

Public Document Pack



Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 8 January 2008 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David WR', is centered on the page.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe (Vice- Chairman)	Labour
Councillor John Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Bob Bryant	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Mark Dennett	Labour
Councillor Susan Edge	Labour
Councillor Christopher Inch	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Kath Loftus	Labour
Councillor Paul Nolan	Labour
Councillor Ulfar Norddahl	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour

*Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 471 7395 or e-mail gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 26 February 2008*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

Item No.	Page No.
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
<p>Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached, and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.</p>	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 8th January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 33(5).

1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Standing Order 34(11) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
- (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
- (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be submitted by 4.00 pm on the day prior to the meeting. At any meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
- (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner, which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
- (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter, which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak:-

- Please keep questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note that public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 8th January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board and Executive Sub Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Sub since the last meeting of this Board are attached at Appendix 1 (link) for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to update the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

**6TH SEPT 07 – EXEC BOARD
CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

EXB48 POLLING DISTRICTS/POLLING STATION REVIEW -
APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTY

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive outlining the requirement of the Electoral Administration Act 2006 for all local authorities to review their polling districts, polling places and polling stations by the end of 2007.

It was noted that the last major review of polling districts/polling stations had taken place in 2003 with the Periodic Electoral Review. A further review was now required by 31st December 2007 and every four years following that. The main purpose of the review was to ensure that all residents had reasonable facilities for voting.

The consultation procedures were outlined for the Board's consideration. It was noted that, on completion of the consultation exercise, a report would be prepared for submission to a Member Working Party. The Working Party would make recommendations to Council where the final decision would be made.

RESOLVED: That a Working Party, consisting of 4 Labour, 2 Liberal Democrat and 1 Conservative Group Members, be established to undertake the review of polling districts and polling places, following consultation, as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

EXECUTIVE BOARD – 15 NOVEMBER 07

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB55 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2008/09 TO
2010/11

The Board received a report of the Operational Director, Financial Services which set out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS). The MTFS set out a three-year projection of resources and spending. It had been based on information that was currently available but there was information yet to be received and revisions would need to be made as new information became available. As a result, the projections must be treated with a considerable degree of caution, but they do provide initial guidance to the Council on its revenue position into the medium term.

The MTFS showed that the spending required to

maintain existing policies and programmes was expected to increase at a faster rate than the resources available to support it. As a result, additional spending on new or improved services would have to be kept to a minimum. To balance the budget the forecast showed there was a requirement to make significant efficiency savings and cost savings. Given the financial challenge the Council was likely to face over the coming years, it was considered prudent to review the way it does its business. It was proposed that external support be engaged to work alongside the Authority to assist that process. Any support engaged could be funded from the Invest to Save Fund.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Medium Term Financial Strategy be noted;
- (2) the base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Forecast;
- (3) further reports be considered by the Executive Board on the areas for budget savings and spending pressures; and
- (4) the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services, be authorised to take the appropriate steps to engage a partner to help support the Council's efficiency agenda.

EXB56 LICENSING ACT 2003 - STATEMENT OF LICENSING POLICY

The Licensing Act 2003 required the Council to adopt a Statement of Licensing Policy and to review the policy every three years. Prior to any review the Council must carry out a consultation exercise. The review of the Council's existing policy must be completed by January 2008. The Statement of Licensing Policy set out the broad approach of the Council in its approach to its licensing functions under the 2003 Act.

On 20 September 2007 the Council authorised a consultation exercise to be undertaken to review the Council's Statement of Licensing Policy. The consultation period ended on 19 October 2007.

Only one response was received to the consultation exercise and this was from the British Beer and Pub Association. They commented that they welcome the

Council's positive approach to the licensing of the sale of alcohol and the provision of public entertainment and in particular its recognition of the cultural and social contribution that the trade had made and also its importance as a local employer. They further commented that the draft policy had also recognised one of the key principles of the Licensing Act 2003 namely that each application would be treated on its own merits.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the Statement of Licensing Policy considered at the Executive Board meeting on 20th September 2007.

EXECUTIVE BOARD – 29 NOVEMBER 07

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

EXB64 DETERMINATION OF COUNCIL TAX BASE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the 'Tax Base' for the area and the tax base for each of the Parishes. The Council was required to notify Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Policy Authority, the Cheshire Magistrates' Courts Committee, the Cheshire Probation Committee and the National Rivers Authority of this figure by 31st January 2008. The Council was also required to calculate and advise, if requested, the Parish Councils of their relevant tax bases.

Members were advised that the 'Tax Base' was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula, representing the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band 'D' dwellings, and was the measure used for calculating the council tax. Taking account of all the relevant information, and applying a 99% collection rate, the calculation for 2008/2009 gave a tax base figure of 37,762 for the Borough as a whole.

The Board noted that, this year, there had been the creation of two new parishes at Sandymoor and Halebank. The advice of the National Association of Local Councils had been sought on the process for setting their first precepts and this advice was now awaited.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Council be recommended that the 2008/09 Council Tax Base be set at 37,762 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Policy Authority and the National Rivers Authority be so

Strategic Director
- Corporate and
Policy

notified; and

- (2) Council be recommended that the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	724
Daresbury	140
Moore	349
Preston Brook	339
Sandymoor	816
Halebank	510

EXB65 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community providing an update on the current position on the equalities agenda in Halton.

It was noted that, in December 2006, the Council produced a new corporate equalities scheme encompassing all legal duties in terms of promoting the race, gender and disability equality schemes. Public consultation took place on the scheme in May 2007 and no adverse comments were received; it was therefore proposed that the Corporate Equality Plan be fully adopted.

Members were advised that the Government had recently published a Green Paper setting out detailed proposals for a single equality bill, which would replace the existing complex array of primary and secondary legislation. A consultation had begun on this, to which the Council had responded. It was likely to be 2010 before the Bill was enacted and became law but there was much Halton could do to pick up on the spirit of the proposal and embed in how equality and diversity policy operated in the Borough.

The considerable progress made in understanding and addressing the equality and diversity agenda across all services was outlined for Members' information together with key issues and challenges. In particular, Members noted the need to address issues collaboratively with other partners in the Halton Local Strategic Partnership, having joint approaches to strategies and plans with very clear equalities outcomes and targets embedded in the Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted and the approach described in

Strategic Director
- Health and
Community

Section 4 be agreed;

- (2) a partnership with other key partners be established under the auspices of the Local Strategic Partnership and a wider review of investment be considered;
 - (3) the community cohesion agenda be directly connected to the wider equality and diversity agenda; and
- (3) the Corporate Equality Plan be fully adopted.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB – 18 OCTOBER 2007

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES33 SPIKE ISLAND - CANAL LOCK GATES

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought a waiver of Standing Orders to allow for single tender action in respect of the replacement of one pair of lock gates at Spike Island.

It was reported that in addition to the problem with the gates, there was an on-going problem of silt build up, both within the lock and on the river side of the outer gates, this had now reach the stage where if the silt on the river side was left it may soon begin to restrict craft from entering and exiting the lock.

KD Marine a Runcorn based firm who specialised in barge and ship operations, inclusive of canal and lock maintenance work had carried out all maintenance works associated with the canal over the past few years.

It was proposed that the Council contract KD Marine to install the gates as they provide a very good service, and as such they would be maintaining the gates in the future. KD Marine had provided a quotation for the remedial works of £58,250, this being inclusive of the replacement of the outer gates together with the silt removal where required. This included the supply of the gates and paddles themselves which was a sub-contract element of £32,550. The sub-contractor in this case was Calderdale Borough Council. The second element of the work amounting to £25,700 consisted of the de-silting of both the lock chamber itself and the area to the river side of the lock. Set up and security costs are also included in the above figure. An allocation covering the total amount had been made in the 06/07 Repairs and Maintenance Programme.

A waiver of Standing Orders was sought as requesting tenders may lead to the appointment of a contractor other than KD Marine, it would be likely that they would not be local to the area, and as such it was unlikely that the Council would get the same level of after-service as we would with KD Marine as they are locally based.

RESOLVED: That the Operational Director Property Services be authorised to award the contract for the replacement of the outer lock gates at Spike Island to KD Marine in the sum of £58,250, and in light of the exceptional circumstances namely that the work is of such a specialist nature and in accordance with procurement SO 1.6 standing orders 3.1-3.7 and 3.10 be waived on this occasion in view of the fact that compliance with standing orders is not practical because the requirements can only be reasonably delivered by KD Marine, due to the specialist nature of the work, which includes the provision of new gates, together with the associated de-silting operations.

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ES34 INVEST TO SAVE FUND

The Sub-Committee was advised that the Invest to Save Fund was established earlier this year and totalled £1m. The purpose of the fund was to provide “up front” monies from which sustainable savings were generated to help balance the Council’s budget. The Invest to Save criteria was outlined in the report and the following two proposals had met the criteria:

	Cost £000’s	Annual Savings £000’s
Halton Stadium - Energy Savings Measures	49	18
Various Buildings -Install Powerpefectors	137	40

These two proposals would utilise £186,000 from the fund and generate annual savings £58,000.

RESOLVED: That the proposals be approved.

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ES35 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2007/08 2ND QUARTER:
JULY-SEPTEMBER

The Sub-Committee considered a report which reviewed activity in Treasury Management for the Second Quarter 2007/08.

It was noted that all policy guidelines including the Prudential Indicators had been complied with. With regard to the approved counterparty list, the Sub-Committee noted that Northern Rock was on the Council's list of approved counterparties.

Although the Bank had forecast a downturn in profits this year from £650m to £500m due the increased cost of borrowing and had seen its long-term credit rating downgraded from A+ to A-, in all other respects it remained a sound mortgage based financial institution.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**ES39. 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 Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A 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 outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, members of the press and public be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the following item of business

in accordance with Sub-Section 4 of Section 100A of the Local Government Act 1972 because it is likely that, in view of the nature of the business, exempt information will be disclosed, being information defined in Section 100 (1) and paragraph 3 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES40 ACQUISITION OF LAND AT THE FORMER BLUE CIRCLE SIDINGS, WIDNES WATERFRONT, WIDNES

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought authority to acquire the site of the former Blue Circle Sidings, Widnes Waterfront, Widnes. The sidings were at present in the ownership of Network Rail and had been redundant for many years and were identified in the approved Widnes Waterfront Masterplan.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) approval be granted to the terms of the acquisition of the specified land at the Widnes Waterfront; and
- (2) the Council's Legal Department be instructed to complete the legal formalities.

Strategic Director
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EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB – 1 NOVEMBER 2007

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES44 2007/08 HALF YEAR SPENDING

The Sub-Committee considered a report which outlined the overall half year revenue and capital spending position for 2007/08.

The Sub-Committee was advised that in overall terms, as of the 30th September 2007, revenue expenditure was below the budget profile. However, it was highlighted that the budget profile was only a guide to eventual spending. The 2007 Pay Award had not as yet been settled and the Pay and Grading Review had also not been finalised. Furthermore, spending was historically higher in the latter part of the financial year. In this respect, it was important that budget managers continued to monitor and control spending closely to ensure that overall spending remained in line with budget by the year end.

It was noted that in respect of performance and timescales, there were practical differences between services which had not necessarily been reflected in the report.

In respect of the income for Market Rents and Industrial Estate

rents, where a number of large units remained vacant and which continued to be below budget profile, it was agreed that this matter be referred to the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board to be considered as an item for a future review.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Sub-Committee request that the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board consider undertaking a review on the market rents and industrial rents to identify and address the issues relating to income continually being below the budget profile.

Strategic Director – Fi

ES45 ICT CAPITAL PROGRAMME

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval to improvements to the IT infrastructure in line with the IT Strategy. The individual projects were as follows:-

- Local Area Networking;
- Hardware Replacement; and
- Infrastructure Software, MS Licences & Software Development.

The ICT capital programme was primarily focused upon the replacement and renewal of ageing network and server solutions and the installation of new hardware and software support solutions that were capable of delivering a sustainable technology platform over the next three years. This was essential given the reliance the Council placed on IT for the delivery of front-line services.

It was noted that the authority was always seeking opportunities to work in partnership with other authorities to deliver IT services. It was also noted that next year a storage facility would be available which would automatically archive documents that were not used on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the planned spending profiles detailed in the report be approved and the Strategic Director, Corporate & Policy, in consultation with the Executive Portfolio Holder for IT, be authorised to implement those replacements; and
- (2) the Strategic Director, Corporate & Policy be authorised to place the contract for SAN / NAS data storage

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solution with Vistorm in a sum not exceeding £70,000.00 and that in accordance with Standing Order 1.6 Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 – 3.7 and 3.9 – 3.10 be waived on this occasion in light of the exceptional circumstances, namely that:

- (i) compliance with these Standing Orders is not practicable for reasons of urgency which could not reasonably have been anticipated (1.6 (b)); and
- (ii) because compliance would result in the Council foregoing clear commercial benefits, namely knowledge of the Halton installation and on estimate a saving of £20,000 against the other prices on the market.

ES46 FORMER KINGSWAY HEALTH CENTRE BUILDING

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval, in principle, to the transfer of the former Kingsway Health Centre to Halton Voluntary Action (HVA) to enable a bid to be made to the Big Lottery Fund.

The reason for seeking the Sub-Committee's in principle, agreement to the transfer was because in September the Big Lottery Fund announced that the Government had asked that it administer £30m worth of 'Community Asset' funding which had been purposely set aside to offer grants for the refurbishment of Local Authority buildings in England, enabling their transfer to third sector ownership for the use of the whole community. The programme made available capital grants of between £150,000 and £1m. The closing date for the receipt of applications was 15th November 2007, which meant a lot of work had to be done quickly.

The aim of the Community Assets fund was community empowerment. It was intended to achieve this by facilitating the transfer of genuine assets from the Local Authority to the third sector for their use as community resources. It was the belief that genuine assets would generate operational, financial and other benefits for third sector organisations without significant liabilities over a long time period.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the granting of a 25 year lease at a peppercorn rent of the former Health Centre building to HVA be approved in principle, subject to:-
 - (i) formal terms being agreed and a detailed

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business case being presented; and

- (ii) HVA being successful in the Big Lottery Funding Bid;
- (2) a former policy on asset transfer to the third sector be developed, and following consultation with the Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board, be presented to the Executive Board for consideration; and
- (3) this meeting be the subject of a further report indicating progress, and if necessary seeking detailed authorisation to enter into the lease.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE – 15 NOVEMBER

2007

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES48 ACCEPTANCE OF TENDER RUNCORN TOWN HALL REFURBISHMENT

The Sub-Committee was advised that tenders had been invited from six contractors to carry out the refurbishment of Runcorn Town Hall. The first stage entailed the provision of a notionally priced document from each contractor based upon a pre-determined elemental cost analysis of the proposed project.

Following analysis of the stage one bids which were assessed on both price and quality, three contractors were chosen to progress to stage two. At stage two a detailed presentation and rigorous interview of each of these contractors was undertaken by an appointed panel to establish quality levels as part of the overall review. The aggregate of both price and quality from this two stage process resulted in a preferred contractor, Globe Management Services Limited, being chosen for this project and a contract had been entered into.

RESOLVED: That Members note that the tender submitted by Globe Management Services Limited had been accepted by the Operational Director Property Services, and a contract had been entered into, with a contract sum of £2,981,299.00.

Strategic Director
Corporate
Services

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE – 29 NOVEMBER 2007

CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO

ES52 DISCRETIONARY NON-DOMESTIC RATE RELIEF

Under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1988, the Authority is allowed to grant Discretionary Rate Relief to organisations who were either a charity or a non-profit making organisation. The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out details of an application for Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief from the Kingsway Bike Project, adjacent to 105 Kingsway, Widnes.

RESOLVED: That under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988 Discretionary Rate Relief be granted to the following organisation at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1st April 2007 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later, to 31st March 2009:

Kingsway Bike Project 100%.

Strategic Director
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REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy Performance Board

DATE: 8 January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Job Evaluation

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report progress on the implementation of the National Job Evaluation Scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

2.1 That the content of this report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 As the final stage of the Single Status Agreement, the Council is about to implement the outcomes for the recent pay and grading review. This process will have analysed and allocated a basic grade to all posts on Green Book terms and conditions.

3.2 To bring us to this point, a joint union/management workgroup was established which met on a weekly basis to determine various agreements in connection with the pay and grading review such as the new pay structure, the Appeals Procedure and pay protection.

3.3 Whilst the Joint Working Group was considering these matters, a team of Job Analysts interviewed all post holders, with their managers, for every job on Green Book terms and Conditions to analyse the job using the National Local Government Job Evaluation computerised scheme, which then allocated a score based on set criteria. Once agreement had been reached on the pay to point's line, these scores equate to a new HBC grade as detailed at appendix A.

3.4 Agreement has been reached on all the matters as detailed in paragraph 3.2 and the unions have consulted with both their regional and national offices regarding the outcomes of the evaluations and have balloted their membership to agree to the adoption of the new pay structure, the joint appeals process and the pay protection and other arrangements. UNISON and GMB received a positive Yes vote of 78% and 73% accordingly, to adopting the new pay structures. A Pay and Grading Framework Agreement has been drafted which will be signed by all parties.

3.5 It is now left to inform all staff and their managers of the outcomes of the Review and it is intended that this will be done by issuing letters for all affected employees to their managers, to be handed to their staff. It is expected that we will be in a position to do this mid-January 2008. However, due to the scale of the change affecting employees authority-wide and the number of changes which will need to be done to affect pay for those employees whose pay will change, it is envisaged people will not receive pay for their new grades and any back pay owing until March 2008.

3.6 These letters will also be accompanied by an information pack telling staff the full details of the Pay Agreement, how their job was assessed, what they should do if they wish to exercise their right of appeal etc. Divisional Managers will receive a summary of their staff's new grades, a few days before staff themselves are told.

3.7 Non-teaching jobs in schools have been dealt with in a slightly different way. A number of generic job descriptions for administrative and technical jobs, together with Midday Assistants, Kitchen Assistants/Cooks etc. have been evaluated and will be recommended to schools for adoption. Schools will be strongly advised to adopt these grades, or if they have jobs which do not fit these generic job descriptions, then to request a separate evaluation be complete. Some schools have already started this process and the J.E Team have briefed staff and evaluated jobs accordingly.

3.8 As the Pay and Grading review can only evaluate the basic grades for jobs, management and unions need to now consider how premium payments and local agreements such as consolidated rates will be dealt with and a separate negotiation will now commence to address such issues and ensure corporate consistency.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The implications on the pay policy are set out in detail in this report.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 The undertaking of the Pay and Grading Review will reduce the potential financial implications of the failure to eradicate any discriminatory pay practices from the Councils current pay arrangements.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 The Pay and Grading Review was undertaken to eradicate, as far as is possible, any bias in pay, related to gender and to best protect the Council from any tribunal claims. It reflects the councils approach to the payment of its male and female employees and the eradication of any discriminatory practices.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 The Council has made provision over recent years through the medium term financial planning process to deal with the eventualities of the Pay and Grading Review.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

Appendix A

The New Pay Structure

Grade	JE Score	Min SCP	Max SCP
HBC 1	Up to 280	4	8
HBC 2	281 – 325	9	13
HBC 3	326 – 370	14	17
HBC 4	371 – 414	18	21
HBC 5	415 – 458	22	25
HBC 6	459 – 502	26	29
HBC 7	503 – 546	30	33
HBC 8	547 – 590	34	37
HBC 9	591 – 635	38	41
HBC 10	636 – 679	42	45
HBC11	680+	46	49

REPORT TO: Corporate Services
Policy & Performance Board

DATE: January 8th 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Runcorn Town Hall Refurbishment

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report is to notify members that a presentation will be given at the meeting in respect of the Runcorn Town Hall refurbishment project.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 Members note that a presentation will be given in respect of the Runcorn Town Hall refurbishment project. The report will outline, the main objectives of the project, the extent of the works, the factors affecting the design, the overall programme, the budget and progress to date.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The decision to refurbish the accommodation at Runcorn Town Hall was approved at the full Council meeting dated 7th March 2007, minute number COU73, where a budget of £4m was agreed, £2.5m from 2007/08, and a further £1.5m from 2008/09. The above works are therefore in respect of implementing this decision.
- 3.2 The works are being carried out in accordance with the accommodation strategy approved by Executive Board on 25th January 2007 minute no EXB 77.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 See above.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

6.6 Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

The newly refurbished offices will contribute towards maximizing the use of space owned by HBC, thus allowing us to create significant revenue savings by vacating rented accommodation elsewhere.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy &
Performance Board

DATE: 8 January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Service Plans 2008-2011

WARDS: Borough wide

1. **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1. To enable Members to consider objectives and targets for services for the next three years.

2. **RECOMMENDED: that**

(1) the Board identifies any objectives and targets for the next three years that it wishes to see included in the Service Plans; and

(2) Board Members pass any detailed comments that they may have on individual draft Service Plans to the relevant Operational Director by 31 January 2008.

3. **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1. The Departmental Service Plans are currently being reviewed and rolled forward. They will go to Executive Board for approval on 21 February 2008, at the same time as the draft budget. This will ensure that decisions on Service Planning are linked to resource allocation.
- 3.2. Each Operational Director will make a brief presentation to the Policy and Performance Board describing the key factors affecting their service and their main objectives for the coming three years. In preparation for this discussion, Board Members may wish to consider:
- the three things they would most like to see each department address in the next three years; and
 - the three things they would most like to have regular performance reports on in relation to each department.

- 3.3. The departments reporting to Corporate Services PPB are:
- i. Financial Services
 - ii. Exchequer and Customer Services
 - iii. IT Services
 - iv. Policy & Performance
 - v. Property Services
 - vi. Hospitality and Stadium Services
 - vii. Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources
- 3.4. Detailed draft Service Plans will be made available electronically in early January for comment by individual Members. Comments should be made to the relevant Operational Director by the end of January 2008. If it is decided to hold a special meeting of the Board in late January or early February, to comment on the draft budget proposals, then, subject to the Chairman's consent, any comments or suggestions received on individual plans could be reviewed at that meeting.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1. Service Plans will clearly indicate how objectives and targets relate to the areas of focus identified in the Council's Corporate Plan.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1. Financial, IT, Property, and Human Resource implications are all identified within the individual Service Plans.

6. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- Children & Young People
 - Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
 - A Healthy Halton
 - A Safer Halton
 - Halton's Urban Renewal
- 6.1. The objectives in the Service Plans are intended to support the Council's priorities particularly that for effective and efficient service delivery.

7. RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1. Risk analysis of all key objectives within Service Plans is undertaken and summarised in the plan.

8. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1. All Service Plans will be subject to an equality impact assessment and any high priority implications will be summarised within the plans.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 8 January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Work Programme Progress Report

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on progress with work programme topics

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Board confirmed the work programme for 2007-08 on 5 June 2007. Progress with the four topics is as follows:

1. Learning from Complaints. Work is progressing in accordance with the project plan. A topic group meeting took place on 27 September (notes appended) and a further meeting will take place in January.
2. Development of Web-based Service delivery. The lead member and lead officer have met and developed a proposed focus for this work. This is summarised in the appendix.
3. Disabled Access to Council Buildings and Services. A summary of the findings of a tour of facilities is appended
4. Performance Management. There have been 2 meetings of the topic group, and work is proceeding in accordance with the project plan. A consultation with chairs took place on 4 December.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications arising directly from this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

There are no implications for the five priorities at this stage.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The only risk at this stage is failure to complete the topic work. Lead members and officers have been identified for each topic, and progress reports will be made to each meeting of the Board.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None at this stage.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
None		

APPENDIX 1

LEARNING FROM COMPLAINTS

The working group met in September to discuss the project brief and to review the progress that had been made to date. The group discussed the Council's approach to complaint handling and how it deals with service requests. It was agreed that the group would look further at the issue of customer care across the whole Council. It was suggested that the group look at how Halton Direct Link One Stop Shops and Contact Centre deal with service requests and complaints. It was also suggested that Officers and Members dealing with complaints should be trained in customer care.

A further topic for future consideration will be to assess whether sufficient information is provided to residents on how to complain at various service delivery points such as local recycling centres. It may also be possible to invite comments through messages on Council vehicles and uniforms or high visibility jackets.

The group considered the results of a survey of all those residents who had made a corporate complaint over the 12 month period 2006-2007. The results tended to confirm the levels of satisfaction recorded by the Best Value General Surveys of 2003 and 2006 in relation to complaint handling by the Council. The survey prompted a number of suggestions to improve customer satisfaction with the Corporate Complaints Procedure. These included the possibility of offering to visit all complainants as part of the investigation into their complaint, follow-up contact to gauge complainants' satisfaction, and how best to quality assure the content of written replies to complainants under the first stage of the procedure.

It was accepted that a system to ensure that the Council learns from complaints needed to be introduced. It was suggested that information should be provided to relevant PPBs about complaints received and action taken to avoid such complaints being repeated in the future. The PPBs may wish to set up a subgroup to review policy where they feel that lessons from complaints have not been fully absorbed.

The group also considered the results of a benchmarking survey of those local authorities who had shown the greatest improvement in customer satisfaction. It was agreed that more detailed examination would be undertaken on a "closing the loop" process developed by another authority.

The next meeting of the group would be held with staff from HDL and Contact Centre to gather information about their approach to customer care and to investigate the scope for obtaining further information and service requests from the CRM system.

Towards the end of the process a meeting would be arranged with the Communications and Marketing division when the recommendations of the

Group are beginning to take shape to discuss with them possible arrangements for promoting and publicising the complaints procedure, and any reputations impact that any changes to procedures might have.

APPENDIX 2

WEB-BASED SERVICES

1. The working party initiated a project to develop an on-line 24x 7 Web-based Members CRM solution.
2. The primary focus was to develop a secure internet based solution initially aimed at the needs of councillors within the member's surgery giving instant access to both an interactive on-line form and aspects of the current HDL service delivery solution such as client identification and basic case/transaction history. This will be linked to live client data and fully auditable allowing the instant creation of issues/complaints and the update of on going cases within the call centre for further action.
3. A fully functional application is now available on-line for test purposes and seeks approval by the working party. Again this is also open to wider comment from all Council Members wishing to trial this new solution.

The image displays two screenshots of the Halton Borough Council Members' Surgery Enquiries web application. Both screenshots show the same header with the Halton logo and '24 HOUR ONLINE HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL | RUNCORN & WIDNES'. The left screenshot shows the 'Members' Surgery Enquiries' page with a 'Contact Details' section containing various input fields for personal and property information. The right screenshot shows the 'Enquiry Details' section with a text area for providing details of the enquiry.

<https://haltoncommunities.org.uk/memberscsd>

APPENDIX 3

DISABLED ACCESS TO COUNCIL BUILDINGS AND SERVICES

Inspections of a number of council properties were undertaken with Cllr Bryant and Cllr Loftus on 29th August 2007. The purpose of the inspections was to gain an understanding of any outstanding issues regarding the accessibility of the council's buildings.

Following the inspections a summary of the key findings was produced. Areas of concern are listed below, these include:

- Remaining Physical Barriers
- Emergency Evacuation Procedures
- Disabled Toilet Facilities
- General First Aid/Fire Marshal's

One area of particular concern was the absence of evacuation chairs within refuge areas. In addition it was identified that appointed fire marshals were not instructed to accompany or assist persons within these refuge areas during an emergency situation.

Leisure Centres

Although the leisure centres have been leased to DC leisure, it was decided that an independent inspection of Kingsway Leisure Centre, Runcorn Swimming Pool and Brookvale Leisure Centre should be undertaken. Unfortunately due to ill health, Cllr Bryant was not available to attend these inspections. The inspections were completed on 12th September 2006. A number of key issues were identified, again specifically in the area of emergency evacuation and the use of evacuation chairs.

Our findings at the various leisure centres confirmed that due to DCL's strict policy in the event of a full-scale evacuation, the monitoring of refuge areas is not undertaken. In addition there is not a sweep of the building undertaken by fire marshals.

Although all leisure centre facilities are leased to DCL, it was agreed to invite the fire officer to attend all leisure centre premises in order to develop a policy regarding the evacuation of persons of limited mobility during a full-scale evacuation.

PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

To date the Corporate Services PPB Working Group responsible for reviewing the performance management topic have met twice, initially to agree the scope and project plan for the review and, secondly, to discuss the findings of the first four elements of the project plan, which have now been completed. These looked at issues previously raised by the Audit Commission relating to inconsistencies in the approach to service planning and linkages to corporate priorities, and how risk management was incorporated into service performance.

In respect of the linkages between service plans and corporate plans, referred to as the 'golden thread', evidence was found of good practice and overall it was acknowledged that the introduction of areas of focus against the corporate priorities had made it easier to establish the golden thread, but continued improvements are still being sought.

In terms of risk management, there is now a comprehensive register reducing the risk of wasted resources, further improvements are also being sought in this area to ensure that the registers are completed simultaneously with the service plans.

In addition, there was an issue over the timeliness of information. However, the more immediate issue is the need to determine what information is collected. It was determined that this needs to be more focused in terms of the information being monitored and reported so that it is more relevant to the audience it is designed to serve.

Consideration is to be given to the roles of the Strategic Directors, the PPBs and Executive Board portfolio holders in the planning and reporting process, in particular, determining responsibility for monitoring strategic and operational information.

A presentation was also given to the Topic Group on the essential features of service planning and performance information as identified by professional research organisations in this field, such as, the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA), the Local Government Information Unit (LGIU) and the Audit Commission. There are many recommendations, but it is stressed by these agencies that to try to include everything would lead to a complex document. It is better for each organisation to take the key elements that they require.

Additionally, the views of the PPB Chairs were sought at the Chairs Away Day on 6th December 2007. David Armin, Principal Consultant from the Improvement and Development Agency, (North and Midlands), was called in to provide background information relating to performance management, examples of good

practice, and details of the new challenges facing local government through the new performance management framework. The key issue for Members is the role of the Executive Board and the PPBs in order to:

1. Add value and reduce duplication by deciding who should view what performance information, and provide a level of information necessary to discharge duties effectively.
2. Establish how Members can make more effective use of scrutiny powers in relation to performance planning and information especially in relation to the six strategic priorities

Interviews have also taken place with members of the Corporate Performance Management Team. They were in agreement that, whilst there is still room for further improvement, substantial strides have taken place with regard to establishing a clearer 'golden thread' and improvements have been made to the risk management arrangements with further plans to ensure that it coincides more closely with the production of the service plans.

With regard to the management and reporting of information the Corporate Performance Management Team felt that a considerable amount of time is currently spent on the monitoring and reporting of performance, but it is less clear what action is being taken to address areas where targets are identified as failing.

Next Steps

During January 2008, it is intended that a questionnaire will be circulated to all Operational Directors responsible for the collation of the service plans in order to determine their view of the current performance management framework. Follow up interviews will also take place during this period if further information is required. A discussion paper will also be prepared for Management Team, and a meeting arranged with the Executive Board portfolio holder for performance.

The review is also looking at the extent to which new factors have affected the operational environment, including: the emergence of Local Area Agreements; the greater emphasis that has been placed upon evidencing the fact that public engagement and opinion have shaped the delivery of services; and the significant reduction in the number of statutory nationally prescribed performance indicators to 198.

An initial meeting has already taken place with the Performance and Standards Sub Group for the Local Strategic Partnership advising them of the review and interviews are under way with a number of individuals from this group. Additionally, the Head of Research and Intelligence for the Council will be interviewed to discuss the workings of the Data Observatory and how this might

help with the links between the reporting of the LAA performance indicators and the development of the Council's own performance management framework.

Two benchmarking exercises are also planned, one with a family group of authorities and one with a best practice authority to compare how they are dealing with current developments in relation to the above performance management issues. These will also take place during January 2008.

Consultations on a draft report are due in early February for reporting back a final draft to the Corporate PPB at the end of February.

REPORT: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 8th January 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
Work Programme 2007/8

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report is the first step in developing a work programme of Topics for the Board to examine in 2008/9. While the Board ultimately determines its own Topics, suggestions for Topics to be considered may also come from a variety of other sources in addition to Members of the Board themselves, including members of the Council's Executive, other non-Executive Members, officers, the public, partner and other organisations, performance data and inspections.
- 1.2 The key tasks for Board Members are:
- to suggest and gather Topic ideas on issues relevant to the Board's remit:
 - to develop and prioritise a shortlist of possible Topics for examination in 2007/8, bearing in mind the Council's agreed selection criteria (Annex 1):
 - to decide on a work programme of 2 to 4 Topics to be undertaken in the next municipal year.
- 1.3 A non-exhaustive list of initial Topic ideas is attached as Annex 2 to help prompt discussion. However, Members should not be inhibited from offering additional ideas of their own for discussion and prioritisation by the Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: that the Policy and Performance Board

- (1) Put forward and debate its initial suggestions for Topics to be included in the Board's 2008/9 work programme**
- (2) Develop and informally consult on a shortlist of its own and others' 2008/9 Topic suggestions ahead of the Board's meeting on February 26th, bearing in mind the Council's Topic selection criteria**
- (3) Decide at its February 26th meeting on a work programme of 2 to 4 Topics to be examined in 2008/9.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Annex 1 – Topic selection checklist

Annex 2 – Initial list of possible Topic ideas for discussion

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Topic Selection Checklist

This checklist leads the user through a reasoning process to identify a) why a topic should be explored and b) whether it makes sense to examine it through the overview and scrutiny process. More “yeses” indicate a stronger case for selecting the Topic.

#	CRITERION	Yes/No
<i>Why? Evidence for why a topic should be explored and included in the work programme</i>		
1	Is the Topic directly aligned with and have significant implications for at least 1 of Halton's 5 strategic priorities & related objectives/PIs, and/or a key central government priority?	
2	Does the Topic address an identified need or issue?	
3	Is there a high level of public interest or concern about the Topic e.g. apparent from consultation, complaints or the local press	
4	Has the Topic been identified through performance monitoring e.g. PIs indicating an area of poor performance with scope for improvement?	
5	Has the Topic been raised as an issue requiring further examination through a review, inspection or assessment, or by the auditor?	
6	Is the Topic area likely to have a major impact on resources or be significantly affected by financial or other resource problems e.g. a pattern of major overspending or persisting staffing difficulties that could undermine performance?	
7	Has some recent development or change created a need to look at the Topic e.g. new government guidance/legislation, or new research findings?	
8	Would there be significant risks to the organisation and the community as a result of <u>not</u> examining this topic?	

<i>Whether? Reasons affecting whether it makes sense to examine an identified topic</i>		
9	Scope for impact - Is the Topic something the Council can actually influence, directly or via its partners? Can we make a difference?	
10	Outcomes – Are there clear improvement outcomes (not specific answers) in mind from examining the Topic and are they likely to be achievable?	
11	Cost: benefit - are the benefits of working on the Topic likely to outweigh the costs, making investment of time & effort worthwhile?	
12	Are PPBs the best way to add value in this Topic area? Can they make a distinctive contribution?	
13	Does the organisation have the capacity to progress this Topic? (e.g. is it related to other review or work peaks that would place an unacceptable load on a particular officer or team?)	
14	Can PPBs contribute meaningfully given the time available?	

Annex 2

CORPORATE SERVICES PPB

Initial Topic ideas for 2008/9

The list below shows a number of initial ideas for Topics that could be examined as part of the PPB's 2008/9 overview and scrutiny work programme. These should be debated alongside any additional Topic ideas suggested at the PPB meeting, taking into account the criteria set out in the Topic Selection Checklist (Annex 1), with a view to producing a shortlist of Topics to be examined by Members during the next municipal year.

Customer focus

This would be a follow-on from the 2007/8 Topic on Complaints which is highlighting the wider issue of the need to sharpen further the Council's customer focus in dealing with the public.

Flexible working practices

This would take stock of, and explore ways to take forward, the Council's efforts to introduce more flexible and family-friendly working practices and achieve complementary improvements in productivity, job satisfaction and cost-effectiveness.

Markets and industrial units

This would review the Council's 'business' of owning and managing markets and industrial units within Halton and make recommendations for its future direction.

Access to services

This would examine the way people currently access Council services and might prefer to access them in the future: explore the impact and opportunities for better service access provided by changing technology and media, and pay special attention to people who are hard to reach and failing to access services they want and need.

This Topic would complement rather than duplicate two specialist but related Topics being undertaken in 2007/8:

- Access to services specifically by children and young people, and
- Disabled access to Council buildings and services

Transfer of redundant community assets

The government is encouraging local authorities to consider transferring redundant assets (especially land and buildings) to the community and voluntary sector where appropriate. This review would look at the emerging policy, examine the associated risks for both the council and community, and propose a set of criteria or principles against which individual proposals for asset transfer can be judged.

Note: in deciding their PPB's work programme, Members may want to bear in mind a suggestion from the recent Executive Board Awayday that PPBs could achieve a useful spread and balance in their work programme content by including a Topic in each of the following categories:

- A corporate or strategic Topic
- One regarding service delivery and/or highlighted through performance monitoring
- One of a topical nature of particular current interest to Members and the public.