

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 15 October 2009 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Gerrard

Absence declared on Council business: none

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Cook, M. Noone, A. Scott, D. Parr, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley and G. Meehan

Also in attendance: Councillor Hodgkinson

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB44 LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985 URGENT BUSINESS

The Board was advised that a matter had arisen which required immediate attention by the Board (Minute 50 refers), therefore, pursuant to Section 100 B(4) and 100 E and due to the need to allow the maximum time for a considered response by Members as early as possible in the consultation process, the Chairman ruled that the item be considered as a matter of urgency.

EXB45 MINUTES

The Minutes of 24 September 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB46 OLDER PEOPLE'S JOINT COMMISSIONING STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Health and Community, which set out the draft

Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People for 2009-2014.

The new strategy updated the plans for Older People's Services and identified the commissioning priorities and key actions for the next five years. The main themes of the strategy reflected the various consultation exercises which had been undertaken with a range of commissioning staff, voluntary sector representatives, independent providers and service users and carers and one to one meetings, together with the outcome of scrutiny by the Council's Health Policy and Performance Board.

In the local context, a thorough analysis had been undertaken as part of the Commissioning Strategy and strategies identified to address a range of mental health, major illness and quality of life issues. The Council had already considered a range of strategies that would address some of these issues, including Extra Care Housing and Reablement Services. The Commissioning Strategy would now bring together the different strands into one coherent document.

The Board were advised that this was a joint Commissioning Strategy with NHS Halton and St Helens, with funding supported for the main major illnesses through the Primary Care Trust (PCT); the remaining areas would be contained within existing budget allocations set by the Council and the PCT.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Older People's Commissioning Strategy 2009-2014.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB47 PROPERTY SERVICES – REVIEW AND WAY FORWARD

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy, on the Property Services Review and The Way Forward.

As part of the Council's Efficiency Review, KPMG had identified potential savings to the Council by changing the way it delivered its Property Services. Specialist input from the Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy Property (CIPFA) was commissioned. Their recommendation was to outsource the operational elements of Property Services, but retain an in-house strategic function along with a client/contract role.

The report identified the need for an adequately resourced in-house team to carry out the retained functions and to effectively manage the outsourced elements, with a suitably qualified Client Contract Manager appointed to ensure delivery of a value for money service. In addition, a number of procurement options were outlined together with the implications for staff in the Property Department in each option.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the following actions:-

- (1) a 'soft' market test exercise of the whole Service be undertaken, as outlined in the report;
- (2) expert advice be engaged to ensure any future delivery model provided the best value to the Council; and
- (3) work to commence on identifying and developing an in-house strategic/client management function to manage both the transition and any new contract arrangements.

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB48 HOUSING GROWTH POINT CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment, on the Amendment to the Capital Programme to reflect the Growth Fund Capital Award.

The Board were reminded that Growth Point Status had been awarded jointly with Halton, St Helens and Warrington in July 2008 by the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG). Halton, acting as the "responsible authority", led on the formation of a Growth Point Partnership Board and on the production and submission of bids for funding from the Community Infrastructure Fund (CIF2) and the Growth Fund.

The Mid Mersey Programme of Development had achieved an allocation of approximately £4.2million. However, in July 2009, the DCLG informed all Growth Points that there would be a reduction in capital grant in the next financial year. This would result in a revised total allocation of £3.2 million.

The report outlined the initial priorities for capital funding during 2009/10 which included Affordable Housing

Subsidy and General Capital Improvement fund projects.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- (1) note the funding allocation from the DCLG's Growth Fund; and
- (2) recommend that Council amend the Capital Programme to reflect the Growth Fund award and facilitate Halton's position as the 'Responsible Authority' for the Growth Point Partnership.

Strategic Director
- Environment

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB49 REVIEW OF REGIONAL SPATIAL STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment, on the Regional Spatial Strategy Partial Review Consultation Response.

4NW (formerly the North West Regional Assembly) had been tasked to prepare, monitor and review the Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) in partnership with others. The RSS was a regional plan that had to be taken into account when decisions were made about planning applications. It provided a spatial framework for development in the region and for other regional strategies and promoted sustainable development in the North West.

Members were advised that a partial review of the RSS was underway, due to the need to complete unfinished policy work within the RSS in response to recommendations of the RSS Examination in Public Panel. The Partial Review covered three key subject areas:

- New Draft Policy L6 – Gypsies and Travellers
- New Draft Policy L7 – Travelling Show People
- Revised Policy RT2 – Car Parking Standards

and consultation was open until 19 October 2009.

Draft Policy L6 specifically dealt with the scale and distribution of Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision across the North West Region. The policy made a distinction between permanent and transit pitches. In Halton, an additional 45 permanent and 5 transit pitches would be required by 2016; however ten new transit pitches recently provided at the Warrington Road site would meet and exceed the allocated apportionment under the draft policy.

Draft Policy L7 dealt with accommodation for Travelling Show People. At the present time, Members were advised that there was no provision or demand from these communities in Halton and the draft policy target figure did not require any future provision to be made.

Draft Policy RT2 dealt with the revision of an existing RSS policy and as such there was only an opportunity to comment on the specific minor revisions rather than the policy as a whole.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- (1) agree the content of the report as the formal response to the consultation on the North West Plan Partial Review;
- (2) recommend that Council strongly objects to the proposals in draft policy L6 for Halton to provide 45 additional pitches for Gypsies and Travellers by 2016, rising to 58 by 2021;
- (3) recommend that Council supports draft policy L7 detailing the Scale and Distribution of Travelling Show People Plot Provision; and
- (4) recommend that Council generally supports the principles of the proposed revisions to Regional Parking Standards (Policy RT2) and suggests some minor amendments to the draft text in the interests of policy clarity.

Strategic Director
- Environment

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB50 PROPOSED CLOSURE OF WIDNES MAGISTRATES' COURT

The Board received an urgent item of business regarding a consultation document from the Ministry of Justice on their proposed closure of the Widnes Magistrates' Court. The Board noted that the formal consultation period would end on 5 January 2010.

The Chief Executive informed the Board that, although the consultation document had been received on 14 October 2009, there had not been sufficient time for Members to be briefed prior to it being reported in the press.

The document circulated at the meeting contained an

Executive Summary of the proposals of the Ministry of Justice. It stated that in order to achieve a more efficient service delivery to the public, it was proposed to permanently close the under-used court and continue with the arrangements to list cases at Runcorn Law Courts. The principal reasons for the proposal were given as:

- The court was under- utilised and dealt with a limited workload; and
- The building was no longer suitable for the provision of court services

The document went on to explain that the court facilities in Widnes were no longer cost effective and that significant savings and better value for money could be achieved by transferring all services to Runcorn.

Mark Reaney, Operational Director was nominated as the co-ordinator for the Borough Council's response to the Ministry of Justice.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the consultation document be sent to all Council Members and relevant External Partners inviting comments or views on the proposal by 30 November 2009;
- (2) the Chief Executive be asked to present a report to Executive Board in December 2009 with a summary of comments and a recommendation for the Council's response to the Ministry of Justice; and
- (3) the Chief Executive be asked to meet with the Court Service to discuss the proposal and the possible future use of the building.

Chief Executive

MINUTES ISSUED: 22 October 2009

CALL IN: 29 October 2009

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 29 October 2009.

Meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.