

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 13 March 2012 at the Council Box, Stobart Stadium

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), Wallace (Vice-Chairman), A.Cole, Edge, Fraser, J. Gerrard, M Lloyd Jones, N.Plumpton Walsh, M. Ratcliffe, Shepherd and Thompson and Mr Hodson

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, H. Coen, L. Derbyshire, J. Hunt, A. McIntyre, P. McWade, H. Moir, S. Semoff and J. Sutton

Also in attendance: Standing Order 33, Councillor Jones Portfolio Holder – Economic Development. Councillor C Loftus

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

	<i>Action</i>
SAF39 COUNCILLOR DAVE LEADBETTER	
The Board stood in silence as a mark of respect for the sad passing of Councillor Dave Leadbetter.	
SAF40 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2012 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF41 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF42 SSP MINUTES	
The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 15 November 2011 were presented to the Board for information.	

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF43 HATE CRIME AWARENESS RAISING AND DVD

Due to technical difficulties, this item was deferred for consideration at the next meeting of the Board.

SAF44 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS - QUARTER 3

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources regarding the Quarter Monitoring Reports for the third quarter of 2011/12 to December 2011. 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 following points arose from the discussion:-

- P28 - It was noted that there had been a slight increase in the number of the repeat incidents of domestic violence, including the number of incidents involving children than the same period last year. It was also noted that repeat offenders were a contributing factor in the increase of this performance indicator;
- PA12 – the Board noted that a number of HBC staff had received Adult Safeguarding Training, including e-learning in 2011/12;
- It was noted that Hate Crime was reported under 'other' performance indicators. Clarity was sought on whether such crimes led to prosecution in court. In response, it was reported that not all incidents would result in prosecution;
- Page 5 – Communities Directorate – Priority 5 - Clarity was sought on the funding for the projects. In response, it was reported that the projects had been previously funded by the Working Neighbourhood Fund which had ceased at the end of March last year. However, the projects had been re-prioritised and funding carried over to

enable them to be funded for an additional year. The Chairman reported that the Council were looking to mainstream some of the projects.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF45 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY
PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK 2011 – 16 AND MID-
YEAR PROGRESS REPORT 2011/12

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the 2011- 2016 Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton.

The Board was advised that selected measures and targets for Health in Halton's strategic community priorities were summarised in Appendix 1 to the report, using the Halton Corporate template, designed for the purpose of bringing together all relevant items of performance information. The template also provided a clear evidence based rationale for measure selection, which would further evidence and support value for money judgements by the Audit Commission and ensure outward accountability.

The Chairman welcomed the report and indicated that it was easy to understand and that Members requests had been taken into account.

In respect of Page 33, concern was raised regarding Partnership funding in the future. The excellent preventative work that had been undertaken with the use of the tasking vehicle was noted. The Board noted that the Community Safety Review was looking to identify funding to continue this service.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF46 TACKLING 'TROUBLED FAMILIES' - INITIAL PLANS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which outlined the Government's proposals for tackling troubled families and the Council's initial plans for delivering this new initiative in Halton.

The Board was advised that the Government had announced that almost £450 million had been made

available in a cross-government drive to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families. The money was being made available to local authorities to fund a national network of Troubled Family 'Trouble-Shooters' and family intervention projects. The trouble-shooters would oversee the programme of action in their area.

The Board was further advised that a new Troubled Families Team based within the Department of Communities and Local Government, headed by Louise Casey, had been established to join up efforts across Whitehall, provide expert help to local areas, and drive forward the strategy. It reported directly to Eric Pickles, the Secretary of State.

It was reported that it was estimated that troubled families cost the taxpayer an estimated £9 billion per year, equivalent to £75,000 per family. The initiative was intended to cut the costs of this to the state.

Furthermore, it was reported that It appeared that the troubled families programme would build on existing work, rather than some new, separate initiative being bolted on. In Halton this meant augmenting the 'Team Around The Family' approach in Widnes and Runcorn. In addition, it was reported that all agencies, central and local, would need to work closely together to get over some of the hurdles in delivering more co-ordinated and effective services.

It was reported that it would be challenging for Halton to achieve the target by 2015 and success would depend on all public services in Halton and Government departments working closely together. Local partners, such as health and the police would also need to contribute.

In addition, it was reported that the Criteria for defining a family as 'troubled' was still under development and the 375 families calculated for Halton had been based on an analysis from the 2005 Family and Children survey using the child welfare index and indicators of multiple deprivation,

The Board noted the Council's initial response to the initiative set out in paragraphs 4.1 to 4.6 of the report.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the troubled families programme would be integrated into the community safety activities;

- Concern was raised at the 375 families for Halton which had been based on an analysis from the 2005 Family and Children survey using the child welfare index and indicators of multiple deprivation. It was suggested that these indicators were stereotypical and represented a situation rather than a behaviour. In reply, it was reported that not all of the 120,000 would be categorised as 'Troubled Families' as some issues would result in additional support and some would be signposted to other support including, Halton People into Jobs and the Reed Partnership DWP/ESF Project working with families with multiple problems;
- It was suggested that the initiative 'Tackling Troubled Families' had been based on out of date data and the name itself represented a master label and this could create problems;
- After considerable discussion, the Board agreed that the initiative 'Tackling Troubled Families' was inappropriate and should be locally to 'Tackling Local Problems';
- The Board noted the urgency of identifying families with multiple problems as soon as possible. In reply, it was reported, that work was already taking place to identify the actual number of people in the Borough with multiple problems; and
- The Board noted the importance of receiving the definition of 'Troubled Families' from the Government and that this had been delayed and was now anticipated in April 2012.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments be noted;
- (2) The Council's initial response to troubled families listed in paragraph 4 of the report be supported with the initiative being named 'Tackling Local Problems';
- (3) The Board receive a further report once consultation has been undertaken with key partners on the delivery of the 'Troubled Families' programme, and after the initial analysis of the 375 troubled families calculated by Government as living in Halton; and

- (4) the data outlining the families with multiple problems be undertaken as a matter of urgency.

SAF47 DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave the Members an update on the activities being supported across the Borough in response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Board was advised of the four groups that formed The Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) and the role and responsibilities they had in addressing domestic abuse and sexual violence in the Borough. The Board noted the role and composition of the Halton Survivors Group.

The Board was further advised that domestic abuse and sexual violence were issues that affected young people. Ensuring that young people were able to identify abuse and have the knowledge and information available to them to enable them to make and identify healthy relationships was central to raising expectations both in males and females. It was reported that Cronton 6th Form College had delivered a Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence awareness raising event whereby 125 young people had attended. Marketing information with local service access provision had been circulated and the College had expressed a willingness to continue to work with and support the HDAF.

It was reported that the Cheshire Sexual Assault Referral Centre was holding an opening event on Thursday 29 March 2012 at Northwich Memorial Hall, Chesterway, Norwich, Cheshire CW9 5QJ, and Members were encouraged to attend. It was also reported that the details of the event would be circulated to all Members of the Council.

The Board also received a verbal update on the Sanctuary Scheme and it was reported that this information would be circulated to all Members of the Board.

The Board noted the importance of retaining the sanctuary scheme. The Board also noted the activities / actions being taken to address domestic abuse and sexual violence set out in paragraphs 3.4 to 3.10.5 of the report.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF48 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR IN THE PRIVATE RENTED SECTOR

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which outlined the outcomes from the scrutiny review and sought comments on the report attached as Appendix 1.

The Board was advised that the topic group had been formed in response to a number of issues identified by Members relating to the private rented sector including poor property conditions, anti-social behaviour caused by private tenants and absentee landlords who were reluctant to take action against tenants who caused problems. The group had been chaired by Councillor Pamela Wallace.

The Board was advised that Members of the topic group had made their recommendations and these were outlined within the Action Plan contained in Appendix 4 of the report along with further details of the project and outcomes from meetings.

It was reported that the recommendations would have staffing implications and there may need to be funding identified for these additional resources. The report presented to the Board meeting in June would identify such costs. In response, it was highlighted that if additional funding was required, Members would need to be informed in time for it to be considered as part of the budgetary process.

The Chairman of the topic group, Councillor Wallace, took the opportunity to thank Officers for their support and excellent work they had undertaken during the review.

The Chairman suggested that a summary document be produced which would include contact names and telephone numbers and that it be circulated to all Members of the Council. It was also highlighted that some of the properties in the Borough were being used as 'safe houses' and would need to be protected.

The Chairman also suggested that due to financial pressures, an interim solution could be that landlords give the Authority details of all their properties so that they could be inspected randomly.

Clarity was sought on how many of the 5030 properties were privately owned and were being let out and how many

were being let to an agency. In reply it was reported that this information would be circulated to Members of the Board. In addition, it was reported that the Government were addressing Housing Tenancy Fraud and there had been a recent campaign to encourage members of the public to report potential tenancy fraud in Halton. This had resulted in eleven cases being reported, half of which did not warrant further action.

The Board noted that the electoral register was available to check who was registered at an address and this could be used more frequently to identify sub letting issues.

The Board noted the issues set out in paragraphs 3.2.1 to 3.2.4 of the report.

The Topic Group agreed the following recommendations for the Board to support:-

1. Recommend that the Council uses its discretion to charge 90% Council Tax on properties that have been needlessly left empty for over 6 months and that the Council support proposals contained in the Government's consultation on technical reforms of Council Tax to increase this amount to 100% and charge an additional empty homes premium;
2. It was agreed that a targeted project management approach to the issue be piloted in West Bank and Halton Lodge, which would feature the following:
3. An information event for landlords and tenants involving all relevant services with exhibition space;
4. Inviting landlords in the areas to register their contact details with the Council;
5. Promote the benefits of joining the Landlord Accreditation Scheme;
6. Provide advice to landlords on how to deal with anti social tenants;
7. Introduce a Healthy Homes approach in these areas making links with relevant organisations with front line staff perhaps through re-instigation of the Safer Homes Group;
8. Make full use of relevant enforcement powers in

these areas to tackle poor condition;

9. Undertake an external inspection of properties in these areas to identify empty properties and establish whether Council Tax or Housing Benefit fraud is an issue;
10. Pilot an approach which accredits the property rather than the landlord in these areas;
11. Explore the possibility of bringing in additional staffing resources to assist with the above either through re-organisation of existing staff, secondment from another organisation, funding bids to external agencies or through use of volunteers or graduate work experience schemes;
12. Undertake a survey of known private landlords throughout the Borough to gain a better understanding of the types of properties they own, their motivations for being a private landlord, their intentions for the future and to provide an opportunity to promote their responsibilities as a landlord and Council services that are available to assist;
13. Work with the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service to support their call for a change in legislation that would require all private landlords to install hard wired smoke detectors in their properties; and
14. Via the Council's intranet and Cheshire Police's Looking Glass system, encourage staff whose jobs involve outside visits to report empty properties so that they can be verified against Council Tax details and potential fraud identified.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments raised be noted;
- (2) The recommendations and Action Plan set out in Appendix 1 to the report be supported;
- (3) A further report detailing cost implications be presented to the Board in June; and
- (4) After consideration by the Board in June it be presented to the Executive Board for consideration.

SAF49 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave the Members an update on 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 Safeguarding Adults Board's priorities, structure, reporting arrangements, membership and work plan had been reviewed, taking into account the establishment of the Health and Well-Being Board in shadow form, and the need to look creatively at mechanisms for engaging as partner agencies and individuals at a time of reducing resources and major change. The revised work plan would demonstrate a greater focus on prevention, aim to strengthen links with Dignity and Domestic Abuse agendas, and examine Safeguarding provision in self-directed support and Personalisation.

The Board noted the various activities that had taken place and were set out in paragraphs 3.2 to 3.6 of the report.

The Chairman highlighted the Safeguarding e-learning and encouraged Members of the Board to undertake the course. He highlighted, that it was critical that the Council did not solely rely on the Care Quality Commission to ensure that the residents of Halton were safe in residential homes. He indicated that in the future, Members in Halton would be undertaking visits. The Board also requested that they receive advance warning of any safeguarding issues in the Borough at the earliest opportunity.

The Board noted the current changes in the CQC and that the Head of CQC had resigned recently as a result of the public losing confidence in the service. The Board requested that a representative from the regional CQC be invited to the next meeting of the Board to give the Members an update on their service and how it would affect the residents of Halton.

The Chairman, Councillor Osborne informed the Members that Julie Hunt was leaving the Authority and was attending her last meeting. He took the opportunity to thank Julie for the support she had given to the Board during her time in Halton.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the Board place on record a vote of thanks to Julie Hunt for the work undertaken by her during her time with the Council and also gave their best wishes to her for the future.

SAF50 COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave the Members an update on the Community Safety Review process and the outcomes from the consultation with key stakeholders.

The Board was advised that the purpose of the review was to:-

- Prioritise community safety outcomes for 2012-13;
- Define the role of the Multi-Agency Team;
- Identify the demands;
- Identify the activities that provide value;
- Identify those roles and activities that enable or deliver;
- Identify how other partner organisations, third sector and the general public could assist, support and deliver outcomes; and
- Review the financial structures and funding streams to identify options for 2011/12 and beyond.

The Board was advised that the community safety review had commenced November 2011 and numerous pieces of work had been used to inform the position statement. In addition, the following areas had been considered:-

- Challenge what we do. Can it be done differently?
- Review of other Community Safety Teams staffing, roles and functions;
- Consultation (Voluntary / Partners / Councillors);
- Future priorities - Government policy changes i.e. PCC/ JSNA for 12/13;

- Build on what works well/ successes of the team to date;
- We want to be high performing and well placed for when the Police and Crime Commissioner comes into post; and
- Sustainable – less reliant on temporary funding sources.

It was reported that the review had put forward a number of options for consideration by the Safer Halton Partnership Chairs. In response, the Chairs had requested some additional work and information, which was currently being compiled. The aim was to complete the review by the end of February 2012.

Furthermore, it was reported that the findings from the consultation were attached at Appendix 1 to the report. Sixty four responses had been received, identifying priorities for action and suggesting how to improve partnership working. The many suggestions from stakeholders to improve partnership working were currently being analysed to influence the review and were therefore not included in the report, but were available on request.

The Chairman reported that it was vital that the final report was presented to the June meeting and if possible it be circulated to Members as soon as it was available. He indicated that this would enable the proposals to be considered as part of the budgetary process. In reply, the Lead Officer gave an undertaking to circulate the final report to Members before the June meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF51 POLICE & CRIME COMMISSIONERS AND POLICE & CRIME PANELS

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive on the introduction of Police and Crime Commissioners and a Police and Crime Panel.

The Board was advised that the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 introduced a new regime for policing and community safety in England. From November 2012, Police Authorities would be replaced by a Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC). In addition, a new Police and

Crime Panel (Panel) would be established to scrutinise the activities of the PCC. The introduction of the PCC and the Panel would change the relationship with the Council and the Community Safety Partnerships and other partners in crime reduction, crime detection and the criminal justice system.

The report informed Members of the preparations underway for the transition from the Police Authority to a PCC. It was noted that a Transition Group had been established, David Parr had been nominated and accepted as the Police Area Returning Officer (PARO) for the Cheshire Police Force area and Warrington Borough Council had been nominated as the host authority for the Police and Crime Panel. In addition, the report provided details of the Election arrangements taking place in November 2012, the powers and scrutiny role of the Panel, Partnership and Commissioning arrangements and the preparations already underway for the PCC and the Panel in Halton.

The Chairman reported that he and the Vice Chair had recently met with the Chief Constable and he had indicated that he would like to attend a future meeting of the Board. He added that the Chief Constable had recognised the uniqueness of Halton and would like to continue the working relationship with the Council after the Police Crime Commissioner had been recruited. In addition, he reported that the Police Crime Panel would only scrutinise the Police Commissioner and there would be no public access to the meetings.

The Board noted that there would be a 5 year Crime Plan which would be developed by the Chief Constable and the Police Crime Commissioner.

It was agreed that the helpful guidance notes for Members information, listed in section 3.1 of the report be circulated to all Members of the Board.

It was reported that the funding streams set out on Page 120 of the report paragraph 7.3 would be going to the Police Crime Commissioner from 2013/14 and it would be spent at their discretion.

The Board noted that to date there had been no indications of candidates for the Police Crime Commissioner role. However, it was also noted that nominations could be received as late as 19 days prior to the elections.

The Board noted that it was imperative that the Welcome Pack was established and ready for the new Police Crime Commissioner so that they would be aware of the following:-

- The current operating arrangement in Halton;
- The community safety architecture in Halton;
- The key players and partners involved directly and indirectly in crime and community safety in Halton; and
- The current crime and community safety priorities for Halton based on the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, research and data.

The Board noted the importance of adequate representation on the Police Crime Panel.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF52 COUNCILLOR JOHN SWAIN

The Board stood in silence as a mark of respect for the sad passing of Councillor John Swain.

Meeting ended at 8.45 p.m.