

REPORT TO: Environment and Urban Renewal Policy
Performance Board (PPB)

DATE: 28th February 2018

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Enterprise, Communities and
Resources

PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment

SUBJECT: Regeneration Working Party Update

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the work of the Regeneration Working Party and seek agreement for this work to continue into the next Municipal Year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) Members welcome the work being undertaken by the Regeneration Working Party in contributing to the development of Halton's Regeneration Priorities.**
- ii) Members agree to the continuation of the Working Party in order to complete the assessment and review of the remaining regeneration priority areas.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In September 2017, the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property provided a presentation on the development of the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan (plus) document. The document identified a number of 'Key Impact Areas' and regeneration opportunities that will arise following the completion of the Mersey Gateway and the future 'hand back' of land that was no longer required for this project.

3.2 Given the complexity, significance and scale of Halton's regeneration projects, the Chair of the PPB proposed that a Regeneration Working Party should be established which would enable Members to contribute to the design and development of future regeneration schemes.

3.3 The Working Party comprising Councillors Woolfall, Fry, Nolan, Sinnott, Wall and Zygadlo, has met monthly. To date it has

considered the following Key Impact Areas:

- Runcorn/Runcorn Station Quarter
- The Widnes Waterfront
- Astmoor Business Park
- Ditton Corridor
- West Runcorn Employment Growth Area.

3.4 A presentation has been provided by the Lead Regeneration Officer for these areas. Each presentation outlined the proposed objectives and intended outcomes resulting from the potential development of each area. The presentations have emphasised the dynamic nature of regeneration and that proposals would need to be worked up in more detail over time.

3.5 Initial comments from Members to date are as follows:

3.5.1 Runcorn/Runcorn Station Quarter

Members welcomed the development of a Vision document for Runcorn and acknowledged that the station quarter provided a potential catalyst for the regeneration of the wider town centre.

Members were hopeful that capital funding could be allocated to support de-linking work whilst the Silver Jubilee Bridge was closed and considered the various options for delivering improvements to the road links to and from the station.

Members supported the development of a Masterplan for the area given that the arrival at Runcorn station did not encourage visitors to venture beyond the station. Members specifically asked that Ward Councillors for the area be kept involved as the Masterplan emerged and it would be useful to provide a separate briefing for Ward Councillors. References were made to improvements to signage and pedestrian links to the town centre. The management of car parking was also discussed. Members referred to the need for a long-term strategy which balanced the needs of rail users locally who travelled into Liverpool for work, whilst avoiding any negative impact on residential zones in Runcorn Town Centre.

There was also a discussion regarding the complexity of land ownerships in the area.

Overall, Members were content that the Council was taking a long-term and strategic view of the area.

3.5.2 3MG Ditton Corridor:

Members expressed concern over the existing road access to Ditton Station and the former Castaway site. They said it was completely

inadequate. Officers explained that with the sale of the part of the former castaway site, road access had been secured from Newstead Road and that there was a longer term ambition to improve the road junction from Speke Road to Hale Road and provide better connectivity.

Members said the area around the Golden Triangle and Cameron's site continues to be an eyesore. However, they said as there were small businesses operating from the area and if the use were to change, this would need to be carefully managed.

Members said there had been a lot of commercial traffic accessing and egressing from Stobart through Foundry Lane over the years, which has caused nuisance. Officers explained that the Council has worked with Stobart to secure this as an emergency access going forward and that the Desoto Road would be the main access and egress point for new developments.

3.5.3 West Runcorn

Members said the existing road to the Port of Weston was no longer suitable for commercial traffic as it passes close to residential properties and causes a nuisance. Officers explained that the plans for this area were at a very early stage and that alternative access were to be considered. Also, that in the past Inovyn had agreed that commercial traffic could use its new road and gain access over the canal, thus minimising the impact on the residential roads.

3.5.4 Widnes Waterfront

The presentation was well received and supportive of the current approach however one Member raised an issue regarding the type of tenure on the Routledge site.

It was noted that this would be a matter to be considered as part of the housing planning application. The site is not within Council's ownership. There was also a discussion about the number of residential units to be provided and were a full planning application be submitted, that the number of units will be considerably less than initial numbers which were based on a pre-2008 housing boom and demand for apartment developments.

3.5.5 Astmoor

Members were broadly content with the 'direction of travel' at Astmoor, acknowledging that the area presented a real opportunity to generate some future business rates uplift.

Some aspects of the future development of the area would be dependent upon the outcome of the Business Improvement District

vote which would be completed at the end of February 2018.

3.6 Remaining Key Impact Areas

There are three remaining Key Impact Areas to consider:

- Halton Lea Healthy New Town
- Southern Widnes
- West Bank

Once the three remaining Impact Areas have been considered, it is proposed that a further report would be presented to this PPB for consideration. In addition to the customary consultation that would be required on individual projects, it is also proposed that the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property would be asked to provide an update to this Board on schemes on a six monthly basis. This would provide a further opportunity for Members to assess and contribute to the development of projects.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no immediate policy implications arising from this report.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan Plus document emphasise that regeneration goes beyond the construction of buildings and transforming places but should seek to add value for our local communities; the Council will work with schools and colleges to boost the qualifications and skills of our young people, but will drive the growth of apprenticeships to boost the local economy

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

During the next 10 years a number of sites contained in the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan Plus document will be unlocked, leading to further job creation in the borough. The regeneration team will work with colleagues in Employment Learning and Skills to support local people in benefitting from these opportunities.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan Plus document identifies Halton Lea Healthy New Town as a key priority. However, the Plan also promotes green routes and an emphasis on clean and healthy

access routes to the borough's major employment sites

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan Plus document will promote the quality of the environment and will ensure that security by design is factored into any future development opportunities

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan seeks to bring back into use approximately 20 hectares of residual project land.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 There are no immediate risks outlined in this report.

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

None.