

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 31 March 2011 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, A. Gerrard, Harris, Jones, McInerney, Nelson, Stockton, Swain and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Scott, M. Reaney, G. Cook, I. Leivesley, G. Meehan, D. Tregaea, B. Dodd, A. McIntyre, T. Gibbs, S. Wallace-Bonner and M. West

Also in attendance: Councillor Wallace

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB110 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 March 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB111 ADOPTION OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2011-2026 KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Resources on the adoption of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011-2026.

The SCS outlines what the Council and Halton Strategic Partnership (the Partnership) intend to do to enhance the quality of life for local communities through enhanced economic, social and environmental activity across the Borough.

The Board was advised that Halton's existing SCS expired on 31 March 2011. There remained a duty to prepare an SCS (Section 4.1 of Local Government Act 2000) and a wider duty to co-operate to be placed on

Action

councils and other local agencies, due to be introduced via the Localism Bill.

The SCS was a long term plan that would guide the Council and the Partnership over the next 15 years and it was considered important to remain aspirational in outlook. In the short term, the financial climate may constrain the ability to deliver change on the ground. This uncertainty would be dealt with via a separate 'living' SCS 5 year delivery plan.

It was noted that the new SCS had been produced through extensive research of baseline data, subsequent analysis, and then policy formulation. This process was followed by wide consultation with Elected Members and partners to identify key themes and related strategic objectives. This had included reporting on the detail of the emerging strategy to all Policy and Performance Boards during the September 2010 meeting cycle.

Reason(s) For Decision

This decision was required to adhere with statute. Halton's existing SCS expired on 31 March 2011. There remained a duty to prepare an SCS (Section 4.1 of Local Government Act 2000) and a wider duty to co-operate to be placed on councils and other local agencies, due to be introduced via the Localism Bill.

Alternative Options Considered And Rejected

A 'do nothing' approach had been considered and rejected due to non-conformity with statute. An overriding need existed for the different agencies and service providers operating in Halton to co-operate to deliver workable, long term answers to Halton's key challenges. The SCS provided the framework for this co-operation.

Implementation Date

The Sustainable Community Strategy would be implemented from April 2011.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

EXB112 APPLICATIONS FOR TWINNING GRANT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy on an application to the Town Twinning Grant Fund.

Halton Borough Council set up a Grant Fund to assist in enabling all members of the community to access and gain benefit from the Council's International Links. Since 1996, a number of groups had accessed the fund to undertake exchange visits. Participants in previous exchanges had found that the benefits of learning about another culture and language were immense. A wide range of activity in the Borough had been facilitated by the provision of grant aid and had given an opportunity to those who would not otherwise be able to participate.

Details of costs and the purpose of the visit were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That a grant of £1500 be awarded to Halton & District Junior Football League to visit Berlin Football Club in Marzahn-Hellersdorf, Germany.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

NEIGHBOURHOOD LEISURE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO

EXB113 AFFORDABLE WARMTH STRATEGY 2011-16

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community on the Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-16

The Board were advised that this was Halton's first Affordable Warmth Strategy. It's principal aim was to alleviate fuel poverty (where a household must spend more than 10% of its income to maintain a satisfactory heating regime). A problem that affected approximately 4,900 (12.2%) of households in Halton. Although this figure was lower than the national average of 13.2% it still represented a substantial number of households. Fuel poverty was a problem that had become worse in recent years due to the rise in fuel prices and, given the current financial climate it was likely to become an even greater issue for a wider number of households.

The key aims of the Affordable Warmth Strategy were to:

- Raise awareness and understanding of fuel poverty;

- Establish effective referral systems amongst agencies;
- Improve the housing stock so it was affordably warm;
- Maximise incomes and improve access to affordable fuel; and
- Ensure coordination and monitoring of the strategy.

Each aim had a corresponding list of associated actions contained in the Action Plan. The Strategy was presented to the Health Policy and Performance Board on 8 March 2011 and was well received and supported.

RESOLVED: That the draft Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-16, be approved, and any subsequent amendments be agreed by the Strategic Director in consultation with the relevant Portfolio holder.

Strategic Director
- Communities

HEALTH AND ADULTS PORTFOLIO

EXB114 NHS SUPPORT FOR SOCIAL CARE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community on recent announcements about NHS support for Social Care.

The report advised that, on 5th October 2010, the Department of Health announced that an additional £70m would be allocated to Primary Care Trusts (PCTs) for spending in 2010/2011 on services to promote better re-ablement services for patients upon discharge from hospital. The PCTs were requested to work in partnership with Local Authorities, community services and Acute Trust partners to develop plans on the best way to use this funding, to facilitate seamless care for patients on discharge from hospital and to prevent avoidable hospital readmissions. A proportion of the funding would be used to develop current re-ablement capacity in the community and the PCT was allocated £488,000 for Halton and St. Helens. For Halton, this funding provided additional Intermediate Care Beds and Community Re-ablement.

In addition, on the 4th January 2011, the Department of Health announced a further allocation of £162m to PCTs for immediate spending on social care services that benefit the NHS but which must be committed by 31st March 2011. It was noted that the allocation for Halton Council was £427,000.

Due to the short notice on this allocation, a meeting was arranged by the PCT to agree spending for this financial year, and details of the agreed allocation of funding, were incorporated in the Partnership agreement.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) on the basis of the National Guidance, the Adults and Communities Directorate be authorised to enter into a partnership agreement with NHS Halton and St Helens on behalf of Halton Borough Council.

Strategic Director
- Communities

EXB115 OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION TO MODERNISE AND INTEGRATE DAY SERVICES AND OPPORTUNITIES FOR ALL ADULTS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community on the outcome of the consultation to modernise and integrate day services and opportunities for all adults.

The Board had received a report on 13 January 2011, which outlined the key issues and development plan for the modernisation and redesign of Day Opportunities for Older People and Adults, which sought approval to begin formal consultation with key stakeholders, on the future provision of services. The focus was on:

- Integration of Sure Start To Later Life and Community Bridgebuilders to provide a single access point to all day opportunities and Early Intervention services- providing a service for all adults;
- Decommission Older People's Community Day Services, in its current format, and further develop alternative day opportunities within the community, ensuring these were utilised more effectively across all client groups;
- De-commission Pingot and the service be delivered in its entirety from within the community as the "Hub and Spoke" model; and
- Oakmeadow Day Centre- to develop as an alternative enablement model, integrated with Adult Day Service

as a Community Resource Model.

Details of the consultation were outlined in the report for Members' consideration. It was noted that the Health Policy and Performance Board (PPB) had considered a report at its meeting on 8 March 2011, on the proposals and ongoing discussions had taken place with the Chair and Deputy Chair of the Health PPB as well as the Portfolio holder for Health and Adults.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- 2) approval be given to implement the following proposals:
 - i) to integrate the staffing groups for Sure Start To Later Life and Community Bridge Building Service;
 - ii) to de-commission Older People's Day Services within the current format and work in partnership with the Third Sector;
 - iii) redesign the current provision of Day Care within Oakmeadow, and implement the Business Plan for Oakmeadow Community Resource Centre; and
 - iv) to de-commission Pingot Day Centre as a base for the delivery of Day Services.

Strategic Director
- Communities

COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

EXB116 DOMESTIC ABUSE & SEXUAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which presented the recently revised Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy that the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) had produced.

HDAF was established in 2003 to develop a multi agency partnership approach to addressing the issue of Domestic Abuse. The outcomes from this strategy and Forum approach had been:

- Development and piloting of a local Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC);
- Re commissioning of a Domestic Abuse Service to move towards a one stop shop, including best practice Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs);
- Commissioning of an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA);
- Piloting and introduction of the Community Domestic Violence Programme by Cheshire Probation;
- Development of a Sanctuary Scheme to ensure victims are safe within their homes;
- Development of a local survivors group;
- Development of the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes;
- Consistent awareness campaigns; and
- Development of Multi Agency Training Schedule.

It was reported that underlying these accomplishments had been the development of a multi agency performance management framework to ensure progress and issues within this area could be identified.

The Board was further advised that the HDAF had now developed a refreshed Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy for the period 2011-2014. This strategy was the product of a comprehensive review of local and national policy context across a multi agency arena. It had adopted the focuses being echoed in central government reviews of Prevention, Provision, Protection and Partnership working. It aimed to build on the progress achieved to date and highlight future focuses to be addressed.

It was noted that the strategy outlined the specific actions involved in the achievement of these areas for development and had been designed to ensure flexibility in response to the forthcoming action plans central government had announced.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the strategy be noted ;and
- 2) Implementation of the strategy be endorsed as the Area's multi -agency approach to addressing Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence.

Strategic Director
- Communities

EXB117 ALLEYGATING

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community on the Council's policy on Alleygating.

The report advised that the Safer Policy and Performance Board had considered a report on 18 January 2011 following a working group review of the existing policy. The working group concluded that a more radical approach was required which included a review of policy as well as procedures. It was therefore appropriate to consider a more flexible approach to establish whether the expectations of the community and Members could be accommodated better than with the current system.

The Board was advised of the proposed alleygating principles and procedures as set out in the report. The proposed principles and procedures were cost neutral in terms of the physical costs of erecting and maintaining alleygates but would save money in processing gating orders which did not comply with the above principles.

The Board was further advised that at the current prices, the cost of processing gating orders (excluding costs of erecting and maintaining gates) had been assessed to be in the order of £1,000 to £1,500 per scheme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the revised approach as described in section 3.2 of the report be endorsed; and subject to
- 2) the final detailed wording of the approach be agreed by the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources and the Strategic Director, Communities in consultation with the Portfolio holders for Community Safety and Transportation.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources /
Strategic Director
- Communities

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB118 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2011/12

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2011/12 Municipal Year appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2011/2012 Municipal Year as appended to the report.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

EXB119 REVIEW OF COUNCIL CONSTITUTION 2011

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

Members had received a revised version of the Constitution, and were advised that this amended 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. The review also took account of the recent changes to the Council's Management Structure.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in the amended version attached to the report.

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB120 HALTON CORE STRATEGY - CHANGES TO PROPOSED SUBMISSION DOCUMENT FOR A PERIOD OF FURTHER PUBLIC CONSULTATION - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director,

Environment and Economy which sought approval; for changes to Halton's Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document, for a period of further consultation on a revised document.

The report advised that on 18th November 2010, approval was received from the Executive Board to publish the Proposed Submission Core Strategy for an 8 week period of public consultation and for representations to be made. Between 29th November 2010 and 24th January 2011 this period of public consultation, known formally as the Publication Stage in accordance with Regulation 27 of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) (Amendment) Regulations 2008, took place. A number of stakeholders and members of the public asked for additional time to make representations on the Core Strategy and the final representations relating to this period of consultation were received in mid-February.

A total of 41 respondents, ranging from members of the public, neighbouring local authorities, Government agencies, landowners and developers made representations on the Halton Core Strategy Proposed Submission Document. The representations ranged from support for the document and its contents, comments, and objections which related to the legal compliance or "soundness" of the plan.

The main policy areas questioned by respondents during the consultation period were:

- Availability of evidence upon which the policies within the Core Strategy were founded upon;
- Green Belt policy;
- Daresbury Strategic Site;
- Liverpool John Lennon Airport policy;and
- Core Strategy plan period not covering the required period of 15 years from adoption;

The points raised by the public and stakeholders on these areas, plus the Council's proposed way of addressing the comments were summarised in the report. These major issues plus other matters raised through the consultation were summarised in Appendix B to the report.

Reason(s) For Decision

In order to avoid being found 'unsound' for procedural reasons, it was recommended that a period of further public consultation be agreed.

Publication of the Core Strategy Revised Proposed Submission Document must be carried out for a statutory minimum 6 week period to allow interested parties ample opportunity to comment and to avoid legal challenge. As the Core Strategy was a Development Plan Document, publishing the document for public consultation required the approval of Executive Board.

Alternative Options Considered And Rejected

As discussed at paragraph 6.1, the Council was able to proceed to Submission. Although the time and resource implications of undertaking a further period of consultation had been considered, given the scale of some of the issues raised in response to the Proposed Submission consultation, it was decided that in the longer term it would be more sensible to incur minor delays at this stage rather than to risk the Core Strategy being found “unsound” at Examination, resulting in a much longer delay and the Council having to cover the Planning Inspector’s costs, without a successful outcome.

Implementation Date

It was envisaged that the Core Strategy would be submitted to the Secretary of State in July 2011, with the examination phase commencing in Autumn 2011, to be followed by adoption of the plan in Spring 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the changes to the Proposed Submission Document be approved for incorporation into the Core Strategy for the purposes of a secondary public consultation for a six week period under Regulation 27 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2008;
- 2) further editorial and technical amendments that do not materially affect the content of the Halton Core Strategy Revised Proposed Submission document or the supporting documents be agreed by the Operational Director for Policy, Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder and Leader of the Council as necessary, before they are published for public consultation; and
- 3) the Halton Core Strategy be taken before

Strategic Director
- Policy &
Resources

Council later in the year prior to Submission to the Secretary of State for Independent Examination.

CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO

EXB121 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2012 - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People on the School Admission Arrangements 2012.

The report fulfilled the requirement under the School Standards & Framework Act 1998, the Education Act 2002, The Education & Inspections Act 2006, and associated regulations, to determine Halton Local Authority's (LA's) School Admissions Policy for LA maintained community and voluntary controlled schools, and coordinated admission schemes for all primary and secondary schools for September 2012 following statutory consultation.

In addition to managing the admission of children to reception class in primary school and the transfer of pupils from primary to secondary school, the Government also required Local Authorities to manage the In-Year Admissions process for children moving between schools during the academic year. Details of the consultation were published in the local press, made available on the Council's website, and issued to the head teachers and governing bodies of all nursery, infant, junior, primary and secondary schools, the four Diocesan Authorities responsible for voluntary aided schools in Halton, and neighbouring authorities; it proposed no changes to the current oversubscription criteria for admission to LA maintained community and voluntary controlled primary schools, and no change to the current oversubscription criteria for admission to LA maintained community schools.

The Board was advised that the LA, as commissioner of school places, must ensure that the admission arrangements were fair, not complex, and fully complied with all statutory requirements. The arrangements currently in operation and proposed for continuation for the 2012/13 academic year reflected those requirements.

Reason(s) For Decision

The decision was statutorily required and any revision to the proposed arrangements may adversely affect school place planning as detailed in paragraph 7.1 of the report.

Alternative Options Considered And Rejected

Other options considered and rejected include the allocation of places through random allocation (lottery) as this method could be seen as arbitrary and random.

Implementation Date

The Policy would apply for the September 2012 academic intake and would apply for 3 years unless further central or local government changes were required.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and co-ordinated schemes for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2012/13 academic year proposed by the Local Authority be approved; and
- 2) the continuation of the current In-Year Co-ordinated Admissions Scheme as statutorily required be approved.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

EXB122 THE OUTCOME OF OFSTED'S AND CARE QUALITY COMMISSION'S ANNOUNCED INSPECTION OF SAFEGUARDING AND LOOKED AFTER CHILDREN SERVICES UNDERTAKEN BETWEEN THE 7-18TH FEBRUARY 2011

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People on the outcome of the Ofsted and Care Quality Commission Announced Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children Services.

The report advised that the inspection took place between 7 and 18 February 2011 and was a rigorous inspection process which focused on the Council's services and those of its partners, and how they worked together to protect children in the Borough. A summary of the main findings, together with areas for development were included in the report for Members' consideration.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks and congratulations to all staff involved in helping to achieve such a positive outcome.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board noted that Ofsted and the Care Quality Commission found:

- 1) the overall effectiveness of Safeguarding Services in Halton was good with outstanding capacity to secure further improved outcomes for children and families;
- 2) the overall effectiveness of services for Children in Care in Halton was good, with outstanding capacity for further improvement; and
- 3) that leadership and management; ambition and prioritisation; along with performance management and partnership working for children and young people was outstanding in Halton.

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 outweighs 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 business in accordance with Sub-Section 4

of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

EXB123 CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS FOR GREATER MERSEY CONNEXIONS- KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which provided an update on the contractual negotiations between the six Greater Merseyside Local Authorities and the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership.

The Board had previously received a report at its meeting on 27 January 2011, which outlined the background to the award of the Connexions Contract, the contractual arrangements, the national policy direction and implications and the process for discussions with Connexions.

The report advised the Board on the details of the current proposed offer from Connexions in relation to the core contract value and the associated conditions requested. A verbal update on a revised timetable and extension of the current contract until 30 June 2011 was given at the meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the current proposal to reduce the core contract value for 2011/2012, the associated conditions along with the current position in respect of the Connexions Service including contract deadlines, be noted; and
- 2) Officers be authorised to continue to negotiate with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership in respect of the contract and service specification for future years, together with the other five Local Authority areas in the Liverpool City Region.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

EXB124 ACADEMY UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Young People which provided an update on Academies.

The report advised that Halton High had converted to an Academy (Ormiston Bollingbroke) on 1 September 2010 under the previous Academy arrangements. In addition, a further two schools had formally notified the authority that they intended to convert under the new arrangements by 1 May 2011.

The Board was advised that a number of key issues would need to be addressed as a result of these proposals, which were detailed in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the implications to the authority of the conversion of two Halton Schools to Academies be noted;
- 2) the Council should continue to sell services to the Academies and that the costs of each service be increased by up to 20% to reflect the additional administration of such contracts and achieve "full cost" recovery be agreed; and
- 3) the decision on which services to continue to sell to each Academy and the content of each Service Level Agreement be delegated to the Director of Children's Services in conjunction with the Director of Policy and Resources.

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise /
Strategic Director-
Policy and
Resources

The Board noted that this was the final meeting of the 2010/11 Municipal Year, and wished to record their thanks to Dick Tregoe, Strategic Director, Environment and Economy for his support to the Board and the Borough Council and wished him well in his retirement.

The Board also wished to place on record their thanks to Councillor Ann Gerrard who was standing down as a Ward Councillor in May 2011 and thanked her for her support and commitment in the past and wished her well for the future.

MINUTES ISSUED: 5 April 2011

CALL-IN: 12 April 2011

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 12 April 2011.

Meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.