

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

16th June 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB9 2015/16 FINANCIAL OUTTURN

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the final revenue and capital spending position for 2015/16.

The Board was advised that the final accounts for 2015/16 were near completion; the revenue spending for each Department, which would be subject to external audit, was attached to the report at Appendix 1.

It was reported that the budget savings for 2016/17 were implemented over three tranches, the first and second of which consisted of savings of £11.4m and approved by Council in October and December 2015. As a result of some of these savings being implemented early, it provided part-year savings in 2015/16.

The report provided details on the key variances (which were in addition to the overall net underspend) in the following services:

- Children and Families;
- Economy, Enterprise and Property;
- Education, Inclusion and Provision;
- Community and Environment;
- Finance;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Policy, Planning and Transportation; and
- Corporate and Democracy.

Members were advised that the Council's Reserves and Balances had been reviewed in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy. The Council's General Reserve stood at £5.391m. It was noted that the general reserve was now at its lowest level since 2003. Given the financial challenges and spending pressures the Council faced, the balance was considered to be at a reasonable level, but it was not considered prudent to make any further reductions to balance future budgets.

With regards to Capital Spending, details of spending against the 2015/16 Capital Programme were attached to the report at Appendix 2. It was noted that spending was £2.096m below the revised Capital Programme of £30.639m, which represented 93% delivery of the revised Capital Programme. Members were advised that although there had been slippage on several large projects, spend would be incurred into 2016/17.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the information within the report be taken into account when reviewing the medium term forecast and saving proposals for future years.

EXB10 TREASURY MANAGEMENT QUARTER 4 2015/16

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

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB11 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION – 100% BUSINESS RATES RETENTION PILOT AREA

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which related to the Liverpool City Region 100% Business Rates Retention Pilot Area.

The Board was advised that as part of the 2015 Spending Review, the Chancellor of the Exchequer announced plans that would involve councils retaining 100% of the business rates they collect. The Government's stated aims in making this change were set out in the report.

In March 2016, the Department for Communities and

Local Government (DCLG) approached the Liverpool City Region councils to act as a pilot area for the development of the new 100% business rates retention system. It was reported that the development of the pilot areas would include discussions regarding which additional service and funding responsibilities the councils might adopt and the timescales for doing so. DCLG would ensure that appropriate measures were developed to mitigate any financial risks and ensure that the new system was sustainable.

The report also advised that the offer of a four year Grant Settlement option, which had been offered by the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government in March 2016, provided a commitment to provide “minimum” grant allocations for each year up to 2019/20. The intention was to provide some degree of financial certainty and some assurance that each council’s grant allocations would not fall below a minimum level. Members were advised that, as part of the discussions regarding the LCR rates retention pilot area proposal, DCLG had guaranteed that during the pilot period each of the six councils would be financially no worse off than if they had taken up the four year grant settlement offer.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposal for the Liverpool City Region to be a pilot area for 100% business rates retention, as presented in the report, be noted; and
- 2) the decision taken by the Chief Executive under urgency powers to agree to Halton’s inclusion within the Liverpool City Region pilot arrangement, be noted.

EXB12 DISCRETIONARY BUSINESS RATES RELIEF REQUEST

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which detailed a request for discretionary business rates relief.

In April 2013, the Government introduced the Business Rates Retention Scheme, whereby the Council retained 49% of the business rates income collected up to a baseline level and also 49% of any growth in business rates income above that baseline. It was noted that the Scheme offered Councils a financial incentive to promote economic

growth.

The report set out the details of a request from a company based in Christleton Court, Manor Park in Runcorn. Members were advised that Officers of the Council had visited the company to evaluate their growth plans and to agree a series of realistic and deliverable outputs which would be conditional upon the award of any discretionary business rates relief.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) 100% Discretionary Business Rates Relief be granted "in principle" for Unit 8, 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 3.8 of the report;
- 2) Subject to resolution 1, at the end of the first six month period, if satisfactory progress is evidenced towards the creation of at least six new sustainable jobs within twelve months, a further six months relief be awarded as set out in paragraph 3.8 of the report; and
- 3) the Strategic Director, Community 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 8, Christleton Court, Manor Park, Runcorn, once the premises have been added to the rating list and subject to the conditions detailed in paragraph 3.8 of the report.

Strategic Director
- Community &
Resources

EXB13 DIRECTORATE OVERVIEW REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the fourth quarter year-end to 31 March 2016.

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 Directorate Risk Register.

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

EXB14 ICT & SUPPORT SERVICES CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which outlined the ICT and Support Services Capital Programme.

The Board was advised that, supported by last year's capital programme, the authority's technology infrastructure had undergone a considerable upgrade with major changes to the internal structure, wi-fi, server and storage infrastructure and server infrastructure licensing. It was noted that these changes had given the authority a multi-site resilient technology architecture that would enable the delivery of a true cloud based service to all of its users.

The report set out the key programme areas for the 2016/17 ICT Capital Programme, which was split into three distinct areas of Licensing, Desktop Development and Cloud Services. It also set out details of the financial spend profile for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes and approves the programme and IT Capital Programme spend profile for 2016/17.

EXB15 CORPORATE SECURITY CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, People and Economy, which advised of a tender opportunity for Corporate Security Services to be published via The Chest.

The Board was advised that Select Security (North West) Limited were awarded the Corporate Security Contract following a procurement exercise in 2015, for a three year period. It was reported that the company was placed into Administration on 19 January 2016. The company was sold and a change of company name had

taken place, with the new company known as Select Security (NW) Limited.

It was reported that, following a meeting, it was acknowledged that as an interim measure the Council had little option but to continue with the current provider of the security contract. However, this was subject to the new company demonstrating that they had everything in place to deliver such a service. This was confirmed and the Board was advised that the Chief Executive had used emergency powers to approve a waiver of procurement standing orders under Procurement Standing Order 1.8.1 in respect of the interim security arrangements.

The Board noted the new contract would be for a three year period with the provision for a twelve month extension subject to satisfactory performance giving a maximum contract length of four years.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board note the intention to procure a new corporate security contract in line with EU Public Procurement Regulations 2006 and Procurement Standing Orders; and
- 2) note that the Chief Executive approved a waiver of Standing Orders under Procurement Standing Order 1.8.1, in respect of the provision of interim security arrangements until such time that a new contract is awarded.

Strategic Director
- People and
Economy

14th July 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

(N.B. Councillor Jones declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business, as he was a Governor at Fairfield Primary School)

EXB22 2016/17 TO 2018/19 CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Council's total forecast Capital Programme expenditure and associated funding over the next three years.

The report updated Members on the latest position on the Council's Capital Programme, including confirmed and indicative capital grant allocations for 2016/17 and future

years. Table 1 provided details of the planned Capital Programme for 2016/17 onwards, based on current information for approved schemes. Table 2 summarised how the Capital Programme would be funded.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the updated Capital Programme for 2016/19, including forecast spend and funding, as set out in Table 1 and 2, be approved; and
- 2) the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, in consultation with the Transportation Portfolio holder, be authorised to agree a detailed implementation programme of Highways and Transportation schemes to be delivered in 2016/17.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community &
Resources

EXB23 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on an application for non-domestic rate relief.

The Board was advised that under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. Significant changes came into effect from 1 April 2013 in the funding of non-domestic rate reliefs and exemptions, with the Business Rates Retention Scheme. It was noted that the Council was now responsible for funding 49% of any award or relief granted, whereas before, the Government fully funded such arrangements.

A new application from The Cyrenians Limited had been received for top-up discretionary rate relief from 1 April 2016. However, the Board noted that historically, the Council had chosen not to provide top-up discretionary rate relief for national charities, and a previous application from The Cyrenians Limited in 2015 for similar relief had been rejected on this basis.

RESOLVED: That, under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the application for 15% discretionary rate relief from The Cyrenians Limited, be refused on the grounds of it being a national organisation.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community &
Resources

EXB24 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.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB25 PARKLANDS, CHAPEL LANE, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the Parklands Club, Chapel Lane, Widnes.

The report sought Members' approval to take forfeiture action by the Council to recover the possession of the premises known as Parklands.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the taking of forfeiture action by the Council as a Operational

result of breaches of the Lease covenants be approved; and

Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

- 2) the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, be authorised to take the necessary action to require the Tenants to comply with the terms of the Lease, and failing this, to seek forfeiture of the Lease.