

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 23 February 2010 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), A. Lowe (Vice-Chairman), E. Cargill, Dennett, Edge, D. Inch, Nolan, Norddahl and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors J. Bradshaw and Browne

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson, N. Goodwin, R. Mackenzie, W Rourke and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: None

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS30	MINUTES	
	<p>The Minutes from the meeting held on 3rd November 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.</p>	
CS31	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	<p>It was reported that no public questions had been received.</p>	
CS32	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	<p>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.</p> <p>Under Minute EXB62 the Board congratulated B Dodd and his team on an excellent report from the Audit Commission.</p> <p>Under Minute EXB47 Councillor Wainwright requested an update on the progress of the Property Services review. It was agreed that a written response would</p>	

be provided.

Arising from the discussion on ES31 the Board requested further information on how many Councillors had complied with the upgrade of IT request, has the authority been criticised for members who have not upgraded and have any Local Authorities been penalised for not being fully compliant by the deadline date. It was agreed that further information would be sought and sent to Members.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

CS33 SSP MINUTES

The Minutes of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board were submitted to the Board for consideration.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

CS34 HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL'S PEOPLE STRATEGY

The Board was advised that a People Strategy had been developed by a cross-directorate Working Group, which also included a representative from the Trade Unions. A People Strategy was founded upon the principle that developing their people best developed organisations. If people were well trained, were well-motivated and felt that they were being treated well, then good organisational performance would follow.

It was noted that a People Strategy provided an overarching strategy for how people would be deployed, managed and developed within the organisation and how they would be expected to behave. A key driver in the development of any People Strategy was the relationship between developing customer focused services and ensuring that there was an appropriate workforce in place to do this. Through the development of a People Strategy the organisation would be able to address leadership, skills development, recruitment and retention and pay issues in a structured and co-ordinated way.

The Strategy would also help plan for the future by providing a framework to assess current workforce and people management activity and identify any gaps that needed to be filled. The Strategy could then act as a forerunner to Directorate Workforce Development Plans, which provided information on operational/practical human resources requirements in greater detail.

It was the intention to launch the strategy prior to the implementation of the Council's new structures in April 2010.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Executive Board be recommended that the People Strategy for Halton Borough Council be adopted and implemented: and
- (2) an update report be brought back to the Board on the progress of the People Strategy Action Plan.

Strategic Director
Environment

CS35 USE OF RESOURCES TOPIC THEME PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received an update report on the progress to date by the Use of Resources Topic Group. The Group had met on two occasions. Its main focus was to look at the Council's approach energy management in buildings.

The Group had considered the following:-

received evidence from the Carbon Trust in terms of a good practice model for developing a strategic approach to energy management;

examined the Council's approach and received details of the Council's current policy and examined how it compared to the good practice model and to what extent the policy was fully implemented;

received details of the schemes implemented by the Council to reduce energy consumption;

looked at the implications arising from the Carbon Reduction Commitment;

examined the approaches to energy Management in Liverpool and Knowsley MBC;

examined the Council's approach to collecting baseline data and how effective the Council was at using data to monitor and reduce consumption;

received evidence of the approach to energy management at the Stadium which had resulted in a 24% reduction in consumption; and

examined the Council's approach to raising staff awareness of energy management.

The Group still needed to look at how IT impacts on the levels of energy consumption and opportunities, for reducing the impact, the potential for investing in renewable technologies, the Council's approach to financing energy management and the opportunities for securing external funding.

The Group had started to identify some preliminary recommendations and it was hoped to draft a report for the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS36 CORPORATE CUSTOMER SERVICE STANDARDS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which outlined a Corporate Customer Service Standards document for the Authority. The Customer Service Excellence Officers Group had implemented the following actions:-

- appointed a company called Customer Service Excellence Assessment Services to work with the Council in the pursuit of the Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence Standard;
- agreed a building block approach focussing attention on working towards developing Customer Services within the HDL and Revenue/Benefits, before attempting accreditation across the remainder of the Council's Services;
- were developing a Customer Services Communication Plan and Training Plan to raise awareness and ownership;
- developed a set of Corporate Customer Service Standards in relation to employees interactions with customers, to ensure efforts were focussed in the right direction;
- gathered information about existing standards from services within the Council and desk based research to gather information about Corporate Customer Care Standards from other authorities;
- produced a staff guide whilst further work was being

undertaken with the Corporate Training Section to incorporate standards into the in-house Customer Care Training Courses; and

- were developing an approach for monitoring the standards across the Council, which would give more precise consideration to the timing of e-mail and written responses.

At a meeting of the Customer Service Excellence Members Scrutiny Topic Group held on the 26th January 2010 Members approved the Standards subject to a paragraph being inserted to reflect the rights and expectations that staff could have of their customers. In addition, the Members Scrutiny Topic Group requested that the training for staff should have a two fold approach. As well as informing staff about the Standards and gaining feedback from them, practical training would be given to assist staff, particularly front line staff, in dealing with customers in a variety of practical situations. It was noted that some training of this nature was already provided but would be extended to ensure a wider staff coverage.

It was noted that the Council already had a good level of customer service but the Corporate Standard would help to build on the current position. It was proposed that the Corporate Customer Services Standards and Staff Guide be submitted to the Councils Executive Board for approval and to progress with the development of related communication, training and monitoring.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the draft Standards be approved with a view to presenting them to the Executive Board; and

(2) the Board continues to support the process to develop, promote and monitor the Standards, as part of gaining accreditation of the Cabinet Office Customer Service Excellence Standard as outlined in the report.

Strategic Director
Health and
Community

CS37 LOCALITY WORKING TOPIC PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which provided an update on the progress of the Locality Working Topic Group. Meetings of the Group had taken place on the 26th November and 15th December and the Group had considered the scope of the review, the lessons from the Neighbourhood Management

pilot and some of the options for taking forward locality working. The Group was also looking at whether and how any future arrangements might be supported from within existing resources. Key partner agencies would be invited to the next meeting to enable them to contribute their views to the review.

Arising from the discussion it was agreed that a special joint meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board and Business Efficiency Board be arranged in March 2010 to consider the Locality Working Group findings and to propose a recommendation to the Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a special joint meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board and Business Efficiency Board be arranged in March 2010 to consider the Locality Working Group findings and to propose a recommendation to the Executive Board

Strategic Director
Corporate and
Policy

CS38 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which provided information on the progress towards meeting Halton's Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets to September 2009.

It was noted that the revised LAA was signed off by the Secretary of State in June 2008. The LAA contained a set of measures and targets agreed by the Council, local partner agencies and the Government. There were 32 indicators within the LAA along with statutory and education and early years targets. The current Agreement covered the period April 2008 to March 2011.

It was further noted that the Agreement had been refreshed in March 2009 following a review with Government Office North West. It was not expected that there would be many significant changes to the Agreement except those areas affected by the downturn in the national economy. Of this the Government had identified a list of factors for which targets would be reviewed before the end of March 2010.

The Board was advised that attached as Appendix 1 was a report on progress to the 2009 – 2010 mid year which included those indicators and targets that fell within the remit

of this Board.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS39 CORPORATE COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT AUDIT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director Health and Community which reported the findings of the recent Corporate Community Engagement audit. The audit was designed to collate data of consultation and engagement on four levels:

Information giving
Consultation
Deciding together
Acting together

The data provided was considered against the analysis framework for measurement in terms of volume and quality of activity. The report provided a summary of the categories of activity being undertaken across the following four levels of participation: Information Giving, Consultation, Deciding Together and Acting Together.

It was acknowledged that corporately there was a need to map engagement activity and the following recommendations were suggested from the findings received:

- ongoing engagement activity could be shared as best practice and support strategic regulatory requirements;
- in respect of service planning, the Council should consider including involvement plans through service planning;
- the Council's consultation register should be modernised to provide a mechanism that serves as a corporate register and evidence base of engagement activity;
- the Council should strive to better coordinate and streamline activity both internally and with partners;
- the Council should consider how to strengthen and support the Councillor role in engagement; and
- there was a need to agree an approach under 'Duty to Promote Democracy' requirement and understand the strengthened powers for Members.

RESOLVED: That the Board

- (1) receive the report and audit findings; and
- (2) consider the arrangements for community engagement activity contributing to a co-ordinated corporate approach and supporting strategic requirements and assessments.

CS40 CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD WORK PROGRAMME 2010/11

The Board considered a report regarding the Work Programme for 2010/11 regarding possible Topics for inclusion in the next Municipal Year. It was agreed that the following topics would be included on the Work Programme:

- Markets
- Procurement
- Carbon reduction

RESOLVED: That the topics outlined above be included in the Boards Work Programme for 2010/2011.

(NB: Councillor Nolan declared a personal and prejudicial interest in the following item of business due to his wife being an employee of Halton Borough Council).

CS41 SICKNESS ABSENCE – 2ND QUARTER (1JULY – 30 SEPTEMBER 2009)

The Board considered a report which outlined the number of working days lost in the second quarter of 2009/10, outlining trends and patterns of sickness. It also included a report on comparative data from previous quarters, 2008/09 and 2009/10.

The following additional information was requested:

- comparative data be provided with a private sector company of a similar size and nature of business;
- further information, if available, on the increase in sickness levels within Children and Young People (non schools); and
- could future reports separate those days lost due to industrial injury from the total no of sickness days.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS42 2ND QTR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR 2009/10

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive on the Performance Management Reports for the second quarter 2009/10 against the service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for:

- Policy and Performance;
- Exchequer and Customer Services;
- Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resource Services;
- Financial Services;
- Property Services; and
- Stadium and Hospitality.

RESOLVED: That the 2nd quarter performance management reports be received.

CS43 3RD QTR PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR 2009/10

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive on the performance management reports for 3rd Quarter 2009/10 against the service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons factors affecting the services etc for:

- Policy and Performance
- ICT Services
- Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resource Services;
- Financial Services;
- Property Services
- Stadium and Hospitality

The following information was requested:

- the impact of the Mersey Gateway acquisition programme on industrial and commercial rent income; and
- that progress with the implementation of the International financial reporting standards (IFRS) is included in future Financial Services quarterly monitoring reports

RESOLVED: That the 3rd quarter management

reports be received.

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Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.