

REPORT TO: Safer Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 18 September 2012
REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Communities
PORTFOLIO: Community Safety
SUBJECT: Neighbourhood resolution Panels
WARDS: Grange Ward

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update the Policy and Performance Board on the introduction of a Neighbourhood Resolution Panel in the Grange ward of Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The Board receive a presentation on the progress of the Neighbourhood Resolution Panel pilot.
- (2) The policy and performance board raises any issues regarding the introduction of neighbourhood resolution panels.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Halton is to be one of the 15 English areas to pilot a Neighbourhood Resolution Panel, designed to resolve anti-social behaviour and low-level crime affecting local communities. (For example neighbour disputes, noise & nuisance parking)

The successful bid produced by the Community Safety Team and Halton Housing Trust was submitted at the end of October 2011.

The pilot is located in the Grange Ward and will run until 2014 and will be evaluated by the Ministry of Justice.

The panel will deliver agreed restorative justice outcomes and can include perpetrators agreeing to carry out tasks that make amends to the victim or wider community. They are designed to give victims and the community much more of a say in the punishments that are given out.

Panels are made up of volunteers trained in restorative justice, who will facilitate meetings between victim and offenders. (5 volunteer facilitators have successfully completed the training)

- 3.2 The Minister for Policing and Criminal Justice Nick Herbert said: "Too often offenders are dealt with behind the scenes, with little regard for the effect of crimes on victims and communities. We want to reconnect the justice system to the local communities they serve."

Some areas have already been using restorative justice, concentrating on youth offending. The Neighbourhood Resolution Panels will extend this approach, which can be applied to any low level crime and is open to adults and youths

Neighbourhood Resolution Panels aim to agree meaningful action on the part of the perpetrator that meets the needs of the victim, and any wider community involved.

These pilots are not intended to deal with cases that involve more serious offences which will be prosecuted or dealt with through formal out of court disposals such as a caution, which would be given by the police.

Benefits:

- Divert offenders/perpetrators from the Criminal Justice System
- Speed (4-6 week turn around)
- More victim involvement
- Improve perceptions of complaint handling
- Improve/decrease re-offending rates
- Free up time for more pressing work for housing and police officers

These reforms build on the lessons learned from the response to last summer's disturbances and are intended to modernise criminal justice services, speed up court cases, improve transparency so the public can understand how the system works, and engage local communities in the judicial process.

The pilot is open to accept referrals from the partner agencies.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 None associated with this report

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Addressing anti-social behaviour and crime is the key function of the Community Safety Team and without this work it is likely that both will increase having a significant impact on resident's health.

6.4 A Safer Halton

This new set of measures will help to improve the way local partners and the community deal with anti-social behaviour and neighbour nuisance in Halton. If the national pilot is successful then this may lead to an increase in the number of panels across the borough.

6.5 Urban Renewal

None

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

None

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

8.1 None under the meaning of the Act