

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 23 October 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Bevan, Ball, Harris, T. McInerney, Thompson, Wall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Dennett and P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, R. Rout and J. Rosser

Also in attendance: D. Trust Dickinson, C. Deadman and A. Hogarty – Halton Housing Trust

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB48 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 September 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

N.B. Councillor Harris declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as he is a tenant of Halton Housing. Councillor Wright declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business as she is a member of the Halton Housing Trust Board.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO

EXB49 HALTON HOUSING ANNUAL REPORT

The Board received the Halton Housing (HH) Annual Report, which provided an update on their activities since the last report to Executive Board.

The Chair welcomed Debbie Trust Dickinson, who presented the report to the Board – *Annual Report to HBC Executive Board, October 2025*; and her colleagues Amanda Hogarty and Clive Deadman (Chair of the Halton Housing Trust Board).

The report outlined the key achievements over the past year which included:

- customer satisfaction levels across all 12 Tenant Satisfaction perception measures had increased compared to 2024/25 performance;
- there had been significant and sustained improvement in repairs service delivery;
- compliance across 5 out of 6 building safety measures was 100% at the end of March 2025;
- performance against the Trust's target to have 86% of homes with a stock condition survey of no more than 5 years old had been achieved with a year-end figure of 89.5%;
- several community events had been arranged; and
- external accreditations included a gold award by the Council Health Inclusion Team.

The presentation also highlighted the future focus as outlined in the Trust three-year Corporate Plan. This included the Halton Housing Deal for tenants and delivering new homes.

RESOLVED: The Board thanked Halton Housing for the presentation and noted the report.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB50 URGENT DECISION

The Board received a report from the Interim Chief Executive, which provided information on urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.

It was noted that the Council's Constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB51 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2025/26 REVISED

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26 for Halton Borough Council.

The Council was required to publish a Pension Discretion Statement annually, to advise the discretions it intended to exercise under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – this was appended to the report.

It was reported that the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2025-26 was based upon the statement for 2024-25, which was approved by Executive Board in March 2023. It was noted that there had been a revision to the agreed Pensions Discretion Statement 2025/26 incorporating an element to reflect the implementation of the unpaid leave element as required by the Pensions Fund.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26.

Chief Executive

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB52 ALL AGE COMMUNITY CARE PROCESSES AND NEXT STEPS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adults, that presented a summary of the current operational and financial process for All Age Community Care (AACC) and the associated financial risks facing the Council in the current landscape. The report considered the financial impact of the changes Cheshire & Mersey Integrated Care System (C&M ICS) had brought about as part of their financial recovery agenda.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the financial pressures facing the Community Care budget outlined in the report be noted; and
- 2) moving forward, financial processes are aligned to reflect contractual financial obligations of the Council and C&M ICS.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB53 ASC WORKFORCE STRATEGY

The Board was advised that early in 2025, Skills for

Health were commissioned to work with the Council to develop an ASC Workforce Strategy for Halton. Following extensive engagement, which include online surveys that captured views across the workforce, one to one interviews with operational leaders and an analysis of workforce data, vacancy trend, pay benchmarks and training uptake, the strategy was presented to the Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That the draft Adult Social Care Workforce Strategy for Halton be approved.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB54 ANNUAL CONSULTATION EXERCISE - FEE RATES

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adults, that sought approval to enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2026/27. The approach to setting fees and agreeing to appropriate uplifts included consulting with all stakeholders and reassuring them that arrangements for determining fees and uplifts were robust. The approach also allowed for uplifts to be considered on an annual basis with consideration given to changes, business costs and the conditions faced by providers.

RESOLVED: That approval be given to actively enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2026/27.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB55 JOINT HEALTH SCRUTINY ARRANGEMENTS - CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: STAGE 1 DELEGATION

The Board considered a report that sought approval to delegate Stage 1 consideration of substantiation variation to health services, where necessary, when Joint Health Scrutiny (JHS) arrangements may apply. The proposal had previously been presented to the Health and Social Care Policy and Performance Board on 23 September 2025, and the protocol was endorsed.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the proposal for Stage 1 delegation as outlined and recommends for onward approval by Council.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB56 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.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB57 DIRECT AWARD OF THE HALTON INTEGRATED SEXUAL HEALTH PUBLIC HEALTH SERVICE CONTRACT 2026 VIA PROVIDER SELECTION REGIME – DIRECT AWARD PROCESS C. WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL WILL BE THE LEAD COMMISSIONING AUTHORITY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, that sought approval to proceed with a procurement process to grant a direct award to Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Axess) for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS).

Reason(s) for Decision

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 set out a local authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning the Integrated Sexual Health Service.

The Health and Care Act 2022 introduced a new procurement regime for selecting providers of healthcare services in England: The Provider Selection Regime (PSR).

Therefore, Public Health wish to use this procurement route to award a new contract via PSR Direct Award Process C to the current provider Axess. The contract would be jointly commissioned with Warrington the lead commissioning authority.

The justification to use PSR Direct Award Process C to direct award to Axess is noted below:

- The existing provider was satisfying the existing contract and is likely to satisfy the new contract and the proposed new contracting arrangements
- This would minimise the impact on local families, staff and the wider health and social care economy
- This would ensure continuity of service
- This would reduce bureaucracy and cost associated with a tender exercise
- This would ensure a flexible and proportionate process for selecting providers of health care services, so that all decisions are made in the best interest of people who use the services.

The Public Health could legally and without prejudice, use the PSR route should it be passed at Executive Board level. The Public Health Department had sought guidance and direction from both the Legal Department and the Procurement Department.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option was to undertake a full competitive tender exercise. This was rejected for the reasons mentioned in section 10. The report recommendation would strengthen and stabilise the current system, especially the Family Hub, Women's Hub, other neighbourhood models and the transformation model. It would also strengthen the existing Partnership and collaborative working streams.

Implemented Date

It was intended that the process to provide a direct award would be undertaken following the Executive Board approval, with the new contract to begin on 1 October 2026.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board:

- 1) note compliance with Procurement Standing Order

1.3.5 – Preliminary Estimates Report, Contracts exceeding £5,000,000 in Value;

Director of Public Health

- 2) note compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.2(iii) - Joint or Partnering Arrangements with another body or bodies and, under that arrangement another body is the commissioning body, the Standing Orders of that other body shall apply to contracts entered into under the arrangement subject to the prior approval of the Director and Monitoring Officer (Legal and Democratic Services). Warrington Borough Council's Standing Orders will be applicable as the lead commissioning authority;
- 3) note the Local Authority's statutory responsibility for commissioning public health services for the specialist integrated sexual health services (ISHSs). Including testing and treatment for sexually transmitted infections (STIs), the provision of HIV PrEP and provision of the full range of contraception. (Health and Social Care Act 2012);
- 4) approves the use of the new procurement regime for selecting providers of healthcare services in England: The Provider Selection Regime (PSR), Direct Award Process C, to Axess;
- 5) approval to proceed with a procurement process to grant a direct award to Liverpool University Hospitals NHS Foundation Trust (Axess) for the delivery of the Integrated Sexual Health Service (ISHS) period 1st October 2026 to 30th September 2031, with the option of 2 x plus 1-year, pre-determined extension periods up to 30th September 2033. This contract is jointly commissioned with Warrington Borough Council, who will be the lead commissioning authority; and
- 6) note the content of the report.

MINUTES ISSUED: 28 October 2025

CALL-IN: 4 November 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 4 November 2025.

Meeting ended at 2.50 p.m.