

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 15 July 2010 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, Gerrard, Harris, Nelson, Stockton, Swain and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Jones and McInerney

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, D. Tregea, M. Allen, B. Dodd and M. Simpson

Also in attendance: Cllr Hodgkinson

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EXB23 MINUTES	
The Minutes of 1 July 2010 were taken as read and signed as correct record.	
<i>(NB: Councillor Harris declared a personal interest in the following item due to being a Halton Housing Trust Tenant).</i>	
<i>(NB: Councillor Nelson declared a personal interest in the following item due to being a Halton Housing Trust Board Member).</i>	
<i>(NB: Councillor Swain declared a personal interest in the following item due to being a Halton Housing Trust Board Member).</i>	
EXB24 HALTON HOUSING TRUST PROGRESS REPORT	
The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Adults and Community which provided a further update on Halton Housing Trust’s progress since the last report to Executive Board on the 16 th July 2009.	
Mr Nick Atkin, Chief Executive Halton Housing Trust and Ingrid Fife, Chair of the Board, Halton Housing Trust attended the meeting to present the report which set out the progress to date in delivering some of the key “pledges”	

made prior to the stock transfer, and progress in meeting the Tenant Services Authority's regulatory framework.

The Board was advised that the Trust continued to make strong progress in the range and quality of the services provided for their customers. This was underpinned by the Corporate Plan, which provided a clear strategic direction and vision for their role and contribution to the wider success of Halton.

The report provided information on the following key headlines:-

- The Decent Homes Programme had been delivered 14 months ahead of schedule and had achieved efficiency savings of over £6.5 million. These savings would be reinvested in improving customers homes and neighbourhoods;
- Core performance and the quality of services to customers continued to improve as evidenced by the outcome of recently completed mock Short Notice Inspection;
- The Trust was viewed positively by the regulator, the TSA, and had received an improved Regulatory Judgement. The Trust had also been selected as one of only 39 pilots for the development of "local offers" following the implementation of the TSA's new Regulatory Framework in April 2010;
- A new Chair, Ingrid Fife, had been appointed following the resignation of the previous and first Chair, David Felix. Ingrid, with the help and support of other members of the Board, was leading a review of the governance arrangements of the Trust to ensure that they remained fit for purpose both now and into the future;
- The continued development of the Neighbourhood Investment Framework outlined how the Trust would invest up to £262 million in the Borough between 2009 and 2015;
- There was strong support and positive contributions towards the Council's priorities for the Borough. The Trust was working with a cross section of stakeholders to secure some real outcomes for people living within the Borough;

- For the second consecutive year the Trust had taken full advantage of the additional adaptations funding made available by the Council and had significantly reduced the long term backlog;
- The development and acquisition of new homes to support the Council's Housing Needs Survey and Housing Strategy;
- The Trust implemented the Job Family and Pay Frameworks in May 2009, backdated to 1st April 2008; and
- A formal 5th anniversary celebration event is planned for 6th December 2010.

The Board was advised that as the Trust continued to make improvements to primary business areas and improving core performance the emphasis was now shifting towards considering longer term new business growth and development opportunities. This was underpinned through the continued development of an enhanced customer orientated culture throughout the organisation.

Arising from the presentation Members discussed affordable housing and new build schemes, delivering presentations of the Annual Report to the next round of Area Forums, communication pathways and points of contact for tenants, partnership working to tackle anti-social behaviour issues and the success in keeping rent arrears at a minimum.

RESOLVED: That the progress outlined in the report be noted.

HEALTH AND ADULTS PORTFOLIO

EXB25 SAFER MANUAL HANDLING POLICY & PROCEDURES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Adults and Community which presented the revised Safer Manual Handling Policy, Procedure and Practice document for endorsement.

The Board was advised that The Safer Handling Policy Procedures and Practice document had been originally developed in partnership with representatives from Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust and closely mirrored the current PCT Safer Handling Policy prepared in 2007 and the Council's policies developed in 2005.

The Board was further advised that the reason for reviewing Halton's policy, procedures and practice was:-

- To update Halton's policy, procedures and practice in line with that of partner organisations, to reflect developments in guidance and in preparation for the development of an integrated service;
- There are increasing numbers of service users with complex disabilities being supported at home by domiciliary care services, family carers and personal assistants and use of complex equipment requiring regular review; and
- To update procedural arrangements covering risk assessments and reviews, training and the role and responsibilities of Manual Handling Advisors acknowledging the complexity of social care and health service provision.

RESOLVED: That the Safer Manual Handling Policy, Procedures and Practice document be endorsed.

EXB26 FAIR ACCESS TO CARE SERVICES POLICY- KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Adults and Community which presented the updated 'Fair Access to Care Services (FACS) Policy' in light of the Department of Health's (DoH) guidance on eligibility entitled "Prioritising need in the context of 'Putting People First' – a whole system approach to eligibility for social care", published in March 2010.

The Board was advised that the revised guidance reflected the current responsibility held by local authorities for identifying local priorities and allocating their own resources accordingly. In doing so, it ensured that those individuals who did not meet the eligibility threshold were adequately signposted to alternative sources of support such as: luncheon clubs, befriending, volunteering etc. Such universal services improved outcomes for the wider population and could help some individuals avoid or delay having to rely on health or social care services for support. If councils based their approach to needs on achieving outcomes rather than providing specific services, then people with similar needs within the same local authority area should expect to receive a similar quality of outcome.

The Board was further advised that this approach required councils to prioritise their support to individuals in a hierarchical way. Those whose needs had immediate and longer term critical consequences for their independence and safety should be supported ahead of those with needs that had substantial consequences and so on. In addition, the policy sets out how decisions would be made in Halton about 'what sorts of people with what kinds of needs qualify for what types of services.' Since the publication of the new national guidance, paragraphs 3.4 –3.5 summarised the main aspects of FACS that were the same, those that have changed and those that were either new or enhanced as a result of policy wider developments.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To update the Fair Access to Care Services Policy following the Department of Health's guidance "Putting People First – a whole system approach to eligibility for social care" (March 2010).

ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The revised guidance from the Department of Health reflects the current responsibility held by local authorities for identifying local priorities and allocating their own resources accordingly.

Halton's Fair Access to Care Services Policy needs to be updated in order to uphold its responsibility and ensure that those individuals who do not meet the eligibility threshold are adequately signposted to alternative sources.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

July 2010.

RESOLVED: That the enhanced Fair Access to Care Services Policy to comply with the March 2010 Department of Health Guidance "Putting People First" be approved.

Strategic Director
- Adult and
Community

EXB27 ADULTS & COMMUNITY CAPITAL PROGRAMME OUTTURN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Adults and Community which informed Members of the 2009/10 capital programme outturn and the provisional

capital programme for 2010/11.

The Board was advised that the 2009/10 underspend mainly related to two areas:-

- Developments at Runcorn Town Hall Park, original delays in the scheme identified in the year had caused succession projects for the Skate Park and Multi Use Games Area to also be delayed; and
- Within Housing Strategy, Renovation/Home Repairs had received approximately £70k income for repayment of works already completed due to houses being sold. RSL adaptations budget was fully committed but due to contractors being delayed, consultation with clients and the backlog of adaptations being prioritised the budget had not been fully spent in 2009/10 but the expenditure would be realised in the first half of 2010/11.

The Board was further advised that for Housing schemes provisional carry forward figures for 2011/12 had been included in the event that underspends could again occur. Demand on some schemes may not reach target budgets and other schemes experience time lags that cross over financial years. Therefore predicted amounts were in line with similar underspends for 2009/10.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the final 2009/10 outturn figures be noted; and
- (2) the Board recommend that the Council approve the capital project for 2010/11 as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Strategic Director
- Adult and
Community

COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

EXB28 A MULTI-AREA APPROACH TO COMMISSIONING ALCOHOL AND SUBSTANCE MISUSE TREATMENT SERVICES- KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Adults and Community which sought agreement to participate in a multi area approach towards the commissioning of alcohol and substance misuse treatment services.

The Board was advised that as part of the emerging sub regional collaborative agenda, St Helens, Halton and Warrington Councils identified problematic drug use and alcohol related harm as issues of particular concern. This was reflected in the inclusion of NI 40 'numbers of problematic drug users in effective treatment' within their respective Local Area Agreements (LAA).

The Board was further advised that initial work across the three local Council areas identified that the substance misuse treatment systems had a number of common features. All were more or less successful in attracting and retaining service users but there was less evidence for the progression of service users and a concern that treatment services were perpetuating, rather than addressing, social exclusion.

In July 2009, Mott MacDonald were commissioned to look at current arrangements in terms of total expenditure, the numbers in treatment, per capita costs of treatment and the number of service users being discharged from treatment via a planned exit. A copy of their key findings document (April 2010) was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

Arising from the discussion Members noted the potential future changes of Primary Care Trusts in relation to recent Government announcements and discussed staffing implications and TUPE arrangements.

REASON FOR THE DECISION

To seek to provide better and more cost effective services for alcohol and substance misuse treatment.

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Current arrangements could continue however as identified in the Mott MacDonald report, there would be less evidence for the progression of service users. Continuing with current arrangements will perpetuate the social exclusion of service users and put local arrangements increasingly out of step with the National Treatment Agency's (NTA's) aspiration for treatment systems to become recovery orientated.

IMPLEMENTATION DATE

July 2010.

RESOLVED: That

1. the proposals to establish a Multi Agency approach for the commissioning of alcohol and substance misuse treatment services be approved; and
2. the proposals form the basis of consultation with the Trade Unions.

Strategic Director
- Adult and
Community

ENVIRONMENT SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO

EXB29 ENERGY MANAGEMENT IN BUILDINGS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment and Economy which outlined that the Corporate Policy and Performance Board had agreed that the Use of Natural Resources topic should form part of their work programme for 2009/10. Given the broad nature of the topic area the Board had agreed that they should initially focus on a small number of key areas that offered the greatest scope for reducing the use of resources. Based on the findings of a baseline report the Board decided to focus their attention initially on the Council's approach to energy management in buildings. This report presented the findings and recommendations of the Working Group set up to look at the issue.

The Board was advised that as a result of the investigations to date, the Group had identified a number of interim recommendations in respect of:-

- Monitoring and reporting;
- Energy management;
- Training;
- Devolved energy management;
- Procurement policies;
- Finance; and
- Renewable energy.

The Board was further advised that the findings of the review and recommendations were set out in the attached Appendix attached to the report. In particular it was noted that a trial had taken place at Stobart Stadium resulting in a reduction in energy usage of 20% that resulted in a combined saving of £31,000.

The Board noted that current initiatives could still be carried out within the existing expenditure budget, however any additional fitting of meters and equipment would be subject to funding.

RESOLVED: That recommendations contained in the report in respect of energy management in Council buildings be endorsed for implementation.

Strategic Director
- Resources

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB30 CONSULTATION PAPER - PROVISION OF COURTS SERVICES IN CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive which advised Members of the publication by the Ministry of Justice of a Consultation Paper on their proposal on the provision of Court Services in Cheshire and Merseyside.

The Board was advised that on 23 June 2010 the Ministry of Justice published a Consultation Paper entitled "Proposal on the Provision of Court Services in Cheshire and Merseyside". (Attached at Appendix 1). It was noted that this was part of Her Majesty's Court Services National Estates Strategy, in which HMCS indicated that it was committed to providing a high quality Court Service within a reasonable travelling distance of the communities that used it, whilst ensuring value for money for tax payers.

It was suggested that the Consultation Paper be sent to all Members of the Council to invite them to make responses either direct to the Ministry of Justice, or to the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services who would collect them and produce a draft Consultation Response for consideration by Executive Board at its meeting on 9 September 2010. This would therefore enable the Council's response to be provided before the end of the consultation period on 15 September 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Members of the Council consider the Consultation Paper issued by the Ministry of Justice on the proposal for the provision of Court Services in Cheshire and Merseyside;
- (2) all Members be provided with a copy of the document and be invited to submit their comments to the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services; and
- (3) a further report be brought to the 9th September 2010 meeting of the Executive

Chief Executive

Board, containing a draft response to the consultation.

EXB31 LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT AND WORKING NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND ALLOCATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Resources which outlined progress with the review of the Working Neighbourhood Fund (WNF) and Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) reward grant allocations.

The Board was advised that a report to an earlier meeting of Executive Board on proposals for the use of Local Public Service Agreement reward grant (LPSA2) and additional WNF had been deferred. The deferral was to enable consideration of the £600,000 reduction in Working Neighbourhood Fund allocation for 2010/11 by the Government.

The Board was further advised that it was important that decisions were made as quickly as possible to enable savings to be made. Some projects required an early approval to allow them to proceed (if there was funding).

It was reported that following the meeting of SSP Chairs on 5th July 2010 a WNF / LPSA2 funding cut proposal document had been produced which was tabled at the meeting. The Board considered the document and requested that a column be added to the spreadsheet entitled “Original / Revised Allocation” in order to clarify the current figures. The Board was informed that the document would be created as a supplement agenda item and published accordingly.

RESOLVED: That progress with the review of LPSA2 and WNF allocations be noted.

MINUTES ISSUED: 21 July 2010

CALL-IN: 29 July 2010

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 29 July 2010

Meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.