

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 15 October 2020 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: G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, A. Jones, N. Goodwin and W. Rourke

Also in attendance: One member of the press

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

*Action*

#### EXB24 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 September 2020 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

#### EXB25 URGENT DECISIONS

The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided the urgent decisions 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. As Council meetings were suspended for some time during the Coronavirus outbreak, a number of urgent decisions had been necessary.

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

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

EXB26 LOCAL TRUST COMMUNITY WEALTH ALLIANCE

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive informing of the Community Wealth Fund Alliance campaign being supported by Local Trust.

Local Trust was the body responsible for delivering the Lottery's *Big Local* programme which consisted of 150 Big Local areas in England, in Halton the Windmill Hill Estate was a Big Local area.

Members were advised of a report published in September 2019 on *Left Behind Areas* in England, a collaboration between Local Trust and Oxford consultants for Social Inclusion. This report identified eight Wards in Halton as 'left behind' areas – Appleton, Grange, Halton Brook, Halton castle, Halton Lea, Hough Green, Norton South and Mersey and made three key recommendations to Government, these were outlined in the report.

Following this Local Trust commenced the Community Wealth Alliance (CWA) to formalise the call for a Community Wealth Fund. Members were presented with details of the public and private sector organisations that had signed up so far to be part of the call to Government to release funds to 'left behind' areas. It was requested that Halton Borough Council also commits to being a Community Wealth Alliance member, which would add strength to the growing number of organisations in support of this. It was noted that in doing so there would be no resource or financial implications for the Council.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

Chief Executive

- 1) notes the report; and
- 2) approves the Council signing up to the Community Wealth Fund Alliance.

**ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO**

EXB27 DWP KICKSTART PROGRAMME

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided information on the DWP *Kickstart* Programme.

It was reported that Government had recently launched its job creation scheme, *Kickstart*, for young people aged 16-24. It aimed to provide wage subsidies to employers that created new 6 month work experience placements. It was noted that the Employment, Learning and Skills (ELS) Division would act as intermediary for the Programme, which would see 100 six month placements being administered between November 2020 and December 2021. Further, an amount of £719,367 would be administered through the division for the placements with £80,000 being retained as income to staff the delivery of the Programme.

The report provided the Board with an introduction to *Kickstart*, the local approach being taken and explained how the resources would be used to deliver the Programme.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) note the report;
- 2) approve the ELS Division to act as a *Kickstart* Programme Intermediary; and
- 3) authorise delegated authority to the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, to enter into a contract with the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) relating to the role of being an Intermediary.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

## RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

### EXB28 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2021/22

The Board 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.

The Board was advised that the Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent Band 'D' dwellings.

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 96% collection rate, the calculation for 2021/22 gave a base figure of 35,154 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to:

Operational  
Director - Finance

- 1) set the Council Tax Base at 35,154 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	655
Halebank	520
Daresbury	179
Moore	323
Preston Brook	257
Sandymoor	1,316

EXB29 ADDITIONAL HACKNEY CARRIAGE STANDS NEAR RUNCORN STATION

The Executive Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, recommending that they approve the creation of two additional Hackney Carriage stands near Runcorn Station as part of the Runcorn Station Quarter Project.

Members were referred to Appendices one and two, which showed the location of the proposed northerly and southerly stands in Shaw Street, Runcorn. It was noted that these proposed stands would replace the current private rank at Runcorn Station; would be public ranks; and shall be open 24 hours per day. Further, the proposals were recommended by the Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2020 and had been the subject of a consultation exercise with the Taxi consultative Group and with the Council’s Highways Section.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the proposals relating to the creation of two additional Hackney Carriage stands near Runcorn Station;

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

- 2) authorises the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, to fulfil all procedural requirements in accordance with Section 63 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 and to make the taxi stands Order accordingly, unless there were any objections received; and
- 3) agrees that in the event of any objections being received, the matter be brought back to the Executive Board.

#### EXB30 POLICY CHANGES RELATING TO TAXI LICENCING CONDITIONS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which made a recommendation from Regulatory Committee to adopt, as Council policy in respect of the Council's taxi and private hire jurisdiction, the *Assessment of Previous Convictions* provisions in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (July 2020); and to revoke all existing *Relevance of Convictions* policies.

It was reported that in February 2019 the Department for Transport issued a consultation draft version of a document entitled *Taxi and Private Hire Licensing: Protecting Users*. The final version of the document was issued in July 2020 and was entitled *Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Standards*.

It was noted that the 2020 Standards had been issued under Section 177 of the Policing and Crime Act 2017, so the Council was required to have regard to the document when exercising its taxi and private hire licensing functions. Members were referred to Appendix A – an annex within the document titled *Assessment of Previous Convictions*. They were advised that Regulatory Committee had been applying the *Assessment of Previous Convictions* on a case by case basis since February 2019 and it was now considered appropriate to formalise this and create a formal policy, which would then supersede the existing policy.

The Board noted that the new *Assessment of Previous Convictions* appeared to be clearer than the previous policy and placed passenger safety as a priority, whilst enabled past offenders to sufficiently evidence that they had been successfully rehabilitated so they might obtain or retain a licence.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the *Assessment of Previous Convictions* provisions in the Statutory Taxi and Private Hire Vehicle Standards (July 2020) be adopted as Council policy in respect of Taxi and Private Hire jurisdiction; and
- 2) all existing *Relevance of Convictions* policies be revoked.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

EXB31 POLICY CHANGES RELATING TO THE RESTRICTION ON HACKNEY CARRIAGE VEHICLE NUMBERS IN THE BOROUGH

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, in which the Council’s Regulatory Committee recommended that Executive Board adopts a Council Policy on the limit of the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles licenced within the Borough.

The Board heard that this Policy was considered by the Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 2 September 2020, following a refusal by the Committee to issue an individual with additional licences, which resulted in the individual appealing the decision at the Crown Court. The Court had ordered that an ‘unmet demand survey’ be carried out (attached at Appendix 1) and that the application be re-heard. It was noted that the survey demonstrated that the Committee was correct in concluding that there was no significant unmet demand in the Borough.

The Board was advised that following this, it was now appropriate for the Council’s Policy on limiting the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles be re-considered, as recommended by the Regulatory Committee (minute number REG 13 refers), which recommends that the limit should remain at 267 vehicles.

RESOLVED: That the Policy change as recommended by Regulatory Committee (minute number REG 13 refers) that the Council maintains its current Policy of limiting the number of Hackney Carriage Vehicles licensed in the Borough to 267 be approved and adopted as Council Policy.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

EXB32 POLICY FOR MANAGING RENTAL ARREARS FOR COUNCIL OWNED PROPERTY

The Executive Board considered a report from the

Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out a policy and options for how the Council manages rent arrears on its property (land and buildings).

It was reported that Covid-19 had presented significant challenges for the Council as a Landlord, but the Council also acknowledged the impact that the Pandemic has had on its tenants. Upon lockdown the Council adopted a pragmatic approach to the management of rents and immediately introduced a 3 month rental holiday for the vast majority of its tenants, including market traders. This ended in June 2020 and Members were advised that the Council continued to face challenges in respect of the payment of rents – an estimated 73% of tenants were paying in full, 23% were in arrears. Further, despite the Council’s best efforts in assisting tenants as described, some had unfortunately gone out of business.

It was understood that the effects of Covid-19 would have a long lasting negative effect on the Borough’s economy affecting the income of most of the Council’s tenants and in turn, the income of the Council. The Board was asked to consider a number of options that were aimed at enabling the Council to formulate a longer term policy on how it manages its income generating property portfolio.

The five options were presented to the Board as outlined in paragraph 3.7 of the report and the preferred option agreed was number 5.

RESOLVED: That the Board approved option 5, as outlined in section 3.7 of the report.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

EXB33 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.

**COMMUNITY & SPORT, HEALTH & WELLBEING,  
PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT AND RESOURCES  
PORTFOLIOS**

EXB34 PROPOSED LEISURE CENTRE, MOOR LANE, WIDNES -  
UPDATE REPORT

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Economy and Resources which provided an update on work undertaken on the Pre-Construction Delivery Plan, for the new leisure centre on the Moor Lane site.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report is noted;
- 2) the Council pause the project until it had clarity on vacant possession of Moor Lane site;
- 3) once vacant possession was guaranteed, proceed to construction of the new leisure centre; and
- 4) the solar farm option be considered.

Strategic Director  
- Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources



**MINUTES ISSUED: 20 October 2020**

**CALL-IN: 27 October 2020 at 5.00 pm**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 27 October 2020.**

*Meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.*