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COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 14 December 2011 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Morley, Austin, Baker, Balmer, M. Bradshaw, J. Bradshaw, Browne, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Carlin, A.Cole, Dennett, Edge, Fraser, Fry, J. Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, Hignett, Hodge, Hodgkinson, Howard, Jones, Leadbetter, M Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, Macmanus, McDermott, A.McInerney, T. McInerney, Nelson, Nolan, Osborne, Parker, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, N.Plumpton Walsh, M. Ratcliffe, Redhead, Roberts, Rowe, Shepherd, Stockton, Swain, Thompson, Wallace, Wharton, Wright and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Horabin and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, A. Scott, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan and D. Parr

Also in attendance: The Mayoress, Mrs Sheila Glynn

Action

COU52 MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Mayor reported on the sad passing of former Mayor and Honorary Alderman, Olive Smith. He expressed the Council's deepest sympathy at this time.

The funeral would take place on Friday, 16 December 2011, at 12.30 pm in St Paul's Church, Widnes. This would be followed by a reception for family and friends at The Village Club, Widnes from 1.30pm.

The Mayor also reported the sad passing of Ethel Parr, a former Mayoress of Halton, whose memorial service was held on 24 November 2011 at Heath Methodist Church, Runcorn.

The Council stood in silence for one minute as a mark of respect.

COU53 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the Council meeting held on 19 October 2011, having been printed and circulated, were

taken as read and signed as a correct record.

COU54 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader reported on the following issues:

- the Localism Act received Royal Assent on 15 November 2011. Members would receive a briefing in the New Year;
- the budget continued to present a challenge for the authority and a number of proposed budget savings had been identified and brought to this meeting for approval. The Leader wished to thank all Members and staff for their support during this difficult process; and
- changes affecting benefits payments would have an impact for many Halton residents. A briefing seminar would be arranged in the New Year to inform Members on how these changes may affect the approximately 15,000 households in the Borough that claimed benefits.

COU55 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings from 13 October 2011, 3 November 2011, 17 November 2011 and 1 December 2011.

In seconding the minutes for the meeting on 1 December 2011, Councillor Wharton wished to place on record his thanks to staff in achieving an unqualified audit opinion from the District Auditor on the Council's financial statement and achieving value for money in the use of resources.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU56 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board Sub Committee meetings from 13 October 2011, 3 November 2011, 17 November 2011 and 1 December 2011.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU57 MINUTES OF THE MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting from 17 November 2011.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU58 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

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

(N.B. Councillor Hignett declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item of business, as he was employed by Community Integrated Care and left the room during consideration of the item)

COU59 2011/12 HALF YEAR SPENDING (MINUTE EXB 60 REFERS)

The Executive Board had considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance on 2011/12 Half Year Spending.

A summary of spending against the revenue budget up to 30 September 2011 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. In overall terms, the revenue expenditure was above the budget profile, although this was only a guide to eventual spending.

Action Plan was approved which aimed to restrict spending by year end within its bottom-line operational budget. The required actions had been put in place and would continue to be applied during the remainder of the year.

The report contained a number of budget proposals for 2012/13. Members noted that a number of these proposals could be implemented immediately, to achieve a part-year saving for 2011/12, to assist in keeping the overall spending in line with budget.

The report also outlined details of a revision to the capital spending programme and monitoring of the Council's balance sheet.

RESOLVED:

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolute essential;

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- 2) Directorates continue to closely control spending on agency staff and additional hours (including overtime) so that spending in these areas reduced in each succeeding quarter;
- 3) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end was within their total operational budget;
- 4) the revised capital programme as set out in Appendix 2 be approved; and
- 5) implementation of the 2012/13 budget proposals listed in paragraph 3.13 of the report, subject to the inclusion of the amended figures reported, be approved.

COU60 BASIC NEED CAPITAL ALLOCATION 2011-12 - KEY DECISION (MINUTE EXB 61 REFERS)

The Executive Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise on the Basic Need Capital Allocation 2011-12.

The Government had announced the schools capital grant allocations for 2011/12, which included an allocation of £1,689,618 for Basic Need. In July 2011, Executive Board approved the development of capital projects to address basic need at Windmill Hill Primary School, Weston Primary School, Lunts Heath Primary School and St Bede's Catholic Infant and Junior Schools.

Funding had been allocated in recognition of the significant pressures faced by local authorities in the provision of additional school places, particularly in the primary sector. The additional pressure on primary places was due to rising birth rates and changed migration patterns.

The report summarised the current position for each of the schools listed in terms of building projects, together with indicative costs. The work proposed would allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the learning environment in schools and provide sufficient accommodation for increased pupil numbers

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposals to be funded from the Basic Need

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

Capital allocation be approved; and

2) the submission of the projects be approved.

COU61 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2011/12: MID-YEAR REVIEW (MINUTE ES51 REFERS)

The Executive Board Sub Committee considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance which reviewed activities on the Treasury Management 2011/12 Mid Year Review, in accordance with the Council's Treasury Management Policy Statement.

As a consequence of delays in the capital programme and in particular the Mersey Gateway project, more investments were being held with UK - backed LloydsTSB and the Royal Bank of Scotland. With potential further delays likely, combined with advance borrowing where beneficial, it was recommended to increase the counterparty limits of LloydsTSB and Royal Bank of Scotland.

RESOLVED: That the revised Prudential Indicators and the increase in counterparty limits for Lloyds/TSB and Royal Bank of Scotland be approved.

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COU62 DETERMINATION OF THE COUNCIL TAX BASE (MINUTE EXB 75 REFERS)

The Executive Board had considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance on the requirement for the Council to determine the "Tax Base" for its area and the tax base for each of the Parishes.

The Council was required to notify the figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority and the Environment Agency by 31st January 2012, and calculate and advise the Parish Councils, if requested, of their relevant tax bases.

The Tax Base was the measure used for calculating the council tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (the Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police Authority), in the calculation of their council tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula representing the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band "D" dwellings. Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 99% collection rate, the calculation for 2012/13 gave a tax base figure of 38,200 for

the Borough as a whole.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the 2012/13 Council Tax Base be set at 38,200 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority, and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	729
Halebank	590
Daresbury	146
Moore	345
Preston Brook	347
Sandymoor	985

(N.B. Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones declared a personal interest in the Health Policy and Performance Board minutes, as a Non-Executive Director of Halton and St Helens PCT)

COU63 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 19 October 2011:-

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

In receiving the minutes, the following comments/observations were made:

- Councillor Jones' attendance had been omitted from the minutes of the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board meeting of 14 November 2011;
- Councillor E Cargill (Chairman of the Health Policy and Performance Board) updated Members on the meetings that had taken place

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on the Cardiovascular Review and thanked them for their work;

- Councillor Osborne (Chairman of the Safer Policy and Performance Board) encouraged all Members to complete the online questionnaire which related to the Community Safety Review referred to in minute SAF27 – Safer Policy and Performance Board 15 November 2011; and
- Councillor McDermott highlighted the tenth anniversary of the establishing of Area Forums, and the importance of safeguarding future budgets. Councillor A Lowe, (Chairman of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board), advised Members that a Working Party would consider future budget implications and would report back to the Board.

COU64 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the work of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of the Council on 19 October 2011:-

Development Control
Appeals Panel
Appointments Committee

In receiving the minutes, the following comments/observations were made:

- Councillor C Loftus requested an update on the response from Ineos Chlor. Councillor Nolan, (Chairman of the Development Control Committee) advised that the company had indicated a response would be received in the New Year, and that it would not be appropriate to take the item back to the Committee without this information.

Meeting ended at 7.00 p.m.