

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 2 July 2015

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Leader's

SUBJECT: Halton Foundation – Runcorn and Widnes Community Fund.

WARD(S) All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Executive Board of progress made to date in the development of a Community Foundation for Halton and seek Executive Board approval, both for the Foundation itself and for the Council to continue to play a role as a founding partner.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- 1. Endorse the establishment of the Halton Foundation – Runcorn and Widnes Community Fund;**
- 2. Agree to the Council having an ongoing advisory role in the Halton Foundation as a founding partner;**
- 3. That an Elected Member be nominated to represent Halton Borough Council on any decision making boards; and**
- 4. Agree that, subject to trustee approval charitable funds named in the report, and currently administered by the Council, are administered in future by the Community Foundation for Lancashire and Merseyside as part of the Halton Foundation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In June 2014, Executive Board gave in principle approval to the development of a Community Foundation and Partnership Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) offer for Halton. Work has now taken place on planning and establishing this.

3.2 The Halton Foundation - Runcorn & Widnes Community Fund, referred to as 'The Halton Foundation' for the purpose of this report, will link individuals, businesses and organisations with their community to facilitate philanthropy across the borough of Halton, supporting community cohesion and prosperity.

3.3 The Steering Group for this activity has articulated a **Vision-** To

support the Halton community to enrich their lives through connecting them with funding, businesses and people to build a thriving, resilient and prosperous community; and a **Mission** - To provide social investment and strategic charitable grant-making that meets the needs of Halton's local community via a public, private and voluntary sector forum.

3.4 **Founding partners** for the Halton Foundation are the Halton Chamber of Commerce, Halton and St Helens VCA, the Community Foundation for Lancashire & Merseyside (CLFM) and Halton Borough Council. **Contributing partners** include Cheshire Connect and Business in the Community (BITC). The Founding Partnership has been established to create an independent cross-sector partnership of private, public and voluntary sector stakeholders to work together to ensure the social growth and economic development of communities across the Borough via The Halton Foundation.

3.5 The Foundation supports and promotes Halton's Five Strategic Priorities through its aims and proposed activities.

3.6 An overview document for the Halton Foundation is attached at Appendix 1.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Halton Foundation's focus will comprise four key elements:

4.2 **Halton Gives will:**

- Help Halton to become a thriving and prosperous community by prioritising issues such as poverty, health, unemployment, a safe and crime –free environment and promoting family values;
- Have a co-ordinated approach for receiving charitable donations across the borough;
- Provide a strategic approach to allocating funding;
- Maximise charitable donations;

4.3 The processes that will make Halton Gives work will be managed by Community Foundation for Lancashire and Merseyside (CFLM). CFLM is a registered charity and is a vehicle for charitable giving working with individuals, families and companies to design bespoke grant making strategies that target particular issues and/or focus on particular geographical areas. CFLM will be accountable for all the financial and legal matters, providing annual accounts and reports enabling 'The Halton Foundation' to focus on supporting their local community. CFLM will undertake the management and administration of the funds ensuring all due diligence is adhered to.

4.4 **Halton Supports will:**

- Create a time bank for employee volunteering;
- Businesses will be encouraged to pledge hours of support;
- CFLM will match philanthropists with local need ;
- Halton support will be co-ordinated through an established on-line portal;
- Incorporate business to business support.

Halton & St. Helen's VCA will co-ordinate the volunteering aspect of Halton supports.

4.5 **Halton Cares will:**

- Introduce an accreditation mark for businesses who can demonstrate good Corporate Social Responsibility practices;
- Companies will be encouraged to donate both time and money;
- Volunteering time will be used to support vulnerable people who meet qualification criteria.

Halton Chamber of Commerce and Halton Borough Council have co-ordinated this element to date.

4.6 **Halton Shares** will Promote and support the co-ordination of recycling items such as IT equipment, office furniture, meeting rooms etc. It is proposed that this element will be developed through the proposed online portal as part of the wider Halton Foundation development.

4.7 The Halton Foundation will operate across Runcorn and Widnes, enabling individuals, families, companies, entrepreneurs, and charitable trusts to support Halton's communities in a cost effective way. This philanthropy could take many forms, including funding, volunteering, donating goods and services, sharing expertise and providing in-kind support. By working with The Halton Foundation donors can choose the goal and direction of their philanthropy, charitable donations and volunteering. CFLM will share social data and case studies with donors to ensure that their giving has a social impact and connects with the right people in Halton's communities.

4.8 Businesses will be encouraged to make an investment into Halton as part of their Corporate Social Responsibility (CSR) offer. This could comprise of:

- Making a donation to The Halton Foundation to support social priorities in the area;
 - Releasing employees to volunteer to support local community development and initiatives;
 - Providing in-kind support for local community businesses, charities and community groups;
 - Including local social enterprises , charities and community groups as part of the supply chain;
- 4.9 The Halton Foundation will sit as a fund under the registered charity number of CFLM (1068887), retaining its own identity and accounts for financial processing, social investment and charitable funding. The stakeholders of The Halton Foundation will direct all funding decisions for ratification to CFLM's trustees as part of their governance requirements. CFLM will provide six-monthly reports on the financial and grant performance of The Halton Foundation.
- 4.10 Funding panels will be established and facilitated by CFLM with Halton & St Helens VCA acting in an advisory capacity. These panels will make recommendations to disburse funds into the community.
- 4.11 Decision- making on the **activities** of The Halton Foundation will be made by senior representatives of the Founding Partners, in consultation with the Contributing Partners and other co-opted partners and local experts as and when required.
- 4.12 Decision-making on funding will be made by independent panel members for the individual funds comprising of representatives of the original donors, the founding partners and on occasions senior community leaders will also be invited to join these panels. There will be a combination of restricted and unrestricted funds i.e. depending on the funding source **some funds will retain their own identity and funding will be ring-fenced for a specific geographical area and/or fund objective.**
- 4.13 The financial investment made will be monitored and evaluated to demonstrate the impact of the funding. Social indicators will be used to measure impact. This will be led by CFLM and VCA Halton and St. Helens
- 4.14 The Halton Foundation, as it develops, has the potential to become the umbrella body for a large amount of CSR work across Halton. It could become the hub through which a number of work streams

could be co-ordinated including the coordination of charitable donations, volunteering, timebanking, business to business support, CSR accreditation and business to community resources.

- 4.15 The development of the Halton Foundation could be a key step in building a more resilient community and in helping us to manage demand on public services. It would encourage cross-sector joint working in providing support to vulnerable residents and link available skills and resources to those who need them most. Collaborating with partners on Corporate Social Responsibility would help the council connect with residents and neighbourhoods, support the communities we serve, and improve value for public money by maximising the public benefit of our services.
- 4.16 In order to guide this work it is suggested that Executive Board endorse the establishment of the Halton Foundation, approve continued council involvement and nominate an elected member to sit on the decision making panel.
- 4.17 Halton Borough Council currently administers a number of local charitable funds. These are:
- Knights House Charity
 - Widnes Educational Foundation
 - Runcorn General War Relief Fund
- 4.18 Due to issues of reducing resources, it has not been possible to make best use of these funds and administer them in the most effective way. CFLM has offered to take over the administration of these funds as part of the Halton Foundation. It is therefore recommended that Executive Board approve a decision to do this, subject to the consent of the trustees involved in the charities.
- 4.19 It is proposed that a website be put together to act as a portal to signpost the work of each organisation on this agenda, together with information about sources of help and support. Halton and St Helens VCA are exploring designing and hosting this website and are hopeful of committing some administrative resource to it.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 At this stage there are no resource implications for the council, other than a small amount of officer support and a commitment to being involved in the decision making process for activities and funding.
- 5.2 It is clear that the long-term implications of not developing an approach to community resilience are a continuing increase in demand on our services in a context of diminishing resources, which places pressure on the levels of service we can deliver, and

ultimately on the quality of life for our residents.

5.3 It is intended that this work also be reported to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board for their support and endorsement at the September Board meeting. The HSPB has previously given in principle support to this activity.

5.4 This activity also has strategic fit with the Council's Social Value Policy and approach and is being developed to complement and support that activity.

5.5 This activity has also been developed taking account of the Halton Borough Council and the Halton Strategic Partnership's strategic themes.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 Each of the council's strategic priorities could benefit from the development of a Halton Foundation through increased access to funding sources, business support, volunteer hours and an increased level of community resilience. The Corporate Social Responsibility element of the Foundation could help in safeguarding the levels of service quality on offer through community empowerment, early intervention and demand management.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The development of a Halton Foundation has been undertaken as a partnership activity, and as such has the support of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board. The Halton Foundation therefore supports the aims of the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy, which Halton Borough Council has also endorsed as their aims through the Corporate Plan. There is therefore no risk with this work being in contradiction of approved policy agendas.

7.2 There will always be an inherent risk with activity of this nature that funds are not used as originally intended, or appropriately managed. By using an experienced, established body (CFLM) to manage this process, alongside decision making from strategic founding partners, the risk of this happening is minimised. Decisions on funding will be made by independent panel members alongside founding partners. In addition, some funds will be ring-fenced for specific areas or objectives as necessary to meet the original intent and criteria associated with that funding. All funding will also be monitored and evaluated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no immediate equality and diversity issues arising from this report.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 To support the establishment of a Halton Foundation and to approve the council's continued involvement as a founding member.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 As this piece of work is a Partnership activity, it is not necessary for Halton Borough Council to be involved as the Foundation progress even without Council involvement as a partner. However, given the aims of the Foundation are a close fit with the aims of the Council and its community stewardship role, the continued involvement of the Council in endorsing and supporting this work is recommended.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 A launch for the Halton Foundation is proposed for around October 2015.

12.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

12.1 None.