

Annual Report of the Scrutiny Co-ordinator 2012/13

It has been another busy year for our Policy and Performance Boards with the combined effects of budget reductions and changes taking place across all areas of the public sector taking up much of their time.

Despite that there has been much good work done with topics ranging from “Apprenticeships” to “Falls Prevention” being undertaken. It is even more important for the PPBs to monitor the Council’s performance given the diminishing resources it has at its disposal. The recent all member Seminar looking at the Council’s budget projections over the next few years clearly demonstrated that difficult choices will have to be made. The Council will not be able to do everything it has always done and will not be able to maintain the excellent performance it has done across many services. The PPBs will have an important role in how those choices are made.

Ensuring the Borough gets the best out of the new arrangements for health will still be a key role for the Health PPB. A role that it has performed admirably over recent years. Our new Public Health responsibilities are a key component in those new structures. Similarly the Safer PPB will continue to play a key role in overseeing the community safety agenda, alongside our representatives on the Police and Crime Panel.

Reviewing the on-going effects on the Borough of the Welfare Reform agenda will also be a key challenge for many of the PPBs but particularly the Employment Learning Skills and Community PPB who have chosen that issues as a topic for the next year. Our Children and Young People PPB will continue to review our work on “Inspiring Families” whilst the development of the Mersey gateway will no doubt become an increasing focus for the Environment and Urban renewal PPB.

The Corporate PPB will no doubt keep a watchful eye on the overall finances as well as the impact of the changes in Council Tax and the introduction of our Discretionary Support Scheme.

I would like to thank the Chairs of the PPBs for their regular attendance the Chairs' meetings. I have found them very helpful in carrying out my role. I hope also that people have found "Scrutiny News" useful. Suggestions for future articles are always gratefully received.

We have many challenges ahead of us but I am sure we are up to them and as always act in the best interests of the Halton community.

Tony McDermott

Scrutiny Co-ordinator