

**REPORT:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 17 March 2010  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment  
**SUBJECT:** Widnes Waterfront NWDA Performance Plan  
**WARDS:** Kingsway, Riverside and Halton View

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To agree the Widnes Waterfront Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) Performance Plan for the financial year 2010/11.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

**(1) Members agree the annual Widnes Waterfront NWDA Performance Plan for 2010/11.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 For NWDA schemes that last more than 1 year it is a requirement of the scheme approval that the delivery organisation, in this case Halton Borough Council (HBC), prepares an Annual Performance Plan. This is attached as an appendix.

3.2 In the last financial year up to March 2010 it is likely that £1,450,000 of NWDA will be claimed. This is only slightly less than originally anticipated. The main NWDA funded achievements from April 2009 to March 2010 have been:-

- Completion of the WRL project Heron Phase 2
- Completion of Carter House Bridge Construction
- Completion of the Landmark Arts project
- Completion of Japanese Knotweed removal at Venture Fields.
- Completion of the Land Acquisition (at time of writing still subject to the outcome of the NWDA funding appraisal)

3.3 Further details are contained in section 2 of the draft Performance Plan 2010/11.

3.4 This Performance Plan is for the fifth and final year of the NWDA funding programme. The plan must be agreed with the NWDA before new expenditure is incurred for which the grant will be claimed.

3.5 The Performance Plan summarises what the Widnes Waterfront Scheme is intending to achieve in the year 2010/11.

- 3.6 It provides output detail and clarifies how HBC intends to deliver and achieve them.
- 3.7 The Performance Plan will also enable the Widnes Waterfront Programme Manager to review the progress and activity in the Widnes Waterfront as a key part of the monitoring and evaluation process.

#### **4.0 LOCATION**

- 4.1 The Widnes Waterfront programme area is situated between Widnes Town Centre and the waterfront environment. Since the construction of large-scale factories, plant and infrastructure in the mid 19<sup>th</sup> Century, the riverside environment has been cut off from the remainder of the town. Proposals for the Widnes Waterfront are designed to regenerate the area and to improve the link between the waterfront and the Town Centre.

#### **5.0 KEY PROJECTS IDENTIFIED FOR 2010/11**

##### **5.1 Projects from 2006/07 and continuing into 2010/11**

- Project appraisal

##### **New Projects for 2010/11**

- The HIVE leisure development
- The programme evaluation

##### **5.2 Currently the planned expenditure for 2010/11 is £1,490,000.**

- 5.3 These projects are detailed in Section 3 of the Draft Performance Plan. There will be a presentation of the Performance Plan and an update on the progress of the Widnes Waterfront programme to Members at the meeting.

#### **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 None at this stage.

#### **7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The performance plan needs to be agreed by Halton Borough Council, the Urban Renewal SSP and the Northwest Development Agency before projects can be appraised and the allocation spent.

#### **8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

##### **8.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

None known.

##### **8.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Overall the Widnes Waterfront programme will assist in providing job opportunities for local people and will go some way in addressing the level of unemployment in Halton.

### **8.3 A Healthy Halton**

The overall Widnes Waterfront programme provides new walking and cycling routes as well as a bus service which offer safe and affordable means of accessing key services and thereby can overcome many of the transport barriers often faced by people who do not own or have access to cars.

### **8.4 A Safer Halton**

The Widnes Waterfront programme will provide much-needed environmental improvements to the area.

### **8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Widnes Waterfront programme is acting as a catalyst to attract developers and new businesses to the Widnes Waterfront area by creating an attractive, well-accessed and serviced area which provides a safe and attractive environment for employees and visitors.

## **9.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

9.1 NWDA funding needs to be spent over the next year on projects outlined in the NWDA Widnes Waterfront Performance Plan. Changes to this plan need to be agreed with NWDA prior to project development.

9.2 Delay in approving this draft performance plan will further delay key decisions for funding agencies ultimately resulting in the loss of some time dependant grants. Without this initiative, several key projects could be affected, and all of the money might not be spent within the time allocated.

9.3 The Council itself will not be implementing all of the projects taking place within the Widnes Waterfront. Therefore, it will need to ensure that the risks associated with the NWDA funding are passed onto those third parties undertaking the projects.

9.4 The NWDA funding agreement provides that any breach of the agreement, no matter how technical, can trigger a right for the NWDA not only to refuse future funding under the agreement but also to reclaim from HBC funding paid up to that date under the agreement. Monitoring of the Performance Plan will minimise this risk.

## **10.0 QUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

The NWDA operates a code of Conduct relating to equality and diversity matters. All NWDA funded projects will have to adhere to this code.

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

11.1 There are no background papers within the meaning of the Act.