

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 10 December 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, People and Economy

PORTFOLIO: Leader's Portfolio

SUBJECT: Regeneration in Halton 2010-2015

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with an overview of regeneration activity and investment in Halton for the period 2010-2015.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members acknowledge the strong levels of investment and regeneration activity in the Borough during the last five years.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 During the period 2010-2015 the UK experienced unprecedented difficult economic conditions, which included a downturn in the land and property markets. Despite these economic pressures, the Council has been able to deliver a number of programmes and projects that are contributing to growing the Borough's economy. Excluding the Mersey Gateway Project, (£600m) the recent announcement on collaboration at Sci-Tech Daresbury (£200m) and Health and Social Care initiatives, the Borough has benefitted from over £338m of public and private sector investment. Overall in excess of £1 billion has been invested in Halton during the last five years.

3.2 This investment between 2010 – 2015 has been broken down into the following categories:

Category	Investment 2010-2015
Regeneration Initiatives -	£60,769,038 Runcorn £38,447,610 Widnes £22,321,428
Open Spaces (inc. Parks/Rec Areas) -	£6,577,334 Runcorn £1,900,119 Widnes £4,677,215
Transport Coordination -	£360,154 Runcorn £243,698 Widnes

	£116,456
Highways	£13,611,000 Runcorn £4,164,000 Widnes £9,447,000
Housing Development -	£229,710,000 Runcorn £106,600,000 Widnes £123,110,000
Business Support Grants	£6,814,463 Runcorn £6,656,671 Widnes £157,792
Schools Investment	£7,089,071 Runcorn £3,024,213 Widnes £4,064,858
Children's and Community Centres	£1,930,031 Runcorn £796,398 Widnes £1,133,633
Council Property	£7,038,831 Runcorn £2,606,651 Widnes £4,432,180
Museums	£4,774,821 Runcorn £4,550,321 Widnes £224,500

3.3 However, these investment categories do not take into account additional levels of investment generated by the private sector at the following locations:

Location	Summary of Activity
Heath Technical and Business Park, Runcorn	Provision of office premises 'Prospect House'
The Bridge Retail Park, Runcorn	Home Retail unit and coffee shop with drive through
Manor Park, Runcorn	Development of warehousing for storage and distribution
Astmoor Industrial Estate, Runcorn	Upgrade of warehouse for storage and distribution
Runcorn Halton Lea	Food store and fast food outlet
Runcorn Shopping Centre	Investment in car parks, upgrade of shopping malls

3.4 In addition, further planned investment is anticipated at Runcorn Shopping Centre with the opening of a new Range store and the further development of the former Polar Ford site in Runcorn.

3.5 Progress is being made to deliver a number of key regeneration schemes and investment allocated between 2010-2015 and has

been broken down into the following areas:

Regeneration Project	Total Investment 2010-2015
1. Castlefields, Runcorn	£7,361,000
2. Murdishaw Local Centre, Runcorn	£2,215,000
3. Sci-Tech Daresbury, Runcorn	£24,078,246
4. 3 MG, Widnes	£7,000,000
5. Widnes Waterfront	£11,800,000
6. St. Michael's Golf Course, Widnes	£2,945,317
7. Peel House Lane Cemetery, Widnes	£200,000.

3.6 **3MG & HBC Field**

- 3.7 ▪ Mersey Multimodal Gateway (3MG) is a public and private sector partnership supported by Halton Borough Council and The Stobart Group, The project will create up to 5,000 new jobs, reclaim up to 200 acres of contaminated land and see an investment of over 200 million pounds.
- 3.8 ▪ 3MG is destined to be one of the UK's largest inter-modal logistics parks and offers unrivalled access to the UK's deep-sea ports with six daily train services to the key south coast ports of Felixstowe and Tilbury.
- 3.9 ▪ The park covers 200 hectares and handles in excess of 190,000 containers each year of which some 100,000 are moved by rail. There are currently 530,000 ft² of existing distribution sheds on site with outline consent for a total of 2.7 m² of new build, rising eventually to 3.5m ft² of space.
- 3.10 ▪ A 525,000 ft² Tesco chilled distribution centre was purpose built by Stobart Development on the former Tessengerlo site.
- 3.11 ▪ Recruitment for the new Tesco facility was managed by Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) and resulted in the creation of 420 new jobs, 73% of which went to local people. To date 625 jobs have been created; 100 acres of land remediated and 146 acres brought forward for development.
- 3.12 ▪ HBC Field is poised to welcome an end user in 2016/17.

3.13 **Widnes Waterfront**

3.14 ▪ The Widnes Waterfront programme, has seen the transformation of low quality former industrial land into a new development site of regional significance.

3.15 ▪ A five-screen cinema, an ice rink, bowling alley and associated restaurants and hotel have been developed.

3.16 ▪ Several new developments, offering both commercial and retail space, have been constructed including : -

- **Turnstone Business Park** 50,000 ft² development of office and hybrid accommodation

- **Heron Business Park Phases 1 & 2** (developer Widnes Regeneration Ltd) over 120,000 ft² of high quality light industrial and office accommodation. Phase 1 is fully let and Phase 2 is currently being marketed.

- **Forward Point** (developer Forward Construction) Forward Point was the first Grade A speculative office development in Widnes for a decade.

- **Widnes Trade Park** (45,000 ft² B&Q warehouse with garden centre and builder's yard together with an adjacent 50,000 sq. ft. trade park. Widnes Trade Park has successfully attracted a number of household names including Screwfix, and Plumbing Trade Supplies **Venture Fields** development of Pure Gym leisure facility.

- **Johnsons Lane** – provision of access road to the site has attracted three businesses and brought back into use

3.17 ▪ A master plan for the 40 acre former Bayer site currently being developed.

3.18 ▪ Significant public realm improvements include the Future Flower public art piece on Widnes Warth and Moss Bank Park, a linear park along the route of a disused railway line.

3.19 **Sci-Tech Daresbury Enterprise Zone**

3.20 ▪ Sci-Tech Daresbury is one of only two centres in the UK (along with Oxford Rutherford) for 'big scale' science. It is home to the National Centre for Detector Science, Virtual Engineering Centre and enhanced super commuting capacity

3.21 ▪ It accommodates the Cockcroft Institute, the National Centre for Accelerator Sciences and the Hartree Centre in partnership with IBM.

3.22 ▪ A Joint Venture between the Science Technology Facilities

Council (STFC), Halton Borough Council and Langtree Property Partners is in place to deliver a 30 year master plan for the site which is anticipated to create 10,000 new jobs with a capital investment of over £600 million

- 3.23 ▪ Daresbury Innovation Centre (DIC), home to over 100 technology companies, is at capacity. The opening of Vanguard House has been hugely successful with 80% occupancy.
- 3.24 ▪ During the last year improved access works have been completed and construction is well underway to provide 58,000 square feet of technical space
- 3.25 ▪ Since 2013, 320 jobs and 16 new high-tech businesses have been created.

3.26 **Castlefields Regeneration**

3.27 The regeneration of Castlefields is a striking example of the principle of delivery through partnership promoted by the Borough Council. The regeneration activities of the Council, The Homes and Communities Agency, Liverpool Housing Trust and Plus Dane Group has seen the transformation of one of the Borough's most deprived estates into a wholly new urban environment with greatly improved housing offer, public amenities and leisure and community facilities

- 3.28 ▪ Value approx. 150 million to date.
- 3.29 ▪ Castlefields was made up of 2,400 residential units, including 1,392 unpopular deck access flats in 24 blocks, had a run-down local centre and limited facilities, particularly for young people.
- 3.30 ▪ To date 943 new homes have been built with a further 117 under construction
- 3.31 ▪ A further 320 new homes will be constructed
- 3.32 ▪ 19 acres of land remediated and 81 acres brought forward for development.
- 3.33 ▪ A key project was the redevelopment of the run down Local Shopping Centre and its replacement with a new £11 million Village Square community hub.

3.34 **Murdishaw Local Centre**

3.35 Since 2013 the Council has been working with local partners to

ensure that the former New Town neighbourhood of Murdishaw makes a positive contribution to the housing offer in East Runcorn. Recent success includes securing a £2.3 million investment by Liverpool Housing Trust, including a HCA affordable housing grant, to give the local centre a makeover and deliver new houses. This scheme is scheduled to start on site in December 2015 and supported by the delivery of an Action Plan to make further improvements to the local centre environment.

3.36 All this work is being overseen by a Group of public, private and third sector stakeholders; the first time partners have come together around a single purpose. Work completed to date includes: - Subway mural, landscape improvement to make area safer and more attractive, and issuing of Cheshire's first Public Space Protection Order. The Council has also been working with local registered providers to coordinate investment programmes to further improve the housing offer.

3.37 **St Michaels – Remediation**

3.38 St Michaels Golf Course was created with minimal reclamation over industrial chemical waste. Investigation of visual contamination outbreaks led to the closure of the course in 2004, on advice of the Health Protection Agency. The Council had to follow a protracted and lengthy process of further investigation, consultation and determination under the Contaminated Land regime. This process resulted in the implementation of a remediation strategy for the 31 hectare northern section of the site through receipt of £2.9 million pounds in external funding. This work to cap the course, divert Stewards brooks and install a leachate collection and treatment system was fully completed in 2013.

3.39 In response to the current economic constraints, the only viable option for the Council to deliver on its commitment to re-instate a golf course facility has been lease to a private operator. Mersey Valley Golf and Country Club currently have an agreement to lease the site, and by the importation of inert material will create a 9-hole golf course, driving range, clubhouse and associated facilities. The development will be at nil cost to Halton Borough Council, with rental income received on its operation. The Council has worked with Mersey Valley through the process of legal due diligence and Mersey Valley's acquisition for the necessary consents and permits. The works will take five years to be fully complete, with the driving range and clubhouse to be delivered and operation in two years. Halton residents currently receive discounted rates at the Mersey Valley course pending the new development.

3.40 Peel House Cemetery (Former Fairfield High School Site)

3.41 The driver for the project was the need for a new civic cemetery by summer 2016, due to capacity issues at the existing Widnes cemetery site. In the absence of any funding, the sale of land at the frontage of the site for a residential development was deemed necessary to generate the capital required. The project has required considerable time in the close management and co-ordination of a number of elements including investigation and survey, design, planning, residential tender and exclusivity period, and most notably the essential approval to the works by external statutory bodies. Following these consents and Board approval, tenders have now been received for the cemetery development and works are anticipated to commence on site shortly and legal process is underway for the sale of 5 acres of the frontage to Miller Homes to provide for 162 new homes.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Although Halton is one of the UK's smallest Unitary Authorities, Halton Borough Council and its partners, have brought forward a number of large scale projects which have had a profound and lasting impact upon the Borough.

4.2 Similarly, there are a number of projects, of equal significance and scale, in early stages of development which will, when realised, impact upon, not only the Borough of Halton, but the region as a whole.

4.3 During the last five years the Council, together with a number of private and public sector partners, have invested considerable financial resources to bring forward large tracts of, often derelict and contaminated, land for new sustainable employment uses

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other or financial implications arising from this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Regeneration projects have had a positive impact across a number of the Council's priorities and seek to promote a connection between the Borough's people and places. The work being undertaken emphasises the interrelationship between assets both in public and private ownership and the association between respective drivers of regeneration such as housing, planning, leisure and culture, health and well-being.

6.2 In summary, it is important to acknowledge that the investment that the Council and its partners make in areas such as: Improving Education and Skills; Supporting Children and Families; Supporting Vulnerable People; Promoting the Health and Well-being of our residents; Maintaining Recreation, Leisure and Cultural Facilities, all have a significant impact on Halton's economic success.

6.3 The Council and its partners also work together to promote social inclusion so that all Halton's residents can share in its economic prosperity.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no risks arising from this report

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

8.1 None under the meaning of the Act.