

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 10 February 2011 in the Conference Room 2, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, Harris, Jones, McInerney, Nelson, Stockton, Swain and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A. Gerrard

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, M. Reaney, G. Cook, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, D. Tregaea, B. Dodd, E. Dawson and K Hall

Also in attendance: Councillors Redhead and Hodgkinson and two members of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
EXB90 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 27 January 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
LEADER'S PORTFOLIO	
EXB91 WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND - FINAL ALLOCATIONS	
<p>The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Resources on the Working Neighbourhoods Fund - Final Allocations.</p>	
<p>The Board were advised that the Working Neighbourhoods Fund (WNF) had ended and no further sums would be received. Since 2002, the Halton Strategic Partnership Board had ensured that there was a Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) for each of the five priorities. These partnerships were commissioned to produce the original Strategies and Action Plans and needed to produce updated Action Plans setting out their activities post Working Neighbourhoods Fund. They set out a programme of activity</p>	

to deliver the thematic elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The allocations detailed in the report had been agreed by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board in conjunction with the Specialist Strategic Partnerships. There was an expectation that all projects receiving grant funding address their priorities and have an exit strategy. Those projects receiving final grant allocations would have additional controls on expenditure, as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the final allocations of Working Neighbourhoods Fund and Local Public Sector Agreement grant referred to in the report be endorsed; and
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council, to approve amendments to the allocations as necessary.

Chief Executive

CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

(NB: The following Councillors declared a personal interest in the following item of business for the reasons stated:

Councillor Nelson as Chair of Governors and Councillor Stockton as a Governor both at the Grange School; Councillor Jones as a Governor at Wade Deacon School)

EXB92 APPROVAL OF THE BUILDING SCHOOLS FOR THE FUTURE FINAL BUSINESS CASE - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People on the approval of the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) Final Business Case (FBC).

The Board were reminded that Halton had previously submitted successful BSF business cases, as outlined in the report. Along with the formal approval of the Outline Business Case on 22 October 2009, came the permission to commence the procurement of a Local Education Partnership (LEP). The report outlined the details of the process for Members' consideration.

Reason(s) For Decision

The report sought to gain the approval of the Board to submit the final business case to the Department for Education (DfE) for the Halton BSF Programme. It also sought approval to delegate the responsibility to make changes to the FBC to the Chief Executive.

The report also sought to gain approval for the establishment of the LEP in line with the guidance contained in the report and to authorise the Operational Director for Legal and Democratic Services to enter into the legal bidding documents as listed in the report, on behalf of the Council.

By approving the FBC, establishment of the LEP and the authorisation of the legal documents, the programme team would be able to work with the LEP up to financial close in April 2011 and then to commence work on The Grange School and Wade Deacon High School shortly afterwards.

Alternative Options Considered And Rejected

The alternative of not proceeding with submitting the FBC or bringing any changes to the document had been considered and rejected as it was strongly believed that a delay to submission would lead to a loss or significant reduction in the capital funds being made available to Halton for these projects.

The alternative of bringing all legal documents to the Executive Board had also been considered and rejected as this would also lead to delays and a risk to the funding of the projects.

Implementation Date

The FBC would be submitted to the DfE for approval on 10th February 2011.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks and appreciation for the work carried out by officers in compiling the business case.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Final Business Case be approved;
- 2) responsibility to make any changes to the BSF Final Business Case be delegated to the Chief

Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Member for Children and Young People, Operational Director Finance and the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services;

- 3) the Strategic Director for Children and Young People be authorised to submit the Final Outline Business Case and all supporting documentation to the Department for Education in the form agreed by the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Lead Member for Children and Young People, Operational Director Finance and the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services;
- 4) the supporting information provided in Appendix B regarding the establishment of the Local Education Partnership (LEP) be noted and authorised and the extent that the LEP could be used as a procurement vehicle into the future be noted;
- 5) the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services be authorised to enter into the legal bidding documents on behalf of the Council listed in Clause 6.2;
- 6) a full report on the outcome of the Department for Education assessment of the Final Business Case, Financial Close arrangements and the Local Education Partnership establishment be presented to the Executive Board in June / July 2011; and
- 7) the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Lead Member for Children and Young People, be authorised to appoint 2 member representatives to the Local Education Partnership and one Local Authority Representative to the Strategic Partnering Board.

Strategic Director
- Children &
Young People/
Chief
Executive/Operati
onal Director,
Finance/
Operational
Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

EXB93 OFSTED AND CARE QUALITY COMMISSION
INSPECTION OF CHILD PROTECTION AND CHILDREN
IN LOOKED AFTER SERVICE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director,
Children and Young People on the Ofsted and Care Quality

Commission Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services.

The Board were advised that an inspection of Safeguarding (Child Protection) Services, and those for Children in Care, was undertaken by Ofsted every three years. This was a major inspection process covering the Council and statutory partners principally involving NHS Services, the Police but also involved other members of Halton's Children's Trust. The Inspection focused on evaluating outcomes for children and young people, and in particular the impact of practice and services on improving outcomes for some of the most disadvantaged children in the Borough.

The Board were reminded that the Inspection was different to other inspections of the Council in that it incorporated all agencies that contributed to Safeguarding and Children in Care. The role of Halton's Children's Trust and Halton's Safeguarding Children's Board was pivotal.

It was noted that the Inspection would take place over a 10 day period between 7 February 2011 and 18 February 2011, and would be conducted through individual interviews, case auditing, focus groups and direct feedback from children and young people.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Ofsted inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Services for Children and Young People taking place between the 7th February 2011 and 18th February 2011 be noted; and
- 2) a copy of the findings of the Ofsted/Care Quality Commission inspection be presented to the Board after the 25th March 2011.

Strategic Director
- Children &
Young People

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB94 DRAFT BUDGET 2011/12

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 2011/12.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Government had not announced the final Local Government Settlement, nor had Cheshire Police and Fire Authorities set their budgets and Council Tax precepts. However final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

In June 2010, the Chief Executive had asked all staff for their suggestions to save money. In addition, in September 2010, a survey was undertaken on the Council's budget with the Halton 2000 Citizen's Panel and the Area Forums on their suggestions for savings; the results had been considered in developing the budget.

The Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October 2010 announced that public spending would be cut back significantly, with local government spending reduced by 28% over four years, with the largest cuts taking place in 2011/12. It was also announced that ring fencing of grants would be limited in future and that the number of grants would reduce from about 100 to 10. A number of grants would be rolled up into Formula Grant, further increasing the grant loss to deprived areas such as Halton. Working Neighbourhoods Fund would be abolished.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 20th November 2010, had identified a funding gap of around £20m in 2011/12, £16m in 2012/12 and £12m in 2013/14. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Direct spending towards the five priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency savings;
- and
- Protect front line services as far as possible.

The Board had considered the level of growth and savings at its Away Day on 6th January 2011, including the impact on the Council's priorities and service users. Appendix B contained a list of the proposed savings. Details of the outcome of consultation with the Area Forums were circulated at the meeting.

The Departmental analysis of the budget was shown in 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 £110,501m.

The Board were advised that the budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Provisional Settlement, and included £1.086m in relation to the Council Tax Freeze Grant, which would be payable for four years. In addition, it included £300,000 for a new grant, the New Homes Bonus Grant, payable to local authorities based on the net increase in new homes in the area.

Further information was provided in respect of the Local Government Finance Settlement, Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, the Capital Programme, the Prudential Code and school budgets.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £110.501m and the Band D Council Tax for Halton (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) of £1,137.91.

Operational
Director - Finance

(NB: Councillor Wharton declared a personal interest in the following item of business as he had close links with a user of the Pingot Day Centre (referred to in the Savings Options))

EXB95 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2011/12

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2011/12.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2011/12).

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 now stated that Authorities could combine the statement and the strategy into one report, and the Council had adopted this approach.

Members noted that the production of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statement, approved list of counterparties, counterparty limits and indicators outlined in the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

MINUTES ISSUED: 14 February 2011

CALL-IN: 21 February 2011

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm, 21 February 2011

Meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.