

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 4 September 2007 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), A. Lowe (Vice-Chairman), Bryant, C Inch, Loftus, Nolan, Norddahl, D. Cargill and Swain

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Bradshaw, Dennett, Edge and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: G. Ferguson, Michelle Baker, G. Cook, J. Goacher, I. Leivesley, R. Mackenzie, N. Mannion, S. Riley, A. Villiers and J. Yates

Also in attendance: Councillors D. Cargill and Swain (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33).

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS11	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 5 th June 2007, having been printed and circulated, were taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.	
CS12	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	It was noted that no public questions were received.	
	<i>N.B Councillor Bryant declared a personal interest during consideration of the item with regard to minute CS13 below as member of Runcorn War Memorial Club Limited.</i>	
CS13	MINUTES OF EXECUTIVE BOARD	
	The Minutes of the Executive Board and the Executive Board Sub-Committee, relating to the work of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board since its last meeting were submitted for information.	

Under Minute ES9 2006/07 Financial Outturn, the Board noted the Executive Board Sub-Committee's suggestion that the Corporate Services PPB be requested to consider developing a business plan for Halton Market which could be submitted to a relevant Committee for approval. It was proposed that this suggestion would be considered by the Board as a work topic for the next Municipal Year.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be received.

CS14 LOCAL AUTHORITY CARBON MANAGEMENT PROGRAMME (LACMP)

The Board considered a report outlining the process for taking forward the Council's involvement in the carbon management programme.

It was noted that, earlier in the year, the Council applied for, and was accepted onto, the Carbon Trust Local Authority Carbon Management Programme (LACMP).

This programme would guide the Council through a number of processes, which were set out in the report for the Board's consideration. The final step in the process was the development of a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan by March 2008 to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. In signing up to the programme, the Council had committed to specific terms and conditions as outlined in the report.

As part of the programme the Council would produce a baseline to measure its carbon emissions from buildings, vehicles, street lighting and waste and identify and implement opportunities to reduce emissions.

The Project Plan was agreed by the Executive Board and the Carbon Trust in July 2007.

The Project Plan set a target of reducing the Council's carbon emissions by 33% by 2012. This was an ambitious target and, if it was to be achieved, would likely require some financial investment over the five-year period and require employees to consider their impact/approach to energy usage. However, the development of the action plan should lead to long-term cost savings for the authority. Energy efficiency measures had already been built into the Runcorn Town Hall improvements.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Carbon Management Project Plan be endorsed;
- (2) quarterly reports on progress be submitted; and
- (3) on completion of the action plan, annual reports on progress be issued.

CS15 PRESENTATION ON NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

The Board received a presentation from Nick Mannion, Director of Neighbourhood Management.

The presentation outlined to the Board, the progress to date in the development of Neighbourhood Management in Halton, current work and issues, and future objectives and challenges.

The key ingredients to Neighbourhood Management were as follows:

- Use of evidence to tackle local issues;
- Multi-level partnership working;
- Listening to Local Communities;
- Tailoring public services to meet local need;
- Making public money work harder; and
- Acknowledging one size does not fit all

Progress made to date by Neighbourhood Management included engaging with Strategic Partners, building neighbourhood partnerships, and delivering early interventions such as, Kooldown Plus, Palace Fields moat, iCan Messaging and early work on community cafes.

It was noted that during the next six months Neighbourhood Management aims to track progress against the baseline, implement the partnership's delivery plan, commission further interventions, agree Neighbourhood Action Plans and further support small local community groups.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted and further progress reports be made to this Board twice yearly.

CS16 PRESENTATION ON COMMUNICATIONS AND MARKETING

The Board received a presentation from Gill Cook and Michelle Baker on behalf of the Communication and

Marketing Division.

The Presentation outlined the current context for local government communications including details of the LGA's Reputation Campaign. The Communications and Marketing Division's response to the core actions recommended by the LGA included:

- Effective media management;
- Providing every household with an A-Z Guide to Council Services;
- Publishing a quarterly Council Magazine;
- Branding – effective and consistent linkages of Council brand to Services;
- Good internal communications; and
- Integration of the Council website.

In addition, the presentation highlighted statistics from recent surveys undertaken which included:

- 48% of residents felt well-informed (BVPI Survey 2006) – Making Halton the best performing authority of its comparator group of 19 authorities and in the top quartile nationally;
- 52% felt informed about the standards of services;
- 41% of Halton versus 31% of Mori North felt informed about how well the Council is performing;
- 78.9% of staff were satisfied with internal communications up from 71.1% in 2005 and 45% in 2003;
- 91% of readers rated Inside Halton as an excellent way of communicating Council services;
- 40,000 visitors to our website in July 2007 – up 7,000 in just six months.

The Board was also advised on the future aims of the Communications and Marketing Division and how these aims could be achieved. It was anticipated that the development of the Communications Strategy and regular Performance Monitoring through the Service Plan Monitoring Reports would assist these aims.

In addition to the presentation, a copy of a draft Corporate Communications and Marketing Strategy had been previously circulated to the Board for comment.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the presentation on Communications and Marketing is received and noted by the Board; and

(2) the Operational Director – Policy and Performance be requested to produce an action plan for the delivery of the revised draft Communications Strategy following consultation with the Portfolio Holder and the Council's Management Team.

CS17 Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORTS

The Board considered a report which outlined the progress of the Performance Management First Quarter against the Service Plan Objectives, Performance Targets, Performance Trends/Comparison and Factors affecting the Service etc., for the following areas:

- Exchequer and Customer Services;
- Financial Services;
- ICT Services;
- Legal Services;
- Personnel Services;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Stadium and Hospitality.

RESOLVED: That the 1st Quarter Performance Management reports be received.

CS18 TOPIC GROUP PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received an update on the progress of the following programmed topics:

(i) Learning from Complaints – a project plan had been prepared (copy previously circulated to Members) and a meeting of the Working Group was to be arranged for September;

(ii) Development of web-based service – the Lead Member and Lead Officer had met and developed a proposed focus for this work;

(iii) Disabled access to Council buildings and services – work on this topic had not yet commenced, however a meeting was to be arranged in September for the Lead Officer and Lead Member; and

(iv) Performance Management – the Project Plan had been prepared (a copy previously circulated to Members) and a meeting of the Working Group was to be arranged for September.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS19 OMBUDSMAN'S ANNUAL REPORT LETTER

The Board was advised that each year the Ombudsman produced an annual letter which summarised the complaints made against the Council and its performance in dealing with those complaints.

The letter contained statistical data on the number of complaints received by the subject area, the Ombudsman's decisions and the Council's response times. In overall terms, the trend for the number of complaints continued to fall. The number of complaints submitted this year was 19 compared to 31 in 2005/06 and 36 in 2004/05. The Ombudsman in investigating those complaints had not issued any reports against the Council during the year, although 6 complaints were resolved by a local settlement.

Last year the Council was also asked to take specific steps to improve its response times and a series of measures were put in place to bring about an improvement. The average response times for this year had dramatically improved, and the Council would now try to build on this performance to ensure that all complaints were responded to within the average timescales.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Ombudsman annual letter be received; and
- (2) the information contained in the Ombudsman's letter be fed into the Scrutiny Topic on complaints handling and the information be used to identify improvements in the way the Council handles and learns from complaints.

Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.