

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 13 March 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Ball, Dennett, Harris, T. McInerney, Nelson, Thompson and Wright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors M. Lloyd Jones and P. Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, G. Ferguson, D. Cooke, J Stevens and S. McDonald

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB97 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB98 URGENT DECISIONS

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive, which provided information on 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 Director Finance and/or the Director Legal and Democratic Services, where necessary.

One urgent decision had been made since the last meeting of the Board and full details were published on the Council's website.

RESOLVED: That the urgent decision taken since the last meeting of the Executive Board be noted.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB99 REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES AND CHARGES

The Board considered a report of the Director - Finance, on the review of the Council wide fees and charges for 2025/26 for services provided by the Council's Directorates.

The Board was advised that, as part of the budget preparations for 2025/26, a review of fees and charges had been carried out. The aim in setting fees and charges was to ensure that the Council fully recovered the cost incurred in providing the service, although this was dependent on a number of factors outside of the agreed charge. These were detailed in the report and noted as including demand, which could change year on year and be affected by weather, economy, regional and national events and demographics; competition, where there may be a strong competitive market; and a statutory element, where some charges were outside the control of the Council and there was no discretion to what could be charged.

Attached at Appendix A was the proposed schedule of statutory fees for 2025/26 and the chargeable rates for The Brindley Theatre and the Registrar's Service were attached at Appendix B and C respectively, for 2024/25 and 2025/26.

The Board noted that the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) had considered a proposal for the pest control fee for rat treatments on domestic properties. The PPB had endorsed the proposal to introduce a new fee that recovered the full cost of rat treatments on domestic properties, with the exception for those in receipt of benefits (subject to proof). It was agreed that this would be explored.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2025/26 as set out in Appendix A and for 2026/27, as set out in Appendices B and C, be approved.

Director
Finance

of

EXB100 2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2025

The Board received a report from the Director - Finance, which advised on the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position as at 31 January 2025, together with a forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending

against the operational revenue budget up to 31 January 2025 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 £15.487m. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 January 2025, highlighting the schemes, which had been revised.

RESOLVED: That

Director of
Finance

- 1) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to reduce the councilwide forecast outturn overspend position;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved savings proposals for 2024/25 and 2025/26 as detailed in Appendix 4;
- 3) Council be asked to approve the revisions to the Capital Programme as set out in paragraph 3.22 and incorporated within Appendix 3; and
- 4) 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.

EXB101 PENSIONS DISCRETIONS STATEMENT 2025/26

The Board received the annual Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26 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 2025-26 was based upon the statement for 2024-25, which was approved by Executive Board in February 2024. It was noted that no new discretions had been added.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the Pensions Discretions Statement for 2025-26

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB102 CONTRACT FOR THE PROVISION OF DAY, RESIDENTIAL AND NURSING HOME CARE CONTRACT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which sought an extension of the current contract for the provision of day, residential and nursing home care. The current contract was due to expire on 31 March 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the contents of the report; and
- 2) confirms their approval for an extension to the current contract for the provision of day, residential and nursing home care for a period of two years from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027 for care homes in the Borough to continue placements on a spot purchase basis.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB103 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL & NHS CHESHIRE & MERSEYSIDE: JOINT WORKING AGREEMENT (BETTER CARE (POOLED) FUND) - KEY DECISION

The Board considered report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which sought approval for the new Joint Working Agreement (JWA) between Halton Borough Council and the NHS Cheshire & Merseyside taking effect from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2027, which replaced the previous JWA. A copy of the new JWA was attached to the report as Appendix 1.

It was noted that when information on possible future implications to the Council on the Government decision to abolish NHS England was known, a report would be brought to Board members.

Reason(s) for Decision

Approval of the Agreement will continue to support both the Council and NHS CM in developing our integrated approach to service delivery and transformation to improve the health and wellbeing of Halton residents.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Allow the JWA to cease

Implementation Date

The two-year JWA takes effect from 1 April 2025

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the contents of the report and associated Appendix; and
- 2) approve the Agreement, with delegated authority be given to the Executive Director, Adults Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Adult Social Care, to finalise the new JWA.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB104 DEMENTIA ADVISOR SERVICE - ALZHEIMER'S SOCIETY

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which sought approval for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for a further 12-month contract renewal, through a direct award, to the Alzheimer's Society for the provision of a Dementia Advisor Service in Halton. Adult Social Care had previously commissioned Alzheimer's Society to provide a community support service across Halton to those pre and post dementia diagnosis and their carers'.

The current contract was issued on 1 April 2024 and ran for 12 months. The Board was advised that a further 12-month contract was recommended to run from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026. The current contract value was £77,173 per annum, remaining unchanged since 2023.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, for a direct award to support the continuation of the provision of the Dementia Advisor Service in Halton delivered through contract with Alzheimer's Society for the period from 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB105 HALTON LIBRARY SERVICE REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the library service consultation exercise, which took place from 27 August to 8 October 2024. Questions

were posed around changes to opening hours and the reasons why people use or do not use the library service with consultations submitted both online and via hard copies at a variety of sites to ensure the engagement approach was inclusive. A copy of the public consultation survey, current and proposed opening hours and a complete summary of findings was attached to the report as Appendix A.

It was noted that the proposals provided a budget saving in year one of £49,599.97. With reduced costs in subsequent years of £91,599 less than £2,666 increased outreach costs, a net position of £88.933.87 per annum.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves

- 1) the amended library opening hours; including closure of Runcorn Old Town & Ditton library on Saturdays; and
- 2) amending the 'Home Library' delivery service model, with the acquisition of an electric vehicle to increase service reach.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

N.B. Councillors Thompson and Wharton declared a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest in the following item of business as they are a Non-Executive Director of Mersey Gateway Crossings Board and left the meeting for the duration of the item. Councillor Nelson declared a Disclosable Other Interest as a member of the Environmental Trust Board.

COUNCILLOR HARRIS IN THE CHAIR

EXB106 MERSEY GATEWAY

The Board considered a report of the Director, Legal and Democratic Services, which recommended that the Council enter into a new provision of services contract with Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust. The Trust was set up as the long-term vehicle for the Environment Mitigation Plan to deliver lasting benefits associated with the Project and related environmental initiatives. On 19 November 2015, Mersey Gateway Crossings Board Ltd appointed the Trust to carry out the responsibility for the environmental services.

The Trust, the Board and the Council were now proposed to enter the second phase of the Environmental Services Contract to maintain the environmental monitoring and environmental improvement of the Mersey estuary

through the implementation of the Trust's charitable objectives that were agreed in the Project Agreement. The report highlighted the reflected changes in the proposed agreement for the following Scheme Titles:

- Business Operation;
- Environmental Monitoring;
- Wigg Island; and
- Saltmarsh

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) give authority for the Council to enter into a new contract for the provision of services by Mersey Gateway Environment Trust; and
- 2) authorises the Director, Legal and Democratic Services to take all necessary steps to bring the contract into effect by 1 April 2025.

Director, Legal
and Democratic
Services

EXB107 HOUSES IN MULTIPLE OCCUPATION SPD AND CLIMATE CHANGE AND ADAPTATION SPD

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to adopt the following Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs):

- Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO) SPD; and
- Climate Change and Adaptation SPD

Once agreed, the SPDs would be sent to the Secretary of State as part of the adoption process, made publicly available and used as a material consideration in planning decisions in addition to the Local Plan.

RESOLVED: That the adoption of the Supplementary Planning Documents is approved.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB108 ADDITIONAL HIGHWAY GRANT ALLOCATIONS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to accept capital funding from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority (LCRCA) in compliance with Council Standing Orders. The Council had received from the LCRCA a grant of £1,233,766 for the Runcorn Busway and expected funding of £995,895.90 for Local Highways Maintenance Funding Allocations. The LCRCA had requested formal grant acceptance for the highway funding

in advance of receipt to ensure funding expenditure could start as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the grants for Runcorn Busway and the Local Highway Maintenance Funding 2025/26 are formally accepted;
- 2) delegated powers are provided to the Director Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, to deal with the Grant Funding Agreement(s) described in the report; and
- 3) delegated powers are provided to the Director Planning and Transport, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder Environment and Urban Renewal, to deal with any matters relating to procurement and the operation and delivery of these agreements.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB109 ROADSIDE MEMORIALS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to formally adopt a new Roadside Memorial Policy. It was noted that several local authorities had established policies and protocol relating to the placement and removal of roadside floral tributes and other memorials placed at the scene of fatal road crashes, and other fatalities adjacent to the highway.

The purpose of the policy would be to provide a formal framework which would enable the management of roadside memorials in a way which best served the community. A copy of the policy was attached at Appendix A to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board adopt the policy contained in Appendix A.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB110 SERVICES FOR MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE FOR YOUNG PEOPLE ACROSS CHESHIRE FOR HALTON, CHESHIRE WEST & CHESTER AND WARRINGTON: REQUEST FOR WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS

The Board considered a request for a waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 iv of

part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders to allow the continuation of a contract with We are With You to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Tri-Party Missing from Home and Care Service, for a period of one year from 1 July 2025 to 30 June 2026. We are With You was commissioned to deliver the Pan Cheshire Missing from Home and Care Service across Warrington, Cheshire West and Halton.

RESOLVED: The Board approve that the contract with We are With You should be extended for a further twelve months without going through the Procurement process, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (non-emergency procedures – exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB111 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'S PORTFOLIO

EXB112 HIGH STREET RUNCORN

The Board considered a report which sought authority to acquire with Town Deal funding 77 High Street, also known as Chambers.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director for Environment and Regeneration (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects) to take such action as necessary to acquire 77 High Street, also known as Chambers; and
- 2) the Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property be authorised to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB113 ASTMOOR MASTERPLAN UPDATE

The Board considered a report which provided an update on progress in delivering the Astmoor Masterplan.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) authority is delegated to the Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to continue the negotiations to enable the disposal of the land identified in the report; and
- 2) Council amends the Capital Programme to include the Astmoor Masterplan capital receipt as set out in paragraph 3.13.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

N.B Councillor Wright declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as a member of the Halton Housing Trust Board.

EXB114 RUNCORN WATERFRONT DEVELOPMENT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Environment and Regeneration, which sought approval to progress delivery of the Runcorn Waterfront

development. Delivery being enabled through entering into a Development Agreement with Halton Housing for the disposal of Council Land to unlock this regeneration and housing renewal project within Runcorn Town Centre.

The Board discussed the recent developments which were ongoing in Runcorn Town Centre and it was agreed that a report would be brought to the next meeting together with all the current and future developments in the area.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the progress being made to realise the Runcorn Waterfront development;
- 2) approves delegated authority to Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to agree final details of the terms of the Development Agreement with Halton Housing for disposal of Council Land to enable delivery of the Runcorn Waterfront development; and
- 3) authorises the Director of Economy, Enterprise and Property to arrange for all required documentation for the transactions to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB115 CARE PROVIDER CONTRACT UPLIFT 2025/26 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director, Adult Services, which advised on the outcome of the consultation with domiciliary care, direct payments, supported living and care home providers within Halton, in respect of the Care Provider Contract Uplift for 2025/26.

Reason(s) for Decision

Section 5 of the Care Act 2014 requires local authorities to ensure that the care market as a whole remains viable and sustainable, any uplift is essential to support this market.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Not offering an uplift for the care market would jeopardise

market sustainability and potentially see providers leaving the Borough.

Ceasing delivery of the services would impact negatively on a vulnerable cohort of the borough's population and likely result in more costly, crisis intervention being.

Implementation Date

1st April 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the contents of the report;
- 2) considers the recommendations and risks; and
- 3) approval to be given to offer the recommended uplift to care providers for 2025/26

Executive Director
of Adult Services

EXB116 DOMICILIARY CARE SERVICE TENDER: WAIVER TO EXTEND CURRENT CONTRACT TERM - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report which sought approval for a Non-Emergency Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 2 to allow the continuation of a contract with the current provider under the new Domiciliary Care Service contract to commence on 28 April 2025. This would ensure business continuity.

Reason(s) for Decision

- The decision relates to a service which is statutorily required.
- The contract value is above £5m.
- The decision impacts on all wards and communities within the borough.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

There are no alternative options. The Council must award contracts to providers for the supply of a Domiciliary Care Service in compliance with its regulatory duties to ensure continuity of service once the current contract ceases on 1st April 2025.

Implementation Date

The proposed contract will be for an initial five years commencing 28th April 2025 until 27th April 2030 with the

option to extend by 2 x 12-month periods, 28th April 2030 until 27th April 2031 and 28th April 2031 until 27th April 2032.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves a Non-Emergency Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of Part 2, to grant an extension to the current Domiciliary Care Service contract as per sections 3.7 and 3.8 of the report.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

MINUTES ISSUED: 18 March 2025

CALL-IN: 25 March 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 25 March 2025.

Meeting ended at 3.10 p.m.