

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 15 June 2011 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), J. Gerrard (Vice-Chairman), Baker, E. Cargill, Hodgkinson, A. McInerney, Nolan, Thompson and Zygodillo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J. Bradshaw and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, J. Unsworth, D. Cunliffe, S. Rimmer and H. Coen.

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order 31 Councillors Nelson and Stockton.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
EUR1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 th March 2011 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.	
EUR2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
EUR3	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.	
	RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	
EUR4	SSP MINUTES	
	The Board received the draft Minutes of the Urban	

Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership meeting held on 3rd May 2011.

RESOLVED: That the draft Minutes be noted.

EUR5 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Policy and Resources which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the sustainable community strategy for Halton.

It was reported that the Sustainable Community Strategy was a central document for the Council and its partners, which provided an evidenced-based framework through which actions and shared performance targets could be developed and communicated.

It was noted that following extensive research and analysis and consultation with all stakeholder groups included Elected Members, partners and the local community and representative groups, a new sustainable community strategy (SCS) 2011 – 2026 was approved by Council on the 20th April 2011.

The Board was advised that the Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton, and the performance measures and targets contained within it would remain central to the delivery of community outcomes. It was therefore important that progress was monitored and that Members were satisfied that adequate plans were in place to ensure that the Council and its partners achieved the improvement targets that had been agreed.

The Board noted that Councillor Hodgkinson had submitted the following questions:

Why is NI5 'Overall satisfaction with local area' no longer used? Also what difference will the Ineos incinerator and associated traffic movements, which are currently approved, make to the CO2 levels?

In response the Board was advised that NI 5 was part of the nationally prescribed places survey which the coalition government abolished from April 2011. However Management Team had agreed that a Halton Residents Survey would be undertaken in order to gather public perception data and the methodology was currently being developed with a view to undertaking the survey by the end of this calendar year. Although the final set of questions was

still to be determined they would be based on previous place survey type questions and our local priorities. On this basis it was almost certain that overall satisfaction would be a feature of the new survey.

With regard to the Ineos incinerator and associated traffic movements, the Board was advised that the indicator was measured by Defra and provided to the Council on an annual basis and it was not possible for officers to determine what difference a single operation, such as the Incinerator, would make to it. The definition of the indicator could be provided and some idea of the sorts of measures an authority could use to address CO2 emissions could be provided. Debbie Houghton in the Council's Policy and Strategy Division could be contacted if required.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

EUR6 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive which detailed the fourth quarter management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons and factors affecting the services for –

- Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business Development (Business Development and Regional Affairs)
- Highways, Transportation and Logistics
- Environment and Regulatory Services
- Prevention and Commissioning (Housing Strategy)

In receiving the fourth quarterly monitoring reports, Councillor Hodgkinson submitted the following questions:

1. What other activity in town centres has benefited from the reduction in improved business premises?

In response the Board was advised that during the last twelve months a number of improvements have been completed to improve the public realm within the town centres. Such improvements have included installation of new litter bins and benches within both Runcorn and Widnes town centres; re-painting of street furniture within Runcorn town centre; new gateway signage in Runcorn town centre; new temporary car park off High Street in Runcorn; and the demolition of 57 High Street property and landscaping works

to create urban green space.

Orientation signage to assist visitors to navigate between the shopping areas within the central retail area of Widnes town centre would be installed later this summer. The signage would be clear and colourful and each sign is easy to follow, incorporating the “Try Widnes” branding and a “Did you know” feature which would enhance civic pride for the town. The bandstand (between Widnes Road and Albert Road) in Widnes has been re-painted using the “Try Widnes” branding colours. There were also plans to install lighting on the bandstand to upgrade this town centre facility.

Within Travis Street (off Widnes Road) plans were advanced to provide an area of pavement which will be used as an al fresco dining area. This would help to further develop this location as an area where restaurants and cafes were operating and help them become more economically sustainable.

2. Which Playbuilder project was cut?

A written response would be provided.

3. What are the ongoing issues around experienced administrative support to the Development Control team?

In relation to the above question the Board was advised that these issues included: the capacity available in Admin section to provide the necessary resources; the need for those staff involved to be trained (as there has been a complete change in personnel); and there were issues around the more limited range of tasks that were now undertaken by the admin section.

4. Could the prosecution of fly-posters partly cover the cost of removing fly-posted material?

With regard to the above question, legislation does allow the Council to take action against those who fly-post. This included the issuing of Fixed Penalty Notices or prosecution and any monies received from successfully prosecuting offenders could be used to off-set costs incurred from clearing fly-posted materials.

5. Why is the average number of days taken to repair street light increasing?

The street lighting repair time for DNO (Distribution Network Operator – Scottish Power) faults has increased due to a

change in response time in their agreement. This type of fault was totally outside our control and the faults were repaired by Scottish Power at their expense. Faults within in our control were still being repaired within 5 days.

RESOLVED: That the fourth quarter performance management reports be received.

EUR7 PETITION CONCERNING HEAVY INDUSTRIAL TRAFFIC ON SOUTH PARADE, WESTON POINT, RUNCORN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Policy and Resources, which informed Members of a petition requesting that steps be taken to reduce the volume and weight of heavy industrial traffic travelling along South Parade, Weston Point, Runcorn. The petition had been signed by 21 residents and cites damage to properties, dangers to pedestrians, obstruction, increasing volumes of traffic, noise and pollution.

Members were advised that the sites generating the highest traffic movements affecting South Parade were Ineos Salt Works and the Energy From Waste (EfW) construction site, together with the Merseyside Gateway Port (previously Weston Docks), which was now operated by Stobart's.

Traditionally, these sites had been accessed from South Parade via either Picow Farm Road and Sandy Lane or Bankes Lane junctions on the Weston Point Expressway. This had resulted in industrial traffic travelling down both Sandy Lane and Bankes Lane/South Parade. However, Ineos had constructed a new access road, Barlow Way from Picow Farm Road which together with a new internal site roadway system provided access to both the Salt Works and the EfW sites from Picow Farm Road. Temporary signing for the EfW site had been erected on the Weston Point Expressway on both the north and south bound approaches.

In addition Ineos had also approached the Council with a view to funding replacement permanent signing on the Weston Point Expressway, to direct both Salt Works and EfW traffic to use the Picow Farm Road junction, thus avoiding travelling via either Sandy Lane or Bankes Lane/South Parade. However, HGV traffic continued to access these sites via Bankes Lane and South Parade as it was not prohibited to do so. The roads could physically accommodate this traffic and SatNav systems show Bankes Lane as the shortest route, particularly for vehicles approaching from M56.

With regard to access to Mersey Gateway Port, this would need to remain off the junction of South Parade and Sandy Lane for the foreseeable future. A possible solution to reduce traffic on these roads was to extend Barlow Way so that it could provide a new connection to the Port. However, no funding had been identified for this proposal and until this was found traffic for the Port would need to continue to use South Parade and/or Sandy Lane. The Council was continuing to facilitate meetings between all parties (Ineos and Stobart's) involved to try to find a solution.

It was noted that both Ineos and Stobart's had issued instructions to drivers to use the signed routes and in the case of Stobart's they had requested drivers not to arrive before the Port opened at 7.00 a.m. In addition, Ineos had issued maps to their hauliers and reported drivers to their employers if they do not follow the correct routes. Further, a sign had been erected on South Road (former access to Salt Works) advising that there was no access to the Salt Works. Ineos had also installed temporary blocks to deter traffic from turning right towards Sandy Lane.

It had been suggested that traffic leaving the Port be signed along Sandy Lane, to discourage use of South Parade. It was recognised that this was an option but this would not be enforceable and could result in objections from the residents of Sandy Lane; and may not be followed due to drivers following SatNav rather than direction signs. This needed to be investigated further together with possible amendments to the carriageway markings to encourage drivers to take the most appropriate route.

It was reported that the possibility of reducing the speed limit in the vicinity of the residential properties had also been suggested, but this would require the support of the Police. The Police had previously confirmed that they would not enforce 20 mph limits as they should, in their view, be self enforcing through design of the horizontal and vertical alignment. This option could not be progressed further at the present time.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the re-signing of routes to the industrial sites from the Weston Point Expressway, both existing and planned, be endorsed;
- 2) a time limited weight restriction on South Parade and Sandy Lane between Bankes Lane and

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

Picow Farm Road be deferred to allow a review of the other measures to be deployed;

3) the existing waiting restrictions on South Parade and Sandy Lane be reviewed to discourage parking of HGVs near the houses together with the direction signs and carriageway markings for traffic leaving the Mersey Gateway Port;

4) the Council arranges for discussions to resume between Ineos and Stobart's regarding alternative accesses to Mersey Gateway Port; and

5) the petition be noted and the lead petitioner be informed of the decisions of the Policy and Performance Board.

(NB: Councillor Nelson declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as he is a Council representative on Halton Housing Trust.)

EUR8 RECEIPT OF PETITION - RUSSELL COURT, FARNWORTH, WIDNES. PARKING ISSUES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which informed Members of a petition from residents of Russell Court, in relation to car parking problems in the area. Residents had reported problems with car parking in the area for several years. On street parking was very restricted due to the layout of Russell Court which was little more than a short access way and turning head, but it was adopted highway. Although a sign had been erected in the past stating parking for residents in Russell Court only this had no legal standing and could not be enforced. Therefore the carriageway was open to all highway users, for access and for considerate parking, and any enforcement of traffic obstruction issues etc. would rest with the Police.

It was reported that nearby Farnworth Street was narrow with "no waiting at any time" restrictions and many properties had no off-street parking provision of their own. As a result, Russell Court and the adjacent private street and garage court became congested with parked vehicles, making access and turning for residents of Russell Court difficult.

Both the Locality Area Forum and Halton Housing Trust (HHT) had agreed to allocate funding to try to resolve parking problems through the construction of additional

parking areas and to control inappropriate and unauthorised parking. HHT Housing Officers prepared an Options Report which formed the basis for discussion with Council Officers, Ward Councillors and residents. A series of meetings had been held to discuss the feasibility of various options which were as follows –

- Option A – Demolition of bin store and provision of around 8 car parking spaces and footpath, accessed from private street;
- Option B – Provision of around 10 car parking spaces on part of land currently used as “drying area”. Spaces would form part of garage court accessed from private street;
- Option C – Prevention of parking on highway verges in Russell Court and provision of marked/allocated car parking bays. This option would not be legally acceptable, however vehicle access crossings and driveway parking could be investigated as an alternative;
- Option D – Demolition of garages and additional car parking spaces provided within garage court accessed by new road off Russell Court. This option had not been progressed as neither HHT nor the residents were supportive.

Members were advised that following discussions between HHT and Council Officers, Option B would be subject to consultation with local residents.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council Officers, on conjunction with HHT continue their efforts to resolve the reported parking problems in Russell Court through the development of new parking provision and the control of inappropriate parking; and
- 2) the residents of Russell Court be consulted on any proposals developed to resolve the parking problems.

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

EUR9 PETITION REQUESTING PARTIAL REMOVAL OF WAITING RESTRICTIONS ON HALE BANK ROAD

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which informed Members of

a petition requesting partial removal of the “At Any Time” waiting restrictions on Hale Bank Road, Hale Bank, Widnes in order to provide more on-highway parking space for local residents. The petition had been signed by 19 residents from 11 out of 16 properties on Hale Bank Road. At present, the “At Any Time” waiting restrictions extend from the junction of Hale Road for a distance of 62 metres in a westerly direction along Hale Bank Road on both sides. The petition requested that the length of the waiting restriction lines on the south side of Hale Bank Road be reduced by 23 metres, so as to provide additional on-highways parking for local residents.

Members were advised that having evaluated the situation it was proposed that the majority of the south side restrictions could be removed to further help residents, but leaving 15 metres of “At Any Time” waiting restrictions adjacent to the Hale Road junction in order to provide space for vehicles entering Hale Bank Road to wait whilst oncoming traffic cleared the area further west where parking would be permitted.

In addition, it was noted that permitting parking adjacent to Frederick Terrace effectively limited vehicles to one running lane at a time past these properties. However, in recent years the speed limit had been reduced to 30 mph on Hale Bank Road and a vehicle weight restriction introduced. Taken together, these measures had reduced the speed, volume and average weight/size of vehicles using this route.

Following consultation with Cheshire Police and Ward Councillors, no objections to the proposed amendments had been received.

RESOLVED: That the request for the partial removal of “At Any Time” waiting restriction on Hale Bank Road, Hale Bank be accepted and the lead Petitioner be informed accordingly, with the exact extent of waiting restrictions to be removed being advertised through the normal procedure for Traffic Regulation Orders.

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

EUR10 PRELIMINARY FLOOD RISK ASSESSMENT

The Board was 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. This screening and any identified risk was contained

within a preliminary assessment report (PAR) a copy of which had been previously circulated to Members.

The Board received a presentation on the key findings of the PAR which set out how the assessment had been undertaken and provided a robust evidence base to help support preparation of a Local Flood Risk strategy. The PAR was based on data held by a wide variety of sources but primarily, the Environment Agency, United Utilities and from within the Council Strategic Flood Risk Assessments (SFRA1 and SFRA2).

It was noted that the outcome of the first two stages of flood risk assessment required by the Regulations was that no Flood Risk Area was proposed for Halton. Consequently the next two stages, the production of Flood Risk Maps and preparation of a Flood Risk Management Plan for FRAs were not triggered.

However, as LLFA, the Council still had to produce a Local Flood Risk Management Strategy for the area. Although currently there was no prescribed timetable for the production of the Strategy, the data used in, and the information produced by the PFRA, together with the results of the soon to be completed Surface Water Management Study, would put the Authority in a good position to commence preparation of a comprehensive strategy later this year, once the national strategy had been approved.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the findings of the Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment for Halton be noted and the draft Preliminary Assessment Report be recommended to the Executive Board for approval; and
- 2) the submission of the draft Preliminary report to the Environment Agency by the 22nd June 2011, in order to comply with DEFRA's timetable for review and approval be supported.

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

EUR11 ANNUAL REPORT ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD 2010-11

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board 2010/11. The full Board met five times during the year and the worked on a variety of initiatives during the year which included:-

- Consideration of a draft Household Waste Collection Policy which was subsequently recommended and a Waste Management Topic Group was established to scrutinise the process;
- Proposed recommendations in respect of the adoption of an Abandoned Shopping Trolley Policy;
- Consideration of the current practice relating to the provision of grit storage bins and manual gritting of footpaths and proposed improvements for the delivery of the service in the future.

The Chairman thanked all the Councillors and Officers for their support during the year.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be received for the purpose of its adoption at a forthcoming meeting of Full Council.

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

EUR12 POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which sought to develop a work programme of topics for the Board to examine in 2011/12.

The Board had previously agreed that the Waste Management Topic Group needed to be re-established and a Topic Working Group had been set up. The Group had met on 1st June 2011 and Members received a verbal update on the work undertaken by the Topic Group to date. The Group had examined the alternative bin collection pilot schemes and the following had been noted.

- The pilot scheme had been rolled out to 2,500 properties and very few issues or concerns had been reported;
- More residents had been recycling as a result of the pilot;
- There had been more requests for larger blue recycling bins;

- Although a small number of complaints had been received, these had been prior to the introduction of the scheme and no complaints had been received since the scheme had been implemented;
- It was proposed to extend the pilot into four other ward areas (Birchfield, Farnworth, Daresbury and Norton North);
- Weekly bin collections would take place during the Christmas period;
- The alternate bin collection scheme would not be viable for those properties with sack collections.

Arising from the discussion, it was agreed that a Cemeteries Working Party be established and the Operational Director Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board agree the Topic Brief. This brief was to include a timeline indicating when the Group intended to reach its conclusions by.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) a Cemeteries Working Party be established for 2011/12 with the following Membership:

Councillors Thompson (Chair), J. Bradshaw, E. Cargill, A. McInerney and Zygadlo; and

- 2) the Operational Director Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board agree the Topic Brief; and

- 3) the Waste Management Topic Group continue as previously established.

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

EUR13 NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO THE CONSULTATION REVIEW PANEL

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which requested nomination of two Members to represent the Board on the Consultation Review Panel.

RESOLVED: That the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board sit on the Consultation Review Panel as may be required from time to time.

EUR14 NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO THE HALTON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ADVISORY PANEL - MUNICIPAL YEAR 2011/12

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy, which requested Members to agree nominations to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the Municipal Year 2011/12.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the nominations for Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel for 2011/12 be as follows: Councillors Hignett, Gerrard, Stockton and Hodgkinson;
- 2) the key issues discussed by the Panel during the Municipal Year 2010/11 be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.53 p.m.