

## CORPORATE POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Corporate Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 2 November 2021 in the Council Chamber - Town Hall, Runcorn*

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chair), Philbin (Vice-Chair), Hutchinson, P. Lloyd Jones, A. Lowe, G. Stockton, Angela Teeling, Wainwright and Wall

Apologies for Absence: Councillor N. Plumpton Walsh

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, C. Hill, I. Leivesley, E. Dawson, G. Ferguson, S. Baker, P. Garnett, L Pennington-Ramsden and J. Yates

Also in attendance: None

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

*Action*

*The Board took part in a minute's silence in honour of Councillor Howard, who had sadly passed away last month. The Chair paid tribute to him on behalf of members and colleagues.*

#### CS16 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 7 September 2021 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### CS17 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

#### CS18 EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES

The Board was presented with the Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which had been considered by the Executive Board since the last meeting of this Board.

RESOLVED: That the Minutes be noted.

## CS19 MEMBER DEVELOPMENT GROUP NOTES

The Board considered the minutes of the Member Development Group meeting held on 15 July 2021.

The Board discussed:

- the possibility of future Member Induction Days being held in the evening and also including a tour of the Borough; and
- future Member seminars relating to planning and the Liverpool City Region.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

## CS20 ENERGY/CARBON REDUCTION UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an update on related activities aimed at reducing the Council's impact on the environment and CO2 emissions from Council activities. The Council started to measure its baseline for carbon emissions in 2006/7, emissions stood at 26338 tonnes of CO2. For 2020/21, the overall emissions had reduced to 9770 tonnes, a further reduction of 13.9%. To date, since 2008, the Council had reduced its carbon footprint by a total of 43%. The report highlighted the key figures for this year across each Council sector and provided an update on the following initiatives:

- street lighting LED programme;
- roof top solar on Council buildings and biomass boilers at Brookvale Leisure Centre and Norton Priory;
- solar farm on the former St Michael's Golf Course;
- public Sector Decarbonisation Fund;
- transport projects; and
- the Council's Climate Change Action Plan

Arising from the discussion, the Board:

- requested further information on the street lighting quality corridor and the street lights in the Hough Green Ward;
- discussed the Council plans to install electric car charging points and requested that Ward Councillors are included in future public consultation exercises around the location of these points; and
- commented that, where possible, consideration should also be given to including electric car

charging points as part of future planning applications.

RESOLVED: The report and the ongoing work be noted.

CS21 CORPORATE ACCIDENT / INCIDENT REPORT 1.4.21 TO 31.8.21

The Board was provided with a report from the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented details of corporate accident statistics with associated trends, from 1 April 2021 to 31 August 2021.

Officers commented that the report highlighted the national and local health and safety information, and together with performance and incident trends, these formed the basis for the recommended actions for 2019/20. In order to be proactive in health and safety management the report also indicated the number of completed risk assessments.

The report highlighted:

- Covid-19 still remained as the focal point for a large part of Local Authority working as the Council moved towards a cautious return to office buildings for some staff;
- Covid risk control measures were still in place across the authority to protect staff with the added protection of requests to regularly test and encouragement to take up the offer of vaccination. There was also the continued availability of the wellbeing programmes and courses;
- there was continued demand for personal protective equipment with central distribution still available;
- the pandemic reflection on this report showed a significant reduction in accidents and violent incidents compared to pre-pandemic years;
- lone working contact centre monitoring – registered users had increased from the same period as last year but actual use had decreased. An audit was currently taking place to understand non-use;
- fire audits were being actioned across all corporate buildings; and
- a review of security risk assessments for the 4 main council buildings as also taking place in light of the forthcoming Martyn's Law.

The Board discussed Member surgeries and it was suggested that when they re-commenced in the community,

risk assessments could be carried out. Also near misses – staff would be reminded of the reporting procedures for near misses in the next staff safety bulletin.

Strategic Director  
– Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

## CS22 CORPORATE COMPLAINTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Enterprise, Community and Resources, which provided an analysis of Corporate Complaints received during the 2020/21 financial year.

The report outlined the two stage procedure to deal with corporate complaints; a corporate complaints trend analysis from 2012 to 2021; the nature of those complaints received and outcomes. In addition, the report also provided a summary on complaints and queries that had been received by the Local Government Ombudsman during 2020/21. It was noted that the Ombudsman had made 17 decisions during the year and upheld 6 complaints.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted.

## CS23 PROGRESS UPDATES REGARDING THE DISCRETIONARY SUPPORT SCHEME, DISCRETIONARY HOUSING PAYMENTS AND UNIVERSAL CREDIT

The Board received an update regarding the delivery of the Discretionary Support Scheme (DSS), Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) and Universal Credit (UC).

With regard to the DSS, it was in its ninth year of operation. During 2020/21, 610 awards were made totalling £170,554. In addition it was noted that during the first half of 2021/22 (1 April to 30 September) the DSS had made 162 awards with a total value of £66,592. An analysis of applications by type and awards granted was set out in the report.

In respect of DHP, Members were advised that in 2020/21 grant funding of £527,810 was received and actual expenditure totalled £527,810 representing 1,645 DHP awards. This compared with 2019/20 where 1,391 awards were made and a total expenditure of £469,579. It was reported that the increase in the number of awards and total expenditure compared to the previous year had been caused by an increase in Government funding of £58,223. In 2021/22 the Council had received DHP grant funding of £394,099 which was a reduction of £133,711 compared to

the previous year.

In addition, Members received an update on the numbers of Halton residents claiming UC in Halton. According to the DWP as at 12 August 2021 there were 15,968 Halton residents now claiming UC. The report provided details on the UC caseload in Halton since April 2015.

It was agreed that a Working Party would be set up to review the DSS criteria for awarding payments.

RESOLVED: That the latest position regarding the Discretionary Support Scheme, Discretionary Housing Payments and Universal Credit, be noted.

Strategic Director  
– Enterprise,  
Community and  
Resources

#### CS24 COLLECTION FUND PROGRESS REPORT

The Board received a report on the Council's Collection Fund position on council tax and business rates. For the Year to 31 March 2022 it was currently forecast the income generated from council tax and business rates would be in line with budgeted expectations.

It was noted that the 2020/21 council tax net collectible debit (the billed amount) was £69.512m, to date £37.940m of this had been collected which resulted in a collection rate of 54.58%, down by 0.69% on the same period last year.

Members were advised that comparing the in-year collection rate to the same period last year was arguably misleading due to the number of payment deferral plans which were agreed due to the impact of the Covid pandemic. A more meaningful comparison would be the same period in 2019 which showed a decrease of 0.47% to the collection rate.

As well as in-year collections the Council also actively pursued council tax debt from previous years. For the year to date the Council had collected £1.116m of old year debt. This enabled the Council to reach the target council tax collection rate of 96%, used in setting the Council's net budget. For a number of years this had been set at 97% but had been reduced to the unknown impact of the pandemic.

In addition the report provided an update on the:

- Council Tax Reduction Scheme up to 30 September;
- Business Rates Position Statement up to 30

- September;
- Covid19 – Business Rate Reliefs; and
- Collection Fund Recovery Procedures.

RESOLVED: That the latest position regarding the Collection Fund be noted.

## CS25 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS FOR QUARTER 2 OF 2021/22

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director - Enterprise, Community and Resources, which presented the Performance Monitoring Report for Quarter 2 of 2021/22.

The reports related to the following functional areas which reported to the Board and detailed progress against service objectives and milestones and performance targets, and provided information relating to key developments and emerging issues that had arisen during the period:

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

The Board:

- discussed the issues around recruitment of staff;
- thanked the ICT team for all their excellent work over the past months; and
- congratulated the Market staff for their fantastic work organising the recent craft market.

RESOLVED: That the Quarter 2 Performance Monitoring reports be received and noted.

*Meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.*