

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 16 March 2023

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Corporate Director, Chief Executives Delivery Unit

**PORTFOLIO:** Leader's

**SUBJECT:** The Corporate Plan: Interim approach and the way forward

**WARD(S)** Borough wide

## 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The Council's current Corporate Plan is an expired version. In light of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the shifting national political and economic landscape, and the ever increasing challenges, (some same, some new), facing the organisation it was thought timely to reconsider the Council's priorities and set a new plan for the coming 3 to 5 years. This will also tie in with the emerging transformation work around 'Reimagine Halton'.

## 2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That the Board**

- 1) agree on the interim approach outlined and the way forward culminating in a new Council Corporate Plan being launched on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2024;**
- 2) the report be noted;**
- 3) approves the Statement of Intent for publication on April 1<sup>st</sup> 2023; and**
- 4) endorses the approach to facilitate 'The Big Conversation'.**

## 3.1 **Background**

An effective Corporate Plan should underpin everything that the Council is wanting to achieve, in terms of its overall vision and the achievement of its key strategic objectives.

In order to progress this initial work, 2 associates from North West Employers were commissioned to facilitate and support the process. This took numerous formats, ranging from questionnaires through to

key conversations and finally a face-to-face facilitated session which took place in the Stadium on Tuesday, December 6<sup>th</sup> 2022.

All members of both the Executive Board and Management Team were invited to attend and participate.

### 3.2 **Statement of Intent - moving forward**

Following the session it was agreed that we would adopt an interim plan, in order to provide adequate opportunity for meaningful consultation, and ultimately to produce a Corporate Plan which is totally unique and meaningful to the people of Halton.

During this period of transition it is important to point out that Halton Borough Council will continue to deliver its statutory services and work towards achieving its current Corporate Plan priorities, more specifically, looking after Vulnerable People and Children, as well as focusing on Urban Renewal and the Environment.

In terms of timescales, an interim Corporate Plan with an accompanying Statement of Intent will be in place until the end of March 2024, with a new Corporate Plan taking effect from April 2024.

A brief narrative will be placed on the Council's intranet and internet sites to indicate this from April 2023, see Appendix A.

### 3.3 **Lessons from elsewhere – ‘The Wigan Deal’:**

The Wigan Deal was an informal agreement between the council and those who lived or worked in the area to work together to create a better borough.

It led to profound cultural change within the council and its partners, at the heart of which was the belief that frontline staff and local people can bring about improvement.

The four key lessons learnt were:

1. A **common vision** was required between council officials and elected members, which ensured that a clear narrative and consistent message was shared to one and all – on the lines of the changes that the Council wanted to bring about and why they were needed.
2. An **enabling style of leadership** was essential in allowing all concerned considerable freedom to develop their own set of ideas.
3. The changes in Wigan were made by a series of **bold**

**decisions** rather than incrementalism. This was supported by training for all staff and partner organisations.

4. Great importance was attached to **communications and marketing** in order to build a shared sense of purpose. The Deal was reinforced at every available opportunity. Stories from staff and service users were useful in this regard, providing tangible examples of how local people have benefited, and in doing so showing staff that the permission to innovate was real rather than rhetoric.

This approach, and the result, lends itself to the outputs of the session held in December 2022 and can be used as a guide in Halton.

### 3.4 **The Key Themes for Halton:**

Key Themes were identified and agreed as follows:

- Consultation via ‘the big conversation’, the aim of which is to unite and activate people around what matters.
- Be local – an area based approach with more partnership working taking place. Local collaboration impacting services explicitly.
- Changing the mind set and culture – targeting and engaging all and doing things differently with an emphasis on communities doing more for themselves.

### 3.5 **Timeline:**

Outlined as follows:

- January – March 2023: Update Management Team/Executive Board and also communicate with the wider audience, namely Divisional Manager`s and all elected members
- May – June 2023 – specific consultation with elected members via Policy & Performance Boards
- May – September 2023: The Big Conversation takes place
- September - October 2023: consult HBC Workforce
- November - December 2023: analyse data and identify the key learning points/issues
- January – March 2024: compose the Corporate Plan and seek approval
- April 2024: the New Corporate Plan is launched

### 3.6 **The Big Conversation: Reimagine Halton - we don't have all the answers!**

'The Big Conversation' is all about engaging with the public so that they understand the challenges that the Council is facing.

It is 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.

It also links to 'Reimagine Halton' which will see the Council looking in detail at what we do, how we do it and why we do it – and whether taking a different approach could be more efficient, productive or deliver a better outcome.

The actual detail of 'The Big Conversation' is still being finalised, but will consist of a mixture of specific individual questions and group interactions.

### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no specific policy implications at this stage; however ultimately there will be a new contemporary and relevant Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan.

### 5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 It is not envisaged that any specific financial implications will emerge as a direct result of formulating the Council's Corporate Plan.

### 6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 The Corporate Plan is Halton Borough Council's key strategic document. This plan sets out the main vision, themes and values of the Council.

'The Big Conversation' will help to determine the Council's new set of priorities, which will be translated into the plan.

### 7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The major risk is that we do nothing and roll out the same priorities as we have done in previous years. To this end the current Corporate Plan is a bit irrelevant and doesn't really engage with either the workforce or the people of Halton.

7.2 If we are serious in 'Reimagining Halton' that this is a perfect opportunity to undertake a meaningful piece of work which will engage the people of Halton and together with our workforce determine a set of new priorities, which will make a difference and take Halton forward over the next 3 – 5 years.

## 8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Equality and Diversity may well be a specific Corporate Plan priority, but if not then it will certainly underpin the Plan, and if required an Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken.

## 9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 At this stage there is nothing specific to highlight within the context of this report; however there is a distinct possibility that as a result of 'The Big Conversation' that this might form one of the Council's key priorities.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

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## **Appendix A: Statement of Intent re: Halton Borough Council's Corporate Plan**

The Council's current Corporate Plan is an expired version.

In light of the changes brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic, the shifting national political and economic landscape, and the ever increasing challenges, (some same, some new), facing the organisation it was thought timely to reconsider the Council's priorities and set a new plan for the coming 3 to 5 years.

This will also tie in with the emerging transformation work around 'Reimagine Halton'.

In order to provide adequate opportunity for meaningful consultation, and ultimately produce a Corporate Plan which is totally unique and meaningful to the people of Halton, it has been decided to adopt an interim plan.

During this time consultation will take place with all community groups, voluntary groups, partner agencies, etc and will be deemed 'The Big Conversation'.

'The Big Conversation' is all about engaging with the public so that they understand the challenges that the Council is facing.

It is 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.

During this period of transition it is important to point out that Halton Borough Council will continue to deliver its statutory services and work towards achieving its current Corporate Plan priorities, more specifically, looking after Vulnerable People and Children, as well as focusing on Urban Renewal and the Environment.

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