

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 4<sup>th</sup> December, 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Environment

**SUBJECT:** The 'Heart of Halton' Plaque Scheme

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To report the deliberations of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board in regard to the development of a new tourism initiative – the Heart of Halton.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

**(1) Executive Board approves the development of a 'Heart of Halton' plaque scheme subject to the 2009/10 budget process.**

## **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 Halton has many famous places, people and landmark events, all of which have in some way shaped Halton and the towns and the parishes within the borough. Currently no one record of the achievements, places or people has been brought together in one celebratory scheme. Urban Renewal PPB has been considering proposals to establish such a scheme – 'The Heart of Halton'. This would be similar to the Civic Trust's Blue Plaque scheme but the scheme focuses only on people whilst the Heart of Halton will seek to identify and celebrate Halton's achievers, people, important buildings and activities which took place. Local historical societies, groups and the public will be invited to submit suggestions.

3.2 To complement the plaques, online Web based maps will be developed highlighting the location of the plaques and what they signify. This will be supported from time to time with leaflets or other publications. The plaques will also offer a cost effective way of developing heritage trails using the Web based maps, or for providing historical information to residents and visitors to the Borough.

3.3 At the meeting of the Policy and Performance Board on the 17<sup>th</sup> September, the costs and scale of such a project were considered. From an initial proposal of 100 plaques the Board concluded a more modest scheme of 50 plaques as a first phase would be more appropriate. The PPB decided 'the scheme be referred to the Executive Board for consideration during the Council's 2009/10 budget settlement process.'

## **4.0 OPERATIONAL REQUIREMENTS**

### **4.1 Staffing**

To implement the scheme, it is estimated that a total of 3 weeks work will be required in year one, by a member of the Promotions and Tourism team.

### **4.2 Research/validation**

Any suggestions received will need to be validated for accuracy prior to manufacture and installation.

### **4.3 Approvals**

Written approval will be required from property owners prior to installation. If it's not granted, the plaque will be placed in a nearby location.

### **4.4 Erection of Signs**

The signs will be erected using an Approved Contractor who will also undertake the necessary insurance in case of building repair requirements following installation.

### **4.5 Finance**

The final cost of the 50 proposed plaques will be subject to quotations. At this stage it is estimated that the plaques including erection would cost £11,000 which is presently not budgeted for and would be subject of consideration within the council budgetary processes. The estimated cost of cleaning and maintaining is estimated to be in the region of £500 per annum which can be met from existing budgets.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Halton Economic Development and Tourism Strategy has specific policies on tourism which state that Halton will develop the tourism offer of the Borough to support the Liverpool City Region, and other brands as advised by the North West Development Agency, and in so doing ...  
“will place the emphasis on investment in quality attractions which make a positive contribution to the overall quality of life and opportunities for employment for residents, potential new residents, and visitors ...”

## **6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

### **7.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The provision of such a scheme would stimulate the interest of younger people in the history of the Borough and hopefully further civic pride.

## 7.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Halton's has a rich history in entrepreneurial activity and part of the Halton Enterprise Strategy is to raise awareness of this. Local plaques of famous entrepreneurs and businesses would be a good way of supporting this awareness raising.

## 7.3 **A Healthy Halton**

The provision of such a scheme would facilitate the establishment of heritage style walking tours of the borough similar to those that exist in other towns and cities.

## 7.4 **A Safer Halton**

The locations of the plaques will need to take into account safety issues such as lighting and personal/road safety.

## 7.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

An appreciation of the cultural heritage that has made Halton what it is today will aid in the understanding of new projects and areas of local interest.

## 8.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 A risk assessment has been undertaken. The most significant risks involved are obtaining permission from property owners and with the validity of the information. Every effort will be made to engage property owners early and to ensure that information is validated as correct.

## 9.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 A Equality Impact Assessment screening has been undertaken. Whilst the plaques will only be produced in one language, it is intended that using Web based technology, people who are non-English speaking will be able to translate the online map information to enable them to learn more about the sites where the plaques are situated.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Heart of Halton Plaque Scheme (June 2008)	Heath Business and Technical Park	Iain Bisset
The 'Heart of Halton' Plaque Scheme – Costs and Operational Requirements (September 2008)	Heath Business and Technical Park	Iain Bisset