

REPORT TO: Employment Learning Skills & Community
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 September 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Resources

SUBJECT: Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 –
2026

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to update Members on the progress of the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011-2026 and present the emerging vision, key objectives and long term priorities that the plan seeks to deliver upon. The content of this report serves as an introduction to a presentation to be given during the meeting that covers the detail of the content within the emerging draft SCS.
- 1.2 The drafting of a new SCS offers the opportunity to revisit the high level objectives under each of the current five key priorities and reflect the current public priorities and needs. There are a multitude of changes proposed for the public sector and uncertainty over financing mechanisms, but these factors will not change the long term challenges the borough faces. It is important the overarching priorities for the borough are scrutinised so that decisions about the allocation of resources can be made when organisational architectures and funding mechanisms become clearer.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Members consider and comment upon the five overarching priorities for the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026.
- (2) Members consider the suggested vision, strategic objectives and challenges contained in Section 6.0 and their alignment with their knowledge of local needs.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The purpose of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to look at what life in Halton is like now, set out how we would like it to change and identify the key things (objectives) required to make this change happen. It is a statutory requirement.
- 3.2 The targets in Halton's existing strategy run to 31 March 2011, Halton Strategic Partnership must therefore produce a new Sustainable Community Strategy for adoption by the Council by April 2011.

- 3.3 The Sustainable Community Strategy will not be delivered in isolation but will dovetail with the wide framework of statutory plans the Council and partners produce to steer corporate direction and inform the community. Examples include the Children and Young People's Plan, Local Development Framework, and Local Transport Plan. The new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) will cover the period from 2011 to 2026. This is the time scale as other major plans, such as the Core Strategy and Local Transport Plan 3, allowing coordinated delivery.
- 3.4 The available evidence, such as the State of the Borough Report, Places Survey, and Joint Strategic Needs Assessments for Health and Community Safety has been reviewed. This information was the subject of a presentation to Full Council on 21 July 2010. From this evidence, it is apparent that the high level vision and five strategic priorities of Halton's current SCS continue to reflect the long term and intransigent nature of Halton's challenges and therefore it is proposed that they remain largely unchanged.
- 3.5 The current phase of work is to seek endorsement of the proposed emerging issues / themes and long term challenges that Halton needs to tackle. Once these have been agreed, detailed policy options can be worked up to provide a range of potential interventions to deal with the challenges that Halton faces. The most effective and realistic of these alternatives will be chosen by the Council and its partners later this year for the five year delivery plan.
- 3.6 The five year delivery plan will contain the detail of the planned intervention and prevention activities that will be undertaken to bring about positive change upon Halton priority areas. The inclusion of a five year delivery plan will allow for a regular review of the selected intervention and prevention measures on a shorter timescale to enable changing circumstances throughout the lifetime of the full SCS to be reflected.

3.7 Timescales and Approval Process

3.8 The key dates in the drafting process are as follows:

Date	Stage
September PPBs	Consultation report on emerging themes and challenges at Policy and Performance Boards.
September SSPs	Consultation report on emerging themes and challenges at Special Strategic Partnership (SSP) meetings.
29 September	Approval of draft SCS for public consultation by Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB).
14 October	Approval of draft SCS for public consultation by Executive Board.
29 October	My Halton event. Publicise public consultations.

November	Public consultation on Core Strategy Development Plan Document and draft Sustainable Community Strategy.
December	Final draft SCS issued to elected members and Partners for consultation.
27 January 2011	Executive Board to ratify strategy and sign off final document
11 February	Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB) to ratify strategy and sign off final document
20 April 2011	Adoption at Full Council meeting.
April 2011	Implementation begins.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The SCS will impact upon many policy areas and have wide ranging impacts on, but not exclusively, social inclusion, poverty, equality and diversity, physical development, environmental quality and health care.

4.2 SCS Vision

4.3 The overall vision contained in the last SCS would still appear to be relevant and it is not recommended that this be changed:

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.

4.4 SCS Priorities

4.5 A summary of the priorities suggested for the SCS are covered in section 6.0 of this report.

4.6 The selection of remedies to tackle the long term challenges under each of the five SCS Priorities will reflect a focus on a united multi-agency response, the holistic understanding of the total public sector investment within an area, and activities that provide early intervention and prevention rather than reactive measures and cures for avoidable situations.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The draft Development Plan at Annexe A takes into account Government guidance on the development of Sustainable Community Strategies and the duty to inform, consult and involve local people. It is imperative that partners continue to play an integral role in the development of the Strategy through the Halton Strategic Partnership structure.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 For each of the Council's priorities the SCS drafting process allows the review of the baseline information and evidence that underpins this current priority and associated Key Objectives. The new SCS will ensure that the most pressing priorities are identified and addressed.

6.2 A Healthy Halton

6.3 There are no proposed changes to the title of this strategic priority. The vision for this priority will be:

6.4 *To create a healthier community and work to promote well being and a positive experience of life with good health, not simply an absence of disease, and offer opportunities for people to take responsibility for their health with the necessary support available.*

6.5 The strategic objectives of this priority are as follows:

- To understand fully the causes of ill health in Halton and act together to improve the overall health and well-being of local people
- To lay firm foundations for a healthy start in life and support those most in need in the community
- To reduce the burden of disease and preventable causes of death in Halton
- To respond to the needs of an ageing population improving their quality of life and thus enabling them to lead longer, active and more fulfilled lives.
- To remove barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health

6.6 The long term policy priorities for this priority will include:

- Reducing death rates from some of the major causes of death in Halton by reducing smoking levels, increasing exercise and physical activity, improving diet and improving the early detection and treatment of disease.
- Reducing health inequalities by addressing the wider determinants of health such as poverty, unemployment, education, housing and crime.
- "Building" healthy individuals from the earliest stages of life.
- Addressing the needs of older people, enabling them to lead longer, active and healthier lives.
- Increasing community participation and engagement in health issues at an appropriate level based on the health needs of individual communities.
- Developing planned health services (such as planned operations and routine appointments for existing health problems).
- Early detection and screening for depression.

- Developing urgent care services (health services you need in an emergency or when your GP practice is closed).
- Optimising organisational and partnership working arrangements to ensure effective delivery of public health and health improvement.

6.7 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

6.8 There are no proposed changes to the title of this strategic priority. The vision for this priority will be:

6.9 *To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, enterprise and business growth, and improves the opportunities for learning and development together with the skills and employment prospects of both residents and workforce so that they are able to feel included socially and financially.*

6.10 The strategic objectives of this priority are as follows:

- To develop a strong, diverse, competitive and sustainable knowledge-based local economy.
- To foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and make Halton an ideal place to start and grow economic activity
- To develop a culture where learning is valued and raise skill levels throughout the adult population and in the local workforce
- To promote and increase the employability of local people and remove any barriers to employment to get more people into work
- To maximise an individual's potential to increase and manage their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services.

6.11 Research indicates that the long term challenges for this priority include:

- Narrow the gap between deprived and non-deprived areas within the borough
- Development and investment
- Enterprise and business support
- Promotion and marketing
- Targeted investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and creating a strong culture of entrepreneurship.
- Ensure that no area of Halton has unemployment at more than 20% above the borough average
- To reduce the number of adults of working age claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
- Encourage digital inclusion and digital life skills
- Tackle worklessness, focussing on reducing the number of Job Seeker Allowance claimants
- Tackle the low wage economy
- Encourage the growth of new businesses and improve business survival
- Improve the skill base within the borough including vocational qualifications.

6.12 Children and Young People in Halton

6.13 There are no proposed changes to the title of this strategic priority. The vision for this priority is:

6.14 *Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and are ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future.*

6.15 There are three options for the strategic objectives contained in the SCS for this priority. The option chosen for the SCS will also be the basis for the new Children & Young People's Plan that will also be written and published by April 2011. The three policy options are to:

- 1) Continue to frame all work within the existing four overarching priorities for children and young people. These are:
 - Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy
 - Every young person is successful when they leave school
 - Children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs
 - Children and young people feel safe at home , in school and in their communities
- 2) Amend the priorities in line with the five Every Child Matters outcomes.
- 3) Develop new priorities that reflect both the development of additional areas of focus within Halton's Children's Trust since the current priorities were implemented, and also the new policy framework for children's services being developed by the government.

6.16 Research indicates that the long term challenges for this priority include:

- Emotional health of children and young people
- Positive activities for young people
- Supporting the teenage pregnancy strategy
- Supporting the childhood obesity strategy
- Support for young people to achieve through education, employment or training (reducing NEET)
- Remove socio-economic barriers to early development
- Continue to improve educational attainment
- Reduce child poverty
- Encourage a healthy weight for children
- Creating opportunities / facilities / amenities for children and young people

- Ensure that low cost transport options are available to allow children and young people to access the activities that matter to them.

6.17 A Safer Halton

6.18 There are no proposed changes to the title of this strategic priority. The vision for this priority will be:

6.19 *To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live.*

6.20 The strategic objectives of this priority are as follows:

- To investigate and tackle the underlying causes of crime and disorder and respond effectively to public concern by reducing crime levels
- To reduce fear of crime and increase public confidence in the police, council and other agencies to respond to reports of crime and anti social behaviour
- To tackle alcohol and drug/substance misuse problems, and the resulting harm that is caused to communities, families and individuals
- To create and sustain better neighbourhoods that are well designed, well built, well maintained, safe and valued by the people who live in them, reflecting the priorities of residents
- To tackle the problem of domestic abuse and sexual violence in all its forms, supporting the victims and their families and taking enforcement action against perpetrators.
- To reduce the levels of crime that disproportionately affects some of the more deprived areas
- Safeguarding adults who are more vulnerable within the community to physical, financial, sexual and emotional abuse.
- Safeguarding vulnerable children, who are often part of families where there are drug and alcohol problems or where relationships are abusive or violent
- To consult and engage with communities to identify problems and put in place effective measures to address them.
- To monitor and work together to tackle any potential tensions within communities, in particular those that may lead to extremist activity.
- To promote community cohesion and adopt a zero tolerance to all forms of hate crime within Halton, so that no-one is unfairly victimised

6.21 Research indicates that the long term challenges for this priority include:

- To address public perceptions of crime and drug abuse, through more effective communication of information and of positive news stories and locality working/ community engagement.
- To tackle alcohol related crime and anti social behaviour through greater enforcement activity, focused on the night time economy and in other problem areas

- To tackle drug abuse and drug related crime, through provision of effective treatment services and interventions for users and taking appropriate enforcement action. Collaborative working through Ashley House is central to success
- To deliver a wider integrated offender management programme to repeat offenders. This will involve a partnership approach to offer support to perpetrators, such as access to drug and alcohol treatment services to help them to change their behaviour. Where this approach fails we will take appropriate enforcement action.
- To reduce the number of fatal and serious road accidents through enforcement activities, bike safety, driver engagement days and community speed watch projects. Particular attention will be given to educating young people on the risks and causation factors e.g alcohol.
- To tackle serious acquisitive crime, including burglary, personal and business robbery and vehicle crime with a focus on bringing offenders to justice, targeting prolific offenders, providing accessible crime prevention advice, responding to victims, promoting 'Crimestoppers', disrupting the stolen goods market and delivering 'Smartwater' property marking neighbourhoods within those high risk communities.
- Tackling public perceptions of drug dealing in the borough through undertaking a Mapping exercise to show where drug perceptions are out of line with actual drug-related activity and making the public aware of police activity to tackle drugs. Use of the New Places Survey data 2010
- Tackle anti social behaviour within neighbourhoods, through a 'whole family' approach.
- Providing activities, advice and support for young people within Halton, particularly for older children and teenagers.
- Tackling domestic abuse within Halton, supporting the victim and their families and taking appropriate action to deal with offenders. In particular we need to identify interventions that work to address repeat offenders where current approaches are not working.
- Safeguarding adults, identifying abuse early and working together to put in place effective measures to address these
- Safeguarding vulnerable children, in particular those that come from families where there is a history of domestic abuse or drug and alcohol problems. Adopt a 'think family' approach, to ensure that we tackle the underlying causes and not just address the problem.
- Improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved to help shape what happens in their local area via the continued provision of Locality Area Forums, Police Community Action Meetings (CAMs), Homewatch Schemes and 'Face the People' Sessions.
- Support our diverse community where all residents are able to live without fear of abuse or hate crime

6.22 Halton's Urban Renewal

6.23 It is proposed to change the title of this strategic priority to 'Halton's Environmental Quality and Urban Regeneration'. The vision for this priority will be:

6.24 To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.

6.25 The strategic objectives of this priority are as follows:

- Ensure that development achieves high standards of design and sustainability including in regard to its contribution to, and effects of, climate change and provides a positive contribution to its locality.
- To create and sustain a twenty first century business environment with the required variety and quality of sites and premises. Improving digital, road, rail, freight and green infrastructure that will support high levels of investment and economic growth and increase Halton's competitiveness
- To promote the Borough's major employment sites
- Realise the potential of the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the Silver Jubilee Bridge in Halton in order to fully achieve economic growth and environmental benefits, fully deliver sustainable travel options and reduce congestion.
- To revitalise the town centres into dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial, social and cultural areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors;
- Ensure Halton's residents enjoy access to a network of community services and facilities providing opportunities to pursue active and healthy lifestyles and allowing them to participate fully in their local community
- Manage the multifunctional value of the Borough's Green infrastructure resource, whilst protecting and seeking enhancements to important local habitats, geology and landscapes, aquatic environments and species
- To ensure Halton designs in and maintains high levels of accessibility to places and spaces, so that opportunity and need are matched, and provide excellent connectivity to the wider world through transport and ICT links;
- Minimise waste generation and maximise reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery within the Halton waste stream to support sustainable and effective waste management.
- Provide good quality, affordable accommodation to meet the needs of all sections of society
- To enhance, promote and celebrate the quality of the built and natural environment in Halton including tackling the legacy of contamination and dereliction, to further improve the borough's image and boost the confidence and aspirations of local people and business.

6.26 Research indicates that the long term challenges for this priority include:

- Long term commitments for new development:
 - Widnes Waterfront including Venture Fields
 - Windmill Hill
 - Castlefields
 - Canal Quarter
 - West Bank
 - 3MG
 - Sandymoor
 - Daresbury
- Work with partners and the local community to support The Mersey Gateway Bridge to fully realise its benefits.
- Fully utilise the borough's rail, road, commercial waterways and digital and other infrastructure in order to maximise the potential for economic development and sustained economic growth
- Adapt to climate change
- Improve municipal and household recycling rates to bring it in line with regional and national rates
- Maintain the Borough's highway network to promote greater accessibility and connectivity, contributing to improved air quality.
- Continue to reduce CO₂ emissions within the Borough (including industry and road transport).
- Increase the provision of decent homes at a price that people can afford including a focus on the need for extra care housing
- Improve public transport information and local bus services
- Continue to maintain a hierarchy of Parks and open spaces
- Conserve and manage the historic and natural environment in order to maximise the social, cultural and environmental benefits through its contribution to improving the Borough's image.
- Work with partners, private sector organisations and the local community to achieve Borough wide digital connectivity.

6.27 Cross Cutting Issues

6.28 The following issues require a comprehensive and integrated approach to tackle them and therefore the issues are too broad to be encompassed by a single theme:

- Providing for the ageing population
- Narrowing the gap between deprived and non-deprived areas within the borough addressing health and socio-economic inequality.
- Improving educational attainment and increasing access to training opportunities for those living in deprived areas
- Improving access to services such as social and leisure facilities, supermarkets, health services and transport.
- Understanding how knowledge and perceptions of health related issues can affect the local population
- Reducing social isolation
- Maximising community resources and facilitating effective community engagement and participation in public sector activities in Halton.
- Integrated delivery of services

- Increase community satisfaction with Halton as a place to live.
- Running services effectively and efficiently to meet customer needs and increase public satisfaction with all public services in Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 It is vital that rapid progress is made on the Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure that Halton Strategic Partnership continues to be clear about its priorities for service delivery, setting out the steps needed to bring about improvements to those areas of greatest concern to the people of Halton.

7.2 Delay to the SCS will:

- Reduce the Partnership's ability to take account of the local community's aspirations, needs and priorities;
- Have serious implications for Partnership co-ordination between all the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally.
- Potentially reduce the effectiveness of the Partnership through fragmentation of strategies.

7.3 These risks are mitigated by a monthly review of all significant risk factors highlighted by the project's risk assessment.

7.4 The availability of funding will impact upon the range of options and activities that can be put forward in the delivery plan component of the final SCS. Until a clearer financial picture emerges following the Comprehensive Spending Review in October no decision on the range of measure can be made.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Building stronger communities through community engagement must continue to be a key outcome for the strategy. The Halton Strategic Partnership is already committed to equality regardless of age, sex, caring responsibility, race, religion, sexuality or disability.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton 2006-2011	Municipal Building, Widnes	Tim Gibbs
Refresh SCS 2006-2011 (published September 2009)	Municipal Building, Widnes	Tim Gibbs

