

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 17 September 2015 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Wharton

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, P. McWade and K. Mackenzie.

Also in attendance: Nick Atkin and Ingrid Fife – Halton Housing Trust

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB39 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 3 September 2015 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB40 HALTON HOUSING TRUST PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which provided an update on the progress of Halton Housing Trust for the past twelve months.

The Board received a verbal update from Nick Atkin, Chief Executive of Halton Housing Trust, and Ingrid Fife, Chairman of the Board, Halton Housing Trust (HHT.) They reported on progress to date in delivering some key achievements, partnerships and strategic priorities.

Members were advised that the Trust had a successful year in performance across core areas. In 2014/2015 a further £9m was invested in improving customer's homes and neighbourhoods. This represented

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over £130m investment in the nine years since housing stock transfer.

The Board noted that the operating environment of the Trust was becoming increasingly challenging. In July 2015, the Budget included a 1% reduction in rents for four years to March 2020, a benefits freeze and a change to the benefits cap. Together with the extension of Right to Buy opportunities, this would have a significant impact on the sector as a whole.

The Trust would have a reduction in income of 14% (£10 million) over the next four years, and a significant amount of work and analysis would be carried out to understand the detailed impact and potential savings by targeting resources more effectively.

Members had the opportunity to ask questions and clarify information contained in the presentation before Mr Atkin and Ms Fife were thanked for attending.

RESOLVED: That the progress report be noted.

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB41 VARIATION OF THE NON-STATUTORY FEES OF HALTON REGISTRATION SERVICE FOR 2017/2018

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought approval to vary the non-statutory fees offered by Halton Registration Service for 2017/2018.

The Marriage Act 1995 and the Civil Partnership Act 2005 allowed local authorities to set fees for ceremonies in approved premises. In January 2011, the Executive Board Sub-Committee agreed to set the non-statutory fees outside the usual timeframe for setting fees due to ceremonies being planned up to two years in advance.

RESOLVED: That the variations to the non-statutory fees of Halton Registration Service, be approved.

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB42 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION GROWTH GRANT REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which updated Members on the delivery of the £15 million Liverpool City Region (LCR)

Business Growth Grant Programme.

The Board had previously considered a report that described the proposed roll-out of the LCR Business Growth Grant in Halton in November 2014.

The Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership (LCRLEP) had secured £10 million from Round 3 of the Government's Regional Growth Fund (RGF) programme and a further £5 million from RGF Round 4 to establish a pan-Merseyside scheme to provide grant support of between £50,000 and £1,000,000 to eligible businesses across the City Region. The LCR Business Growth Grant supported business planning to invest in capital or equipment that directly created or safeguarded jobs and to increase business output. This was designed to unlock private sector investment, which would be at least 5:1 - every £5 invested by a business could potentially lead to £1 of support from the LCR Business Growth Grant.

The Board noted the final RGF3 and the current RGF 4 spend position. To date, 90.95 % of contracted grant (RGF3 and RGF4) had been paid to businesses. A total of £3,239,554.03 of private sector leverage had been invested in the Borough as a consequence of the award of grant against total project expenditure of £3,916,416.64. The Programme had created 26 jobs, and safeguarded a further 23 jobs to date. Grant recipients had until 2017 to meet the jobs created and safeguarded targets associated with the award of grant. It was anticipated that the Programme would create 102 jobs and safeguard 72.

RESOLVED: That the positive performance of the Liverpool City Growth Grant Programme in Halton be recognised in respect of the number of companies supported; the level of grant contracted and paid; private sector leverage generated as a consequence of the receipt of grant; and the anticipated number of jobs created and safeguarded as a result of the receipt of grant.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB43 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 1 2015/ 16

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the first quarter to 30 June 2015.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate, being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements, with the Board having a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability. Performance management would continue to be important in the demonstration of value for money and outward accountability.

RESOLVED: That the report and progress and performance information be noted.

EXB44 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2015/16 - QUARTER 1

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic background, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing/investments, new long term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

MINUTES ISSUED: 21 SEPTEMBER 2015

CALL-IN: 28 SEPTEMBER 2015

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 28 September 2015

Meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.