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L to R: Cllr Mark Dowd, Jim Hancock and Neil Scales launch the LTP3 consultation

Boost to Merseyside transport welcomed

The Government's Spending Review shows support for some of the region's key transport initiatives, but details remain fluid at the time of going to press.

Nationwide there will be more than £30 billion invested in transport projects over the next four years, more than was invested during the previous period, as the key role of transport in driving growth in the economy is recognised.

However, while Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) welcomed the green light given to the £431m Mersey Gateway bridge and the £100m electrification of Liverpool to Manchester railway, fears grew over their security.

The Government has promised to fund the land costs associated with the Mersey Gateway, but has also made it clear that significant cost savings must be found before the final go-ahead can be given. The timetable for the rail upgrade has not been confirmed.

MTP is also waiting to hear about the future of the proposed Thornton to Switch Island Link and Northern Rail's Northern Hub project.

Bus operators will receive less support for subsidised routes, although incentives to

introduce smartcard technology and low carbon buses will remain. In addition, the cap on regulated rail fares will rise, representing a 10% increase over the next four years.

Sustainable transport

Cycling England has been wound up, but there is still hope for Bikeability – the national child cycle training programme.

Funding for Bikeability may be sourced through the new Local Sustainable Transport Fund, which will include £350m revenue and £210m capital funding over the next four years.

In addition, more than £1.3bn will be provided through the Integrated Transport Block (ITB). Local authorities will be able to use funding from this to improve road safety, reduce congestion and deliver social justice to communities.

Future of Merseyside transport

Members of the public and those working in the private, public and voluntary sectors are

currently invited to share their views on the future of transport in Merseyside, as part of the consultation on Merseyside's next Local Transport Plan (LTP3).

An integrated assessment of LTP3 will be finalised later in the year and will include health impact, habitat regulations and equalities impact assessments, as well as a sustainability appraisal.

The third LTP will focus on making best use of existing resources, while encouraging growth and carbon reduction. Supporting disadvantaged communities and addressing health inequalities will be key, as will improving safety. There will also be greater focus on promoting health and wellbeing, and reducing carbon emissions through raising awareness of public transport and active modes of travel.

Key short-term actions identified in the Preferred Strategy include:

1. Prioritise maintenance programmes
2. Integrate LTP with Local Development Frameworks and Community Strategies
3. Expansion of public transport services
4. Begin to implement the next generation of technology
5. Enhance the freight and logistics network
6. Reduce carbon emissions and reliance on oil
7. Use TravelWise to further promote sustainable travel and behaviour change
8. Introduce more low speed zones
9. Effective delivery of capital programmes
10. Plan for the long term and be resilient

Mark Dowd, Chair of Merseyside's Integrated Transport Authority (ITA) that has responsibility for LTP3, said: "Transport plays an essential role in helping the region's economy grow and reducing our carbon output. Together, we can build a transport system that will help Merseyside become a thriving international city region by 2030 and make the area a cleaner, safer and healthier place to live, work and visit."

LTP3 is due to start in April 2011. To take part in the consultation, visit www.transportmerseyside.org or call **0151 330 1294** before 30 November 2010.



West Derby residents pledge to opt for more sustainable modes

Thousands of West Derby residents have pledged to opt for greener modes of travel, as part of a TravelWise initiative aimed at reducing peak-time congestion on the main routes into Liverpool city centre.

The TravelWise Personal Travel Planning project, run in conjunction with JMP Consultants, challenged households in the West Derby area of Liverpool, including parts of Tuebrook and Croxteth Park, to walk, cycle or use public transport.

The TravelWise team visited more than 5,300 households, offering a free personalised travel service and bespoke travel information, incentives and discounts to help them try out smarter ways to travel. Travel advisors also met with community groups such as The Edge Youth Club to raise awareness of more sustainable modes of transport amongst local children.

Representatives from TravelWise attended one of the club's Friday night meetings at Deysbrook Village Centre, giving the children information and advice on using public transport and more active travel, such as walking and cycling.

Andy Vint helps run the youth group and invited TravelWise to attend the session. He said: "The children who attend the youth group range in age from eight, right up to 19. We have great fun on Fridays, but our group is also about helping young people develop skills for the real world and knowing how to get around in healthy, green and safe ways is vital. The session went down really well and a number of the children have vowed to try to walk more in the future."

Carol Johnson-Eyre, TravelWise Co-Ordinator, is pleased with the success of the project to date. She said: "Our TravelWise team were on the ground in the West Derby area for four months this summer, speaking to residents face-to-face about how they can get from A to B and offering tailored ongoing support and incentives. We managed to visit more households than our target, with more than 2,600 residents pledging to walk more and more than 1,500 trying out the bus."

Health sector helps support Liverpool residents to cycle more

The transport and health sectors have joined together to offer free cycle skills training and bike maintenance courses to Merseyside residents.

Rolling out in Liverpool, with the support of Liverpool PCT as part of the Year of Health & Wellbeing 2010, the cycle skills sessions are the perfect way to learn to ride a bike for the first time or improve confidence and on-road cycling skills. Businesses can also offer the training to staff through their travel plans.

Andy Hull, Director of Stakeholder Engagement at Liverpool PCT, said: "Merseyside's rates of obesity are higher than the UK average and many people are affected by conditions such as heart disease, strokes and diabetes.

"Increasing walking and cycling rates has great potential to help improve Merseyside's health and fitness levels, particularly as they are two of the easiest forms of physical activity to incorporate into our everyday lives."

To book your free cycle skills and maintenance session, email amyu@cyclingsolutions.co.uk or call on **0151 234 9484** or for more on how your organisation can support cycling visit www.LetsTravelWise.org and click on the Cycling Alliance.

Green driving day for Merseyside taxi drivers

Taxi drivers across Merseyside are being encouraged to drive greener vehicles and learn more about the latest fuel-efficient technologies.

In mid-October, Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP) held an event at Aintree Racecourse, where taxi drivers were given free information on low emissions vehicles and had the opportunity to drive some of the UK's leading low emission vehicles such as the Electric E7 Taxi.

Drivers were able to check their fuel-efficiency on a driving simulator, see how low carbon technologies can save money and learn more about the latest vehicle technologies such as electric, hybrid and biofuels.

Sarah Jolly, climate change officer at MTP, explains: "The day was a really useful opportunity for taxi drivers to get information and advice. Driving an electric vehicle not only reduces air pollution, but running costs are typically between 1.5p/km and 3p/km and require less maintenance work than a diesel engine, so it can be a smart choice financially.

"We are currently looking into how we can support those taxi drivers who want to invest in green technology, such as providing grants for low emission technologies."



CLr Ron Abbey (centre) joins Sarah Jolly and taxi driver Mike Holland at the event

Funding lifeline for accessibility programme

An award-winning programme that helps people from disadvantaged communities get to employment opportunities has been granted funding to continue in the South Liverpool area until July 2011.

The WorkWise programme, co-ordinated by the Merseyside Transport Partnership (MTP), is delivered as part of the 'Let's Get Moving' project. The additional funding – secured through Working Links – will allow WorkWise to continue to provide intensive support to people accessing employment opportunities in the pilot area.

Across Merseyside, WorkWise currently has funding to continue until December 2010, after securing £1.5million from the European Social Fund (ESF) Pathfinder Enabling Programme (PEP), which was matched by Merseytravel. The 'Let's Get Moving' team are currently seeking further funding to continue delivery across Merseyside into 2011 and beyond.

Last year "Let's Get Moving" won Beacon Status for MTP and Halton Council, recognising its excellence and innovation in improving the quality of life for local communities. Bringing together neighbourhood travel teams in each of the five Merseyside boroughs and Halton, more than 15,000 people have been helped since the programme began.



Commuters in Merseyside were 'bugged' to take notice of TravelWise Week, as The BugWorld Experience staff hopped onto Merseyside's transport network in costume to raise awareness of more sustainable alternatives to the car.

Reducing carbon provokes debate at FQP

Merseyside's future freight strategy topped the agenda at a recent meeting of the Freight Quality Partnership (FQP).

More than 25 stakeholders – from across the public and private sectors - attended the meeting at Hatton Garden in mid-October. A number of issues were the subject of intense debate, including the question of whether electric freight vehicles should be allowed to travel in bus lanes and the introduction of an electric vehicle charging point network for HGVs and LGVs.

Peter Evans, Merseyside Transport Partnership's Freight Partnership Co-Ordinator, said: "The freight strategy forms an important part of the draft Preferred Strategy for Merseyside's third Local Transport Plan, which is currently open for consultation. It is vital that we gather as many views as possible on our future freight strategy and we were very pleased with the turnout at the meeting.

"The smooth movement of goods across the region is crucial to the future economic success of Merseyside and a strong freight strategy will create jobs and help us to build a low carbon economy. This work will play an important role in supporting the wider goals of the Liverpool City Region and strategies are nearing fruition for a number of exciting projects, including the development of SuperPort.

"I'd encourage organisations across the public and private sectors to share their views by visiting www.transportmerseyside.org by 30 November."

Photographers urge Merseyside to think TravelWise on days out

People from across Merseyside were encouraged to consider alternatives to the car, as part of TravelWise Week (20-26 September).

The annual sustainable travel awareness week – held to coincide with International Car Free Day on 22 September - this year focussed on leisure time, encouraging people to travel by cycle, foot, bus or train when going on days out in the area.

To encourage people to think more creatively about their journey options, TravelWise organised a photography competition with the winning entries displayed at the World Museum, Liverpool during TravelWise Week.

Photographers were invited to submit images of popular Merseyside landmarks and visitor attractions, incorporating a more sustainable alternative to the car into their picture.

Michael Fahy of Waterloo was awarded first prize in the competition and won an overnight stay for two at the Malmaison, Liverpool. Runners-up were awarded Big Mersey Adventure Annual Family Passes and dinner for two at Halligan's Restaurant, Oxtown Village.

Pam Wilsher, Head of Tourism Development at The Mersey Partnership, said: "We want local residents to make the most of their leisure time and hope that, away from the hustle and bustle of the working week, people will take the time to

consider the alternatives to jumping in the car at the weekend.

"We have some of the UK's most exciting visitor attractions in the Liverpool City Region and TravelWise, with the support of funding from the European Regional Development Fund (ERDF), has been working with them to make it easier for people to reach their sites without using the car."

Other activities being organised as part of TravelWise Week included a TravelWise roadshow, which visited leading attractions to give people information on sustainable travel and personalised travel advice to help with journey planning.

A 'wheel-y' good summer for Merseyside

Merseyside cyclists have been pedalling more often and more regularly this summer, with a number of new initiatives to encourage cycling throughout the autumn and beyond.



For more information on cycling in Merseyside, visit www.LetsTravelWise.org or call 0151 330 1290.

Hundreds take part in the TravelWise Cycle Challenge

Running for five weeks, the TravelWise Cycle Challenge encouraged participants to get out on their bikes, log their progress and set themselves goals online at www.LetsTravelWise.org. Those making the most effort to increase the number of trips they make by bike won a whole range of exciting prizes.

Participants cycled a combined total of more than 23,500 miles, burning three million kilojoules of energy – equivalent to 208 pounds of fat. Around half of all trips were taken in place of travelling by car or public transport, saving more than 3,000 kilograms of carbon dioxide emissions between them.

Cycling success for Southport

Southport's reputation as a Cycle Town is continuing to grow, with the number of people hiring bicycles from the Hire Centres in Southport rocketing during August.

Despite the poor weather, the number of hires almost doubled from July to August. A cycle maintenance centre has also recently opened at Southport train station, successfully completing more than 50 jobs since it opened in June.

More than 600 people also took part in Southport's evening family rides this summer.

New cycle routes for St Helens

New guided cycle tours are now available to residents of Rainford and Windle as part of the Cycle for Health programme in St Helens.

The new routes operate from Liverpool St Helens Rugby Union Club at Moss Lane, Windle, running every Tuesday morning between 9.30am and 12 noon. Rainford cyclists can also benefit from a new programme of bike maintenance courses, held Thursdays, between 6pm and 8pm, at Rainford Scout Hut, Church Road, Rainford.

Cycle for Health is a regular, weekly calendar of cycle rides that operate around St Helens to get people in shape. For more information call the Road Safety and Travel Awareness Team on 01744 671656.

Huyton pupils learn to fix their own bikes

Pupils in Knowsley are being given lessons in how to keep their bikes on the road.

Knowsley Council's Road Safety and School Travel Plan Team have been running bike maintenance workshops in ten primary schools.



Pupils at St Margaret Mary's primary in Huyton learn how to fix their own bikes with mechanics from Cycling Projects

The sessions, run by qualified bike mechanics from the charity Cycling Projects, showed pupils how to do minor repairs and, for the first time, were interactive.



Smartcard technology comes to Merseyside

Concessionary travel pass holders are leading the way in a public transport technology revolution in Merseyside.

New technology which validates English national concessionary travel scheme passes has been introduced on five CityLink routes operated by Cumfybus. The development is being hailed as the first step on the road to ticketless travel – or 'smartcards' - in Merseyside.

Merseytravel has been actively working on a smartcard strategy and the technology for the past two years.

Neil Scales, Chief Executive of Merseytravel, said: "This is the first step on a very long road. We're starting in a phased and focused way to allow travellers to get accustomed to the technology.

"Soon we will extend the technology to incorporate our ferry services and eventually we will have the biggest smartcard network outside London.

"Currently, however, it is restricted to these city centre services – and the 300,000 holders of concessionary travel passes."

The Merseyside Transport Partnership

