

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 7 February 2013 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building*

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chairman), D. Cargill, Harris, R. Hignett, Jones, Nelson, Philbin, J. Stockton, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: Councillor Ratcliffe

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

*Action*

#### EXB138 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 24 January 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### HEALTH AND ADULTS PORTFOLIO

#### EXB139 REPORT OF WAIVER OF PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS, FOR THE SOCIAL WORK TRAINEESHIP

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities on the waiver of Procurement Standing Orders for Social Work Traineeships.

The Board was advised that the Council proposed to support two employees to undertake a Part Time BA Honours Degree in Social Work. Only two Higher Education Institutions (HEI) in the area, offered an appropriate course. Details of the HEI's and their respective charges were detailed in the report.

The Board noted that, as there were only two available providers, it was not possible to comply with Procurement Standing Order 4.1: Competition Requirements, whereby three electronic invitations were

required for a spend in excess of £1,000.

It was further noted that the Head of Procurement had been consulted and supported the request for the waiver of Procurement Standing Order 1.4.

RESOLVED: That the waiver of Procurement Standing Order 4.1, in respect of the Social Work Traineeship, be approved.

Strategic Director  
- Communities

#### EXB140 COMMUNITY MEALS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which sought approval to bring the Community Meal Service (CMS) back in-house from 1 April 2013.

The Board was advised that the CMS delivered a hot meal service to the Borough's most vulnerable adults on a daily basis. The current service was largely fragmented in that food preparation was provided by an external agency (I-Care) and the meals delivered to the client's home by Halton Borough Council transport staff.

It was reported that a recent National survey had identified that there were more people in the UK receiving meals in their own home than there were people in care homes. The regular delivery of meals was a key service, providing contact for older people.

It was further noted that the current contract with I-Care would end on 31 March 2013. The proposed transfer of the preparation of the meals service – in-house at the Stadium - would offer a co-ordinated approach and a more dynamic and responsive service, by fostering closer links across Council departments. In addition, the new service would aim to encourage clients to participate in regular food tasting sessions and have a direct input into the menu choice. Members were advised that should the service be transferred, there would need to be a capital investment for a new oven of around £10,000, but that this could be met from within the Directorate's present capital budget.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the request to bring back in-house the Community Meal Service be approved and the proposed service improvements and budget saving proposal be noted; and

Strategic Director  
- Communities

- 2) the virement of £10,000 for capital works to be undertaken at the Stadium, be agreed.

## **PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB141 RUNCORN HILL PARK, "PARKS FOR PEOPLE" PROJECT**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, updating them on the successful "Parks for People" Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) grant.

The Project included the formal grounds of Runcorn Hill, Runcorn Hill Local Nature Reserve and the Heath Playing Fields. The proposals contained a capital element to refurbish and enhance existing fixtures and provide a new park centre/café. The main aim was to promote the site's industrial heritage and promote attractions for a wider audience, thereby raising the standard of the Park and increasing usage and visitor satisfaction.

It was noted that the Project would provide more volunteer involvement, education opportunities and links and the grant included revenue support for two part time posts for a period of five years. Members were advised that these posts would help support and promote the benefits of the overall project by supporting local volunteers with events, groups and other organisations with educational activities.

The HLF application process had been previously reported to the Board in September 2011.

**RESOLVED:** That delegated authority be granted to the Strategic Director, Communities, in consultation with the Executive Member for Physical Environment, to undertake all necessary work to progress the Project proposals and fulfil the grant requirements.

Strategic Director  
- Communities

## **TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB142 EXTENSION OF BRIDGE MAINTENANCE PARTNERSHIP CONTRACT**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the award of a two year extension of the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract (the Contract).

The Board was advised that the term of the current

Contract with Balvac Ltd was for an initial four-year period with a potential two-year extension. It delivered all major bridge maintenance work in the Borough through the engagement of a single “partnering” contractor using a construction framework form of contract. The initial term of HBC’s Contract would expire on 31 March 2013, and by that time would have delivered £20m of major bridge maintenance work funded through a combination of Department for Transport Capital Maintenance Grant sources.

It was noted that any decision regarding an extension to the contract would be subject to the approval of Executive Board, based upon the appraisal of the Contractor’s performance against a prescribed set of Strategic Performance Objectives (SPO’s). These SPO’s measured performance in terms of quality and quantity against a number of criteria, as set out in the report. Attached at Appendix A was the Strategic Performance Objective Appraisal Report for Members’ consideration. It was further reported that continuation of the contract would be advantageous in terms of overall flexibility, quality and value for money through continuity of service.

RESOLVED: That the Strategic Performance Objective Appraisal Report relating to contractor performance, attached at Appendix A, be noted and the two-year extension of the existing HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract to Balvac Ltd, be approved.

Strategic Director  
- Policy &  
Resources

## **RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

*(N.B. Councillors Nelson and J Stockton made a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as both were Governors of The Grange School)*

### **EXB143 DRAFT BUDGET 2013/14**

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2013/14.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Government had not announced the final Local Government Settlement, nor had the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cheshire Fire Authority set their budgets and Council Tax precepts. However final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public and Members' own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. The key conclusions were detailed in the report. Budget presentations were also underway at the seven Locality Area Forums. In addition, individual consultations would take place in respect of specific budget reductions and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 29 November 2012, had identified a funding gap of around £14m in 2013/14, £11m in 2014/15 and £12m in 2015/16. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council's five priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency savings;
- Protect front line services as far as possible; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

On 12 December 2012, the Council approved savings of £6.037m, and the new proposed savings were shown at Appendix B. The Departmental analysis of the budget was shown in Appendix C and the major reasons for change from the current budget were outlined for Members' information in Appendix D. It was noted that the proposed budget total was £115.114m.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Provisional Settlement, and included £195,247 for the New Homes Bonus Grant, payable to local authorities based on the net increase in the number of homes in their area. The grant was payable at this amount for six years.

The Government announced on 19 December 2012 the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2013/14, with the Final Settlement figures due to be announced late January/early February. It was noted that from 1 April 2013, the Local Government funding regime would change significantly with the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme, as outlined in the report.

Further information was provided in respect of the budget outlook, although it was difficult to forecast resources

over the following two years given the uncertainties caused by the current economic climate and the changes to the grant system following the introduction of the Business Rates Retention Scheme. The Medium Term Financial Forecast had been updated and was attached at Appendix E. It was noted that the funding gap over the next two years was forecast to be in the region of £27.5m.

Further information was provided in respect of Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, Police and Fire Precepts, the Capital Programme, the Prudential Code and school budgets.

Members wished to place on record their thanks to all members of the Budget Working Group, Policy and Performance Board Chairs and staff for their hard work in producing this year's budget.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £115.114m, the Council Tax requirement of £36.165m (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,159.53.

Operational  
Director - Finance

#### EXB144 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2013/14

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement for 2013/14.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2013/14).

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to "have regard to" the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act therefore required the Council to set out its Treasury Strategy for borrowing as well as an Annual Investment Strategy, which set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. However, Government guidance stated that Authorities could combine the statement and the strategy into one report, and the Council had adopted this approach.

Members noted that the production of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within Appendix C.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statements and prudential and treasury indicators outlined in the report.

Operational  
Director - Finance

EXB145 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2012/13 3RD QTR:  
OCTOBER - DECEMBER

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic background, economic forecast, short term rates, longer term rates, temporary borrowing/investments and new borrowing. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB146 MULTI FUNCTIONAL DEVICES TENDERS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which advised them on the advertising of tenders for the Council's Multi-Functional Devices (MFD's).

The Board was advised that in 2008, the Council rationalised its office printing, fax and photocopier devices by awarding a contract for the supply and maintenance of MFD's to M2. The existing contract had been successful in rationalising printing, reducing costs and improving reliability and added the ability to scan documents from a standard set of equipment.

Details of comparative Quarter 4 contract expenditure from 2010-2012 was attached at Appendix A. It was noted that contract expenditure peaked in 2010/11 at £255k, and had started to decrease as a result of the Council realising the benefits of electronic working, including the concept of "agile working" for staff, as detailed in the report.

It was reported that there was a need to replace the existing fleet of MFD's, by inviting competitive quotes through The Chest. This would give the Council the

opportunity to compare options for the provision of a replacement service and ensure the most economically advantageous solution. As the existing contract value was in excess of £1m, Procurement Standing Order 2.1 (Preliminary Estimate Report), required prior approval for this process to be undertaken.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the report and support the process of the advertising of the Multi-Functional Device tenders on behalf of the Policy and Resources Directorate, required from September 2013.

Strategic Director  
- Policy &  
Resources

#### EXB147 SINGLE EQUALITY SCHEME 2013 TO 2015

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the revised Single Equality Scheme 2013-15.

The Board was advised that the previous Single Equality Scheme for 2009-12 expired at the end of 2012 calendar year. The Scheme proposed was a Single Equality Scheme, that conveyed the Council's commitment to all the protected characteristics as defined in the Equality Act 2010.

It was reported that since approval of the previous Scheme in 2009, there had been a number of important legislative changes, including the Equality Act 2010 and the Public Sector Equality Duty in force since October 2011. The proposed Scheme incorporated all of these changes, and had been considered and recommended for approval by the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on 10 January 2013.

It was noted that since the inception of the previous Scheme, a workforce survey and workforce profile had been compiled. The information had been used as the basis for the People Plan 2012-2015, and to comply with the Public Sector Equality Duty, must be updated and published annually. The proposed Scheme also included the Council's agreed Equality Objectives, which were approved by the Executive Board on 15 March 2012. It was further noted that in order to achieve compliance, the Council must publish progress towards its objectives in April each year.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) notes the contents of the Single Equality Scheme for 2013-15; and

Strategic Director  
- Policy &  
Resources



- 2) approves the Single Equality Scheme for 2013-15.

#### EXB148 NORTHGATE SOCIAL FUND SOLUTION - WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, seeking approval for the waiver of Procurement Standing Orders in relation to the Northgate Social Fund Solution.

The Board was advised that, the Discretionary Social Fund (the Fund), currently administered by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP), had been abolished by the Welfare Reform Act effective from April 2013. Certain functions within the Fund would remain the responsibility of the DWP. However, it was reported that Crisis Loans, for general living expenses, and Community Care Grants would be replaced by a new service to be administered by the Local Authority.

The Board was reminded that, at its meeting on 13 December 2012, it agreed the development of a scheme for Halton, to be known as the Discretionary Support Scheme, from April 2013. The Council would be responsible for the design and implementation of its own criteria and application process.

Due to the extremely tight timescales, the Board was advised that it was not practical to invite tenders to provide the appropriate revenues and benefits systems, as required by Procurement Standing Order 4.1. Northgate Information Solutions UK Limited had been chosen as they were the current Council providers for the revenues and benefits and blue badge scheme, thereby reducing the need for additional system interfaces to be established.

It was further noted that the contract would be subject to an annual renewal and tendering process, which would be conducted during the 2013/14 financial year.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) in these exceptional circumstances (namely the statutory timetable for the introduction of Discretionary Social Fund changes), Procurement Standing Order 4.1 be waived in respect of Northgate Information Solutions UK Limited, for the supply and operating installation of the Northgate Social Fund Solution; and

Operational  
Director - Finance

- 2) the Operational Director, Finance, be authorised to enter into a contract with Northgate Information Solutions UK Limited for the supply and operating installation of the system referred to in resolution 1) above, for an annual charge of £8,000.

#### EXB149 DIRECTORATE PLANS 2013-16

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on the adoption of Directorate Plans for the period 2013-16.

The Board was advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan or Directorate Plan, in parallel with the budget. These would be subject to annual review and refresh. Draft Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets had been developed and these would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring presented to the Board during the forthcoming year.

It was noted that Elected Members had engaged in the process primarily through the Policy and Performance Boards. Once the budget proposals had been approved by Council in March 2013, budgetary statements would be inserted into the Plans.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Draft Directorate Plans be approved; and
- 2) the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and adjustments that may be required.

Strategic Director  
- Policy &  
Resources

#### EXB150 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 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 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 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.

## **RESOURCES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB151 LAND DISPOSAL FOR HOUSING DEVELOPMENT AT FALKIRK AVENUE - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the disposal of land for housing development at Falkirk Avenue, Widnes.

The Board was advised that, following a competition on The Chest, the Council appointed property agents to advertise the development opportunity on the open market and to act as the Council's advisors for the disposal of land at Falkirk Avenue, Widnes. Offers from a number of developers were received with three parties being selected to submit their final bids by the 31 October 2012. Their details were contained in the report for Members' information.

It was noted that the proposal was consistent with the Council's policy of disposing of its property assets in an economically effective manner, and of ensuring the provision of new homes.

#### Reason(s) for Decision

To maximise a significant land asset to generate a capital receipt for the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

To retain the site for non-residential use, but this would prevent the Council generating a significant capital receipt.

Implementation Date

This would be subject to detailed planning being awarded.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of c.4.34 acres of land to Morris Homes Ltd on the terms set out in Appendix 2, subject to Planning Permission, and subject to contract be approved; and
  
- 2) the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services.

Strategic Director  
- Children and  
Enterprise

**MINUTES ISSUED: 8 February 2013**

**CALL-IN: 15 February 2013**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 15 February 2013**

*Meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.*