

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 20 September 2023 at the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), Abbott, K. Loftus, L. Nolan, Ryan, Stockton and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Ball, Hutchinson and Skinner

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, T. Gibbs, J. Briggs and A. Plant

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EUR10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 June 2023 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.

EUR11 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

EUR12 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.

N.B. Councillor Ryan declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he had organised the petition to save the No 62 bus service.

EUR13 RECEIPT OF PETITION – POTENTIAL WITHDRAWAL OF 62 BUS SERVICE (MONDAY TO FRIDAY)

The Board considered a report of the Executive

Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided information on the petition received following the bus operator giving notice to withdraw the No. 62 bus service. A commercial decision was taken by the bus operator to withdraw the 62 Service due to it operating at a loss and therefore no longer commercially viable. The Council currently provided a level of public funding subsidy towards the operating costs under a “de minimis” arrangement.

A tender exercise to identify the cost to maintain the service had been carried out, however, the level of subsidy required by potential new operators was unsustainable by the Council given the budget position.

The Board was advised that since the publication of the agenda, the Council had carried out a further tender exercise with alternative bus operators to provide the service going forward. The Council recognised that the loss of the No.62 would leave Moore without a bus service as there were no close alternative bus routes. Following this exercise, Ashcroft Travel had been awarded a contract to provide the service. Ashcroft Travel would provide a similar timetable, starting on Monday 25 September.

It was noted that at a time of significant pressure on budgets, and the small amount of funding to support bus routes already being oversubscribed, it was fortunate that the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Travel Fund was able to provide the funding required to retain the No.62 service for the time being. It was hoped this would allow time for the route to re-establish itself on a commercial footing.

The Council would monitor usage of the service operated by Ashcroft Travel and would work with the operator to encourage increased passenger usage. It was vital that people used this service to ensure its viability.

RESOLVED: That in accordance with the Council Constitution, the petition be received by the Board.

EUR14 ENVIRONMENTAL FUND UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the expenditure of the Environmental Fund. Planning permission for the Runcorn Thermal Power Station (TPS) Plant was granted in September 2008. The Plant was subject to a legal agreement, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The legal agreement contained a provision that the owner of the Plant agreed to

pay the Council an annual lump sum payment for every tonne of fuel received and processed.

To date, the Fund had generated £5,924,470 and the projects that had benefitted from those funds were set out in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the wide range of projects that had benefitted from the fund as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

EUR15 HOUSING AND EMPLOYMENT LAND UPDATE 2022/23.

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration which provided a summary of the Annual Housing and Employment Land Monitoring Surveys undertaken by the Planning and Transport Department.

As set out in Halton's Local Plan, the report outlined a number of development targets for the provision of housing and the supply of land for employment including:

- 350 dwellings (net gain) per annum; and
- 180ha of land for employment purposes between 2014-2037.

In the year to April 2023, there had been 368 housing completions in Halton with 6 losses/demolitions with a net dwelling gain of 362 units. Of the 368 completions, 74% were in Runcorn and 26% were in Widnes.

Employment land monitoring for 2023 recorded the take up of 6.7ha of employment land, all of which had been in Widnes.

Members requested the number of affordable housing properties provided in the Borough in the past year and it was agreed that this information would be provided.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EUR16 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR QUARTER 1 OF 2023/24

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 1 of 2023/24.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2023/24 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services.

The reports detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

The Chair advised the Board that a Topic Group would be set up to consider the introduction of civil traffic enforcement for traffic violations. A report setting out further information would be brought to the next Board meeting.

Councillor Ryan advised that he had submitted a number of questions regarding the performance management reports and he had received written officer responses. It was agreed that the questions and responses would be circulated to the Board.

RESOLVED: That quarter 1 performance management reports be received and noted.

Meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.