



Councillor Hignett

ANNUAL REPORT URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD APRIL 2009 – MARCH 2010

“In thanking all of the Members of the Urban Renewal PPB and supporting officers for their positive contributions throughout the year, I would like to express my admiration for the achievements of the Board, particularly recognising the times of stringency in which we have had to work.

It is right that the general public should expect more from every arm of the Council. The Urban Renewal PPB has, this year, received more direct demands on it in the form of petitions than ever before. That this Board has been able to interpret the Council’s policies positively and has been proactive in its response to these, is testament to the knowledge and professionalism which Members constantly demonstrate.”

Councillor Hignett
Chairman, Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2009-10 the Board comprised eleven Councillors –

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| Councillor R. Hignett (Chairman) | Labour |
| Councillor K. Morley (Vice Chairman) | Labour |
| Councillor P. Balmer | Conservative |
| Councillor P. Blackmore | Liberal Democrat |
| Councillor E. Cargill | Labour |
| Councillor M. Hodgkinson | Liberal Democrat |
| Councillor D. Leadbetter | Labour |
| Councillor P. Murray | Conservative |
| Councillor P. Nolan | Labour |
| Councillor C. Rowe | Liberal Democrat |
| Councillor D. Thompson | Labour |

The Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board’s primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its Partners) in seeking to bring about the Urban Renewal of the Borough. It is also charged with scrutinising progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Urban Renewal Priority. It is responsible for evaluating performance and formulating policy in relation to the following areas:

- Major Projects
 - Highways and Transportation,
 - Environmental Health and Planning,
 - Economic Regeneration,
- with the additional responsibility for
- the Park Ranger service (as from 2005/6)
 - Contaminated Land (as from 2005/06)
 - Strategic Housing (as from 2006/07).

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met six times during the year. As well as considering Executive Board decisions relevant to the work of the Urban Renewal Board, agreeing the Service Plans of the relevant Departments and monitoring their general activities and performance against them, set out below are some of the main activities and issues which the Board has worked on during the year:

Corporate Responsibilities

- The PPB received the minutes of the Urban Renewal SSP.
- The Board received and considered the draft mid term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy.
- Progress made towards meeting Local Area Agreement targets at the end of the first year of the Agreement was discussed.
- The Board reviewed the Warrington Road Transit Site.
- The Board considered a petition from the residents of Claremont Avenue, Claremont Drive, Derby Rd, Marsh Hall Road, Windermere Avenue and Windermere Street, following the relocation of a bus stop by approximately 100 metres from its original location on Derby Road, at the junction with Claremont Drive, Widnes, and agreed a temporary relocation.
- The Board considered a petition from residents of Southway and Ash Grove, Widnes and referred a possible parking scheme to the Halton Housing Trust.
- The Board received a petition from residents of Halton Road and surrounding areas regarding the levels of public transport operating via Halton Road. Support was given to extending the 52 bus service and an assessment of the benefits of the extended service was requested
- The Board received a petition from the residents of Murdishaw and surrounding areas following the withdrawal of the commercially operated Arriva Northwest X1 service from Liverpool City Centre, on Sunday evenings from 19.00 hours.

Highways and Transportation

- The PPB agreed nominations of Members to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the 2009/10 municipal year.
- The Board received information on the condition of the footways in Halton. The Board endorsed the decision of Executive Board on 19th March 2009 to prioritise footway reconstruction within the Highways Capital Maintenance block budget allocation, doubling the area of footways to be reconstructed for the next two years.
- The Board noted the progress made in the development of a proposed highway improvement scheme at the junction of Lunts Heath Road and Wilmere Lane junction, Widnes. It resolved that consideration be given to include funding for junction improvements be included in the Capital Programme for Local Transport Plan for the 2010/11.
- The Board endorsed a revised enforcement policy for the illegal crossing of vehicles over footways and verges and to established a policy for the construction of access crossings.
- The Board considered and forwarded the draft Rights of Way Improvement Plan to the Executive Board for consideration
- The Board reviewed the measures put in place to deliver the duty to treat highways for snow and ice and, in particular, the delivery of the service in the 2008/2009 gritting season.
- The Board reviewed the Council's policy in relation to residents-only parking schemes.
- The Board considered the key results and recommendations of Town Centre Parking Studies and agreed actions which would enable a new parking strategy to be developed and which would seek to sustain the viability of the Borough's Town Centres.

- The Board welcomed the progress which had been made during 2008/09 on implementing the programmes contained within Halton's second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) and on the targets that underpin LTP's policies and strategies.
- The Board considered and commented on the Department of Transport's revisions to its 'Speed Limits' circular.
- The Board received a report on winter gritting arrangements of the Borough's highways and footpath networks.
- A report on capacity issues on Murdishaw Roundabout, Runcorn, was presented to the Board.

Major Projects Department

- The Board considered the projects on the Widnes Waterfront which the North West Development Association had funded and which were completed in 2009-10, together with those which had been identified for funding in 2010-11.
- The PPB agreed the Widnes Waterfront Northwest Development Agency (NWDA) Performance Plan for the financial year 2010-11.
- The PPB received a presentation on Urban Renewal activity in the Borough.
- The Board considered the final financial outturn position and achievements of Urban Renewal projects receiving Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) support.
- The Board considered an update on progress of the Castlefields Regeneration Programme and the potential next development phases which would continue to drive forward the regeneration of the area.
- The Board received a report on the future of Victoria Road area of Widnes from consultants Urbed, and agreed a stimulus programme for Widnes Town Centre, funded by grants from DCLG and the Working Neighbourhood Fund.

Economic Regeneration

Environmental and Regulatory Services

- The Board were informed of a number of new important initiatives implemented in research projects undertaken in Halton in connection with its natural environment.
- The Board received a report on the performance of the Council as measured in the APSE Performance Network Year 11 (2008/9 Annual Report, Parks and Open Spaces).

Housing

- The Board considered and commented on the Draft Homelessness Strategy for Halton, prior to submission to the Executive Board.

Other

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2009-10

- The Board considered a report from the Logistics Sector Skills Topic Group on the 'Future Skill Needs within the Logistics Sector in Halton and an assessment of whether existing Activity would meet those needs including the identification of opportunities for improved performance'. The recommendations were endorsed.
- The Board considered a report from the Topic Group set up to consider the implications of de-linking the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) in support of the Mersey Gateway Project.
- The Board received the final report and recommendations from the Topic Team working on the scrutiny review of supported housing.

- The Board endorsed a work programme for Topic Groups in 2009-10 which included a joint group with the Employment, Learning and Skills PPB on skills for the science industry, and the Local Development Working Party.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2010-11

- The Board agreed a work programme for Topic Groups in 2010-11 including Town Centre co-ordination and, when a positive decision is received on the Mersey Gateway, a reconvening of the 'Delinking of the Silver Jubilee Bridge' group.

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Committee Services in the first instance, telephone 0151 471 7529 or email angela.scott@halton.gov.uk