

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 11 February 2016 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor T. McInerney

Officers present: A. Scott, G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, M. Reaney, E. Dawson and S. Wallace-Bonner

Also in attendance: None

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

*Action*

EXB105 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 28 January 2016 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### **CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO**

EXB106 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2017 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on school admission arrangements for the 2017 intake into Halton's schools.

The Board was advised that in November 2015, Halton Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation paper on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2017 intake. It was noted that the consultation ran until 11 December 2015, with no changes proposed to the current oversubscription criteria for local authority schools.

As commissioner of school places, the Local Authority must ensure that the admission arrangements

were fair, clear and objective and complied fully with all statutory requirements. It was reported that no responses to the consultation had been received.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

The decision was statutorily required and any revision to the proposed arrangements may adversely affect school place planning, as detailed in the report.

#### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Other options considered and rejected included the allocation of places through random selection (lottery), as this method could be seen as arbitrary and random.

#### Implementation Date

The Policy applied to the September 2017 academic intake.

RESOLVED: That the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Coordinated Schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2017/18 academic year be approved.

Strategic Director  
- People and  
Economy

### **HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

#### **EXB107 ADULT SOCIAL CARE CONTRACTS**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services, which sought approval to extend the current services provided by external providers for the Adult Social Care Contracts.

The Board was advised that the authority had contracts in place with MIND, Halton Carers Centre and Halton Healthwatch, to provide services as set out in the report. It was reported that all these contracts were due to expire on 31 March 2016.

Following the implementation of the Care Act in April 2015, the Local Authority had been working with these service providers to achieve service specification re-design, better quality and value for money and improved integration within an evolving system of integrated health and social care services.

It was noted that the extension of these contracts to 31 March 2017 required a waiver of Procurement Standing Orders. Details of the total financial cost to the authority

were detailed in Appendix 1, attached to the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the use of Procurement Standing Orders 1.8.3 (e) and (f) be agreed to waive Procurement Standing Orders 4.1 and 4.1 (a), in respect of the current contracts with MIND, Halton Carers Centre and Healthwatch; and
- 2) an extension of the existing contracts listed in Appendix 1, attached to the report, be agreed for a period of up to one year from 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017.

Director of Adult  
Social Services

#### EXB108 ADULT SOCIAL CARE BUDGET PRESSURES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which presented a summary of the current and forthcoming budget pressures facing Adult Social Care.

The Board was advised that Adult Social Care Services were experiencing significant and increasing pressure driven by a number of factors, such as increased demand, reductions to wider local government funding, introduction of the National Living Wage (NLW), workforce availability and skills and the reduced scope for further efficiency savings.

Phase 1 of the Care Act was introduced in April 2015. The main changes to the duty of local authorities which this introduced were set out in the report. Care Act funding was allocated to local authorities for new burdens which arose from the Care Act. However, it was reported that future funding was unclear which presented a further potential pressure. In July 2015, confirmation was received that Phase 2 of the Care Reform which would have proposed a cap to care costs, would be delayed until 2020.

Since April 2010, funding had been transferred to local authorities to be used to support Adult Social Care services; there was flexibility for local areas to determine how this investment in social care service was best used. However, from April 2015, this funding was integrated into the Better Care Fund, with the Council receiving £9.451m. The Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement 2016/17 indicated that local authorities would receive additional money to spend on Adult Social Care by 2019/20,

with the allocations back-loaded. Halton's indicative figures were set out in the report.

The Board was further advised that in the 2015 Autumn Spending Review, it was announced that Councils would have the power to increase Social Care funding through levying up to 2% as an additional Council Tax precept from 2016/17. This would generate an additional £793,000 of council tax for Halton. Members noted the estimated impact for Halton of the spending pressures which had been quantified and were detailed in the report.

**RESOLVED:** That the budget pressures facing Adult Social Care, outlined in the report be noted, and be taken into account when considering the 2016/17 Budget Report, found elsewhere on the agenda.

## **RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB109 BUDGET 2016/17 - KEY DECISION**

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 2016/17.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, the Cheshire Fire Authority and Daresbury Parish Council had not set their budgets and Council Tax precepts. However, final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

The Government announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement figure for 2016/17 on 9 February 2016, which was in line with the Provisional Settlement announced on 17 December 2015. The Business Rates Retention Scheme allowed 49% of the business rates generated within the Borough to be retained, with the Council in receipt of a Top Up grant and Revenue Support grant.

The 2015 Spending Review also announced that local authorities responsible for adult social care would be given an additional 2% flexibility on their current council tax referendum threshold, which was to be used towards the funding shortfall for adult social care.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 10 December 2015, had

identified a funding gap of around £18m in 2016/17, £16m in 2017/18 and £7m in 2018/19. 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 gains;
- Protect essential front line services; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

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. Budget presentations had taken place at its Area Forums and details of the comments made were tabled at the meeting. In addition, individual consultations would take place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

On 14 October 2015 and 9 December 2015, the Council approved initial budget savings totalling £11.5m for 2016/17, and further proposed savings were shown at Appendix B. 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 £98.465m.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Final Grant Settlement, and included £0.5m for the New Homes Bonus Grant, payable to local authorities based on the net increase in the number of homes in their area.

Further information was provided in respect of the budget outlook. As part of the Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement for 2016/17, the Government had published indicative Settlement Funding Allocations for the three years up to 2019/20. In addition, a consultation had been published on the future of the New Homes Bonus grant, which looked to reduce the number of years this grant was paid from six to four years. The Medium Term Financial Forecast had been updated and was attached at Appendix E. It was noted that the resultant funding gap over the next two years was forecast to be in the region of £34m.

Further information was provided in respect of

Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, 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.

Reason(s) For Decision

To seek approval for the Council's revenue budget, capital programme and council tax for 2016/17.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

In arriving at the budget saving proposals set out in Appendix B, numerous proposals had been considered, some of which had been deferred pending further information or rejected.

Implementation Date

2 March 2016.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £98,465m, the Council Tax requirement of £41.217m (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,250.97.

Operational  
Director - Finance

EXB110 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT  
2016/17

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2016/17.

The TMSS was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2016/17).

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 at paragraph 2.3, with Appendix A detailing the full policy and Appendix B detailing the changes in the policy for 2016/17.

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

Operational  
Director - Finance

**MINUTES ISSUED: 15 February 2016**

**CALL-IN: 22 February 2016**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 22 February 2016**

*Meeting ended at 2.16pm*