



ENVIRONMENT, CLIMATE EMERGENCY AND TRANSPORT COMMITTEE

20 OCTOBER 2022

REPORT TITLE	ACTIVE TRAVEL FUND TRANCHE 2: A554 BAYSWATER ROAD/HARRISON DRIVE, WALLASEY – PROPOSED MANDATORY CYCLE LANE AND LEASOWE ROAD – REMOVAL OF SCHEME FROM PROGRAMME
REPORT OF	DIRECTOR OF REGENERATION AND PLACE

REPORT SUMMARY

This report considers the objections and expressions of support received following consultation regarding the proposed mandatory cycle link along A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive, Wallasey Ward. This scheme has been developed as part of Tranche 2 of the Department for Transport’s (DfT) Active Travel Fund. In accordance with the Council’s constitution consideration of the approval of the implementation of the scheme is a matter for this Committee given that in excess of 14 objections have been received in response to the public consultation on the scheme.

The scheme also seeks approval for the removal of the Leasowe Road scheme in the Leasowe and Moreton East ward, and the Moreton West and Saughall Massie ward from the Tranche 2 programme.

The Wirral Plan 2021-2026 sets out the Councils 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 Wallasey Ward, the Leasowe and Moreton East ward and the Moreton West and Saughall Massie ward. This matter is a Key Decision.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The Environment Climate Emergency and Transport Committee is requested to:

- (1) Approve the implementation of a mandatory cycle link along the A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive, Wallasey, as set out in Appendix 1 of this report; and
- (2) Authorise the Director of Regeneration and Place to:
 - (a) Submit a change control request to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to withdraw the Leasowe Road scheme from the Active Travel Tranche 2 programme;
 - (b) Submit a change control request to the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority to enable £111,000 of budget previously allocated to the Leasowe Road scheme to be allocated to the A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive scheme; and
 - (c) Effect an associated virement so that the budget for the proposed mandatory cycle link along Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive is increased from £70,000 to £181,000.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

1.0 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1.1 The proposed mandatory cycle link along A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive, Wallasey Ward is 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.
- 1.2 The scheme is funded via the Department for Transport's (DfT) Active Travel Fund and the funding cannot be used for any other purpose.
- 1.3 The objections and expressions of support received during the consultation period have been considered and have been given comprehensive responses. It is considered that the scheme proposal should be progressed as it is in line with the latest DfT design guidance for cycle schemes and the objectives of the Active Travel Fund.
- 1.4 Due to the current macro-economic climate there has been a significant increase in costs which has impacted on the Tranche 2 programme. It is therefore considered appropriate to withdraw the Leasowe Road scheme from the programme and consider this for future funding opportunities. This scheme has not yet been consulted on and therefore not as advanced as other schemes in the programme.

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 ("LCRCA") has advised that the funds could only be spent on schemes within the current programme and could not be spent on a new scheme in the borough.
- 2.2 Remove the A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive Scheme from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 programme and return the £70,000 of funding to the LCRCA. This is not considered an appropriate option as failure to deliver the scheme could result in reputational issues for the Council in terms of its commitment to active travel.
- 2.3 Remove an alternate scheme from the programme rather than Leasowe Road. This is not considered an appropriate option as the Leasowe scheme is not as progressed as other schemes in the programme and has not yet been the subject of a public consultation.

3. BACKGROUND INFORMATION

- 3.1 Wirral Council has been awarded £830,000 from the LCRCA Active Travel Tranche 2 programme to progress 5 projects to support and enable increased levels of walking and cycling in the Borough. The programme, which was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 30 June 2021 is set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Wirral Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 Programme

Scheme	Budget
Arrowe Park Road (Pensby and Thingwall Ward)	£70,000
Duke Street (Bidston & St James Ward and Claughton Ward)	£110,000
Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive (Wallasey Ward)	£70,000
Leasowe Road (Leasowe and Moreton East Ward and Moreton West and Saughall Massie Ward)	£430,000
School Streets (Various Wards)	£90,000
The Crescent (Hoylake and Meols Ward) REMOVED FROM PROGRAMME	£60,000
Total	£830,000

The budget for the Leasowe Scheme was increased to £1,020,000 following an Officer Decision Notice 17 February 2022.

- 3.2 The A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive scheme proposals extend from the junction with Newport Avenue to the junction with Coastal Drive. The proposal includes the conversion of the existing advisory cycle lane to a mandatory cycle lane with light segregation. An advisory cycle lane is marked with a white dashed line and motorists are advised not to drive or park in it, but it is not an offence to do so. A mandatory cycle lane is marked with a solid white line and it is an offence for motorists to drive or park in the lane.
- 3.3 Bayswater Road has a 30mph speed limit and the segregation units required for this project will subsequently be substantial in nature and quality. Appendix 1 of this report includes a photograph of the type of wand orca segregation unit to be used. Additional road markings, highway signs and coloured surfacing will supplement the segregation units.
- 3.4 The objective of the Active Travel Fund Programme is to implement walking and cycling schemes to reduce the dependency on car-based journeys and through segregation provide increased confidence for users of active travel modes.
- 3.5 On 30 June 2021 the Policy and Resources Committee resolved to accept various recommendations from the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee and resolved (amongst other matters) that:
- (1) *the Director of Regeneration and Place be authorised to accept the grant funding of £1,153,380 allocated to Wirral Council by Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for the Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and 2 Programmes and accept the Local Authority Active Travel Capability Fund Programme indicative allocation of £286,000;*

- (2) *the proposed Active Travel Fund Tranche 1 and 2 Programmes and the Active Travel Capability Fund Programme (“the Programmes”) as set out in Appendices 1, 2 and 3 of the report, be approved;*
- (3) *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, be authorised to amend the Programmes if required having due regard to any issues that may arise during design or consultation stages of projects;*
- (4) *Committee notes that the above authority and approvals are subject to the schemes at the Crescent, and proposed cycle way through Wallasey and New Brighton, being deferred until a consultation process has taken place;*
- (5) *Committee notes the significant overlap between the terms of reference of the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee and requests that these committees work jointly with Economy Regeneration and Development Committee leading on active travel issues which affect major regeneration master plan projects and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee to lead on all other transport, active travel and road safety strategy and schemes. Officers are asked to liaise with the Chairs of both committees on all transport planning to ensure that the work programmes are always agreed.*

3.6 Following Committee approval of the programme, design work for the A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive scheme and the Leasowe Road scheme was progressed.

Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive Scheme

3.7 In February 2021, officers consulted with Ward Councillors (Wallasey Ward), Stakeholders, and Chairs and Spokespersons of Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. One Councillor enquired regarding the rationale behind the proposals, the cost of the proposals, how the mandatory cycle lane would be enforced, and why this route was chosen. The Councillor was informed that the existing link had been identified as one that would benefit from being brought in line with current standards and that the extension of the existing route would help protect cyclists and therefore encourage more cycling. They were also told that there was funding available from DfT’s Active Travel Fund and that the use of light segregation devices (Wand Orca’s) would make the route self-enforceable. The Councillor raised concerns regarding the maintenance of the cycle lane when light segregation units are installed and refuse vehicles are unable to sweep down such narrow lanes. These concerns, all objections and expressions of support received

during the public consultation and an officer response to each are summarised in Appendix 2 of this report.

- 3.8 In March 2021 public consultation was undertaken with local residents, landowners, and businesses. 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.
- 3.9 Following the establishment of the Active Travel Members Working Group in March 2021 it was considered appropriate that the Chairs and Spokespersons of both the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee and the Environment, Transport and Climate Change Committee should be consulted on any proposed Active Travel schemes. Further design development was also undertaken on the scheme in order that the proposals could be improved to include bus-boarder type facilities and traffic regulation orders (double yellow lines). As a result of these changes it was considered appropriate to undertake a further consultation exercise. All objections and expressions of support received during this consultation were recorded and are included, along with an officer's response, within Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.10 In September 2021, officers re-consulted with Ward Councillors (Wallasey Ward), Stakeholders, Chairs and Spokespersons of Environment, Climate Emergency & Transport Committee and also Chairs and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee. One Councillor stated that their comments were as per the first consultation (see paragraph 3.7 of this report) in that the route does not connect to the existing network.
- 3.11 In December 2021 a further public consultation exercise was undertaken with local residents, landowners, and businesses. Further 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.
- 3.12 In total, during both public consultation periods (1 March 2021 to 19 March 2021 and 8 December 2021 to 5 January 2022), 16 objections and 10 expressions of support were received. The objections and officer response are summarised in Appendix 2 of this report.
- 3.13 The feedback from the consultation has been discussed with the Chairs and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee and the Chairs and Spokespersons of the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committee, and with members of the Active Travel Working Group at its meeting of 6 October 2022.

Leasowe Road Scheme

- 3.14 The Leasowe Road scheme has not been the subject of any ward member or public engagement.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 £70,000 has been approved to deliver the A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive Road Scheme. This is funded by DfT's Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 programme and was approved by Policy and Resources Committee on 30 June 2021
- 4.2 Due to the current macro-economic situation, there is a significant national increase in costs which has impacted on the Active Travel Tranche 2 Programme. The current cost for the scheme is estimated to be £181,000.
- 4.3 The Leasowe Road scheme currently has an allocated budget of £1,020,000 with £489,000 of that funding being from the Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 programme.
- 4.4 Discussions are ongoing with the LCRCA regarding the scaling down of the overall Active Travel Fund Tranche 2 programme to ensure that total programme cost does not exceed the grant available. It is proposed, given that the current programme exceeds the Tranche 2 budget, that the Leasowe Road Project is withdrawn from the Tranche 2 programme. A further opportunity to secure funding for active travel, including potentially for the Leasowe Road, is due to be announced by Active Travel England in October 2022 via Tranche 4, and this will be considered at future meeting of the Active Travel Members Working Group . Active Travel England and the LCRCA has also been approached with regard to slipping any unspent Tranche 2 monies into the future programme.
- 4.5 The ongoing maintenance costs would be included within the existing highway maintenance programme. Discussions are currently taking place with the LCRCA 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 As per the decision of the Policy and Resources committee on the 30 June 2021, the Director of Regeneration and Place, in consultation with the LCRCA and the Chairs and Spokespersons of the Economy, Regeneration and Development and the Environment, Climate Emergency and Transport Committees, is authorised to amend the Programmes if required having due regard to any issues that may arise during design or consultation stages of projects.

5.3 Under the Council's scheme of delegation this matter could have been dealt with as an officer decision if there had been 14 or less objections. However for the implementation of this type of planned highways and infrastructure schemes, where budget provision exists and in excess of 14 objections have been submitted, it is a requirement for this Committee to consider the objections and make a decision on whether or not to implement this scheme.

6.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS: ICT, STAFFING AND ASSETS

6.1 All capital schemes funded from Active Travel Fund allocations have been added to the Council's Capital Programme. Existing staff resources has been used for development of scheme included in the programme, supplemented where required with external design resources.

7.0 RELEVANT RISKS

7.1 Failure to deliver an active travel scheme that is designed in accordance with the latest cycle design guidance would be viewed negatively by the DfT and would impact future funding allocations to the LCRCA from the DfT and in turn to Wirral.

7.2 The original deadline for spending the funding was the end of March 2022 however unavoidable delays in the wider programme as a result of a national shortage of segregation units this deadline has been extended to March 2023.

8.0 ENGAGEMENT/CONSULTATION

8.1 Wirral Council has a statutory consultation process that is required for the undertaking of work on the adopted highway which require public consultation, objections to which would be considered under the Scheme of Delegation in the Council's Constitution.

8.2 Further consultation was undertaken with the Emergency Services, Freight Transport Association, Road Haulage Association, Merseytravel & Wirral's Active Travel Forum. Letters/plans were delivered to residents living within the vicinity of the scheme, informing them of the proposals and giving them the opportunity to provide comments/support/concerns/objections. This report provides details of objections and comments received.

8.3 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 will continue to be engaged as these programmes develop.

8.4 On 4 March 2021, the Economy Regeneration and Development Committee resolved to establish a Members Active Travel Working Group to support the work of Economy, Regeneration and Development Committee and the Environment. Climate Emergency and Transport Committee. The first meeting of this working group took place on 19 January 2022 and members of that

group were updated on the Active Travel Fund programme. The responses to the consultation for the scheme were considered at a further meeting on 6 October 2022 and the views of the group were taken into account in finalising this report.

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 The Council has an obligation under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 to show due regard to the public sector equality duty and mitigate any negative impacts that may affect people with protected characteristics..
- 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 IMPLICATIONS

ENVIRONMENT AND CLIMATE

- 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 A554 Bayswater Road/Harrison Drive 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:** Scheme Drawings Ref Nos.
 DC/0676/100
 DC/0692/100
- Appendix 2:** Objections and Expressions of Support including Officer Responses.

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
Officer Decision Notice Leasowe Road	17 February 2022
Active Travel Cross Party Member Working Group Economy Regeneration and Development	4 March 2021

Committee Item 33 Active Travel Funding Economy Regeneration and Development Committee Item 6	8 June 2021
Active Travel Funding Policy and Resources Committee Item 11a	30 June 2021