

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 7 December 2011 at the Karalius Suite, Stobart Stadium, Widnes

Present:

Board Members:	Cllr Rob Polhill (Chairman)	HBC
	Nick Atkin	Halton Housing Trust
	Cllr Dave Cargill	Police Authority
	Hayley Dooley	Job Centre Plus
	Dympna Edwards	NHS Halton & St Helens
	Kate Fallon	Bridgewater Community NHS Trust
	Mike Fry	Community Representative
	Rev. Ray Jones	Faith Communities
	Terry Parle	Halton Sports Partnership
	Michael Sheehan	Riverside College
	Richard Strachan	Cheshire Police
	Alex Waller	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services
	Jim Wilson	NHS Halton and St Helens
	Sally Yeoman	Halton and St Helens VCA
	David Parr	HBC – Safer Halton Representative
	Ann McIntyre	HBC – Children’s Trust Representative

Advisors to the Boards

Hazel Coen	HBC
Lorraine Cox	HBC
Lynn Derbyshire	HBC
Linda Driscoll	HBC
Alan Graham	HBC
Ann McIntyre	HBC
Mick Noone	HBC
David Parr	HBC
Shelah Semoff	HBC
Louise Wilson	HBC

Apologies for Absence: P Cain, B Edwards, T Gibbs, M Hankinson , Cllr R Hignett, G O'Rourke, W Rourke, S Spoerry and D Sproson.

32 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The minutes of the meeting held on 21 September 2011 having been printed and circulated were agreed as a correct record.

33 PRESENTATION: PROCUREMENT LANDSCAPE

The Board received a presentation from Lorraine Cox, Head of Procurement. The presentation highlighted the procurement process in Halton and the changes and improvements made over the last 20 months. The presentation:-

- Explained why a change in procurement rules had been essential i.e. because of budgetary cuts resulting in a need for efficiency savings and identifying ways of working differently;
- Outlined going 'Go-cal – how the Council had challenged and changed the internal rules for procurement and raised the threshold to the EU threshold and outlined the benefits this had to the Council and the business community;
- Set out what had been done to date i.e. education activities to raise awareness, in the first three months £600k had been saved and the Council were on track to save £1m in Year 2 and The Chest had been rolled out across the Borough;
- Outlined the various methods to check that the process was being successful i.e. via savings, compliance, local statistics and the Audit Commission;
- Highlighted the importance of thinking differently and thinking together i.e. consider the following points:-
 - Do you understand your total spend?
 - Contracts in place – renew?
 - Aggregation Rules – economy of scale?
 - Rules – do they help or hinder?
 - Change people and practice?
 - Collaborate?
 - Procurement is everybody's business?
 - The Law; and
 - Think beyond the usual and challenge all spend; and
- Set out the next steps in the process as follows:-
 - Full use of Adv RFQ – Prove Impact;
 - Full compliance;
 - More savings;
 - Wider collaboration;
 - Challenge the Law;
 - National arena; and
 - Putting Halton on the map.

The Board noted that Halton were sharing the success of the procurement process with other Local Authorities regionally. The Board also noted that work would be undertaken with smaller voluntary organisations to encourage collaboration. In addition, it was suggested that as part of the Governance

Review which was to be considered later on the agenda, procurement could be identified as a task and finish group enabling the Partnership to take the process forward.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation and comments raised be noted;
- (2) Lorraine Cox be thanked for her informative presentation; and
- (3) The procurement process be added to the proposed programme of topics under the new agenda management structure to be established from March 2012.

34 PROGRESS ON ACTION PLAN AND GOVERNANCE REVIEW

The Partners considered a report on the progress against the improvement areas outlined in the Board's Development Plan.

The Board was advised that the report outlined progress made to date, and future proposals against the following areas:-

- Governance Arrangements;
- Agenda Management; and
- Communication.

In respect of the Governance Arrangements, the Board was advised that they were being reviewed and the proposed membership for future Board meetings was attached at Appendix A to the report. The proposed membership list reflected the positive and inclusive partnership ethos under which the Board operated, but also reflected changing architecture of the public sectors by addressing changes such as the move to Health and Wellbeing Boards and Clinical Commissioning Groups and the intended introduction of the Police and Crime Commissioner in November 2012.

In respect of Agenda Management, the Board was advised that from March 2012 a standing agenda / structure for each meeting would be introduced and was set out in the report. Board meetings would only be held for a maximum of two hours, agendas would be sent out two weeks in advance of the meeting and Board Members would be asked to raise any issues/questions relating to Information Items prior to the meeting. If no issues had been raised, the item would not be discussed, to facilitate more time on the Open Forum discussions. In addition, a programme of topics for the open forum discussion would be agreed by the Board in advance.

In respect of Communication, the Board was advised that the HSPB Community Strategy which had been endorsed at the June 2011 meeting in which a named champion had been put forward was now being implemented by the Partnership Equality, Engagement and Cohesion Group. Communications across the Partnership were also being reviewed with the named champion

(Nick Atkin) and a report outlining progress made and recommendations would be presented to the March 2012 meeting. The actions that had already been implemented were listed in the report.

The Board welcomed the report and the greater accountability that it would bring to the partnership. The importance of disseminating the key messages to the Board's respective organisations and engaging with broader stakeholders in the Borough was also noted

After discussion it was agreed that a representative from NHS Halton & St Helens be added to the membership set out in Appendix A of the report.

In conclusion, it was reported that an update report would be presented to the March meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the revised Board Membership set out in Appendix A to the report, with an additional representative to be added to the list from the NHS Halton and St Helens be approved;
- (2) the Board endorse the proposal to receive the revised Governance documents at the March 2012 meeting for approval; and
- (3) the new agenda management process and the proposal to agree a programme of topics of Open Forum discussion with topic leads be endorsed.

35 ENHANCED PARTNERSHIP WORKING UPDATE

The Board considered a report which set out the recommendations from the Enhanced Partnership Working Project's Final Report and proposals for how these would be implemented.

It was reported that in June, the Board had accessed NW IEP funding and commissioned Local Improvement Advisors Bernie Wilde with support from Estelle Rowe, to work with the Partnership to enhance partnership working and support the Board's Action Plan improvement areas of resource mapping and development of a strategic work programme with a focus on innovation and joint working.

It was also reported that the exercise had focussed on three areas of the Sustainable Community Strategy – Stronger Local Labour Force, Reducing Alcohol Related Harm and Reducing Social Responsibility.

Furthermore, it was reported that the experience gained through implementation of the project together with the learning from regional and national resource mapping initiatives provided a number of recommendations, contained within the final Board report that would have to be considered as it

moved into the next phase of partnership working. The recommendations were outlined at the Board Workshop which had taken place on 17 October 2011 and were listed in the report.

The Board was advised that the full report was attached at Appendix 1. There were also a large number of appendices to the report, which due to their volume had not been appended to the report. However, it was reported that the appendices would be available upon request.

The Board was further advised that, subject the report recommendations being approved, work would continue on training Cost Benefit Analysis Practitioners and completing the current work streams. The results would be reported back to the SSP's and to the Board in March 2012 with a view to rolling out the approach more extensively across the Partnership.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted;
- (2) the recommendations of the Final Enhanced Partnership Working report set out in Appendix 1 to the report be approved;
- (3) the work be completed on the three pilot work streams of a Stronger Local Workforce, Anti-Social Behaviour and Alcohol Harm Reduction and the results reported back to the Board at its March 2012 meeting; and
- (4) the Board endorse the approach and recommend and agree for a core group of officers to be trained as Cost Benefit Practitioners to deliver the resource mapping exercise to future priority work streams.

36 SCS PERFORMANCE FRAMEWORK

The Board considered a report which proposed a set of performance measures and targets for inclusion within the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

The Board was advised that the SCS was a central document for the Council and its Partners, which provided an evidenced based framework through which actions and shared performance targets could be developed and communicated.

The Board was further advised that following extensive research and analysis and consultation with all stakeholder groups including Elected Members, partners and the local community and representative groups, a new SCS (2011-26) had been approved.

It was reported that selected measures and targets for each of the five community priorities were set out in Appendix 1 to the report. In addition,

further detail was provided in Appendix 2A – 2E, using the Halton Corporate template, designed for the purpose of bringing together all relevant items of performance information.

In conclusion, it was reported that an annual ‘light touch review’ of targets contained in the SCS would also ensure that targets remained realistic over the five year plan to ‘close the gaps’. In addition, placeholder measures had also been included where new services were to be developed or new performance information was to be captured. This was in response to legislative changes for which baselines would be established in 2011/12 or 2012/13, against which future services would be monitored.

The Board also noted that the rate of increase of NI 39 – the alcohol related hospital admissions rate was slowing down. It was also noted that in the next twelve months a more reasonable target would be considered for this performance indicator. However, it was reported that this highlighted the challenges the Partnership faced in respect of alcohol abuse in the community. The Board noted some of the actions that were being taken to address the issues relating to alcohol abuse.

The representative from Halton and St Helens VCA, suggested that the report focussed on outcome targets rather than input targets i.e. reporting that the number of volunteers had increased. In response, It was reported that the Engagement Strategy incorporated these input targets and this fell within the remit of the Equality Partnership. It was agreed that this be discussed in greater detail with the Officer concerned.

RESOLVED: That the proposed measures and annual targets for the period up to 2012 in line with the Sustainable Community Strategy Delivery Plan be adopted.

37 FOODY FORTNIGHT FEEDBACK

The Board considered a report which gave Partners feedback on the ‘My Halton Foody Fortnight’ event which took place in September and October 2011.

The Board was advised that ‘My Halton’ was first held in 2009 as a showcase for the work of the Halton Strategic Partnership and had cost £26,000. The event had been repeated in 2010 and cost £19,000 and saw an increase in numbers with 210 members of the public at the peak of the event.

The Board was further advised that after the Halton Strategic Partnership Board agreed to hold an event in June 2011, the event had evolved into “My Halton Foody Fortnight.” From 17 September until 2 October 2011, over 20 events had taken place.

It was reported that My Halton Foody Fortnight” event had been co-ordinated by the Council’s Communications & Marketing team, alongside the support of a range of colleagues from across the partner organisations.

Furthermore, it was reported that the only finance available for the event had been a £500 donation from Halton Housing Trust. This had been used to fund flyers, posters and an advertising campaign run in partnership with the Runcorn & Widnes World.

In addition, it was reported that In order to make good use of free public relations, Communications & Marketing had issued six media releases, which attracted 23 users. As well as Runcorn & Widnes Weekly News and Runcorn & Widnes World, "My Halton Foody Fortnight" also featured on Radio Merseyside, Cheshire Life website, Liverpool Daily Post, Wire FM and Halton Community Radio. Using Twitter and partner social media accounts also helped to create a buzz and wider prominence for the events. The media statistics helped Communications & Marketing have its best month ever for media coverage for Halton Borough Council.

In conclusion, it was reported that the events had been very well-received and had attracted significant attention from both the media and public alike, more than previous events. With thousands of people engaging with the event in some small fashion, the impact on the public was much more than other "My Halton" events and gave many valuable opportunities to showcase the Halton Strategic Partnership and practical partnership working in Halton, even during difficult times.

Whilst "My Halton Foody Fortnight" was both an idea of and run by the Communications & Marketing team at Halton Borough Council, thanks must go to Halton Housing Trust for their generous donation.

The Chairman of the Board highlighted that the event had cost a small amount of money and had been a huge success. He encouraged the Partners to support the event next year and discuss this with their organisations. He indicated that it was important that preparations commenced as early as possible.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) Halton Housing Trust be thanked for their generous donation.

38 LOCALISM ACT 2011 - ROYAL ASSENT

The Board considered a report which gave the Partners an update on some of the impacts and implications of the recently agreed Localism Act.

The Board was advised that The Localism Bill received Royal Assent and hence became law on the 16th November 2011. Whilst the majority of the Act would come into force in April 2012, some sections had come into force in November, other parts in January 2012. The most important part that came

into force in November 2011, was the duty on local authorities to co-operate on the planning of sustainable development.

The Board was also advised that during its passage through the House of Lords, the legislation had experienced a number of changes such as the scrapping of the provision to have “shadow mayors” and removing the need to hold local referendums. There had been concern that poorly supported referendums could have cost local government in excess of £310m over a 10 year period.

It was reported that originally there had also been the provision for fines from the EU to be passed directly to councils. However, it was highlighted that this had now been watered down and there was now a requirement for a Parliamentary debate and vote on each and every fine before it was applied.

Furthermore, it was reported that new rights would allow local communities to shape new development by coming together to prepare neighbourhood plans. Local communities, Parish and town councils or, where they existed, neighbourhood forums would lead the creation of neighbourhood plans, and this must be supported by the local planning authority. Once written the plan would be independently examined and put to a referendum of local people for approval.

In addition, Community Right to Bid (assets of community value) would ensure that community organisations had a chance to bid to take over assets and facilities that were important to them. It was considered that community ownership would allow the adoption of a variety of business models and therefore make assets viable in a way that they were not previously. This referred to assets only (land and buildings) not services. Community groups may therefore be able to nominate a building to be listed as an asset of community value, but not the service that operated from within that building.

In respect of the Community Right to Challenge: this gave the right for community and voluntary bodies, parish councils and authority employees to bid to take over the running of Local Authority services. It would give these groups the ability to bring their proposals on take on the running of a service to the attention of the local council and require it to give them proper consideration. It would enable these bodies to express an interest in running a service, which may trigger a procurement exercise relating to the provision of relevant authority services on the authority's behalf.

In conclusion, it was reported that the legislation contained in the Localism Act would have an impact on both planning services and Council and partnership working as a whole. However, systems and procedures were already in place to expedite this so changes made would represent a refresh and evolution of partnership working, rather than the creation of something entirely new.

The Chief Executive reported that the Localism Act was a significant piece of legislation that represented changes to planning legislation to give the

community a greater opportunity to influence planning applications within a framework. It was a major change in respect of empowering communities and it was suggested and agreed that a half day seminar be arranged for Elected Members and Partners.

The Board noted the implications of the emerging Localism Act. The Board also recognised that it was important to consult / engage with local people but noted that decision making required leadership and Elected Members were nominated to represent the community.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted;
- (2) further update reports be presented to the Board as further aspects of the Act comes into force; and
- (3) a half day seminar to consider the implications of the Localism Act be arranged for Elected Members and Partners.

39 SUPERFAST BROADBAND

The Board considered a report which gave the Partners an update on the progress in delivering a Superfast Broadband (SFB) facility in Halton.

The Board was advised that Halton Borough Council were in the process of formally joining the Cheshire and Warrington programme to delivery superfast broadband (SFB) to the County of Cheshire. This was necessary to take advantage of the funding for infrastructure being made available by Broadband Delivery UK (via the Department for Culture Media and Sport)

It was reported that the Halton Digital Economy and Inclusion Strategy consisted of four elements:

1. Obtain Next Generation Access (NGA) Broadband for the Borough by driving demand for this utility;
2. Provide businesses with the knowledge and skills to take advantage of NGA and related technology;
3. Provide residents with the knowledge, skills and infrastructure for inclusion in the online world; and
4. Deliver more Council Services primarily online with backup via other channels.

The Board was further advised that in order for Halton's business and commerce to stay competitive in a modern and global economy essential infrastructure such as NGA was critical. Digital infrastructure was essential in retaining and attracting businesses within Halton.

Furthermore, it was reported that the focus on the strategy was obtaining NGA for the Borough. The other key aims (elements 2,3,4 above) were targeted at driving up demand for NGA, thereby making Halton an attractive market for providers such as BT and Virgin Media to invest in NGA infrastructure with the minimum of public sector intervention.

In addition, it was reported that Halton Borough Council was in the process of joining the Cheshire East / Cheshire West and Chester and Warrington Consortium who were at an advanced stage of bidding to draw down the BDUK funding. The Consortium had also developed a credible "Connecting Cheshire" bid for ERDF funding which received first stage approval in November 2011 and would continue to be developed and move forward for full approval in March 2012. The bid would be worth a total cost of £27.17m with an ERDF contribution worth £13.58m.

In conclusion, it was reported that joining with the Cheshire Consortium offered access to an established and branded project that had already made substantial efforts to engage businesses and politicians at a local and national level. It was anticipated that superfast broadband would support the creation of 5,500 jobs in Cheshire and Warrington and add £197m in growth to the economy year on year.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

40 FAITH SECTOR ENGAGEMENT EVENT - FEEDBACK

The Board considered a report which informed the Partners of a recent event that had taken place to improve engagement activities with members of the faith communities in Halton.

The Board was advised that the faith community had an active role in supporting community life across Halton. In some areas there was joint working with the public sector and other community & voluntary sector agencies and the benefits to those communities were apparent, strong communities with a sense of cohesion and pulling together.

The Board was advised that on the 24 November, a half day event had taken place at CRMZ, Kingsway which brought together over 60 service providers, and members of Halton's Faith Communities. The key outcomes of the event were as follows:-

- An opportunity to commence dialogue across the sectors in capacity building for future service provision to our neighbourhoods;
- The start of a Directory of Non-Christian Places of Worship around Halton's boundaries;

- An increased awareness of faiths & how to deal with people from non-Christian denominations respectfully; and
- An increased understanding of neighbourhood activity from both public service providers and the faith communities and a platform for future working.

In conclusion, it was reported that part of the evaluation questionnaire had asked delegates how they would wish to see the networking opportunities continue, particularly with the lack of resources to facilitate a full network. In addition, it was reported that work would continue to build on the first event and encourage interaction between the public and faith sectors in a format that would be sustainable.

The Board noted that it had been a very positive and successful event which had been well attended.

RESOLVED: That the report and the comment raised be noted.

41 WNF FINANCIAL SUMMARY UPDATE

The Board considered a report which gave the Partners an update on the spend profile for WNF funded projects for quarter 2 of the 2011-12 financial year.

The Board was advised that the spreadsheet attached at Appendix 1 to the report showed WNF spend per project for the second quarter of the current financial year, currently showing on the Council's financial system as of 17 November 2011.

The Board noted that the WNF was currently on track to spend the identified funds. It was suggested and agreed that the third quarter report would be sent out to members of the Board electronically when it was available and prior to the next meeting.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

42 CHRISTMAS AND NEW YEAR

As this was the last meeting prior to the Festive Season, the Chairman extended his best wishes to the Members of the Board and Officers for a Merry Christmas and prosperous New Year.

Meeting ended at 11.10 a.m.