

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 OCTOBER 2024

EXB40	ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY MAINTENANCE ALLOCATIONS
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to accept capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in compliance with Standing Orders.

It was noted that in addition to the current capital funding arrangements through the LCRCA, the Council had received two Highways and Improvement Grants for £306,781.20 each and a Traffic Signal Maintenance and Improvement Grant for £44,394.12. The cost of works undertaken as part of these grant funding agreements would be met entirely from the approved budget allocations for this additional capital funding.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approves the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal be delegated to accept the Grant Funding Agreement and enable timely delivery of the agreement; and
- 2) the Director Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal be delegated to deal with any matters relating to procurement and operation of this agreement.

EXB41	A STRATEGY FOR HALTON'S TREES AND WOODLANDS
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval of an updated Halton Trees and Woodlands Strategy. A review of the Strategy had recently been undertaken as one of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan objectives ES10.

The Board was advised that there had been no material changes to the Council's Policy since the adopted Trees and Woodland Strategy was approved in 2018. A summary of the primary updates to the Strategy was detailed in the report and a copy of the Strategy was attached as Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the updated Trees and Woodland Strategy attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

N.B. Councillor Wharton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following item of business as he is a Non-Executive Director of Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and left the meeting for the duration of the item.

COUNCILLOR NELSON IN THE CHAIR

EXB42	MERSEY GATEWAY
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The Board considered a report of the Director – Legal and Democratic Services, that advised on the requirement to replace the existing Road User Charging Scheme Order (RUCSO) with a new RUCSO to reflect the need to increase toll charges on both the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Silver Jubilee Bridge. The report also included details on proposed changes to Blue Badge Holders, Penalty Charge Notices and Local User Discount Scheme which would all be subject to consultation which would run for six weeks in November and December 2024.

It was noted that both bridges are described as being operated as tolled crossings, however motorists pay in the form of a road user charge under the Transport Act 2000. The charges are anticipated to remain on the crossing until the Mersey Gateway Bridge, improvements to the Silver Jubilee Bridge and other associated highway network improvements are paid for.

Since the tolls were introduced in 2017, they had remained unchanged and there was now a need to increase the tolls by 20% to ensure that in line with the original proposals the project remained financially robust without the need for additional local or central funding beyond that already agreed.

It was noted that the Mersey Gateway Project had continued to operate with a financial loss and had required Central Government grants. Details of the income and expenditure of the scheme from October 2017 to March 2024 were outlined in Appendix 2 of the report.

Following the consultation period a report would be taken to a meeting of the Council and if approved the updated RUCSO would come into effect from 1 April 2025.

Following a discussion, the Board agreed that the reference to proposed changes for Blue Badge holders would be deleted in the updated RUCSO before the document is subject to consultation.

RESOLVED: That the Board should

- 1) consult on making an updated RUCSO based on the working draft enclosed at Appendix 1 on the basis prescribed in this report, subject to the removal of the reference to changes for Blue Badge holders.
- 2) after full and proper consideration to any responses received, and having taken them into account, recommend the Council to make the updated RUCSO based on the working draft enclosed at Appendix 1 and delegate to the Director –

Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, the authority to make any non-material or consequential amendments as are necessary to give it effect; and

- 3) authorise the Director – Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to take all necessary steps to bring the RUCSO into effect, provided that any material amendments or considerations shall be considered by the Council and subject to its determination before the RUCSO is brought into effect.