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EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 19 January 2023 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Harris, M. Lloyd Jones, J. Lowe, T. McInerney, Nelson, Nolan, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Vasic, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB60 MINUTES

Action

The Minutes of the meeting held on 8 December 2022, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB61 TRANSFORMATION PROGRAMME AND BUDGET PROPOSALS 2023/24 TO 2025/26

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the budget savings proposals and the implementation of a transformation programme for the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), approved at its meeting on 17 November 2022, had identified funding gaps for the Council over the next three years. The latest MTFS forecast a total budget funding gap of around £25m over the next three years, with a gap of £17m for 2023/24.

Appendix 1 outlined proposed budget savings

totalling £6.881m over the three year period 2023/24 to 2025/26. Given the significant forecast budget gap for 2023/24, further work would be undertaken to review the assumptions within the forecast and to identify further saving proposals and the scope to use one-off reserves to deliver a balanced budget for 2023/24.

In order to identify sufficient savings to bridge the forecast budget gaps, a more fundamental approach was required to transform delivery via the implementation of a three year Transformation Programme as outlined in Section 5 of the report.

The Board considered the proposal to close both Warrington Road and Ditton Daycare Centres. Further information was provided on the significant financial losses made at both sites for a number of years, proposals to provide places for 2 to 4 year olds within the current nursery setting at the same site, communication with staff, parents and Trade Unions and a letter from Derek Twigg - Halton Member of Parliament.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Council's latest financial position and forecast budget gaps, as outlined within the section three of the report, be noted;
- 2) Council be recommended to approve the budget savings proposals for 2023/24 to 2025/26 presented in Appendix 1; and
- 3) Council be recommended to approve the three year transformation programme and funding arrangements, as outlined within section five of the report.

Operational
Director - Finance

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB62 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2024 - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Children's Services, which requested the approval of the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Schemes, for admission to primary and secondary schools, including Academy, Free School and Voluntary Controlled schools for the September 2024 intake.

The Board was advised that in October 2022, the

Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2024 intake for primary and secondary schools (attached as appendices 1 and 2 respectively). The primary scheme also included the proposed oversubscription criteria for community and voluntary controlled schools for whom the Local Authority was the admission authority.

The report provided details of the consultation, which ran until 11 November 2022; no responses to the consultation were received. Additionally, no amendments to the oversubscription criteria were suggested, as these worked well and met the requirements of the Department for Education's School Admissions Code.

It was noted that all Halton's secondary schools were either academies, free schools or voluntary aided and were therefore their own admission authorities, with responsibility for consulting and determining their own admissions criteria and their own Published Admission Number (PAN).

Reason(s) for Decision

The decision was statutorily required.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Other options considered and rejected included the allocation of places to community and voluntary controlled schools through random allocation (lottery), as this method could be seen as arbitrary and random.

Implementation Date

The Policy and co-ordinated schemes would apply for the September 2024 academic intake.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the School Admissions Policy, Admission Arrangements and Co-ordinated Schemes, for admission to primary and secondary schools for the 2024/25 academic year.

Executive Director
Children's
Services

EXB63 CAPITAL PROGRAMME - 2023/24 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children's Services, which provided a summary of the capital funding received by the Council from central Government to support Schools Capital Programmes for 2023/24.

The Board was advised that the Department for Education (DfE) had not announced the School Condition Allocation Capital Grant for 2023/24 however, given the timescales for some of the proposed capital projects, there was a requirement to present this report, so it was compiled using the 2022/23 allocation, which was £747,836.

The report set out details of the indicative funding available to support capital projects across the schools estate and also explained how the School Condition Allocation would be utilised.

Reason(s) for Decision

To deliver and implement the Capital Programmes.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

Capital Programmes for 2023/24 would be implemented with effect from 1 April 2023.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the position regarding capital funding from the Department for Education for 2023/24 be noted;
- 2) the proposals to be funded from the School Condition Capital Allocation be approved; and
- 3) the capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the budget report to full Council be approved.

Executive Director
Children's
Services

EXB64 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SPEECH AND LANGUAGE THERAPY SERVICES: RECOMMISSIONING IN PARTNERSHIP WITH NHS CHESHIRE AND MERSEYSIDE ICB - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Children's Services, which requested authorisation to recommission Children and Young People's Speech and Language Therapy services in partnership with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside Integrated Care Board (ICB), with the new contract to start in August 2023.

A comprehensive consultation with a broad range of stakeholders on the requirements of the new service was

currently taking place and the service specification for the new contract would be costed following conclusion of the consultation exercise.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the recommissioning of the service in partnership with NHS Cheshire and Merseyside ICB.

Executive Director
Children's
Services

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB65 ADULT SOCIAL CARE (ASC) DISCHARGE FUND

The Board received a report of the Executive Director – Adult Services, which presented the Adult Social Care Discharge Fund Plan, 2022/23. Although the national fund was announced on 22 September 2022, Local Authority allocations were not notified until 18 November 2022. It was noted that the funding was being provided in two tranches with the first (40%) in December 2022 and the second (60%) by the end of January 2023 for those areas that had provided a planned spending report, fortnightly activity data and had met the associated grant conditions.

Halton's spending plan submission had been summarised and was attached as Appendix 1.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the contents of the report and associated appendix.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB66 ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL REPORT FOR 2021/22

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adult Services, requesting agreement of the Adult Social Care Annual Report for 2021/22, which was appended to the report. The period incorporated both responding to the Covid-19 pandemic and the re-opening of services as restrictions were lifted.

The Adult Social Care Annual Report was now an embedded part of the reporting cycle for the Council and whilst not a mandatory requirement, it remained supported as good practice by the Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS).

It was also noted that the Annual Report, also known as the 'Local Account', allowed the service to take stock and reflect on how services had developed and delivered throughout the period and the impact this had on adults in the borough who have care and support needs.

The Board thanked Officers for an informative report.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and appendices be noted.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB67 UK SHARED PROSPERITY FUND (UKSPF) DELIVERY PLAN HALTON

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property, that provided an overview of Halton's Delivery Plan against the UKSPF allocation for Halton under the following three strands:

- Green, Safe, Resilient Communities - £301,059;
- Local Culture, Arts, Heritage - £188,900; and
- Town Centres - £118,063.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve in principle the Delivery Plan proposals.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO AND EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, LEISURE, COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB68 RUNCORN SWIMMING POOL

The Board considered a report which outlined the approach the Council had taken to seek a third party who would take on the future operation of Runcorn Swimming Pool. It was noted that the opportunity to operate the pool had been advertised on the Chest on 22 March and on the Council's website, news update, social media and business newsletters including a trade advert in Leisure Opportunities. Following advertisement of the opportunity, the Council had received no expressions of interest.

As some interest to use the building was expressed by community groups, the Council had ran a further procurement round. This time it sought expressions of interest for alternative uses for the building. The opportunity was advertised from 20 September to 14 October and no expressions of interest were received.

Subsequently, the Council had reviewed the site and the current budgetary position meant that it could not afford the significant investment needed to maintain the building. It was therefore proposed that the building would be declared surplus to requirements and the Council would place the

building on the open market for sale.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the placing of the asset on the Council's Asset Disposal register be approved; and
- 3) approval is given to the Operational Director – Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Environment and Urban Renewal and Employment, Learning and Skills and Community, to place the property on the open market for sale.

Operational
Director -
Community &
Environment

EXB69 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 Section 100A (4) 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 that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) 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.

DEPUTY LEADER PORTFOLIO

EXB70 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT LOWLANDS ROAD RUNCORN

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, which requested approval for the disposal of land at Lowlands Road, Runcorn.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board

- 1) approves the disposal of the freehold interest in land at Lowland Road behind Picow Engineering on the terms reported in section 3.4; and
- 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, Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder – Leader's.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

EXB71 RUNCORN TOWN DEAL (PROGRAMME UPDATE)

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property, which provided an update on the Runcorn Town Deal Programme.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services is authorised to:

Commission preparatory work and engage appropriate advisors to enable Halton Borough Council to be in a position to make a Compulsory Purchase Order, pursuant to section 226 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, for land in Runcorn Old Town if required.

Operational
Director -
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB72 HIGHWAYS TERM MAINTENANCE CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Policy, Planning and Transportation, on the procurement exercise to award a new contract for Highway

Maintenance to commence on 1 June 2023 for an initial period of six years, with options to extend it for up to 4 further years.

RESOLVED: That the award of the Highway Term Maintenance Contract to the successful bidder be approved.

Operational
Director - Policy,
Planning and
Transportation

MINUTES ISSUED: 24 January 2023

CALL-IN: 31 January 2023 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 31 January 2023.

Meeting ended at 3.18 p.m.