

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 5 September 2017 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Abbott, E. Cargill, Howard, C. Loftus, A. McInerney, N. Plumpton Walsh, Joe Roberts, G. Stockton and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: Councillor Philbin

Officers present: M. Reaney, I. Leivesley, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, J. Patten, K. Wilson and M. Foy

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS10	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 6 th June 2017 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS11	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS12	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.	
CS13	MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES	
	The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meeting held on 16 March 2017.	
	RESOLVED: That the Board note the minutes.	

CS14 EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE

The Board considered an update report on the work of the Regeneration Non Town Centres (RNTC) Team in securing external funding resources into Halton. The report outlined:

- an update on the team's priorities/key activities;
- emerging issues in external funding;
- funding statistics for 2012 to end March 2017;
- an update on the implications of Brexit on the ESIF programme; and
- a summary of a recent IDOX report on the External Funding function in local authorities.

Members noted the following key headlines which included details on:

- the demonstrable increase in competition for external funding streams, underlined by the success rate of bids submitted having reduced in 2016/17;
- evidence that local authorities with an external funding function/team were more successful in accessing funding;
- an increase in availability of funding for visitor economy and cultural activity, including heritage and the arts;
- the development of a Training Programme by the External Funding Team for Council staff and partners; and
- evidence that the level of demand for funding support was increasing.

Arising from the discussion the Board requested a further report which provided information on the expenditure of £9m European Funding previously awarded to the Council towards regeneration.

RESOLVED: That

1. the report be noted; and
2. the continued approach to securing external funds be endorsed.

CS15 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS 2016-17

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, which

provided an analysis of Corporate Complaints received during the 2016/17 financial year.

The report outlined the 2 stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints, a corporate complaints trend analysis from 2012 to 2017, nature of those complaints received and outcomes. In addition, the report detailed how the Council used the information from complaints received to improve the services provided or commissioned. Further information was also provided including a summary of compliments the Council had received for 2016/17.

The Board requested the following further information:

- Would the cameras placed on refuse collection vehicles allow the Council to determine if bins had been inadvertently tipped into the back of vehicles; and
- Was the pattern of an upturn in the number of corporate complaints received in 2015-16 also repeated in the number of complaints against the Council to the Local Government Ombudsman.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS16 COUNCIL TAX SECTION 13A DISCOUNT POLICY STATEMENT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources to amend the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement to reduce to nil the amount of council tax payable by young people leaving care from ages 18 to 25. The proposal was in response to a recent Children's Society campaign that identified a range of disadvantages that care leavers typically experienced. The campaign called on local authorities to do more to support families who were struggling with council tax debt, in particular care leavers. The campaign was supported by the Children's Commissioner for England, who had written to each Council asking them to consider granting council tax relief for care leavers.

It was proposed that as the Council had a parenting role, that in some circumstances lasted until a care leaver was 24, the care leavers relief would apply to every care leaver until their 25th birthday. Full details of the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That Executive Board be recommended to approve the amendment to the Council Tax Section 13A Discount Policy Statement, to reduce to nil the amount of council tax payable by young people leaving care from the ages of 18 to 25.

CS17 DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME TOPIC GROUP – UPDATE

The Board considered a report which provided an update on the work of the Discretionary Support Scheme Topic Group following their meeting on 19th July 2017. The Group had met to review the progress of the Discretionary Support Scheme and received an update regarding Discretionary Housing Payments and implementation of Universal Credit. A copy of the report considered by the Topic Group had been previously circulated to Members.

The Topic Group had further noted that work had been undertaken to establish the cost of implementing the Board's previous proposal, to limit the number of liability orders which would be taken out in respect of the same council taxpayers. It was reported that the potential cost was estimated to be around £150,000 and therefore it was agreed not to implement the change at this time.

RESOLVED: That the Topic Group's review of progress with the Discretionary Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payment Scheme and Universal Credit, as set out in the report be noted.

CS18 COUNCIL TAX REDUCTION SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Enterprise, Community and Resources, which outlined proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme for 2018/19, for which public consultation would be required. It was noted the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme was introduced in April 2013 replacing Council Tax Benefit and was based on the national Housing Benefit scheme. Since April 2013 the Housing Benefit Scheme had been amended by Government regulations whilst the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme had not.

It was further noted that the national Housing Benefit scheme had been adjusted to take account of changes to other national welfare benefits such as Tax Credits. It was therefore appropriate at this stage to consider aligning the Council Tax Reduction Scheme with the Housing Benefit

scheme to achieve a measure of consistency that previously existed in April 2013. The proposed changes would only affect new claimants from 1st April 2018 and would be subject to public consultation.

Arising from the discussion, the Board did not support the proposed changes to the Local Council Tax Reduction Scheme, due to the potential impact for new claimants. It was therefore agreed that the potential changes should not be recommended to Executive Board. Further information was requested for a future Board meeting regarding the potential impact of such changes for individual claimants and the current position of neighbouring local authorities.

RESOLVED: That the proposed changes to the Council Tax Reduction Scheme as outlined in the report, are not supported.

CS19 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - QUARTER 1 - 2017/18

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 1 of 2017/18.

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

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

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

Meeting ended at 8.07 p.m.