

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 24th February 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Transportation

SUBJECT: Active Travel Schemes Update

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report sets out an update for the Board on two active travel schemes within the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). An overview of the LCWIP can be found here: <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/activetravel/>
- 1.2 LCWIP Phase 2 – Runcorn to Daresbury
Provides a dedicated cycle route connecting Runcorn to Sci-Tech Daresbury. The final design of the route will be consulted upon during March 21. The draft consultation leaflet and route map can be found in Appendix 1.
- 1.3 LCWIP Phase 3 – Runcorn Busway (Halton Lea to Murdishaw)
Funding recently allocated to and received by the Liverpool City Region from the Department for Transport (DfT) for ‘active travel’. Halton’s allocation will allow the busway cycle route between Halton Lea and Murdishaw to become permanent. This is an important link and essentially forms a second project that eventually aims see the whole busway transform into an active travel corridor. A map of the route can be found in Appendix 2 to this report.
- 1.4 These phases follow on from the LCWIP Phase 1 schemes. Phase 1 provided the ‘Mineral Line’ between St Helens and Widnes, and also the Prescott to Runcorn route via Widnes.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 **The Board endorses the two schemes and recognises the importance of consultation in measuring project success.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) is a non-statutory document that aims to provide the context to prioritise a list of

walking and cycling routes to be created or improved. It aligns itself to the Governments 2017 Cycling and Walking Investment Strategy that looks to make walking and cycling the natural choice for shorter journeys or as part of a longer journey.

- 3.2 The LCWIP is a ten year strategy for the wider Liverpool City Region and sets out a proposed network of strategic routes across the city region. These focus on origin/ destination points that will primarily be used by commuters, and people using cycling and walking as transport options. The routes will be designed to offer an alternative to travelling by car. The routes have been prioritised into a programme based on elements such as predicted employment and housing growth, air quality issues and accessibility.
- 3.3 The LCWIP supports a number of Transport Strategies from the Local Transport Plan 3, and the LCR's Local Journeys Strategy. It addresses the climate change agenda that the Combined Authority is committed to by providing and promoting clean and low carbon transport systems. Routes aim to enable people to connect easily with employment, services and social activities and providing opportunity to improve the health and well-being of the people who live and work in the borough.
- 3.4 The LCWIP will help deliver some of the City Region's Mayoral priorities to reduce transport emissions, and improve the health of the region by providing new and improved cycle and walking corridors to encourage residents and visitors to the City Region to make more sustainable travel choices. The formalisation of the LCR LCWIP consolidates and enhances support for future funding applications to within the LCRCA (Transforming Cities Funding), externally to Central Government, and other opportunities that may become available.
- 3.5 LCWIP Phase 2 (Runcorn to Daresbury)
In August 2020, residents and businesses were invited to comment on draft proposals for a dedicated cycle route connecting Runcorn to Sci-Tech Daresbury. The feedback provided has helped to shape the final design of the route, which will now be consulted upon in March 21 (see map in Appendix 1 (back page of draft leaflet)).
- 3.6 LCWIP Phase 3 (Runcorn Busway - Halton Lea to Murdishaw):
In June 2020 DfT invited applications for the Active Travel Fund to be submitted to DfT on 7th August 2020. The LCR was successful in receiving £7.896m from the Active Travel Fund, and this amount was 100% of the indicative allocation identified for the LCR by DfT.
- 3.7 The Busway sustainable travel corridor is recognised in the adopted LCR Local Cycle and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). The first scheme on the busway (Astmoor Business Links) was delivered in 2018-19 and has proven to be popular. It is hoped that the whole of the busway where possible will follow suit. The busway route has been chosen as it will create a long, off-road route, linking to a number of destinations, and has

close proximity to existing routes. It equally allows both commuters and leisure cyclists to navigate to a number of destinations.

- 3.8 Halton has indicatively been awarded £2.2m of the £7.896m to make the temporary Active Travel Corridor between Halton Hospital and Murdishaw Local Centre permanent.
- 3.9 It is a condition of the funding from DfT that local authorities undertake thorough consultation on permanent schemes. DfT have indicated they require evidence of input from local communities through appropriate consultation.
- 3.10 A consultation period commenced on the 18 January 2021, and due to the current Covid circumstances a consultation letter and has been sent to residents and stakeholders in close proximity to the busway. Maps have been displayed in the Shopping City. Details of the consultation are also available on the HBC website. The consultation closed on the 22nd February 2021.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Active travel has seen an increasing profile due to key drivers such as tackling climate change, improving air quality, zero carbon emissions, and better health and wellbeing.
- 4.2 Halton is seeking to add further routes to its existing cycle network. However, funding new infrastructure is expensive, and this aspect means the creation of new routes has to be prioritised. Therefore, in prioritising routes, a number of criteria are considered including:
 - travel demand along a route (number of users expected)
 - the need to connect destinations (employment, retail and leisure)
 - the need to connect existing routes within the Halton and inter-borough. For example, the Transpennine Trail, canal corridors, and National Cycle Routes
 - The cost, deliverability, and safety of a route

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no other implications arising from the subject of this report.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 For LCWIP Phase 3, the temporary cycleway currently in place between Halton Lea and Murdishaw has allowed the assessment of safety considerations.
- 6.2 Financial risks arise from the need to meet conditions attached to the funding, for example in terms of the timescale for scheme delivery. However, these are standard conditions that accompany grant funding and processes are in place to manage these risks.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 Following the recent publication of the governments guidance note Local Transport Note 1/20 Cycle Infrastructure Design, (LTN1/20), all newly implemented infrastructure for cycling and walking will need to meet minimum standards which includes provision for adapted bikes, provides a safe separated environment for cyclist suitable for use by children and adults.
- 7.2 The provision of safer cycle and walking routes also provides opportunity for individuals who may find themselves in transport poverty, as a result of lower incomes, to utilise active travel, potentially supported by the revenue activities which are also part of this fund.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|---------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Liverpool City Region Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP). https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/activetravel/ | Online | Iain Dignall / Rebecca Taylor |
| Murdishaw Active Travel Scheme https://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/traffic/cycling.aspx | Online | Iain Dignall / Rebecca Taylor |