

URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 20 September 2006 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), Leadbetter (Vice-Chairman), E. Cargill, Morley, Nolan, Sly, Thompson, Wallace, Whittaker and Worrall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: C. Halpin, G. Collins, A. Villiers, J. Dutton, A. McNamara, S. Rimmer and S. Williams

Also in attendance: Councillors Polhill (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33) and Cross and two members of the public.

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
URB14 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2006, having been printed and circulated, were signed as a correct record.	
URB15 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
URB16 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee relevant to the Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board.	
RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.	
URB17 PETITION: DERBY ROAD, WIDNES	
The Board was informed of the receipt of a petition requesting improvements to the junction of Derby	

Road/Peelhouse Lane, Widnes. The petition and subsequent letter from the main signatory requested installation of traffic signals incorporating pedestrian crossing facilities and requesting that the existing zebra crossing be re-located, or if this was not possible that it should be removed.

In considering this, accident records for the junction were reviewed and it was noted that in the last five years four injury accidents had been reported at the junction. In addition a traffic survey was undertaken in October 2005, for a 12 hour period, however, this did not indicate that there was justification for any additional pedestrian crossing facilities. Additional supporting information was outlined within the report.

The Chairman invited Ward Councillor Cross to address the Board in support of the petition. He outlined the nature of traffic using the junction, the difficulties for pedestrians due to the position of the crossing and that it was a potential accident hotspot. He therefore requested that a review of the whole junction be undertaken prior to any decision being made.

The Board discussed both the views of Councillor Cross and the Traffic Manager, who attended the meeting to respond to the concerns raised, and concluded that further investigation of the junction was needed by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, in consultation with the Traffic Manager.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) further investigation of the junction be undertaken by the Chairman and Vice Chairman, in consultation with the Traffic Manager; and
- (3) a report detailing the outcome of the investigation be submitted to a future meeting of the Board.

(NB: Councillors Hignett and Leadbetter declared a personal interest in the following item due to being employed by CIC, which received supporting people funding, and being a member of Halton Housing Trust, respectively.)

URB18 HOUSING UPDATE

The Board was informed that due to the recent changes to the roles and remits of the Policy and Performance Boards the responsibility for scrutiny of the strategic housing function had now transferred to this Board.

Strategic Director,
Environment

Therefore as a prelude to its future work the Board was updated on the range of housing functions, which the Council undertakes, along with a summary of recent service developments and what some of the challenges ahead would be for the service.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

URB19 HOUSING NEEDS SURVEY RESULTS

The Board received a report on the Housing Needs Survey 2006. The survey had been completed at the end of 2005 by housing consultants DCA Ltd.

The survey had been a comprehensive and robust housing market and needs assessment, which provided high quality information about current and future housing needs at a local authority level. The key study findings and recommendations were set out in detail within the report.

Arising from the discussion reference was made to what the definition of affordable was, the percentage of affordable new properties being built on Castlefields and how it might be possible to increase the number of affordable properties through the planning process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the findings of the Housing Needs Survey be noted; and
- (2) the date of the formal presentation on 25th October 2006 be noted.

(NB: Councillors Hignett and Leadbetter declared a personal interest in the following item due to being employed by CIC, which received supporting people funding, and being a member of Halton Housing Trust, respectively.)

URB20 PROPOSED SCRUTINY TOPIC: SUPPORTED HOUSING

The Board was updated on the work undertaken by the Health Policy and Performance Board in relation to a review of Supported Housing in Halton, which had commenced in October 2005.

The review had been suspended in March 2006, pending an announcement by the Department of Communities and Local Government on the long term funding arrangements and National Strategy for the

Supporting People Programme. The review was scheduled to resume in October 2006 and it was expected that the final report would be submitted by July 2007.

As a result of the changes to the remits of the Policy and Performance Boards in 2006 the responsibility for Strategic Housing was now within the Urban Renewal portfolio therefore the Board was asked to consider this review becoming part of its work programme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) supported Housing be accepted as a topic for scrutiny in 2006;
- (2) a working party be established consisting of 3 members; and
- (3) authority be delegated to the Chairman and the Vice Chair to finalise the membership of the Working Party.

Strategic Director,
Environment

URB21 DRAFT HOUSE EXTENSIONS SPD

The Board was informed of the publication of the draft House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD), for statutory public consultation between 14 September and 26 October 2006. A copy of the draft SPD was made available to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

URB22 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Board received a report outlining the need for a Local Area Agreement (LAA) to be negotiated with Central Government by April 2007. A LAA was a three year protocol which set out the priorities for a local area, as represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through the Local Strategic Partnership. The Board was updated on the progress made to date in this respect.

The idea was that LAA's would join up, focus and simplify the administration of neighbourhood renewal activity which would enable utilisation of external funding streams. Whilst at present LAA's were based on four blocks established around the Government's shared priorities, as detailed within the report, there was an indication from the Government that this may be extended to cover elements for mainstream and statutory activity.

Within the report an outline was given of:

- how LAA's would be formed,
- how they would align with national priorities,
- the reward element,
- the Government timetable leading to the adoption of an LAA, and
- the building blocks already in place at Halton, which would enable a strong and robust LAA to be put in place.

It was reported that a draft agreement would be submitted to Executive Board on 21 September 2006 for comments. A final version of the agreement would go to the Executive Board in December.

RESOLVED: That the report and outline of the process be noted.

URB23 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board was informed of the new process for reporting on performance monitoring. The first quarter monitoring reports were published in August to enable Members to review performance within service areas at the earliest possible opportunity.

A number of emerging issues and key developments that would impact upon the service or where any action was required to address performance were detailed within the report for the following services:

- Enterprise & economic development;
- Healthier communities, and older people;
- Safer and stronger communities; and
- Children and young people.

The Board raised concerns regarding the new process for reporting on performance monitoring, as it felt it was unable to undertake its scrutiny function efficiently and effectively without receiving paper copies of the full monitoring reports.

In response it was noted that paper copies of the full reports were available on request from the Policy Unit.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the service performance and progress towards achieving objectives and targets be received; and
- (2) in future paper copies of the performance monitoring

Strategic Director,

reports be issued to the Board.

Corporate and
Policy

Meeting ended at 7.26 p.m.