

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 5 January 2011 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), E. Cargill, Findon, J. Gerrard, Nolan, Thompson and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Morley, Hodgkinson and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, A. Villiers, J. Unsworth, S. Rimmer and H. Coen

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

URB34 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24th November 2010 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

URB35 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

URB36 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.

Arising from the discussion an update be provided on Widnes Recreation Club to all members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

Action

URB37 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 2010/11

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive which detailed the 2nd quarter performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons and factors affecting the services for –

- Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business Development (Business Development and Regional Affairs)
- Highways, Transportation and Logistics
- Environment and Regulatory Services
- Prevention and commissioning (Housing Strategy).

RESOLVED: That the 2nd quarter performance management report be received.

URB38 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT 2010-11

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Halton.

The Board was advised that an updated SCS for Halton was currently at an advanced stage of preparation and would become 'live' from April 2011. In addition, the Coalition Government had set out its performance measurements in the Government departmental business plans, of which many of these performance measures were already included in the SCS.

The Board was further advised that in considering the report, Members needed to be aware that –

- All of the measures within the National Indicator Set (NIS) were monitored through quarterly monitoring reports. The purpose of the report was to consolidate information on all measures and targets relevant to the PPB in order to provide a clear picture of progress; and
- In some cases, outturn data could not be made available at the mid-year point. Additionally, all measures captured through the National Place

Survey, which was due to be undertaken this year, had been deleted from the NIS by central Government and therefore no further data would be made available in 2010/11. The future requirement for localised perception survey under the transparency agenda was presently subject to consideration.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

URB39 DRAFT BUSINESS PLAN 2011-14 FOR THE ENVIRONMENT & ECONOMY DIRECTORATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Resources which provided an update on Business Planning for the period 2011-14 and the Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for services for this period that fell within the remit of the Board.

The Board was advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. Draft Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets had been developed by each department and the information was included in the Appendices to the report. These objectives and measures would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring received by the Board during the future year.

The Board was further advised that due to the proposed structural changes across the Council and the need to better integrate the Directorate's priorities as last year a combined plan would be published rather than individual Departmental Service Plans. The plan was, however, subject to reconfiguration of services between Directorates and subject to consultation.

It was reported that comments could also be made to the relevant Operational Director by no later than 20th January 2011 to allow inclusion in the draft Business Plan.

In addition, the draft Directorate Business Plan would be revised in the light of the proposed reconfiguration of Directorates during January and would be presented to the Executive Board for approval on the 12th February 2011, at the same time as the draft budget. This would ensure that decisions on Business Planning were linked to resource allocation. All Directorate Plans would be considered at full Council at its 2nd March 2011 meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board was asked to identify any objectives and targets for the next three years that it wished to see included in the Business Plans; and
- (2) the Board Members pass any detailed comments that they may have on the information in the report to the relevant Operational Director by 20th January 2011.

URB40 HOUSEHOLD WASTE COLLECTION POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which outlined a revised draft Household Waste Collection Policy document for comment and endorsement.

At a previous meeting held on 15th September 2010 (Minute URB19 refers), the Board received a report on a draft Household Waste Collection Policy, which contained proposals to introduce a charge to all residents for the provision and delivery of a new or replacement residual waste wheeled bin.

Subsequently, the Board resolved that consideration be given to a discretionary element being built into the Policy to allow the charge for new and replacement wheeled bins to be waived in certain circumstances. Members approved that authority was delegated to the Divisional Manager Waste and Environmental Improvement, in consultation with the Chair and Vice Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, to agree nominations for a specific group of Members to explore options for applying discretion in respect of the proposed charges for wheeled bins.

It was reported that Councillors Wainwright and Thomson were nominated to explore options for applying discretion, along with Councillor Hignett, Councillor Morley and the Divisional Manager Waste and Environmental Improvement. After consideration, it was determined that a new paragraph should be inserted into the draft Policy that would allow the charge for new and replacement wheeled bins to be waived in certain circumstances. A revised draft Policy was attached to the report. Members' attention was drawn to the paragraph that had been inserted into Section 4 of the revised draft Policy as follows:-

In exceptional circumstances, where a charge would impose a significant hardship on a household, the Strategic Director, after consultation with the Chair of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board, will be authorised to waive the charge.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Members receive the report;
- (2) a report be presented to the Executive Board recommending the adoption of the draft Household Waste Collection Policy; and
- (3) the Boards appreciation of the work by refuse collection employees over the past few weeks to maintain an excellent level of service in the Borough be forwarded onto staff.

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

URB41 PETITION REQUESTING TRAFFIC CALMING IN CASTLE RISE, RUNCORN

The Board was advised that a petition signed by 99 people had been received via Pastor Frank Wilding of Brook Chapel, Boston Avenue, requesting traffic calming measures (speed bumps) be installed in Castle Rise, Runcorn. A copy of the petition and the covering letter were attached to the report.

It was noted that an examination of the Cheshire Police traffic accident records showed that during the period 2005 to 2009 inclusive, only one incident took place that involved personal injury. This occurred in 2009 when a child cycling on the wrong side of the road collided with a car turning into the road near the central playground area and received slight injuries. Since that time, waiting restrictions had been implemented adjacent to the playground gates, to improve the inter-visibility between highway users.

In addition, Members were advised that at a meeting of the Executive Board on 22nd June 2000, it was resolved that the Council would cease installing traffic calming in cul-de-sacs.

Therefore, given the Council's policy and the lack of any significant casualty history, it was recommended that the request be refused.

In addition, the covering letter also requested the erection of signs to indicate that Castle Rise was not a through route. Such signage was already in place, in accordance with Traffic Signs Regulations and General Directions 2002; therefore it was recommended that the lead petitioner be informed that the sign was already in place.

RESOLVED: That the petition be noted and the lead petitioner be informed that the request for traffic calming measures on Castle Rise be declined as this would be contrary to Council policy relating to such work.

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

URB42 CHESHIRE SAFER ROADS PARTNERSHIP (CSRP) AND SAFETY CAMERA ENFORCEMENT IN HALTON

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy on the impact of Government funding reductions on the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (CSRP) and how these would affect Halton. The CSRP was established in April 2007, comprising representatives from the five highway authorities, (Halton, Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Warrington and Highways Agency), Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and the Courts' Services. Its remit not only included the management and development of Cheshire's speed and red light cameras, but also the delivery of Cheshire wide strategic road safety, education, training and publicity initiatives.

Since 2007, the four highway authorities had received a Road Safety Grant (RSG) from the Government, with each putting the majority of it into a pooled CSRP budget to fund activities by the Partnership including camera enforcement. The remainder was retained in Halton's case to fund two temporary members of staff and for the delivery of road safety initiatives locally.

However, in June 2010, the Coalition Government cut the road safety capital grants completely (i.e. £75k) and reduced revenue funding by 27% (i.e. by £90k). These cuts meant an immediate curtailment of any capital works that had not been committed and revenue supported project work outside of the core revenue area (staff, accommodation and associated costs) in order to protect CSRP establishment.

It was noted that the RSG had always been due to finish on the 31st March 2011 but it was hoped that a dedicated replacement fund would be provided.

Unfortunately, this had not happened. If the CSRP was to be continued, the local authorities would have to provide funding from other services to pay for it. Due to the severity of cuts it had experienced and the subsequent review of Council services that was now underway, it was not considered prudent for this Council to commit limited funding to an external partnership without determining local priorities in the first instance.

Discussions were ongoing between officers and members of the CSRP Board as to whether the CSRP could continue and, if so, in what form. Members were advised that officers were conducting a full review of the costs and benefits of CSRP to Halton and camera enforcement in particular, with a view to informing Members how road safety in Halton could be taken forward. It was noted that significant reductions in road casualties were underway before the CSRP was formed and this trend had continued across the Borough.

Cheshire Police, as main beneficiaries of CSRP funding distribution, had indicated that safety cameras would be switched off in Halton on 1st January 2011 if this Council was unable to replace the lost RSG contributions. However, the Police should, in theory, still be required to carry out speed limit enforcement. Since the publication of the report Cheshire Police had advised the Council that the safety cameras may not now be switched off on 1st January 2011.

It was also noted that not subscribing financially to CSRP would bring a more local focus to RSETP activities and free our remaining staff to concentrate on purely Halton issues, with work that was guided by local accident/casualty analysis as was the case before the RSG supported CSRP was created. Through Road Safety Great Britain and regional contacts the Council would continue to remain abreast of any current issues and developing trends and continue to work with our neighbours on areas of common interest.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- (1) notes that because of the withdrawal of the dedicated Road Safety Grants by Government, which had been used to support the CSRP since its inception, and because of the severe cuts to funding for Council services, the Council cannot commit to making a financial contribution to CSRP beyond 31st March 2011;

Strategic Director
Environment and
Economy

- (2) notes that if the CSRP were to no longer exist in its current form, this could result in camera enforcement reducing or even ceasing altogether on Halton's roads from January 2011;
- (3) notes that discussions with partners, regarding the future of the CSRP and camera enforcement, are ongoing and that it may be necessary to bring a more detailed report on this matter to a future meeting of the Board; and
- (4) endorses the intention of officers to continue to deliver road safety education, training and publicity (RSETP) work locally, in conjunction with neighbouring authorities and the emergency services as resources permit.

Meeting ended at 7.15 p.m.