

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 13 December 2018 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), D. Cargill, Harris, R. Hignett, Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor S. Hill

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, T. Gibbs, E. O'Meara and S. McDonald

Also in attendance: One member of the press and Audrey Williamson, Independent Chair of the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB62 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 URGENT BUSINESS

The Board was advised that a matter had arisen which required immediate attention by the Board (Minute EXB 76 refers), therefore, pursuant to Section 100 B (4) and 100 E, and in order to safeguard the land at HBC Field for the developer, the Board ruled that this item would be considered at this meeting.

EXB63 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 October 2018 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB64 HALTON SAFEGUARDING ADULTS BOARD ANNUAL REPORT 2017 -2018

The Board received the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) Annual Report for 1 April 2017 to 31 March

Action

2018, which was attached at Appendix A. The report was presented by Audrey Williamson, Chair of the HSAB.

It was noted that the Annual Report fulfilled one of the Safeguarding Adults Board's three core statutory duties.

It was reported that all safeguarding partners had been invited to submit an annual summary of their work activity. The focus of work activity addressed HSAB's priorities as identified from the 2016/17 Annual Report, Performance Framework and Strategic Plan (2016/2018), in addition to acknowledging local and national safeguarding adults emerging issues / trends / policies throughout the year.

The report provided a summary analysis of the data gathered from Halton Borough Council's Safeguarding Adults Collection and highlighted what this information meant for informing the work priorities for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB65 SHARED LIVES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, on a new approach to the delivery of the Adult Placement Service in Halton, called Shared Lives.

The Board was advised that Shared Lives offered people an alternative and highly flexible form of accommodation and/or care or support. The care and accommodation was provided by individuals, couples or families in the local community. Shared Lives schemes were an alternative to traditional kinds of care, such as care homes.

It was noted that the funding model set out in the report, was based on guidance and was designed to ensure that Shared Lives Carers providing long term accommodation and support, were fairly and appropriately remunerated so as to ensure service sustainability.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) approves the proposed scheme.

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HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB66 2017 - 2018 PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT - KEEPING HAPPY AND HEALTHY IN SCHOOL

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, on the development of the Public Health Annual Report (PHAR) 2018 for Halton.

The Board was advised that the PHAR was the Director of Public Health's independent assessment on the health of the local population. It was reported that for 2017/18 the PHAR focused on Keeping Happy and Healthy in School. This topic highlighted the key priority of Improved Child Development, in particular, tackling social, emotional and physical activity. The report included a short video film which examined how these issues were approached within two local schools through Halton's Healthy Schools Programme.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted and recommendations supported.

(N.B. Councillor Ron Hignett declared that he was a member of the Town Team, and as such, to avoid any perception of bias, he took no part in the debate or decision on the following item of business)

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB67 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the receipt of two applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.

The Board was advised that the Council became responsible for meeting the full cost of all mandatory and discretionary rate relief from 1 April 2017, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.

Details of two applications received were set out in the report. One was from a not-for-profit organisation that worked with young people in the community, based in Widnes. The second was from a registered charity also based in Widnes, which automatically received 80% mandatory relief with a 15% discretionary top-up rate relief

from the Council. Members considered and discussed the individual merits of each application.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Discretionary Rate Relief of 90% be awarded to Power in Partnership Ltd, from 4 January 2016 until 31 March 2022; and
- 2) the application for an additional 5% Discretionary Rate Relief from Widnes Sea Cadet Corps in respect of their premises in Cliffe Street, Widnes, be refused.

EXB68 COUNCIL TAX SECTION 13A DISCOUNT POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on a proposed amendment to the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy.

It was reported that over recent years, the Council had experienced a significant increase in the number of children coming into care, resulting in pressures on availability of foster care placements in the Borough. It was reported that a key objective was to increase the number of Foster Carers in the Borough.

At its meeting on 6 November 2018, the Corporate Policy and Performance Board (PPB) considered a report proposing a change to the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy, in respect of Foster Carers, to provide a 100% discretionary council tax discount, as detailed in Appendix 1, attached to the report. In addition, the PPB also recommended that Executive Board consider whether to provide a 100% discretionary council tax discount for all Special Guardians resident within the Borough who had responsibility for Halton children.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the amendment to the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy, outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report, in respect of Foster Carers, be approved;
- 2) Council Tax Relief to Special Guardians, as outlined in paragraph 3.6 of the report be not

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approved; and

- 3) the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy presented within Appendix 1, attached to the report, be approved.

EXB69 CHANGE TO THE RATE OF COUNCIL TAX EMPTY HOMES PREMIUM

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on proposed changes to the rate of Council Tax Empty Homes Premium.

The Board was advised that the Local Government Finance Act 2012 allowed billing authorities to levy an empty homes premium of up to 50% in addition to the full council tax on dwellings unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years.

Since 1 April 2013, Halton Borough Council had levied the maximum 50% on all such properties which did not fall into any statutory exemptions. It was reported that additional legislation gave billing authorities further powers to increase the level of empty homes premium, as detailed in the report. Since the introduction of the Empty Homes Premium, the number of properties in Halton empty for more than two years had reduced from 250 to 157, as at 1 November 2018.

RESOLVED: That the level of Empty Homes Premium on dwellings that have been unoccupied for more than two years, be applied as follows:

- 1) from 1 April 2019, 100% premium in addition to the full council tax charge for each dwelling unoccupied and unfurnished for more than two years;
- 2) from 1 April 2020, 100% premium in addition to the full council tax charge for each dwelling unoccupied and unfurnished between two and five years, and 200% premium for dwellings unoccupied for more than five years; and
- 3) from 1 April 2021, 100% premium in addition to

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the full council tax charge for each dwelling unoccupied and unfurnished between two and five years, 200% for dwellings unoccupied between five and ten years, and 300% for properties unoccupied for more than ten years.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB70 BUILDING CONTROL JOINT SERVICE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on a Joint Building Control Service.

It was reported that a Collaboration Agreement had been in place between Halton and Knowsley Councils since July 2015, with the aim of exploring the potential for a shared Building Control service. In January 2018, the Leaders and Chief Executives of both Councils, endorsed the undertaking of work to examine the potential establishment of a Regulation 12 company, as detailed in the report, on the basis that the Company would be jointly and equally owned by both Councils.

The Board was advised that in order to complete the work, approval was required to formalise an interim shared service agreement until 31 March 2020 with Halton, for the provision of Building Control services.

Reason(s) for Decision

The Building Control Service required sufficient resource and capacity to continue to provide high quality advice to residents, developers and investors. Following the departure of all Building Control Officers in November 2017, temporary arrangements had been in place to provide service continuity. The reason for the decision was to place the Service on a sustainable footing for future service delivery.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Do nothing – The current temporary arrangements (the use of an agency member of staff) were not cost effective, nor efficient, and the current team lacked capacity to offer a high quality service and generate income.

Outsourcing – A higher quality, more cost effective service could be offered through a joint shared service. An in-house

service was far more responsive in terms of support for public services (for example, public safety at events) and did not rely upon commercial contracts as the basis for delivery. The preferred approach retained local control over service delivery.

Implementation Date

1 January 2019.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) a shared service arrangement for Building Control services for Halton and Knowsley Councils be approved on the basis set out in the report and with a joint structure to be hosted by Knowsley Council for a period until March 2020;
- 2) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised to execute all relevant documentation required for the establishment of a shared service agreement for Building Control services for Knowsley and Halton Council, as set out in the report; and
- 3) the proposal to explore the establishment of a Building Control Regulation 12 company be endorsed, which would be the subject of a future report to Executive Board.

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EXB71 A STRATEGY FOR HALTON'S TREES AND WOODLANDS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the adoption of a policy for Halton's Trees and Woodlands.

In March 2016, the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board considered a report of the Tree and Woodlands Working Group which had proposed the development of a Tree Strategy for Halton. Attached to the report at Appendix 1, was a proposed Strategy which followed the principles developed by the Member-led Tree and Woodland Working Group, as detailed in the report.

The Board was advised that the intention of the Strategy was to clearly articulate how the Council managed its trees and woodlands and help to identify priorities for its work programme.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board adopt the document '*A Strategy for Halton's Trees and Woodlands*', attached to the report at Appendix 1, as the Council's policy with regards to the management of its trees and woodland assets.

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EXB72 MASTERPLAN STRATEGY FOR IMPROVEMENTS AT TOWN PARK, RUNCORN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on a proposed Masterplan Strategy for improvements to Town Park, Runcorn.

The Board was advised that Town Park was created as an integral part of the original Runcorn New Town development. The Park currently fulfilled the original concept as a substantial continuous open space central to the New Town character and retained many features of the original layout and design.

It was reported that the aim of the Town Park Masterplan was to preserve a strong landscape identity for the future as well as to provide a setting for sustainable leisure and recreational needs for Halton residents. A key element of the proposals were noted as being the development of three visitor/ activity hubs, as detailed in the report. The Masterplan approach allowed for the proposed infrastructure improvements to the wider park area and hub facilities to be undertaken either separately or in combination with each other.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the Masterplan; and
- 2) gives delegated authority to the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Physical Environment, to progress the Town Park project and prepare all necessary information for suitable grant applications.

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EXB73 STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)
LOCAL PLAN DOCUMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval to publish the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) Local Development Document.

The Board was advised that the SCI document set out how councils would engage with local communities and other interested parties in producing their Local Plan and determining planning applications. It was reported that the Council's first SCI was adopted in 2007, revised in 2013, and was now being updated due to legislative changes in the way that planning documents were prepared.

It was noted that at its meeting on 14 November 2018, the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board had considered the document and recommended that it be adopted by the Executive Board for public consultation. A final version of the SCI would then be presented to the Board for formal adoption by the Council.

RESOLVED: That the draft Statement of Community Involvement, attached to the report at Appendix A, be approved for the purposes of a six week public consultation.

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EXB74 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT
1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO
INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraphs 3 and 5 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the

public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

EXB75 STREET LIGHTING CONTRACT – KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the Street Lighting Maintenance Contract for the Borough.

It was reported that the current contractor had given notice that they would not extend the existing contract, which ended on 24 November 2018. Therefore, it was necessary to procure an alternative provider to ensure service continuity and to comply with the Council's legal duty to deal with damaged and dangerous equipment on the highway.

Reason(s) For Decision

It was necessary to take this decision at this stage in order to ensure continuity for this important service. It was unlikely that the Council would be able to reach a satisfactory conclusion with the existing contract and therefore, a new arrangement was necessary.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Two alternative arrangements had been considered. One to remain with the existing contractor, which had been rejected for the reasons outlined in the report. The second was to go out to a full tender exercise, which had been rejected for the following reasons:

- The need for continuity of service;
- The time and resources it would take; and
- The fact that a recently tendered contract existed that

the Council could utilise.

Implementation Date

This would be determined by the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, in consultation with the Transportation Portfolio Holder, following the process outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Transportation, to take the necessary actions to ensure value for money through an appropriate procurement route for the Council.

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB76 3MG HBC FIELD

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which updated Members on the disposal of part of HBC Field.

It was reported that the Chief Executive had used his delegated powers, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holders for Physical Environment, Transportation and Resources, as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board endorses the use of delegated powers by the Chief Executive.

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MINUTES ISSUED: 18 December 2018

CALL-IN: 3 January 2019

With the exception of Minute EXB 75, which is exempt due to the need to issue the contract, any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 3 January 2019.

Meeting ended at 12.10 p.m.