

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 15 March 2011 at the Council Box, Stobart Stadium

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), Wallace (Vice-Chairman), Edge, J. Gerrard, Morley, M. Ratcliffe, Shepherd and Thompson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor M Lloyd Jones and Mr Hodson

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, H. Cockcroft, L. Derbyshire, R. Lyden and Y. Sung

Also in attendance: Mr G O'Rourke – Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
SAF44 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF45 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF46 SSP MINUTES	
The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) Meeting held on the 10 November 2010 were presented to the Board for information.	
It was noted that no substitutions were allowed at the meeting and clarity was sought on whether it was possible to add a representative of the Port Authority to the Membership. In response, it was reported that Officers would look into this matter.	
RESOLVED: That	
(1) the minutes be noted; and	

- (2) Officers consider whether a representative from the Port Authority could be added to the Membership.

Chief Executive

(Note: Councillors Edge and M Ratcliffe declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business due to being employees of Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service).

SAF47 PRESENTATION: CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE

The Board received a presentation from Mr G O'Rourke, Unitary Performance Manager, Cheshire Rescue and Fire Service which:-

- Outlined that the average reductions for Fire Services over 2011-12 and 2012-13 was a total of 7.7% in grant, The Government had said that grant reductions would be back loaded;
- Outlined that Cheshire had benefited from a small 2.2% increase over the two years. This represented a cut because of the costs of inflation led price rises;
- Set out that the grant settlement was better than others due to the risk profile;
- Explained that the Fire Minister, Bob Neill had been very clear that FRS's would be hit harder in 2013-14 and 2014-15 and intelligence received suggested that the average grant reduction would be 12%;
- Highlighted that it was important to prepare for the financial challenges over the next four years as £4.75m of savings would need to be delivered;
- Set out the risks if the grant settlements for 2013-14 and 2014-15 were worse than expected; highlighted the Strategy and savings plan and that a Council Tax (CT) freeze had been taken for 2011-12 with the assumption that it would be acceptable to increase CT by 2.5% in future years;
- Outlined that there would be a fundamental review of Local Government Financing during January – July 2011 which may have profound effects on future grant settlements and the level of reserves commensurate with the risks that were managed; and

- Set out the management structure and the proposed future structure of the Fire and Rescue Service.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that recruitment of fire fighters had been frozen for four years. However, it was reported that there were no plans for voluntary redundancies and the 28 jobs that had been lost had been absorbed into other stations and via natural wastage. This had resulted in there being an excess of 28 fire fighters over four watches across the organisation which would minimise any natural wastage over the next four years during the recruitment freeze;
- It was noted that Halton had a significant number of COMAH sites because of the nature of the area. It was also noted that Inspections, visits, exercises and then annual visits were undertaken on COMAH sites;
- The excellent work Cheshire Fire Service undertook with the Council on schemes such as clean up days, working with youths etc, was noted. The Board agreed that the Council had a very good relationship with Cheshire Fire Service and they were proud of their achievements to date. It was agreed that a letter be sent to Cheshire Fire Service expressing the Board's good wishes and appreciation for their excellent achievements to date;
- It was noted that fire fighters operating the 'On Call' system were required to live within five minutes from the station;
- It was noted that currently there were no proposals to make any changes to the fire station in Lacey Street, Widnes; and
- It was noted that the 96 hour system would allow families to visit as living accommodation would be available for each individual. It was reported that this system had proved popular in Lancashire.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation be received;
- (2) Mr G O'Rourke be thanked for his informative presentation;
- (3) the comments raised be noted; and
- (4) a letter of appreciation for all their achievements to date be sent to Cheshire Fire Service on behalf of the Board.

Strategic Director
– Adults and
Community

SAF48 QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources regarding the Third Quarter Monitoring Reports for:

- Environment & Regulatory Service – Environmental Health (Extract); and
- Adults and Community – Community Safety, Drug and Alcohol Action and Domestic Violence Teams (Extracts).

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF49 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

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

The Board was advised that an action plan had been progressed in response to recommendations made after the Care Quality Commission's inspection of Adult Social Care. In addition, the following activities had taken place:-

- An email had been distributed by the Chair of the SAB/Strategic Director, to all Adults & Community Directorate staff, to remind them of their responsibilities in relation to safeguarding children;
- Steps have been taken to strengthen links between Safeguarding Adults and Safeguarding Children training;
- A Safeguarding Adults E-learning course had been developed and was now available via the HBC Internet website and intranet;

- Three brief follow up courses on Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment (DASH) risk assessment and referral processes had taken place recently, for assessment/care management staff and managers;
- Safeguarding Adults had been incorporated into the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) procedures recently agreed;
- A number of initiatives had been introduced to support the personalisation agenda and to ensure appropriate safeguards were in place for service users;
- The Council's Confidential Reporting Policy had been reviewed using the Safeguarding Adults policies & procedures audit tool and was subsequently updated, making specific reference to Safeguarding;
- Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service had devised a written guidance document and policy for their staff and Worked closely with Safeguarding Adults and Domestic Abuse leads to streamline the service's internal referral procedures;
- The Marketing Plan had been reviewed and updated, after analysis of surveys, referral data and other intelligence. Dignity would also be incorporated into the plan;
- A Serious Case Review (SCR) had been carried out during 2010. The independent chair of the review had briefed the Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) on key findings and learning points arising from individual agency management reviews that contributed to the SCR. The Executive Summary of the SCR report would be shared with local organisations and published on the Internet; and
- The SAB's priorities and Work Plan had been reviewed and updated, incorporating recommendations arising from the SCR and the Adult Social Care Inspection.

The Chairman requested that the Board be presented with a report of the Children & Young People's Safeguarding Board at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the Board receive a report of the Children and Young People's Safeguarding Board at a future meeting.

Strategic Director
– Adults and
Community

SAF50 DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which presented the recently revised Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy that the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) had produced for Members consideration.

The Board was advised that the HDAF had been established in 2003 to develop a multi agency partnership approach to addressing the issue of Domestic Abuse.

The outcomes from this strategy and Forum approach had been:

- Development and piloting of a local Specialist Domestic Violence Court (SDVC);
- Re commissioning of a Domestic Abuse Service to move towards a one stop shop, including best practice Independent Domestic Violence Advocates (IDVAs);
- Commissioning of an Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA);
- Piloting and introduction of the Community Domestic Violence Programme by Cheshire Probation;
- Development of a Sanctuary Scheme to ensure victims were safe within their homes;
- Development of a local survivors group;
- Development of the local Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC) processes;
- Consistent awareness campaigns; and
- Development of Multi Agency Training Schedule.

It was reported that underlying these accomplishments had been the development of a multi agency performance management framework to ensure progress and issues within this area could be identified.

The Board was further advised that The HDAF had now developed a refreshed Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy for the period 2011-2014. This strategy was the product of a comprehensive review of local and national policy context across a multi agency arena. It had adopted the focuses being echoed in central government reviews of Prevention, Provision, Protection and Partnership working. It aimed to build on the progress achieved to date and highlight future focuses to be addressed.

It was highlighted that the strategy outlined the specific actions involved in the achievement of these areas for development and had been designed to ensure flexibility in response to the forthcoming action plans central government had announced.

The Board also received a presentation from Rosie Lyden which:-

- Explained the rationale for the strategy refresh;
- Set out the process and research behind the new strategy document;
- Highlighted the key issues identified for focus for 2011-14; and
- Outlined some current challenges.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- The Domestic Incidents list by Ward/Beat and how it was useful for Elected Members in their wards was noted;
- It was noted that a significant number of domestic violence incidents were related to alcohol;
- Concern was raised that people with learning difficulties and a disability could be vulnerable to domestic abuse and violence. It was reported that it was important to obtain local data and some people with learning difficulties could be more at risk in certain categories such as sexual assault etc. In addition, the Police had launched a new campaign

which encouraged and facilitated third party reporting of domestic abuse. The campaign encouraged anyone who suspected that someone was being physically or verbally abused to speak out and take advantage of the Constabulary's on line facility for reporting abusers. The scheme allowed relatives, friends, work colleagues or neighbours to air their concerns by logging onto www.cheshire.police.uk and making their concerns known. There was also a dedicated telephone number available for individuals to ring (0845 458 0000) and it was reported that this number would be circulated to all Members of the Board for information;

Strategic Director
– Adults and
Community

- Two leaflets were circulated for Members information on the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF). It was reported that the domestic abuse service was provided locally and an individual could go and talk to someone and a needs assessment would be undertaken. The service was driven by risk and numerous support package were available i.e. police prosecution, if the individual wished to return to the home basic safety training, alternative housing and security measures were available to make the home safer and sometimes it was possible to remove the perpetrator from the victims home. It was highlighted that the service was there to empower victims of domestic abuse. It also provided a link for young people at risk of domestic abuse to receive appropriate services. However, it was noted that there was a lot of work taking place to address domestic violence but there was not enough capacity and more work would need to be done on community awareness with a targeted intervention;
- It was noted that statistics could be used to present data in various ways and the analysis of the data was important as it had an impact on the outcomes by identifying appropriate interventions;
- It was noted that the evidence presented on Page 79, Figure 5 on the total domestic related reports in 2009/10 were higher during peak times ie. during the world cup, Christmas and the end of the football season etc, which highlighted the link between domestic violence and alcohol. It was also noted that the Police were also visiting repeat perpetrators at peak times to re-assure people at risk and pre-

empt any potential incidents;

- It was noted that links were being built with children's services to address historical problems such as teenage pregnancy etc in the Borough; and
- It was suggested that the HDAF be invited to a meeting of the Domestic Abuse Topic Group.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation be received;
- (2) Rosie Lyden be thanked for her informative presentation;
- (3) The revised Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Strategy be supported; and
- (4) The comments raised be noted.

SAF51 COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which gave Members an update on the new funding allocations and proposed new changes to Community Safety legislation.

The Board was advised that although it had not been announced, all Council's had been advised of the Government's 'Anti Social Behaviour tools and powers review'. It was likely that the term, "Anti Social Behaviour Order" (ASBO) would cease but aspects of the 'ASBO regime' would continue and the number of antisocial behaviour offences (categories) would be cut from 19 to 5.

The Board was further advised that new civil injunctions to prevent gang-related violence by adults had come into effect on 31 January 2011. The police and Local Authorities would be able to apply for the injunctions which would be issued by a county court (or the High Court). The injunctions would last for up to two years and would be for adults who had been proven to have engaged in, encouraged or assisted gang-related violence.

It was reported that Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) would continue to be statutory partnerships focused on taking actions and achieving outcomes – cutting crime and reducing harm. In addition, the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners from May 2012 would give the

public direct influence over crime in their local area. Work was also ongoing through the Sub National Crime and Justice Commission to ensure that there were plans in place for March 2012

In conclusion, it was reported that the funding for 2011/12 for the projects listed in the report and the re-profiling of the LPSA2 would help to ensure that there continued to be a level of community safety service available next year. However, it was highlighted that beyond that time there was no mainstream resource allocated and partners were requested to consider what services were a priority and to look to mainstream these in the longer term.

The Board noted the implications for the Community Safety team in twelve months time re the short term funding. The Board agreed that they fully supported the work of the Community Safety team and that addressing alcohol issues in the Borough was a priority for the Authority. It was also agreed that every effort would be made to maintain the level of service currently being provided in the Borough.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was reported that Asda had agreed to move all alcohol from the front of their stores;
- Concern was raised that a bouncer had cut up a driving license that had been used as ID in The Cornerhouse Pub, Widnes It was reported that Officers would look into this matter;
- It was noted that a significant amount of work was being undertaken by the Authority to introduce a byelaw on the minimum price of alcohol; and
- Discussions took place on the number of derelict buildings in the Authority which presented a health and safety problem. It was suggested that a league table could be established to enable the Authority to be aware of any vandalism, fire and anti social behaviour in these buildings. It was agreed that this suggestion be considered by the RSL Topic Group. It was also agreed that a relevant Officer from property services be invited to the Topic Group.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

The Chairman reported that Mr Howard Cockcroft (Operational Director – Community) and Mr A Villiers (Divisional Manager – Scrutiny) were attending their last meeting prior to retiring from the Authority.

The Chairman took the opportunity to place on record the Board's appreciation of the work undertaken by Howard and Alex during their time with the Authority.

RESOLVED: That the Board place on record its thanks to Mr Howard Cockcroft and Mr Alex Villiers and extend its best wishes to them for the future.

Meeting ended at 8.22 p.m.