

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 19 June 2008

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Sub National Review Consultation

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to advise the Executive Board on the Sub-National Review (SNR) consultation document.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Executive Board approves the attached consultation response.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A consultation document entitled “Prosperous Places” on the Sub-National Economic Development and Regulation Review was published on 31st March 2008.

3.2 There is a twelve-week consultation, which runs until 20th June.

3.3 In summary, there are a number of key issues that are set out in the review:

- A statutory economic development duty for Local Authorities to undertake an economic assessment of an area, either jointly with other authorities or on their own;
- Reform of the Local Authority Business Growth Initiative;
- Making LAA’s the main delivery agreement between central and local government;
- Extending the powers of passenger transport authorities;
- Formalising arrangements for collaborative working between neighbouring local authorities and partners in the form of multi-area agreements;
- Outlines the option to establish permanent sub-regional structures;
- Aligning regional strategies i.e. a single Regional Strategy;
- Redefining regional strategic priorities and targets;

- Proposals for greater scrutiny of RDA's
- Abolishing Regional Assemblies, but acknowledging that Local Authorities will still need to work collectively at a regional level.

3.4 The Consultation Document is divided into five chapters:

- Chapter 1 – Responding to the Consultation
- Chapter 2 – Securing Prosperity in a changing economy (covering the SNR Policy Context)
- Chapter 3 – Stronger Partnerships for Regional Growth
- Chapter 4 – Integrating Regional Strategies to promote growth
- Chapter 5 – Strengthening Sub-Regional Economies – the Local Authority

3.5 Government is asking for views on 15 questions. The Executive Board is advised that the Head of External Funding is leading on the development of a sub-regional response. A copy of the latest draft of this response is attached, (as at 4th June 2008). Additional commentary specific to Halton, is highlighted under each of the consultation questions as appropriate.

3.6 The response is contained in Appendix 1.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 When the SNR was published in July 2007 it set out proposals for the devolution of economic development and appeared to present opportunities for Local Authorities to shape the economy of their place through the introduction of an Economic Development Duty. Up until the publication of this document, there had been little guidance or consultation produced by Government.

4.2 The policy proposals set out in the consultation are, potentially far-reaching. Local Authorities have long sought greater responsibility for local economic development, both individually and in collaboration. A number of proposals in the SNR strengthen the role of Local Authorities in this regard and the document should generally be welcomed as an opportunity to further promote appropriate devolution of powers to Local Authorities at both the sub-regional and local levels.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 In addition, the SNR proposes that where there is a demand, Government will work with Local Authorities to establish statutory sub-

regional arrangements for economic development activity. Members will need to reflect on the fact that a statutory body would remove the requirement for lead authorities and accountable bodies when implementing sub-regional programmes.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Not applicable

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Government is proposing that an Integrated Regional Strategy would be supported through Local Authorities being placed under a statutory duty to prepare an assessment of the economic conditions of an area, which in turn should inform locally developed strategies.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Not applicable

6.4 A Safer Halton

Not applicable

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Not applicable

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

A low risk is associated with additional responsibilities being given to Local Authorities and whether adequate resources will follow. One such example would be the development of a local economic assessment. The risk of lack of adequate resources will be reduced through ongoing dialogue with Government to ensure that assumptions outlined in the document are more realistically calculated.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Not applicable

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Prosperous Places: Taking forward the Review of the Sub national Economic Development and Regeneration	External Funding Office, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes	Wesley Rourke