

Public Document Pack



Corporate Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 10 June 2014 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David WR'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|---------------------------------------|------------------|
| Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chairman) | Labour |
| Councillor Alan Lowe (Vice-Chairman) | Labour |
| Councillor Joe Roberts | Labour |
| Councillor Ellen Cargill | Labour |
| Councillor Mark Dennett | Labour |
| Councillor Stan Hill | Labour |
| Councillor Chris Loftus | Labour |
| Councillor Angela McInerney | Labour |
| Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh | Labour |
| Councillor Kevan Wainwright | Labour |
| Councillor Christopher Rowe | Liberal Democrat |

*Please contact Ann Jones on 0151 511 8276 Ext. 16 8276 or e-mail
ann.jones@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 2 September 2014*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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| Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary Interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion and voting on the item. | |
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10 June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Resources

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34(9).

1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep your questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 10 June 2014
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes
WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 27 FEBRUARY 2014

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| 155 | 2013-14 QUARTER 3 SPENDING |
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, on the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position to 31 December 2013.

A summary of spending against the revenue budget up to 31 December 2013 was attached to the report at Appendix 1. This provided individual statements for each department. The Board was advised that in overall terms, the revenue expenditure was £0.9m below the budget profile, although this was only a guide to eventual spending.

It was reported that on 11 December 2013, the Council had approved the early implementation of budget savings for 2014/15 totalling £6.5m. A number of those would provide part year saving in 2013/14 and would assist in keeping overall spending within budget at year end.

The report contained details on a number of significant areas of the budget including:

- The employee budget, vacant posts, overtime and agency staff;
- Expenditure on general supplies and services;
- Children's residential placements;
- Spending on in-house adoption;
- The Complex Care Pooled Budget (attached at Appendix 2);
- The collection rate for Council Tax and Business Rates; and
- The Council's net overall spending.

The report also outlined details of a revision to the capital spending programme at Appendix 3 and monitoring of the Council's balance sheet.

RESOLVED: That

1. all spending continues to be limited to the absolutely essential;
2. Strategic Directors ensure overall spending at year-end is within the total operational budget; and
3. Council be recommended to approve the revised Capital programme as set out in Appendix 3.

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| 156 | TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2013-14, 3RD QUARTER OCTOBER - DECEMBER |
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The Board considered a report of the Operational Director, Finance, which updated them on activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Statement.

The report provided supporting information on the economic background, economic forecast, short term rates, longer term rates, temporary borrowing/investments and new borrowing. It was noted that no debt rescheduling had been undertaken during the quarter.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

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| 157 | DISCRETIONARY HOUSING BENEFIT SCHEME GUIDANCE |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the Discretionary Housing Benefit Scheme Guidance (the Guidance).

The Board was advised that Discretionary Housing Payment (DHP) provided claimants with financial assistance, in addition to any welfare benefits, when the Council considered that help with housing costs was required.

Members were referred to the draft Guidance document which was appended to the report. They were advised that, due to the significant changes in welfare provision that were taking place, it was considered helpful to provide further guidance to staff who administered DHPs. The Guidance was intended to give Officers a framework to work to when assessing claims, thus ensuring an equitable treatment of applications for what was a limited sum of money.

It was noted that notwithstanding the Guidance, each case would still be looked at on its individual merits. Additionally there was an appeal process to Members which was already in existence, which provided a further test to the fairness of the application of the Policy.

At its meeting on 22 January 2014, the Corporate Policy and Performance Board had considered the Guidance and recommended that Executive Board approve its adoption.

RESOLVED: That the Discretionary Housing Benefit Scheme Guidance document be approved.

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| 158 | BUSINESS RATES RETAIL RELIEF SCHEME |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the adoption of a local Business Rates Relief Scheme.

The Board was advised that the Government had announced in its Autumn Statement on 5 December 2013, plans to provide a relief of up to £1,000 to all occupied retail properties with a rateable value of £50,000 or less in the years 2014/15 and 2015/16.

Local Billing Authorities would adopt a local scheme and decide in each individual case when to grant relief under Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988 (as amended). Government would reimburse local authorities that used their discretionary relief powers. The report set out details of the types of property that would benefit from the relief and how much would be available. It was noted that within Halton, 850 businesses could be affected by the Scheme, although approximately 400 of these already received Small Business Rate Relief and so would not benefit from this Scheme. For the 450 businesses that would be eligible, the relief would be worth in the region of £440,000, which would be fully refunded from Government grant.

RESOLVED: That

1. the Scheme for the award of Business Rates Retail Relief in Halton, as detailed in the report be approved; and
2. the granting of Business Rates Relief for any properties which meet the eligibility criteria set out within the report, be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 13 MARCH 2014

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| 168 | DIRECTORATE PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 2013-2014 |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which detailed the Council's performance against key objectives, targets and milestones for Quarter 3.

The Board was reminded that in September 2011, a review of the Council's existing performance management and monitoring arrangements had been undertaken, based upon a set of principles agreed by the Corporate Policy and Performance Board. This was based around the better management of performance information in

terms of both strategic focus and volume. The Directorate Performance Overview Report provided a strategic summary of key issues arising from performance in the relevant quarter for each Directorate, being aligned to Council priorities or functional areas. The Board noted that such information was key to the Council's performance management arrangements, with the Board having a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

It was reported that Directorate Risk Registers were under review and would be refreshed in conjunction with the development of Directorate Business Plans 2014-17; monitoring of high risks would be reported in due course to Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the information contained in the report be noted.

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| 172 | REMOVALS CONTRACT – WAIVER OF PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS (PART II) |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, which sought the approval of a waiver of Procurement Standing Orders with regards to the provision of a removals service for the Borough Council.

The Board was advised that a removals contract was awarded on 1 September 2013, following a procurement exercise. It was reported that in December 2013, the appointed contractor withdrew from the contract; in consultation with the Head of Procurement, action was taken to appoint a replacement contractor, the details of which were set out in the report.

RESOLVED: That

1. the waiver of Procurement Standing Order 4.1 (Competition Requirements) under Standing Order 1.8.4 (c) be approved. This would allow a direct award of a contract to the company named in the report for removal services for a period of 3 years, with an option to extend two separate periods of one year each; and
2. as a retrospective waiver report, it be noted that the Operational Director, Economy, Enterprise and Property's approval to an emergency waiver under Procurement Standing Orders 1.8.2, in consultation with the Head of Procurement, to enable the company named in the report to be appointed to undertake removal services on an interim basis, pending a new contractor being appointed through a competitive process or waiver approval.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 27 MARCH 2014

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| 180 | CALENDAR OF MEETINGS 2014-15 |
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The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which set out the proposed Calendar of Meetings for the 2014/15 Municipal Year, which was appended to the report for information.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the Calendar of Meetings for the 2014/2015 Municipal Year, as appended to the report.

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| 181 | ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION 2014 |
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The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which sought the approval of the Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

Members were advised that the revised version picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

The proposals for change had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Resources in accordance with Article 16.02. It was reported that, apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that were considered to be of particular significance were listed as an appendix to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the revised Constitution, including the amendments set out in Appendix 1 attached to the report.

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| 182 | POLLING DISTRICTS / POLLING STATIONS REVIEW |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the results of the formal Polling District, Places and Stations Review.

The Board was advised that the Electoral Administration Act 2006 required the Council to carry out a review of all its polling stations every four years. The main purpose of the review was to ensure that all residents had reasonable facilities for voting.

It was reported that, as part of the review process, electors, Councillors and other interested parties had been consulted; details of all polling districts and polling stations had been published on the Council's website. It was noted that no comments had been received. In addition, the Polling Station Review Working Party had considered the scheme and recommended it for approval.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to adopt the amendments to the scheme, as detailed in the Appendix to the report, for the period 2014/19.

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| 183 | DIRECTORATE PLANS 2014-17 |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the adoption of the Directorate Plans for 2014/17.

The Board was advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan or Directorate Plan, in parallel with the budget. These would be subject to annual review and refresh. Draft Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets had been developed and these would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring presented to the Board during the forthcoming year.

It was noted that Elected Members had engaged in the process primarily through the Policy and Performance Boards. It was reported that the plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed.

RESOLVED: That

1. the Draft Directorate Plans be approved; and
2. the Chief Executive be authorised, in consultation with the Leader, to make any final amendments and adjustments that may be required.

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| 184 | REVIEW OF COUNCIL WIDE FEES & CHARGES |
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The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, on the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15 for Council services.

The Board was advised that a review of fees and charges had been carried out as part of the budget preparations for 2014/15. It was proposed that existing fees and charges be increased in line with inflation, although some would increase more to reflect charges in

adjacent authorities. In addition, others had been reviewed with consideration of the impact of the price change.

The schedule in Appendix 1 included a number of statutory fees which it was noted might increase during the coming financial year, with the relevant fees increased accordingly. Charges for The Brindley were listed in Appendix 2 and were for the 2015/16 financial year. Details of other increases were contained in the report.

RESOLVED: That the proposed fees and charges for 2014/15 as set out in Appendix 1, be approved and referred to the relevant Policy and Performance Boards for information.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 10 June 2014
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Halton Strategic Partnership Board minutes
WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 5 March 2014 at the Karalius Suite,
Select Security, Widnes**

Present:

| | | |
|-----------------------|------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Board Members: | Councillor Rob Polhill | HBC (Chairman) |
| | Simon Banks | Halton Clinical Commissioning Group |
| | Sarah Boycott | Cheshire Police |
| | Paula Cain | Chamber of Commerce |
| | Simon Clough | HBC – Halton’s Children’s Trust |
| | Rev. Jeremy Duff | Faith Communities |
| | Sean Henshaw | Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service |
| | Mick Noone | HBC Chair E&R SSP |
| | Eileen O’Meara | Director of Public Health |
| | Mary Murphy | Riverside College |
| | Terry Parle | Halton Sports Partnership |
| | David Parr | HBC |
| | Janine Peterson | Job Centre Plus |
| | Noel Sharpe | Halton Housing Trust |
| | Wesley Rourke | HBC – Chair ELS SSP |
| | Christine Whittaker | Bridgewater NHS Trust |
| | Sally Yeoman | Halton & St Helens VCA |

Advisors to the Boards Shelah Semoff HBC – Partnership Officer

In Attendance: M. Andrews (HBC), M. Carney (Sefton MBC Chief Executive), L Derbyshire (HBC) and D. Gordon (Cheshire Police)

Apologies for Absence: N. Atkin (HHT), K. Fallon (Bridgewater NHS Trust), J. Rigby (OB Academy) and A. Waller (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service)

16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 11 December 2013 having been printed and circulated were agreed as a correct record.

17 SSP KEY MESSAGES/ISSUES

The key partners each gave a verbal update on their areas in respect of: the Health and Wellbeing Board, Environment, Skills and Learning, Children and Young People (Children’s Trust), Environment and Regeneration, Safer Halton, the Housing Partnership and Equalities and Engagement.

In relation to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the following was reported:-

- In May 2013, Newcastle City Council had passed a declaration setting out their commitment and action plan to tackle the harm that smoking caused within our communities. This had become known as the Local Government Declaration on Tobacco Control;
- The new Dementia Strategy had been signed off;
- The Board had received an update on the Autism Self Assessment Framework (SAF). It was noted that the submission would be jointly owned by both the Local Authority and the Clinical Commissioning Group and would be monitored via the Autism Strategy Group;
- The number of Falls in the Borough were reducing as a result of the progression of the Falls Strategy Action Plan;
- Halton Children's Trust had been restructured and new priorities identified. The priorities from 2014 for Halton Children's Trust, were:
 - Integrated Commissioning;
 - Early Help & Support; and
 - Closing the Gap;
- The Board had considered the Halton's Integrated Mental Health and Wellbeing Commissioning Strategy 2013 – 2018.

In relation to Environment, Learning and Skills (ELS), it was reported that the last meeting had been held on 24 February 2014 where consideration had been given to the following key areas:-

- Raising the Participation Age;
- The Advice Service Transition Fund;
- Changes in the Welfare Reforms in respect of work commitment;
- Received a presentation and update on Job Centre Plus changes;
- Received a presentation on the introduction of the Local Support Framework; and
- A European Structural Funds Update.

In relation to Children and Young People, the Board noted the following:-

- The specific Joint Strategic Analysis was in its final stages and a number of key themes had emerged that would require exploration. The analysis had shown that Halton had maintained good results across many of the indicators. It was reported that there had been some resistance to change i.e. breast feeding. However, it was reported that the target for breast feeding had been exceeded and Halton had been awarded the Baby Friendly Status Level 2;
- Halton's Children and Young People's Plan 14-17 was in its final stages of drafting. The plan was user friendly, with an interactive

web base technology. It was anticipated that children and families would be involved, particularly in the art work and design. Mark Grady was leading on this matter and details of the Plan would be appended to the minutes of the meeting;

- A Joint Halton Trust and Safeguarding Board event was taking place on 1 May 2014 at 4.30 pm in the Select Security Stadium and Partners were encouraged to attend;
- The Board noted the excellent success of Riverside College's Performance, being 4th in the North West at 'A' level and overall were 23rd out of 318. The Board congratulated Mary Murphy on the excellent achievements;
- It was noted that teenage pregnancies had reduced; and
- The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) had been circulated to all Partners and the Chairman encouraged send their comments to Shelah Semoff by no later than 30 May 2014 so that they could be included in the report that would be presented to the next meeting of the Board in June.

In relation to Environment and Regeneration, the following was reported:-

- A Special SSP had been held on 7 January 2014 to refresh the SCS as the role and responsibilities of the partners had become outdated. All the objectives had been reviewed and the wording changed slightly to set out how the Partnership could contribute to the objectives. The listed activities had also been considered and refined and now focussed on achievable outcomes;
- At the 26 February 2014 meeting the SSP had considered the following:-
 - Received a presentation on the Mersey Gateway Environmental Trust from the Project Team. An interesting debate had taken place. Stobarts were also keen to consider how they could be involved in it;
 - The European Funding Programme, a priority for the SSP;
 - Received a presentation on Affordable Housing SPD; and
 - Received a presentation on the Regeneration of Runcorn and Widnes.

In relation to Safer Halton Partnership, the following was reported:-

- Widnes Street Pastors had been very successful in providing support to Cheshire Police and issuing people with flip flops and warm

blankets and clearing up glass etc. The scheme had removed some of the pressure from Cheshire Police services. The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) had also identified additional funding for the street pastors;

- The new Chief Constable for Cheshire, Mr Simon Byrne had been appointed by the PCC after being approved by the Police and Crime Panel. The Board looked forward to working with him in the future;
- The number of incidents related to anti-social behaviour in the Borough had decreased. The increase previously, had been primarily as a result of neighbour disputes and motor bikes;
- The Local Authority Alcohol Area bid had been approved and it made Halton one of twenty Authorities in the country to receive the additional support for dealing with alcohol issues. An update report would be presented to the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Safer Halton Partnership and this Board in the future;
- The White Ribbon Campaign relating to domestic violence had proved to be successful;
- The Pilot involving the police and mental health (mental health nurses were present in patrol cars to deal with mental health issues more effectively) had proved to be an enormous success. The pilot had enabled the police to make a financial saving which would be re-invested back into the service. The pilot had been presented to the Leaders Group and it had been decided to roll out the scheme across the whole of Cheshire;
- A private company had been appointed to address dog fouling and litter throughout the Borough. They had issued in excess of 100 notices to date and the service was being funded via the fines;
- There had been some good joint campaigns – drug dogs had attended pubs and clubs and a number of people had been apprehended, visits had been undertaken with the Gambling Commission and illegals working in accommodation in Halton;
- A strong working relationship had been established with the PCC who it appeared had most of the same priorities as Halton. He was also considering how he would fund the partnership in the future. It was reported that the PCC was looking to develop a needs based approach to funding based on criminal activity. It was reported that the Authority would continue to work very closely with the PCC; and
- Consultation was taking place on the re-location of the Police Station at Widnes to the Select Security Stadium, in the sports bar area. This would replace the police station in the heart of the community, would enable a financial saving and represented a win win situation.

In relation to the Strategic Housing Partnership, it was reported that they had recently reviewed their structures and there would be two main groups. The Housing Partnership would become the Operational Group and the Visioning group would take the strategic lead and report to the Board.

It was reported that a sub group had been formed to look at the early stages of dementia, falls and loneliness. A pilot would be launched in April/May for the next 12 months.

In relation to Equalities, Engagement and Cohesion Group, it was reported that the group had met on 24 February 2014 where a debate had taken place on whether it was worthwhile for the group to continue to meet or not. There had been a dramatic fall in attendance over the last few months and it had been decided that whilst the information sharing was useful, consideration would need to be given as to whether it could be done differently. It was reported that a meeting had been scheduled to take place on 19 May 2014 and a more detailed debate would take place on how it could be put into action reflecting on the Terms of Reference.

It was suggested that the very important aspects of what the group undertake could be incorporated within each SSP rather than having it as a separate meeting. Each SSP would need to have a regard to equalities, engagement and cohesion, if each Chair of the SSP was comfortable with adding it as a separate agenda item in their meetings. It was agreed that the group would establish a template for a standard agenda item and when necessary, specific issues could be raised under the SSP key messages/issues item on this Board.

18 PRESENTATION: SERIOUS ORGANISED CRIME

The Board received a presentation from Margaret Carnery, Chief Executive of Sefton MBC, the Merseyside Lead Chief Executive on Serious Organised Crime. The presentation:-

- Detailed the background to the gun crime problem in Sefton - (Spring/summer 2012 – the problem had exploded, could it have been predicted?) A partnership approach was very important as it was a whole community issue;
- Detailed Sefton's comparative performance in respect of firearm discharges and highlighted how fragile the situation was;
- Set out the trend of firearm discharges 2011 – 13 and reported that the spikes had been due to interventions;
- Explained the where, why and when – high levels of deprivation, families were known to all partners, early risk factors, low level anti-social behaviour and low level criminal activity;

- Highlighted it was important to understand why the situation had occurred – sense of belonging, power, respect/identify, unstable family background, previous family members – gang links, boredom and drugs etc;
- The question that was considered – Gangs or Business with Apprenticeships?
- Early community intelligence – a feeling of unrest, the atmosphere had changed, racial graffiti, feeling vulnerable, welcome visible police presence, asking for community meetings, incidents happening frightening communities. Community leadership had proved to be the key;
- Set out a Group Offending Continuum chart highlighting that a lot of research on the issue had been undertaken;
- Detailed the issues that Sefton MBC had faced – there had been only two main gangs with a fluid membership and territory, youths/young offenders 13-15 years of age, drug dealing especially cannabis, a top tier gang which was very complex, young people dealing drugs, a smaller urban street gang float, old disputes which split the bottom tier of the gang i.e shared girlfriends and the community had a lack of confidence that anything would change;
- Set out how they had addressed the issue by establishing three key principles – reduce violence by gangs, increase the communities sense of pride and confidence and helping to keep issues in context and retain Sefton's reputation as a place people wanted to live work and visit;
- Explained what they had done – securing leadership and commitment from the Council and Partners, including the community, identified community leaders, targeted particular areas and individuals using a relentless strategy approach of stem, strength and safeguard. A South Sefton problem profile in conjunction with Merseyside Police and the PCC had also been produced and was updated daily. Work was also taking place with North Liverpool to discuss border working and progress had been made;
- Highlighted that detailed work had taken place with partnerships and roles and accountabilities agreed. Some of the following actions had been taken / developed - Culture clashes had been reconciled, high visibility policing introduced, community leaders established, consistent community assurance undertaken, critical incidents had been effectively managed and developed, a critical incident protocol had been developed, interventions had been commissioned, there were informal volunteer mentoring of gangs and gun crime in and out of prison to provide alternatives to gang and gun crime, an analysis and problem profile intelligence had been undertaken to identify

vulnerable localities and people and individualised packages of support had been developed; and

- Detailed the lessons learned i.e. partnership work, community reassurance, strong leadership, respond to incidents, was essential. It was also essential to target those who engaged in gun crime and target them in partnership with the police who were on the cusp of gun and gang crime.

In conclusion, the Board was advised that gun crime was a national and international issue and it was important to learn lessons and establish long and short term local solutions.

It was noted that specific wards had been targeted and clarity was sought on whether this had resulted in a negative effect in the remaining wards. In response, it was reported that a strong leadership had been developed and excellent community partnerships were in place, with a strong infrastructure of voluntary organisations. Community messages had been developed which brought people together and who had access to information and data and personal support enabling individuals providing the support to be protected.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The presentation and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) Margaret Carney be thanked for her attendance and informative presentation.

19 PRESENTATION: THE LOCAL PICTURE

The Board received a presentation from Sarah Boycott (Cheshire Police), Mike Andrews and Dave Gordon (Community Safety Team – HBC and Cheshire Police) on the current situation in Halton in relation to serious organised crime.

The Board was advised that serious organised crime did not only incorporate gun crime. It was reported that in 2010 a loan shark had been operating in Halton resulting in a suicide. It was highlighted that illegal money lending also destroyed the community.

The presentation:-

- Set out the Government's definition of Organised Crime;
- Detailed the serious organised crime types i.e. drugs, fraud, organised acquisitive, organised immigration crime, counterfeit currency and human trafficking;
- Outlined the national strategy which had been launched in October 2013 by the Home office and which had coincided with the newly

reformed NCA, 4 main principles based on counter terrorism contest work and based on strong partnership;

- Set out the key aims – pursue, prevent, protect and prepare and circulated the serious organised crime strategy chart;
- Explained the definition of success;
- Gave some practical examples of what happened in Halton i.e. benefit frauds, loan sharking, violent debt collections, commercial robberies, cash in transit metal theft, immigration offences, late night refreshment houses, child sexual exploitation (isolated cases) and the cultivation and distribution of drugs;
- Detailed the 2013 organised crime hits in Halton and showed photographs of an incident of gun crime that had occurred, detailed the police response, set out the early partnership support and how the crime had been addressed and gave a summary of the seizure;
- Set out the lessons that had been learned from the incident; and
- Detailed what was required in respect of disruption, enforcement, prevention and intelligence and communications.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the Partnership could learn from the experiences of Sefton MBC and the importance of community engagement. It was also noted that a considerable amount of work undertaken in Halton had been built on the lessons learned from surrounding authorities;
- It was noted that the Partnership would need to focus on voluntary and faith sectors and identify community leaders. The importance of all partners being involved and utilising all partners skills, tools and information was also noted;
- The college was supportive of a partnership approach to addressing the issue as it was recognised that some of the young people attending the college could be part of a gang. It was reported that there would be an opportunity to work with the students, including the use of performing arts in schools to get the message across to the young people;
- It was suggested that SPARC could have a role in getting the message across in the Borough as they would be producing several comics, the early draft was titled 'Crime' and could focus on a case study and be accompanied by an animated film, The young group met every Monday evening and were also developing an APP;

- A Health and Wellbeing magazine was being produced on a monthly basis for schools and information could also be incorporated in the magazine; and
- It was noted that Level 1 agreements were in place in respect of sharing information between the Partnership.

In conclusion, it was agreed that the Chief Executive and Sarah Boycott look at a partnership approach to taking the issue forward. It was noted that the partnership would be involved in the development and delivery of the actions/proposals to address serious organised crime.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The presentation and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) Sarah Boycott, Mike Andrews and Dave Gordon be thanked for their informative presentation.

Meeting ended at 11.45 a.m.

To be confirmed as an accurate record

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10 June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Member Development Group Notes

WARDS: NA

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 Members are asked to note the notes of the last meeting of the Member Development Group held on 10 December 2013.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) The report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The notes of the last meeting of the Member Development Group are before CPPB as a result of changes to the Constitution.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton - None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton - None

6.3 A Healthy Halton - None

6.4 A Safer Halton - None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal - None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.

Member Development Group

*At a meeting of the Member Development Group held on 10th December 2013
at the Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Stockton (Chairman), J. Bradshaw, N Plumpton Walsh and Wharton.

Officers: J Greenough, K Mackenzie and A Miller.

Apologies for absence: Councillors Gilligan, C Plumpton Walsh, Ratcliffe, Wainwright, Wallace, Wright and Zygadlo.

Officers: S. Connor and M. Carruthers

| | | |
|--------------|---|----|
| MDG13 | NOTES OF THE LAST MEETING | |
| | The notes of the last meeting held on 17 October 2013 were approved as a correct record, with the addition of Councillor John Bradshaw to the apologies for absence recorded. | |
| MDG14 | REVIEW OF CURRENT PERFORMANCE AGAINST TARGETS | |
| | <p>LOD2 - Number of Members with a Member Action Plan (MAP)</p> <p>The number of Members with a MAP to date since April 2013 were 54 of 56. This number had remained unchanged since the last meeting and the Chairman thanked all Members for their input to their own MAP's. There would be another invitation sent to Members who were due their MAP's after the Christmas holiday.</p> | KM |
| | <p>LOD3 - Percentage of Members attending at least one organised training event in the current financial year.</p> <p>Since April 1st 2013, 70% (39) Members had attended at least one organised training event. The target for the year was 100% attendance, which had been achieved in 2012 - 2013.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the report be noted.</p> | KM |
| MDG15 | LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT UPDATE | |
| | <p>North West and North East Employers Member Development Conference – Leeds Rose Bowl – Thursday 7 November 2013</p> <p>Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh had attended the conference for Member Development with Kathryn. The event had focussed on current issues surrounding supporting Members especially in their community role.</p> | |

| | | |
|---------------|---|-------|
| | <p>North West Employers Charter Celebration – Lowry Salford – Friday 22 November 2014</p> <p>Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh attended the celebration event with Kathryn. The event focussed on the North West Charter for Elected Member Development, with discussion between officers and Members throughout the North West Region on opportunities and ways forward to support Members.</p> <p>Fraud Awareness Training – E Learning Module</p> <p>Members had been encouraged to complete the E-Learning on-line module on Fraud Awareness. A similar module had been circulated to all officers to complete.</p> <p>Drop-In training sessions for E-Learning Modules</p> <p>Sarah Connor had arranged two drop-in sessions on 6 and 18 November for Members who wished to complete e-learning modules on various topics.</p> | |
| MDG16 | PROTOCOL FOR FUTURE ATTENDANCE BY MEMBERS AT TRAINING EVENTS | |
| | <p>Members of the Group considered a report which outlined a suggested protocol for Members attendance at externally provided training events. Members noted that no such “policy” was currently in place for approving attendance.</p> <p>It was suggested that Members complete an application in the first instance, held by Kathryn Mackenzie. Completed applications should then be passed by Kathryn to the Leader of the Council, who would consider applications with the Chairman of the Member Development Group, and the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources. If approved, the Member would then be asked to complete a brief evaluation form after attending the event.</p> <p>Members present agreed that the evaluation form should be altered slightly to remove the requirement for Members to make a formal feedback presentation, but rather a more informal email if appropriate to other Members.</p> <p>The Group agreed this was good practice and welcomed the completion of such applications.</p> <p>RESOLVED: That the attached Application Form and Evaluation Form be agreed, subject to the minor alteration of Form B as suggested above.</p> | KM |
| MDG 17 | DEMONSTRATION OF MEMBERS’ VIRTUAL DESKTOP | |
| | <p>Members received a presentation from Jonathan Greenough and Alan Miller, regarding Windows 7 Virtual Desktop. Members present were shown a brief “tour” of how the virtual desktop would look. Jonathan</p> | JG/AM |

| | | |
|---------------|--|-----------|
| | <p>explained that full training would be offered to all Members. The Leader and Deputy Leader of the Council were currently using the new system and would feedback any issues they encountered. The new desktop would then be rolled out to the Members of the Development Group for their feedback. Members understood that one of the advantages of the new Windows package was the ability to view “embedded” documents. This was currently causing an issue to some Members as they were unable to access some documents attached to agendas easily.</p> <p>Members were informed that there would still be a “two step” process, with the use of the current key fob for secure access to the council network. Members were also informed that a new printer would be installed in both Members’ Rooms in Widnes and Runcorn, making printing more efficient.</p> <p>Members welcomed the progress being made and thanked Jonathan and Alan for their presentation.</p> <p>RESOLVED: that Members of the Development Group pilot the virtual desktop when appropriate in the near future with IT support.</p> | |
| MDG 18 | ANY OTHER BUSINESS | |
| | <p>A member of the group mentioned the lack of car parking spaces under the podium recently for Members. Other members of the group replied that they had not encountered any issues with parking, and that the car park was subject to busy periods during the week.</p> | |
| MDG 19 | DATE OF THE NEXT MEETING | |
| | <p>RESOLVED:</p> <p>The next meeting to be held at 4.30pm in the Marketing Suite on Tuesday 25 March 2014.</p> <p>Future meeting dates for 2014 – 2015 will be agreed with the Chairman of the Group. The Group will meet quarterly.</p> | KM /JS |
| | The meeting closed at 5.30pm | |

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10 June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Policy & Resources

SUBJECT: Annual Report 2013/14

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To receive the Annual Report of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board for 2013/14, to comment in respect of the same, and to make any changes considered appropriate.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Report be approved.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

| Document | Place of inspection | Contact Officer |
|-------------------------------|--|------------------------|
| Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit | 2 nd Floor Municipal Building | M. Reaney |



CORPORATE PPB ANNUAL REPORT

“This has been a difficult year for the Council which continues to cope with a difficult financial situation with significant cuts in government grants and facing the prospect a further £20 million pounds worth of savings in the year 2015-2016. I greatly appreciate the efforts of all the Council’s employees for their work in delivering services at a high level of efficiency under difficult circumstances. Corporate Services is greatly assisted in its work by the hard work and endeavours of its lead officer and members services also other officers who contribute to the working of the topic groups.

I would like to thank my Vice Chair Joe Roberts for the support he has given me and for his work on Enquiries Compliments and Complaints Topic Group and Cllr Wainwright for his commitment to the Borough’s markets through his lead on that topic group. And all of the Members of the Board for the contributions which they have made to the topic groups- particularly the discretionary social fund topic group- during the past year”

– Councillor Bob Gilligan, Chair of Corporate Policy & Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2013/2014, the Board comprised of eleven councillors – R. Gilligan (Chairman) J Roberts (Vice Chair) E Cargill, M Dennett, S Hill, C Loftus, A Lowe, A McInerney, N Plumpton Walsh, G Stockton and K Wainwright.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Resources, HR and Training, ICT, Property, Democratic Services, Legal Services, Communications and Marketing, Stadium, Civic Catering, Procurement, Corporate Complaints and Area Forums. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the reporting departments which during the last year Legal and Democratic Services including Communications and Marketing, Human Resources, Financial Services, ICT and Support Services, and the Policy and Performance Divisions.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year. Set out below are some of the main initiatives upon which it has worked during that time.

PEOPLE PLAN 2012/2015

At the September meeting, the Board received a Report and Presentation on the progress made on the delivery of the Council’s

People Plan which was adopted by the Executive Board at its meeting on 29th March 2012 following a recommendation from Corporate Policy and Performance Board.

The aim of the Plan was to place the workforce at the heart of the organisation as it was recognised that this was our most valuable asset. The Plan was therefore built around four key strategic aims

- to attract, develop and retain excellent people
- to provide excellence in Leadership and Management development
- being an excellent employer
- promoting organisational excellence.

The Plan was monitored by the Organisational Development Group, chaired by the Strategic Director Policy and Resources with membership across all three directorates including the Trade Unions. The Plan had successfully implemented the following projects

- maintained and updated the organisation's workforce profile
- ensured continued investment in the workforce
- devised and implemented a talent strategy
- devised and introduced an Employee Recognition and Award scheme
- implemented a Healthy Workforce initiative
- met legislative requirements.

Over the next twelve months, challenges would include

- devising and implementing a talent pool
- devising and implementing an organisational succession plan
- developing a learning and development plan and managers guide
- developing more effective leaders.

Further progress would be provided to the Board in twelve months' time.

DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME

The September meeting also received a report providing an update on the implementation of the Discretionary Support Scheme after the first three months of its operation. Members were reminded that the Scheme was introduced in Halton in April 2013 to replace the one previously administered by the Department of Work and Pensions. It had been introduced in a very tight timescale. Payments had been made against a set of criteria previously agreed with a working party whose membership was drawn from the Board. The Board was advised that the working party had requested the core element of the DWP scheme be retained where possible, namely to provide assistance with living expenses due to

emergencies or crisis and to provide assistance for vulnerable people to help them return to or remain in the community or to ease exceptional pressure on families. The working party had agreed that no cash payments would be made, no payments for fuel would be made, and that the application process be either by phone or internet.

Members noted that at the time of the report in September, a total of £20,000 had been paid out by the end of quarter one. The decision not to pay cash had seen a dramatic reduction in payments made from the fund, which was the case with most other authorities. Many people have been more than satisfied with the service though feedback from external organisations had asked for consideration to be given to making payments for fuel and approving the standard of furniture and food provided.

Members of the PPB asked for a further report to be submitted to the working party by the end of October on the options of fuel payment for further consideration.

THE LIVING WAGE

A report was presented to the Board in September recommending the establishment of a Topic Group to examine the implications for the Council of introducing the Living Wage, and for the Topic Group to make recommendations back to the Board.

The Board was advised that the Living Wage was defined by the Living Wage Foundation as the hourly rate of pay deemed adequate for a worker to provide his or her family with the essentials of life. In London the current rate was £8.55 per hour. Outside of London the current rate was £7.65 per hour. Whilst the Council clearly adhered to the National Minimum Wage, it did have employees paid below the living wage. The living wage had no statutory basis but it had been adopted voluntarily by a range of public and private sector organisations.

The Topic Group met on three occasions prior to reporting to the full PPB in March 2014. The Topic Group considered the questions of:

- affordability
- equal pay implications
- impact on differentials
- views of the Trade Unions
- application of the Living Wage.

The recommendations of the Living Wage Topic Group were that the Council introduce a supplement to any pay grade that currently sits below the living wage rate of £7.65 per hour and the living wage be paid to those with permanent contracts and to those casual workers who undertake the same roles and duties as permanent staff. When considering the recommendation, the full Board supported the recommendations but referred them to the Budget Working Group for consideration before they could be progressed further.

SECURITY – CORPORATE TECHNOLOGY SERVICES

At Members' request, a report was presented by the Strategic Director Policy and Resources at the October meeting which gave members an update of IT security within the Council's activities and highlighted the importance of security in the management and delivery of Council services. Members were advised that the Council managed a huge range of personal information across a number of differing categories and that inappropriate access could result in severely adverse effects to individuals or organisations. The Council had a statutory as well as common law duty of care to ensure that all reasonable steps were taken to safeguard and secure the information it managed and processed. ICT services had delivered an approach towards security to ensure that the Council operated within its legal obligations whilst also enabling front line staff to deliver services in the most efficient and appropriate ways. Security assurance activities have been delivered to ensure that the Council was discharging its duties. The Council had been working on the transition from Capital Government Connect Secure Extranet to the new Public Services Network, full details of which were provided in the Report.

ENERGY EFFICIENCY

At its last meeting in March, the Board were given an update on progress on the Council's Carbon Management Plan and the wider activity to reduce CO2 emissions across the Borough. This was set into the context of National and Local Frameworks, and members were informed that the Carbon Management Plan set a local target to reduce emissions from the Council's estate between five and ten per cent by 2013 from a 2006/07 base line. The Liverpool City Region had set a target to reduce emission by twenty per cent by 2020 against a 1990 base line. The data for 2012/13 showed that overall, emissions were down approximately seven per cent from 2006/07.

Members were provided with a copy of the Action Plan which indicated the projects completed to date included:

- voltage optimisation in fourteen council buildings – reduction in electricity consumption of between eight and fourteen per cent
- energy efficiency measures in Runcorn Town Hall which had reduced consumption by an estimated fifteen per cent
- energy efficiency measures at Halton Stadium which had reduced electricity consumption by twenty four per cent, saving in excess of £30,000
- boilers replaced at Picow Farm, Glendale and Inglefield
- staff awareness programme introduced
- removal of stand-alone printers and switch to MFD's had delivered savings in excess of £200,000
- solar panels have been installed at three sites (Select Security Stadium, Rutland House, and Brookvale Leisure Centre) total energy to date produced from the systems is 205,000 KWH as of January 2014. This equated to an energy saving of £20,000. In addition the panels attract a feed-in tariff income which to date amounts to £75,000. There are a number of other initiatives which were brought to the attention of members.

The report also drew attention to the Carbon Reduction Commitment, a new mandatory scheme which began in 2010. Each year the Council had to report its annual emissions from gas and electricity usage from buildings and schools and purchase and surrender allowances based on those emissions. There would be an annual on-going saving of approximately £70,000. The Liverpool City Region Sustainable Energy Action Plan set out the region's ambitions to transform itself into a low carbon economy. It contained a co-ordinated programme for the delivery to ensure the city region is at the forefront of the transition. It has identified opportunities for the Council, which had secured funding to carry out a detailed feasibility study for the East Runcorn area.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

During the course of the year the Board considered in detail the performance of the reporting departments. Issues which were overseen by the Board during the year included:-

- Accidents
- Statistics
- Sickness Absences
- School catering and the operation of the Select Stadium

WORK PROGRAMME 2014/15

The Board had received reports during the year on all the topics which it identified for examination, namely the Council's Discretionary Social Fund, and the Living Wage.

For the year 2014/15, it was expected that the Complaints Topic Group would make a final report to the June meeting. Members were giving consideration to further items to be scrutinised during the year.

REPORT TO: Corporate PPB

DATE: 10th June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: Corporate PPB Topic Group – Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide the Board with the findings of a review of the Council's existing Corporate Complaints Handling Procedures which was undertaken as part of the 2013 - 14 Corporate PPB work programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) That the Corporate Policy & Performance Board supports the recommendations contained within the report.**
- 2) The report be submitted to the Executive Board for consideration.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council takes pride in the fact that it operates on the principle of getting things right first time and that public satisfaction with services remains positive. However it remains important that the organisation continues to have an effective system in place whereby stakeholders can express their views, both positive and negative, in order that we can learn and take appropriate action where things may have gone wrong.
- 3.2 In light of the current operating environment, and the ongoing fiscal constraints which we face, it was considered appropriate to undertake a review of existing arrangements for handling Corporate Complaints in order to ensure the system remained fit for purpose, was consistent with recognised good practice, and reflected best value principles in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.
- 3.3 A thorough review has been undertaken which included a review of existing good practice literature, a benchmarking exercise with a number of authorities and a small number of other organisations and in-depth discussions between Elected Members and Officers.

- 3.4 As a result of this work it was concluded that existing arrangements had a number of strengths in that the procedure, which largely followed good practice guidance, is well documented and publicised, is accessible through a range of channels and provides information which is shared periodically with Elected Members and Senior Officers.
- 3.5 However whilst acknowledging these strengths it was considered that there was some scope to further improve arrangements and reduce operational budget allocations. The recommendations within the report are intended to ensure that the collection of information is more consistent and complete, that the procedure is simplified to reduce potential / actual operating costs and avoid matters becoming protracted for a complainant's perspective, and that staff dealing with complaints are provided with sufficient support, resources and skills to allow them to deal with complaints effectively.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 If endorsed the recommendations would require that the Council's existing Corporate Complaints Procedure be revised. Additionally the report also contains a recommendation that consideration be given to the development of a Corporate Unacceptable Behaviour / Actions policy.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The adoption of the recommendations will result in some limited and initial resource requirements e.g. to rewrite policy and produce guidance notes etc. However the adoption of a more streamlined and quality assured process will reduce the overall and ongoing budget costs to the authority.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There is a risk that current arrangements for handling corporate complaints result in duplication and inconsistency and that the quality of the Councils response to complaints remains variable. The recommendations within the report are intended to mitigate against such risk as far as is reasonably possible.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

It is imperative that the Corporate Complaints Procedure remains accessible to all stakeholders within the community. The existing and continued use of a range of communication channels will ensure that the procedure remains accessible to all groups and individuals.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

None under the meaning of the Act.



Corporate Policy and Performance Board
Topic Group

**Review of Corporate Complaints
Handling Procedure**

A Report by Cllr Joe Roberts (Topic Group Chair)

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This review, which was concluded in March 2014, formed part of the 2013 – 14 Corporate PPB Topic Group work programme. The final draft report of the findings and recommendations arising from the review will be submitted for consideration by the Corporate Policy and Performance Board in June 2014.

Subject to approval by PPB the final report and recommendations will be submitted for consideration by Executive Board in June 2014.

Please note that as this document is intended to be read electronically it includes some graphics containing relatively small size font.

Executive Summary

The Council takes pride in the fact that it operates its services on the principle of getting things right first time and that satisfaction with services remains high. However it is recognised that occasionally we may not meet every service users' needs and expectations and that in order to learn from our practices we need to have in place an effective means of facilitating user feedback where things go wrong.

In light of changes within the Councils operating environment, not least of which is the continuing pressure on the availability of resources, it is considered appropriate to review the Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure adopted by the Council in order to ensure that it remains fit for purpose and continues to represent best value in terms of economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

In light of this the Topic Group has undertaken a detailed review of existing arrangements in the context of both current good practice, the processes adopted by similar and other organisations, and the practical experiences and insight of Elected Members and Officers.

The Group concludes that the Council has in place well-established procedures for receiving and responding to complaints and comments from the public and other interested parties. Such arrangements have a number of positive attributes in that:-

- They allow communication with the Council through a number of channels such as telephone, e-mail, on-line submission and in person;
- The Complaints procedures operated by the Council are well documented and publicly accessible and largely reflect current good practice;
- Information about complaints is used to aid organisational learning and is shared periodically with Elected Members and Senior Officers.

However there are considered to be a number of opportunities to build on the existing strengths of the system that will reduce administration costs and improve outcomes from both a service user and organisational perspective. Such revisions include:-

- ✓ Providing a clearer definition of what constitutes a complaint and what matters will and will not be dealt with through the Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure;
- ✓ Further simplifying the procedure and providing comprehensive good practice guidance/training to staff in complaints handling particularly those involved in front-line delivery.
- ✓ Developing a database to capture more fully details of complaints and their outcomes and using this information, in conjunction with other data such as social media and service level activity, to aid organisational learning;
- ✓ Routinely sharing information about complaints, comments and compliments with Elected Members, Senior Officers and staff to aid organisational intelligence and decision-making processes.

This report makes a series of recommendations throughout which are presented in the order that key issues are addressed. For completeness they are also included in their entirety as **Appendix 5**.

I commend this report and its recommendations to you.

Joe Roberts

1.0 Background and Scope

1.1 The Council has for some time had a number of systems in place, and which operate in tandem, for handling complaints that are received from members of the public and other stakeholders. The processes for handling each of the following types of complaint are subject to individual arrangements;

- Corporate Complaints Procedure
- Adult Social Care Complaints Procedure
- Children's Social Care Complaints Procedure
- Schools Complaints Procedure

1.2 With the exception of Corporate Complaints each of these procedures is based upon national statutory frameworks. As a consequence of this the work of the Topic Group has been confined to a review of the non-statutory arrangements the Council has in place for dealing with Corporate Complaints.

1.3 Although there are no statutory requirements concerning the handling of Corporate Complaints it is widely accepted that public bodies will have in place an effective two-way communication process for receiving and responding to those who wish to raise concerns about the action, or inaction, of the Council. In addition to promoting transparency and accountability such arrangements can provide valuable intelligence that can be used to inform and improve service delivery and aid organisational learning and development.

'What we recommend is a clear, accessible, and flexible process that forms part of service provision.....'

Local Government Ombudsman Guidance (2009)

1.4 It is acknowledged that in order to gain the greatest insight into public perception and opinion account also needs to be taken of views and opinions expressed through other feedback mechanisms such as comments, compliments, and the increasing use of social media.

1.5 The primary challenge in undertaking the review was to strike an appropriate and acceptable balance between the needs and expectations of the various stakeholder groups and the financial and human resources the Council has available to it to develop a procedure that remained fit for purpose in the medium to long-term.

2.0 Review Methodology and Process

- 2.1 During the first meeting of the Topic Group a range of issues were discussed relating to the Council's current arrangements for the administration of the Corporate Complaints Procedure. Members raised a number of points on which they would require additional information and which would need to be considered further as the review progressed. In light of this discussion it was agreed that the following 2 stage approach be adopted in order to bring the work of the Topic Group to a successful conclusion.

Stage 1.

Exploration of options for streamlining / improving existing processes including:-

- How complaints are received by the Council?
- How information is captured / collated e.g. databases?
- How do we manage vexatious complaints / compliments?
- Are existing arrangements, including limitations and exceptions, still considered appropriate?
- What opportunities may exist to streamline the process?



Stage 2.

Exploration of options for Quality Assurance / Organisational Learning including:-

- What arrangements do / could we have to ensure quality of responses?
- How do we / could we capture and share information, with whom and for what purpose?
- How do we / could we monitor compliments?
- How do we / could we ensure learning opportunities are captured?

- 2.2 The Group adopted an evidenced-based approach to the review through commissioning both secondary and primary research, in order to inform its discussions and considerations. This work was further supplemented through the sharing of information that had been gained from the practical experience and insights of both of Elected Members and a small group of Key Officers.
- 2.3 Secondary research was undertaken to review the extensive literature available on complaints handling, including existing good practice in Complaints Handling Procedures (CHP), published by the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) and the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (SPSO) and other organisations. A summary of this information is included as **Appendix 1**.
- 2.4 As would be expected there was considerable degree of common ground between the two agencies, with the exception that the LGO suggests a localised approach based upon good practice whereas the SPSO sought to develop a nationally adopted framework. Additionally the SPSO suggests that all communications from stakeholders should be formally recorded.

2.5 A summary of each of the model principles has been included for information as **Appendix 2**. The primary findings of the review of good practice are that:-

- ✓ There needs to be clarity about what constitutes a ‘complaint’ and what issues will, and will not, be dealt with via the Complaints Handling Procedure.
- ✓ The procedure should be accessible and information made available in a clear and understandable form along with target timeframes for addressing complaints.
- ✓ Complaints should be dealt with in a timely manner and systems that provide independent review are more credible. Adopting a 2 stage process is considered to be the most appropriate means of avoiding unnecessary delay and reducing operating costs.
- ✓ Investigative staff should have the authority to question the explanations of colleagues. Systems should be managed by someone who can take an overview, make changes to it, and be reviewed periodically.
- ✓ Staff need to be provided with appropriate skills and resources and clear guidance / training on procedure and roles and responsibilities.
- ✓ Responses should be co-ordinated and decisions communicated clearly and concisely.
- ✓ Organisations should maintain accurate and complete records and use information actively to inform service improvement.
- ✓ Organisations should have an unacceptable action / behaviour policy in place and a process for communicating its implementation to relevant parties.

2.6 In undertaking primary research a process benchmarking exercise was undertaken with a number of organisations through the analysis of information available via their websites and through direct contact via a questionnaire. This group comprised of local authorities of various size and type identified as case studies by the Local Government Ombudsman¹ and a group of Halton’s nearest geographical neighbours.

2.7 Of the 13 questionnaires sent to local authorities 8 responses were received.

2.8 In addition the content of the websites of a small number well-known high street retailers who have a presence in the borough were also reviewed to establish if there was any discernable differences in approach between the public and private sector organisations.

2.9 An overview of the principal findings of the benchmarking exercise is included as **Appendix 3**.

¹ Aiming for the Best – Using lessons from complaints to improve public services (Centre for Public Scrutiny / Local Government Ombudsman) July 2011 Joint Publication available [here](#)

3.0 Findings, Conclusions, and Recommendations

3.1 Current Operating Environment

3.1.1 Existing arrangements for managing the Corporate Complaints Procedure have been in place for a considerable number of years. However a number of significant changes have occurred within the operating environment that will need to be considered in order to ensure that such arrangements remain fit for purpose and continue to reflect 'Best Value' in relation to the economic, efficient and effective use of the Council's resources.

3.1.2. Most notably such changes include:-

- At a time of rising public demand and increasing expectations the on-going national austerity regime has resulted in a reduction in the Council's available resources and this is likely to continue into the medium to longer term.
- Central government remain committed to further promoting transparency in public service provision and in 'making authorities more accountable to local people'.
- Revised and updated guidance in handling complaints was published by the Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (2011) and the Local Government Ombudsman (2009)

3.2 Publishing, Receiving and Recording Information

3.2.1. The Council currently publicises the Corporate Complaints Procedure on its website. This includes details of the process, how matters will be handled and target timeframes for complaint resolution.

3.2.1 Historically Corporate Complaints were received by a small corporate team either by telephone or in hardcopy by letter or through the use of a Corporate Complaints Form which is available through the Council's website.

'New technologies are opening more channels and changing the way in which citizens interact with public services.....However traditional methods of communication remain vital channels for collecting people's views of services'
The role of complaints in transforming public services; Nesta (April 2013)

3.2.2. In recent years there has been a notable trend away from the use of formal letters and toward the greater use of electronic channels such as e-mail, the completion of in-line enquiry forms and the use of the Council's Contact Centre and Halton Direct Link facilities.

3.2.3. In addition to reflecting current good practice the Topic Group considered that maintaining a range of options through which residents and stakeholders could contact the Council supported transparency and accountability at a local level. Additionally this approach provided a degree of assurance that specific stakeholder groups, for example those with limited ICT access or skills, did not become marginalised or disengaged from the process of developing and delivering local services.

3.2.4. However it became evident that in practice there were a number of unintended consequences in maintaining multiple channels of communication such as:-

- A possible lack of clarity or understanding at an organisational level as to what constituted a complaint or a comment and what issues would and wouldn't be dealt with through the Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure.
- The development of service specific ITC and support systems resulting in information relating to complaints being recorded on separate systems, some of which cannot be readily interrogated;
- Inconsistencies in the way information was being classified and handled, e.g. some 'complaints' being directed to services , some to staff administering the Corporate Complaints system, and some to both;
- Individuals using a number of different channels to contact the Council simultaneously or repeatedly on the same or similar issues or to raise matters that had already been addressed. On occasion comments that are directed at individual Officers or more general Council activities, as opposed to the specific provision of a service, are being categorised as complaints by the originator with the expectation that they will be allowed to progress through each of the 3 stages of the existing complaints procedure.

'Recently a complainant contacted the Council through 5 different channels simultaneously in relation to the same issue'.

Principal Performance & Improvement Officer (2014)

3.2.5. Historically all complaints directed to the Corporate Team had been recorded on a relatively simple database. However in addition to having a limited degree of functionality and automation recent changes in the Councils structural arrangements have resulted in certain aspects of the database becoming defunct and in need of revision. As a result of this, and other managerial factors, a system was recently introduced as a temporary means of recording information based upon a Microsoft Word application.

3.2.6. Whilst some of the benchmarking group of authorities managed complaints though commercially procured software this tended to be as part of a wider system application, e.g. Direct Link / Contact Centre enquiry systems. An equal number of authorities have used in-house ICT support to develop their own software applications.

3.2.7. The Group noted that colleagues within ICT had previously undertaken some work in this regard although this had not been fully completed as a result of the changes in management arrangements that occurred in 2013. Additionally systems had already been developed in-house for similar types of activities, e.g. managing Freedom of Information requests, which had functional features that were considered useful to the administration of a complaints procedure, e.g. assigned named Officers, automated e-mail alerts etc.

3.2.8. In considering the varied nature of complaints that had been received by the Council, and taking account of existing guidance, it was recognised that defining a complaint was in itself not necessarily as straightforward as may first appear. There was some concern that too broad a definition may result in all manner of communications being classified as complaints and being dealt with through the formal Complaints Handling Procedures.

‘Providers should be clear about what a complaint is and what issues will be considered through their CHP. They should define the meaning of a complaint within the CHP so it is clear to both staff and service users’
SPSO (2014)

3.2.9. Most of the authorities contacted as part of the benchmarking exercise had developed a definition of a complaint based upon LGO Guidance which suggests that:-

‘A complaint is an expression of dissatisfaction about a Council service (whether that service is provided by the Council directly (or by a contractor or partner) that requires a response’.

3.2.10 Darlington Council have adopted a slightly narrower definition i.e.

‘When someone tells us that they are not happy about a service or something that we have or have not done that has an impact upon them’.

3.2.10. Whilst the Council would continue to welcome feedback from service users it was recognised that the formal Complaints Handling Procedure should be used primarily to address issues of actual or perceived service failure which could, or had, led to some injustice to the individual.

3.2.11. Adopting this approach would not prohibit the Council receiving or responding to communications concerning decisions it may have made that have a wider community impact e.g. the construction of the Mersey Gateway. However should the complainant remain dissatisfied with the Councils response such matters would not necessarily and routinely be progressed to an independent Stage 2 review.

3.2.12 Similarly to Halton all of the authorities within the benchmarking group made efforts to ensure that routine requests, such as missed bin collections, were directed to relevant service areas who would be responsible for monitoring and managing such activity.

- 3.2.13. It is also recognised that on occasion the authority may receive contacts from individuals or groups whose expectations are unreasonable, where the Council cannot deliver the outcome that they are seeking, or where opinion about the acceptability of the Councils actions remains diverse and there is an unwillingness to accept the facts or the Councils position.
- 3.2.14. In 2008 the Council adopted a vexatious Complaints Policy to provide a means by which the Council could respond consistently, and as a last resort, to habitual or repetitive complaints. To date the Council has not had occasion to implement the Policy.
- 3.2.15. However there was recognition that, and albeit outside of the direct scope of the review, the Council may find it helpful to develop a wider Unacceptable Actions and Behaviour Policy that would extend beyond, although include, complaints. For example this could be linked to the Council's existing Exclusion Policy and provide a framework through which staff and managers could respond to a range of unacceptable behaviours ranging from verbal or physical abuse to the intention to cause alarm or distress.
- 3.2.16 In light of the findings above the Group concluded that in regards to the receipt and capture of information there were opportunities for the Council to further improve upon existing arrangements and recommends the following course of action.**

Recommendation 1

The Council should determine a clear definition of what constitutes a complaint publish a revised Corporate Complaints Procedure which includes target timeframes for resolution. It may be helpful to supplement the procedure with user focussed list of Frequently asked Questions.

This Procedure should be widely communicated internally, particularly amongst key customer facing staff, and provide named contact details as further sources of advice and information.

Recommendation 2

The development of an in-house system to record information about complaints should be reinstated and a solution implemented as soon as possible. The existing Freedom of Information system used by the Council would provide a suitable platform for this work.

Recommendation 3

To further enhance accessibility and automation a Corporate Complaints Form should be made available via the website that can be submitted electronically to the Complaints Team.

Recommendation 4

Consideration should be given to the development of a Corporate Unacceptable Actions and Behaviour Policy. This would provide a framework through which the Council can respond consistently to a broader range of communications / interactions with individuals / groups that are considered to be unacceptable. This work should be taken forward through the Council's normal policy development arrangements.

3.3 Complaints Handling Process

3.3.1 At present the complaints handling procedure follows a three stage internal process as illustrated opposite. A more detailed explanation of this process is provided for information within **Appendix 4**. This approach has a number of advantages in that:-

- It is a transparent process that is well documented and publicised;
- In exceptional circumstances it can provide a helpful degree of flexibility in dealing with complex or high-risk complaints through the instigation of a stage 2 review at the outset e.g. where there is a significant risk of damage to the organisations reputation or credibility;
- It allows the views of Officers to be constructively challenged through independent investigation by colleagues external to the service.



3.3.2. However the Topic Group made a number of observations as to how this process worked in practice that were considered to offer the scope for improving future arrangements and potentially reducing operating costs.

3.3.3. Current good practice guidance suggests that a two stage internal process would provide a credible and proportionate procedure and provide sufficient assurance to stakeholders that their concerns were treated seriously.

'The fewer the people involved and the quicker the response the lower the cost'. SPSO Guidance (2011).

'The CHP includes a robust review by someone who has independence and authority to ask questions, get at the facts and recommend changes in response to complaints'. LGO Guidance (2009)

3.3.4. Additionally 5 of the 8 local Authorities used as case studies by the LGO adopt a 2 stage process, as do 3 of the 5 of the Council's nearest geographical neighbours. Of the minority of authorities that adopt a 3 stage process only 1 (Salford) has an Elected Member Panel as part of the procedure.

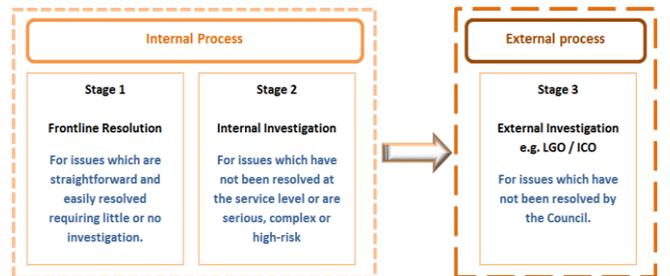
3.3.5. There is some evidence that on occasion complaints can inadvertently be dealt with twice at Stage 1 where services are initially contacted directly and details are not logged through the Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure.

3.3.6. In addition the existing three stage process has the potential to extend the timeframe in which complaints can be concluded and whilst pursuing a complaint through each of the stages may not result in additional costs to the individual it has the potential to increase the authority's operating costs.

3.3.7. In light of the findings above the Group concluded that in regards to the Complaints Handling Procedure there were opportunities for the Council to further improve upon existing arrangements and recommends the following course of action.

Recommendation 5

In line with current good practice adopt a 2 stage Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure. This would ensure complaints are dealt with in a timely manner and that provides credibility and assurance whilst reducing the potential ongoing costs of administering the CHP in line with Best Value principles.



Recommendation 6

In addition to a revised Corporate CHP being published all key staff, particularly those delivering customer facing activities, should be made aware of the Corporate Complaints Handling Process and provided with clear guidance on individual roles and responsibilities. All such staff new to the organisation should be routinely identified as a target audience for such material.

3.4. Monitoring and Reporting

3.4.1. There was a mixed picture amongst the authorities within the benchmarking group as to how Complaints Handling Procedures were monitored and administered. This ranged from having a dedicated Complaints Team, all complaints being directed through a Contact Centre, or having a small team that monitored the CHP as part of a wider remit.

3.4.2. Historically, and preceding an organisational restructure in 2013, Halton has adopted the latter approach and the CHP has been administered and monitored by staff within the Corporate Performance and Improvement Team who also undertake stage 2 investigations.

3.4.3. The principal advantage to this approach is it provides oversight of the process and the speed and quality of responses whilst devolving responsibility for initial complaint resolution to those delivering services.

3.4.4. For example Warrington Council designate individuals within service areas as 'Complaints Reps' who are responsible for logging information into the central system and manage the provision of responses at Stage 1 of the CHP.

3.4.5. This allows the central team responsible for retaining oversight of the CHP to provide additional support where this is necessary, for example by identifying those complaints that may be considered high-risk or high-profile and best dealt with as Stage 2 internal

'Councils should have adequate systems in place to track progress and follow up delays and reasons for them.'

LGO Guidance (2009)

investigations at the outset. It can also ensure that a co-ordinated approach is taken when dealing with complaints that cut across a number of service areas.

- 3.4.6. It was noted that due to recent organisational restructuring both the Communities and Children and Enterprise Directorates have a small staff responsible for the administration of Adult Social Care and Children’s Social Care Complaints Procedures who potentially could act as Directorate Representatives.
- 3.4.7. Additionally in the absence of a unified system for recording complaints and ambiguity concerning roles and responsibilities there remains a risk that the Council may provide discrete and inconsistent responses to the same individual who chooses to communicate through different channels on the same or varied issues.
- 3.4.8. In recent years the number of Corporate Complaints recorded each year has averaged between 25 and 35 per year and this may indicate that some complaints were being dealt with outside of the formal system. Whilst this may be a positive indication that complaints were being handled informally, and to the satisfaction of complainants, it is unhelpful in monitoring the nature and type of complaints at an organisational level. The use of a central database and the availability of clear guidance on the Complaints Handling Process should improve this situation *(Please refer Recommendations 2 and 6 on p 10 and p12)*.
- 3.4.9. Historically an annual year-end report has been presented to the Corporate Policy and Performance Board which was publicly available via PPB Agendas and Minutes published on the Council’s website. The report provided details of the complaints that were handled in the preceding year through the Corporate, the Adult Social Care, and the Children’s Social Care procedures.

‘Councils should regularly publish complaints performance data... this helps ensure transparency and demonstrates to service users that complaints are valued

SPSO Guidance (2011)

This report included information on;-

- A trend analysis of the number of complaints received through each of the three procedures over the preceding 5 years.
 - The number of complaints resolved at the various stages and the proportion responded to within target timeframes.
 - The nature of complaints by type and Directorate and the numbers upheld, partially upheld, or not upheld.
- 3.4.10. More recently this information has been supplemented by information concerning compliments that had been received across the various areas of the Council albeit that such information largely reflected documented comments e.g. those received via e-mail or thanks you cards etc. It was however recognised that many compliments may be provided on a one to one basis through the interaction of Officers and service users.

- 3.4.11. Whilst information concerning compliments was considered helpful in providing a balanced picture of the Council activities it was not considered essential that a formal system is developed in the short-term to capture such information. However this could be considered as part of the development of a Complaints Database and warranted further discussion with ICT colleagues.
- 3.4.12. This type of report was considered to provide useful information to Members concerning both the issues that were of concern to service users and the extent to which the Council was managing the Complaints Procedures effectively. However as a result of a number of factors, including restructuring and resource constraints, the Corporate Policy and Performance Board did not receive a report for the financial year 2013-14.
- 3.4.13. In light of the findings above the Group concluded that in regards to the monitoring and reporting of the CHP existing arrangements were effective and recommends the following course of action.**

Recommendation 7

That central oversight of the CHP is maintained and that Members continue to receive an annual report, which is published via the Council's website, providing the number and nature of complaints, the actions taken in response and the extent to which target times were achieved. Such information should be supplemented as far as possible with details of comments and compliments regarding the delivery of services.

In developing a suitable database consideration should also be given as to whether it is possible or practical to capture complaints comments and compliments within a single system.

3.5 Organisational Learning

- 3.5.1 There are considered to be two primary means by which the management of the complaints process can aid organisational learning. These relate to improving the delivery and design of services and improving the administration of the actual process itself e.g. the quality and consistency of the Councils response to complaints and in.
- 3.5.2. Intelligence from complaints needs to be used and combined with other information to develop a picture of the Council's overall performance and care needs to be taken to avoid providing individual remedies to complainants without considering the wider picture.

'Complaints systems are not mechanisms for apportioning blame but an important part of a Council's learning and development

LGO Guidance (2009)

- 3.5.3. At present any lessons learned and improvements that have been identified from handling complaints are largely communicated at an operational level through word of mouth and other informal channels of communication. This may be adequate given the limited number of complaints being recorded under current arrangements and there is some evidence that changes to working practices have changed as a direct result of complaints being made.
- 3.5.4. However in light of a revised system being developed, which would include information on complaint outcomes, a more formal approach may need to be adopted and other channels of communication considered e.g. Directorate Management Teams etc. this would allow senior management to routinely monitor the implementation of any agreed actions that had arisen as a result of the Complaints Procedure.
- 3.5.5. In relation to the administration of the process considerable experience has been accumulated by key staff that have extensive organisational knowledge of dealing with complaints from service users. However such knowledge is largely shared on an individual case by case basis and this could be more widely shared in order that it is exploited to its full potential.
- 3.5.6. At present there is no guidance available to staff, other than the published Corporate Complaints Procedure, which would assist them in managing interactions with service users in situations where a complaint may be or is being made. Additionally it is important that staff feel supported by the system, receive feedback on complaints that they have been involved in, and know what process will be followed should complaints be received about them. It is important that the Council develops an approach that encourages an open-minded and impartial approach to handling complaints and avoids defensive responses becoming the default position.
- 3.5.7. It is also important that staff who handle complaints are able to empathise with complainants in recognising that the world, and the actions of the Council are viewed through individual human lenses and this may result in a diversity of opinion. In light of this responses provided by the Council, should be clear and evidence based and avoid assumption and the use of emotive language.
- 3.5.8. There is some anecdotal evidence that scope exists to improve the quality and consistency of Stage 1 responses provided directly by services and that on occasion the clarity and quality of the initial response could lead to complaints being escalated thereby causing unnecessary duplication and additional grievances about the way the matter has been handled. In light of this there needs to be a system in place which provides feedback to staff who are providing responses on behalf of the Council concerning good and bad practice and accepting the limitation of confidentiality using actual examples of this may be considered helpful.

'Bodies should regularly review the training needs of frontline employees and investigative staff to ensure that they have the skills and confidence to use the authority delegated to them'

SPSO Guidance (2011)

3.5.9. In light of the findings above the Group concluded that in regards to organisational learning there were opportunities for the Council to further improve upon existing arrangements and recommends the following course of action.

Recommendation 8

In addition to the published Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure staff should be provided with more comprehensive guidance / training on the handling of complaints. This could for example include information about roles and responsibilities, how to deal with difficult behaviour and how to make an apology, how to develop and communicate a response, how to undertake an investigation etc.

In communicating such information a range of channels should be considered to meet any identified needs of discrete audiences e.g. guidance notes, group sessions, e-learning modules etc.

Recommendation 9

That each Directorate Management Team formally receives a summary of the complaints and compliments that are being received on a regular basis e.g. quarterly / bi-annually. This need not be an extensive narrative on every individual matter but should identify any emerging trends in the nature of complaints, the number that were upheld and any learning outcomes that resulted.

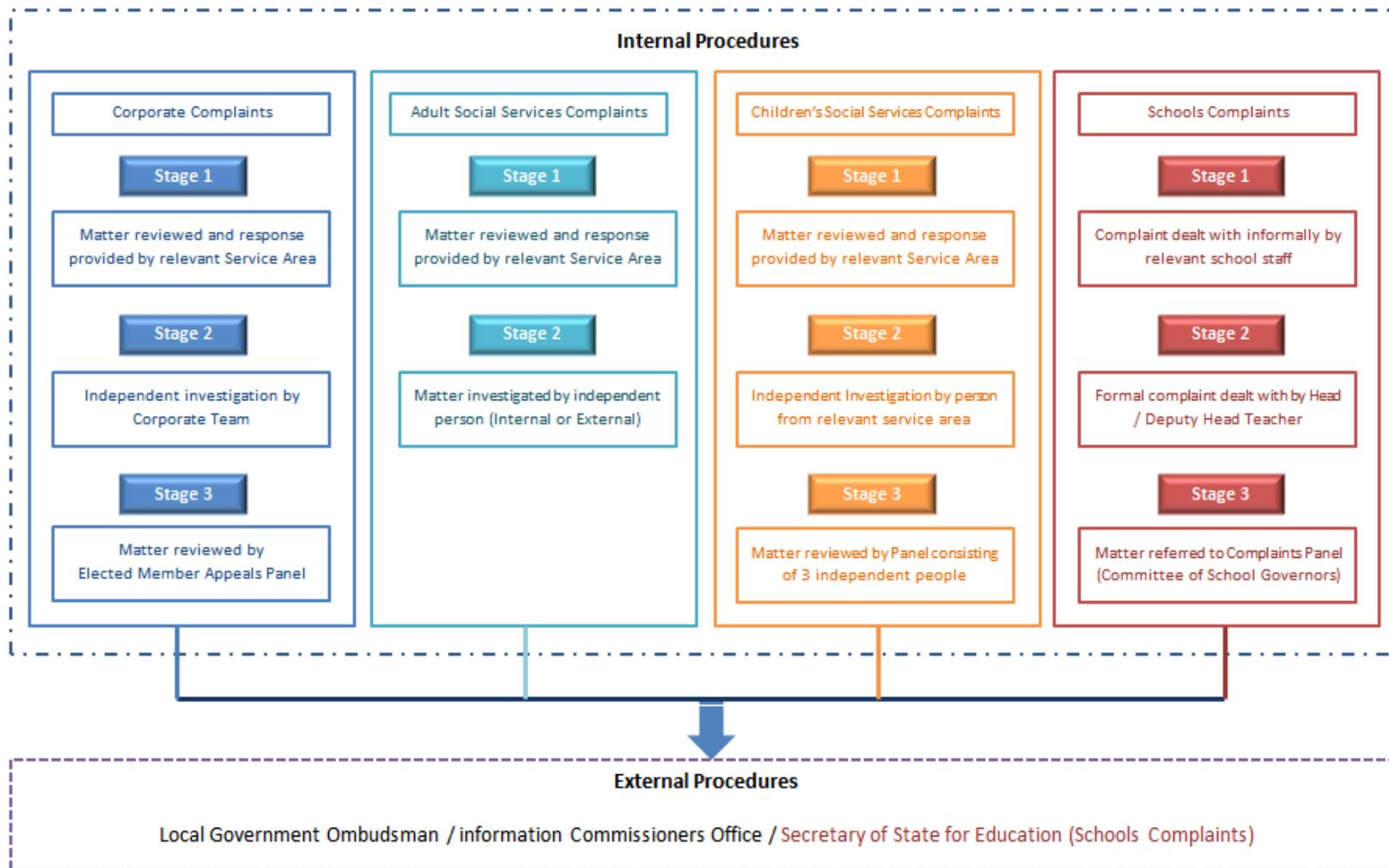
This would provide visible Senior Management leadership of the process and communicate a positive message that complaints are important to the authority and are being used as a source of learning.

Where such learning has implications at an organisational level it should be shared across Directorates through Directorate Complaint Representatives.

Recommendation 10

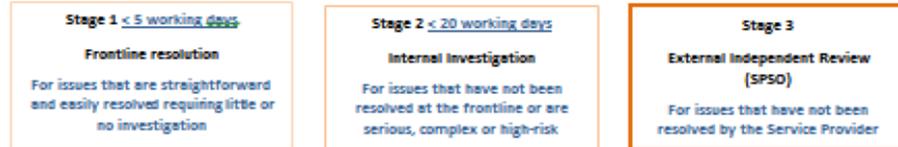
In addition to publishing an Annual Report via Corporate Services PPB, the Council should make use of internal communication methods, e.g. InTouch, Intranet etc., to circulate information to staff concerning the handling of complaints and the Councils performance and any learning outcomes.

HBC Existing Complaints Procedures March 2014



Scottish Public Services Ombudsman (2011): Guidance has been developed around 3 principal aspects.

Process and Accountability



- > The fewer the people involved and the quicker the response the lower the cost. Staff should be aware of complaints process and be provided with clear guidance / training. Organisations need to be clear about what constitutes a complaint and what issues will and will not be dealt with via the CHP.
- > Senior Management should take an active interest in the volume and nature for all complaints received and Line Managers should take responsibility for frontline complaints handling and recording and reporting performance.
- > Following investigation a full, objective and proportionate response representing the definitive position on all points raised should be provided and signed off by Senior Officer.

Tools for Investigation and Redress

- > Complaints should be accepted through the easiest means for the complainant and handlers should determine what the complaint is about, what the complainant seeks to achieve, and if their expectations realistic and achievable. The scale of an investigation should be proportionate to the issue(s) raised.
- > Investigative staff should have the authority to question explanations given by colleagues.
- > Where parties agree mediation / conciliation services can be used as a tool to resolve user dissatisfaction and defuse problems before they escalate.
- > Communicating a decision needs to be clear and concise, literacy should not be assumed and special needs taken into account.
- > Service providers should develop an unacceptable actions / behaviour policy and communicate it to staff and have a process in place to communicate a decision to implement the policy with the individual concerned.
- > Senior Management should develop a clear policy on redress and complainants should be told about action taken although it is inappropriate to share specific details that affect individual staff members.

Publicising, recording, learning and improvement

- > The CHP should be easily accessible by users e.g. leaflets, online access, special needs etc. Staff should be aware that users may not always use the term ‘complaint’ and use discretion to ensure expressions of dissatisfaction are handled via the CHP.
- > The organisation should regularly publish performance data, including outcomes, to help ensure transparency and demonstrate that complaints are valued.
- > Organisations should maintain a complete and accurate record of all complaints, including frontline resolution, including subject, outcomes and actions and use such information proactively for improvement.
- > Senior Management should provide clear direction on the extent of limits and discretion and responsibility in resolving complaints.
- > Staff involved in complaint handling should be provided with appropriate skills, resources and training including Data Protection law and practice.

Local Government Ombudsman (2009): Guidance has been developed around 6 suggested features.

General issues

There can be confusion about what constitutes a complaint. When a request for a service or an objection to a decision or a policy becomes a complaint, and what response is provided and accepting one is expected, is a matter for the authority to decide. There is no difference between an informal or a formal complaint and we suggest that Councils have a definition that includes ‘*an expression of dissatisfaction about a Council service that requires a response*’

Accessibility

- > Information on how to complain is available in a clear and understandable form and is on relevant websites, along with primary contact details, and facilities exist to make complaints within different forms. Authorities *must* ensure that their procedures comply with equalities and human rights legislation.
- > Councils need to decide how to address anonymous complaints as some may raise issues of serious concern. New staff need to be given information on the process and existing staff need to be provided with periodic updates. Staff need to be able to give clear and accurate advice about comments and complaints and to provide assistance.

Communication and Timeliness

- > Direct contact with the complainant helps to clarify whether the issue is a complaint, what outcome is being sought, and if this is achievable. However this does not mean that LGO advocate personal contact as a replacement for more formal written responses.
- > It is helpful if Contact Centre Staff (CCS) are trained to assist people who wish to make a complaint. Tensions can arise between CCS and departments where there is a lack of clarity about who should respond and how. Joined up processes and co-ordinated responses between the Council and partners should be facilitated and there is an effective recording and feedback loop so that organisational improvements can be made.
- > The LGO believes **2 stages will normally be appropriate to deal with most complaints** and consider that 12 weeks allows sufficient time for a Council to deal with a complaint. Published procedures should include target timescales which can be tracked and delays identified. However there is a need to avoid perverse incentives and lack of ownership.

Fairness and Credibility

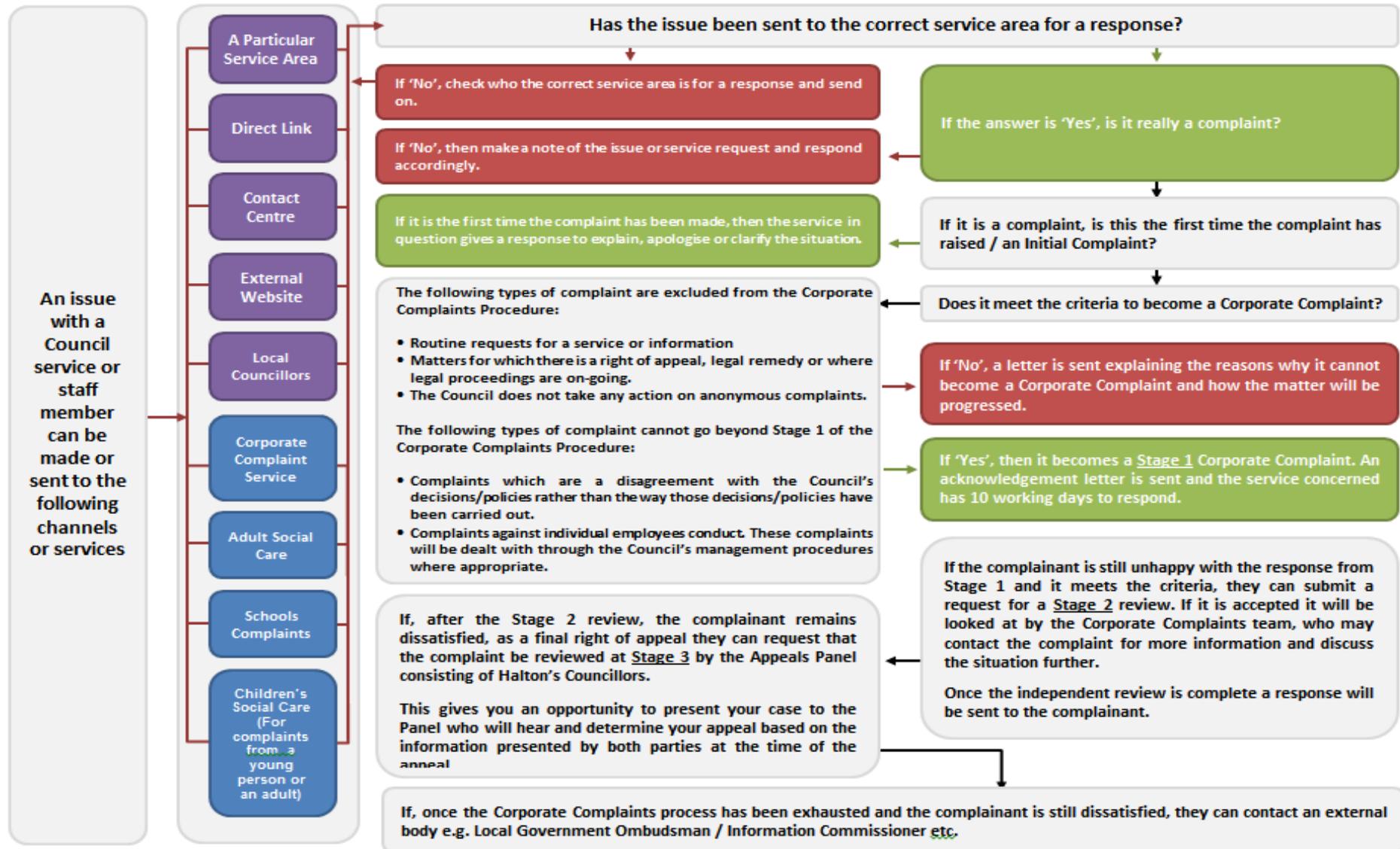
- > Councils that perform well have feedback loops which allow front line staff to capture and pass on information about emerging issues. Staff should be aware of the process and what they can and cannot do. Councillors have an important role to play in raising awareness of procedures and reviewing performance. The LGO have published guidance on unreasonably persistent complainants and unreasonable behaviour.
- > The complaints system needs to be managed by someone who can take an overview and implement changes to it. Systems that provide independent review are more credible to the service user and can save time and resources.

Accountability

- > The disclosure of information would have to be made on a case by case basis where personal information may be involved and staff will need advice from an information specialist e.g. Data Protection.
- > Responses should be clear and evidenced based and responsibility for implementing changes determined. The complaints process should be reviewed periodically

Appendix 3 – Summary of Benchmarking Information

| Organisations reviewed | Primary findings |
|-----------------------------------|---|
| Darlington Council | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Retail outlets published relatively little information on their websites about the formal procedure for dealing with complaints. this may arise from stores having discretion in how to handle them e.g. award of discount on next shop etc. the preferred route seems to be service desk in individual stores. Amazon also facilitates a help forum where questions can be answered by their customer services team or by other customers. ▪ All of the LA's published details of their complaints process and the timeframes in which they expected complaints to be handled. ▪ All retained a number of communication channels and in some cases all complaints were routed through Customer Contact Centres ▪ All authorities had based their definition of a complaint around 'an expression of dissatisfaction requiring a response'. ▪ All retained central oversight of the process through either dedicated complaints teams or specific staff with wider duties although the extent to which administrative responsibilities were devolved to individual service areas / contact centres etc. varied. ▪ All made efforts to differentiate between service requests and complaints and authorities recognised the difficulty in trying to formally capture every communication to the Council given the different communication channels that are available. ▪ All authorities seem to use a single database for capturing details of complaints which were either procured externally or developed in house. ▪ The majority of authorities adopted an internal 2 stage process with second stage complaints being subject to review, generally undertaken by Senior Officers. Of the 5 authorities that adopt a 3 stage process only 1 involved an Elected Member Panel. ▪ All produced an analysis of the number and nature of complaints and their outcomes and used this alongside other information to support organisational learning and service development. |
| Lincolnshire Council | |
| Haringay Council | |
| Richmond Council | |
| Manchester Council | |
| Salford Council | |
| Sandwell Council | |
| Southend Council | |
| Cheshire West and Chester Council | |
| Knowsley Council | |
| Liverpool Council | |
| St Helens Council | |
| Warrington Council | |
| <i>High Street Retailers</i> | |
| Asda | |
| B & Q | |
| Tesco | |



Appendix 5– Recommendations and Rationale

| | Recommendation | Rationale |
|-----|---|--|
| 1. | The Council should determine a clear definition of what constitutes a complaint publish a revised Corporate Complaints Procedure which includes target timeframes for resolution | <i>This would ensure that only those matters that could involve an injustice to the individual are considered within the two-stage process involving internal review and avoid protracted communication on more general matters.</i> |
| 2. | The development of an in-house system to record information about complaints should be reinstated and a solution implemented as soon as possible. | <i>This would provide a comprehensive database which can be used alongside other intelligence to inform the decision making processes of the Council.</i> |
| 3. | To further enhance accessibility and automation a Corporate Complaints Form should be made available via the website that can be submitted electronically to the Complaints Team. | <i>This would make fuller use of existing ICT resources in further developing self-service portals for service users.</i> |
| 4. | Consideration should be given to the development of a Corporate Unacceptable Actions and Behaviour Policy. | <i>This would provide greater clarity and an organisational level framework through which unacceptable actions and behaviour could be managed.</i> |
| 5. | In line with current good practice That the Council should adopt a 2 stage Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure. | <i>This would provide a quick simple and streamlined process which focusses on early resolution by empowered and well-trained staff.</i> |
| 6. | In addition to a revised Corporate CHP being published all key staff, particularly those delivering customer facing activities, should be made aware of the Corporate Complaints Handling Process and provided with clear guidance on individual roles and responsibilities | <i>This would help to ensure greater consistency in the process and provide transparency and assurance to service users that complaints are valued by the organisation.</i> |
| 7. | That central oversight of the CHP is maintained and that Members continue to receive an annual report. | <i>It is important that Members and Officers have a comprehensive picture of complaints being received across the organisation and of the Council's performance in administering the process.</i> |
| 8. | In addition to the published Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure staff should be provided with more comprehensive guidance / training on the handling of complaints | <i>This would empower staff to deal with complaints confidently and assure the consistency of the Council's approach.</i> |
| 9. | That each Directorate Management Team formally receive a summary of the complaints and compliments that are being received on a regular basis | <i>This would provide an operational context and supplement the information received by Corporate Management Team / Members on an annual basis. It would also provide assurance that any agreed actions were implemented.</i> |
| 10. | In addition to an Annual Report via Corporate Services PPB, the Council should make use of internal communication methods to circulate information to staff concerning the handling of complaints the Councils performance and learning outcomes. | <i>This would channel information directly to staff and engage them more fully in relation to the handling of complaints and the opportunities for organisational learning.</i> |

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10th June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

SUBJECT: Discretionary Support Scheme

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report to the Board on the delivery of the Council's Discretionary Support Scheme (DSS) following its first 12 months of operation and to consider the findings of the Topic Group who have maintained an oversight of the scheme over the past 12 months, as requested by the Executive Board.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

- i) It is recommended that the Board support the conclusions and findings of the Topic Group.

3.0 **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The DSS previously administered by the Department for Work and Pensions was abolished by the Welfare Reform Act 2012. On 1st April 2013 Crisis Loans for living expenses and Community Care Grants were replaced by a new grants scheme administered by the Council. This Board played a key role in developing the scheme and was asked by the Executive Board to keep the scheme under review. This role has been performed by the Board's Topic Group.
- 3.2 The Topic Group met twice during the year. Once about halfway through the year to examine how the scheme was performing and once to review the first years activity. The scheme provides vital support to people where there is no other source of support, subject to the criteria set by the Council.
- 3.3 The Council was keen to develop a scheme that was affordable and sustainable given the significant budget reductions that have and will continue to take place in its core Government Grant.
- 3.4 The Council was also keen to establish a scheme that supported individuals in crisis situations and those who required support in establishing a place to live.

4.0 **TOPIC GROUP REVIEW AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

4.1 The PPB Topic Group reviewed the scheme after 6 months and again after the first 12 months of operation. At each review point, the Topic Group were made aware of the feedback from partner agencies such as the CAB and Registered Social Landlords. They used this information to make recommendations around fine-tuning the scheme.

4.2 These changes were introduced at the half yearly stage having listened to feedback. They were:

- The Council's DSS would be the first port of call for individuals requiring food. Prior to this the Council was referring people to other agencies first. This was proving slow and confusing for the service user.
- The introduction of payments for fuel. Up until this point the Council was not providing fuel support. This was mainly predicated on the fact that the Executive Board, when setting the broad parameters for the scheme, had agreed not to provide cash support, in common with other local authorities. Finding a way of providing fuel support without cash payments had proved difficult. However, a solution was found and fuel payments are now being made and were so from the second half of the first year of operation.

4.3 The consequence of these two decisions was to increase expenditure over the second half of the year.

4.4 The second review by the Topic Group took place on 24th April 2014 with the benefit of the experience of a full year in operation and knowing the financial impact of the half year changes outlined above. The Topic Group considered the following information about the first year of operation:

- The scheme provided support to people in need and the Council and the staff who administer the scheme received a number of thanks and compliments from those accessing the scheme.
- The scheme operated in budget spending £118,277 out of a total grant of £649,000.
- The scheme had extended beyond simply providing a short-term solution. The Council provides a more rounded scheme than previously offered as it provides people with Money Advice and Welfare Reform advice and is therefore proactive as well as reactive trying to deal with the underlying reasons to the client's situation.

- Good liaison exists between the DSS Team and Children's Services.
- Issues have been raised by partner organisations around the signposting by the scheme to other agencies when individuals require essential "white goods". This was causing significant delays for clients and the Council was asked to see if, like food, the scheme could be the first port of call ensuring that such essential goods were provided quickly.
- Issues were also raised by partners in relation to the criteria in the scheme which says that individuals "sanctioned" by the DWP could not apply for support and are directed to other forms of support by the Team. The DWP are able to make Hardship Payments in such circumstances.

4.5 In summary:

- The scheme had met the needs of many individuals in the Borough.
- Despite the very tight timescales, the scheme was introduced on time.
- The scheme operated within budget.
- The changes made after the first 6 months have proved very helpful to clients.
- The Council's ability to provide Money Advice and Welfare Rights Advice as part of the scheme has improved the overall service.

4.6 Having considered the end of year position, the Topic Group made the following recommendations in relation to the future operation of the scheme.

1. The scheme should continue. This is a discretionary scheme that the Council could choose not to provide.
2. The unspent funds from the 2013/14 financial year to be ring-fenced and rolled forward to fund future years in order to sustain a scheme once the specific grant is subsumed into the Council's general grant in 2015/16.
3. In order to support a wider approach to budgeting advice and supporting individuals two temporary Money Advice posts be funded via the scheme.
4. The scheme to be the first port of call for people seeking assistance with white goods.

4.7 In relation to the issue of those with "sanctions" not being able to access the scheme, the Group acknowledged the difficulty this can cause but felt that the DSS Team neither had the capacity nor the

information to make judgements about the fairness of any individual sanction. Nevertheless, the Topic Group asked officers to look into some specific issues further and keep it under review as part of the continuing review of the scheme.

4.8 The Topic Group agreed to carry out a further review of the scheme in October 2104.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The DSS operates within the Policy set by the Council. Delegated authority exists in order for fine-tuning of the scheme to take place following consultation with this Board.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The scheme has operated within budget, providing the opportunity to sustain a scheme in future years.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

7.1 It has the potential to affect all Council priorities.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Payments will be monitored from the scheme to ensure that these remain with budget and adhere to the set criteria.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 The eligibility criteria and application process would have to ensure that no particular groups of individuals were excluded. An Equality Impact Assessment will need to take place on any amended scheme.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|--|-----------------|
| Various letters from the Department of Works & Pensions | Revenues & Benefits & Customer Services Division, Kingsway House, Widnes | Peter McCann |

REPORT TO: Corporate PPB
DATE: 10th June 2014
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children and Enterprise
PORTFOLIO: Physical Environment
SUBJECT: Markets Update
WARD(S) Appleton and Mersey

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to provide a further update to Members on the management and operation of the borough's markets. The report also sets out future priorities and actions.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That:**

i) Members note the contents of the report.

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATON**

In January Members considered a report which outlined the changes and improvements that have been made at the markets during 2013. The report also focused on future work priorities including: refurbishment work to the public toilets; review of energy consumption; Wifi access and the Traders' Committee. A summary of progress on these areas is provided as follows:

Refurbishment Work to the Public Toilets.

This work was completed in March and has received positive feedback from customers and traders.

Wifi Access

This work was completed in April 2014.

Traders' Committee

The Traders' Committee has met two times in 2014. The Portfolio Holder for Physical Environment attends the meeting. Meetings have been very positive with Traders' presenting views on the operation of the markets in a constructive way and have been supportive in the implementation of new initiatives within the markets. One good example of this is the development and refinement of the Commodities Panel Meeting which meets to discuss new trader applications and amendments to commodity lists. Traders asked if these meetings could be more frequent and also requested an amendment to the arrangements to allow traders to express an opinion on potential applications. These changes have been made.

Marketing and Promotions

Love Your Local Market (LYLM) Promotional Event

The LYLM event took place between 14th May and 28th May 2014. This event was opened by Mayor of Halton Cllr Margaret Ratcliffe, followed by a charity auction in the outdoor market to raise funds for Marie Curie UK. Within the indoor market during the fortnight extra stalls were given to Cheshire Police, Halton Women's Institute and Halton Vision. Further indoor stalls in the indoor market were provided to internal Council services such as Trading Standards, Library Services and Halton People Into Jobs to enable them to advertise their offer. Riverside College also advertised their courses and facilities within the market. Live music was also the main feature at Runcorn Street Market during the final Tuesday of LYLM fortnight. New market traders were given the opportunity to rent outdoor stalls at the cost of £10 for two days to encourage new businesses to start up within the market.

Widnes on Sea Promotional Event

The Widnes on Sea event will take place between 23rd July and 26th July 2014. This event will commemorate the start of World War One by theming the rides and activities to a typical Edwardian entertaining day at the market. There will be strong men, escapologists, policeman and a recruiting sergeant set up in the market to entertain shoppers. A fun fair will take place with further activities planned for children.

Power Supply

A review of Power Supply and Power Consumption in both the indoor and outdoor market has been undertaken. This review has considered the electricity metering arrangements in the market; key users; and a categorisation of usage in relation to commodities.

This is an important piece of work because power supply within the market is close to full capacity and as a result this has a negative impact on the ability to diversify the commodity offer. For example, vibrant markets tend to have a good mix of food/dining outlets, but power capacity reduces our options in this regard.

This work has a bearing on the review of market hall rents described below.

The Operational Director for Economy Enterprise and Property will provide further details at the meeting.

Future Priorities and Actions

In addition, Members were also advised that as part of its on-going review of its services, the Council would need to carry out a cost benefit analysis which links to exploring ways of increasing the commercial viability of the markets.

This analysis to date has focused on the following areas:

- Occupancy/Vacancy Rates;
- Rental Income;
- Rental Arrears;
- Expenditure;
- Return on Investment i.e. an opportunity/cost analysis

A review of market hall rents has also taken place. The review has focused on a payment system that more accurately reflects an equitable distribution of expenditure/costs across the market, and satisfactorily distinguishes between popular or, conversely, difficult to let stalls.

There are a number of considerations arising from this review, including the introduction of an updated pricing policy.

It is proposed that the Operational Director for Economy, Enterprise and Property will provide more detail at the meeting.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no further policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Whilst the Council makes a small profit in regard to the operation of its markets Members are asked to balance this with the wider benefits that the markets provide. For example, there are currently 83 traders in the indoor market, which represents a significant contribution to supporting self-employment in Halton. Equally, when a customer survey of the markets was carried out in July 2011 of the 227 residents of Halton who completed the questionnaire 86.3% (196) said they had used Widnes Market in the last 12 months.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

N/A

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The markets allow potential entrepreneurs and fledgling businesses the opportunity to set up in a supportive and low risk environment.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Markets contribute to supporting the respective town centres. It also encourages local residents to 'shop local'.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There is a risk that the Council does not see a return on its investment through increased footfall in the markets and wider town centres and an increase in traders paying rent.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Access to the markets has improved to ensure that our markets remain accessible for all.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10th June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

SUBJECT: Corporate Accident / Incident Report
1st April 2013 – 31st March 2014

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide the Board with details of corporate accident statistics and associated trends from 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

i) That the report is noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The annual report on performance of health and safety management for the period 1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014 is appended to this report.

3.2 With regard to proactive action taken, the report highlights that there has been an increase in the number of occupational risk assessments and near misses, whilst there has been a decrease in the number of stress risk assessments and officers using the Lone Working Monitoring system.

3.3 It also highlights a decrease in RIDDOR (Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations) reportable accidents and violent incidents, however, there has been an increase in the number of significant accidents.

3.4 This underlines the improvement in proactive action taken to create a safer working environment as this has led to the reduction in the number of incidents leading to injuries; as highlighted by the significant decrease in the number of days lost.

3.5 The subsequent recommendations contained in the report are based on current developments and incident trends. Their implementation will be closely monitored.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The provision of a safe working environment and reduction in accidents is important in order to provide efficient and effective delivery of services (the sixth priority in the Corporate Plan).

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Accidents which lead to lost time have financial implications for the authority (although these are always secondary to our concern for the well being of staff and customers).

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 A reduction in accidents and subsequent days lost increases the Council's capacity to deliver on all its priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no particular risks attached to this report. Occupational and workplace risk assessments are used to reduce the likelihood of accidents.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no direct implications for equality and diversity.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no relevant background documents.



**CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT
CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
1st April 2013 to 31st March 2014**

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INTRODUCTION

1.1 General

The Health and Safety at Work etc Act clearly places responsibility on those who create the risk to manage it. The new HSE Strategy, 'Being Part of the Solution' highlights that members of the board have both collective and individual responsibility for health and safety. As such, the need is for board-level members to champion health and safety and be held accountable for its delivery.

Part of this includes identifying areas for improvement in health and safety management with the intention of improving staff morale, reducing in work-related sickness absence and lowering insurance premiums. In particular having robust health and safety procedures in place provides safeguards against legal action being taken against the Authority.

1.2 Health and Safety Management System

In order to demonstrate how Halton Borough Council as an employer is delivering the HSE Strategy, this report is to provide Management Team with details of health and safety performance in relation to Key Performance Indicators (KPI). Details of KPI's are as follows:

LEAD INDICATORS

Proactive action taken and any outcomes

KPI No.

1. **Number of risk assessments completed on corporate systems**
Rationale – creating a safe working environment
2. **Number of Near Misses**
Rationale – action taken to prevent further similar incidents and before injuries
3. **Percentage of registered staff on the Lone Working Monitoring System who are utilising the system**
Rationale – demonstrating effective management of lone working risks

REACTIVE [Lagging] INDICATORS

Reactive action taken in response to accidents/incidents

4. **Number of Significant¹ and RIDDOR Reportable Accidents²**
Rationale – identify accident/incident trends and actions required to prevent similar occurrences
5. **Number of Violent Incidents**
Rationale – identify incident trends and actions required to prevent similar occurrences

By responding positively to identified trends, the Authority can demonstrate compliance with the recommendations of the Health and Safety Executive's guidance HS(G)65 "Successful Health and Safety Management".

¹ Accidents that either require more than basic first aid, incur time lost or arise from a failure in health and safety management

² Reporting of Injuries, Diseases and Dangerous Occurrences Regulations, (RIDDOR) 1995, including Fatalities, Specified Injuries, Over 7-day Injuries, Reportable Occupational Diseases & Dangerous Occurrences

1.3 Local Information

1.3.1 Reportable Occupational Disease

In October 2013 during annual Occupational Health Screening an Open Space Services operative was diagnosed with Vibration White Finger [VWF], which is a chronic injury and is not treatable. It was reported to the HSE under RIDDOR as an Occupational Disease and they carried out a full investigation.

The said operative has been employed by the Authority for over 35 years working in cemeteries. He has only worked for Open Space Services since 2011 and prior to this he was a grave digger, predominantly involved in manual digging and use of mechanical diggers.

Open Space Services had already implemented a number of control measures and monitoring arrangements to mitigate against vibration exposure. No enforcement action was taken at the time and there are several agreed actions that are currently being implemented. These will be replicated in other services where staff are exposed to vibration. The operative has since been redeployed to another area where he will not be using vibration equipment.

1.3.2 Defibrillators

On the 13th February 2014 a 79 year old man attended at the Stobart Stadium for a meeting with Solicitors. While waiting to see them his heart went into defibrillation and he suffered a cardiac arrest. An ambulance was called and in the meantime two members of Stadium staff administered first aid by applying CPR and utilising the defibrillator. They managed to revive him before he was taken to Whiston Hospital by ambulance. Initially he was in a critical condition; however the family has since informed Stadium staff that he has made a recovery and has been released from hospital.

1.4 Environmental Scan

1.4.1 Corporate Manslaughter

The Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act has now been in force for 6 years. The Act is designed to establish corporate liability where it can be shown that the way an organisation's activities were managed or organised by senior managements was a substantial element in causing a person's death.

Three companies have been convicted to date, five further companies have been charged and there are several ongoing investigations including the Greater Manchester Police. Under sentencing guidelines the suggested starting point for a fine following conviction is £500,000.

As well as the corporate manslaughter charge, senior managers of the companies have been charged personally with gross negligence manslaughter or health and safety offences.

1.4.2 Professor Löfstedt report 'Reclaiming Health and Safety for All'

The report was published in 2011 and followed Lord Young's report "Common Sense: Common Safety", of October 2010. It highlighted a review of legislation and guidance with a view to remove or improve 84 per cent of health and safety regulations by the end of 2014.

To date all the recommendations have either been delivered or are on track to be completed by the agreed date. Several Policies have recently been updated (see 2.1 - action 4) including:

- Workplace
- Asbestos
- Legionella

- Working at Heights

Also, on the 1st October 2013 RIDDOR was amended and the main changes are:

- Simplified and shortened list of specified reportable injuries (major injuries) to workers sustained as a result of a work-related accident
- Clarified and shortened list of reportable dangerous occurrences (near-miss events)
- Simplified and significantly shortened list of reportable ill-health conditions in workers (replacing 47 specified ill-health conditions with 8 categories of work related diseases)

1.4.3 Review of Function of the HSE

Last year the Department for Work and Pensions carried out a review of the Health and Safety Executive (HSE) in accordance with the government's commitment to review all public bodies.

It concluded that it is operating with the level of control and governance that should be expected of an arm's-length body of its size and profile. However, the report has identified a number of areas where there is scope for innovation and change to ensure that HSE continues to operate efficiently and effectively in the 21st century.

1.4.4 Violence at Work

The Health and Safety Executive published a report presenting findings from the 2012/13 Crime Survey for England and Wales (CSEW) on violence at work. A resume of the findings are as follows:

- The risk of being a victim of actual or threatened violence at work in 2012/13 is similar to the last few years with an estimated 1.4% of working adults the victims of one or more violent incidents at work;
- In 2012/13, 323,000 adults of working age in employment experienced work related violence including threats and physical assault;
- The 2012/13 CSEW found that 1.2% of women and 1.6% of men were victims of violence at work once or more during the year prior to their interview;
- Strangers were the offenders in 60% of cases of workplace violence. Among incidents where the offender was known, the offenders were most likely to be clients or a member of the public known through work;
- Victims of actual or threatened violence at work said that the offender was under the influence of alcohol in 38% of incidents, and that the offender was under the influence of drugs in 26% of incident; and
- The survey found 51% of assaults at work resulted in injury, with minor bruising or a black eye accounting for the majority of the injuries recorded.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

2.1 Recommended Actions for 2013/14

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| No. | KPI No. | ACTION | I/C |
|-----|---------|---|---|
| 1 | 1. | Review the functionality of the corporate Stress Risk Assessment system (see 3.1.2) | Health and Safety Team & IT |
| 2 | 3. | Review use of Contact Centre Monitoring system by lone workers to ensure that they are fully utilising the system (see 3.3) | Operational Directors/ Divisional Managers |
| 3. | 4. | <p>Review and update following risk assessments:</p> <p>Specific areas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) <u>Open Space Services</u> – Thrown Objects (see 4.1.3.6) b) <u>School Catering</u> – Manual Handling Objects – i.e. moving canteen furniture (see 4.1.3.7) c) <u>Independent Living (Reablement)</u> – Environmental Risk Assessments for service users homes (see 4.1.3.4) d) <u>Open Space Services & Transport Workshop</u> – Vibration implement agreed HSE actions (see 1.3.1) e) <u>Schools</u> – Classroom Risk Assessments (see 4.1.3.8) <p>General</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> f) Ensure that noise risk assessments are carried out and, if required, review occupational risk assessments in line with results (carried over from 2012/13 – action 3D) g) Review Work at Heights risk assessments Ensure that Environmental & Fire Risk assessments continue to be carried out and there are sufficient resources for the maintenance and servicing of equipment (see 4.1.3.2) | Operational Directors/ Divisional Managers |

GENERAL ACTIONS

| | | |
|----|---|--|
| 4. | To review and update the Workplace, Asbestos, Legionella and Working at Heights Policies (See 1.4.2) | Health and Safety Team |
| 5. | To review the current Drugs and Alcohol Policy to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 (carried over from 2012/13 – action 11) | Divisional Manager HR & Learning and Development |

2.2 Update for 2012/13

KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

| No. | KPI No. | ACTION | UPDATE |
|-----|---------|---|---|
| 1 | 1. | To promote the use of the new corporate Stress Risk Assessment system | See 3.1.2 below. |
| 2 | 3. | Review Lone Working Risk Assessments to ensure that they are suitable and sufficient and establish if use of Contact Centre Monitoring system (CCMS) is required | Before registration on CCMS, Lone Working risk assessment to be completed. There are currently 59 risk assessments. See 3.3 below |
| 3. | 4. | <p>Review and update following risk assessments;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> h) Admin Shared Services – Manual Handling (Objects) i) Open Space Services – Slip Trip Fall & Thrown Objects/PPE j) Schools – Manual Handling <p>Implement and monitor effectiveness of revised measures;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> k) Independent Living – Manual Handling (People) l) Schools Catering – Manual Handling (Objects) <p>General;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> m) Ensure that there are sufficient resources for the maintenance and servicing of equipment n) Ensure that noise and vibration risk assessments are carried out and, if required, review occupational risk assessments in line with results | <p>In this period: No incidents reported</p> <p>STF - 6 incidents Objects – 7 incidents Investigation carried out by managers into causes</p> <p>MH - 1 incidents</p> <p>3 incidents reported</p> <p>4 incidents reported Staff received general H&S training and new environmental risk assessment used</p> <p>On going</p> <p>See 1.3.1 above and agreed actions for vibration and these are to be adopted by Transport Workshops. Noise risk assessments to be carried out this year</p> |
| 4. | 5. | <p>Review Occupational Risk Assessments and monitor effectiveness of measures for 'violence and aggression';</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Adult Care b) Children's Residential Care c) Rev's & Benefits and One Stop Shops d) Primary Schools | Reduction in number of violent incidents. Personal Safety training delivered to Reablement, Adult Social Care & Rev's & Benefits and One Stop Shops. |

GENERAL ACTIONS

| | | |
|-----|--|---|
| 5. | To carry out the biennial review the Corporate Health and Safety Policy | Policy reviewed and updated. |
| 6. | To ensure that health and safety standards of contractors employed by HBC are suitable and sufficient by; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) Employing effective procedures at tendering, employment and employed stages b) Monitoring contractors c) Implementation of agreed actions | Procurement processes embedded. Inspections of building, road & street light contractors carried out. |
| 7. | To consider the provision of defibrillators within HBC with a view to developing a corporate approach | North West Ambulance supplying equipment on the 10 th October. Training delivered to relevant staff. Buildings include – stadium, market, community centres & libraries. Further to this the following now have defibrillators Brookvale Recreation Centre; Runcorn swimming Pool and Kingsway Leisure Centre (see 1.3.2) |
| 9. | To ensure that the revised procedures for First Aid Training are implemented | Trainers are taught by Reach Out For Training, an accredited provider. Corporate Training reviewing regulations and are developing an action plan. |
| 10. | To review the current Drugs and Alcohol Policy to ensure that it meets the requirements of the Corporate Manslaughter and Corporate Homicide Act 2007 (carried over from 2012/13) | On going |
| 11. | Brief new Public Health team on health and safety management processes and arrangements (carried over from 2012/13) | Briefing took place July 2013. |

3. LEAD INDICATORS

3.1 KPI 1. Number of risk assessments completed on corporate systems

3.1.1 An electronic risk assessment system, based on the Intranet, has been 'live' since September 2011. Total number of assessments completed in the last 3 years are;

| Policy & Resources | | | Children & Enterprise | | | Communities | | |
|--------------------|---------|---------|-----------------------|---------|---------|-------------|---------|---------|
| 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 | 2013/14 |
| 191 | 246 | 248 | 64 | 119 | 180 | 99 | 197 | 319 |

- To date 167 members of staff have been trained in the use of the system and 747 risk assessments entered onto the system, compared with 562 last year
- This is in part due to a significant increase in the number of risk assessments completed within Communities Directorate, particularly in Communities and Environment;
- In order to enhance competencies an Elearning Risk Assessment training programme was went 'live' on the 1st April 2011 and so far 149 members of staff have been trained. Also, this year 11 members of staff have completed IOSH Managing Safely courses; and
- Although schools do not utilise the system, this year the Health and Safety team has carried out 23 health and safety audits of schools, which covers risk assessments. The average score was 87% and the common occurring score was 91%.

3.1.2 The on-line Stress Risk Assessment went 'live' on the 15th October 2012. The total number of Stress Risk Assessments surveys completed last year are;

| | Policy & Resources | Children & Enterprise | Communities |
|---------|--------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| 2013/14 | 4 | 5 | 3 |
| 2012/13 | 24 | 10 | 5 |

There has been a decrease in the use of the system and only the initial surveys were instigated; omitting to complete the second stage of carrying out risk assessments with the teams.

3.1.3 The Authority uses an intranet based system to complete workstation assessments (Cardinus). This year 1288 assessments have been completed and 66% are low risks; compared with 70% last year.

3.2 KPI 2. Number of Near Misses KPI 3.

3.2.1 For a breakdown of near misses see 5.1 below and the number reported in the last 3 years are:

| 2010/11 | 2011/12 | 2012/13 |
|---------|---------|---------|
| 5 | 10 | 15 |

- The increase is mainly due to reporting by Waste Environmental & Improvement Services; and

- An incident involving the failure of 'fall prevention' equipment whilst on the Silver Jubilee Bridge has resulted in a corporate recommendation around working at heights (see 2.1 – action 3g).

3.3 KPI 3. Percentage of registered staff on the Lone Working Monitoring System who are utilising the system

3.3.1 Lone Working – Contact Centre Monitoring update [comparative period December 2013 to March 2014]

| | 2011/12 | | 2012/13 | | 2013/14 | |
|----------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| | Registered Users | No's Using System | Registered Users | No's Using System | Registered Users | No's Using System |
| Policy & Resources | 48 | 22 | 49 | 23 | 66 | 21 |
| Children & Enterprise | 139 | 22 | 157 | 85 | 186 | 51 |
| Communities | 205 | 26 | 123 | 29 | 236 | 104 |
| TOTAL USERS | 392 | 70 | 329 | 137 | 488 | 176 |
| % OF USE | 17% | | 41% | | 28% | |

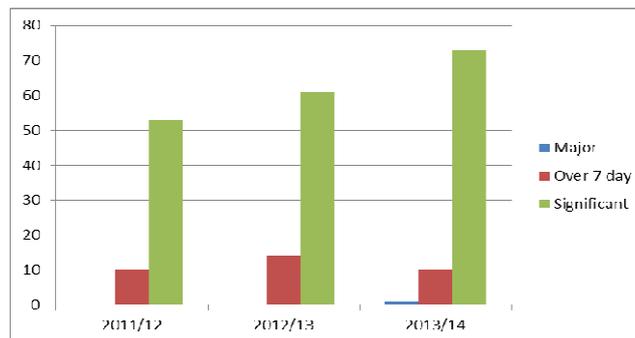
- There has been an increase in the number of registered users particularly in the Communities Directorate with 52%; and
- However, there has as a decrease in the numbers using the system and update reports on individual use have been sent to Directorates

4. REACTIVE ['Lagging'] INDICATORS

4.1 KPI 4. Number of Significant and RIDDOR Reportable Accidents

4.1.1 The number of accidents that took place this year compared with the last two years are:

| Directorate | Specified (Major) | > 7-Day | Significant |
|------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|-------------|
| Policy & Resources | 0 | 2 | 3 |
| Children and Enterprise | 0 | 2 | 12 |
| Communities | 1 | 6 | 58 |
| TOTAL YTD 2013 / 2014 | 1 | 10 | 73 |
| TOTAL YTD 2012 / 2013 | 0 | 14 (> 3day) | 61 |
| TOTAL YTD 2011 / 2012 | 0 | 10 (> 3day) | 53 |

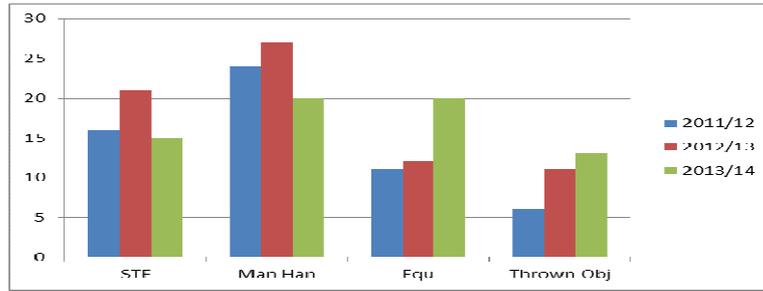


- This highlights an increase in incidents reported and at the same time a reduction of accidents leading to reportable injuries

4.1.2 Accident Categories

- A further breakdown of the categories of incidents are as follows,

| Main Categories | Accident | | |
|---------------------------|----------|-------|-------|
| | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 |
| 1. Slips, trips and falls | 16 | 21 | 16 |
| 2. Manual handling | 24 | 27 | 19 |
| 3. Use of equipment | 11 | 12 | 21 |
| 4. Thrown object | 6 | 11 | 13 |

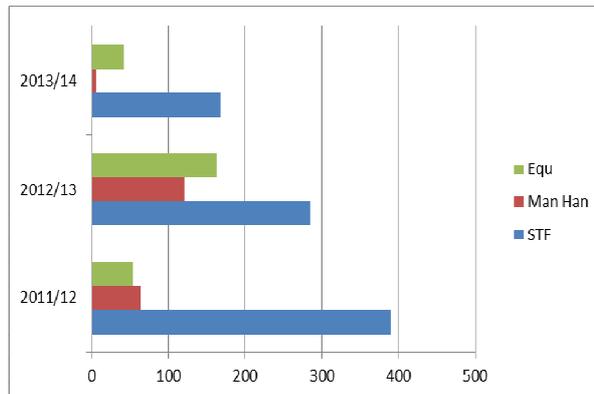


- This highlights a significant reduction in slips, trips & falls and manual handling incidents, however; an increase in equipment and thrown objects incidents;

Main Categories

Days Lost

| | 11/12 | 12/13 | 13/14 |
|---------------------------|-------|-------|------------|
| 1. Slips, trips and falls | 390 | 285 | 168 (-187) |
| 2. Manual handling | 64 | 121 | 6 (-115) |
| 3. Use of equipment | 54 | 163 | 42(-136) |



- The total days lost are 373, compared with 735 last year;
- Two accidents account for a total of 201 days lost, i.e. fall from heights resulted in 130 days and a slip trip fall 71 days;
- It does not take account of incidents involving teachers with two violent incidents leading to 81 days lost and a slip trip and fall leading to 17 days lost. There was a total of 77 days lost in 2012/13; and
- The total number of individual incidents leading to days lost is 40, including violent incidents, which equates to 8 incidents to every 1,000 employees and is the same as last year.

4.1.3 Accident Trends

4.1.3.1 Policy & Resources (see 5.2)

- There are no trends.

4.1.3.2 Children & Enterprise (see 5.3)

- One incident involved a fall from a ladder resulting in significant injuries (see 2.1 - action 3g).
- There have been several incidents involving the use of equipment that are office or property related. In order to address these areas Property Services continue to carry out annual Condition Audits of properties and individual services carry out annual

Environmental and Fire Risk Assessments addressing housekeeping risks (see 2.1 - action 3h).

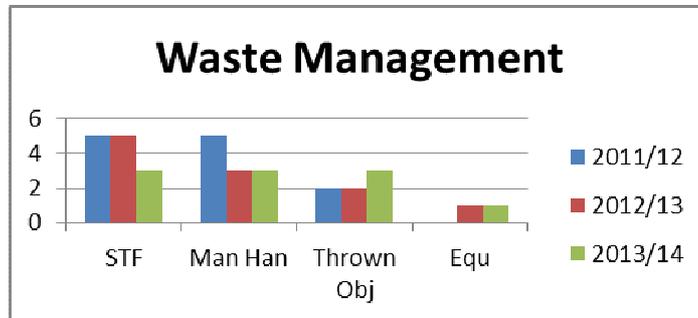
4.1.3.3 Communities (see 5.4)

- Accidents within the Communities Directorate reflect the higher risks involving front line operational services:

4.1.3.4 Independent Living (Reablement)

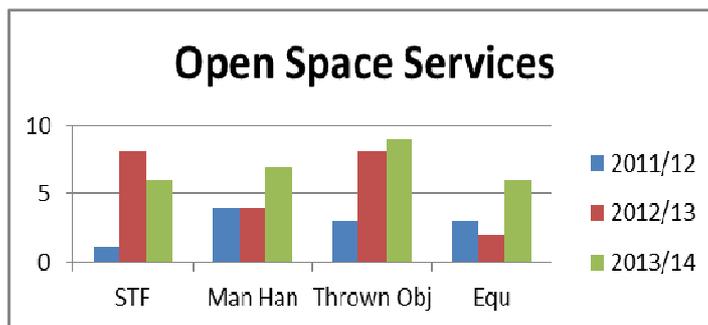
- 3 manual handling of service users accidents occurred within the team - compared with 7 last year and 10 the previous year.
- A slip, trip accident involving a member of staff in a service user home has led to significant injuries and the service is reviewing and updating the Environmental risk assessment (see 2.1 - action 3c).
- .

4.1.3.5 Waste & Environmental Improvement Services



- Over the past two years there has been a decrease in the number of accidents, particularly around slips and trips and manual handling.

4.1.3.6 Open Space Services



- There has been a decrease in the number of incidents involving slips and trips but an increase in the number involving thrown objects, manual handling and equipment, with 6 involving the use of personal protective equipment (PPE) (see 2.1 - action 3a); and
- The PPE was found to be fit for purpose. For some operations safety glasses are now also worn. During a number of on-site inspections it was discovered that staff were not wearing the visors correctly. A number of informal verbal warnings were issued and all staff were reminded that they must wear the appropriate PPE.

4.1.3.7 School Catering

- There has been an increase in the number manual handling accidents moving canteen furniture (see 2.1 - action 3b); and
- The service has developed an Environmental Risk Assessment to be completed each school term and delivered health and safety training for kitchen supervisors.

4.1.3.8 Schools (see 5.5)

Teachers

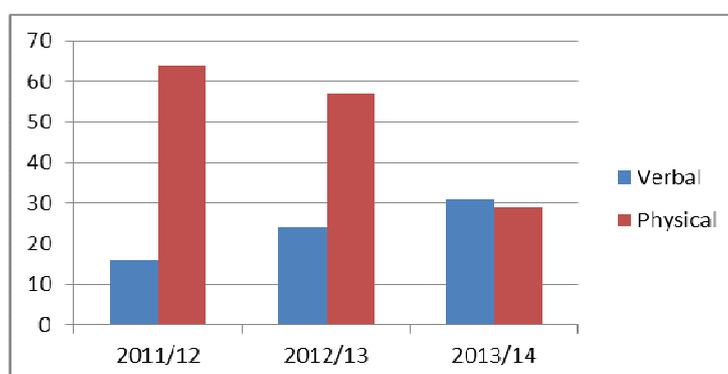
- There have been several incidents around use of equipment (see 2.1 - action 3e); and
- An accident occurred when a teaching assistant was standing on a table whilst putting up displays. The table collapsed and she fell onto the floor. Although in this instance she received minor injuries, it is important that schools provide the correct equipment because it often leads to major injuries. Schools bulletin sent.

Pupils

- All 8 major/specific injuries took place at Primary schools and involved either playground incidents or fingers trapped in doors; and
- There were 8 major sporting injuries at Secondary schools last year and none this year

4.2 KPI 5. Number of Violent Incidents

| Directorate | Verbal | Physical |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------|
| Policy and Resources | 20 | 1 |
| Children and Enterprise | 3 | 9 |
| Communities | 8 | 19 |
| TOTAL 1/4/13 to 31/3/14 | 31 | 29 |
| TOTAL 1/4/12 to 31/3/13 | 24 | 57 |
| TOTAL 1/4/11 to 31/3/12 | 16 | 64 |



4.2.1 Further Information:

4.2.1.1 Communities

- There has been a significant reduction in the number of physical incidents with 48 last year;
- This can be attributed to a reduction of incidents within Supported Housing Network with 42 last year and 12 this year; and
- One verbal incident within Open Space Services was racially motivated and another involved threats to kill at a Library. On both occasions they were reported to the Police.

4.2.1.2 Children & Enterprise

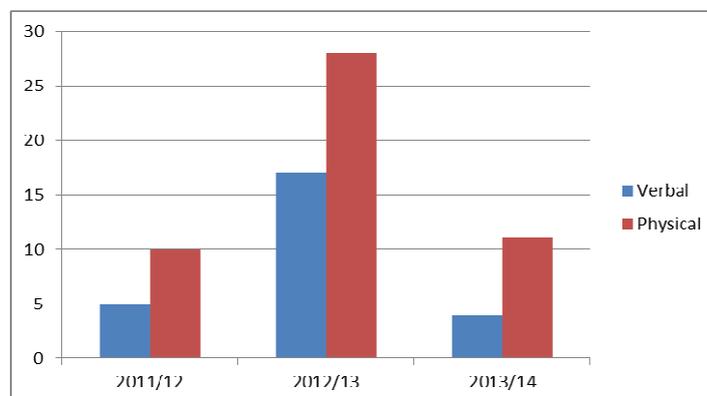
- 3 of the physical incidents involve Residential Care staff with 7 last year.

4.2.1.3 Policy & Resources

- There has been a significant increase in reported verbal incidents with 4 in 2012/13 and 5 in 2011/12;
- The majority involved issues raised by customers around welfare reforms at One Stop Shops;
- The physical incident involved a female member of staff from Public Health who was inappropriately touched by a male outside Runcorn Town Hall. Police were notified; and
- One incident at a One Stop Shop involved a claimant who produced a knife and simulated cutting his own throat. The claimant was arrested and underwent an Informal Resolution process, with the Chief Executive representing the Authority.

4.2.1.4 Schools

| Schools | Verbal | Physical |
|--------------------------------|--------|----------|
| TOTAL 1/4/13 to 31/3/14 | 4 | 11 |
| TOTAL 1/4/12 to 31/3/13 | 17 | 28 |
| TOTAL 1/4/11 to 31/3/12 | 5 | 10 |



- These has been a significant decrease in the number of incidents reported;
- 5 physical incidents involve pupils on staff at the Pupil Referral Unit and the others were at Primary schools; and
 - 2 verbal incidents involved families threatening Head teachers.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10th June 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Sustainable Community Strategy Quarter 4 year-end Progress Report 2013-14

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide information to the Corporate Policy & Performance Board on the progress in achieving targets contained within the 2011 – 2016 Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDED THAT:

- I. The report is noted
- II. The Board considers whether it requires any further information concerning actions taken to achieve the performance targets contained within Halton's 2011-16 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy, a central document for the Council and its partners, provides an evidenced-based framework through which actions and shared performance targets can be developed and communicated.

3.2 The previous Sustainable Community Strategy included targets which were also part of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). In October 2010 the coalition government announced the ending of government performance management of local authorities through LAAs. Nevertheless, the Council and its Partners need to maintain some form of effective performance management framework to:-

- Measure progress towards our own objectives for the improvement of the quality of life in Halton.
- Meet the government's expectation that we will publish performance information.

3.3 Thus, following extensive research and analysis and consultation with all stakeholder groups including Elected Members, partners and the local community and representative groups, a new SCS (2011 – 2016) was approved by the Council on 20th April 2011.

- 3.4 The new Sustainable Community Strategy, and its associated “living” 5 year delivery plan (2011-16), identifies five community priorities that will form the basis of collective partnership intervention and action over the coming five years. The strategy is informed by and brings together national and local priorities and is aligned to other local delivery plans such as that of the Halton Children’s Trust. By being a “living” document it will provide sufficient flexibility to evolve as continuing changes within the public sector continue to emerge, for example the restructuring of the NHS and Public Health delivery, and the delivery of the ‘localism’ agenda.
- 3.5 As such, articulating the partnership’s ambition in terms of community outcomes and meaningful measures and targets to set the anticipated rate of change and track performance over time, will further support effective decision making and resource allocation.
- 3.6 Attached as Appendix 1 is a report on progress for the period to year-end 31st March 2014, which includes a summary of all indicators for each of the five shared strategic priorities of the Halton Strategic Partnership i.e.:
- A Healthy Halton
 - Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton
 - A Safer Halton
 - Children and Young People in Halton
 - Environment and Regeneration
- 3.7 The full reports for each of the strategic priorities are reported to the respective Policy and Performance Boards. Additionally the Halton Strategic Partnership Board will receive a report for all measures.

4.0 CONCLUSION

- 4.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton, and the performance measures and targets contained within it will remain central to the delivery of community outcomes. It is therefore important that we monitor progress and that Members are satisfied that adequate plans are in place to ensure that the Council and its partners achieve the improvement targets that have been agreed.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton is central to our policy framework. It provides the primary vehicle through which the Council and its partners develop and communicate collaborative actions that will positively impact upon the communities of Halton.

6.0 ATTACHED DOCUMENTS

6.1 The publication by Local Authorities of performance information is central to the coalition government's transparency agenda.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS' PRIORITIES

7.1 This report provides information in relation to the Council's shared strategic priorities.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The key risk is a failure to improve the quality of life for Halton's residents in accordance with the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This risk can be mitigated through the regular review and reporting of progress and the development of appropriate interventions where under-performance may occur.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 One of the guiding principles of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to reduce inequalities in Halton.

10.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPAERS UNDERSECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNEMNT ACT 1972

| | |
|---------------------|---|
| Document | Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 – 26 |
| Place of Inspection | 6 th Floor, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes |
| Contact Officer | Mike Foy (Performance & Improvement Officer) |



The Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton

2011 – 2016

**Quarter 4 Progress Summary to
Year-End 31st March 2014**



| | |
|--|--|
| Document Contact (Halton Borough Council) | Mike Foy Principal Performance & Improvement Officer Municipal Buildings, Kingsway Widnes, Cheshire WA8 7QF mike.foy@halton.gov.uk |
|--|--|

This report provides a summary of progress in relation to the achievement of targets within Halton’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 - 2016.

The following symbols have been used to illustrate current performance as against the 2012 – 13 targets and as against performance for the same period last year.

| | | | |
|---|--|---|--|
|  | Target is likely to be achieved or exceeded. |  | Current performance is better than this time last year |
|  | The achievement of the target is uncertain at this stage |  | Current performance is the same as this time last year |
|  | Target is highly unlikely to be / will not be achieved. |  | Current performance is worse than this time last year |

| Ref | Descriptor | 2013 / 14 Target | Direction of travel |
|-------|---|---|---|
| HH1* | a) Alcohol related hospital admissions (NI 39) (Rate 100,000 pop.) |  |  |
| | b) Alcohol related hospital admissions – AAF =1 (Rate) |  |  |
| HH 2 | Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks (NI 53) |  |  |
| HH 3 | a) Obesity in Primary school age children in Reception (NI 55) |  |  |
| | b) Obesity in Primary school age children in Year 6 (NI 56) |  |  |
| HH 4 | Reduction in under 18 Conception (new local measure definition for NI 112) |  |  |
| HH 5 | a) All age, all-cause mortality rate per 100,000 Males (NI 120a) |  |  |
| | b) All age, all-cause mortality rate per 100,000 Females (NI 120b) |  |  |
| HH 6 | Mortality rate from all circulatory diseases at ages under 75 (NI 121) |  |  |
| HH 7 | Mortality from all cancers at ages under 75 (NI 122) |  |  |
| HH 8 | 16+ Smoking quit rate per 100,000 (NI 123) |  |  |
| HH 9 | Mental Health - No. of people in counselling/ day services or on waiting lists. (NEW 2011) | Not Yet Available | Not Yet Available |
| HH 10 | Proportion of older people supported to live at home through provision of a social care package (NEW 2011): |  |  |
| HH 11 | a) Increase the % of successful completions (drugs) as a proportion of all in treatment (over 18) |  |  |
| | b) Increase the % of successful completions (Alcohol) as a proportion of all in treatment (over 18) |  |  |

NB - Measures HHI and HH12 are also reported within the Safer Halton priority area as SH 10 and SH7 respectively.

Employment, Learning & Skills

| Ref | Descriptor | 2013 / 14 Target | Direction of Travel |
|-------|---|---|---|
| ELS 1 | Increase the number of active enterprises within the Borough (NEW 2011) |  |  |
| ELS 2 | Increase the proportion of business diversity (NEW 2011) |  |  |
| ELS 3 | Increase the number of people classed as self-employed (NEW 2011) |  |  |
| ELS 4 | Reduce the proportion of people with no qualifications |  |  |
| ELS 5 | Increase the percentage of people achieving NVQ Level 4 and above (Revised NI 165) |  |  |
| ELS 6 | Increase the percentage of adults using a library (NI 9) | N/A | N/A |
| ELS 7 | Reduce the percentage of people registered unemployed and seeking employment (JSA claimants) (NI 152) |  |  |
| ELS 8 | Reduce the percentage of the working age population claiming out of work benefits (Revised measure) |  |  |
| ELS 9 | Increase the gross weekly earnings by residents (NI166) |  |  |

| Ref | Descriptor | 2013 / 14 Target | Direction of travel |
|-------|--|---|---|
| SH 1 | Reduce Actual Number of ASB incidents recorded by Cheshire Police broken down into youth and adult incidents. |  |  |
| SH 2 | Reduce the number of Deliberate Fire incidents (NI33) |  |  |
| SH 3 | Reduced perception by Residents of antisocial behaviour (NI 17) |  |  |
| SH 4 | Safeguarding Children: Reduce the Number of Young People who repeatedly run away in Halton (New Measure) |  |  |
| SH 5 | Vulnerable Adults – Safeguarding: Increase the percentage of VAA Assessments completed within 28 days. |  |  |
| SH 6 | Reduce repeat incidents of domestic abuse within the MARAC Cohort (NI32) |  |  |
| SH 7 | a) Increase the percentage of successful completions (Drugs) as a proportion of all in treatment (over 18) |  |  |
| | b) Increase the percentage of successful completions (Alcohol) as a proportion of all in treatment (over 18) |  |  |
| SH 8 | a) Reduce the number of individuals re-presenting within 6 months of discharge (Drugs) [New Measure] |  |  |
| | b) Reduce the number of individuals re-presenting within 6 months of discharge (Alcohol) [New Measure] |  |  |
| SH 9 | Reduce the rate of young people (0-18) admitted to hospital due to substance misuse (will include alcohol) |  |  |
| SH 10 | Reduce Alcohol related hospital admissions (NI 39) |  |  |
| SH 11 | Reduce the re-offending rates of repeat offenders (RO's in the Navigate IOM scheme) (Formerly NI 30) |  |  |
| SH 12 | Reduce the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System (formerly NI111). |  |  |
| SH 13 | Use of Custody (New Measure) |  |  |
| SH 14 | Reduce the proportion of individuals within the Navigate cohort who's offending is substance misuse related. (Placeholder New Measure) |  |  |
| SH 15 | Reduce the re-offending rate of young offenders (Formerly NI 19) |  |  |
| SH 16 | Reduce serious acquisitive crime (Formally NI16) |  |  |
| SH 17 | Reduce Assault with Injury crime rate (Formerly NI 20) New Revised Measure |  |  |

Children and Young People in Halton

| Ref | Descriptor | 2013 / 14 Target | Direction of travel |
|---------------|--|---|---|
| CYP 1 | Falling Levels of infant mortality |  |  |
| CYP 2 | Reduce the percentage of children who are obese in Year 6 |  |  |
| CYP 3 | Increase the number of children breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks |  |  |
| CYP 4 | Reduce the rate of CYP admitted to hospital for substance misuse |  |  |
| CYP 5 | Reduce under 18 conception rate (Rolling average) |  |  |
| CYP 6 | Monitor number of children on a child protection plan for second or subsequent time. |  | N/A |
| CYP 7 | Reduce the Number of Young People who repeatedly run away in Halton |  | N/A |
| CYP 8 | Increase the percentage achieving 'good level of development average' total points for cohort. | N/A | N/A |
| CYP 9 | Reduce the attainment gap between FSM and Halton average at Key Stage 4 | N/A | N/A |
| CYP 10 | Increase the percentage achieving 5+ A*-C including English & Maths |  |  |
| CYP 11 | Increase the percentage achieving Level 3 at 19 |  |  |
| CYP 12 | Reduce the percentage of young people not in education, employment or training |  |  |
| CYP 13 | Increase the percentage of children in care achieving their expected outcomes at KS2 & KS4 | N/A | N/A |

Environment and Regeneration

| Ref | Descriptor | 13 / 14 Progress | Direction of travel |
|-------|---|---|---|
| ER 1 | a) Number of Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area NI 177 |  |  |
| | b) Number of passengers on community based accessible transport PPT LI 28 |  |  |
| ER 2 | a) Percentage of buses starting route on time |  |  |
| | c) Percentage of buses on time at intermediate timing points |  |  |
| ER 3 | Average Number of days to repair street lighting faults: | | |
| | a) Non Distribution Network Operators (HBC) |  |  |
| | b) Distribution Network operators |  |  |
| ER 4 | Percentage of road carriageway where maintenance should be considered: | | |
| | a) Principal Carriageways |  |  |
| | b) Non-Principal Carriageways |  |  |
| | c) Unclassified Carriageways |  |  |
| ER 5 | Satisfaction with the standard of maintenance of trees, flowers and flower beds. (No longer reported) | N/A | N/A |
| ER 6 | Residual household waste per household (Kgs). |  |  |
| ER 7 | % of household waste recycled / composted. |  |  |
| ER 8 | Percentage of municipal waste land filled. |  |  |
| ER 9 | Satisfaction with the standard of cleanliness and maintenance of parks and green spaces. (No longer reported) | N/A | N/A |
| ER 10 | Number of Green Flag Awards achieved for Halton. |  |  |
| ER 11 | Improved local biodiversity –active management of local sites. |  |  |
| ER 12 | To regenerate 5 hectares of urban sites per annum for the next five years. |  |  |
| ER 13 | To make sure there is a 5 year rolling supply of housing land available for 2000 homes over 5 years. |  |  |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Corporate Policy and Performance Board |
| DATE: | 10 th June 2014 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Strategic Director Policy & Resources |
| SUBJECT: | Performance Management Reports for Quarter 4 of 2013/14 |
| PORTFOLIO: | Resources |
| WARDS: | Boroughwide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider, and raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the fourth quarter period to 31st March 2014.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2013-16 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board as detailed below:
 - Finance
 - Human Resources & Organisational Development
 - ICT and Administrative Support
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Policy & Performance
 - Property Services
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency. The report details progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets and provides information relating to key developments and emerging issues that have arisen during the period.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the fourth quarter performance management report;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Board.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Departmental objectives provide a clear statement on what services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. Such information is central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Departmental service objectives and performance measures, both local and national are linked to the delivery of the Council's priorities. The introduction of a Thematic Priority Based Report and the identification of business critical objectives/ milestones and performance indicators will further support organisational improvement.
- 6.2 Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross - cutting activities being reported, means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the Council priorities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Not applicable.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Not applicable

Corporate Policy and Performance Board– Priority Based Monitoring Report

Reporting Period: **Quarter 4 – Period 01st January to 31st March 2014**

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress against key service objectives/milestones and performance targets, during the fourth quarter of 2013/14 for service areas within the remit of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board.
- 1.2 Key priorities for development or improvement in 2013-16 were agreed by Members and included in Directorate Plans, for the various functional areas reporting to the Board in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency i.e.:
- Financial Services
 - Human Resources & Organisational Development
 - ICT Infrastructure
 - Legal and Democracy
 - Policy & Performance
 - Catering, Stadium and Registration Services
 - Property Services
- 1.3 The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Section 8 of this report.

2.0 Key Developments

- 2.1 There have been a number of developments within the Directorate during the period which include:-

Finance

- Government announced the 2014/15 final Local Government Finance Settlement on 5th February 2014. There was only a very minor change to the Council's funding from that announced as part of the provisional grant settlement.
- The 2014/15 budget of £108.243m was approved by Council on 5th March 2014. The net budget will be part-funded from an increase of 1.9% to Council Tax which will result in a 2014/15 Council Tax requirement of £37.101m.
- The Medium Term Financial Forecast has been updated for 2015/16 and 2016/17. The funding gap for 2015/16 as included in the budget report is £22m with a further gap of £13m forecast for 2016/17.

- At the end of March 2014 the Council has spent its full allocation of the Discretionary Payment Housing Fund with the 'under occupancy' reforms (bedroom tax) placing the largest demand on available financial resources.
- The effects of the implementation of the reform of Council Tax and the Council Tax Reduction Scheme have led to a significant increase in recovery activity throughout the year, particularly in respect of Attachment to Benefits. Council Tax collection at the end of March 2014 was 95.82% which is 1.29% down compared with the same point last year.
- Children's Social Care: The Contact Centre went live with the loading of new Contacts and Referrals for Children's Social Care in January 2014 and early signs are that all is going well as the Contact Centre now play an essential part in the new Children's Social Care front door model.
- The Council has recently completed a procurement exercise for its Employers' Liability (EL) and Public Liability (PL) insurance covers and the new cover will take effect from 1 April 2014. To avoid a significant increase in premium, the Council has increased its level of self-insurance following a risk assessment and will now incur the first £250k of each successful claim.
- A Service Level Agreement has been agreed with the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board (MGCB) under which the Council will provide a purchase ordering and invoice processing service to MGCB, providing a new income stream for the Council.
- Significant work has also been undertaken further developing the Council's purchase to pay processes, which have resulted in efficiency and performance improvement. This has led to almost 92% of the 82, 000 invoices processed in the year being paid within 30 days of receipt and 95% of purchase orders being sent directly to suppliers being issued electronically. Additionally 66 suppliers have signed-up to the Early Payment Discount Scheme resulting in further budget savings.

Human Resources and Organisational Learning and Development

- Following a period of consultation, the new H.R. and L&D structure was implemented on 1st March. To reflect the new ways of working, a tendering exercise has been completed for the provision of learning and development activity as part of the corporate training calendar.
- Following a successful pilot of E-Payslips, work has commenced to roll out this facility across all staff. It is envisaged that this will produce some monetary savings as well as saving staff time and provide a more efficient and flexible service for employees.

ICT and Administration Support Services

- Following a successful trial Cloud based desktop facilities will now be rolled out to all Members and the facilities within the Members room will now be upgraded.
- The new Council website, which has a simplified structure and design allowing easier access to services for users, is now live and receiving positive feedback with further improvements and new services being added over the coming months.
- The upgrading of encryption facilities is in process and the rollout of the new laptop product set is underway. Additionally the main phase of the printing and MFD upgrade has now been completed.
- The take up of ICT services through a commercial arrangement with schools continues to be positive with a further 2 schools being added during quarter 4.
- The Electronic social care record (ESCR) system is now live and in use within the social care teams together with the new reporting solutions designed to complement the CareFirst Systems upgrade.
- The upgrade of the councils Anti-Virus and e-Mail filtering systems has completed successfully and over the coming months further facilities will be configured and deployed ensuring the required levels of security compliance are met and exceeded.
- The Records management facility at Picow Farm is now ready for use and the final section racking is being installed over the coming weeks. Work has now started at the centre to co-ordinate and manage the considerable mountain of paper files and records the authority owns.
- A new in-house developed records management solution is currently in the design phase and will be linked to the SharePoint systems currently in place to allow for efficient access to all digital records. This will be linked to the use of Business Analysts who will be tasked with defining and mapping the process and efficiencies required to improve the records management process and procedures throughout the authority.
- Following a detailed legal mediation process the council has now agreed terms with the respective supplier of the contact centre telephony system and the upgrade of the old analogue system to integrate with the council wide Lync solution will be completed by the end of June

Legal and Democratic Services

- Financial close of the Mersey Gateway project was achieved at the end of the Quarter. Contracts have been signed and work will commence early in Quarter 1. Additionally The Combined Authority was set up with all supporting

documents put in place to enable the first meeting to be held at the start of Quarter 1.

- Work has continued within Communications and Marketing to further establish and reinforce positive working which has resulted in some good media coverage with notable success with Radio Merseyside with live studio interviews around a range of topics including World War One events, Runcorn Town Team initiatives and New Town anniversary plans. In addition there have been a number of events covered by radio presenters on-site.
- A survey of readers of InTouch magazine (our staff newsletter) showed 85% of respondents thought the magazine was good or very good. In addition, 85% were satisfied or very satisfied (32%) with our internal communications.
- Marketing support continues for the Connecting Cheshire project with drop-in road shows taking place across the borough, where Halton residents could find out more about the arrival of fibre broadband, direct from BT Openreach experts.

Policy, Planning, and Transportation.

- Work has taken place around redeveloping the Corporate Plan in light of both the current financial situation and the recommendations of the recent Peer Challenge.
- Work to meet our procurement commitments under the Public Services (Social Value) Act) continues. The Council, the Clinical Commissioning Group and Voluntary & Community Sector and Social Value UK are producing a borough-wide Social Value Charter with the aim to establish Halton as an area at the forefront of promoting the Social Value agenda. An event taking place in May has been planned, aimed at finalising the Social Value Definition and Charter. A Draft Social Value policy has been developed alongside this and will be presented to Executive Board in June following feedback from the May event.
- The Employee Recognition & Award Scheme Ceremony for 2013/14 has taken place, formally recognising the winners of the six categories who were

| | |
|-------------------------------|--------------------|
| Team of the Year: | The Contact Centre |
| Rising Star: | Nicky Noon |
| Leadership & Motivation: | Shelagh Thornhill |
| Achieving Value for Money: | Suzanne Houghton |
| Unsung Hero: | Julie Bannon |
| Outstanding Customer Service: | Paula Parle |

- Detailed work has taken place with regards to formulating and implementing the Council's Apprenticeship Strategy, as well as taking forward a series of Internal Audit recommendations with regards to the Volunteer Scheme.

Catering, Stadium and Registration Services

➤ Stadium

Widnes Vikings league season started in February, they have made their best ever start to a Super League campaign winning all their games at home so far. The executive Suite Level and Karalius Suite hospitality has been full for all the games.

Liverpool Ladies have taken up residency in the office accommodation on the first floor and have started training here.

The pitch is used on a regular basis and most evening bookings are for community use, in excess of £100K has been generated this year in pitch bookings.

A half term rugby training camp for children has been organised and run by Widnes Vikings.

The only disappointment with the SL campaign to date is the level of spectators, given the Vikings have had such a goodstart the spectator levels has not grown since last year.

The Crucial Crew event has been held at the Stadium for the 10th year, this event sees over 1,500 school children attend the Stadium for a multi-agency training exercise outlining a range of dangers to children.

Merseyside Police have used the Stadium for 'Drug' exercise with their dogs
Cheshire Police have also held a number of training events in various areas of the Stadium.

The South West Concourse bar has been modernised, enabling it to be utilised as part of the fitness offer via Stadium Fitness.

As an ongoing refurbishment programme the Bridge Suite has been decorated and a new carpet fitted.

School Meals

Universal Free School Meals for Infants

The school meals team are continuing to review the service in preparation for Sept 2014 when all infant children will be served a free school meal.

Capital funding has been made available to the Community and Voluntary controlled schools and a separate amount to the Diocese schools.

All schools requiring works to facilitate the provision of the meals have been undertaken, unfortunately the costs of the works involved far exceeds the allocation and needs to be rationalised schools requiring works are :-

| | |
|----------------|-------------------|
| Ditton Primary | Farnwoth ce |
| Lunts Heath | Spinney Ave |
| Daresbury | Hillview |
| Gorsewood | Moore |
| Moorfield | Woodside |
| OLPS | Our Ladys primary |
| ST Basils | St Bedes |
| St Bertelines | St Clements |
| St Marys CE | |

This funding needs to be prioritised to ensure that each school can prepare and serve all the infants with a meal within the lunchtime period

Training For Universal Free School Meals for Infants

Training has begun in preparation for the possible increase of around 2000 meals per day.

Speed of service is critical for the successful delivery of the lunch time service along with closely working with schools to ensure that the children enjoy the food served

National School Meals Week Implementation

Due to the successful promotion of National school meals week in November 2013

A week of favourite school dinners were served again in March in many schools again with great success and enjoyment Halton Catering team felt it is very beneficial to raise the awareness to children as to how tasty school meals can be.

All schools were invited to serve their own schools favourite meals for a complete week.

Property Services

- The Building Schools for the Future (BSF) projects at both Wade Deacon and The Grange are getting towards the end of defects period, which will be reached in April 2014. Both have some outstanding issues which we are currently working towards resolving.
- The demolition of the former Fairfield High School buildings has now been completed, with the site being graded and levelled off. Approval to demolish

the former Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior school buildings has been obtained as such these works are now progressing on site.

- The improvement works to Lowerhouse Lane Depot following a Health & Safety Executive visit are progressing well, completion being due in May 2014.
- Design works are continuing with the proposed new travellers site at Warrington Road, Runcorn, these have been delayed slightly due to the service restrictions that are being imposed on the proposals. The procurement process is anticipated to commence in due course, with the target completion being in Autumn 2014
- Works have now commenced on site with regards the new sports pavilion building at Widnes Recreation ground, completion being due in November 2014.
- The biomass boiler installation at Brookvale Recreation centre is on site and progressing well, completion being due in June 2014.
- The pre-start meeting for the new build Runcorn Hill Park Pavilion has taken place, works will commence on site Monday April 7th 2014, completion being due in late September 2014.
- The contract has now been let in respect of the replacement of both cremators at Widnes Crematorium. There is a significant amount of off-site manufacturing to be undertaken prior to a start on site which is planned for early June, completion being due prior to the year end.
- Approval has now been obtained for both the Educational capital programme and the Corporate maintenance programme for 2014/15; as such initial works have now commenced with regards the delivery of both these programmes of work.

3.0 Emerging Issues

3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of the Directorate including:-

Financial Management

- I. The expansion of the Universal Credit arrangements will take effect in Halton from November 2014 and the DWP will be meeting with individual authorities in April and May to discuss the detailed requirements of the role Councils will be expected to perform. Early indications are that single claimants will be the first to be affected by these new UC arrangements.
- II. Changes made to the level of unoccupied property discounts and the replacement of Council Tax Benefit with the Council Tax Reduction Scheme from April 2013 have significantly increased the amount to be collected, which is impacting upon collection rates.
- III. The Government has introduced some new rate reliefs, which are available from 2014/15. Awards of up to £1,000 can be made to the majority of retail businesses, up to a ratable value of £50,000, subject to them satisfying the eligibility criteria
- IV. There is also a new reoccupation discount of 50%, available for 18 months, for new occupants of retail premises, which have previously been empty for a year or more. The 'doubling' of small business rate relief will also continue for 2014/15.
- V. Whilst Personal Independence Payment appeal numbers have stabilised, there are concerns that the new Mandatory Reconsideration process has made it more difficult for clients to appeal and placed an obstacle in the way of decision making.
- VI. Work has begun on closing the accounts for 2013/14 and the process is now in place to complete the draft Statement of Accounts prior to it being passed to the Council's external auditor (Grant Thornton) by 30th June 2014.
- VII. Support continues to be provided on the financial aspects of the Mersey Gateway project, partnership arrangements on the pooled budget with Halton CCG and the joint venture arrangements with the Science & Technology Facilities Council and Langtree for the development at Sci-Tech Daresbury.
- VIII. It is proposed that the 2014/15 National Fraud Initiative programme will include two additional mandatory requirements. These are that Council tax to electoral register data sets will be requested from local authorities every year, currently this data is requested every 2 years; and Personal budget (direct payments) data will be introduced.

Human Resources and Organisational Development

- I. Preparations are taking place around the potential TUPE implications of the Single Fraud Investigation Service to the DWP.
- II. Additionally, and following changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme 2014, work has begun to amend associated policies, procedures and contracts in response to changes in the new pension scheme
- III. Managers have been in discussion with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and the Manchester Port Health Authority to provide Human Resource and Learning and Development services through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) arrangement generating additional income for the Council.

ICT and Administration Support Services

- I. The Council is scheduled to migrate over to Public Sector Network and away from the Government Secure Extranet (GCSx) on the 15th May. This migration ensures the councils compliance with the stringent Cabinet Office, DWP and Action 4 Employment security requirements.
- II. Central Government have made their position very clear in terms of Local Authorities allowing non – Council managed equipment to access Council information (primarily e-Mail) – the “Central Electronics Security Group” do not want to allow any personal equipment to access government (Council) information. There is also a potential Data Protection policy risk if Personal Information is extracted from a Council system and stored on a non-Council computer.
- III. The main concern is that by using personal devices, any associated Council is not managing the associated equipment, and therefore there is a significant risk of information systems being compromised – this could be through data loss, gaining access to passwords, virus. There are, however, some conflicting views within Government, because some areas of Government see the use of personal equipment being a potential saving.
- IV. At this stage in the process, the DWP do not consider that the Council using Outlook Web Access from non-Council Equipment is an acceptable security risk. A submission has been made that will be in common with most other Local Authorities, but may still fail to meet the overall expectations of the DWP. Should this be the case, it may be necessary to switch off Outlook Web Access to non-Council managed equipment. Failure to meet the DWP’s security requirements can put some key services at risk, mainly Halton People into Jobs, and the Councils Benefits service.
- V. If the submission is rejected the ICT team is working on a new solution that will meet this ever growing set of restrictions, and will make sure all essential users of key systems will have an acceptable working access solution in place.

Policy, Planning, and Transportation (Policy and Performance).

- I. With the formation of the Liverpool City Region Combined Authority, there is a need to produce a Joint Local Transport (LTP4) for the LCR as opposed to having one for Halton and one for Merseyside, as currently happens. The potential resource implications involved in producing this document are difficult to determine at this stage but it will have to be treated as a priority over the next 10 to 11 months so that an agreed and approved LTP can be ready for the period beginning 2015/16.

Property Services

- I. The restructure of the Operational Division has now been completed. The changes mainly came into effect on 1st October 2013, but have only been completed recently. This will deliver a £90,000 saving for 2014/15.
- II. We have continued to look at income generation from our corporate building stock linked to the move to agile working which is having the effect of freeing up space. This is an area that we will be increasingly focussing on in the future as there is an opportunity to generate a significant amount of income. The Department of Health have now moved into Rutland house which reflects a proactive approach to sharing our accommodation, another example of which is the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who have previously moved into Runcorn Town Hall. We are also currently in discussions with other public sector partners with a view to them taking some space in Rutland House.
- III. Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC)
It has now been confirmed that the proposed changes to the CRC will come into effect from April 1st 2014. These changes will mean that Halton will no longer be captured by the scheme and will drop out of it from April 2014. Based on the cost of the scheme over recent years this will have the effect of saving the Council slightly in excess of £150,000 per annum.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. As such Directorate Risk Registers were updated in tandem with the development of the suite of 2014 – 15 Directorate Business Plans.

Progress concerning the implementation of all high-risk mitigation measures will be monitored in Quarter 2 (14-15).

5.0 Progress Against Equality Actions

Equality issues continue to form a routine element of the Council's business planning and operational decision making processes. Additionally the Council must have evidence to demonstrate compliance with the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) which came into force in April 2011.

The Council's latest annual progress report in relation to the achievement of its equality objectives was published on the Council website during quarter 4 and is available via

http://www3.halton.gov.uk/Pages/councildemocracy/pdfs/EandD/Equality_-_objectives_progress_report_-_April_2013.pdf.

6.0 Performance Overview

The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.

Financial Services

Key Objectives / milestones

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|-------|--|---|
| FS O1 | Report Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board November 2013 . |  |
| FS O3 | Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts for certification by Chief Financial Officer by 30th June 2013 . |  |
| | Publish the Abstract of Accounts by 30th September 2013 . |  |

Supporting Commentary

Medium Term Financial Strategy was reported and the Draft Abstract of Accounts certified as scheduled as was the publication of the Statement of Accounts for 2012/13.

Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|----------|--|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| FS LI 05 | Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected. | 97.11 | 96.00+ | 95.82% |  |  |

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|----------|--|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| FS LI 06 | The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received. | 97.13 | 96.00+ | 97.08% |  |  |
| FS LI 10 | Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit). | 11.78 | 18 | 15.18 |  |  |

Supporting Commentary

Following the changes referred to earlier in this report that have led to a considerable increase in the number and amounts of accounts the collection rate has remained positive and reflects the efforts made by staff to ensure action is taken promptly.

There has been a slight drop in the collection of business rates primarily as a result of some large new assessments and increases in Rateable Values and although processing times have increased slightly on the preceding year they still remain amongst the best in the region.

Human Resources & Organisational Learning and Development

Key Objectives / milestones

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|---------|---|---|
| HRLD O1 | To commence Real Time Tax information reporting to HMRC by June 2013 . |  |
| | To further enhance the i-Trent system capabilities. March 2014 |  |
| HRLD O2 | Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Corporate People's Plan. March 2014 Monitor & review implementation of revised Employee Development Review (EDR) process. December 2013 |  |

Supporting Commentary

The Council now complies with the requirements of HMRC and i-trent system capabilities continue to be exploited with the plan to roll out the use of e-payslips across the Council having commenced.

Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|------------|---|----------------|----------------|-----------|--|--|
| HRLD LI 01 | The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness. | 10.06 | 8.5 | 11.24 |  |  |
| ODHR LI 05 | % of training delegates attending as a proportion of places reserved. | 88 | 85 | 86 |  |  |
| ODHR LI 06 | The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: | | | | | |
| | a) women | 55.04 | 50 | 55.47 |  | |
| | b) From BME communities. | 2.91 | 1.0 | 2.80 |  |  |
| | c) With a disability | 0.65 | 5.0 | 0.68 |  | |
| ODHR LI 07 | No of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act as a % of the total workforce. | 1.36 | 7.50 | 1.49 |  |  |
| ODHR LI 08 | Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce. | 0.89 | 1.00 | 1.13 |  |  |

Supporting Commentary

Unfortunately the number of days lost to sickness has increased when compared to the preceding year and whilst acknowledging that it can be influenced by a broad range of factors work will continue to try to manage this aspect of performance.

The workforce profile remains broadly in line with the preceding year although the ambitious targets for staff with a disability and those declaring that they meet the DDA have not been achieved.

ICT & Administrative Support**Key Objectives / milestones**

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|--------|--|---|
| ICT O1 | SharePoint and Records Management enhancement. March 2014 |  |
| | Continued Social Care Systems Service Support Programme. March 2014 |  |
| | Schools Cloud Services developments. September 2013 |  |

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|--------|--|---|
| ICT 01 | Interactive Web Services and further SharePoint integration. March 2014 |  |
| | Development of commercial ICT opportunity within desktop. Hosting and Disaster Recovery provision. March 2014 |  |
| ICT 02 | Continued development of document management and distribution services. March 2014 |  |
| ICT 03 | Deliver operational Records Management Unit services. August 2013 |  |
| ICT 04 | Conduct and evaluate point of contact satisfaction survey for ICT & Support Services. March 2014 |  |

Supporting Commentary

All milestones for objective ICT 01 have been achieved and projects progressed as planned. The development of commercial ICT opportunities continues and the department is now delivering services for Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, Wiltshire Council, North West Employers and the Mersey Gateway Crossings Board.

The development of document and records management has progressed well with building works completed as planned and staff in place and the development of supporting software systems underway.

Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|-----------|--|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| ICT LI 01 | Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%). | 99 | 99 | 99.9 |  |  |
| ICT LI 02 | Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%). | 99 | 99 | 99 |  |  |
| ITC LI 04 | % Of all responsive repairs completed within 2 working days. | 92 | 80 | 94 |  |  |
| ITC L1 08 | Average working days from order to completion of a new PC | 9 | 10 | 8 |  |  |

Supporting Commentary

All key measures are showing very positive levels of performance with the availability of the Councils servers being almost at their ceiling.

Legal & Democracy**Key Objectives / milestones**

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|-------|--|---|
| LD O1 | Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation. January 2014 |  |
| LD O3 | To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting March 2014 |  |

Supporting Commentary

Due to resource constraints it has been reluctantly decided that renewal of Excel and ISO Accreditation would not be pursued and that assurance of service standards would be sought through other means e.g. internal audits and client questionnaires.

All Members were provided with the opportunity of having a MAP meeting during the course of the year.

Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|----------|--|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| LD LI 01 | No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total) | 46 (79%) | 56 (100%) | 54 |  |  |
| LD LI 03 | Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of full instructions (working days). | 7 | 10 | 10 |  |  |
| LD LI 04 | Average time taken to send out first draft business lease from receipt of complete instructions from Property Services (working days) | 15 | 20 | 20 |  |  |
| LD LI 05 | Average time taken to file application for Care proceedings at Court from receipt of all written evidence from client department (working days). | 1 | 3 | 1 |  |  |
| LD LI 11 | % who believe internal communications service has improved. | 71 | 87 | 85 |  |  |

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|----------|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| LD LI 15 | % satisfaction with Inside Halton. | 99 | 90 | |  |  |

Supporting Commentary

Whilst the time taken to issue prosecutions, send out business leases is taking slightly longer than the previous year performance is still within annual target and acceptable thresholds. Additionally satisfaction with Inside Halton remains very positive.

Although satisfaction has not reached its annual target level it has increased when compared to the preceding years and remains a positive achievement.

Policy & Performance

Key milestones

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|--------|--|---|
| PPT 04 | Review the Sustainable Community strategy and monitor performance b-annually March 2014 |  |

Supporting Commentary

The review of the SCS has concluded. This review updated key aspects of terminology, legislation and resolved other editorial amendments. A simplified interactive single page document has been completed and will be made available on the new Partnership website which is www.haltonpartnership.com

Catering and Stadium Services

Key Objectives / milestones

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|-------|---|---|
| CE O2 | Measure customer satisfaction with Stadium Community Services - January 2014. |  |
| | Promote off peak opportunities at the start of each quarter to charitable and community organisations to utilise Stadium facilities at a reduced price - March 2014. |  |
| CE O3 | School Lunches - Deliver a promotion and educational campaign - September 2013 and January 2014. |  |

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|-----|---|---|
| | Review and update the strategy and action plan to increase the uptake of free school meals - July 2013 . |  |
| | Develop effective joint working and agree funding, with the private/public sector to address childhood obesity - Sept 2013 . |  |

Supporting Commentary

The initiative to promote off peak opportunities at the Stadium is continuing to work well with both community groups and the Stadium benefitting.

All Primary schools have been provided with a Themed calendar with a selection of poster for 2013-2014 to promote National Days, Festivals, Sporting occasions etc. All reception children's parents have been given an information pack on the benefits of school meals.

Increasing the number of tasting opportunities for children and favourite school meals weeks have been arranged in many schools, which has increased uptake.

The school catering team are working with the Healthy School Team to deliver various cooking projects to help address childhood obesity and a trial has commenced at Simms Cross and Brookvale Primary schools for parents.

Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|----------|---|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| CE LI 01 | No. of meals served versus hourly input of labour (Previously SH1). | 9.85 | 10.00 | 10.51 |  |  |
| | % Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible (Previously SH LI 8) | | | | | |
| CE LI 08 | a) Primary Schools | 77.46% | 85% | 85.12% |  |  |
| CE LI 09 | b) Secondary Schools | 76.59% | 75% | 75.81% |  |  |
| | % Take up of school lunches (%) – (Previously NI52). | | | | | |
| CE LI 10 | a) Primary Schools | 51.71% | 55% | 52.12% |  |  |
| CE LI 11 | b) Secondary Schools | 53.64% | 55% | 55.22% |  |  |

Supporting Commentary

CE LI 01: To achieve over 10 meals per hour is a significant achievement.

CE LI 08 & 09: An excellent result.

CE LI 10: Although slightly below target this is still an excellent result

CE LI 11: Halton now has the fourth highest uptake of meals in the secondary sector.

Property Services

Key Objectives / milestones

| Ref | Milestones | Q4 Progress |
|--------|---|---|
| EEP O1 | Review accommodation in light of budget decisions by July 2013 . |  |
| | Identify further property to be considered for sales and implement asset disposals by March 2014 . |  |

Supporting Commentary

As previously reported, the Council has been consolidating its accommodation portfolio. In light of this, this has made space available to encourage external partners to share office accommodation in Runcorn.

A list of assets for disposal has been prepared and approved by Executive Board. It is intended that this list will be reviewed in March 2014, as part of this process ward members have been consulted in regard to assets in their respective areas.

Key Performance Indicators

| Ref | Measure | 12 / 13 Actual | 13 / 14 Target | Q4 Actual | Q4 Progress | Direction of travel |
|-----------|------------------------------------|----------------|----------------|-----------|---|---|
| DIS LI 01 | Occupancy of HBC industrial units. | 86% | 85% | 85% |  |  |
| DIS LI 02 | Occupancy of Widnes Market Hall. | 92% | 90% | 84% |  |  |

Supporting Commentary

Occupancy of our industrial estates remains high and a recent upturn in the market means that the target for 2013/14 has been met.

Three new traders have started at Widnes market this calendar year with a further four traders offered stalls. However, three traders have reduced their stalls.

7.0 Financial Summaries

The Council's 2013/14 year-end accounts are currently being finalised.

The year-end position for each Department will therefore be made available via the Intranet by 30th June 2014.

8.0 Explanation for use of symbols

Symbols are used in the following manner:

| Progress | <u>Objective</u> | <u>Performance Indicator</u> |
|-----------------|--|---|
| Green |  Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe. | <i>Indicates that the annual target <u>is on course to be achieved</u>.</i> |
| Amber |  Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> , whether the milestone/objective will be achieved within the appropriate timeframe. | <i>Indicates that it is <u>uncertain or too early to say at this stage</u> whether the annual target is on course to be achieved.</i> |
| Red |  Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain</u> that the objective will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe. | <i>Indicates that the target <u>will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</i> |

Direction of Travel Indicator

Where possible performance measures will also identify a direction of travel using the following convention

| | |
|-------|---|
| Green |  Indicates that performance is better as compared to the same period last year. |
| Amber |  Indicates that performance is the same as compared to the same period last year. |
| Red |  Indicates that performance is worse as compared to the same period last year. |
| N/A | Indicates that the measure cannot be compared to the same period last year. |