

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Thursday, 11 September 2014 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), A. Lowe (Vice-Chairman), Joe Roberts, Dennett, C. Loftus, A. McInerney, Rowe and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors E. Cargill, S. Hill and N. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, A. Jones, I. Leivesley and E. Dawson

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CS13 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 10 June 2014 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CS14 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

CS15 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.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CS16 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP MINUTES

The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meeting held on 25 March 2014.

RESOLVED: That the Board note the minutes.

CS17 ESTABLISHMENT OF A FEES & CHARGES TOPIC GROUP

Members received a report which proposed the establishment of a 'Cross Policy and Performance Board' Topic Group, to examine the potential the Council had to increase income from 'fees and charges', given the current pressures on its budget and its ability to continue to deliver essential services.

The Board noted that the Council continued to face significant challenges in delivering a balanced budget, given the continuing reduction in Government grants and that it was getting increasingly difficult to deliver essential services in the current financial climate.

Officers reported that a piece of work had been initiated which benchmarked the Council with similar Councils, in relation to the income it was currently generating from fees and charges. It had been revealed that in comparison with a list of similar councils, Halton was second from the bottom in relation to the amount of money it was generating in relation to the size of its overall budget. It was felt that, given both the results of this research and the Council's current financial position, that this issue was worthy of further more detailed examination. The Chairs' Group have therefore suggested that a Topic Group be set up under the auspices of this Board, with cross PPB representation, given that each PPB had a clear interest in this topic. Further, given the respective responsibilities of the Development Control and Regulatory Committees, it was recommended that the Chairs of these be invited to attend the meetings.

Members agreed that the establishment of the Topic Group was needed for reasons detailed in the report. They supported all the recommendations made, however felt that all Members of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board (CPPB) should be invited to attend, and that the Vice Chairman of the CPPB should act as Vice Chairman of the Topic Group.

RESOLVED: It was agreed that

- 1) the Topic Group be supported and established;
- 2) The Chairman of this PPB would sit on and act as Chairman for the Topic Group and the Vice Chairman of this PPB would sit on and act as Vice Chairman for the Topic Group; and that the invitation to attend be

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extended to all Members of the CPPB;

- 3) each of the other Policy and Performance Boards be asked, via the Chair, to nominate a member to sit on that Group;
- 4) the Chairs of the Regulatory and Development Control Committees be invited to attend the Group; and
- 5) the Group report its findings back to this Board, with a view to forming final recommendations to the Executive Board.

CS18 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS - QUARTER 1 2014-15

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Reports for Quarter 1 of 2014/15.

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;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services.

Arising from the reports:

- Members discussed the impact on Halton's schools of Universal Free School Meals (UFSM) for all reception, year 1 and year 2 children from September 2014, which amounted to an additional 1500 children staying for a school lunch;
- The capital cost of the kitchen building work and cost of new equipment was requested; this would be sent to Members;
- It was noted that Halton had been successful in managing the increase in free school meals and had not encountered the problems other authorities had;

- The increase in supplier fraud was discussed as was the identification of this type of fraud. One Member requested to know whether the identification process was being shared with other authorities, as it would be useful; and
- Members requested an update on the market arrears for current and historic debts. A report on this would be included on the next agenda.

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RESOLVED: That the first quarter performance monitoring reports be received and noted.

CS19 SICKNESS ABSENCE - 4TH QUARTER 2013-14

The Board received a report from the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which provided information on the number of working days lost in the fourth quarter of 2013/14 and presented comparative data from fourth quarter of 2012-13 and outlined the overall out-turn figure for sickness absence for the last financial year.

Members discussed the sickness absence figures for the fourth quarter (11.24 per employee) in comparison to the same period in 2012/13 (10.06 per employee) which was an upwards trend. The possible reasons for this were discussed. In response to queries it was confirmed that the sickness policy and its application was currently being reviewed by Internal Audit. It was also reported that the Public Health Team would be examining the causes of absence to help identify trends and reasons to establish if there were any patterns emerging from the information and therefore any interventions possible.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the content of the report be noted; and
- 2) Managers be reminded of the need to proactively apply the Council's sickness policies and seek the support and guidance of the HR Team.

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Meeting ended at 7.35 p.m.