

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 16 November 2022 at the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), Fry (Vice-Chair), Ball, D. Cargill, Davidson, Gilligan, S. Hill, Logan, McDermott, Stretch and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: J. Brussels, T. Gibbs, K. Butler and A. Plant

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EUR19 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2022 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.

EUR20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

EUR21 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

EUR22 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION & CASUALTY REPORT

The Board received a report on the latest road safety statistics released by the Department for Transport through the publication of the 2021 Comprehensive Annual Report.

The report set out full details of the numbers of traffic

collisions and casualties in 2021 and compared these figures with those from previous years. Of those killed or seriously injured, the number of adult and child casualties decreased by 2 (total decrease of 4). However, due to the low numbers recorded annually in Halton, this number did fluctuate from year to year.

Halton had achieved its performance targets as set by the Department of Transport and was one of the few Local Authorities to report a fall in both collisions and casualties, against a national picture where road casualties (all categories) increased by 11% in 2021.

In addition, the report highlighted the work the Road Safety Team had undertaken in 2021/22 and the programme for 2022/23 which would continue to cover road traffic reduction schemes, road safety education, training and publicity as well as engaging with Cheshire Police to target effective enforcement action.

Members also considered information on the following road safety initiatives:

- Community Speed Watch;
- “Smiley” Speed Indicative Device/Sign (SiDs);
- Speed Camera A562;
- Gyrotory Red Light Camera;
- Mobile Speed Camera Sites;
- Collision Sites;
- Safer Active Travel;
- Education; and
- Halton 2023/24 Programme.

Arising from the discussion, a Member asked if a timeline could be confirmed for the installation of the gyrotory red light camera on the A557 Watkinson Way. It was agreed that this would be looked into.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and
- 2) the 2023/24 programme of road safety schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

The Board expressed their appreciation to the Road Safety Team on their work.

Operational
Director - Policy,
Planning and
Transportation

EUR23 ENVIRONMENTAL FUND UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Operational Director, Policy, Planning and Transportation, which provided an update on the expenditure of the Environmental Fund. Planning permission for the Runcorn Thermal Power Station (TPS) Plant was granted in September 2008. The Plant was subject to a legal agreement, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The legal agreement contained a provision that the owner of the Plant agreed to pay the Council an annual lump sum payment for every tonne of fuel received and processed.

To date, the fund had generated £5,035,120 and the projects that had benefitted from those funds were set out in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the wide range of projects that had benefitted from the fund as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

EUR24 HOUSES OF MULTIPLE OCCUPATION - WORKING PARTY UPDATE

The Board received an update report on the progress of the Houses of Multiple Occupation (HMO) Working Party.

The Working Party last met on 27 October 2022 and compiled a list of issues reported by Members relating to HMOs and these was outlined in section 3.2 of the report.

It was reported that the Working Party had agreed an action plan which covered the following:

- Undertake a borough-wide exercise to gather evidence on numbers of small HMOs to identify locations and clustering (using Council data sources);
- Examine the level of clustering of HMOs at Frederick Street, Widnes;
- Use the West Bank area as a pilot area to test interventions;
- Identify small HMOs and private rented properties in West Bank and investigate options for discretionary (selective) licencing of private rented properties. The pilot would be used to inform options for any future Borough wide scheme;
- Investigate an Article 4 Direction for West Bank to remove 'permitted development rights' preventing single dwellings becoming small HMOs (note this

does not prevent applications being made for planning permission);

- Improve the management of waste from HMOs in West Bank;
- Quantify the cost of these interventions for budget purposes; and
- Present recommendations to the Executive Board.

The Board noted the Terms of Reference of the Working Party attached at Appendix 1.

Following discussions, a Member raised concerns regarding the state of some HMO's in the West Bank area and rubbish that was accumulating in the area. It was agreed to raise this matter at the next Working Party meeting in December.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Terms of Reference of the Working Party (Appendix 1) be endorsed; and
- 2) the action plan set out in Section 5.0 be noted.

Operational
Director - Policy,
Planning and
Transportation

EUR25 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2022/23

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 2 of 2022/23 (1 July 2022 – 30 September 2022).

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2022-23 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services; and
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services;

The reports detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

Members discussed the challenges the Council faced in recruiting Planning Officers and it was suggested that

consideration be given to a retention package, similar to the one adopted for Social Workers.

A Member also questioned if the decline in the occupancy rate at Widnes Market was due to the introduction of car parking charges at Green Oaks. It was agreed that Property Services would clarify this matter.

RESOLVED: That the second quarter performance monitoring reports be received and noted.

Operational
Director - Policy,
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Meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.