

URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 20 June 2007 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), Morley (Vice-Chairman), P. Blackmore, Bradshaw, Murray, Nolan, Sly and Thompson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor E. Cargill and Leadbetter

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Collins, M. Curtis, T. Leather, M Noone, M. Simpson, A. Villiers and P. Audoire

Also in attendance: Councillor Polhill (in accordance with Standing Order 33) and two members of the public.

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
URB1	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 March 2007 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.	
URB2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
URB3	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.	
URB4	POST OFFICE CLOSURE - HALTON LEA	

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director Environment, which briefed Members on the consultation exercise being undertaken by the Post Office regarding future arrangements for the provision of Post Office Services in Halton Lea Shopping Centre.

Mr Peter Millcrest from Post Office explained the proposals to transfer the existing Post Office services from their existing location at 88 Forest Walk to the Branch of W. H, Smith within Halton Lea. The Board was informed of the size of the Post Office network and the figures of the management type of Post Offices as follows: 302 Post Offices were managed by company franchises such as Tesco, Co-op and Asda, 55 were franchised by independent businesses and 458 were currently Crown Post Offices.

The Board heard of the need for the move due to increasing financial pressure the Post Office was under caused by habitual changes of customers in the way that they bank, shop and receive benefits. Post Offices were taking only 20% of the business it was taking four years ago, with a loss of four million customer visits within one year.

The Board discussed various issues such as customers queuing outside the store, whether the workers would remain with the same conditions once they had transferred, the consultation and whether the Post Office in Halton Lea did make a loss. In response it was noted that opening times for the Post Office in W.H. Smith would be extended to 5.30 on a Saturday, which may help reduce queuing times and customers would be queuing in the store, the staff would have the choice to move to W.H. Smith or be moved within the Post Office and conditions would remain the same and at present the Post Office in Halton Lea was not making a profit.

RESOLVED: That Members of the Board forward comments to the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy who, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services, has been authorised by the Executive Board to make further comments to the Post Office.

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

URB5 ANNUAL REPORT

The Board received the draft Annual report of the activities of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board during 2006/2007 for endorsement for the purpose of its adoption at a forthcoming meeting of the full Council.

The report outlined membership and responsibilities, review of the year, work programme for 2006/2007 and the work programme for 2007/2008 which detailed the following topic ideas for consideration in the forthcoming year:

- Future of Town Centre Management;
- Housing Strategy; and
- Income Regeneration.

RESOLVED: That the Members endorse the Annual Report for the purpose of its adoption at a forthcoming meeting of the full Council.

URB6 WIDNES WATERFRONT 3D ANIMATION

The Board received a Widnes Waterfront 3D animation which was presented in the context of the wider Widnes Waterfront Marketing and Communications Strategy. The animation detailed a virtual flight along the New Mersey Crossing to the Widnes Waterfront programme area, the new key developments ie: Venture Fields leisure development and the Langtree development, new roads, junctions landscaping area and public green space.

The Board were advised that the digital asset of the Borough would benefit many other regeneration projects which could, for example be dropped into the animation. It would also help the New Mersey Crossing Team to analyse different road configurations associated with the new bridge.

It was reported that the animation would be available to individual developers and agents for marketing purposes who could for example choose to introduce a greater degree of interactivity to their individual buildings. A memory stick, branded with the Widnes Waterfront log and contained the animation, was distributed to Members which would also be used for marketing purposes.

RESOLVED: That the Widnes Waterfront 3D animation in the context of the wider Widnes Waterfront Marketing and Communications Strategy together with the potential of utilising the animation for other, major regeneration projects in the Borough be noted.

URB7 BIRCHFIELD ROAD / HALTON VILLAGE CONSULTATION REVIEW

The Board was advised of the outcome to two

Strategic Director
- Environment

Consultation Review Panel (CRP) meetings over the 2006/2007 financial year for Halton Village and Birchfield Road, Widnes.

It was reported that written complaints were received from residents of Norton Lane and Stockham Lane, Halton Village, requesting traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds in the area. A Local Transport Plan funded traffic calming scheme was designed to address immediate issues, and the project was extended to offer calming over the whole of Stockham Lane, Norton Lane and Norton View. Resulting from the consultation, less support had been received for calming on part of Stockham Lane and the majority were against it on Norton View. Therefore it was agreed that the section for Norton View be discarded along with part of Stockham Lane. Implementation of the calming measures would take place in July and August 2007.

The Board was advised of the consultation exercise that was carried out for the Birchfield Road Widnes. The pre consultation meeting was held 27th November 2006 with Councillors from the affected Wards and public consultation took place on 5th December 2006 with surrounding residents and businesses being invited. Questionnaires were issued to all who attended then questionnaires received were analysed and report to a CRP held on 15th January 2007. Revisions to the scheme that were recommended by the CRP were detailed in the report.

It was reported that there would be a meeting held on 21st June 2007 in order to discuss the concerns raised from a resident of Birchfield Road who did not attend the consultation.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB8 URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGIC REVIEW & ACTION PLAN
2007-10

The Board received the draft Urban Renewal Strategic Review and Action Plan for 2007-2010. The Urban Renewal SSP Co-ordinator provided Members with details of the plan and a copy of the draft Strategic Review and Action Plan was distributed to the Board. It was reported that this was a working document and included activities, which would impact on and were impacted upon by activities that were the responsibilities of the Safer Halton, and Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board.

Members felt that there was a need to add the issue of car parking as this was a positive aspect of shopping and visiting the Borough. In response it was noted that this would be taken into account.

RESOLVED: That

1. the Board review the report with a view to setting priorities and creating an Action Plan;
2. the Board refer the report to the Safer Halton and the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Boards for consideration of how their activities complement and support the Urban Renewal activities described within it; and
3. the 'Urban Renewal Strategic Review and Action Plan 2007-10', together with comments be referred to the Executive Board for approval.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB9 HALTON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ADVISORY PANEL AND TRANSPORT / ACCESSIBILITY BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE

The Board considered a report which informed Members of the agreed membership arrangements for the forthcoming Municipal Year of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel (PTAP). The report detailed an update on progress that had been made to implement recommendations as set out in the recently completed Transport and Accessibility Best Value Improvement Plan.

It was noted that the Halton PTAP would comprise of the following Members for the Municipal Year 2007/2008:

- Cllr Hignett (Chair);
- Cllr Morley;
- Cllr Polhill; and
- Cllr Sly.

RESOLVED: That

1. Membership of the Public Transport Advisory Panel be noted; and
2. Members note the progress being made to implement the recommendations as set out in the Transport and Accessibility Improvement Plan.

Strategic Director
- Environment

URB10 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report regarding the Fourth Quarter Monitoring Report for the Highways & Transportation, Environment & Regulatory Services, Cultural & Leisure, Major Projects, Economic Regeneration and Health and Partnerships Services.

The Board discussed areas of concern in relation to the absence of financial information. It was noted that options for improving this would be explored.

RESOLVED: That the quarterly monitoring reports be received.

Strategic Director
- Environment

Meeting ended at 7.43 p.m.