

Extract of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17TH JANUARY 2019

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

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

EXB83 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on an application for discretionary non domestic rate relief.

The Board was advised that, under the amended provision of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business rate payer. Since 1 April 2017, the Council had been responsible for meeting the full cost of all mandatory and discretionary rate relief granted, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.

The report set out details of an application for 80% discretionary rate relief in respect of two business premises at the Sci-Tech, Daresbury campus.

RESOLVED: That the request for 80% discretionary rate relief from United Kingdom Research and Innovation (UKRI) for their premises at Daresbury Laboratory and Building Two, Daresbury Innovation Centre, Keckwick Lane, Daresbury, be refused.

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EXB84 WAIVER TO PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS: INTEGRATED HR AND PAYROLL SYSTEM

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought a waiver of Procurement Standing Orders in respect of the award of a new contract for the Council's Integrated

HR and Payroll system.

The Board was advised that the Council used an integrated HR and payroll system known as iTrent. The system was used for a number of payroll processes including those traded under service level agreements to external clients. It was reported that those external customers had tailored and established processes which were compatible with the iTrent systems.

The current contract ended on 17 November 2018. Consideration had been given to market testing for a change of systems, although the iTrent system was so firmly established within the Council and with its external customers, there would need to be either a replacement or re-engineering of systems, which could be time and resource intensive.

The Board noted that by making a direct award under the Light Touch Regime, the financial benefit to the Council, as a result of the waiver of Procurement Standing Orders, would be £38,587.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves the waiving of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders relying on numbers 1.14.4 (iii), 1.14.4 (iv) and 1.14.4 (v).

EXB85 WAIVER TO PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS:
MBA/MSC SENIOR LEADER MASTERS
APPRENTICESHIP

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought a waiver of Procurement Standing Orders to award a contract for the provision of a MBA/MSc Senior Leader Masters Apprenticeship.

The Board was advised that since 2010/11, the Council had rationalised its management structures and now operated within a more commercial environment and in new collaborations across the public sector. A need had been

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identified for succession planning to enable strategic leadership capability in the future.

It was reported that Liverpool John Moores University (LJMU) had created a range of leadership and management qualifications at Masters Level 7, available through the national Apprenticeship Framework and funded by the Apprenticeship Levy. It was noted that LJMU had demonstrated that they could deliver and provide the content of the qualifications which met the Council's needs.

Members were asked to waive the Council's Procurement Standing Orders to allow the awarding of the contract for the provision of a MBA/MSc Senior Leader Masters Apprenticeship, to be fully funded through the existing Apprenticeship Levy, which the Council was required by statute to contribute to.

RESOLVED: That the Board, in compliance with Procurement Standing Orders 1.14.4 and 1.14.5, approve a waiver to award a contract to Liverpool John Moores University, for the following reasons:-

- (i) Standing Order 1.14.4 (iii), where compliance would result in a clear financial or commercial detriment to the Council;
- (ii) Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) where compliance would result in the Council having to forego a clear financial or commercial benefit.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 21ST FEBRUARY 2019

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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:

- 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%.

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

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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.

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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.

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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

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.

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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

authorises the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services and the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, to conclude all

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necessary documentation required to complete the sale.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14th MARCH 2019

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EXB109 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION 2019/20

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought the approval of Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

Members were advised that the revised version picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place throughout the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

The proposals for change had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Resources, in accordance with Article 16.02 of the Constitution. It was reported that, apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that were considered to be of particular significance were listed as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the revised Constitution, including the matters set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

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EXB110 ADOPTION OF THE REAL LIVING WAGE FOR COUNCIL EMPLOYEES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the adoption of the Real Living Wage for Council employees.

The Board was advised that the National Living Wage was introduced in 2016, and must be paid to all employees over the age of 25 years. The Council took a decision in 2016 to pay the National Living Wage rate to all employees, including those under the age of 25, and this remained the case.

It was reported that the UK Living Wage Foundation

published a real living wage figure in November each year, which reflected the true cost of living. The Council had explored the option of adopting the Real Living Wage, but it was found to be unaffordable, although this remained an aspiration for the Council.

Within the Liverpool City Region, consultation was underway on a 'Fair Employment Charter' (the Charter), and it was expected that in the final version of the Charter there would be a commitment to pay the Real Living Wage. The Board noted that there was an expectation that public sector employers within the City Region would sign up to the Charter, to lead by example and encourage others to do so.

The UK Living Wage Foundation also encouraged employers to become accredited Living Wage Employers, which required that payment of the Real Living Wage was inherent in the organisational supply chain. The Council would be expected to ensure that all procured suppliers and service providers paid the appropriate wage rate, although it was reported that this would be difficult to achieve because a supplying organisation could only be asked to voluntarily pay the given rate, with the potential for contract costs during the procurement process being passed back to the Council. Given the difficulties outlined in the report, it was considered that accreditation would not be pursued by the Council as an option.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Board approves the paying of the prevailing Living Wage Rate from April 2019, and each April thereafter; and
- 3) the Council does not seek accreditation from the UK Living Wage Foundation.

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EXB111 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the review of the Council wide fees and charges.

The Board was advised that, as part of the budget preparations for 2019/20, a review of fees and charges had been carried out. The aim in setting fees and charges was to ensure that the Council fully recovered the cost incurred in

providing the service, although this was dependent on a number of factors outside of the agreed charge. These were detailed in the report and noted as including demand, which could change year on year and be affected by the weather; regional factors or demographics; competition, where there may be a strong competitive market; and a statutory element, where some charges were outside the control of the Council and there was no discretion to what could be charged.

Attached at Appendix A was a schedule of statutory fees which may increase during the financial year. Chargeable rates for The Brindley Theatre and the Registrar's Service were attached at Appendix B and C respectively.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2019/20 as set out in Appendix A attached to the report and for 2020/21 as set out in Appendices B and C attached to the report, be approved.

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EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 11th APRIL 2019

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB117 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

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

The Board was advised that under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business rate payer. Since 1 April 2017, the Council had been responsible for meeting the full cost of all mandatory and discretionary rate relief granted, as part of the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme.

The report set out details of two applications from two registered charities, for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the application for discretionary rate relief from Vision Enhancement Services/Deafness Support Centre in respect of 126 Widnes Road, Widnes, be refused on the grounds that the organisation

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also operates in Cheshire West and Chester, Flintshire, Denbighshire, Cheshire East, Wrexham and Conwy, and the Deafness Support Centre operates nationally; and

- 2) the application for discretionary rate relief from the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation in respect of Unit 20, Albert Square, Widnes, be approved.

EXB118 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the annual publication of the Pensions Discretion Statement (the Statement).

The Board was advised that the 2019/20 Statement was based on the previous Statement (2018/19) and it was reported that no new discretions had been either added or removed. In addition, there had been no material changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013, that would result in a change in the Statement.

RESOLVED: That the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2019/20 be approved.

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EXB119 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 2018 - 19

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the third quarter to 31 December 2018.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from the relevant quarter for each Directorate. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements and Executive Board had a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability. Performance Management would continue to be important in the demonstration of value for money and outward accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report, progress and performance information be noted.

EXB120 BUSINESS PLAN 2019 - 2020

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the adoption of the Council Business Plan (the Plan) 2019/20, as a basis for action and performance monitoring.

The Board was advised that the Council developed its business plan in parallel with the determination of its annual budget and the review and refresh of Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers. The Plan was formulated as a series of extracts representing each of the Council's six strategic priority areas. Each of the Business Plan extracts provided details of the specific objectives and performance measures which would provide a focus for the ongoing monitoring of progress throughout the coming financial year.

It was noted that Elected Members were engaged in the development of Directorate Plans, primarily through the autumn cycle of individual Policy and Performance Board meetings. This allowed Members to consider key themes for each strategic priority area and develop specific improvement activities and targets for the coming year.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the draft Business Plans extracts be received; and
- 2) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, be authorised to make any final amendments and adjustments that may be required.

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