

## APPENDIX 1

### Extracts of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes that are relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board

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#### EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 OCTOBER 2011

55	PARLIAMENTARY BOUNDARY REVIEW
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the Parliamentary Boundary Review.

The Board was advised that the Boundary Commission had the task of periodically reviewing the boundaries of all Parliamentary Constituencies of England. New rules, laid down by Parliament, involved a significant reduction in the number of constituencies in England from 533 to 502.

The Boundary Commission had completed the first stage of a review process and had published its initial proposals. Details of these proposals as they affected the North West, Cheshire and Halton were contained in the report with full details of proposals available on the Boundary Commission web site: <http://consultation.boundarycommissionforengland.independent.gov.uk/>

The overall review process would be undertaken in five stages with final recommendations in place by 1 October 2013. The Board was reminded that the Council and any interested body had until 5 December 2011 to submit comments on the proposals.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to:

- 1) strongly oppose the inclusion of Hale and Ditton in the Mersey Banks Constituency for the reasons outlined in paragraph 4.6 of the Executive Board report;
- 2) suggest that the Penketh and Cuerdley Ward remains within a Warrington based Constituency;
- 3) support the creation of a “**Halton**” Constituency containing the following Wards:

Appleton, Beechwood, Birchfield, Broadheath, Hale, Halton Castle, Farnworth, Grange, Halton Brook, Halton Lea,

Halton View, Heath, Ditton, Hough Green, Kingsway, Mersey, Riverside and Windmill Hill.

(This Constituency would fit the Commission's number criteria as it contains 79,654 electors);

- 4) not support the renaming of the Halton Constituency – Widnes and Runcorn – as, if the Council's proposal in 3) above is accepted, then the Constituency of Halton would be substantially as it is now and therefore would not require renaming;
- 5) **Reluctantly** accept the inclusion of Daresbury, Norton North and Norton South in a Warrington South Constituency; and
- 6) express concern to the Commission in relation to the lack of publicity given to this important topic and the difficulty presented to third parties in doing so because of a potential conflict of interest.

<b>56</b>	<b>LOCAL GOVERNMENT RESOURCE REVIEW, PROPOSALS FOR BUSINESS RATES RETENTION - CONSULTATION</b>
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The Board received a report of the Operational Director, Finance on the Local Government Resource Review Proposals for Business Rates Retention Consultation.

The Board was advised that the Government's Local Government Resource Review would make fundamental changes to the funding of local government and have a significant impact upon the future resources available to the Council.

As part of the Resource Review, the Government had launched a consultation in relation to the proposals for Business Rates Retention. In August 2011, eight technical papers were published which provided further details of the proposals. The consultation set out how Tax Increment Financing (TIF) and the New Homes Bonus would work within the proposed Business Rates Retention System.

The Board was further advised that the consultation did not propose any changes to the current business rates payment mechanism, with the rateable values set by the Valuation Office Agency and the rate in the pound set by Government. However, the changes proposed related to the re-distribution of business rates and this was outlined in the report for Members' consideration.

The Board noted that the deadline for responses on the consultation was 24 October 2011. Halton's proposed response was

contained in Appendix 2. In addition, it was proposed that the Council made a contribution to a joint response by the Liverpool City Region.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the consultation response presented in Appendix 2 be approved; and
- 2) the Council contributes to a joint consultation response by the Liverpool City Region.

<b>58</b>	<b>LAND DISPOSAL FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise on Land Disposal for Housing Development.

The Board was reminded that, after extensive stakeholder and community consultation, in September 2003 the Council formally adopted the 'Castlefields Masterplan - An ambition for regeneration and a plan for action'. In doing so, the Council also authorised a series of supporting actions to help deliver the Masterplan, as outlined in the report.

The Board noted that to facilitate the delivery of the Masterplan the Council adopted the Castlefields and Norton Priory Action Area Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in June 2005, to formally guide the physical regeneration of the area. The Masterplan and SPD provided the basis for approval by the Local Planning Authority in August 2008 of outline planning permission for residential development of Lakeside and Canalside. In July 2009 the outline permission was extended for a further three years.

RESOLVED: That the disposal of c.5.9 acres of land subject to planning permission and subject to a formal valuation report from the District Valuer, be approved.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 3 NOVEMBER 2011**

<b>60</b>	<b>2011-12 HALF YEAR SPENDING</b>
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The Board received a report of the Operational Director, Finance which reported on the 2011/12 Half Year Spending as at 30 September 2011.

A summary of spending against the revenue budget up to 30 September 2011 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was

advised that in overall terms, the revenue expenditure was above the budget profile, although this was only a guide to eventual spending.

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 22 September 2011, an Action Plan was approved which aimed to restrict spending by year end within its bottom-line operational budget. It was noted that the required actions had been put in place and would continue to be applied during the remainder of the year.

The report contained a number of budget proposals for 2012/13. Members noted that a number of these proposals could be implemented immediately, to achieve a part-year saving for 2011/12, to assist in keeping the overall spending in line with budget. Since the report was written, three figures had been amended and these were reported as follows:

- Reduction in the number of externally commissioned placements for children in care (£100,000);
- Open spaces- reduction in security in parks (£50,000); and
- Supporting People – efficiency saving in external and in-house services following review of current SP funding (£100,000) and an underspend in Supporting People budgets (£473,000 one-off).

The report also outlined details of a revision to the capital spending programme and monitoring of the Council's balance sheet.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Directorates continue to closely control spending on agency staff and additional hours (including overtime) so that spending in these areas reduces in each succeeding quarter;
- 3) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end is within their total operational budget;
- 4) Council be recommended to approve the revised capital programme as set out in Appendix 2; and
- 5) Council be recommended to approve implementation of the 2012/13 budget proposals listed in paragraph 3.13 of the report, subject to the inclusion of the amended figures reported.

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which provided Members with an update on Council accommodation.

Members were reminded that the Council's Office Accommodation Strategy (2007), stated that where possible, staff should be located in Council owned buildings. Since then much progress had been made with a number of proposals resulting in savings within the property portfolio.

The report outlined the current position with a number of properties including Runcorn Town Hall, Municipal Building, Rutland House, Grosvenor House as well as the Council's depots.

The report contained a number of proposals for the future use of a number of the Council's offices for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, in consultation with the Resources Portfolio Holder, be authorised to implement the proposals contained within section seven of the report.

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2011**

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 shows 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.

#### **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1 DECEMBER 2011**

<b>74</b>	<b>ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER</b>
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The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the Annual Audit Letter 2010/11.

The Board was advised that the Annual Audit Letter summarised the findings from the 2010/11 audit completed by the Council’s External auditors. The Letter included messages arising from the audit of the financial statements and the result of the work that had been undertaken in assessing the Council’s arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources.

Mike Thomas, the District Auditor and Colette Williams Audit Manager, attended the meeting and reported that an unqualified audit opinion had been issued on the Council’s financial statements, which

had been completed in line with the statutory deadlines. The District Auditor also concluded that the Council had adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to all Officers that had assisted in the preparation of the audit inspection.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Audit Letter be approved.

<b>75</b>	<b>DETERMINATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the "Tax Base" for its area and the tax base for each of the Parishes.

The Council was required to notify the figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority and the Environment Agency by 31<sup>st</sup> January 2012. In addition, the Council was required to calculate and advise the Parish Councils, if requested, of their relevant tax bases.

The Board was advised that the Tax Base was the measure used for calculating the council tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (the Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police Authority), in the calculation of their council tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula representing the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band "D" dwellings. Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 99% collection rate, the calculation for 2012/13 gave a tax base figure of 38,200 for the Borough as a whole.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended that:

- 1) the 2012/13 Council Tax Base be set at 38,200 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority, and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	729
Halebank	590
Daresbury	146
Moore	345
Preston Brook	347
Sandymoor	985

**EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 13  
OCTOBER 2011**

<b>41</b>	<b>VARIATION OF THE NON STATUTORY FEES AND SETTING OF NEW FEES OFFERED BY HALTON REGISTRATION SERVICE FOR 2012-13</b>
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The Sub Committee was advised that the Marriage Act 1995 and Civil Partnership Act 2005 allowed local authorities the facility to set fees for the attendance of a Superintendent Registrar and Registrar at a ceremony in an approved premise. In January 2011 the Sub Committee agreed to review its charges for non-statutory registration services each September for the forthcoming financial year.

As part of the review of charges the following changes were proposed:

- the Service currently had two levels of fees for civil ceremonies taking place in a decommissioned room. It was proposed to amend this to one fee level as most ceremonies take place in the afternoon;
- increase the non-returnable reservation fee of £20 to £25 for the booking or subsequent change of time, date or venue for all ceremonies; and
- introduce a fee of £18 for telephone applications for copies certified certificates e.g. birth, marriage and death etc from 1<sup>st</sup> January 2012.

RESOLVED: That the following variations and the setting of new fees offered by Halton Registration Service as set out in the report be approved.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 3  
NOVEMBER 2011**

<b>50</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2011-12 – 2<sup>ND</sup> QUARTER JULY TO SEPTEMBER</b>
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The Sub-Committee considered a report which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic background, economic forecast, short term rates, longer term rates,



temporary borrowing/investments and new borrowing. It was noted that all the policy guidelines in the Treasury Management Policy had been complied with.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

<b>51</b>	<b>TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2011-12 – MID YEAR REVIEW</b>
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The Sub-Committee considered a report, which reviewed activities on Treasury Management for the mid-year point 2011/12 in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement.

The mid year report covered the following:

- An economic update for the first six months of 2011/12;
- A review of the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and Annual Investment Strategy;
- Capital expenditure (prudential indicators);
- A review of the Council's investment portfolio for 2011/12;
- A review of the Council's borrowing strategy for 2011/12;
- A review of any debt rescheduling undertaken during 2011/12;
- A review of compliance with Treasury and Prudential Limits for 2011/12.

Members were advised that as a consequence of delays in the capital programme and in particular the Mersey Gateway project, more investments were being held with UK backed LloydsTSB and the Royal Bank of Scotland. With potential further delays likely combined with advance borrowing where beneficial, it was recommended to increase the counterparty limits of LloydsTSB and RBS as follows:

		Current		Revised	
	<3months	>3months	<3months	>3months	>3months
LloydsTSB	£20million	£15million	£30million	£20million	£20million
RBS	£20million	£15million	£30million	£20million	£20million

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the revised Prudential Indicators and the increase in counterparty limits for Lloyds/TSB and Royal Bank of Scotland.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 17  
NOVEMBER 2011**

<b>56</b>	<b>COMPUTER SALARY SACRIFICE SCHEME</b>
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The Sub Committee considered a report for a salary sacrifice scheme which allowed all permanent members of Halton Borough staff and temporary employees with a contract lasting longer than the lease to be included, to take the option to lease personal computer equipment for use within the home.

The scheme would allow those employees the opportunity to budget within their means, take advantage of discounted rates and spread payment options for modern and up to date computer equipment whilst supported by the added benefit of maintenance and insurance options. Full details of the benefits of the scheme and how the scheme would operate in Halton were outlined in the report. It was noted that only eligible employees who earned a salary that would remain above the legally set National Minimum Wage once deductions had been taken would be eligible for the scheme.

Members were advised that it was proposed that 15% of the income received from this scheme would be set aside to insure against the potential for a small number of bad debts.

In addition it was noted that investigations were ongoing into developing a similar scheme within the Authority's schools which would benefit parents and pupils. The scheme could utilise the considerable education discount the Authority could gain from the major suppliers such as Microsoft and Apple. A pilot scheme of 4 schools within the Authority was in the planning stage.

In order to initiate the availability of the service prior to Christmas it was suggested that Standing Orders be waived.

RESOLVED: That

1. the Board supports the development of this scheme; and
2. the Board waives Standing Orders in relation to procurement allowing the Scheme to be developed and made available by the 30<sup>th</sup> November 2011, prior to Christmas.