

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 18 November 2021 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Dennett, Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, J. Lowe, Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors T. McInerney and Nelson

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: One member of the press

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

*Action*

#### EXB40 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 October 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

#### EXB41 URGENT DECISIONS

The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board and during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was noted that the Council's Constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Operational Director Finance and/or the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

A list of these decisions were provided to Members in the report and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

## CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

### EXB42 2021/22 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2021

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 September 2021, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2021 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by between £4.0m and £5.843m. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2021, highlighting the schemes which had been revised.

It was noted that the forecast overspend position was inclusive of operational day to day net spend and cost and loss of income attributable to Covid. Operational net spend was forecast to be up to £5.108m above budget at year end; this figure being approximately 9.6% higher than the figure of £4.661m forecast at quarter one. All forecasts were based on current service demand and estimated future costs and income levels, as described in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and
- 3) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.16.

Operational  
Director - Finance

### EXB43 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR REPORT 2021-22

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2019/20 and Half Year Report 2020/21.

These reports 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 outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and 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.

EXB44 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2022/23 - 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 Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented 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 2022/23 gave a base figure of 35,831 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council set the 2022/23 Council Tax Base at 35,831 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) Council set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Operational  
Director - Finance

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	664
Halebank	526
Daresbury	186
Moore	333
Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,417

EXB45 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2022/23 – 2024/25 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2022/23 to 2024/25.

The MTFS sets out a three-year projection of the Council's resources and spending and was based on information that was currently available. It was reported that limited financial information was available for 2022/23, with the Public Sector Spending Review being the first indicator of funding resources. The Spending Review was published at the end of October 2021 and covered the next three financial years. It was noted that details of the 2022/23 Local Government Grant Settlement were expected to be released in December 2021 on a provisional basis, with a final settlement expected in January 2022.

The Board was advised that the delay and uncertainty regarding 2022/2023 financial resources meant the financial information included within the MTFS was based on a large number of assumptions and best estimates. The financial forecast would be updated as and when further information was known. Appendix 1 therefore detailed the MTFS from 2022/23 – 2024/25 using a prudent estimate of the financial conditions over the course of the next three years. Appendix 2 presented the Reserves and Balances Strategy.

Reason for the Decision

To seek approval for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2022/23 to 2024/25.

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 process.

Implementation Date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2022/23 would be implemented from 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2022/23 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and
- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2022/23 remains at the 2021/22 level of 21.55%

Operational  
Director - Finance

EXB46 INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2022/23 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered the revenue budget proposals for 2022/23 as reported by the Operational Director – Finance.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecasted potential revenue budget funding gaps for the Council totalling £18.8m, over the next three years, with a gap of £12.0m for 2022/23. The forecast assumed that the Council would apply a general council tax increase of 1.99% in each year and would levy a 1% social care precept in 2022/23.

The initial set of savings proposals totalling £1.783m were listed in Appendix 1 and included an indication of whether each saving proposal was permanent or temporary (one-off).

Members were advised that the Government would announce its Grant Settlement for Local Government in December, which would provide the detailed funding figures for 2022/23 for Halton. It was noted that a further set of budget savings proposals was currently being developed by the Budget Working Group, which would be recommended to Council on 2 March 2022, to deliver a balanced budget for 2022/23.

Reason for the Decision

To seek approval for the initial set of revenue budget proposals for 2022/23.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There was no alternative option, as failure to set a balanced budget would put the Council in breach of statutory requirements.

Implementation Date

The 2022/23 revenue budget would be implemented from 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the initial budget proposals for 2022/23 set out in Appendix 1.

Operational  
Director - Finance

EXB47 COUNCIL CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF FRUIT AND VEGETABLES (INCLUDES BREAD AND DAIRY)

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided a Preliminary Estimate and sought approval to commence a new procurement process for the supply of fruit and vegetables, and bread and dairy produce in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4. and using the ‘The University Caterers Organisation’ (TUCO) framework.

Details of the current contract were provided; this was due to expire on 31 December 2021. It was noted that annually the Council spent £500k on the supply of fresh fruit, vegetables, bread and dairy products across over 60 sites – this included the school meals service.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approves this Preliminary Estimated report in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4, to allow officers to undertake a call-off by mini competition in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.1 frameworks, as supported by the Council’s Procurement Division, accessing the TUCO Fresh Fruit and Vegetables and Related Products Framework for a 2 year period, with the option to extend for a further two separate 12 month periods from 1 January 2022 to 31 December 2025, with an estimated total expenditure of £2m.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

EXB48 AGENCY WORKER CONTRACT PROCUREMENT

The Executive Board received a Preliminary Estimate report which sought approval to commence a collaborative procurement process for the supply of Agency Workers in compliance with the Public Contract Regulations 2015 and Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4, as the estimated value was likely to exceed £1,000,000 per annum, across

participating partners in the Liverpool City Region.

It was reported that since 2019 there had been a significant increase in the use and overall cost of agency workers in the Council for the reasons described in the report. It was imperative therefore that the Council sought to maintain access to a resourcing solution that met the needs of the organisation and delivered value for money. Continuing participation in a collaborative contract arrangement was the most effective way of achieving this. It was noted that a managed service ensured that the Council remained compliant with the prevailing legislation pertaining to the use of contingent resources (The Agency Worker Regulations) and the equity and safeguarding requirements of individual role types; this also allowed efficient call-off of workers through a single gateway.

The report provided Members with the spend across the current contract term, along with the savings achieved through use of the current contract.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the report; and
- 2) approves that Halton participate in the procurement of a new collaborative contract arrangement within the Liverpool City Region, to ensure that Council maximises purchasing power on a common category of spend (supply of Agency Workers).

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

EXB49 DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT STATUTORY TAXI  
AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLE STANDARDS  
RECOMMENDATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented a recommendation from the Regulatory Committee, for the Board to approve amendments to the current taxi licensing policies.

The Board was advised that in July 2020, the Department for Transport (DfT) published statutory guidance referred to as the '*Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards*' (appendix A to the report). The focus within the standards was the protection of children and vulnerable adults and a number of recommendations were made. It was noted that the DfT expected these recommendations to be implemented by local authorities unless there was a compelling reason not to.

The report outlined the recommendations considered by the Regulatory Committee, the consultation process and the options available to them with regards to the guidance.

RESOLVED: That the following be adopted:

- 1) a requirement that all new applicants be checked against a central database prior to being licensed and that a National Register be updated with details of licence refusals and revocations;
- 2) a requirement for all licensed drivers to be registered with the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) update service so that more frequent checks could be conducted; and
- 3) an amendment to the vehicle licensing policy requiring the display of a customer feedback notice in vehicles.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB50 THE FUNDING FORMULA FOR MAINSTREAM SCHOOLS AND ACADEMIES FOR 2022-23**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – People, which presented the proposal for the Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) Schools Block Funding Formula for Halton’s mainstream schools and academies for the Council’s financial year 2022-23.

The report described how the DSG was split and how the National Funding Formula (NFF) was used by the Department for Education (DfE) to calculate the Schools Block element of the DSG allocated to Halton.

The Board was required to make a decision on the funding formula to be adopted for 2022-23. Further to the consultation paper sent to all schools (appendices A and B) and after its consideration at Schools Forum, it was agreed by them that the adoption of the NFF method, principles and rules should continue to be applied to mainstream schools and academies.

The Board was also requested to support the disapplication request to the DfE to transfer 1% of DSG from Schools Block to the High Needs Block, due to the continuing pressures on the High Needs Block budgets. Again, a consultation had been carried out on this proposal with schools, set out in appendices C and D and the



proposal was considered at Schools Forum on 3 November, where this was supported.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the continuation of the National Funding Formula for 2022-23; and
- 2) supports the disapplication request to transfer 1% of DSG from Schools Block to High Needs Block.

Strategic Director  
- People

## **ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB51 PROCUREMENT OF SERVICES FOR CAPITAL FUNDED HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENT SCHEMES**

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval to proceed with the procurement of services for the delivery of capital funded highway improvements across the Borough.

The existing contract was held by Lambros Ltd and would expire on 5 August 2022. It was proposed that the new tender is set up for a three-year period with an option to award a one-year extension – this was in line with current capital funding arrangements through the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA). The anticipated tender date would be early February 2022 with a contract start date of 6 August 2022.

The report discussed the value of the contract and the tender process and evaluation. The cost of the works delivered through this contract would be met from approved budget allocations for capital funding received via LCRCA and the local Transport Plan integrated transport block grant, from the Department for Transport (DfT).

RESOLVED: That the Board approves a procurement process to secure a delivery contractor for capital funded highway improvement works.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

### **EXB52 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.

## **HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB53 THE PROCUREMENT OF A NEW INTEGRATED SPECIALIST ADULT COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICE FOR HALTON - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Interim Director of Public Health, which requested approval to authorise the award of a contract to the provider who, through an open procurement exercise, had been assessed as being the most economically advantageous and effective organisation to deliver an Integrated Specialist Adult Community Substance Misuse Service for Halton.

The contract would be awarded for a period of 3 years with the option of two additional one-year contracts. The report outlined the procurement process and financial implications in respect of the award.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

A decision was required to award the contract. As the value of the proposed contract would exceed the EU threshold for

services of this type, Executive Board approval was sought.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

N/A

Implementation Date

The mobilisation process would commence following the approval process and the new contract would commence on 1 April 2022.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) notes the outcome of the formal open procurement exercise for the provision of an Integrated Specialist Adult Community Substance Misuse Service for Halton; and
- 2) under Procurement Standing Order 1.9.4, approves the award of a contract for the provision of an Integrated Specialist Adult Community Substance Misuse Service for Halton, for a period of three years (plus two one-year extensions).

Interim Director  
of Public Health

**MINUTES ISSUED: 23 November 2021**

**CALL-IN: 30 November 2021 at 5.00 pm**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 30 November 2021.**

*Meeting ended at 2.30 p.m.*