

EXECUTIVE BOARD

At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 13 November 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, M. Reaney, E. Dawson, W. Rourke and G. Ferguson

Also in attendance: John Houghton - Hope Street Strategy Company

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

EXB58 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 23 October 2025, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB59 URGENT DECISIONS

The Board received a report from the Interim Chief Executive, which provided information on an urgent decision 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.

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

DEPUTY LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

EXB60 PLAN FOR NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND, RUNCORN

The Board received a presentation from John Houghton on behalf of the consultancy Hope Street Strategy Company who were drafting the Vision and Regeneration Plan for the Plan for Neighbourhoods Fund (PfN), Runcorn. The presentation outlined engagement which had taken place to develop the 10 proposals, the vision and impact of the Plan and the next steps.

In the Spring 2024, the then Government announced Phase 2 of their Long-Term Plan for Towns (LTPT) programmed which identified Runcorn as one of 20 additional towns across the country that would benefit from an allocation of £19.5m to invest over a 10-year period in local priorities.

In March 2025, the LTPT was renamed PfN by the new Government and the timeline for delivery was pushed back to April 2026. The intention remained that the £19.5m funding (25% revenue/75% capital) over a 10-year period would provide long term certainty to deliver a range of interventions. A funding profile was provided at Appendix 1 and a full list of interventions, including sub-interventions was provided at Appendix 2. A robust assessment process for determining which projects to be taken forward would need to be developed and this would be undertaken by a sub-panel of the Runcorn Town Neighbourhood Board, alongside officers.

It was noted that in order to access the funding, the Council would need to produce a Regeneration Plan for the agreed area by 28 November 2025, along with a 4-year investment plan. Hope Street Strategy Company had been employed to develop the Regeneration Plan.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the update and associated presentation.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB61 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE 2026/27 - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Director of Finance, on the requirement for the Council to determine the Council Tax Base for its area and the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

The Council Tax Base was the measure used for calculating Council Tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (Cheshire Fire Authority, Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner and the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority), in the calculation of their Council Tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula which represented the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent Band 'D' dwellings.

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 97% collection rate, the calculation for 2026-27 gave a base figure of 37,115 for the Borough as a whole. The Council Tax Base figure for each of the Parishes was noted.

Reason for Decision

To seek approval for the Council Tax Base for the Borough and also the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes.

Alternative options considered and rejected

The Council was required to determine annually the Council Tax Base and to notify the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police & Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, the Environment Agency and Parish Councils.

Implementation date

The Council Tax Base 2026/27 would be implemented from 1 April 2026.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve:

Director of Finance

- 1) setting the 2026/27 Council Tax Base at 37,115 for the Borough and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police and Crime Commissioner, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority and the Environment Agency be so notified; and
- 2) setting the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes

as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	675
Halebank	540
Daresbury	424
Moore	338
Preston Brook	368
Sandymoor	1,739

EXB62 2025/26 COUNCILWIDE SPENDING AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 25

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, advising of the Council's overall revenue and capital net spending position as at 30 September 2025, together with a 2025/26 forecast outturn position.

Appendix 1 presented a summary of spending against the operational revenue budget up to 30 September 2025 and Appendix 2 provided detailed figures for each individual Department. It was reported that in overall terms the net Council spend as at 30 September 2025 would be over the approved budget by £2.658m. The outturn forecast for the year estimated that net spending would be over budget by £4.672m if no corrective action was taken. Appendix 3 detailed the Council approved savings covering 2025/26 and 2026/27, together with information on progress to date. Appendix 4 presented the Capital Programme as at 30 September 2025, highlighting the schemes which had been revised. Appendix 5 set out the Budget Risk Register as at 30 September 2025.

RESOLVED: That

- 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) 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 area of responsibility; and

Director of Finance

- 4) Council be asked to approve to the revisions to the capital programme set out in paragraph 3.25 and incorporated within Appendix 4.

EXB63 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2025-26 HALF YEAR UPDATE

The Board considered a report from the Director of Finance, which presented the Treasury Management Half Year Report as at 30 September 2025.

These reports updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market during the first half of the financial year to 30 September 2025, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The report provided supporting information on the economic outlook, interest rate forecast, short-term borrowing rates, longer term borrowing rates, borrowing and investments, budget monitoring, new long-term borrowing, policy guidelines and treasury management indicators. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO

EXB64 HOME TO SCHOOL AND POST 16 TRAVEL AND TRANSPORT POLICY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE WITH SPECIAL EDUCATIONAL NEEDS AND DISABILITIES (SEND) POLICY 2026-2027 RECOMMENDATIONS - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Children's Services, that provided an update on the consultation process that had taken place from 2 April to 6 May 2025, on the Home to School and Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities 2026-27. A copy of the Policy was attached to the report and would be implemented from 1 September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support.

Reason(s) for Decision

To agree changes to the Home to School and Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Policy 2026-

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

Given the current financial position of the Council and the significant pressure on this current Home to School Transport budget, to do nothing would impact the local authority's ability to set a balanced and sustainable budget.

Implementation Date

All aspects of this policy would be implemented from 1 September 2026 for all new applicants for travel support.

RESOLVED: That the 2026-27 Home to School & Post 16 Travel and Transport Policy for Children and Young People with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) be approved.

Executive Director
of Children's
Services

N.B. Councillor Bevan declared an Other Registrable Interest in the following item of business she is a member of the Fortuna Female Society.

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO

EXB65 CULTURE

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, which provided an update on the Culture Work Programme and Borough of Culture approach for 2026 and beyond. Halton was scheduled to deliver Borough of Culture in 2026 and the report set out the draft programme for the year.

It was noted that new arrangements for the future programme of Borough of Culture had been in place since 2018. Liverpool City Region (LCR) Chief Executives had met earlier this year and the LCR Neighbourhoods and Communities Directors Group had met in March 2025. An experienced consultant had also been procured to engage with key delivery stakeholders across the LCR and this had provided recommendations on the future of the programme.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) approves the 2026 year of culture work programme;
- 2) supports a forward culture approach; and

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

- 3) agrees a proposal to explore a music festival for Halton in 2027.

HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY PORTFOLIO

EXB66 APPROVAL OF THE BOROUGH WIDE HOUSING STRATEGY - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, that sought approval to make a recommendation to Council for the approval of a Borough wide Housing Strategy (A copy of the Strategy document was attached to the report). It was noted that a six-week public consultation exercise was taking place until 16 November 2025, on the draft Strategy and a summary of the responses received to date was reported.

Following the closure of the consultation exercise, comments would be reviewed, and any final changes would be made to the Strategy. In order to expediate this process it was recommended that the Board gave delegated approval to the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental Sustainability, to agree any final revisions to the Strategy.

Reason for Decision

Approval of a new five-year Borough wide Housing Strategy for Halton to allow implementation.

Alternative options considered and rejected

Not applicable.

Implementation date

Five Year Strategy 2026-2031.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the progress on the production and consultation of the draft Housing Strategy for Halton 2026 – 2031 (Appendix A) and supporting evidence document (Appendix B);
- 2) provides delegated approval to the Executive Director - Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing and Environmental

Executive Director
Environment &
Regeneration

Sustainability to agree any final revisions to the draft Housing Strategy; and

- 3) Council be recommended to approve the revised Housing Strategy.

EXB67 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.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB68 VICTORIA PARK CHARITY

This item was deferred until a future meeting.

MINUTES ISSUED: 19 November 2025

CALL-IN: 26 November 2025 at 5.00 pm.

Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 26 November 2025.

Meeting ended at 2.44 p.m.