

ANNUAL REPORT

SAFER HALTON POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

APRIL 2021 – APRIL 2022

Councillor Norman
Plumpton-Walsh

Creating a 'Safer Halton' remains a key priority for the Council and its partners and empowers confidence in our residents and visitors that they are supported and protected from harm.

The Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board is focussed on meeting the needs of our communities to help keep them safe and it seeks to explore and anticipate emerging issues, working closely with Partners.

I and the other Elected Members are satisfied that we have considered, responded to, and reported on the main issues affecting Halton but also looked at any potential new areas that may not have previously been scrutinised.

I thank my colleagues who sit on the Board for their contributions to the work of the PPB and to those officers and guests who presented to the Board. We have been extremely fortunate to have excellent support and reporting from our officers.

Finally, I want to make clear that Halton is a relatively safe place to live, visit and work due to the combined efforts of the Council and its many partners and that commitment will be just as robust in the year ahead.

Councillor Norman Plumpton-Walsh
Chairman, Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During the municipal year 2021-2022 the Board comprised of 10 elected members:

Cllr Norman Plumpton-Walsh (Chair)

Cllr Valerie Hill (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Sandra Baker

Cllr Laura Bevan

Cllr Irene Bramwell

Cllr Chris Carlin

Cllr Kath Loftus

Cllr Angela McInerney

Cllr Margaret Ratcliffe

Cllr Andrea Wall

The Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Community Safety, Channel and Prevent activities, Domestic Abuse, Safeguarding Adults, Environmental Health, issues related to Asylum Seekers and Refugees, Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking, and the Safer Halton Partnership. The Board is also represented on the Safer Halton Partnership and Cheshire Police & Crime Panel.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met three times during the year, with the February 2022 meeting being cancelled.

The Board's work programme during 2021-2022 covered the scrutiny of relevant Executive Board decisions relevant to the Boards business, scrutinising the performance of the Safer Halton Partnership and relevant partners under the Crime and Disorder Act, together with monitoring performance against these service plans. Covers the following:

Safer Halton Partnership

The Board continue to monitor and note the actions of the Partnership, ensuring that significant agenda items are brought to PPB for scrutiny. Feedback from the Board is, in turn, made to the Partnership via the Chair's and other relevant officer's attendance at Partnership meetings. Where necessary they pick up on issues at the Partnership for added review and scrutiny at the PPB.

Cheshire Police And Crime Panel

The Board received regular updates on the Police and Crime Panel, including taking the opportunity to comment on the Police and Crime Commissioners Annual Report.

Since 2010 the Cheshire police budget has endured over £60 million of cutbacks in government funding, which means the force is spending about 37% less on policing, in real terms, than it was nine years ago. According to national figures, there are 135 fewer Cheshire police officers now than in 2010. Another £12 million of savings is expected over the next 2 years meaning close attention is required to be spent on how the force is shaped and changes over the coming years.

The Police & Crime Commissioner has a productive working relationship with the Council and a new Chief Constable has recently been appointed with whom we hope to contain good relations.

A new Chair and Vice Chair for the years 2022/2023 have been elected - Mr Ewan Morris MBE as Chair and Mr Robert Bissett as Vice Chair.

The Panel has considered the Government's White Paper "Reforming our Fire & Rescue Services" and after much discussion they had a separate full and formal

meeting to discuss the White Paper, and agreed a formal response which can be found on the panel's page of the Cheshire East Website.

Police and Crime Commissioner

The Police & Crime Plan 2021 – 2024 for Cheshire sets the priorities which the new Chief Constable, will deliver so that people feel safe in their homes and communities. The PCC, John Dwyer, six key priorities for policing and crime in Cheshire from now until 2024, and these are to:

- Prevent and tackle crime
- Make Cheshire's roads safer
- Deliver justice for victims of crime
- Protect vulnerable and at-risk people
- Improve public confidence in policing
- Modernise our police service

Hate Crime and a More Tolerant Society

During the year the Board received presentations from the Anthony Walker Foundation on a hate crime project being delivered across the Liverpool City Region and the Heartstones Odyssey Book Festival, both projects aiming to work with young people to reduce levels of hate crime, bullying, harassment and encourage a more tolerant society for them to grow up in.

Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

During the course of the year, the Board received two reports on issues related to modern slavery and in particular Pan-Cheshire Governance arrangements and the leading role Halton is playing to ensure a consistent approach to data recording, performance monitoring, training, raising awareness and victim support.

Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence

The Board received a report about the ongoing work to ensure Halton is ready to fulfil its legal duties under the Domestic Abuse Bill, which received Royal Assent on 29th April 2021. Local Authorities must now provide wrap round support which includes things such as therapy, advocacy and counselling in safe accommodation for victims of domestic abuse and their children. Halton had received funding for the new duties, and were commissioning additional vital support services for victims and improving links between existing local services. Halton has been identified as a tier one Local Authority and as such has to provide safe accommodation and is required to appoint a multi agency Local Partnership Board to ensure proper performance of certain specified functions. The Board was also informed that the Council's bid to the PCC for additional Independent Domestic Violence Advocates across Cheshire had been approved.

Community Triggers

The Community Trigger element of the Home Office's Reform of Anti-Social Behaviour powers was launched on 1st October 2014, and updated guidance was published in January 2021. In Halton the process is managed via the Safer Halton Partnership and the Community Safety Manager regularly reviews the process alongside the other community safety manager in Cheshire.

Probation Service Integrated Offender Management Scheme – National Refresh

The Board received a presentation from a representative of the National Probation Service who provided information on the service since it underwent a national refresh of the Integrated Offender Management Scheme (IOM). The IOM, introduced in 2009, brings a cross-agency response to crime and reoffending threats faced by local communities. The aim was for the most prolific and problematic offenders to be prioritised and jointly managed by the police, probation and other partner agencies.

In early 2020, a joint inspection from Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services found that the IOM "had lost its' way". It highlighted the need for greater leadership from the centre, improving clarity around the cohort focus for IOM and the nature of its work. In response, the Ministry of Justice and the Home Office undertook a review of the IOM and the way it worked. From June 2021 this has meant new arrangements and working practices that would facilitate new ways of the police and probation to work together in this space.

Unpaid Work Scheme

The Board received a presentation from the National Probation Service on the current unpaid work scheme, known as the "Community Payback Scheme". The presentation highlighted the different stands of activity, core principles, safety for staff and public, and the type of community payback work undertaken in Cheshire.

Contest Strategy – "Prevent" Aims and Objectives

The Board was presented with a report and presentation, which contained information on the Counter Terrorism Policing North West in relation to the Prevent Strategy and what counter terrorism looked like and the Council's duties and functions to deliver a Prevent Strategy across Halton. Contest is the name of the Government's counter terrorism strategy and has identified four key elements in response; Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare. Jointly these aim to identify terrorist, prevent people from becoming terrorists, protect society from attacks and mitigate the impact of attacks when they occur.

The presentation highlighted that whilst a local authority had a role in all of these areas, the main focus was around the Prevent strand, which had at its core safeguarding and supporting individuals who might be vulnerable to radicalisation. The final part of the presentation was outlining for the Board activity across Halton and Cheshire to show how the authorities were meeting with responsibilities.

Contest Strategy – “Protect” Aims and Objectives

Alongside the Prevent element of the Contest Strategy, the Board also received a presentation about the Protect element. This provided information for the Board about what counter terrorism looked like and the Council’s duties and functions in order to deliver this element of the strategy.

Protect had four objectives; detect and deal with suspected terrorists; reduce the risk and improve the resilience of global aviation and other types of transport, and critical national infrastructure most at risk of attack; reduce the vulnerability of crowded places, specific groups and high profile individuals; detect and prevent terrorist access to and use of materials of concerns, knowledge and information that could be used to conduct attacks.

It was noted that local authorities already undertook considerable work alongside other partners to assess and mitigate against the risks, particularly in relation to venues and events.