

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 2 March 2022 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Abbott, Ball, Baker, Bevan, J. Bradshaw, M. Bradshaw, Bramwell, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Carlin, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Gilligan, Goodall, Harris, S. Hill, V. Hill, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, McDermott, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Nelson, Nolan, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, N. Plumpton Walsh, Ratcliffe, Rowe, G. Stockton, J. Stockton, Stretch, Aimee Teeling, Angela Teeling, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright, Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Whitley, Woolfall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Begg

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: One member of the press and S. Young

Action

MINUTES SILENCE

At the commencement of the meeting the Mayor asked everyone to pause for a minutes silence as a mark of respect for Ukraine.

COU48 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting of Council held on 26 January 2022 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

COU49 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor welcomed everyone to the Council Chamber for the meeting.

COU50 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader highlighted the following issues since the last meeting of the Council:

- The two most significant issues for consideration at this Council meeting are the approval of the budget

for 2022/23, including the setting of the Council Tax and the final and formal adoption of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan;

- The budget 2022/23 had been the most difficult yet and reserves and balances had been used in setting this budget more than we would ideally like. The Government had put us in this position and this was the only way vital local services could be protected;
- With regard to Covid-19, we are now moving into a different phase of the pandemic with the Government announcing the removal of all restrictions and reducing the availability of testing. This would present different challenges but we will continue to listen to public health advisers, service users, staff and trade union representatives to chart a route through to a return to normality;
- Finally this is David Parr's last full Council meeting after 17 years as Chief Executive. On behalf of the Council the Leader thanked David for his outstanding contribution to the Borough and expanded upon his personal and leadership qualities that he had brought to the role. He wished David and his family well for the future

With regard to the work of the Independent Remuneration Panel following the Triannual Review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances, the Leader requested that:

1. On behalf of members, appreciation to the members of the Independent Panel for their work in undertaking this review be recorded;
2. Given the independent nature of the panel and its consideration of the feelings members had expressed on the budget pressures faced as an authority the outcome be accepted and that the scheme of allowances in Halton do not exceed more than 90% of the average of neighbouring Cheshire and Merseyside local authorities; and
3. It be noted that he was declining the increase in the SRA of 5% recommended for the Leader's allowance as he had no wish to add to the costs of the scheme of allowances.

COU51 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings on 9 December 2021, 20 January 2022 and 17 February 2022.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU52 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Health and Wellbeing Board meeting on 19 January 2022.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU53 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

COU54 BUDGET 2022-23 (EXB68 REFERS)

The Executive Board had considered a report setting out a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2022/23.

The Executive Board had recommended that Council adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £113.891m, the Council Tax requirement of £57,174m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,595.67.

Councillor Dennett, Resources Portfolio holder, thanked all Officers involved, for their support in producing this budget and wished to record his thanks to the Members of executive Board, the Budget Working Group and the Chairs of the Policy and performance Boards for their contribution. In addition, he thanked the Leader for his help and support in delivering this budget.

In accordance with Standing Order 16 (3), a recorded vote was taken.

The following Members voted FOR the motion:-

Councillors Abbott, Ball, Baker, Bevan, J. Bradshaw, M. Bradshaw, Bramwell, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Carlin, Dennett, Dourley, Fry, Gilligan, Goodall, Harris,

S. Hill, V. Hill, Hutchinson, Jones, Leck,
M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, K. Loftus, Logan, A.
Lowe, J. Lowe, McDermott, A. McInerney,
T. McInerney, Nelson, Nolan, Philbin, C. Plumpton
Walsh, N. Plumpton Walsh, Polhill, Ratcliffe, Rowe,
G. Stockton, J. Stockton, Stretch, Aimee Teeling,
Angela Teeling, Thompson, Thornton, Wainwright,
Wall, Wallace, Wharton, Whitley, Woolfall, and
Wright.

There were no votes against the motion.

There were no abstentions.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £113.891m, the Council Tax requirement of £57.174m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D council Tax for Halton of £1,595.67;
- 2) the recommendations in the report relating to the setting of the 2022/23 budget, set out in Appendix B and Capital Programme set out in Appendix F, be supported and recommended to Full Council for approval, with the exception of the proposal contained therein in relation to the closure of Runcorn Swimming Pool;
- 3) the proposal to close Runcorn Swimming Pool be put on hold for a period, no longer than six months, to allow time to see if an alternative delivery model can be identified by giving the opportunity for a third party to come forward with a costed and sustainable business plan to take over the running of the baths. That opportunity would be widely advertised to attract potential interest;
- 4) any proposal must cover both the capital and revenue costs of running the pool in the future;
- 5) if no such proposal is submitted that meets the above criteria within that six month period then the closure of the pool would proceed at that point; and
- 6) the subsequent gap this causes in the budget currently recommended by officers be met by increasing the amount of reserves and balances being utilised to set a legal budget for 2022/23.

COU55 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT
2022-23 (EXB 69 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Treasury Management Statement, which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy and the Minimum Revenue Provision Strategy for 2022/23.

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

COU56 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022-23 (EXB 70 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Council's Capital Strategy for 2022/23.

Members noted that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Statement, also considered at this meeting. The successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council approve the 2022/23 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

COU57 2021/22 REVISED CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Council considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which sought approval for a number of revisions to the Council's 2021/22 Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That the revisions to the Council's 2021/22 Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report, be approved.

COU58 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2022-23 (EXB 71 REFERS)

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the calendar of meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That the calendar of meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, as appended to the report, be approved.

COU59 ADOPTION OF THE HALTON DELIVERY AND ALLOCATIONS LOCAL PLAN (DALP) INCLUDING CONSEQUENTIAL DELETION OF SPECIFIC CORE STRATEGY POLICIES AND THE DELETION OF SAVED UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES

The Council considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, to request that the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (DALP) be adopted. This followed receipt of the Planning Inspectors Report of Examination, into the soundness of the plan (Appendix A), which concluded that the Plan as proposed to be modified was 'sound' and could be formally adopted.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) accept the findings of the Planning Inspector's report into the soundness of the submitted Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan including the Main Modifications that are necessary for the document to be sound (Appendix A);
- 2) adopt the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan (Appendix B) and supporting Local Plan Policies Map (Appendix C), including the Inspector's Main Modifications and Council's Minor Changes as part of the Development Plan for Halton, to be used for development management purposes;
- 3) authorise the Operational Director for Policy, Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder, to make final editorial amendments to the Halton Delivery and Allocations Local Plan prior to final publication. These amendments will be restricted to correcting minor errors and formatting text and shall not alter the meaning of the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan;
- 4) note that a number of saved policies in the Core Strategy (as listed in Appendix C of the DALP) will be deleted and replaced by policies in the Delivery and Allocations Local Plan, and the saved policies of the Halton Unitary Development Plan will be deleted; and
- 5) withdraw the following Supplementary Planning Documents:
 - Affordable Housing SPD

COU60 MEMBERS' ALLOWANCE SCHEME - TRI-ANNUAL REVIEW

The Council considered a report of the Independent Remuneration Panel following the Triannual Review of the Scheme of Members' Allowances.

Under the Local Authority (Members' Allowances) Regulations 2003, the Scheme of Members' Allowances must be reviewed tri-annually. Three independent private sector representatives were invited to sit as an Independent Panel to review the Council's Scheme of Members' Allowances and to make recommendations to the Council.

The Panel were provided with, and appraised of, the Council's current Scheme of Allowances, as set out in the report. The Panel met once and corresponded on a number of occasions, considered papers supplied in advance of their meetings and received a briefing by the Chief Executive. In addition, the Panel invited comments from the Leaders of the three Political Groups and considered written representations submitted by Councillors. The Panel's conclusions and recommendations were set out in the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) note and agree the recommendations of the Independent Members' Allowances Panel as set out in Paragraph 6 of the report;
- 2) having regard to the Panel's recommendation, approve the Members' Allowance Scheme as submitted to be effective from April 2022 for a 3 year period; and
- 3) note the Leader was declining the increase in the SRA of 5% recommended for the Leader's allowance.

COU61 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS AND THE AUDIT AND GOVERNANCE BOARD

The Council considered the reports of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of Council on 26 January 2022:-

- Children, Young People and Families;

- Health;
- Safer;
- Environment and Urban Renewal;
- Corporate Services; and
- Audit and Governance.

COU62 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 26 January 2022:-

- Development Management;
- Regulatory; and
- Appointments Committee.

COU63 RECOMMENDATION FROM MAYORAL COMMITTEE

The Mayoral Committee had considered a Part II item which made recommendations for the appointment of Mayor and Deputy Mayor for the 2022/23 Municipal Year.

Formal confirmation would be sought at the Annual meeting of Council.

RESOLVED: That Council note that

- 1) Councillor Mark Dennett be appointed as Mayor;
and
- 2) Councillor Valerie Hill be appointed as Deputy Mayor.

COU64 NOTICE OF MOTION - SEXUAL HARASSMENT, SEXUAL VIOLENCE AND BULLYING IN SCHOOL

Council considered a Notice of Motion submitted in accordance with Standing Order No. 6.

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Loftus and seconded by Councillor Bramwell:-

A report was presented to the Children and Young People (C&YP) Policy and Performance Board about Bullying, Sexual Harassment and Sexual Violence involving Students.

Within the report it was made clear to the members that the reporting of incidents of Sexual Harassment Sexual Violence and Bullying in schools was not being as open as it should be. The Members were informed that when schools stated that no incidents had happened it would be to assume the opposite because this was a national problem. It was this assumption that prompted me to propose this motion.

I propose that all Local Authority School Governor's ask for every school, Governor's Board to debate these issues at their next meeting and report back to next meeting of the C&YP Board.

The issues that need to be addressed are as follows:

- 1) Education, Young Adults need to be made aware of the impact that incidents of Bullying Sexual Harassment or Sexual Violence has on both the victim and the perpetrator. For both the impact could be life changing. For the victims their self-worth could be undermined for life, for the perpetrator if convicted their aspirations for employment will be greatly reduced and the stigma will last for years.
- 2) Actions by the Schools, recording of incidents and support for the victim is essential. All complaints must be taken seriously and investigated thoroughly. Each year group should have a named adult that a child from that year group can talk to. This person will need to be able to support the young person throughout the investigation. If the incident involves a criminal act the Police should be involved from the start.
- 3) Bullying, some Schools in Halton already allow girls to wear trousers in school but those girls are often bullied by people making assertions of their sexual identity. With the changes to the rules governing school uniforms (thanks to Mike Amesbury) this could be the opportune time to encourage schools to promote Gender Neutral Uniform's (including gym kits) from September. This will be very economically beneficial for those parents on limited incomes.

I hope all Members can agree with me that these steps need to be taken, when you vote. We all need to

remember that as Councillors we are corporate Parents.

Following a supporting statement from Councillor Bramwell, the motion was put and carried.

RESOLVED: That the motion be approved.

Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.