

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 5 November 2015 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, Harris, R. Hignett, Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Philbin

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, G. Cook, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner and S. McDonald

Also in attendance: L. Temple-Murray (Grant Thornton)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB58 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 October 2015 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB59 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2014/15

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which presented the Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15.

The Board was advised that the Annual Audit Letter (the Letter) summarised the findings from the 2014/15 audit completed by Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors. The Letter included messages arising from the audit of the financial statements and the results of the work undertaken in assessing the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources.

Liz Temple Murray, Audit Manager for the external auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, attended the meeting and reported that an unqualified opinion had been issued on the Council's financial statements. The Letter also provided an unqualified conclusion that the Council had adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

Action

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to all Officers that had assisted in the preparation of the audit.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15 be approved.

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

EXB60 RETENDERING OF INSURANCE CONTRACTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which advised on the commencement of a procurement process for the re-tendering of a range of insurance contracts.

The Board was advised that in April 2011, the Council entered into five year contracts for a range of insurance services cover which included property/business interruption, contract works, ICT infrastructure, fidelity guarantee, motor vehicles and uninsured loss recovery. It was reported that these contracts were due to end on 31 March 2016, and the Council's insurance broker, Aon, had been asked to manage a procurement process to re-tender these services.

Members noted that the new contracts would run from 1 April 2016 for a three year duration, with the option to extend for a further two years. The procurement process was subject to European procurement rules and would be tendered accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the procurement process, to be entered into via The Chest, be noted, with the purpose of securing the following insurance services:

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

- Property/Business Interruption cover;
- Contract Works cover;
- ICT Infrastructure cover;
- Fidelity Guarantee cover;
- Motor vehicle cover; and
- Uninsured Loss Recovery cover.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB61 CESSATION OF TALKING BOOKS SERVICE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which sought approval for the cessation of the Talking Books Service.

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 20 November 2014, it had approved budget savings for 2015/16 of £50,000 from the restructure of vision rehabilitation services. Work was ongoing to achieve this, which included £20,000 relating to the Talking Books Service. Developments in technology had improved and increased options for everyone to access a wide range of free and purchased audio books and magazines. It was noted that Halton Library Service offered a range of e-books and audio books could be provided, through volunteers, to a person's home.

It was reported that the range of alternatives had prompted a review of the continuation of the Council funded subscriptions to the Talking Books Service. Details of a proposed phased withdrawal were set out in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the phased withdrawal of subscriptions to the Talking Books Service.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB62 THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR OFFER POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on the introduction of a new Private Rented Sector Offer Policy (PRSO).

The Board was advised that the Localism Act 2011 introduced provisions that allowed local authorities to end their homelessness duty by means of a private rented sector offer without the applicant's consent, provided certain safeguards were met. Prior to this, most applicants preferred to wait for housing in the social rented sector.

Members were advised that, in order for the authority to make use of the power, the Localism Act required authorities to adopt a clear policy on how the powers would be used. Halton had developed a toolkit and suite of materials to utilise the powers safely and effectively, as set out in the report. It was noted that the proposed PRSO

would result in a more effective homelessness service, making better use of the private rented sector and providing significant benefits and choice for homeless households.

RESOLVED: That the introduction of the Private Rented Sector Offer Policy, as detailed in section 3.6 of the report, be agreed.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

EXB63 HALTON HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY 2013-16 ANNUAL REVIEW - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which sought approval for an amended action plan following the annual review of the Homelessness Strategy for the period 2015/18.

The Board was advised that as part of the implementation of the Homelessness Strategy, the Strategic Action Plan would be reviewed annually. A consultation event was held in June 2015 which involved active engagement with all partner agencies, service providers and Members. It was reported that the review provided clear direction for preventing and addressing homelessness within Halton, and ensured that the Action Plan remained current and reflected legislative and economic changes.

Reason(s) For Decision

Local Authorities were required to produce a strategy in accordance with the Homelessness Act 2002.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternatives were considered as a strategy was required to establish key challenges, objectives and priorities for tackling homelessness in Halton over the coming years.

Implementation Date

November 2015.

RESOLVED: That the Homelessness Strategy 2013/18 Annual Review and amended Action Plan be agreed, with the content, findings, key challenges and priorities for the period 2015/18 outlined in the consultation report.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

EXB64 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB65 3MG HBC FIELD - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which sought approval to dispose of part of HBC Field and to report on the financial terms of the agreement.

The report set out details of the financial terms of the agreement and details of the end users' proposals for the site, for Members' consideration.

Reason(s) for Decision

To support the development of a key strategic site with the prospect of bringing up to 600 high quality jobs to the Borough.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

To revert to the original asking price for the land. This was rejected firstly because the prospect of good quality jobs outweighed the reduction in capital receipt for the site. Secondly, the offer presented a long term solution for the site. Thirdly, it allowed certainty in the draw down of capital receipt to be used to repay a Growing Places Fund Loan used to fund the access road to the site.

Implementation Date

1 December 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Executive Board agree the disposal and option agreement to the end user;
- 2) Council be authorised to enter into the Heads of Terms with the end user, as set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report, it being agreed that the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Portfolio holders for Resources, Physical Environment and Transportation, be authorised to make any necessary amendments following negotiations with the end user;
- 3) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, and the Portfolio holders for Resources, Physical Environment and Transportation, be authorised to take such action as he judges necessary to implement the 3MG HBC Field; and
- 4) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

**PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO AND
RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

EXB66 LAND DISPOSAL FOR EMPLOYMENT LAND AT
JOHNSON'S LANE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on proposals for the disposal of Plots A and B on Johnson's Lane, Widnes Waterfront.

The Board was advised that the Council owned approximately 20 acres of land at Johnson's Lane, Widnes. The whole site was placed on the market through property agents in November 2010.

It was reported that offers for Plots A and B had been received, as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the sale of two areas of land (Plot A and Plot B) of approximately 1.8 acres each, to the end users named in the report, for the values named in the report, both subject to planning permission and subject to contract, be approved; and
- 2) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

CALL IN

MINUTES ISSUED: 9 November 2015

CALL-IN: 16 November 2015

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 16 November 2015

Meeting ended at 2.16 p.m.