

APPENDIX 1

Extracts of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes that are relevant to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15 DECEMBER 2011

81	LOCAL GOVERNMENT PENSION SCHEME – POLICY DISCRETIONS & STATEMENTS
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) Policy Discretions and Statements.

The Board was advised that Halton employees (other than teachers), had an option to join the Cheshire Pension Fund, which was part of the LGPS. The scheme allowed for employers to exercise certain discretions and to publish those discretions in an annual scheme. The Council was required to publish an annual statement setting out which discretions it intended to adopt.

The Board noted that the Policy formed an integral element of the Council's overall approach to the management of its employees, and that it had been negotiated with the Trade Unions.

RESOLVED: That the LGPS Pensions Policy Discretions and Statements, contained in the attached scheme be approved, as in the case of augmentation, further detailed in the Staffing Protocol.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2012

95	RISK MANAGEMENT – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the Risk Management Policy (the Policy) and Strategic Risk Register (the Register) for 2012.

The Board was advised that the purpose of the Policy and the Register was to ensure that the Council maximised its opportunities whilst minimising and controlling risks in delivering its priorities. The Policy described the framework the Council operated under Risk Management, which was linked to its performance management arrangements.

The Policy and the Register, attached to the report, had been reviewed and updated, with the process simplified in accordance with the Corporate Risk Management Policy, without losing any of the benefits of the old processes. The risks had been grouped in order of priority of risks under eight headings listed in the report. It was noted that briefings had taken place with Directorate Senior Management Teams, as part of the review process.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The Policy and Register be approved; and
- 2) The Business Efficiency Board be asked to review the adequacy of arrangements for identifying and managing business risks, in accordance with the Council's Constitution.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2012

100	DRAFT BUDGET
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2012/13.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Government had not announced the final Local Government Settlement, nor had Cheshire Police and Fire Authorities set their budgets and Council Tax precepts. However final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public and Members' own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. In addition, in October 2011, a resident's survey was undertaken on the Council's budget which sought views on a wide variety of issues. The key conclusions were detailed in the report. Budget presentations had also been made at the seven Locality Area Forums.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 17 November 2011, had identified a funding gap of around £15m in 2012/13, £13m in 2013/14 and £11m in 2014/15. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;

- Prioritise spending towards the Council's five priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency savings; and
- Protect front line services as far as possible.

The Board had considered the level of growth and savings at its Away Day on 5 January 2012. On 14 December 2011, the Council approved savings of £5.621m, and the new proposed savings were shown at Appendix B. Details of the outcome of consultation with the Area Forums were circulated at the meeting.

The Departmental analysis of the budget was shown in Appendix C and the major reasons for change from the current budget were outlined for Members' information in Appendix D. It was noted that the proposed budget total was £106.305m.

The Board were advised that the budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Provisional Settlement, and included £509,000 for the New Homes Bonus Grant, payable to local authorities based on the net increase in the number of homes in their area. The grant was payable at this amount for six years.

Further information was provided in respect of the Local Government Finance Settlement, Budget Outlook, Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, the Capital Programme, the Prudential Code and school budgets.

Members wished to place on record their thanks to all members of the Budget Working Group, Policy and Performance Board Chairs and staff for their hard work in producing this year's budget.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £106.305m, the Council Tax requirement of £43.468m (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,137.91.

101	DIRECTORATE PLANS
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the adoption of Directorate Plans for the period 2012-15.

The Board was advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan or Directorate Plan, in parallel with the budget. These would be subject to annual review. Draft Service Objectives and performance Indicators and targets had been developed

and these would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring presented to the Board during the forthcoming year.

It was noted that Elected Members had engaged in the process primarily through the Policy and Performance Boards. Once the budget proposals had been approved by Council in March 2012, budgetary statements would be inserted into the Plans.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council be recommended to approve the Draft Directorate Plans; and
- 2) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and adjustments that may be required.

102	TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2012-13
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2012/13.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2012/13).

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to “have regard to” the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act therefore required the Council to set out its Treasury Strategy for borrowing as well as an Annual Investment Strategy, which set out the Council’s policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. However, Government guidance stated that Authorities could combine the statement and the strategy into one report, and the Council had adopted this approach.

Members noted that the production of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statements and prudential and treasury indicators outlined in the report.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 1 MARCH 2012

109	SPENDING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2011
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 December 2011.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.6m below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that Directorates had been advised to continue to limit spending to the absolutely essential, to ensure that each Directorate's spending at year-end was within the total operational budget. The overall position reflected the success of the Action Plan implemented by the Board at its meeting on 22 September 2011.

The Board was reminded that at its meeting on 14 December 2011, Council had approved the early implementation of budget savings for 2012/13 totalling £5.6m. These provided a part-year saving in 2011/12, and assisted in keeping overall spending within budget by year-end.

Members were advised that the economic downturn was affecting income. A number of income budgets were below their profile including market rents, industrial estates rents, stadium rents and social care charges and licence fees. These budgets would continue to be closely monitored to minimise any shortfalls by year-end.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that the capital programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles as schemes had developed and were reflected in the capital programme presented at Appendix 2. The revised schemes were listed in the report. Capital spending at 31 December 2011 totalled £30.9m, which was 86% of the planned spending of £36.0m at this stage. However, this only represented 55% of the total capital programme of £55.8m. Main areas of programme slippage to date were in respect of Castlefields Regeneration, Silver Jubilee Bridge Maintenance and Mersey Gateway Early Land Acquisition.

The Council's Balance Sheet was monitored regularly in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy which formed part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key reserves and balances had been reviewed and were considered prudent and appropriate at this stage in the financial year.

The report also advised that 800 equal pay claims had been lodged with the Council as part of the national single status agreement.

An equal pay reserve had been established over recent years, of £5m in order to meet the future cost of such claims.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Directorates continue to closely monitor spending on agency staff and overtime, so that spending in these areas continues to reduce;
- 3) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end is within their total operational budget; and
- 4) The Board note the revisions to the capital programme in paragraph 3.13 of the report, made under delegation by the Operational Director, Finance.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15 March 2012

113	PUBLIC SECTOR EQUALITY DUTY – EQUALITY OBJECTIVES
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the Public Sector Equality Duty, Equality objectives.

The Board was advised that the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) came into force in April 2011 as part of the Equality Act 2010. The Duty consisted of a General Duty and Specific Duties, as detailed in the report. This information, which was published by the Council on 31 January 2012, would be updated annually and included:

- Information relating to employees that share protected characteristics; and
- Information relating to people affected by the public body's policies and practices.

In addition, the Specific Duties also required public bodies to prepare and publish one or more specific and measurable equality objectives which help them to further the three aims of the Equality Duty. This must be first published by 6 April 2012 and subsequent objectives must be published at least every four years, with a progress report each year.

The Board noted that the proposed objectives for 2012 were set out in Appendix 1, attached to the report. They reflected issues raised by customers and staff and would promote partnership working, and

had been developed as a result of consultation with the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the obligations of the Council in respect of the Public Sector Equality Duty be noted; and
- 2) the proposed objectives be agreed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2012

124	THE PEOPLE PLAN 2012-15
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the implementation of the Council's People Plan 2012-2015 (the Plan).

The Board was advised that in order to produce the draft version of the Plan, two key pieces of work had been undertaken at the start of the process, which had been used extensively in its production. These were a Staff Survey which sought the views of the staff on what they thought the Council was like to work for, and a Workplace Profile which looked in depth at the characteristics of the workforce. Both documents were appended to the report.

The Plan identified four Key Strategic Aims, as detailed in the report, each of which contained a number of objectives, a number of actions, a number of success measures with linked outcomes and timescales. The Board was advised that the Plan would be monitored by the Organisational Development Group and that a further Staff Survey would be carried out in 2015.

It was noted that the draft Plan had been considered in some detail by the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on 21 February 2012, with a recommendation that Executive Board approve its adoption.

RESOLVED: That the Board fully endorse and support the implementation of the Council's People Plan 2012-2015.

125	ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2012
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The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which sought the approval of the Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

Members were advised that the revised version picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

The proposals for change had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Resources in accordance with Article 16.02. It was reported that apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that were considered to be of particular significance were listed as an appendix to the report. The review also took account of the recommendations by the cross party Constitutional Working Group, legislative changes to the Standards regime as well as changes to Public Health arrangements.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

126	CALENDAR OF MEETINGS
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The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2012/13 Municipal Year appended to the report for information.

The Board was advised that, subject to Council agreeing to retain meetings of the Standards Committee, dates had been allocated for this in the 2012/13 calendar. In addition, adjustments had been made to reflect other changes proposed by the cross party Constitutional Working Group as they affected the scheduling of the Executive Board Sub Committee and the deletion of the 3MG Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2012/2013 Municipal Year as appended to the report.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB MEETING HELD ON 26 JANUARY 2012

75	DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF
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The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which sought Members consideration of an application for discretionary rate relief, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Sub-Committee was advised that under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that were either a Charity or a non-profit making organisation. This relief may also be awarded to community amateur sport clubs. A summary of the applications was outlined within the report and a list of the associated figures was included.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1st April 2011 or the commencement of liability, whichever was the later, to 31st March 2013:

Age Concern Mid Mersey	20%
Four Estates Limited	20%
Halton Credit Union Limited	100%
Halton Haven Hospice	20%
Halton Speak Out	20%
RSPCA, Warrington, Halton and St. Helens Branch	20%

- 2) in respect of the following organisations, it was also recommended that they should be granted discretionary rate relief for the backdated element of the charge from 1st April 2010 of the commencement or liability, whichever is the later:

Four Estates Limited	20%
Halton Credit Union Limited	100%

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB MEETING HELD ON 9 FEBRUARY 2012

82	TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2011-12 THIRD QUARTER (OCTOBER – DECEMBER)
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The Sub-Committee considered a report which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic background, economic forecast, short term rates, longer term rates, temporary borrowing/investments and new borrowing. It was noted that during the financial year to date, the Council had operated within the treasury limits and prudential indicators set out in the Council's Treasury Management Strategy Statement and in compliance with the Council's Treasury Management Practices.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB MEETING HELD ON 15 MARCH 2012

93	REVIEW OF FEES AND CHARGES
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The Sub-Committee received a report which sought approval to increase existing fees and charges generally in line with inflation, although some would be increased by more to reflect the charges in other local authority areas, for the following:

Environmental Information, requests for information regarding potentially contaminated land, hackney carriage and private hire charges, licence fees (other than hackney carriage and private hire charges), Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984, Town Police Clauses Act, Highways Act 1980, Highway Searches, Signing, Traffic Signals, Building Act, Street Naming and Numbering, Road Safety, Traffic Data, CCTV Maintenance, closure of Bus Stops for roadworks, New Roads and Street Works Act 1991, Health and Safety Advice to Schools and Academies and miscellaneous.

The Sub-Committee was advised that the increase in fees and charges also included a number of statutory fees that may increase during the coming financial year and Members were asked to agree to these increases as they occurred.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges as set out in the report be agreed for 2012/13 and referred to the relevant Policy and Performance Boards for information.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB MEETING HELD ON 29 MARCH 2012

99	AWARD OF TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS
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The Sub Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director - Children and Enterprise, which advised on the tender process for the award of a number of term contracts with regard to the maintenance of the Council Property portfolio. The overall value of the contracts were estimated at slightly over £1m per annum the breakdown being as follows:

- Mechanical – Widnes £190,000
- Mechanical – Runcorn £165,000
- Electrical – Widnes £300,000
- Electrical – Runcorn £200,000
- Building – Widnes £100,000
- Building – Runcorn £100,000

Following expressions of interest, Contractors were required to submit a PPQ document which was evaluated and a short list of contractors obtained for each lot, these contractors were taken through to tender stage. The tender submissions were then evaluated on both price and quality on a 60/40 ratio, and included an interview/site visit stage which allowed for 10% of the overall quality mark. The results of the evaluation process for the 6 lots were outlined in the report. It was noted that both of the contracts awarded represented a reduction in cost from previous years.

An addendum to the report was circulated at the meeting which highlighted the following:

- Paragraph 3.6 of the report had not been taken into account in the decision making process as current performance did not form part of the Award criteria during the procurement process; and
- Paragraph 3.7 was withdrawn and replaced with an amended paragraph.

RESOLVED: That the award of the electrical and building term maintenance contract covering both Widnes & Runcorn to Picow Building Services, and the award of the Mechanical term maintenance contracts covering both Widnes & Runcorn to Sure Mechanical Services

be approved, each contract is to be awarded for a 3 year period with the potential for a 1 year extension.

100	ICT CAPITAL PROGRAMME 2012-13
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The Sub Committee considered a report which proposed a spending profile for the 2012/2013 ICT Capital Programme. The Council had allocated capital resources to support its ICT infrastructure as part of the overall budget considerations on 7th March 2012.

Members were advised that the technology and support strategy would continue to develop the three fundamental areas required by service users essential for gaining access to council services, its systems and key data sets from any location. The three areas consist of the Data Support Environment (Data Centre – Server & Digital Storage), the Network (Wireless or Wired) and the Desktop Access solutions. The current capital programme allocation 2012/13 was £1,100,000 and it was recommended that it be split as follows:

Data Support Infrastructure	£447,000
Network	£268,000
Desktop Access Solution	£385,000

Members commented that a more detailed ICT Capital Programme report should be submitted to a future Executive Board meeting.

RESOLVED: That the Board supports the spend profile for 2012/13 as outlined in the report, subject to a more detailed report being submitted to a future Executive Board meeting.

108	DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF
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The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director - Policy and Resources, which sought Members' consideration of an application for discretionary rate relief, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Sub-Committee was advised that under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that were either a charity or a non-profit making organisation. This relief may also be awarded to Community Amateur Sports Clubs. A summary of the application was outlined within the report and a list of the associated figures was included.

RESOLVED: That under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, the following application for discretionary rate relief from 2nd October 2009 be refused:

Headstart Academy Ltd

100%

109	PROPOSED USE OF THE AD HOC PROPERTIES GUARDIAN SCHEME
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The Sub Committee considered a request to waive Standing Orders to implement the Ad Hoc properties guardian scheme as an alternative method of protecting vacant properties within the Council's ownership. It was reported that the arrangement would be initially for two vacant Council properties for a 3 month period. Following the initial three months, the Council could terminate the agreement by giving a minimum of two weeks' notice. If the scheme was successful a procurement exercise would be carried out.

It was noted that following initial set up costs, for example, minor adaptations, clearing out the building, and basic amenities provided, there was no management fee to pay as Ad Hoc gained their income from the Licence fee paid by the guardians.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) The proposal to test the use of the guardian scheme in two of its vacant properties be approved;
 - 2) a report is brought to a future meeting of the Executive Board to consider the success/failure of the scheme and whether it should be adopted for other vacant Council buildings and to consider procurement options should the pilot scheme be successful; and
 - 3) pursuant to Standing Order 1.8.2 (c), on this occasion Standing Orders be waived as this is a pilot scheme to test the effectiveness of the scheme.
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