

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 6 September 2007 in the Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Swain

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L. Cairns, G. Cook, D. Johnson, I. Leivesley, A. McIntyre, D. Parr and D Tregoe

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB25 MINUTES

Action

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19th July 2007 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB26 SUSTAINABLE SCHOOL TRAVEL POLICY 2007 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People, fulfilling the requirement under the Education and Inspections Act 2006 to determine a Sustainable School Travel Policy. It was noted that there were four main elements to the duty, all of which had been drawn together in the proposed Sustainable School Travel Policy 2007/8.

Requirements placed on the Authority were outlined for the Board's consideration and it was noted that there was a need to update the policy on an annual basis. Although the document was supposed to be published on the Council's website by the end of August 2007, the Department for

Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) had recognised that, due to the short time-scales given to produce the document, some local authorities may be unable to meet the deadline. The DCSF was aware of Halton's progress.

Reason for Decision

The decision was required to fulfil the Council's statutory duty to promote the use of sustainable travel and transport.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

Academic Year 2007/08 and reviewed annually.

RESOLVED: That the Sustainable School Travel Policy 2007/8 be approved.

EXB27 2007 REVIEW OF THE CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S PLAN 2006-2009 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing information on the Annual Review of the Children and Young People's Plan 2006/09. It was noted that the Plan was one of the statutory requirements introduced by the Children Act 2004 setting out the priorities, targets and actions by which the local authority and its partners would jointly achieve the five Every Child Matters Outcomes for children and young people in the Borough. The plan had to be reviewed on an annual basis and, this year, guidance had been received that the review of the plan would also be the authority's self assessment for the purpose of the Annual Performance Assessment (APA).

Information regarding the self-evaluation grades to be awarded were outlined for the Board's information. These would feed into the grades for the Children and Young People's block of the Audit Commission's Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA).

It was noted that the reduction of children and young people not in education, training and employment, and an increase in the qualification levels of young people in Halton, were the Children and Young People's Plan priorities for 2007 – 2009.

In relation to the qualification levels of young people in Halton, the Board congratulated officers within the Children and Young People Directorate on the excellent results recently received at Key Stage 2 and GCSE Level.

Reasons for Decision

This was a key decision as the plan was significant in terms of its effects on children and young people, families and communities in Halton.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

The Children and Young People's Plan would be reviewed annually and the review published in June of that year. The current Children and Young People's Plan was initiated in April 2006 and was applicable to 2009.

RESOLVED: That the 2007 Review of the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-2009 be endorsed.

COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB28 HALTON PLAY PLAN AND LOTTERY FUND APPLICATION - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Children and Young People providing Members with the 'final draft Play Plan' and information concerning Halton's bid for Play Projects to be funded through Big Lottery Fund – Play Initiative.

The Board noted that the need to improve the provision that was made for children to play was acknowledged in a range of national policy areas, and local authorities in England had a statutory duty, under the Children Act 2004, to co-operate in their provision for the enjoyment of play and recreation as part of the five key outcomes for children. The Secretary of State for the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF), had recently announced projects to support the well-being of children with the focus on play, which enabled children to lead healthy, safe and happy lives, stating that the department would be taking on dual responsibility for play with the Department for Culture, Media and Sport to develop

fun, safe and effective children's play.

As part of the Big Lottery Funded/Play England "Children's Play Initiative", Halton had the opportunity to bid for £385,830 for play projects. Together with a £50,000 grant for wheeled sports facility at Runcorn Town Hall and a further £100,000 levered funding through WREN (Waste Recycling Environmental's landfill tax community fund), the total cost of the proposed projects was £535,830.

The timetable for the Big Lottery Fund application was set out and it was noted that a requirement of the bidding criteria was for authorities to develop and adopt a "local" Play Plan. Halton's Play Plan had been developed by the Play Partnership under the leadership of the Community Portfolio Holder who had agreed to take on the role of Play Champion.

The Board noted the positive contribution of the Plan and the extensive consultation undertaken but noted that there was a need to ensure Member involvement in all future consultation processes.

Reasons for Decision

The endorsement of the Play Plan was a criteria of Big Lottery Fund for authorities submitting funding applications to the Big Lottery Fund Play Initiative.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

An alternative was to not submit an application to Big Lottery Fund Play England Initiative. This option was rejected on the basis of a lost opportunity to access external funding.

Implementation Date

10th September 2007.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Play Plan be approved; and
- (2) the application for the Big Lottery Fund - Play Initiative Bid be endorsed.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy detailing the recommendations of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board for improving the operation of Area Forums.

It was noted that the review had involved surveys, focus groups, interviews and visits to other local authorities. It had looked at how Forums had evolved in Halton, and had identified recommendations for further improvements. The report of the review was outlined at Appendix 1 of the report and the recommendations were set out in Section 5.

The Board considered the following issues:

- attendance at meetings;
- hard to reach groups;
- the cost associated with extra meetings;
- whether extra meetings would have a positive impact on attendance;
- the need to retain flexibility within Area Forums, so that they could tailor their style to meet local need; and
- the need to continue to access the views of hard-to-reach groups via a variety of methods already in place and to feed this information into the process, for example via neighbourhood management.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) option 3 – to retain the current forum arrangements, but to develop their role to increase participation by residents and partners - be supported;
- (2) each Area Forum retain flexibility in terms of the style and nature of their meetings;
- (3) the involvement of the Youth Forums in meetings be welcomed; and
- (4) the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy prepare an action plan for the implementation of the Board's decision in the 2008/9 Municipal Year and regular progress reports be made to the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board.

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

HEALTH AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Directors of Health and Community, and Children and Young People, and of the Director of Public Health – Halton and St. Helens Primary Care Trust (PCT), providing an overview of the requirement to produce a JSNA in line with Department of Health guidance.

It was noted that the JSNA was a process that resulted in the production of a document of significant strategic importance. The process, and subsequent documentation managed jointly by the local authority and PCT, described the future health, care and well-being needs of local populations and the strategic direction of service delivery to meet those needs over 3-5 years. The objective and nature of a strong and effective JSNA, together with the process to be undertaken, were outlined for the Board's consideration.

It was noted that discussions had already commenced with a range of key stakeholders and a timetable for completion of the JSNA had been produced. The Health Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) would be the responsible and accountable group to ensure that the document was produced in the timetables identified, with regular update reports to be made to the Executive Board, the Local Strategic Partnership, the PCT Board and the Healthy Halton Policy and Performance Board.

RESOLVED: That the process outlined in the proposed co-ordination section be supported and a draft JSNA be received in 2008.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

(NB Councillor Nelson declared a personal interest in the following item of business due to being a board member of Groundwork Mersey Valley.)

EXB31 GROUNDWORK MERSEY VALLEY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community in relation to proposals from Groundwork Mersey Valley regarding the way its service was organised.

It was noted that Groundwork Mersey Valley was set up in 2001 as a new Trust with the transfer of staff from the

former Mersey Valley Partnership, an organisation working with local people and other organisations on a range of environmental improvement projects.

The Council had had a contractual agreement with Groundwork Mersey Valley since October 2001, which terminated on 30th September 2007. The proposal, as it affected Halton, was to merge Groundwork Mersey Valley and Groundwork Wirral into one organisation and then to extend its remit to cover the whole of Merseyside. The new Trust (Groundwork Merseyside), would be operational from April 2008.

Groundwork's view was that smaller Trusts were not sustainable in business terms, and were not geared up to taking a strategic approach to their objectives. In response to this, officers considered that, in principle and in business terms, the proposals appeared to be sound. However, there were some concerns, which were outlined for the Board's consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the proposals to merge Groundwork Mersey Valley and Groundwork Wirral be supported in principle, but the concerns raised in paragraph 4.2 of the report be forwarded to Groundwork and a response be requested; and
- (2) it be noted that the support in principle does not represent any financial commitment or support.

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

EXB32 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 item of business in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB33 WIDNES VIKINGS RLFC

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining the actions taken by the Leader and Chief Executive, in accordance with Article 17.01 (c) of the Council's Constitution, in relation to the Widnes Vikings Rugby League Football Club.

RESOLVED: That the actions of the Leader and Chief Executive be noted.

MINUTES ISSUED: 13th September 2007

CALL IN: 20th September 2007

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 20th September 2007

Meeting ended at 3.00 p.m.