

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board, Executive Board Sub Committee and Mersey Gateway Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 24 SEPTEMBER 2009

35. IMPLICATIONS OF THE ATLANTIC GATEWAY IN HALTON

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Environment which aimed to summarise the “Atlantic Gateway Spatio-Economic Framework Options Paper”, published by the North West Development Agency (NWDA) in terms of its implications for Halton.

The Board was advised that the “Atlantic Gateway Spatio-Economic Framework Options Paper” (the Options Paper) was prepared by the consultants Ekosgen on behalf of the NWDA, and was published in August 2009 for a period of stakeholder consultation. The Options Paper sought the views of partners on the options for interventions associated with the implementation of Atlantic Gateway, across a series of themes. The Options Paper was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

It was noted that the Atlantic Gateway was the spatial area anchored by the cities of Liverpool and Manchester and the corridor between them, including Warrington, Halton and parts of Cheshire. The Atlantic Gateway concept sought to join together the disparate elements of this large sub-region, linking initiatives and interventions, including physical sites and infrastructure, and also social, environmental and most significantly economic policy approaches.

It was further noted that the Options Paper was primarily based upon themes of intervention, creating a high level economic and spatial framework. This methodology looked to establish what the Atlantic Gateway should aim to become rather than assessing the potential contribution of individual development sites in the first instance. However, the Atlantic Gateway would be influenced by Peel Holdings Ocean Gateway investment strategy, which was based on the development of Peel’s portfolio sites in the North West and shared some of the same themes, aims and goals.

In policy terms, the Atlantic Gateway sought to build upon the Government initiatives to focus economic development on strong regions and sub-regions, and sought to overcome potential problems with City Region insularity by ensuring that both Manchester and Liverpool look outwards as well as inwards. This meant that there was an opportunity for

Halton, over and above its role in the Liverpool City Region, to play an important role in this larger sub-regional area.

The Board was advised that the Options Paper built on a series of Foundation Reports assessing the Atlantic Gateway in a number of ways, which were set out in the report. The Options Paper set out a number of areas in which it was anticipated that organising, planning, advocacy and prioritisation at the spatial level of the Atlantic Gateway had some merit. The paper also recognised that in some areas, a more localised, informal approach to capitalising on opportunities may be more appropriate. The key areas identified were outlined in detail in the report.

It was further noted that the Options Paper focussed on a number of underlying principles guiding the Atlantic Gateway, as outlined in the report. The Options Paper stated that it was not the intention for the Atlantic Gateway to subsume current arrangements or to take over the role of the city regions and sub-regional partnerships; rather, there would be a focus on key areas of added value.

The Board was advised that the Options Paper presented the key areas outlined above in terms of the pertinent issues, why the key areas presented an opportunity for the Atlantic Gateway, and the potential options for dealing with the key area within the Gateway remit. In most cases, there were around three options presented, based on varying levels of intervention, ranging from no or little intervention to high level or radical intervention.

The Board was further advised that a summary of the issues and options presented for each of the key areas, along with suggestions of potential implications for Halton, was attached to the report at Appendix 2.

It was noted that being in a central position within the Atlantic Gateway Area, the implementation of the options proposed would have an impact upon Halton. Depending on the degree, type and level of intervention which formed the preferred options, these impacts would range from relatively minor to potentially extremely large. The most significant of these impacts were summarised and set out within the report, with consideration being given to the opportunities afforded by the Atlantic Gateway for Halton, as well as the areas of the Options Paper which could be altered or improved to better reflect Halton's needs and aspirations.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the implications of the implementation of the "Atlantic Gateway" Options in Halton are noted; and

- (2) the Council respond to the Options proposed within the “Atlantic Gateway Spatio-Economic Framework Options Paper” in the manner outlined within this paper.

36. RESIDENTS-ONLY PARKING SCHEMES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which reviewed Council policy in relation to residents only parking schemes.

The Board was advised that the increasing number of vehicles on our roads was creating more and more pressure on parking space on the highway. The problems were at their worst adjacent to schools, shops, transport hubs and other key destinations but there was also a growing problem with residential areas, partly due to multiple car ownership in some households. There was pressure on parking spaces to the areas around Runcorn and Widnes North (Farnworth) rail stations. In Victoria Road (Widnes North rail station) where most residents had off-road parking facilities, the problem had been largely solved by the use of parking restrictions.

It was noted that parking on Halton’s roads was free and open to all highway users on an equal basis, provided their vehicles were street legal. It was an uncomfortable truth that nobody had an absolute right to expect to park on the highway directly outside or even near their own home. Owning and running a car was a lifestyle choice that residents made and, therefore it was their responsibility to ensure that they could legally park their vehicle when not in use. The highway was for the passing or repassing of traffic and not for parking.

It was further noted in Halton, there was no charge levied for the use of the limited number of Council owned car parks and thus there was no income from these facilities and they were a financial liability to the Council, due to their ongoing maintenance costs. Most parking provision associated with the town centre and supermarket shopping was in private ownership and again carried no charge, currently. However, there was charging by the owners of car parks at some locations such as the hospital and Runcorn mainline railway station. The Council had commissioned parking studies in Runcorn and Widnes Town centres and in Halton Lea. These studies provided the base data and analysis to enable consideration by the Council, in conjunction with private car park operations, of future car parking policy. Enforcement of on-highway parking restrictions was the responsibility of Cheshire Police.

The Board was advised that Cheshire Police had been consulted to ascertain if they would be prepared to enforce a Residents Only Parking

(ROPS) scheme in Halton, if one was introduced. This request had been declined as Police had indicated that the Force's position on residents only parking was that it was solely a local authority issue. Extensive internet research and contact with other local authorities confirmed that this was the Force's view and was consistent with those of other Forces in the Country. The Police were also not prepared to enforce ROPS, even if the funding was provided by the Council to enable officers to work overtime.

It was noted that using powers introduced by the Road Traffic Act 2004, it would be possible for Halton to take on responsibility for enforcing on street parking restrictions instead of the Police, including any ROPS. These Civil Parking Enforcement (CPE) powers would mean that the majority of parking offences, including parking on yellow lines and mis-using disabled persons' parking bays, would no longer be criminal offences. A total of 247 local authorities had taken on CPE powers to March 2009, freeing some Police resources to tackle more serious crime.

The case for introducing CPE in Halton was in the process of being considered and would include an assessment of the financial implications as well as any enforcement benefits. However, should Halton subsequently decide to adopt CPE powers it would be able to keep the income from any parking tickets issued under the initiative. This income would then have to be used to cover all operational costs including funding parking attendants (called Civil Enforcement Officers) who would replace Police staff for enforcement, and also the management and administration systems associated with collecting fines and pursuing defaulters. The operational costs would be dependent on the areas covered and the times of operation. If the income from any parking charges issued did not cover operational costs, any shortfall would have to be met from other Council resources. It followed that there was a direct relationship between the number of parking tickets issued and the level of parking enforcement that could be resourced.

The Board was advised that, as indicated above, there was no charging regime in place either on street or in the limited number of off street car parks, which were operated by the Council. Therefore the Council had no parking income against which it could offset the cost of a ROPS within a CPE regime. Without wishing to prejudice the outcome of the Council's feasibility study into CPE, its ability to fund a ROPS would be limited.

It was noted that there had been intermittent requests over the years for ROPS to be introduced in individual streets in the Borough, usually triggered by residents being unable to park immediately outside their homes. However, even taking into consideration the town centres and other areas subject to high levels of often transitory demand for parking space, it was clear that the area around Runcorn mainline rail station was one of the most under pressure, with Holloway being the main focus of attention. This was

due to the on-street parking by rail users, who wished to avoid paying daily charges at the station's car parks and the practical difficulties facing householders in constructing off road parking, due to the height of their front gardens relative to the carriageway of Holloway.

The Board was advised that the situation had been much worse over the past few months as construction of a new multi-storey car park at the station required the temporary closure of the main car park. A large proportion of the usual parking demand was displaced onto the surrounding streets and following the opening of the multi-storey car park, drivers were now reluctant to pay for parking. Instead they were continuing to park on surrounding roads, wherever possible, with some leaving cars outside resident's homes for days on end.

Many of Holloway's residents see the introduction of ROPS as a simple solution provided that the restrictions were enforced robustly. However, based on the reported experiences of other local authorities, such schemes had a number of associated problems and impacts, which were set out in the report and it was felt inappropriate to introduce a scheme at the present time.

RESOLVED: That residents only parking schemes should not be introduced at the present time.

37. RIGHTS OF WAY IMPROVEMENT PLAN

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment, which sought approval to the adoption of Halton's first Rights of Way Improvement Plan, following a 12 week consultation with other local authorities, user groups and outside agencies.

The Board was advised that Section 60 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 introduced a requirement on all local authorities in England and Wales to prepare a Rights of Way Improvement Plan (ROWIP).

ROWIPs were not about rights of way in isolation, they were intended to deliver an integrated network of routes in and between town and country. The areas the Rights of Way Improvement Plan must assess were set out in the report.

It was also noted that the plan must contain a Statement of Actions that the Highway Authority intended to carry out in order to improve its network, with particular regard to issues identified within the assessment. The Rights of Way network was undoubtedly a major means of accessing the countryside and key services, but on its own did not show the full picture. There were many other routes and sites that were used by the general

public for informal countryside access and every day journeys that were not legally recorded as definitive public rights of way. With this in mind, the Rights of Way Improvement Plan for Halton considered the whole network of access routes, public open spaces and sites, as well as definitive rights of way and highways. It also assessed the whole spectrum of users and journey purposes, from disabled needs to routes to open access land.

It was noted that once the ROWIP was published, the Council was required to make a new assessment and review it within 10 years. Thereafter, they would review the plan at not more than 10 year intervals.

The ROWIP was a strategic document and would form a distinct strand of Halton's next Local Transport Plan (LTP), which was being prepared on a joint basis with Merseytravel and the five Merseyside districts. This was Halton's first full 10 year Rights of Way Improvement Plan.

The draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan had been used as the basis for a 12 week consultation with a wide range of users and stakeholders to enable their views to be taken into consideration in the preparation of the final document. The Board was advised that only 14 formal written responses were received, these responses along with discussions with other consultees, were found to be positive, in addition, 17 questionnaires on the ROWIP were also returned. On the whole, the document was well received and strongly supported. Summaries of the results of the questionnaire survey and written responses were set out in the Appendices to the report.

The Board was further advised that the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan was also considered by the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board at its meeting on 17th June 2009, when it resolved that the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan be forwarded to the Executive Board for consideration.

Under the Strategic Environment Assessment Directive and Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, there was requirement to undertake a Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) on certain plans and programmes, such as the ROWIP. The results of these assessments were set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That the adoption of the Rights of Way Improvement Plan, subject to any minor amendments and the inclusion of photographs that may be required prior to its publication, being delegated to the Strategic Director, Environment, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, transportation, Regeneration and Renewal be approved.

41. HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which sought the Board's approval to ratify a new Homelessness Strategy for the Borough.

The Board was advised that the Homelessness Act 2002 required each local authority to review the extent and nature of homelessness in their area and to produce a strategy and action plan to prevent and tackle the problem. Halton's first Homelessness Strategy was published in 2003 which included measures to prevent homelessness and to develop and improve services for households who become homeless.

The new Homelessness Strategy built upon the progress made from the previous Homelessness Strategy and focused more heavily on prevention and early intervention strategies.

The report set out the key findings of the Review and the key recommendations that came from this.

The Board was advised that a formal consultation exercise was carried out in March 2009, to seek views on the draft documents referred to above. The Council received six formal responses of which three were from external sources, one from an Elected Member and two from internal officers.

However, it should also be noted that the blue print for developing the draft Homelessness Strategy was presented to the Borough's Homelessness Forum. The Homelessness Forum also had the opportunity to consider and comment on the findings and draft strategy on several occasions ahead of the wider consultation exercise.

The Board was advised that a key component that the respondents were supportive of was the preventative emphasis in the new strategy, its general strategic direction and the objectives and recommendations. The Review and Strategy was presented to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on the 17th June 2009 and endorsed its content.

It was noted that the draft Documents had now been revised taking into account all the appropriate comments. Where possible the recommendations had been rationalised in order to clarify and prioritise strategic thinking to aid delivery of resulting actions.

REASON(S) FOR DECISION

To adopt a new fit for purpose Homelessness Strategy for the Borough

covering the next five years.

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The Action Plan prioritises a number of developmental activities. The actions highlighted are considered to be the ones which would optimise the potential to improve outcomes for homeless households and those at risk of homelessness.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

With immediate effect.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board agrees the adoption of the new Strategy.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2009

35. CONFIRMATION OF AWARD OF CONTRACT FOR REPLACEMENT OF CARTERHOUSE SWING BRIDGE

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Strategic Executive Director, Environment regarding the tendering process for the replacement of the existing bridge at the location of the original Carterhouse Swing Bridge, spanning the Sankey Canal at the south end of Tanhouse Lane in Widnes.

In accordance with Procurement Standing Order 2.5, tenders were invited from a list of contractors drawn from Constructionline database. As a result, three tenders were received. Following scrutiny one of the tenders was deemed invalid as it did not price all elements of the work. Evaluation of the remaining two tenders was based upon a 40-60 ratio in terms of quality and price respectively, resulting in the following ranking –

- 1) Cheetham Hill Construction
- 2) Eric Wright Civil Engineering

Cheetham Hill's target cost for the works was £288,305.00.

Funding had been confirmed for the work through NWDA and Capital Priorities Fund.

RESOLVED: That the circumstances of the award of the Carterhouse Swing Bridge replacement contract to Cheetham Hill Construction Limited, be noted.

MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 19 NOVEMBER 2009

7. GENERAL PROGRESS TOWARDS COMMENCING PROCUREMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which advised Members of the general progress made towards securing the authority required to commence the procurement process.

The Board was advised at the meeting of the last Mersey Gateway Executive Board on 24 September, that the formal procurement process for a Mersey Gateway concession contract could only commence once the Council had secured the planning decision by the Secretaries of State and for Ministers to grant Conditional Funding Approval.

The Board was further advised that the timing of an announcement of the planning decision by the Secretaries of State was linked to when the Department for Transport received the Inspector's Public Inquiry Report. Although the Authority had been advised that the Inspector's Report was expected to be with the Department towards the end of November, the Minister had recently advised that this was now expected in mid-December. The Minister gave this information in his response to an oral question in Parliament raised by Derek Twigg MP. The response by Transport Minister Sadiq Khan was as follows:-

"The Inspector's report following the recent public inquiry is not expected to be received until the middle of December and its recommendations will need to be considered carefully before the Secretary of State can announce the decisions. A further decision on funding will be taken after that."

In addition, the Minister's reference to a further decision on funding related to their consideration of the Conditional Funding Approval submission. The Minister in his response also acknowledged the hard work of the Council and our representations received which explained the benefits of an expeditious decision. The Minister reaffirmed that the timescale for a decision was linked to when the Department expected to receive the Public Inquiry Inspector's report and pointed out the scheme's complexities. The Minister did however assure Mr Twigg that he had taken on board the points made and the sense of urgency that he had expressed.

It was reported that it was encouraging to receive the positive comments from the Minister but the legal due process leading up to planning Decision would determine the timescales to a great extent. There was still an opportunity to announce the Decision before the end of March 2010 but the

recent delay puts this outcome at greater risk.

It was also reported that the second requirement prior to commencing the procurement process was to secure Conditional Funding Approval from DfT Ministers and work towards this aim is progressing as planned. The first draft of the Outline Business Case was due to be discussed with the DfT Major Projects Team at the progress meeting on 19 November 2009.

The Board noted the recent work that had been undertaken on the bridge by United Utilities and the impact of the lane closures on the Borough in respect of traffic. It was also noted that the problem had been exacerbated because of weather conditions and an accident on the motorway. In addition, repairs had been undertaken in the evening to minimise the disruption. It was reported that the lane had been closed to ensure the safety of the workforce.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the progress made and the outlook for commencing procurement next year.

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

Minutes:

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board 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 Part I 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 Part I of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

9. LAND ASSEMBLY STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which advised Members that at its meeting on 24th September 2009, the Board considered a Report (MGEB5 – Land Assembly and Agreements with Third Parties) and resolved to note the agreements in place for the advanced acquisition of land, and the obligations of the Council in respect of those agreements.

The Board was further advised of the strategy which the Mersey Gateway Team proposed to adopt in order to assemble all the land required to construct and operate the proposed Mersey Gateway scheme in accordance with statutory procedure where some land was expected to be acquired by compulsion.

RESOLVED: That the Mersey Gateway Executive Board note the land assembly strategy to be adopted by the Mersey Gateway Team in order to assemble all the land required to construct and operate the proposed Mersey Gateway scheme and to deliver the project to the required timescale.