

CORPORATE AND INCLUSION POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate and Inclusion Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 4 November 2025 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillors McDonough and A. McInerney

Absence declared on Council business: None.

Officers present: M. Reaney, E. Dawson, L. Combes, C. Westwood, P. Garnett, G. Tootle, S. Davies, B. Reardon and I. Moorhouse.

Also in attendance: M. Wainwright and K. Gummer (observing)

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
CS18 MINUTES	<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 2nd September 2025 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>
CS19 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	<p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>
CS20 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	<p>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, and were attached as Appendix 1 for information.</p> <p>The Board expressed that they would like to discuss the Voluntary Severance Scheme before any final decisions are made by the Executive Board.</p>
CS21 UPDATE REGARDING THE HOUSEHOLD SUPPORT FUND AND DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS AS AT 30 SEPTEMBER 2025	

The Board considered an update regarding delivery of the Government's Household Support Fund and progress with Discretionary Housing Payments between 1 April 2025 and 30 September 2025. This included the breakdown of spending for the Discretionary Support Scheme which included money for free school meal vouchers and foodbanks. The Household Support Fund will be replaced by the Crisis and Resilience Fund, and it was expected that Halton would receive the same amount.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- Regarding foodbanks, it was clarified that Runcorn Food Bank had not spent all their allocation yet, but it was expected that they would.
- Both Widnes and Runcorn's foodbanks received the same amount of funding.
- When the Household Support Fund was introduced, the Council involved many third sector parties including the Citizen's Advice Bureau. However, the funding provided could not be used to fund salaries of those who worked in the third sector.
- Free school meals took up £1 million of the Household Support Fund's payments and £500,000 was given to pensioners.
- There would be new Government guidance regarding payments from Government Funds.
- It was confirmed that the Team's staffing structure had stayed the same but there was a vacancy following a retirement.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS22 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1/4/25 TO 31/8/25

The Board considered the performance of Health Safety Management within the Authority for 1st April 2025 to 31st August 2025. This included the proposed recommendations from the accident analysis data for the first half of 2025 from 1st April and be actioned during the period 2025/26. The risk assessments remained the same and work was being done to 'tie up' the system.

The Board was advised that:

- The first set of data for lone working was obtained, but this could not be compared until 2026.
- There had been a decrease in incidents in workplaces but an increase in the 43 primary

- schools that reported to the Council.
- 15 incidents came from one school and support was given to school staff when these incidents occurred.

It was confirmed that academies do not report incidents to the Council, and these incidents would only be known if academies shared this information. Officers agreed to see if they could obtain these statistics through the Freedom of Information Act 2000.

Monitoring Officer

Ofsted guidance emphasised that schools should collaborate with the local community and officers had written to academies before asking them to share their incident statistics. Officers agreed to see if this issue was unique to Halton.

Health & Safety Advisor

A Board Member noted that if a child was violent in school, then they could become violent in the community, and this would become a Council issue. Officers agreed to liaise with the Director of Education on this to see if Ofsted would need to be involved.

Health & Safety Advisor

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS23 WIDNES MARKET

The Board considered an update on Widnes Market. The Market's business plan outlined the strategic priorities and actions to be implemented by the Market Management Team to ensure that Widnes Market continued to operate successfully and sustainably. This included using social media and partnerships with organisations including the Business Improvement and Growth Team, Digital Cheshire, and Halton Chamber of Commerce.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- The data in 3.6 of the report showed the positive effect of the social media strategies had for the market and showed the difference from three months before they were implemented.
- A new social media strategy was planned to highlight free parking areas within a 3-minute walk to the market.
- Market stall occupancy was at 82% and the market covered its own costs.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS24 PROGRAMMES OFFICE UPDATE

The Board considered the annual update on the work of the Programmes Office in securing and managing external funding resources. The report provided an annual update on the Programmes Office key activities and priorities and the funding statistics for the period 2024-25. Development and Investment Services was split into two halves: funding & development and monitoring & compliance, which was increasing in the amount of work that needed to be done. The Team was aiming to get a 'fair share' of funding for Halton from the Government and raise the borough's profile. In the future, funding would come from the new Pride and Place Fund from Central Government.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- As Halton has a castle, this should be promoted more as historical buildings were very popular with tourists.
- As the first constructed canal in the country, it was noted that the Bridgewater Canal should be promoted to tourists.
- Officers run a project called 'Destination Halton' which worked with the Liverpool Combined Authority to promote tourism.
- A new place strategy was being developed to encourage tourism and improve the area for residents.
- Officers do not instigate tourism projects, but these projects should be able to access the incoming Pride and Place Fund.
- League tables that showed the funding amounts that areas received were not produced anymore.
- For future projects, officers agreed to look at holding a member seminar to inform members on how funding could be obtained.
- As Halton was not a priority area for National Lottery funding, there had been a decline in people applying for their funding in the borough.
- Halton got 7.9% of UKSPF due to the level of deprivation in the borough.
- Officers asked councillors or members of community groups to forward their email address (funding@halton.gov.uk) if they wanted help to access funding.

Programmes Manager

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS25 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2025/26

The Board considered the performance management for the second quarter period to 30th September 2025. Key priorities for development or improvement in 2025-26 were agreed by Members for various functional areas.

The following additional information was provided in response to Member's questions:

- The Board expressed a concern in the reduction of workforce stability.
- It was clarified that the planned solar panel farm for Halton Leisure Centre would go out to bid in early 2026 with a contract being awarded in the spring of 2026.
- Officers agreed to investigate how much money the solar panels would save and how much power they would provide.
- Officers agreed to clarify whether the intention is for the new Halton Leisure Centre to operate on a full cost recovery basis and therefore, whether the delay with connecting the Leisure Centre to the Solar Farm is affecting this.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

Assistant to the
Chief Executive

Sports Services
Manager

Meeting ended at 19:41