

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 13 December 2006 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Swain (Mayor), Blackmore, Bradshaw, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Cole, Cross, Dennett, Drakeley, Edge, Findon, Fraser, Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, Hignett, Hodgkinson, Horabin, Howard, C Inch, Jones, Leadbetter, Lewis, Lloyd Jones, Loftus, Lowe, Massey, McDermott MBE, McInerney, Morley, Nelson, Nolan, Norddahl, Osborne, Parker, Pearsall, Polhill, E Ratcliffe, M Ratcliffe, Redhead, Rowan, Rowe, Sly, Stockton, Swift, Thompson, Wainwright, Wallace, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Higginson, D Inch, Marlow, Philbin, Whittaker and Worrall

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: D. Parr, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, D Terris, D Tregua, R. Barnett, C. Foley and L. Cairns

Also in attendance: (none)

Action

COU43 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor commented on the imminent departure of Ms D Terris, Strategic Director – Children and Young People, who was due to take up the post of Chief Executive at Warrington Borough Council in the near future. It was noted that Ms Terris had joined Halton Borough Council at a difficult time and had moved the Authority forward quickly in respect of the challenging integration of children agenda.

The Council thanked Ms Terris and wished her well for the future.

COU44 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2006, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read subject to an amendment to the list of apologies.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be confirmed and adopted subject to Councillor McInerney's apologies being amended to read "absence declared on

Council business”.

COU45 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader of the Council reported on the following issues:

- There would be the opportunity for Members to go through the Liverpool City Region bid in more detail on 5th January 2007. In the meantime, the Chief Executive would circulate his presentation slides and the business case to Members for information.
- The Executive Board was to consider a paper the following week regarding “Building Schools for the Future”. If the Authority was successful in this, it would provide the opportunity of £90 million worth of new school building, having an effect on provision in schools and on the Borough as a whole. Certain criteria had to be met for the Authority to be successful.
- The proposed changes to the Magistrates’ Court arrangements in Halton (minute number EXB58 of the Executive Board meeting held on 16th November 2006 refers) was an ongoing issue. The Authority had expressed its concerns about the changes and the fact that the decision had been made prior to consultation, and meetings were ongoing in this respect.
- A representative of the LGIU had visited the Authority two weeks ago and had been very complementary about what was happening in Halton and, in particular, the information provided by the HDLs (Halton Direct Links). Another illustration was the positive impact alley gates had had on reducing nuisance.
- The Standards Committee was now up and running with the new Independent Chairman. It was noted that there had never been a Standards Board investigation at the Authority to date and this was a credit to all concerned. In addition, Members were advised that a new Code of Conduct was to be published in the coming months.

COU46 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive

Board held on 2nd November and 16th November 2006.

In receiving the minutes, the Council noted that:

- the new Halton Direct Link (HDL) in Runcorn had proven to be a massive hit with those people who used it, including those who required tourist information;
- buses were now running between the Warrington and Halton hospital sites daily, which had been a request predominant in the Council's submission;
- in response to a question, the Leader confirmed that the Council could look at whether or not similar meetings to those arranged with Halton Housing Trust (item EXB57 of the Executive Board meeting held on 16th November 2006 refers) were required with the hospitals; and
- the agreed new Children's Centre in the Mersey Ward would now fill the gap in provision in Western Runcorn: it was noted that Children's Centres were being rolled out to almost all areas in the Borough that fit the criteria.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU47 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board Sub-Committee held on 12th October, 2nd November and 16th November 2006.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU48 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE (TRANSMODAL IMPLEMENTATION) SUB-BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive (Transmodal Implementation) Sub-Board held on 19th October 2006.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU49 MINUTES OF THE MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board held on 19th October 2006.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU50 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER NO. 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted in accordance with Standing Order No. 8.

COU51 EXECUTIVE BOARD - 2ND NOVEMBER 2006 (EXB49 REFERS) - RENEWAL OF REFUSE COLLECTION VEHICLE FLEET

The Executive Board had considered a report requesting agreement to the procurement of 10 new refuse collection vehicles via direct purchase funded from the Council's capital budget rather than through the lease arrangements currently used. Procurement was proposed to be undertaken through a partnership with an established framework, and an amendment to the 2006/07 capital programme was sought.

The Portfolio Holder for Environment, Leisure and Sport undertook to respond in writing to a question raised by the Principal Opposition about the procurement route taken.

RESOLVED: That the 2006/07 Capital Programme be amended to provide a sum of up to £1.2million through prudential borrowing to fund the purchase of 10 new refuse collection vehicles.

(NB Councillor Osborne declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item of business due to being a member of WREN and left the meeting during its consideration.)

COU52 EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE (ES51 REFERS) - WREN - LANDFILL TAX FUNDING THIRD PARTY PAYMENTS

The Executive Board Sub-Committee had considered a report proposing a variation of the capital programme to enable draw down of landfill tax credit grant funding of £310,764 this financial year.

RESOLVED: That the capital programme be varied by the inclusion of an allocation for Third Party Funding – Landfill Tax Credit Funding in the sum of £34,200 for 2006-2007.

COU53 EXECUTIVE BOARD - 7TH DECEMBER 2006 - GAMBLING ACT 2005 STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY

The Executive Board had considered a report proposing the adoption of a Gambling Policy at its meeting on 7th December 2006.

It was noted that, under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005, the Council was required to adopt a three-year licensing policy, also known as a statement of gambling policy. A draft had been out to public consultation and responses, with a corresponding reply from the Authority, had been detailed for the Executive Board's consideration. Under the Gambling Act 2005 the statement of Gambling Policy must be adopted by full Council and then advertised in the local press with all statements in place by the end of January 2007.

Council was advised that the Executive Board had resolved to recommend that the Statement of Gambling Policy attached to the report be adopted.

RESOLVED: That the statement of Gambling Policy attached to the report be adopted.

COU54 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Executive Board had considered a report regarding the determination of the 'Tax Base' for the Authority's area and for each of the Parishes at its meeting on 7th December 2006. It was noted that the Council was required to notify the figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority, the Cheshire Magistrates' Courts Committee, the Cheshire Probation Committee and the National Rivers Authority by 31st January 2007.

The Board's resolution was reported to the Council for information.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the 2007/8 Council Tax Base be set at 37,392 for the Borough, and the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority and the National Rivers Authority be so notified; and
- (2) the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	722
Daresbury	140
Moore	352

Operational
Director –
Financial Services

COU55 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining the need to set up an Independent Remuneration Panel.

It was noted that the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances would expire on 31st March 2007 and a new Scheme needed to be in place before that date. The Council was advised that, before making a Scheme, the relevant Regulations required that an Independent Remuneration Panel be appointed from which the Authority must take advice.

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive be authorised to take all necessary steps to establish an Independent Remuneration Panel to review the Council's Scheme of Member Allowances.

COU56 CHANGE TO APPOINTMENTS TO OUTSIDE BODIES

The Council was advised of the following change in appointments to outside bodies which had been made in accordance with the Scheme of Delegation (Matters Relating to Council Policy –17):

- T H Brown Trust – Councillor Nelson appointed.

(NB Councillors Morley, Osborne, Wainwright and Wharton declared a personal interest in respect of minute number URB33 on the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board minutes in the following item of business due to being Board Members of Halton Borough Transport.)

COU57 MINUTES OF 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 last meeting of the Council:

Children and Young People
Employment, Learning and Skills
Healthy Halton
Safer Halton
Urban Renewal
Corporate Services
Joint Children and Young People, and Healthy Halton

Business Efficiency Board

In receiving the minutes of the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board, the Council noted that, since becoming a Unitary Authority, the statistics in respect of the number of children killed or seriously injured in the Borough had reduced dramatically.

(NB Councillor Findon declared a personal interest in respect of minute number DEV18 of the Development Control Committee minutes on the following item of business due to being a member of the local golf club.)

COU58 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered reports on the following Committees in the period since the last meeting of the Council:

Development Control
Standards
Regulatory
Appointments
Statutory Joint Scrutiny Committee

(NB At the close of the meeting, the Council wished a speedy recovery to both John Whittaker (Mayoral Attendant) and Councillor Higginson.)

Meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.