

## **ENVIRONMENTAL OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE HELD: 3 NOV 2011**

Start: 7.30pm

Finish: 9.25pm

### **PRESENT:**

Councillors: Mrs Blake (Chairman) Pratt (ViceChairman)

Councillors: Mrs Atherley McKay  
Baybutt Mee  
Cheetham Mrs Pollock  
Delaney Pye  
Gartside Savage  
Hennessy Mrs Stephenson  
Hodson

Officers: Borough Economic Regeneration and Strategic Planning Officer  
(Mrs J Traverse)  
Deputy Borough Planner (Mr I Gill)  
Technical Services Manager (Mr C Brady)  
Planning Officer (Mr D Carr)  
Principal Overview and Scrutiny Officer (Mrs C A Jackson)

In attendance: Mrs M Fazal (Project Director, Exselcic West Lancashire Community  
Recycling Service)  
Mr A Simpson (Sustainable Travel Team, Lancashire County Council)  
Mr R Hancock (Sustainable Travel Team, Lancashire County Council)

### **10. APOLOGIES**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ainscough and Ms Melling.

### **11. MEMBERSHIP OF THE COMMITTEE**

There were no changes to membership of the Committee.

### **12. URGENT BUSINESS**

There were no items or urgent business.

### **13. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

### **14. DECLARATIONS OF PARTY WHIP**

There were no declarations of a party whip.

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### **15. MINUTES**

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting of the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 July 2011 be received as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

### **16. CYCLING IN WEST LANCASHIRE**

Members considered the following five items.

### **17. PROJECT PLAN**

Consideration was given to the draft Project Plan for the review 'Car Parking in West Lancashire'. Members agreed the lines of enquiry of the review and formulated and endorsed the Project Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Project Plan be approved.

### **18. CYCLING IN LANCASHIRE**

#### **Presentation 1 – Cycling in West Lancashire**

Members received a presentation from Mr Alasdair Simpson, Sustainable Travel, Lancashire County Council (LCC). The presentation 'Cycling in West Lancashire' was supported by a series of slides as contained on pages 59 to 64 of the Book of Reports.

Members heard about the seven key priorities contained in the Lancashire Local Transport Plan which presents LCC's transport priorities for the next ten years. The seven key priorities include: Improving Access into Areas of Economic Growth and Regeneration; Providing Better Access to Education and Employment; Improving People's Quality of Life and Wellbeing; Improving the Safety of our Streets for our most Vulnerable Residents; Providing Safe, Reliable, Convenient and Affordable Transport Alternatives to the Car, Maintaining our Assets and Reducing Carbon Emission and its Effects and made reference to the White Paper 'Creating Growth, Cutting Carbon' on sustainable travel, a government document issued in early 2011 with the aim to support economic growth whilst at the same time reducing carbon.

The areas covered in the presentation included:

- Potential for Change – a comparison of trips by type and distance.
- The benefits of investing in cycling.
- Transport as a barrier to access to employment.
- Ormskirk – Problems (heavy traffic) and the opportunities to promote cycling through Edge Hill University, school and rail commuting.

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As a demonstration of what can be achieved the cycling related facilities at Lancaster University were highlighted. Members heard about the University's internal cycle path network on the Lancaster campus, the cycle recycling scheme and the promotion of cycling by that University and additionally the cycle infrastructure within the city of Lancaster.

Mr Simpson raised the problems cyclists faced associated with the Skelmersdale Road Network, in particular the large roundabouts and style of junctions that can discourage cyclists and where there are cycle paths the disadvantages with them including an incomplete network, lack of links to industrial estates, barriers and the remoteness of subways. He then explained the opportunities that could be achieved by promoting cycling in Skelmersdale highlighting opportunities to cycle to work, college, school, the town centre and Tawd Valley.

It was further explained that the Department of Transport had recently announced improvements to road signs (on cycle/footpaths) to include "travel times" as well as distances to encourage and assist more accurate planning of journeys by foot or cycle.

Mr Simpson concluded his presentation by making reference to the various promotional schemes being supported by LCC in the Borough to encourage more cycling use.

Members discussed, raised questions and made comments in respect of:

- The financial support available from Government to promote cycling in Lancashire.
- The provision of secure "cycle bays" at railway stations, schools and Edge Hill University.
- Problems that hamper cyclists associated with indiscriminate parking of cars. Examples cited included vehicles parking too close to junctions and shops.
- Possibility of improvements to junctions to improve road safety for cyclists, similarly to those operating in Lancaster.
- The success of the initiative where cyclists ride against the on-coming traffic.
- Evidence of supporting cycle use related to road accident as it was highlighted that the improvement of cycling facilities has demonstrated that cycle-related accidents can decline, despite the increase in cycle users.
- The cycling routes mapped for West Lancashire and possible extension into Skelmersdale and the eastern part of the Borough.
- The availability of funding, similar to the Lancaster model, for cycling projects in the Borough.
- The funding available for sustainable transport initiatives through the Local Transport Plan.
- Allowing cyclists to use the pedestrian town centre (Ormskirk). It was reported that some cities allow cycling in pedestrian only areas outside commuting hours.

On behalf of Members the Chairman thanked Mr Simpson for the informative presentation.

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### **Presentation 2 – School Travel Plans**

Consideration was given to the presentation by Rob Hancock, Sustainable Travel Team, LCC, entitled 'Travel Planning in Lancashire'. The presentation was supported by a series of slides as detailed on pages 65 to 68 of the Book of Reports.

In his presentation, Mr Hancock, explained that a Travel Plan is a long-term management strategy from a site to deliver sustainable transport objectives through positive action. He then went on to explain the different Travel Plan Types and the type of sites/personnel they covered. These include Plans for School Travel, Business/Workplace, Area Wide, Resident and Personalised Travel.

Attention was drawn to the benefits of travel planning which are:

- To maximise access to education, jobs and services.
- Reduce traffic congestion.
- Reduce carbon emissions and improve air quality.
- Improve health and well-being.
- Create more attractive, safer places and communities to ensure greater access for everyone to local services.
- Promote enhanced mobility and independence for vulnerable groups.

Mr Hancock gave an insight into the production of the travel plans, particularly those completed with schools, stating that 98% of schools in the Borough now had a School Travel Plan. He also drew attention to cycle storage facilities which had been introduced at some schools using some of the grant money connected to the School Travel Plans and provided statistical information that showed a decline in the reliance on cars for school travel in the County.

In conclusion Mr Hancock outlined the current and future use of travel plans including:

- The target approach with Schools.
- The support by schools in the Borough of the Walk to School Weeks and WOW initiative.
- The travel plans being devised with businesses, citing the work being undertaken with Southport & Ormskirk NHS and Edge Hill University.
- Development Support
- The ability to identify Large Employers and Employment Sites to encourage a proactive approach to cycling.

In discussion Members raised questions and comments in relation to:

- The availability of grants to schools to provide cycle storage.
- General use and availability of cycle storage facilities at train stations to encourage cycle use and to alleviate car parking congestion particularly in villages in the Borough where lack of car parking at stations is a problem.
- The link to the drop in car usage for school transport through travel initiatives for example good School Travel Plans and WOW.

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- The opportunities available to encourage implementation of travel initiatives within School Travel Plans.
- Possible partnership (LCC) with LAPTC to encourage road safety schemes in the Parishes.

In response to questions Mr Hancock explained that as a result of changes at the County Council they were unable to formally review individual School Travel Plans in operation in schools across the County. However, through projects such as WOW it was hoped that schools would continue to regularly audit their own School Travel Plans to ensure they remained valid. He also informed Members that 98% of schools in West Lancashire now had a School Travel Plan in place.

- RESOLVED:
- A. That the presentations be noted and Mr Alasdair Simpson and Mr Rob Hancock of Lancashire County Council Sustainable Transport Team be thanked for their contribution to the review.
  - B. That the drop in car use for school travel in West Lancashire be noted.
  - C. That the 98% of Schools in the Borough who now have a School Travel Plans be noted.
  - D. That it be recommended that Members continue through their links with schools in their Ward to encourage continuation of the initiatives adopted within their School Travel Plans.
  - F. That it be recommended that Lancashire County Council as the Highway Authority be encouraged to take account of cyclists safety on the highways, particularly at junctions, when re-surfacing and upgrading road markings.
  - G. That information relating to the established cycle routes and proposed cycle routes in the Borough, and other related information be brought to the next meeting.

### **19. WEST LANCASHIRE COMMUNITY RECYCLING SERVICE (WLCRS) - CYCLE RECYCLE FACILITY**

Consideration was given to the presentation by Maureen Fazal, Project Director of Exselcic WLCRS on the work undertaken, particularly in relation to the Cycle Recycle Facility. The presentation was supported by a series of slides as contained on pages 69 to 76 of the Book of Reports.

Mrs Fazal made reference to the visit recently undertaken by Members to the Recycling facility located in Skelmersdale.

In her presentation Mrs Fazal gave an overview of the various recycling services that are undertaken by WLCRS and the awards and accolades they had received.

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She then went on to describe the renovation and repair work that is to be undertaken in the aptly named 'Bike Shed'. It was explained that the service had started as a result of the large number of bicycles that were either being donated or discarded with other household goods. In response WLRCS began to recondition bicycles initially to provide transport for volunteers coming to work at the Skelmersdale site but due to the volume of cycles being donated or discarded it was recognised that, with the assistance of a cycle technician, there was an opportunity to extend this much needed service to the wider community.

Unfortunately, on the day of the site visit, the Bike Shed had been commandeered to take a large number of mattresses for deconstruction which had been donated by a well-known bed mattress manufacturer.

Mrs Fazal then explained the bid Excelcic WLCRS had submitted to The Big Lottery "Reaching Communities" for financial assistance for the Bicycle Recycling Initiative. The application was to assist with:

- Development of the work area.
- Purchase of tools and equipment.
- Financial support for qualified staff.
- Training materials to train/support volunteers.
- Contribution towards utilities.

If successful the aim was to introduce a bicycle recycling programme for Skelmersdale that could include a full repair and renovation service, the ability to rebuild donated bikes to the required BSS standard thereby assisting in the provision of affordable transport, reducing pollution and encouraging healthier lifestyles with the long-term goal of achieving sustainability.

In discussion questions/comments were raised in relation to the following:

- The type of cycles WLCRS hoped to repair and renovate.
- The processes involved from stripping down the donated bicycles to final re-build.
- The financial implications of offering such a service.

The Chairman thanked Mrs Fazal for her contribution to the review and on behalf of the Committee congratulated her on the success of Excelcic WLCRS.

RESOLVED: A. That the presentation be noted and Mrs Fazal be thanked for her contribution to the review.

B. That the potential to recycle otherwise discarded bicycles be encouraged.

(Note: Councillor Hennessy declared a personal interest when Mrs Fazal made reference to her contact with her in relation the work of the West Lancashire Community Recycling Service (WLCRS).

**20. LOCAL SUSTAINABLE TRANSPORT FUND (LSTF)**

Consideration was given to the presentation by the Council's Planning Officer, Dominic Carr entitled 'Local Sustainable Transport Fund – The Sefton & West Lancashire visitor Economy Project'. The presentation was supported by a series of slides as detailed on pages 77 to 82 of the Book of Reports.

In his presentation Mr Carr gave background information relating to the Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) explaining that the key aim of the fund is to support economic growth whilst reducing carbon emission, which was released to help authorities deliver sustainable transport solutions. It was noted that funding through the LSTF does not include major rail, passenger transport or road infrastructure enhancements as these are more appropriately funded from other sources.

Mr Carr then provided information relating to the successful West Lancashire Sefton Bid from the LSTF. He explained that Sefton as a Transport Authority had approached WLBC about submitting the joint bid focusing on the visitor economy that effectively works as one area. The area covered in the bid included the Sefton Coast from Waterloo to Southport and inland incorporating the western parts of West Lancashire including Ormskirk and Burscough and includes many attractions in West Lancashire which are difficult to access by public transport. Its aim is to promote sustainable forms of transport to these areas, primarily walking and cycling and it is also hoped that this will become an attraction in itself. The bid was awarded £1.55 million.

He then went on to explain some of the areas focussed on within the bid which included:

- Cycle Hire (primarily Sefton-focused, but may extend into WLBC).
- Southport Eastern Park and Ride (at Kew).
- Improvements in Leisure Routes and Facilities.
- Improved facilities for walking and cycling.
- Developing and promoting the visitor offer.

Other aspects covered in the course of the presentation included the proposed Governance arrangements and a breakdown of the financial proposals over the five year period.

He concluded his presentation highlighting the opportunities that the successful bid has provided including:

- Opportunities for joint working between neighbouring authorities.
- Mayor boost through promotion to the local visitor economy.
- Opportunities to open up access to areas of "attraction", including the potential for new recreational routes and facilities for residents and visitors.
- The knock-on benefits related to health and a reduction in levels of congestion.

In discussion Members raised questions and comments in relation to:

- Involvement of the Sefton/Coastal Partnership – completion of coastal paths.
- Development/maintenance of canal paths.

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- The financial resource for the individual projects over the 5 year period.
- The possibility of extending the recreational and other routes further eastward into Skelmersdale, particularly the Ormskirk route or at least the potential to do so in the future.
- Physical improvements – the possibility of making the Cheshire Lines more accessible.
- Improving cycle routes through the town centre (Ormskirk).
- Proposals relating to the linear parks.
- Consultation process related to projects.
- Exclusion of eastern areas of the Borough deemed a visitor attractive, for example Parbold.

In response it was explained that the bid was based on visitor economy, was a small scale project led by Sefton (as the highway authority) and that Skelmersdale and Parbold, and the more eastern parts of West Lancashire, were not included as they are not adjacent to Southport (Sefton). It was suggested, however, that through the Local Transport Plan future opportunities may be available on other key routes into the eastern part of the Borough but it was recognised that the latter would be a big project that would need to take account of, for example, land ownership issues.

In discussion reference was made to the work of the Community Voluntary Service (CVS) and the projects they undertake and manage. It was agreed that it would be useful to invite a representative from the CVS to come along to a future meeting of the Committee to discuss any projects which relate to cycling, if indeed there are any.

RESOLVED: A. That the presentation be noted.

B. That a representative from the CVS be invited to a future meeting of the Committee.

C. That it be recommended that during future consideration of the West Lancashire Local Transport Plan, the potential to extend recreation and other routes eastward be considered.

### **20. PROJECT PLAN - REVIEW**

Members reviewed the Project Plan.

RESOLVED: That the review of the Project Plan be noted.

### **21. CAR PARKING IN WEST LANCASHIRE - REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer advising Members of the progress made on the recommendations that came from the review undertaken by the Committee on 'Car Parking in West Lancashire' as set out at Appendix A of the report.

RESOLVED: That progress and responses as set out at Appendix A be noted.



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**22. THE ROLE OF THE UTILITY COMPANIES IN SUPPORTING THE DELIVERY OF DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION IN THE BOROUGH - REVIEW OF RECOMMENDATIONS**

Consideration was given to the report of the Borough Treasurer advising Members of the progress made on the recommendations that came from the review undertaken by the Committee on 'The Role of the Utility Companies in Supporting the Delivery of Development and Regeneration in the Borough' as set out at Appendix A of the report.

RESOLVED: That progress and responses as set out at Appendix A be noted.

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Chairman