

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 11 September 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: E. Dawson, S. Wallace-Bonner, Z. Fearon, G. Cook, G. Ferguson, R. Rout, D. Cooke and L. Wilson-Lagan

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB28 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10 July 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB29 URGENT DECISION

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

EXB30 NEW RISK MANAGEMENT POLICY

The Board was presented with a revised Risk Management Policy which had been drafted in conjunction with Zurich Municipal, the Council's insurers. The aim of the Policy was to provide direction and alignment to current Risk Management processes across the Council Directorates.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the updated Risk Management Policy, with the changes outlined in Section 3.3 of the report.

Interim
Executive

Chief

EXB31 EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION POLICY

The Board considered a report that set out the development of the Council's new Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy, a copy of which was attached as an appendix. The Policy set out in detail how the Council met its duties and responsibilities under the Equality Act 2010.

RESOLVED: That the Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Policy be approved.

EXB32 2025/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 JULY 2025

The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, which reported the Council's overall revenue net spending position as of 31 July 2025, together with a 2025/26 forecast outturn position.

A summary of spending against the operational revenue budget position as at 31 July 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 July 2025 was £1.629m over budget. The outturn forecast for the year estimated that net spend would be over the approved budget by £5.572m. It was noted that the forecast position remained a matter of great concern and action needed to be taken to reduce net spend immediately.

The report detailed a review of the Council General Reserve as at 31 July 2025 it remained unchanged from the previous period at £5.149m.

Members were advised that Council had previously approved the capital programme for 2025/26 at its meeting

on 5 March 2025. Since then, the capital programme had been revised to reflect a number of changes in spending profiles and funding as schemes had been developed. Appendix 4 brought all the separate elements together and outlined the Council's total planned capital programme expenditure.

RESOLVED: That

Director of
Finance

- 1) Executive Directors continue to implement the approved 2025/26 saving proposals as detailed in Appendix 3;
- 2) Executive Directors continue to identify areas where they can further reduce their directorate's spending or generate income, in order to ensure the Council wide forecast outturn overspend position for the year remains within budget;
- 3) the 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; and
- 4) Council be asked to approve the revisions to the capital programme set-out in paragraph 3.24 and incorporated within Appendix 4.

EXB33 MEDIUM-TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2026/27 – 2030/31 - KEY DECISION

The Board received a report from the Director – Finance, which included an update on the Council's Medium Term Financial Forecast (MTFS) for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31. The Medium-Term Financial Strategy set out the five-year projection of the Council's resources and spending and was based on the most recent information that was currently available. The forecast showed that it was vital that a significant level of budget saving were achieved over the next five years, the scale of which would be extremely difficult to implement.

It was noted that the Government had confirmed that there would be significant and wide-ranging changes introduced to the local government finance system in 2026/27, known as the Fair Funding Review. The aim of the review was to target funding where it was most needed by using updated funding formulae to determine the different needs and costs faced by individual authorities, as well as their ability to raise revenue locally through Council Tax. A

consultation was issued in June with a closing date of 15 August 2025. The potential impact of the Fair Funding Review for Halton was set out in Medium Term Financial Strategy at Appendix 1.

Reason(s) for Decision

To seek approval for the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for 2026/27 to 2030/31.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The alternative option of not maintaining a MTFS had been considered. However, this would not follow good financial management practice, as the MTFS was a key element in informing the Council's financial planning and budget setting processes.

Implementation Date

1 April 2026.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Medium-Term Financial Strategy presented in Appendix 1, be approved;
- 2) the 2026/27 base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Strategy;
- 3) the Reserves and Balances Strategy presented in Appendix 2 be approved; and
- 4) the award of Council Tax Support for 2025/26 remains at the 2025/26 level of 21.55%.

Director of Finance

EXB34 FINANCIAL RECOVERY PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Director - Finance, which outlined the Council's Financial Recovery position and provided options for the Council to achieve a sustainable budget position by the year 2030/31. The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) showed that based upon current levels of spend, income and forecast growth in service costs and demand across the Council, by 2030/31 the cumulative deficit or funding gap on the Council's budget would have reached £118.613m. The position was unsustainable, and action must be taken over the MFTS period to ensure the Council had a balanced budget position by 2030/31 at the latest, removing the

dependency upon Exceptional Financial Support. The report set out proposals regarding action that must be taken to ensure this was achieved.

In addition to the financial forecast included with the MTFS, the report provided a summary of two scenarios with a potential budget deficit position for each. Executive Directors were asked to take immediate action to identify the savings, cost control and income generation proposals identified under scenario B.

Members were also provided with detailed information on a benchmarking exercise undertaken to review the Council cost base across a number of services and this was compared to its nearest neighbour group.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) benchmarking information be used to start the process of setting departmental budget reductions for the period 2026/27 to 2030/31;
- 3) Executive Directors supported by the Transformation Delivery Unit provide options for the Transformation Board, regarding how budget reductions on the scale outlined within this report might be achieved, along with details of the associated service delivery implications; and
- 4) Executive Directors identify specific budget savings proposals to be implemented from 1 April 2026 as a matter of urgency, utilising the template in Appendix B, in order to support setting the 2026/27 budget.

Director of
Finance

EXB35 TREASURY MANAGEMENT ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Board considered a report from the Director – Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Annual Report 2024-25.

The report updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

Information was provided on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long-term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. The Council's approved

Treasury and Prudential Indicators for 2024-25 were set out in the Treasury Management Strategy Statement and was attached as Appendix one.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB36 CARE EXPERIENCED AS A 'PROTECTED CHARACTERISTIC'

The Board received a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, that outlined the need to recognise children in care and care experienced young people as a locally protected characteristic under the Equalities Act to promote lifelong care and protection for this group of young people. It was aimed to end the discrimination that young people faced when presenting to other services and partnerships, as well as to ensure that all policies ensured consideration for this group of young people under a protected characteristic to prevent discrimination.

RESOLVED: That the Board agree that the Council recognises the 'Care Experienced' as a protected characteristic.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

EXB37 YOUTH JUSTICE PLAN (ANNUAL UPDATE)

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, which presented an annual refresh of the Youth Justice Plan for the sub-regional Youth Justice Service. This was in compliance with the Youth Justice Board Guidance (Ministry of Justice) and Regulation 4 of the 'Local Authorities (Functions and Responsibilities) (England) Regulations 2000'.

Halton had a shared service arrangement for Youth Justice Services with the other three Local Authorities in the sub-region and as such the Governance arrangements for Youth Justice were overseen by a pan Cheshire Partnership Management Board. In line with legislative requirements the updated Youth Justice Plan had been refreshed and was attached as Appendix 1. The Plan included comprehensive performance data updated for the 2024/25 financial year and was produced in partnership with Cheshire Police and other statutory partners following consultation with service users.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board notes the update on performance and

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

progress made against priority areas during the financial year April 2024 to March 2025 set out in the refreshed and updated Youth Justice Strategic Plan for Cheshire (attached as Appendix 1); and

- 2) approves the content of the 2025-26 Youth Justice Strategic Plan for Cheshire and agrees to it being presented to Council for approval.

ADULT SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO

EXB38 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL ADULT SOCIAL CARE - CARE QUALITY COMMISSION (CQC) ASSESSMENT OUTCOME

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Adult Services that provided details of the outcome of the Council's Adult Social Care CQC Assessment. The assessment process officially began back in October 2024 and culminated in an onsite CQC visit that took place 17 to 19 March 2025. The final report was published on 4 July 2025 and was attached as Appendix 1. Halton's Adult Social Care Services had been rated overall as Good. An Improvement Plan had been developed and was attached as Appendix 2.

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

COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO

EXB39 DOMESTIC ABUSE ACCOMMODATION

The Board considered a report that sought 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 SHAP (St Helens Accommodation Project) to deliver on behalf of the Council, the Domestic Abuse Supported Accommodation Service, for a period of one year from 11 January 2026 to 10 January 2027.

The request for authorisation of a waiver rather than implementing a tender process was due to the following:

- the current service was well known and performing well and met all required expectations. In the current situation it would be difficult for a new provider to become established as it was a specialist provision; and

- the contract delivered on a statutory duty to provide refuge accommodation, there could be no gap in service provision.

RESOLVED: That the Board approves the contract with SHAP that expires on 10 January 2026 to be extended for 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
Environment &
Regeneration

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB40 DCBL STADIUM - NEW PAVA SYSTEM AND STRUCTURAL STEEL MAINTENANCE WORKS AND PITCH REPLACEMENT

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that sought Member approval to proceed with necessary works to the Public Address Voice Alarm (PAVA) System, the Structural Steelwork Repairs and replacement Pitch at the DCBL Stadium as identified in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Capital works identified in the report in sections 3.3 to 3.6 be approved;
- 2) consideration be given to the options outlined in paragraph 5.4 below regarding how the annual capital financing costs might be funded;
- 3) Council be asked to add works to the capital programme and include a financial contribution of £1.325m, subject to further work to establish detailed costs, and to proceed with an option to include the implementation of a PAVA system and undertake steel repairs to four stands only. This is to ensure the ongoing safety of the public when using the premises. A decision on options relating to the pitch to be deferred; and
- 4) approval of the detailed costs and the option to be undertaken, be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment Learning, Skills and Community and the Portfolio Holder for

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Community Safety.

ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO

EXB41 REVIEW OF THE MERSEYSIDE AND HALTON JOINT WASTE LOCAL PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the review of the Merseyside and Halton Joint Waste Local Plan (JWLP). The JWLP set the framework for waste related planning.

It was noted that the 2025 JWLP document reviewed the original 2013 policies to understand whether they were fit for purpose and in line with Local and National Policy. The report concluded that most of the policies in the plan remained fit for purpose. A copy of the review of the JWLP was attached as an Appendix to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the review and accepts the outcome of the review of the Joint Waste Local Plan.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

EXB42 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on a number of matters in relation to the Council's Waste Management Services, including options to help meet legislative requirements, proposed contractual arrangements for the processing of collected recyclable materials, proposed recycling collection methodologies and potential financial implications were known at this stage.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) endorse that the Council provides to the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority, as outlined commitment for Halton to be included in their procurement of new Waste Management and Recycling Contract arrangements that are to be introduced from 2029;
- 2) approve that, following the introduction of food waste collections in 2026, Halton's collected food waste is managed by the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authority under the terms of the Waste Management and Recycling Contract;

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

- 3) approve that the Council collects 'Additional Materials' for recycling as part of household kerbside collections from 2026, at temporary additional cost, until the new Merseyside Recycling the Waste Authority Waste Management and Recycling contract is in place;
- 4) endorse that the Council retains a co-mingled recycling collection system from 2026 onwards (subject to a TEEP Assessment being carried out);
- 5) approve that the Council introduces the additional resources required to deliver a comprehensive, local waste communications and education campaign, and also approves the required expenditure to do so; and
- 6) delegated authority be given to the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Environment and Urban Renewal Portfolio Holder, to take any decisions as may be necessary as part of Halton's inclusion in the Merseyside Recycling and Waste Authorities re-procurement exercise of the Waste Management and Recycling Contract.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND ENVIRONMENT AND URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIOS

EXB43 ARTICLE 4 DIRECTION - REMOVAL OF PERMITTED DEVELOPMENT RIGHTS FOR THE CHANGE OF USE FROM USE CLASS C3 (DWELLING HOUSES) TO C4 (HMOS) - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to remove the permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to C4 (HMOs). The report advised that Local Planning Authorities had the power, in exceptional circumstances, to withdraw permitted development rights through the making of an Article 4 direction. This meant that deemed planning permission would not be granted automatically and an application needed to be made to the Council. It did not prohibit development but enabled the Council to have some control over the proposed development and to apply its own policies.

The report set out the type of Article 4 directions, the proposed local areas where it was required, together with evidence and justification, the procedure and the timescales

involved to obtain Article 4 direction.

RESOLVED: That

Director -
Planning and
Transportation

- 1) the making of an immediate Article 4 Direction to remove permitted development rights for the change of use from Use Class C3 (dwelling houses) to C4 (HMOs) as set out at Appendix 4 be approved;
- 2) the required notifications as set out in the report and the publication of a public notice as shown in Appendix C be authorised;
- 3) following notification and consultation, the matter is brought back to the Board to consider any consultation responses and make a decision on whether to confirm the immediate Article 4 Direction;
- 4) authority is delegated to the Director of Planning and Transportation in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability to amend the Houses in Multiple Occupation Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) to include the making of the article 4 direction; and
- 5) it was noted that this proposal is a key decision which has not been included on the Council's Forward Plan and the procedure set down in Rule 16 of the Access to information Procedure Rules of the Constitution have been followed.

EXB44 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.

EMPLOYMENT LEARNING AND SKILLS AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB45 SUSTAINABILITY OPTIONS FOR HALTON PEOPLE INTO JOBS

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval for a sustainable funding option for the Council's Halton People Into Jobs Service when existing funding streams came to an end in March 2026.

RESOLVED: That the proposed sustainable funding option outlined in the report be approved.

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB46 VOLUNTARY SEVERANCE SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Interim Chief Executive, that provided details of options for the introduction of a Voluntary Severance Scheme.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the options contained in the report in relation to Voluntary Redundancy approvals and the introduction of a Voluntary Severance Scheme; and
- 2) acknowledge that further work to draw up an operational scheme would be required and a report would be brought back for consideration and approval.

Interim Chief
Executive

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB47 FUNDING FOR EXTENSION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, that set out a proposal for a loan agreement to build an extension on a property to accommodate four children in 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 of Children's Services be asked to finalise the details of the arrangement in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

MINUTES ISSUED: 18 September 2025

CALL-IN: 25 September 2025 at 5.00 pm.

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

Meeting ended at 2.40 p.m.