

## **ENVIRONMENT AND REGENERATION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board on Wednesday, 12 November 2025 at the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Woolfall (Chair), P. Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chair), V. Hill, McDermott, Nelson and L. Nolan

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Hutchinson and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, S. Burrows, I. Saxby and A. Plant

Also in attendance: J. Hayes, D. Lyon and M Bennett – Mersey Gateway Crossings Board

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

	<i>Action</i>
EUR19 MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 September 2025, having been circulated, were signed as a correct record.</p>
EUR20 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.</p>
EUR21 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	<p>The Board considered the Minutes of the meetings of the Executive Board relevant to the Environment and Regeneration Policy and Performance Board.</p>
	<p>RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.</p>
EUR22 MERSEY GATEWAY PROJECT	
	<p>The Board received a report and accompanying presentation in relation to the achievement of the seven strategic objectives of the Mersey Gateway Project.</p>

The Mersey Gateway Bridge opened to traffic on 14 October 2017 and on the eighth anniversary, almost 190 million crossings had been made. The Silver Jubilee Bridge and MGB had been operating concurrently for the past 4.5 years. The Council established the Project with the intention of delivering seven strategic objectives, which had all been achieved, and these were outlined in the report and in the presentation.

The Project had delivered major transport improvements and an 80% reduction in traffic using the Silver Jubilee Bridge, which allowed it to be freed up for local use. This had led to social benefits to communities in and around Halton which included improvements to public transport facilities across the river, walking and cycling facilities and health and improved road safety. As a result of reduced air pollution, the Air Quality Management Areas in Halton were revoked in November 2023.

The Board were also advised on the work of the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust which had seen the following achievements:

- creating and managing new wildlife habitats;
- delivering environmental improvement works;
- conducting environmental monitoring to assess bird populations; and
- community engagement such as work with local schools.

It was agreed that the presentation would be shared with all members of the Council.

RESOLVED: That the report and presentation be noted.

#### EUR23 ANNUAL ROAD TRAFFIC COLLISION AND CASUALTY REPORT

The Board received a report from the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, which provided the latest road safety statistics released by the Department for Transport (DfT) through the publication of the 2024 Comprehensive Annual Report.

The report set out full details of the numbers of traffic collisions and casualties in 2024 and compared these figures with those from previous years, which showed a substantial fall in overall casualty numbers. This 16% reduction compared very favourably with the national picture

where there had been a 4% decrease.

Members noted that Halton had achieved its performance targets as set by the DfT; there were 123 road traffic collisions involving personal injury within Halton, 35 fewer than the previous year. The latest figures (2024) for Halton showed a welcome substantial fall in overall casualty numbers, following marginal annual increases post-Covid.

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:

- Gyrotary Red Light Camera;
- “Smiley” Speed Indicative Device/Sign (SiDs);
- Mobile Speed Camera Sites;
- Collision Sites;
- Safer Active Travel;
- Education; and
- Halton 2025/26 Strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the overall progress made on casualty reduction in Halton over the past decade be noted; and
- 2) the 2026/27 strategy of road safety schemes and road safety education, training and publicity be endorsed.

#### EUR24 PEST CONTROL – UPDATE ON FEES AND CHARGES

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which provided an update on the Pest Control Service following the implementation of a charge for rat treatments in April 2025.

In February 2025, the Board agreed to introduce a new fee to recover the full cost of rat treatments on domestic properties. However, residents who were in receipt of Council Tax reduction benefits would be exempt. The proposal was ultimately agreed by Council as part of the budget setting process for 2025/26.

Since the charge had been reduced the number of treatments delivered by the service had reduced and the service would not achieve its anticipated income target. It was noted that the potential negative consequences of the charge outlined in the report to the Board in February had not materialised. These included an increase in rat activity and an increase in enforcement cases for the Environmental Protection team.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board endorse the proposal to continue with the current means tested charges for rat treatments. This includes the provision of free treatments for residents in receipt of Council Tax reduction benefit.

#### EUR25 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 £7,936,270.74. The projects that had benefitted from the fund were set out in Appendix 1.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board notes the report and the wide range of projects that had benefitted from the fund, as set out in Appendix 1.

#### EUR26 PROGRESS OF THE PLANNING POLICY TEAM'S LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME (LDS)

The Board received a report which set out the work of the Planning Policy Team's progress to date on the following projects:

- Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD)
- Social Value in Planning SPD
- House Extensions SPD
- Call for Sites Exercise

It was noted that consultation on the House Extension

and Transport Accessibility SPDs would take place in mid November. Whilst consultation around the Social Value in Planning SPD would take place in early 2026. It was anticipated that the SPDs would be submitted to Executive Board for approval in 2026.

The Board was advised that the Call for Sites exercise was a process of gathering information and assisted the Council to understand any potentially available sites for future development. At the request of a large landowner the Council had extended the deadline for this exercise to 5 December to allow them to submit a site to the Council.

**RESOLVED:** That the report is noted and Officers proceed with the necessary consultation to endorse Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD).

#### EUR27 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2025/26

The Board received the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 of 2025/26.

The key priorities for development of improvement in 2025/26 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 reports 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.

**RESOLVED:** That the quarter 2 performance management report be received and noted.

*Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.*