

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 10 November 2015 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Lea (Vice-Chairman), M. Bradshaw, Gilligan, V. Hill, M. Lloyd Jones and Nolan

Apologies for Absence: Councillor J Gerrard, Sinnott and Zygadlo

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: A. Jones, M. Andrews, C. Patino and B. Seabury

Also in attendance: Councillor Nelson, S. Henshaw and C Wathen (CFRS) and C. Eccleshall (Immigration Service)

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

SAF22 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Action

The Chairman made the following announcements:

- 1) Halton and Weavervale Members of Parliament had petitioned central Government with regards to the introduction of Food Standards Hygiene Certificates being displayed on a statutory basis, regardless of the rating.
- 2) Topic group visits were planned over the next 12 months to support the topic groups, such as: a visit to the Cheshire Custody Suite; observing Staysafe in operation; observing dog operations; Creamfields site visit; Halton Stadium match day visit; Night Time Economy (NTE) early hours visits to the Town Centres.

The Community Safety Manager would confirm dates and email Members with details so that they could respond with their interest.

RESOLVED: That the announcements be noted.

SAF23 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 September 2015 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

SAF24 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

SAF25 SSP MINUTES

The draft minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 23 September 2015 were presented to the Board for information.

SAF26 FIRE BRIGADE ANNUAL REPORT

The Board received a presentation from the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service (CFRS) on activity in Halton for 2014-15.

The Chairman introduced the presenters: Councillor Nelson, who was a representative on the CFRS Board, Caroline Wathen and Sean Henshaw, both from (CFRS).

There were three areas of focus discussed:

- Home Safety: engagement, fires in the home and response rates;
- Road Safety: engagement, road traffic collisions and response rates; and
- Deliberate Fires: engagement, incidents and intelligence.

The Board also received the Annual Report for 2014-15 which set out how the Service had performed over the last 12 months and looked at some notable achievements. It also looked at what the future may hold for the Service.

In response to Members' queries the following was noted:

- The construction of the Gateway had so far not created any problems with regards to response times. The CFRS held regular meetings with Merseylink in order to keep abreast with any road closures;
- The CFRS worked with schools and colleges to raise awareness of fire safety;

- It was a difficult task to get the general public to understand the importance of installing smoke alarms in their homes; the same could be said for sprinklers in businesses and educating people that they did not use much water;
- The CFRS was a statutory consultee in the planning process, yet they rarely responded to consultation requests; Councillor Nelson would feed this back to the CFRS;
- CFRS was in a better financial position than most other authorities;
- Runcorn Fire Station was the most community active station in Cheshire;
- New laws were coming in which would require private landlords to install working smoke and carbon monoxide alarms in their properties; and
- Wheelie bin fires were one of the biggest problems faced by the fire service in Halton despite prevention methods.

The Chairman thanked all presenters for their informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be noted.

SAF27 UK VISA AND IMMIGRATION SERVICE

The Chairman introduced Chris Eccleshall from the Immigration Service who updated the Board on the work of the UK Visa and Immigration Service, formerly known as the United Kingdom Border Agency (UKBA).

He advised that the service was split into three areas: UK Visa Section; UK Border Force; and Immigration Enforcement. They had a National Strategy and Planning Department who had begun to work at a local level in Halton, in partnership with the Council and other agencies to remove illegal people from the UK who were a drain on local resources such as housing and health.

He also spoke about criminality issues associated with illegal immigrants that were dealt with by the Service and gave examples of the work being carried out presently with HBC Licencing Officers.

Members discussed the service and agreed that they would be interested to receive statistics of illegal immigrants in Halton and the activity carried out by the Service to remove them and combat criminality.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received and noted.

SAF28 BONFIRE NIGHT / HALLOWEEN NIGHT - VERBAL UPDATE

The Board received a brief update on the activities of the Community Safety Department over the Halloween and Bonfire Night period.

Operation Treacle was carried out, were two hubs (one in Runcorn and one in Widnes) were set up consisting of Police staff and PCSO's, RSL's, child agencies, Addaction and parents. They were active in dispersing groups of people throughout this period.

It was reported that overall figures for crime and criminal damage were down over 30-31 October and the feedback received from partner agencies was good.

It was noted that a full report would be brought to the next meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

SAF29 CREAMFIELDS - VERBAL UPDATE

The Board received a verbal update on this year's Creamfield's Event relating to statistics on drug offences; theft; violence against persons; criminal damage; robbery and sex offences.

It was noted that a full report would go to the next meeting of the Board following ratification of the information at the Safer Halton Partnership meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

SAF30 LOCAL ALCOHOL ACTION AREA FINAL REPORT

The Board received a report from the Director of Public Health, which presented the Local Alcohol Action Area (LAAA) Final report.

The Board was reminded that in March 2014 Halton was one of only twenty areas in the country to be selected as an LAAA as part of the Government's response to the Alcohol Strategy Consultation in July 2013, and the subsequent commitment by the Home Office to launch a number of Local Alcohol Action Areas.

The key aims of the Halton LAAA, its objectives and progress made was discussed in the report and in the appendix to the report. It was noted that the LAAA scheme had concluded in May 2015 and the final report summarising the successes of the project had been submitted to the Home Office.

It was noted that the LAAA had strengthened the relationship between crime and community safety colleagues and health, ensuring that there was a shared understanding and commitment to reducing all aspects of alcohol related harm across the Borough. Members were advised that the LAAA Steering Group would now merge with the Halton Alcohol Strategy Group and continue to build upon actions and momentum.

On behalf of the Board, the Chairman wished to convey his thanks to Dr Elspeth Anwar, who had led the project in Halton.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the contents of the report and continues to support local actions to reduce alcohol related harm.

SAF31 LEGAL HIGHS WORKING GROUP UPDATE

Members received an update on the progress of the Legal Highs Working Group to date. It was noted that the risks of legal highs were identified and a key recommendation made early in the process was that Halton would take a strong stance on legal highs.

The Group had received Public Health England representatives who advised of the increase in their usage in general in the UK. They also advised that not a lot was known about them or what substances the different types of drugs contained. As far as the Topic Group knew, there were no shops in Halton that sold these drugs.

Members were advised that a final report of the Topic Group would be submitted to the Board at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That the update be noted.

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Meeting ended at 8.05 p.m.