

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 1 March 2012 in The Board Room - Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, Harris, Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Stockton, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Swain

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Cook, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, B. Dodd and A. Jones

Also in attendance: None

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

#### EXB104 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2012, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

#### EXB105 APPLICATIONS TO THE TWINNING GRANT PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which gave details of three applications to the Twinning Grant Fund.

Halton Borough Council set up a Grant Fund to assist in enabling all members of the community to access and gain benefit from the Council's International Links. Since 1996, a number of groups had accessed the fund to undertake exchange visits. Participants in previous exchanges had found that the benefits of learning about another culture and language were immense. A wide range of activity in the Borough had been facilitated by the provision of grant aid and had given an opportunity to those who would not otherwise be able to participate.

*Action*

Details of costs and the purpose of each visit were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the following applications be approved:
  - Application by Power In Partnership £250 per head;
  - Application by Wade Deacon £167 per pupil;
  - Application by St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School £166.66 per head;
- 2) Power in Partnership receive £1,000 in line with the Town Twinning Grant criteria to award a maximum of £1,000 towards European Twinning projects;
- 3) Wade Deacon High School receive the £2,000 requested towards their trip to Tongling, in line with the Town Twinning Grant criteria, to award a maximum of £2,000 towards Chinese Twinning projects; and
- 4) St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School receive the £2,000 requested towards their trip to Tongling, in line with the Town Twinning Grant criteria to award a maximum of £2,000 towards Chinese Twinning projects.

Strategic Director  
- Children and  
Enterprise

## **CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO**

*Councillors Polhill and Harris declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as they are both Governors of The Bankfield School.*

### **EXB106 CAPITAL PROGRAMME- SCHOOLS CAPITAL GRANT ALLOCATION - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the Capital Programme 2012/13.

The Board was advised that in December 2011, the Department for Education announced the schools capital grant allocations for 2012/13, for each area of capital funding. The report detailed the works proposed for funding from the Capital Maintenance and Revenue Allocation (CERA).

*The Capital Programme 2012-13* and the *Capital Repairs Programme* papers were appended at Appendix 1 and 2 respectively.

The Board noted that Basic Need capital funding was allocated to the relative need for new places, based on forecast data provided by local authorities, and was provided to local authorities to provide school places where needed in their area, in all categories of taxpayer-funded schools.

Capital Maintenance funding was allocated to ensure school buildings were properly maintained. The Local Authority schools element was allocated to support the needs of the schools and for Sure Start Children's Centres and the Voluntary Aided Schools element was allocated to Chester Diocese, Shrewsbury Diocese and Liverpool Archdiocese to fund condition and suitability projects at Voluntary Aided Schools. Devolved Formula Capital would be allocated directly to schools for their own use to address building and ICT needs.

It was noted that a further detailed report would be submitted to the Board later in the year containing proposals for the use of the Basic Need Capital allocation for 2012-13.

#### Reason For Decision

To deliver and implement the capital programmes.

#### Alternative Options Considered And Rejected

Not applicable.

#### Implementation Date

Capital Programmes to be implemented with effect from 1 April 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the capital funding available for 2012/13 be

Strategic Director  
- Children and

noted;

Enterprise

- 2) the proposals to be funded from Capital Maintenance be agreed and the position in respect of Basic Need be noted;
- 3) Full Council be recommended to approve the Capital Programme 2012/13; and
- 4) a further report be submitted to Executive Board to detail how the Basic Need capital funding would be spent in 2012/13.

### **COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

#### **EXB107 POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONERS AND POLICE & CRIME PANELS**

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive on the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners and a Police and Crime Panel.

The Board was advised that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced a new regime for policing and community safety in England. From November 2012, Police Authorities would be replaced by a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). In addition, a new Police and Crime Panel (Panel) would be established to scrutinise the activities of the PCC. The introduction of the PCC and the Panel would change the relationship with the Council and the Community Safety Partnerships and other partners in crime reduction, crime detection and the criminal justice system.

The report informed Members of the preparations underway for the transition from the Police Authority to a PCC. It was noted that a Transition Group had been established, David Parr had been nominated and accepted as the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for the Cheshire Police Force area and Warrington Borough Council had been nominated as the host authority for the Police and Crime Panel. In addition, the report provided details of the Election arrangements taking place in November 2012, the powers and scrutiny role of the Panel, Partnership and Commissioning arrangements and the preparations already underway for the PCC and the Panel in Halton.

**RESOLVED:** That the report be noted.

## PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

### EXB108 PORTAS PILOT

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive on the bid for Runcorn Town Centre to be nominated as a *Portas Pilot* Town Centre.

The Board was advised that in December 2011, the *Portas* Review had made twenty-eight review recommendations, one of which was to form a Town Team to improve town centre locations. It was intended that a Town Team would focus on driving innovation and improvement in the management and development of a strategic and collaborative approach to the way the high street was managed. This would include landlords, retailers, local authorities and local communities.

The report provided details of the application and funding process and the bidding criteria. It was noted that 12 pilot areas would be selected with a maximum allocation of £100,000 per Town Team. Resources would be allocated on a value for money basis, so areas would need to be able to demonstrate the potential for improvement. The closing date for applications was 30 March 2012.

RESOLVED: That the Council submit a bid to Government for Runcorn Town Centre to be made a *Portas Pilot* Town Centre.

Chief Executive

## RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

### EXB109 SPENDING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 December 2011.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.6m below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that Directorates had been advised to continue to limit spending to the absolutely essential, to ensure that each Directorate's spending at year-end was within the total operational budget. The overall position reflected the success of the Action Plan implemented by the Board at its meeting on 22 September 2011.

The Board was reminded that at its meeting on 14 December 2011, Council had approved the early implementation of budget savings for 2012/13 totalling £5.6m. These provided a part-year saving in 2011/12, and assisted in keeping overall spending within budget by year-end.

Members were advised that the economic downturn was affecting income. A number of income budgets were below their profile including market rents, industrial estates rents, stadium rents and social care charges and licence fees. These budgets would continue to be closely monitored to minimise any shortfalls by year-end.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that the capital programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles as schemes had developed and were reflected in the capital programme presented at Appendix 2. The revised schemes were listed in the report. Capital spending at 31 December 2011 totalled £30.9m, which was 86% of the planned spending of £36.0m at this stage. However, this only represented 55% of the total capital programme of £55.8m. Main areas of programme slippage to date were in respect of Castlefields Regeneration, Silver Jubilee Bridge Maintenance and Mersey Gateway Early Land Acquisition.

The Council's Balance Sheet was monitored regularly in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy which formed part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key reserves and balances had been reviewed and were considered prudent and appropriate at this stage in the financial year.

The report also advised that 800 equal pay claims had been lodged with the Council as part of the national single status agreement. An equal pay reserve had been established over recent years, of £5m in order to meet the future cost of such claims.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Directorates continue to closely monitor spending on agency staff and overtime, so that spending in these areas continues to reduce;
- 3) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at

Operational  
Director - Finance

year-end is within their total operational budget; and

- 4) The Board note the revisions to the capital programme in paragraph 3.13 of the report, made under delegation by the Operational Director, Finance.

**MINUTES ISSUED: 6 March 2012**

**CALL-IN: 13 March 2012**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 13 March 2012.**

*Meeting ended at 2.21 p.m.*