

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

15th October 2015

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB57 EXPRESSWAY INDUSTRIAL ESTATE DISPOSAL

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, regarding the disposal of the Expressway Industrial Estate.

The Board was provided with information on offers that had been received for the sale and disposal of the estate.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of Expressway Industrial Estate to the company and for the price referred to in the report be approved, with the proceeds shared on a 50/50 basis with the joint owners, following the deduction of legal and marketing costs; and
- 2) 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.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

5th November 2015

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB59 ANNUAL AUDIT LETTER 2014/15

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which presented the Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15.

The Board was advised that the Annual Audit Letter (the Letter) summarised the findings from the 2014/15 audit completed by Grant Thornton, the Council's external auditors. The Letter included messages arising from the audit of the financial statements and the results of the work

undertaken in assessing the Council's arrangements to secure value for money in the use of its resources.

Liz Temple Murray, Audit Manager for the external auditor, Grant Thornton UK LLP, attended the meeting and reported that an unqualified opinion had been issued on the Council's financial statements. The Letter also provided an unqualified conclusion that the Council had adequate arrangements to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.

The Board wished to place on record their thanks to all Officers that had assisted in the preparation of the audit.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Audit Letter for 2014/15 be approved.

Strategic Director
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Resources

EXB60 RETENDERING OF INSURANCE CONTRACTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which advised on the commencement of a procurement process for the re-tendering of a range of insurance contracts.

The Board was advised that in April 2011, the Council entered into five year contracts for a range of insurance services cover which included property/business interruption, contract works, ICT infrastructure, fidelity guarantee, motor vehicles and uninsured loss recovery. It was reported that these contracts were due to end on 31 March 2016, and the Council's insurance broker, Aon, had been asked to manage a procurement process to re-tender these services.

Members noted that the new contracts would run from 1 April 2016 for a three year duration, with the option to extend for a further two years. The procurement process was subject to European procurement rules and would be tendered accordingly.

RESOLVED: That the procurement process, to be entered into via The Chest, be noted, with the purpose of securing the following insurance services:

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Resources

- Property/Business Interruption cover;
- Contract Works cover;
- ICT Infrastructure cover;
- Fidelity Guarantee cover;
- Motor vehicle cover; and

- Uninsured Loss Recovery cover.

EXB64 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 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

EXB66 LAND DISPOSAL FOR EMPLOYMENT LAND AT JOHNSON'S LANE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, on proposals for the disposal of Plots A and B on Johnson's Lane, Widnes Waterfront.

The Board was advised that the Council owned approximately 20 acres of land at Johnson's Lane, Widnes. The whole site was placed on the market through property agents in November 2010.

It was reported that offers for Plots A and B had been received, as detailed in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the sale of two areas of land (Plot A and Plot B) of approximately 1.8 acres each, to the end users named in the report, for the values named in the report, both subject to planning permission and subject to contract, be approved; and
- 2) 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.

Strategic Director
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19th November 2015

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB73 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2016-17

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 Council was required to notify the figure for the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Environment Agency by 31 January 2016. In addition, the Council was required to calculate and advise the Parish Councils of their relevant Tax Bases.

The Board was advised that the Tax Base was the measure used for calculating the council tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (the Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner), in the calculation of their council tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula representing the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band "D" dwellings. Taking account of all the relevant information and

applying a 97.0% collection rate, the calculation for 2016/17 gave a tax base figure of 32,948 for the Borough as a whole.

It was noted that since 2013/14 onwards, the tax base calculation included an element for the Council Tax Reduction Scheme (the replacement for Council Tax Benefit).

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve

- 1) the Council Tax Base for 2016/17 be set at 32,948 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be as follows:

Operational
Director - Finance

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	659
Halebank	499
Daresbury	159
Moore	326
Preston Brook	336
Sandymoor	966

EXB74 2015-16 QUARTER 2 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reported on the 2015/16 Quarter 2 Spending as at 30 September 2015.

A summary of spending against the revenue budget up to 30 September 2015 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was advised that, in overall terms, the revenue expenditure was below the budget profile, although this was only a guide to eventual spending.

The report contained details on a number of significant areas of the budget including:-

- The employee budget and the staff turnover savings target;
- Expenditure on general supplies and services;
- High demand for services within the Children's and Families Department;

- Spending on employees and the use of agency staff;
- The proposed allocation of £0.5m of the contingency budget to help mitigate budget and service pressures in the Children and Families Department;
- Net expenditure within the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department;
- The Complex Care Pool budget;
- The collection rate for Council Tax and the retained element of Business Rates; and
- The Council's net overall spending.

The report also outlined details of a revision to the capital spending programme at Appendix 3 and monitoring of the Council's balance sheet. The schemes that had been revised within the programme were listed within the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolute minimum;
- 2) Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end is within their total operational budget;
- 3) the transfer of £0.5m from the 2015/16 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
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EXB75 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 2 2015/16

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, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing/investments, budget monitoring, new long term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB76 BUDGET PROPOSALS 2016/17 - SECOND SET - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which presented further revenue budget proposals for 2016/17.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) forecast revenue budget funding gaps would be approximately £16m in 2016/17 and £9m in 2017/18. A first set of savings proposals totalling £7.8m was approved by Council on 14th October 2015.

Appendix 1 presented a second set of proposals. It was proposed to implement these immediately in order to also achieve a part-year saving in 2015/16, which would assist in keeping the Council's overall spending in line with budget. In addition, a number of the proposals would take time to implement and therefore commencing the process as soon as possible would assist with ensuring they were fully implemented by 1 April 2016. Appendix 1 also presented the impact in 2017/18 of certain of the savings proposals.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the budget proposals for 2016/17 as set out in in Appendix 1, attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

10th December 2015

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB82 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2016-19

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2016/19.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) set out a three-year projection of resources and spending based on information currently available.

The projections in the forecast showed there was a need to make a significant level of savings over the next three years, as a result of the effect of the Government policy to reduce the national deficit through reductions in public sector funding. The Strategy took into account the following:

- Autumn Statement 2014;
- Business Rates Review 2015;
- Summer Budget 2015;
- Technical Consultation – Local Authority Public Health Allocations 2015/16 : In-Year Savings; and
- Comprehensive Spending Review 2015.

The forecast provided initial guidance to the Council on its financial position into the medium term. Revenue savings of approximately £18m, £16m and £7m would be required over the next three years. It was noted that as a result, £41m would need to be removed from the Council's budget, which represented 17% of the gross expenditure budget.

The Board was advised that the MTFS had a number of objectives, as listed in the report. The Council would need to consider these objectives when balancing its budget over the next three years. The report also set out the Council's budget strategy, with budget savings proposals for 2016/17 being presented in three sets. The first of these was considered by Council at its meeting on 14 October 2015. In addition, the report set out details of the Council's Capital Strategy, for the management of assets such as land and buildings in Council ownership.

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RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Budget Strategy and Capital Strategy be approved;
- 4) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved;
- 5) the award of Council Tax Support for 2016/17 remains at the 2015/16 level of 21.55%; and
- 6) the Council's 2016/17 Council Tax Support grant is not shared with the Parish Councils.

EXB83 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT
QUARTER 2 2015/16

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the second quarter to 30 September 2015.

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. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Executive Board had a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability. Performance Management would continue to be important in the demonstration of value for money and outward accountability.

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