

URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 19 September 2007 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Hignett (Chairman), Morley (Vice-Chairman), P. Blackmore, Bradshaw, E. Cargill, Leadbetter, Murray, Nolan, Rowe and Thompson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Sly

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: C. Halpin, D. Sutton, G. Collins, P. Cornthwaite, A. Villiers and P. Watts

Also in attendance: Councillors Polhill, Wright (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33) and Councillor Howard and 20 members of the public.

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

URB11 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20th June 2007 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

URB12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was noted that no public questions had been received, however, two members of the public had requested the opportunity to address the Board in relation to the Travellers Transit Site Provision report (Minute URB15 refers).

Due to the nature of the Item the Board agreed to waive Standing Orders 11 (ii) and (iii) to allow the two members of the public to address the Board.

Mr Bryant of Haddocks Woods Allotments Society addressed the Board to raise concerns in relation to recent illegal encampments and the tolerated site currently situated on the busway site.

Mr Cornes addressed the Board to raise concerns in relation to the Travellers Transit Site provision in the

Borough.

The Operational Director, Environmental and Regulatory Services and the Operational Director, Major Projects responded to each of the concerns raised and clarified a number of points in relation to the purpose of the report.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Board agreed to waive Standing Orders 11 (ii) and (iii) to allow the two members of the public to address the Board; and

(2) the concerns raised be noted.

URB13 TRAVELLERS' TRANSIT SITE PROVISION

The Board received a report explaining the approach taken in identifying sites and to assess their suitability for use as a travellers transit site.

In July 2007 the Executive Board considered a report relating to the provision of a 'transit site' in the Borough, an extract from the report was included for Members consideration.

The criteria applied to the sites assessed prior to the matter being considered by the Executive Board included a number of factors outlined within the report. As a consequence the sites shown in the table in the report were initially considered.

Councillor Howard addressed the Board, in his capacity as Ward Councillor. He raised a number of issues and concerns in relation to the report, but in particular he wished to emphasise that the report indicated that the decision to have a site had been made, however, this was not the case and as such there was a need to consider whether or not to have such a site at all. In addition it was noted that if the proposed site was agreed it would mean that between Halton and St. Helens 60 per cent of the required provision would be provided and that this burden should be more widely shared. He also raised an issue with the use of monies which were originally directed elsewhere and the on-going revenue implications, the need to clarify the policing and enforcement arrangements and the general inappropriateness of the location considered.

The Board raised a number of issues in relation to this being a national issue, the need to consider what other local authorities were planning and the need for more formalised discussions with the police.

RESOLVED: That the Board accept that finding and locating a transit site in Halton is difficult bearing in mind restricted options available, but would ask that before the Executive Board move forward they consider:

- (1) whether or not discussions should be held with adjacent authorities and whether or not sites in adjacent boroughs would be more appropriate for the use; and
- (2) that assurances are given that any future unauthorised encampments will be enforced against rigorously and that no further encampments be allowed to become established within the Borough.

URB14 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.

URB15 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

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

RESOLVED: That the quarterly monitoring reports be received.

URB16 FORMALISING RELATIONSHIPS BETWEEN THE URBAN RENEWAL PPB AND URBAN RENEWAL SSP

The Board was asked to consider a report which sought to encourage the PPB and the Urban Renewal Specialised Strategic Partnership (SSP) to move closer together. The report detailed the reasons why closer working would be beneficial and the format this working could take.

RESOLVED; That an invite be issued to the Urban Renewal SSP to attend two meetings during each Municipal Year to give an update on their progress.

URB17 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN PROGRESS REPORT

The Board was advised of the progress which had been made during 2006/7 on implementing the policies, strategies and programmes contained within Halton's second Local Transport Plan (LTP2) and the funding made available for Integrated transport initiatives.

In March 2006, Halton had submitted its second LTP to the Department for Transport (DfT) for approval. An extensive and detailed assessment then followed, which resulted in the Plan being upgraded as 'excellent'. This combined with a further grading of 'Excellent' for our LTP1 Delivery Plan resulted in the authority being placed within the top 13 local authorities within England (outside London) and the award of a 25% increase in funding in its Integrated Transport Block.

Throughout LTP1, detailed Annual Progress Reports were required to be submitted to the DfT each July, which were onerous both in terms of the local authority staff time required to prepare them and the DfT staff time required to undertake the necessary detailed assessments. The DfT has therefore reviewed the reporting of progress on LTP2 and has agreed to a much reduced report for 2006/07. A more comprehensive report would be required in July 2008, covering the first two years of delivery.

The report summarised the programme of works and initiatives undertaken in 2006/07 and details of the Integrated Transport Block allocations for each year covered by LTP2. In addition, the report describes the progress that had been made against the performance indicators contained within LTP2.

Unfortunately, the dates indicated by the DfT for the return on progress, precluded the information being reported to Board first. However, the information contained within this report formed the basis of the return.

Members were advised of the Local Transport Plan Capital Programmes and the performance during LTP2, in particular that 80 per cent of core indicators were on target and 77 per cent of all indicators were on target.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the progress made during 2006/7 be welcomed;
and
- (2) the Integrated Transport Block funding for LTP2 be noted.

URB18 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN SCHEME: BIRCHFIELD ROAD
QUALITY TRANSPORT CORRIDOR

The Board was informed of an amendment to the approved Birchfield Road Quality Transport Corridor Improvement Scheme.

The Board had previously been advised of the outcome of a Consultation Review Panel (CRP) held to discuss Birchfield Road Quality Transport Corridor Improvement Scheme. It was also reported that Ward Councillors and Officers were due to meet with a resident who had not attended the consultation to discuss his concerns about the scheme.

It was following that meeting, the CRP was reconvened and the Panel reviewed the scheme and previous decisions. It was recognised that the junction of Birchfield Road/Lockett Road and Victoria Avenue presented a number of challenges for all types of road user and that this would particularly be the case if traffic and pedestrian flows were to increase in the future.

It was agreed therefore that further traffic assessments be carried out at this junction in order to determine the most appropriate method of control. This may ultimately lead to a full traffic signalisation of Birchfield /Lockett/Victoria Avenue junction including pedestrian facilities if all road users were to be adequately and safely accommodated.

In the meantime, the pedestrian crossing would remain in its current location but would be upgraded to a 'Toucan' (pedestrian/ cycle) crossing. Also the footway at Victoria Avenue fronting No. 103 Birchfield Road would be widened as originally described in order to deliver the Council's sustainable transport aims for the Birchfield Quality Transport Corridor.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.00 p.m.