

## ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 16 February 2022 at the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), Fry (Vice-Chair), Ball, D. Cargill, Dyer, Gilligan, S. Hill, Logan, McDermott, Stretch and Thornton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, T. Gibbs, I Boyd and J. Unsworth

Also in attendance: 3 Members of the public and Councillor Wall

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

*Action*

#### EUR27 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2020 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.

#### EUR28 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

In accordance with Standing Order No.34 (9), the following public questions were submitted to the Board by email:

#### **QUESTION 1 - Mr Millea – Minute No 30**

Why was the temporary cremator allowed to run unattended overnight on Monday 31 January 2022 during gale force winds which could have resulted in catastrophic incident and what was the result of the incident investigation as my complaint re this has not yet been addressed by the Council.

#### **RESPONSE:**

The temporary crematory was not knowing left active during the night/early hours of Monday 31 January and Tuesday 1 February.

The fact that it was active was only discovered by Council staff at 07:30am on Tuesday 1 February when they arrived on site and discovered that the unit had not shut down correctly and was running in idle.

We have put measures in place to ensure that this does not happen again.

The cremator software has been updated so that it will automatically shut down after one hour of being in idle mode.

As a further safeguard, the gas is shut off at the end of each day.

**SUPPLEMENTARY QUESTION:**

When and on what date is the “temporary” cremator going to be removed, and if no firm date is available – why not It should be an agenda item on this committee meeting until the temp cremator is removed?

Why the temporary cremator is sited less than 50 metres from the local housing which is in breach of the Government regulations for siting and positioning of 182 metres minimum *17. The Cremation Act 1902 (Section 5) provides that no crematorium shall be constructed nearer to any dwelling house than 200 yards (182.880m)\*, except with the consent in writing of the owner, lessee and occupier of such house, nor within 50 yards (45.720m) of any public highway, nor in the consecrated part of a burial ground.*

**RESPONSE:**

The installation of the new replacement cremator is scheduled to take place in June 2022 and after it is installed and fully commissioned, we will be in a position to consider its removal.

Due to factors beyond our control, we are not currently in a position to advise how long the installation and commissioning period may be.

Arising from the discussion, it was agreed that an update report would be provided to the next Board meeting if the temporary cremator had not been removed.

**QUESTION 2 – Mr Ferguson – Minute No 32**

With reference to the Annual Road Traffic Collision and

Casualty report, section 4.3 Halton's 2021 Programme.

I applaud the Council's efforts in working with Cheshire Police to improve the safety of pedestrians, particularly around schools. The 'Show you care, park elsewhere' scheme is especially welcomed.

However, as noted in the Halton 2000 Traffic Collisions Review, poor driver behaviour and the difficulty in educating drivers remains a serious concern.

The Halton Castle Ward includes 5 Primary schools, serving over 700 children. St Mary's Primary feels the need to install parking buddies to remind drivers to park safely, and Halton Castle Police regularly have to take enforcement action around St Mary's, The Brow and Bridgewater Park Primary Schools. Local residents close to Astmoor and St Augustine's Primary schools have also raised concerns to me about dangerous parking around those schools.

No home in Halton Castle is more than 10 minutes-walk from the nearest Primary school, and over a third of our residents do not have access to a car. This combined with the safety concerns noted earlier, indicate that Halton Castle would be the perfect place to use as a testing ground for School Streets.

The School Streets programme brings a collective approach to road safety around schools. It brings together the school, parents and children, local residents, the Police and the Local Authority, to develop practical and local solutions that reduce or eliminate road traffic around schools at the start and end of the day. As well as road safety benefits, headteachers report that children are much more alert and their learning experience improves when they walk, scoot or ride to school.

Will the Council consider implementing School Streets in Halton Castle, using this as a testing ground for the possible wider implementation across the Borough, if the benefits can be demonstrated?

**RESPONSE:**

Regarding the possibility of trialling a School Street initiative in the Halton Castle Ward.

Firstly, the possibility of installing a School Street at a Primary School in Halton was explored recently and was discounted for a number of reasons. Halton Borough

Council, unlike the overwhelming majority of Local Authorities, does not operate Civil Parking Enforcement and we are totally reliant on Cheshire Police to undertake all enforcement action. As such, we do not operate residents' only parking schemes anywhere in the Borough (Cheshire Police are unwilling to enforce these restrictions) and given that some form of residents' permit is a requirement of any new Traffic Management Order, it is difficult to envisage how such a scheme could operate in Halton.

We are also constrained by a lack of resources and from a financial perspective, the use of rising bollards and ANPR cameras is not something we could fund from existing budgets. We also don't have sufficient staff to deploy at School Street sites to install temporary signage and barriers. Likewise, the school where this type of initiative was explored indicated that they do not have enough staff available to put out and take in temporary traffic barriers, or space to store them. I imagine that this would be a similar picture at other schools.

Looking at the collision statistics for the five Primary Schools in Halton Castle, there have been no recorded injury collisions on the approach roads to four of the schools in the previous five years. There has been one recorded injury collision (a slight) on Kingshead Close, adjacent to Astmoor Primary School. This collision occurred in January 2017, at 12:49pm and not during the school run.

#### EUR29 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

#### EUR30 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 OF 2021/22

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 3 of 2021/22.

The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

- Development and Investment Services;
- Highways and Transportation, Logistics and Development Services;
- Waste and Environmental Improvement and Open Space Services; and
- Housing Strategy.

Arising from the discussion it was agreed that a report on the impact of lockdown measures on local centres would be brought to a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the third quarter performance monitoring reports be received and noted.

#### EUR31 RECEIPT OF PETITION - TO AMALGAMATE BUS STOPS ON HALE ROAD, HALE BANK

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Economy, Community and Resources, which advised on a petition received from the residents of Halebank, requesting the amalgamation of bus stops in the Halebank area with a view to removing two bus stops located on Hale Road. The petition had been signed by 152 residents.

The petition suggested that by removing two bus stops and the 82a service calling at an alternative bus stop at Pickerings Road terminus would be more beneficial for passengers and improve traffic flow in the area. However, removing the bus stops would increase the number of road crossings for passengers. In addition the bus operator had also expressed concern that removing the bus stops would increase the turning manoeuvres accessing and egressing the proposed alternative bus stop at Pickerings Road. There was also concern that journeys may be delayed especially in the peak periods. The operator had indicated that they had not experienced any issues whilst observing the two bus stops and would be opposed to the removal. Also if the operator chose not to service the proposed alternative bus stop in the petition this would result in passengers having to walk a greater distance to the bus stops at Foundary Lane.

It was noted that the bus stops had been in place in the current location for a significant number of years with no incidents or issues reported.

The Board also considered a statement from Mr Maxwell on behalf of Halebank Parish Council, in support of the petition. The statement had been emailed to Board members prior to the meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the petition be noted;
- 2) following consideration of the request in the petition to remove the two bus stops on Hale Road and also consideration of the concerns of the bus operator and that the operator is opposed to their removal, the Board agreed that the bus stops should remain in place and operational; and
- 3) the local Ward members be informed of the outcome of the Board's consideration of the petition.

#### EUR32 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION & CASUALTY REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which gave details of road traffic collision and casualty numbers within the Borough.

The Board was advised that Appendix A to the report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in the year 2020, and compared these figures with those from previous years. There was a considerable reduction in the number of people slightly injured as compared to 2019 with the number of those killed or seriously injured also decreasing by a similar margin.

Of those killed or seriously injured, the number of adults decreased by 11. However, due to the low numbers recorded annually in Halton, this number did fluctuate from year to year.

Overall, given that the country was in lockdown for large parts of 2020, the number of road traffic collisions was always going to fall, as traffic on roads fell to levels not seen for many decades. However when comparing Halton's 2020 road traffic collision record with neighbouring authorities in Cheshire or the Liverpool City Region, the reduction in casualty numbers compared favourably.

In addition, the report highlighted the 2021 programme of work which would cover road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training and publicity and included an outline of the work of the Road Safety Team.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and
- 2) the programme of road safety collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

*Meeting ended at 7.45 p.m.*