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EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 15 April 2021 held remotely

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: G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, A. Jones and P. Preston

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB89 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 March 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

Councillor Hignett declared a discloseable other interest in the following item as his daughter works as a care worker in Halton.

EXB90 CARE PROVIDER CONTRACT UPLIFT 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which informed of the outcome of the consultation discussions with domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton in respect of the proposed fee increases for 2021/22.

It was noted that the Care Act 2014 required local authorities to ensure that the market as a whole remained viable and sustainable. When commissioning services, local authorities must have regard to the cost effectiveness and value for money that the services offered for public funds. However, they must not undertake any actions that may threaten the sustainability of the market and must ensure that remuneration for staff must be at least sufficient to comply with national minimum wage legislation, and that

Action

there was a fair price paid for care.

Members were presented with the key issues and risks to be considered and the recommended fee uplifts, these were detailed in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.10 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) considers the recommendations and risks; and
- 3) approves that the recommended uplift for 2021/22, as indicated in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.10, be offered to care providers.

Strategic Director
- People

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB91 COVID 19 EXCEPTIONAL HARDSHIP FUND

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which recommended the introduction of a Covid-19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme.

It was reported that as part of its response to the Covid-19 Pandemic, the Council had provided a range of financial and non-financial support measures to support residents since March 2020. The Shielded Individuals Hub, the Self Isolation Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments, the Discretionary Support Scheme, as well as the Welfare Rights and Money Advice Service were all provided, as described in the report.

A proposal was made to introduce a Covid-19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme, in order to assist residents who suffered hardship due to having to self-isolate without meeting the criteria for other forms of Covid-19 or other financial support.

The Scheme's Statement of Objectives, application process and eligibility criteria were presented for consideration by the Board. Members were also referred to the Appendix, which contained an extract from the Council's Local Outbreak Management Plan (LOMP) regarding contract tracing and self-isolation.

RESOLVED: That the establishment of a Covid-19 Exceptional Hardship Scheme, as outlined in the report, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

Councillor Wharton declared a discloseable other interest in the following item as he was Treasurer for Hale Youth Centre, so the report was presented by the Operational Director – Finance.

EXB92 NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which requested consideration of the renewal of discretionary business rate relief for existing registered charities, not-for-profit organisations and Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC), who continue to satisfy the appropriate criteria.

Appended to the report was the list of charities, not-for-profit organisations and CASC's currently in receipt of discretionary rate relief and the costs for each one.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) discretionary business rate relief of 15% be granted for those registered charities and CASC organisations currently in receipt of such relief, for the period of three years commencing 1 April 2022; and
- 2) discretionary business rate relief of 90% be granted for the not-for-profit organisations currently in receipt of such relief (with lower amounts for two as indicated in the Appendix), for the period of three years commencing 1 April 2022.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

COMMUNITY & SPORT PORTFOLIO

EXB93 LOCAL AREA FORUMS

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented details of the impacts that the planned changes to the Borough's Ward boundaries will have upon Local Area Forums.

It was noted that the planned changes to the Borough's current Ward boundaries were due to come into effect on 7 May 2020, but were delayed as the local elections were postponed due to the Coronavirus outbreak. Therefore, the boundary changes would now come into effect on 6 May 2021 and these had implications for the Local Area Forums.

It was reported that following the establishment of the new Wards the current seven Area Forum 'footprints' would

be affected. Officers recommended that six new Area Forums be established with effect from 6 May 2021; these were set out in paragraph 3.7 of the report. Members were referred to Appendix 1, which showed a map of the proposed new Area Forum boundaries against the current Area Forum footprints.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves

- 1) the proposals for dealing with the impacts that Ward boundary changes will have upon Local Area Forums, as set out within the report;
- 2) that Halton's current seven Local Area Forums be disbanded with effect from 5 May 2021; and
- 3) that six new Local Area Forum, as set out in Paragraph 3.7, be established in Halton with effect from 6 May 2021.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB94 ELIGIBILITY CRITERIA AND MOVE ON PATHWAY PLAN FOR THE COUNCIL'S HOUSING AND HOMELESSNESS SERVICES

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – People, updating them in respect of the changes to the eligibility criteria for accessing housing and homelessness support that was made as a result of the Coronavirus Pandemic.

At the beginning of the Pandemic central Government announced that all local authorities should continue with the statutory eligibility criteria for services but also adopt an approach of supporting all people who contacted housing and homelessness services for help, irrespective of their priority need. This 'Everyone In' approach meant that although those with priority need would continue to be supported as before, there was now an additional layer of support for a wider group of vulnerable people that was needed. The report outlined how this led to an increased demand on services and provided information on the commissioning of additional provision to help meet this increased demand.

It was reported that the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (MHCLG) had advised that move on pathway plans to reduce temporary accommodation must now be in place. The policy was now

to support people to move on from their homeless accommodation into more permanent settings and for the local authority to transition back to the routine approach to the delivery of homelessness services.

The 'Move On Pathway' recommendations were set out under paragraph 3.2 together with the proposed pathway plan for Halton. This would enable the Housing Solutions Team to adopt a phased approach in reverting to the homelessness eligibility criteria.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) agrees with the recommendations set out in paragraph 3.2, that the Housing Solutions Team revert to using the homelessness eligibility criteria and adopt a phased approach to its implementation.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB95 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 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.

CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB96 BEECHCROFT NURSING HOME

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update in respect of Beechcroft Nursing and Residential Home in Palacefields, Runcorn.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) agrees to monitor the progress in respect of Beechcroft.

Strategic Director
- People

MINUTES ISSUED: 20 April 2021

CALL-IN: 27 April 2021 at 5.00 pm

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 27 April 2021.

Meeting ended at 2.22 p.m.