

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD ANNUAL REPORT



"I would like to thank all of the Members of the Environment and Urban Renewal PPB for their support during this, my first year as Chair.

Members have considered and responded to a broad range of issues relevant to Halton's physical environment. These have covered corporate responsibilities including business planning, through to road safety, highway maintenance, waste management and planning.

The Board's response to these matters was given during what are becoming increasingly challenging times as we all come under more pressure to deliver our services with less resources. The fact that the Board was able to respond so effectively to these matters reflects not only their commitment and positive attitude to their roles but also their experience in helping our communities to improve their quality of life and address real concerns.

Councillor Bill Woolfall
Chair, Environment and Urban Renewal Policy
and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2014/15 the Board comprised eleven Councillors:-

Councillor Bill Woolfall (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Mike Fry (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Pauline Hignett	Labour
Councillor Valerie Hill	Labour
Councillor Chris Loftus	Labour
Councillor Andrew MacManus	Labour
Councillor Keith Morley	Labour
Councillor Pauline Sinnott	Labour
Councillor Gareth Stockton	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Andrea Wall	Labour
Councillor Geoff Zygadlo	Labour

The Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board's primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its partners) in seeking to bring about the Environmental and Urban Renewal of the Borough. It is also charged with scrutinising progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Urban Renewal Priority.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the following areas:

- Highways, Transportation and Logistics (including road maintenance, street lighting, road safety, traffic management, supported bus services and flood risk management)
- Landscape Services, Parks & Countryside, Cemeteries & Crematoria
- Environmental and Regulatory Services
- Major Projects
- Economic Regeneration and Business Development
- Waste Management and Waste Strategy
- Derelict and contaminated Land
- Housing Strategic Policy
- Sustainability, Climate Change and Biodiversity
- Physical Environment and Planning policies

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

During 2014/15, the Board met 5 times. As well as considering Executive Board decisions relevant to the work of the Environment and 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 have come before the Board during the year.

The Board received, considered reports, endorsed recommendations and put forward relevant actions on the following issues:-

Corporate Responsibilities

- Minutes of the Environment and Regeneration SSP.
- Regular progress reports on achieving targets contained with the Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton.
- Updates on Business Plans for the period 2013-16 and the Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for the services that fell within the remit of the Board for this period. It also considered and commented on Quarterly Monitoring reports which

detailed progress against service objectives/milestones, performance targets and factors affecting the services that fell with the remit of the Board. Members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement that they would like to see reflected in the plans.

- Draft Business Plans for 2015-18.

Highways and Transportation

- Nominations were agreed for Members to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the 2014/15 Municipal Year. These were Councillors B. Woolfall (Chair), K. Morley, G. Stockton, and T. McInerney (Portfolio holder – Transportation).
- It was also agreed that the Chair and Vice-Chair would sit on the Consultation Review Panel as may be required from time to time.
- A petition requesting removal of bollards and provision of parking at Manor Place, Widnes. It was noted that Ward Councillors were consulted prior to the installation of the bollards and had been involved in the ongoing discussions, and continued to support the need for bollards. It was resolved to refuse the petition request and that the appropriate petitioner be informed.
- A petition concerning traffic issues on and around Halton Station Road, Runcorn. It was noted that problems had arisen since work was started by Cheshire West and Chester Council to renovate and repair the Sutton Weaver Swing Bridge, and the subsequent traffic flow issues that related to that work. The petition raised several problems including lack of consultation by both local authorities, extra volume of traffic, excessive speed, damage to roads and properties, and concerns that the temporary traffic routing would be made permanent when the works were completed. It was resolved that Officers contact CWaC Council on behalf of residents setting out the concerns, contact Cheshire Police requesting enforcement of existing vehicle weight restrictions and that the Board endorse the proposal to formally object to any attempts by CWaC Council to make permanent the current temporary traffic arrangements.
- Following a revision to the National Code of Practice for Highway Maintenance – Winter Service, Halton's Winter Service Plan had been reviewed and revised. The Board endorsed the updated plan.
- Following discussions at previous meetings, a formal consultation had been undertaken on a proposed Traffic Regulation Order to implement "At Any Time" waiting restrictions on both sides of Cronton Lane, Widnes. Only two objections had been received and it was the decision of the Board to support the Council's intention to introduce the Order. A report for the Executive Board to consider would be prepared.
- A formal public consultation had taken place on a proposed Traffic Regulation Order to introduce "At Any Time" waiting restrictions on part of Hill Top Road, Preston on the Hill, Preston Brook. Eight individual objections were received as well as ones from Warrington Anglers Association and Preston Brook Parish Council. Whilst the Board considered all of the objections, it was still believed that most of the benefits

of introducing waiting restrictions could be achieved whilst leaving space for resident parking. The Board agreed to support the intention to introduce the Order as set out in Appendix B of the report, and asked for a report for the Executive Board to be prepared highlighting the Board's recommendation.

- The Annual Road Traffic Collision and Casualty report. This showed overall progress on reductions, but noted that overall numbers have remained essentially the same as in the previous four years. It was highlighted that the number of child casualties (i.e. those aged under 16 years) had reduced to the lowest recorded total known in Halton. Whilst this tally was known to be volatile and could fluctuate from year to year, such a low number was unprecedented. The figures confirmed the success of the casualty reduction work, which was supported via Council revenue funds and the Local Transport Plan. This consisted of targeted enforcement and local road safety education, training, publicity and traffic management initiatives, and was undertaken both independently and jointly with partner organisations. It was resolved that progress be noted and an appropriate press release be issued, along with an endorsement for the current programme of activities. Members also asked that concerns regarding the achievement of further casualty prevention, as a result of resource reductions, be noted.
- A petition and objections to proposed "At Any Time" waiting restrictions at Parklands and Ash Priors, Widnes. Members were informed that the Club had taken various steps to deal with some of the concerns raised by residents, however, it was felt more action was needed. It was resolved that a wider consultation exercise be undertaken, with a further report to be brought back to the Board.
- Following discussions and additional information from Cheshire Police, it was noted that a petition from Hale Parish Council requesting the introduction of vehicle weight restrictions would not be supported, although a further traffic count would be carried out in 12 months' time.
- An update on the preparation of the statutory Local Flood Risk Management Strategy was brought before the Board for consideration. It was noted that the draft version of the strategy, following a period of formal consultation in late 2014, would be sent to statutory consultees for their comments. It was resolved that the Strategy be noted and a report prepared for Executive Board recommending approval and adoption of the final Strategy.
- Public questions relating to parking issues along School Way, Widnes were brought before the Board, by local residents. Waiting and loading restrictions, with three trial gaps in the restrictions, had been introduced around Moorfield Primary School. Officers advised the Board that all points highlighted by these residents had been addressed, and as a compromise it was being recommended that only one section of Halton Borough Council (Various roads Widnes) (Prohibition of Waiting) Order 2011 and the Halton Borough Council (Various Roads, Widnes) (No Loading) Order 2011, rather than the proposed three, be revoked. A written response would be provided to all those who submitted a public question, with a report, and

recommendation for approval, prepared for the Executive Board's attention.

Environmental and Regulatory Services

- An annual review of the Council's current Household Waste Recycling and Collection Policy had been undertaken, to ensure that it reflected current service, provision, policies and other decisions of the Council. The review, done by the Waste Management Working Party, did not highlight any areas of concerns, although it was noted that the waste collection schedules were currently being revised so that each property in the Borough had the same day each week for collection. The Board endorsed the draft updated Policy, although they did ask for a further report to be brought back to them following the roll out of the new collection scheme in summer 2015. A report and recommendation for endorsement to be prepared for the Executive Board.
- The Council's garden waste collection service. A presentation gave Members an overview of the current arrangements and highlighted that there was no duty on the Council to provide a service and a charge for an optional scheme could be put in place if agreed. It would be completely optional and only those receiving the service would pay, thus ensuring the service was self-financing, sustainable and would contribute towards budget savings. The annual cost would be £25 for online payments and £30 via alternative methods. The new arrangements would be monitored on a regular basis and an update report should be presented to a future meeting of the Board.
- The first annual (2013/14) monitoring report for the Joint Waste Local Plan (WLP) for the Liverpool City Region, which Halton formally adopted in July 2013. The report, which was noted, showed progress with initial WLP implementation against several performance indicators and included information on the Duty to Co-operate to ensure interested parties were aware of that progress.

Physical Environment and Planning

- A summary of the results of the annual housing and employment land monitoring survey were noted.
- A report advising that following investigatory work a Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) would be viable for Halton, and it was agreed that a charging schedule targeted at residential development (in the viable areas of Halton) be supported and prepared, with a report to be submitted to the Executive Board recommending formal adoption.
- A report was noted which aimed to understand how town centres were responding to broader trends in consumer behaviour and preferences and to highlight any policy responses to these trends, and how these might be tailored to various types of town centres.

Communities

- An update on the Armed Forces Covenant and the Armed Forces and Veteran support available in Halton was provided to the Board, focussing on the 20

pledges and 5 key themes of Housing, Employment and Benefits, Education, Health, and Wellbeing. The report was noted.

- A petition/request for a sports play area in Somerville Road, Widnes. Members were advised that the Council had adequate resources to maintain its current sites but were unable to resource additional facilities. It was resolved that the petitioner should be directed to the Council's External Funding Team to explore potential funding opportunities to progress this initiative.

Work Programme for 2014/15

The Board was asked to consider whether it wished to carry out Topic Reviews for the 2014/15 Municipal year.

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 Mick Noone on 0151 511 7604 or mick.noone@halton.gov.uk