

## **APPENDIX 1**

### **Extract of Executive Board, Executive Board Sub Committee and Executive (Transmodal Implementation) Sub Board Minutes Relevant to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board**

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2007**

##### **6. FUTURE OF HALTON LEA POST OFFICE**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the consultation exercise being undertaken by the Post Office on the future arrangements for the provision of Post Office Services in Halton Lea Shopping Centre. The proposal was to transfer the existing Post Office Services from the existing location at 88 Forest Walk to the branch of WH Smith within Halton Lea. Attached as Appendix 1 to the report was a copy of a letter received from the National Consultation Manager from Post Office Limited which provided more details of the proposals.

The Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) had invited representatives from the Post Office to its next meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007 to provide more details on the proposed changes. Unfortunately, this would be after the date set by the Post Office for the receipt of comments: the deadline was 14<sup>th</sup> June 2007.

RESOLVED: That the Council:

(1) submits an interim objection to the new arrangements until the meeting of the Urban Renewal PPB takes place;

(2) requests to see the proposed layout of the new facilities; and

(3) authorises the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services, to make further comments after the meeting of the Urban Renewal PPB.

##### **10. APPOINTMENT OF CONSULTING ENGINEER FOR DESIGN OF HIGHWAY INFRASTRUCTURE PROJECTS**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment seeking approval for the waiver of Procurement Standing Orders for the award of highway infrastructure design work to appoint consulting engineers by the single tender

contract procedure.

It was noted that design work for the new highway access to the Mersey Multi Modal Gateway (3MG) freight park had now progressed to the detailed design stage. In order to meet the tight timescales required for delivery of this project, and to keep to the programmed network railway possessions currently planned for the construction of the replacement Hale Road Bridge, it was necessary to proceed with detailed design work without delay. The implications of missing the critical railway possession date was that additional costs would be incurred in arranging for an additional possession, and the provision of highway access to the site would be delayed.

Atkins Highways and Transportation had been involved in the 3MG since its inception, producing a number of reports and outputs relating to the project, which were outlined for the Board's consideration. This company was therefore considered to offer the most efficient and cost-effective means of delivering the next stage of design work.

The Board was advised that undertaking a competitive tendering process would delay the start of the detailed design and the use of Atkins had an added advantage for the management of the project in that its Rail Infrastructure Division was lead consultant for Network Rail in the replacement of the Hale Road bridge. It was therefore considered that the appointment of Atkins for this work would provide the Council with a clear financial and commercial benefit in bringing the 3MG site to the market on-programme.

Value for money, transparency, proprietary and accountability issues would be managed through a number of measures, which were outlined in the report for the Board's consideration. In addition, it was confirmed that the fees levied by Atkins could be assessed against existing contracts for comparability.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.6 be waived; and
- (2) Atkins Highways and Transportation be invited to submit a price under the single tender contract procedure in accordance with Procurement Standing Order 1.5.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2007-08-20**

### **16. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY CONSULTATION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community seeking approval to change the Council's Housing Allocations Policy with regard to accommodation offers made to homeless households and responsibility for undertaking first stage reviews of homelessness decisions.

It was noted that, further to the resolution of the Board on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007, stakeholders had been consulted about the proposed changes to the Council's Housing Allocations Policy and the responses were outlined for consideration. In particular, Members noted the concerns regarding the proposal to adopt a "one offer within the Borough" approach to homeless households and the subsequent proposal to revise this to read "one offer in either Runcorn or Widnes as preferred by the applicant".

The Board was advised that the Policy needed to be tailored to reflect the local supply and demand situation rather than simply follow recommended practice. However, in view of the vulnerability of the clients involved, Members requested that this be reviewed by the appropriate Policy and Performance Board and a further report be submitted to the Executive Board in 12 months' time.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the following revised wording to the Housing Allocations Policy be agreed – "Where the Council has a duty to secure accommodation for a homeless applicant, it will discharge that duty by making one offer only of suitable accommodation (under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996), in either Runcorn or Widnes as preferred by the applicant. Whilst regard will be paid to the applicant's preferred areas of choice within either Runcorn or Widnes, it may not be possible to meet such preferences given the shortage of accommodation.";
- (2) future s202 homelessness reviews be undertaken by the Council's Service Development Manager (Homelessness) or other nominated officer; and
- (3) a report be submitted to the Executive Board in twelve months' time providing an update on how the revised

Policy is working in practice.

## **17. HALTON HOUSING TRUST PROGRESS REPORT**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community providing a further update on Halton Housing Trust's progress since the Executive Board's meeting of 16<sup>th</sup> November 2006.

Mr. Nick Atkins, Chief Executive of Halton Housing Trust, attended the meeting to present his report setting out progress to date in delivering some of the key pledges prior to stock transfer and progress in meeting the Housing Corporation's regulatory framework. In particular, the following issues were discussed and noted:

- Difficulties had been experienced with one of the partners involved in delivering the investment programme; however, a plan was now in place to resolve this and so it was intended that the programme be accelerated, whilst maintaining standards, in order that it could be completed before schedule. A possible barrier to this was the legal governance arrangements that had previously been signed up to. However, following discussions with the newly appointed Regulation Account Manager, it appeared favourable that these covenants could be amended.
- An interim plan had been set in place for customers suffering problems with fencing and security. Each case was risk assessed and looked at individually considering issues such as the vulnerability of the resident and the contribution to wider crime.
- The consultation timeframe of 18 months in respect of the Environmental Improvement Programme had been set on the advice of Groundwork Mersey Valley who was undertaking the work. However, this would be completed in four tranches and, as each tranche came to an end, the Trust would be looking to start work in that area.
- Regarding the wider issue of climate change, the Trust had secured an alternative site to relocate its construction services team where there was sufficient space to recycle a higher proportion of materials. The Trust was also looking to procure materials from sustainable sources and was addressing in-house issues regarding recycling. Suppliers

were being encouraged to look at alternative sources of fuel as part of any re-build programme and better use was being made of existing resources such as IT.

- It had been recognised that some aspects of Management Moves were overly complicated and this had now been resolved. It was anticipated that Choice Based Lettings would make the allocation process more transparent for applicants and the general public. In addition, a Business Analyst had been appointed for a two year period to strip out inefficiencies in the organisation: this was already proving to be successful.
- Customer Liaison Officers were available to assist people in completing application forms. A customer panel had been established, which provided valuable feedback, and a number of customers had come forward to stand for election for Halton Housing Community Voices. As there were more applicants than seats, some would inevitably be disappointed. However, those who were would be contacted to see how area based work could be done on a more customer friendly basis.
- Since the transfer, the maintenance service had been enhanced to improve the green spaces. There had also been a number of specific initiatives where there were “hotspots”, for example intensive estate management and “clean up” days where everyone in the organisation went out with residents and Halton Borough Council services to clean specific areas.
- The help of Halton Borough Council, particularly the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director – Health and Community, was commended by Mr Atkin as being vital in the early stages of the Trust’s development. The Trust was now keen to play its part alongside the Council to help deliver the requirements identified in the Housing Needs Survey.

The Chairman thanked Mr Atkins for attending the meeting.

RESOLVED: That the progress set out in the report be noted.

## **19. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community outlining the financial outturn for the 2006/07 Housing Capital Programme and seeking approval for an amended 2007/08 programme. It was advised that the programme previously agreed by the Executive Board on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2007 had been amended in light of the actual outturn for 2006/07. The only new scheme was the provision of an additional £28,000 to fund further necessary repair works at Belvedere supported housing scheme in Runcorn, for which the Council was still responsible.

RESOLVED: That the 2006/07 outturn be noted and the amended programme for 2007/08, as set out in the appendix, be recommended to Council for approval.

#### **24. 2007 DRAFT LOCAL TRANSPORT BILL**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment outlining the key changes proposed within the 2007 draft Local Transport Bill and advising on the intended response to the Department for Transport on the proposal.

It was noted that, in May 2007, the Department for Transport had published detailed plans to improve the quality of local bus services in a document entitled “Strengthening Local Transport Delivery: The Draft Local Transport Bill”. The proposals built on the extensive review that was carried out into bus services across the country detailed in “Putting Passengers First” (December 2006). The draft Bill was intended to empower local authorities to develop local solutions to the local transport challenges they faced, consistent with the devolutionary principles set out in the Local Government White Paper “Strong and Prosperous Communities”.

The key proposals for Halton fell into three areas:

- improving the quality of local bus services;
- reforming local transport governance; and
- taking forward local road pricing schemes.

The proposed changes, and related comments and issues, were outlined for the Board’s consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed changes facilitated by the draft Local Transport Bill be noted; and
- (2) the Operational Director – Highways, Transportation and Logistics, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, be authorised to submit comments to Government on the Draft Local Transport Bill, reflecting those contained within the report.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 7 JUNE 2007**

### **7. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT JOHNSON'S LANE, WIDNES**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval for the disposal of land at Johnsons Lane, Widnes to Widnes Regeneration Limited.

It was noted that a restrictive covenant would be included on the disposal of land preventing residential use. In addition, an update report would be brought back to the Sub Committee detailing the outcome of the District Valuer's findings on the value of the land.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a restrictive covenant be included on the disposal of land preventing residential use;
- (2) an update report be brought back detailing the outcome of the District Valuer's findings on the value of the land; and
- (3) approval be given to dispose of the land as identified on the plan to Widnes Regeneration Limited.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JULY 2007**

### **12. WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS TO ALLOW RESURFACING OF DITTON ROAD USING THE COLAS REPAVE PROCESS**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval for the waiver of Procurement Standing Order 3.1 to allow appointment of Colas Limited to undertake the resurfacing

of Ditton Road using their sustainable Repave process.

Ditton Road was a highly used section of the Borough's highway network, particularly with regard to HGVs. There was a 1.1km section of it which was considered to be in extremely poor condition and was a major source of public complaint. It was noted that there two main engineering problems with this length of highway. Firstly, there was a nine year old utility trench running the full length of the proposed section which was in poor condition and required reinstatement. Secondly there was a problem with localised poor vertical alignment due to the nature of the underlying galigu material. This was an industrial waste product which is thixotropic and was settling and moving non-uniformly.

The Repave process was currently unique to Colas Limited and so it was not possible to directly seek comparable alternative quotes. It was a tried and tested process which met Highways Agency Specification and had been successfully used on a wider range of projects for local authorities, Highways Agency trunk roads, motor racing circuits, airport runways and taxi ways. The cost of the work including traffic management would be in the order £70k as opposed to 120k for a traditional 50mm plane and relay contract delivered through the term maintenance contract.

RESOLVED: That Standing Orders 3.1 be waived and Colas Limited be engaged to undertake the resurfacing of Ditton Road using their Repave process.

#### **14. DISPOSAL OF LAND AT THOMAS STREET, RUNCORN**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval to dispose of a vacant site of land at Thomas Street, Runcorn. The site was located within a residential area and therefore it was anticipated that it would be sold for residential development. A statement from the Planning Officer would be included in the particulars.

There had been limited interest in the site for development, however it was now being brought forward because of recent incidences of fly tipping and therefore it was recommended that the site was offered for sale by auction. It was anticipated that a capital receipt would be received in excess of £50,000.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to dispose of the property by auction.