

## EXECUTIVE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Executive Board on Thursday, 11 December 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, S. Wallace-Bonner, T. Gibbs, G. Ferguson, R. Rout, J. Hughes and D. O'Connor

Also in attendance: None

### ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER POWERS AND DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

#### *Action*

#### EXB69 MINUTES

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

#### LEADER'S PORTFOLIO

#### EXB70 URGENT DECISION

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.

## **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB71 FINANCIAL RECOVERY, CHANGE AND INNOVATION RESOURCE APRIL 2026 ONWARDS - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Director of Transformation (Interim), that sought approval to establish and resource a dedicated Financial Recovery, Change and Innovation function for the Council from April 2026, following the conclusion of the current Transformation Programme and its associated funding on 31 March 2026. The proposal would ensure the Council had the capacity, capability and governance structures required to deliver the scale and pace of change necessary to achieve financial sustainability.

The Board noted that a Financial Recovery Plan was currently being developed with the aim of demonstrating how the Council could return to a sustainable budget position by 2030/31. To support the Plan and the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS), it was proposed that a new Change and Innovation Unit (CIU) would be established from 1 April 2026. Given the tenure of the current contract arrangements and the rights accrued, appointments to the CIU would be on a permanent basis. Some flexible budget would also be retained to buy-in expertise on an as and when needed basis. It was noted that £2.5m had been included in the MTFS to fund a change programme for the period 2026/27 to 2028/29.

#### Reason for Decision

Agreement for funding to resource a Financial Recovery, Change and continuous Improvement function for the Council from April 2026 following the end of the Transformation Programme and its funding on 31 March 2026.

#### Alternative options considered and rejected

N/A

#### Implementation date

1 April 2026.

**RESOLVED:** That the Board approves the establishment of a Change and Innovation Unit (CIU) to support the Financial Recovery and Corporate Plan from 1

Chief Executive

April 2026.

## EXB72 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

The Board received a report from the Director of 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 three applications from organisations, in relation to their respective address. Appended to the report was the potential annual cost to the Council of granting the discretionary rate relief. On 25 February 2025, the Board approved the renewal from 1 April 2026, of existing discretionary rate relief awards, for a period of three years in order to provide certainty for the organisations. Historically, the Council had chosen to only support organisations who operated solely or mainly within the Borough with discretionary rate relief.

**RESOLVED:** That

Director of  
Finance

- 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;
- 2) the application for 10% discretionary rate relief from the National Council of Young Men's Christian Associations (Incorporated) in respect of 12 Runcorn Shopping Centre, Runcorn, Cheshire, WA7 2BS with effect from 4 September 2025, be rejected;
- 3) the application for 10% discretionary rate relief from Widnes Gymnastics Academy in respect of Unit 10 Widnes Business Park, Foundry Lane with effect from 25 August 2025, be approved;
- 4) the application for 10% discretionary rate relief from Widnes Gymnastics Academy in respect of Unit 11 Widnes Business Park, Foundry Lane with effect from 25 August 2025, be approved.

EXB73 DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 2025 - 2026

The Board considered a report of the Director of HR and Corporate Affairs (Interim), on progress against key objectives/milestones and performance targets for the second quarter period to 30 September 2025, for Corporate and Inclusion, Health and Social Care and Children's Services.

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 information contained in the reports be noted.

**HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL SUSTAINABILITY AND COMMUNITY SAFETY PORTFOLIO**

EXB74 PRIDE IN PLACE, IMPACT FUND

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, that provided an update on the recently announced Pride in Place Impact Fund (PiPIF) of £1.5m for Halton and the considerations around how to deploy the funding within the required timescales. The funding had to be used to achieve visible impacts by March 2027, and the guidelines outlined that local authorities would act as the accountable body for the PiPIF working with local stakeholders to identify and invest in themes that met local need. The report set out the three following overarching themes that the funds could be deployed on:

- Community spaces;
- Public spaces; and
- High street and town centre revitalisation.

RESOLVED: That the Board  
1) acknowledge the £1.5 million allocation being made

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

available and note that the Chief Executive has signed the associated memorandum of understanding on behalf of the Council;

- 2) approves delegated authority to the Executive Director for Environment and Regeneration (in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Community Safety and Housing and Environmental Sustainability) to progress projects that meet the strategic objectives of the fund, with specific projects to be determined by Executive Board;
- 3) note the timeline for submission of key documents to MHCLG (first submission in February 2026) and that the Council will act as Accountable Body for the funding; and
- 4) approves delegated authority to the Director Economy Enterprise and Property (in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services) to arrange for all required documentation to be completed to the satisfaction of the Director Legal and Democratic Services in relation to any necessary proposed project activities.

## **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB75 CHILDRENS SERVICES COMMISSIONED CONTRACT EXTENSIONS**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director of Children's Services, that sought approval for a series of staged extensions via requests to various contractual waivers, in compliance with Procurement Standing Orders 1.14.4.3 and 1.14.4 iv seeking to waive parts 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders. The waivers were for several contracts identified in the report and overarching rationale was provided for each, alongside individual contractual considerations. The eighteen short term extensions would allow:

- a focused workplan to be spread more equitably across the financial year, resulting in contract end dates of April and October respectively and allow a dedicated focus on each contract;
- the allocated commissioning officers time and space to fully review each contract, allowing for more options to be considered, including the use of open and competitive tenders, or longer-term direct awards, based on quality audits of the outcomes

achieved across the specification key performance indicators; and

- the Procurement Team time to plan the preferred options into their annual work schedules.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted;
- 2) approval be given to the Emotional Health and Wellbeing contract with Barnardo's being extended for 12 months, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.3 (non-emergency procedures – not exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive parts 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;
- 3) approval be given to the Advocacy and Independent Visitor (CRAIV) contract with NYAS being extended for 6 months, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.3 (non-emergency procedures – not exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive parts 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;
- 4) approval be given to the Personal Assistant Services contract with Positive Futures Consultancy being extended for 12 months, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.3 (non-emergency procedures – not exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;
- 5) approval be given to the Specialist Children's Domestic Abuse Service contract with The Children's Society being extended for 6 months, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.3 (non-emergency procedures – not exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;
- 6) approval be given to the Friendships Groups contract with VIBE being extended for 6 months, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.3 (non-emergency procedures – not exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;
- 7) approval be given to the Specialist Seating contract with Newlyn Healthcare being extended for 12

Executive Director  
of Children's  
Services

months, in pursuance of Procurement Standing Order 1.14.3 (non-emergency procedures – not exceeding a value threshold of £100,000), seeking to waive part 3.1 and 3.2 of Procurement Standing Orders;

8) approval be given to the Supported Accommodation contract with P3 being extended for 12 months, 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;

9) approval be given to the PAUSE and REACH Programmes contract with PAUSE Halton being extended for 12 months, 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; and

10) the re-commissioning of each service, via open competitive tender, or otherwise, at the extended contract end dates, be undertaken by the Children's Head of Commissioning and Quality Assurance in liaison with the Portfolio Holder for Children's.

## **ENVIRONMENT & URBAN RENEWAL PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB76 WASTE MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

The Board considered a report that provided an update on the continuing work in the development of the new Strategic Policy and Service Plan documents in respect of the Council's Waste Management Services. It was noted that since the last report to the Board on 11 September 2025, the following actions had taken place:

- work was being undertaken to draft a new Halton Waste Strategy document which would be presented to the Board in Spring 2026. The aims of the Strategy would be underpinned by a new Waste Policy which was also in development;
- an Environment Service Transformation Programme supported by the Transformation Delivery Unit was ongoing;
- workforce engagement: staff, management, Trade Unions and HR representatives had met and been fully engaged throughout the development of the Transformation programme;
- work was progressing to bring in additional staffing

resources to deliver effective communication and community engagement on the new services for Halton residents and the development of a Communications Plan; and

- an update on the new Food Waste Collection Service to be implemented to every household in 2026 was provided including staffing implications.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board endorse the current programme of work, as set out within the report, which is being undertaken to support the Council in meeting its Strategic aims and objectives with regards to the management of waste in Halton; and
- 2) a further report be presented to the Board in Spring 2026.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

**EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY PORTFOLIO**

**EXB77 CONNECT TO WORK PROGRAMME**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, that advised on the opportunity for the Council to participate in the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority's delivery of the national Connect to Work programme and sought delegated authority to negotiate and execute related Grant Funding Agreements.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approve the indicative £2,170,118 funding allocation from the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority for delivery of the Halton Connect to Work programme; and
- 2) authority be delegated to the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Employment, Learning, Skills and Community, the Director Finance / Section 151 Officer and the Director of Legal and Democratic Services, to negotiate and execute Grant Funding Agreements for delivery of the Connect to Work programme.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

**EXB78 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

### EXB79 ACCOMMODATION REVIEW UPDATE - KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Environment and Regeneration, on the continuing review of the Council's accommodation.

#### Reason for Decision

To enable notification to be given to the Telecommunications companies and allow for the Municipal Building to be demolished, and to allow for negotiations to be undertaken in respect of the possible future use of the site.

#### Alternative options considered and rejected

Alternative options were considered in the July Executive Board report.

#### Implementation date

December 2027.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approve that arrangements be prepared to decommission and vacate the Municipal Building; and
- 2) the Municipal Building be demolished, subject to the necessary planning requirements being met, and that delegated authority be given to the Executive Director for Environment and Regeneration in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Major Projects to enter negotiations regarding the potential future use of the site.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

## **ADULT AND SOCIAL CARE PORTFOLIO**

### **EXB80 REVIEW OF TELEHEALTHCARE SERVICES - KEY DECISION**

The Board considered a report of the Executive Director Adult Services, that set out options following a review of the Telehealthcare Services.

#### Reason for Decision

The outcome of this report and decision is likely to result in savings and potential changes to the charging of the service.

#### Alternative options considered and rejected

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

#### Implementation date

The outcome from the report is to be implemented as soon as possible.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- 1) note the report;

Executive Director  
of Adult Services

2) a further report be brought to the next meeting of the Board clarifying the points raised.

On behalf of the Council the Leader thanked Sue Wallace Bonner for her work and years of support and he wished her a happy and healthy retirement

**MINUTES ISSUED: 16 December 2025**

**CALL-IN: 23 December 2025 at 5.00 pm.**

**Any matter decided by the Executive Board may be called in no later than 5.00pm on 23 December 2025.**

*Meeting ended at 2.45 p.m.*