

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 22 February 2007 at the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors McDermott MBE (Chairman), D. Cargill, Gerrard, Harris, Massey, McInerney, Polhill, Nelson, Wright and Wharton

Apologies for Absence: (none)

Absence declared on Council business: (none)

Officers present: D. Parr, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, D Tregea, B. Dodd, A. McIntyre, J. Tradewell and L. Cairns

Also in attendance: 2 Members of the Press and 2 Members of Public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB84 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 8th February 2007 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB85 BUDGET 2007/08

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services outlining the budget, capital programme and council tax for 2007/08 to be recommended to Council.

It was noted that, since the report had been written and circulated, the Police Authority and Fire Authority had set their precepts at an increase of 6.9% and 1.5% respectively. Members were advised that, at this level, there was a risk that the Police Authority would be capped. If this happened, there would be implications for the Council, as the billing authority, in terms of any re-billing required.

The Corporate Services Portfolio Holder thanked those officers and Councillors involved in producing what

Action

was considered to be an excellent budget, particularly in light of the tough Local Government Finance Settlement received.

In addition, the Board gave consideration to the motion, referred to it by Council the previous evening under Standing Order No. 6(4), outlining proposed amendments to the budget by the Liberal Democrat Group.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £95.041m and the Band D Council Tax for Halton (before Parish, Police and Fire precepts) of £1,043.45; and
- (2) the mover and seconder of the Motion submitted by the Liberal Democrat Group to Full Council on 21st March 2007, and referred to the Executive Board under Standing Order No. 6(4), be afforded the opportunity by Full Council to resubmit the Motion as an amendment to the substantive Budget Motion.

JOINT CORPORATE SERVICES AND EUROPEAN AFFAIRS PORTFOLIOS

EXB86 FLEXIBLE WORKING

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive outlining the work of the North West Flexible Working Group.

It was noted that the need for the Group had been identified out of the "Home-working in England's Northwest" project supported by the North West Development Agency. The Group was chaired by Peter Connor from BT and the Chief Executive had been asked to represent Local Authority interests on the Group. The mission and targeted outcomes of the Group were outlined for the Board's consideration.

It was noted that Halton had a number of flexible working pilots operating at present, which were regularly monitored and evaluated. In addition, a "Home/Work Balance" Officer Group was also exploring how best to maximise flexible working to enhance service quality and efficiency whilst at the same time improving terms and conditions for employees. It was requested that any proposed pilot be reported to the Board prior to implementation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the proposed actions outlined in the report be approved; and
- (3) Halton develop a programme of flexible working as an exemplar for local government best practice.

Chief Executive

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB87 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT DELIVERY PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive proposing updates for each of the Action Plans, produced to deliver Halton's Local Area Agreement, and requesting approval of the funding allocations contained within them.

It was noted that, since 2002, the Halton Strategic Partnership Board had ensured that there was a Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) for each of the five priorities. These SSPs were commissioned to produce the original Strategies and Action Plans, and had now produced updated Action Plans setting out their activities and investment proposals for 2007/08. They set out a programme of activity to deliver the thematic elements of the Community Strategy and, in particular, addressed the key measureable outcomes set out within it.

The Board was advised that the Action Plans utilised Neighbourhood Renewal Fund (NRF) and, in the case of the Safer Halton Partnership, Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) as well. In addition, the Council had committed a substantial amount of resources through the Priorities Fund (PF). The Council monies were aimed at supporting neighbourhood renewal activity by match funding initiatives within the Action Plans.

Details were outlined for the Board's consideration and it was noted that the Action Plans had been endorsed by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the five Action Plans accompanying the report be approved;
- (2) the allocation of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and Safer and Stronger Communities Fund, referred to in this report and contained in the Action Plans

endorsed by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board, be approved;

- (3) the allocation of the Council's Priority Funds referred to in this report, including that contained in the Action Plans, be approved; and
- (4) delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council to approve amendments to the Actions Plans as necessary.

Chief Executive

PLANNING, TRANSPORTATION, REGENERATION AND RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB88 LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME 2007

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment seeking approval of the Local Development Scheme (LDS), which was attached as an appendix.

It was noted that the LDS was a public statement of Halton Borough Council's three year work programme for producing the Local Development Framework (LDF). This was the fourth that had been prepared by the Council and it moved the preparation of the LDF forward to the 2007-2010 period.

The Board was advised that the Government Office for the North West (GONW), to whom the document was to be submitted, was keen for LDSs to become definitive programme management documents and, from 1 April 2007, would only expect them to be departed from in exceptional circumstances or as agreed in response to annual monitoring.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revision to the Local Development Scheme, appended to the report, come into effect from 22/03/07, or from the date on which the Council receives notification from the Secretary of State in accordance with Regulation 11 (2) of The Town and Country Planning (Local Development) (England) Regulations 2004, whichever is earlier;
- (2) the Operational Director - Environmental & Regulatory Services, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning,

Strategic Director
- Environment

Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, be authorised to make any changes to this document as required by the Planning Inspectorate or the Government Office for the North West, or as a consequence of alterations to the joint working arrangements in relation to the Waste Development Plan Document, or as a consequence of the ongoing negotiations with consultants in relation to planning policy documents to support the Mersey Gateway;

- (3) further editorial and technical changes and/or correction of printing errors that do not affect the content be agreed by the Operational Director – Environmental & Regulatory Services before the document is published.

QUALITY AND PERFORMANCE PORTFOLIO

EXB89 DEPARTMENTAL SERVICE PLANS 2007-10 (KEY DECISION)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the Council's Departmental Service Plans for 2007-2010.

It was noted that Departmental Service Plans sat within an established planning framework and were central to the Council's performance management arrangements. They provided a clear statement on what individual services were planning to achieve and showed how this contributed to the corporate priorities of the Council. They were an essential tool for making key decisions about future service provision and the level of resources required.

The Board was advised that there had been no significant amendments to the layout of plans from the previous year. However, following the development of the Corporate Plan 2006-2011 and the introduction of Key Areas of Focus for each of the Council's Priority areas, the service objectives section of service plans had been revised in order to show more clearly how departmental activities were related to Corporate Priorities.

Members noted that the definitive set of 2007-08 Best Value Performance Indicators had yet to be confirmed by the Department of Communities and Local Government; once this information had been published, any changes that were necessary as a result would be incorporated. In addition, a Budgetary Statement would be inserted into plans following the approval of the budget by full Council in

March.

A number of questions were raised by the Environment, Leisure and Sport Portfolio Holder: the Board was requested to direct any further queries in respect of the Plans direct to the Chief Executive.

Reason for Decision

Departmental Service Plans were central to the Council's performance management arrangements. As such, it was necessary for them to be approved before the start of the new financial year.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

1st April 2007.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) this set of advanced draft Service Plans be received; and
- (2) full Council be requested to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and adjustments that may be required, and to approve the final service plans.

Chief Executive

MINUTES ISSUED: 2nd March 2007

CALL IN: 9th March 2007

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 9th March 2007

Meeting ended at 2.42 p.m.