

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 21 January 2014 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Morley (Vice-Chairman), J. Bradshaw, P. Hignett, MacManus, T. McInerney, Sinnott, Thompson, B. Woolfall and Zygodllo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J. Gerrard and Fraser

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, S. Johnson and S. Doore

Also in attendance: Nick Atkin and Ingrid Fife on behalf of Halton Housing Trust. In accordance with Standing Order 33, Councillors R. Hignett and J. Stockton.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EUR35 APPOINTMENT OF CHAIRMAN FOR THE MEETING

The Board was advised that Councillor Morley would be Chairman for the meeting.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Morley be appointed Chairman for the duration of the meeting.

Councillor Morley
Vice Chairman of the Board
(in the Chair)

EUR36 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th November 2013 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

EUR37 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

(NB: Councillors Sinnott and Zygodllo declared a disclosable other interest in the following item of business Minute No EXB106 as they are allotment holders)

EUR38 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Mersey Gateway Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

EUR39 HALTON HOUSING TRUST - GOVERNANCE

The Board received a presentation from Nick Atkin, Chief Executive of Halton Housing Trust (HHT) and Ingrid Fife Chair of HHT Board, which outlined proposed revised governance arrangements. Members were advised that a governance review was commissioned by the Board in January 2013. The review considered that changes to the existing governance arrangements were necessary in order to be fully compliant with the requirements of the Homes and Communities Agency and the National Housing Federation Code of Governance.

Members noted evidence of other Housing Associations who had not managed their governance arrangements and consequently had been downgraded in their regulatory ratings and received direct intervention in the running of their business. The Board also considered the impact of downgrading on an Association and the future challenges faced by HHT.

Under the proposals:

- the number of members on the Trust Board would be reduced;
- the term of office of Board members would be limited to 3 years and a maximum of 9 years; and
- the Trust's Skills Matrix would form the basis for appointment to the Board.

Arising from the discussion the Board:

- acknowledged the continued success of HHT, recognised the future difficulties faced, but also expressed disappointment at the proposals;
- queried why the number of people on a revised HHT Board had to be reduced;
- queried who decided if potential Board members met the skills criteria and how would this be done?
- expressed concern that in the proposed governance

arrangements no Board positions were ringfenced as in the current arrangements; and

- enquired on the comparability of the list of Authorities listed in the report as recent regulatory judgements.

In response the Board was advised that Halton Borough Council had a 33% share in HHT and in accordance with HHT legal advice, the Board could not have more than a third of Council Members. They were also advised that the skills matrix would be adopted by HHT to appoint Board members during the selection process.

RESOLVED: That

1. a copy of HHT legal advice on Board membership be circulated to members of the Policy and Performance Board;
2. the proposed changes to the governance arrangements be recommended to the Executive Board for approval, subject to the Council having a 33% representation on the HHT Board which is representative of the Council's share in HHT; and
3. the Council retain three places on the HHT Board if the number of members on the Board is reduced to nine.

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

EUR40 HALTON CARES - A CORPORATE SOCIAL RESPONSIBILITY ACCREDITATION SCHEME

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which advised on the development of the Halton CARES project and pilot proposal. In Halton there had been a number of cases where local residents were potentially going to be issued with section 215 notices under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. In most cases a lack of maintenance to a resident's property was detrimental to the amenity of the local area. In a number of recent cases residents had been elderly, disabled or in some way vulnerable and it had been deemed unsuitable to issue a 215 notice.

Members were advised that the Council, together with Halton Chamber of Commerce, had developed the Halton CARES proposal as a potential solution. The scheme offered vulnerable residents access to private company services at no cost to the resident through a corporate social responsibility accreditation scheme. The accreditation scheme would operate between the Council and Halton

Chamber of Commerce, with private sector organisations gaining accredited status through providing a number of expertises, free of charge, to vulnerable residents. In return they would gain good publicity and be able to use their accreditation in their marketing and publicity information.

It was proposed that a 12 month pilot scheme would be launched to initially focus on gardening issues.

RESOLVED: That the Board support the development of the Halton CARES scheme and the running of a pilot project in Partnership with the Chamber of Commerce.

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

EUR41 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION AND CASUALTY REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which gave details of road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2012 and recommended a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

The Board was advised that Appendix A to the report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2012 and compared these figures with those from previous years. These results were mixed, with large reductions in the numbers of people being slightly injured but with the overall numbers of those killed/seriously injured (KSI) remaining the same as 2011. The report also gave details of casualty trends locally against national figures and highlighted concerns regarding the resources available to continue road safety work in the future.

In summary during 2012:

- there were 278 road traffic collisions involving personal injury in Halton, this being the lowest number in over 20 years and the same as in 2011. These incidents produced 377 casualties;
- 36 of the casualties were classed as serious and there were four deaths, giving a total of 40 killed or seriously injured (KSI), the same as in 2011, which was the lowest in over 20 years;
- the child serious injury (CKSI) total of 10 was three more than in 2011, but there were no child fatalities in 2012 and this number was in line with the trend for more CKSI casualties over the past four years; and

- the number of people of all ages being slightly (SLI) injured fell from 382 in 2011 to 337.

Members were advised that since April 2011, Halton had suffered the loss of annual Government funded capital and revenue Road Safety grants of £75k and £396k respectively. This had resulted in a halving of the number of Road Safety Officers in Halton and loss of funding for a wide range of projects and initiatives. The cuts had also meant Halton no longer provided a financial contribution to the local safety camera partnership. Halton's 2012 casualty figures were not universally good news, and the fear remained that these cuts would have an impact on our ability to continue achieving year on year reductions, despite the best efforts to maximise resources through running initiatives jointly with Warrington Borough Council and other partner organisations. Locally, Halton was falling behind KSI reduction rates being achieved nationally.

In addition, since the loss of the Road Safety grant in 2011, Halton had not contributed financially to the Cheshire Road Safety Group, but continued to participate in joint safety initiatives locally as resources permitted. In not contributing financially to the partnership there was a strong possibility that camera enforcement in the borough would be adversely affected. Discussions were ongoing as to how Halton could find the resources to contribute financially and the implications if resources could not be made available.

RESOLVED: That

1. the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton be noted and welcomed;
2. the current programme of road safety collision reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed; and
3. concerns with regard to the achievement of further casualty prevention, as a result of resource reductions, be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.