

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 16 January 2025 in Halton Leisure Centre, Moor Lane, Widnes

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

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, W. Rourke and D. Nolan

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB70 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 12 December 2024, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB71 24/25 SPENDING AS AT 30 NOVEMBER 2024

The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position as at 30 November 2024, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 November 2024 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 November 2024, highlighting the schemes which had been revised.

It was reported that in overall terms the outturn forecast for the year showed that net spend would be over the approved budget by £14.246m. The outturn forecast for the year estimates that net spending would be over budget

by £20.757m if no corrective action is taken. It was clear that Council reserves alone would not be sufficient to fund this pressure. As a result the Council had applied to Government for Exceptional Financial Support.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) all spending continue to be limited to essential items only;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to reduce the council/wide forecast outturn overspend position;
- 3) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved saving proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 4;
- 4) the updated forecast outturn position be shared with the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government in support of the Council's application for Exceptional Financial Support;
- 5) Council be asked to approve the revisions to the capital programme set-out in paragraph 3.22 and incorporated within Appendix 3; and
- 6) this report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board in order to ensure they have a full appreciation of the councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

Director of
Finance

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB72 SCHOOL ADMISSION ARRANGEMENTS 2026/27 - 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 2026 intake.

The Board was advised that on 1 October 2024, the Local Authority issued a statutorily required consultation on the proposed admission arrangements and co-ordinated admission schemes for the September 2026 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 12 November 2024. It was noted that no amendments to the oversubscription criteria were suggested, as these reflected the criteria 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

Local Authorities as the admission authority for community and voluntary schools are required to consult and then determine their admission arrangements annually, and are also required to determine coordinated schemes for primary and secondary admission rounds that apply to all schools.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None

Implementation Date

The implementation date is September 2025 which is when the timetabled process for the September 2026 intake commences.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the Coordinated Scheme for Admission to Primary Schools – which also contains the Local Authority's admissions criteria to community and voluntary controlled schools, and approves the Co-ordinated Scheme for admission to secondary schools, both of which will apply to the September 2026 intake.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB73 CAPITAL PROGRAMME – 2025/26 - 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 capital works and programmes

within schools for 2025/26.

The Board was advised that the Department for Education (DfE) had not announced the School Condition Allocation Capital Grant for 2025/26 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 2024/25 allocation, which was £704,785.

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

The Council was required to demonstrate appropriate identification of need against spend from the School Condition Allocation Grant. The work would provide schools with a suitable learning environment and manage the condition of the educational buildings we are responsible for.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

None.

Implementation Date

It is intended that all works would be completed by March 2026.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the position regarding capital funding from the Department for Education for 2025/26 be noted;
- 2) the proposals to be funded from the School Condition Capital Allocation and Basic Need Funding be approved; and
- 3) the capital allocations are put forward for inclusion in the budget report to full Council.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB74 FEE SETTING PROCESS AND REQUEST TO CONSULT CARE PROVIDERS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which provided information on the

proposed fee setting process and annual uplift for domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton for 2025/26.

The Board requested further information on spending within Adult Services, including details on current trends and demographics. It was agreed that information would be circulated.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- 2) approval be given to actively enter into consultation with care providers in relation to the annual uplift for 2025/26.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB75 ADULT SOCIAL CARE ANNUAL REPORT 2023-24

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adult Services, which provided a copy of the Adult Social Care (ASC) Annual Report for 2023/24. The Annual Report demonstrated an open approach to ASC successes, challenges and where the service can develop further in order to improve outcomes for people with care and support needs and their unpaid carers within Halton.

The theme of this year's report was 'prevention and wellbeing'. The focus of the report was to highlight the work that had taken place across the Directorate in recognising and responding to the National and Local drivers of prevention as a catalyst for change in how services are delivered to prevent or delay the need for statutory services.

The Board thanked Officers within the Adult Services Directorate for all their work.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXB76 WELLBEING & ENGAGEMENT SERVICES IN HALTON

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adult Services, which sought approval to make a Direct Award of contract for the period 12 February 2025 to 11 February 2028 (three years) to Age Uk Mid Mersey to deliver Wellbeing and Engagement Services in Halton. It was believed that the service, in its current form, could not be replicated by another provider within the borough and to ensure continuity of provision a Direct Ward had been made. Due to the contract being extended previously this Award

had been made via a VEAT Notice and was in compliance with Procurement Standing Orders.

The new contract value for the three years of service would be £356,172.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve a VEAT (Voluntary Ex-Ante Transparency) notice to enable the Council to directly award a three year contract to the incumbent provider for re-settlement support to ensure continuity of care in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.5.8.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB77 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on the progress in developing Plans and Strategies in relation to the collection and recycling of Halton's waste.

At a previous meeting of the Board held on 16 March 2023, Members approved the principles set out in a LCR Zero Waste 2040 Strategic Framework to reduce waste related carbon emissions (Minute EXB94 refers). A Zero Waste Strategy had now been developed for the LCR and a copy was attached at Appendix 1. The Board was requested to endorse the draft strategy document and were advised that a final branded version would be produced.

Members were also advised that from 1 April 2026, all Councils across England would be legally required to offer a food waste collection service to all households in their area. The service must be provided on a weekly basis, be separate and preferably treated by anaerobic digestion. Attached to the report attached as Appendix 2 was a report produced by a specialist waste management consultancy who were appointed by the LCR Waste Partnership to develop a Strategy to meet the requirements for a food waste collection.

The report also sought approval to support the principals of, in the longer term, the purchase of green gas powered vehicles to collect the food waste. Liverpool City Region Waste Partnership would explore this approach further. In June 2024 DEFRA allocated capital monies to Council's to fund the vehicle and caddy purchasing requirement for food waste collection. Halton was allocated £1.019m. Procurement was now at an advanced stage and

approval was sought to purchase the vehicles and caddies.

The Board noted that in January 2024, DEFRA announced that revenue resource transitional funding would be provided to Waste Collection Authorities from the 2024/25 financial year to implement the weekly food waste collection. Further allocations would be provided in 2026. The allocations to Halton were not known at this stage.

A further report would be brought to the Board on the proposals for the processing/treatment of collected food waste.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) endorse the Zero Waste Strategy for the Liverpool City Region (attached as Appendix 1);
- 2) give delegated authority to the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Environment and Urban Renewal, to agree the final branded version of the Zero Waste Strategy for the Liverpool City Region;
- 3) support a proposal to transition to a circular food waste system for the Liverpool City Region by:
 - i. Supporting the principles of local circularity and green powered vehicles over the longer term
 - ii. acknowledging the high level business case to support such an approach
 - iii. endorsing the further exploration of this approach by the Liverpool City Region Waste Partnership; and
- 4) approve the capital spend associated with the procurement of food waste receptacles and collection vehicles using monies allocated to the Council by DEFRA for that purpose.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB78 SPORTS FACILITY FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report on the proposed fees and charges for Halton Leisure Centre and for services provided by the Council's Sports Services for financial year 2025/26. It was noted that included within the report was a

proposal to increase the eligibility age for Halton Leisure Card from 60 years to 65 years.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the proposed fees and charges as set out in Appendix A are approved; and
- 2) Halton Leisure Card age eligibility criteria be raised from current 60 years to 65 years.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB79 VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING - GRANT ALLOCATIONS 2024/25

The Board considered a report of the Director – Adult Services, on Voluntary Sector Grant Funding Awards for 2024/25. Applications were assessed and recommendations agreed by a Panel consisting of the Executive Board Member with portfolio responsibility for the Voluntary Sector and Officers. The report set out monitoring arrangements and the proposed allocation to each organisation based on the budget available.

RESOLVED: That the grant allocations outlined in Section 3.3 be approved.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB80 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.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB81 FULL COST CLIENTS IN RESIDENTIAL CARE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director – Adult Services, which sought approval to amend the current practice in relation to contracting on behalf of self-funders in residential care. The Council would still complete assessment and provide information and advice for self-funders, in line with its obligations under the Care Act 2014 but it would no longer contract with residential care providers on behalf of self-funders.

It was noted that in limited circumstances the Council would act as a broker for self-funder however an arrangement fee would be charged.

Reason(s) for Decision

Board approval was required to reconsider existing arrangements in relation to the Council contracting with care homes on behalf of self-funders.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

N/A

Implementation Date

1 April 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Council amends its practice in relation to contracting on behalf of self-funders in residential care, as outlined at 3.9-3.11.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

MINUTES ISSUED: 22 January 2025

CALL-IN: 29 January 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 29 January 2025.

Meeting ended at 3.08 p.m.