

FOREWORD

“This is my fourth year as Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy Performance Board PPB.

The role and remit of the PPB is wide ranging and we have covered a variety of specialist themes and topics during the last 12 months.

I hope that the short summary outlined in this annual report adequately reflects this. I'm grateful to PPB Members for their continued support and valuable contributions at meetings. The quality of the discussions is always impressive and ensures that the PPB not only plays a role in informing and improving the Council's policies and procedures, but also helps with the design and delivery of the valuable services we provide to our residents, employees and businesses in the borough.

To illustrate this, during 2017/18 The PPB concluded its Household Waste Topic Group and the recommendations of the group have been submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

The PPB is midway through a scrutiny topic group which provides a proactive input into the Council's future regeneration projects and priorities.

Councillor Bill Woolfall
Chair, Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 17/18 the Board comprised eleven Councillors:-

Councillor Bill Woolfall (Chair)
Councillor Mike Fry (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Harry Howard
Councillor Valerie Hill
Councillor Keith Morley
Councillor Paul Nolan
Councillor Joe Roberts
Councillor Pauline Sinnott
Councillor John Stockton
Councillor Andrea Wall
Councillor Geoff Zygadllo

The Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board's primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its partners) in seeking to bring about the Environmental and Urban Renewal of the Borough. It is also charged with scrutinising progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Urban Renewal Priority. The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the following areas:

- Highways, Transportation and Logistics (including road maintenance, street, lighting, road safety, traffic management, supported bus services and flood risk management)
- Landscape Services, Parks & Countryside, Cemeteries & Crematoria
- Environmental and Regulatory Services
- Major Projects
- Economic Regeneration and Business Development
- Waste Management and Waste Strategy
- Derelict and contaminated Land
- Housing Strategic Policy
- Sustainability, Climate Change and Biodiversity
- Physical Environment and Planning policies

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The Board met 4 times during the Municipal Year 2017/18. As well as considering Executive Board decisions relevant to the work of the Environment and Urban Renewal Board, agreeing the Service Plans of the relevant Departments and monitoring their general activities and performance against them.

Some of the main activities and issues which have come before the Board during the year are set out below.

The Board has reviewed the minutes of meetings of the Executive Board and considered questions from the public on relevant matters. It also received, considered reports, agreed decisions and put forward relevant actions on the following issues:

Installation of Bus Shelters

This item related to a request from the public for the installation of bus stops on Clifton Road with the junction of Malpas Road. As a result of the request a period of consultation was undertaken and a subsequent request was submitted for an additional bus shelter.

Delivery and Allocations Local Plan

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of the next key document to be produced in Halton's Local Plan. It also provided an opportunity to view the proposed draft policies to be included within the Revised Core Strategy policies and Delivery and Allocations Local Plan.

Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment Update

The Board considered a report which advised that as part of its new duties as a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA), the Council must undertake a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). This was a high level screening exercise, to determine whether there was a local flood risk within the LLFA boundary based on historic and potential future flood risk data.

Air Quality Forum

The Board considered an update report on the progress of the Air Quality Forum since its first meeting in July 2016. It was noted that the Air Quality Forum membership and independent Chair had been appointed. In addition, terms of reference for the group which included a number of objectives had also been agreed.

With regard to other recommendations which were included in the air quality report, previously adopted by the Executive Board in 2015, it was noted that:

- A methodology for engagement and consultation had been explored and resources were being identified which would enable the engagement work to proceed;
- Whilst the forum would continue to work to identify opportunities for improvements across all sectors, the Council would also continue to develop initiatives across departments and with stakeholders that would contribute to improved air quality across the area; and
- A Joint Needs Assessment for air quality was scheduled in the work plan for the forthcoming year.

In addition, Members received updates on the Council response to the National Air Quality Plan and the work that had taken place around Air Quality Management Areas and the application to the Environment Fund Board for additional air quality monitoring across the Weston Point area.

Arising from the discussion, Members requested clarification on the number of charging points in the Borough for electric vehicles.

Mersey Gateway Regeneration

The Board received a presentation on the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan (Plus) document. The document identified a number of Key Impact Areas and Regeneration Opportunities which would arise following the completion of the Mersey Gateway. There are three distinct elements to the Plan:

- provides the strategic context for growth and recognises the Mersey Gateway Project as a catalyst for change; and
- sets out a cohesive package of development and investment opportunities, identifies the key infrastructure and enabling projects that will be brought forward to complement and support economic growth; and
- outlines the approach to implementation and delivery.

It was reported that the Plan would facilitate the development of a steady pipeline of regeneration and development opportunities over a 10-15 year period, and that it would be the first in a suite of documents that would form Halton's Economic Growth Strategy.

It was agreed that a working party to develop the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan would be established.

Sci-Tech Daresbury Presentation

The Board received a presentation regarding existing and proposed developments at Sci-Tech Daresbury, including an overview of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Enterprise Zone, achievements to date and details of an emerging Master Plan for the area.

The presentation highlighted the progress made in the first five years of Sci Tech Daresbury Enterprise Zone Status.

Members were also advised on the 25 year masterplan for expanding the campus, the immediate proposals for the next 4 years which would focus on the delivery on the corner plot of the A56 and Daresbury Expressway and an outline of the proposal for a 'Skills Factory'

Review of Primary Gritting Routes for Marginal Nights

The Board considered a report which sought support for the proposed introduction of a Cold Route to the winter gritting routes for the marginal nights and the rationalisation of the existing primary gritting routes as a result of the updating of Halton's thermal map for highways.

Annual Road Traffic Collision and Accident Report

The Board considered a report which set out full details of the numbers of road traffic collision and casualty numbers in the year 2016, and recommended a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

E-Petition – Colvend Way

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources which provided an update on action taken relating to an ePetition regarding traffic calming measures installed by Morris Homes at Colvend Way, Widnes as part of the residential development. The petition contained 71 signatures.

Petition – Request for Zebra Crossing facilities and 20 MPH speed limit on Beechwood Avenue, Runcorn

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, which advised that a petition containing 82 signatures had been received requesting the installation of zebra crossing facilities near Beechwood and Hillview School (the latter also mentioned the new park) and a 20 mph speed limit on Beechwood Avenue.

With regard to the request for a 20 mph speed limit on Beechwood Avenue it was noted that in 2015 a proposal to make the whole of Beechwood including a 20 mph zone was advertised. A number of objections were received and following consideration by the Board in June 2015 and subsequently the Executive Board in September 2015, the Traffic Regulation Order was made to make the whole of Beechwood a 20 mph zone excluding Beechwood Avenue. Given the process only took place two years ago it was not the best use of resources to rerun it again as the same outcome was likely.

Sky Lanterns and Helium Balloons Releases

The Board considered a report which outlined the risks which had been identified in respect of the release of sky lanterns and helium balloons into the open air and the options available to control their use within the borough. It was proposed that in order to mitigate the risks associated with the use of sky lanterns and helium balloons, a Policy be adopted to prohibit the release of both on Council owned land.

Household Recycling Centres in Halton

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which requested Members to endorse proposed changes to current Policy and operating practices at Halton Household Waste Recycling Centres (HWRCs).

Due to increased costs associated with operating Halton's two HWRCs, together with the continuing financial pressures being felt by the Authority as a result of cuts to its funding by Central Government, a review of the Council's HWRCs operations had been undertaken. The purpose of the review was to identify options to reduce the overall costs associated with the operation of the Centres whilst maintaining a high level of customer service.

As part of the review, and in addition to looking at Halton's own current practices, research was undertaken into the operation of HWRCs across a number of other local authority areas; both regionally and nationally and four key options for change had been identified for Members' consideration. The four were as follows and were detailed in the report, together with the rationale behind each:

- To reduce the current opening hours at the Centres;
- To amend aspects of the current Vehicle Permit Scheme;
- To introduce a new "Halton Resident Only" Policy; and
- To introduce a new Policy of charging for the deposit of 'non household' waste items at the HWRCs.

Liverpool City Region (LCR) joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided information on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) joint Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP), a copy of which had been forwarded to Members for comment. Halton had produced its first statutory Public Rights of Way Improvement Plan in 2009. With the creation of the LCR joint ROWIP each authority had identified the successes of previous individual ROWIP whilst combining the ambitions of each member authority looking to the future.

Members noted that the ROWIP was a statutory document which dealt specifically with Rights of Way and traffic free corridors. The document was designed to give a forward looking vision as to how they would be used

Environment Student Group Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy, Runcorn

The Board received a presentation from pupils representing Ormiston Bolingbroke Academy School which outlined to Members the work of the Ormiston Citizenship Programme, how pupils would benefit from the Programme and the improvements they aimed to make for the wider community. In addition, pupils explained a variety of environmental improvements they aimed to achieve which would improve the local area and the range of activities they had undertaken to raise funds for a selection of different charities.

Pupils discussed with Members a poster campaign which would target Primary School children to encourage them to dispose of litter appropriately and a needle exchange programme. The presentation was very well received by Members and congratulations were given to the students for their informative presentation.

Contact Person for this Committee

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Wesley Rourke, Operational Director 0151 511 8645.