



**ANNUAL REPORT
CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND
PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2010 – MARCH 2011**

“I would like to thank Members of the Board for their hard work and the contribution they have made to its activities over the past year. This year, key areas have included detailed consideration of market provision in the Borough carbon management issues, staff accidents/violent incidents statistics, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Council’s Property Portfolio. In addition I have, together with the Chair of the Business Efficiency Board, been deeply involved in the formulation of the Council’s budget and I would like to express my thanks to the Chairs and Vice – Chairs of all PPBs for their assistance. This year, work on use of natural resources will continue.”
Councillor Alan Lowe – the Chairman of Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board.

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2010/11 the Board comprised of eleven Councillors – A. Lowe (Chairman), J. Roberts (Vice Chair), Browne, Dennett, Gilligan, Inch, Loftus, Nolan, Norddahl, Philbin and Wainwright.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Resources, Personnel and Training, ICT, Property, Committee and Member Services, Legal Services, Communications and Marketing, Stadium, Civic Catering, Procurement, Corporate Complaints and Area Forums. During the year the Board also scrutinised voluntary sector issues. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the reporting Departments which during the last year were Policy and Performance, Legal and Democratic Services, Human Resources, Financial Services, and ICT and Support Services.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met six times during the year including a special meeting to consider the future of Runcorn Market.

Set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during the year.

RUNCORN MARKET

The Market Working Group continued to meet during the year, and presented its findings to a Special Meeting of the Policy and Performance Board on 19th October 2010. The meeting considered in detail the future viability of Runcorn Markets and discussions culminated in a recommendation being made to the Executive Board to consider the closure of Runcorn Market, which eventually took place during the year. Members of the Markets Working Group were thanked for their diligent consideration of all of the issues raised.

PROPERTY PORTFOLIO

Councillor Mike Wharton, Executive Board Portfolio Holder for Resources, attended the meeting on 7th September and provided Members with an update on current issues in his portfolio. The discussion involved Council-owned land, and it was agreed that the Council's Property Portfolio would be reported to Members at a future meeting, and that any land releases would only proceed after consultation with Members and advice from valuers. A detailed report on the Authority's Property Portfolio was brought to the meeting on 22nd February 2011 for full consideration and discussion by Members.

ENERGY MANAGEMENT IN BUILDINGS

The meeting on 25th May considered a report from the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy dealing with the section of the use of natural resources work which focused upon the approach to energy management in buildings. The report presented the interim findings of the Working Group. The Board was advised of the key principles, amongst which was the approach to tackling energy reduction, and was advised of the actions undertaken at the Stobart Stadium, Halton which had represented a good example of how to reduce energy consumption. The Board was further advised that the ability to monitor energy consumption would be greatly improved with the installation of the automatic meter readings across the Borough and a performance management system developed to report consumption data for individual buildings. An officer had been identified to monitor energy consumption and establish robust targets and develop action plans. In addition, a training programme would be developed and the Board would receive regular update reports.

CORPORATE HEALTH AND SAFETY POLICY

A draft fully revised policy was produced by the Strategic Director, Resources to the meeting in May. It identified the undertakings and arrangements for the provision of health

and safety across the Authority and had recently been amended to take account of the role of the Board in monitoring health and safety performance and reporting back to Executive Board Members. It also took account of the new HSE Strategy, and, as a result included aims, objectives and outcomes for the Health and Safety meetings. The Board endorsed the policy and referred it to the Executive Board, where it was subsequently adopted.

SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Board received a report in May providing information on the progress towards meeting Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy targets at 2009/10 financial year end. The Board was advised that it was important that progress was monitored and that Members were satisfied that adequate plans were in place to ensure that the Council and its partners achieved the improvement targets that had been agreed. In future, reports would contain a column with a directional arrow highlighting the direction of travel. A further update was provided to the January meeting in which it was noted that as a result of changes to the National Government Framework, the Council and the Halton Strategic Partnership would need to review their respective performance frameworks. The Board would take an overview of this process.

STAFF ACCIDENT/VIOLENT INCIDENTS STATISTICS

The Strategic Director – Resources reported to the meetings on 25th May and 2nd November on Corporate Accident Statistics and Associated Trends. The first report highlighted a reduction in reported incidents compared with the last two years, especially those resulting in major injuries. The report contained a detailed breakdown by type of incident and by directorate. There had also been a reduction in the total working days lost due to accidents. There had been 823 days this year, compared to 746 last year. Based on HSE calculations, the total cost of the accidents was £150,000 compared to £459,000 last year. There had also been a significant reduction in the number of slips, trips and falls, due to a considerable amount of

work being undertaken in those areas.

The November report highlighted a continuous trend in the reduction of reported accidents. Compared to the other local authorities in the benchmarking exercise whose

expenditure per employee exceeded £20 plus, Halton provided the lowest costing health and safety service at £8.62 per employee. Putting these two pieces of information together provided a very positive result for the Council. It was noted that the success in the reduction of accidents was down to team efforts from all Council staff, Members and trade unions who had embraced their own health and safety responsibilities, as well as the teams and departments they were in.

VOLUNTARY SECTOR FUNDING

The meeting on 4th January received the Annual Report for Voluntary Sector Funding, presented by the Strategic Director, Adults and Community. It examined the policy context to providing core grant support to the voluntary sector and considered the benefits of supporting volunteering opportunities. It provided performance information on the eleven organisations which had been core grant supported in 2008/9 and Members considered case studies.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

During the year the Board also focused a significant amount of time and effort monitoring the performance of its reporting departments. A number of performance issues overseen by the Board during the year have been

- School catering and the operation of the Stobart Stadium Halton.
- Sickness absence
- The retention of the Council's IIP Accreditation.

The excellent overall performance of Audit which was monitored by the Business Efficiency Board.

WORK PROGRAMME 2011/12

The Board has decided that during the current Municipal Year (2011/12), it would carry out detailed work on the following topics:-

- Markets – Lead, Councillor Wainwright
- Carbon Reduction – Lead, Councillor A. Lowe
- Halton Strategic Partnership – Lead, Councillor Loftus.
- Area Forum Locality Working – Lead, Councillor A. Lowe.

Members of the public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Committee Services. In the first instance, e-mail ann.jones@halton.gov.uk