

Extract of Executive Board Minutes relevant to the Environment & Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 14 MARCH 2024

EXB100	PRELIMINARY ESTIMATES FOR STREET LIGHTING ENERGY PROCUREMENT
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval for the Council to utilise Dukefield Energy (formerly Utilities Procurement Group UPG), as specialist Energy advisory for the Council's un-metered electricity supply contract for street lighting. The current un-metered electricity supply contract for street lighting with SSE Energy would expire on 31 March 2024, and it was proposed that Dukefield Energy would invite tenders for a period of 12 and 36 months as recommended.

The Board was advised that a preliminary recent market enquiry with the current supplier had suggested the new rates would represent an annual decrease of up to 18%/300k depending on the length of contract term chosen.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse

- 1) the use of the National Public Sector Energy Framework for the purchase of un-metered energy in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.4.1;
- 2) that expenditure is anticipated to be in excess of £1.0m per annum; and
- 3) that Dukefield Energy continue to be used to manage the Council's street lighting energy provision.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 18 APRIL 2024

EXB109	PRODUCTION OF BOROUGH-WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which sought support for the commissioning and production of a new Borough wide Housing Strategy and approval to undertake stakeholder engagement and wider community consultation as an integral part of the production process.

The Council's previous Housing Strategy was adopted in 2013 and covered a period up to 2018. The Strategy was in need of comprehensive review and replacement and the production required the identification, gathering and analysis of any supporting evidence base gaps, including an up-to-date Housing Needs Assessment. This would be a specialist task and would be commissioned externally.

In order to guide the commissioning, production and consultation of the Housing Strategy an internal officer working group was set up in 2023, including representatives from Halton Housing Partnership (HHP). The key early messages from the group and HHP were set out at Appendix A.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the commissioning and production of a new Borough wide Housing Strategy and supporting evidence base be endorsed;
- 2) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to agree details of the Housing Strategy production, including draft documentation and activity for stakeholder engagement and wider community consultation; and
- 3) upon completion of the production and consultation process, the Board will receive a further report seeking a recommendation to Council that the new Borough wide Housing Strategy be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 JUNE 2024

EXB8	LONG TERM PLAN FOR TOWNS, FUNDING FOR RUNCORN
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which set out details to date about the Long-Term Plan for Towns funding which was allocated to Runcorn in the Spring Budget 2024.

In the Spring Budget 2024, the Government announced Phase 2 of their long-term plan for Towns programme which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country which would benefit from £19.5m endowment style funding to invest over a 10 year period in local priorities.

In order to access the funding Halton would need to produce a Long-Term Plan for Runcorn. The Government had issued guidance on 1 October 2023 which required each town to establish a Town Board to oversee the development of the long-term plan. Halton proposed to repurpose its existing Town Fund Board, in line with Government guidance to ensure compliance with this guidance and to avoid duplication.

The Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) had released £50k of capacity funding to the Council to establish a Town Deal Board. A further £200k capacity funding would be issued to develop the plan which was to be submitted by 1 November 2024.

Appendix 1 to the report detailed the Government list of interventions which had already been assessed as having a strong case for investment, value for money and benefit to cost ratio.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board accepts external grant funding from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLUHC) of £19.5m in relation to the Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT);
- 2) agree that the Council will act as Accountable Body for the LTPT Programme;
- 3) the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Deputy Leader, be authorised to amend the Towns Fund Board terms of reference and membership to reflect the criteria of the Long-Term Funding for Towns criteria;
- 4) in consultation with the Town Deal Board, the Deputy Leader and Member of Parliament for Runcorn and Helsby, authority be delegated to the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, to spend the £200,000 capacity funding to develop a ten-year Vision and three-year Investment Plan to submit to Government by 1 November 2024; and
- 5) delegate authority to the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration and the Section 151 Officer, to agree and complete Funding Agreements with partners that will deliver the LTPT for Runcorn projects on behalf of the Council, as the Accountable Body for the Programme.

EXB9	EAST RUNCORN CONNECTIVITY (ERC) PROJECT A56 CONSTRUCTION GATEWAY
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The Board received a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to enter into a delivery agreement and commence Stage 5 of the SCAPE Framework process awarding a contract to deliver the A56 major maintenance works to Balfour Beatty. The contract would commence in July subject to approval and was programmed to complete in September 2025.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) approval be given to awarding a contract to Balfour Beatty via the SCAPE framework to complete the A56 Major Maintenance Scheme;
- 2) the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to accept the Grant Funding Agreement and enable timely delivery of the contract; and

- 3) the Director Planning and Transportation, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, be delegated to deal with any matters relating to procurement and operation of this contract.

EXB11	DELIVERING THE FREEPORT UPDATE – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment & Regeneration, which provided an update on the progress relating to Halton's Freeport. The report sought approval to carry out due diligence investigations with a view to acquiring the 44-acre (of which 15 acres were water) Port of Weston site for the regeneration of West Runcorn.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) the Board supports the approval to carry out due diligence investigations with a view to acquiring the Port of Weston Site (using Freeport funding) for the regeneration of West Runcorn;
- 3) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director for Environment & Regeneration, in consultation with the Deputy Leader to take the necessary steps to progress further the Freeport in Halton as outlined in this report;
- 4) following appropriate due diligence, the Board authorises the Director Finance to put in place systems to support the acquisition of land to support the regeneration of West Runcorn; and
- 5) approval be sought from the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (DLHUC), via the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and Freeport Board, to reallocate Freeport Seed Funds for the planning and construction of an access road onto Port of Weston and to purchase the Port of Weston.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 11 JULY 2024

EXB22	REPLACEMENT CREMATOR WIDNES CREMATORIUM – KEY DECISION
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The Board considered a report which sought approval for the procurement and installation of a new cremator at Widnes Crematorium.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) delegated authority be granted to Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to procure a replacement cremator and associated installation, service and maintenance contract; and
- 2) Council be recommended to include £308,000, in the 2024/25 Capital Programme for the scheme, as outlined in section 5.0 of the report.