



Cllr. Ron Hignett
Chairman

Annual Report Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board April 2011 – March 2012

“I would first like to thank all of the Members of the Environment and Urban Renewal PPB for their efforts and support throughout the year. These efforts have played a significant role in the continued regeneration of the Borough and its environment, in particularly challenging times.

The Board has responded admirably to a wide range of issues which demonstrates not only a very high level of commitment but also a positive attitude to swiftly and effectively resolving matters that are brought before Members. The Board’s experience and abilities combine to improve the quality of life in Halton and the opportunities afforded to its communities.”

Councillor Hignett
Chairman, Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2011/12 the Board comprised eleven Councillors –

Councillor Ron Hignett (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor John Gerrard (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Sandra Baker	Labour
Councillor John Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Ellen Cargill	Labour
Councillor Mike Hodgkinson	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Angela McInerny	Labour
Councillor Paul Nolan	Labour
Councillor Dave Thompson	Labour
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	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 Environment and 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 the year. 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 the Board has worked on during the year.

Corporate Responsibilities

- The PPB received the minutes of the Urban Renewal SSP.
- The Board noted that following extensive research and analysis, and consultation with all stakeholder groups, a new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011-2016 was approved by the Council on 20th April 2011. A subsequent report was also considered on the progress made in achieving targets within the SCS.
- Members of the Board were provided with an update on Business Planning for the period 2012-15 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.

Highways and Transportation

- The PPB agreed nominations of Members to sit on the Council's Public Transport Advisory Panel for the 2011/12 municipal year. These were Councillors Hignett, Gerrard, Hodgkinson and Stockton.
- Consideration was given to a report regarding a petition requesting that steps be taken to reduce the volume and weight of heavy industrial traffic travelling along South Parade, Weston Point. A series of proposals to respond to the issues was endorsed.
- A petition from residents of Russell Court, Widnes in relation to car parking problems in the area was also considered. It was decided to investigate the provision of around 10 car parking spaces on part of land currently used as "drying area". Spaces would form part of garage court access from a private street.
- Members considered a petition requesting the partial removal of waiting restrictions on Hale Bank Road which was supported and the work was subsequently carried out.
- The nominations for Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel for 2011/2012 were agreed as Cllrs Hignett, Gerrard, Stockton and Hodgkinson.

- It was confirmed that the Chair and Vice Chair would sit on the Consultation Review Panel along with local Ward Members and other agencies the purpose of which is to consider representations received on traffic management proposals.
- The Board received a report which provided details on the overall vision for public transport provision in Halton and the goals that has been set in order to achieve this. In addition, the report highlighted recent bus service changes affecting the public transport network within the Borough and other relevant challenges and issues currently being encountered.
- A petition was received in connection with the withdrawal of the commercially operated No 17A bus service from the Derby Road and Lunts Heath Road sections of route in Widnes. The request for the service to be reinstated was noted and the lead petitioner was informed of the outcome of the Board's consideration of the matter.
- Two separate reports on petitions received objecting to the proposed withdrawal of the 3A and the 26 Bus services respectively were presented. The Board noted that officers would continue to discuss the potential for these services to be operated on a commercial basis, and without subsidy, by the current commercial bus operators.
- Details of road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough in the year 2010 were presented a recommendation to continue the road traffic collision reduction work was supported. The figures for 2010 were not yet available, however according to the DfT in 2009 Halton was one of the highest achieving highway authorities in the country in terms of casualty reduction rates. Concerns regarding the achievement of future casualty prevention, as a result of reductions in resources, were also noted.
- Members also considered a report regarding parking issues around the Stobart Stadium, Widnes on match days. It was noted that the temporary increased demand for on-street parking was associated with St. Helens using the stadium for their 'home' matches and that the situation would be monitored once the new Rugby League season commenced.
- Progress made during 2010/11 on implementing the capital programme of schemes to support the strategies and policies contained within Halton's 2nd Local Transport Plan (LTP 2) was presented for information.
- It was noted that the Government was providing £560m for the Local Strategic Transport Fund (LSTF) to challenge local authorities outside London to bid for funding to support packages of transport intervention that supported economic growth and reduce carbon emissions in their communities. Members endorsed the approach that the Council was taking in regards to the preparation of bids for this fund.
- The Board was advised that as part of its new duties as Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) the Council must undertake a Preliminary Flood Risk Assessment (PFRA). A presentation was given on the key findings of the preliminary risk assessment report, which set out how the assessment had been undertaken and provided a robust evidence base to help support preparation of a Local Flood Risk strategy. A comprehensive PFRA accompanied the report detailing the flood risk assessments, results and findings. The conclusions drawn from the PFRA indicated that there was no single large area of potential flooding in the Borough.
- The Board also considered a separate report on Flood Risk Management and which provided an update on:
 - The introduction of new duties under the Flood and Water Management Act (2010)
 - The production of Halton's Surface Water Management Plan (SWMP) and current activity in flood risk management.
 - The opportunities to engage through Member representation and

involvement in new regional sub-group arrangements.

- Members were informed of the planned implementation of the Sustainable Drainage Systems provisions of the Flood and Water Management Act 2010 and the response to the Defra consultation prepared jointly with partners from the Cheshire and Mid Mersey regional sub-group of Lead Local Flood Authorities. The Board endorsed the response to the consultation.
- A petition requesting that a car park be built, extra car parking spaces be provided and road widening take place at Gorsewood Road/St. Martins Lane, Murdishaw was presented but it was resolved that because the Council did not own this land it was unable to intervene. It was however, agreed that the owners be approached to enable their views on the proposals to be sought.
- A report containing a Topic Brief and Terms of Reference for a Working Group looking at the work of Halton Community Transport was endorsed and agreed membership of the Group as: Councillors Hignett, Gerrard, A. Lowe, Edge, Nolan, Zygadlo and E. Cargill.

Economic Regeneration and Business Development

- The Board noted that Enterprise Zone Status has been approved for Daresbury. This status will enable the accelerated delivery of the plans to build on Daresbury's continuing role as a national designated Science and Innovation Campus, containing internationally competitive facilities, developing world class science and maximising opportunities for knowledge transfer. The vision for this site is to deliver 1 million sq ft of science and technology development and over 10 000 new jobs.
- Members were presented with a paper that outlined the potential for tourism relating to the construction of the Mersey Gateway and they resolved that the Executive Board consider the potential for this sort of activity.

Environmental and Regulatory Services

- The Board received an update on the progress made in respect of reducing the nuisance caused by Abandoned Shopping Trolleys in the Borough. The previously endorsed Abandoned Shopping Trolley policy came into force on 1st August 2011 and it was noted that legislation allowed local authorities to enter into agreements with local retailers, in which the retailers undertook to collect all abandoned trolleys notified within a specified period of time.
- Members also reviewed the notes of a meeting of the Waste Topic Group which had discussed the recent introduction of a bin charging policy. The Board supported the delegated Officers and Members in having the discretion to waive bin charges in exceptional circumstances.
- The Board agreed that the Waste Management Topic Group continue as previously established and that a Cemeteries Working Group be established with the following membership: Councillors Thompson (Chair), J. Bradshaw, E. Cargill, A. McInerney and Zygadlo.

Communities

- Members considered a petition that requested the provision of Public Toilets at the

Crematorium in Widnes. Following a feasibility study, which was undertaken by Property Services, support was given for a Public Toilet being provided within the Crematorium building.

- A report on Halton's Tenancy Strategy was presented as a draft for further consultation and Members were given the opportunity to comment on it.
- The Board received a presentation regarding the Halton Healthy Homes Network which was launched in February 2012 with the help of funding from the Department of Health under its 'Warmer Homes, Healthy people' programme.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2012/2013

- The Board is to consider whether it wishes to carry out Topic Reviews for the 2012/13 Municipal year at its next or subsequent meetings.

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 471 7370 or mick.noone@halton.gov.uk