

## SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 14 June 2011 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Osborne (Chairman), Wallace (Vice-Chairman), A.Cole, Fraser, J. Gerrard, M Lloyd Jones, N. Plumpton Walsh, M. Ratcliffe, Thompson and Mr Hodson

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Edge

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, H. Coen, L. Crane, D. Cunliffe, L. Derbyshire, T. Holyhead, H. Moir, P. McWade and S. Walker

Also in attendance: Mr C Heyes – Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and in accordance with Standing Order 33, Councillor D Cargill, Portfolio Holder – Community Safety and four members of the public.

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

		<i>Action</i>
SAF1	MINUTES	
	The Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF2	PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
	The Board was advised that two public questions had been received.	
	As the question related to an item on the agenda, it was agreed that the questions would be answered under that item on the agenda (Minute No: SAF4 refers).	
SAF3	SSP MINUTES	
	The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) Meeting held on the 15 February 2011 were presented to the Board for information.	
	RESOLVED: That the report be noted.	

SAF4 PETITION OBJECTING TO THE PROPOSAL FOR THE  
INSTALLATION OF ALLEYGATES BETWEEN 21 & 23  
MONTGOMERY ROAD, WIDNES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which advised Members of the receipt of a petition containing 13 signatures of residents of Somerville Road, Gathurst Court and Standish Court who objected to the proposed installation of alleygates to a pathway between 21 and 23 Montgomery Road, and recommended a proposed course of action.

The Board was advised at its meeting on 21st September 2010, the Board had considered a report which outlined anti-social behaviour which was occurring to the rear of Montgomery Road, Widnes. It was reported that an eleven-point action plan to address the anti social behaviour to the rear of Montgomery Road, which was detailed in the report, was in the process of being implemented and that its impact would be monitored and assessed. The Board resolved that the plan be supported. Furthermore, following discussion in relation to the establishment of an alleygate in the pathway leading from Montgomery Road, the Board resolved that a working group, including Members of the Board, be established to consider how to proceed with alleygating in the future.

The Board was further advised that the Council's Community Safety Department had reported greater Police involvement in this area and the problems, which were being addressed by the action plan, had declined in frequency and intensity. The action plan had already resulted in crime statistics falling.

It was reported that during October 2010, an informal local consultation had been carried out in the area by Halton Borough Council in order to gauge the views of residents in respect of an Alley Gating scheme being introduced at this location. Letters were delivered to approximately 250 houses on each side of the footpath / cycleway. A total of 42 responses were received including 9 objections to the scheme and 33 in support. The attached petition was also received and had been signed by 13 local residents opposing the gating scheme in this area. The signatures on the petition included one original objector who responded to the consultation, bringing the numbers against the scheme to 21 (or 39%) and numbers in favour 33 (61%).

Those respondents opposed to the proposal, argued

that the pathway should remain open, as it provided a valuable, convenient and safe route to school for the children of the area, avoiding the need to cross the very busy Dundalk Road at peak hours.

It was also reported that five of those who responded in support of the scheme had made additional comments requesting the closure of another link onto the footpath / cycleway, from the Chillington / Netherfield estate, or expressed the hope that the proposed gating would resolve problems on the main route entirely. It would appear from these responses that the consultation may have raised the expectation levels of some residents in these respects. However, this gating proposal did not form part of a wider scheme. The gating of all accesses to this part of the cycle network was something the Highway Authority would be opposed to as this could lead to a sustainable transport route that was no longer used for its intended purpose and could lead to an increase in anti-social behaviour due to a reduction in natural surveillance.

The Chairman reported that there had been an original petition of approximately 250 residents in support of the installation of the alleygates. The Board had made a decision previously to support the installation of the alleygates as over the last twelve months there had been a considerable amount of anti social behaviour with numerous incidents being recorded by the Police. Councillors had identified the alley to the greenway by these properties as a key access point for the people who were causing the anti-social behaviour. In addition, it was noted that alleygates had been very successful throughout the Borough in reducing incidents of anti social behaviour.

The Board noted the numerous incidents of anti social behaviour in the area and that the pathway was not a designated safe route to school or a cycle path. In addition, the Board agreed that installing an alleygate was in the best interest of the community.

After considerable discussion, the Board unanimously agreed to support the installation of an alleygate and agreed that the recommendation be presented to the Executive Board for approval.

It was noted that the following public questions had been received:-

- (1) *If the gates do not go ahead this time what is it going to take to get them put up, after having death*

*threats made to me, the Police catching thieves in my garden and letting them go with a warning, youths throwing eggs at my windows, glass bottles getting thrown into the dog pen (cutting her paw and resulting in a £180 bill from the vets). Please dont take the next few lines the wrong way, but I remember a man from Warrington called Garry Newlove who was plagued with yobs outside his house he is now six foot under. I have 3 fantastic kids and a fantastic wife and I HONESTLY DON'T WANT TO END UP LIKE GARRY NEWLOVE, especially over an alleyway that could have something done about it to stop all this.*

In response, the Board was advised that due to the complexity and late receipt of this question, a written response would be provided to the member of the public directly.

- (2) *I would like to address the meeting again on 14th June 2011 to reiterate my previous concerns and comments and would also like to ask if the Safer Halton Partnership are aware of the cost implications for sending a fire engine to deal with these incidents, sending the street scene team out to clean up the mess made (not just by the fire set but also for the fly tipping that goes on there) and the cost to replace the damaged fencing and replace the wheelie bin that was destroyed. I expect that if you add all those things together it will amount to a pretty penny, but the other cost that cannot be described in pounds, shillings and pence are the social costs, the effect it is having on the health of the residents who live next to that pathway, the fact that they cannot settle because they are constantly worried about what is going to happen next, people should have a right to expect to be safe in their own home and live in peace, not live in fear.*

In response, the Board was advised that Halton Housing Trust estimated the cost of repairs to a damaged fence at £100 following a bin fire reported last week. Their records indicated that there had also been a bin fire in 2003. Each wheelie-bin replacement cost the Council £20 per bin.

In respect of the amount of fly tipping that had been removed, more information on the specific

area concerned was required. Therefore a written response on this matter would be provided when further information has been ascertained.

In respect of Safer Halton Partnership and the cost implications due to the complexity of the question a written response would be provided to the member of the public directly.

In addition, the Board noted the additional letters of support for the alleygates received from residents in the area. A map of the area was also circulated at the meeting for Members information.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The Board unanimously support the installation of an alleygate on the pathway between 21 and 23 Montgomery Road;
- (2) the Board's recommendation be presented to the Executive Board for approval; and
- (3) the petitioners be informed of the Board's decision.

Strategic Director  
– Policy &  
Resources

*Note: (Councillor Ratcliffe declared a Personal Interest in the following item of business as an employee of Cheshire Fire Service).*

SAF5 CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE ANNUAL BONFIRE SEASON REPORT 2010

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which presented a report by Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service on the Annual Bonfire Season Report 2010. Mr Colin Heyes, Arson Reduction Manager, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service attended the meeting to present the report.

The Board was advised that the Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service Annual Bonfire Season Report covered the period from 18th October to 8th November 2010 when activity was increased across the UK for the Service.

The Board was further advised that the report covered the following:-

- Recording of Bonfire Incidents;
- Pre-Planning and Partnership Activity;
- Bonfire Removal Schemes;

- Educational Events and Activities;
- Diversionary Events;
- Response;
- Fire and Rescue Control;
- Media; and
- Incident Data and Performance.

Members were requested to give consideration to the recommendations set out on page 48, paragraphs 13.1 – 13.12 of the report.

It was noted that the annual firework display cost in the region of £30,000 per year and was not contributing to reducing the number of fires / accidents and other incidents on bonfire night. It was also noted that people from all over the surrounding area attended the event which only lasted for approximately 20 minutes. After this, it was acknowledged that the majority of people would then attend private bonfire parties. It was suggested that in conjunction with Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service consideration be given to holding two events, which could be subsidised by mobile catering units such as burger bars etc. This could also result in a financial saving for the Authority.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that a short term topic group be established (two meetings) to look into the feasibility of holding two such events this year. The topic group, it was agreed, would be Chaired by Councillor Ratcliffe. Councillor Wallace also volunteered to be part of the group and it was agreed that an email would be sent to all Members of the Board requesting nominations to be part of the group.

The topic group would look at examples of good practice and consider alternative sites to hold the bonfire events, one in Runcorn and one in Widnes which could be subsidised by mobile catering units. It was suggested that the membership should include Mr Colin Heyes, Mr Simon Walker and the Housing Association as land owners. It was also agreed that the Board would consider the recommendations from the topic group, which would include any financial savings and then a recommendation be presented to the Executive Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report and comments made be noted;
- (2) Mr Colin Heyes be thanked for his informative verbal presentation;

- (3) A topic group chaired by Councillor Ratcliffe be established to consider the possibility of two alternative subsidised bonfire events, one in Runcorn and one in Widnes;
- (4) An email be circulated to Members of the Board for nominations to be part of the topic group; and
- (5) the recommendations be presented to the Board for ratification and subsequently to the Executive Board for adoption.

Strategic Director  
- Communities

#### SAF6 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS - QUARTER 4

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources regarding the Fourth Quarter Monitoring Reports for:

- Environment & Regulatory Service – Environmental Health (Extract); and
- Adults and Community – Community Safety, Drug and Alcohol Action and Domestic Violence Teams (Extracts).

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

#### SAF7 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members an update on key issues and progression of the agenda for Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults.

The Board was advised that Halton LINK had held an informal 'drop-in' event/coffee morning in February 2011 to mark Dignity Action Day. The aims were to offer LINK's support to the local and national Dignity in Care campaign, to raise awareness of the importance of Dignity in Care and highlight what was taking place locally and to remind society that the dignity of those in their community was not the sole responsibility of health or social care staff. In addition, that everyone had a role to play and to remind the public that staff had a right to be treated with dignity and respect too, and to hear about people's experiences of local health and social care services over the past 12 months.

The Board was further advised that on the 15th February 2011, a shocking report from the Health Service Ombudsman, Ann Abraham, had been published called "Care and Compassion" [www.ombudsman.org.uk](http://www.ombudsman.org.uk).

The Board noted the key issues and progressions of the safeguarding agenda set out in paragraphs 3.3 – 3.10 of the report.

The Board noted that the increase in the numbers had been as a result of advertising and raising awareness of how to report safeguarding incidents.

The Chairman encouraged the Members to attend the basic Safeguarding Awareness Course highlighting that it would be invaluable to Members particularly with issues raised during surgeries.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

#### SAF8 HALTON SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which sought to inform the Members of the work of the Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB).

The Board was advised that The Children Act 2004 required each Local Authority to establish a Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) by 1<sup>st</sup> April 2006. Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) was in place by February 2006.

The Board was advised of progress made by HSCB in respect of the following:-

- Training;
- Recruitment and Supervision;
- Private Fostering;
- Communicating and Raising Awareness;
- Functions relating to child death; and
- Serious Case Reviews.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was agreed that a copy of the annual report be sent to all Members of the Board;
- It was agreed that a copy of the Ofsted report be



circulated to all Members of the Board;

- It was noted that Members were Corporate Parents and had a responsibility to scrutinise actions that had been taken to ensure the safety of children in the Borough;
- The numerous activities, events and awareness campaigns that were being undertaken were noted;
- It was noted that consideration was being given to holding a training course to raise Members awareness on abuse etc; and
- It was noted that volunteers were still required for Climbie visits. It was reported that any Member interested in undertaking Climbie visits should contact the officer directly.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF9 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY 2010 - 11 YEAR-END PROGRESS REPORT

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided information on the progress in achieving targets contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton.

The Board was advised that the Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton, and the performance measures and targets contained within it would remain central to the delivery of community outcomes. It was therefore important that progress was monitored and that Members were satisfied that adequate plans were in place to ensure that the Council and its partners achieved the improvement targets that had been agreed.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that there had been a considerable reduction in NI 17 – Reduce the perceptions of anti social behaviour and credit was given to the Safer Halton Partnership for their excellent work in addressing this matter;
- In relation to NI 39 – Reduce the number of alcohol related harm admissions, it was reported

that a two stage competitive tender had been launched for future Tier 2 and 3 drug and alcohol services (as part of an integrated recovery service), in Halton and work to support the tender continued. It was agreed that a report on the outcome of the tender be presented to a future meeting of the Board;

- Page 112 – NI 47 – Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents – it was noted that over a long period of time the overall trend for accidents in the Borough had been significantly reduced. However, concern was raised that this would change and road accidents would increase in the future as a result of the budget cuts by the Government, particularly the Highway budget which addressed road safety matters. After discussion, it was agreed that a letter be written on behalf of the Board to Mr Derek Twigg MP and to Mr Graham Evans MP, highlighting how the budgetary cuts had impacted on Safer Halton's Community Strategy and asking how they proposed this matter could be addressed;
- The excellent work undertaken by the Safer Halton Partnership in reducing anti social behaviour and alcohol abuse in the Borough was noted. It was also agreed that a report outlining how the Partnership would be affected by the budgetary cuts be presented to a future meeting of the Board;
- In conjunction with Licensing, a report be presented to the Board on how safe public transport was in the Borough. In addition, it was agreed that the report should include all forms of public transport, including taxis and buses; and
- Clarity was sought on what checks were in place to address underage drinking in the Borough. In response, it was reported that covert operations were undertaken regularly at weekends and during the week testing public houses in the Borough. There was also a considerable amount of awareness raising undertaken in schools and enforcement in liaison with the Licensing Department. However, it was reported that if information was received on a particular public house then it could be targeted and tested.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

#### SAF10 CHILDREN IN CARE FROM OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave details of the current numbers of Children in Care of Other Local Authorities (CICOLA) and the possible impact on services within Halton.

The Board was advised that Local Authorities had a statutory duty in determining the most appropriate placement for a looked after child. However for a variety of reasons, a person could be placed outside of the Local Authority that they lived in.

The Board was further advised that Halton had the second highest concentration of one bed homes in the region (St. Helens had the highest with 15). The costs per week ranged from £2600 - £4995. However the average placement cost for local provision equated to £4211 per week – this was substantially higher than the regional average cost which currently was approximately £2750 - £2835 per week.

It was reported that in total there were 116 children's homes with the current OFSTED inspection with the following findings:

- 83 - Good or outstanding;
- 22 – Satisfactory;
- 2 – Inadequate; and
- 7 homes not yet having received their first OFSTED inspection due to being newly opened provision.

In addition, it was highlighted that within Halton there were 63 placements for Independent Fostering Agencies and 37 placements within a residential setting.

Furthermore, it was reported that there were some issues with the quality of the current data and how Halton 'tracked' the young people in Care from other Local Authorities. The current figures showed approximately 266 young people in Halton from other Local Authorities. These young people were aged from 1 to 17 years old and included foster carers approved from other Local Authorities. However, it was highlighted that the data was constantly

changing.

Using the current information and looking at Police data at the amount and type of police contact there had only been 36 separate pieces of intelligence for 16 individuals over the past 12 months mostly around anti-social behaviour and 12 arrests for 7 individuals.

The Board noted the future work being undertaken to address the issues and the Procedures for Notification of Children In Care Placed In Other Local Authorities attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that placements from other authorities which resulted in anti social behaviour or arrests reflected on Halton as Corporate Parents;
- The challenges in respect of private companies placing people in establishments with private carers, which the Authority were unaware of was noted;
- The challenges facing the authority in respect of placements from other authorities and the financial and resource implications on the Council was noted;
- It was noted that from April there was a requirement that the placing LA's have a duty to notify Halton and should not place children further than a 20 mile radius from their home address. However, it was also noted that this may reduce the number of children placed in Halton, but it could also result in the children that were placed in the Borough could be more problematic as local placements had not been successful;
- It was noted that if any issues / concerns are raised about a particular home, the Local Authority and the Police would undertake an emergency inspection; and
- the actions taken when Ofsted place an establishment below the standard was noted. It was also noted that Halton would not place a child in any establishment that was below a certain standard on the list.

The Chairman highlighted the excellent work being undertaken by Halton and reported that the Community Safety Team were the link with all the partners. He indicated that it was vitally important that they were retained. In addition, he encouraged Members of the Board to support the Community Safety Team via mainstream funding in the future when considering the future budget.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The content of the report and comments raised be noted;
- (2) Further work is undertaken to get an accurate picture on how many CICOLA's reside in Halton, ensuring that the procedures around notifications of CICOLA's is clearly in place;
- (3) Work be undertaken with other key agencies, such as the Police, Education and Health to understand the demand and impact of CICOLA's on Halton services and to investigate the avenues for charging other Local Authorities for certain key services; and
- (4) The report be referred to the Children, Young People and Families PPB for further consideration

Strategic Director  
Children &  
Enterprise

#### SAF11 HATE CRIME AND HARRASSMENT REDUCTION STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided Members with a draft of the Hate Crime Reduction Strategy and Action Plan for Halton.

The Board was advised that Hate crime was a serious issue that could affect the quality of life for people and communities, and reducing the level of hate crime was a key priority for the Safer Halton Partnership. Hate crime could take various forms of either physical or verbal abuse and even the threat of attack.

The Board was further advised that according to the Home Office and Association of Police Chief Constables the definition of hate crime came in five categories: Race, Faith, Homophobic, Transphobic and Disability, with the number of incidents being under reported nationally. This was not,

however, unique to Halton, it was a national problem which is why a Hate Crime Cross-Government Action Plan had been produced.

It was reported that not all reported incidents became a crime. A hate incident may or may not constitute a criminal offence once it had been investigated. However keeping a record of incidents could help build a picture of what was happening within communities.

In Halton, due to the low numbers of reported incidents and the knowledge that there was a smaller diverse community, work had been progressing to include the hate crime matters with the wider safeguarding issues, such as training front line service providers and using existing communication methods to raise awareness of reporting centres.

The strategy and action plan was for the wider Strategic Partnership, as it has been recognised that the Council could not progress this work alone. The Strategy had been shared with a variety of partners, groups and networks. The strategy had also been shared with the Safeguarding Co-ordinator and Manager for Adults and Children and Young People. There had also been 1-2-1 meetings with the two lead officers for the Community Safety Team, along with a large public consultation event held in November 2010 which included service users and providers.

The Board noted that the report highlighted that there had been no reported incidents linked to disability or religion, which was likely to be due to under reporting rather than a tangible success.

RESOLVED: That the Board endorse the Hate Crime Strategy and Action Plan to forward to the Council's Executive Board for adoption.

Strategic Director  
- Communities

*Meeting ended at 8.35 p.m.*