

URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 21 March 2007 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), E. Cargill, Morley, Nolan, Rowe, Sly, Thompson, Wallace and Whittaker

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Leadbetter and Worrall

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: D. Sutton, G. Collins, M. Curtis, L. Derbyshire, D. Owen, A. Villiers, P. Watts, A. West and I Goodall

Also in attendance: (none)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

URB42 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24th January 2007, having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

URB43 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

URB44 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee relevant to Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

URB45 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS FOR THE 3RD QUARTER (2006/07)

The Board received a performance briefing paper which highlighted aspects contained in the full versions of

the monitoring reports, which set out what the services had been planning to achieve and demonstrated how they contributed to the Council's strategic priorities.

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:

Environment Directorate

1. Highways & Transportation
2. Environment & Regulatory Services
3. Economic Development
4. Major Projects

Health & Community Directorate

5. Culture & Leisure

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

URB46 WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PERFORMANCE PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought agreement of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone (EDZ) Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) Performance Plan for the financial year 2007/08.

In this respect, the Board received a presentation which:-

- (1) gave an update of all the key NWDA projects for 2007/08; and
- (2) outlined the current and future developments of the NWDA Projects.

It was noted that, at an appropriate stage within the development of Venture Fields, the Authority would advertise for a suitable developer in order to establish a quality hotel on the site.

RESOLVED: That the Widnes Waterfront NWDA Performance Plan for 2007/08 be approved.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB47 TOPIC BRIEF - BUSINESS PARKS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director

– Environment which reported on the programme of work that had been undertaken by the Business Parks Topic Group as part of the scrutiny programme. The report explored the options for sustaining and expanding the Council's business parks improvement programmes.

As this was the last meeting of the Board in the municipal year, the Chairman of the Board, Councillor Hignett, took the opportunity to thank Officers and Members for the work they had undertaken on the Topic Groups during the year.

In relation to the willingness of businesses to consider paying a 'Bid Levy' to sustain or implement a range of estate improvements, it was noted that Riverview Industrial Estate, because of the insufficient size of the site, was not able to progress the bid. However, it was anticipated that they could form part of the Widnes Waterfront bid.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The proposal to progress the development of the Business Improvement Districts on Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estate as set out in paragraphs 7.4 to 7.7 of the report be supported;
- (2) the proposal to expand the Business Parks Improvement Programme to cover the Widnes Waterfront and adjacent areas as set out in paragraph 8.4 of the report be supported;
- (3) the key recommendations of the Topic Team set out in paragraphs 7.4 to 7.7 in the report and paragraph 8.4 be forwarded for consideration and decision by the Executive Board at the next available meeting; and
- (4) the Executive Board be requested to formally feedback their comments, decisions and proposed actions to the next available meeting of the Board and informally give feedback to the Chairman of the Board as soon as is practicably possible.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB48 TOPIC BRIEF - RAISING ADDITIONAL REVENUE FROM EXISTING SERVICES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which reported on the programme of work

that had been undertaken by the Raising Additional Revenue from Existing Services Topic Group as part of the scrutiny programme. The report detailed the ideas that had been reviewed, discussed and researched by the Topic Group and provided recommendations for further action.

Arising from the discussion, the value of selling Council Services, such as grass cutting and other Landscape Services was noted.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Council Officers further investigate the following revenue raising ideas that had been recommended by the Topic Group:-

- a) Sponsorship;
- b) Advertising;
- c) Franchising;
- d) Biomass; and
- e) Selling Services to other Authorities; and

(2) the conclusions of the investigation be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB49 TOPIC BRIEF - STREET LIGHTING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which reported on the programme of work that had been undertaken by the Street Lighting Topic Group as part of the scrutiny programme. The report gave feedback on the review and the results for the bids for Capital Funding of Street Lighting.

The Board was advised that the Topic Group had discussed various options for reducing the cost of street lighting whilst trying to maintain current high standards. Some of the discussions included the following:-

- The removal of high mast lighting on expressways;
- A trial of the dimming of street lighting;
- The change of switching levels for columns;
- Lights being switched off at midnight;
- The use of solar panels; and
- Decorative lighting.

The Board was further advised of a manufacturer of the technology to dim street lighting who were currently promoting a scheme whereby they would pay for the capital

costs of installing the equipment and this would be re-paid by advertising on the electronic panels on street signs.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the report be forwarded to the Executive Board for consideration and then subsequently be reported back to a future meeting of the Board;
- (3) in the specification for new installations there be a requirement for equipment that can be dimmed and for lower maintenance columns;
- (4) consideration be given to the main supply to street lighting being metered;
- (5) consideration be given to the scheme currently being promoted by a manufacturer to install the technology for dimmed street lighting at no capital cost to the Authority; and
- (6) the new developments in solar power and LED technology be monitored and implemented where appropriate.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB50 PETITIONS RELATING TO TRAFFIC CALMING ON DITCHFIELD ROAD AND HALTON VILLAGE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which outlined the petitions that had been received in relation to existing traffic calming on Ditchfield Road, Widnes and to proposed traffic calming on Norton Lane, Stockham Lane and Norton Village in Halton Village.

In respect of the petition relating to Ditchfield Road, Councillor Osborne, in his capacity as Ward Councillor spoke on behalf of the residents to support the retention of the existing traffic calming adjacent Trewan House Nursing Home, Ditchfield Road. He outlined the background to the petition and highlighted that the traffic calming had significantly improved the safety for residents in Ditchfield Road. There were no objectors to the petition present at the meeting.

Arising from the discussion, it was noted that such schemes had significantly reduced the number of road traffic accidents in the Borough. The role and composition of the

Highways Consultation Review Panel was also noted.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the following conclusions be supported:-
 - (i) that the existing traffic calming adjacent Trewan House Nursing Home (No. 335) Ditchfield Road, Widnes be retained and the situation monitored with the petitioners informed accordingly; and
 - (ii) that the Norton Village petition be considered as part of the Consultation Review panel evaluation of the proposed traffic calming scheme for the area.

(Note: Councillor Sly declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business due to his business being based on the Daresbury site).

URB51 COMMERCIAL PROPERTY REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which gave an overview and outlined the conclusions and recommendations outlined in a commercial property study which assessed the supply of and demand for employment land and premises (industrial, office and retail) in Halton.

The Board was advised that due to the timing of the study, it had not taken account of the requirements within the Mersey Gateway Project. However, the information would be updated at the appropriate time.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations set out in paragraph 3.20 of the report (a – j) be supported.

(Note: Councillor Wallace declared a Personal Interest in the next item of business due to being a Board Member of Groundwork Mersey Valley),

URB52 PUBLIC RIGHT OF WAY MILESTONE STATEMENT PROGRESS REPORT 2007/8

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which informed the Members of the progress that had been made in relation to the works detailed within

Strategic Director
- Environment

the Council's Public Rights of Way Milestone Statement 2003.

The Board noted the proposed reduction in core funding for Groundwork Mersey Valley proposed for 2007/8 and the end of all core funding in 2009/10 and the significant impact it would have on the ability to address issues raised within the Milestone Statement.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

URB53 UPDATE ON TRAFFIC MANAGEMENT ACT & UTILITIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which outlined the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 2004 (TMA) and some of the responsibilities placed on the Authority.

The report outlined that the powers the Authority currently had to direct the work of 'undertakers' (which included the public utilities such as electricity, gas, telecommunications and water companies, or their contractors) under the New Roads and Street Works Act 1991 (NRSWA) and Highways Act 1980.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a representative from the undertakers, when appropriate, be invited to attend a future meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB54 ALLEYGATES AND GATING ORDERS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which advised of new powers available to the Council to make Gating Orders. The report also proposed a policy be adopted that would respond to all future requests for alley gates.

The Board was advised that as this was a cross cutting issue, the report had also been considered by the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board who had approved the recommendations and added a further proposal relating to the finance for maintenance of the schemes.

The Board noted that alley gating had been successful in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour in the Borough. However, it was also noted that the Authority would have to

balance safety and highway issues when a proposed gating order affected a right of way of access for the general public rather than residents' rear access to a limited number of properties.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposals for the adoption of a policy requiring all future proposed alley-gates to be supported by a Gating Order be supported; and
- (2) the Executive Board be requested to adopt a policy requiring all future proposed alley-gates to be supported by a Gating Order made under the provisions of Section 129A of the Highways Act 1980.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB55 AUTUMN LEAF SWEEPING REPORT 2006

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which informed the Members of the way in which the Autumn Leaf Sweeping had been carried out on adopted footpaths and other amenity areas during the last leaf fall period of 2006. The report did not include the leaf sweeping activities along the public highway as this activity had been carried out in close partnership with Landscape Services by the Waste Management Division.

The Board was advised of the data that had been provided to show how a co-ordinated approach with some additional resources from within the Landscape Services Division had brought about a more effective clear up of leaves and had led to a drop in calls from members of the public.

The Board was further advised that there had been a 42% reduction in the number of complaints received and an update report would be presented to the Board on an annual basis.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the recommendations as set out in Appendix 1 to the report be endorsed.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB56 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman, Councillor Hignett reported that Alan West was attending his last meeting of the Board prior to taking retirement. The Chairman took the opportunity to place on record the Board's appreciation of the work undertaken by Mr West during his time with the Authority.

RESOLVED: That the Board place on record its thanks to Mr West and to extend its best wishes to him in the future.

Meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.