

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 21 February 2019 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, E. Dawson and S. Wallace-Bonner

Also in attendance: One member of the press

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EXB90 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2019, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
<b>CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO</b>	
EXB91 HIGH NEEDS REVIEW	
The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which provided a summary of the High Needs Strategic Planning Review.	
The Board was advised that the 2014 Children and Families Act introduced some of the most far reaching and significant changes to the way the needs of children with Special Educational Needs and/or Disabilities (SEND) were identified, assessed and addressed.	
It was reported that over the same period of time, local authorities had experienced a rise in demand for SEND services, whilst the system of funding had changed. Support had been extended to children and young people aged 0 to	

25 years. In Halton, High Needs Budget costs were outstripping available funding and therefore the current system was unsustainable.

Halton had commissioned an independent review of SEND by Peopletoo in 2018; the first phase of the work was complete, with three key findings, as set out in the report. Members noted that to address these key findings, five high level recommendations had been made, and it was proposed that the next steps would be to share this with all partners across the Borough, including those in health, schools and colleges, Parents, Carers and all Officers involved in SEND provision.

It was further noted that a second piece of work to set out the actions needed to implement the main recommendations would be required; it was proposed that Peopletoo be commissioned to undertake the implementation phase of the review.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) agree the five recommendations identified by the Review; and
- 2) agree to commission Peopletoo to undertake the implementation phase of the review.

## **RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB92 BUDGET 2019/20 - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2019/20.

It was noted that at the time of writing, the Cheshire Fire Authority had not set its budget and Council Tax Precept. However, final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), approved at its meeting on 15 November 2018, had identified funding gaps of around £9.8m in 2019/20, £8.2m in 2020/21 and £3.3m in 2021/22. The Strategy had the following objectives:

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- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council's priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency gains;
- Protect essential front line services and vulnerable members of the community; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public and Members' own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. Individual consultations had taken place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

On 12 December 2018, the Council approved initial budget savings totalling £4.653m and further proposed savings were shown at Appendix B. The departmental analysis of the budget was shown at Appendix C and the major reasons for change from the current budget were outlined for Members' information in Appendix D. It was noted that the proposed budget total was £108,621m.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated grant figures announced in the Local Government Grant Settlement, and included £2.381m for the New Homes Bonus 2019/20 grant and £5.233m for Improved Better Care Funding, paid to councils for the third year. Also announced in the Government's 2018 Autumn Budget, was additional funding for both Adults and Children's Social Care.

Further information was provided on the budget outlook, Halton's Council Tax, Precepts for Parishes, Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region Mayor, the Capital Programme, Prudential Code and School Budgets.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's revenue budget, Capital

Programme and Council Tax for 2019/20.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

In arriving at the budget saving proposals set out in Appendix B, numerous proposals had been considered, some of which had been deferred pending further information or rejected.

Implementation Date

6 March 2019.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £108.621m, the Council Tax requirement of £49.597m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,419.08; and
- 2) From 1 April 2019 the level of Empty Homes Premium on dwellings that have been unoccupied for more than 2 years be increased to 100%.

Operational  
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EXB93 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT  
2019/20

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy for 2019/20.

The TMSS was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2019/20).

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to “have regard to” the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years, to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act therefore required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing as well as an Annual Investment Strategy, which set out the Council’s

policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. However, Government guidance stated that authorities could combine the statement and the strategy into one report, and the Council had adopted this approach.

Members noted that the provision of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report at paragraph 2.3, with Appendix A detailing the full policy.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statements, prudential and treasury indicators outlined in the report.

Operational  
Director - Finance

EXB94 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2019/20

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Council's Capital Strategy for 2019/20.

It was reported that all councils were required to produce a Capital Strategy annually, the aim of which was to ensure that the Council understood the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

Members were advised that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Statement, included on the same agenda. It was noted that the successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the 2019/20 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

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*(N.B. Councillor Ron Hignett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business, as he was on the Board of the Sci-Tech Daresbury Private Sector Joint Venture Board)*

EXB95 2018/19 QUARTER 3 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reported on the 2018/19 Quarter 3

Spending as at 31 December 2018.

A summary of spending against revenue budget up to 31 December 2018 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was advised that, in overall terms, revenue expenditure was £3,142m above the budget profile. Whilst the overspend position had increased since Quarter 2, the pace of increase had steadied.

The report contained details of the main budget pressure within the Children and Families Department with Out-of-Borough Residential Placements and Fostering dominating the overspend position. However, initiatives were in place for the Council to increase the number of in-house foster carers, by joining a collaborative fostering service with neighbouring authorities.

The report also provided details of other services which had experienced overspent budget profiles including the Community and Environment Department; the Complex Care Pool; the Education, Inclusion and Provision Department. Also, details of underspends in Planning and Transportation Department; and Corporate and Democracy.

The Capital Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles as schemes had developed, and these were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) All spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Strategic Directors take appropriate action to ensure overall spending is contained as far as possible within their total operational budget by year-end; and
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the revised Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 2, attached to the report.

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#### EXB96 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2019/20

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for

information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2019/20 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

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EXB97 UNISON'S END VIOLENCE AT WORK CHARTER

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out details of Unison's End Violence at Work Charter.

The Board was advised that the Council had been approached by Unison seeking support and to adopt their Violence at Work Charter. A copy of the ten standards set within the Charter were attached to the report as an Appendix. Any employer seeking to sign up to the Charter, would be asked for evidence of their compliance with these ten points.

It was reported that the Council had established policies and practices in place to protect its employees, which it kept under constant review in the light of experiences and changes in legislation. It was noted that the Charter reflected the Council's own philosophy and existing practices.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the Unison "End Violence at Work Charter" and works with Unison representatives to ensure the standards within the Charter are adhered to.

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EXB98 INTERNATIONAL HOLOCAUST REMEMBRANCE ALLIANCE WORKING DEFINITION OF ANTI-SEMITISM

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the adoption of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance (IHRA) and working definition of Anti-Semitism.

The Board was advised that the IHRA was an intergovernmental organisation which strengthened, advanced and promoted Holocaust education, research and remembrance worldwide. It also upheld the commitments of the Declaration of the Stockholm International Forum on the Holocaust. The IHRA working definition of Anti-Semitism was set out in the report. It was reported that the Council

had been approached by the Jewish Leadership Council to adopt this definition.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the IHRA working definition of Anti-Semitism.

## **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB99 TOWN CENTRES AND FUNDING**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on Town Centre funding.

The Board was advised that two major town centre funding streams had been announced. The Liverpool City Region (LCR) had launched its Strategic Investment Fund, with an allocation to support town centres; and the Government-launched Future High Streets Fund, which provided co-funding towards innovative capital projects that brought transformative change and supported wider economic growth.

The report set out details of the context, process and objectives for each funding stream for Members' consideration, and a recommendation on the proposed approach for the Council.

RESOLVED: That Members approve the proposals set out in Sections 4 and 7 of the report.

### **EXB100 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 item 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 paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the

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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.

## **RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB101 LAND PURCHASE AT CROW WOOD LANE, WIDNES**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval for the purchase of land at Crow Wood Lane, Widnes.

The Board was advised that the Council had been successful in a bid for funding for the purchase and adaptation of properties which provided suitable accommodation for those that required a supported living environment.

It was reported that there was a lack of suitable properties in the Borough, and so a decision had been made to purchase land at Crow Wood Lane, Widnes, and to develop it with high quality, bespoke new-build accommodation.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) approves the purchase of land at Crow Wood Lane, Widnes; and
- 2) authorises the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services and the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, to conclude all necessary documentation required to complete the sale.

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**MINUTES ISSUED: 26 February 2019**

**CALL-IN: 5 March 2019**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 5 March 2019.**

*Meeting ended at 2.35 p.m.*