

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> June 2008  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Board and Executive Sub Minutes  
**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Sub since the last meeting of this Board are attached at Appendix 1 (link) for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to update the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Minutes be noted.**

## **3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

None.

## **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

None.

## **7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**Executive Board – 24<sup>th</sup> January 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**EXB82 HALTON 2000 SURVEY ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy outlining the results of a Halton 2000 Survey. It was advised that, in November 2007, 2367 members of Halton's citizens' panel were sent a questionnaire on their opinion about a range of Council services: 992 people responded - a response rate of 42.5%.

A number of key questions and the responses were outlined for the Board's consideration. It was noted that the survey had sought the public's views on:

- their overall priorities for the Borough;
- their spending priorities; and
- their views on the impact on Council tax levels.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the results of the survey be noted;
- (2) the results be taken into account when considering the 2008/09 budget proposals; and
- (3) the results be drawn to the attention of the Policy and Performance Boards.

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Policy

**EXB83 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2008-2009**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy setting out a proposed calendar of meetings for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2008-2009 Municipal Year, attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

**EXB84 POLLING DISTRICTS/POLLING STATIONS REVIEW**

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive outlining the results of the formal Polling District, Places and Stations Review; highlighting recommended changes to the polling scheme; and putting forward a revised polling scheme for approval.

It was noted that the Electoral Administration Act

2006 required the Council to carry out a review of all its polling stations every four years. The main purpose of the review was to ensure that all residents had reasonable facilities for voting.

The consultation process was outlined for the Board's consideration. It was advised that comments had been required by 12<sup>th</sup> November and those received had been taken into account by the Polling Station Review Working Party on 18th December 2007 and 17th January 2008.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the amendments to the scheme detailed in the appendix to the report for the period 2008-2011.

**Executive Board – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

*(NB Councillor D. Cargill declared a personal interest in respect of Appendix B of the following item of business, in relation to Community Care Services, as a relative was awaiting a care package.)*

#### **EXB91 DRAFT BUDGET 2008/09**

The Board considered a draft report outlining the proposed recommendation to Council regarding the budget, capital programme and council tax for 2008/09.

It was reported that the Fire Authority had now set its precept at 2.8%: the Cheshire Police precept was awaited. A further report would be made to Council to include the precept when it became known.

Members noted that the Government had recently announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement for 2008/09, 2009/10 and 2010/11 – the first three-year settlement in alignment with the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007. The proposed growth and savings were shown in Appendices B and C and it was advised that, after taking account of these and the use of reserves set out in the report, the budget totalled £101.895m.

The Board was advised of the process undertaken in arriving at this proposed budget including the survey taken in November 2007 using the Halton 2000 Citizens' Panel. The results of the survey had been considered by the Area Forums and a list of comments arising from the discussions at these meetings was tabled for information. In addition, it was reported that the Liberal Democrat Group had submitted a document entitled "Proposed Additional

Savings". It was suggested that both these documents be considered by Full Council at the special budget meeting on 5<sup>th</sup> March 2008.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £101.895m and the Band D Council Tax for Halton (before Parish, Police and Fire precepts) of £1,079.97.

#### EXB92 NEW PARISHES OF HALEBANK AND SANDYMOOR

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the Halton (Parishes) Order 2007 and the Halton (Parish Electoral Arrangements) Order 2008, requesting that a recommendation be made to Council that the Halebank Parish Council Order 2008 and the Sandymoor Parish Council Order 2008 be made.

It was noted that, following receipt of petitions under Section 11 of the Local Government and Rating Act 1997, the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government had made an Order under Sections 14 and 23 of the Act that the Council establish Parish Councils for the new Parishes of Halebank and Sandymoor.

Following that Order, the Electoral Commission had now made an Order under the same Sections setting out the electoral arrangements, requiring elections to be held on the ordinary day of election for Councillors in 2008, ie 1<sup>st</sup> May 2008. The next election for Halebank would take place in 2010, to bring it into line with the neighbouring Parish of Hale. Thereafter, elections would take place every four years. In the case of Sandymoor, the election would take place in 2008 and every fourth year thereafter, again in line with its neighbouring parishes. There would be five Councillors elected for each Parish.

The Board noted that the new Parish Council issued its official precept at any time from the May 2008 elections up to October 2008 but could not exceed the precept anticipated by the Authority, which was to be calculated by the Council and included in the Section 16 Order. It was recommended that the specified amount be £5,000 in the case of each Parish.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the making by the Secretary of State for Communities

and Local Government of the Halton (Parishes) Order 2007, and by the Electoral Commission of the Halton (Parish Electoral Arrangements) Order 2008, be noted; and

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- (2) the Council be recommended to make the Halebank Parish Council Order 2008 and the Sandymoor Parish Council Order 2008.

**Executive Board – 20 March 2008**

**QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO**

EXB110 CORPORATE DATA QUALITY STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the development of a draft Corporate Data Quality Strategy that had been produced in response to recommendations made by the Audit Commission following its most recent review of the Authority's Data Quality Management Arrangements.

It was advised that the Audit Commission's Review had used a three staged approach with the first stage concentrating upon the Authority's management for securing data quality from the following perspectives:

- governance and leadership;
- policies and procedures;
- systems and processes;
- people and skills; and
- data use and reporting.

The results of the Commission's most recent review in 2007 were outlined. It was noted that the review recognised that there were a number of demonstrable strengths within the present arrangements, although opportunities existed for further developing and strengthening of some aspects of the Council's approach. Therefore, an action plan had been developed and endorsed by Management Team on 4<sup>th</sup> December 2007.

From 2008, arrangements to secure data quality were explicitly referenced within the value for money Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's) that were used by the Commission to form a judgement concerning the Authority's use of resources. This development was reflective of the Government's view that the quality of data being used by authorities was fundamental to its success in managing claims on competing resources to provide and plan the delivery of services and its ability the properly account for its activities to service users, partners and central government

departments and regulators.

In addition, the implementation of the new comprehensive area assessment framework, and the further development of local area agreements, would also bring greater responsibilities to, and expectations of, local agencies and partnerships to ensure that good quality data was acquired, used and shared in a timely and effective manner. Therefore, officer and member leads had been identified to take the data quality agenda forward, being the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy and the Quality and Performance Portfolio Holder respectively.

RESOLVED: That the Data Quality Strategy be adopted.

**Executive Board – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

#### **EXB120 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining the proposed changes to the Council's Constitution. It was noted that the revised version picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year as well as other amendments which would hopefully assist the Council to operate more effectively.

The proposals for change had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services in accordance with Article 16.02. Those that were considered to be of significance, and not just purely technical, were listed in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in the amended version.

### **LEADER'S PORTFOLIO**

#### **EXB123 APPROVAL OF HALTON'S LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining a draft Local Area Agreement, the three-year protocol setting out the priorities for the local area.

It was advised that the Local Area Agreement had to be agreed between Central Government and the area itself, as represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnership.

The new Local Area Agreement would be part of the whole performance systems for Local Government as set out within the Act, aiming to be far more streamlined and significantly reduce the burden on the Local Partnership. Some existing performance indicators and reporting systems had been swept away and replaced with a new, single set of indicators, limited to 198. The Local Area Agreement would include two sets of indicators and targets, which were outlined for the Board's information. The expectation was that the totality of public funding in any area would be focused on achieving the key outcomes enshrined in the Local Area Agreement.

In Halton, partners had been working in recent weeks to produce an initial Local Area Agreement document in line with Government requirements. A copy of the narrative – “The Story of Place” – was attached at Annex 1 to the report. A series of negotiation meetings were to be held with the Government in coming months and it was important to establish a consensus within Halton about the direction and focus of the Agreement. The timetable dictated that ministers must sign off the final version by June 2008.

It was noted that, in the core of the Local Area Agreement, was the outcomes framework; a copy was attached at Annex 2 to the report. This would be the focus of the negotiation process with Government Office North West (GONW). Although the Agreement lasted for only three years, the overall ambitions for Halton were set out in the Community Strategy/Corporate Plan and consistent effort behind the priorities would be needed for 15 – 25 years for them to be realised. The Local Area Agreement formed just one part of the delivery chain for the overall priorities.

Members were requested to consider the outcomes framework on which negotiation with Government Office was to take place. The Agreement was then to be brought back in its final form to the Board for approval in May.

#### Reason for Decision

Under the new Local Government Act 2007, there was a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce a Local Area Agreement to the format and timetable set down by Government.

### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

No other options had been pursued. The agreement process was a prescriptive one and Halton had followed Government guidance.

### Implementation Date

The Local Area Agreement would come into force when the Agreement in its final form was agreed and signed by the Minister for Local Government. This was expected to take place in June 2008.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the progress made to date be noted and "The Story of Place" welcomed; and
- 2) the Outcomes Framework attached at Annex 1 to the report be endorsed as the starting point for negotiation with Government.

### EXB124 APPLICATION FOR TWINNING GRANT

The Board considered report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining an application that had been made to the Twinning Grant Fund.

It was advised that the application had been received from Wade Deacon High School requesting support for a visit to No' 12 Middle School in Tong Ling. Eight pupils, four teachers, a head teacher and a Mandarin speaking School International Co-ordinator had visited the Tong Ling School during 23<sup>rd</sup> March to 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 and examined the two rivers Yangtze and Mersey in the Music and English Department. They had visited sites of cultural, historical and geographical interest in Tong Ling and had taken two interactive wipe boards so that teachers from Wade Deacon could train colleagues in Tong Ling in the use of this technology. The visit was to provide a platform for the students to cement relationships with their pen pals and create friendships between each other.

The applicant had identified total costs of £20,260. Guidance given to applicants was that any grant awarded would not usually exceed £3,000: grants normally supported up to a maximum of 75% of the total cost of the project.

Members noted that Wade Deacon had been



awarded a grant of £3,000 in May 2007 in order to visit Tong Ling No' 12 Middle School in June 2007. The maximum grant that a group could be awarded each year was £3,000, which was why the applicant had waited until the new financial year (2008/2009) to apply. The applicant was asking the Board to make a special exception on this occasion and award retrospectively.

RESOLVED: That £3,000 be awarded to the Wade Deacon High School.

### **Executive Board Sub Committee – 7<sup>th</sup> February 2008**

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

##### **ES74 SPENDING AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2007**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was below the budget profile. The budget profile was only a guide to eventual spending and spending was historically higher in the latter part of the financial year.

In addition, the financial implications of the recently announced pay and grading review would only come through towards year-end. Within the overall position, there were some significant variances and details of these were outlined in the report.

It was noted that investment returns were currently better than expected despite the volatility of the financial market. As a result, investment income was expected to exceed the budget target by year-end. In addition, following a review of the balance sheet the capital financial requirement had been amended, resulting in a reduction of the minimum revenue provision.

Overall, spending was expected to below budget by year-end, which was mainly due to the investment returns and the review of the balance sheet. Therefore the 2008/09 budget proposals currently being considered by the Council included making provision within the 2007/08 final accounts for items of time limited expenditure relating to Building Schools for the Future and the Mersey Gateway. Work was also ongoing to assess the financial implications of potential equal pay claims. Similarly other key reserves such as the Insurance Reserve would be reviewed at year-end to ensure

their adequacy.

With regard to capital, it was reported that spending to 31<sup>st</sup> December 2007 totalled £16.9m, which was 83% of the planned spending of £20.3m at this stage. However, this only represented 46% of the total capital programme of £36.6m. Although historically capital expenditure was significantly higher in the latter part of the financial year, it was important that project managers maintained pressure to keep projects and spending on schedule and in particular to ensure that all external funding was maximised.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) reserves are established as set out above.

Operational  
Director Financial  
Services

**Executive Board Sub Committee – 21 February 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

ES80 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972  
AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)  
ACT 1985

The Committee considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Committee 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 outweighs 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 is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

### **ES81 ST. MICHAEL'S GOLF COURSE AWARD OF ADDITIONAL WORK TO CURRENT CONTRACTOR, LAND AND WATER REMEDIATION LTD**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval to waive Standing Orders in order to add defined work to an existing contract for the remediation of St. Michael's Golf Course, Widnes. Following lengthy statutory processes, work was now at a stage where Land and Water Remediation Limited needed to undertake assessment actions. These were required by the Environment Agency and DEFRA to support the final remediation technique selection and they would facilitate its implementation following approval by the Environment Agency.

In waiving standing orders and allowing Land and Water to proceed with an extension to their existing contract, the process would not be further unduly delayed. Also, as the contract was a design and build it would be advantageous for the existing Contractor to carry out these actions to ensure continuity of design and to enable the liability for the remediation solution to be retained by Land and Water Remediation Limited.

**RESOLVED: That**

- (1) the Operational Director, Major Projects Department, be authorised to approve the addition of work to the existing contract for the remediation of St. Michael's Golf Course for the sum of £188,012 (this being the sum received in grant for this work from DEFRA) to the existing appointed contractor, Land and Water Remediation Limited. This is in the interests of efficiency, continuity and ensuring the clarity of design and work responsibility which would derive from extending the current contract with Land and Water Remediation Limited;

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Policy

- (2) in accordance with Procurement Standing Order 1.6, Standing Orders 3.1, 3.7 and 3.10 be waived as necessary on this occasion in view of Procurement Standing Order 1.6 reasons (b), (c), (d) and (e); and
- (3) the Operational Director, Major Projects, in consultation with the Chair of Executive Board Sub-Committee and the portfolio holder for Environment, Leisure and Sport be authorised to approve any other unforeseen work necessary for the delivery of the remediation, subject to the availability of approved funding.

## ES78 ARRANGEMENTS FOR APPOINTMENT OF MAYOR

The Sub-Committee was requested to recommend to the Council the appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the year 2008/09 Municipal Year.

The Council's Mayoral Selection Guidelines provided for the Councillor appointed as Deputy Mayor in one Municipal Year to succeed as the Mayor in the subsequent Municipal Year. It was therefore suggested that Councillor K. Loftus be recommended to Full Council for appointment as Mayor for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

With regard to Deputy Mayor, the Council's Mayoral Selection Guidelines provided that it be based on the length of service with the Council (and its predecessor authorities). This year, there were a number of Members with the same length of service. Councillor F. Fraser had been approached as the most senior. It was therefore suggested that Councillor F. Fraser should be recommended to Full Council for appointment as Deputy Mayor for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

It was noted that there were Members with a longer period of length of service who did not wish to be considered as Deputy Mayor at the present time.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended:

- (1) that Councillor Loftus be appointed as the Mayor for the 2008/09 Municipal Year; and
- (2) that Councillor F. Fraser be appointed as the Deputy Mayor for the 2008/09 Municipal Year.

**Executive Board Sub Committee – 6<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

Strategic Director  
Corporate and  
Policy

ES83 HALTON VILLAGE YOUTH CLUB PREMISES

The Sub-Committee considered a report regarding the future of the site of Halton Village Youth Club building at Camelot Walk, Castlefields. At a previous meeting of the Sub-Committee held on the 13<sup>th</sup> December 2007 (Minute No. ES63) Officers were asked to provide further information on which Members would be able to make a clear decision on the future of the building and on possible alternative uses and also to report at a later date on other pieces of land in the Borough. The report highlighted additional information with regard to lease documentation, occupation of the building, rental income, restriction of use of site and the gross sale value of the site in its present state for the prescribed community use.

RESOLVED: That

(1) in respect of the Halton Village Youth Club building the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy be authorised to invite organisations to express an interest in the future use; and

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(2) an update report be brought to a future meeting of the Sub-Committee as soon as possible.

**Executive Board Sub Committee – 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

ES99 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2008/09

The Sub-Committee considered the Council's Treasury Management and Investment Strategy for 2008/09.

The Strategy covers the treasury limits in force which would limit the treasury risk and activities of the Council, prudential indicators, the current treasury position, the borrowing requirement, prospects for interest rates, the borrowing strategy, debt re-scheduling, the investment strategy and any extraordinary treasury issues.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the policies and strategies outlined in the report.

Strategic Director  
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Policy

ES100 LAND EXCHANGE DITTON ROAD

The Sub-Committee considered a request to vary the approval given under Minute No. ES 115 for a small increase in the area of land to be exchanged with a private developer as part of the proposed new Mersey Gateway. This would allow the developer to secure a development for a 130 bed hotel development with offices (B2) on this site.

RESOLVED: That

(1) approval be given to exchange the land identified on Plans B4027/4PC/82 and B4027/4/PC/87, the area edged in red is transferring to Council ownership whilst the area edged in blue will transfer from the Council to the developer; and

(2) authority be given to the Operational Director Property Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Corporate Services to conclude the deal.

Strategic Director  
Corporate and  
Policy

#### ES103 HALTON VILLAGE YOUTH CLUB PREMISES

At a previous meeting of the Executive Board Sub Committee held on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008, a decision was made regarding the future use of the site of Halton Village Youth Club building at Camelot Walk, Castlefields. Following the meeting officers wrote to both Halton Voluntary Youth Club and HAMS. Subsequently a letter was received from HAMS setting out the impact of the decision on them, on the service they provide to the community and on HAMS' investment in the premises. In view of that position and the fact that there was no current other interests registered for the building, the Sub Committee agreed the following:

RESOLVED: That

(1) no new lease be offered to the trustees of the Halton Village Youth Club; and

(2) the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy be authorised to enter into negotiations and conclude terms of a lease for the building between the Council and HAMS.

Strategic Director  
Corporate and  
Policy

#### **Executive Board Sub Committee – 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008 CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

#### ES108 PURCHASE OF PROPERTY AND BUSINESS AT 59 HIGH STREET, RUNCORN

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval for the acquisition of the property and business of R. C. Withington and Sons trading from premises at 59 High Street,

Runcorn, in order to create additional frontage land to the proposed Canal Quarter development.

In addition, it was reported that Mr. Withington had been using the garages to the rear of the property for over 60 years and would pursue a claim for possessory title of these important storage buildings. If successful these properties would transfer to Halton Borough Council at nil cost other than to indemnify Mr. Withington for his legal costs involved in securing title.

The funding would be provided by Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (Town Centre Improvements) (£325,000) for the acquisition of key buildings to deal with difficult/derelict properties in town centres and/or the acquisition of sites that were key to the generation of town centres.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) approval be given to purchase the property situated at 59 High Street, Runcorn and the furniture business trading as R. C. Withington and Sons; and
- (2) authority be given to the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy in consultation with the Corporate Services portfolio holder to conclude the purchase.