

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 12 June 2025 in The Boardroom, Municipal Building

Present: Councillors Wharton (Chair), Bevan, Ball, Dennett, Harris, T. McInerney, P. Nolan, Thompson, Wall and Wright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Cook, S. Young, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, Z. Fearon, G. Ferguson and K. Appleton

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

EXB1 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 13 May 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB2 WIDNES TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION FRAMEWORK – CREATION OF WIDNES TOWN CENTRE STRATEGIC BOARD

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which set out the structure of the Widnes Strategic Board. The purpose of the Board was to:

- provide advice, insight and challenge to Halton Borough Council on the regeneration and development of Widnes town centre;
- represent the interest of local residents, businesses and community organisations;
- support the delivery of the Widnes Regeneration Framework and related projects; and
- champion Widnes town centre and promote civic

Action

pride.

The Widnes Strategic Board would consist of up to 15 members drawn from the local community. A copy of the Terms of Reference was attached as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the structure of the Widnes Strategic Board and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to finalise its members; and
- 2) approves the draft Terms of Reference (Appendix 1) and delegated authority be given to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to update and adapt the Terms of Reference as the projects contained within the Widnes Town Centre Regeneration Framework evolve.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB3 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which presented three applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, for consideration.

It was noted that under the amended provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Council was able to grant discretionary rate relief to any business ratepayer. This relief had previously only been available to organisations that were a registered charity, a community amateur sports club or a not for profit organisation.

The report outlined details of the three applications, in relation to their respective addresses. Appended to the report was the potential annual cost to the Council of granting the discretionary rate relief.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) discretionary rate relief for any new applications received during 2025/26 be awarded at the rates approved on 25 February 2025 for the renewal of existing awards, as outlined in paragraph 3.5;

Director of
Finance

- 2) the application for discretionary rate relief from the Cathie Stankevitch Foundation in respect of Unit 9, Foundry 10, Waterside Lane, Widnes with effect from 1 July 2024 be approved at 10%;
- 3) the application for discretionary rate relief from The Autism Wellbeing Project in respect of Suite A8, The Business Hub, Simms Cross, Widnes Road, Widnes with effect from 14 March 2025, be approved at 75%; and
- 4) the application for discretionary relief from The Autism Wellbeing Project in respect of Suite B2, The Business Hub, Simms Cross, Widnes Road, Widnes with effect from 14 March 2025, be approved at 75%.

**EXB4 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS
FOR QUARTER 4 2024 - 2025**

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the fourth quarter period to 31 March 2025, for the Children and Young People Directorate; 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.

EXB5 2024/25 SPENDING AS AT 31 MARCH 2025

The Board received a report from the Operational Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position for the 2024/25 financial year.

A summary of spending against the Council's revenue and capital net spending position for 2024/25 was

presented in Appendix 1 and Appendix 2 and these provided detailed figures for each individual Department. In overall terms net spending as at 31 March 2024 was £16.073m over budget. This was an improvement from the forecast outturn position of £18.906m reported at the end of January 2025. Whilst an improved position, given the scale of the budgetary overspend the Council would need to access the exceptional financial support provisionally approved by the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government on 24 February 2025.

The report also detailed a review of the Council General Reserve as at 31 March 2025. Other than the General Fund reserve of £5.149, there were no further reserves available to help fund future budgets.

In addition, it was noted that Capital Spending at 31 March 2025 totalled £46.517m, which was 91.7% of the planned spending £50.748m (which assumed a 20% slippage between years). Appendix 2 presented details of spending against all capital schemes. Appendix 3 presented the Capital Programme as at 31 March 2025.

It was noted that the 2025/26 budget had been slightly increased to reflect the increased spending against all the high-pressure areas.

A report on the 2025/26 budget monitoring position as at 31 May 2025 along with an initial outturn forecast, would be presented at the earliest opportunity to allow for any urgent corrective action to be taken.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Council's 2024/25 outturn position as presented in the report be noted;
- 2) Directorates take all possible steps to manage spending in line with budget during 2025/26;
- 3) priority is given to the acceleration of the Council's Transformation Programme, to ensure it is sufficiently developed to deliver the savings required to meet the medium-term financial gap and help the Council replenish its reserves; 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.

Director
Finance

of

HEALTH AND WELLBEING PORTFOLIO

EXB6 HOMELESSNESS CONTRACTS: WAIVER TO EXTEND CURRENT CONTRACT TERMS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Adult Social Care, which sought approval for two Non-Emergency Waivers in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3 to allow the continuation of contracts with the incumbent providers until new procurement processes have been undertaken and completed. This would ensure business continuity. The two contracts were in relation to the following Homelessness services that were due to end in 2025:

- Single Homelessness Supported Accommodation Service; and
- Homeless Families Supported Accommodation Service.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) the Board approve a Waiver in compliance with Procurement Standing Order 1.14.4 (v) of part 3 of Procurement Standing Orders, to grant extensions to the current Homeless contracts as per sections 3.8 and 3.9 of this report.

Executive Director
of Adult Services

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB7 CEMETERY INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which provided details of essential work required to be undertaken to refurbish aging infrastructure and update the grounds with a range of environmental enhancements at three of the Council's cemeteries located at Widnes, Runcorn and Halton cemeteries.

RESOLVED:

- 1) the proposals set out within the report be approved;
- 2) Council be asked to include £1.971m within the Council's Capital Programme over 4 years to fund the proposed works as set out within the report; and

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

- 3) authority be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Urban Renewal, to prepare and approve all necessary documents, contracts and funding arrangements required to complete the proposed works.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB8 NEW CO-OPTED MEMBER OF THE CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE & FAMILIES POLICY & PERFORMANCE BOARD

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, to Co-Opt a new independent member of the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board to provide assurance and challenge.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended that Stuart Smith OBE, be Co-Opted to the Children, Young People and Families Policy and Performance Board for a period of 12 months, to be reviewed at the end of that period.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB9 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.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB10 FUNDING FOR EXTENSION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, that outlined details of a loan to carers to build an extension on their property to accommodate four children in their care.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the loan be agreed, subject to the legal and financial arrangements being finalised in detail and due diligence being undertaken; and
- 2) the Executive Director - Children's Services be asked to finalise the details of the arrangement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB11 EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION: STAFF UNPAID LEAVE

The Board considered a report of the Corporate Director Chief Executives Delivery Unit, that provided details on a proposed scheme for a Christmas closure utilising a variation of the previously proposed four days unpaid leave arrangement.

RESOLVED: That the Board approve the scheme and the commencement of formal negotiations with Trade Unions to finalise and implement the scheme for a Christmas closure.

Corporate
Director - Chief
Executive's
Delivery Unit

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

EXB12 DISPOSAL OF LAND AT CROW WOOD LANE, WIDNES

The Board considered a report which sought approval for the disposal of land owned by the Council at Crow Wood Lane, Widnes to Halton Housing to enable the construction of 13 homes for adults with disabilities and complex needs.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the disposal of the freehold interest in land at Crow Wood Lane for the terms outlined in paragraph 5.2; and
- 2) 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.

Director
Economy,
Enterprise &
Property

MINUTES ISSUED: 17 June 2025

CALL-IN: 24 June 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 24 June 2025.

Meeting ended at 2.20 p.m.