

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

20th October 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

**EXB50 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS
QUARTER 1**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the first quarter 2016/17.

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. 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.

**EXB51 POLICY CHANGES RELATING TO TAXI LICENSING
CONDITIONS**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, regarding policy changes in respect of Taxi Licensing Conditions.

The Board was advised that the policy changes recommended by the Regulatory Committee were the culmination of a consultation exercise via the Taxi Consultative Group. The Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 5 October 2016, had recommended the adoption of the policy changes which related to both hackney carriage and private hire conditions. It was noted that a number of the proposed policy changes were set out in Appendix B, attached to the Regulatory Committee report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the policy changes amending existing conditions relating to hackney carriage and private hire licensing as recommended by the Regulatory Committee at its meeting on 5 October 2016, be adopted as Council Policy;
- 2) the adoption shall take effect on 24 October 2016; and
- 3) to reflect the decision of the Council at its meeting held on 14 September 2016 (which related to the adoption and re-adoption of Part II Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976), all existing policies of the Council relating to public and private hire (as amended by the changes made in resolution 1), shall be adopted and re-adopted on 24 October 2016.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community &
Resources

17th November 2017

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB56 ANNUAL EXTERNAL AUDIT LETTER 2015/16

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Annual Audit Letter 2015/16.

The Board was advised that the Annual Audit Letter (the Letter) summarised the findings from the 2015/16 external 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.

Georgia Jones, 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 the use of its resources. It was noted that the planned audit for 2016/17 of the Highways Network Asset would be deferred for 12 months.

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 2015/16 be approved.

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB59 BOUNDARY REVIEW 2018 - INITIAL PROPOSALS FOR NEW PARLIAMENTARY CONSTITUENCY BOUNDARIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, on the initial proposals for new Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries.

The report advised Members that the Boundary Commission for England was conducting a review of Parliamentary Constituency Boundaries, based on rules that required a reduction in the number of constituencies in the UK. It was reported that the rules stipulated that for the whole of the UK, there should be 600 Parliamentary constituencies, and that within England, there would be a reduction in number from the current 533 to 501. Each constituency must have an electorate range of between 71,031 and 78,507.

The report set out the timetable for the review, with consultations on the initial proposals as they relate to Halton, closing on 5 December 2016. A four week "secondary consultation" period was expected to take place in Spring 2017 when all responses that had been made would be published.

The document contained a link to the Boundary Commission website so as to obtain details of the initial proposals and the link to an interactive consultation website for views to be submitted in writing.

RESOLVED: That Members note the Boundary Review process.

EXB60 TREASURY MANAGEMENT HALF YEAR POSITION 2016-17

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

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community &
Resources

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.

EXB61 2016/17 QUARTER 2 SPENDING

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which reported on the 2016/17 Quarter 2 Spending as at 30 September 2016.

A summary of spending against the revenue budget up to 30 September 2016 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was advised that, in overall terms, revenue expenditure was £0.442m above the budget profile, although this profile was only a guide to expected spending. However, historically, as the spend in the first half year tended to be lower, accelerating towards year end, there was a significant risk that the Council may overspend its budget for the year.

The report contained details of the main budget pressure within the Children and Families Department, and in particular, out of Borough residential placements and fostering. It was reported that the cost of out of Borough residential placements continued to grow, with spend for the year to date up 19% compared to the same period last year.

The report also outlined details of a shortfall in income in the Community and Environment Department; spending on employees; staff turnover targets; expenditure on general supplies and services and the Council Tax collection rate for the first quarter for 2016/17. The Capital Spending Programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles as schemes developed and these were detailed in Appendix 3.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
- 2) Strategic Directors take all reasonable steps to ensure overall spending is contained within their total operational budget by year-end; and
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the revised

Operational
Director - Finance

Capital Programme, as set out in Appendix 3, attached to the report.

EXB62 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2017/18 - KEY DECISION

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 2017. 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 (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 Band "D" dwellings. Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2017/18 gave a base figure of 33,818 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 2017/18 be set at 33,818 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:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	662

Operational
Director - Finance

Halebank	522
Daresbury	174
Moore	328
Preston Brook	332
Sandymoor	1,020

EXB63 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2017/20 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2017/18 to 2019/20.

The Board was advised that the 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. This was the effect of the projections of public spending through to 2020 which resulted from the 2015 Comprehensive Spending Review. The Strategy took account of:

- The Budget, announced in March 2016 and the Autumn Statement 2016 announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer on 25 November 2015;
- The Comprehensive Spending Review 2015;
- Technical consultation on the future of New Homes Bonus dated December 2015; and
- The announcement on schools revenue funding for 2017/18.

The Strategy provided initial guidance to the Council on its financial position into the medium term. Revenue savings of approximately £11.7m, £11.7m and £9.2m would be required over the next three years. It was noted that as a result, £33m would need to be removed from the Council's budget which represented 21.6% 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 and areas identified for further savings. The report also contained details of the Council's Capital Strategy for the management

of assets such as land and buildings in Council ownership and occupation.

Reason(s) for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2017/18 to 2019/20.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option of not maintaining a Medium Term Financial Strategy had been considered. However, this would not follow good financial management practice, as the Medium Term Financial Strategy was a key element in informing the Council's financial planning and budget setting processes.

Implementation Date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy would be implemented from 1 April 2017.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2017/18 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Budget Strategy and the Capital Strategy be approved;
- 4) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved;
- 5) the award of Council Tax Support for 2017/18 remains at the 2016/17 level of 21.55%; and
- 6) the Council's 2017/18 Council Tax Support Grant is not shared with the Parish Councils.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB64 INITIAL BUDGET PROPOSALS 2017/18

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which presented revenue budget proposals for 2017/18.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy forecast revenue budget funding gaps of nearly £33m over the next three years, assuming no increase in Council Tax. It was noted that budget savings proposals were being developed by the Budget Working Group.

Appendix 1 presented the first set of proposals totalling £7.9m proposals and it was proposed to implement these immediately in order to achieve a part-year saving in 2016/17. This 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 this process as soon as possible would assist with ensuring they were fully implemented from 1 April 2017.

It was reported that a second set of budget saving proposals currently under consideration by the Budget Working Group, would be recommended to Council on 8 March 2017, in order to deliver a balanced budget for 2017/18.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the budget proposals for 2017/18 as set out in Appendix 1, attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

15th December 2016

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB73 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 2016/17

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

EXB74 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 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, 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

EXB75 PROPOSED DISPOSAL OF THE FREEHOLD INTEREST IN THE CROFT PUB, RUNCORN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval for the proposed disposal of the Council's freehold interest of the site of the former Croft Public House, Runcorn.

The Board was advised that the former Croft Public House had been closed for around two years and that the site had been the subject of anti-social behaviour and was visually unattractive. It was reported that the agents had submitted a proposal to develop the site for residential use as assisted living units of accommodation.

The report set out details of the proposed transaction for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the disposal of the site to The Croft Halton Limited be approved, for the sum set out in the report, net, subject to contract and subject to planning permission in accordance with the Heads of Terms, attached to the report at Appendix 1; 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
- Enterprise,
Community &
Resources