SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safe Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 21 September 2010 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), Wallace (Vice-Chairman), M. Bradshaw, Edge, J. Gerrard, M Lloyd Jones, M. Ratcliffe, Shepherd, Thompson and B Hudson

Apologies for Absence: None

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, S. Burrows, G. Collins, L. Derbyshire, D. Houghton, J. Hunt, R. Mapleson, J. Pope, Y. Sung, P. McWade, C. Walsh and A. Villiers

Also in attendance: In Accordance with Standing Order 33 Councillor D Cargill – Portfolio Holder – Community Safety.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

Action

SAF10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 June 2010 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

SAF11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman, Councillor Osborne welcomed the new co-optee Mr Hodson to the Board. A Member of the Board requested further information on the appointment of Mr Hodson and it was reported that this information would be sent to him directly.

SAF12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

SAF13 SSP MINUTES

The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) Meeting held on the 11 May 2010 were presented to the Board for information.

Minute No: SHP5 – The Bye-Law on the Minimum Price of Alcohol – It was agreed that the Board receive a report on this item at a future meeting.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the minutes be noted; and

(2) a report on the Bye-Law on the minimum price of alcohol be presented to a future meeting.

Strategic Director-Adults and Community

SAF14 1ST QUARTER MONITORING REPORT

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive on the Performance Management reports for Quarter 1, (April – June 2010).

Members were requested to consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the 1st quarter performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for;

- Health and Partnerships;
- Highways and Transportation;
- Environmental and Regulatory Services; and
- Culture and Leisure.

RESOLVED: That the 1st quarter performance management reports be received.

SAF15 GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE REVIEW OF THE HALTON REGISTRATION SERVICE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which informed the Members of the findings of the recent Inspection of the Halton Registration Service (attached at Appendix 1 to the report).

The Board was advised that the delivery and administration of civil registration was a partnership between local government and the General Register Office (part of the Identity and Passport Service). In 2007 registration officers had become local authority employees. This, together with the creation of a new governance framework, provided local authorities with greater responsibility and opportunities to develop the delivery of local registration services. To date some 93 local authorities, including

Halton, have adopted the new governance arrangements, and committed to the national Code of Practice / Good Practice Guide.

The Board was further advised Halton had adopted new governance arrangements in July 2007. The terms of reference for the review were agreed with the Proper Officer for Registration and the Registration Service Manager / Superintendent Registrar on 29 April 2010 as follows:

- To examine the technical proficiency of staff in relation to marriage activity and service attainment against related Good Practice Guide standards;

- To examine the service's Key Performance Indicator monitoring systems and service attainment;

- To examine the customer journey whilst accessing the service and attainment against related Good Practice Guide standards;

- To identify existing strengths and offer recommendations for improvement; and

- To report on any other noteworthy issues identified during the review.

In addition, the review noted the following:

- Observation of the Superintendent Registrar and other registration officers performing statutory duties revealed a very good standard of technical proficiency;

- The register office made good use of electronic and manual recording systems which worked well in monitoring service performance in respect of appointment availability, customer waiting times and certificate applications;

- The Registration Service's attainment against Key Service Performance (set out in Appendix B of the report);

- Customer access to the Registration Service was excellent across the district with additional service points providing convenient access;

- Initial customer contact via the Council's contact

centre worked very well, although there was scope to extend its role and responsibilities in relation to the registration service; and

- Staff displayed excellent customer care skills and a willingness to ensure that customers were fully informed and all their needs met.

It reported that there was scope for improving storage space for deposited registers as the strong room had exceeded capacity and consideration would need to be given on how to deal with this situation. It was suggested that a way forward could be to scan the registers and store them in controlled conditions at the Cheshire Record Office. In response, it was agreed that this could be done, but it was highlighted that this would require a considerable amount of time and money to complete as there were a significant number of records. It was also highlighted that current records (under 100 years old) would need to be kept on site as frequent access was required.

It was also suggested that a report be presented to a future meeting of the Board outlining various options for storage and digitising the records.

RESOLVED: That

(1) The findings of the Board be endorsed;

(2) the Board review the recommendations in accordance with the report; and

(3) a report be presented to a future meeting outlining various options for storing and digitising the records together with the associated costs.

Strategic Director – Adults and Community

(Note: Councillor M Lloyd Jones declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as her husband is a non executive Director of Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust.)

SAF16 ALCOHOL MISUSE

The Board received a presentation from Collette Walsh, the Head of Alcohol Harm Reduction (PCT) relating to harm linked to alcohol misuse, and a strategy to reduce the impact on services and to create capacity for the local population to understand and manage their own risks in relation to alcohol.

The presentation:-

- Highlighted the journey to date i.e. the immediate need to stabilise services, co-ordinate partnership activities, address inequity across Halton and St Helens and progress initiatives outlined in the Commissioning Strategic Plan;

- Set out the successes to date;

- Outlined the key findings of the Alcohol Needs Assessment and the 12 Point Plan;

- Set out prevention strategies;

- Explained the scale of the challenge in relation to attitudes and behaviours;

- outlined the treatment options;

- highlighted the key findings of a review of existing alcohol services and shared draft consultation questions to inform future redesign;

- highlighted the key findings of the review and the draft consultation questions; and

- set out the next steps.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- concern was raised that non alcoholic beers were not available in all public houses. In addition the high cost of soft drinks in comparison to alcoholic drinks was noted. After considerable discussion it was suggested that a letter be sent from the Board to the MP requesting this matter be addressed. In response, it was reported that it may be more beneficial to involve the campaigning group 'Our Life'. It was agreed that a letter be sent to the group on behalf of the Board;

- It was noted that the funding for key posts whose role it was to tackle alcohol related harm was externally funded. It was also noted that the actions for 2010/11 could only be implemented as long as the external funding remained in place. The Board agreed to recommended that posts be considered as a priority for future funding;

- The linkages between alcohol abuse and domestic violence, suicide and crime etc was noted;

- It was suggested that it should be statutory to attend an alcohol seminar on the risks of alcohol abuse as part of the community pay back system;

- It was suggested that the Authority could consider random breath testing for employees; and

- The Chairman requested that Councillor Wallace in the Community Safety Working Group look at local prices of beer in comparison to soft drinks. In addition, that a letter be sent to Officers responsible for Licensing to request via the licence that local public houses must provide alcohol free beers and that the Working Group make contact with the campaigning group 'Our Life'.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the presentation be received;

(2) Collette Walsh be thanked for her informative presentation;

(3) The comments and actions raised above be noted; and

(4) That the Board request that the Budget Working Group consider whether the Alcohol Harm Reduction roles could be regarded as a priority for future funding

Strategic Director – Adults and Community

SAF17 REGULATION OF HEALTH AND SAFETY AT WORK IN HALTON - ANNUAL PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which invited the Members to comment on Health and Safety Plan for the forthcoming year and provided an update on the work of the Health and Safety Enforcement team in the Environment and Regulatory Services Department.

The Board received a presentation from Steve Burrows, Principal Environmental Health Officer which:-

- Outlined the role and responsibilities of the Health

and Safety Enforcement Team;

- Set out the teams enforcement responsibility;
- outlined and explained the various Health and Safety Law Acts;
- demonstrated the difference between Health and Safety law and myth;
- highlighted the key functions of Health and Safety Enforcement;
- detailed the number of inspections and interventions taken between 2009-10;
- highlighted the new inspection programme from April 2010 and the new criteria;
- detailed the procedure of accident investigations and showed photographs of incidents; and
- outlined forthcoming projects and future opportunities.

The Board noted that it was within their remit to monitor the work being undertaken by the Health and Safety Executive. The Board agreed that a letter would be sent to the Health and Safety Executive in Liverpool inviting them make a presentation at a future meeting of the Board.

It was suggested that the team could extend their advisory service role to a consultancy role with a charging policy. In response, it was reported that this would be deemed as a conflict of interest and could create liability issues.

RESOLVED: That

(1) The report, comments made and attached plans be noted;

(2) the presentation be received;

(3) Stephen Burrows be thanked for his informative presentation; and

(4) A letter be sent to the Health & Safety Executive in Liverpool inviting them to a future meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director – Environment and Economy

SAF18 SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adult and Community which presented the Annual Report of Halton's Safeguarding Adults Board, for the year 2009/10, and briefed the members on the key issues and progression of the agenda for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

The Board also received a presentation from Julie Hunt, Adults and Community which:-

- Set out the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Adult Board and Halton Borough Council;
- Highlighted the Board's Vision;
- Detailed the national context of the report e.g the 'No Secrets' review, the structure and reporting, the outcomes for Service Users and Carers; the key developments and local activity 2009-10 and the priorities and work plan 2010-11;
- Set out how positive outcomes were assured for service users and carers;
- Outlined what was being done to make it happen, i.e. Working together, the procedural framework, safer recruitment, training and development and publicity;
- Detailed the quality and performance of the service;
- Outlined and explained the partner agency representation on the Board; and
- Set out the review and forward planning and the website for further information www.halton.gov.uk/safeguardingadults.

RESOLVED: That

(1) The content of the Annual Report of the Safeguarding Adults Board 2009/10 and the current key issues be supported;

(2) the presentation be received;

(3) Julie Hunt be thanked for her informative

presentation; and

(4) the Board requested that a member of the Safer PPB be nominated onto the Safeguarding Adults Board

SAF19 JOINT TRADING STANDARDS SERVICE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Adults and Community which updated the Members on the performance and activities of the joint Trading Standards Service between Warrington and Halton Borough Council.

The Board was advised that this was the second report giving an outline of the performance of the joint Warrington and Halton Trading Standards Service. Joint arrangements had commenced on 1st December 2008 and the first report had been presented to the Board on 21 September 2009. It was reported that the report covered the following 12 months to date and the performance had been referenced primarily against the objectives contained in the Service Specification.

The Board was further advised that in the past 12 months, against a background of a recession that had brought fresh challenges the key objective was still to prioritise the activities to those which had the greatest impact on health, wellbeing, community safety and economic prosperity. This required a balance of the longer term goals of tackling childhood obesity and alcohol harm against more reactive, short term demands of, for example, rogue traders preying on vulnerable residents.

It was reported that ICAN was the Warrington and Halton Consumer Alert Network and was an extremely powerful communication tool that could telephone, email and text its members providing targeted, relevant information to residents on a wide variety of issues relating to doorstep crime, phone, email and postal scams, rogue traders and other issues. It also provided information and advice on more general consumer issues.

In addition, it was reported that there had been a small reduction of under age alcohol sales reported since last year. A dedicated Under Age Sales Alcohol Officer for Halton had commenced work in May 2010. Clarity was sought on how long the contract was for. In response, it was reported that it would be for approximately two years.

The Chairman reported that a Bill to abolish loan sharking was about to be debated in Parliament. He encouraged the members of the Board to write to their MP to support this Bill.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments made be noted.

SAF20 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2011–2026

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Resources which gave members an update on the progress of the new Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011-2026 and presented the emerging vision, key objectives and long term priorities that the plan sought to deliver upon.

The report highlighted that the SCS is a high level strategic document, which sets the Council's and partners priorities and what action will be taken to deliver these. Under the SCS sits a wide framework of statutory and non statutory plans that the Council and partners produce. For example, The Alcohol Strategy, The Policing Plan and the Anti Social Behaviour Strategy. The new SCS would cover the period from 2011 to 2026.

The SCS would also include a five year delivery plan, which would contain the detail of the planned intervention and prevention activities that would be undertaken to bring about positive change upon Halton's priority areas. The inclusion of a five year delivery plan would allow for a regular review of the selected intervention and prevention measures on a shorter timescale to enable changing circumstances throughout the lifetime of the full SCS to be reflected.

It was reported that some of the key challenges facing the authority in the future are as follows:-

- Alcohol harm and drug abuse and related crime;
- How the Authority support integrated offender management;
- Anti social behaviour and looking at long term holistic solutions;
- Looking at new approaches to address domestic violence and abuse;
- Safeguarding vulnerable children and adults; and
- Communication and marketing.

In addition, the Board were encouraged to attend the

'My Halton' event which would be taking place on 29 October 2010 at the Stobart Stadium from 12 pm – 4 pm.

It was noted that anti social behaviour and domestic violence in Halton were mainly as a result from alcohol abuse rather than drug related.

RESOLVED: That the five overarching priorities for the emerging Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026 and comments made be noted.

SAF21 ANTI SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR, MONTGOMERY ROAD

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment and Economy which outlined the anti-social behaviour to the rear of Montgomery Road, Widnes.

The Board was advised that between Montgomery Road/Cunningham Road and Chilton Avenue / Netherfield Road, there was a linear greenway. Over the last 12 months there had been a considerable amount of anti-social behaviour with 27 incidents being recorded by the police. St Georges Court (operated by Riverside RSL) and 23 Montgomery Road had been particularly affected. There was a non adopted alley to the greenway by these properties and local councillors had identified this as a key access point for the people who were causing the anti-social behaviour. This alley also provided access to the Council allotments and was well used by the public as a route to the town centre, schools and places of work.

The Board was further advised that there had been a number of meetings regarding the issues in this area and that the Tasking and Coordination Group had considered this location on a number of occasions. An action plan had also been put in place as follows:-

- Investigate the deployment of CCTV to try and identify who is throwing stones at the rear of St Georges Court;
- Police Tasking Vehicle to be used in the area;
- The turning area of the access road to the allotments will be resurfaced (This was breaking up and loose stones are used for throwing);
- The Vroom vehicle had been in the area on Friday the 16 and Saturday 17 July 2010 – assess what impact this had;

- Contact Addaction in relation to the mobile Muga and see if it was possible to get this resource into the area;

- Contact Ashley House in relation to supporting local drug users and encourage access to services;

- PCSO's increased foot patrol;

- To continue to provide support to victims of ASB within the area;

- Contact the Community Centre – targeting information about the effect that stone throwing has on others;

- Contact Cheshire Fire and Rescue and see if they were operating in the area and establish whether or not they were able to assist in terms of engaging with the local youths; and

- Community Development was currently in the process of supporting the local residents in developing plans for a community house, Muga and a play builder scheme to be situated in Tedder Square.

The Board was further advised that these actions were now in the process of implementation and the impact would be monitored and assessed. There was local support to close the alley adjacent to 23 Montgomery Road. Whilst the alley was not adopted it was established as a right of way and a Gating Order would be required. Consultation would be undertaken, particularly with the allotment holders as part of the Gating Order process. It was noted that this would restrict access to the greenway (though there were a number of other accesses in the vicinity) and the police and community safety were not convinced this would significantly reduce the anti-social behaviour in the area.

Councillor Wallace and a representative of Ditton West Community Group attended the meeting to highlight the anti social behaviour in the area and to support the Gating Order and the establishment of an alleygate. Photographs and a map of the area was circulated at the meeting.

Councillor Wallace highlighted that there had been 27 incidents reported last year and numerous others that had not been reported. These incidents included fly tipping, graffiti, pellets being fired at windows, damage to the

residents windows and arson. It was reported that if alley gates were erected and the action plan in place it would eradicate the problem and not displace the youths into other areas. In response to the comments set out in paragraph 6.1 of the report stating that the alleygate may require young people to detour around the closure and walk along busy roads, this fact was disputed and it was highlighted that there were also quicker alternative routes available.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the footpath had not been adopted and because of the continual use it was established as a Right of Way. It was agreed that clarity should be sought from the Legal Department and Highways and Transportation on the appropriate way forward to establish an alleygate in Montgomery Road;

- It was noted that previously the methodology of establishing alley gates had been discussed and it had been agreed that a flow chart outlining the steps/procedure to installing alleygates would be produced but to date, the Board had not received it; and

- The Chairman recommended that a specific working group be established for a short period (maximum of six meetings) to consider how to proceed with alley gating. To consider what was happening now, what could happen in the future and the best way of getting there. The following Councillors agreed to be part of the working group which would be led by Councillor Wallace – Osborne, J Gerrard, M Ratcliffe and Thompson.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the action plan for addressing the anti social behaviour to the rear of Montgomery Road, Widnes be supported;

(2) a short term working group be established to look at the procedure for Alleygates with the recommendations being presented to the Executive Board for adoption; and

(3) Councillors J Gerrard, Osborne, M Ratcliffe and Thompson be part of the Working Group with Councillor Wallace being Lead Member.

Strategic Director – Environment and Economy

Meeting ended at 9.00 p.m.