

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 23 November 2011 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), J. Gerrard (Vice-Chairman), Baker, E. Cargill, Hodgkinson, A. McInerney, Thompson and Zygodllo

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Nolan and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Noone, G. Ferguson, D. Parr, S. Rimmer, P. Wright and D. Cunliffe

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order 33 Councillor Stockton – Portfolio Holder Transportation

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EUR21 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 th September 2011 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.	
EUR22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
EUR23 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee relevant to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.	
RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.	
EUR24 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION AND CASUALTY REPORT	

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which gave details of road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2010 and recommended a continuance of road traffic collision reduction work.

The Board was advised that Appendix A to the report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties on Halton's roads in the year 2010, and compared these figures with those for previous years. These results were exceptionally good. The report also gave details of success in meeting various national targets for casualty reductions and highlighted concerns regarding the resources available to continue this work and achieve further reductions in the future.

The Board was further advised of the following:-

- there had been 303 road collisions involving personal injury in Halton, resulting in 464 casualties;
- 37 of the casualties were classed as serious, and there were 4 deaths. The total of 41 serious injuries or deaths (KSI) is equal to the 2009 total which was the lowest for over 20 years;
- there were 9 child serious injuries and one child fatality (CKSI). This was in line with the gradual reduction in such incidents over the recent years; and
- the number people of all ages being slightly injured (SLI) rose from 374 in 2009 to 423, again in line with the progressive reduction of recent years.

It was reported that, whilst the increase in those people of all ages being slightly injured may appear a disappointing year to year increase, the 2009 total of 374 was an exceptionally low figure, well below the gradually decreasing numbers of the past ten years.

In addition it was reported that overall the results confirmed the success of casualty reduction work, funded through Halton's second Local Transport Plan and (until March 2011) the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership, supported by targeted enforcement and road safety education, training publicity and traffic management initiatives.

Whilst national comparison figures (for other local authorities) for 2010 were not available yet, according to the DfT in 2009 Halton was one of the highest achieving highway authorities in the country in terms of casualty reduction rates.

It was further noted that Halton had recently been reported as the top performing local authority in the country having recorded a 70% reduction in Killed and Seriously Injured over the last 15 years.

Although all schools in Halton now had School Travel Plans (STPs) in place, the Government grant support for this service was withdrawn from April 2011 and these documents with their safety based implementation plans were, very regrettably, unlikely to be carried through without another funding source being identified. This could have implications for road safety, especially in the vicinity of schools and the promotion of sustainable modes of transport (walking, cycling and public transport) as one of the main objectives of STPs was to discourage use of the private car.

It was reported that until June 2010, the Council also received Government funded capital and revenue Road Safety grants of £75k and £396k respectively. However, the capital grant was then cut in its entirety and the revenue grant was cut by 27% (£90k). From April 2011, the remainder of the revenue grant was cut. This resulted in a halving of the number of Road Safety Officers in Halton and loss of funding for a wide range of projects and initiatives. Whilst the impact of these cuts could not be predicted, there was a concern that the impressive downward trend in casualty reduction might not be sustainable. Given the reduced staff numbers, in the future it was intended to run some initiatives jointly with Warrington Borough Council and other partner organisations such as Cheshire Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service.

In addition, the loss of Road Safety grant had resulted in the Cheshire Safer Roads partnership (CSRP) being disbanded. A new group, the Cheshire Road Safety Group had been formed to operate the safety cameras, with reduced contributions from the local authorities within Cheshire. Due to the level of cuts, Halton was unable to contribute financially to the Group. At the present time the safety cameras within Halton would continue to operate although the level of activity and enforcement could not be determined.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton be noted and welcomed, particularly achievement of national targets for 2010;
- 2) the current programme of road traffic collision

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reduction schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed; and

3) concerns with regard to the achievement of further casualty prevention, as a result of resource reductions, be noted.

EUR25 PETITION: PUBLIC TOILETS TO BE INSTALLED IN WIDNES CEMETERY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which informed Members of a petition requesting the provision of Public Toilets at Widnes Cemetery. The petition had been signed by 73 persons and stated that "At the present time there was no public toilets for the public who attend the Cemetery".

Members were advised that there were public toilets at Widnes Cemetery which were located close to the main entrance at the side of the Cemetery Lodge. However, it was considered that there might be an issue with signage and managers from Open Space Service were asked to investigate. The Strategic Director, Communities wrote to Mr. Lyon on 29th September 2011 and explained to him that there were toilets at Widnes Cemetery although as 73 people had signed the petition, it was obvious that many people were not aware of the toilets and that the Council would look into the matter.

Consequently, on 12th October 2011, Mr. Lyon returned the letter with hand written notes which indicated that the petition referred to there being no public toilets at the Crematorium. Mr. Lyon's comments were acknowledged and he was informed the petition would be presented to this Board.

The toilets referred to at present formed part of the Cemetery Lodge, which was still open during the Cemetery's open hours. However, the Asset Management Working Group had declared the Lodge to be a surplus asset and a report had recommended its demolition. If a public toilet was still to be provided at the Cemetery, an alternative location would have to be identified.

It was noted that an area within the Crematorium had been identified as a possible location for a public toilet. It was reported that following a feasibility study that was undertaken by Property Services, it was agreed that a Public Toilet could be provided within the Crematorium building.

Arising from the discussion Members expressed concern that the Asset Management Working Group had declared the Cemetery Lodge as a surplus asset and had recommended its demolition. Members commented that they were disappointed that property services had not decided to 'test the market' for the potential sale of the Lodge. In response Members were advised that due to the position of the Lodge site there were potential problems with access from the highway, it was near to burial plots and close to the depot area which would remain open. In addition if left empty there would be potential costs of security and vandalism. It was agreed that Members comments would be forwarded to Property Services and further information on the cost of demolishing the site and why the decision was made would be sought.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the petition and inform Mr. Lyon of the next steps.

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EUR26 ENTERPRISE ZONE DARESBUY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided information on the recently approved Enterprise Zone for Daresbury. The Enterprise Zone status (which uniquely had the full support of 3 LEPs – Liverpool, Manchester and Cheshire and Warrington) enabled the accelerated delivery of the plans to build on Daresbury's continuing role as a nationally designated Science and Innovation Campus, containing internationally competitive facilities, developing world class science, and maximising opportunities for knowledge transfer.

The Daresbury vision was to deliver 1 million sq. ft. of science and technology development and over 10,000 new jobs, making Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus the most ambitious project in this sector anywhere in the UK.

All Enterprise zones would benefit from:

- A business rate discount worth up to £275,000 per business over a five year period;
- All business rates growth within the zone for a period of at least 25 years would be retained by the local area, to support the Partnership's economic priorities and ensure that Enterprise Zone growth was reinvested locally;
- Government help to develop radically simplified planning approaches for the zone using, for example,

- provision of Local Development Order powers; and
- Government support to ensure that superfast Broadband was rolled out throughout the zone, achieved through guaranteeing the most supportive regulatory environment and, if necessary, public funding.

The Board received a presentation from David Parr, Chief Executive on Daresbury Enterprise Zone which set out a brief history of the Daresbury site, success rates of business start ups, an outline of the companies based there and the various types of partnerships between SMEs and blue chip companies. The presentation also provided details on the new DSIC Joint Venture (JV) Partnership with Langtree from the private sector.

The proposed timetable for implementation of the Enterprise Zone was outlined in the report, subject to agreement from Government, the SCI – TECh Zone at Daresbury would be officially established in April 2012.

RESOLVED: That the presentation on the development of an Enterprise Zone at Daresbury be noted.

EUR27 MATCH DAY PARKING AROUND THE STADIUM

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Policy and Resources regarding parking issues around the Stobart Stadium, Halton on match days.

It was noted that the housing estates and associated roads around the Stobart Stadium were built around 1930, when car ownership was low and hence were not designed to include off street parking within the properties. On most days, even when a match was not taking place there were parking problems particularly on the narrow roads due to the lack of off street parking and increased level of car ownership.

In February 2011 St. Helens RLFC began playing their home matches at the Stobart Stadium whilst it awaited the completion of its new Stadium in 2012. This resulted in effectively two away teams of Super League status and following, playing at the Stadium. The combined number of visitors had resulted in increased traffic volumes in the residential areas beyond what may have been experienced in the past and increased the demand for on street parking.

Consequently, a number of complaints were received from local residents who had experienced a range of

problems or who had expressed concerns about the ability to access the estate and its properties. These concerns had been echoed by the local Ward Members and the Local Area Forum, but the number of complaints had only increased significantly since St. Helens had played here for a few weeks.

Members were advised that beginning in February 2012, Widnes Vikings would be playing their home matches generally on a Sunday afternoon at 3 pm and it was hoped that a large number of more local supporters would either walk to the Stadium or be dropped off away from the immediate area. St. Helens would also no longer be playing here and hence there should not be two away teams and the associated traffic volumes and demand for parking to cater for.

Prior to St. Helens beginning to play at the Stadium the waiting restrictions on surrounding roads were reviewed to reduce the need to put out "No Waiting" cones for matches to improve road safety and to reduce recurring costs of putting out cones and remove the potential for misuse. As a result, new restrictions were implemented.

Following a number of complaints the Council's Traffic Division and Cheshire Police visited the area and fixed penalty notices had been issued where appropriate. In response to the complaints received a summary of the following Options to control parking had been investigated and were listed as follows:-

- Match day parking restrictions on new roads;
- No Waiting cones on selected streets within Kingsway estate;
- Parking on pavements;
- On street physical parking restrictions (e.g. bollards etc.)
- Residents only parking
- Review all potential parking areas within a reasonable distance of The Stadium.

Members were advised that it was unlikely that the most recent problems reported to the Council would be resolved with the departure of St. Helens RLFC. However, it was possible that they may be alleviated to some extent as demand for on-street parking hopefully would reduce. It was, therefore, proposed that the parking situation in the vicinity of the Stadium continue to be monitored, once the new Super League season started, in order to firmly establish

where problems may be occurring. It was further proposed that potential solutions to these problems continue to be explored and evaluated to establish their feasibility. Any potential solution was likely to have costs associated with them and it would be necessary to determine what these were and how they could be funded.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the temporary increased demand for on-street parking, associated with St. Helens playing its fixtures at the Stadium be noted;
- 2) the measures already taken to control parking on surrounding streets be noted;
- 3) the situation continue to be monitored, especially once the new Rugby League season commenced;
- 4) options to address any persistent parking problems resulting from matches at the Stadium, including additional Traffic Regulation Orders, be explored and evaluated in order to establish their feasibility; and
- 5) proposals that were deemed to be feasible and had identified resources to fund them, are consulted on (where appropriate) in order to obtain the views of those directly affected.

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EUR28 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT 2010-11

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which advised on the progress that had been made during 2010/11 on implementing the capital programme of schemes to support the strategies and policies contained within Halton's second Local Transport Plan (LTP2).

The report summarised the programme of works and initiatives undertaken in 2010/11, which was the final year of LTP2, and also described the progress that had been made against the performance indicators contained within LTP2.

It was noted that the Capital Programme budget allocation comprised two funding blocks, Bridge and Road Maintenance and Integrated Transport. Progress within each block was reported separately.

The Board was advised that the future maintenance

Block delivered through LTP3 had reduced by 9% in 2011/12 and was expected to reduce by a further 17% by 2014/15. There was also the need to continue to find significant savings from future highway maintenance revenue budgets. The combination of these factors would create a major challenge to the Council's ability to deliver a highway maintenance service for what is its biggest single asset and for one which was consistent with current levels of public expectation.

With regard to the Integrated Transport block in June 2010, the Government imposed in-year budget cuts of 25% to the planned Integrated Transport block allocation (down from the expected £1.717m) and the withdrawal of the entire Road Safety capital grant (£75.114). A reduced programme of sustainable transport intervention was devised and the main casualty of the cuts was the improvement and car park extension at Hough Green Railway Station, which was originally to have been delivered in partnership with Merseytravel, who also cut funding for this scheme. It was noted that a much reduced scheme had now been developed, which was subject to Network Rail approvals, and should be implemented later this financial year. In total, £9,919,645 had been spent on structural maintenance and integrated transport improvements to during 2010/11.

It was also reported that during 2010/11, good progress had been made towards the achievement of the local performance indicators. An analysis of progress against all the targets that could be reported on had revealed that 82% of indicators had either achieved or bettered the target set.

RESOLVED: That the progress during 2010/11 is welcomed.

EUR29 BUSINESS PLANNING 2012-15

The Board considered the report of the Strategic Director Policy and Resources which gave Members an opportunity to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year. Members received a copy of a briefing note which provided an overview of the key strategic issues facing the Board over the medium-term.

Members were advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan, in parallel with the budget that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period

2012-2015 was at the beginning.

The Board was further advised that at this stage Members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3 – 5) that they would like to see reflected in those plans.

It was reported that Strategic Directors would develop draft plans which would be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the New Year.

In addition, the plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post-March 2012.

The report also detailed the timeframe for plan preparation, development and endorsement.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.20 p.m.