

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 13 November 2024 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), Hughes, K. Loftus, L. Nolan and Ryan

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Hutchinson, Skinner, Thornton and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, T. Gibbs, I. Dignall, J. Farmer, I. Jones and I. Saxby

Also in attendance: H. Jenkins (Liverpool City Region Combined Authority)

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EUR12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
EUR13 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2024 having been circulated were signed as a correct record.	
EUR14 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.	
EUR15 LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN 4 (LIVERPOOL CITY REGION COMBINED AUTHORITY)	
Huw Jenkins from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority attended the meeting to present a report to the Board, which provided an overview of the draft	

Local Transport Plan 4 (LTP4) and the consultation process.

Members of the Board were advised that the aim of the Plan was to provide transport choices that would be safe, inclusive, affordable and low carbon. It was acknowledged that there were gaps in the current transport network that needed to be challenged and the Plan would seek to address those. In order to decarbonise transport by 2040 we would need to significantly change the way we travel and transport freight and goods.

The draft Plan included five goals and eight core principles, and these were set out in section 4.4 of the report. The Plan also included details of the policy approaches and proposed interventions across the range of transport challenges. The consultation on proposed plans opened on 3 October 2024 and would close on 15 December 2024.

Members of the Board noted and discussed the report and subsequently the following additional information was noted:

- shopping habits had changed in recent years with more people buying goods online and consideration needed to be given to alternative ways to deliver those goods, for example, electric/greener vans or e-bikes;
- consideration to be given to banning petrol or diesel delivery vans in city centres. Instead goods could be delivered to a consolidation centre outside of a city centre and then delivered by e-bikes or greener vehicles. This however would require help from the Government in terms of funding and legal changes; and
- the plan does not advocate user charges (cleaner emission charges) due to the risk of alienating itself to other nearby areas, such as Manchester or Skelmersdale.

On behalf of the Board, the Chair thanked Huw Jenkins for his attendance and said they looked forward to further updates on the Plan in the future.

RESOLVED: that the Board note the Local Transport Plan 4 and its associated consultation process.

EUR16 HALTON LOCAL CYCLING AND WALKING INFRASTRUCTURE PLAN

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration which provided an update on the recent completion of a Halton specific Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) document. Members also received a presentation which highlighted the main points of the report and demonstrated some examples of travel patterns, proposed cycle networks and walking routes round the Borough.

Members were reminded that the Liverpool City Region LCWIP document was produced in 2019 and approved by the Combined Authority. This document was presented to this Board on 26 February 2020 and since then, several schemes identified in the report had either been completed or were in the process of being taken forward, including:

- Runcorn-Daresbury – completed;
- Runcorn Busway - to be delivered in phases; Shopping City to Runcorn East Station/Whitehouse near to completion;
- Silver Jubilee Bridge to Sandy Lane/Knowsley boundary – completed; and
- Wilmere Lane/Birchfield Road – subject to ongoing design/consultation and funding.

The LCWIP sets out the structure and strategic direction to allow the development and delivery of a planned active travel network for Halton over a 10 year period for its residents, workers and visitors. The routes would be designed to offer safe and convenient alternatives for walking and cycling and had been prioritised based on elements such as connectivity to new developments; existing population; employment and services; air quality issues and deliverability. The LCWIP would also help deliver some of the local priorities such as a reduction in transport emissions and health improvement.

Members of the Board discussed the proposals and following discussions, the additional information below was noted:

- Members would be provided with more detailed information in due course which would demonstrate how proposals would look for each ward in the Borough;
- use of cycle lanes were observed by sensors and

- would continue to be monitored;
- Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones suggested that it would be helpful if routes could be signposted; it was confirmed that a LCR standard was being adopted for signage and plans on the website would be updated as schemes come forward; and
 - scheme funding was subject to further announcements, potentially in Spring 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) endorses the Halton LCWIP (which comprises the Halton Borough Wide LCWIP and East Runcorn Connectivity Programme documents); and
- 2) notes the prioritised list of potential schemes outlined in the report.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EUR17 DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT STATISTICAL UPDATE 2023

The Board received a report on the latest road safety statistics released by the Department for Transport (DfT) through the publication of the 2023 Comprehensive Annual Report.

The report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2023 and compared these figures with those from previous years, which showed a small rise in overall casualty numbers. This was in contrast to the national picture where there had been a slight decrease and traffic flow had been comparable for the first time since the pandemic.

Members noted that Halton had achieved its performance targets as set by the DfT; there were 158 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, one more than the previous year. These incidents had resulted in 195 casualties, a 4% increase on the 2022 figure but 22% below 2019, when traffic levels were comparable.

In addition, the report highlighted an update on the work the Road Safety Team had undertaken in 2024/25 which would continue to cover road traffic collision reduction schemes, road safety education, training and publicity as well as engaging with Cheshire Police to target effective enforcement action.

The report also outlined information on the following road safety initiatives:

- Gyrotray Red Light Camera;
- Speed Camera A562 (Speke Road);
- “Smiley” Speed Indicative Device/Sign (SiDs);
- Mobile Speed Camera Sites;
- Collision Sites;
- Speed Limit Reduction;
- Safer Active Travel;
- Road Safety Audits;
- Education; and
- Halton 2025/26 Programme.

Members of the Board noted the report and suggested that it would be useful to do a press release on Halton’s achievements on meeting performance targets.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and
- 2) the 2024/25 strategy of road safety schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EUR18 PETITION FOR REGENT ROAD, WIDNES TO BECOME ONE-WAY

The Board considered a report from the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided information on the petition received containing 43 signatures requesting that Regent Road be made a one-way street as a measure to reduce traffic flows and increase public safety. The lead petitioner had been informed that their request would be considered at this meeting and it was noted that they were not in attendance.

Members were reminded that in respect of petitions, their role was to receive a report on any petitions received by the Council relating to their respective area and/or any action taken or proposed to be taken by the Executive (or Portfolio Holder, or an Officer acting under delegated powers).

It was noted that at the time the petition was received, a section of Appleton Village, between Regent Road and Deacon Road had been closed for an extended period in July and August, to allow for emergency utility works and this had impacted on traffic to migrate onto adjacent roads, including Regent Road.

Following receipt of the petition, the report described the steps that were put in place to monitor activity on Regent Road and surrounding areas, and what the findings were as a result of those investigations.

It was also noted that a one-way street could only be imposed as part of a legal Traffic Regulation Order (TRO) which would require statutory consultation with various agencies, including emergency services. Members were advised that Cheshire Police had stated that they would not support a one-way TRO for the following reasons:

- vehicle speeds would increase as there would be no opposing flow of traffic;
- roads in the immediate vicinity would see an increase in traffic; and
- response times for emergency services would increase.

Members were advised that based on the findings of traffic monitoring investigations and advice from Cheshire Police, there was no recommended action.

RESOLVED: That the request set out in the petition not be supported for the reasons given in the report.

EUR19 ENVIRONMENTAL FUND UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the expenditure of the Environmental Fund.

Planning permission for the Runcorn Thermal Power Station (TPS) Plant was granted in September 2008. The Plant was subject to a legal agreement, under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990. The legal agreement contained a provision that the owner of the Plant agreed to pay the Council an annual lump sum payment for every tonne of fuel received and processed.

The fund had been in operation since 2015 and to date had generated £6,909,919.76. The projects that had benefitted from the fund were set out in Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the wide range of projects that had benefitted from the fund as set out in Appendix 1 be noted.

EUR20 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT FOR
QUARTER 2 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Reports for quarter 2 of 2024/25.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2024/25 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans for the various function areas reported to the Board as detailed below:

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

The report 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.

Board Members were asked to note the budget reporting position and forecast which indicated that the Directorate services were on track to be delivered within budget.

RESOLVED: That quarter 2 performance management reports be received and noted.

Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.