

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 20 March 2008 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), Gerrard, Harris, McNerney, Nelson, Swain, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: Councillors McDermott and D. Cargill

Officers present: L. Cairns, G. Cook, D. Johnson, G. Meehan, D. Parr, D. Tregoe, R. Barnett and A. McIntyre

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB104 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 6th March 2008 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

(NB: Councillor Gerrard declared a personal interest in the following item of business due to being a Governor of Simms Cross Primary School and Ditton Nursery.)

EXB105 PRIMARY CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing an overview of the Primary Capital Programme and an outline of the Government's submission requirements for a Strategy for Change to secure Primary Capital Funding.

It was advised that all authorities were required by Government to develop a Primary Capital Programme aiming to ensure primary schools played a lead role in the heart of their communities by offering local services; providing a 21st learning environment, particularly in ICT;

developing world class standards; and promoting personalisation, flexibility, diversity and choice. As part of the programme, consideration needed to be given to local demography, pupil numbers and school standards. In addition, local authorities were required to produce a Strategy for Change (Primary), which had to be formally endorsed by the Council, the diocesan authorities and a majority of primary schools. This document had to be with the Department for Children, Schools, and Families by 16th June 2008. Consultation requirements were outlined for the Board's consideration.

It was advised that Halton's Strategy for Change covered five main elements:

- the local perspective;
- baseline analysis;
- long terms aims;
- approach to change; and
- initial investment priorities.

Further information was provided on each of these elements together with funding implications. It was expected that the Authority would develop a strategic approach to capital investment for primary schools over fourteen years and indicative figures were provided.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the requirements of the Strategy for Change be noted;
- (2) approval be given to developing the draft Strategy for Change in partnership with schools, the dioceses and other key stakeholders; and
- (3) a further report be provided to the Executive Board in June 2008 detailing the draft Primary Capital Strategy.

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB106 CAPITAL OF CULTURE - YOUTH CULTURAL FESTIVAL

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community providing an update on the development of the programme for the Youth Cultural Festival and requesting approval for the release of further monies to underwrite the proposed programme.

Following the Board's previous approval of an approach to Halton's involvement in Liverpool's Capital of Culture Celebrations, a major showcase event for Halton, the Youth Cultural Festival, was to be held on 12th and 13th July 2008 at the Stobart Stadium, Halton, with associated activity at The Brindley.

A revised outline programme was tabled for the Board's consideration showing committed expenditure (£73,300) and other budget requirements (£60,900) to deliver the programme. These figures included a contingency of 15%.

In September 2007, the Board had given agreement in principle to a further £60,000 of funding, subject to further detail and it being considered as part of the overall budgetary process. The £60,000 had been identified within 2007/08 budgets and no new monies were therefore required. Current sponsorship agreements were outlined for information. In addition, officers were continuing to attempt to attract sponsorship in order to reduce the overall budget required even further.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revised outline programme for the Youth Cultural Festival, tabled at the meeting, be endorsed; and
- (2) approval be given for orders to be placed to a maximum value of £60,000.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

ENVIRONMENT, LEISURE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO

EXB107 MUNICIPAL WASTE MANAGEMENT STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment seeking adoption of an updated Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Halton following a recent public consultation exercise.

It was noted that this exercise had taken place between 17th December 2000 and 27th January 2008. During this period the draft strategy was made available on the Council's website, at prominent Council buildings, and circulated to all elected Members. Responses were received from both members of the public and elected Members and were generally supportive of the updated Strategy. The main comments received were summarised within the report.

Individuals who had provided comments had been responded to and these responses were again outlined within the report.

It was advised that, following the consultation, no significant changes had been made and it was now proposed that Members approve the updated Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Halton. This would be a headline document that would continue to guide the Council's actions and inform the future decision-making process. The aims, objectives and targets contained within the Strategy would be achieved through the delivery of services and initiatives contained within a number of supporting documents including a Waste Action Plan and Waste Prevention Strategy.

It was advised that Waste Prevention was a vital element of the Council's Waste Strategy and, while successful initiatives had already been introduced, more needed to be done to reduce the levels of waste produced in Halton. Accordingly, it was proposed that additional resources be provided to support the existing efforts and further promote waste reduction, and that a Waste Prevention Strategy for Halton be presented to Members for consideration in April 2008.

Reason for Decision

In order to work in partnership with the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA), there was a need for Halton to update its current Waste Management Strategy. Notwithstanding this requirement, there was also a need to ensure that the Council's Strategy Document remained fit for purpose.

Alternative Options considered and rejected

The options that had been considered, and led to a decision to update the Council's current strategy, were detailed in previous reports presented to the Executive Board.

Implementation Date

Implementation was expected by May 2008.

RESOLVED: That the Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Halton be adopted.

PROGRAMME (LACMP)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment presenting a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan for approval.

It was noted that, in May 2007, the Council had applied, and was accepted onto, the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management Programme (LACMP). This had helped the Council to:

- undertake a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint;
- identify the likely increase in CO2 emissions and increasing costs from Council activities if business continued as normal; and
- identify opportunities to help manage and reduce carbon emissions and costs over the next five years.

The baseline year for the programme was 2006/07 and emissions from Council buildings (including schools), street lighting, fleet transport, business travel and waste were included, to calculate current and future costs should the Council take no action to reduce existing trends.

The Action Plan set out measures to reduce the Council's emissions by 20% over the next five years. If achieved, this would deliver anticipated cost savings of £480,000 per annum once all measures were implemented. The Plan also established an aspirational 33% reduction by 2013/14. Cost savings in the region of £1.6m may be achieved if these targets were met.

RESOLVED: That the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plans be approved subject to any minor amendments to be made in consultation with the Strategic Director – Environment and the Portfolio Holder for Environment, Leisure and Sport.

Strategic Director
- Environment

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT

EXB109 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING - GRANT ALLOCATION 2008-09

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community recommending Voluntary Sector Grant Awards for 2008/09. It was noted that, in accordance with a previous agreement, applications had been assessed and recommendations agreed by a Member

Panel consisting of the Executive Board Member with Portfolio responsibility for the Voluntary Sector, and the Chair and Vice-Chair of the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board.

The recommended grants were listed within the report for the Board's consideration in the context of the Budget allocation and the Panel's assessment. It was advised that Halton Voluntary Action and the Citizen's Advice Bureau were to receive the largest reductions, which equated to approximately 10% on the 2007/08 allocation. As these were the two largest grants given the Panel felt that this was the fairest way to deal with the budget reduction. In addition, it was noted that a significant reduction was recommended in respect of Halton Talking Newspapers as, after inspection of the previous year's accounts, it had been noted that the organisation only required £600 from the voluntary sector core funding to meet the required expenditure due to its reserves.

There was also a further recommendation that Warrington Law Centre receive no funding as much of the activity currently funded by this organisation could be undertaken by other advice giving departments and/or agencies. The Law Centre would still be providing independent housing information as part of the Legal Service Contract funded by the Legal Services Commission at Runcorn Court. Similarly, Shelter still received referrals for Halton clients for specialist housing advice through a Legal Services Contract and so there would be no gap in provision.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the recommended grant allocations be approved for the period 1st April 2008 to 31st March 2009; and
- (2) further applications be approved by the Strategic Director – Health and Community in consultation with the Neighbourhood Management Development Portfolio Holder.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

EXB110 CORPORATE DATA QUALITY STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the development of a draft Corporate Data Quality Strategy that had been produced in response to recommendations made by the

Audit Commission following its most recent review of the Authority's Data Quality Management Arrangements.

It was advised that the Audit Commission's Review had used a three staged approach with the first stage concentrating upon the Authority's management for securing data quality from the following perspectives:

- governance and leadership;
- policies and procedures;
- systems and processes;
- people and skills; and
- data use and reporting.

The results of the Commission's most recent review in 2007 were outlined. It was noted that the review recognised that there were a number of demonstrable strengths within the present arrangements, although opportunities existed for further developing and strengthening of some aspects of the Council's approach. Therefore, an action plan had been developed and endorsed by Management Team on 4th December 2007.

From 2008, arrangements to secure data quality were explicitly referenced within the value for money Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's) that were used by the Commission to form a judgement concerning the Authority's use of resources. This development was reflective of the Government's view that the quality of data being used by authorities was fundamental to its success in managing claims on competing resources to provide and plan the delivery of services and its ability the properly account for its activities to service users, partners and central government departments and regulators.

In addition, the implementation of the new comprehensive area assessment framework, and the further development of local area agreements, would also bring greater responsibilities to, and expectations of, local agencies and partnerships to ensure that good quality data was acquired, used and shared in a timely and effective manner. Therefore, officer and member leads had been identified to take the data quality agenda forward, being the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy and the Quality and Performance Portfolio Holder respectively.

RESOLVED: That the Data Quality Strategy be adopted.

GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 -
URGENT BUSINESS

The Board was advised that a matter had arisen which required immediate attention (Minute Number EXB114 refers). Therefore, pursuant to Section 100 B(4) and 100 E, the Chairman ruled that the item be considered as a matter of urgency.

EXB112 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 items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A 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 paragraphs 3 and 5, and paragraph 3 respectively 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 outweighs the public interest 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 Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraphs 3 and 5, and paragraph 3 respectively of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB113 YOUTH MATTERS/CONNEXIONS TRANSITION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People, providing an update on an in principle agreement made by the Board on 29th November 2007 to commission the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Limited to provide Connexions Services once the funding was transferred to the Council in April 2008. In addition, the report sought approval of a number of recommendations for future service provision.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the contents of the report be noted and approval be given to the entering into by Wirral MBC (as Lead Commissioner) of a one-year contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Limited (GMCP) for the delivery in Halton of “Connexions Services” for Young People (this would be seen as the “Transitional Year” during which the Merseyside Local Authorities would put together a procurement package to allow a formal contract to be tendered);
- (2) delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director – Children and Young People to negotiate any remaining issues and finalise the form of contract with GMCP and the form of indemnity to Wirral MBC as set out within the report; and
- (3) authority be granted to the Council Solicitor to execute the form of indemnity referred to in resolution (2) above, and any associated legal documentation required to progress the matter on behalf of the Council.

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

Council Solicitor

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

(NB: Councillor Polhill declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item of business due to being a Member of the Widnes Regeneration Ltd Board and left the room during the consideration of this item.)

COUNCILLOR WHARTON IN THE CHAIR

EXB114 WIDNES REGENERATION LTD AND THE VENTURE FIELDS COMMERCIAL LEISURE DEVELOPMENT - "THE HIVE"

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive providing an update on progress made on the Venture

Fields Leisure Development (“The Hive”).

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the utilisation of £550,000 of Halton Borough Council retained dividend in the Widnes Regeneration Limited Company to support the costs of developing The Hive at Venture Fields be endorsed; and
- (2) the other elements of the funding package for The Hive Venture Fields Development as described in the report be noted and endorsed.

MINUTES ISSUED: 3rd April 2008

CALL IN: 10th April 2008

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 10th April 2008

Meeting ended at 2.26 p.m.