

## SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 12 March 2013 at the Karalius Suite, Stobart Stadium, Widnes*

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), N. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chairman), Edge, Gilligan, V. Hill, Ratcliffe, Nolan and Sinnott

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Gerrard, Lea and M. Lloyd Jones

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, T. Dean, L. Derbyshire, N. Goodwin, D. Houghton, A. Lewis, A. McNamara, L Pennington-Ramsden and J. Sutton

Also in attendance: Collette Walsh (NHS Merseyside, Halton and St Helens), Gareth Heesom and Tracey Done (Halton Credit Union).

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
SAF51	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 January 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF52	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF53	SSP MINUTES	
	The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 20 November 2012 were presented to the Board for information.	
	RESOLVED: That the report be noted.	
SAF54	HALTON CREDIT UNION	
	The Board received a presentation from Tracey Done and Gareth Heesom, Halton Credit Union, which:-	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Highlighted that since it had been established in</li></ul>	

2002, over 25,000 loans had been allocated with a total value of £11.7 m and members had deposited £7.8m in savings;

- Explained that there were over 4,000 active adult members who had over £1.8m in savings and had £2.3m on loan, the majority of which was spent locally;
- Detailed the financial year so far from October 2012 to September 2013; £1.2 m had been allocated on loans, 700,000 withdrawals had been processed and £2m had been brought in share deposits and loan repayments; and
- Outlined what the future could hold; more members in financial hardship; an increase in the services that were offered and that Halton Credit Union members would continue to be served.

The Board was advised that Halton Credit Union was a none profit organisation who encouraged saving and promoted money management. Members could pay in weekly, two weekly or monthly and pay in as little as 50p on a regular basis. It was reported that the main office was based in Halton Lea and members could pay in cash, via payroll or from their child benefit etc. Members were given a free life assurance (with terms and conditions), and there were no penalties for early repayment of loans with the highest interest rate equating to 26.8%. The Credit Union also had some junior savers and two schools had signed up to the scheme. This enabled the young people to learn money management at an early age.

The Board was further advised that there was a loan scheme available from Co-op electricals, which was a much better option than other similar high street shops. Delivery was free and within two days and the interest rate was much lower.

The following comments arose from the presentation:-

- Concern was raised that money lenders were operating in the Ditton Ward and that the situation would get worse with the introduction of Universal Credit. It was reported that some individuals had limited budgetary skills and this would create a problem when they were paid their rents directly as they were not accustomed to handling large amounts of money. The benefit cuts would also

create difficulties as the allocated rent money could be used for other things and this could result in rent arrears and possibly the family becoming homeless;

- It was noted that Halton Credit Union had 12 staff, but many of them were part time. It was also noted that many volunteers had retired and had left as the pressure for the service had increased;
- It was noted that Halton Housing Trust had invested in Halton Credit Union and had also paid for the marketing of the service;
- It was agreed that details of Halton Credit Union be placed in the In Touch magazine, Inside Halton and in HBC's employees payslips. It was also suggested that information could be placed on the Council's website. It was agreed that Halton Credit Union would contact HBC's communications department to co-ordinate the advertising;
- It was noted that Santander had allocated £10,000 to the Credit Union which had enabled them to purchase equipment in order to deliver a better service and deal with people more effectively;
- It was noted that currently only two schools had engaged with Halton Credit Union. However, it was also noted that the Credit Union did not currently have the capacity to engage with further schools because of the lack of resources; and
- It was reported that the main office in Widnes was in Queens Avenue, which was not ideally located and rent payments were high. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the Chief Executive on behalf of the Board requesting that consideration be given to finding new cheaper premises for Halton Credit Union. It was noted that they would need an office with equipment etc. It was also agreed that information on the service be placed at Halton foodbanks.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The presentation and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) Gareth Heesom and Tracey Done be thanked for

their informative presentation; and

- (3) The Board congratulate Gareth Heesom and Tracey Done for the excellent work they had undertaken to date.

## SAF55 ALCOHOL HARM REDUCTION PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report from the Strategic Director, Communities, which informed Members of the progress to date in relation to reducing alcohol related harm and a multi-agency action plan which detailed future proposed activity.

The Board was advised that alcohol misuse was a major source of harm in the local communities and the range of harm included alcohol related violence (including domestic violence); deliberate self-harm; suicide; crime and anti-social behaviour; short and long-term damage to physical and mental health; harm to unborn babies; child abuse including neglect and early mortality, as well as increased risk taking in sexual behaviour. It was reported that many accidental injuries and road traffic accidents had been attributable to alcohol misuse and it was also linked to negative effects on the economy and incalculable misery for individuals and families.

The Board was further advised that Halton had been identified as the 15<sup>th</sup> worst affected Local Authority Area (out of 326) in England for alcohol related harm and the 8<sup>th</sup> worst Local Authority Area in England for under 18 alcohol specific hospital admissions. This it was reported, represented a significant improvement and the direction of travel for the service was moving in the right direction.

It was reported that estimates were that in 2011/12, there had been 11,874 alcohol related admissions to hospital for Halton residents. The main reasons for alcohol-attributable admissions had been for hypertensive diseases, (52% of alcohol admissions), cardiac arrhythmias (16%) and mental and behavioural disorders due to alcohol (7%).

The Board noted the significant developments that had taken place and that were set out in paragraphs 4.1 – 4.9 of the report.

In conclusion, it was reported that now that there was a robust infrastructure and treatment offer in Halton for people who required support to tackle alcohol related problems, the strategic approach was focussing on prevention and early

intervention.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that alcohol harm reduction activity was linked to the night time economy and Collette Walsh and Amanda Lewis were invited to take part in the Night Time Economy Topic Group. It was also noted that a meeting of the Topic Group would take place on 20 March 2013;
- It was noted that a meeting had taken place in Whiston Hospital to collect the following data; when individuals had their last alcoholic drink and whether they had an injury or were there as a result of an assault. It was also noted that the data would be monitored;
- It was noted that various initiatives of the Safer Halton Partnership had contributed towards the reduction and A&E also had a better recording system in place;
- Details were sought on where the hotspots had been identified by the Outreach Bus and Street Based Teams. It was also reported that a number of residents in the Appleton area had identified hotspots and a serious accident involving two young people had also occurred. In response, it was reported that this information was available in Addaction sent to Members on a regular basis;
- It was noted that the Problem Solving Courts were no longer in operation. It was also noted that the courts would be keen to re-establish the service if a solution could be found. It was agreed that the Night Time Economy Topic Group would consider this issue; and
- It was noted that a significant number of licensed premises were being used to hold children's parties. It was suggested that consideration could be given on establishing an alcohol free bar. It was reported that The Brink in Liverpool was an alcohol free bar and also served food and it had proved to be very popular. In addition, it was suggested that Community Centres could be used for social based activities. It was agreed that the feasibility of establishing an alcohol free bar in

the Borough would be considered by the Night Time Economy Topic Group.

The Chairman reported that Colette Walsh was attending her last meeting of the Board. He took the opportunity to place on record the Board's appreciation of the work that had been undertaken by Colette during her time with the Authority. The Chairman also welcomed Amanda Lewis to the Board indicating that she would be replacing Colette Walsh.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the Board place on record its thanks to Colette Walsh and extend its best wishes to her for the future.

#### SAF56 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS - QUARTER 3

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which detailed progress against service objectives/ milestones and performance targets, and described factors affecting the service for the following service areas within the remit of the Safer Policy and Performance Board:

- Communities Directorate – Community Safety, Drug and Alcohol Action Teams, Domestic Violence and Environmental Health; and
- Area Partner indicators from the Police, Fire and Probation Services were stated where available.

The Board was advised that In line with the revised Council's Performance Framework for 2012/13 (approved by Executive Board in 2012/13), the Policy and Performance Board had been provided with a Safer Priority Based report; which identified the key issues arising from the performance in Quarter 3 to December 2012. This had been structured using the following priorities and key areas of focus, as stated in the Directorate Plan for 2012-15:

- Community Safety;
- Safeguarding and Dignity (including Consumer Protection and Substance Misuse); and
- Domestic Violence.

It was reported that the full Departmental quarterly reports were available on the Members' Information Bulletin and via the link in the report.

Page 26 – PA 26 – Clarity was sought on why this target was missing and what the target was. In response, it was reported that this information would be circulated to all Members of the Board.

Page 26 – PA 25 (b) – clarity was sought on the percentage of Local Air Pollution Control Audits being broadly compliant – an explanation of broadly compliant was requested. In response, it was reported that this information would be circulated to all Members of the Board.

A reference was made to the young man who committed suicide and clarity was sought on whether the Board could influence the transition from children to adult services. In response, it was reported that the transition was a difficult period and work was being undertaken to address this issue. In addition, it was also reported that the Youth Offending Team would give the Board an update on this matter.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

#### SAF57 MANUAL HANDLING (PEOPLE) POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which informed Members of the introduction of the Manual Handling (People) Policy.

The Board was advised that The Health & Safety at Work etc Act 1974 and the Manual Handling Operations Regulations 1992 (as amended 2002) required a full risk assessment of lifting and handling activities including that of people. It was reported that due to a rise in employee accidents and injuries around the manual handling of persons in 2010 and 2011 a recommendation had been made for the introduction of a policy. At present there was no corporate policy covering this. The purpose of the policy was to bring a co-ordinated procedural and documentary approach to the lifting and handling of all people irrelevant of their ages and physical abilities.

It was noted that providers in the Borough did not subscribe to the training. However, Health and Safety Standards formed part of the procurement process and providers submitted their policy during this process. It was

reported that when the Quality Assurance Team undertook visits, staff were questioned on whether they understood the policy. It was also agreed that information on incidents over the last five years would be circulated to the Members for information.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

#### SAF58 ARMED FORCES COMMUNITY COVENANT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which informed the Members of the Armed Forces Community Covenant set out in Appendix 1 to the report. The term 'Armed Forces' referred to the Army, Royal Navy and Air Force. The Board noted that the Territorial Army were also included in the Covenant as they would be utilised more in the future with the reduction in the armed forces.

The Board was advised that Halton was part of a pan Cheshire Covenant covering the Local Authorities of Cheshire East, Cheshire West & Chester, Warrington and Halton. In addition to local authorities, health, probation and Job Centre plus were involved in supporting the covenant.

The Board was further advised that the Armed Forces Community Covenant had been signed by dignitaries representing each of the authorities on the 30<sup>th</sup> June 2012, Armed Forces Day.

It was reported that each Local Authority was required to have a nominated Armed Forces Champion, the Community Development Manager had been designated this role in Halton. The Armed Forces Champion provided representation on a Community Covenant working group that covered the Cheshire area and provided a point of liaison for the forces.

Furthermore, it was reported that The Armed Forces Community Covenant set out twenty pledges, around five key themes:-

- Housing;
- Employment & Benefit;
- Education;
- Health; and
- Wellbeing.

It was reported that the Council would work with



partners to assist and support armed forces and their families in line with the pledges set out in the covenant.

The Board discussed the importance of knowing how many armed forces families could be re-locating to Halton. It was reported that the number of people re-locating was currently unknown as the armed forces did not collect such data on discharge. However, transition arrangements had been raised at a meeting in Preston but information had not as yet been received. It was also reported that the Employment, Learning and Skills PPB would be undertaking the lead on this matter.

It was highlighted that key partners would need to be identified in the Borough to help to deliver the pledges in the covenant. The Chairman requested that SAFFA be involved in the process.

Furthermore, it was reported that the Authority had always supported armed services personnel regarding housing provision and it was hoped that this remained the current position.

The Board noted that a high number of ex forces personnel were involved in the criminal justice system. The Board also noted that it could take 12 months for post-traumatic stress to develop and ex forces personnel had limited experienced in accessing services. The Chairman requested that on behalf of the Board, a letter of support for the covenant be provided to encourage others to support the initiative.

It was noted that £35m had been allocated to the fund and very little had been accessed to date. It was reported that some pledges would be via local provision

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

#### SAF59 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY – ACTION PLAN UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which informed Members of the progress to date with the Community Engagement Strategy action plan.

The Board was advised that the Community Engagement Strategy had been approved by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board in June 2011 and reported to

the Safer PPB in September 2011. Since then a Community Engagement Operational Group had been set up to oversee the delivery of the action plan. This group consisted of engagement managers and professionals from across the strategic partnership.

The Board was further advised that overall the Strategy remained on course to be completed by 2015. It was reported that a Community Engagement Health Check was being carried out to evaluate how well the partnership engaged with the community. The Community Engagement Operational Group had also agreed the approach to be taken, which was set out in Appendix B to the report.

It was reported that the final paperwork for the community engagement health check would be sent out by March 2013 and the deadline for submitting completed forms would be the end of April/early May 2013. In addition, it was reported that the Community Engagement Action Plan had been updated and a "progress" column had been added. The document was attached in Appendix A of the report.

In conclusion, it was reported that the Community Engagement Operational Group would take the lead on overseeing delivery of the action plan.

The Board noted that Members would receive a monthly briefing to support Councillors on how they could take a leading role in community engagement

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted;
- (2) the contents of the updated action plan be noted;  
and
- (3) the format and timescales of the community engagement health check be noted.

#### SAF60 DRAFT HALTON HOUSING STRATEGY 2013-2018

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which presented Halton's Housing Strategy 2013-18 as a draft for public consultation.

The Board was advised that Under Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2003, local authorities were expected to produce a Housing Strategy which gave an overview of

housing in their district and set out priorities for action.

The Board was further advised that there had been significant achievements since the last Housing Strategy had been published in 2008. The Board noted the changes set out in paragraph 3.1.6 of the report.

It was reported that the draft Strategy had taken a slightly different approach from previous years in that two documents had been produced. The Strategy itself (Appendix A of the report) was a short, easy to read document which focused on the strategic objectives, priorities and planned activities for the next three years and which were detailed in an action plan. In addition, it was reported that this was supported by an evidence paper (Appendix B of the report) which set out the context in which the Strategy had been developed and brought together key data and information on housing issues and services which had helped to shape the strategic objectives and priorities.

The Board noted the next steps set out in paragraphs 3.4.1 - 3.4.3 of the report.

It was requested that a link to the Armed Services Covenant be added to the Housing Strategy.

Page 115, Priority 3D - it was noted that the Strategy suggested a more pro active approach to empty homes and this was welcomed by the Members.

The Chairman encouraged Members of the Board to pass their comments directly to Joanne Sutton before the 21 March 2013.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be endorsed; and
- (2) the comments raised be noted.

#### SAF61 POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER (PCC) UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members an update on the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC).

The Board was advised that PCCs would also exercise regional power and influence over the development and work of local Community Safety Partnerships (CSPs) via powers and duties set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The Board was advised that in 2013/14 there would be a new and un-ring fenced Community Safety Fund (CSF) which would be paid to PCCs. The exact size and basis for allocation of this fund had yet to be determined. However, it was reported that an announcement had been expected on 5 December 2012. The CSF would replace the vast majority of existing drugs and crime funding provided by the Home Office.

The Board was further advised that it had now been agreed by the Police and Crime Commissioner to passport this funding stream back to the Community Safety Teams under a strict 12 month Service Level Agreement (SLA). The primary aim of the SLA would be to focus the funding on tackling and reducing anti-social behavior. It was reported that the content of all the Local Authority SLA's had been similar.

It was reported that from 2014/15 onwards the Home Office intended to roll CSF funding into Police Main Grant. Again the amount of funding had yet to be decided. In his letter, Nick Herbert had made it clear that that the Home Office had no intention of ring-fencing the Police Main Grant, nor the setting of a minimum or maximum amount that PCCs must or should spend on community safety activity. It would be up to the PCCs to decide how to use all of the resources at their disposal in pursuit of local priorities.

Furthermore, it was reported that the newly elected Police and Crime Commissioners now had their own dedicated website hosted by the Association of police and Crime Commissioners. The aim was to provide essential national support functions for elected PCCs and all policing governance bodies in England and Wales. It also contained useful information regarding the new role and the manifesto of the individual commissioners and recent news updates. It was reported that the website could be accessed via the following link [Association of Police and Crime Commissioners](#).

In conclusion, the Board noted the preparations of the PCC in Cheshire and Halton. The Board also noted the Police and Crime Panel update and that Councillor E Cargill had been elected Chair of the Panel.

The Chairman reported that the PCC and his Commissioning Officer would be invited to a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report and comment raised be noted.

SAF62 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

As this was the last meeting of the Board in the current Municipal Year, the Chairman, recorded his thanks and appreciation to the Members and Officers of the Board for their support during the year. He also extended his best wishes to the Divisional Manager, Performance and Improvement for her hard work on developing the performance framework.

Members of the Board responded and expressed their appreciation of the manner in which the Chairman and Vice Chairman had undertaken their duties.

*Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.*