

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 25 February 2021 held remotely

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. Jones, G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, A. Jones and M. Hibbard

Also in attendance: Councillor Ratcliffe and one member of the press

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB63 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21 January 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB64 URGENT DECISIONS

The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided the urgent decision/s taken since the last meeting of the Board and during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was noted that the Council's constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Operational Director Finance and/or the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

A list of these decision/s were provided to Members in the report and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB65 HOME TO SCHOOL TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT POLICY - KEY DECISION

The Board received the *Home to School Travel and Transport Policy*, as required under the Department for Education (DfE) Home to School Travel and Transport Guidance (statutory guidance) 2014; the Education Act 1996; and the Education and Inspections Act 2006.

It was noted that the Council's current Policy was regularly reviewed to ensure it met statutory requirements. Further to an investigation made by the Local Government Ombudsman, the Council was asked to consider some recommendations that would further enhance the Policy and assist parents and carers in their understanding of school admissions and eligibility to assistance with transport.

The revised Policy incorporated the Ombudsman's recommendations and there were no changes to the eligibility criteria, which were statutorily set. It was noted that in addition to the minor Policy amendments, a revision of the guidance notes and application forms was in progress. These would provide enhanced information for parents and carers and support them with their application for assistance with transport.

Reason(s) for Decision

The decision is required to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport and provide assistance with transport to eligible children and young people.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

With immediate effect following approval.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approve the Home to School Travel and Transport Policy 2020-21 (Statutory School Age) for implementation, with immediate effect.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB66 YOUTH PROVISION - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – People, which provided an update on the Integrated Youth Support Service consultation and proposed future model.

The report provided details of feedback from the recent Halton Youth Provision consultation and set out the Council's proposed response. It was noted that the consultation evidenced that there was support for the proposed model and areas of agreement included: the need to work in partnership across all sectors, the importance of valuing volunteers and existing local voluntary and community provision providers, and the need for qualified workers to support those children and young people in most need. Further, the proposal put forward had taken account of the feedback whilst also recognising the financial challenges faced, the changing service needs and the current and future landscape due to Covid-19.

Reason(s) for Decision

To agree the future shape of youth services in Halton

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

To put the service out to the market as one commission. This was rejected, as it did not allow local organisations with good local networks the opportunity to provide a service.

Implementation Date

1 April 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approves the implementation of a new model of grant funded and commissioned Youth Provision across Halton.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB67 APETITO (PROVISION OF MEALS TO ST LUKE'S AND ST PATRICK'S CARE HOMES) : DIRECT AWARD

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which sought a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 3, for the granting of a Direct Award to 'Apetito' for the supply of pre-prepared meals to St Luke's and St Patrick's Care Homes, from 1 March 2021 to 28 February 2022.

The report outlined the rationale behind the waiver

request and the ongoing challenges faced by care homes in responding to the Pandemic was recognised. A more permanent interim arrangement was needed therefore, until the service had capacity to complete a full review of catering in care homes. The above waiver was requested, with the option to extend for a further 12 months should the Pandemic continue to place pressures.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) note the contents of the report and associated appendix; and
- 2) approve a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 3, for the Direct Award to 'Apetito' for a period of one year.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB68 SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE FOR HALTON, CHESHIRE EAST, CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AND WARRINGTON: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – People, which requested a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (iv) of Part 3, to allow the continuation of a contract with 'We are With You' to deliver, on behalf of the Council, the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2021 to 30 June 2022.

The report outlined the rationale for the request and the value of the contract extension. It was noted that all contributing local authorities had agreed to continue with a joint commissioning approach with Halton acting as the lead.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) note the contents of the report; and
- 2) approve a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £1000,00) to allow the continuation of a contract with 'We are With You' to deliver the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year.

Strategic Director
- People

HEALTH & WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB69 HEALTH REFORMS

The Board considered a report from the Chief Executive, which presented the proposed reforms on the Integration of Health and Social Care. This included the proposed Memorandum of Understanding and a request for a representative from Halton to join the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership (C&MHCP) Board.

Appended to the report was the Council and Liverpool City Region's joint response to the consultation on the proposals at appendix one; and appendix two contained the correspondence from Alan Yates (Chair, C&MHCP) and the Memorandum of Understanding – January 2021.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

Chief Executive

- 1) note the contents of the letters;
- 2) agree the proposed Memorandum of Understanding; and
- 3) agree that the Chair of the Halton Health and Wellbeing Board represent Halton on the Cheshire and Merseyside Health and Care Partnership Board.

CHILDREN, EDUCATION & SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB70 CRADLE TO CAREER TRANSFORMATION OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S OUTCOMES

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, informing of a forthcoming initiative with philanthropists and Right to Succeed, in collaboration with the Liverpool City Region (LCR) to deliver a place shaping transformational approach for children and young people in an agreed ward.

It was reported that the Steve Morgan Foundation had been working collaboratively with SHINE, the Right to Succeed and the LCR to deliver a place based transformation programme for children and young people in North Birkenhead; details of this pilot project were provided in the report. The ambition of the programme was to provide place based intense support from cradle to career to lift aspirations and achievement, thus the overall wellbeing of the next generation and the community. Discussions were

being held with the LCR and Right to Succeed about replicating this approach in Halton.

Further to dialogue with Children's Services and Regeneration, Halton Lea Ward had been identified as an appropriate area to participate in the programme, the reasons were outlined in the report together with the indicative budget information.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) note the report; and
- 2) approve Halton Lea Ward to be the area to benefit from the support and focussed approach of the programme.

Strategic Director
- People

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB71 HALTON SMART MICRO GRID

The Board considered a report from the Chief Executive, which presented the proposals for the development of a smart micro grid that would seek to decarbonise Council buildings, electricity, heating and transport, via the culmination of several technologies.

It was noted that the Council completed construction of a 1MW Solar Farm connected by private wire to the DCBL Stadium on the former St Michael's Golf Course in September 2020. Following completion of the project further feasibility work had been undertaken to see if there was scope to extend the Solar Farm and create a micro grid connecting other Council buildings.

The report provided details of the key features of the feasibility study and the provisional costings of the schemes discussed.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board agree

- 1) that a formal bid be made to the Strategic Investment Fund for 50% funding of the estimated total project costs (circa £4,971k);
- 2) that a bid of £60k be made to the Energy from Waste Environmental Fund to support pre development costs; and
- 3) subject to a successful Strategic Investment Fund

Chief Executive

Bid, a further report be brought to Executive Board setting out a detailed financial case to support the project.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB72 BUDGET 2021-22 - 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 2021/22.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved at the Executive Board meeting on 19 November 2020. It was noted that there were funding gaps of around £15.2m in 2021/22, £3.9m in 2022/23 and £3m in 2023/24. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council's priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency gains;
- Protect essential front line services and vulnerable members of the community; 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.

The proposed revenue budget for 2021/22 totalled £111.446m. Appendix B outlined proposed budget savings for 2021/22, totalling £1.369m. The departmental analysis was shown in Appendix C and the major reasons for change from the current budget were shown in Appendix D.

The Board was advised the final Local Government Finance Settlement figures were awaited, along with confirmation of some 2020/21 grant allocations including the Public Health grant. It was confirmed that the Council would continue to participate in the pilot of the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme, as part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

Further information was provided on the budget outlook, Halton's Council Tax, Precepts for Parishes, Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region Mayor, the Capital Programme, Prudential Code and School Budgets.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £111.446m, the Council Tax requirement of £54.509m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D council Tax for Halton of £1,549.34; and
- 2) Council be recommended to approve the revenue budget proposals for 2021/22 set out in Appendix B and capital programme set out in Appendix F.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB73 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2020

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 31 December 2020 together with an initial forecast outturn position, and reported the financial impact of Covid-19 and the Government funding made available to the Council to date.

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 31 December 2020 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £1.180m. It was noted that in comparison to the forecast overspend of £4.752m reported at the end of September 2020, this represented a significantly improved position. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 December 2020.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) departments seek to implement those approved budget savings proposals which currently remain to be actioned;
- 3) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and

Operational
Director - Finance

- 4) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.18.

EXB74 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2021-22

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the Council’s Capital Strategy for 2021/22.

It was reported that all councils were required to produce a Capital Strategy annually, the aim of which was to ensure that the Council understood the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

Members were advised that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Statement, included on the same agenda. It was noted that the successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the 2021/22 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB75 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2021-22

The Board considered the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2021/22.

The TMSS was appended to the report and detailed the expected activities of the treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2021/22). Its production and submission to Council was a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

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 and to prepare 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. Government guidance notes stated that authorities could combine the TMSS and the AIS into one report, which the Council had done and was included in Section 4.

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 the full policy shown in Appendix A.

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

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB76 PENSIONS DISCRETION STATEMENT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the annual publication of the Pensions Discretion Statement.

The Board was advised that the 2021/22 Statement was based on the previous Statement (2020/21) and that no new discretions had been either added or removed. In addition, there had been no material changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme Regulations 2013 that would result in a change in the Statement.

RESOLVED: That the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2021/22 be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB77 TAXI LICENSING - TEMPORARY POLICY - AMENDMENT TO THE CURRENT AGE RESTRICTIONS ON LICENSED HACKNEY CARRIAGE AND PRIVATE HIRE VEHICLES

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, requesting approval for a temporary amendment to the current age restrictions of licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

The background to the request was provided in the report and a consultation exercise was undertaken with the taxi trade, the responses of which were attached at appendix A and the findings were summarised in the report.

The Regulatory Committee considered the matter at its meeting on 13 January 2021 and after considering the consultation responses and the current economic situation

resulting from the Coronavirus Pandemic, recommended that Executive Board approve a temporary amendment to the current restrictions of licensed Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approves the temporary amendment of the maximum age restriction on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles by two years, for a two-year period, with the following conditions:

- 1) Any vehicle taking advantage of the relaxation of the restriction be subject to 3 tests per year; and
- 2) No vehicle taking advantage of the relaxation of the restriction may be transferred to another proprietor.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB78 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS FOR 2021-22

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2021/22 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of meetings for the 2021/22 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB79 FOUNDRY LANE RESIDENTIAL

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on proposals for residential development at Foundry Lane, Widnes, and to seek approval to appoint a development partner following the procurement process.

It was noted that this regeneration project was last reported to Executive Board in January 2019 (EXB77) where Members supported the acquisition of the Stobart site, forming a larger site with the former Tarmac site; both sites had now been vacant since February 2020.

The Board was advised that due to delays caused by Covid-19, in June 2020 Homes England withdrew its grant funding of £1.8m. The Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCR) had agreed since, as part of its Brownfield Land Fund, to make the grant funding of this project one of its key priorities, subject to the normal application process.

The report outlined the tender process for a development partner, which was carried out in conjunction with the LCR throughout. This resulted in Cityheart Limited scoring the highest overall, following evaluation as described in the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) approves the appointment of Cityheart Limited to act as Development Partner in the regeneration of the Foundry Lane area;
- 2) authorises the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property and/or the Operational Director for Legal and Democratic Services, to ensure full legal compliance with statutory planning matters throughout the regeneration project; and
- 3) the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property be authorised to seek and secure grant funding in relation to the project.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB80 HOMELESSNESS FUNDING GRANT ALLOCATIONS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – People, which described the various grants that had been issued by Central Government to support rough sleepers and people who were, or likely to become homeless.

It was noted that the Coronavirus Pandemic had made the need to support rough sleepers and potentially homeless people more urgent and further guidance had been issued to councils as a result.

Halton had been allocated Homeless Prevention Grant funding for 2021/22 of £344,828, which was an increase of £92,077 from 2020/21. The proposals for allocation of these monies were presented in Appendix 1. Also, received was the Rough Sleeper Initiative funding of £109,000 for 2020/21, with the commitment that the allocation for 2021/22 would be at least the same amount. The proposals for the use of this grant were presented in appendix 2.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board approves the recommendations for expenditure against the grants, as described in Appendices 1 and 2 of the report.

Strategic Director
- People

EXB81 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 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

EXB82 ACQUISITION OF ELITE HOUSE, SHAW STREET, RUNCORN

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval for the acquisition of the freehold interest in Elite House, Shaw Street, Runcorn.

The report provided Members with details of the proposals and financial implications for their consideration.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) approves the acquisition and of the freehold interest in Elite House, Shaw Street, Runcorn, on the terms reported in paragraph 3.4; and
- 2) authorises the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

MINUTES ISSUED: 2 March 2021

CALL-IN: 9 March 2021 at 5.00 pm

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 9 March 2021.

Meeting ended at 3.15 p.m.