

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 2 November 2006 at the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors McDermott (Chairman), D. Cargill, Gerrard, Harris, Massey, McInerney, Polhill, Nelson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors (none)

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor Wharton

Officers present: D. Parr, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, D Terris, D Tregoe, L. Butcher, B Dodd, M. Loughna, J. Tradewell, G. Derby, L. Cairns and G. Cook

Also in attendance: 1 Member of the Press and 1 Member of the Public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EXB46 MINUTES	
The minutes of the meeting held on 21 st September were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO	
EXB47 CHILDREN'S CENTRES PHASE 2 DEVELOPMENTS (KEY DECISION)	
The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing an update on the second phase of Children's Centre Developments and proposing sites for the development of three new Children's Centres to be completed by March 2008.	
It was noted that Local Authorities must plan capital investments and phase capital programmes so that all children living in the 30% most disadvantaged areas, as measured by Super Output Areas, had access to the core children's centre offer of services by March 2008. In line with Government guidance, the centres would ensure that families with young children would have easy access to these services.	

Information was provided in respect of a needs analysis that had been carried out together with an outline of the proposed sites in the Castlefields, Hough Green and Mersey Wards. In addition, Ms G Derby, Divisional Manager – Early Years and Lifelong Learning, attended the meeting to give a presentation outlining progress so far.

The Board considered the following issues:

- the proposed virtual children's centre opportunity which would enable disadvantaged and vulnerable communities to access interactive service provision via cutting edge technology methods;
- the need for local performance indicators to demonstrate the improvements required and being made, which may not be reflected in national indicators;
- services were being developed to deliver at a range of venues based on a needs analysis identifying where people would go, and outreach was based around the delivery of services to people in their homes; and
- groups that found accessing services difficult would be identified and targeted.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

Centres to be completed by March 2008.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposed sites for the new Children's Centres in the Castlefields, Hough Green and Mersey Wards, as outlined in the report, be approved; and
- (2) the proposal for inclusion of the virtual children's centre opportunity as part of the Phase 2 developments be endorsed.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB48 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL FORECAST

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services setting out the findings of the

Medium Term Financial Forecast. It was noted that the Forecast set out a three-year projection of resources and revenue spending. The implications of the forecast in terms of the need for budget savings in 2007/08 onwards could then be considered and the scope for increased costs to maintain or enhance services assessed.

It was noted that the projections provided initial guidance to the Council on its revenue position into the medium term, although further information had yet to be received and the projections therefore needed to be treated with caution. However, the forecast currently showed that the spending required to maintain existing policies and programmes was expected to increase at a faster rate than the resources available to support it. Given the need to avoid budgets being capped by the Government, levels of additional spending would need to be kept to the absolute minimum and compensating budget savings would need to be identified.

The Board considered areas of uncertainty such as the change in the allocation of the Supporting People Grant and the waste agenda. In addition, Members discussed the impact on the Authority of the introduction of the Dedicated School Grant where, due to the Council supporting its schools and cushioning them from the impact of the new formula, it was now being penalised. It was advised that representations in this respect were ongoing. The Board further noted that national negotiations would determine the final figure in respect of staff salary inflation.

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; and
- (3) further reports be considered by the Executive Board on the areas for budget savings and cost increases to maintain existing service levels or service enhancements.

Operational
Director -
Financial Services

ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO

EXB49 RENEWAL OF REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLE FLEET

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment requesting agreement to procure ten new refuse collection vehicles via direct purchase funded

from the Council's capital budget rather than through the lease arrangements currently used. It was noted that the procurement was to be undertaken through a partnership with an established framework and an amendment to the 2006/07 capital programme was sought.

It was advised that the current fleet had been procured in 1999 through an operating lease arrangement that expired on 12th December 2006. However, as a new Council Waste Management Strategy had been in development over the past year, and in order to provide time for this work to be completed, it had been agreed that the renewal of the lease arrangement be deferred until 31 March 2007. Arrangements needed to be in place by 1 April 2007 in order to avoid high maintenance costs and an unreliable refuse collection service.

The report outlined details of the proposed procurement arrangement which would yield an estimated net revenue saving of £100,000 per year over the annual cost of a seven-year contract hire arrangement based on the procurement of ten vehicles. The ten vehicles represented the core fleet and those in need of the most urgent replacement.

The officers involved in bringing this to fruition were congratulated.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the full Council be recommended to amend the 2006/07 Capital Programme to provide a sum of up to £1.2m through prudential borrowing to fund the purchase of 10 new refuse collection vehicles, and subject to full Council agreeing to amend the Capital programme to make the purchase;
- (2) the Operational Director for Highways and Transportation, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Environment, Leisure and Sport, be authorised to procure 10 new refuse collection vehicles through direct purchase;
- (3) procurement be undertaken through partnership working with an established framework of an appropriate Procurement Organisation; and
- (4) Procurement Standing Orders 2.1 to 2.6 and 2.8 to 2.14 be waived for the reason that insufficient time is available to undertake a procurement process in

Strategic Director
- Environment

compliance with the statutory procurement procedures.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB50 APPLICATION FOR TWINNING GRANT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining an application being made to the Twinning Grant Fund. It was noted that the Fund had been set up in April 1996 to assist in enabling all members of the community to access and gain benefit from the Council's international links.

An application had been received from Halton Swimming Team requesting support for 25 members to visit Usti nad Labem between 10th and 13th November 2006. During the visit the members would compete in a swimming competition in the Ing. Vilem Protschke swimming pool: a return visit from the swim team in Usti nad Labem was being planned for August/September 2008.

It was advised that, if Members were to approve the project, the grant would be offered subject to a number of conditions which were outlined within the report.

RESOLVED: That £2000 be awarded to the Halton Swimming Club.

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB51 CONSULTATION ON ROYAL LIVERPOOL CHILDREN'S NHS TRUST APPLICATION FOR FOUNDATION STATUS (KEY DECISION)

The Board considered a joint report of the Strategic Directors of Health and Community, and Children and Young People, regarding key issues and concerns relating to the application for Foundation Status by the Royal Liverpool Children's NHS Trust.

It was reported that Foundation Trusts were to be at the cutting edge of a wider programme of public sector reform with the intention of offering more diversity and patient choice, enabling leadership, innovation and initiative to flourish as part of the local health economy and replacing central control from Whitehall with accountability to the local community. National debate was ongoing in this respect and implications and key questions were outlined within the report for the Board's consideration.

It was noted that the Trust had applied for Foundation Status under the Health and Social Care Act 2003 and, as the consultation period had ended on Monday, 23rd October 2006, a letter had been sent from the Health and Social Care, and Children and Young People, Portfolio Holders in response.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Halton Borough Council seeks clarity and reassurance as to what Foundation Status will actually mean for the residents and families of Halton in receipt of patient care;
- (2) reassurance be sought that high cost and low caseload interventions will not be under threat in the context of a market driven by choice and competition;
- (3) clarification should be sought as to whether the funding arrangements, assessment of need, nature of the workforce and the range of provision will change as a result of Foundation status;
- (4) the Trust should make clear its policy on generating income;
- (5) clarification should be sought with respect to the composition of the council of governors and the process for selecting representatives; and
- (6) the impact of this policy (i.e. to foster innovation and change in acute hospitals) on the ability of Primary Care Trusts to invest in preventive, primary, community and intermediate care should be carefully monitored by the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

EXB52 SCRUTINY AND COMMISSIONING ISSUES ACROSS THE HALTON/ST HELENS FOOTPRINT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community regarding the implications of the reconfigured Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust (PCT) with respect to Halton Borough Council.

It was noted that the policy context arising from the White Paper was dominated by patient choice, Practice Based Commissioning, Payment by Results and the overriding requirement to achieve financial balance. The key

issues that emerged from the policy context were outlined for consideration. It was noted that, within this context, PCTs were expected to act as a system intermediary. As such, their goal was to help customers achieve their objectives rather than those of the organisation itself. The Council would therefore need to consider its future joint commissioning arrangements with the PCT and build upon the work already established within the Children's Services Directorate.

In addition, information was provided in respect of the reconfiguration of the footprint for PCTs and the structure for the delivery of public health, as well as the arrangements for the scrutiny of health. It was noted that the reconfiguration of PCTs created an opportunity to review current arrangements, and opportunities for the development of health scrutiny were outlined.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) a further report be received in 2007 on proposals to establish a Joint Public Health Unit; and
- (3) the existing Scrutiny arrangements continue (but with the emphasis refined to take into account the points raised in 3.6.2 and 3.6.4 of the report).

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

EXB53 TRANSPORT ARRANGEMENTS POST
RECONFIGURATION OF NORTH CHESHIRE HOSPITALS
TRUST

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community regarding transport between Halton and Warrington Hospitals, which had been prepared following a recommendation from the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board (minute number HEA16 refers).

It was noted that recent developments, with a free bus service commencing from mid-November involving 11 journeys a day, had alleviated some of the issues highlighted by the Policy and Performance Board. However, a number of other issues relating to accessibility remained.

RESOLVED: That the Council, in partnership with the Primary Care Trust and North Cheshire Hospital Trust, review the transport arrangements to and from Halton and Warrington hospitals.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

MINUTES ISSUED: 13th November 2006

CALL IN: 20th November 2006

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 20th November 2006.

Meeting ended at 3.07 p.m.