

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

At a meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee on Thursday, 15 October 2009 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chairman) and Nelson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Harris

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson, A. Cross, B. Dodd, J. Unsworth and Tully

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE SUB-COMMITTEE

		<i>Action</i>
ES26	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 th September 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record. PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO	
ES27	LANDFILL ALLOWANCE TRADING SCHEME (LATS) The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out the implications of the Landfill Allowances and Trading Scheme (LATS) on the Council, and the Authority's current and predicted LATS position until 2013/14. At a previous meeting of the Sub-Committee it was resolved that delegated powers to trade for Landfill Allowances were given to the Operational Director, Financial Services, in consultation with the Strategic Director, Environment and the Portfolio holders for Environment, Leisure and Sport and Corporate Services, and that authority be granted to purchase or sell LATS permits, provided that the sum value of all such transactions (disregarding whether purchases or sales) in any financial	

years did not exceed £100,000 and subject to adequate budgetary provision having been made (Minute ES54/2006).

The Sub-Committee was advised that estimates indicated that the financial requirement for future years exceeded the value in the previous resolution. Therefore, additional approvals were now required for future purchases.

In order to avoid future potential fines, Halton could now purchase landfill allowances to cover predicted shortfalls for the year 2010/11 onwards. Based upon current market offers following a request for three written quotations, allowances were currently available at £9 per tonne for 2010/11 and 2011/12 and £10.80 for 2012/13 if purchased in advance. Alternatively, payment could be made each April at these prices plus an RPI increase for each year.

Currently, allowances were not available for 2013/14 due to internal approvals not being available until 2010, therefore the figures shown for 2013/14 were estimates. This offer also provided flexibility with the options of immediate purchase or spreading costs over several years.

Members were advised that only one other quotation was received from another authority that were working to an indicative price level of £13.50 for 2010/11 and 2011/12 rising to £17.50 for 2012/13 and 2013/14.

It was noted that it was DEFRA's view that if landfill allowances were traded for cash, public procurement rules were not engaged because there was no acquisition of supplies or services. Although it was DEFRA's view that it would not be necessary for the Council to go out to tender for the purchase of allowances, in order to deal with the implications of the Council's Standing Orders, the Sub Committee was requested to consider waiver of Standing Order 3.1, which required that three competitive tenders be sought for contracts between £50k and £1m.

Whilst there was no certainty about future prices, which might go up or down, it was believed that the current offer represented good value for money and it was recommended that the Council now secure contractual arrangements for the purchase LATS permits for the period 2010/11 to 2013/14.

RESOLVED: That for the purposes of LATS, the Operational Director – Financial Services, in consultation with the Strategic Director – Environmental and the Portfolio Holders for Environment, Leisure and Sport and Corporate

Strategic Director
Environment/
Operational
Director Financial

Services, be authorised to;

Services

(1) secure contractual arrangements with other local authorities for the purchasing of permits to enable Halton to meet LATS targets; and

(2) trade up to the value of £125,000 for 2011/12, £175,000 for 2012/2013 and up to £250,000 for 2013/2014 subject to budgetary provision;

(3) Procurement Standing Order 3.1 be waived for the purposes of the exercise of the delegated power; and

(4) further reports be received on LATS as necessary.

ES28 HOUSING GROWTH POINT – INITIAL PROGRESS

The Sub-Committee had been previously advised that Halton, together with St. Helens and Warrington had submitted expressions of interest in being awarded Growth Point Status. The Department Communities Local Government (DCLG) had subsequently awarded funding for a period of two years of £4.2m. However, in July 2009 DCLG informed all Growth Points that in order to fund the Government's Housing Pledge, there would be a reduction in Capital Grant to Growth Points in the next financial year. For Mid-Mersey this would mean a reduction in notified grant of £999,289 giving a revised total allocation of funding to our Growth Point of £3.2m.

In order to direct the development and delivery of the Growth Point Programme, a Partnership Board had been established under the banner Mid-Mersey Growth Point Partnership Board. The Board comprised of five voting members and two non-voting representatives as follows:

St. Helens Council; Councillor Brian Spencer (Chair)
Halton BC; Councillor Marie Wright
Warrington BC; Councillor Bob Barr
Environment Agency; Area Manager (North)
RSL Representative; Peter Styche (Helena HA)
Homes and Community Agency (non-voting adviser)
GONW (Housing Policy Section) (non-voting adviser)

The Board had met five times to date to approve the submission of the Community Infrastructure Fund bid, the Growth Fund bid, in the form of a programme development and to agree priorities for future action following the announcement of Growth Fund allocations.

The Board had agreed the initial priorities for revenue and capital funding during 2009/10 and details were outlined in the report.

Beyond getting the right structures in place to move the programme of development forward, the Partnership Board focus was on housing delivery, particularly in the current and expected economic climate. The following initiatives were being progressed:

- Helena Housing had been asked to develop its suggested model for an affordable housing subsidy, including the potential to recycle grant monies for re-use by the Board;
- RSLs had been invited to come forward with proposals to deliver new additional social housing;
- fuller information on sites where development could take place and or continue within the Growth Point was being sought, alongside information on where sites were stalled or stopped;
- a Housing Thematic Group had been set up;
- a stakeholder group of RSLs had been established under the Chairmanship of the Board RSL representative along with a stakeholder group of housebuilders;
- the commissioning of a new Strategic Housing Market Assessment for the Growth Point had been agreed by the Board;
- a Green Infrastructure Thematic Group was in place and a framework developed to fit with the LDF;
- a Thematic Group for Transport Infrastructure had been established and work was already underway enabling the successful scheme supported by the CIF to start early next year;
- DFT Strategic Studies budget funding had been achieved for support towards feasibility studies looking at sustainable transport measures across the Growth Point that supports housing;
- the draft Phase 1 Water Cycle Scoping Study had been undertaken; and

- a Growth Point Manager, Richard Tully, had been appointed.

RECOMMENDED: That the Sub Committee

(1) note the grant of Growth Point Status and funding allocation from DCLG;

(2) endorse the contents of the submitted Programme of Development (PoD);

(3) support the establishment, structure and ongoing work of the Mid-Mersey Growth Point Partnership Board; and

(4) support the initial funding priorities identified by the Growth Point Partnership Board and authorise the release of revenue and capital expenditure in accordance with the priorities as determined by the Growth Point Partnership Board.

Strategic Director
Environment

MINUTES ISSUED: 2nd November 2009

CALL IN: 10 November 2009

Any matter decided by the Executive Board Sub Committee may be called in no later than 10 November 2009.

Meeting ended at 10.37 a.m.