

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 20 October 2015 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), A. Lowe (Vice-Chairman), Dennett, C. Loftus, A. McInerney, N. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts, Rowe and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor C. Gerrard

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, I. Leivesley, E. Dawson, T. Dean, N. Goodwin, A. Scott and R. Shacklady

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS17	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 1 September 2015 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS18	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS19	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of the Board.	
	RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.	
CS20	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES	
	The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meeting held on 25 June 2015.	
	RESOLVED: That the Board note the minutes.	

CS21 HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which sought approval of a revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy.

It was reported that the Health and Safety At Work Act required employers with five or more employees to have a written health and safety policy. The revised Policy, attached at Appendix 1, highlighted the commitment of the Authority to managing health and safety effectively.

It was noted that this year, the biennial review of the Policy had been updated to reflect procedural and Directorate structure changes.

Members commented on the improvements to the lone working arrangements, the training that was provided and the risk assessment procedures.

RESOLVED: That the revised Corporate Health and Safety Policy be approved.

CS22 CORPORATE ACCIDENT AND INCIDENT REPORT

The Board was provided with a report from the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which presented details of corporate accident statistics with associated trends, from 1 April 2015 to 1 September 2015.

Members commented on the following:-

- the review of building security arrangements;
- the increase in incidents of verbal violence;
- the action taken following a violent incident in Children's Social Care; and
- the introduction of drug driving legislation.

The Board thanked Tony Dean, Health, Safety and Welfare Officer, and his colleague for the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS23 BUSINESS PLANNING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which advised Members that the process of developing Business Plans for

2016/17 had begun.

The Council developed its business plans in parallel with the determination of its annual budget and the review and refresh of Corporate and Directorate Risk Registers.

It was noted that Members now had the opportunity to contribute to the process of plan development. Members were informed that plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March 2016 and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2016.

The following areas were discussed:

- Finance;
- ICT and Administrative Support Services;
- Legal and Democratic Services;
- Policy, People, Performance and Efficiency;
- Property Services; and
- Catering and Stadium.

Members commented that the level of reporting on the work plan so far was very informative.

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Members' comments be taken into account when developing the Business Plans; and
- 2) the draft plan be brought to a future meeting of the Board.

CS24 LOCAL AREA FORUMS 2014-15

A report was presented to the Board by the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, which informed members of the project delivery of the Local Area Forums for the financial period 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015.

Members were advised that Local Area Forums (LAF) were set up in 2001 to take policy development to communities, bridging the gap between key agencies

working within the Borough. Each LAF was led by the respective local Councillors and supported by a Senior Officer from the Council. Other partner organisations such as the Police, Fire Service, Housing Associations, Youth and Voluntary sector bodies also attended LAF's to keep the community informed of local developments and to respond to local concerns.

It was reported that in 203/14, £568,890 was allocated to the Area Forums which was allocated on a per capita basis across the seven LAF's that covered the Borough; details of each area's funding was provided in the report. Projects funded through the LAF's were categorised into the following key areas:-

- Landscapes;
- Improved Parks;
- Pedestrian and Highway Improvements;
- Security;
- Children and Youth Facilities;
- Community Events;
- Community Initiatives; and
- Community Resources and Equipment.

It was highlighted that the Area Forum budget had enabled the leverage of other grants, and through joint working, had secured access to funds from other agencies such as Housing Providers, Biffa, WREN and the National Lottery.

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

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

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

CS25 DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME TOPIC GROUP - UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic

Director, Community and Resources, which contained two recommendations from the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group (DSS).

It was noted that the DSS was in its third year of operation. The Topic Group had met on 30 September 2015 to review progress with both the Discretionary Support Scheme and the Discretionary Housing Payments Scheme (DHP) during 2015/16 to date. Details of progress were outlined in the report.

Members considered the proposals to increase the minimum value of food orders placed via the DSS from £25 to £40, and the proposal to increase the period of DHP awards from 13 weeks to 18 weeks, in order to ensure more stability for claimants.

It was reported that the Topic Group had requested that discussions be held with the Registered Social Landlords regarding their priority cases for DHP to ensure that assistance was granted to those moving to alternative accommodation.

RESOLVED: That

1) the Board recommend that

- (i) the Topic Group's review of progress with delivery of the Discretionary Support Scheme and Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme during 2015/16 be noted;
- (ii) the minimum food order be increased to £40 under the Discretionary Support Scheme;
- (iii) the award period for Discretionary Housing Payments be increased to 18 weeks per application; and

2) the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, be recommended to exercise his delegated authority from Executive Board, in liaison with the Executive Board Member for Resources, with regard to the Resolutions in i), ii) and iii) above.

Strategic Director
-Community &
Resources

CS26 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Community and Resources, on progress on the implementation of the revised Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure.

Members had considered a revised Corporate Complaints Handling Procedure at its meeting in June 2014. The revised scheme, intended to ensure a more consistent and simplified approach to dealing with complaints, was approved by Executive Board in September 2014. The report and Appendix 1 provided a summary of the key recommendations and the current position concerning implementation.

In discussion, the following comments were made:-

- The merits of having a range of frequently asked questions with answers available to view on the Council's web site, to improve communication with service users and the public;
- Better use of the web site and social media to advise the public when Council services may be reduced in frequency or when they were no longer provided, in order to manage expectations; and
- The costs in Officer time associated with processing Freedom of Information requests.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the progress report be received; and
- 2) Members' comments be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.15 p.m.