

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 6 January 2015 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Wainwright and Rowe

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: I. Leivesley, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, S. Davies, N. Goodwin, P. McCann and R. Shacklady

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS26	MINUTES The Minutes from the meeting held on 21 st October 2014 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS27	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS28	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the Board. RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.	
CS29	SSP MINUTES The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership were presented to the Board for information.	

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

CS30 CODE OF PRACTICE - DATA TRANSPARENCY

The Board was advised that in September 2011, as part of its local accountability agenda, Government published a Code of Recommended Practice for Local Authorities on Data Transparency. The Code identified a series of data sets that authorities were, as a minimum, encouraged to publish in order to promote local accountability.

In Autumn 2012 the Government undertook a consultation exercise in which it was suggested that the original Code would be substantially revised with its basic requirements becoming mandatory and its scope extended. Following the publication of the government's response to this consultation the DCLG finalised and published the Local Government Transparency Code. The Code set out specific data sets that were both required to be published and recommended for publication on a quarterly and annual basis.

Subsequently following this publication, the Code was further revised by DCLG in October 2014 and specified that authorities were required to publish quarterly data by 31st December 2014 and annual data by 2nd February 2015. The Code also stated that the requirements had been made mandatory. Although compliance with the code would not be monitored by the Information Commissioners Office (ICO), the ICO would react to complaints being received from interested parties under existing frameworks.

Members were advised on the number of data sets that must be published or were recommended for publication and specific Officer resource implications.

RESOLVED: That

1. the authority's new statutory obligation to publish prescribed information in accordance with the Code and consider that which is recommended be noted; and
2. the authority's additional resource requirements be noted.

CS31 DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic

Director, Policy and Resources, which provided an update regarding the operation of the Council's Discretionary Support Scheme. The Discretionary Social Scheme Topic Group met on 20th November 2014 to review progress with the Scheme. The Board noted:

- at the end of Quarter 2 in 2014/15 £171,000 had been paid out of the Discretionary Support Scheme;
- details regarding the applications to the Scheme so far during 2014/15, numbers of awards and reasons for rejection;
- that feedback had been received from Citizens Advice Bureau and a detailed response had been agreed with the Chairman and forwarded to them;
- proposed changes for the Scheme which were required to take account of the introduction of Universal Credit, to clarify the position regarding the number of awards permitted each year and to enable the Scheme to assist customers who were in full time education and where they had no alternative support.

It was reported that for 2015/16 £584,000 had been allocated to the Council towards the Discretionary Support Scheme. However the Council had also received an equivalent reduction in its general grant, which effectively meant there was no funding for the Scheme in 2016/17.

Members were advised that due to underspend in the Discretionary Support Scheme in previous years, the Council could continue to support the Scheme in 2016/17. A report on the options for the future provision of the Discretionary Support Scheme in Halton would be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

Arising from the discussion, the Board thanked those members of staff within the Benefits Team who had continued to administer the Discretionary Support Scheme during the Christmas period.

RESOLVED: That

1. progress with the operation of the Council's Discretionary Support Scheme be noted; and
2. in accordance with the Executive Board minute EXB122 (2012) (and the delegation contained therein), it is recommended that the proposed amendments to the Scheme outlined in Appendix B, be approved; and

Strategic Director
Policy and
Resources

3. a report on the options for the future of the Discretionary Support Scheme in Halton be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

CS32 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2014/15

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 2 of 2014/15.

The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones, and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

- Finance;
- Human Resources and Organisational Development;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services.

Arising from the reports it was commented that the Fees and Charges Topic Group would be meeting again shortly and that any short term opportunities to increase income should be taken.

RESOLVED: That the second quarter performance monitoring reports be received and noted.

CS33 EXTERNAL FUNDING TEAM UPDATE

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which provided an overview of the remit of the External Funding Team and external funding secured. The Team had a Council-wide remit and also a role in supporting partners in the voluntary/community and private sectors where appropriate. The Board noted the key funding streams the Team advised on, the roles within the Team, funding statistics and the current pipeline project list. For 2014-15 the Team had secured £3.4m of funding to date.

Arising from the discussion the Board congratulated the External Funding Team on their work and securing £3.4m of external funding.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS34 LOCAL AREA FORUMS 2013/14

A report was presented to the Board by the Strategic Director, Communities, which informed Members of the project delivery of the Local Area Forums for the financial period 1 April 2013 and 31 March 2014.

Members were advised that Local Area Forums were set up in 2001 to take policy development into communities, bridging the gap between key agencies working within the Borough. Each Local Area Forum (LAF) was led by the respective local Councillors and supported by a Senior Officer from the Council. Other partner organisations such as the Police, Fire Service, Housing Associations, youth and voluntary sector bodies also attended LAF's to keep the community informed of local developments and to respond to local concerns.

It was reported that in 2013-14, £600,000 was allocated to the Area Forums which was allocated on a per capita basis across the seven LAF's that covered the Borough, details of each area's funding was provided in the report. The local communities were then invited to attend their local forum to provide ideas for neighbourhood projects that would enhance their local area. These ideas were then progressed with the help of Community Development Officers who presented them to the respective Forum Members for consideration.

The report provided information on the areas of expenditure of the LAF's as a whole, these were categorised into key areas: Landscapes; Safety; Youth Facilities; Improved Parks; Pedestrian Access; Security and Community. Additionally, breakdowns were provided of the individual expenditure for each of the seven Area Forums, using the above categories.

It was highlighted that the Area Forum budget had enabled the leverage of other grants and, through joint working, had secured access to funds from agencies such as Biffa, Wren, Housing Associations, Awards for All, Lottery and Health. This meant that an additional amount of £592,202 had been levered in to support projects providing a budget total of £1.1m. In other words for every £1 of Area Forum funding, a further amount of £1.10 of funding was provided. It was noted that a significant amount of money was levered in during this reporting year for the Halton Carers Centre.

Finally the report provided Members with examples of case studies which demonstrated the positive impacts that Area Forum projects had in Halton's communities.

Members thanked officers for the detailed report and congratulated the Community Development Team on their work.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.