

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 8 September 2009 in the Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), A. Lowe (Vice-Chairman), J. Bradshaw, Browne, E. Cargill, Dennett, Edge and D. Inch

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Nolan, Norddahl and Wainwright

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Reaney, G. Ferguson, R. Mackenzie, N. Mannion, P. Searing, A. Villiers and J. Yates

Also in attendance: N/A

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
CS13	MINUTES	
	The Minutes from the meeting held on 2 nd June 2009 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
CS14	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	It was reported that no public questions had been received.	
CS15	EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the Executive Board and the Executive Sub-Committee relating to the work of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board since its last meeting were submitted for information.	
	Arising from the discussion on Minute ES3 it was agreed that the Board be provided with further information regarding the merger of building societies which resulted in the Council exceeding its limit with Nationwide Building Society.	Operational Director Financial Services
	RESOLVED: That the Board be provided with further	

information on the merger of building societies that resulted in the Council exceeding its limit with Nationwide Building Society.

CS16 SSP MINUTES

There are no SSP minutes for this meeting.

CS17 DISABLED ACCESS TO PUBLIC BUILDINGS

The Board received an update report on the current position with regard to disabled access and the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) compliance with regard to public buildings. The BVPI 156 'Buildings Accessible to People with a Disability' was introduced in 2000/01 in order to monitor the improvement of access to local authority buildings for disabled people. The indicator was formally withdrawn following the 2007/08 submission, however, Property Services had a local indicator PYSLI 12 which replaced it, together with a service objective (PSO7) which measured DDA compliance with regard to public buildings.

The percentage of public buildings which now complied with BVPI 156 and the subsequent local indicator PYSLI 12 had risen from 25% in 2003/04 to 72% in 2008/09, the target for 2009/10, which the Council was confident could be achieved was 75%.

The Board noted that service objective PS07 was at the stage where all Priority 1 work had been completed where necessary together with over 60% of necessary priority 2 works. The target for March 2010 was that 90% of Priority 2 works would be completed, following which a review of the remaining works would be undertaken as many of the Priority 3 items had already been carried out in conjunction with other works.

It was reported that over the past few years the available funds to address disabled access and DDA issues in public buildings had had a massive impact on improving compliance. This was evidenced by the significant increase in the percentage of buildings which now complied with the indicators. However, improving the percentage would become increasingly difficult due to the nature of some of the buildings where compliance was extremely difficult to achieve, as such it was important to continue with the funding stream.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) a further report be provided later in the year containing a list of all Council buildings detailing their priority (ie 1, 2 or 3), the current position with regard to disabled access and DDA compliance.

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CS18 MARKETS UPDATE

The Board received an update on the current position with regard to Halton's Markets and the work being undertaken by the Market's Topic Group, chaired by Councillor Wainwright.

It was noted that over the past few years Halton Markets had been operating in an increasingly competitive environment. This was having an impact on trader numbers and Council income. Whilst Widnes Market was well occupied, many traders under pressure. To assist this, the Council had given the traders a 10% reduction in rent and frozen the rent increase of 2.5% that was due in April 2009. This had helped the traders and the numbers leaving had now stopped and some new traders were appearing. The rent arrears were also reducing with payment plans in place to eliminate all arrears.

With regard to Runcorn Market, whilst its position had stabilised at a lower level, rents were still at half standard rates. Various initiatives had been tried but with little improvement coming through. There was a core of Committee Traders who worked closely with the Market Management. As a result of the problems with the indoor market and the general economic downturn in trade, it was felt a radical solution was required. The Member's Working Party was set up to look at ways to improve the situation to ensure the Borough, its residents, and visitors continued to enjoy the benefits of vibrant markets.

Consequently, the Working Party had supported the introduction of a Street Market in Runcorn and assisted in its setting up to increase the social and financial vitality of the area. The Market had proved a great success in the first few weeks. It was now in the process of establishing itself with small lettings, increasing from 23 to 36 and over 20 different commodities currently on offer. Primarily due to the positive views and rental levels at a rate that encouraged traders to

stay there was a waiting list of 23 applications.

Whilst the Street Market had only had a partial positive impact on the indoor market, the Town Centre had seen a large increase in visitors on a Tuesday, with many of the local retailers benefiting and complaints have been minimal. In the short term the venture may break even, but in the longer term as the market becomes more established, it could show a profit.

The Working Party was continuing to examine further aspects of the operation of both markets and additional reports would be brought to the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

CS19 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT PROGRESS
REPORT

The Board received a presentation from Councillor Swain, Executive Member for Quality and Performance Portfolio and Mr. N. Mannion, Neighbourhood Director on progress developing Neighbourhood Management in Halton over the past six months.

The Presentation provided:

- a brief overview of the Government's expectations and the key objectives to narrow the gap between our communities in Halton, promoting effective and efficient use of resources whilst facilitating greater resident involvement;
- how and why the three pilot neighbourhoods were chosen. The three pilot areas were Central Widnes, Hallwood Park and Palacefields and Castlefields and Windmill Hill;
- how the Halton Neighbourhood Management Partnership was structured and operated;
- Halton's approach to developing neighbourhood management – the key tools and techniques being utilised to narrow the gap. A number of examples of how using these had worked in the pilot areas, including home safety and tackling arson in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Services, men's health projects (1 & 2), raising aspirations: Aim Higher Programme, targeting Year 8 and Year 9 pupils

and their families, addressing worklessness through Pilot HaltonNet and the delivery of employment and training and skills services; and

- the future challenges and opportunities for Neighbourhood Management, which included the current funding source for Neighbourhood Management ending in March 2010.

Arising from the discussion, Councillor Inch requested that it be minuted that she would have preferred a copy of the presentation report earlier than at the meeting. It was also requested that a financial breakdown of the Neighbourhood Management service be provided to Board members.

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RESOLVED: That the report and presentation be noted.

CS20 THE FUTURE OF LOCALITY WORKING IN HALTON

The Board received a report which outlined three options for sustaining the development of locality working beyond March 2010.

The three options, containing an outline of the pros and cons of each were considered as follows:

Option 1

Complete closedown, disband the Neighbourhood Management Team and the Boards. Whilst this was the case with over 90% of SRB Programmes, there were only two known examples of this course being adopted from Neighbourhood Management elsewhere (Chelmsleywood (Solihull) and Gospel Oak (London Borough of Camden)).

Option 2

Transfer of the Neighbourhood Management Partnership to a third sector/charitable host/accountable body. This option had been pursued in other districts where there was an existing community development trust, or tenants management organisation in the locality that already had significant capital assets. Examples included Tranmere

and Rock Ferry (Lairdside Trust) and Blacon in Chester.

Option 3

Development of wider more systematic or targeted locality working and community engagement arrangements across the whole borough based on the Area Forum Footprint. The learning from local neighbourhood management pilots was being used to develop this type of option in the majority of other local authority areas that have had neighbourhood management pilots. Arrangements commonly had varying degrees of intensity between localities across the local authority area depending upon places level of need/deprivation. An example of this could be found in St. Helens. Specific localities were targeted but sit within a Borough-wide strategic locality-working framework.

Members made the following observations on the information presented

- in Option 3 the words Area Forum Footprint should be amended to read Area Forum Model;
- the Board requested precise costs of developing a wider more systematic or targeted locality working and community engagement arrangements across the whole Borough based on the Area Forum Model (Option 3) before considering approval;
- the Council was currently going through a restructure process and consideration needed to be given to this;
- a Working Party needed to be set up to consider locality working in more depth; and
- further information was requested on how the deprivation gap had been bridged in the Neighbourhood Management areas.

RESOLVED: That the Executive Board be recommended to accept Option 1 – complete closedown, and a Working Party be set up with the Business Efficiency Board to consider the future of locality working in Halton.

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CS21 WORK PROGRAMME 2009/10

The Board had previously agreed that the Use of National Resources topic should form part of their Work Programme for 2009/10.

The topic was very broad and in order to identify those areas with the most need for/offering the greatest scope for improvement, the Board considered a report which provided an overview of the current baseline in terms of Halton's approach to green issues.

The report identified the following areas for the Board to consider investigating further:

Energy – green audit of data centre/computer rooms;

Energy – operational buildings (excluding schools)

- school buildings
- street lighting; and

Procurement – use case studies of high spending areas to identify scope for minimising environmental impact with a view to developing a sustainable procurement strategy.

RESOLVED: That the following Use of Natural Resources priority areas for closer scrutiny as part of the work programme for 2009/10 be approved with the membership detailed:

Procurement – Councillor Gilligan Chairman, Councillors Inch, Norddahl, Browne, Edge, Lowe and Cargill.

Buildings and Machinery – Councillor Lowe, Chairman, Councillors Inch, Browne, Bradshaw, Cargill and Norddahl.

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CS22 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board received a report from the Chief Executive on the performance management reports for First Quarter 2009/10 against the Service Plan Objectives and Performance Targets, Performance Trends/Comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for:

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

The Board, in considering these reports, identified areas of interest or concern as detailed below:

- Exchequer and Customer Services; the Board congratulated Exchequer Services on its recent collection rates for Council Tax and Business Rates.

- Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources Services: The Board were advised that training sessions on sickness monitoring had taken place for 200 managers throughout the Council and the programme was being rolled out to schools. Before the next Board meeting it was requested that sickness absence figures for school staff be provided as well as a breakdown of sickness by Council Directorate including long-term and more casual absences. Also additional information on sickness absences due to industrial accidents be provided.

RESOLVED: That the First Quarter Performance Management Report be received.

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Meeting ended at 8.37 p.m.