

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 17 November 2016 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building, Widnes

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB55 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 October 2016 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB56 ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT LETTER 2015/16

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Annual Audit Letter 2015/16.

The Board was advised that the Annual Audit Letter (the Letter) summarised the findings from the 2015/16 external 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.

Georgia Jones, 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 the use of its resources. It was noted that

the planned audit for 2016/17 of the Highways Network Asset would be deferred for 12 months.

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 2015/16 be approved.

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

EXB57 CLOSURE OF WESTFIELD PRIMARY SCHOOL RESOURCE PROVISION BASE FOR PUPILS WITH HEARING IMPAIRMENT AND SPECIFIC LEARNING DIFFICULTIES - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, on the proposed closure of the Resource Base for pupils with Hearing Impairment and Specific Learning Difficulties at Westfield Primary School (the Resource Base).

At its meeting on 15 September 2016, Executive Board had agreed to a statutory consultation on the proposal to close the Resource Base. It was reported that at the close of the consultation, seven responses had been received, summarised at Appendix C. A response from the National Deaf Children's Society was attached at Appendix D.

The report set out details of guidance for Members on the decision making process, now that formal consultation was complete. It was noted that the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board had considered the proposals and the majority of its Members had supported the recommendation to close the Resource Base, with the continuation of funding to support the completion of the primary education for the three children at the School.

Reason(s) for Decision

To provide a more inclusive offer for pupils with Hearing Impairment, giving them the opportunity to be educated with support alongside their peers.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Retaining the current provision. This was rejected as it was less inclusive and more costly.

Implementation Date

31 December 2016.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Resource Base Provision at Westfield Primary School closes with effect from 31 December 2016;
- 2) the Local Authority continues to provide support to the three pupils in the Resource Base at Westfield Primary School until they finish their primary education at the School; and
- 3) funding previously allocated to fund the Resource Base Provision is ring fenced and re-invested into Hearing Impaired Provision and the recruitment of additional central staff both teaching and non-teaching.

Strategic Director
- People

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB58 PUBLIC HEALTH ANNUAL REPORT: ASSESSING NEEDS AND TAKING ACTION - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, on the development of the Public Health Annual Report (PHAR) 2015/16 for Halton.

The Board was advised that the PHAR was the Director of Public Health's independent expert assessment of the health of the local population. It was reported that for 2015/16 the PHAR would focus on the work of the Public Health Evidence and Intelligence Team and would highlight some key pieces of work and how they would be used by Halton Borough Council and its partner organisations.

It was reported that the PHAR would use a life-course approach around three chapters of Starting Well, Living Well and Ageing Well. The report provided a summary of the content of each Chapter. The PHAR would be used to inform commissioning plans and collaborative action for the NHS, Social Care, Public Health and other key partners, as appropriate.

Reason(s) for Decision

The Public Health Annual Report was a statutory document.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Implementation Date

With immediate effect following approval by Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the theme and development of the Public Health Annual Report 2015/16 be noted.

Director of Public Health

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB59 BOUNDARY REVIEW 2018 - INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries.

The report advised Members that the Boundary Commission for England was conducting a review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries, based on rules that required a reduction in the number of constituencies in the UK. It was reported that the rules stipulated that for the whole of the UK, there should be 600 Parliamentary constituencies, and that within England, there would be a reduction in number from the current 533 to 501. Each constituency must have an electorate range of between 71,031 and 78,507.

The report set out the timetable for the review, with consultations on the initial proposals as they relate to Halton, closing on 5 December 2016. A four week "secondary consultation" period was expected to take place in Spring 2017 when all responses that had been made would be published.

The document contained a link to the Boundary Commission website so as to obtain details of the initial proposals and the link to an interactive consultation website for views to be submitted in writing.

RESOLVED: That Members note the Boundary Review process.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community &
Resources

EXB60 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR POSITION 2016-17

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, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing/investments, budget monitoring, new long term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB61 2016/17 QUARTER 2 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reported on the 2016/17 Quarter 2 Spending as at 30 September 2016.

A summary of spending against the revenue budget up to 30 September 2016 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was advised that, in overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.442m above the budget profile, although this profile was only a guide to expected spending. However, historically, as the spend in the first half year tended to be lower, accelerating towards year end, there was a significant risk that the Council may overspend its budget for the year.

The report contained details of the main budget pressure within the Children and Families Department, and in particular, out of Borough residential placements and fostering. It was reported that the cost of out of Borough residential placements continued to grow, with spend for the year to date up 19% compared to the same period last year.

The report also outlined details of a shortfall in income in the Community and Environment Department; spending on employees; staff turnover targets; expenditure on general supplies and services and the Council Tax collection rate for the first quarter for 2016/17. The Capital

Spending Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles as schemes developed and these were detailed in Appendix 3.

RESOLVED: That

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

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB62 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017/18 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the 'Tax Base' for its area and the Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

The Council was required to notify the figure for the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Environment Agency by 31 January 2017. In addition, the Council was required to calculate and advise the Parish Councils of their relevant Tax Bases.

The Board was advised that the Tax Base was the measure used for calculating the council tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner), in the calculation of their council tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula representing the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent Band "D" dwellings. Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2017/18 gave a base figure of 33,818 for the Borough as a whole.

It was noted that since 2013/14 onwards, the tax base calculation included an element for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (the replacement for Council Tax Benefit).

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve

Operational
Director - Finance

- 1) the Council Tax Base for 2017/18 be set at 33,818 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	662
Halebank	522
Daresbury	174
Moore	328
Preston Brook	332
Sandymoor	1,020

EXB63 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/20 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20.

The Board was advised that the MTFS set out a three year projection of resources and spending based on information currently available.

The projections in the forecast showed there was a need to make a significant level of savings over the next three years. This was the effect of the projections of public spending through to 2020 which resulted from the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review. The Strategy took account of:

- The Budget, announced in March 2016 and the Autumn Statement 2016 announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 25 November 2015;
- The Comprehensive Spending Review 2015;
- Technical consultation on the future of New Homes Bonus dated December 2015; and

- The announcement on schools revenue funding for 2017/18.

The Strategy provided initial guidance to the Council on its financial position into the medium term. Revenue savings of approximately £11.7m, £11.7m and £9.2m would be required over the next three years. It was noted that as a result, £33m would need to be removed from the Council's budget which represented 21.6% of the gross expenditure budget.

The Board was advised that the MTFS had a number of objectives, as listed in the report. The Council would need to consider these objectives when balancing its budget over the next three years. The report also set out the Council's budget strategy, with budget savings proposals and areas identified for further savings. The report also contained details of the Council's Capital Strategy for the management of assets such as land and buildings in Council ownership and occupation.

Reason(s) for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option of not maintaining a Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered. However, this would not follow good financial management practice, as the Medium Term Financial Strategy was a key element in informing the Council's financial planning and budget setting processes.

Implementation Date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy would be implemented from 1 April 2017.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2017/18 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Budget Strategy and the Capital Strategy be

Operational
Director - Finance

approved;

- 4) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved;
- 5) the award of Council Tax Support for 2017/18 remains at the 2016/17 level of 21.55%; and
- 6) the Council's 2017/18 Council Tax Support Grant is not shared with the Parish Councils.

EXB64 INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which presented revenue budget proposals for 2017/18.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast revenue budget funding gaps of nearly £33m over the next three years, assuming no increase in Council Tax. It was noted that budget savings proposals were being developed by the Budget Working Group.

Appendix 1 presented the first set of proposals totalling £7.9m proposals and it was proposed to implement these immediately in order to achieve a part-year saving in 2016/17. This would assist in keeping the Council's overall spending in line with budget. In addition, a number of the proposals would take time to implement and therefore commencing this process as soon as possible would assist with ensuring they were fully implemented from 1 April 2017.

It was reported that a second set of budget saving proposals currently under consideration by the Budget Working Group, would be recommended to Council on 8 March 2017, in order to deliver a balanced budget for 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the budget proposals for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix 1, attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB65 ENVIRONMENTAL FUND MANAGEMENT BOARD

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval for delegated authority to determine future requests by the Environmental Fund Management Board,

and to endorse their first set of proposals.

The Board was advised that planning permission was granted for the Runcorn Energy From Waste Plant in September 2008. The Plant was subject to a legal agreement, containing a provision that the owner agreed to pay the Council a lump sum payment annually for every tonne of fuel received and processed. In addition, the agreement also stated that the Council would convene a Management Board to be charged with the task of identifying environmental matters proposed within the Borough of Halton.

The report set out a number of projects supported by the Management Board, and sought Executive Board endorsement of the initial seven projects it supported. In addition, delegated authority was sought to streamline the process for future schemes, by allowing the Operational Director, Policy, Planning and Transportation, to authorise expenditure, in consultation with the members of the Management Board, and to report such decisions through the Development Control Committee agenda.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board agrees

1) The initial projects, outlined below, that have been approved by the Management Board:-

- £160,000 – towards improvements at Runcorn Hill Park;
- £2,500 – for clearance of Dukesfield Garage on behalf of the Runcorn Locks Restoration Society;
- £193,746 – 5 Year contribution towards the community payback team to provide additional cleaning or environmental maintenance and support community clean-up initiatives;
- £12,000 – to close the layby on the Weston Point Expressway following complaints from residents;
- £24,000 – 2 year programme to support the Community Garden in Runcorn Town Centre;
- £7,239.60 – the creation of a running/walking route around Runcorn Hill Park, this includes

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community &
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boards and signing; and

- £27,600 – Air Quality Monitoring for a 12 month period.

- 2) that the Operational Director, Policy, Planning and Transportation, be given delegated authority in consultation with the members of the Management Board, to authorise future expenditure; and
- 3) decisions made via this delegation be published in the “Miscellaneous Issues” report contained in future Development Control Committee agendas.

EXB66 TENANCY STRATEGY 2016 - 2019

The Board considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services, on the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Tenancy Strategy (the Strategy).

The Board was advised that it was a statutory requirement for local authorities to publish a Tenancy Strategy. Halton first published its Strategy in 2013, and there was a need to regularly keep it under review. It was reported that other LCR authorities were in a similar position and it was therefore considered appropriate to produce a single Sub Regional Tenancy Strategy.

The Strategy had been informed and developed through consultation with all LCR local authorities, the Sub Regional Property Pool Plus Steering Group and all registered providers with housing stock in the LCR. Open public consultation took place in July 2016. Details of the outcome of consultation were set out in the report. It was noted that the proposed LCR Tenancy Strategy built on the existing local authority strategies by maintaining a presumption in favour of lifetime tenancies. The Strategy had received agreement from the LCR Spatial Planning Co-ordination Group in August 2016. Once approved, the Strategy would be subject to annual review and amended to reflect economic and legislative changes. An annual update report would be submitted to each of the Sub Regional Authorities.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Liverpool City Region Tenancy Strategy

Director of Adult
Social Services

2016/19 be approved, subject to the unanimous agreement of each Liverpool City Region Local Authority, through their corresponding approval processes.

EXB67 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 item 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 item 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.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB68 THE PROCUREMENT OF DOMICILIARY CARE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services, which sought approval to commission Domiciliary Care at the end of the current contract from 1

July 2017.

The report set out a number of Options for the provision of domiciliary care from July 2017 in Halton for Members' consideration, alongside a business case for procurement. It was noted that the current budget for domiciliary care was circa £4.3 to £4.5m per annum which was not fixed but was subject to fluctuation depending on capacity and assessed needs.

Reason(s) for Decision

To ensure business continuity and maintain support and care for service users accessing domiciliary care.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

All Options were outlined in the report under section 3.4.

Implementation Date

The procurement process would commence from December 2016 with a contract commencement date of 1 July 2017.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Options outlined in paragraph 4.0 of the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves Option 1.

Director of Adult
Social Services

MINUTES ISSUED: 21 November 2016

CALL-IN: 28 November 2016

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 28 November 2016

Meeting ended at 2.42 p.m.