

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 21 July 2010 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Wright, Austin, P. Blackmore, M. Bradshaw, J. Bradshaw, Browne, Bryant, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, C. Carlin, Dennett, Edge, Findon, Gerrard, J. Gerrard, Harris, Hignett, M. Hodge, Hodgkinson, Horabin, Howard, D. Inch, Jones, Leadbetter, Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, Loftus, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, A. Macmanus, McDermott, McInerney, Morley, Murray, Nelson, Nolan, Norddahl, Osborne, Parker, Philbin, Polhill, E. Ratcliffe, M. Ratcliffe, J. Roberts, Stockton, Swain, Thompson, Wainwright, Wallace and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Balmer, Gilligan, Redhead, Rowe and Shepherd

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson, D. Johnson, C. Lawley, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr and D. Tregea

Also in attendance: None

Action

COU14 PRESENTATION ON "THE YEAR AHEAD, 2010 AND BEYOND".

Members received a presentation from the Chief Executive which highlighted the major external and internal influences which would affect the Council during the year ahead, 2010 and beyond, they included:

- less money;
- more efficiencies: working together with partners, Members and communities;
- devolution/choice
- accountability;
- big society;
- business/private sector driven;
- economic emphasis; and
- higher expectations.

Members had previously received a copy of "The Year Ahead" document which provided an outline of the major initiatives and activities the Council, with its partners, would focus on during 2010. The document focussed on the

following priorities as identified by Halton's residents and partners, and which were set out in the Sustainable Communities Strategy:

- Safer Halton
- Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton
- Urban Renewal of Halton
- Children & Young People in Halton
- Running Our Business Effectively.

It was anticipated that 2010 would be a challenging year for Halton with the global financial crisis, reduction in public spending and budget constraints. However, the Council would continue to run its business effectively whilst seeking to improve its services.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

COU15 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 21st May 2010, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be confirmed and adopted.

COU16 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor announced that the Strategic Director Adults and Community had been presented with two awards from the Disability Awareness Day (DADS) Management Team who expressed their sincere thanks for all the support that was given to them from Halton Borough Council.

COU17 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported on the following issues:

- The Council had been advised that Central Government would cut funding by £6m, together with £2m area based grant cuts and £1m cuts from other grant areas. A special Council meeting would be arranged for 1st September 2010 to discuss potential budget cuts of £10m for each of the next three years;

- Building Schools for the Future programme would no longer go ahead in Halton with the exception of Halton High, Wade Deacon and Grange Secondary School, these were still under discussion; and
- Mersey Gateway was still part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review. A "Back the Bridge" campaign had been launched by the Runcorn and Widnes Weekly News, and businesses were being encouraged to write letters of support to Central Government.

COU18 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board from meetings held on 17th June 2010 and 1st July 2010.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

(Councillor Hodgkinson declared a personal and prejudicial interest in EXB9 as a governor of Halton High School.)

COU19 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board Sub-Committee from meetings held on 27th May 2010, 17th June 2010 and 8th July 2010.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU20 MINUTES OF THE MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the Minutes of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board from the 17th June 2010.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU21 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

COU22 APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director – Resources regarding the appointment of

Members to serve on various outside bodies. A document was tabled showing recommendations put forward.

RESOLVED: That representatives be appointed to outside bodies in accordance with:

- 1) the tabled report, subject to Councillor Loftus replacing Councillor E Cargill on North Cheshire Hospital Trust (see appendix to these minutes); and
- 2) Councillor Browne be appointed to serve on Widnes Educational Foundation.

COU23 REVIEW OF THE COUNCIL'S GOVERNANCE ARRANGEMENTS (MINUTE EXB 11 REFERS)

The Executive Board had received a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which outlined the implications of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, in relation to the Council's governance arrangements.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the process and timetable outlined in Appendix 1 attached to the report be endorsed;
- 2) the Council undertake consultation on governance arrangements as outlined in paragraph 4.9 of the report; and
- 3) the Council propose that no change be made to the current electoral arrangements, with Halton continuing with elections by thirds, in accordance with paragraph 5.2 of the report.

(Councillor M Ratcliffe Declared A Personal And Prejudicial Interest In The Following Item Due To Her Role As A Magistrate.)

COU24 WIDNES MAGISTRATES COURT - RESPONSE TO PROPOSED CLOSURE (MINUTE EXB12 REFERS)

The Executive Board had considered a report of the Chief Executive which advised on the decision by the Ministry of Justice to close Widnes Magistrates Court following a consultation exercise.

At its meeting on 16 December 2009, Council approved a response to the consultation document issued

by the Ministry of Justice on the proposal to close Widnes Magistrates Court. The response made clear that the Council did not believe that the court should close, and that residents may be potentially disadvantaged by having to travel to facilities in Warrington, Runcorn or Northwich to access the judicial system.

Although the decision to close the Court had been taken, the Ministry of Justice had revised its equality impact assessment to take account of the Council's response regarding financial impact. In addition, other suggestions regarding the future use of the land and greater use of the Council's existing buildings by the Court Service had been welcomed by the Ministry.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

COU25 CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY (MINUTE EXB 21 REFERS)

The Executive Board had received a report of the Strategic Director, Resources on the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy for 2010. The Policy had been amended to take account of the role of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board in monitoring health and safety performance. In addition, the document took account of the new Health and Safety Executive's Strategy entitled "Being Part of the Solution", and as a result, included aims, objectives and outcomes for the Health and Safety meetings.

RESOLVED: That the Corporate Health and Safety Policy be approved.

COU26 ANNUAL REPORTS OF PPBS

The Council considered the report of the Strategic Director Resources outlining the Annual Reports for each of the Policy and Performance Boards (PPBs) which had been submitted outlining their work, making recommendations for future work programmes and amended working methods if appropriate.

It was further reported that the Annual Reports had been submitted to the appropriate PPBs for consideration and had all been agreed.

RESOLVED: That the 2009 – 2010 Annual Reports submitted from the Policy and Performance Boards be received.

COU27 STANDARDS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT (MINUTE
STC 3 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which summarised the work of the Standards Committee in the last Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That the information in the report be noted.

COU28 CHANGE OF COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

It was noted that the following changes to Board Membership had been made in accordance with Standing Order No. 30(4):

Councillor Bryant had resigned from Health Policy and Performance Board and would be replaced by Councillor E Ratcliffe; and

Councillor Inch would replace Councillor E Ratcliffe on the Business Efficiency Board.

COU29 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE
BOARDS AND THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

The Council considered the reports on the work of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of the Council on 21st May 2010:-

Children Young People and Families
Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
Health
Safer Halton
Environment and Urban Renewal
Corporate Services
Business Efficiency Board

In receiving the minutes, the Chairmen thanked Members, officers and Topic Groups for their work throughout the year. In addition:

- (1) the Chairman of the Corporate Services PPB thanked Councillor Gilligan for his contribution as the previous Chair of Corporate PPB; and
- (2) the Chairman of Children Young People PPB thanked staff involved in the recent Safeguarding inspection;

(Councillor K Loftus declared a personal and prejudicial interest in EB106 as an employee of Riverside College. Councillor P Lloyd Jones declared a personal and prejudicial interest in Health Policy and Performance Board Minutes as a Non Executive Director Halton and St Helens PCT.)

COU30 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports on the work of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of the Council on 21st May 2010:-

Appointments
Development Control
Standards
Regulatory

COU31 MOTION - SO6 " OPPOSING THE INCREASE IN VAT FROM 17.5% TO 20%"

The following motion was moved and seconded by Councillor Howard and McDermott respectively:

"The Council resolves:

To write directly to the Chancellor of the Exchequer raising concerns about the impact of the proposed VAT increase on pensioners, other vulnerable groups and businesses in Halton.

To call on the Members of Parliament representing the Borough of Halton; to stand up for Halton's pensioners, businesses and wider community; to voice their opposition to this unfair increase in VAT; and to vote against it in Parliament."

A recorded vote was requisitioned in accordance with Standing Order number 16(1)(b).

Moved by Councillor Howard.

Seconded by Councillor McDermott.

The following Councillors voted for the motion:

Councillors Austin, Blackmore, Bryant, Carlin, D. Cargill, E Cargill, Dennett, Edge, Findon, A. Gerrard, J. Gerrard, Harris, Hignett, Hodge, Horabin, Howard, Inch, Jones,

Leadbetter, M. Lloyd-Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, Loftus, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, McDermott, McInerney, Macmanus, Morley, Nelson, Nolan, Norddahl, Osborne, Parker, Philbin, Polhill, E Ratcliffe, M Ratcliffe, Roberts, Stockton, Swain, Thompson, Wainwright, Wallace, Wharton and Wright,

The following Councillors voted against the motion:

Councillors J Bradshaw, M Bradshaw, Browne, and Murray.

Councillor Hodgkinson abstained.

RESOLVED: That the motion be agreed.

Meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.