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EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 20 April 2023 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, J. Lowe, T. McInerney, Nelson, P. Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson and A. Lewis

Also in attendance: One member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB104 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2023, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

N.B. Councillor M. Lloyd Jones declared an Other Registerable Interest in the following item of business as her husband Councillor P. Lloyd Jones is a trustee of Citizens Advice Bureau.

EXB105 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND NO.4 2023/24

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, which sought approval for a proposed Scheme and Spending Plan, regarding how the Council's grant allocation of £2.6m from the Government for the 2023/24 Household Support Fund might be utilised. The grant allocation would provide continuation of the Household Support Fund for a further twelve months from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024.

A Spending Plan had been prepared, as set out in the Appendix, regarding how the grant funding might be utilised via a combination of Council departments and the voluntary sector, to deliver help and assistance to vulnerable

households over the twelve month period. The Plan would also provide a basis for monitoring spending against the grant, as required by the DWP and ensure that it was fully utilised in accordance with the grant guidance by 31 March 2024.

The Spending Plan must be submitted to the DWP by 17 May 2023. It was proposed that any subsequent revisions to the Plan would be approved by the Operational Director, Finance, in consultation with the Leader. Regular monitoring reports would be presented to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Scheme and Spending Plan for the 2023/24 Housing Support Fund, as outlined in the report and appendix, be approved;
- 2) regular progress reports be presented to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board; and
- 3) any subsequent revisions to the Spending Plan be approved by the Operational Director, Finance in consultation with the Leader.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB106 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented an application for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The report outlined details of the application from SHAP Limited in respect of their premises and the potential annual cost to the Council of granting discretionary rate relief to the organisation.

RESOLVED: That the application for discretionary rate relief for SHAP Limited be approved at 15% with effect from 11 January 2023.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB107 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION 2023

The Board received a report of the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, which sought the approval of Council to a small number of changes to the Constitution.

The revised version of the Constitution picked up the

changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

Members were referred to Appendix one where the proposed amendments were listed; these had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Leader, in accordance with Article 16.02.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board recommends Council to approve the changes to the Constitution including the matters set out in Appendix one.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

N.B. Councillor M. Lloyd Jones declared an Other Registerable Interest in the following item of business as her husband Councillor P. Lloyd Jones is a trustee of Citizens Advice Bureau.

EXB108 SERVICES FOR EARLY HELP, EMPLOYMENT, DEBT AND BENEFITS ADVICE SERVICE: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services, that requested a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders was sought for the direct award to support the introduction of a contract with Halton Citizens Advice Bureau to deliver, on behalf of the Council, the provision of Early Help, Employment, Debt and Benefits Advice Service, for a period of two years from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2025.

The value of the contract would be £200,000 for two years and would be supported by the Supporting Families and Family Hub programmes. It was noted that undertaking a tender process would delay the introduction of the specialist service provision and would reduce the impact on the most vulnerable children, young people and families. In addition, Citizens Advice Bureau was a well-established partner in Halton and had the skills and knowledge to provide this service.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the contents of the report; and
- 2) in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv), Executive Board approve a Waiver of Part

Operational
Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

Executive Director
Children's
Services

3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for a direct award of a Contract for Early Help, Employment, Debt and Benefits Advice Service, to be delivered by Halton Citizens Advice Bureau for a period of two years from 1 June 2023 to 31 May 2025.

EXB109 HIGH NEEDS PROVISION CAPITAL ALLOCATION - PROPOSED EXPANSION OF SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS & DISABILITY PROVISION - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Children's Services, which advised that in March 2022, the Council had received notification from the Department of Education that it would be allocated £3.3m in capital funding over a two year period to support the provision of new places and/or to expand existing provision for pupils and students with high needs. The report set out the progress to date and sought approval for the proposals made with regard to expanding the special educational needs and disability provision in Halton.

Reason(s) for Decision

The Council is required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the High Needs Capital Allocation Grant. To deliver and implement the capital programmes.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

It is intended that the first phase of additional provision could be offered from September 2023, the next phase from January 2024, and the remainder from September 2024.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approves in principle the proposals for the additional Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) provision and the issuing of statutory notices for those schools where applicable – detailed in Appendix A.

Executive Director
Children's
Services

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING, SKILLS AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB110 CULTURAL STRATEGIC VISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Greenspace, which sought approval for the adoption of the Cultural Strategic Vision, a copy of which was attached to the report as an appendix.

It was noted that Art Reach had been commissioned to write a Cultural Strategy in 2022. Consultation with various organisations and workshops took place prior to a draft strategy being submitted to the Council. Following the document being shared with the Cultivate Partnership, a Cultural Report and a Cultural Strategic Vision had been prepared, to which all Partners had signed up to. The Action Plan contained within the Cultural Report would be developed further in consultation with Cultural partners across Halton.

The Board was advised that a temporary externally funded Culture Officer post had been created, utilising UK Share Prosperity Funding. The Officer would be responsible for developing the Action Plan and would facilitate Culture in the Borough over the next two years.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and Portfolio for Employment, Learning, Skills and Community, to finalise of the Cultural Strategic Vision ready for adoption; and
- 2) approves the adoption of the Cultural Strategic Vision 'The Crucible of Culture – The Cultural Vision for Halton Borough'.

Operational
Director -
Community &
Green Space

EXB111 BRINDLEY THEATRE EXTENSION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Greenspace, which provided an update on the progress of the Brindley Theatre Extension project. The Runcorn Old Town Investment Plan was previously reported to the Board on 14 April 2022 (EXB91).

Since that time, the Council had secured Town Deal Funding of £23.6m. The Brindley was one of 7 projects to improve Runcorn Old Town and had received £6,606,232.

The project was split into two phases, the Brindley Theatre Extension £5,608,613 and the development of the Brindley Green £997,618. The report highlighted the following:

- the Council's intention to procure a contractor via The Chest Procurement Portal. The current estimate remained within budget;
- the planning application for the project was submitted in August 2022. Following feedback from consultees, amended plans had been submitted in March 2023;
- in order to avoid the Brindley's peak period, construction work would commence on 8 January 2024, with a view to completing the works early December 2024;
- the plans to replace the existing Education room at the Brindley; and
- discussions were ongoing with Peel to make temporary alterations to the tow path to allow safe access to all customers during the works.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the utilisation of £5,608,613 of the Town Deal funding for the Brindley Theatre Extension;
- 2) approves the tendering of project and gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Employment, Learning, Skills and Community to take all reasonable steps to award the contract to the successful contractor; and
- 3) authorises the submission of external funding bids to support the delivery of the project, where necessary.

Operational
Director
Community
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Green Space

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ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB112 CREATION OF CAFÉ FACILITY AT PICKERINGS PASTURE

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Greenspace that sought approval to provide a café facility at Pickerings Pasture Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which would be operated as a franchise.

The cost of the café facility was estimated to be £520,000 and it was proposed that an application would be submitted to the INEOS Environment Fund for £87,500 for a period of seven years to cover the capital financing costs.

The franchise would be on a Full Repair and Insuring (FRI) lease to avoid the Council having any ongoing revenue liabilities in respect of the building. Once completed and opened the café would generate income for the Council from the franchise rental, which could be used to offset the running costs of Pickings Pasture.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposal to open a café facility at Pickering's Pasture Local Nature Reserve which would be operated as a franchise opportunity, as outlined within the report, be approved; and
- 2) Council be asked to include £520,000 within the Council's Capital Programme to fund the construction of the café facility.

Operational
Director -
Community &
Green Space

MINUTES ISSUED: 26 April 2023

CALL-IN: 4 May 2023 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 4 May 2023.

Meeting ended at 2.20 p.m.