

COUNCIL

At a meeting of the Council on Wednesday, 11 December 2013 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Ratcliffe, Baker, J. Bradshaw, M. Bradshaw, D. Cargill, E. Cargill, Cassidy, Cole, Dennett, Edge, J. Gerrard, Gilligan, Harris, P. Hignett, R. Hignett, S. Hill, V. Hill, Hodge, Horabin, Howard, Jones, Lea, M. Lloyd Jones, P. Lloyd Jones, C. Loftus, K. Loftus, Logan, A. Lowe, J. Lowe, MacManus, McDermott, A. McInerney, T. McInerney, Morley, Nelson, Nolan, Osborne, Parker, Philbin, Polhill, C. Plumpton Walsh, N. Plumpton Walsh, Roberts, Rowe, Sinnott, G. Stockton, J. Stockton, Thompson, Wainwright, Wallace, B. Woolfall, Wharton, Wright and Zygadlo

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Fraser and Fry

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: Two members of the public

Action

COU48 MINUTE'S SILENCE

The Mayor reported the sad passing of Honorary Alderman and former Mayor, Cath Gerrard.

The Council stood for a minute's silence as a mark of respect.

COU49 COUNCIL MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 October 2013, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

RESOLVED: That the minutes of the meeting be confirmed and adopted.

COU50 THE MAYOR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Mayor made the following announcements:

- Halton Borough Council had been presented with a square silver salver for safe keeping. This had formerly been presented to the late

Alderman John Collins OBE. JP. BSc in May 1973 in recognition of his eminent services to the Borough of Widnes;

- The Mayor read out a letter of thanks she had received from Mr S Johnson for the warm welcome and hospitality afforded the USA Rugby League Team during their stay in the Borough for the recent World Cup Event.

COU51 LEADER'S REPORT

The Leader made the following announcements:

- Work continued on the arrangements for presentation of a balanced budget for 2014/15; and
- Feedback had been received on the recent Corporate Peer Challenge that had taken place and was organised by the Local Government Association. Members would be invited to a seminar in the New Year, to discuss the observations and recommendations which had been made.

COU52 MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Executive Board meetings from 17 October 2013, 7 November 2013 and 21 November 2013.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU53 MINUTES OF THE MERSEY GATEWAY EXECUTIVE BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the Mersey Gateway Executive Board meeting on 7 November 2013.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU54 MINUTES OF THE HEALTH AND WELLBEING BOARD

The Council considered the minutes of the meeting of the Health and Wellbeing Board on 13 November 2013.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

COU55 QUESTIONS ASKED UNDER STANDING ORDER 8

It was noted that no questions had been submitted under Standing Order No. 8.

(N.B. Councillor Ron Hignett declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he was a member of the Public Sector Joint Venture Board)

COU56 FURTHER DEVELOPMENT OF SCI-TECH DARESURY - KEY DECISION (MINUTE EXB 103 REFERS)

Executive Board had considered a report and presentation of the Chief Executive which updated Members on the proposed arrangements to fund the future development of Sci-Tech, Daresbury.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposals for the future development of Sci-Tech Daresbury be noted;
- 2) Council approve the inclusion of Project Tech Space in the Council's Capital Programme, to be funded as set out in the Threshold Report;
- 3) authority be given for the Council to enter into the legal and funding agreements with the Joint Venture Partners for the delivery of the projects; and
- 4) agree to the Council entering into the financial arrangements to deliver the projects.

Chief Executive

COU57 DETERMINATION OF THE 2014/2015 COUNCIL TAX BASE (MINUTE EXB 112 REFERS)

Executive Board had considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the 'Tax Base' for its area and the tax base for each of the Parishes.

RESOLVED: That Council approve

- 1) the Council Tax Base for 2014/15 to be set at 31,400 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Police and Crime Commissioner and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be

Operational
Director - Finance

set as follows;

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	643
Halebank	494
Daresbury	150
Moore	316
Preston Brook	319
Sandymoor	950

COU58 2013/14 HALF YEAR SPENDING (MINUTE EXB 113 REFERS)

Executive Board had considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reported on the 2013/14 Half Year Spending as at 30 September 2013.

RESOLVED: That the revisions to the Council's 2013/14 Capital Programme set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report be approved.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU59 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2014/15 (MINUTE EXB 116 REFERS)

Executive Board had considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on initial revenue budget proposals for 2014/15.

Members wished to place on record their thanks to all staff that had worked on the budget preparations.

RESOLVED: That the initial budget proposals for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1 be approved.

Operational
Director - Finance

COU60 WIDNES WATERFRONT INFRASTRUCTURE (MINUTE EXB 119 REFERS)

Executive Board had considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an update on regeneration projects at Widnes Waterfront and Johnson's Lane, and sought approval to vary the Capital Programme to allow these projects to proceed.

RESOLVED: That the £0.52m remediation costs of the former Bayer site and £0.5m for the provision of infrastructure at Johnson's Lane, Widnes, be included within the Capital Programme, to initially be funded from Growing Places Fund (GPF) loans (subject to successful bids) which will thereafter be repaid from the capital receipts generated

Strategic Director
- Children and
Enterprise

from the sale of the respective sites.

COU61 ABSENCE OF ELECTED MEMBER

Council was advised that Councillor Frank Fraser had been absent from attending Council meetings for four months, due to ill health.

Under Section 85 of the Local Government Act 1972, permission was required for Councillor Fraser to be granted an extended period of absence from attending Council meetings for a further period of 3 months, concluding on 14 March 2014.

All Members wished Councillor Fraser a speedy recovery.

RESOLVED: That Councillor Frank Fraser be granted a period of absence from attending Council meetings for 3 months, concluding on 14 March 2014.

Chief Executive

COU62 MINUTES OF THE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARDS AND THE BUSINESS EFFICIENCY BOARD

The Council considered the reports of the following Boards in the period since the meeting of Council on 16 October 2013:

- Children, Young People and Families;
- Employment, Learning and Skills;
- Health;
- Safer;
- Environment and Urban renewal;
- Corporate; and
- Business Efficiency.

In considering the minutes, Councillor Wainwright requested that his apologies be recorded for absence from the Business Efficiency Board meeting on the 27 November 2013.

COU63 COMMITTEE MINUTES

The Council considered the reports of the following Committees in the period since the meeting of Council on 16 October 2013:

- Development Control;
- Regulatory;
- Appeals.

COU64 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

Council considered:

- (1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of Council 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 paragraphs 3 and 5 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 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.

COU65 THE DRAFT FINAL BUSINESS CASE SUBMISSION TO THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT- KEY DECISION (MINUTE MGEB 15 REFERS)

Mersey Gateway Executive Board had considered a report of the Chief Executive on the funding agreement and final business case for the Mersey Gateway Project.

Councillors Chris Loftus, Cole, Morley and Tom McInerney made observations on the funding arrangements. In addition, Councillor Rowe read out a letter which had

been sent by the Mayor of Halton, Councillor Margaret Ratcliffe, to the Deputy Prime Minister Nick Clegg, on the issue of tolling.

RESOLVED: That

Chief Executive

(A) Council approve the following:-

- (1) The Final Business Case (including the recommended Local User Toll Discount Scheme - attached)
- (2) The Final Funding Submission and Final Funding Agreement with the Department for Transport as presented in the Final Funding Letter;

and

(B) Council delegate to the Chief Executive (in consultation with the Leader, the Portfolio Holder Resources, the Portfolio Holder Transportation, the Operational Director (Legal and Democratic Services), the Operational Director (Finance), the Operational Director (Policy, Planning and Transportation) and the Mersey Gateway Project Director) authority to

i) enter into the following formal contracts:-

- a) the Mersey Gateway Project Agreement with the Merseylink consortium;
- b) the Demand Management Participation Agreement with Sanef S. A;
- c) the Governance Agreement with the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board;

and

ii) to write to senior officials at the Department for Transport to confirm that the terms and conditions in the Final Funding Letter offered by Ministers are accepted by the Council;

- (C) that the Leader, on behalf of the Council, make representation to Government, inviting Government to contribute financially to an improved LUDS to ensure ALL Halton residents can cross Mersey Gateway and Silver Jubilee Bridges – free of any tolls
- (D) that the Leader, on behalf of the Council, writes to Government, expressing the Council's anger and frustration at the double standards shown by Government by stating existing roads such as the A14 in the southeast of England should not be tolled but insisting that the A533 an existing road crossing the Silver Jubilee Bridge, but in the north of England, must be tolled.

COU66 FORMER CROSVILLE DEPOT RUNCORN- VARIATION TO CAPITAL PROGRAMME

Council considered a report of the Chief Executive on the progress made to develop the former Crossville site and the need to revise the Capital Programme to allow the development to proceed.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Development Agreement with Consolidated Property Group (CPG) for the redevelopment of the former Crossville Site, Runcorn be approved; and
- 2) the Capital Programme as outlined in paragraph 5.3 of the report, be revised to enable this development to proceed.

Chief Executive

Meeting ended at 7.20 p.m.