

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 17 September 2020 via remote access

Present: Councillors Polhill (Chair), D. Cargill, Harris, R. Hignett, S. Hill, Jones, T. McInerney, Nelson, Wharton and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, D. Parr, I. Leivesley, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, A. Jones, S. McDonald and H. Moir

Also in attendance: One member of the press and 5 members of the public

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 30 July 2020 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

EXB11 COVID-19 UPDATE

The Executive Board received an update and presentation on the most recent COVID-19 Coronavirus figures for Halton.

This included how the Halton outbreak support team were working within the contain framework to successfully identify and manage local outbreaks using information from NHS Test and Trace and how this worked with the Cheshire Hub. It also detailed the most recent information on Halton's testing approach in the community and for schools.

RESOLVED: That the presentation and update be noted.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB12 URGENT DECISIONS

The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided the urgent decisions taken since

the last meeting of the Board and during the COVID-19 Pandemic.

It was noted that the Council's constitution gave authority to the Chief Executive to take urgent decisions, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the Operational Director Finance and/or the Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary. As Council meetings were suspended for some time during the Coronavirus outbreak, a number of urgent decisions had been necessary.

A list of these decisions were provided to Members in the report and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CHILDREN, EDUCATION AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB13 FINANCIAL SUPPORT TO CARE PROVIDERS DURING THE PANDEMIC

The Board was presented with an update from the Strategic Director – People, on the current financial support available to care providers to support additional cost pressures related to COVID-19.

It was agreed that COVID-19 had been one of the greatest challenges for care providers nationally; in relation to ensuring the health and wellbeing of their residents and service users, and the additional financial impact of the virus. It was noted that the levels of expenditure in this area were significant and essential to reduce the impact of the virus on vulnerable individuals, who relied on the providers to keep them safe and well.

As Members were aware, it was important to note that the care market was fragile prior to the impact of COVID-19 with ongoing challenges in relation to sustainability and quality of care.

The report discussed the emergency funding made available to local government and how this had been utilised locally to ensure financial support was available to all contracted care providers within Halton.

Members were presented with a number of options

for consideration in relation to the provision of ongoing financial support to the sector during the Pandemic, as outlined in paragraph 3.10 of the report. It was recommended that the Board agrees to Option 2 – *for the Local Authority to fund only additional PPE costs, once the infection control grant funding ceased* – for the reasons explained in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) notes the contents of the report; and
- 2) agrees that Option 2 be carried in relation to the provision of ongoing financial support to the sector during the period of the Pandemic.

Director of Adult
Social Services

TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO

EXB14 LOCAL BUS CONTRACT TENDERS

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which notified them of the Local Bus Contract Framework coming to an end in March 2021.

Members were advised of a proposal to move from a framework type agreement to a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) to cover the period April 2021 to March 2023, with an option to extend the period by a further two years. It was reported that a DPS would allow for flexibility to allow suppliers to join at any time during the lifetime of the DPS once they had satisfied the relevant criteria.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) approves the use of a Dynamic Purchasing System (DPS) agreement for the procurement of supported local bus contracts; and
- 2) notes that under Procurement Standing Order Part 2.1, the accumulative value of the contracts was projected to be in excess of £1m over the period of the DPS agreement.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB15 LOCAL TRANSPORT RESPONSES TO PANDEMIC

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which updated them on the works undertaken to support the local economy and protect public health during the Pandemic.

It was reported that the guidance issued by the Departments' for Transport and Education on the restart of the transport network formed the basis of the measures implemented. This highlighted the critical importance of walking and cycling, and the allocation of public space to allow people to travel and access services in a way that aided the ongoing need for social distancing.

The report provided information on the acceleration of local measures, to help support the safe and sustainable movement of people in the 'new normal'. For Members information Appendix 1 listed the tranche 1 schemes already in place and tranche 2 schemes still in development.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) notes the interventions taken so far; and
- 2) receives future updates on developments in this area.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

Councillors Polhill and Wharton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following item as they are both Non-Executive Directors of the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and left the meeting for the duration of the item.

EXB16 MERSEY GATEWAY

The Executive Board received a report from the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, which sought approval to a process of consultation, so that the current *Road User Charging Scheme Order* (RUCSO), could be revoked and replaced with an updated Order.

It was reported that this was required due to the imminent reopening of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and the changes to the road layout on the Runcorn approach to the SJB associated with the Runcorn Station Quarter regeneration. There was a requirement to update the existing Order to reflect the new road configuration. The draft updated Order was attached to the report in Appendix 1.

In requesting the Board's approval for the above, Members were also requested to consider:

- the approach roads to the SJB and their associated drawings – which need to be updated;
- further exemptions to be applied – following a representation received by the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board, suggesting anomalies in the toll

charging regime and subsequent proposal to add further exceptions to the list of vehicles exempt from toll charges; and

- charges payable – moving the two tables of *Charges Payable* from the actual Order to the Schedule attached to the Order, to enable revision by a variation order rather than the whole Order.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) consult on making an updated RUCSO in the form (or substantially the same form) as that in Appendix 1, on the basis prescribed in the report;
- 2) give full and proper consideration to any comments received, make the updated RUCSO in the form (or substantially the same form) as that in Appendix 1 and delegate to the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, the authority to make any non-material or consequential amendments as are necessary to give it effect; and
- 3) authorises the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, to take all necessary steps to bring the RUCSO into effect, provided that any material amendments or considerations shall be considered by the Executive Board before the RUCSO is brought into effect.

Operational
Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB17 ASTMOOR REGENERATION PROGRAMME

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Astmoor 5-year Regeneration Masterplan and Delivery Strategy and recommended it for adoption.

It was noted that in March 2017, Executive Board approved the *Mersey Gateway Regeneration Plan Plus* (MGRPP), as a way of prioritising resources in respect of the Council's physical and economic regeneration activity. Focussed on eight Regeneration Impact Areas, the Plan set out a cohesive package of development opportunities and identified the key infrastructure and enabling projects needed to complement and support the Borough's economic growth. The Plan identified the former new town industrial estate of Astmoor as one of the eight Regeneration Impact Areas.

Following this an Astmoor Annual Delivery Plan (ADP) was produced to steer the development and implementation of a comprehensive regeneration programme for the area; this was approved by Executive Board in June 2018. Appended to the report was the Astmoor Funding Profile 2020.

The report provided Members with detailed information on:

- the consultation events in March 2019;
- the Discretionary Business Rates Scheme;
- the aims and objectives of the Masterplan and Delivery Strategy;
- progress to date and the next steps;
- the relocation of inappropriate uses on the estate;
- the greening of Astmoor; and
- the way forward.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) adopts the Masterplan and Delivery Strategy for Astmoor;
- 2) recommends to full Council a variation to the capital programme of £1.5m to cover the costs as outlined in Section 6 of the report; and
- 3) approves the extension to the Discretionary Business Rates Scheme of one year to March 2025.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PORTFOLIO

EXB18 BOROUGH OF CULTURE

The Board received an update on the preparations being made to deliver Halton's Borough of Culture year in 2021.

It was noted that although the report sets out a potentially exciting programme of activities, the ongoing uncertainty surrounding the COVID-19 Pandemic and its impact on the Visitor and Cultural Economy could not be underestimated.

It was reported that the Pandemic could have a bearing on the Council's ability to deliver the programme in its entirety. Additionally the breadth of the programme would be influenced by the drawdown of match-funding, the level of commitment from the Borough's partners, as well as

the level of human resources that could be made available to support this.

Members were referred to the appendices attached to the report and the Board was requested to approve in principle, the progression of the programme ideas outlined in these:

- The project overview of the proposed Borough of Culture programme to be used for funding applications;
- The timetable summary 2021; and
- The list of proposed events.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves, in principle, the draft programme outlined in the report;
- 2) acknowledges that the programme may be subject to change; and
- 3) receives a further progress report in due course.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

RESOURCES PORTFOLIO

EXB19 BUSINESS RATES SECTION 44A DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF POLICY STATEMENT

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval of the Business Rates Section 44A Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Statement, to allow discretionary relief for short term periods for unoccupied or partly unoccupied business premises.

The Business Rates Section 44A Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Statement was presented to Members in Appendix A of the report.

RESOLVED: That the Business Rates Section 44A Discretionary Rate Relief Policy Statement, as presented in Appendix A, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB20 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented an application for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance

Act 1988, for consideration.

The report outlined details of the application from *Sports Traider*, a registered Charity and a letter detailing the Charity's aims and activities was attached at Appendix 2 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board approves the application from *Sports Traider* for the award of 15% discretionary rate relief in respect of Unit 39, Orchard Way, Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB21 2020/21 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 30 JUNE 2020

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 June 2020, together with a forecast outturn position. It also advised Members on the financial impact of Covid-19 and summarised Government funding made available to the Council to date.

The following appendices were attached:

- A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 June 2020 – Appendix 1;
- Detailed figures for each individual department – Appendix 2; and
- Capital Programme spending – Appendix 3.

It was reported that as at 30 June 2020 total spending was £770,000 above budget and in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over budget by £6.951m, unless corrective action was taken. It was noted that this was inclusive of additional costs and loss of income incurred as a result of Covid-19 as explained in paragraph 3.2.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continued to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Departments seek to implement those approved budget savings proposals which currently remained to be actioned;
- 3) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year;

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

- 4) the write off debts as set out in paragraph 3.19 be approved; and
- 5) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.17.

EXB22 ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2020-2023

The Board received an overview of the new one page Organisational Development (OD) Strategy 2020-23, from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources.

It was noted that a contemporary approach had been adopted in the development of the Strategy and it was no longer appropriate to have lengthy and time consuming strategies that few employees had the time or inclination to read. The factors taken into account for the new design and content were explained in the report and the *Organisational Development Strategy – Unlocking our Potential 2020-23* was appended to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board note the Organisational Strategy 2020-23.

EXB23 CORPORATE SECURITY CONTRACT

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which notified Members of the intention to go out to tender with regards to procuring a new corporate security contract in line with the Council's procurement strategy.

Members noted that the existing contract was due to expire on 28 February 2021, so the new contact would commence on 1 March 2021 and be for a 3 year period with the option to extend it for a further 12 months, subject to satisfactory performance.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the intention to go out to tender via the Chest, in respect of procuring a new corporate security contract.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

MINUTES ISSUED: 23 September 2020

CALL-IN: 30 September 2020 at 5.00 pm

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 30 September 2020.

Meeting ended at 3.20 p.m.