

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 17 November 2011 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, Harris, Jones, T.McInerney, Nelson, Stockton, Swain, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, M. Reaney, G. Cook, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr and B. Dodd

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB67 MINUTES

Action

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 November 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

EXB68 OFSTED'S ANNUAL CHILDREN'S SERVICES
ASSESSMENT- KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, informing them of the Ofsted Statutory Annual Children's Assessment 2011.

The annual assessment of Children's Services took into account the inspection results of all settings and services for children, from Early Years, Primary, Secondary and Post -16 as well as specialist provision including those outside of Local Authority control.

The assessment letter, attached as an appendix, indicated that Halton's Children's Services performed well, and that this level had been maintained from 2010 to 2011.

It also acknowledged the improvements made during the past 12 months and areas for improvement. The Board wished to place on record their congratulations to all staff that had contributed to the outcome of this Assessment.

The Board was informed that the letter would be the subject of detailed consideration and action by both the Halton Safeguarding Children Board and Halton's Children's Trust.

Reasons for Decision

To inform Executive Board of Ofsted's Statutory Annual Children's Services Assessment for 2011, reporting on the quality of services for children and young people in Halton. This letter included findings from across Ofsted's inspection and regulation of services and settings for which the local authority had strategic or operational responsibilities, either alone or in partnership with others, together with other published data.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

A draft version of this letter was reviewed and approved by the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise for factual accuracy before being submitted to Executive Board. The Ofsted Children's Services Annual Assessment letter is also accessible to the public on the Ofsted website.

Implementation Date

The Ofsted letter would be the subject of detailed consideration and action by both Halton Safeguarding Children Board and Halton's Children's Trust, following publication on 8th November 2011.

RESOLVED: That it be noted that

- 1) Ofsted's judgement that Children and Young People's services in Halton continued to be performing well; and
- 2) the large majority of services, settings and institutions inspected by Ofsted were judged to be good or better.

EXB69 TRADED SERVICES SCHOOL IMPROVEMENT SERVICES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided an update on Traded Services School Improvement Services.

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 30 June 2011, it had approved the appointment of Serco Limited as the preferred bidder to form a Partnership between Halton and Warrington Borough Councils to provide school improvement services across the two authorities.

Staff previously employed by both authorities transferred to the Partnership, (which was named Aspire), on 1 September 2011. The menu of services previously provided by the local authority would be provided through the Traded Services Partnership. It was noted that 37 schools and 2 Pupil Referral Units in Halton had subscribed to Aspire for the provision of school improvement services.

The Board was advised that Halton Borough Council retained its statutory role in improving underperforming schools and the local authority had powers of intervention, as outlined in the Education Bill (expected to become law by the end of November 2011).

The report and attachment at Appendix 4b provided details of the current management structure for Members' information.

RESOLVED: That the report and the progress made since June 2011 be noted.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB70 DWP/ESF PROGRAMME FOR FAMILIES WITH MULTIPLE PROBLEMS - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise on the outcome of the tender process for the Programme for Families with Multiple Problems.

The Board was advised that the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) had notified the preferred bidder for the European Social Fund (ESF) programme for families

with multiple problems. Reed in Partnership would deliver their programme across the ten local authorities in the Contract Package Area (CPA) which included Halton, Liverpool, Knowsley, Sefton, St Helens and Wirral.

Members were advised that a copy of Reed's ESF Document 'The Families Programme', set out the support they would provide to families, their delivery approach, the supply chain to the public, private and voluntary sectors they would be working with and how they would work with key stakeholders across Merseyside and Halton.

The report provided Members with the progress to date and details of the next steps.

Reason(s) for Decision

To ensure that the proposed actions could be agreed and implemented prior to the implementation date.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

As DWP had awarded the contract for ESF Programmes for Families with Multiple Problems to Reed in Partnership, the only viable option that was available to Halton was to ensure as far as possible, through the proposed actions that our communities obtain maximum benefit from the provision and were safeguarded effectively.

Implementation Date

DWP had advised that the implementation date of the ESF provision was 14th December 2011; however this may be delayed due to the need to establish safeguarding protocols and other requirements with Reed in Partnership.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the actions contained in the report be agreed.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB71 DESIGN OF RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT
SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT - APPROVAL
FOR PERIOD OF PUBLIC CONSULTATION- KEY
DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the Design of Residential Development Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)-

Approval for Period of Public Consultation.

The Board was reminded that in 2009, public consultation was undertaken on a draft Design of New Residential Development SPD. Following the public consultation period, the SPD had been edited to take account of comments received. Members were advised that, as the comments had resulted in substantial changes to the 2009 draft, it would be prudent to carry out a further period of consultation before adoption by full Council. The new consultation draft was attached at Appendix A.

The Board noted that the purpose of the Design of Residential Development SPD was to provide additional practical guidance and support for those involved in the planning and design of residential development within Halton. It would also be used by the Council in the assessment of applications for planning permission for schemes of residential development or mixed use schemes containing a residential element.

Reason(s) for Decision

These were set out in Section 3 of the report.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options had been considered at this stage.

Implementation Date

The SPD would be effective from the date of adoption by the Council's Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the consultation draft Design of Residential Development SPD attached at Appendix A, for the purposes of public consultation for a six week period be approved; and
- 2) any minor drafting amendments which may be required to be made to the consultation draft Design of Residential Development SPD prior to public consultation, be delegated to the Operational Director – Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Executive Board Member, Physical Environment.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB72 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) set out a three-year projection of resources and spending based on information currently available. However, as there was information yet to be received any revisions would need to be made as new information became available.

The projections in the forecast clearly showed there was a need to make a significant level of savings over the next three years, as a result of the joint effect of three Government policies. These policies were the reduction in grant support to councils, the localisation of council tax benefit and the localisation of business rates. It was noted that this would mean a considerable deterioration in the monies available to fund services in the Borough.

The forecast provided initial guidance to the Council on its financial position into the medium term. Revenue savings of up to £15m, £13m and £11m would be required over the next three years. In making these savings the Council would need to have in mind the objectives of the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as set out in the report.

The Board were reminded that the MTFS represented the “finance guidelines” that formed part of the medium term corporate planning process. These guidelines identified the financial constraints that the Council would face in delivering its key objectives, and were an important influence on the development of the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and Strategies.

Councillor Mike Wharton referred to a newspaper article which compared the amounts of grant cuts per head of population imposed by the Government on councils around the country. A map was circulated which showed the highest grant cuts were in the most deprived areas of the country, including Halton.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Forecast be noted;
- 2) the base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Forecast;
- 3) the Budget Strategy and Capital Strategy be approved;
- 4) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and
- 5) further reports be considered by the Executive Board on the budget.

Operational
Director - Finance

MINUTES ISSUED: 23 November 2011

CALL-IN: 30 November 2011

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 30 November 2011

Meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.