

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 17 January 2012
at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), Wallace (Vice-Chairman), A.Cole, Edge, Fraser, J. Gerrard, M Lloyd Jones, M. Ratcliffe, N.Plumpton Walsh, Shepherd, Thompson and Mr Hodson

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, H Coen, L. Derbyshire, D. Houghton, A. McNamara, P. McWade, H. Moir and T. Ryan

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order 33 – Councillor D Cargill – Portfolio Holder Community Safety.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
SAF29 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 November 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF30 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF31 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS	
The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources regarding the Second Quarter Monitoring Reports of 2011/12, to September 2011. The report detailed progress against service objectives / milestones and performance targets and described factors affecting the service for:-	
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communities Directorate – Community Safety, Drug & Alcohol Action Teams, Domestic Violence and Environmental Health (Extracts); and	

- Area Partner indicators from the Police, Fire and Probation Services were stated, where available.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF32 DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members an update in relation to the activities being supported across the Borough in response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Board was advised that domestic violence was a serious and high-volume crime. It was a pattern of controlling and abusive behavior, held together by the threat and use of violence. It was reported that domestic violence was widespread, approximately every minute in England and Wales, the police received a call for assistance. In addition, one in four women and one in six men had experienced domestic violence.

The Board was further advised that domestic violence killed and at least two women were murdered by their current or former partner every week in the UK. The estimated cost of domestic violence in England and Wales in 2008 was £18 billion.

Furthermore, it was reported that Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) Strategic Group had been established to provide overall direction, control management and guidance for the response to Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence within Halton. It acted as a multi-agency Partnership Board of lead officers and key representatives, which undertook strategic decisions aimed at tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence in their widest forms and provided support to all victims within our area. In addition, it was reported that the Forum was responsible for determining and implementing policy, coordinating activity between agencies, and facilitating training. It evaluated the responses locally for victims, children living in households where domestic violence was a feature and also considered provision for perpetrators.

The report summarised that Halton had an active approach to preventing future abuse and reducing risks to victims and involved victims and survivors in service improvement. The report highlighted that there had been a slight increase in the number of domestic abuse incidents being reported to Cheshire Police of five cases compared to the same period last year. In addition, the Crown

Prosecution Service; Pre charge cases were down by 28% compared to the same period last year and the number of defendants was also down on Quarter Two last year (133) by 57%. In addition, it was reported that successful prosecutions were also considerably better than that recorded in the same period last year.

The Board noted the success of the Halton Survivors of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Conference in support of 'The White Ribbon Campaign', which had been opened by Derek Twigg MP and closed by Councillor Shaun Osborne.

The Chairman reported that the conference had been a great success and he took the opportunity to place on record the Board's gratitude to local community groups who had actively been engaged in addressing this issue over the last few years. He reported that the main cause of domestic abuse in Halton was as a result of alcohol abuse.

The Board noted the number of repeat offenders (mainly because of alcohol abuse) in the Borough and the link with domestic violence incidents. It was also noted that alcohol abuse needed to be addressed in a targeted way.

The Board also noted that males were less likely to report incidents of domestic violence than females and that this was a national issue.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF33 SANCTUARY SCHEME POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members information on the development of the Halton Sanctuary Scheme Policy and presented the draft report.

The Board was advised that a holistic Domestic Abuse Support Service had been commissioned in December 2009, and included the provision of a Sanctuary scheme for victims of Domestic Abuse across all tenure within Halton.

The Board was further advised that the Sanctuary Scheme provided enhanced security for victims of domestic abuse through the installation of Sanctuary measures following a property risk assessment.

It was reported that at the Housing Partnership meeting held in April 2011, discussions had taken place regarding proposals for efficiencies which may be made and areas where gaps in service provision may be met by partner agencies. In addition, it was reported that efficiencies were proposed from the Sanctuary element of the Domestic Abuse Support Service. The proposals included focussing the commissioned service on the provision of Sanctuary measures for people living within private sector housing, and for Registered Social Landlords (RSL's) to be responsible for the installation of Sanctuary measures within their properties.

Furthermore, it was reported that Halton Borough Council was currently working with RSL's to develop and implement Halton's Sanctuary Policy which would ensure a consistent approach was taken to the assessment of need and standards of Sanctuary measures provided.

It was reported that the draft policy attached at Appendix A to the report had been circulated to the Housing Partnership for comment.

In conclusion, it was reported that a further report would be presented to the Board at its meeting on 13 March 2012. The report would detail statistics including a breakdown of the cost, type and number of sanctuary measures and the number of service users resident in the Borough after Sanctuary measures had been installed.

The Chairman welcomed the report and took the opportunity to thank Officers and RSL's for the excellent work that had been undertaken to date. He indicated that the scheme was very flexible and could be as little as giving advice to installing CCTV in a property.

The Board noted the Sanctuary Model set out on page 37 of the report and the Sanctuary Measures available set out on Pages 40 /41 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF34 DIGNITY & HUMAN RIGHTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided Members with an update on Halton's involvement in the Equality and Human Rights Commission formal inquiry into older people and human rights in home care.

The Board was advised that the Commission had launched the inquiry to investigate the extent to which the current legislative, regulatory and quality control systems provided sufficient human rights protection for older people requiring or receiving home care.

The Board was further advised that Stage 1, held in March 2011, the Equality and Human Rights Commission had written to request Halton's participation in this inquiry citing their legal powers for our involvement under section 16 of the Equality Act 2006 and included their Terms of Reference set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The initial stage involved completion of an online survey which included various areas of human rights.

It was reported that Stage 2 held in April 2011, the Commission had sought further documentary evidence towards the inquiry to support Halton's response and conducted an extensive interview with Halton's Dignity Co-ordinator and the Divisional Manager for Independent Living Services.

Furthermore, it was reported that Stage 3 held in May 2011, the Commission had written to the Chief Executive stating how impressed they had been with Halton's integration of the dignity and human rights based approach and sought permission to conduct interviews to gather further evidence towards the inquiry. In preparation for the interviews the Commission had provided an Interview Framework detailing the thematic areas of evidence they wished to explore, with a particular emphasis on the integration of human rights, set out in Appendix 2 of the report. It was reported that the Commission had conducted the interviews during June/July 2011 which included the numerous roles.

On completion of the interviews, the Commission had informed the Dignity Co-ordinator that Halton had been selected as an exemplar of best practice and sought permission for the Council to be named within their published report due to be issued in November 2011. In November, prior to the report being published, the Commission had contacted the Dignity Co-ordinator to advise that Halton was in fact the only local authority to be 'officially' named within their published report in terms of best practice. Although evidence had been sought from many other local authorities no others had 'ticked all the boxes'. The Commission's 'Close to Home' report had been published on 23 November 2011.

The Chairman highlighted that Halton were the only authority in the country to have a dedicated Dignity Co-ordinator to ensure that the residents of Halton had access to the best service possible.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF35 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members an update on the key issues and progression of the agenda for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

The Board was advised that discussion had began, aimed at developing a pilot project in Halton based on the 'Safe Around Town' scheme which was currently running in St Helens. The scheme's purpose was to provide a safe sanctuary for people with learning disabilities in St Helens town centre.

The working group were considering widening the proposed scope of the scheme in Halton to include vulnerable people of all ages and needs in the wider community rather than limiting it to shopping areas.

Halton Speak Out also had a lead role in the project and it was hoped that collaboration could also be achieved with other voluntary groups, community centres and employers.

The Board noted the various activities that had taken place and were set out in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.7 of the report.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was requested that any training that was available could be offered to Members of the Board;
- It was noted that training was designed / customised to the needs of the participants;
- It was noted that the logo that was being added to all Council literature and the strap-line 'Help us Help You' would encourage people to give the Council feedback rather than 'complaints' and improve the services;
- It was suggested that literature from the Council in respect of a family member in a home was mainly to

enquire about financial matters and did not incorporate any contact details on how to raise concerns over care provided by the 'care provider'. In response, it was reported that this matter would be looked into and the logo and strap-line had only recently been developed;

- it was noted that all agencies were joining together in a positive way to address safeguarding issues; and
- The newly developed Safeguarding Adults Induction Workbook for all staff and volunteers was noted.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF36 COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW

The Board received a verbal update report on the outcome from the review of community safety.

The Board was advised that Halton Community Safety team was a combined Police and Council partnership team that reported to the Safer Halton Partnership and had been traditionally funded over recent years through some mainstream funding from Police, Partners and the Council but primarily by Government grants given on a year to year basis. The team had grown over a period of years but due to financial cuts had been slightly reduced in size during the last financial year. The current economic climate and cessation of Government grants for the next financial year dictated that the team could not continue in its present format without an injection of funding to address the anticipated shortfall.

The Board was further advised that rather than simply reduce the team in size again it had been agreed to review the current and future activities and structure of the team in order to be ready for 2012-13. The review was being jointly led by the Police and the Council. To help inform this review, the views of members and other stakeholders had been sought.

It was reported that the review had been completed and a number of options had been identified. The options were being considered by the Safer Halton Partnership Chairman and they would be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

It was reported that the review had been very thorough and had been a worthwhile process. There had been significant funding cuts to various organisations, the Council and Cheshire Police and this had impacted on the team and the service. It was also reported that services provided had been very successful and the review sought to build on that success. In addition, it was reported that the new Police Crime Commissioners would be responsible for funding for such services by 2013 and would commission these services to any interested party ie the Local Authority or a private organisation. It was therefore vitally important that the service delivered was robust and represented value for money.

Furthermore, it was highlighted that some Local Authorities were adopting Halton practices and the review placed the team in an excellent position to undertake services on behalf of other authorities and to generate some funding.

The Chairman reported that it would no longer be the responsibility of the Board to scrutinise the Police, this would be undertaken by the new Police and Crime Panels. It was also reported that the Chief and Deputy Chief Constable had been invited to attend the next meeting to discuss the role and responsibilities of the Board in order to prepare and understand how the Police and Crime Panels might operate in the future. He reported that there would be at least two Elected Members from Halton Borough Council on the Panel and it was anticipated that there would be 10/12 members on the Panel, although this could be extended to 17 members if necessary. In addition, he reported that the Board would need to undertake a considerable amount of work over the next twelve months and there may need to be additional meetings arranged in the future. The Board would need to consider and identify priorities in order to submit a bid for funding to the Police and Crime Commissioner.

The Board noted that Police Authorities had opposed the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Bill. However, it was now legislation and a lot more information was required on how the Police and Crime Commissioner would operate.

The Chairman requested that a report on Persistent and Prolific Offenders be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report and comments raised be noted; and

- (2) a report on Persistent and Prolific Offenders be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director
- Communities

SAF37 PREVENTION FROM EXCLUSION POLICY, PROCEDURE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which presented Members with the revised Prevention from Exclusion from building based services and withdrawal of service from individuals' homes Policy, Procedure and Practice 2011.

The Board was advised Adults with Learning Disabilities have had an Exclusion Policy since April 2005. During 2006 the Policy had been reviewed by the Safeguarding Adults Board (previously the Adult Protection Board) and it had been decided that it could be adapted and extended to apply to all service user groups across internal day, residential and home care services.

The Board was further advised that the purpose of the review had been to establish if the procedures detailed in the policy were effective and fit for purpose and to identify any changes that needed to be included to ensure the policy's relevance.

The Board noted the main amendments to the policy set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.4.8 of the report. In addition, it was also noted that the procedure would be reviewed on a regular basis and presented to the Board when appropriate.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF38 BUSINESS PLANNING 2012-15

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided Members with an update on Business Planning for the period 2012-15 and the Directorate priorities, objectives and targets for services for this period that fell within the remit of the Board.

The Board was advised that each Directorate was required to develop a medium term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. Draft Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets had been developed by each department and the information had been included in the Appendices to the report. These objectives and measures would form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring received by the Board during the future year.

It was reported that the key priorities for development or improvement in 2012-15, proposed by Officers of the Council were as follows:

- Safeguarding & Dignity;
- Review of the Community Safety Team; and
- Review of Domestic Violence Services

These priorities had been discussed by Members on 15 November 2011, and had now been reflected in the draft plans. It was reported that comments could also be made to the relevant Operational Director by no later than 18 January 2012 to allow inclusion in the draft business plan.

Furthermore, it was reported that the draft Directorate Business Plan would be revised following Member comments during January and would be presented to the Executive Board for approval on 9 February 2012, at the same time as the draft budget. This would ensure that decisions on Business Planning were linked to resource allocation. All Directorate plans would be considered by full Council at the 7 March 2012 meeting.

In conclusion, it was reported that It should be noted 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 2012.

The Chairman encouraged Members of the Board to send in their comments / suggestions to the Operational Director, by no later than tomorrow, 18 January 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments made be noted; and
- (2) Members of the Board pass any detailed comments that they may have on the information in the report to the relevant Operational Director by 18 January 2012.

Meeting ended at 8.28 p.m.