

**Extracts of Executive Board Minutes Relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills and Communities Policy and Performance Board**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING ON 7 July 2014**

<b>EXB27</b>	<b>EFFICIENCY REVIEW OF HALTON'S LIBRARY SERVICE</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which sought approval to commence a public consultation on proposals for the future delivery arrangements for Halton's Library Service.

The Board was advised that an Efficiency Review of the Library Service had previously been carried out which realised savings of £157,500. A fresh Library Service review, as part of the current Wave 5 of the Efficiency Programme had been conducted by the Efficiency Programme Board. Information had been gathered which had helped to construct two options which would be the subject of public consultation and which were detailed in the consultation document attached to the report.

It was reported that, in conducting the Efficiency Review, Officers and the Programme Board had drawn on demographic and other data on local need, to ensure that the revised service would meet the needs of current and future users of the Library Services. However, it was noted that the focus of the review, and of the two proposed options, had been on opening hours. In addition, the consultation would seek the public's view on the viability of maintaining the universal Mobile Library Service and the need to address services to the elderly, given the ageing population profile of the Borough.

The Board was advised that, once analysed, the responses would be reported to Executive Board for decision on the future of the service.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the content of the report;
- 2) approves the documents attached to the report as the basis for public consultation on the future delivery of the Library Service; and
- 3) approves the consultation period outlined in the report.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING ON 4 SEPTEMBER 2014**

<b>EXB56</b>	<b>WELFARE REFORM SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT AND RECOMMENDATIONS</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which presented the recommendations of the Welfare Reform Scrutiny Topic Group.

Councillor Sue Edge, Chair of the Topic Group, attended the meeting to present the report. The Board was advised that the report, attached at Appendix 1, was commissioned by the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board, following changes to the welfare system introduced by the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

It was reported that the Scrutiny Review was conducted between June and September 2013. The original recommendations were adjusted through a prioritisation exercise, which took account of financial and budgetary restrictions. The report contained a summary of the recommended actions, for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That the recommendations of the Welfare Reform Scrutiny Topic Group be noted.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING ON 18 SEPTEMBER 2014**

<b>EXB63</b>	<b>SCI-TECH DARESBUY ENTERPRISE ZONE FUNDING</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on funding for the development of Sci-Tech Daresbury.

The Board was advised that Sci-Tech Daresbury was allocated as a strategic site in Halton's Core Strategy and was an international hub for world class science. In August 2011, part of Daresbury was named as one of the eleven new Enterprise Zones, the aim of which was to attract new businesses with simplified planning rules, super-fast broadband and reductions in business rates.

It was reported that in February 2014, Sci-Tech Daresbury was shortlisted for £3.57m of Enterprise Zone (EZ) Capital Grant which would be used to facilitate the next stage of development. Details of the DCLG claw back arrangement for any increase in the value of the development as a result of the grant were outlined in the report.

In addition, it was noted that in June 2014, an application for £1.128m European Regional Development Funding (ERDF) was approved by the DCLG, subject to match funding. An offer letter would be issued once match funding and State Aids were confirmed. The offer would be made to Langtree as the developer, with the intention that the Council be acknowledged as the delivery partner, receiving £25k towards the funding and monitoring service it would provide to Langtree.

Members were advised that there were financial implications for the Council in accepting ERDF funding, minor breaches of the agreement could result in DCLG having the right not only to discontinue funding for the future but to also demand the return of funding prior to any breach of the agreement. In this respect the Council's direct liability would be limited to the 25k it would receive as delivery partner.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the offer of £3.57m of EZ Capital Grant (EZ) from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) be accepted;
- 2) the offer of £25k of European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) from DCLG be accepted;
- 3) the Council be given authority to enter into a back to back contract with Joint Venture partners for the delivery of the project; and
- 4) the Council agrees to entering into a claw back agreement with Joint Venture partners in accordance with the EZ offer.

<b>EXB64</b>	<b>YOUTH EMPLOYMENT GATEWAY – KEY DECISION</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the Youth Employment Gateway Programme (the Programme).

The Board was advised that the Liverpool City Region (LCR) had secured £5.9 m of Government investment to deliver a programme to reduce youth unemployment across the LCR over the next three years. Each local authority had been allocated a sum to deliver the scheme in their respective area, as set out in table 1.

It was reported that the Programme aimed to support young people aged 18-24 years that had been unemployed for between 2 and 9 months. A detailed explanation of how the Programme would work was contained in Appendix 1. Members noted that Appendix 2 outlined how young people would be referred to the Programme and how the local authority would contribute to it. The Programme afforded an opportunity to provide young people with a coherent support package to help them into sustained work.

#### Reason(s) For Decision

Youth Employment Gateway would assist young people in Halton to find employment or training aimed at supporting their future career prospects.

#### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

One option that the Council could consider was to tender for a training provider to undertake the management and delivery of the Programme in Halton. However, it was felt that many of the functions required to deliver the Programme in Halton could be fulfilled through slight adjustments to existing structures within the Council's Employment, Learning and Skills division. In addition, going out to tender would delay the implementation of the Programme.

#### Implementation Date

1 October 2014.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the offer of Youth Employment Gateway Funding be accepted;
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Economic Development, to accept the contract/offer letter; and
- 3) the use of Youth Employment Gateway funding be authorised to develop an employment support programme in Halton.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING ON 2 OCTOBER 2014**

<b>EXB67</b>	<b>EFFICIENCY REVIEW OF HALTON'S LIBRARY SERVICE</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which reported the findings of the public consultation on the proposals for the future delivery arrangements for the Library Service in Halton.

The Board was advised that, following an in-depth review by the Efficiency Programme Board, a consultation exercise was undertaken in which the public and stakeholders had the opportunity to comment on two proposals for the future delivery of the Service. It was reported that both the Library Service and the Efficiency Programme Board were keen to ensure that as part of any recommendations for the future, two key criteria were met. These were detailed as all four of the Borough's libraries remaining open and that any new arrangements were able to deliver strategic objectives contained within the Council's adopted Library Strategy, as set out in the report.

It was noted that, given the first criteria of keeping all four libraries open, the focus of the consultation had been on library opening hours. In addition, views were also sought on the viability of maintaining the universal mobile library service and the need to address the services to the elderly and the housebound. The Board was further advised that further consultation would begin immediately on this before any final decision was made.

Details of the consultation responses were attached at Appendix 1 and a proposed schedule of opening hours were attached at Appendix 2, for Members' information.

### Reason(s) For Decision

The recommendations relating to Library opening times contained within the report had been developed following a period of public consultation, details of which could be found in the report.

There were 1011 individual responses to the questionnaire; 84% of respondents preferred 'Option 1'. While the majority of people selecting Option 1 as their preference also agreed with the opening times as stated in the questionnaire, a number of comments were received suggesting minor amendments to the proposed hours. These suggestions included a range of comments relating to earlier opening

times (i.e. before 10am), and moving the late night opening (until 7pm) from Monday to another weekday.

As a result of the number of people selecting Option 1, and the suggested alternatives, the recommended opening hours were as included in the report.

#### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The public consultation questionnaire included two possible options for opening hours. Option 2 was preferred by only 12% of respondents and consequently this option had been rejected on the basis of the public consultation.

#### Implementation Date

It was anticipated that any new opening arrangements would be implemented across the library service in March/April 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted;
- 2) the results of the public consultation on the future delivery of the Library Service be noted; and
- 3) the service delivery model, outlined in the report, be approved.

<b>EXB68</b>	<b>NORTON PRIORY HERITAGE LOTTERY FUND BID</b>
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which sought approval in principle for the Council to fund the installation of a proposed Biomass boiler as part of the Norton Priory Museum re-development.

The Board was advised that the Heritage Lottery Fund had confirmed the success of a bid to allow for the refurbishment and extension of the Museum. It was reported that as part of the design work, a mechanical and electrical services report had been completed which included an assessment of the most appropriate type of heating system. A number of options had been considered, as set out in the report.

It was reported that the most attractive proposition would be the installation of a Biomass boiler, which would be able to take advantage of the Renewable Heat Incentive (RHI) payment scheme. Estimated costs, tariff levels and RHI payments were detailed in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the funding of the Biomass boiler at Norton Priory Museum be supported in principle, subject to further assessment of the financial returns following the detailed design of the boiler; and

- 2) Council be requested to approve the addition of the Biomass boiler project to the 2014/15 Capital Programme.

**EXB70**

**BUSINESS RATES PROPOSAL – UNIT 3 ARAGON COURT, MANOR PARK**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which detailed a request for Business Rates relief.

The Board was reminded that in April 2013, the Government had introduced a Business Rates Retention Scheme, which enabled Councils to keep a proportion of the business rates revenue as well as growth on the revenue that was generated within their area.

The Board was advised of a request for Business Rates Relief from a company that had agreed a long lease on premises in Manor Park, Runcorn, the details of which were set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposals set out in the report be approved; and
- 2) subject to the required outcomes being delivered regarding capital investment and job creation, approval be given on an exceptional basis to the award of Business Rate Relief to Jem Recycling Group for the period of six months at the level as set out in the report.