

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 22 February 2018 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

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

Also in attendance: Audrey Williamson, Chair Halton Safeguarding Adults Board (Minute 106), Councillor Pamela Wallace (Minute 110)

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB104 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2018 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

EXB105 INSPECTION FRAMEWORK (PRESENTATION)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, regarding the framework for the Ofsted Inspection of Local Authority Children Services (ILACS).

The Board was advised that the last Ofsted Inspection of Children Services in Halton took place in 2014, under the Single Inspection Framework (SIF). It was noted that the overall judgement was "Requires Improvement", as detailed in the report. Since that inspection, a plan had been developed to address the recommendations, with continual monitoring, review and evaluation of performance undertaken.

It was reported that the SIF cycle had ended, and

local authorities would now be inspected under the ILACS framework, which was essentially built around answering three questions, as stated in the report. In addition, the presentation provided information on what the authority could expect in terms of inspection visits, although it was noted that the 'Annual Conversation' visit and shared self-evaluation took place on 26 January 2018.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB106 HSAB ANNUAL REPORT 2016-2017

The Board received the verbal report of the Halton Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) Annual Report for 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2017. The report was presented by Audrey Williamson, Chair of the HSAB.

It was noted that the Annual Report fulfilled one of the Safeguarding Adults Board's three core statutory duties which were to:

- Develop and publish a strategic plan setting out how they would meet their objectives and how their member and partner agencies would contribute;
- Publish an Annual Report detailing how effective their work had been; and
- Commission safeguarding adults reviews (SARs) for any cases which met the criteria for these.

It was reported that all members of HSAB, HSAB sub-group chairs and the Safeguarding Adults Partnership Forum members were invited to submit an annual summary of their work activity. The focus of work activity addressed HSAB's priorities as identified from the 2015-16 Annual Report, Performance Framework and Strategic Plan (2016-2018), in addition to acknowledging local and national safeguarding adults emerging issues, trends and policies throughout the year.

The report provided a summary analysis of the data gathered from both NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group and Halton Borough Council's Safeguarding Adults Collection and highlighted what this information meant for informing the work priorities for 2017-18.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB107 HALTON SPEAK OUT CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, which sought approval to extend the current contract for the Halton Speak Out service.

The Board was advised that Halton Speak Out was commissioned in 2015 to provide support services to adults with learning disabilities. The contract had two elements, which although not statutory, did contribute to the Council's prevention agenda which ensured the delivery of outcomes linked to the Care Act.

It was reported that a review of learning disability services, which included those services delivered by Halton Speak Out, was being undertaken. An extension to the contract would allow completion of the review and consideration of other options, and would inform future service delivery.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the waiver of Procurement Standing Orders 3.0, to award a contract to Halton Speak Out for Person Centred Planning Co-ordination/Facilitation, Self-Advocacy and Halton People's Cabinet for the period 1 April 2018 to 31 March 2019.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB108 HALTON HEALTHWATCH & ADVOCACY TENDER

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, on the Halton Healthwatch and Advocacy Hub contract.

The Board was advised that Halton Healthwatch was first commissioned in 2013/14 and had been extended twice by Executive Board. It was reported that a provider bidder event was held in October 2017, when an outline of Halton's vision for a new combined Healthwatch and Advocacy Service was presented to prospective bidders. The contract was advertised on The Chest on 20 October 2017 with evaluation subsequently taking place. It was noted that the contract would be for an initial period of three years, with the option to extend for a further two years, and would commence on 1 April 2018.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the award of the Healthwatch and Advocacy Hub contract to Engaging Communities Staffordshire CIC.

EXB109 STAIR LIFTS – PROPOSED NEW MODEL OF PROVISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Adult Social Services, on a proposed new model for the installation and maintenance of stair lifts.

The Board was advised that, given the increasing costs of maintaining stair lifts, a new model of provision was proposed which incorporated two key changes compared to the current practice. These were outlined in the report as being the introduction of a means testing element so that those who were able to fund/contribute to the cost were identified; and the provision of an extended warranty funded by the Council at the point of installation, after which the stair lift would become the responsibility of the individual for ongoing maintenance.

It was noted that the new model would only apply to owner-occupiers and those in private rental accommodation; the current joint funding agreement for adaptations between the Council and seven of the major Housing Associations which operate in Halton, would continue.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the proposed new model for stair lift installation and maintenance outlined in the report at paragraph 3.6, be approved.

Director of Adult
Social Services

TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB110 WIDNES LOOPS TO WEST BANK LINK ROAD - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented design options for a new link road between the Mersey Gateway Bridge and West Bank.

The Board was advised that the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan *Plus*, approved by the Board in March 2017, identified a new link road between the Mersey Gateway Bridge and West Bank Impact Area as a priority 'connectivity' infrastructure project. It was reported that construction of this new link road would contribute to regeneration and economic development objectives and

provide a more resilient and connected transport network.

A feasibility study was commissioned in August 2017 to undertake initial design, traffic modelling and costing work of the potential scheme. A series of options had been considered for the configuration of the new link road and associated junction, and were summarised in Appendix B, attached to the report. A further technical review process lead to some of the options being rejected, as detailed in the report. Therefore, it was noted that three options remained. The timetable for the delivery of the programme was set out in the report, with the next step to formally engage with the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and Merseylink to agree the acceptability of Option 5b, in principle.

Reason(s) for Decision

Delivery of the Widnes Loops to West Bank Link Road would help maximise the regeneration, economic and transport benefits of the Mersey Gateway Project.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

These were outlined at paragraph 3.5 to 3.7 of the report.

Implementation Date

April 2018.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the development of recommended Option 5b, as outlined in the report, be agreed;
- 2) the formal engagement of the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and Merseylink to enable delivery of the Widnes Loops to West Bank Link Road, be approved;
- 3) Council be recommended to approve a variation to the capital programme to cover the costs, as outlined in paragraph 5.1 of the report;
- 4) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources be authorised, in conjunction with the Portfolio holders for Physical Environment and for Transportation, to take the necessary actions to ensure value for money through the appropriate

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

procurement processes; and

- 5) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, be authorised, in consultation with the portfolio holders for Physical Environment and for Transportation, to take any other actions necessary to enable timely delivery of the new link road.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB111 BUDGET 2018/19 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2018/19.

It was noted that at the time of writing, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cheshire Fire Authority had not set their budgets and Council Tax Precepts. However, final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

The Government announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement figure for 2018/19, which was in line with the Provisional Settlement figure announced on 19 December 2017. The main change was the announcement of a one-off Adult Social Care Support Grant for 2018/19 to the value of £0.399m. As part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR), the Council would continue to participate in the pilot Business Rates Retention Scheme. Government had confirmed that the pilot scheme would operate under a “no detriment” policy in that no Council operating as part of the pilot would see a reduction in their funding, in comparison to what would have been received previously.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 16 November 2017, had identified a funding gap of around £5.6m in 2018/19, £13.2m in 2019/20 and £3.3m in 2020/21. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council’s five priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;

- Protect essential front line services; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public and Members' own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. Individual consultations had taken place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

On 6 December 2017, the Council approved initial budget savings totalling £2.2m and further proposed savings were shown at Appendix B. The departmental analysis of the budget was shown at Appendix C, and the major reasons for change from the current budget were outlined for Members' information in Appendix D. It was noted that the proposed budget total was £109.227m.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated grant figures announced in the Provisional Grant Settlement and included £2.152m for the New Homes Bonus and £3.045m for Improved Better Care Funding, paid to councils for the second year.

Further information was provided on the budget outlook. As part of the Local Government Finance Settlement for 2016/17, the Government had published indicative Settlement Funding Allocations for the three years up to 2019/20. Local Authorities had been asked to produce and publish an efficiency plan setting out their forecast budget position through to 2019/20, along with their proposed efficiency measures to achieve annual balanced budget positions. The Council's efficiency plan was published on 14 October 2016. The Medium Term Financial Strategy had been updated to take account of the 2018/19 finance settlement, multi-year allocations and saving measures already agreed or proposed.

Further information was provided in respect of Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, Capital Programme, the Prudential Code and School Budgets.

Members wished to place on record their thanks to all members of the Budget Working Group, Policy and Performance Board Chairs and staff for their hard work in producing this year's budget.

Reason(s) for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's revenue budget, capital programme and council tax for 2018/19.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

In arriving at the budget savings proposals set out in Appendix B, numerous proposals had been considered, some of which had been deferred pending further information or rejected.

Implementation Date

7 March 2018.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A attached to the report, which includes setting the budget at £109.227m, the Council Tax requirement of £47.447m (before Parish, Police and Fire precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,377.88.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB112 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2018/19

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2018/19.

The TMSS was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2018/19).

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to "have regard to" the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years, to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act therefore required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing as well as an Annual Investment Strategy, which set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. However, Government guidance stated that authorities could combine the statement and the strategy into one report, and the Council had adopted this approach.

It was noted that on 10 November 2017, the Ministry

of Housing Communities and Local Government had issued a consultation on “Proposed Changes to the Prudential Framework of Capital Finance”, which suggested future changes to the Prudential Code. However, nothing further had been issued and therefore the Treasury management Statement had been written in line with the previous year’s Prudential Code.

Members noted that the provision of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report at paragraph 2.3, with Appendix A detailing the full policy.

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

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB113 2017/18 QUARTER 3 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reported on the 2017/18 Quarter 3 Spending as at 31 December 2017.

A summary of spending against revenue budget up to 31 December 2017 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was advised that, in overall terms, revenue expenditure was £1.990m above the budget profile. It was noted that the position for the past three months in certain departments had slowed measurably, in other departments, increased pressures had developed.

The report contained details of the main budget pressure within the Children and Families Department, with Out-of-Borough Residential Placements and Fostering dominating the overspend position. However, the 2018/19 budget to be presented to Council on 7 March 2018, will include an additional £3.0m of budget provision for the Department, to help alleviate the overspend position and to bring about ongoing reductions in costs.

The report also provided details of other services which had experienced overspent budget profiles, including Complex Care Pooled Budget; Residential and Nursing Care; Domiciliary Services and Supported Living; Community and Environment; and Education, Inclusion and Provision. Also, details of an underspend in Corporate and Democracy; spending on employees; staff turnover targets; expenditure on general supplies and services; and the

Council Tax collection rate for the third quarter of 2017/18.

The Capital Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles as schemes had developed, and these were detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Strategic Directors continue to take appropriate action to contain overall spending within their operational budget by year-end;
- 3) for those Services experiencing net overspends, Strategic Directors take action to bring net spend back in line with budget as soon as possible during the next financial year; and
- 4) Council be recommended to approve the revised Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 3, attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB114 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2018/19

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2018/19 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2018/19 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

(N.B. Councillor Wharton declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he was Treasurer of Hale Youth Club)

EXB115 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF - RENEWALS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which detailed renewal requests for discretionary business rate relief for organisations that continued to satisfy the appropriate criteria.

The Board was advised that the Council had previously granted discretionary business rate relief to a number of organisations which were Registered Charities or

Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC). It was noted that the organisations currently received a mandatory 80% business rate relief and the Council funded the full cost of such relief as part of the 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Scheme. Not for profit organisations were not entitled to mandatory rate relief and therefore, the full cost of any discretionary rate relief granted was funded by the Council.

Details of the organisations currently in receipt of discretionary rate relief and the costs were listed in the appendix attached to the report. The Board noted that regulations required that twelve months' notice of any changes to provision must be given and therefore organisations must be so notified by 31 March 2018.

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 2019; 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 as indicated in the Appendix attached to the report), for the period of three years commencing 1 April 2019.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

(N.B. Councillor Ron Hignett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he was a member of the Public Sector Joint Venture Board)

EXB116 SCI-TECH DARESBURY IMPLEMENTATION
PROGRAMME - PHASE 2

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on the developments at Sci-Tech Daresbury.

The report provided an update on the next phase of developments and proposed funding arrangements. The Implementation Programme, attached to the report, outlined how the Joint Venture would deliver the masterplan vision to provide world class science and technology, innovation and business enterprise. The next development phases agreed were Enabling Works; Project Violet; and Skillspace, as

detailed in the report.

The Funding Strategy outlined the funding options available to facilitate future development of the campus; it reflected the designation of Sci-Tech Daresbury as an Enterprise Zone.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposals outlined in the Sci-Tech Daresbury Implementation Programme which comprises Project Violet and Skillspace be approved;
- 2) the Council enters into the necessary legal and funding agreements to deliver 'Skillspace' and associated enabling works; and
- 3) authority be given to the Operational Director, Finance, and the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Resources, to conclude the legal and funding arrangements.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB117 FEES AND CHARGES 2018/19 – TRAVELLER SITES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People, regarding fees and charges for Traveller Sites for 2018/19.

The Board was advised that the Council was required to give 28 days' notice of a change in rent, under the Mobile Homes Act 2013. In order for any increase in rent to apply from 1 April 2018, details of proposed increases in pitch and water fee charges were attached to the report at Appendix A, for Members' consideration. It was noted that the effects of the proposed charges had been incorporated into budgets for 2018/19.

RESOLVED: That the 2018/19 proposed fees and charges for Traveller Sites, as set out in Appendix A attached to the report, be approved.

Strategic Director
- People

MINUTES ISSUED: 27 February 2018

CALL-IN: 6 March 2018

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 6 March 2018

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Meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.