

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 6 January 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Suggested Improvements to Victoria Road, Widnes

WARDS: Riverside

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform the Board of the result of the study carried out by URBED consultants into the options for the regeneration of the Victoria Road area.
- 1.2 The attached report details the ideas that have been reviewed, discussed and researched to provide recommendations for future action.
- 1.3 Consultants from URBED will attend the meeting and present their report.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: The Board is invited to comment on URBED's report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A number of meetings with URBED and partners have taken place between March and June 2009 along with a series of consultations with local businesses to discuss the ideas which hopefully will lead to the improvement of the Victoria Road area of Widnes.
- 3.2 The report attached includes three regeneration scenarios for the area:
 - Scenario 1 – Modest Capital Budget: This scenario shows the scope for intervention in the absence of major investment. This includes improved parking provision and access but does not solve the issue of the Queens Hall or make improvements to the public realm.
 - Scenario 2 - Maximise Capital Receipt: This scenario describes how significant capital could be generated and re-invested in improvements. This includes the sale of land in Moor lane to accommodate a new retail unit and the re-development of the Queens Hall site.
 - Scenario 3 – Transformational Regeneration: This scenario shows how the area could be transformed via the formation of a “Knowledge Quarter”. This would give the area a clear enterprise role that would take advantage of its close links to surrounding educational, civic and cultural assets. This scenario would include

the re-configuration of the roundabout at the Moor Lane/Kingsway junction to provide land that could be re-developed to create a new Enterprise Forum. Also, the sale of land currently owned by the council for residential development and the sale of the Queens Hall site to a hotel or leisure operator would bring in funding to make substantial improvements to the area.

3.3 The report attached provides details of these scenarios.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Information contained within the report attached should inform future policy within this area.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Improvements to this area would facilitate improved access to learning and employment opportunities.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

A new Enterprise Forum within Halton would help future generations to have the right skills to take advantage of future employment opportunities.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Creation of learning and employment opportunities would help to support a healthier community.

6.3 A Safer Halton

Public realm improvements would make this area easier and safer to access.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Improvements to this area would contribute to Urban Renewal priorities by developing the area as an exciting place and space to develop business growth.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Victoria Road, Widnes Regeneration and Delivery Strategy (August 2009)		Ian Goodall