

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

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20 OCTOBER 2022

EXB23	URGENT DECISIONS
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The Executive Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided information on the urgent decisions taken since the last meeting of the Board.

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.

Four urgent decisions had been made since the last meeting of the Board 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.

EXB24	PROCUREMENT OF PROPERTY TERM CONSULTANT SERVICES
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property, that notified Members of the intention to utilise the Matrix MM online market place to appoint Cassidy & Ashton as the main property term consultants for up to a four year period.

Cassidy & Ashton were the current term consultants and were appointed via the Chest in November 2018. The initial contract period was for three years and ended on 16 November 2021, a 12 month extension option was available which was exercised.

It was noted that during the past 4 years Cassidy & Ashton had consistently delivered a high level of service across all disciplines and it was considered desirable that the Council continued to engage with them going forward.

RESOLVED: That Members note the intention to utilise the Matrix MM online Market Place in order to appoint Cassidy & Ashton as our main property term consultants going forward for up to a 4 year period.

EXB25	2022/23 SPENDING AS AT 30 JUNE 2022
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The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 June 2022, together with an initial forecast outturn position. The report also included the financial

impact of Covid-19 with a summary of Government funding made available to the Council to date.

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 June 2022 was presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these 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 £4.661m. It was noted that this figure was based on current service demand and forecast of future costs and income levels. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 June 2022.

The implications to the Council of the recently announced 1.25% increase in National Insurance contributions was discussed.

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 3.14.

EXB26

COUNCIL CONTRACT FOR SUPPLY OF GROCERY AND CHILLED GOODS (INCL FRUIT, VEGETABLES AND DAIRY)

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Community and Environment, which sought approval to commence a new procurement process for the supply of Grocery and Chilled Goods.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the preliminary estimates report be approved in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.3.4; and
- 2) Officers be authorised to undertake a call-off in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.1, Frameworks, accessing the TUCO Grocery, Frozen and Chilled Food, including associated goods of Fresh Fruit & Vegetables Framework for a 2 year period with the option to extend for a further two separate 12 month periods from 1 January 2023 to 31 December 2026 with an estimated total expenditure of £4 million.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 17 NOVEMBER 2022

EXB42

TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2022-23 HALF YEAR UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Half Year Report as at 30 September 2022.

These reports 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 outlook, interest rate forecast, short term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and 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.

EXB43	MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2023 TO 2026 - KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The MTFS sets out a three-year projection of the Council’s resources and spending and was based on information that was currently available. The most recent Public Sector Spending Review was published at the end of October 2021 and covered the next three financial years. It was noted that details of the 2023/24 Local Government Finance Settlement were expected to be released in December 2022 on a provisional basis, with a final settlement expected in January 2023.

The Board was advised that the delay and uncertainty regarding 2023/24 financial resources meant the financial information included within the MTFS was based on a large number of assumptions and best estimates. The financial forecast would be updated as and when further information was known. Appendix 1 therefore detailed the MTFS from 2023/24 – 2025/26 using a prudent estimate of the financial conditions over the course of the next three years. Appendix 2 presented the Reserves and Balances Strategy.

The Board received an update from the Operational Director – Finance, on the Governments Autumn Budget Statement which was announced today:

- local authorities could increase Council Tax in April 2023 by 3% with an additional 2% increase - Adult Social Care precept;
- a Business Rates revaluation will take place in April 2023;
- proposed adult social care reforms would be deferred for 2 years; and
- there would be a 12 month extension of the Household Support Fund.

Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2023/24 to 2025/26.

Alternative options considered and rejected

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

Implementation date

The Medium Term Financial Strategy 2023/24 will be implemented from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;
- 2) the 2022/23 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and
- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2022/23 remains at the 2021/22 level of 21.55%

EXB44	2022/23 SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2022
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The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue net spending position as at 30 September 2022, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2022 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £7.586m. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2022, highlighting the schemes which had been revised.

It was noted that the increased energy costs, pay award and high inflation rates would all have a serious negative impact upon the Council's financial position. There was no expectation that any increased Government funding would be received to help meet these pressures. Therefore, to address the pressures within the Council budget there was an urgency for all Departments to reduce, cease or defer any non-essential spending and to implement any proposed efficiencies as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the scale of the potential outturn overspend and the potential impact upon reserves, if no corrective action is taken, be noted;

- 2) all departments be requested to limit spending to only absolutely essential items;
- 3) all Departments be requested, to identify as a matter of urgency any areas where spending could be reduced or ceased for the remainder of the current financial year, or deferred until next year; and
- 4) Council be requested to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme, as set out in paragraph 3.18.

EXB45	DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2023-24 - KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the Council Tax Base for its area and the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

The Council Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented 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 2023/24 gave a base figure of 36,241 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council Tax Base for the Borough and also the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council is required to determine annually the Council Tax Base and to notify the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Environment Agency and Parish Councils.

Implementation date

The Council Tax Base 2023/24 will be implemented from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Council set the 2022/23 Council Tax Base at 36,241 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and

2) Council set the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	668
Halebank	528
Daresbury	186
Moore	336
Preston Brook	370
Sandymoor	1,473

EXB46	TAXI LICENSING MATTER
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services, which set out proposed amendments to the current Taxi Licensing Policy and Private Hire Operator Conditions.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) a new private hire operator licence condition on the use of passengers carrying vehicles be adopted; and
- 2) the temporary policy amendment relaxing the maximum age restriction on Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Vehicles, which is due to expire on 25 February 2023, be extended for a further period of 2 years (i.e. until 25 February 2025) subject to the same two conditions requiring the vehicles benefiting from the extension to have 3 tests per year and on the basis that no vehicle taking advantage of the dispensation may be transferred to another proprietor.

EXB47	BUSINESS RATES ACTION AREAS
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property that provided information on the Business Rates Action Areas Scheme. The Scheme had been previously approved by the Executive Board at its meeting in July 2018 and the first five year pilot commenced on Astmoor in 2019. Other locations would follow when local circumstances were considered favourable.

It was noted that conditions were now favourable for access to the Business Rates Action Areas Scheme at 3MG at two sites occupied by Warburtons.

RESOLVED: That Business Rates Relief to Warburtons be agreed.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 8 DECEMBER 2022

EXB52	DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 2022 – 23
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Policy, People, Performance and Efficiency, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the second quarter period to 30 September 2022, for the People Directorate (Children and Young People; and Adult Social Care and Health); and the Enterprise, Community and Resources Directorate.

The Board was advised that the Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from the relevant quarter for each Directorate and was aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements and 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 strengthening accountability.

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