

URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 23 January 2008 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: C. Halpin, D. Sutton, M. Curtis, P. Esseen, C. Leyshon, P. McWade, M. Noone, A. Villiers and P. Watts

Also in attendance: Councillor Polhill (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

URB32 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 21 November 2007 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.

URB33 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.

URB34 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.

(NB: Councillor Hignett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item due to his employment with CIC and left the room during consideration of the item).

Action

COUNCILLOR MORLEY IN THE CHAIR

URB35 SERVICE PLANS 2008-2011

The Board received a report of Strategic Director, Environment which enabled Members to consider objectives and targets for services for the next three years.

It was noted that the Departmental Service Plans were currently being reviewed and rolled forward. The plans were due to go to the Executive Board for approval on 21 February 2008, at the same time as the draft budget. This would ensure that decisions on service planning would be linked to resource allocation.

The Board considered the draft reports for the Major Projects, Economic Regeneration, Environmental and Regulatory Services (part) and the Health and Community (part) departments.

RESOLVED: That Board Members pass any detailed comments that they may have on individual draft service plans to the relevant Operational Director by 31st January 2008.

COUNCILLOR HIGNETT IN THE CHAIR

URB36 CONTAMINATED LAND STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which considered the issues facing contaminated land and the proposed strategy for the next five years.

It was noted that contaminated land was a major issue for Halton and there was not many new developments, large or small, carried out without some form of remediation being necessary. Over the past three years over 35 hectares of land had been reclaimed.

The funding for remediation work was constantly changing, as were the outputs required to justify that funding. Recent schemes had utilised funding from a wide variety of sources, as detailed within the report. With this in mind it was hard to predict which future works would be eligible for funding.

The Board was advised that Council Officers were

currently working with English Partnerships to explore new ways of facilitating brownfield remediation. One idea being explored was the possibility of swapping green field development for brownfield remediation. This could be using a gearing of say 1 acre of green field released for the remediation of 2 acres of brownfield. The cost of the remediation would fall to the developer of the green field site and in Halton's case the remediation of the brownfield would bring green space back into the heart of communities. This idea would require a change in national planning policies and was likely to be controversial. However, the overall effect would be energy saving, beneficial to the environment and economy.

It was noted that this would work particularly well in Halton as we have a high proportion of brownfield sites that were not suitable for hard end use and very few sites for greenfield development. English Partnerships had recently indicated that they would like to trial this idea in Halton and were working with Council officers to try to facilitate this.

The Board was also advised of the statutory duties of the Council and the 2008/9 Work Programme, in particular the main piece of work due to start would hopefully be the remediation of the Golf Course. This was dependent on the release of funding from the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA). In addition other work would include assisting in the design and remediation of development sites within the EDZ (such as Venture Fields) and for the 3MG Strategic Freight Park.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and the issues facing contaminated land remediation be noted; and
- (2) the Strategy and action plan be endorsed for consultation.

URB37 CASTLEFIELDS TREE STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought endorsement of the Castlefields Tree Strategy. The report gave details of the key actions which were to:

- To promote the values and benefits of trees to the local community;
- To promote the management of trees in accordance with good arboriculture practice;

- To ensure that the tree and woodland coverage within the Castlefields Action Area was sustained for future generations; and
- To ensure that new development schemes within the Action Area make provision for retaining the best of existing trees, and replace any trees felled to a minimum 2:1 and where feasible a 3:1 ratio.

It was noted that the Tree Strategy had been prepared under the umbrella of the Castlefields Regeneration Programme which had been ongoing since 2003. Its preparation was a recommendation of the Biodiversity Appraisal for the Action Area carried out in 2005, which noted the particular threat to tree coverage posed by the physical regeneration projects.

The Board was advised that the strategy had been prepared by environmental consultants The Environment Partnership (TEP), in full collaboration with the Council's Landscape Services, the Major Projects Department and the two main Registered Social Landlords, who have responsibility for tree management in the Action Area, CDS Housing and Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT).

In addition, recognising the value of the area's extensive landscaped setting, the Strategy had served to document and raise awareness of the environmental value of trees and woodland. Castlefields natural assets provide an attractive and interesting setting, with known social and health benefits being derived from them.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Strategy, as a document purely reinforcing the best practice principles already promoted by the Council borough-wide, be endorsed by the Board and published as a document available to the public;
- (2) the recommendations contained within the strategy be endorsed, conveyed to all services and followed by all Council activities in the Castlefields Action Area; and
- (3) the public launch of the document be endorsed.

URB38 SANDYMOOR SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD) APPROVAL FOR STATUTORY PERIOD OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director,

Environment which informed the Members of the recent approval by the Executive Board Sub Committee for the publication of the draft Sandymoor Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for the purpose of a statutory period of public consultation.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and detailed comments concerning the detail of the draft SPD be submitted as representations during the forthcoming consultation exercise.

URB39 TRANSPORT ASSET MANAGEMENT PLAN 2007

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which reviewed the requirements for the production of a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP) and the work carried out to date in its preparation. It was noted that the TAMP would be submitted to the Executive Board with a recommendation of adoption and for approval to be granted to embark upon the valuation phase of the plan.

It was noted that well maintained local transport assets, including roads, footpaths, streetlights and street furniture were essential to the delivery of better transport and accessibility, and make an important contribution to the quality and liveability of public spaces.

The Board was advised that the current Local Transport Plan (LTP) committed the Council to the production of a Transport Asset Management Plan (TAMP), designed to demonstrate that it was managing its transport assets effectively. Extensive guidance on the preparation of asset management plans had been published and the TAMP for Halton presented with this report fully met this. There were several key areas in the TAMP including sections on assessing levels of service, future network changes, work programmes, risk management, lifecycle plans and future monitoring of the TAMP.

It was further advised that the TAMP was aligned with the Council's Corporate Plan and was supported by various management and operational procedures contained within the Highway Maintenance Strategy. The key information which would be included in the TAMP was detailed within the report.

RESOLVED: That the TAMP be noted.

URB40 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN SETTLEMENT 2008/09

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which informed Members of the announcement of the three year Local Transport Settlement (2008/9 – 2010/11).

It was noted that in previous years Local Transport Plan (LTP) funding had been dependent, in part, on annual assessments on the progress transport authorities had made on the delivery of their LTPs. New guidance issued recently by the Department for Transport (DfT) had confirmed a much less rigorous reporting requirement, based on a more collaborative approach between the DfT and local authorities to enable weaknesses in progress to be jointly addressed and strengths built upon. In addition the guidance made it clear that the levels of funding allocated throughout the remainder of LTP2 were not dependent on progress made.

The DfT had also indicated that it was vital that local authorities, along with Government Offices and local partners, incorporate local transport issues adequately and sufficiently in local area agreements.

The Board was advised that the November 2007 settlement letter confirmed the LTP Integrated Transport Capital Block allocations for the period 2008/9-2010/11 as being unchanged from that previously indicated in the December 2006 letter, further details of which were included in the report. In addition the allocations for the integrated transport capital block, highways maintenance capital block, PRN bridge strengthening and maintenance capital allocation, road safety grant and detrunked roads maintenance grant were outlined within the report.

RESOLVED; That the 2008/9 – 2010/2011 Local Transport Settlement be noted.

URB41 WORK PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought consideration of progress on the 2007/8 work programme and to consider possible suggestions for the 2008/9 work programme.

It was noted that the report detailed three suggestions;

- Housing Growth Point (Runcorn Docks);
- Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry

(Joint Group with Employment, Learning and Skills PPB); and

- Implications of de-linking the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

However it was now felt that the Housing Growth Point would not be appropriate topic due developments in the process.

RESOLVED; That

- (1) the following topics be included in the 2008/9 Work Programme:

- Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry (Joint Group with Employment, Learning and Skills PPB); and
- Implications of de-linking the Silver Jubilee Bridge; and

- (2) details of the Topic Briefs subsequently be agreed by the Chair and Vice Chair of the Board in consultation with the Operational Director, Major Projects.

Strategic Director,
Environment

Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.