

REPORT TO: Corporate Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 23 January 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit

PORTFOLIO: Leader

SUBJECT: The Corporate Plan - The Big Conversation Analysis and the way forward

WARD(S) Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To share with the Board an analysis of 'The Big Conversation', which is integral to formulating a new Council Corporate Plan, and to outline the next steps to ensure that this will take effect from April 2024.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- 1) the report be noted; and**
- 2) that Board continues to endorse the approach to facilitate the implementation of a new Corporate Plan.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Background

The Big Conversation was about engaging with the public to share the challenges that the Council is facing and to establish what is important to people in the Borough.

It was an approach between the Council and those who live or work in Halton to work together in order to create an improved Borough in all aspects of everyday life.

A Stakeholder Analysis together with a Communications Plan was developed in order to generate and establish as many opportunities as possible to involve all our stakeholders in many different and varied ways.

The Big Conversation consultation opened on July 28th 2023 and closed on November 30th 2023, what follows is an analysis of the feedback.

3.2 Promotion, Consultation & Engagement:

3.2.1 Breakdown of responses by source:

Total Number of responses: 1076

This was the second biggest response ever to a Halton Borough Council survey.

Comms Meta Advert	223
HBC Staff	222
Comms Carers Centre	136
Comms Organic Facebook	124
Comms Media	64
No Reply	41
Inside Halton	39
Comms Flyer	34
Comms Partner	30
Comms HBC (Home page)	27
Comms Short URL	18
Comms Organic LinkedIn	16
Comms Community	14
Comms Linnets	13
Comms School Crossing Patrol	12
Comms Hale Village Coffee Morning	12
Active Ageing	11
Comms Organic X	9
Comms iWalkers	7
Comms Visually Impaired Group	6
Comms Halton Voices	5
Comms Colleges	3
Comms Vikings	3
Comms Dementia Group	3
Comms Schools	2
Comms Organic Threads	1
Comms TUC	1
Total Number of Responses	1076

3.2.2 Response by Age Group:

Age Group	Response Rate: Number / Percentage %
16 - 19 years	14 / 1%
20 - 24 years	11 / 1%

25 – 34 years	79 / 8%
35 – 49 years	266 / 26%
50 – 64 years	387 / 37%
65 – 74 years	191 / 19%
75 – 84 years	55 / 5%
85 years or over	15 / 1%
Prefer not to say	17 / 2%
No Reply	41
Total	1076

Census 2021 (by comparison):

Data	Percentage %
16 – 19 years	4.3
20 – 24 years	5.2
25 – 34 years	12.8
35 – 49 years	9.4
50 – 64 years	20.6
65 – 74 years	11.2
75 – 84 years	5.6
85 years and over	1.9

3.2.3 Response by Area:

- Runcorn: 55%
- Widnes: 45%

3.2.4 Consultation Success:

862: Direct (Speaking directly to stakeholders and listening)
11,840: Indirect (Social media, partner's newsletters and flyers)

Specific Forums and Venues attended:

General Public:

- Halton Trades Union Congress
- Visually Impaired Group
- Friends of Hale Village Coffee Morning
- Eat at the Heath Community event
- Windmill Hill Shops
- Women's Institute
- Fellowship Centre
- Women's Group (St John Fisher Club)
- i-Walkers
- Kingsway Leisure Centre
- Catalyst Museum

Print & Social Media:

- Inside Halton Magazine
- LinkedIn
- X
- Thread
- Facebook
- HBC Homepage

HBC Workforce:

- Emails to staff
- Video message

Adult's Services:

- Healthy & Active Ageing events
- Partners in Prevention event
- Dementia Group meeting
- Care Home visit (Millbrow)
- Flyer distribution by Adult Social Work Services Teams
- Feature in Young Carers & Adult Carers newsletters

Children's Services:

- Primary School Heads
- Children's Provider Network Meeting
- Halton Youth Cabinet
- Family Hub Centres
- Riverside College
- School & College newsletters
- Flyers distributed by Children's Services Teams

Partners:

- Halton Patient Participation Group
- Cheshire Constabulary
- Halton & St Helens Voluntary Community Action
- Health Improvement Team
- Citizens Advice Bureau
- Public Health Vaccination Team

Businesses:

- Halton Chamber of Commerce Network Meeting
- Halton & Warrington Business Fair
- Halton Chamber of Commerce
- Business Improvement & Growth
- Sci-Tech Daresbury Business Breakfast

3.3 **Emerging Themes:**

3.3.1 The 5 themes in order of response priority were:

- Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence: 93%
- Building a strong, sustainable local economy: 91%
- Supporting children, young people and families: 89%
- Tackling inequality, helping those who are most in need: 84%
- Working towards a greener future: 78%

3.3.2 **Level of agreement to all of the 5 suggested themes was very high.**

Identifying other potential corporate plan themes, the top 3 identified by our stakeholders were:

- Environment / Open spaces / Litter / Overgrowth / Maintain green spaces / Keep street free of litter and weeds.
- Regeneration / Business / Economy / Support growth and town centres
- Housing / Affordability / Increase supported living / protect green spaces / Improved infrastructure

3.3.3 It is proposed that we recognise this level of engagement with our stakeholders and form a 6th priority, which encompasses all of the above, under the title '**Place and Community**'.

When asked how the Council can support these themes, the top 3 responses were:

- 'Provide opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interest them, keep them safe and make them happy'.
- 'Create vibrant town centres for everyone to enjoy across the Borough'
- 'Continue to ensure local people are able to enjoy the Borough's parks and green spaces'

3.3.4 In terms of the ways our stakeholders can support the 5 popular themes, these were as follows:

- 'Spending money with local shops and businesses'
- 'Doing our best to stay healthy and active'
- 'Being a good neighbour'

3.5 **Timeline:**

- November 30th 2023: Consultation ended
- December 2023: Analysis undertaken
- January 2024: Key priorities identified and agreed / summary developed / shared with stakeholders via drop-in sessions within council buildings and open engagement at community spaces
- February - March 2024: Corporate Plan finalised and approved at key forums
- April 2024: the New Corporate Plan is launched

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no specific policy implications at this stage, however the output of this process will be a new contemporary and relevant Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan. This will form the basis of the Council's Corporate Policy framework in the immediate term.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None. The development of the new Corporate Plan is being delivered within existing budget and resource provision.

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

6.1 The Corporate Plan is Halton Borough Council's key strategic document. This plan sets out the main vision, themes and values of the Council.

'The Big Conversation' has helped to determine the Council's new set of priorities, which will be translated into the plan.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 If the Council had continued with the same priorities that were in place in previous years, given the socio-demographic and economic changes that have taken place over the last few years, there was a significant risk that the current Corporate Plan would lose its relevance.

7.2 That would lead to the Council failing to maintain engagement with the people of Halton, and its workforce, around where resources are best targeted in the contemporary environment.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Equality and Diversity will be an integral part of the new Corporate Plan priority under the Big Conversation banner of 'Tackling inequality, helping those who are most in need.'

8.2 The Big Conversation consultation process was fully inclusive in terms of consulting a wide and varied range of stakeholders, which covered the 9 protected characteristics in the Equality Act 2010.

8.3 An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the plan development process.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 At this stage it is evident that there will be a specific priority around climate change, with the theme receiving full support under the Big Conversation banner of 'Working towards a greener future'.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.