

URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board held on Wednesday, 18 June 2008 at Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Leadbetter and Polhill (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33).

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: C. Halpin, I. Bisset, G. Collins, M. Curtis, D. Tregaea, H. Baxter, H. Coen and R. Peak

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
URB48 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 th March 2008 having been printed and circulated were signed as a correct record.	
URB49 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
URB50 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.	
URB51 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS	
The Board considered a report regarding the Fourth	

Quarter Monitoring Reports for the Highways & Transportation, Environment & Regulatory Services, Cultural & Leisure, Major Projects, Economic Regeneration and Health and Partnerships Services.

Arising from the discussion reference was made to a number of issues including:

- the change in requirement in relation to pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people;
- the prioritisation and completion of planning documents; and
- the progress being made on the Canal Quarter project.

RESOLVED: That the quarterly monitoring reports be received.

URB52 ANNUAL REPORT

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report for the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board for 2007/08.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

URB53 THE 'HEART OF HALTON' PLAQUE SCHEME

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment on the 'Heart of Halton' Plaque Scheme, which set out the proposals to establish the scheme.

It was noted that Halton had many famous places, people and landmark events, all of which have in some way shaped Halton and the towns and parishes in the Borough. Currently there was no one record of the achievements in a celebratory scheme. The proposals would be similar to the Civic Trust's Blue Plaque scheme and sought to identify and celebrate where Halton's achievers, people and activities took place or lived.

It was further noted that to compliment the plaques, online web based maps would be developed highlighting the location of the plaques and what they would signify. This would also be further supported from time to time with leaflets or other publications.

In addition it was felt that the plaques would offer a cost effective way of developing heritage trails using the

Web based maps, or for providing historical information to residents and visitors to the Borough.

As the proposal was at the exploratory stage it was noted that a further report detailing the costs, insurance maintenance and legal implications of such a scheme would be brought before the Board at a future date.

The Board discussed the list of examples which was attached to the report as Appendix 1 and suggested a number of possible additions.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the comments as detailed above on the proposal to establish the Heart of Halton scheme be noted;
- (2) Members of the Board contact the relevant Officer with their suggestions for additions to the list at Appendix 1; and
- (3) a further report setting out the costs and operational requirements for implementing the scheme be submitted to a future meeting of the Board, be agreed.

URB54 TOPIC ISSUES WORK PROGRAMME 2008-9

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought approval to 2 of the draft topic briefs, which had previously been agreed at the Board's meeting of 23rd January 2008, namely 'Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry' and implications of de-linking the Silver Jubilee Bridge' (SJB).

Three topics had been chosen for 2008/9 and it was noted that the report and findings of the topic group for 'Supported Housing' was expected during 2008/9.

At the last meeting of the Board the Strategic Director, Environment was invited to give further information in relation to the 'Invest to Save' biomass bid, which had been submitted as part of a work topic on 'Raising Additional Revenue from Existing Services' on the Board's Work Programme in 2007/8. The Strategic Director, Environment attended the meeting and gave further information on the bid as requested.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the topic briefs for or 'Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry' and implications of de-linking the Silver Jubilee Bridge' be agreed; and
- (2) the membership of the Topic Teams be agreed as follows:

Topic Group	Membership
Implications of De-linking SJB	Councillor Morley (Chair) Councillor Nolan Councillor Balmer Councillor Hodgkinson
Workforce and Skills for the Logistics Industry	Councillor Hignett (Chair) Councillor Leadbetter Councillor Rowe

URB55 IMPROVING OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY; ACTION PLAN 2008-9

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought to bring attention to the elements of the 'Action Plan 2008/9 for Overview and Scrutiny' relevant to the Board.

It was noted that Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) was intended to be an independent, Member-led process. In 2007-8 a series of initiatives were undertaken to progress the way in which Halton Borough Council undertakes this activity and these were detailed within the report.

It was further noted that as a consequence a Draft Action Plan was drawn up and circulated informally amongst Members including Members of this Board in March 2008. The Action Plan was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The elements relevant to this Board were set out in a summary table, together with comments and/or actions either implemented or required. It was be noted that the nature of the scope of this Board was such that it had always exercised flexibility in its approach to policy and scrutiny matters and it was agreed that this approach would be maintained.

The Board suggested that further investigation of the

most effective way of notifying Members of the publication of the Forward Plan be investigated. In addition the Board reiterated that it felt that policies should be submitted to the Board for scrutiny prior to being agreed at by the Executive Board or its Sub Committees.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the recommendations relevant to this Board set out in the Action Plan for 2008/9 for Overview and Scrutiny be noted; and
- (2) the actions set out in the Action Plan for 2008/9 for Overview and Scrutiny be agreed.

URB56 RESIDENTS PETITION RE ST MARIE'S CHURCH, WIDNES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which informed the Board of the receipt of a petition from a group of parishioners from St Maries in Widnes called the 'Friends of St Maries 1864', in relation to the closure of the Church and which gave an update on the Council's response.

It was noted that St Marie's Church closed in early January 2007 following a decision by the Archdiocese of Liverpool that it was not economic to remain open due to congregation size and maintenance costs. Since this date the building had been vacant and 'mothballed' by the Archdiocese of Liverpool. Worship continues for the Parish in the former school canteen building, now the 'Parish Hall' opposite the Church.

The actions taken by the Council over the past eighteen months were outlined in detail within the report. 'The Friends of St Marie's 1864' continues to meet but currently they do not feel there was sufficient need for a 'community centre' in the area and do not want to pursue setting up a community trust at this stage. They were, however, looking to continue as a pressure group, asking the Archdiocese to re-open the Church for worship.

In response to the petition it was proposed that a written response be sent to the petitioners informing them that the Council notes their petition and supports them in their aims and objectives.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council's support for the petitioners aims and objectives detailed within report be noted; and
- (2) the Petitioners be informed of the Board's support.

URB57 ASTMOOR BUSINESS IMPROVEMENT DISTRICT
PETITION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which informed the Board that a petition had been received from a number of businesses concerning the Astmoor Industrial Estate Business Improvement District (BID).

It was noted that the proposal to establish a BID for Astmoor had been formulated over the past year and cumulated in a BID ballot, which received 72% of the companies who turned out voting yes.

The Astmoor BID formally commenced on 1 April 2008 for a 5 year period. All businesses in occupation of premises within the Astmoor BID area on 1st April 2008, or property owners where premises were vacant, were liable for the Astmoor BID Levy. All parties liable for the Astmoor BID Levy were sent a bill dated 28th March 2008, which was due for payment on 30th April 2008.

A petition was received on 24th April 2008 marked for the attention of the Business Parks Officer, which was signed by thirteen businesses located on Astmoor Industrial Estate. With the exception of three companies, all the businesses were located on Arkwright Court, the area of the estate containing some of the smallest units on the estate.

The petition stated:

"We the undersigned tenants of Arkwright Court, Astmoor, Runcorn do not approve of the levy we are being charged for the Business Improvement District (BID)

We are all small business working on a very tight financial budget and we are unable to pay this levy that Halton Borough Council is imposing on us.

Eventually there will be no businesses left on Astmoor for Halton Borough Council to collect any monies from.

We all think it is unjust and unfair."

In response the Business Parks Officer wrote to all companies that signed the petition. The letter stated that the Astmoor BID was designed to benefit **all** businesses on Astmoor, regardless of the size of the business and the nature of the operations. All the new services and infrastructure that would be delivered through the Astmoor BID's three themes for improvement (safe & secure, image enhancements and co-ordinated estate) would be available to every business on the estate.

The Council was in the process of spending the £115,000 council contribution to the Astmoor BID. The funding was being used to purchase much of the capital equipment required by the BID, as detailed within the report

Coupled with the infrastructure, there would be a range of new security services introduced, these were also detailed within the report.

The Council had no option, therefore, but to seek payment from all parties liable for the BID Levy as a contribution towards the cost of delivering the Astmoor BID Business Plan. It was further noted that three of the businesses who had signed the petition had now paid the BID levy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the implementation of the Astmoor BID be supported; and
- (2) the petitioners be notified that the Board does not endorse the petition.

URB58 REVIEW OF TRAVEL POLICY AND PROCEDURE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which provided an update in the proposed changes to the Travel Policy and Procedure for the Health and Community Directorate.

In February 2007, the Directorate consulted widely on proposals for changes to charges for social care services. All service users/carers were sent a copy of a survey form to complete and return and eight open forums were held in locations across the Borough. The results of the survey were considered on charging for social care services and recommendations for changes to charges for social care services were made including the introduction of a charge for transport provision. Following the consultation, for the

first time, a charge of 50p a trip with a maximum charge of £2 per day/£8 per week was introduced in 2007.

As a consequence of introducing charges for transport it was now necessary to review the Travel Policy, Procedure and Practice. Currently an average 520 service users received transport services from Transport Coordination each month. Service continued to change and expand due to the re-design of the provision of day services, which had led to wider dispersal of daytime activities including gardening, catering, crafts and drama across 14 centres. Given increased transport usage per day with day centre modernisation, demonstrable improvements in service quality, previous consultation responses and the need to cover a greater proportion of the service/petrol costs and assumed budgetary savings targets; increases to transport charges were approved by full Council on 5th March 2008 and the Executive Board Sub Committee on 20th March 2008 as set out in the report.

A number of changes to the Travel Policy and Procedure were proposed in the following areas and were outlined within the report.

It was noted that in November 2008 a review would be taking place on the proposed changes to the Travel Policy and procedure for the Health and Community Directorate.

The Board emphasised the importance of policies being submitted to the Board for consideration prior to being agreed by the Executive Board and Council.

Furthermore the Board discussed mobility vehicles, the quality of the service being provided and the investment made in new vehicles. The Board thanked the driver for bringing a new bus for them to view.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the review of Travel Policy and Procedure be noted; and
- (2) an update report be submitted to the Board in November 2008.

URB59 THE DEVELOPMENT OF A PROPOSITION BASED PR AND MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO PROMOTE THE HALTON LOGISTICS SECTOR

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which considered the development of a proposition based public relations (PR) and Marketing campaign to promote the Halton Logistics sector.

The report considered the current and future capacity of the logistics sector locally and based upon that assessment, proposed the campaign. The report further detailed the scale of the logistics sector, the capacity for growth, the factors that needed to be considered when developing the Halton logistics brand and what the next steps would be.

RESOLVED: That the approach suggested on the development of a logistics focused, proposition based marketing and PR campaign be agreed, as set out in 5.2 of the report.

Meeting ended at 8.30 p.m.