

## **CORPORATE AND INCLUSION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD**

*At a meeting of the Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 3 June 2025 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Philbin (Vice-Chair) - in the Chair, Carlin, Davidson, Leck, Logan, McDermott, A. McInerney, C. Loftus and N. Plumpton Walsh

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Gilligan and McDonough

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: K. Butler, E. Dawson, P. Garnett, H. Hamlett, C. Hill, M. Reaney, G. Tootle and C. Westwood.

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 21 January 2025 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 the Board.          |               |
|     | Members requested an update on the cessation of school meals and queried if there were still any schools who had not made alternative arrangements for the provision of school meals. |               |
|     | Members also questioned if assets such as cash registers and kitchen equipment were transferred to the new                                                                            |               |

catering providers.

Officers agreed to provide Board Members with updates to these queries in due course.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

CS4 ANNUAL REPORT 2024-25

The Board considered a copy of the Annual Report from the Chair of the Corporate & Inclusion Policy and Performance Board for 2024/25. The Board had met four times during the year and the report set out the work carried out during the Municipal Year April 2024 to March 2025.

RESOLVED: That the Annual Report be noted.

*NB: Councillor Sian Davidson declared a disclosable pecuniary interest for the following item due to a family member being in receipt of pension benefits.*

CS5 HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND – PROGRESS UPDATE

The Board received a report from the Director of Finance, which outlined the final spend position regarding the delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund for the period 1 October 2024 to 31 March 2025.

A spending plan (tranche 6) had been prepared and was attached as Appendix A. It was noted that £100,000 had been allocated to the Discretionary Support Scheme within the Benefits Division to process applications. As per Government guidance, it was intended to cover a wide range of low income households in need, including families with children, pensioners and people with disabilities.

Appendix B of the report contained detailed information relating to spending for the period 1 April 2025 to 31 March 2026 (tranche 7). This included expenditure from partner organisations including Halton Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB); Widnes Foodbank; Runcorn Foodbank; Holiday Activity Food Programme; Affordable Warmth – Energy Projects Plus; and Halton Voluntary Action.

A Board Member raised a concern regarding the withdrawal of funding for the CAB and queried if they still had capacity. Officers confirmed that their funding was topped up in tranche 6 and no objections had been received to date.

RESOLVED: That the Board note:

- 1) the final position regarding the Household Support Fund for the period 1 October 2024 and 31 March 2025; and
- 2) the spending plan for the Household Support Fund for the period 1 April 2025 – 31 March 2026.

CS6 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1ST APRIL 2024 TO 31ST MARCH 2025

The Board was provided with a report from the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which presented details of health and safety management within the Authority from 1 April 2024 to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2025.

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.

The following information was also highlighted from the report:

- Reportable and significant accidents for employees were at a total of 10; a rise of 1 across all directorates;
- Near miss reports had fallen from 3 to 0;
- Two additional categories had been added to the report i.e. threats of violence and sexual harassment;
- 28 violent incidents had been reported; a rise of 7;
- Schools had reported 6 verbal threats, 33 physical incidents and 1 threat of violence. Members were reminded that these figures did not include academies or free schools; and
- The Terrorism (Protection of Premises) Act 2025 (also known as Martyn's Law) received Royal Ascent on 3 April 2025. The regulator had been confirmed as the Security Industry Authority (SIA). A Halton working group had been set up to scrutinise the guidance to ensure the Council was compliant and updates would be included in future reports.

Members raised concerns that health and safety information and data regarding violent incidents, involving staff and pupils, was not readily available from Academy Trusts. Members were advised that despite various requests to the Academy Trusts, the Local Authority (LA) did not have access or receive reports regarding health and

safety or information relating to accidents or incidents. It was agreed that attempts would continue to be made to find a solution to this issue.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted including the recommendations and actions for 2025/26.

Corporate  
Director - Chief  
Executive's  
Delivery Unit

#### CS7 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 4 OF 2024/25

The Board received the Performance Management Report for Quarter 4 of 2024/25. 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;
- Operational HR Division, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services; and
- Property Services.

Members were reminded that in September 2024, the Council entered into a joint venture with Commercial Services Group, a company wholly owned by Kent County Council. Connect2Halton, a council-owned company, was dedicated to recruiting employees. Members were reassured that this arrangement would be reviewed and monitored to determine its impact and any changes would be reported to the Board in due course.

In relation to one of the Council's milestones to vacate the Municipal Building, it was noted that a Member Working Group (led by Councillor Thompson) had been set up to look at this piece of work, however, this was currently on hold. Councillor Leck questioned who the Members of this group were and how could others feed into the debate. It was agreed that concerns would be fed back to the Executive Director – Environment and Regeneration, and an update would be provided in due course.

RESOLVED: That the 2024/25 quarter 4 performance management report be noted.

Executive Director  
Environment &  
Regeneration

CS8 COUNCIL WIDE SPENDING AS AT 31 JANUARY 2025

The Board received a copy of a report, which was presented to the Council's Executive Board on 13 March 2025. The report outlined the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 31 January 2025, together with the latest 2024/25 outturn forecast. The report also described the reasons for key variances from budget.

The Executive Board had requested that a copy of the report be shared with each Policy and Performance Board for information, to ensure that all Members had a full appreciation of the Councilwide financial position, in addition to their specific areas of responsibility.

Councillor Logan requested that the consideration be given to keep the Children's Centre at Windmill Hill open. It was agreed that the request would be taken forward with the Director of Education, Inclusion and Provision and the Board would be updated in due course.

RESOLVED: That the Councilwide financial position as at 31 January 2025, as outlined in the report, be noted.

Director -  
Education,  
Inclusion and  
Provision

CS9 SCHEDULE 12A OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION) ACT 1985

The Board considered:

- 1) whether Members of the press and public should be excluded from the meeting of the Board during consideration of the following item of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business to be considered, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972; and
- 2) whether the disclosure of information was in the public interest, whether any relevant exemptions were applicable and whether, when applying the public interest test and exemptions, the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighed that in disclosing the information.

RESOLVED: That as, in all the circumstances of the case, the public interest in maintaining the exemption

outweighed that in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following items of business in accordance with Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 because it was likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information would be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CS10 EMPLOYER VALUE PROPOSITION: STAFF UNPAID LEAVE

The Board received a report from the Corporate Director – Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which outlined a proposed scheme for a Christmas closure, which utilised a variation of the previously proposed 4 days unpaid leave arrangements.

The report outlined the process which was undertaken, including the staff consultation and discussions with Members and Trade Unions. The outcome determined that a Christmas closure was preferred.

RESOLVED: That the Board:

- 1) note the report and consider the proposed scheme for a Christmas closure; and
- 2) endorse the recommendations to Executive Board for approval.

Corporate  
Director - Chief  
Executive's  
Delivery Unit

*Meeting ended at 8.03 p.m.*