

REPORT TO: Safer Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10th September 2024

REPORTING OFFICER: Executive Director - Environment & Regeneration

PORTFOLIO: Community Safety

SUBJECT: Community, Safety & Protection Division Update

WARD(S) Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update the board on progress in the Community Safety & Protection division as it continues to develop since becoming established in February 2023.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The board has received various update reports on the divisions services that have continued to evolve since its formation, most recently enforcement and anti-social behaviour in June 2024, the Domestic Abuse service in February 2024, and Emergency Planning in September 2023.

3.2 Domestic Abuse Services

The Domestic Abuse service has continued to evolve since transferring into the Council in January 2023. The team is now on Council terms and conditions and has expanded; the Independent Domestic Violence Advocate staffing resource has increased as recommended in Halton's Safe Lives report. The staffing now also includes a Case Officer working with those that harm to support behaviour change and the service secured funding for a 12 month post/project an Advocate Educator who is working with health professionals in Halton's General Practice surgeries to raise awareness of domestic abuse, build confidence in raising this with patients to enable early interventions and sign post appropriately.

3.3 The service received 345 referrals during quarter one for victims of domestic abuse, comparator data is not available as the service transferred into the Council in January 2023. The average case is open to the service for 38 days and 109 cases left the service in a planned way having received an intervention.

3.4 The service began taking referrals for those that harm programme in

April, there have been 19 referrals to date, the current case load is 15 with 4 pending. The programme is 32 weeks; hence, the service has not reached a point of service leavers in a planned way; future updates will set out the direction of travel.

- 3.5 The service supports Halton's statutory partnership, the Domestic Abuse Partnership board. The board is overseeing the implementation of the recommendations set out in the Safe Lives Report 2023, which provided areas of focus the Board are mobilising work programme to progress: -
- System wide approach
 - Training and workforce development
 - Authentic voice and communication toolkit
 - Children and young people
 - Multi-agency risk assessment conference (MARAC's)
- 3.6 The Service Manager provided Member seminars relating to domestic abuse in July, two sessions were scheduled the first in the morning and second early evening; 13 members attended the sessions and overall, the seminar was positively received.
- 3.7 **Enforcement & CCTV**
Some areas of responsibility have altered with the CCTV function now aligned with Enforcement as of 1st July 2024; the Enforcement Manager post has been expanded to incorporate this. The post is currently vacant due to internal promotion of the postholder and will be out to advert imminently. In the interim, the Principal Environment Enforcement Officer is assisting to ensure service delivery levels are not negatively impacted.
- 3.8 The team cover environmental enforcement, since the last update to the board in June 2024 the service has issued nine fixed penalty notices and has eight files pending for prosecution.
- 3.9 The service secured additional funding for Neighbourhood Patrol Officers for 12 months. Two officers commenced in post mid-August and will be visible patrolling; the service delivery and impacts will be monitored and reviewed to consider sustainability.
- 3.10 This service incorporates Anti-Social Behaviour; the board received a report on this work recently in June. Partnership approaches are continuing to develop to tackle hotspots in the borough including the deployment of the increased mobile CCTV provision. The programme the Police & Crime Commissioners Office are delivering in diversionary activities for Serious Violence is becoming embedded in Halton which again, the board received a presentation on this in June 2024.
- 3.11 **Emergency Planning**
The Board received a report on emergency planning arrangements

in September 2023, a member seminar was also recently delivered on 30th July 2024 in the Council Chamber which provided a thorough overview of the service and the planning to ensure preparedness for major incidents or standby.

- 3.12 The work programme involves exercise planning for Control of Major Accident Hazards sites. Annual exercise with Runcorn COMAH Operators was successfully delivered in the last quarter with the exercise report published in July 2024 following a multi-agency debrief. An exercise for a Widnes operator is scheduled for the autumn and will take the format of a major live exercise. Planning meetings commenced in June and are scheduled monthly until the exercise is delivered which will also include the debrief and report publishing phases.
- 3.13 The team have been working on the Council's on call arrangements, strengthening the framework and training to build resilience and robustness in responses, should major incidents or standby's be declared. This work includes supporting vulnerable people and mobilising premises to support any decants required.
- 3.14 The teams work also involves event safety leading the borough's safety advisory groups for events in Halton.
- 3.15 Emergency Planning arrangements for Cheshire are governed by Cheshire Resilience Forum. The Emergency Planning Team actively work with the forum to ensure risks are understood and appropriate measure are in place and reviewed regularly.
- 3.16 **Asylum Seekers & Refugees**
The division has a relatively newly created post to oversee arrangements for refugees and work with government agencies and third sector partners on matters related to asylum. The programme involves working locally, regionally, and sub-regionally.
- 3.17 A multi-agency forum has been developed and is thriving with membership from a wide cross section of agencies active in this area of work; Halton is fortunate to have such willing and passionate partners and third sector agencies supporting delivery of the programmes and integration for residents.
- 3.18 **Safer Halton Partnership**
The board received a report on Safer Halton Partnership, Halton's statutory community safety partnership in February 2024 setting out governance along with a draft strategy consulting on nine draft priorities which 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

3.19 The partnership is currently developing its delivery plan to respond to the priorities set out above. A workshop was delivered in August and the September board will receive a draft for endorsing.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None to report.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications to the report. The introduction of Neighbourhood Patrol Officers will be reviewed as they are fixed term posts externally funded; income generation and sustainability will be key considerations.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Improving Health, Promoting Wellbeing and Supporting Greater Independence

Community Safety & Protection functions directly impact on generating a cleaner and safer Halton. How residents feel about where they live impacts on their behaviours and resilience contributing to strong, vibrant communities.

6.2 Building a Strong, Sustainable Local Economy

A safe Halton supports the business sector and economic growth. The CCTV function provides surveillance across the borough, this provides re-assurance and support to businesses, retailers, and service providers.

6.3 Supporting Children, Young People and Families

The function includes the Boroughs community safety partnership, a multi-agency approach to services to support a safer Halton including anti-social behaviour; this work focusses on seeking proactive measure along with partner agencies to provide diversionary activities, deter criminal behaviours and risks of exploitation.

6.4 Tackling Inequality and Helping Those Who Are Most In Need

The divisions services for domestic abuse and refugees provides support to marginalised cohorts of Halton's communities. Emergency Planning response arrangements include supporting the Boroughs vulnerable residents in a major incident situation.

6.5 Working Towards a Greener Future

The division seeks opportunities in its working practice and procurement measures to support delivery of the Council's Climate Change Action Plan.

6.6 Valuing and Appreciating Halton and Our Community

The divisions functions aim to address community concerns whilst delivering services for vulnerable residents and working to improve behaviours to improve resident's experiences of where they live.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None to report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The services are universal. There is focussed with marginalised communities to support access to services and respond to cultural and faith needs.

9.0 CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS

9.1 None to report.

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

None under the meaning of the act.