

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 13 June 2019

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Transport Infrastructure Update

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to update members on the improvements made in recent years to the Borough's transport infrastructure and to seek the Board's approval to the next set of key transport projects within Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) Members approve the list of schemes in Appendix 1 to this report to be developed into deliverable schemes (including feasibility works, business case preparation, funding bids, and when appropriate, entry into the Council's Capital Programme);**
- 2) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transportation, to take the necessary actions to ensure value for money through the appropriate procurement processes; and**
- 3) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transportation, to take any other actions necessary to enable timely delivery of this infrastructure.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Good transport links bring significant benefits to people, businesses, the environment, and the overall economy of the Borough. For example, good transport can: help people access jobs; help shape greener and healthier places; attract new firms and investment; and unlock new development sites for business and housing.
- 3.2 Halton has natural advantages in its geographical location and excellent transport links. The Council continues to invest in a comprehensive

programme of infrastructure projects with the objective of providing safe, efficient, and effective transport systems to facilitate sustainable growth.

- 3.3 These schemes also meet the wider policy objectives of reducing congestion, reducing road casualties, efficient freight movement, providing access to opportunities, improving health and well-being, air quality improvement, and tackling climate change.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Halton's adopted Local Transport Plan 3 (LTP3) sets out the statutory context for investment in infrastructure to 2025/6. In association with the 22 'Primary Transport Strategies' contained in LTP3 there are a number of major schemes and improvement projects covering road, rail, bus, cycling and walking.

- 4.2 This section reviews the delivery of infrastructure against the ambitions set out in LTP3.

- 4.3 The major schemes (identified in Chapter 10 of LTP3) are either complete or in their final phases:

- Mersey Gateway
- Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) Major Maintenance – 10 year programme
- Halton Curve (connects Chester / Warrington rail line with Liverpool Branch of West Coast Mainline)

- 4.4 Chapter 11 of LTP3 sets out further schemes across all modes of transport. Many of these schemes have been delivered.

Cycling & Walking

- 4.5 Halton has approximately 74km of public rights of way (including 71km of footpath and 3km of bridleways). Appendix 2 of this report sets out the most recent schemes undertaken to extend and link this network (set out under 'sustainable transport schemes').

Rail

- 4.6 Major investment has delivered the Halton Curve re-opening in May 2019. In addition, all stations in Halton have benefited from access upgrades over the LTP3 period. Runcorn Mainline is receiving major investment through the Runcorn Station Quarter project, which will provide direct access from the Expressway into the Station, and a new public transport interchange. Runcorn East has doubled its car parking facilities. Widnes Station has had parking improvements, and further access improvements are planned at both Hough Green and Widnes Stations.

- 4.7 New stations remain an ambition, including the re-opening of Ditton station, and others at Barrows Green, Upton Rocks, and Beechwood. New sidings have been installed at 3MG in Widnes to serve the multi-modal freight facility and Alstom.

Bus

- 4.8 Investment in the bus network over the last five years has seen the Halton Transport and Arriva Bus fleets operating at Euro V and VI standards. There has also been a borough-wide scheme to improve the waiting facilities and access at bus stops.
- 4.9 Investment from the Liverpool City Region has allowed the No17 bus service which operates between Widnes and St Helens to become a Quality Bus Partnership Corridor. This partnership between both operators has provided for an improved frequency of 20 minutes and also a reciprocal ticketing agreement is in place whereby both operators accept the other's multi-journey tickets. Therefore, providing a much improved and convenient service for the user. The Liverpool City region is currently undertaking the roll out of the Walrus smartcard, Halton will in the future be included in this programme.
- 4.10 Bus priority has also been improved at a number of traffic signalled junctions along the Liverpool Road and Hale Road corridor and at the junction of Lunts Heath Road and Wilmere Lane.

Roads

- 4.11 The Council is responsible for 560km of road (50km of principal roads, 79km of non-principal classified roads, and 432km of unclassified road). In addition there are 226km of footpath, 17km of busway, 179 highway bridges and 59 retaining walls. All have to be maintained.
- 4.12 LTP3 identified a number of improvement schemes, of which the following are complete or underway:
- A557 approach to M56 J12 (Runcorn)
 - 3MG Access Road providing access into Alstom (Widnes)
 - Johnson's Lane Improvement (Widnes)
 - Runcorn Station Access Road (Runcorn)
 - Sandymoor Distributor Road (Runcorn)
 - Gyrotory improvements (Widnes)
 - A558 junction capacity at Sandymoor & Daresbury (Runcorn)
 - Wilmere Lane / Lunts Heath Road junction (Widnes)
- 4.13 The following schemes remain in the future programme (Appendix 1):
- A558 widening to provide additional capacity for growth at East Runcorn, including Sci-Tech Daresbury, and housing at Sandymoor and Delph Lane.

- M56 J11A. The feasibility of this proposed junction remains under review by Highways England.
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport Access Road. The construction of a link road from the A562 is supported in the Local Plan to provide highway capacity to allow airport expansion.
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Traffic Management & Safety

- 4.14 Pressure to improve traffic flow, reduce energy use and improve environmental benefits has driven investment in Intelligent Transport Systems (ITS). Traffic signals have been upgraded to LEDs and extra low voltage (ELV) systems. 88% of traffic signal heads are now LED, (86% of sites). Upgrades are still required at 20 sites (117 heads) and this work is scheduled over the next two years as traditional lamps (incandescent, halogen etc) will no longer be available.
- 4.15 Over recent years there has been a programme to convert the lamps in the street lights to LEDs. To date, approximately 12,000 of Halton's 20,000 street lights have been converted or changed to LED. As a result, the energy reduction for the last 2 years is in excess of 1.5 Million kWh (equivalent to £200,000 at current prices). Typical overall energy savings of the schemes that have been installed to date, resulted in an energy reduction of around 70%.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Following adoption of LTP3, there have been a number of changes to the way transport strategy and funding is administered. In 2015 the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR CA) was created. New priorities exist in the form of Transport for the North, Northern Powerhouse Rail and High Speed 2. The Combined Authority is addressing this through its emerging Mayoral Transport Plan.
- 5.2 Department for Transport funding is now directed to the LCR CA and redistributed to the local councils. New funding sources have become available to the CA (e.g. the Strategic Investment Fund, Transforming Cities Fund, and Sustainable Urban Design Fund). This means that funding that was previously dedicated to Halton now forms part of a City Region investment strategy. It is therefore imperative that Halton's future transport interventions are closely scrutinised on the basis of benefits and deliverability in the context of the City Region, rather than solely at a Borough level. This evolution in funding will provide access to higher levels of funding than previously possible for high priority schemes. However, it is imperative that schemes are developed to an advanced stage of design and appraisal to ensure funding success.
- 5.3 As part of the devolution deal, the LCR CA should at some stage become responsible for the maintenance of the key route network (KRN)

in the Liverpool City Region. However, this transfer of responsibility is yet to occur and so remains with each District.

- 5.4 It is necessary to keep the Borough's highway network models up to date to allow for accurate traffic analysis to be undertaken and understand the impact of new developments and proposed infrastructure options on the operation of the network. Work to update both the Mersey Gateway traffic model, and the local element of the CA model, are currently under review to ensure they can be used as evidence to support future scheme bids.
- 5.5 At the present time there are four major projects on site in the Borough:
- Silver Jubilee Bridge maintenance (Contractor: Balvac). This is the final element of the 10 year programme to include arch painting, cable replacement, and deck reconfiguration (see 4.3).
 - Runcorn Station Quarter & Delinking (Contractor: Balfour Beatty). New Expressway roundabout and station access, together with removal of overhead road viaducts and 'Trumpet Loop'.
 - Widnes Loops to West Bank Link (Contractor: Balfour Beatty). Provides a direct link from the Mersey Gateway into West Bank and 3MG.
 - Sustainable transport corridor upgrades to extend and link the existing off-road network for walking and cycling. This is a package of schemes funded by the LCR Combined Authority (Appendix 2).

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Access to funding for large projects will remain a challenge. The cost of programme development to individual local authorities is increasing due to the competitive nature of funding opportunities and the level of subscription (i.e. the number of bids submitted from across the LCR). It is clear that Halton requires a 'pipeline' of schemes, with feasibility, appraisal, and business cases in place, to allow access to funding and swift delivery. Appendix 1 identifies this scheme pipeline.
- 6.2 Scheme development requires a range of unique skills in the form of engineering design, cost assessment and quantity surveying, land acquisition knowledge, contract management, niche appraisals (Webtag), funding and bid formulation. In-house staff no longer have all the required skills and consultants are relied upon to provide bespoke input. This has implications for time and cost in programme development.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 Transport networks should be ubiquitous and open for everyone. Each scheme is appraised separately to ensure it provides equality of access for all users.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
LTP3 https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/TransportPolicy.aspx	Municipal Building	Alasdair Cross

APPENDIX 1 - FUTURE TRANSPORT PIPELINE SCHEMES

NAME OF SCHEME	BENEFITS	DESCRIPTION	SCHEME VALUE
Runcorn Station Quarter	Improved public realm; improved public transport interchange; catalyst for area regeneration	<p>This scheme provides the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A new piazza space to replace the station forecourt, comprising a safe, and welcoming open space to greet travellers. Combining quality materials and circulation spaces, with seating areas in a green planted setting. The proposed design will be flexible enough to provide small ancillary developments such as a coffee bar/meeting hub, and legible access guiding visitors towards Runcorn town centre and the Brindley. • Bus interchange facilities rationalising the 3 current bus stop locations into one central location close to Waterloo Bridge. Facilities to include shelters, seating and real-time information (in both the station and shelters) in a style consistent with the piazza space. • Improved walking and cycling connectivity between the station and town centre and surrounding residential areas, and also linking into the newly refurbished Silver Jubilee Bridge. • Improved cross canal bridge connecting the Station Quarter to the Brindley Theatre and Town Centre. 	£5m
Wilmere Lane Slips Highways England	Address current congestion issues	Part of a Highways England scheme to relieve congestion at the M62 J7	Highways England
Hough Green and Widnes Stations	Safe and compliant access to the stations. Encourages use.	The east bound platform at Hough Green station is only accessible via a steep flight of steps. For disabled users alighting here, the only way off the platform is across the lines. Widnes station is accessed on the east bound platform by a bridge and a non-compliant ramp, the ramp is currently too steep for use by wheelchair users and does not have any rest areas	£1-3m each station

Replacement Rail Bridge Ditton / Halebank	Improved access	This point is often congested, and with predicted growth across all sectors, this pinch point may constrain the potential of this key area. The provision of a new bridge over the railway will alleviate this problem, supporting inclusive growth through improved access to job opportunities, as well as helping to sustain existing residential communities. Complements the Halton Curve and potential reopening of Ditton Station to improve connectivity in the 3MG / Ditton / wider 'Speke Approaches' growth corridor. This scheme maximises the opportunity for the Ditton/Halebank area.	£5-10m
3MG Employment links	Encourages sustainable transport & access TO employment and housing areas	Cycling and walking improvements Halton Curve and potential for reopening Ditton Station improves the sustainability and connectivity of the 3MG Ditton Corridor and wider 'Speke Approaches' growth corridor - supporting more balanced growth by improving access to job opportunities as well as helping to sustain and grow residential communities.	£1-2m
Daresbury A558 Dualling	Reducing congestion; improving access to Enterprise Zone & development sites in the East Runcorn.	The A558 Daresbury Expressway is dual carriageway from the junction with the A553 Mersey Gateway to the roundabout junction with Blackheath Lane and Pitts Heath Lane in northeast Runcorn. Between this roundabout and Sci-Tech Daresbury EZ (Innovation Way), a distance of 1 mile/1.5km the A558 it becomes single carriageway. The road then reverts to dual carriageway at Sci-Tech Daresbury at Innovation Way. This scheme seeks to upgrade the current single carriageway section to dual carriageway.	£20-30m
M56 J11A	Improved traffic flows; reducing traffic impacts on Preston Brook/ Darebury area; supports East Runcorn development	Highways England scheme to add an additional junction at Preston Brook.	Highways England
Whitehouse Enabling Infrastructure	Create opportunities in East Runcorn Area; reducing traffic impacts e.g.	Feasibility work to understand future options to service the land adjacent to Whitehouse Industrial Estate and route HGV traffic away from Preston Brook Village.	£250k (feasibility)

	HGV routes		
LJLA Eastern Access Corridor	Improving access to LJLA, supporting the LCR growth agenda.	Promoted by LCR CA. £300k allocated from the Pre-SIF to examine feasibility.	£20-30m
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – LCWIP Runcorn Busway Sustainable Travel Corridor	Car free routes; health promotion; improved connectivity	<p>First phase of work already in delivery (the section through Astmoor linking to Manor Park and onward towards Daresbury.</p> <p>The Runcorn Busway Cycling and Walking scheme aims to strengthen the existing bus corridor and upgrade it to a sustainable transport corridor which supports cycling and walking. This will be done in the form of a physical separation from bus traffic to ensure safety of its users. The link has long been identified as convenient and direct for cyclists. The aim is to provide segregated cycle walking provision on the entirety of the bus network and strengthen its appeal and usage. The scheme aims to create sustainable travel links into employment areas across Runcorn.</p>	2nd Phase £3 to 5m
Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan – LCWIP Runcorn Employment Links	Car free routes; health promotion; improved connectivity	<p>The first phase of work already in delivery - Runcorn Canal tow path, walking and cycling improvements</p> <p>The scheme addresses challenges for cyclists to access areas of employment across Runcorn into Daresbury. The challenge is to have as much of the route traffic free as possible and for the large part this is achievable.</p>	2nd Phase £1 -2m

APPENDIX 2 – Current Schemes

MAJOR SCHEMES

Note* **≡ complete**

Category	Scheme	Construction	Fund	Value
Rail	Halton Curve	19 May 19 Complete	LCR LGF 1 & 3	£14.5m
<p>A Local Growth Deal and Liverpool City Region Combined Authority-funded scheme to re-open the 1.5 miles of track to regular passenger services between Liverpool, Cheshire and North Wales.</p> <p>Services will operate between Liverpool Lime Street and Chester via Liverpool South Parkway, Runcorn, Frodsham and Helsby from Monday to Friday, with approximately one service an hour.</p> <p>There will be a Wrexham to Liverpool service running from Monday to Saturday, with two trains a day running from Wrexham to Liverpool and one in the other direction.</p>				

Category	Scheme	Construction	Fund	Value
Silver Jubilee Bridge Project	Major Maintenance: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arch Painting • Cable replacement • Deck reconfiguration 	To August 19	LCR LGF 1 & 3 DfT MGC	£4.985m £4.880m £600k
<p>Painting of arch now into its final two phases (7&8). Programmed to be complete in the summer, with painting to Phase 7 painting underway, and encapsulation for the working areas on Phase 8 in progress.</p> <p>Hutchinson Sidings steelwork painting is now complete.</p> <p>3500 tonnes of scaffold currently on the bridge deck to provide access to arch for painting. This needs to be removed before deck can be reconfigured for 2 lanes for vehicle traffic & separate dedicated cycle lanes.</p> <p>Works from May to complete over the summer comprise reconfiguration of the SJB carriageway, hanger cable replacement and works to Runcorn Approach Viaduct to build a new parapet wall.</p> <p>Demolition on Runcorn Approach Viaduct West is due to start in July, and to enable this Balvac will relocate to the Widnes side of SJB in June.</p>				

Category	Scheme	Construction	Fund	Value
Runcorn Station Quarter	Trumpet Loop de-linking and Deconstruction	To May 20	Regeneration	£13m

Category	Scheme	Construction	Fund	Value
Widnes Loops	Permanent junction into West Bank from Mersey Gateway Bridge. Installation of signalled controlled junction	To May 20	Regeneration	£5m
<p>Statutory undertakers work underway. The temporary link road from Widnes Loops into West Bank closed on 13 May 19 to commence excavation works.</p>				

SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL SCHEMES

Category	Scheme	Construction	Fund	Value
Sustainable Travel (ST)	Runcorn East Station Car Park	May 19 Complete	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£605k
Extension & surfacing has been completed with double the original number of parking spaces now available				
ST	Gyratory, Widnes	May 19 Complete	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£549k
Addition lanes to give junction extra capacity to relieve congestion. Scheme now complete				
ST	Astmoor Business Links - cycle and walking improvements	August 19	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£1.133m
ST	Runcorn Canal Tow Path, walking and cycling improvements Phase 1	August 19	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£484k
Provides a link along the Bridgewater Canal, from Runcorn mainline station, via the Old Town to Daresbury Enterprise Zone.				
ST	Delph Lane	Complete	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£300k
A56 links to Daresbury including Pegasus crossing				
ST	3MG / Jaguar Land Rover Links	Complete	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£300k
Complete. Ditton Road into Halebank connecting to existing cycle network.				
ST	Station to Health Offices -	Complete	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package)	£200k
Lining and signing scheme to provide clear direction up Holloway and Highlands Road, Park Road to Heath Offices. Lining on Picow Farm Road to Ineos site.				
ST	Cycle Promotion	Complete	STEP (Sustainable Transport Enhancement Package) (STEP Revenue)	£90k
Victoria Park – bike and boots project – provided route planning, cycle training, and basic equipment. Aimed at breaking down transport barriers to work				
ST	SJB towards Prescott (via Sandy lane / Victoria Park / Frederick St / Ashley Way)	2021	SUD (Sustainable Urban Design) Efw S106 Mersey Gateway	£650k £200k £150k £300
Walking and cycling improvements. 3 year programme starting 2019 and the grant funding agreement has now been received for signing.				
ST	LJL Airport Safety Area	June 19	Planning Section 106	£106k
Liverpool John Lennon Airport Runway End Safety Area. Closure of Dungeon Road and opening of Baileys Lane. Construction of a new Bridle Way. Construction in progress.				
ST	Warrington Road to Watkinson Way Footpath Link	July 19	Halton Housing Trust	£130k

Warrington Road to Watkinson Way (Widnes). Provides a link from the new housing development on the old P&O site to the Gyratory.				
ST	PROW Bridge/Structure/Boardwalk renewals	2019-2022	Various	£200k+
Renewal of Small bridges and boardwalk structures on public rights of way network using state of the art composite materials to ensure longer life and less future intervention				

OTHER SCHEMES

Category	Scheme	Construction	Fund	Value
OTHER	Salt Barn	To Sept 19	Risk & Emergency Fund	£135k
Provision of new Salt Barn at Picow Farm Road Depot.				
OTHER	Electric Vehicles	Complete	DfT	£75k
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> OLEV ECPT/Station £10k OLEV EV Grant £65k 2 Electric vehicles for HBC services. Charging points in Picow Farm & Lower House Lane depots				
OTHER	Buses	Complete	DfT	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Better Bus £360k (14 – 18) – junction improvements at Wilmere Lane Clean Bus Fund £337,000 – retrofits to Halton Transport Fleet with particulate traps 				
FLOOD RISK	Bridgeway Lockgate Windmill Hill	Late 2019	Environment Agency	£188k
Surface water flood alleviation scheme, including kerb alterations, walls, flood doors and changes to paths and open space layouts to direct surface water flooding away from properties at risk.				
FLOOD RISK	Runcorn Road Moore	Late 2019	Environment Agency	£28k
Surface water flood alleviation scheme, to improve watercourse to protect properties at risk.				
FLOOD RISK	Wharford Farm Lake	Mid 2019	Environment Agency	£10k
Monitoring equipment to log flood alleviation structure impounding events				

Planned Maintenance: Carriageway Resurfacing Programme 19/20: (HMB & Revenue)
Fairfield Road - remaining southern half – reconstruction - Complete
Daresbury Expressway - Central Expressway - Pitts Heath Lane roundabout – surface dressing -Complete
Northwich Road, Runcorn – surface dressing - Complete
Weston point slip road to Rocksavage – surface dressing - Complete
Prescot Road - railway bridge to Heath Road
Hale Road - haunch repair
Runcorn Road - Moore, Runcorn
Liverpool Road - haunch repair – Heath Rd
Additional LCR KRN Carriageway Funded Schemes: Liverpool Road, from Chesnut Lodge to Heath Road. Full carriageway reconstruction and programmed during school summer holidays. Meeting scheduled for next week to discuss phasing of the works to minimise impact on businesses and residents.
J12 Under M56 – resurfacing – complete

Planned Maintenance: Footway Reconstruction Programme

(Flag to Flexi programme where vehicles overrun e.g. outside shops / post war estates)
(HMB & Revenue)

Birkdale road,
Ryder Road
Hough Green Road
Hale road
Blackburn Avenue to Lovell Terrace
Fieldway
Bishops Way

Works programmed for the future at Coroners Lane, Ditchfield Road, Upton Lane and Russell Road.

Section 278

Section 278 of the Highways Act 1980 allows a developer to carry out works to the public highway. This is generally where planning permission has been granted for a development that requires improvements to, or changes to, public highways. This works require agreement and monitoring by the Highways Authority.

Daresbury Redrow A558
Daresbury Redrow A56
Manor Farm Road
Picow Farm Road
Derby Road

Section 38

Section 38 of the Highways Act 1980 allows a developer to offer new roads within a development site for adoption by the Highway Authority. This requires a legal agreement and monitoring by the Highway Authority. Current sites include:

- Sandymoor Bloor
- Riverside College
- Picow Farm Road
- Derby Road
- Warrington Road
- Daresbury Science Park
- Castlefields