

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 15 January 2026 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Thompson

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, W. Rourke and R. Rout

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB81 MINUTES

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

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB82 URGENT DECISIONS

The Board received a report from the Interim Chief Executive, which provided information on an urgent decision 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

Action

the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB83 2025/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 30
NOVEMBER 2025

The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, advising of the Council’s overall revenue net spending position as at 30 November 2025, together with a 2025/26 forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 November 2025 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. Appendix 3 presented detail on the High Needs 2025/26 forecast outturn position and Appendix 4 set out the progress against agreed savings.

It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend at 30 November 2025, would be over the approved budget by £0.294m. The outturn forecast for the year estimated that net spending would be over budget by £1.281m if no corrective action is taken. This was an improved position from that reported at the end of September 2025 and the report set out a number of areas where improvement had been achieved.

Council had approved the 2025/26 Capital Programme on 5 March 2025. Since then, the Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes had been developed. Appendix 5 brought all the separate elements together and report on the Council’s total planned capital programme expenditure and the report set out those schemes that had been revised.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 4;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate’s spending or generate income, in order to ensure the council wide forecast outturn overspend position for the year remains within budget;
- 3) this report be shared with each Policy and

Director of
Finance

Performance Board in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility;

- 4) Council be asked to approve the revisions to the capital programme set-out in paragraph 3.31 and incorporated within Appendix 5; and
- 5) the forecast position for High Needs set-out in Para 3.19 to 3.24 and Appendix 3, be noted.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB84 SCHOOLS CAPITAL PROGRAMME – 2026/27 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children's Services, which provided a summary of the capital funding received by the Council from central Government to support capital works and programmes within schools for 2026/27 financial year.

The Board was advised that the Department for Education (DfE) had not announced the School Condition Allocation Capital Grant for 2026/27 however, given the timescales for some of the proposed capital projects, there was a requirement to present this report, so it was compiled using the 2025/26 allocation, which was £1,076,826.

The report set out details of the indicative funding available to support capital projects across the school estate and also explained how the School Condition Allocation would be utilised.

Reason(s) for Decision

The Council was required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the School Condition Allocation Grant. The work would provide schools with a suitable learning environment and manage the condition of the educational buildings we are responsible for.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

It is intended that all School Condition works would be completed by March 2027.

RESOLVED: That

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

- 1) the position regarding schools capital funding from the Department for Education for 2026/27 be noted;
- 2) the proposals to be funded from the School Condition Capital Allocation be approved; and
- 3) the capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the budget report to full Council.

EXB85 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2027/28 - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Children's Services, which requested the approval of the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Schemes, for admission to primary and secondary schools, including Academy, Free School and Voluntary Controlled schools for the September 2027 intake.

The Board was advised that on 1 October 2025, the Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and coordinated admission schemes for the September 2027 intake for primary and secondary schools (attached as appendices 1 and 2 respectively). The primary scheme also included the proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority was the admission authority.

The report provided details of the consultation, which ran until 14 November 2025. It was noted that no amendments to the oversubscription criteria were suggested, as these reflected the criteria worked well and met the requirements of the Department for Education's School Admissions Code.

It was noted that all Halton's secondary schools were either academies, free schools or voluntary aided and were therefore their own admission authorities, with responsibility for consulting and determining their own admissions criteria and their own Published Admission Number (PAN).

Reason(s) for Decision

Local Authorities as the admission authority for community and voluntary schools are required to consult and then determine their admission arrangements annually, and are also required to determine coordinated schemes for primary

and secondary admission rounds that apply to all schools.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

Implementation Date

The implementation date is September 2026 which is when the timetabled process for the September 2027 intake commences.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the Coordinated Scheme for Admission to Primary Schools – which also contains the Local Authority’s admissions criteria to community and voluntary controlled schools, and approves the Coordinated Scheme for admission to Secondary Schools, both of which will apply to the September 2027 intake.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB86 SERVICES TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE IN EDUCATION, EMPLOYMENT AND TRAINING

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children’s Services, that requested a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders to allow the continuation of a contract with Career Connect to deliver, on behalf of the Council, the provision of services to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education, employment and training, for a period of four years.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

It was noted that since the introduction of the Halton Participation Strategy in 2014, Career Connect had been commissioned to provide a service in 2014, 2018 and 2022. Since the initial contract in April 2014, and through all subsequent contracts, Career Connect had performed well against agreed outcomes, supported Halton to meet its statutory duties and they worked well with the 16+ Education to Employment Team. Given the value-added benefits outlined in the report and the changes to procurement regulations, approval was sought to continue with the contract with Career Connect from 1 April 2026 – 31 March 2030.

RESOLVED: The Board approve that the contract with Career Connect should be extended for a further four years without going through a Procurement process, in

pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders, as advised by Procurement Team.

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB87 ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY GRANT ALLOCATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to accept capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in compliance with Standing Orders.

It was noted that in addition to previous capital funding arrangements through the LCRCA, Halton had now received:

- a grant of £190,000 as part of the Active Travel Fund 5;
- notification of an imminent Active Travel Fund 6 grant (Consolidated Active Travel Fund). LCR approvals were ongoing, but it was expected £577,000 would be allocated to Halton; and
- £564,556.12 had been allocated for Pre-Development Work of the Transport Pipeline projects that were due to be constructed with the future funding from the Transport for City Regions Capital allocation to the City Region. Final Grant funding Agreement for this was awaited.

Full details on the schemes it was proposed the grant funding would be invested in were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approves the Director of Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to accept the Grant Funding Agreement and enable timely delivery of the agreements; and
- 2) the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to deal with any matters relating to procurement and operation of these agreements.

Director -
Planning and
Transportation

EXB88 POLICY DOCUMENTS: LIVERPOOL CITY REGION LOCAL NATURE RECOVERY STRATEGY, TRANSPORT AND ACCESSIBILITY SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT, HOUSE EXTENSIONS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT, AND VEHICLE CROSSING GUIDANCE

The Board considered a report that sought approval to support the adoption of the following documents:

- Liverpool City Region Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LCRS);
- Transport and Accessibility Supplementary Planning Document (SPD);
- House Extensions Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

Associated Technical Guidance:

- Vehicle Crossing Guidance (VCG)

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Board approves the Strategies for adoption; and
- 3) Authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Urban Renewal and Climate Change and Housing, to amend the Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) if required.

Director -
Planning and
Transportation

EXB89 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.

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB90 DCBL STADIUM - PITCH REPLACEMENT - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report that sought approval to proceed with the necessary works for the replacement of the pitch at DCBL Stadium as outlined in the report.

Reason(s) for Decision

To agree capital investment to enable replacement of the artificial pitch at the DCBL Halton Stadium.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None. The pitch is required to be compliant with Rugby League specifications as set out in 3.3 and 3.4.

Implementation Date

To commence in September 2026.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members give approval to proceed with the works as identified in the report;
- 2) Executive Board approval is given for recommendation to Full Council for an adjustment to the capital programme of up to £546,000; and

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

- 3) approval of the detailed costs and the option to be undertaken, be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment Learning, Skills and Community.

MINUTES ISSUED: 20 January 2026

CALL-IN: 27 January 2026 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 27 January 2026.

Meeting ended at 2.23 p.m.