

EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING AND SKILLS, AND COMMUNITY POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Employment, Learning and Skills, and Community Policy and Performance Board on Monday, 29 January 2024 in the Boardroom - Municipal Building, Widnes

Present: Councillors Jones (Chair), Teeling (Vice-Chair), Ball, Garner, Hutchinson, Rowe, Ryan and Stretch

Apologies for Absence: Councillors C. Plumpton Walsh and Wall

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, P. Wright and J. Gallagher

Also in attendance: None

ITEMS DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

ELS26 MINUTES

The Minutes from the meeting held on 20 November 2023, were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

ELS27 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

ELS28 THE CORPORATE PLAN - THE BIG CONVERSATION ANALYSIS AND THE WAY FORWARD

The Board received a report of the Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit, which gave an update on 'The Big Conversation', since it was presented at the last meeting in November 2023.

The consultation closed on 30 November 2023. The report outlined the engagement results of the consultation, broken down into age groups and presented the methods used and areas the consultation had reached, which included many stakeholders and partners.

It was noted that there was a high level of agreement

on the suggested themes within the consultation. It was evident however that the addition of a 6th theme was required to encompass areas such as: environment, open and green spaces and the protection of these, litter, overgrowth and weeds, regeneration, business, economy, growth support and town centres, housing and supported living. It was proposed that these would come under '*Place and Community*'.

The timeline for the new Corporate Plan was provided and its launch was scheduled for April 2024. All Elected Members of the Council had been emailed to advise of the qualifying statements devised for each priority/theme. These would also be made available to the public, employees and residents, who would now be given the opportunity to provide feedback on these statements, which set out what each priority would aim to achieve over the next 5 years.

The public consultation on the qualifying statements was open from 19 January to 26 January and was being shared via social media and drop-in sessions in the libraries and Direct Links in Runcorn and Widnes.

The following additional information was given in response to Members questions:

- The feedback for the qualifying statements was now received and a 10- page document explaining the detail of each of the priorities would be added;
- This 10-page document will be shared and promoted amongst stakeholders – Elected Members, residents, Halton's workforce and businesses once it was approved;
- A detailed Workforce Plan would then be written for staff to work to, containing business plans and KPI's for example; and
- The Corporate Plan is linked to the reimagine Halton agenda and the Transformation agenda.

Members discussed the timeline for the launch of the new Corporate Plan and raised concerns that the full Plan would not have been scrutinised by Members before it was launched. Specifically, they were concerned that the detail of the full plan would not be known until after the Council meeting in March, where the Plan was being approved. The Board also requested an opportunity to scrutinise the full document at Policy and Performance Board's in the future.

Officers would explore the possibility of sharing the

10-page document with all Members prior to approval of the Plan at the Executive Board meeting in February.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) concern was expressed with regards to the lack of time for scrutiny of the full Corporate Plan. Therefore, the Board declined to endorse the approach to facilitate the implementation of a new Corporate Plan. Members felt that it was essential that Policy and Performance Boards were able to scrutinise the full Corporate Plan before its presentation to full Council.

ELS29 PRESENTATION - COMMUNITY & GREENSPACE DEPARTMENT

The Board received a presentation from the Operational Director of Community and Greenspace, on developments that had taken place within that Department over the past two years and how they were contributing to the Council's strategic aims.

The Community and Greenspace Department comprised 4 areas:

- Environmental Services;
- Leisure Services;
- Community Safety and Protection; and
- Stadium and Catering Services.

The presentation covered several areas of interest within each of the above services, including how the structural changes that had been made had aligned services to the various Member Portfolios and streamlined management arrangements to create a more focused service delivery.

The following highlights were discussed:

- An additional stage had been built for the Stadium, to accommodate smaller events such as tribute and comedy nights; this was also portable so could be used indoors and outdoors;
- The cessation of the schools meals service by 31 March 2025 was discussed;
- A restructure of the Stadium and Catering services to form a new division was currently underway. Although staff would be put at risk, there were

enough job vacancies for those staff who wanted them;

- Widnes Cemetery was now full – an opening ceremony for the one in Peel House Lane would take place in Spring 2024;
- Further work around increasing the amount of recycling in the Borough was being undertaken, as well as looking at reducing contamination;
- The importance of the Borough's libraries to Halton's communities; and
- An Enforcement Team of 4 staff is being put into place who would patrol open spaces and parks and would issue fines for littering and dog mess/control offences.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and information noted.

Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.