

REPORT TO: Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 17 September 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Award of Growth Point Status

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Policy and Performance Board of developments concerning Growth Point Status.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

(1) recommends to the Executive Board the acceptance of the offer of Growth Point Status;and

(2) recommends to the Executive Board that officers work with our partners in the Mid-Mersey area and where appropriate private landowners to further work on the successful delivery of the Growth Point agenda, including submission of returns for Community Infrastructure Fund and Growth Fund.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton Borough together with St.Helens MBC and Warrington BC as the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area have been awarded Growth Point Status in the recent Government announcement of the 16th July 2008. The formal DCLG letter confirming this status and setting out the conditions that we need to fulfil is attached as Appendix A.

3.2 The timetable of actions leading to this award was as follows:

July 2007	Housing Green Paper included proposals to extend the Growth Points and Eco Towns programme to cover the north of England
Oct 2007	LA's were invited by GONW to submit Expressions of Interest (Eol) by 31 st October 2007.
31 st Oct 07	Expressions of Interest (Eol) submitted by Merseyside Policy Unit (MPU) on behalf of Halton and the other Merseyside authorities, divided into two areas centred on Liverpool and Wirral Waterfronts, and Halton and St.Helens. Warrington submitted a stand-alone Eol.
13 th Dec 07	Report presented to Executive Board re. submission of Expression of Interest.
Jan 08	Agreement reached to merge Halton/St.Helens and

	Warrington's proposals under the Mid-Mersey Housing Market Area banner.
Jan–Feb 08	Initial Liaison with key stakeholders undertaken and additional material supplied at request of DCLG.
6 th March 08	Report presented to Executive Board re. merger of 'bid' with Warrington and proposal for Halton to act as 'Lead Authority'.
16 th July 08	DCLG announce award of (second round) Growth Points

- 3.3 Following the award of Growth Point status the Council (with its partners) now need to undertake a number of actions.

Deadline	Action
	Constitute management arrangements for the delivery of the Growth Point ambitions.
15 th Sept 08	Submission of bids for Community Infrastructure Fund – Round 2 (CIF2) funding
27 th Oct 08	Submission of 'Programme of Development' including requests for funding from the Growth Fund.

- 3.4 As previously reported to Members, Halton's EoI was largely centred upon the Runcorn and Weston Docklands Regeneration Area (Halton UDP). The landowner Peel Holdings are intent on developing this site and have initiated partnership working with the Council to produce a Masterplan which will be incorporated into planning policy as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in a manner similar to the joint working with English Partnerships on the recently adopted Sandymoor SPD.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Delivery will be heavily dependant upon redevelopment of Runcorn Docks and this will have implications for the Core Strategy and the Local Development Framework (LDF). This will introduce significant population into an area currently sparsely populated and integration with Runcorn Old Town will be an important element to the wider success of this proposal.
- 4.2 Opportunities exist for integration and early delivery of aspects of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy and the Sustainable Transport Strategy.
- 4.3 The grant of Growth Point Status will influence housing policy in the current partial review of RSS, to which Halton's LDF will need to conform.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Growth Point status allows the Council and its partners to bid for additional funding from Central Government to support housing growth and improve sustainability.

- 5.2 In the short term, this will have an impact on staff resources available for delivery of the LDF timetable as previously set out in the Local Development Scheme.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Halton's contribution to the Mid-Mersey Growth Point is initially dependant upon redevelopment of the Runcorn Docks area. This will increase the population within a sparsely populated area generating demands for services and facilities for children and young people.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Will provide additional housing opportunities, contribute to improving the image of the Borough and support continued economic development. The proposed development should help improve accessibility to the Runcorn College Campus.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The proposed development will regenerate underused former industrial land and be expected to contribute towards healthy travel options and wider sustainability issues.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The proposed development will regenerate underused former industrial land and will be expected to adopt design principles as contained in the Designing for Community Safety SPD.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The proposed development will directly regenerate a significant area within a previously defined Regeneration Area and will increase the local population within the catchment of Runcorn Old Town centre and contribute towards further improving the image of the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The Growth Point proposal is primarily based upon the development of land within a single ownership in a previously allocated Regeneration Area.

- 7.2 Without this, delivery of the additional units required under the Growth Point status may not be achievable without release of greenfield sites elsewhere within the Borough that the Council has not previously allocated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues contained in the report.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
The Housing Green Paper (July 2007)	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Merseyside Expression of Interest (Halton & St.Helens)	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Mid-Mersey Letter to GONW 9 th January 2008	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Mid-Mersey Letter to GONW 14 th January 2008	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Mid-Mersey Letter to GONW 31st January 2008	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
GONW Letter confirming Award of Growth Point Status	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Community Infrastructure Fund Bidding Guidance	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross
Growth Fund Programme of Development Guidance	Rutland House	Alasdair Cross