

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Corporate Policy and Policy and Performance Board

12th February 2015

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB123 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF REQUEST

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources and the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on requests for discretionary business rates relief.

The Board was reminded that in April 2013, the Government introduced a Business Rates Retention Scheme (the Scheme). The Scheme offered a financial incentive to Councils to promote economic growth and by offering discretionary rate relief for an initial period to businesses to encourage them to relocate or expand their existing business.

It was reported that a request had been submitted for a proposed development at Manor Park, Runcorn by a company wishing to re-locate from Warrington. Details of the request were set out in the report for Members' consideration.

Members considered that a proposed business rate relief should be granted initially for six months. A further six months of relief would only be awarded if the Company were able to provide evidence of satisfactory progress towards the creation of at least ten new sustainable jobs during the first twelve months of operation from the Manor Park premises.

An additional request for discretionary business rate relief was considered at the meeting, as an urgent item of business. Members were advised that, following an announcement by Tesco Stores to close their premises in Runcorn Shopping Centre, the Post Office facility would have to re-locate within the Centre. Temporary premises had been identified and a request had been received to waive business rates for a six month period. The Post Office was seen as a vital facility for the local community.

Members were advised that the Leader and the Chief Executive, together with the Ward Members, would meet

with Tesco to put the case for the retention of the store.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) 100% discretionary business rate relief be granted for Unit 118, River Walk, Halton Lea, for a period of six months;
- 2) 100% discretionary rate relief be granted "in principle" for Unit 7, Christleton Court, Manor Park, Runcorn, initially for a period of six months, based upon the economic and job creation opportunities outlined in the report and subject to the conditions detailed in paragraph 5.2;
- 3) at the end of the first six month period, if satisfactory progress is evidenced towards the creation of at least ten new sustainable jobs within twelve months, a further six months relief be awarded as set out in paragraph 3.14; and
- 4) the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, in liaison with the Resources Portfolio holder, be authorised to action the initial six months and subsequent six months discretionary business rates relief in respect of Unit 7, Christleton Court, Manor Park, Runcorn, once the premises have been added to the rating list and subject to the conditions detailed in paragraphs 3.14 and 5.2 of the report.

Strategic Director
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EXB124 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2014/15 3RD QUARTER:
OCTOBER-DECEMBER

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

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.

EXB125 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT
2015/16

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, proposing the Treasury Management Strategy Statement (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2015/16.

The TMSS was attached to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2015/16).

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 AIS, 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 the report at paragraph 2.3, with Appendix A detailing MRP in more detail.

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

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB126 2014/15 QUARTER 3 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which summarised the overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 December 2014.

In overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.053m below the budget profile, however, this was only a guide to eventual spending. It was noted that spending on employees was £0.434m below the budget profile as at 31 December 2014.

Members were advised that there continued to be budget pressures on some budgeted income targets, including trade waste income and sales revenue from the

Stadium.

With regard to capital spending, it was reported that spending to the 31 December 2014 totalled £20.9m, which was 97% of the planned spending of £21.5m at this stage. However, this represented 60% of the total capital programme of £34.7m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years).

The Council's Balance Sheet was monitored regularly in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy which formed part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The key reserves and balances had been reviewed and were considered prudent and appropriate at this stage in the financial year.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited only to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Strategic Directors ensure that overall spending at year-end is within their total operational budget;
- 3) the transfer of the remaining 2014/15 contingency budget to the Children and Families department, as outlined in paragraph 3.7, be approved; and
- 4) Council be recommended to approve the revised capital programme as set out in Appendix 3, attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB127 BUDGET 2015/16

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 2015/16.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Cheshire Fire Authority had not set their budgets and Council Tax precepts. However, final figures would be reported to Council when the information was available.

The Government announced the Final Local Government Finance Settlement figure for 2015/16 on 5

February 2014, which was in line with the Provisional Settlement announced on 18 December 2014.

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. Budget presentations had taken place at all of the Area Forums and details of the comments made were tabled at the meeting. In addition, individual consultations would take place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 20 November 2014, had identified a funding gap of around £19m in 2015/16, £13m in 2016/17 and £10m in 2017/18. 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 gains;
- Protect essential front line services; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

On 10 December 2014, the Council approved initial budget savings of £11.332m for 2015/16, and further 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 £101.188m.

The Board was advised that the proposed budget incorporated the grant figures announced in the Provisional Grant Settlement, and included £440,000 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.

It was noted that from 1 April 2013, the Local Government funding regime changed 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 Government's continuing austerity measures and the national election in May 2015. The Medium Term Financial Forecast had been updated and was attached at Appendix E. It was noted that the resultant funding gap over the next two years was forecast to be in the region of £31.9m.

Further information was provided in respect of Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, 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 Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which included setting the budget at £101.188m, the Council Tax requirement of £38.649m (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) and the Band D Council Tax for Halton of £1,204.01.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB128 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 outweighed 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

EXB129 JOHN BRIGGS HOUSE AND THE POLICE & MAGISTRATES SITES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on proposals for John Briggs House and the Police and Magistrates Court sites in Widnes.

The report set out details of the proposed occupation of John Briggs House by Cheshire Police and the arrangements for the disposal of the Police Station and Magistrates Court sites, for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of John Briggs House to Cheshire Police and the acquisition of the Police Station and Magistrates Court sites be approved;
- 2) a variation to the Capital Programme of £350,000 be approved, to enable the proposal to proceed;
- 3) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services; and
- 4) Council be recommended to approve the addition to the Capital Programme, of a scheme for the demolition and fencing of the Police and Magistrates Court sites, as set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

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RESOURCES PORTFOLIO AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB133 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources and the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which set out criteria to be applied in the consideration of applications for Discretionary Business Rate Relief.

The Board was advised that the Localism Act 2011 amended the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, such that Councils may grant Discretionary Business Rates Relief to any business ratepayer in any circumstance. The report set out details of the current arrangements where the Council had granted relief to Registered Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC's), and Not-for profit Organisations for Members' information. It was noted that the Council currently granted relief to organisations for a three year period, and it was recommended that this practice continue to provide organisations with some certainty and to assist with their financial planning.

In respect of applications from organisations who are not Registered Charities, Community Amateur Sports Clubs (CASC's), or Not-for profit Organisations, in order to ensure consistency, it was proposed that the criteria, as set out in the report, should be applied in future when considering requests for rate relief. This was intended to provide a policy framework to assist with the consideration of each application, although it was noted that the Board would still consider each request on its merits.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Discretionary Business Rate Relief of 15% be granted for those registered charities and CASC organisations currently in receipt of such relief, for the period of three years commencing 1 April 2016;
- 2) Discretionary Business Rate Relief of 90% be granted for the not-for-profit organisations currently in receipt of such relief (except for the two referred to in paragraph 5.3 of the report), for the period of three years commencing on 1 April 2016; and
- 3) the criteria set out in Section 6 of the report, be

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approved as a policy framework to assist with considering future applications for Discretionary Business Rate Relief on the grounds of potential economic development and job creation benefits, whilst still considering each application on its own merits.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO AND PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB134 DISPOSAL OF FORMER HALTON VILLAGE HALL

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise and the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the proposed disposal of the former Halton Village Hall, Runcorn.

The Board was informed that the former Halton Village Hall was declared surplus to requirements and would be brought forward for disposal by the Executive Board at its meeting on 23 September 2013. The property had been gifted in 1903 and held in trust by the then Halton Parish Council (which was the area around Halton Village as opposed to the Borough of Halton). Members were then advised that when the Parish Council ceased to exist, the powers passed to the Borough Council.

It was reported that the last tenant vacated the premises in June 2011. The property was in a poor condition and would be in need of a substantial refurbishment before it could be re-occupied. The Board was advised that the provisions of the trust were such that if the Council decided not to use the property for the specific purposes (set out in the report), then the property could be disposed of, with the proceeds used for the purposes of the Trust. This was suggested as including an allocation towards education, recreation or religious purposes within Halton Village.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the property is no longer convenient for the purposes of the Trust and should be brought forward for disposal;
- 2) the sale proceeds used for the purposes of the Trust, be allocated towards education, recreation or religious purposes within Halton Village. Any funds could be managed through the

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arrangements for Area Forum grant;

- 3) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property and the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to distribute the proceeds of sale as directed by the Board; and
- 4) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, be authorised to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services.

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RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB142 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 2014 - 15

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the third quarter to 31 December 2014.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate, being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements, with the Board having a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

It was reported that each report contained an update concerning the implementation of mitigation measures for all high risks contained within each of the Directorate Risk Registers.

RESOLVED: That the report and progress and performance information be noted.

EXB143 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the Pensions Discretions

Policy (the Policy).

The Board was advised that since approving the current Policy in July 2014, the Appointments Committee had approved changes to the Council's Staffing Protocol, specifically in relation to the ability to augment an employee's pensionable service on early retirement.

It was reported that the new Local Government Pension Scheme introduced changes in the calculations of pensionable service, as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the amended Pensions Discretion Statement for 2014/15 be approved and the 2015/16 Statement be adopted; and
- 2) those discretions be exercised by the appropriate Strategic Director, in consultation with the Portfolio holder for Resources and the Operational Director, Finance. (In the case of applications from Strategic Directors/Chief Executive, replace appropriate Strategic Director with Chief Executive/Strategic Director, Policy and Resources respectively).

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LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB148 WEBSITE ADVERTISING OPTIONS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on website advertising options.

The Board was advised that the Council Advertising Network (CAN) provided an opportunity for local authorities to have adverts appear on their websites and intranets to generate income. A list of potential advertisers was set out in the report as an example. It was noted that each month, CAN would supply a list of advertisers for approval with the local authority having powers to veto any adverts that appeared. Income would be generated by the number of times the page on the Council's website was viewed, rather than relying on a user clicking on the adverts themselves.

It was reported that a soft market test exercise was undertaken via The Chest to establish whether CAN was the

only organisation which offered this service to local authorities. The only expression of interest received was from CAN.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) advertising on the Council's website and microsites using the Council Advertising Network be approved;
- 2) in accordance with Procurement Standing Order 1.8.3 (e), Procurement Standing Order 4.1 and 4.2 be waived in respect of the website advertising due to the results of the soft market testing carried out as reported; and
- 3) a review of the project take place after 12 months.

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TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB158 INVEST TO SAVE PROPOSAL - STREET LIGHTING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the findings of a Street Lighting Asset review and to seek approval of funding for an Invest to Save proposal.

The Board was advised that Halton currently had 19,000 street lights which operated with traditional high sodium lanterns. These need replacing after 4-5 years which incurred additional costs to the highways budget. It was reported that approximately 2000 lanterns had already been switched to LED's (light emitting diode) units, mainly in residential areas. The key benefits were noted as a reduction in energy costs, increased reliability and longevity and enabling the Council to meet its commitments on sustainable practices and reducing carbon emissions.

The report set out an analysis and assessment of three options for conversion of the Borough's street lighting to LED units, as follows:

- A bulk change of residential lights only;
- A bulk change of main roads and through routes only; and
- A bulk change of both residential and main

roads and through routes.

Members noted that a risk assessment had been undertaken, as detailed in the report. A number of methods of funding the upfront investment costs had also been considered.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) a programme of work to replace the current conventional street lighting with energy saving Light Emitting Diode (LED) Units be approved;
- 2) Council be recommended to include this £4.7m scheme within the 2015/16 Capital Programme, to be funded as outlined in the report;
- 3) the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources in consultation with the Operational Director, Finance, be authorised to determine the most financial advantageous method of financing the Conversion Programme; and
- 4) subject to resolution 3, the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, in consultation with the Operational Director, Finance, and the relevant Portfolio holders, be authorised to seek prudential borrowing of up to £4.7m to cover the costs of the LED Conversion Programme.

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RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB161 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16 for services provided by the Council.

The Board was advised that a review of fees and charges had been carried out as part of the budget preparations for 2015/16. Fees and charges for the Communities Directorate were approved by Executive Board on 26 February 2015, and were attached at Appendix B. It was reported that other fees and charges had been set to ensure that the Council recovered costs incurred as a result of providing the service charged for. Details were contained in Appendix A.

The Board was further advised that the cross- Policy

and Performance Board Topic Group was conducting a more detailed review of fees and charges, and that their work was likely to influence the setting of figures primarily for the 2016/17 budget.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2015/16, as set out in Appendices A and B, be approved.

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EXB162 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2015/16

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2015/16 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2015/2016 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

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EXB163 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION 2015

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

Members were advised that the revised 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.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the revised Constitution, including the amendments set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

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EXB164 DIRECTORATE PLANS 2015 - 2018

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the adoption of the Directorate Plans for 2015 - 18.

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. It was reported that the plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed.

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.

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EXB165 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 from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Sub-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 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.

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO AND RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB166 DISPOSAL OF VARIOUS PARCELS OF LAND FOR RESIDENTIAL DEVELOPMENT - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which sought approval to dispose of various parcels of land for residential development.

The Board was advised that development on the parcels of land identified as Castlefields, Lakeside; Latham Avenue (Land adjacent to The Grange School); Land at Grangeway; and Land at The Ridgeway were all subject to planning permission. The report contained detailed information on the proposed disposal and development of each location for Members' consideration.

Reason(s) for Decision

To dispose of surplus land at best value and to meet the housing requirements of the Borough. The do nothing option would mean that the sites remained unused for a further period of time, which would result in continued costs to the Council.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Place the land on the open market for sale; in Officers' opinion negotiated transactions offered the best opportunity of influencing the development outcomes to support regeneration and housing policies.

Implementation Date

Transactions were subject to contract and anticipated completion dates were October 2015.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of the various sites to the named developers, and on the terms as set out in the report and appendices, be approved subject to planning permission and subject to contract;
- 2) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise

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and Property, be authorised to arrange for all documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services; and

- 3) the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, be authorised in consultation with the Portfolio holders for Physical Regeneration and for Resources, to agree any appropriate and reasonable variations to the land price which may arise from more detailed ground investigations or Planning.

9th April 2015

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB168 2015/16 INSURANCE RENEWALS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, regarding the renewal of insurance premiums for 2015/16.

The Board was advised that emerging trends within the insurance market were putting pressure on rates, with many insurers looking for increased terms. It was reported that organisations that were prepared to accept a higher level of self-insurance were more attractive to insurers, and benefitted from lower premiums as a result.

It was noted that in recent years, the Council had moved towards taking on a greater level of self insurance in order to obtain cost-effective insurance cover and to minimise the revenue impact of increasing insurance premiums. Details of the increase in the level of excess across a number of insurance classes were contained in the report. Acting under delegated powers, the Operational Director, Finance, had reviewed insurance cover for 2015/16, as set out in paragraph 3.5. These changes had been taken after consultation with the Council's insurance broker, taking into account the Council's capacity to fund uninsured losses through the Insurance Reserve.

It was further reported that the draft Risk Financing and Insurance Strategy, attached at Appendix 1, set out how the Council would ensure that the structure of its insurance programme achieved the optimum balance between self-insurance and externally procured insurance.

Clarification was provided on insurance cover for Academy Schools. Upon transfer to Academy status, the Council would cease to provide such cover.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the changes in the Council's Insurance Programme regarding the purchase of external insurance for 2015/16 be noted; and
- 2) the Risk Financing and Insurance Strategy presented at Appendix 1, be approved.

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EXB169 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which set out details of three applications for Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief.

The Board was reminded that under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. At its meeting on 26 February 2015, the Board had approved a set of criteria which provided 15% discretionary relief where applications were approved from registered charities or community amateur sports clubs.

Details of the applications were set out in the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentages indicated, for the period 1 April 2015 to 31 March 2019;

Halton Community Partnership Trust –	15%
Halton Disability Partnership –	15%

- 2) That Discretionary Rate Relief is backdated in respect of the following organisations, at the percentage indicated, for the period up to 31 March 2015;

Halton Community Partnership Trust	20%
Halton Disability Partnership	20%

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- 3) The application for Discretionary Rate Relief from The Cyrenians Ltd, be refused on the grounds of them being a national organisation.

EXB170 ICT & SUPPORT SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the proposals for the ICT and Support Services Capital Programme.

The Board was advised that the long term investment made by the Council in its ICT infrastructure, had played a major part in its drive for greater efficiency. It was noted that this had enabled the Council to reduce its estate, introduce automated processes, facilitate greater use of agile working and enhance its income from Service Level Agreements from third parties, amongst other initiatives. In addition, it was noted that the Administrative Shared Service had successfully launched the Picow Farm Records Management Service, which delivered scanning and a document management services within the Council and to neighbouring authorities. This was also the location for the Council's second data centre, which enhanced the resilience of the Council's business continuity, as well as providing the ability to offer services to others.

The report set out details of the three key programme areas for the 2015/16 ICT Programme. These were noted as being:

- Licensing to support the strategy;
- Server Replacement and Development; and
- Desktop Device Refresh.

RESOLVED: That the details of the ICT and Support Services Capital Programme be noted and approved and the financial spend profile for 2015/16 be supported.

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