

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 18 September 2012 in the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), N.Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chairman), Edge, Gerrard, Gilligan, Lea, M Lloyd Jones, Ratcliffe, Sinnott and Mr Hodson

Apologies for Absence: Councillors V. Hill and Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, A. Bailey, S. Burrows, H. Coen, L. Derbyshire, P. McWade and S. Rimmer

Also in attendance: In accordance with Standing Order No: 33
Councillor D Cargill, Portfolio Holder – Community Safety.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
SAF15	LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972 AND THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT (ACCESS TO INFORMATION)ACT 1985 URGENT BUSINESS The Board was advised that one matter had arisen which required immediate attention by the Board (minute SAF25 refers). Therefore, pursuant to Section 100 B (4) and 100 E, and due to the need to progress talks with another party, the Chairman ruled that the item be considered as a matter of urgency.	
SAF16	MINUTES The Minutes of the meeting held on 26 June 2012 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF17	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF18	SSP MINUTES	

The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 15 May 2012 were presented to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF19 PRESENTATION - PUBLIC RESOLUTION PANELS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities and a DVD which gave the Members an update on the introduction of a Neighbourhood Resolution Panel in the Grange ward of Halton.

The Board was advised Halton was 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 had been produced by the Community Safety Team and Halton Housing Trust and had been submitted at the end of October 2011. The pilot was located in the Grange Ward and would continue until 2014 and would be evaluated by the Ministry of Justice.

It was reported that the panel would deliver agreed restorative justice outcomes which could include perpetrators agreeing to carry out tasks that made amends to the victim or the wider community. They were designed to give victims and the community much more of a say in the punishments that were given out.

Panels would be made up of volunteers trained in restorative justice, who would facilitate meetings between victim and offenders. Five volunteer facilitators had already successfully completed the training.

The Board was further advised that some areas had already been using restorative justice, concentrating on youth offending. The Neighbourhood Resolution Panels would extend this approach, which could be applied to any low level crime and was open to adults and youths.

The benefits of the Neighbourhood Resolution Panel were as follows:-

- 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; and
- Free up time for more pressing work for housing and police officers.

The reforms built on the lessons learned from the response to last summer's disturbances and were intended to modernise criminal justice services; speed up court cases; improve transparency so that the public could understand how the system worked and engage local communities in the judicial process. In addition, it was also reported that the pilot was open to accept referrals from the partner agencies.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- The Board noted the positive impact the pilot was having in the Grange Ward both on the victims and the perpetrators and that the scheme empowered the community to take ownership and reduce the fear of crime in their area;
- Clarity was sought on how the volunteers were recruited and how their suitability for the role had been assessed. In response, it was reported that Officers had undertaken a presentation in the community to raise awareness of the scheme and enable individuals to become involved in the process. Several individuals, who lived/worked in the community had been interviewed and had successfully completed the course;
- The Board welcomed the alternative approach being used to address low level crime and anti-social behaviour;
- It was noted that Cheshire Police had been fully involved in the restorative justice process and also received regular updates on the progress of the pilot;
- Clarity was sought on at what point restorative justice would be considered i.e. on a burglary charge would the intervention be before the individual was bailed to court. In response, it was reported that the intervention could be at any stage, as it was what would be appropriate to the situation. However, burglary was not part of the pilot and restorative justice did not replace punishable offences. In addition, it was reported that Police

Officers would record that restorative intervention had taken place.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report, DVD and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) Mr Andrew Bailey be thanked for his informative presentation.

SAF20 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS - QUARTER 1 OF 2012/13

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources regarding the Quarter Monitoring Reports for the first quarter to June 2012. The report detailed progress against service objectives / milestones and performance targets and described factors affecting the service for:

- 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.

The Board was advised that after consultation with Members, and in line with the revised Council's Performance Framework for 2012/13 (approved by the Executive Board), the reports had been simplified with an overview report provided for the Safer Priority. This identified key developments, emerging issues and the key objectives / milestones and performance indicator structured using the below priority areas as stated in the Directorate Plan 2012/15

- Community Safety;
- Safeguarding and dignity (including Consumer Protection and Substance Misuses); and
- Domestic Violence.

However, the full departmental quarterly reports were available in the Members Information Bulletin to allow Members to access the reports as soon as they were available and within six weeks of the quarter end. The Departmental quarterly monitoring reports were also available via the link in the report.

An update extract of the red and amber performance

indicators was also circulated at the meeting as requested by the Chair.

The Board congratulated Officers on the improvements that had been made to the report indicating that they were easier to read and more accessible

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- Page 20 – DEFRA – Concern was raised at the issue of dog faeces in Halton; that there was only two dog wardens for the whole of Halton and what further action could be taken to address this matter.

In response, it was reported that enforcement officers were also responsible for this matter and there were seven in Halton. Officers advised that if the community reported incidents of dog fouling, the owners would be contacted and resources targeted to that particular area.

In reply, clarity was sought on how often the byelaw was reviewed, and it was suggested that when reviewed consideration be given to adding conditions to the byelaw which would address this issue. The Board agreed that this be referred to the Environment and Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board for consideration/action; and

- Page 21 – CCC24 – Reduce Alcohol related hospital Admissions – Clarity was sought on how the targets were set given the actual position for 2011/12 (updated by Public Health to 2922.4 admissions per 100,000 and the 12/13 target of 3027). In response, it was reported that this target had been calculated by Public Health to reduce the rate of increase based on a projection of a 4.8% increase in the rate from 2010/11, slowing the trend and reducing the rate of increase by 1%. It was also reported that the targets were set in consultation with Cheshire Police and that in February 2012 the Safer Halton Partnership and in March 2012 the Safer PPB (Item 45 Appendix 1 Page 36-61) received a full report on the rationale to every target set with Partners in the Sustainable Community Strategy, to ensure a clear audit trail. After discussion, it was agreed that an explanation of how these targets were calculated would be circulated to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF21 RISK & EMERGENCY PLANNING UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy & Resources which informed Members of the roles and responsibilities of the Risk and Emergency Planning Team.

The Board was advised that the Emergency Planning Team currently consisted of three staff; Principal Emergency Planning Officer; (currently vacant due to a recent retirement) and two Emergency Planning Officers. The team provided services to the whole Council and was the initial contact for any Major or Serious Incident within Halton. When a call was received from Cheshire Police, the Emergency Planning Officer (EPO) on call made an initial assessment of the situation and then, if necessary, would contact a First Responder. First Responders were essentially all Operational Directors (OD) and Divisional Managers (DM) from across all departments who would take it in turns (on a monthly basis) to be on-call to respond to the EPO and subsequently instigate various processes to enable the Council to respond positively and quickly to the incident.

The Board was further advised that during office hours this could be the most appropriate OD or DM for the incident, but outside of office hours this would be from the list of available First Responders. Strategic Directors also took it in turns to be available for calls from the EPO. In addition, it was reported that, in consultation with the First Responder a decision may be taken to open a Local Authority Emergency Centre (LAEC) to respond to the incident.

It was reported that the Risk Management Team prepared, co-ordinated and monitored all the Risk Registers for the Council, highlighting particular risks to the Authority to ensure approach measures were implemented.

The Board noted the numerous responsibilities of the team set out in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.7 of the report.

In conclusion, it was reported that it was not possible to give the Board an update on Creamfields as the de-brief had not as yet taken place.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was suggested that Members of the Board observe a test/exercise in the future to obtain a greater understanding of how the Emergency Centres operated;
- The Board noted the sequence of events that would take place when there was a major incident;
- The chairman suggested that a seminar be arranged for all Members in order to raise their awareness on the risk and emergency planning service;
- It was reported that good working relationships were in place with cross border agencies / organisations. Recently, emergency planning had scheduled a cross border multi agency meeting with Merseyside to review the Cheshire roles and responsibilities within the COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazards) Pentagon Fine Chemicals Multi Agency Response Plan. It was also reported that as the site was based in Merseyside, it had a predominantly SE wind, which in the event of a major accident happening on the site, would impact on the Halton community i.e Widnes. Therefore cross border roles and responsibilities needed to be agreed and in place; and
- It was agreed that the designated telephone number for Members to ring in an emergency would be circulated to all Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments be noted.

SAF22 FOOD SAFETY AND THE NATIONAL FOOD HYGIENE RATING SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave the Members information on how well Halton's food businesses were performing on the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The report set out how well food businesses performed overall, what action was taken in relation to failing premises and some of the challenges to securing full compliance.

The Board was advised that Halton was the first

authority in Cheshire and Merseyside to launch the National Food Hygiene Rating scheme in April 2011. Previously Halton had operated its own “scores on the doors” scheme since 2007. The following premises were included in the scheme:-

- Takeaways;
- Caterers including home caterers;
- Restaurants;
- Grocery Shops;
- Supermarkets;
- Staff Canteens;
- Schools and other public buildings; and
- Pubs and Clubs.

It was reported that in total there were 1051 registered Food premises in Halton of which 822 had been included in the National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme. The local authority would publish all scores on the internet because it was considered public information. The ratings were published at www.food.gov.uk/ratings

The Board was further advised that it was not compulsory for a business to display the score on their premises. In practice the premises that scored 4 and 5 were happy to display their scores. However some businesses with 3 stars were reluctant to display their score. This was disappointing as consumer research by the FSA suggested that customers would be happy to eat in a premises that had obtained scores of 3 and above. In general premises with a score of 0, 1 and 2 rarely displayed their score.

It was reported that the score was based on the hygiene risk rating given to a business during the last food hygiene inspection by the Food Safety Team in Environmental Health. The rating was based on the following three key criteria;

- How hygienically the food was handled;
- The structure and cleanliness of the building; and
- How well the business was managed and its track record.

Businesses were awarded a score from 5 to 0. In practice, each score meant the following:-

- 5 - The premises were fully compliant with the law;

- 4 - The premises were essentially compliant with the law but with some minor contraventions that were not critical to food safety. No follow up was needed from the environmental health department;
- 3 - Overall satisfactory standard – premises need to make some minor improvements but these were not critical to food safety. Businesses would receive written advice but it was unlikely to be a priority for revisit;
- 2 - A number of contraventions had been identified – improvement was necessary to prevent a fall in standards. Follow up action in accordance with enforcement policy. The premises were likely to be subject to a revisit to ensure action had been taken;
- 1 - A number of major contraventions had been identified some of which if not addressed may be critical to food safety. The premises subject to enforcement action in accordance with the enforcement policy. The premises would be subject to a revisit to ensure improvements were made; and
- 0 - General failure to comply with food law. The premises may pose an imminent risk of injury to health. Immediate action required to improve standards – this may include closure – otherwise enforcement action in accordance with the enforcement policy. The premises would be subject to regular revisits and monitoring until the situation improved.

It was reported that of the 822 businesses in the scheme - 89% of these had achieved the top 3 scores of 5, 4 and 3 and were considered broadly compliant with the law. This figure was identical to the North West average. This figure had risen steadily in recent years as follows:-

- 2008-2009 84%;
- 2009-2010 84.77%;
- 2010-2011 87.4 %; and
- 2011-2012 89%.

The Board noted the factors that influenced compliance set out in the report and the action taken to address this matter.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the very small number who had achieved a low score were all from takeaway premises;
- The Board noted that there were a high concentration of kebab shops who all had a high turnaround of staff;
- The improvements that had been made with the rating system and the good working relationship Halton Borough Council had with the shops was noted;
- It was agreed that Members be invited, in small numbers, to visit some premises to observe how they operated;
- It was suggested that information on how well Halton were performing could be placed in the Information Bulletin and Inside Halton; and
- It was noted that premises rated 3 – 5 would be inspected approximately every 18 months to 2 years. Premises below this rating would be inspected more frequently and were inspected at an early stage.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF23 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC) UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members information on the progress on the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners (PCCs).

The Board was advised that the first elections of PCCs were scheduled to occur on 15 November 2012. PCCs would be elected for four years and would take office 22 November 2012.

The Board was further advised that as at 4 September 2012, the Labour party had selected Cllr John

Stockton, the Conservative party had selected Mr John Dwyer to stand for PCC in Cheshire and there was one Independent Member Sarah Flannery. In order that all candidates were treated equitably and had access to the same information, requests for information and their responses were being logged and published on the Authority's website. The Electoral Commission had published Guidance for Candidates which was available from <http://www.electoralcommission.org.uk/guidance/resources-for-those-we-regulate/candidates-and-agents/police-and-crime-commissioner-elections>). In addition, it was reported that nominations for PCC could be submitted until the 19th October 2012 deadline.

The Board noted the Police and Crime Panel, the PCC elections, candidates and communications update set out in paragraphs 6.4 to 10.2 of the report.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was reported that there was no definite indication of the level of future funding. However, it was hoped that these details would be made available in the next few weeks; and
- The Board noted the update on the Shadow Police and Crime Panel; that they had met and eventually the number of representatives from each area had been agreed; that a Councillor from Warrington would be chairing the group and when the Panel was formally constituted, there would be no objection to allowing Cheshire East to have a co-optee.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF24 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which outlined the key issues and progression of the agenda for safeguarding 'vulnerable adults' (i.e. adults at risk of abuse) in Halton.

The Board was advised that the following posts had been established in the 12 month pilot for an Integrating Safeguarding Unit (ISU):-

- Principal Manager – Paula Gandy;

- Safeguarding / Dignity Co-ordinator – Tracy Ryan; and
- Social Workers – Rachel Taylor and Jimmy Bush; and
- Positive Behaviour Analyst – Emma Hulme.

The Board was further advised of the following posts that were in the process of being finalised:-

- 2 x RGN; and
- GP Clinical Lead (currently Dr Lyon supporting as an interim measure).

The Board noted the various activities that had taken place and that were set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.11 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF25 HOMELESSNESS REVIEW WORKING GROUP - DISPERSED HOUSING

The Board was advised that Councillor P Wallace was currently undertaking a review which would be considering dispersed housing as one of the options for people who were victims of domestic abuse.

The Chairman reported that dispersed housing created difficulties for Cheshire Police and the individuals concerned, as the location could be compromised. When compromised, he reported the individual/family had to move and the accommodation could not be used again.

The Board was advised that Halton had always preferred a hostel as a solution to the issues relating to domestic violence. The Chairman requested that the Board support that the hostel would not be substituted by dispersed housing. After considerable discussion, the Board agreed to support this option.

RESOLVED: That the Board recommend to the Chairman of the Homeless Service Update Review, Councillor Wallace, that in addressing incidents of domestic violence, the hostel remained as the preferred option and was not substituted by dispersed housing.

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Meeting ended at 8.25 p.m.