

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 19 November 2009 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building*

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Harris

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor McDermott

Officers present: M. Reaney, B. Dodd, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Parr, A. Scott and D. Tregea

Also in attendance: Councillor Redhead

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

#### EXB56 MINUTES

The Minutes of 5 November 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### EXB57 GAMBLING ACT 2005 POLICY STATEMENT OF GAMBLING POLICY

The Board received a report which set out the Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Gambling Policy.

The Board were advised that, under Section 349 of the Gambling Act 2005, the Council were required to adopt a three-year licensing policy. At its meeting on 9 September 2009, the Board approved a draft Statement of Gambling Policy for consultation. A public consultation exercise was undertaken and one response received from the British Beer and Pub Association. Details of the response were attached to the report at Appendix 1.

It was noted that no changes were made to the draft statement as a result of the consultation exercise, and that once adopted, the Statement of Gambling Policy would be used by applicants and the Regulatory Committee in

*Action*

accordance with the Gambling Act 2005.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the Statement of Gambling Policy as attached to the report.

Chief Executive

#### EXB58 HALTON 2000 SURVEY ON THE COUNCIL'S BUDGET

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy, on the results of the recent Halton 2000 Survey.

In October 2009, members of Halton's Citizen's Panel were sent a questionnaire asking them for their opinions on a range of Council services. The response rate was 53.5% and a summary of the results were attached to the report.

The survey was aimed at gauging public opinion of the Council's spending on services. The first part of the survey asked about the top five priorities in relation to Council spending and preferences of spending and saving money in relation to those priorities identified within the Community Strategy. The top five priority spending areas selected by respondents were:

- Health Services
- The level of crime
- Education provision
- Job prospects
- Affordable decent housing

The second part of the survey invited opinions on Council Tax payments in relation to service standards and introducing/increasing charges for certain Council provided services. The Board noted that nearly 63% of respondents had shown support for the Council to increase its charges which included such services as pest control and the removal of bulky waste.

The survey also asked a question on the preferred methods of consultation on future Council budgets, the format of information available and the method of receiving information on the budget. The three preferred methods identified by respondents on how the Council spent its money were:

- Via the Council Tax leaflet
- Via 'Inside Halton'
- Via the local press

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Executive Board note the results of the survey;  
and
- (2) the results be taken into account when  
considering the 2010/11 Budget proposals.

Strategic Director  
- Corporate and  
Policy

## EXB59 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Operational Director, Financial Services, on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2010/11 to 2012/13.

The Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFF) set out a three year projection of resources and represented the “finance guidelines” which formed part of the medium term corporate planning process. The guidelines identified the financial constraints the Council would face in delivering its key objectives and were an important influence on the development of the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and Strategies.

Members were advised that, due to uncertainty about the level of public sector spending, the projections should be treated with a considerable degree of caution, although they did provide initial guidance to the Council on its financial position in the medium term.

The objectives of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy were outlined in the report. In setting the revenue and capital budgets, the Council had regard to its priority areas as set out in the Council’s Corporate Plan and in Halton’s Sustainable Community Strategy. The MTFF showed that within the budget strategy, the spending required to maintain existing policies and programmes was expected to increase at a faster rate than available resources. As a result, additional spending on new or improved services would have to be kept to an absolute minimum, and in order to balance the budget, the Forecast showed that significant cost savings of at least £6m would be needed in each of the next three years.

The MTFF showed that there were sufficient resources to cover the cost of the current Capital Programme although it was unlikely that the Council would receive significant levels of capital receipts; as such the opportunity for additional capital spending would be severely limited and new spending would be limited to schemes with funding attached.

The Board were reminded of the outcome of the Halton 2000 Citizens Panel Survey on the Council's Budget (minute EXB58 refers), the results of which would be taken into account in the preparation of the 2010/11 Budget proposals.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Medium Term Financial Forecast be noted;
- (2) the base Budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Forecast;
- (3) the Budget Strategy and Capital Strategy be approved;
- (4) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and
- (5) further reports on the Budget be considered by the Executive Board.

Operational  
Director -  
Financial Services

*Councillor S Nelson declared a personal interest in the following item of business as he was the Chair of Governors at Grange Junior School.*

#### EXB60 PRIMARY SEN UNIT REVIEW - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People, on the proposals for formal consultation for Special Educational Needs (SEN) in Primary Schools.

The Local Education Authority (LEA) had undertaken a review of SEN provision within the Borough. The Council was committed to providing a range of SEN services to meet the individual needs of children and their families. The diverse range of provision in the Borough had meant that schools could cater for individual needs and were able to personalise the curriculum for certain individuals. This broad range of services placed the Council in a strong position to meet both current and emerging needs.

The report detailed the review stages of Primary SEN provision, with an analysis of the responses to informal consultation carried out in June 2009. The reasons for the Primary SEN review were listed in the report and details of the present SEN unit provision in Primary mainstream schools in the Borough was attached at Appendix 1.

The Board noted that the LEA would ensure that Pathways for learning for SEN pupils would be personalised for the child and their family, and this would involve the current Primary SEN unit being re-designed to provide flexible provision within the appropriate setting. There would be joint working with other areas of Children's Services, for example Health and Social Care, providing a wrap around provision for children and their families.

#### Reasons For Decision

To formally consult on Section 4 of the report.

There were surplus places within Primary mainstream SEN units.

Mainstream Primary SEN Units were not matching the present and future requirements of the Borough.

#### Alternative options considered and rejected

To leave provision as it was. This would potentially leave the Council vulnerable to challenge on the basis of need and value for money.

#### Implementation date:

The proposals for Primary SEN resourced provision must be implemented by September 2011 to be in line with the implementation of the agreed Secondary resourced provision.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- (1) endorse the proposals and recommendations contained in the report; and
- (2) gives approval to proceed to statutory consultation on the proposals on 7 January 2010, and report back to Executive Board on 4 March 2010.

Strategic Director-  
Children & Young  
People

**MINUTES ISSUED: 24 November 2009**

**CALL IN: 1 December 2009**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 1 December 2009.**

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*Meeting ended at 2.28 p.m.*