

REPORT TO: Safer Halton PPB
DATE: 20th September 2011
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities
SUBJECT: HSP Community Engagement Strategy
WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the group of the development and adoption of the partnership's Community Engagement Strategy and associated action plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) Board members note the content of the report; and

(2) The board supports the Community Engagement Strategy and action plan.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 This is the second Community Engagement Strategy that the Halton Strategic Partnership has developed. The first was approved in 2005 and laid the foundation for improved Community Engagement in Halton. The purpose of this strategy is to build on the foundations created by our first strategy to create a comprehensive partnership approach to community engagement,

3.2 This strategy has been developed over the past twelve months with input from all partnership agencies and with significant resident involvement. A brief summary of its development is as follows:

- Community Engagement audit of activity – a questionnaire asking for details of all partners' engagement activities was distributed and the responses informed the context of the strategy;
- A framework for the strategy was drafted, based on the results of the questionnaire and existing research, by the Council's Corporate and Organisational Policy Team and distributed across the partnership for comments;
- Five strategic objectives were developed from the responses of the questionnaire – these were contained in a report to the partnership's Equalities, Engagement and Cohesion group and endorsed by the group on 6.12.10;

- Extensive research was carried out in to current and new approaches to community engagement, giving an evidence base for our approach;
- The strategy has been presented to several local residents' group and their comments have been vital in developing the strategy;
- An action planning event, attended by over 30 people including representative from across the partnership and residents and hosted by Councillor John Swain, was held on 30.3.11. During this event attendees were asked to come up with proposed actions to deliver the strategy and these actions were put to a vote. Attendees were also asked to make a personal pledge to try to improve an aspect of community engagement either in their work or their personal life;
- An action plan has been developed using the results of this action planning day. This has been formulated by the Community Engagement Strategy steering group; and
- The strategy was formally adopted by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board on the 1st June 2011.

The full strategy and action plan are appended to this report.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The strategy will support member organisations of the strategic partnership to deliver well-planned joined-up consultation and engagement. It will ensure that community engagement becomes an integral part of the business planning and policy development process.

4.2 The key elements of this strategy are the five strategic objectives. These have previously been agreed by the partnership's Equalities, Engagement and Cohesion group:

4.3 Objective 1: Citizen-focused local decision making

"We are committed to ensuring community and individual input in to the local decision making process. We will ensure that all decisions taken are focused on the needs of individuals and the local community, and that those affected are given meaningful opportunities to help make those decisions."

4.4 Objective 2: Accessible and inclusive engagement

"We are committed to ensuring that each and every citizen in Halton has equal opportunity to make their voice heard and influence decisions that

affect them. We will ensure appropriate mechanisms are in place to ensure everybody's access needs are identified and accounted for."

4.5 **Objective 3: Open, Efficient and Effective Engagement**

"We are committed to ensuring that all of our engagement activities make a tangible and positive impact on the community and represent best value for money at all times".

4.6 **Objective 4: Innovative Engagement**

"We are committed to exploring new and creative ways of engaging with the communities we serve and maximising the potential of new technologies".

4.7 **Objective 5: Using and Responding to Citizen-initiated engagement**

"We are committed to maximising the impact of all contact we have with residents, including those which are initiated by the individual".

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The group should give consideration to the workload implications of the delivery of the strategy and action plan. There is a need for senior managers to commit time and resources to delivering the strategic objectives and this needs to be spread across the partnership.

5.2 The group will also need to consider supporting the continuation of the Community Engagement Steering Group to oversee the delivery of the strategy. Ultimate responsibility for the monitoring of the strategy will sit with the partnership's Equalities, Engagement and Cohesion board.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The strategy should enable the partnership to create more opportunities for children and young people in Halton to engage with service providers and play a more active role in designing and evaluating the services they receive.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The strategy should enable the partnership to create more opportunities for residents to engage with service providers and play a more active role in designing services they receive. It will enable residents to give genuine feedback about the types of services they feel they need to improve their knowledge, skills and experience to gain employment.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The strategy should enable the partnership to create more opportunities for residents to engage with health service providers and play a more active role in designing the health services they receive.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The strategy should enable residents to engage more with the partnership around issues of community safety and influence how these issues are addressed.

6.5 Environment and Regeneration in Halton

The strategy should enable residents to engage more with the partnership around environment and regeneration issues and influence how these issues are addressed by the partnership.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are few risks associated with delivering the strategy. The main risk lies in not delivering it successfully. This could lead to a worsening of the relationship between residents and member organisations of the strategic partnership and a lack of residential engagement in public service design and delivery.

A full risk assessment is not required for this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The strategy aims to ensure that all residents have the opportunity to engage with the partnership. Where possible equality and diversity monitoring of consultation and engagement will be carried out to monitor our success.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.