

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 18 September 2014 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Wharton

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Cook, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, M. Forder and S. McDonald

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB58 MINUTES

Action

The Minutes of the meeting held on 4th September 2014 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

EXB59 HALTON'S CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S
PARTICIPATION STRATEGY 2014-17

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an overview of the new Halton Children and Young People's Participation Strategy 2014-17 (the Strategy).

The Board was advised that the previous Strategy was devised in 2006 and then renewed and extended until 2011. In November 2013, the INVOLVE group came together to promote and improve the participation of children, young people and their families.

It was noted that work began in January 2014 on the new Strategy, with partnership working between

professionals and children, young people and parents developing new and creative ways of working. The report set out examples of the approaches that had been used to develop the Strategy.

It was reported that the Strategy would sit under the Children and Young People's Plan and was intended as a practical, useful document, which included:-

- An explanation of participation;
- Reasons for participation including legal obligations;
- Possible barriers to participation;
- Current participation and what would be achieved in Halton; and
- What participation would look like in Halton after the Strategy was in place.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted;
- 2) the Participation Strategy 2014-17 be endorsed; and
- 3) the roll out of the new Children and Young People's Participation Strategy be supported, in order to embed active participation in the culture of Halton Children's Trust and the wider Halton partnership.

Strategic Director
Children and
Enterprise

EXB60 FOSTER CARE ALLOWANCES- KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on a revised scheme for the payment of allowances to Halton Foster Carers.

The Board was advised that foster care allowances were determined by each local authority. In 2010, Halton decided to increase allowances beyond the national minimum, as set out in Appendix 1. It was reported that the scheme had worked well, but a review was necessary for the following reasons:

- (i) the current scheme did not recognise the different

knowledge and skill level amongst the foster carer population;

- (ii) there was no 'incentive' for carers to complete their necessary core and developmental training;
- (iii) many local authorities and some of the national bodies (e.g. BAAF, Fostering Network) recommended the use of a 'levels' based scheme which recognised the skills of each carer, the training that they did, the experience that they gained and the development they achieve in the caring role; and
- (iv) case law has established that financial support for Special Guardianship Orders should be based on a local authority's 'base' fostering allowance.

It was proposed that in future, allowances would be paid at two levels:-

- Level 1 – base fostering allowance paid to all carers; and
- Level 2 - enhanced allowance paid to those carers who demonstrated additional skills, knowledge and experience.

It was noted that the proposed revised scheme, attached at Appendix 2, had been consulted upon with carers between June and August 2014, had been amended to reflect their feedback and had the support of existing carers.

Reason(s) For Decision

To implement a revised scheme that represented a more effective and efficient use of Council resources and recognised experience, knowledge and skill.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The proposal had been through the consultation process and had been amended as a result of it.

Implementation Date

The revised scheme of payments would be introduced from April 2015 for existing carers and would be advertised from October 2014 for newly recruited carers.

RESOLVED: That the revised scheme be endorsed.

Strategic Director
Children and
Enterprise

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB61 LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the introduction of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (the Regulations).

The Board was advised that the Regulations had introduced changes to the way that information relating to local authority matters, including those decisions made within meetings, could be disseminated. It was noted that these changes included access to meetings by the press and public and the publication of decisions made by Officers. It was now permissible to film, audio-record, photograph or use social media to report proceedings of those meetings that were open to the public.

It was reported that the Regulations also required Officer decisions to be recorded as soon as reasonably practical and published on the Council's web site. Three decision categories and guidance on which delegated decisions should be included were detailed in the report.

The Board noted that the report and background papers would be used to form a Council Policy on transparency in local government for Halton Council.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) appropriate amendments to the Council's Constitution be incorporated at the next review.

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

EXB62 PUBLIC SERVICES (SOCIAL VALUE) ACT 2012 POLICY & PROCUREMENT FRAMEWORK

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which sought endorsement of the work undertaken to develop the Social Value approach within the Policy and Procurement Framework.

The Board was advised that the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (the Act), introduced a statutory requirement for public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection

with 'public service contracts' within the meaning of the Public Contracts Regulations. It was reported that the Act required the Council only to consider how what was being procured might improve the well-being of the relevant area and how the procurement process might act with a view to achieving that improvement. The Act set out three key themes to be addressed in seeking social value:-

- Social;
- Economic; and
- Environmental.

The report set out details of the policy options for the Council, the vision under the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), the alignment of the environmental, social and economic focus of the Act with the duty of Best Value, the SCS and the Marmot priorities and the development of a Social Value policy statement, which was attached at Appendix 1. In addition, Members noted details of a Social Value Procurement Framework which had been produced to aid implementing the policy statement.

It was noted that both the policy and the framework had been consulted upon with relevant stakeholders, both internal and external, and the suggested approach had received universal support.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the work carried out to date on developing a Social Value Approach for Halton Borough Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group be noted;
- 2) the Policy Statement and Procurement Framework, attached as an Appendix to the report be approved; and
- 3) the sharing of the Council's approach to the wider partnership for their use (as appropriate) through both the Health and Wellbeing Board and the Halton Strategic Partnership be supported.

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PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB63 SCI-TECH DARESBUURY ENTERPRISE ZONE FUNDING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on funding for the development of Sci-Tech Daresbury.

The Board was advised that Sci-Tech Daresbury was allocated as a strategic site in Halton's Core Strategy and was an international hub for world class science. In August 2011, part of Daresbury was named as one of the eleven new Enterprise Zones, the aim of which was to attract new businesses with simplified planning rules, super-fast broadband and reductions in business rates.

It was reported that in February 2014, Sci-Tech Daresbury was shortlisted for £3.57m of Enterprise Zone (EZ) Capital Grant which would be used to facilitate the next stage of development. Details of the DCLG claw back arrangement for any increase in the value of the development as a result of the grant were outlined in the report.

In addition, it was noted that in June 2014, an application for £1.128m European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) was approved by the DCLG, subject to match funding. An offer letter would be issued once match funding and State Aids were confirmed. The offer would be made to Langtree as the developer, with the intention that the Council be acknowledged as the delivery partner, receiving £25k towards the funding and monitoring service it would provide to Langtree.

Members were advised that there were financial implications for the Council in accepting ERDF funding, minor breaches of the agreement could result in DCLG having the right not only to discontinue funding for the future but to also demand the return of funding prior to any breach of the agreement. In this respect the Council's direct liability would be limited to the 25k it would receive as delivery partner. It was also noted that by entering into the back to back contracts with the Joint Venture (JV) for both the EZ and ERDF, this would restrict the Council's overall liability to its liability as a JV partner.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the offer of £3.57m of EZ Capital Grant (EZ) from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) be accepted;
- 2) the offer of £25k of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) from DCLG be

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accepted;

- 3) the Council be given authority to enter into a back to back contract with Joint Venture partners for the delivery of the project; and
- 4) the Council agrees to entering into a claw back agreement with Joint Venture partners in accordance with the EZ offer.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB64 YOUTH EMPLOYMENT GATEWAY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the Youth Employment Gateway Programme (the Programme).

The Board was advised that the Liverpool City Region (LCR) had secured £5.9 m of Government investment to deliver a programme to reduce youth unemployment across the LCR over the next three years. Each local authority had been allocated a sum to deliver the scheme in their respective area, as set out in table 1.

It was reported that the Programme aimed to support young people aged 18-24 years that had been unemployed for between 2 and 9 months. A detailed explanation of how the Programme would work was contained in Appendix 1. Members noted that Appendix 2 outlined how young people would be referred to the Programme and how the local authority would contribute to it. The Programme afforded an opportunity to provide young people with a coherent support package to help them into sustained work.

Reason(s) For Decision

Youth Employment Gateway would assist young people in Halton to find employment or training aimed at supporting their future career prospects.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

One option that the Council could consider was to tender for a training provider to undertake the management and delivery of the Programme in Halton. However, it was felt that many of the functions required to deliver the Programme in Halton could be fulfilled through slight adjustments to existing structures within the Council's Employment, Learning and Skills division. In addition, going out to tender would delay the implementation of the

Programme.

Implementation Date

1 October 2014.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the offer of Youth Employment Gateway Funding be accepted;
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Economic Development, to accept the contract/offer letter; and
- 3) the use of Youth Employment Gateway funding be authorised to develop an employment support programme in Halton

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MINUTES ISSUED: 23 September 2014

CALL-IN: 30 September 2014

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 30 September 2014

Meeting ended at 2.15 p.m.