

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 29 NOVEMBER 2007

63. Housing Allocations Policy - Local Connection Criteria

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community outlining the intention of the Board of Halton Housing Trust (HHT) to amend its housing allocations policy so that points were no longer awarded to reflect a residency connection with the Borough, setting out the implications of this decision for the Council in terms of HHT's management of the Council's waiting list and allocations policy.

It was noted that, on transfer of the Council's housing stock in December 2005, HHT adopted a housing allocations scheme almost identical to the Council's policy. This resulted in minimal IT/Cost implications in terms of HHT managing the Council/HHT joint waiting list and managing nominations to other Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) post transfer. During the course of a series of Housing Corporation regulatory inspections, it was noted that HHT's policy included provision to award points to applicants that had lived in the Borough for any 5 year period. The Housing Corporation had deemed this criterion to be potentially discriminatory and had advised HHT to remove it from its policy by the end of this year.

HHT had written to the Council to advise of its intention to change the policy with effect from 1st January 2008. When this had happened, HHT would find it difficult to meet the Council's requirement for them to select applicants for nomination to RSLs in strict accordance with the Council's policy as HHT's Academy IT system was not capable of automatically short listing applicants for rehousing using two different allocations policies. However, the Executive Board noted that the problem could be overcome manually and considered that the criterion was an inclusive one, ensuring that the bulk of local housing provision went to local residents, or to those who needed to move to the area for support, employment or other pressing medical/social reasons.

RESOLVED: That the Council retain the local residency criterion within its own Housing Allocations Policy and Halton

Housing Trust be advised that the Council does not support the proposed change to Halton Housing Trust's Housing Allocations Policy.

66. Post Office Closures in Halton

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the recent announcement from the Post Office proposing the closure of three Post Offices in Halton at:

- Appleton Village, Appleton, Widnes;
- Hale Road, Halebank, Widnes (near St Michael's Road); and
- Stenhills, Picton Avenue, Runcorn.

Local Members were actively working with their local communities in raising strong objections to the proposals and were part of the process of developing a strong case for their retention: a detailed case was being prepared for submission to the Post Office by 17th December 2007 focusing on a number of key areas, which were outlined for consideration.

The Board agreed that it was vital that people had easy access to a Post Office, particularly those residents that were elderly or infirm, or who had young children

RESOLVED: that

- (1) the Council raises strong objections to the proposed closure of Post Offices in Halton;
- (2) the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, produce a detailed response to the Post Office and local MPs by the 17th December 2007 deadline for submissions; and
- (3) the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board be requested to investigate this matter.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 DECEMBER 2007

71. Growth Point Submission of Interest

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment providing detailed information of the recent submission of an Expression of Interest for Halton to be awarded Growth Point Status as part of a joint Merseyside Submission to

DCLG.

It was reported that the Housing Green Paper, July 2007 (previously reported to Members) included proposals to extend the Government's Growth Points and Eco-Towns programme to cover areas within the North of England. Local Authorities in the North West were subsequently invited to submit Expressions of Interest (EoI) to Government Office by 31st October. Due to the incredibly short timescale for submissions, authorisation was gained from the Leader (Cllr McDermott) and the Environment Portfolio Holder (Cllr. Polhill) for the submission of an initial EoI.

It was noted that Growth Points should be able to deliver in excess of 500 dwellings per annum at a rate representing at least a 20% increase on figures within Regional Spatial Strategy to 2016. Growth Points would have access to a share of a £300 million Community Infrastructure Fund.

Following informal advice from GONW it was quickly decided that it would be most appropriate for the Mersey Policy Unit (MPU) to co-ordinate a joint submission on behalf of the Merseyside Authorities. This joint submission was divided into two potential growth areas centred on Liverpool and Wirral Waterfronts, and Halton and St Helens.

It was reported that Government Office had advised that they expected the decision on which Authorities had been selected to work up their proposals in more detail should be issued within a matter of weeks.

Members discussed the following points:

- the number, type and affordability of dwellings
- assortment of other facilities;
- employment and residential led regeneration of the area; and
- access and egress to the development.

RESOLVED: That

1. Members ratify the actions taken regarding the submission of a Growth Point Expression of Interest; and
2. Members authorise officers to work with our partners on Merseyside and where appropriate private landowners to further work up proposals should Halton be selected by DCLG to progress to the next round.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29TH
NOVEMBER 2007**

**53. Highway Improvement Scheme A56/A558 Daresbury
Expressway Junction**

The Sub-Committee was advised that the rapid development of the eastern Runcorn area was continuing to generate significant traffic growth, resulting in congestion at the junction of the A558 Daresbury Expressway and A56 Chester Road. Halton's Local Transport Plan described a highway improvement scheme that was designed to increase junction capacity through the introduction of traffic signal control and widening the Expressway, to dual carriageway standard, between this junction and the Daresbury Science Park roundabout. These measures were designed to accommodate the increase in traffic growth due to committed developments identified in the Unitary Development Plan and in particular, to improve access to the Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre in support of continuing business interest. The estimated cost of the scheme was £3.478m which included contract supervision and administration.

It was noted that when permission for the Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre was granted, it was subject to a Section 106 agreement. In order to satisfy the terms of the 106 agreement, the following scheme had to be implemented:

replacement of the roundabout at A56/Daresbury Expressway junction with traffic signals; the dualling of the carriageway between the A56 and the new roundabout on the Daresbury Expressway; and traffic movement restrictions on Keckwick Lane at the junction with A56.

It was reported that funding for the scheme had been secured from the following sources:

Local Transport Plan	£650,000
ERDF Objective 2	£658,500
NWDA Section 106 Contributions (Daresbury Innovation Centre)	£185,000

English Partnerships (EP) contributions £250,000

Total £1,743,500

Therefore balance of funding needed to deliver the full scheme was £1,734,500. The ERDF contribution was dependent upon works being completed by June 2008 in order that final payment claims could be processed under ERDF regulations. This would allow a first phase of the scheme, the conversion of the junction to traffic signal control, to proceed.

Further funding from English Partnerships had been secured under a Section 106 planning agreement, tied into the future development of housing within the Sandymoor developments. The agreement contained a schedule of infrastructure and transport related works in the Sandymoor area together with estimated costs including the proposed highway improvements totalling £4.5m at 2005 prices. However, the payment of contributions was dependant upon housing plot completion being in line with an anticipated four to five year programme and it was noted that the initial contribution may not be available until 2008/09.

In order to meet the timetable for the construction of Phase 1 works, tenders had been invited on the basis of a phased approach, delaying the award of Phase 2 dualling scheme, until funding was confirmed in place. However, there were significant contractual, financial and operational advantages of awarding a contract for the full scheme.

It was therefore suggested that £1.735m be made available from the Council's Capital Programme in 2008/09 to enable implementation of the full scheme, until funding from the Section 106 agreement with English partnerships was available. The Council would be reimbursed from contributions paid under the Agreement.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Council be recommended to include the scheme in the Capital Programme at a total cost of £3.478m; and

(2) the funding for the scheme, and the fact that it will be undertaken within one contract be noted.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13TH
DECEMBER 2007**

**61. SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972
AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO
INFORMATION) ACT 1985**

The Committee considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Committee during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

62. Extension of the Mersey Gateway Project Director's Contract

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought authority to extend the Mersey Gateway Project Director's Contract for three years from 1st May 2008 to 30th April 2011 on the same general terms, (subject to inflation) as agreed in 2006. As the formal outcome of the public inquiry should be known in mid-2009, it was proposed that it would be prudent to have a formal review of the contract at that point should there be the

unlikely conclusion from the inquiry that the project should not proceed.

RESOLVED: That

(1) Steve Nicholson's contract as Mersey Gateway Project Director be extended to 30th April 2011 with a formal review when the outcome of the public inquiry is known; and

(2) the Chief Executive agree detailed terms and contractual arrangements for that contract extension.