

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 4 December 2008 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L. Cairns, B. Dodd, D. Johnson, G. Meehan, D. Parr, M. Reaney and D. Tregea

Also in attendance: Councillor Hodgkinson

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB78 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meetings held on 13th and 20th November 2008 were taken as read and agreed as a correct record.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB79 PROPOSALS FOR A GREATER MERSEYSIDE SUB-REGIONAL GROUPING TO PLAN AND COMMISSION 16-18 LEARNING AND COMMISSIONING ARRANGEMENTS - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People outlining a recommendation relating to a Sub Regional Grouping within which Halton Council could discharge its future statutory responsibilities for planning and commissioning 16-18 learning. This was part of the transfer of responsibilities from the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) in April 2010.

It was noted that the Government had announced its intention to route funding for 16-18 year old learning through Councils following the winding up of the LSC. The LSC

Action

would be replaced in 2010 by two new agencies: the Young People's Learning Agency (YPLA) and the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). The changes were subject to legislation and were outlined in the White Paper "Raising Expectations". Part of the transitional arrangements were to establish sub-regional groupings of councils that would co-ordinate commissioning for 16-18 learning across the appropriate area.

Locally, these new responsibilities would be co-ordinated under the auspices of Halton's 14-19 Strategic Partnership. This Partnership brought all stakeholders together to plan 14-19 learning in the Borough and would ensure that the full breadth of provision to meet the 2013 entitlement was in place for Halton's learners.

The Board was advised that significant preparatory work was required to ensure that the Council was ready to assume the lead commissioning role for 16-18 learning in 2010. Details were outlined for Members' consideration, together with the basis of the recommendation for a Greater Merseyside Sub Regional Grouping for 16-18. It was noted that the other Council areas forming this proposal were Knowsley, Liverpool, Sefton, St Helens and the Wirral.

There were three proposed models to undertake the strategic commissioning through the sub regional grouping, each of which were outlined in the report. Model three had strong support from the 14-19 strategic managers to the Directors of Children's Services, and was Halton's preferred model at this stage, as local authorities would remain in control of their local planning and commissioning but, through sub regional collaboration, would be accountable for meeting Multi Area Agreement priorities. This would ensure that both employers' and learner demands were met and that provision was procured locally to meet learner needs. However, the final decision would sit with the YPLA.

The Board was advised that the issue of capacity, in terms of capital to carry out the required development work, had been raised with Government Office North West. Representations had been made for additional support and it was hoped that this would be forthcoming either as staff or resource.

Reason(s) for Decision

To comply with Machinery of Government requirements as part of the transfer of LSC responsibilities to Councils.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

An alternative option was to form a sub group with Cheshire Councils. However, given the emphasis of working within the City Region for the reasons outlined in paragraph 3.4 of the report, this option was not put forward although key strategic linkages would be maintained with any Cheshire grouping, particularly with Warrington Council.

Implementation Date

April 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Halton's membership of a Greater Merseyside Sub Regional Group for 16-18 learning be approved in order to comply with the Council's responsibilities arising from the transfer of Learning and Skills Council (LSC) duties for 16-18 learning to the Council in 2010;
- (2) to maximise the benefits to all learners, the Greater Merseyside Group be requested to ensure that there is co-ordination of strategic planning for 16-18 learners with all neighbouring authorities; and
- (3) "Model Three" be approved for Sub-Regional Commissioning, where local authorities come together to share 14-19 plans but procure providers from within their own Council areas.

Strategic Director-
Children & Young
People

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB80 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services regarding the "Tax Base" for the area and the tax base for each of the Parishes. It was noted that the Council was required to notify the figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority and the Environment Agency by 31st January 2009. In addition, the Council was required to calculate and advise, if requested, the Parish Councils of their relevant tax bases.

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 2009/2010 gave a tax base figure of 38,200 for the Borough as a whole.

The Board noted that the collection rate of 99% was what was currently achieved and was amongst the best in the region. However, there was a risk that this would reduce given the current economic climate.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended that

- (1) the 2009/10 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	569
Daresbury	141
Moore	345
Preston Brook	347
Sandymoor	913

Operational
Director -
Financial Services

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB81 THE 'HEART OF HALTON' PLAQUE SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment outlining the deliberations of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) relating to the development of a new tourism initiative entitled "The Heart of Halton".

The aim of the scheme was to seek to identify and celebrate Halton's achievers, people, important buildings and activities that took place with local historical societies, groups and the public invited to submit suggestions.

To complement plaques, online Web based maps

would be developed highlighting the location of the plaques and what they signified. This would be supported from time to time with leaflets or other publications.

It was noted that the PPB had considered the costs and scale of the project at its meeting of 17th September 2008. The Board agreed that this was a worthy proposal subject to budget pressures although further information was required as to how the scheme would work in practice.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board be requested to examine this proposal in further detail, providing information in relation to the process and criteria; and
- (2) subject to the above and to the 2009/10 budget process, the development of a "Heart of Halton" plaque scheme be approved.

Strategic Director
- Environment

QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

EXB82 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the development of neighbourhood management in Halton up to and beyond the end of Government funding in March 2010.

Members noted that neighbourhood management was designed to help close the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the Borough with regards to health, education, employment and crime. It sought to take a different approach to those taken previously with the aim of working with residents and partners in order to change service delivery mechanisms to reflect the requirements of the local community.

Since 2006, Halton had received government funding to develop neighbourhood management in those areas of the Borough that fell within the 3% most deprived under the 2005 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Although the funding had been for one area, the Council had been able to stretch it across three: Central Widnes; Hallwood Park and Palacefields; and Castlefields and Windmill Hill. Since April 2008, this funding had been part of Halton's Area Based Grant allocation, which continued until March 2010.

Further information relating to Government funding

and guidance; the evaluation of the national neighbourhood management pathfinder programme; achievements so far; and future development were outlined within the report for Members' consideration. It was noted that the Neighbourhood Management Board had reviewed progress at an awayday in July 2008 and a full progress report had been presented to the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board in September 2008.

The Executive Board was requested to confirm the Council's support for the continuation of neighbourhood management for the duration of the current funding, and to support the key areas of future work agreed by the partnership outlined in the report. This work would form the basis for subsequent consideration of the future for neighbourhood arrangements in Halton after April 2010. In terms of Area Forums, it was noted that these performed a different and complementary function and it was recommended that these be retained with their funding arrangements unaltered.

In considering the report, the following issues were discussed/noted:

- the role of Members in relation to neighbourhood management;
- the work already being carried out by the Council in hard-to-reach areas and the need for other agencies to co-ordinate a similar approach;
- the fact that those Wards not covered by neighbourhood management would not benefit directly from this funding despite having pockets of deprivation. However, it was noted that it had previously been decided that the funding on offer by the Government be taken up and utilised and, if the Council decided that it was worth rolling the initiative out throughout the Borough, the implications be considered at that time. In the meantime, a number of projects that had originated in neighbourhood management areas, such as the men's health programme, had been successfully implemented across the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Halton Neighbourhood Management Partnership develop a detailed business case for Neighbourhood Management after 2010 and the Corporate Services

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

Policy and Performance Board review this;

- (2) the Council supports the continuation of present Neighbourhood Management arrangements at least until March 2010; and
- (3) it is confirmed that the Council will retain and fund Area Forums under any future arrangements.

MINUTES ISSUED: 11th December 2008

CALL IN: 18th December 2008

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 18th December 2008

Meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.