

## ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 21 November 2012 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Gerrard (Chairman), Morley (Vice-Chairman), J. Bradshaw, Fraser, P. Hignett, Macmanus, Parker, Sinnott, Thompson, Woolfall and Zygadllo

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, H. Coen, A. Cross, D. Cunliffe and D. Houghton

Also in attendance: Councillor J Lowe and Councillor J Stockton under Standing Order No 33.

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EUR23 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 <sup>th</sup> September 2012 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.	
EUR24 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Mersey Gateway Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.	
RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	
EUR25 SSP MINUTES	
The Board received the draft Minutes relating to the Environment and Urban Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership from 2 <sup>nd</sup> October 2012.	
RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	

## EUR26 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION AND CASUALTY REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which gave details of road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2011 and recommended a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

The Board was advised that the Appendix to the report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2011 and compared these figures with those from previous years. These results were exceptionally good. The report also gave details of casualty trends locally against national figures and highlighted concerns regarding the resources available to continue road safety work in the future.

In summary during 2011:

- there were 278 road traffic collisions involving personal injury in Halton, this being the lowest number in over 20 years. These incidents produced 422 casualties;
- 35 of the casualties were classed as serious and there were five deaths, giving a total of 40 killed or seriously injured (KSI) which was the lowest in over 20 years;
- the child serious injury (CKSI) total of 7 was one more than in 2010, but unlike 2010 when one child died on our roads, there were no child fatalities in 2011 and this number was in line with the trend for gradual on-going reductions year to year;
- the number of people of all ages being slightly (SLI) injured fell from 423 in 2010 to 382; and
- Halton's slight reduction in the local KSI total in 2011 bucks the national trend which saw the first annual increase (2%) in the number of people KSI in road accidents since 2003.

Members were advised that since April 2011, Halton had suffered the loss of annual Government funded capital and revenue Road Safety grants £75k and £396k respectively. This had resulted in a halving of the number of

Road Safety Officers in Halton and loss of funding for a wide range of projects and initiatives. The cuts had also meant Halton no longer provided any financial contribution to the local safety camera partnership. Whilst Halton's 2011 casualty figures were exceptionally good, the fear remained that these cuts would have an impact on our ability to continue achieving year on year reductions, despite the best efforts to maximise resources through running initiatives jointly with Warrington Borough Council and other partner organisations.

It was noted that the fixed safety camera sites within Halton continued to be operated by Cheshire Police. In addition the Cheshire Road Safety Group had agreed a review of all existing camera sites to establish which would be retained and which were no longer justified. Halton was actively engaged in this process but the future of many safety camera sites was in doubt and as most of them lacked the necessary recent accident history to warrant retention. It was agreed that Members would be kept informed of any potential sites where it was proposed that cameras would be removed.

RESOLVED: That

1. the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton be noted and welcomed;
2. the current programme of road safety collision reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed;
3. concerns with regard to the achievement of further casualty prevention, as a result of resource reductions, be noted; and
4. Members would be kept informed of any potential sites where it was proposed that cameras may be removed.

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#### EUR27 RESULTS OF THE NATIONAL HIGHWAY AND TRANSPORTATION SURVEY 2012

The Board considered a report and a presentation which outlined the results of the National Highway and Transportation Survey 2012 and in particular Halton's performance in relation to other local highway authorities and in comparison with the 2009 survey, when Halton last took part. A summary of the survey statistics over the period were detailed in the report.

In summary, Halton's key results and trends were as follows:-

- overall satisfaction with Halton's Highway and Transport services averaged 58.3%. The average Unitary Authority score was 53.8%;
- Halton was ranked 9<sup>th</sup> of 40 Unitary Authorities and 14<sup>th</sup> of all 75 participating authorities;
- although the overall level of satisfaction was down from 2009 and the Council dropped from 1<sup>st</sup> to 9<sup>th</sup>, Halton was still in the top 25% of Unitary Authority rankings;
- in line with all other authorities, the condition of roads in Halton was considered to be the most important aspect of the Highway and Transport service and also the aspect most in need of improvement;
- pavements and footpaths and Safety on Roads were next in importance to the public; and
- in general, levels of satisfaction had deteriorated in approximately 54% of the individual categories although in most these changes were small.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report of the National Highway and Transportation Survey results be noted; and
2. a further "Proposals" report be prepared and presented to the Board in March 2013.

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## EUR28 BUSINESS PLANNING 2013/16

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided the opportunity for Members to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

Members were advised that each Directorate of the Council was required to develop a medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2013-2016 was just beginning.

The Board was further advised that, at this stage,

Members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3-5) that they would like to see reflected within those plans. Strategic Directors would then develop draft plans which would be available for consideration by the Board early in the New Year.

The report further set out the timeframe for plan preparation, development and endorsement.

RESOLVED: That the Board identify priority areas for service development and improvement over the next three years.

EUR29 PETITION REGARDING SURFACE WATER DRAINAGE ISSUE, HEATH ROAD AND CORONATION ROAD, GRANGE

The Board was advised that a petition had been received signed by six residents of Coronation Road regarding surface water drainage problems from Heath Road through to an area near to 44 Coronation Road. The petition raised 7 separate issues relating to flooded land which had been investigated and, where appropriate, addressed. It was noted that the Council own the land in the area of concern, comprising three elements: part of a car park serving the Health Centre/Doctors Surgery at 78 Heath Road, Runcorn; and roadway known as Heath Road Crescent; and open space land at the rear of Heath Road/Langdale Road, which abutted properties in Coronation Road owned by the petitioners and Halton Housing Trust's Sheltered Housing. The land was administered and maintained by Property Services.

The Board was informed that the Property Services Department had carried out work to unblock an existing gully connection adjacent to the doctor's car park area and that the drainage of this area was now working satisfactorily.

It was noted that the summer months had been the wettest recorded since 1912 and that heavy rainfall combined with saturated ground may have resulted in flooding to the gardens which lie at a lower level than the surrounding land.

In addition to the saturated ground and problems of flooding raised by the residents, the petition itemised two other issues which had been addressed:

- firstly, the tree referred to in the petition was removed

by the Council's Open Spaces Department as it was diseased and rotten; and

- secondly, the gully between the car park serving the Halton Housing Trust's Sheltered Housing development had been cleaned and the connection checked to ensure that it was now in working order.

On behalf of local residents Councillor J Lowe addressed the Board to highlight the following:

- the flooding to those properties at Coronation Road had appeared to improve, however, the recent weather on 17<sup>th</sup> November had seen the problems return;
- one resident had lived at the property for over forty years and had not experienced flooding until recently, the flooding appeared to be linked to the removal of a kerb at the Doctors surgery car park; and
- a letter from Mr Groome was read out to the Board.

RESOLVED: That

1. the petition be noted;
2. the work that the Council's Property Services Department had undertaken to date and the further work that was required be noted;
3. the flooding issues highlighted by Coronation Road residents be monitored; and
4. the petitioners and local Ward Members be informed of the outcome of the Board's consideration of the petition.

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#### EUR30 LAND DRAINAGE ACT - WATERCOURSE REGULATION AND BYELAWS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which outlined the recent changes to the Council's regulatory powers under the Land Drainage Act, 1992 (as amended by the Flood and Water Management Act 2010). The report also sought endorsement to the proposal to consult on a set of local land drainage byelaws.

It was noted that partner members of the Cheshire and Mid-Mersey Flood Risk Management Group had considered the set of model Land Drainage Byelaws prepared by DEFRA and had agreed that they would be a

very useful tool across the partnership region for regulation of ordinary watercourses. The making of byelaws was not mandatory but it was seen as a key element at a tactical level to delivery flood risk management. Without byelaws, the application of the consenting and enforcing powers and duties would be very difficult.

RESOLVED: That

1. the changes to the Council's regulatory powers under the Land Drainage Act (1991) be noted;
2. the proposals set out in the report for the regulation of ordinary watercourses be noted; and
3. a report on the adoption of byelaws, be submitted to the Executive Board.

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#### EUR31 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COVENANT OF MAYORS AND CLIMATE LOCAL

The Board considered a report which outlined the benefits and implication of signing up to two climate change commitments:-

- i) the EU Covenant of Mayors, which committed the Council to preparing a Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) and taking action to reduce carbon emissions within the Borough; and
- ii) the Local Government Association's Climate Local which required commitments and actions in terms of both carbon reduction and adapting to future climate change within 6 months of signing.

The Covenant of Mayors was a charter of commitments signed by the local authority Mayor or other authorised representative. It was reported that to date a total of 33 UK local authorities were registered as signatories to the EU Covenant of Mayors.

In respect of the Local Government Association launched "Climate local" in June 2012, this required the signing of a commitment to address climate change but was wider in scope than the Covenant of Mayors in that it also addressed climate resilience and managing the future impacts of climate change such as extreme weather. To date two authorities had signed the commitment with 16 others signalling an intention to sign.

It was reported that signing up to both these initiatives would link closely to the Council's existing low carbon work through Carbon Management Plan, Low Carbon Plan, regeneration programme and was a key recommendation in the Liverpool City Region SEAP, launched in July 2012. It would also provide access to additional support on energy reduction from the Covenant of Mayor's Office and EU funding schemes.

RESOLVED: That the Board review the EU covenant of Mayors and LGA "Climate Local" pledges and recommend the signing of these to Executive Board.

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#### EUR32 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION SUSTAINABLE ENERGY ACTION PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided a briefing on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Sustainable Energy Action Plan (SEAP) and the substantial benefits that could be delivered for the City Region and its districts, including Halton. The report set out how, through the Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) Low Carbon Economy Committee, the SEAP would be implemented. The SEAP was officially launched in July 2012 and was a live document which would be updated on a periodic basis as and when required. The SEAP document set out a number of prioritised actions across the City Region to deliver a low carbon economy, with the potential to add value.

It was noted that the benefits of joining with other LCR projects over time included:

- procurement;
- sharing of skills and resources;
- joining in expansion of heat network infrastructure;
- delivery of heat to customers outside of a local authority boundary;
- project delivery vehicles;
- joint funding applications; and
- attracting new developments to an area because there was access to a modern, resilient energy infrastructure.

As a result of a consultants survey twelve projects across the sub-region had been identified with a total investment value conservatively valued at £200 - £500m. Two of these projects were within Halton, one at Runcorn Docks and the other at Daresbury Park.



Within Halton, it was reported there were a number of low carbon projects within the Borough, all at various stages of development. These included Project Viridis, Widnes Biomass-Fired Combined Heat and Power Plant, PDM Group (Granox), The Heath Business Park, Runcorn, Castlefields New Build Homes, Castlefields Retained Properties, Daresbury Park, Runcorn Docks, Brookvale Leisure Centre and Solar Panels. It was agreed that the Board receive a future report on the low carbon project at Castlefields.

RESOLVED: That the Board

1. review the Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan, which formed a programme and framework for the City Region to advance its sustainable energy activity;
2. recommend that the Executive Board endorse the SEAP document;
3. receive progress reports on the SEAP Programme at appropriate periods; and
4. the Board receive a future report on the low carbon project at Castlefields.

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#### EUR33 SITE ALLOCATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT LOCAL PLAN

The Board considered a report which provided an overview of the next key document to be produced in Halton's Local Development Framework. The "Site Allocations and Development Management Local Plan" would replace and update policies in the current Unitary Development Plan to ensure they carried full weight in the planning process and in appeals. Members noted the production process and timetable for producing the Local Plan.

In addition, Members were advised that following the outcome of an examination into the soundness of the core strategy, the Council had committed to undertake a partial review of the Borough's Green Belt boundaries around Widnes and Hale. The Inspector ruled that the Green Belt Review should take place in the early part of the Core Strategy's plan period (2010 – 2028). Therefore the Green Belt Review would need to be conducted as part of the next planning policy document – the Site Allocations and Development Management Local Plan. The Inspector

examining the plan ruled that this was necessary as insufficient development land existed within the urban areas of Widnes/Hale to deliver the level of housing needed to meet the town's identified need.

As the Widnes/Hale Green Belt abuts the neighbouring authorities of Liverpool, Knowsley, St. Helens and Warrington, the Council had committed to work in partnership with these authorities to ensure that a co-ordinated and strategic approach was taken. In addition it was proposed that the same methodology used by Knowsley, Sefton and West Lancashire Councils in their Green Belt studies would be adopted.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

*Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.*