

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 25 November 2015 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), Fry (Vice-Chairman), P. Hignett, V. Hill, C. Loftus, MacManus, Morley, Sinnott, G. Stockton and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, S. Rimmer, A. Scott, A. Cross, N. Goodwin and J. Unsworth

Also in attendance: One member of the public

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EUR23 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 September 2015, having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.

EUR24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that two public questions had been received and would be submitted and addressed under Standing Order 34 (9).

- 1) What are Halton Borough Council's road safety policy and priorities for financial year 2015/16?
- 2) What are Halton Borough Council's road safety priorities for the Daresbury Ward for the financial year 2015/16?

A written response was provided (appended to these minutes).

EUR25 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of

the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

EUR26 PETITION REQUESTING PEDESTRIAN CROSSING FACILITIES AT BARNFIELD AVENUE, RUNCORN

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which advised that a petition had been received which comprised of 25 individual letters from Year 5 pupils at Murdishaw West Community Primary School, Runcorn, requesting the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities on Barnfield Avenue, and to make recommendations about future provisions of such facilities.

It was noted that there were two paths to the east of the school/Barnfield Avenue, that gave access to the school and were well used at school times; in addition, there was one pathway immediately adjacent to the school entrance and one next to the traffic signals at the Busway crossing.

It was reported that surveys had been carried out to record both the volumes of traffic and the numbers of pedestrians crossing at the three locations shown on the drawing at Appendix A. It was noted that the busiest of these was the most southerly at the Busway/Barnfield Avenue junction, which was a traffic signal controlled junction. It was noted that as the crossing from this footway only added a short extra walking distance for many crossing students, there was further justification for the possible introduction of a pedestrian controlled crossing into the traffic signals at the Busway junction, when the junction was next refurbished.

RESOLVED: That the petitioners be informed that the pedestrian/traffic surveys have been carried out and that consideration will now be given to

- a) introducing controlled pedestrian crossing facilities into the existing traffic signals at the junction of Busway with Barnfield Avenue; and
- b) to reviewing existing signing and road markings, renewing these as necessary, with both proposals being subject to funding availability.

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

EUR27 ANNUAL UPDATE ON ARMED FORCES COVENANT AND ARMED FORCES AND VETERAN SUPPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which provided an update on the Armed Forces Covenant and the Armed Forces and Veteran support.

The Board was advised that the Royal British Legion had commissioned a significant piece of research in 2014, to identify the size, profile and needs of the ex-service community, to provide forecasts on the future profile. The key findings were summarised in the report. It was estimated that the total of the armed forces community living in the UK in 2014 was between 6.5 and 6.7 million, with 46% now aged 75+. It was reported that this age group faced similar problems to those in the UK population as a whole, of isolation, physical health problems and difficulties with mobility and care.

Of those veteran's in the younger cohort of 16-34, (some 6% of the ex-service community), it was noted that they were more likely to have a caring responsibility than the UK general population of the same age. Finance and employment were significant problems for this group with one in twenty having taken out a pay day loan and over half of those of working age unable to make use of their skills or experience in their current job.

Halton was part of a pan Cheshire Covenant; a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community and its local armed forces community. The Covenant, set out 20 pledges, around five key themes; the Board received an update on each of the following:-

- Housing;
- Employment and Benefits;
- Education;
- Health; and
- Wellbeing.

The Board noted that the Cheshire Community Covenant Partnership, which consisted of the Armed Forces Champions from Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Halton, representatives from Health, Job Centre Plus/DWP, 75th Engineers and 42nd Regiments.

In addition, the Board was advised that the Armed

Forces Covenant Fund was a national grants scheme that had been in place since 2012. In 2015, it was reported that the arrangements had been reviewed and revised, with new guidance issued in August 2015. Details and guidance on applications for such grants were given in the report, but there were three key priorities for the fund:-

- Community integration;
- The co-ordination and delivery of support to the Armed Forces Community; and
- Former service personnel in the criminal justice system.

Members were also updated on wider Halton activity since the last report. World War 1 commemorations commenced on 4 August 2014, with Town Centre events in Runcorn and Widnes taking place, the Lights Out initiative promoted, the gathering of history and WW1 experiences in a project by the Library Service, a tea dance and a joint project with the Imperial War Museum North. On 8 May 2015, to mark VE Day, Halton's Mayor lit a Beacon in the evening with local veteran support organisations and residents in attendance.

Members noted details of future plans which included Corporate Covenants to complement the Armed Forces Covenant, the involvement of Reservists in the Covenant arrangements and the outcomes of Mystery Shopping exercises.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR28 GARDEN WASTE COLLECTIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which provided an update on the Council's garden waste collection service.

Members were reminded of the introduction of a charge for the collection of garden waste which was introduced as part of the 2015/16 budget setting process. This report provided Members with an update on the scheme since the introduction of this charge on 1 June 2015.

Service take-up was reported to be 36% of eligible households (15,215 households), with the cost of the service set at £30 per bin per year (£25 if paid for online). It was noted that income received from subscriptions was sufficient to cover the operation, management and administrative

costs associated with the service, which meant that the objective of making the service self-financing had been achieved. The report set out details on the payment rates, incidents of fly tipping, the administration of the scheme and an analysis of kerbside collections and of garden waste deposited at the Council's Household Waste Recycling Centres.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to Officers that had introduced and managed the implementation of the scheme and to those Members of the Waste Topic Group for their contribution.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR29 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME - UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on the proposed updates to the Local Development Scheme (LDS).

The LDS was the timetable for the production of Halton's Local Plan which set out how the Borough would develop over the next 15-20 years. The LDS identified the Planning Policy documents to be prepared with targets dates for their production.

A provisional Halton Local Development Scheme 2015 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. It was noted that the LDS was an essential tool in policy production as it allowed future participation to be scheduled in advance by stakeholders, industry and the public. Regular updates on the milestones in the LDS were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the provisional Local Development Scheme, appended to the report at Appendix 1, and the Local Plan document highlighted in the LDS, be noted.

EUR30 BUSINESS PLANNING 2016-17

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on the Business Plan for 2016/17.

The Council developed its business plan in parallel with the determination of its annual budget and the review and refresh of the Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers.

It was noted that Members now had the opportunity to

contribute to the process of plan development. Members were informed that plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March 2016, and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2016.

The following areas were discussed:

- Waste Management and Open Spaces;
- Economic Regeneration;
- Highways, Transportation and Traffic; and
- Physical Environment – Statutory Plans

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members' comments be taken into account when developing the Business Plan; and
- 2) the draft plan be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

EUR31 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION AND CASUALTY REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which gave details of road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2014, and recommended a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

The Board was advised that Appendix A to the report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2014, and compared these figures with those from previous years. These results were disappointing, with an increase in the numbers of people slightly injured and of those killed/seriously (KSI) injured, compared to those figures for previous years. Within the KSI total, both the number of adults and of children increased, but it was noted that the latter figure was known to be volatile in Halton and could fluctuate from year to year.

A summary for 2014 was set out in the report. Halton's 2014 casualty figures reinforced the view that achieving further reductions would prove to be extremely challenging. Members noted that this should be considered in the context of a reduction in Government grants for road safety, and an anticipated continued reduction following the next Government Spending Review, together with the absence of national road casualty reduction targets.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted and welcomed; and
- 2) the continuing programme of road traffic collision and reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chair made an announcement regarding the recent appointment of Mick Noone as the Lead Officer for Roads for Transport for the North. This appointment was essentially required to ensure that the whole of the North of England's strategic road network was developed to meet the strategic, economic and environmental needs of the North, working in conjunction primarily with the Department for Transport and Highways England.

The Chair congratulated Mr Noone on his appointment.

Meeting ended at 7.34 p.m.

Answers to Public Questions

1. What are Halton Borough Council's road safety policy and priorities for FY2015-2016?

Since 2011 Halton has been a member of the Halton & Warrington Road Safety Group (HWRSG) which brings together the activities of partners to ensure coordinated and effective delivery of road safety improvements across Halton & Warrington. The ultimate aim is to reduce the numbers killed or injured on the roads and the group is made up of representatives from Local Authorities of Warrington & Halton, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and Cheshire Constabulary responsible for identifying priorities and agreeing delivery plans. The HWRSG sits below the Cheshire Road Safety Group (CRSG) which operates safety cameras throughout Cheshire.

The main road safety delivery strands are Education, Enforcement & Engineering aiming to:

- Increase awareness of contributing factors that cause road traffic collisions and increase the severity of injury, examples: speeding, impairment (alcohol/drugs), distractions (mobile phones), not wearing of seatbelts, not using the correct child restraint systems.
- Ensure that the road network is maintained in a good condition, in order to reduce and prevent road traffic collisions and improve road safety. Identify collision hotspot locations and investigate potential engineering solutions to reduce the risk.
- Carry out targeted enforcement campaigns based on sound intelligence.
- Utilise safety/speed cameras to reduce speed in identified high risk locations.
- Respond to local concerns about road safety related ASB/crime. This could include deployment of Speed Indicator Devices (SIDs) and community speed watch campaigns.
- Develop intelligence led road safety activities targeted at high risk groups.
- Create added value through collaborative initiatives and improve partnership working.

'Education' includes road safety education, training and publicity work. Most of the pure education work takes place in schools and colleges and a wide range of different messages are delivered, depending on the target audience, ranging from traditional safe crossing tuition for young children to drink and drug abuse messages aimed at new drivers. Budget cuts over recent years have resulted in a marked reduction in the scale of this delivery but bicycle training is still provided through the national Bikeability scheme, delivered by external contractors and funded via a government grant allocation.

Publicity work ranges from advertising campaigns broadcast via local radio to emphasise national campaigns against drink driving through to day time information stands at supermarkets and other venues, again informing the public about topical issues such as safe driving whilst taking prescribed medicines. Such events are frequently run in conjunction with partner organisations.

'Enforcement' is the responsibility of Cheshire Police who daily operate fixed and mobile safety cameras for speed limit enforcement at numerous sites throughout the Borough and more widely, Cheshire. The locations chosen are those with established

patterns of drivers exceeding the speed limit or hosting a history of speed-related accidents.

'Engineering' focusses on providing physical improvements to the highway network to reduce the incidence of incidents and lessen the severity or consequences should they happen.

- Early each year, accident data for the previous year is received from Police.
- Using computerised mapping system, data is added to that from the previous four years.
- Locations with clusters of accidents are shortlisted, prioritised by accident numbers
- At meetings with local Police traffic officers, the detail of incidents at cluster sites is examined for common causes and affordable solutions with emphasis on the local reporting officer's description of events.
- Outcome is a prioritised list of sites which is taken forward to design and consultation.

Reporting

This Council does not have an overarching road safety policy as such, but each year, a full report on Halton's Road Safety Work and Casualty Position is submitted to the Council's Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board. This year's report will be on the agenda of the 25th November meeting of this Board.

Priorities

The Council's priority is to seek the maximum possible reduction in road traffic accident casualties, but this can only be achieved by analysing road user and accident location data. In seeking the best way to reduce overall incident numbers through engineering work, consideration of host ward location is not a factor, rather tailored engineering remedial measures will be implemented wherever they can have the maximum effect.

The situation with road safety education, training and publicity is somewhat different as ward casualty data is analysed and specific work is delivered based on emerging patterns. Whilst greater priority is given to those wards with the highest child casualty rates, the focus will be different from ward to ward. For example, Kingsway and Riverside wards have comparatively high rates of pedestrian accidents whilst in Daresbury the overall casualty rates are lower with most injuries being sustained whilst travelling by private car.