

Environment and Urban Renewal PPB Annual Report



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

Members have played a significant role in the continued regeneration of the Borough and its environment in these particularly challenging times.

Over the last 12 months, the Board has responded to, and dealt with, a wide range of issues which demonstrates their level of commitment and positive attitude in reacting swiftly and effectively to matters that are brought before them. These, combined with the Board's experience and abilities help support a continuing improvement in the quality of life in Halton and the opportunities afforded to our communities."

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

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2015/16 the Board comprised eleven Councillors:-

Councillor Bill Woolfall (Chair)	Labour
Councillor Mike Fry (Vice-Chair)	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

The Board met 5 times during 2015/16. 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 reviewed the minutes of meetings of the Executive Board and the Environment and Regeneration Special Strategic Partnership Board and considered questions from the public on relevant matters. It also received, considered reports, agreed decisions and put forward relevant actions on the following issues:

Highways and Transportation

- Nominations were agreed for Members to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the 2015/16 Municipal Year. These were Councillors M Fry, K. Morley, G. Stockton, and T. McInerney.
- 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.
- Objections to proposed 20 mph speed limits in various locations across the Borough. Following a public consultation 17 letters/emails were received, 16 of which were objections to proposals mainly in Palace Fields Avenue and Beechwood. The recommendation was to go ahead with the proposals except in Beechwood where it was felt there were already a wide range of initiatives in place to reduce speeding. The report, minus the proposals for Beechwood,

were to be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.

- A new Street Lighting Strategy and Policy was shared, which addressed the need to take action to minimise future growth in energy consumption. The report accompanying the strategy detailed several proposals which were all agreed and the report and strategy were endorsed and subsequently submitted to the Executive Board.
- A summary of the four year implementation programme of Integrated Transport Schemes and Interventions funded through the Integrated Transport Block was provided for information. The report was noted.
- A presentation covering the Liverpool City Region (LCR) 'Transport Plan for Growth', the LCR Long Term Rail Strategy, and new rolling stock procurement for Merseyrail was made by Cllr Liam Robinson, the Chair of Merseytravel. The Board thanked Cllr Robinson for his presentation which was noted.
- A formal consultation regarding the potential introduction of waiting restrictions in Parklands and Ash Priors, Widnes was requested.
- Public questions were received regarding the Council's road safety policy and priorities for the forthcoming year, with a separate question regarding Daresbury ward in particular. Written responses were provided in the minutes for the meeting on 25th November 2015.
- A petition from Year 5 pupils at Murdishaw West Community Primary School, Runcorn requesting the installation of pedestrian crossing facilities on Barnfield Avenue was considered. Following surveys carried out to record both the volumes of traffic and the numbers of pedestrians crossing at three locations, it was agreed to give consideration to the introduction of controlled pedestrian crossing facilities at the junction with the busway and to review existing signage and road markings.
- The annual report for Road Traffic Collision and Casualty Numbers for 2014 was brought to the Board's attention. It was disappointing to note that numbers had increased compared to previous years and achieving further reductions would prove to be extremely challenging when considered in the context of a reduction in Government grants for road safety and continued reductions in the Government Spending Review, alongside the absence of national road casualty reduction targets. The report was noted and it was agreed to continue with the programme of road traffic collision reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity.
- Objections to proposed waiting restrictions at both Naughton Road, Widnes

and Hale Village were received. Following consideration of information supplied by officers and residents alike, it was agreed not to move forward with the restrictions at Naughton Road, however those proposed for various roads in Hale Village would be progressed.

- Agreement was sought for approval to Chapters 1-4 of the Draft Highways Asset Management Plan which would allow further development of the remaining Chapters that would cover the Operational Plan and Procedure. The Board agreed to the endorsement of the Chapters and their submission to the Executive Board, and requested that the remaining Chapters of the HAMP be brought before the Board at the appropriate time.
- The objections to proposed 30 mph speed limit in Lunts Health Road, Widnes were noted, however, the Board supported the proposal and the recommendation was to submit to the Executive Board for resolution.

Environmental and Regulatory Services

- Air Quality in Halton: this report contained an overview of air quality, a summary of national and local air quality monitoring, progress against National and European Air Quality legislation and provided a response to a petition for Air Monitors received in 2015. It had 4 recommendations to address the issues raised:- 1) undertake a series of public engagement events to build a greater understanding of the concerns of local people; 2) develop an active multi-agency Air Quality Forum; 3) investigate further opportunities to limit emissions and reduce NO₂; 4) develop an Air Quality Strategy. The Board recommended that the report be submitted to the Executive Board.
- There were several public questions that were brought before the Board following the above report's presentation, and all received appropriate responses (details can be found within the minutes of the 24th June 2015 meeting).
- An update on the Garden Waste Collection service was given, highlighting the changes since it was agreed to start charging for the service. It was noted that the service has had a 36% take-up from eligible households which makes the service self-financing. Board Members wanted their thanks to Officers, who had introduced and managed the scheme, recorded.
- The annual monitoring report for the Liverpool City Region Joint Waste Local Plan was noted with Halton performing well and continuing to improve its waste management procedures.
- The Tree Working Group submitted their detailed findings and recommendations to the Board. These were noted and the report was submitted to the Executive Board for its consideration.

Physical Environment and Planning

- Proposed reforms for the purpose of local plan making were reviewed in line with the review undertaken by the Planning Advisory Service in 2015, and it was agreed that recent and proposed reforms be noted.
- The scale and pace of change for the town and country planning system were highlighted as part of the Government's planning reform agenda. There were several key messages which are detailed in the report to the Board on the 9th September 2015.
- Proposed updates to the Local Development Scheme, and the Local Plan contained within it, were shared with the Board and noted.
- A summary of the Objectively Assessed Need for Housing contained within the Strategic Housing Market Assessment was shared with the Board. This Needs Assessment was commissioned jointly with St Helens and Warrington Councils and was part of the work undertaken to re-examine the appropriateness of the 3 areas (within the Mid-Mersey geography) to be identified as a Housing Market Area. It noted that there would be an anticipated shortfall for the period 2013-17 of 466 dwellings per annum, as well as an annual shortfall of 119 affordable units, across Halton.

Communities

- Consideration was given to a needs assessment for Gypsy and Travellers within Halton, which covered sites, unauthorised encampments, needs and management. The report was noted.
- An update on the Armed Forces Covenant and support given was presented. Halton is part of the pan-Cheshire Covenant which is a voluntary statement of mutual support between the civilian community and its local armed forces community.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2015/2016

- The Board were notified that there was an opportunity to contribute towards the Council's Business Plan for 2016/17, although it was clarified that this couldn't be finalised until budget decisions were confirmed in March 2016. It was agreed that a draft plan should be brought back to the Board.
- It was noted that, in line with an organisational restructure across the Council, there would be only one Business Plan for 2016/17.

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