

APPENDIX 1

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 JANUARY 2022

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB65 DISCRETIONARY NON DOMESTIC BUSINESS RATE RELIEF

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented two applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The report outlined details of the applications from NMO Spectrum UK and the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation, in respect of their premises. Appended to the report was the potential annual cost to the Council of granting discretionary rate relief to each organisation.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the request for 15% discretionary rate relief from NMO Spectrum UK in respect of premises at D1, 1st Floor Centre Point, Victoria Square, Widnes, from 1 January 2022, be approved; and
- 2) the request for 15% discretionary rate relief from the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation in respect of premises at Unit 2, Ditton Court, Widnes, from 17 June 2021, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB66 COVID ADDITIONAL BUSINESS RATE RELIEF FUND 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which requested approval for a discretionary business rate scheme for the distribution of Government financial support for businesses affected by the Covid pandemic, but were ineligible for existing support linked to business rates.

Members were advised that on 15 December 2021 Government announced that they would provide additional relief to businesses that did not qualify for any previous reliefs announced as part of the response to Covid-19. The new Covid-19 Additional Relief Fund (CARF) was £1.5 billion and the amount allocated to Halton was £3,087,468. The CARF support would be provided to businesses through rate relief to their 2021/22 business rate accounts, rather than via a grant payment.

Appended to the report was the *Covid Additional Relief Fund Policy*, which outlined the Scheme's scope and eligibility, application process and how award amounts would be calculated.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Discretionary Covid Business Rate Additional Relief Policy included at Appendix A be approved; and
- 2) approval be given to the Operational Director – Finance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to amend the Covid Business Rate Additional Relief Policy, to ensure the Council distributes the full amount of Government grant funding allocated for the Scheme.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB67 REVENUE SPENDING AS AT 31 DECEMBER 2021

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 31 December 2021 together with a forecast outturn position; and reported the financial impact of Covid-19 which included a summary of Government funding made available to the Council to date.

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 31 December 2021 was presented in Appendix 1, and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £2.998m. It was noted that this represented a significantly improved position on the forecast provided in quarter 2, where the forecast outturn was an overspend of up to £5.843m; the report outlined the reasons for the improved position. The revisions to the Capital Programme were listed in the report and the revised Capital

Programme was attached at Appendix 3.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continues to be limited to only absolutely essential items;
- 2) Strategic Directors take urgent action to identify areas where spending could be reduced or suspended for the remainder of the current financial year; and
- 3) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.18.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB68 BUDGET 2022/23

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2022/23.

The Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) was approved at the Executive Board meeting on 18 November 2021. It was reported that there were funding gaps of around £12.0m in 2022/23, £4.2m in 2023/24 and £2.6m in 2024/25. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- Deliver a balanced and sustainable budget;
- Prioritise spending towards the Council's priority areas;
- Avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- Achieve significant cashable efficiency gains;
- Protect essential front line services and vulnerable members of the community; and
- Deliver improved procurement.

In terms of consultation, it was noted that the Council used various methods to listen to the views of the public, and Members own experiences through their Ward work was an important part of that process. Individual consultations had taken place in respect of specific budget proposals and equality impact assessments would be completed where necessary.

The proposed revenue budget for 2022/23 totalled £113.891m; the departmental analysis of this was shown in Appendix C and the major reasons for change from the

current budget were shown in Appendix D. Further to the £1.783m savings approved by Council on 8 December 2021, Appendix B presented further proposed budget savings for 2022/23 of £0.504m.

The Board was advised the final Local Government Finance Settlement figures were awaited, along with confirmation of some 2022/23 grant allocations including the Public Health grant. It was confirmed that the Council would continue to participate in the pilot of the 100% Business Rates Retention Scheme, as part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR).

Further information was provided on the budget outlook, Halton's Council Tax, Parish precepts, Police, Fire and Liverpool City Region Mayor precepts, the Capital Programme, Prudential Code and School Budgets.

It was noted that Members' had received copies of letters from Derek Twigg MP and Mike Amesbury MP, opposing the closure of Runcorn Swimming Pool, as part of the budget savings for 2022/23. Members of the public had also made their objections known to the proposed closure of the pool. Following the Board's consideration of the matter the Leader proposed an amendment to the recommendation. This was seconded and agreed by the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A, which includes setting the budget at £113.891m, the Council Tax requirement of £57.174m (before Parish, Police, Fire and LCR Combined Authority precepts) and the Band D council Tax for Halton of £1,595.67;
- 2) the recommendations in the report relating to the setting of the 2022/23 budget, set out in Appendix B and Capital Programme set out in Appendix F, be supported and recommended to Full Council for approval, with the exception of the proposal contained therein in relation to the closure of Runcorn Swimming Pool;
- 3) the proposal to close Runcorn Swimming Pool be put on hold for a period, no longer than six months, to allow time to see if an alternative delivery model can

Operational
Director - Finance

be identified by giving the opportunity for a third party to come forward with a costed and sustainable business plan to take over the running of the baths. That opportunity would be widely advertised to attract potential interest;

- 4) any proposal must cover both the capital and revenue costs of running the pool in the future;
- 5) if no such proposal is submitted that meets the above criteria within that six month period then the closure of the pool would proceed at that point; and
- 6) the subsequent gap this causes in the budget currently recommended by officers be met by increasing the amount of reserves and balances being utilised to set a legal budget for 2022/23.

EXB69 TREASURY MANAGEMENT STRATEGY STATEMENT 2022-23

The Board received the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, (TMSS) which incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) Strategy for 2022/23.

The TMSS was appended to the report and detailed the expected activities of the treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2022/23). Its production and submission to Council was a requirement of the CIPFA Prudential Code and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code.

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to have regard to the Prudential Code and to set Prudential Indicators for the next three years, to ensure that the Council's capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable.

The Act therefore required the Council to set out its treasury strategy for borrowing and to prepare an Annual Investment Strategy (AIS), which set out the Council's policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments. Government guidance notes stated that authorities could combine the TMSS and the AIS into one report, which the Council had done and was included in Section 4.

Members noted that the production of a Minimum Revenue Provision Policy Statement was required and a formal statement for approval was contained within the report at paragraph 2.3, with the full policy shown in Appendix A.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the policies, strategies, statements, prudential and treasury indicators outlined in the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB70 CAPITAL STRATEGY 2022-23

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the Council’s Capital Strategy for 2022/23.

It was reported that all councils were required to produce a Capital Strategy annually, the aim of which was to ensure that the Council understood the overall long-term policy objectives and resulting capital strategy requirements, governance procedures and risk appetite.

Members were advised that the Capital Strategy should be read in conjunction with the Treasury Management Strategy Statement, included on the same agenda; this detailed the expected activities of the treasury management function and incorporated the Annual Investment Strategy (AIS) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy for 2022/23. It was noted that the successful delivery of the Capital Strategy would assist the Council in planning and funding its capital expenditure over the next three years.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the 2022/23 Capital Strategy, as presented in the Appendix attached to the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

EXB71 CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2022-23

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of meetings for the 2022/23 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB76 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 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.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

With prior permission from the Leader, Councillors Carol and Norman Plumpton Walsh remained to observe the following item.

EXB77 ACQUISITION OF ST PAUL'S MEWS, RUNCORN

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, requesting approval to the acquisition of the freehold property of 1-4 St Pauls Mews, Runcorn.

Supporting information and financial implications in respect of the proposal were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) approves the acquisition and of the freehold interest in 1-4 St Pauls Mews, Runcorn, as reported in paragraph 3.4;
- 2) authorises the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property, to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director for Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services; and
- 3) requests that full Council amend the Capital Programme to accommodate this purchase.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 MARCH 2022

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

79) PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2022/23

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2022-23 for Halton Borough Council.

The Council was required to publish a Pension Discretion Statement annually, to advise the discretions it intended to exercise under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) – this was appended to the report.

It was reported that the Pensions Discretion Statement for 2022-23 was based upon the statement for 2021-22, which was approved by Executive Board in February 2021. It was noted that no new discretions had been added and one discretion had been removed for 2022-23 as described in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2022-23.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB80 MOOR LANE BUS DEPOT

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which advised of two offers that had been received for the former bus depot

on Moor Lane.

Members were advised that in November 2020, the Council commissioned Thornber and Walker, a quantity surveyor consultancy to carry out a high level feasibility study to ascertain the potential costs of refurbishing the Moor Lane Bus Depot to provide commercial space. They estimated that the cost of refurbishment would be in the region of £5m. Since the report was commissioned however, construction costs had increased and the building had been designated a Grade 2 listing by Historic England.

It was noted that the listing would have a bearing on any future use of the building, because the listing also related to the interior of the building. The Board was presented with four potential options for the future use of the building. They were also advised of two offers that had been made from local businesses (referred to as X and Y) and the recommendations from officers following these.

RESOLVED: That the Board authorise officers to progress more detailed discussions with Company Y, which would culminate in Company Y being granted a lease for the building.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB81 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the proposed fees and charges for 2022-23, for services provided by both of the Council's Directorates.

The review of fees and charges had been carried out as part of the budget preparations for 2022-23; these were presented in the schedules shown in Appendix A, B and C appended to the report.

The general aim in setting fees and charges was to ensure that the Council fully recovered the cost incurred in providing the service. In a number of cases this was achieved by breaking down the cost of providing a service on a unit basis, but given the volume of services the Council provided, it was not always feasible on a case by case basis. Estimated costs would be reviewed at individual service level and budgeted income targets set to ensure the Council fully recovered the cost of providing that service. It was noted that recovery of the full costs of services throughout the year was dependent on a number of other

factors outside the agreed charge, such as demand, competition and statutory elements.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2022-23, as set out in Appendix A and for 2023-24 as set out in Appendices B and C, be approved.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB86 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 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.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB88 WOODEND, FORMER UNIT 10 CATALYST TRADING ESTATE, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic

Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval to lease Woodend, Former Unit 10 at Catalyst Trading Estate, Widnes.

The report provided the Board with background information in relation to the site and presented three options for its future use, as recommended by the Council's external consultants.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board

- 1) authorises the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property to arrange for all required documentation for the lease to be completed to the satisfaction of the Operational Director, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services;
- 2) approves the lease on the terms reported in paragraph 3.6; and
- 3) Council be recommended to include the required funding for the scheme in the Capital Programme, as outlined in paragraph 3.8.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 APRIL 2022

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB92 SEN SCHOOL NAYLOR ROAD, INVASIVE SPECIES REMOVAL CONTRACT WAIVER REQUEST

The Board received a report requesting approval for a waiver of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) by virtue of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v). The request was to enable the Council to enter into an 'enabling contract' with Bowmer and Kirkland, the contractor who would be delivering the new Special Educational Needs (SEN) School, Raise Academy.

The Department for Education (DfE) were leading on the delivery of the new SEN Free School, to serve both Halton and St Helens Councils; the site selected is on Naylor Road, Widnes. The report described the investigation works carried out on the site where the invasive species Horsetail was discovered. The enabling contract would consist of the removal of the invasive species

Horsetail from the site, in advance of the commencement of building works.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the waiver of Part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000) by virtue of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) and the contract be awarded directly to Bowmer and Kirkland, to carry out an enablement contract consisting of the removal from site of the invasive species, Horsetail.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB93 LIVERPOOL CITY REGION FREEPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought approval for Halton to become part of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Freeport. This would include Tax and Customs Sites within the Borough; the administration of the Business Rates Relief and Tax Increment Financing (TIF) opportunities as they arose; and the identification of a series of projects that could be funded through the Business Rates income.

The LCR Freeport Management Board would be submitting a final Business case to Government in April 2022 to establish a LCR Freeport. If successful, it would be one of eight new Freeports set up by Government. Three Tax sites were permitted within each Freeport area along with an unlimited number of custom sites. The LCR Freeport Tax Sites proposed were Parkside in St Helens, Wirral Waters and the 3MG in Halton. Members were advised that Halton had proposed two customs sites, one at 3MG (Stobart Rail Terminal) and one at the Port of Weston.

If the LCR Freeport bid was approved, the Tax Sites would enable new businesses operating within the sites to access tax measures; these were described in the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the Council entering into a Memorandum of Understanding to become part of the LCR Freeport;
- 2) gives delegated authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to take all reasonable steps to participate in the LCR Freeport; and

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

- 3) authorises the Operational Director – Finance, to set up the required processes to facilitate the Business Rates and TIF associated with the Freeport operations.

EXB94 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION 2022

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources, which sought the approval of Council to a small number of changes to the Constitution.

The revised version of the Constitution picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

Members were referred to Appendix one where the proposed amendments were listed; these had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services, in accordance with Article 15.02.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board recommends Council to approve the changes to the Constitution including the matters set out in Appendix one.

Strategic Director
- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources

EXB95 ENERGY BILLS REBATE SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Enterprise, Economy and Resources, which provided details of the proposed implementation of the Government's Energy Bills Rebate Scheme and sought approval for proposed eligibility criteria to be applied for awards under the discretionary part of the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme.

On 3 February 2022, Government announced a package of support known as the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme to help households with rising energy bills. This included a £150 non-repayable grant payment for households in council tax bands A to D – known as the Council Tax Rebate Grant; and £144m of discretionary funding for billing authorities to support households who were in need but were not eligible for the Council Tax Rebate Grant – known as the Discretionary Fund.

RESOLVED: That

Strategic Director

- 1) the proposals for implementation of the Energy Bills Rebate Scheme set out in the report be approved; and
- 2) the proposed eligibility criteria for awards under the discretionary part of the Scheme, as set out in Section 5 of the report, be approved.

- Enterprise,
Community and
Resources