

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 9 April 2015 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, M. Reaney, G. Cook, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan and E. Dawson

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB167 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 March 2015 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB168 2015/16 INSURANCE RENEWALS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, regarding the renewal of insurance premiums for 2015/16.

The Board was advised that emerging trends within the insurance market were putting pressure on rates, with many insurers looking for increased terms. It was reported that organisations that were prepared to accept a higher level of self-insurance were more attractive to insurers, and benefitted from lower premiums as a result.

It was noted that in recent years, the Council had moved towards taking on a greater level of self insurance in order to obtain cost-effective insurance cover and to minimise the revenue impact of increasing insurance

Action

premiums. Details of the increase in the level of excess across a number of insurance classes were contained in the report. Acting under delegated powers, the Operational Director, Finance, had reviewed insurance cover for 2015/16, as set out in paragraph 3.5. These changes had been taken after consultation with the Council's insurance broker, taking into account the Council's capacity to fund uninsured losses through the Insurance Reserve.

It was further reported that the draft Risk Financing and Insurance Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, set out how the Council would ensure that the structure of its insurance programme achieved the optimum balance between self-insurance and externally procured insurance.

Clarification was provided on insurance cover for Academy Schools. Upon transfer to Academy status, the Council would cease to provide such cover.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the changes in the Council's Insurance Programme regarding the purchase of external insurance for 2015/16 be noted; and
- 2) the Risk Financing and Insurance Strategy presented at Appendix 1, be approved.

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EXB169 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which set out details of three applications for Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief.

The Board was reminded that under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. At its meeting on 26 February 2015, the Board had approved a set of criteria which provided 15% discretionary relief where applications were approved from registered charities or community amateur sports clubs.

Details of the applications were set out in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentages

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indicated, for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2019;

Halton Community Partnership Trust –	15%
Halton Disability Partnership –	15%

- 2) That Discretionary Rate Relief is backdated in respect of the following organisations, at the percentage indicated, for the period up to 31 March 2015;

Halton Community Partnership Trust	20%
Halton Disability Partnership	20%

- 3) The application for Discretionary Rate Relief from The Cyrenians Ltd, be refused on the grounds of them being a national organisation.

EXB170 ICT & SUPPORT SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the proposals for the ICT and Support Services Capital Programme.

The Board was advised that the long term investment made by the Council in its ICT infrastructure, had played a major part in its drive for greater efficiency. It was noted that this had enabled the Council to reduce its estate, introduce automated processes, facilitate greater use of agile working and enhance its income from Service Level Agreements from third parties, amongst other initiatives. In addition, it was noted that the Administrative Shared Service had successfully launched the Picow Farm Records Management Service, which delivered scanning and a document management services within the Council and to neighbouring authorities. This was also the location for the Council's second data centre, which enhanced the resilience of the Council's business continuity, as well as providing the ability to offer services to others.

The report set out details of the three key programme areas for the 2015/16 ICT Programme. These were noted as being:

- Licensing to support the strategy;
- Server Replacement and Development; and
- Desktop Device Refresh.

RESOLVED: That the details of the ICT and Support Services Capital Programme be noted and approved and

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the financial spend profile for 2015/16 be supported.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB171 MARKETING AND PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES IN RUNCORN AND WIDNES TOWN CENTRES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on existing and proposed Marketing and Promotions activity within Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres.

The Board was advised that in December 2014, the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills had commissioned and published a research paper entitled 'Policy implications of recent trends in the high street/retail sector'. This had been considered by the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board at its meeting on 25 March 2015.

It was reported that the research paper identified key trends impacting on the UK's high streets together with some recommendations which could be adapted to improve and sustain the vitality and vibrancy of Halton's town centres.

The report set out a summary of current and proposed marketing and promotions activities taking place in Widnes Markets, Runcorn Town Centre and Widnes Town Centre, for Members' information.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the existing marketing and promotional activities in Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres be noted; and
- 2) the future proposals outlined in the report be approved.

TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

EXB172 PASSENGER TRANSPORT TENDERS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which advised on the process for the open tender procedure for Passenger Transport Tenders.

The Board was advised that the Transport Co-ordination Section was responsible for a complex range of

passenger transport contracts and arrangements on behalf of the Children and the Economy and the Communities Directorates. The report set out the details of the tenders which would be advertised via The Chest, in compliance with Procurement Standing Orders.

RESOLVED: That the process of advertising transport tenders on behalf of the Children and the Economy Directorate and the Communities Directorate for services required from September 2015 be supported.

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MINUTES ISSUED: 14 April 2015

CALL-IN: 21 April 2015

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 21 April 2015

Meeting ended at 2:14pm