

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 13 June 2012 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gerrard (Chairman), Morley (Vice-Chairman), J. Bradshaw, Fraser, P. Hignett, Macmanus, Parker, Sinnott, Thompson, Woolfall and Zygadllo

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, I Boyd, T. Gibbs, J. Unsworth and P. Wright

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order 31 Councillor J. Stockton

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
EUR1	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th March 2012 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. Arising from the discussion it was agreed that a comparison between the private sector and the Council with regard to pest control charges would be circulated to Members. RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	Strategic Director Communities

EUR4 ANNUAL REPORT ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board 2011/12. The full Board met five times during the year and the report set out the work carried out and recommendations made throughout the Municipal Year April 2011 to March 2012. The Board had previously agreed to set up working parties to scrutinise:

- i. the new Household Waste Collection Policy and Waste collection operations;
- ii. to look at cemeteries; and
- iii. Halton Community Transport.

Members queried if the Council's bid to the Government for the Local Strategic Transport Fund had been successful. It was reported that the Council's bid had been unsuccessful and a letter had been sent to the Department of Transport to seek feedback.

The Chair wished to note on record his thanks to Members and Officers for their continued support and hard work throughout 2011/12.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be accepted and the work of any agreed Topic Working Groups be supported in 2012/13.

NB: Councillor Parker declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as he recently sat as a Member of an Appeal Panel involving HCT.

EUR5 HALTON COMMUNITY TRANSPORT SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUP

The Board was advised that the Halton Community Transport (HCT) Scrutiny Topic Group was set up to review the operations of, and services provided by, HCT including identification of funding streams which contributed toward HCT's overall operations and service delivery. Another focus of the Group was to consider the potential social inclusion benefits that the services operated by HCT provided to its users and the impact on these users should services discontinue.

It was reported that four meetings of the Group had

taken place and a brief explanation of the discussions at each of these meetings was outlined to Members. Following the meetings and the information provided, the Topic Group agreed the following recommendations in order to strengthen HCT's operations:-

- Procedures to be put in place for restricting the number of hours to be worked by voluntary drivers. As volunteer drivers were not governed by the working time directive comprehensive paper records were required to be held as confirmation that excess hours were not being worked by volunteers. Volunteers should work to the same conditions (maximum allowed hours) as contracted/paid drivers;
- Mileage log sheets should be issued on each vehicle and completed by drivers prior to and at the end of each shift;
- Vehicle daily "walk around" check sheets should be issued and retained on each vehicle. Drivers should complete a check sheet prior to taking any vehicle out at the start of a shift. Each vehicle should be issued with a pad of numbered sheets to be used;
- Vehicle scheduling system and vehicle tracking devices to be installed and used on all vehicles operating Council funded services. This would ensure that routes are scheduled to maximum effect in terms of route planning and maximising passenger usage, it would also ensure that vehicles are tracked in real-time in order that each vehicle location would be known at all times; and
- An attempt should be made to establish a continual funding stream for the key accessible transport services provided by HCT and that no further funding reductions were faced by this organisation in respect of these services.

Members noted that as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review and current austerity measures, the Council's budget for supported local bus services had faced reductions resulting in increasingly difficult yet unavoidable decisions on scaling back or discontinuing certain subsidised bus services. The Council had recently submitted a Local Sustainable Transport Fund bid to the Department for Transport. This bid was focussed on Economic Growth and Carbon Reduction (promoting sustainable travel modes and changing travel behaviours). The bid would, if

successful, have been worth £4.4m to the Council over three years (£8m including partner contributions) and HCT were a strong partner within this bid. However, as stated previously the Council had recently been informed that this bid was unsuccessful and this was likely to have implications for the provision of sustainable transport measures in the Borough.

Members were advised that the Core grant provided to HCT from the Council for the provision of the Dial-A-Ride daytime and evening transport in 2010/11 was £122,360, this amount was reduced £82,630 for 2011/12 with a further proposed 10% reduction for 2012/13 bringing the core grant down to £74,370. A detailed discussion had taken place within the Working Party to identify how the funded services could be provided at less cost. The outcome of this discussion was that an alternative service could not be provided at similar cost. The Group also commented that the service would not be able to continue following any further grant reduction. A further reduction in funding for the existing specialised door to door transport services would inevitably result in the current range of services being reduced or even being withdrawn entirely.

Arising from the discussion the Board agreed that the Chairman write to the Executive Board on their behalf to express their support for HCT and the services it provided and to recommend that no further reduction in funding for the existing specialised door to door transport services be implemented.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report and review work undertaken by the Topic Group be noted;
2. the conclusions reached be used to guide future relationships with HCT; and
3. on behalf of the Board, the Chairman, write to the Executive Board to express their support for HCT and the services it provided and to recommend that no further reduction in funding for the existing specialised door to door transport services be implemented.

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

EUR6 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR
QUARTER 4 OF 2011/12

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director of Policy and Resources which detailed the Fourth Quarter

Management Report on progress against service plan targets and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons and factors affecting the services for –

- Economy, Enterprise and Property (Development and Investment);
- Policy, Planning and Transportation (Highways and Transportation, Road Safety, Logistics and Transport Management, Planning, Building Control and Contaminated Land);
- Environment and Regulatory Services (Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Spaces);
- Commissioning and Complex Care (Housing Strategy).

In receiving the Fourth Quarterly Monitoring Reports, the following issues were raised:

- Under CELI23 (Satisfaction with Standard of Cleanliness and Maintenance of Parks and Green Spaces) the figure taken from Greenstat Survey was slightly down on the previous quarter, how was the survey information sought? In response, Members were advised that the information was gathered through on-line data but the Council also carried out a number of face to face interviews with users. Further information would be circulated to Members on the exact number of surveys conducted.
- PPTLI07 (Processing of Planning Applications as Measured against Targets for Major, Minor and Other Applications) the percentage had dropped significantly and Members asked for clarification. In response, Members were advised that the numbers of planning applications processed had been impacted due to an increase in the applications workload, for example, major applications for INEOS, 3MG and Widnes Town Centre/Widnes Waterfront and capacity levels. In addition, there had also been a reduction in Officer numbers. It was reported that the situation would be kept under review.
- Further information would be sent to Members clarifying the presence of hydrosene at the Bayer site.

Strategic Director
Communities

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

The Board had previously set up a Cemeteries Working Group to consider options for creating a new cemetery for Widnes as the current one at Birchfield Road had approximately six years of capacity left within it. The Group was to look at the most suitable location, most suitable design and make recommendations to the Board. In addition, the Group were also asked to consider current cemetery rules, making recommendations for how they might be amended and applied in the new cemetery. The Group also considered issues surrounding memorials in the existing cemeteries and how they may be managed in the future.

The Working Group met on three occasions and Members were advised that an opportunity had arisen, through the closure of Fairfield High School in 2010, to use part of that site, the playing fields area for a new cemetery. The site was owned by the Council so money would not need to be spent on buying land. In addition, the site was located close to the existing cemetery and close to Widnes Town Centre. It was also well served by public transport. A draft design of the proposed new cemetery had been previously circulated to Members. The cost of creating a cemetery on this site would be in the region of £1.5m (although there could be additional costs relating to highway works). The Working Group concluded that the option of creating a new Cemetery at Peel House Lane, on part of the former Fairfield High School site was a sensible option and that it should be recommended to the Executive Board that a cemetery be built there and that funding be identified before capacity ran out at Widnes Cemetery.

The Working Group also made the following recommendations:

- a new cemetery should be something to be proud of. It should have an imposing entrance feature;
- it should have enough car parking space;
- all graves should be within lawned sections with memorial stones mounted on concrete as in the newer sections of the existing cemetery;
- the cemetery should be multi-denominational;
- there should be space for green burials;
- there should be a designated baby section;
- the first phase should be done in such a way that the cemetery does not give the appearance of being only half finished;
- traffic calming would have to be considered on approach roads;

- consideration be given to landscape screening for local residents;
- consideration be given to a name and that the name Peel House Cemetery was favoured by Members.

In addition the Working Group recommended that the Executive Board make it policy that the Council was able to remove dangerous memorials using existing legislation and it would do so subject to notice being given. In addition, that a new set of Cemetery Rules be written for the new Widnes Cemetery and the Runcorn extension and that they contain images to better explain what is expected from deed holders and visitors to the cemeteries.

Members discussed the proposal by Wade Deacon to become an Academy School and the effect this would have on the proposals for the Fairfield site and also the speed bumps currently on Peel House Lane. Members also queried the proposals for the remainder of the Fairfield site and were advised that the Asset Management Group were currently looking at the remainder of the site.

RESOLVED: That

1. the recommendations of the Cemeteries Working Group be endorsed; and
2. a report be presented to the Executive Board recommending the adoption of the recommendations of the Cemeteries Working Group.

Strategic Director
Communities

EUR8 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY YEAR END PROGRESS REPORT 2011/12

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained with the 2011-2016 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Halton.

Members were advised that selected measures and targets for Environment and Urban Renewal priorities were summarised in Appendix 1 to the report and provided an update to the 2011/12 year end position, which included a summary of all indicators within the new SCS and additional information for those specific indicators and targets that fell within the remit of this Board.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR9 POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD WORK PROGRAMME

The Board received the report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which sought to develop a Work Programme of topics for the Board to examine in 2012/13.

The Board had previously re-established the Waste Management Topic Group to review the waste collection operations and the new Household Waste Collection policy. Due to the nature of this policy the work of this Topic Group would remain on-going and future reports may be brought to the Board for consideration. However, there had been recent changes in Membership of the Policy and Performance Board and it was proposed that the following Members be nominated for the Household Waste Collection Topic Group:

Councillors Gerrard, J. Bradshaw, Thompson, and Zygadlo.

Arising from the discussion it was also agreed that the Cemeteries Working Group would remain dormant at this present time.

In addition, Members agreed that a Working Party would be set up to look at trees and a Topic Brief would be prepared. The following nominations were received for this Topic Group:

Councillors Thompson, Sinnott, Parker, MacManus, Fraser, Zygadlo and P. Hignett.

RESOLVED: That

1. a Topic Brief be prepared for a Trees Working Party with the following Membership: Councillors Thompson, Sinnott, Parker, MacManus, Fraser, Zygadlo and P. Hignett;
2. The Cemeteries Working Party would remain dormant at the present time; and
3. A Waste Management Working Party be established for 2011/12 with the following membership: Councillors Gerrard, Zygadlo, J. Bradshaw and Thompson.

Strategic Director
Communities

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EUR10 CONSULTATION ON WITHDRAWAL OF SUBSIDISED

LOCAL BUS SERVICES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Policy and Resources, which provided feedback on the results of the recent consultation exercise on the proposed withdrawal of subsidised bus services in 2012/13. The report also provided information on public transport issues facing the Council and Bus Operators in the near future.

RESOLVED: That

1. the factors contributing to the proposal to remove funding support for those particular bus services listed in Appendix 2, as set out in the report, be noted;
2. the findings of the consultation exercise on the proposed withdrawal of support for these services, as summarised in Appendix 3, and the outcome of this Board's consideration of two petitions that objected to the withdrawal of two of these services on 14th March 2012, be noted;
3. the potential implications of the proposed changes to service provision in 2012/13, as well as the impacts of cuts made in 2011/12, and the issues facing the local bus industry in the coming months be noted; and
4. the proposal to reduce the budget for Supported Bus Services by £70,000 in 2012/13, to reflect the proposed cuts to services listed in Appendix 2, be noted.

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

EUR11 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Policy and Resources, which provided Members with proposed updates to the Local Development Scheme (LDS). The LDS was the timetable for production of Halton's Local Development Framework (LDF)/Local Plan. It identified and described the Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and gave target dates for production. These documents that comprised the LDF/Local Plan set out how the Borough would develop over the next 15 years and formed the basis for all decisions under the Town and Country Planning Acts.

RESOLVED: That the provisional Local Development Scheme appended to the report (Appendix 1) and the

LDF/Local Plan documents highlighted in the LDS be noted.

EUR12 NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO THE CONSULTATION REVIEW PANEL

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources 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.

EUR13 NOMINATIONS OF MEMBERS TO THE HALTON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ADVISORY PANEL - MUNICIPAL YEAR 2012-13

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which requested Members to agree nominations to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the Municipal Year 2012/13.

RESOLVED: That

1. the nominations for Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel for 2012/13 be as follows: Councillors Gerrard, Morley, J. Stockton, J Bradshaw and Woofall; and
2. the key issues discussed by the Panel during the Municipal Year 2011/12 be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.22 p.m.