

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 15 September 2010 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), Morley (Vice-Chairman), Balmer, P. Blackmore, E. Cargill, J. Gerrard, Hodgkinson, Nolan, Thompson and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, J. Hatton, A. Moyers, P. Oldfield, S. Saunders, A. Villiers and M. Carter

Also in attendance: Councillors McInerney and Stockton

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EUR15 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16th June 2010 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

EUR16 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

EUR17 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 and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

EUR18 1ST QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive

which detailed the first quarter performance 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
- Community Services (Parks and Countryside)
- Prevention and Commissioning (Housing Strategy).

It was noted that for Community Services (Parks and Countryside) there were no key objectives/milestones, performance indicators or no other objectives and performance indicators reported by exception (being flagged as either red or amber) to be reported for quarter 1. A full report detailing progress against all key and other objectives/ milestones and performance indicators would be reported for quarter two.

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

EUR19 HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which provided members with a copy of the draft Household Waste Collection Policy for comment and endorsement. The Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board work programme of Topics for examination included various aspects of waste management. It had been previously agreed by the Board that the Waste Management Working Party would produce a document that set out the Council's policies and service standards relating to household waste collection. Following the work carried out by the Working Party, a draft Household Waste Collection Policy had been produced.

The policies within the draft Household Waste Collection Policy document had been developed taking into account the pressures the Council faced both in terms of meeting landfill diversion targets and the increasing costs of waste treatment and disposal. It had drawn upon best practice and common approaches adopted by local authorities across the country. The draft Policy set out both existing and new policies and Members' attention was drawn in particular to the policies on charging and collecting side waste.

It was reported that financial pressures and the increasing costs of dealing with waste necessitated a review of the Council's policies on charging for services where legislation allowed. This had resulted in revised policies on charging for the collection of bulky household waste and a new policy regarding the provision of wheeled bins.

It was therefore proposed that from April 2011, the charge for removing bulky household waste be increased to £15 and that the number of items collected be reduced to five. The new proposed payment structure reflected the increasing costs of collecting and disposing of bulky household items. The new lower limit on items per collection had been established to encourage the re-use/recycling of items.

It was noted that the draft Policy also included a charge for new and replacement wheeled bins. At present the provision of new and replacement wheeled bins was free of charge and there was no limit on the number of replacement wheeled bins that a householder could request. It was proposed that a charge for the provision and delivery of new and replacement wheeled bins be introduced on a phased basis as follows:-

- From April 2011 residents could be required to make a contribution of £12.50 towards the costs of new and replacement bins;
- From April 2012 residents would be required to pay £25 to meet the full cost of receiving a new or replacement wheeled bin; and
- Recycling, replacement blue or green bins would continue to be provided free of charge.

Members noted that it was the current policy of the Council not to collect side waste placed alongside wheeled bins for collection. This policy was approved by the Executive Board in April 2005 (Minute EXB 53 refers). However, to date, this policy had not been applied. It was now recommended that the Council applied its policy with regard to not collecting side waste other than in exceptional circumstances, such as during the Christmas holiday period or other unavoidable disruptions in service. The "no side waste" policy would encourage residents to accept responsibility for their waste, minimising their waste and encourage recycling.

It was recognised that the policy document sought to

ensure that the Council provided high quality, cost effective services that were applied fairly and consistently to all households. In addition to setting out clear and robust waste collection policies the document also set out pledges to residents on the level of services that they could expect to receive from the Council.

The Waste Working Party, Councillors Thompson (Chair), Osborne, Stockton, Redhead and Shepherd were thanked for their contributions to the development of the Policy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) authority be delegated to the Divisional Manager Waste and Environmental Improvement, in consultation with the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, to agree the nominations to the Waste Working Party and to explore options for discretion within the Household Waste Collection Policy; and
- (2) The revised Household Waste Collection Policy be brought back to the Board for consideration.

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

EUR20 MERSEY GATEWAY ENVIRONMENT TRUST

At a previous meeting (Minute No. URB 36/2009) the Board received a report on a number of biodiversity issues, including the establishment of the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust, as part of the mitigation scheme for the Mersey Gateway. The Board resolved that a letter be sent to the Strategic Director, Environment on behalf of the Board requesting further information and the justification for the establishment of a charitable trust in relation to the Mersey Gateway Nature Reserve. The letter was subsequently written and responded to.

Members considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which provided an update on progress in the establishment of the Trust and the reasons for its establishment. Arising from the discussion the following information was requested:

- information on the Mersey Gateway Environment Trust accountability, including details on the position if a Halton Councillor representative resigned, be forwarded to Councillor Wainwright; and

- information on the role of the Mersey Gateway Environment Trust and copies of any agreement be forwarded to Councillor Thomson.

The Board also proposed that the Mersey Gateway Environment Trust be included on the Council's outside body list and requested the Mersey Gateway Executive Board to consider increasing the Councillor membership on the Trust to three.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the progress on establishing the Merseyside Gateway Environmental Trust be noted;

(2) a presentation be made to a future Board meeting on the role of the Mersey Gateway Environment Trust; and

(3) the Mersey Gateway Environment Trust be included on the Council's outside body list and the Mersey Gateway Executive Board be requested to consider increasing the Councillor membership on the Trust to three.

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

EUR21 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2011-2026

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which gave Members an update on the progress of the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011 – 2026 and presented the emerging vision, key objectives and long term priorities that the plan sought to deliver upon.

Arising from the discussion it was proposed that reference to Runcorn Docks should be included as part of the strategy document.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the five overarching priorities for the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 – 2026 and comments made be noted;

(2) the suggested vision, strategic objectives and challenges contained in Section 6.0 and their alignment with their knowledge of local needs be noted; and

(3) consideration be given to the inclusion of Runcorn Docks within the strategy.

Strategic Director
Resources

EUR22 HALTON CEMETERIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which outlined revisions to the Council's policy on memorial safety testing in the light of new guidance issued by The Ministry of Justice. In addition, the report also assessed a partnership approach with Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council for the use of Widnes crematorium by Knowsley residents.

Members were also updated on the progress in developing new cemetery space in Halton. For Runcorn the existing cemetery was to be extended onto vacant land, in the Council's ownership, adjacent to the existing cemetery. A feasibility study, ground investigation, topographical survey and cost planning had been undertaken. The project was now moving into the design and planning approval stage. Budgetary approval (£330,000) had been made to undertake this work that would provide a further 10 years of burial space.

Within Widnes, provision of further burial space was more complex as the Council did not own adjoining vacant land that could be used for this purpose. A feasibility study had been carried out on the extension option. The extension to Widnes Cemetery would offer a further 12 years of burial space. The cost estimate in the Executive report of March 2009 indicated a cost of £2.1m. A joint officer working group had concluded that this offered poor value for money.

At the same, other potential sites in Widnes that could host a new cemetery and provide 60 years of burial space had been investigated. Although no conclusion had yet been reached, it was hoped to present to Members a detailed assessment of the options available shortly.

In the meantime, it was proposed that as burial space was in decline it was recommended that to provide continuity of burial space, the pre-purchasing of graves be temporarily suspended pending the establishment of new cemetery space in both Runcorn and Widnes.

It was further noted that in order to offer a new funeral service Bereavement Services were seeking to liaise with local funeral directors with the aim of offering a low cost, but dignified funeral service to local residents. This would enable families to have a simple, no frills, funeral package for an all inclusive price (to be negotiated).

RESOLVED: That

(1) the following be endorsed:

- revised draft memorial safety policy;
- principle of a partnership agreement with Knowsley for the provision of cremation services;
- policy allowing the pre purchase of graves;
- proposed fixed price funeral option to Halton residents.

(2) the progress on the establishment of new cemetery space be noted.

EUR23 3MG SKILLS AND RECRUITMENT PROJECT -

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which provided an update on the 3MG skills and recruitment project which involved the Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) handling the recruitment for the new Tesco chilled distribution centre and the Norbert Dentressangle recycling unit associated with it. The report outlined the final statistics of the recruitment process, feedback from Tesco and Dentressangle and lessons learned by HEP.

It was noted that HEP and its activities were funded through Working Neighbourhood's funding (WNF) which was due to cease on the 31st March 2011. All existing WNF projects were to be reviewed during August/ September 2010 and decisions made about which projects warranted further investment. The long term benefits brought by the Tesco/Norbert's recruitment included an improved local economy and it was suggested that the complete employment offer should continue to be something Halton offered its future investors.

Arising from the discussion members proposed that consideration be given for future Section 106 agreements to be used to assist the funding of HEP.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report be received; and

(2) consideration be given as to how similar projects could take place in the future in light of the withdrawal of Working Neighbourhoods Funding.