

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Corporate Policy and Policy and Performance Board

11th February 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB109 BUDGET 2016/17 - 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 2016/17.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, the Cheshire Fire Authority and Daresbury Parish Council 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 2016/17 on 9 February 2016, which was in line with the Provisional Settlement announced on 17 December 2015. The Business Rates Retention Scheme allowed 49% of the business rates generated within the Borough to be retained, with the Council in receipt of a Top Up grant and Revenue Support grant.

The 2015 Spending Review also announced that local authorities responsible for adult social care would be given an additional 2% flexibility on their current council tax referendum threshold, which was to be used towards the funding shortfall for adult social care.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 10 December 2015, had identified a funding gap of around £18m in 2016/17, £16m in 2017/18 and £7m in 2018/19. 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;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency gains;
- 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. Budget presentations had taken place at its Area Forums and details of the comments made were tabled at the meeting. In addition, individual consultations would take place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

On 14 October 2015 and 9 December 2015, the Council approved initial budget savings totalling £11.5m for 2016/17, and further proposed savings were shown at Appendix B. 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 £98.465m.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Final Grant Settlement, and included £0.5m for the New Homes Bonus Grant, payable to local authorities based on the net increase in the number of homes in their area.

Further information was provided in respect of the budget outlook. As part of the Local Government Provisional Finance Settlement for 2016/17, the Government had published indicative Settlement Funding Allocations for the three years up to 2019/20. In addition, a consultation had been published on the future of the New Homes Bonus grant, which looked to reduce the number of years this grant was paid from six to four years. The Medium Term Financial Forecast had been updated and was attached at Appendix E. It was noted that the resultant funding gap over the next two years was forecast to be in the region of £34m.

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 2016/17.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

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

Implementation Date

2 March 2016.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £98,465m, the Council Tax requirement of £41.217m (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,250.97.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB110 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT
2016/17

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 2016/17.

The TMSS was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2016/17).

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.

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 at paragraph 2.3, with Appendix A detailing the full policy and Appendix B detailing the changes in the policy for 2016/17.

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

Operational
Director - Finance

25th February 2016

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB112 SYRIAN REFUGEE CRISIS

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive, on the Syrian Refugee Crisis, the current response from Central Government and at local level.

The Board was advised that Halton was working collaboratively with all the North West local authorities in respect of this agenda, and was part of the Merseyside sub regional group. It was reported that the Council had developed measures to fully engage with communities, statutory and non- statutory agencies including the faith and voluntary sector, to improve the understanding of the refugee crisis and the implications this had for Halton and the wider North West.

The report set out details of the Asylum Dispersal Programme (COMPASS), which the Home Office had contracted out to Serco to provide asylum accommodation, transport and support. It was noted that the Syrian Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Scheme (VPR), would expand to admit 20,000 Syrian refugees to be admitted to the UK by 2020.

It was further reported that each local authority in the North West would take the lead role to work with local partners to ensure that arrivals were provided with suitable accommodation and the specific needs of this vulnerable group were met. Central Government would meet the cost of the arrivals in terms of orientation, support, health and education costs for the first year, with reducing support in years 2-5.

RESOLVED: That Council

- 1) support the COMPASS and VPR Programme;
- 2) work with all the North West Local Authorities to

Chief Executive

- establish a robust operational mechanism to oversee and deliver the programme; and
- 3) learn from the examples of best practice nationally, to ensure that Halton provides effective humanitarian support, which is measured and proportionate, and takes into account the needs of those relocated under the programme and Halton's existing communities.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB115 THE ESTABLISHMENT, VICTORIA SQUARE, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on the proposed sale of the Council's reversionary freehold interest in The Establishment (Former Halton Business Forum).

The Board was advised that the former Halton Business Forum was currently leased to SJL Leisure Ltd for a term of 150 years from November 2008. The original proposal was for the leaseholder to develop the site for a hotel and a substantial two storey extension was built at the rear of the original listed building to facilitate this.

It was reported that, due to the downturn in the economy, the only area of the building in use was the ground floor bar, the remainder of the property was unoccupied. As the leaseholder would now like to develop the vacant area to provide office space close to the town centre, it was reported he had made an offer of £20,000 (plus professional costs) to the Council for the disposal of the Freehold Interest. This amount would be paid in instalments, as set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) disposal of the Freehold interest on the basis set out in the report, be approved; and
- 2) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

EXB116 2016/17 QUARTER 3 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 December 2015.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was £39,000 below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that spend to date showed a very marginal position and careful monitoring through to year-end was required to ensure spend was within overall budget. Saving proposals of £11.5m had already been approved by Council, and early implementation of these proposals had helped to manage the overall spend for the last three months of the financial year.

It was noted that spending on employees was £0.930m below the budget profile at the end of the quarter, with vacant posts in a number of Departments helping to generate the favourable variance to date.

Members were advised that there continued to be budget pressures within the Children and Families Department which was significantly over the profiled budget to date.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that spending to the 31 December 2015 totalled £19.896m, which was slightly ahead of the planned spending of £19.431m at this stage. However, this represented 65% of the total capital programme of £30.478m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years).

The Council's Balance Sheet was monitored regularly in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy which formed part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key reserves and balances had been reviewed and were considered prudent and appropriate at this stage in the financial year and within the current financial climate.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continued to be limited only to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Strategic Directors ensure that overall spending at year-end was within their total operational budget; and
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the revised Capital Programme as set out in Appendix 3, attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB117 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 3 2015/16

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which updated them on activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Statement.

The report provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, new long term borrowing and policy guidelines. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB118 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- (2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item

of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB119 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF REQUEST

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, and the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on a request for discretionary business rates relief.

The Board was advised that under the Business Rates Retention Scheme, introduced in April 2013, the Council retained 49% of the business rates income that it collected, and offered a financial incentive to promote economic growth. Halton had historically considered applications for discretionary business rates relief on a case by case basis and where there were exceptional reasons for doing so.

The report set out details of the current request for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That discretionary business rates relief of up to 100% in respect of the company referred to in the report, be approved for 2016/17 only, on the basis set out in paragraph 3.9 of the report.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

10th March 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB123 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which set out details of two applications from charities for discretionary non-domestic rate relief.

The Board was advised that, under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been

available to organisations that were a charity, a community amateur sports club or a not-for-profit organisation.

Since 1 April 2013, the Council had been responsible for funding 49% of any award of mandatory or discretionary rate relief granted, with Government meeting the remaining 51%. The Board was reminded of its decision on 26 February 2015, to provide discretionary rate relief at 15% from 2016/17 onwards, where applications were approved from registered charities or community amateur sports clubs.

Details of the requests were set out in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentages indicated, for the period 1 April 2016 to 31 March 2019:-

Halton Haven Hospice	15%
Mark Gorry Foundation	15%

- 2) Discretionary Rate Relief be backdated to the commencement of liability in respect of the following organisations, at the percentage indicated, for the period up to 31 March 2016:-

Halton Haven Hospice	20%
Mark Gorry Foundation	20%

EXB124 FEES AND CHARGES REVIEW TOPIC GROUP

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which presented the work of the Fees and Charges Topic Group.

The Board was advised that the Corporate Policy and Performance Board (PPB) established a cross - PPB Topic Group to consider potential ways to increase income. Given the resources and timescale available, a targeted approach was agreed to review fees and charges, and focused on those Departments which generated the most in financial terms.

Councillor Gilligan, Chairman of the Corporate PPB, attended the meeting to present the report and to answer Members' questions. Over the past twelve months, a series of meetings were held to consider fees and charges within a

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

set of criteria, as listed in the report, and which included the basis and rationale for existing charges; the level of cost recovery; statutory restrictions on charges levied; the scope to charge where no charge was currently made; and the total additional income which might be generated.

Councillor Gilligan reported that, in the light of financial challenges facing the Council, the Topic Group undertook an in-depth and challenging review of existing and potential areas for charging, whilst being mindful of the potential impact upon residents and service users of any new or increased charges introduced.

The Topic Group concluded that, whilst there may be scope to increase fees and charges in certain areas and to introduce new and innovative charges, the amount of additional income generated would be relatively small and would not on its own solve the Council's significant financial challenges.

However, a number of options were considered for implementation from 1 April 2016, to support development of the Council's 2016/17 budget. It was noted that these proposals had been incorporated within the Council's proposed fees and charges for 2016/17, reported elsewhere on this agenda.

Attached at Appendix A was the final report of the Topic Group's work which had been received by the Corporate PPB on 5 January 2016. Executive Board thanked Councillor Gilligan for attending and for the work undertaken by members of the Topic Group.

RESOLVED: That the work of the Fees and Charges Topic Group, as set out in the Appendix attached to the report, the outcomes of which have been incorporated within the Council's proposed fees and charges for 2016/17, be noted.

EXB125 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which presented the proposed fees and charges for 2016/17 for services provided by the Council's Directorates.

It was reported that the review of fees and charges had been carried out as part of the budget preparations for 2016/17. The work of the Fees and Charges Group, reported elsewhere on this agenda, had been incorporated

into the changes made by managers. It was noted that generally, fees and charges were set to ensure the Council was able to recover costs incurred in service provision. It was proposed that existing fees and charges be increased in line with inflation.

The schedule in Appendix A, attached to the report, included a number of statutory fees which may increase during the coming financial year, with the relevant fees increased accordingly. Chargeable fees for The Brindley and Registrars Service for the financial year 2017/18 were set out in Appendix B. Chargeable rates for Halton Registration Service, previously agreed by Executive Board on 17 September 2015, were set out in Appendix C for information.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2016/17 as set out in Appendix A and for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix B, both attached to the report, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

EXB126 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 2015 - 16

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the third quarter to 31 December 2015.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate, being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements, with the Board having a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

It was reported that the Council's Performance Management Framework would continue to form part of the Council's policy framework.

RESOLVED: That the report and progress and performance information be noted.

24th March 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB135 REVENUES AND BENEFITS SYSTEM CONTRACTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought approval to extend three contracts currently provided by Northgate Public Services (UK) Limited, relating to the Council's Revenues and Benefits Computer System.

The Board was advised that the Council had successfully operated the Northgate system for over 15 years, for the provision of housing benefits, council tax support, council tax and business rates. There were three contracts with Northgate in relation to the revenues and benefits computer system, as set out in the report.

Members were advised that the scale of the system meant that any changes would require significant preparatory work, a lengthy lead-in time, additional staff resource and significant costs. Initial discussions had been held with Northgate regarding the extension of all three contracts in order to have a co-terminus end date of 31 March 2021. A number of factors would support this extension in terms of value for money, which included that as well as being the market leader, Northgate were the Council's existing supplier; the system was compatible with the Council's Home Working Policy; and the likelihood of increased capital and revenue costs in terms of the implementation of a new system.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the extension to the Northgate DOL.mailroom over 4 years and 7 months be approved;
- 2) the extension of the Northgate Information@work contract over 4 years and 2 months be approved;
- 3) the extension of the Northgate Revenues and Benefits contract over 3 years and 8 months be approved; and
- 4) the Waiver of Procurement Standing Order 4.1, Competition Requirements, be approved in the light of the exceptional circumstances and on the basis that compliance would result in a clear financial detriment to the Council, as set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.10 of the report.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

EXB136 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on the annual

publication of the Pensions Discretions Statement (the Statement).

The Board was advised that the Statement for 2016/17 was based upon the Statement for 2015/16. No new discretions had been added or removed. In addition, there had been no material changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 which would result in a change to the Statement.

It was reported that minor drafting changes had been made to the Statement for the purpose of adding clarity and to reflect a change in the Staffing Protocol effective 1 April 2016, as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2016/17 be approved; and
- 2) those discretions be exercised by the appropriate Strategic Director, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Resources and the Operational Director, Finance. (In the case of applications from the Strategic Directors/Chief Executive, replace appropriate Strategic Director with Chief Executive/ Strategic Director, Community and Resources, respectively).

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

EXB137 'UNLOCKING OUR POTENTIAL - AN ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL 2016-20'

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought endorsement of the document '*Unlocking Our Potential – an Organisational Development Strategy for Halton Borough Council 2016-2020*' (the Strategy).

The Strategy document was the successor to the People Plan. In line with the public sector generally, despite significant constraints in funding, the Council needed to maintain an effective, professional and motivated workforce, whilst at the same time creating opportunities for the workforce to maximise their potential. In formulating the Strategy the future needs of the community, our values and ways of working were considered as well as information on the workforce composition and feedback from the Staff Survey 2014.

It was noted that the Strategy was built around the following 5 Key Strategic Aims and each contained a number of objectives and actions with linked outcomes and timescales which would enable progress to be monitored:

- Workforce Skills and Development;
- Recruitment and Retention;
- Engagement and Recognition;
- Health and Wellbeing; and
- Innovation and Flexibility.

RESOLVED: That the implementation of the Council's 'Unlocking Our Potential – an Organisational Development Strategy for Halton Borough Council 2016-2020' be endorsed and implemented in April 2016.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

(N.B. Councillor Wharton declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he had a family member employed as a casual worker for Halton Borough Council, and did not speak or vote on the matter).

EXB138 NATIONAL LIVING WAGE - UNDER 25S

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought approval to pay the National Living Wage to members of staff aged under 25.

The National Living Wage (NLW) was announced as part of the Government's Budget in July 2015 as a compulsory payment to workers aged 25 and over effective from 1 April 2016. It was reported that the NLW rate of pay would have no link with the cost of living but was instead based around median earnings. The NLW would apply to all categories of individual that were currently eligible for the National Minimum Wage; these included employees, most 'workers' (working under contract) and agency workers.

The report contained details of the policy implications and the provision of the NLW to all individuals working for Halton under an employment contract or a contract to personally perform services. It was reported that, given the practicalities of implementing the NLW from April 2016, Halton had prepared for the potential impact on pay structures, even though new pay structures under offer through the National Local Government pay negotiations were subject to agreement.

Members were advised that, on balance, there was insufficient justification to pay those under 25 less for doing

exactly the same job. There would however, be a number of on-costs associated with this, including pension, National Insurance Contributions, auto enrolment and the need to maintain pay differentials within the workforce. For Halton, based on current staffing levels and ages, this would equate to an additional total cost of £34,734 in 2016/17. These estimated costs showed a steady cumulative increase in the total cost over the four year period, with an estimated annual cost of implementing the NLW of £1.1m by 2020/21.

RESOLVED: That the payment of the National Living Wage to members of staff aged under 25 be agreed and implemented from 1 April 2016.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

EXB139 CONSTITUTION UPDATE 2016/17

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought the approval of the Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

Members were advised that the revised version 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.

The proposals for change had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Resources in accordance with Article 16.02. It was reported that, apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that were considered to be of particular significance were listed as an appendix to the report.

Members considered a further recommendation to be added to Appendix 1 as follows:-

- (a) All references in the Constitution to the term "Chairman" be replaced by the term "Chair"; and
- (b) All references in the Constitution to the term "Vice Chairman" be replaced by the term "Vice Chair".

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the revised Constitution, including the matters set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report and with the additional recommendation as set out at (a) and (b) above.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

EXB140 MADELINE MCKENNA COURT CARE HOME

RESOLVED: That the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader, the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, the Operational Director Finance, and the Director of Adult Services, to explore all options and to take all and any steps as may be required, insofar as it is reasonably practicable after applying due diligence, to ensure the continued operation of the Madeline McKenna Court Care Home.

Chief Executive

7th April 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB145 TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which sought approval to award the three year term maintenance and minor works contracts once the evaluation process was complete.

The Board was reminded that at its meeting on 1 October 2015, it had given approval for the commencement of a procurement process via The Chest, for term maintenance and minor works contracts for mechanical, electrical and building elements across the Borough.

It was reported that the procurement process had taken longer than originally intended, and the results of the evaluation would not be known until week commencing 11 April 2016. Therefore, due to the timings of Executive Board meetings, it would not be possible to report the outcome of the evaluation in time to award the contracts with a commencement date of 1 June 2016. Approval was therefore sought for the delegation of such award, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Resources.

RESOLVED: That delegated authority be approved for the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, in conjunction with the Portfolio holder for Resources, to award the three year term maintenance and minor works contracts for mechanical, electrical and building elements for use across the Borough, once the evaluation process has been completed.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

EXB146 COUNCIL TAX SECTION 13A DISCOUNT POLICY STATEMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on the adoption of a policy statement for Council Tax Section 13A Discount.

The Board was advised that Section 13A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) provided the Council with discretionary powers to reduce the amount of council tax liability in exceptional circumstances, where national discounts or exemptions could not be applied. It was noted that the Council was required to have a Section 13A Discount Policy Statement in place.

The Policy Statement, attached as an appendix to the report, outlined the process for making applications and set out the decision making process and appeals arrangements.

RESOLVED: That the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement, attached at Appendix 1 to the report, be approved.

COUNCILLOR POLHILL IN THE CHAIR

EXB149 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) Whether members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972, because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) Whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

business, in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

(N.B. Councillor Polhill declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business, as he was Director of Widnes Regeneration)

EXB150 PROPOSED ACQUISITIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which sought approval for the acquisition of a number of sites, as set out in the report.

The Board was advised that in 1999, the Council had entered into a Joint Venture Agreement with the development company St Modwens. Widnes Regeneration Limited (WRL) was formed and over the next twelve years WRL made a significant impact in supporting the regeneration of Widnes. However, it was reported that the partnership had become dormant and St Modwens had worked with the Council to wind up the Company.

It was reported that an agreement had been reached to acquire a package of sites, as detailed in the report, subject to contract and Executive Board approval. The report provided a brief rationale for the purchase of each site.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the purchase of the three sites as set out in the report, be agreed;
- 2) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services; and
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the allocation of Capital Funding, not exceeding £235k, to acquire the sites outlined in the report.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

EXB151 PARKLANDS CLUB, 1A PARKLANDS, CRONTON

The Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, provided an update and drew Members' attention to concerns raised by Local Residents and Ward Councillors.

RESOLVED: That the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, be instructed to seek Counsel's advice on this matter, and to bring a further report to Executive Board in due course.

Operational
Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services