

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 3 December 2009 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building*

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Harris

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L Crane, L. Derbyshire, B. Dodd, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, M Reaney and D. Tregoe

Also in attendance: Councillor Hodgkinson and M Thomas (District Audit)

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

#### EXB61 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### EXB62 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy on the Annual Audit Letter 2008/09.

The Board was advised that the Annual Audit Letter summarised the findings from the 2008/09 audit completed by the Council's External auditors. The Letter included messages arising from the audit of the financial statements and the results of the work that had been undertaken in assessing the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources.

Mr M Thomas, District Auditor attended the meeting and reported that the Council had achieved a very good report in challenging times. In respect of the use of resources which determined how well the Council managed and used their financial resources it had been concluded

*Action*

that the KLOE (key lines of enquiry) scores reflected a Council that was performing consistently above the minimum standards specified by the Audit Commission, a Level 3 performance.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Audit Letter be approved.

Strategic Director  
– Corporate &  
Policy

EXB63 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy 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 31<sup>st</sup> January 2010. In addition, the Council was required to calculate and advise, if requested, the Parish Councils of their relevant tax bases.

The Board was advised that 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 2010/11 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.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended that

- (1) the 2010/11 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:

Strategic Director  
– Corporate &  
Policy

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	729
Halebank	594
Daresbury	142
Moore	343
Preston Brook	352
Sandymoor	938

EXB64 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WIDNES MAGISTRATES COURT - RESULTS OF CONSULTATION

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive which contained a summary of responses received following the consultation exercise on the proposed closure of Widnes Magistrates Court.

The Board noted that the Ministry of Justice had consulted the Borough Council on their proposals to close Widnes Magistrates Court. The period of formal consultation would end on 5 January 2010. At its meeting on 15 October 2009, Executive Board resolved the following:

- The Consultation Document be sent to all Council Members and relevant external partners inviting comments or views on the proposal by 30 November 2009;
- The Chief Executive be asked to present a Report to the Executive Board in December 2009 with a summary of comments and a recommendation for the Council's response to the Ministry of Justice; and
- The Chief Executive be requested to meet with the Court Service to discuss the proposal and the possible future use of the building.

The Board was advised that the Leader and Chief Executive had met with the Court Service Staff on 10 November 2009; they expressed the view that, should the proposal to close take effect, they would wish to see the site utilised for the benefit of the Community.

The report had been prepared prior to the end of the consultation deadline and contained the comments that had been received from Members. It was noted that no additional comments had been received since the draft response had been prepared.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services be authorised to finalise and despatch the Council's response to the consultation.

Chief Executive

*(NB: Councillor Wharton declared a Personal Interest in the following item due to being a Member of the Halton Transport Board and remained in the meeting during consideration of the item.)*

#### EXB65 CHANGES TO THE CONSTITUTION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy, on proposed changes to the constitution in respect of the exercise of powers in relation to Halton Transport.

Under the Council's constitution all matters relating to Halton Transport were reserved to the Council, and the exercise of voting rights as a major shareholder was delegated to the Chief Executive.

The Board was advised that Halton Transport wanted to make a fuel hedging arrangement for which the bank required a guarantee from the Council. Under the Constitution, this decision would be reserved to Council, and given the calendar of meetings, any delay in such a decision could result in a financial loss to Halton Transport.

The proposed change in wording was as follows:

*"To exercise voting rights on behalf of the Council where the Council is the shareholder of a company and to take action up to £250,000 which may be considered appropriate from time to time."*

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to amend the Constitution, as set out above.

Strategic Director  
– Corporate &  
Policy

#### EXB66 CORPORATE PLAN MID- TERM REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy on the Council's Corporate Plan mid-term review.

The purpose of the Corporate Plan was to outline key actions that the Council would undertake during the five year period 2006 to 2011. It also contributed to the Borough's Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) and Local Area Agreement outcomes.

The Board was advised that, as implementation of the Plan was half way through the five year period, it would be appropriate to consider and reflect on changes that had taken place since the Plan had been written in 2006.

The principle amendments to the Plan were outlined in the report and included

- The need to reflect the updated shared partnership vision, priorities, objectives and targets adopted in July 2009 as part of the mid term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy; and
- How the Council would contribute to achieving these shared priorities and objectives.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Corporate Plan mid-term review be noted; and
- (2) the Executive Board recommend that the Council approve the mid term review of the Corporate Plan.

Strategic Director  
– Corporate &  
Policy

#### EXB67 PROVISION OF YOUTH WORK TARGETED YOUTH SUPPORT SERVICES IN HALTON - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People on the provision of youth work and targeted youth support services in Halton.

The Borough Council's Youth Service had been delivered by the Greater Manchester Connexions Partnership since 2002/03. Since then a number of new pieces of legislation and guidance had been produced and in December 2008, Executive Board approved proposals for the future commissioning of the Youth Service.

As the contract was in excess of £1million, a stringent tendering process had been undertaken as defined by EU Procurement regulations. The report gave details of the specification. Members were advised that a comprehensive and effective Youth Service would be an important aspect to ensure the Council could make a real difference to young people across the range of indicators, as described in the National Indicator Set for Children's Services and Local Authorities PSA 14.

In carrying out the selection process, the views and

wishes of young people had been represented; a panel of young people were able to challenge and question providers as part of the interview process.

Reason(s) for Decision:

To comply with recommendations as contained in Youth Matters and Youth Matters Next Steps.

To continue to address specific issues for young people in Halton such as to increase the numbers of young people who were engaged in education, employment or training and to reduce the numbers of under 18 conceptions.

The service would also ensure young people in Halton received services and support that encouraged and promoted their self esteem and self confidence and provided them with the skills, knowledge, choices and opportunities that would help them in making the tricky transition into adulthood and to become the future Halton needed as it moved further into the 21<sup>st</sup> century.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None

Implementation Date:

1 February 2010

RESOLVED: That Executive Board appoint Action For Children as the approved supplier of Youth Work and Targeted Youth Support Services in Halton.

Strategic Director  
– Children &  
Young People

EXB68 REDESIGN OF DAY SERVICES FOR PEOPLE WITH PHYSICAL & SENSORY DISABILITIES AND OLDER PEOPLE WITH ADDITIONAL NEEDS- KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community on the redesign of day services for people with physical and sensory disabilities and older people with additional needs.

The Board noted that approval had been given in June 2009 for a consultation exercise to be carried out with all stakeholders on the decommissioning of Bridgewater Day Centre as a base for day services and for the further development of day service activities in the community.

Extensive consultation had been carried out and a

summary of responses from each of the service users, carers, day service staff, trade unions and other interested bodies and individuals, as well as consultation with the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board, had been included in the report. Comments were positive about the changes and the refocus of the service.

#### Reasons for Decision

Bridgewater Day Centre currently had no service users attending due to the success of the initiative to link day service users to community facilities. It was therefore inefficient, impractical and contrary to the philosophy of social inclusion to continue to run the day centre.

#### Alternative Options considered and Rejected:

The option to return to providing traditional building based day services was rejected due to the success of the community based model and the outcome of the consultation with users, carers and other stakeholders, as detailed in the report.

#### Implementation Date:

January 2010

RESOLVED: That

- (1) In response to the consultation with stakeholders, day activities in the community be further developed to more fully utilise local resources;
- (2) Bridgewater Day Centre be decommissioned as a base for the delivery of traditional Day Services for Adults with Physical and Sensory Disabilities by 1 January 2010; and
- (3) Following the decommissioning of Bridgewater Day Centre, the Strategic Director for Health and Community report the progress and further service developments to the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board.

Strategic Director  
– Health &  
Community

#### EXB69 DUAL DIAGNOSIS STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community on the development of a Joint Dual Diagnosis Commissioning Strategy 2009-2012 for

Halton and St Helens.

The Strategy documented the current services already in place for people with both substance misuse and mental health problems, with a view to identifying and analysing the gaps in services and any blockages to delivering a more integrated care pathway.

The Board was advised that a number of consultation meetings with all stakeholders in both mental health and substance misuse services had been undertaken early in 2009. In addition, a number of one to one interviews with key stakeholders were undertaken to gain views on current services and how services could be improved.

The Strategy recommended more integrated working, earlier identification and treatment in primary care and an increase in skills and knowledge for staff to enable them to provide care to people with dual diagnosis problems. It was designed to improve the care experience and reduce waiting times between services.

RESOLVED: That the Joint Dual Diagnosis Commissioning Strategy be endorsed.

Strategic Director  
– Health &  
Community

#### EXB70 CORPORATE EQUALITIES SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community on the development of a new updated Corporate Equalities Scheme.

The Board was advised that the Single Equity Scheme attached at Appendix 1 to the report had been developed following a review of the existing scheme as was required every three years, Appendix 2, to the report identified a number of achievements since the last scheme had been devised.

The Board was further advised that the Single Equality Scheme had been structured around the performance principles established within the Equality Framework for Local Government (EFLG), introduced earlier in 2009. It provided a competency framework against which the authority could measure its achievements and develop future actions that would focus on what needed to be done in delivering positive equality outcomes for the community.

The draft scheme had been widely circulated for consultation and promoted in local newspapers and on the Council's Intranet. A small number of minor amendments



were required and agreed.

RESOLVED: That the new Corporate Equalities Scheme as amended be endorsed.

Strategic Director  
– Health &  
Community

#### EXB71 LOCALITY WORKING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy on a recommendation from the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board on Locality Working.

The Board was advised that on 8 September 2009, the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board resolved : -

*“that the Executive Board be recommended to accept Option 1 – complete closedown, and a working party be set up with the Business Efficiency Board to consider the future of locality working in Halton”*

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Executive Board support the creation of a Working Group to consider how locality working should operate and be funded in Halton when Neighbourhood Management funding ceases to be available from Central Government; and
- (2) the Working Group receive evidence from a wide range of partners across Halton and report their findings to the Local Strategic Partnership and Executive Board.

Strategic Director  
– Corporate &  
Policy

*(NB: Councillors Nelson, Swain and Wright declared a Personal Interest in the following item due to being a Board Members of Halton Housing Trust and remained in the meeting during consideration of the item.)*

#### EXB72 LAND AT HOUGHTON STREET, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy, on the disposal of land at Houghton Street, Widnes, to Halton Housing Trust.

The Board was advised that Halton Housing Trust had approached the Council with a view to purchasing land retained by the Borough Council following the LSVT Transfer in 2005. A valuation of the site had been obtained

and Halton Housing Trust had a scheme to build nine social rent properties on the site. The sale of the land would be subject to planning permission being granted.

RESOLVED; That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the land at Houghton Street be sold to Halton Housing Trust on the terms contained in the report.

Strategic Director  
– Corporate &  
Policy

EXB73 PILOT DELIVERY OF CHILDREN'S HEALTH SERVICES FROM WARRINGTON ROAD CHILDREN'S CENTRE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People, on the Pilot Health Visiting Service Partnership Project at Warrington Road Children's Centre.

The Board was advised that the DCSF Children's Trusts guidance (2008) required Local Partners, through inter-agency arrangements, to integrate frontline delivery organised around the child, young person and family, rather than professional boundaries.

The proposed Pilot Project, which would be overseen by the Halton Children's Trust (PCT's), would meet five of the essential elements of Children's Trust arrangements; these were outlined in the report. The project would involve a re-design of the Primary Care Trust's Halton Health Visiting Service to provide a new geographical approach to service delivery; this would be based at Warrington Road Children's Centre.

A Pilot Project Steering Group would be established to agree principal areas of partnership working, and subject to approval, would commence work between January and March 2010. If successful, the PCT would consider rolling out the Health Visiting Service in this format across the Borough.

Reasons for Decision

- The project had the potential to influence the development of integrated services in Halton that offered support and early intervention for families;
- The PCT's aspiration for the future delivery of

Universal Health Services was across a children's centre footprint; and

- The proposed pilot would test out how this way of working in Halton could be rolled out.

Alternative Options considered and Rejected:

The alternative would mean that the Authority remained working as separate organisations. Given the need to constantly improve efficiency and the safety of children, this needed to change.

Implementation Date:

January to March 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Pilot Health Visiting Project at Warrington Road Children's Centre be supported.

Strategic Director  
– Children &  
Young People

*(NB: Councillor Swain declared a Personal Interest in the following item due to being a Governor of Halton High School and remained in the meeting during consideration of the item.)*

EXB74 SCHOOL ORGANISATION - CONSULTATION ON THE CLOSURE OF HALTON HIGH - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Children and Young People, on the consultation arrangements on the proposed closure of Halton High School on 31 August 2010.

The Board was advised that, during consultation on future secondary provision, it had been agreed that Halton High School would be developed as an Academy. This meant that the school would need to be discontinued and the school organisation process completed so that the Funding Agreement could be signed off in February 2010.

The Board was further advised that the consultation had commenced on 5 November 2009 and closed on Monday 30 November 2009. The consultation proposal had been widely advertised with details sent to parents of pupils at Halton High, a range of other stakeholders including trade unions, and Halton Schools. Copies of the proposal were also placed in the local Children's Centres and the library

and the meetings had been advertised in the local press, placed on the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) website and on the electronic children and young people's circular.

In addition four consultation events had been held in Halton High School on 12 November 2009 for staff, governors and the public. A further consultation event had been held at Castlefield's Community Centre on 4 November 2009.

It was reported that the notes of the meetings had been placed on the website and a copy had been provided to the school and the sponsor for their information.

In conclusion, it was highlighted that the proposal had been well received and there had been no opposition. In addition, the Authority received four feedback forms supporting the proposal, one of which was from the Chair of Governors of Halton High School.

#### Reasons for Decision

To provide more choice and diversity and retain pupils within the Borough.

#### Alternative Options considered and Rejected:

Not applicable.

#### Implementation Date:

The decision needed to be made on 3 December 2009 so that statutory consultation could commence on 10 December 2009.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the commencement of the Statutory Consultation to close Halton High School on 31 August 2010 to allow the development of an Academy be approved, subject to consideration of any further representations received prior to the end of the consultation period; and
- (2) this decision be excluded from the call-in procedure, as immediate action was required so that the Statutory Consultation could commence on 10 December 2009.

Strategic Director  
– Children &  
Young People

## 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)

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 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 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item 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, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

### EXB76 RE-COMMISSIONING OF THE YOUNG CARERS AND CARE LEAVERS SERVICE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Children and Young People, on the re-commissioning of the Young Carers and Care Leavers Service.

The Board was advised that under the Children (Leaving Care) Act 2000, there was a legal requirement for the Local Authority to appoint a Personal Advisor to each young person who had been looked after for at least 13 weeks since the age of 14 and who was now 16/17 and either currently being looked after or who had left care since becoming 16.

The Board was further advised that in order to avoid young people leaving care failing it was essential that the Personal Advisor Service was highly effective. It was reported that the proposed action to reconfigure the Personal Advisor Service would achieve this aim.

RESOLVED: That the proposed action on the reconfiguration of the services for Personal Advisor for Care Leavers and Young Carers Service, as outlined in the report, be endorsed.

**MINUTES ISSUED: 7 December 2009**

**CALL IN (with the exception of Minute No: EXB74 above): 15 December 2009**

**Any matter (with the exception of Minute No: EXB74 above) decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 15 December 2009**

Strategic Director  
– Children &  
Young People

*Meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.*