

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 26 February 2013 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), Roberts (Vice-Chairman), E. Cargill, Dennett, S. Hill, C. Loftus, A. Lowe, A. McInerney, N. Plumpton Walsh and G. Stockton

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, I. Leivesley, E. Dawson and A. Scott

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS38	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 10 January 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS39	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	It was confirmed that no public questions had been received.	
CS40	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board, were submitted to the Board for information.	
	Members raised queries relating to Discretionary Non Domestic Rate Relief, clarification of which was provided by Officers.	
	RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.	

CS41 SSP MINUTES

The minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board were submitted for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CS42 ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which informed the Members of the Armed Forces Community Covenant set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Board was advised that Halton was part of a pan Cheshire Covenant covering the Local Authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Warrington and Halton. In addition to local authorities, health, probation and Job Centre plus were involved in supporting the covenant.

The Board was further advised that the Armed Forces Community Covenant had been signed by dignitaries representing each of the authorities on the 30th June 2012, Armed Forces Day.

It was reported that each Local Authority was required to have a nominated Armed Forces Champion. In Halton, the Community Development Manager had been designated this role and would provide representation on a Community Covenant working group that covered the Cheshire area and provide a point of liaison for the forces.

The Armed Forces Community Covenant set out twenty pledges, around five key themes:-

- Housing;
- Employment & Benefit;
- Education;
- Health; and
- Wellbeing.

It was reported that the Council would work with partners to assist and support our armed forces and their families in line with the pledges set out in the covenant. It was noted that the lead Policy and Performance Board would be Employment, Learning, Skills and Community.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- The impact of the 'bedroom tax' when armed forces personnel were away on active service;
- How best to publicise services which armed forces personnel could access;
- How to encourage the providers of social housing to give priority to returning armed forces personnel and their families; and
- How the performance of the Council and its partners should be monitored in supporting armed forces personnel in line with the pledges set out in the covenant.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Board receive monitoring reports on progress on the key themes and pledges.

Strategic Director
– Policy and
Resources

CS43 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS - QUARTER 3

The Board received the Performance Management Reports for Quarter 3 of 2012/13, from the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources and was requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of performance management.

Members were advised that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2012-15 were agreed by Members and were included in the Directorate Plans. The report detailed progress against service objectives/milestones and performance targets, in relation to described factors affecting the service for each of the following areas:

- Financial Services;
- Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- ICT Infrastructure;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services.

Arising from the discussion of the report, Members noted the following:

- The possible effect of welfare reforms on the % Council Tax collected;
- The timeframe for the development of the HR self-serve portal;
- Renewal of the Lexcel Accreditation;

- Adoption of the Council's Core Strategy;
- Identification of those premises that were not accessible to disabled people; and
- the excellent job undertaken by staff in managing the budget to date.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments be noted.

CS44 SICKNESS ABSENCE

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources on sickness absence for Quarter 2 of 2012/13.

The report provided a breakdown of sickness absence data for the second quarter of 2012/13 for each Directorate. It was noted that the cumulative working days lost due to sickness absence, per employee, was 4.35. In terms of long term sickness absence, the overall calculation of working days lost was also included.

Managers across all Directorates had actively monitored employee absence, supported by the Employee Welfare Advisors. In addition, they had been asked to ensure that all stress risk assessments were up to date and that previous courses on stress management be re-run for staff and managers. Members noted that work related stress, personal stress and depression accounted for a large percentage of days lost in 2012/13. It was further noted that the Communities Directorate had the highest level of absence and Members felt this should be closely monitored given the nature of the work carried out by staff working in this Directorate in delivering many of the front line services.

In discussion the following points were made:

- The importance of recognising any early signs of stress in staff;
- Other measures, in addition to training, that could be put in place to support managers and staff in recognising and dealing with stress;
- Raising awareness amongst staff that do not have access to ICT equipment, of the availability of support and the advice that was available through self-referral; and
- The views of the Board relating to the issue of stress amongst the workforce to be reported to Management Team for information.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted. |

Meeting ended at 7.10 p.m.