

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26th January 2021

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Enterprise, Community and Resources

PORTFOLIO: Community and Sport

SUBJECT: Local Area Forums

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1) To provide Members of the Board with details of the impacts that the planned changes to the borough's Ward Boundaries will have upon Local Area Forums, and;
- 2) To ask Members to consider and endorse a number of proposals made in respect of dealing with those impacts and to make recommendations to the Executive Board in respect of the same.

2. RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) **Members consider and comment upon the report;**
- 2) **Members endorse the proposals for dealing with the impacts that Ward boundary changes will have upon Local Area Forums, as set out within the report, and;**
- 3) **A report be presented to the Executive Board recommending that;**
 - a. **Halton's current seven Local Area Forums be disbanded with effect from 5th May 2021;**
 - b. **Six new Local Area Forums, as set out in Paragraph 4.1, be established in Halton with effect from 6th May 2021;**
 - c. **The 2021/22 Local Area Forum budget be allocated as set out within Table 1, and;**
 - d. **Any Local Area Forum budget remaining as at 31st March 2021 be carried forward and allocated as set out within Table 2.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Local Area Forums provide a mechanism for the Council to deliver community led initiatives and projects. There are currently seven Area Forums that are made up of the Wards as set out below;

Area Forum 1 – Broadheath, Ditton, Hale & Hough Green

Area Forum 2 – Appleton, Kingsway & Riverside

Area Forum 3 – Birchfield, Farnworth & Halton View

Area Forum 4 – Grange, Halton Brook, Heath & Mersey

Area Forum 5 – Halton Castle, Norton North, Norton South & Windmill Hill

Area Forum 6 – Beechwood & Halton Lea

Area Forum 7 – Daresbury

- 3.2 Changes to the borough's current Ward boundaries were due to come into effect on 7th May 2020, however, following the postponement of the 2020 local elections due to COVID-19, those boundary changes will come into effect on 6th May 2021. The boundary changes will have a number of implications for Local Area Forums, including; the Area Forum 'footprints', the population levels within each Forum area and the budget allocations. This report provides Members with details of those implications and makes a number of proposals for Members to consider.

4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Area Forum 'Footprints'

- 4.1 The establishment of new Wards will affect the current Area Forum 'footprints'. Officers have considered the implications of this and are recommending that six new Local Area Forums be established with effect from 6th May 2021.

Using the current Area Forum 'footprints' as a guide to creating the new ones, Members are asked to consider that six new Area Forums be established as set out below;

Area Forum 1 - Bankfield, Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank and Hough Green

Area Forum 2 - Appleton, Central & West Bank and Highfield

Area Forum 3 - Birchfield, Farnworth and Halton View

Area Forum 4 - Beechwood & Heath, Grange and Mersey & Weston

Area Forum 5 - Bridgewater, Halton Castle and Halton Lea

Area Forum 6 - Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor, Norton North and Norton South & Preston Brook

A plan showing the proposed new Area Forum boundaries and the current Area Forum 'footprints' is attached as Appendix 1.

Local Area Forum Budget Allocation

- 4.2 The annual Area Forum budget is allocated on a per capita basis for each Ward. Changes to the population levels across the Area Forum areas arising from the new Ward boundaries will therefore have implications for the budget allocation. Electorate figures are provided by the Office for National Statistics, however, estimates for each of the new Wards are not currently available and it is therefore recommended that the budget allocation for 2021/22 be calculated using current Electorate figures.
- 4.3 The current total Area Forum budget is £200k and using current Electorate figures would see the budget allocations for each Ward/Area Forum be set at the levels contained within Table 1 below.

Table 1 – Indicative new Area Forum Budget Allocations

Ward	Current Electorate	Ward Budgets
Area Forum 1		
Bankfield	5,280	£10,938.24
Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank	5,265	£10,907.17
Hough Green	5,581	£11,561.81
Total	16,126	£33,407.22
Area Forum 2		
Appleton	4,902	£10,155.17
Central & West Bank	4,983	£10,322.97
Highfield	5,225	£10,824.30
Total	15,110	£31,302.44
Area Forum 3		
Birchfield	6,045	£12,523.05
Farnworth	6,034	£12,500.26
Halton View	5,338	£11,058.40
Total	17,417	£36,081.71
Area Forum 4		
Beechwood & Heath	6,116	£12,670.13
Grange	5,980	£12,388.39
Mersey & Weston	5,752	£11,916.06
Total	17,848	£36,974.58
Area Forum 5		
Bridgewater	5,727	£11,864.27
Halton Castle	4,923	£10,198.67
Halton Lea	5,102	£10,569.49
Total	15,752	£32,632.43
Area Forum 6		
Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor	3,334	£6,906.84
Norton North	5,819	£12,054.86
Norton South & Preston Brook	5,136	£10,639.93
Total	14,289	£29,601.62
	96,542	£200,000.00

Carry Forward of Unspent Area Forum Budgets

- 4.4 It is anticipated that a number Area Forums will have some level of budget remaining that will be carried forward to the 2021/22 financial year. It is proposed that any Area Forum budget underspend at 31st March 2021 be split down to Ward level and allocated to the new Ward that is most closely aligned.
- 4.5 Where any current Ward boundaries alter as a result of the planned changes, the amount of any budget underspend carried forward shall be based upon the proportion of Electorate that made up the old Ward that is transferring to the new one. Table 2 below sets out the implications of this proposed approach.

Table 2 – Proposed Ward Allocation for Area Forum Budget Underspend

Current Ward	Ward to Receive Budget Underspend
Appleton	87% to Appleton, 9% to Central & West Bank and 4% to Halton View
Beechwood	Beechwood & Heath
Birchfield	92% to Birchfield and 8% to Hough Green
Broadheath	43% to Bankfield and 57% to Highfield
Daresbury	83% to Daresbury, Moore & Sandymoor and 17% to Norton South & Preston Brook
Ditton	57% to Bankfield and 43% to Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank
Farnworth	15% to Birchfield and 85% to Farnworth
Grange	Grange
Hale	Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank
Halton Brook	93% to Bridgewater and 7% to Grange
Halton Castle	Halton Castle
Halton Lea	88% to Halton Lea and 12% to Grange
Halton View	Halton View
Heath	65% to Beechwood & Heath and 35% to Mersey & Weston
Hough Green	Hough Green
Kingsway	7% to Appleton, 58% to Central & West Bank and 35% to Highfield
Mersey	3% to Beechwood & Heath, 20% to Bridgewater and 77% to Mersey & Weston
Norton North	84% to Norton North and 16% to Norton South & Preston Brook
Norton South	23% to Halton Lea and 77% to Norton South & Preston Brook
Riverside	41% to Central & Weston Bank, 36% to Ditton, Hale Village & Halebank and 22% to Highfield
Windmill Hill	8% to Halton Castle and 92% to Norton North

- 4.6 The proposed transition from the current Area Forum structures to the new ones shall not preclude Members from considering or approving projects to be delivered during the period 1st April 2021 to 6th May 2021. Where any schemes are approved and delivered within current Wards during that period, the financial expenditure incurred shall be charged against the budget allocation of the most relevant new Ward/Area Forum; either in full or, in circumstances where current Ward boundaries change, on a proportionate basis. Where any expenditure is to be apportioned across two or more new Wards, then such apportionment shall be calculated in accordance with the underspend allocation principles in Table 2 above.

5.0 FINANCIAL AND RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The financial implications are set out within the report.

6.0. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no new Policy implications arising from this report.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None identified.

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

None identified.

7.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None identified.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None identified.

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

There are no background papers associated with this report.

PROPOSED NEW LOCAL AREA FORUMS

