

ANNUAL REPORT

SAFER HALTON POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

JUNE 2023 – MAY 2024

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 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 2023-2024 the Board comprised of 11 elected members:

Cllr Norman Plumpton-Walsh (Chair)

Cllr Chris Carlin (Vice-Chair)

Cllr Sandra Baker

Cllr Laura Bevan

Cllr Irene Bramwell

Cllr Dave Cargill

Cllr Louise Goodall

Cllr Alan Lowe

Cllr Margaret Ratcliffe

Cllr Aimee Skinner

Cllr Pamela Wallace

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.

The primary function is to focus on the work of the Council (and its partners) in seeking to ensure that the environment within the Borough is safe for local people to enjoy, and to scrutinise progress against the Corporate Plan in relation to the Safer Halton Priority.

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met four times during the period, June, September, November, and February. The Board's work programme during 2023/2024 covered the scrutiny of relevant Executive Board decisions related to the boards business, scrutinising the performance of the Safer Halton Partnership and relevant partners under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, together with monitoring performance.

OVERVIEW & SAFER HALTON PARTNERSHIP

This report provides an overview from across the period 1st June 2023 to 31st May 2024. The board has been consistently updated on the landing of the new Community Safety & Protection division since it's formulation on 1st February 2023 which has continued to go through a period of change during the year.

The division has brought together a range of service areas to join Community Safety services. As a whole it provides support and services to residents when they most need it; from being at risk of harm, having experienced trauma, or are vulnerable. The division also strives to tackle negative behaviour, shift outcomes, and generate safer neighbourhoods and communities.

The division operates in a multi-agency environment working intensely with internal and external stakeholders such as Social Care, Police, Integrated Offender Management, Youth Justice partners, Housing providers, third sector partners, commissioned services, Government agencies and funding bodies. At the centre of this work is the Safer Halton Partnership, a statutory partnership to fulfil obligations of a Community Safety Partnership which each local authority area must have.

The board received reports and considered items:

June 2023

The Big Conversation

Annual Report on Community Safety April 2022 – May 2023

County Lines

Dog Control

The Big Conversation - the Council's approach to formulating a new Corporate Plan to take effect from April 2024. The approach engaged residents and stakeholders so that they understood the challenges of the Council and had the opportunity to contribute their views and priorities.

County Lines – the board received a presentation from the Northwest Regional Organised Crime Unit setting out the organised distribution of illegal drugs across networks which mostly exploits young or vulnerable people. The presentation provided an insight into work going on in Halton and the wider footprint.

Dog Control – the board received a report on the Council's public space protection order which aims to tackle dog fouling, dogs on leads, exclusion of dogs, dogs on leads by direction, a restriction on the number of dogs walked at a time and evidence of the means to pick up dog faeces in Council parks and open spaces.

September 2023

Police & Crime Commissioners Office

Cheshire Police Halton Performance

Emergency Planning Annual Report

Enforcement Team & Community Trigger Update

White Ribbon

Police & Crime Commissioners Office – Cheshire Police Crime Commissioner attended the meeting presenting the PCC plan and six priorities.

Cheshire Police Halton Performance – The Constabularies Area Commander and Chief Inspectors for Runcorn & Widnes provided a thorough presentation on the forces and Halton's performance which demonstrated a positive position with reduced crime and tackling of crime in the borough.

Emergency Planning Annual Report – the board received a report which set out the functions work programme ensuring the Council's statutory duties for control of major accident hazards (COMAH), pipeline safety regulations and civil contingencies and the role of a category one responder. The board were advised a whole Members session would be delivered ahead of full Council in October.

Enforcement Team & Community Trigger Update – the Board received a report which provided an update on the Council's work on anti-social behaviour, environmental crime and waste enforcement and alcohol licensing. This included an update on Community Trigger which is now referred to as Anti-Social Behaviour Case review.

White Ribbon – the Board received a report setting out an action plan for the Council to be accredited which would support the Council's motion in October. The approach demonstrates a commitment to ending men's violence against women and girls and is part of the Council's wider approach to domestic abuse which provides a service offer to support all gender victims of abuse.

November 2023

Cheshire Fire Authority Draft Community Risk Management Plan

The Corporate Plan/The Big Conversation

Anti-social Behaviour Tool & Powers

Youth Diversionary Activity

Mischief, Halloween & Bonfire Impacts

Cheshire Fire Authority Draft Community Risk Management Plan – the Board was attended by Cheshire’s Chief Fire Officer setting out proposed changes to the fire and rescue provision across Cheshire. Consultation on the proposals ended in January 2024 with implementation of the agreed operating model in January 2025.

The Corporate Plan/The Big Conversation – the Board received an update on engagement and feedback into the process to assist with shaping the Council’s Corporate Plan.

Anti-social Behaviour Tool & Powers – the board received a report setting out the tools available to the Council to tackle ASB detailed in the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime & Policing Act 2014. The board were advised the legislation requires relevant local agencies to ensure specific legal tests and safeguards set out in the act are met before utilising the powers which are:

- Early and Informal Interventions.
- Civil Injunctions.
- Criminal Behaviour Order.
- Community Protection Notice; and
- Public Space Protection Order

Members were advised the Council works collaboratively with partner agencies in tackling anti-social behaviour through the Problem-Solving Group, a sub-group of Halton’s Community Safety Partnership, Safer Halton.

Youth Diversionary Activity – a report was provided setting out the Council’s commissioned service with Vibe detailing provision on Thursday, Friday, and Saturdays for outreach youth work in agreed locations responding to hot spot areas.

Vibe also shared their extensive work programme:

- Good Choices – funded by Cheshire Police to tackle substance misuse.
- Positive Vibes Programme – funded by Cheshire Police.
- Short Breaks Group Support Service (Saturday Club) – funded by Halton Council.
- Vibe Outdoors – Sports Short Breaks – funded by Halton Council (Short Breaks Grant).
- Inclusive Needs Club – funded by Halton Council (Young People’s Grant).
- Where’s Your Head At? – funded by The Arconic Foundation.
- Detached Youth Club – Hallwood Park & Palacefields – funded by Riverside.
- Detached Youth Club – Windmill Hill – funded by Windmill Hill Big Local.

Mischief, Halloween & Bonfire Impacts – the Board received a verbal update on how the occasions had gone and were advised the Police had reported it was one of the quietest years. There were some hotspots that were targeted however, overall, it was a positive position.

February 2024

Corporate Plan, the Big Conversation analysis, and the way forward Safer Halton Partnership Governance & Strategy Domestic Abuse Service

Corporate Plan, the Big Conversation analysis, and the way forward – the board received a further update on the results of the engagement and themes that had emerged:

- 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%; and
- Working towards a greener future – 78%

The Board were advised a sixth priority place and community had also been identified. The draft corporate plan had been circulated to Members for comment, this would be presented to Executive Board for approval 22nd February 2024 and thereafter launched in April 2024.

Safer Halton Partnership Governance & Strategy – the board received a report which detailed the statutory requirement on the local authority to have a Community Safety Partnership as set out in the Crime & Disorder Act 1998, in Halton this is Safer Halton Partnership. The board were advised the governance and strategy had been reviewed as part of the change of arrangements with the formation of the Community Safety & Protection division; this had highlighted a need for arrangements to be strengthened. A work programme had been developed to review Safer Halton's Terms of Reference, Membership and Governance arrangements and forward strategy. The draft strategy had been developed collaboratively with partners and community consultation. The nine priorities in the draft strategy are:

- Anti-Social Behaviour
- Domestic Abuse and Violence against Women & Girls
- Serious and Organised Crime
- Integrated Offender Management
- Counter Terrorism/Prevent
- Hate Crime
- Substance Misuse
- Serious Violence
- Road Safety

The board were advised the strategy would be for three years from April 2024 to 2027 and annual delivery plans would be developed. This approach provides the assurance required and will set out a framework to articulate delivery and outcomes.

Domestic Abuse Service – the board received a report detailing the work of the Council's Domestic Abuse Service noting the advocacy service had become an in-house direct service from January 2023. The report provided information on the Multi-Agency Risk Assessments (MARAC) conference held in November 2023 led by the national organisation Safelives. This is part of review work across the system in Halton which will provide a suite of recommendations for Halton's statutory Domestic Abuse Partnership Board (HDAPB) to develop into a work programme. The report also provided an update on White Ribbon with a steering group to be established which would be governed by the HDAPB. The report also provided details on Halton Resolve, a commissioned service for young people to provide emotional and wellbeing support to children, young people and families impacted by domestic abuse.

The board has received verbal updates on the landing and evolving of the Community Safety & Protection Division during the period. Overview of key areas are:

ENFORCEMENT

The Council appointed a new Enforcement Manager who leads the programme of work for Anti-Social Behaviour, Enforcement & CCTV. The role chairs the Problem-Solving Group and leads the Council's team responding to environmental crime, the Waste Enforcement team who have been involved with investigating 160 incidents including waste related offences.

The Dog Control PSPO renewal was led by the Enforcement Manager who also secured external funding to provide ten mobile CCTV camera's to be deployed to hot spot locations in the Borough.

The Council's CCTV surveillance has been through a procurement process for maintenance contract which has resulted in a change in provider.

ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR (ASB)

The Council recently appointed a new ASB Officer after a vacant period. The role provides a resource to respond to ASB, co-ordinating multi-agency approaches and dealing with ASB Case Reviews.

The governance under the Community Safety Partnership for dealing with ASB was reviewed with the Tasking & Co-ordination and Multi-Agency meetings being disbanded and one Problem Solving Group being formed.

DOMESTIC ABUSE

The service has had a period of continuous development following the transfer of the Independent Domestic Violence Advocacy (IDVA) service to be inhouse. The team has expanded to include an additional IDVA, a Senior IDVA and a Case Officer which provides a perpetrator officer to change behaviour and outcomes.

The service and Halton's Domestic Abuse Partnership board is continuing to work with Safelives in developing Halton's system response to domestic abuse.

EMERGENCY PLANNING

In addition to the board reports and presentations the Emergency Planning Team has had a rotation in the team with a new Manager and two new Emergency Planning Officers being appointed to strengthen the authority's resources and resilience. The team have renewed key plans and updated system information and further developed the training offer for Halton's responders whilst continuing the exercise work with Halton's COMAH sites.

ASYLUM & REFUGEE RESETTLEMENT

The Council appointed an Asylum, Refugee & Resettlement Officer to lead and co-ordinate Halton's response to the cohorts and changing demographics in the Borough. The role facilitates Halton's multi-agency forum and liaises with local authorities across Liverpool and Cheshire and the Regional Migration Partnership.

OTHER KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Police & Crime Commissioners (PCC) Office works closely with local authority community safety partnerships; there is a shared data analysis resource Halton utilises to ensure priorities and work programmes are data driven.

The PCC facilitate the county's Criminal Justice Board and during the course of the year a sub-group has been established on reducing re-offending and the PCC's office has developed a partnership work stream on tackling waste crime.

Serious Violence Duty became a statutory requirement as of 31st January 2024, the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 has been amended to include the priority for Community Safety Partnerships and places a duty on a range of organisations to work together to have a strategy for preventing and reducing serious violence. The PCC Office has co-ordinated this work across Cheshire and developed a strategic needs assessment and strategy. Additional funding to support this area of work is also managed through the PCC Office who have commissioned services in responding to this area of work.