

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 4 January 2011 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors A. Lowe (Chairman), Roberts (Vice-Chairman), Browne, Dennett, Gilligan, Inch, Loftus, Nolan, Norddahl, Philbin and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L. Derbyshire, J. Hatton, R. Mackenzie, A. Villiers, W Rourke and M. Reaney

Also in attendance: M Ratcliffe – Scrutiny Co-ordinator and in accordance with Standing Order 33 - Councillor Jones Portfolio Holder – Economic Development.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CS33 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 2 November 2010 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CS34 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

It was reported that no public questions had been received.

(Councillor Gilligan declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business CS35 insofar as it related to minute ES56) due to being a Halton Housing Trust Board Member).

CS35 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The minutes of the Executive Board and the Executive Board Sub-Committee relating to the work of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board since its last meeting, were submitted for information.

In respect of Minute No: EXB64 – the Members requested that as this item had an impact across the Authority that it be considered by the relevant Policy and Performance Boards before any decision was made. In response, it was reported that this request would be noted

Minute Number: ES47 – Clarity was sought on the current position in respect of the revenue expenditure being below the budget profile. In response, it was reported that information on the balances and reserves would be provided to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and comments made be noted.

CS36 SSP MINUTES

The minutes from the Halton Strategic Partnership Board held on 29 September 2010, were attached for consideration.

Minute No: 18, Page 18 – an update was requested on the establishment of GP commissioning consortia. In response, it was reported that an update on this matter would be provided to Members of the Board.

Minute No: 19 – WNF Review and Evaluation- an update was sought on the evaluation of the projects funded by the WNF grant and the development of appropriate continuation or exit strategies. In response, it was reported that each SSP had reviewed their spending commitments and there was approximately £1.3 m of funding available. A half day workshop had been arranged in January to consider the options and establish recommendations which would be presented to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board and the Council for consideration.

Minute No: 23 – Halton and St Helens Voluntary and Community Action – It was noted that the merger had taken place. It was also noted that in the future the headquarters could be located in Halton.

Minute No: 24 – HSP Economic Downturn Housing Examples – It was noted that the increased numbers of unsuccessful benefit claimants had been mainly due to an increase in the number of new claimants who were unfamiliar with the process.

RESOLVED: That the minutes and comments made be noted.

CS37 CHOICE OF TOPICS 2011-12

The Board considered a report on the Work Programme for 2011/12 regarding possible topics for inclusion in the next Municipal Year. It was agreed that the

Board would continue with the Marketing Working Group and the Carbon Reduction Working Group.

The Chairman advised the Board that they could email suggestions for new topics and it was agreed that a list of possible topics could be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

It was suggested that the Board could consider looking at the Halton Strategic Partnership Board in the work programme and the impact the Government proposals had on their role.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the topics outlined above be included in the Boards Work Programme for 2011/2012; and
- (2) a list of possible topic groups for the 2011/12 municipal year be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director
– Resources

CS38 RUNCORN INDOOR MARKETS PETITION

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Economy and Environment which informed the Members that the Council had received two petitions in respect of the Indoor Market. The first petition asked for the decision to close the market to be reconsidered and the second specifically referred to the café. It was reported that the petitions had been logged and a response had been sent to the individuals who had submitted them.

The report advised that unfortunately the Indoor Market was not commercially viable. For this reason, the Executive Board had agreed to the closure.

In addition, a number of meetings and discussions had taken place with those traders who wished to continue. A number of options had been considered; which included taking space on the street market, relocating to Widnes Market and possibly moving to shop units either in Runcorn Town Centre or Halton Lea. Traders had been advised that for those properties in Council ownership, consideration would be given to a stepped introduction to rates and rents

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the petition be received;

- (2) the decision of the Executive Board to approve the closure of Runcorn Market Hall with effect from 31 January 2011 be noted; and
- (3) the ongoing work to relocate Runcorn market traders be noted.

(Councillor Nolan declared a Personal Interest in the following item due to his wife working for HBC in personnel).

CS39 SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Resources which outlined the number of working days lost in the second quarter of 2009-10, outlining trends and patterns of sickness.

The Board was advised that the cumulative number of working days lost, due to sickness absence, per employee, at the end of the 2nd quarter 2010/11 was 4.59 as compared to 4.84 days per employee for the same period in 2009/10, which represented a slight improvement.

The Board was further advised that there had been a substantial decrease in the days lost due to work related stress across the Authority in this quarter.- 582 days lost as compared with 1000.50 days lost in the 1st quarter 2010/11. There were also slight decreases in days lost due to depression/personal stress in this quarter as compared to the first quarter of this financial year.

In conclusion it was reported that the continued management of sickness absence remained important as high levels of sickness increase the overall loss to the Council. The Council also had a responsibility to ensure appropriate support was provided to employees who suffer ill-health.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- The extensive health promotional work undertaken by the Authority and the support given to employees on sick leave was noted;
- In relation to the days lost to anxiety and stress and work related stress, it was requested that Members receive a breakdown of these figures by department. In response it was reported that clarity would be sought on whether this information was available on a departmental

basis;

- Members requested that the percentages of sickness absence be added to future reports; and
- Clarity was sought on why schools were included in the data, particularly in light of the new Government proposals and it was suggested that they be taken out of future reports to reflect a more accurate figure. In response, it was reported that this request would be taken into consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the content of the report and comments made be noted; and
- (2) The Board continue to receive regular monitoring reports on sickness absence.

Strategic Director
- Resources

(Councillors Dennett and Gillian declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business due to being members of CAB).

CS40 ANNUAL REPORT FOR VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which presented the Annual Report for Voluntary Sector Funding 2009/10. The report examined the policy context for providing core grant support to the Voluntary Sector and considered the benefits of supporting volunteering opportunities.

The report provided performance information on the eleven organisations that were Core Grant supported in 2008/9. Case studies were also circulated at the meeting for Members consideration.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- Clarity was sought on what information and checks the Authority made to ensure the funding was being utilised efficiently. After discussion Members noted that there were no Service Level Agreements (SLA's) in place for funding below £5,000. However, for funding over £5,000 an SLA was in place and performance would be monitored. It was also noted that SLA's could be changed on an

annual basis;

- The difference between funding given to the voluntary sector to provide core funding and funding that was provided for departments to commission services was noted;
- Samaritans of Warrington, Halton and St Helens who were based in Warrington – it was noted that they provided a Cheshire wide service and it was suggested that funding of the organisation should be proportionate to the population in each Authority;
- It was suggested that in light of the further cuts this year a topic group be established to look at how the funding was being utilised and if it was being used to the best advantage for the residents in the Borough. In addition, opportunities for option for cross funding between St Helens and Halton could be investigated; and
- The Members were advised that they could email the Chairman via the Operational Director – Legal & Democratic Services if they were interested in being part of the Voluntary Sector Topic Group.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the delivery of voluntary sector services in receipt of core grant support from the Council and comments made be noted;
- (2) a Voluntary Sector Topic Group be established and Members email the Chairman via the Operational Director – Legal & Democratic Services if they wish to become part of the group.

Strategic Director
– Adults &
Community

CS41 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 - 2010/11

The Board considered a report from of the Chief Executive on the 2nd Quarter Performance Management Reports for 2010/11 (July – September) 2010.

Members were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the 2nd quarter performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the

services for:

- Policy and Performance;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Financial Services;
- ICT and Support Services;
- Human Resources;
- Property Services;
- Catering and Stadium; and
- Halton Direct Links.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the new A-Z guide had been completed but was currently awaiting a decision on the number to be printed. It was reported that only a limited number would be printed in order to make significant savings. It was suggested that a link to the A-Z Guide be established on the website;
- FSLI3 – Page 111 – It was noted that discussions were ongoing with the Government in respect of the continuance of the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate;
- It was suggested and agreed that Members should not receive hard copies of the 'In Touch Magazine' in the future;
- Clarity was sought on the contribution to the Stobart Stadium to support operational costs. In response, it was reported that this information would be provided to Members of the Board; and
- Page 158 – Clarity was sought on the future of the £200,000 school lunch grant which was expected to end as a result of the Comprehensive Spending Review. In response, it was reported that this information would be provided to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the 2nd quarter Performance Management Reports and comments made be noted.

CS42 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY MID YEAR PROGRESS REPORT 2010-14

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) for Halton.

The Board was advised that an updated SCS for Halton was currently at an advanced stage of preparation and would become 'live' from April 2011. In addition, the coalition Government had set out its performance measures in government departmental business plans, of which many of these performance measures were already included in the SCS.

The Board was further advised that in considering the report Members needed to be aware that:-

- All of the measures within the National Indicator Set (NIS) were monitored through quarterly monitoring reports. The purpose of the report was to consolidate information on all measures and targets relevant to the PPB in order to provide a clear picture of progress; and
- In some cases, outturn data could not be made available at the mid-year point. Additionally, all measures captured through the National Place Survey, which was due to be undertaken this year, had been deleted from the NIS by central Government and therefore no further data would be made available in 2010/11. The future requirement for localised perception survey under the transparency agenda was presently subject to consideration.

The Board was advised that there was no data on NI 5 – Increase residents overall satisfaction with the area.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- NI 5 – A member sought clarity on the key areas residents felt needed to be improved in respect of influence in decision making (NMA's). In response, it was reported that this information would be provided to the member directly.

In respect of CO₂ emissions clarity was sought on whether the information collected by DEFRA from public and private companies could be provided to the Board to consider and use as a benchmark. In response, it was reported that this would be considered. However, it was highlighted that there could be potential data protection issues. It was suggested that the data to improve outcomes year on year that was sent directly to the Government was available as a public record and this data could be used by the Board; and

It was noted that as a result of changes to the national performance framework, the Council and the Halton Strategic Partnership would need to review their respective performance frameworks. The Board would take an overview of this process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments made be noted;
- (2) the Board be involved in the forthcoming review of the Council's performance management framework.

Strategic Director
- Resources

CS43 DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN - 2011-2014

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Resources which provided an update on Business Planning for the period 2011-14 and the Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for services for this period that fell within the remit of the Board.

The Board was advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. Draft Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets had been developed by each department and the information had been included in the Appendices to the report. These objectives and measures would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring received by the Board during the future year.

The Board was further advised that due to the proposed structural changes across the Council and the need to better integrate the Directorate's priorities as last year a combined plan would be published rather than individual Departmental Service Plans. The plan, however, was subject to reconfiguration of services between Directorates and subject to consultation.

It was reported that comments could also be made to the relevant Operational Director by no later than 20 January 2011 to allow inclusion in the draft business plan.

In addition, the draft Directorate Business Plan would be revised given proposed reconfiguration of Directorates during January and would be presented to the Executive Board for approval on 12 February 2011, at the same time as the draft budget. This would ensure that decisions on

Business Planning were linked to resource allocation. All Directorate plans would be considered by full Council at its 2 March 2011 meeting.

The importance of keeping the document up to date in the light of changing management structures, and emerging budget decisions was also noted.

In respect of Page 241 – Key Area of Focus: 36 – ‘Ensuring that the Council’s land and property portfolio is managed effectively – clarity was sought on the meaning of this and who would be making the decisions. The importance of Ward Councillors taking a lead role in this process was noted. It was suggested that a portfolio list of all property and assets and the surplus sites list be reported to the Board and that Councillor Wharton, Portfolio Holder - Resources be invited to the meeting of the Board when the report is presented.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments made be noted;
- (2) a list of all property and assets and the surplus sites list be reported to a future meeting of the Board and Councillor Wharton, Portfolio Holder – Resources be invited to attend; and
- (3) Members of the Board pass any detailed comments that they may have on the information in the report to the relevant Operational Director by January 2011.

Strategic Director
- Resources

Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.