

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 6 June 2023
in the Civic Suite - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), J. Bradshaw, Leck, Logan, A. Lowe, Thornton and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Hutchinson, A. McInerney and N. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, E. Dawson, J. Gallagher, P. Garnett, C. Hill and M. Reaney

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS1	MINUTES The Minutes from the meeting held on 24 January 2023 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
CS3	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 this Board. RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.	
CS4	ANNUAL REPORT 2022/23 The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board for 2022/23. The Board had met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2022 to March 2023.	

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be noted.

CS5 CORPORATE ACCIDENT/INCIDENT REPORT - 01.04.22 - 31.03.23

The Board was provided with a report from the Interim Divisional Manager – HR Operations Division, Chief Executive’s Delivery, which presented details of health and safety management within the Authority from 1 April 2022 to 31st March 2023.

The report highlighted health and safety incidents that had taken place over the past 12 months and as a result of those incident, proposed actions for the future. In addition, the report included information around the number of actual near misses, accidents that had resulted over 7 day absences, together with significant accidents.

It was noted that in December 2022, the authority changed from 2 to 5 Directorates. The figures quoted in the report were given as overall figures. It was anticipated that a more detailed picture would emerge in the next report.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted including the recommendations and actions for 2023/24.

CS6 THE BIG CONVERSATION UPDATE

The Board received a presentation on “The Big Conversation” which was the Council’s approach to formulating a new Corporate Plan to take effect from April 2024.

“The Big Conversation” would engage with the public so that they understand the challenges of the Council. It would be an approach between the Council and everyone who lives or works in Halton to work together in order to create an improved Borough in all aspects of everyday life.

The Corporate Plan Survey would consist of 5 themes and 6 questions. There would be different consultation methods depending on the audience. Responses will be monitored during the consultation period and any low response area will be targeted with iWalkers which proved to be an effective consultation method during the elections. Staff within the One-Stop-Shops and Libraries would be able to offer assistance to anyone who required help to complete the survey.

All feedback and responses would be scrutinised and evaluated and then in conjunction with North West Employers, be summarised accordingly to establish a number of key objectives to form the Council's new Corporate Plan.

Following the presentation, Members' discussions and comments included the following:

- The 5 themes were broad; consideration to be given to linking transport with the work of the Liverpool City Region;
- The Council needed to manage expectations and to not become unrealistic on what it could deliver;
- Work with forums already in existence e.g. children and young people.

The new Corporate Plan would be launch in April 2024.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the approach to facilitate "The Big Conversation".

CS7 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND

The Board received a report which provided an update regarding delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023 and spending plans for the Fund during 2023/24.

The Board noted the final expenditure of the Household Support Fund from 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023. £167,314 was awarded by the Discretionary Support Scheme through its telephone application process. £536,592 was spent on school meal vouchers which were issued during school holidays and £405,500 was spent on supporting those vulnerable pensioner households who were in receipt of a council tax reduction.

The Benefits Division co-ordinated the use of the grant on behalf of the Council and Appendix A outlined how the grant funding was utilised via a combination of Council departments and the Voluntary Sector.

In February 2023, it was confirmed that Halton had been allocated grant funding of £2.6M. In April 2023, the Council's Executive Board approved a Spending Plan on how the allocation would be utilised. It was agreed to allocate £356,000 to the Discretionary Support Scheme

which would cover a wide range of low income households in need, including families with children, pensioners and people with disabilities. It was estimated that the free school meals vouchers would cost approximately £1,170,000 and this would provide approximately 7,500 children with free school meals throughout all of the school holidays over the next 12 months.

In order to support vulnerable pensioner households, it was decided that all those in receipt of a Council Tax reduction would be provided with a one-off award of £120. It was estimated that 4,181 pensioner households would benefit from this award, at a total cost of £501,720.

In 2023/24, there would be additional funding allocations to Public Health, Care Leavers and Voluntary Sector Partners. It was agreed to allocate £100,000 to Public Health who would support vulnerable households who may fall outside those covered by the rest of the Spending Plan. They would also target support to those families who had pre-school aged children and who were flagged on the Income Deprivation Index affecting children. In addition, families who had disabled pre-school aged children. £82,126 was allocated for this project.

£82,127 was allocated to make a cost of living award to recent care leavers and to those young people who would become care leavers in the next 12 months.

Voluntary Sector partners would be again, asked to assist the Council with the delivery of support to residents. The grant allocations made for the previous 6 month period to Citizens Advice, Food Banks, Affordable Warmth etc had doubled for the coming year. Each organisation would be asked to provide a detailed proposal of how they intended to utilise the funding and provide a regular update to the Council with monitoring information for submission to the Department for Works and Pensions (DWP).

The Benefits Division would co-ordinate use of the grant on behalf of the Council and progress with delivery of the Household Support Fund during 2023/24 would be reported regularly to the Board. If the grant was not fully spent by 31 March 2024, and/or not spent in accordance with the grant guidance, it would be clawed back by the DWP.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The actual delivery of the Household Support

Fund for the period 1 October 2022 to 31 March 2023, as outlined in the report, be noted; and

- ii) The Spending Plan for the Household Support Fund for the period 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2024 as presented in Appendix 2, be noted.

CS8 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES

The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meeting held on 28 November 2022.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CS9 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 3 OF 2022/23

The Board received the Performance Management Report for Quarter 3 of 2022/23. 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;
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services; and
- Property Services.

Members of the Board subsequently commented on the report which included the following:

- Living Wage - It was suggested that in the next tranche of tender contracts for Domiciliary Care, consideration should be given as to whether there should be a stipulation regarding the Living Wage. However, it was stressed that this would inevitably result in significantly increased contract costs for the Council, which could not be funded.
- Recruitment Issues – concerns were raised about recruitment issues. It was noted that in order to address the problems, some roles have moved a rolling advert recruitment method. This would mean that any interested candidates would be asked to provide their CV, instead of completing an online

application, and thereafter any suitable applicants would be invited for an interview. So far, this operation has proved to be successful in the Adults Directorate, by speeding up recruitment processes and appointing candidates more quickly. These job opportunities are advertised on LinkedIn but Members also suggested that they could promote them via their social media sites.

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 3 Performance Management report be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.