support further scheme development and funding applications.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Sustrans is a national charity, established in 1977, which wants to make it easier for people to cycle and walk. Their vision is a society where the way we travel creates healthier places and happier lives for everyone and their mission is to make it easier for people to walk and cycle.
- 3.2 In 2021 Sustrans approached the LCRCA with a proposal to work with all 6 districts to develop Liveable Neighbourhoods. The main objectives of a Liveable Neighbourhoods programme are to:
- Create high-quality public spaces that prioritise people over cars;
  - Encourage more people to take journeys on foot, cycle or other active transport modes, reducing their carbon footprint;
  - Create low-traffic areas and remove rat running;
  - Provide opportunities for better social connections, thriving local economies and more sustainable living; and
  - Give people the say in the design of their streets and foster more active and empowered communities.
- 3.3 Sustrans secured revenue funding for the project from the Freshfield Foundation. The Freshfield Foundation has its roots in the LCR and most of the funds it distributes in grants come from the sale of the Littlewoods Organisation which was based in Liverpool.
- 3.4 In September 2021 the Economy Regeneration and Housing Committee resolved that;
- (1) *the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Director of Neighbourhood Services, be authorised to work with Sustrans and local stakeholders, including schools and residents, to co-develop and design a Liveable Neighbourhood (incorporating a school neighbourhood cluster) in Bebington, and to produce a business case which could be used to secure future funding;*
  - (2) *the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the Director of Neighbourhood Services, Chair and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee and the Chair and Spokespersons of Environment, Transport and Climate Change Committee, be authorised to implement any temporary test/trial schemes which arise from the stakeholder co-development programme; and*
  - (3) *a further report be brought forward to Members for approval of the business case, the submission of any funding application and installation of any permanent Liveable Neighbourhoods infrastructure.*
- 3.5 The report to committee identified Bebington as the location for the By Ours project following a comprehensive site selection process undertaken by Sustrans looking at various areas across the borough and considering criteria such as collision data, number of schools and traffic patterns. The September 2021 resolution enabled work to be undertaken by Sustrans to work with

residents and local stakeholders under the project name of “By Ours” to co-develop and design a ‘Liveable Neighbourhood’ in Bebington, and to produce a business case that could be used to secure future funding to be used to deliver the required infrastructure.

3.6 The By Ours project covers an area of approximately 1.3km<sup>2</sup> and 2587 properties.

The area is bound by:

- Heath Road to the south;
- Teehey Lane to the west;
- Town Lane to the north;
- Old Chester Road to the east; and
- The Village and Bebington Road to the southeast.

A plan of the area is included in Section 1.4 of Appendix 1.

3.7 Through the By Ours Bebington project Sustrans has worked with local people to identify how changes to their streets could improve their quality of life and enable them to use their streets more to walk, cycle, play and socialise. This approach has involved seeking involvement from local people to shape their environment around the way they want to live.

3.8 The design principles for the project, as identified by Sustrans were;

- Creating safer, quieter streets by:
  - Prioritising people
  - Reducing traffic speed and volume and cutting through residential streets
  - Making roads easier to cross.
- Making it safer for people to walk, cycle and wheel their school journeys by:
  - Reducing the impact of traffic around schools
  - Improving walking, cycling and wheeling routes.
- Creating more pleasant green spaces that are inviting for people to use and enjoy by:
  - Making existing green spaces better
  - Adding additional greening throughout the neighbourhood
  - Encouraging cleaner streets.
- Improving connections to local centres, schools and amenities by:
  - Improving existing routes for walking, cycling and wheeling
  - Creating better connections to important local places.

3.9 As a result of the design, development and engagement work undertaken Sustrans has developed a concept design for the Bebington area based on design proposals including;

- Modal filters and School Streets
- Safer junctions and crossings
- Public realm improvements
- New paths and cycle tracks
- Traffic calming and one-way streets

The full detail of the proposals can be seen in Chapter 2 of Appendix 1 along with the outcome of the public consultation on the proposals which can be seen in Chapter 4 of Appendix 1.

- 3.10 A high level cost plan and economic appraisal have also been developed as part of the work undertaken by Sustrans, using the Active Modes Appraisal Tool which has been developed by the Department for Transport, these can be found in Chapter 5 of Appendix 1. The total construction cost identified for the scheme is £10.37 million with a benefit cost ratio (BCR) for implementation of the scheme (depending on the usage scenario selected shows a BCR of between 1.59 and 2.22 which is a medium to high value for money.
- 3.11 The proposals represent a high-level concept design which would require significant further development to a more detailed design stage which would also include further consultation, and which would refine the cost estimate which would produce a revised BCR. Subject to available funding, projects could be delivered individually or in phases, rather than all together and therefore partial implementation would also impact the calculation of the benefits.
- 3.12 The By Ours Bebington proposals are set within the wider context of the understanding that not everyone wishes to or can walk or cycle but acknowledges that by providing the infrastructure for those who do also has wider benefits to people who wish or need to drive by reducing the overall number of motorised vehicles on the network.

#### **4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The By Ours project has been funded by the Freshfield Foundation as part of a LCR wide programme. The funding has been given directly to Sustrans by the Freshfield Foundation and is not funding that has been directly received or managed by the Council.
- 4.2 There has been no financial cost to the Council for Sustrans to undertake the community engagement, co-development and design of the Liveable Neighbourhood Programme in Bebington, or for the production of a business case, however the Council has benefited from the behaviour change and technical/engineering design and advice at no cost, which would have a financial value if the Council wished to procure directly.
- 4.3 The By Ours project funding from Freshfields does not include any further funding for the next stages of design or capital funding for delivery of infrastructure. The Council will continue to explore appropriate funding routes with the LCRCA as part of the City Region Sustainable Transport Settlement

Tranche 2 pipeline development and any future Active Travel Funding opportunities to progress elements of the project noting that the proposals will need to be taken to further outline and detailed design stages which will refine costs to implement the schemes, therefore there will be further development costs also required in advance of any delivery, the cost of which would be proportionate to the scale of the proposal. Any further proposals to implement any schemes identified as part of this project would be subject to separate approval in line with the council constitution.

- 4.4 Although no budget has been available from the Freshfield Foundation for the delivery of infrastructure the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee at its meeting in March 2024 allocated a budget of £300,000 to support the delivery of a project identified within the overall By Ours proposals, as part LCR Sustainable Transport Settlement (CRSTS) Combined Authority Transport Plan programme for 2024-27.
- 4.5 The cost estimates presented in the Sustrans report are a high-level summary of indicative costs to implement the design interventions presented in this report. Sustrans estimate that the project cost would be approximately £10.37 million, however it should be noted that this would be for delivery of the whole programme of works and that the proposed programme of works is scalable and could delivered in smaller phases. There is however significant risk attached to this cost estimate figure given the level of design undertaken is high level and a significant number of exclusions have been identified.

## **5.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Should any of the proposed projects progress, 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 Should any of the proposed projects progress, the Council would need to undertake future statutory consultation regarding the delivery of proposals in relation to By Ours Bebington measures.

## **6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS**

- 6.1 Officers in Neighbourhoods and Regeneration and Place Directorates have provided high level support to Sustrans during the development of the project, in particular with regard to engagement with schools.
- 6.2 Existing staff resources, supplemented by external specialist resources as appropriate will be used to support the development of the design for the scheme to be identified from the CRSTS 2024/2027 programme as well as in relation to resources to support seeking funding to support further design and delivery of the By Ours Bebington proposal from other grant sources that may be available.

6.3 There are no immediate ICT or asset implications as a direct result of this report however should the proposals progress to delivery there will be implications for highway assets.

## **7.0 RELEVANT RISKS**

7.1 The cost estimates presented by Sustrans are a high-level summary of indicative costs to implement the design interventions. Further work would be required to reduce the risk associated with these estimated costs, for example as is normal for this stage of design this work has been based on OS mapping rather than topographical survey data and no allowances have been made for;

- Contractor/construction contingencies
- Land and legal costs
- Ecology and biodiversity net gain
- Future maintenance costs
- Traffic sign relocation or replacement
- Relocation of statutory undertakers' equipment.

7.2 Whilst the proposals have been developed in conjunction with residents and stakeholders each measure or package of measures would require significant further development and design work as well as further public and stakeholder consultation and engagement, including statutory consultation.

7.3 Given there is no guarantee of funding undertaking the community engagement stage, project design and business case development may have led to raising the expectations of local residents and stakeholders. However, it is considered that by undertaking this advance consultation and project development that any future funding bid may have an increased chance of success.

## **8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION**

8.1 Bebington Ward Councillors have attended several briefing sessions with Sustrans and have been engaged with the Sustrans team throughout the project. The Wirral Active Travel Forum and Members Active Travel Working Group have also been engaged regarding the project.

8.2 There have been numerous opportunities for residents and stakeholders to engage as part of the Liveable Neighbourhood project running between April 2022 and July 2023. The development of the concept design has been undertaken with extensive co-development with residents, schools and community groups in Bebington. More detail can be found in Chapter 4 of the Feasibility Study at Appendix 1 but in summary the following has been undertaken to support the development of the draft project design;

- Neighbourhood surveys
- Community events
- Workshops



- Project Officer engagement
- Site visits
- School engagements
- Online mapping tool

8.3 The Draft Design was also circulated to 3000 addresses in Bebington inviting residents to provide their feedback and suggestions on the By Ours draft neighbourhood plan. 578 responses were received and the detail of this is set out in Chapter 2 of Appendix 1.

8.4 Whilst the survey responses indicated that there is net support for all 32 of 32 design proposals put forward by Sustrans as part of the By Ours project it should be recognised that significant further development and design work as well as further public and stakeholder consultation and engagement, including statutory consultation would be required to be undertaken.

8.5 Ward Members, the Active Travel Members Working Group and Active Travel Forum will continue to be updated on the progress of the development of the scheme within the 2024/2027 programme and regarding the identification of future funding opportunities.

## **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. There are no equality implications arising directly from this report, the associated actions arising from any of the proposed projects may need to assess any equality issues and mitigate any negative impact that may emerge and as such an Equality Impact Assessment would be published should this project progress further.

## **10.0 ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE IMPLICATIONS**

10.1 The content and recommendations contained within this report are expected to support the development of projects to reduce the emissions of greenhouse gases. This will include, as appropriate, the development and delivery of infrastructure improvements to reduce car dominance and create a safer environment for road users and pedestrians. The development of the By Ours Bebington concept design has clear links to the environment and climate emergency declaration and switch from fossil fuel vehicles and provides an opportunity to ensure that the regeneration of Wirral supports the Cool 2 sustainability targets.

10.2 The link between poor air quality, the climate emergency and emissions from vehicles is widely accepted. The By Ours Bebington concept design encourages modal shift away from the private motor car towards cleaner,

more sustainable modes of transport and can have a positive environmental and climate change impact.

- 10.3 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 nationally each year in England and provide opportunity to improve green spaces and biodiversity.

## **11.0 COMMUNITY WEALTH IMPLICATIONS**

- 11.1 Community Wealth Building reorganises local economies to be fairer and stops wealth flowing out of communities. Striving for a prosperous and inclusive economy where local people can get good jobs and achieve their aspirations, the Council aims to create an economy that benefits all of our residents and one which keeps money within Wirral. The Council's Community Wealth Building Strategy is a key part of how this is achieved and makes a major contribution to improving the economic, social and health outcomes of the borough.
- 11.2 Sustainable travel is at the heart of the emerging Local Plan and it is in this context the development of By Ours Bebington concept design is part of a wider sustainable economic regeneration programme to deliver a prosperous, inclusive economy to benefit local residents, which could be rolled out to other areas of the borough. The By Ours Bebington concept design has the ability to support the delivery of measures that will improve access to key facilities for all.
- 11.3 Any future procurement exercises to support delivery of projects within By Ours will support to build the wealth of our local communities where we will strive to maximise social value activity through creation of local employment/training opportunities and local labour/spend to maximise the Wirral pound. The request for quotation evaluation criteria has a 10% built in award weighting for social value.

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## **APPENDICES**

### Appendix 1 – Sustrans Feasibility Report

The PDF file may not be suitable to view for people with disabilities, users of assistive technology or mobile phone devices. Please contact [juliebarnes@wirral.gov.uk](mailto:juliebarnes@wirral.gov.uk) if you would like this document in an accessible format.

## **TERMS OF REFERENCE**

This report is being considered by the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee in accordance with section (k) of its Terms of Reference:

- (k) undertaking the development and implementation of policy in relation to the Committee's functions, incorporating the assessment of outcomes, review of effectiveness and formulation of recommendations to the Council, partners and other bodies, which shall include any decision relating to the above functions.

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

Places for People

<https://democracy.wirral.gov.uk/documents/s50110342/Appendix%201%20Places%20for%20People%20Strategy.pdf>

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](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/>

Cool Wirral Strategy

<https://www.wirral.gov.uk/files/cool2-strategy-2020.pdf/download?inline>

Plan for Drivers

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/plan-for-drivers/the-plan-for-drivers>

## SUBJECT HISTORY (last 3 years)

<b>Council Meeting</b>	<b>Date</b>
Liveable Neighbourhoods <b>Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee</b>	8 June 2021
Liveable Neighbourhoods Economy Regeneration & Housing Committee Appendix 1 Area Selection Report	29 Sep 2021