

CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 18 March 2014 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), Roberts (Vice-Chairman), E. Cargill, Dennett, S. Hill, C. Loftus, A. Lowe, N. Plumpton Walsh, G. Stockton and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillor A. McInerney

Absence declared on Council business: None

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

Also in attendance: One Member of the Public

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

CS38 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 22 January 2014 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

CS39 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

CS40 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board were attached at Appendix 1 for Members' information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CS41 SSP MINUTES

The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board were attached at Appendix 1 for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

CS42 BUSINESS PLANNING 2014 - 2017

Members were provided with an update on Business Planning for the period 2014-17 and were asked to consider the Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for services for this period that fell within the remit of this Policy and Performance Board (PPB).

It was reported that each Directorate developed a medium term business plan, in parallel with the budget that was subject to annual review and refresh. PPB input into the business planning process and the setting of priorities for the Directorate was an important part of this process. Key priorities for development or improvement for the various functional areas reporting to this PPB were presented to and considered by the Board in November 2013, from which the Draft Directorate Business Plans had been developed. Given the remit of this Board, Business Plans for Policy and Resources, Children and Enterprise (in respect of Property Services) and the Communities Directorate (in respect of Catering, Stadium and Registration Services) were presented for consideration.

Members were informed that plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2014.

Members noted that the plans needed to be kept under close scrutiny due to budget pressures and in light of this, the plans would be subject to annual review and refresh so they remained fit for purpose.

RESOLVED: That the Draft Business Plan be received.

CS43 CODE OF PRACTICE FOR ENFORCEMENT AGENCIES

The Board was asked to consider the Code of Practice for Enforcement Agencies and to agree a recommendation to Executive Board that it be adopted by the Council. This document was appended to the report at Annexe A.

The Board was advised that the Tribunals Court and Enforcement Act 2007 introduced a number changes, some of which would directly affect the work carried out by bailiffs,

who would be replaced by Enforcement Agents, to be employed by the Council from April 2014. The changes had been brought in partly as a result of complaints about lack of transparency in the recovery of debts, anomalies and inconsistencies in the charging of fees and variations in the manner in which debts could be recovered.

It was noted that the three main areas of change were:

- a) The introduction of a standard approach to the enforcement process;
- b) The introduction of fixed staged fees; and
- c) The introduction of standardised training and competency requirements.

Members were advised that the new approach should be much clearer and transparent for all parties and make the recovery process more structured and auditable.

Following Members' discussion it was noted that although the use of enforcement agencies for the removal of goods was rare, the Code of Practice was a legislative requirement, being adopted by all Local Authorities.

Members requested more information relating to the facts and figures of the use of enforcement agencies by the Council in the past. It was agreed that an update would be brought to the Board in 6 months' time which would include this information as well as information relating to any complaints, discipline and monitoring of the Code.

In the meantime the Board recommended the adoption of the Code of Practice to the Executive Board.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommend to the Executive Board the adoption of the Code of Practice for Enforcement Agencies.

CS44 LIVING WAGE

The Board was presented with an update on the progress of the Topic Group in considering the implementation of the Living Wage in Halton Council.

It was noted that due to the most recent meeting of the Topic Group being held on 11 March, an update report was tabled for Members at this meeting, as the findings from the Topic Group meeting were not available in time for the publication of the agenda for this meeting of the Policy and

Performance Board.

The Board was advised that the Topic Group had met on three occasions and deliberated upon the possibility of implementing the Living Wage in Halton Council and the impact that this would have on the Council. The key areas that were thoroughly examined were:

- Affordability;
- Equal pay implications;
- Impact of differentials;
- Views of the Trade Unions; and
- Application of Living Wage.

The Topic Group had made its recommendations as outlined in the report. It was noted that due to the budgetary implications of those recommendations and the fact that there was currently no provision to meet them, if the Board wished to support those recommendations, then they would need to be considered by the Budget Working Group before they could progress further.

Members discussed the report and agreed that the Living Wage should be implemented and supported the recommendations of the Topic Group. However, they also recognised that due to budgetary restraints the recommendations would have to be considered by the Budget Working Group. The Board agreed therefore, that the Living Wage should be implemented subject to consideration by the Budget Working Group and as soon as resources became available.

RESOLVED: That, subject to the matter being referred to the Budget Working Group to determine whether the proposal was affordable and how and when it might be financed, the Board supported the Topic Group's recommendations, namely:

1. That the Council introduce a 'supplement' to any pay grade that currently sat below the Living Wage rate of £7.65 per hour; and
2. That the Living Wage be paid to those with permanent contracts and to those 'Casual Workers' who undertook the same roles and duties as permanent staff.

CS45 ENERGY EFFICIENCY

The Board was presented with an update on progress on the Council's Carbon Management Plan and the wider activity to reduce Co2 emissions across the Borough.

The Board was advised that according to the National and Local Policy Framework, the UK Climate Change Act 2008 required an 80% cut in the UK's carbon emissions by 2050 including an interim target of a 34% reduction by 2020 (over a 1990 baseline). This reduction in carbon emissions would also be driven by expected rising fossil fuel costs over the long term. The UK's decarbonisation agenda was also supported by a range of other legislation, strategies and policies including:

- UK Renewable Energy Strategy;
- Energy Act 2008;
- Low Carbon Transition Plan; and
- Carbon Reduction Commitment Scheme (CRC)

Further, the Board was informed that this national framework provided the context for the City Region's and Halton Council's local policy framework for dealing with climate change and sustainable energy issues relating to: Liverpool City Region Sustainable Action Plan; The Council's Corporate Plan; Sustainable Community Strategy; and the Council's Carbon Management Plan.

Officers reported that since the National Indicator Set was abolished, there were no national indicators for measuring the performance around carbon reduction. However, the Council was required to report the Greenhouse Gas emissions from its own activities, to the Department of Energy and Climate Change (DECC) annually.

The report highlighted the areas of the Council's estate which had been included in the Carbon Management Programme in 2008 and presented some results from the activities implemented to date. Where investment had been made in energy efficient projects, the projects had paid for themselves in the short to medium term and on-going savings were still being achieved or long term income streams had been developed through investment in renewable technologies, taking advantage of the Feed In Tariff and Renewable Heat Incentive. The Carbon Management Plan set a local target to reduce emission from the Council's estate of between 5-10% by 2013 from a 2006/07 baseline. Latest data showed there had been an

overall reduction in emissions of 7% from the 2006/07 baseline to 2012/13. This equated to a reduction from 26,338 tonnes of Co2e to 24,451 tonnes of Co2e.

It was noted that the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) was a new mandatory carbon emissions scheme that began in April 2010. The Council had been a participant in Phase 1 of the Scheme which ran from 2010 to 2014. It was noted that Phase 2 would commence in 2014 but Council would not be a participant as consumption did not meet the qualifying criteria. This would result in an annual on-going saving of around £70,000 from 2015/16.

Reference was also made to the on-going work related to the Liverpool City Region Sustainability Energy Action Plan, particularly the opportunity to develop a decentralised Heat Network around East Runcorn. Funding had been secured from the Heat Network Unit set up by the DECC to carry out a detailed feasibility study for the East Runcorn Area.

Members discussed the Carbon Management Plan and the possibilities of energy saving in the future.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS46 SCRUTINY TOPIC GROUPS 2014-15

Members were requested to consider a work programme for the Corporate PPB for Scrutiny Topic Group subjects for 2014-15.

RESOLVED: That the Board consider the Scrutiny Topics they would like to focus on for the year 2014-15 and advise the Operational Director – Legal and Democratic Services.

Councillor Norman Plumpton Walsh declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item as he was a gym member of DL Leisure.

CS47 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS - Q3

The Board received the performance management reports for quarter 3 of 2013/14 and were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification, in respect of performance management for the third quarter period to 31 December 2013.

The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Corporate Policy and Performance

Board and were in relation to the Council's priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency:

- Financial Services;
- Human Resources & Organisational Development;
- ICT and Administrative Support;
- Legal and Democracy;
- Policy and Performance;
- Property Services; and
- Catering, Stadium and Registration Services.

It was noted that the reports detailed progress against service objectives, milestones and performance targets and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period.

With reference to income, fees and charges, one Member requested information specific to income from the allotments. It was agreed that the Chairman of the Business Efficiency Board would look at this and report back to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the Policy and Performance Board notes the performance management reports for quarter 3 of 2013-14.

Meeting ended at 7.30 p.m.