

EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES – 4th SEPTEMBER 2014

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB46 CORPORATE PPB TOPIC GROUP- CORPORATE COMPLAINTS HANDLING PROCEDURE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which reported the findings of a review of the existing Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures.

Councillor Joe Roberts, Chair of the Topic Group, attended the meeting to present the report. The Board was advised that the Corporate Policy and Performance Board Topic Group had undertaken a review of the existing procedures to ensure that they were fit for purpose, consistent with recognised good practice and reflected best value in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

It was reported that a thorough review had been undertaken which concluded that the existing arrangements had a number of strengths, but that there was scope for improvement. Details of the findings were contained in the Topic Group report attached to the report. It was noted that one recommendation had suggested that consideration be given to the development of a Corporate Unacceptable Behaviour/Actions Policy, to articulate the Council's expectations concerning the behaviour of both staff and members of the public, providing a framework through which interactions could be managed in a consistent manner.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations contained within the report be supported as the basis for the implementation of a revised Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

EXB47 2014/15 QUARTER 1 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 30 June 2014.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.176m below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that spending on employees was £368,000 below the budget profile at the end of the

quarter.

Members were advised that the economic downturn continued to affect budgeted income targets. A number of income budgets were below their profile including trade waste income and sales revenue from the Stadium.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that spending to the 30 June 2014 totalled £6.2m, which was 94% of the planned spending of £6.6m at this stage. However, this represented 17% of the total capital programme of £35.8m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years).

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.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end is within their total operational budget; and
- 3) Council approve the revised Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 3 attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB48 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2014/15 1ST QUARTER
APRIL-JUNE

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, 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 long term borrowing. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB49 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which related to two applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.

The Board was advised that, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer, when it was considered appropriate. This relief had only been available to award to organisations that were a charity, a not-for-profit organisation or a Community Amateur Sports Club.

It was reported that since April 2013, there had been significant changes in the funding of non-domestic rate reliefs and exemptions following the introduction of the Retention of Business Rates Scheme, the details of which were set out in the report.

The report set out the details of the requests from the Chester Diocesan Board of Finance and the Halton Credit Union Ltd. Appendix 1 provided details of the costs identified to the Council Taxpayer for each application.

RESOLVED: That Discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1 April 2013 (or the commencement of liability whichever is the later) to 31 March 2016:-

Chester Diocesan Board of Finance	20%
Halton Credit Union Ltd	100%.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

EXB50 MUNICIPAL BONDS AGENCY

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the establishment of a Municipal Bonds Agency.

The Board was advised that the Local Government Association were looking to establish a Municipal Bonds Agency (MBA) with the aim of offering Councils access to cheaper borrowing rates. It was noted that currently, the usual methods for borrowing by Councils is through the Public Works Loan Board or financial markets. An MBA would seek to give Councils access to lower borrowing costs

and greater influence over interest rates, with the possibility of financing costs reduced by up to a prudent 20 to 25 bases points; this could result in an annual saving on each £10m of borrowing of up to £25,000 each year.

It was reported that the company would look to raise up to £10m of equity capital in two phases, as detailed in the report. The minimum investment to phase 1 was set at £10,000, although it was noted that this phase had been oversubscribed. The company would source the funds to enable it to lend to local authorities by issuing bonds to financial markets. The success of the scheme was dependent on bonds issued at prices which enabled the company to provide competitive lending rates and on there being enough demand for borrowing from local authorities.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approval be given for the Council to become a shareholder in the Local Capital Finance Company Ltd; and
- 2) the Operational Director, Finance, in consultation with the Executive Board Member, Resources, be given delegated approval to invest with the Local Capital Finance Company Ltd, in the first sum of £10,000, and they also consider a subsequent second phase investment.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB51 NON EMERGENCY WAIVER REGISTER - ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2013/14

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which provided an update on non-emergency waiver approvals granted in the period 1 April 2013 to 31 March 2014.

The Board was advised that, following changes to the Council's Constitution which was approved by Council on 17 April 2013, a new threshold for low value non-emergency waivers under £5,000 was established. In such cases, a Divisional Manager could seek approval to waiver part of Procurement Standing Orders with the permission of the Head of Procurement.

It was noted that the Head of Procurement was required to report such approvals to Executive Board

annually. Appendix 1 contained details of the 31 applications in year which had received such approval. It was further noted that, with the changes to the thresholds for the current year to a higher value, approved by Council on 9 April 2014 as part of the Constitution Review, the threshold for the approval of non-emergency waivers had been increased to £50,000 from April 2014.

RESOLVED: That the non-emergency waivers approved during 2013/14 by the Divisional Manager, Procurement, in accordance with Procurement Standing Order 1.8.3, as shown in the attached Appendix, be noted.

EXB52 DIRECTORATE OVERVIEW REPORTS - QUARTER 1

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the first quarter to 30 June 2014.

The Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate, being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements, with the Board having a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

It was noted that Directorate Risk Registers had been reviewed and refreshed in conjunction with the development of Directorate Business Plans 2014/17. The monitoring of high risks would be reported in Quarter 2.

It was reported that monitoring of relevant high risks would be undertaken and progress be reported against the application of the risk treatment measures in Quarters 2 and 4.

RESOLVED: That the report and progress and performance information be noted.

EXB53 CORPORATE SECURITY CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which notified Members that a tender for Corporate Security Services would be published via the Chest and to seek the waiver of

Procurement Standing Orders for a temporary extension of the current contract.

The Board was advised that there were currently three contracts in place, with a total expenditure in the region of £750,000 per annum, which provided static guarding, key holding and emergency call outs to the majority of the Council's corporate buildings. This also included security requirements at The Brindley, Halton Stadium and the Borough's parks and gardens.

It was reported that, as each area of buildings and landscaping had differing requirements, the contract would be split into three sections. It was intended that the new contract would be awarded for a three year period, with the provision to extend for a further year. The report detailed the proposed two stage procurement process.

The Board noted that two of the current contracts expired on 10 May 2015 and the third expired on 31 May 2015. Therefore, permission was sought for a temporary extension so that all contracts would expire on 31 May 2015, with the award of the new single contract commencing from 1 June 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) in line with Procurement Standing Orders 1.8.3 (e), Executive Board approve the waiver of Procurement Standing Orders 2.1. to 2.1.3, in order to allow the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property to grant an extension to the existing security contracts covering corporate buildings and The Brindley and Halton Stadium, from 10 May 2015 until such time that the new contract is let, which is anticipated to be 1 June 2015, in order to bring all requirements in-line to allow a new contract to be awarded covering all requirements at the same time; and
- 2) Members note the intention to procure a new corporate security contract in line with the EU Public Procurement Regulations 2006 and Procurement Standing Orders.

Strategic Director -
Children and
Enterprise

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB61 LOCAL GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the introduction of the Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (the Regulations).

The Board was advised that the Regulations had introduced changes to the way that information relating to local authority matters, including those decisions made within meetings, could be disseminated. It was noted that these changes included access to meetings by the press and public and the publication of decisions made by Officers. It was now permissible to film, audio-record, photograph or use social media to report proceedings of those meetings that were open to the public.

It was reported that the Regulations also required Officer decisions to be recorded as soon as reasonably practical and published on the Council's web site. Three decision categories and guidance on which delegated decisions should be included were detailed in the report.

The Board noted that the report and background papers would be used to form a Council Policy on transparency in local government for Halton Council.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) appropriate amendments to the Council's Constitution be incorporated at the next review.

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

EXB62 PUBLIC SERVICES (SOCIAL VALUE) ACT 2012 POLICY & PROCUREMENT FRAMEWORK

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which sought endorsement of the work undertaken to develop the Social Value approach within the Policy and Procurement Framework.

The Board was advised that the Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012 (the Act), introduced a statutory requirement for public authorities to have regard to economic, social and environmental well-being in connection with 'public service contracts' within the meaning of the Public Contracts Regulations. It was reported that the Act required the Council only to consider how what was being procured might improve the well-being of the relevant area and how the procurement process might act with a view to achieving that improvement. The Act set out three key themes to be addressed in seeking social value:-

- Social;
- Economic; and
- Environmental.

The report set out details of the policy options for the Council, the vision under the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), the alignment of the environmental, social and economic focus of the Act with the duty of Best Value, the SCS and the Marmot priorities and the development of a Social Value policy statement, which was attached at Appendix 1. In addition, Members noted details of a Social Value Procurement Framework which had been produced to aid implementing the policy statement.

It was noted that both the policy and the framework had been consulted upon with relevant stakeholders, both internal and external, and the suggested approach had received universal support.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the work carried out to date on developing a Social Value Approach for Halton Borough Council and the NHS Clinical Commissioning Group be noted;
- 2) the Policy Statement and Procurement Framework, attached as an Appendix to the report be approved; and
- 3) the sharing of the Council's approach to the wider partnership for their use (as appropriate) through both the Health and Wellbeing Board and the

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

Halton Strategic Partnership be supported.

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