

EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 16 February 2023 in the Boardroom -
Municipal Building, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, J. Lowe,
T. McInerney, Nelson, Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner,
G. Ferguson and L. Wilson-Lagan

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB73 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 January 2023 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB74 BUDGET 2023/24 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2023/24.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), approved at the Executive Board meeting on 17 November 2022 had identified a funding gap of around £21.1m in 2023/24, £1.9m in 2024/25 and £2.0m in 2025/26. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council's priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency gains;
- Protect essential front line services and

- vulnerable members of the community; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public, and Members own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. Individual consultations were taking place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

The Board received regular reports summarising spending in the current year against the budget. The latest report indicated that spending was forecast to be over budget in the current year by approximately £7.1m against a net budget of £111.7m.

The proposed revenue budget for 2023/24 totalled £140.880m; the departmental analysis of this was shown in Appendix B and the major reasons for change from the current budget were shown in Appendix C. A total of £2.830m of savings were approved by Council on 1 February 2023.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Local Government Finance Settlement. Additional funding for Adult's and Children's Social Care was announced as part of the provisional settlement and details of these were set out in the report.

Further information was also provided on the budget outlook, Halton's Council Tax, Parish precepts, Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region Mayor precepts, the Capital Programme, Prudential Code and School Budgets.

Reason(s) for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's revenue budget, capital programme and council tax 2023/24.

Implementation Date

8 March 2023.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended

- 1) to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £140.880m, the Council Tax requirement of £60.714m (before Parish, Police,

Operational
Director - Finance

Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,675.29;

- 2) to approve the capital programme set out in Appendix E;
- 3) to approve the introduction of a Council Tax Premium of 100% to properties where there is no resident and which are substantially furnished (typically referred to as second homes) from 1 April 2024, subject to legislation being enacted; and
- 4) to approve the Use of Capital Receipts Strategy as set out in Appendix F.

EXB75 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2023/24

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the Council’s Capital Strategy for 2023/24.

It was reported that all councils were required to produce a Capital Strategy annually, the aim of which was to ensure that the Council understood the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

Members were advised that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, included on the same agenda; this detailed the expected activities of the treasury management function and incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2023/24. It was noted that the successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the 2023/24 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB76 2022/23 SPENDING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2022

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council’s overall revenue net spending position as of 31 December 2022 together with a forecast outturn.

A summary of spending against the operational

revenue budget up to 31 December 2022 was presented in Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £7.098m. It was noted that this represented a lower figure than the figure of £7.586m forecast at 30 September 2022. The revisions to the Capital Programme were listed in the report and the revised Capital Programme was attached at Appendix 3.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Executive Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and
- 3) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.16.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB77 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2023/24

The Board received the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2023/24.

The TMSS was appended to the report and detailed the expected activities of the treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2023/24). Its production and submission to Council was a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years, to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Act therefore required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (AIS), which set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. Government guidance notes stated that authorities could

combine the TMSS and the AIS into one report, which the Council had done and was included in Section 4.

Members noted that the production of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report at paragraph 2.3, with the full policy shown in Appendix A.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statements, prudential and treasury indicators outlined in the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB78 TAXI LICENSING MATTER - PROPOSED INCREASE IN THE HACKNEY CARRIAGE TABLE OF FARES

The Board considered a report of the Regulatory Committee which recommended a proposed increase to the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares.

It was noted that the request to increase fares had been received from members of the taxi trade and was due to the impact of costs of living crisis on the trade over the last 12 months. The Council had the discretion to fix the fares for Hackney Carriages within the Borough and fares may be varied in accordance with the statutory procedure set out in the report.

The report detailed the proposed increases, comparisons with neighbouring authorities and the written responses that had been received from the taxi trade in support of and against the proposal that were considered by the Regulatory Committee.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) agree the proposed increase to the Hackney Carriage Table of Fares; and
- 2) authorise officers to commence the public notification and consultation in line with the statutory procedure as detailed in the report.

Operational
Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

EXB79 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2023-2024

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2023/24 Municipal Year, as appended to the report

Chief Executive

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB80 HOME BASED RESPITE CARE SERVICE IN HALTON

The Board considered a report which sought a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for the granting of a direct award to support the continuation of the provision of the Home Based Respite Care Service in Halton, to be delivered by Crossroads Care North West, for the period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025, plus an option to extend for a further one-year period.

The Board was advised that retendering the contract could result in the Council foregoing a clear benefit in developing out of hospital services with NHS Cheshire & Merseyside and may result in the Council awarding the contract to another provider, which would result in a risk to continuity of care and support to a vulnerable client group. The preference was to remain with the existing provider to continue to achieve positive outcomes for the existing client base, through well-established relationships that they had with health, social care and the local voluntary and community sector.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the contents of the report; and
- 2) in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv), a waiver of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for a direct award to support the continuation of the provision of the Home Based Respite Care Service in Halton, delivered by Crossroads Care North West for a two year period from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2025, plus an option to extend for a further one-year period, be approved.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB81 0 - 19 HEALTHY CHILD PROGRAMME, BRIDGEWATER COMMUNITY HEALTH NHS FOUNDATION TRUST - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, which sought approval to extend the 0 - 19

Healthy Child Service Contract (up to 25 for those with additional or complex needs) with Bridgewater Community Health NHS Foundation Trust, for twelve months to provide the time required to fully procure the service anew.

It was noted that the Board has previously agreed to award the Contract to Bridgewater Community Health for an agreed period of 5 years, with the option for two additional one year contracts (EXB65/2017 refers).

Reason(s) for Decision

- a) result in the Local Authority incurring expenditure which is significant; and
- b) impact in terms of its effects on communities if contract does not continue.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options are available.

Implementation Date

1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approve the implementation of the first one year extension for the year April 2023 to March 2024, for the 0-19 Healthy Child Programme contract which is provided for within the original contract, which was approved and implemented in 2018; and
- 2) approve the commencement of a full procurement exercise including service reviews in the year 2023-24, with a view to award of a new contract at the end of March 2024.

Director of Public Health

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB82 VARIATION OF THE NON-STATUTORY FEES OF HALTON REGISTRATION SERVICE FROM 1 APRIL 2023

The Board considered a report which sought approval to vary the non-statutory fees offered by Halton Registration Service from 1 April 2023. The proposed fee structure for 2023/24 and 2024/25 had been determined by taking into account inflationary increases and these were set out in Appendix 1. The early setting of the fees was necessary as

ceremonies were arranged up to two years in advance. Further, a published fee structure would provide customers with the amount payable and allow the Service to forward plan more effectively its income targets.

RESOLVED: That the variations to the non-statutory fees of Halton Registration Service as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

Operational
Director
Community
&
Environment

-
&

EXB83 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

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 Section 100A (4) 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 outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) 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.

ADULT AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB84 CARE PROVIDER UPLIFT - REQUEST TO CONSULT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adults, which provided information on the proposed

consultation for annual uplift for domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton for 2023/24.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- 2) approval be given to actively enter into discussions with care providers, with a view to offer an uplift for 2023/24.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB85 PROPERTY & ACCOMMODATION REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property, which advised on the review of the Council's property (buildings). The report sought approval to establish a Members' Working Group to consider recommendations arising from the review and to provide options for the future implementation of the review recommendations. The Group would comprise:

Deputy Leader – Portfolio Holder Major Projects;
Chair of Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board;
Chair of Development Management Committee; and
Scrutiny Co-Ordinator.

It was noted that as the review developed, participation in the Working Group would be amended, subject to the topics under discussion.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members note the key considerations arising from a review of the Council's property; and
- 2) the establishment of a Members' Working Group to consider the recommendations arising from the property review be agreed and reports be brought back to the Executive Board.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

MINUTES ISSUED: 21 February 2023

CALL-IN: 28 February 2023 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 28 February 2023.

Meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.