

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 15 November 2011 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Wallace

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: L. Derbyshire, T. Gibbs, A. Lewis, S. Murtagh, T. Ryan and P. McWade

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

	<i>Action</i>
SAF21 MINUTES	
The Minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.	
SAF22 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.	
SAF23 SSP MINUTES	
The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 12 September 2011 were presented to the Board for information.	
RESOLVED: That the report and comment raised be noted.	

Note: (Councillor M Lloyd Jones declared a Personal Interest in the following three items of business due to her husband being a Non

Executive Director of Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust.)

SAF24 CHILDREN IN CARE OF OTHER LOCAL AUTHORITIES
(CICOLA'S)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise which:

- (1) presented an update report regarding the current numbers of Children in Care of Other Local Authorities (CICOLA's) and the possible impact on services provided by Halton Borough Council and its partners within Halton;
- (2) assessed within the context of neighbouring local authorities the numbers of Residential Children's Homes operating within Halton, the types of these services and the potential financial impact on the borough; and
- (3) offered an update regarding ongoing works developments in this area.

The Board was advised that Halton had the second highest concentration of one or two bed Residential Children's Homes operated by the Private / Independent sector in the region (St. Helens had the highest with 15). The Residential costs per week ranged from £2600 - £4995 with the average placement cost for local provision equated to £4211 per week. This, it was reported was substantially higher than the regional average cost which currently was in the region of £2750 - £2835 / week (the variance was due to sub regional figures (Merseyside / Cheshire / Lancashire Greater Manchester).

The majority of local provision was registered for 10-17/18yrs for young people who predominantly had emotional behaviour difficulties (EBD) needs.

Within Halton currently there were a total of five Private/ Independent providers of Residential child care who in total managed fifteen Residential children's homes offering a total of thirty nine beds. These were made up as follows:-

- 1 - six bed home;
- 5 - four bed homes;
- 1 - three bed home;
- 2 - two bed homes; and
- 6 - one bed homes.

It was reported that as of March 2011 Halton had a total of 128 young people looked after of which there were twelve young people placed within Residential homes operating in the private sector three of which were located within the Borough, three were located within 20 miles of the Borough and the remaining six were placed specifically to meet a specialist individual need (mental health needs, parenting assessment needs etc).

Furthermore, it was reported that as of March 2011 Halton had a total of twelve young people placed within an Independent Agency Foster placement of which seven were located in Halton and of the five located outside of the Borough only one had been placed at slightly more than 20 miles from the Borough.

It was also reported that it appeared that Halton was being disproportionately affected due to the investment that it had made with regard to its Early Intervention agenda. This meant that the numbers of Looked After children had decreased and both the high concentration of Residential homes operating within its boundaries as well as the type of establishments meant that it was more likely that the young people placed may have experienced multiple placement disruptions, be less able to live in group settings, may have had disrupted education and were more likely to have been involved with more specialist support services.

The report highlighted that when a young person was placed into a Halton providers' placement the placing Local Authority should complete a Notification Of Children In Care Of Other Local Authorities Placed in Halton (CICOLA) form which then alerted Halton to update their CICOLA list as well as loading the information onto Care First system. However in practice this alert was sometimes overlooked or not processed by the placing authority.

Within Halton the Residential providers were also asked to complete the notification forms as well so that it was more likely that Halton were alerted when young people were placed. There were also similar issues in relation to placing local authorities alerting Halton when a young person either moved placements within Halton or moved out of the borough.

In addition, it was reported that the CICOLA list should be able to provide an up to date picture of the young people who were placed into Halton providers at any one time. This information was utilised by the Youth Offending Service (YOS), Education, Health, Connexions and the Police.

However, like any database the information contained in it was only as good as the information received from other parties (placing Social Workers or placement providers).

It was noted that there were some issues with the quality of the current data enclosed within the CICOLA list and how Halton 'tracked' the young people placed into a Halton providers' placement in care from other Local Authorities. Members requested that a copy of the CICOLA list be circulated to all Members of the Board.

It was reported that consideration was being given to strengthening planning policy to help address the issues surrounding private companies setting up homes in the Borough because house prices were favourable or the transport infrastructure in the area was excellent rather than because there was a need for such establishments.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- The Board noted the negative impact children placed from other Local Authority area was having on the Borough. It was also noted that there was no lawful distance limit for placing children in care only guidance. It was reported that it was best practice to place young people within 20 miles of their Borough boundary. However, it was also reported that Ofsted would be grading CICOLA's and Local Authorities would be required to justify why a young person had been placed in a particular establishment;
- It was noted that Halton's early intervention agenda had successfully decreased the number of children in care in the Borough. However, it was also noted that this had led to Halton being disproportionately affected because of the high concentration of residential homes operating within its boundaries as well as the type of establishments;
- Members of the Board acknowledged that the Missing from Home Service provided by Barnados at a cost of £75k (2011/12) represented value for money. In addition, it was noted that they offered direct support to any young person in Halton that went missing;
- It was suggested and agreed that a seminar be arranged for Members of the Board to raise awareness on CICOLA's;

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- Clarity was sought on whether the Local Authority had any powers to place young people from other Boroughs who were creating problems in the community into establishments outside of Halton. In response, it was reported that depending on the level of criminality, Cheshire Police could impose bail conditions to reside / not reside in specific areas; and
- It was noted that Halton only placed young children in places that had been graded good or excellent by Ofsted. It was also noted that the variations in costs for the numerous establishments did not relate to the quality of service provided.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted:
- (2) further work be undertaken to get a more accurate picture on how many CICOLA's reside in Halton, ensuring that the procedures around notifications of CICOLA's are appropriately utilised and the information shared with partners agencies via an Information Sharing agreement to support service planning/provision and cost recovery;
- (3) further work be undertaken with 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 options for agencies to recover costs through the mechanisms available although this would be dependent on sharing information between agencies regarding placements of children. This would also enable avenues for charging other Local Authorities for certain key services to be further established as required;
- (4) further work be undertaken in relation to the CICOLA data information that is captured by services which will enable improved understanding and scrutiny of the impact upon local services;
- (5) the CICOLA list be located in and updated by Halton Commissioning / Contracting Team and that the revised pathway for notifications

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be adopted;

- (6) work begins with colleagues from other Halton departments and partners to shape local services for the future – in particular planning , health and housing;
- (7) work begins on a sub regional basis to address some of the market management issues in relation to Residential children’s homes currently located in the borough;
- (8) we write to all Independent Fostering agencies to confirm that they must complete a CICOLA notification form in the same way as we request Residential providers to;
- (9) when the data has been finalised, the CICOLA List be circulated to all Members of the Board; and
- (10) an update report be presented the Board on a regular basis.

SAF25 DIGNITY UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which provided the Members with an update on the progress of the dignity working group.

The Board was advised that providing dignity was a key safeguarding matter and the report highlighted what had been done to promote and protect people in the Borough. A fundamental element within it had involved the strengthening of the human rights based approach to Health and Social Care.

The Board was further advised that a partnership approach had been adopted and encompassed all organisations who work with vulnerable adults, including:

- The Local Authority;
- Halton & St Helens NHS;
- Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS;
- Warrington and Halton Hospitals NHS Trust;
- St Helens and Knowsley Hospitals NHS Trust;
- 5 Boroughs Partnership Foundation NHS Trust;
- Independent Providers;
- The Voluntary Sector; and
- The Community Sector.

A wider network had also been established to encourage organisations, groups and individuals to promote and encourage people to address the rights of individuals.

The report provided examples of how the group were approaching issues surrounding dignity and future work plans.

After considerable discussion, the Board agreed that a report on the services care agencies provided for residents of the Borough and the services provided for people cared for in their own homes would be presented to the next meeting.

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The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- Clarity was sought on how the care agencies were monitored. In response, it was reported that agencies were monitored by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) and the Council's Quality Assurance Team who had established robust procedures to ensure establishments and services provided were safe for residents of the Borough;
- A Member of the Board expressed concern at the quality of care a relative had received in hospital and indicated that he was in the process of writing a letter of complaint. He stated that the standards were not adequate and the situation could deteriorate as the changes and budget cuts progressed. In response, it was reported that relatives could make a complaint via PALS at the hospital. In addition, concerns could be raised with the Dignity Co-ordinator who could refer the complaint to the appropriate department / agency;
- Clarity was sought on how often the CQC undertook Inspections on establishments. In response, it was reported that there were two types of inspections undertaken; one by the Council's Quality Assurance Team and one by the CQC to ensure that they met certain standards. In addition, it was reported that the duty to inspect was taken very seriously; and
- Clarity was sought on why the CQC had reduced the number of inspections in comparison to previous years. In response, it was reported that changes in CQC had meant the inspection programme had been amended and they had moved to a prioritisation system. However, recently, a number of high profile

cases had highlighted that this was potentially placing vulnerable people to additional risk. In light of this, it was recently announced that their inspection regime had been intensified.

In conclusion, the Members of the Board were informed about the inspections to Halton care homes and services and in the future Members would be involved in visiting. It was reported that those Members of the PPB who would like to be included on the list should inform Paul McWade. In addition, it was also reported that appropriate training would be provided to assist Members in this process.

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RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF26 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

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

The Board was advised that most actions arising from the plan that had been developed following the Care Quality Commission inspection of Halton Borough Council's Adult Social Care in September 2010 had been completed. The action plan had also been monitored by the Safeguarding Adults Board.

The Board was further advised that events had been held locally on 5 October, focusing on hate crime and hate incidents. More than 120 people had attended the two half day events, which had been organised jointly by the Safeguarding Adults Board, the Safeguarding Children's Board and the Safer Halton Partnership. Delegates attending the event had been asked to make an undertaking to take one action, after attending. Their responses were set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

Furthermore, it was reported that the Council were continuing to market awareness on Safeguarding. The Care Quality Commission (CQC) had judged the Authority as excellent last year regarding safeguarding. A random selection of Members of the public had confirmed that they were aware of safeguarding and how and where to report safeguarding issues.

The Board noted the work that had been undertaken on the safeguarding agenda set out in paragraphs 3.7 – 3.14

of the report.

A Member of the Board sought clarity on what support was available for people who were subject to hate crime. In response, it was reported that there were a number of locations that individuals could report incidents of hate crime and a list of locations was available should Members wish to have a copy. Some incidents were reported to Care Managers and social workers etc and all incidents were 'tracked' and followed through

RESOLVED: That the report and comment raised be noted.

SAF27 COMMUNITY SAFETY REVIEW

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which informed the Members of the terms of reference and timescale for the review of community safety.

The Board was advised that Halton Community Safety team was a combined Police and Council partnership team that reported to the Safer Halton Partnership and had been traditionally funded over recent years through some mainstream funding from Cheshire Police, Partners and the Council but primarily by Government grants given on a year to year basis. The team had grown over a period of years but due to financial cuts had been slightly reduced in size during the last financial year. The current economic climate and cessation of Government grants for the next financial year dictated that the team could not continue in its present format without an injection of funding to address the anticipated shortfall.

The Board was further advised that rather than simply reduce the team in size again it had been agreed to review the current and future activities and structure of the team in order to be ready for 2012-13. The review was being jointly led by the Police and the Council. The Terms of reference for the review of community were set out in Appendix 1 to the report. In addition, in order to inform the review, the views of Members and other stakeholders would be sought.

Furthermore, it was reported that it was very challenging to identify funding streams, and if they were not found, key posts would cease in March 2012. The review would identify these posts and it was important that key pieces of work continued. In addition, it was reported that the questionnaire was very important as it would help to

identify the key areas of work undertaken by the team.

The Chairman reported that there may be an opportunity to have a separate budget meeting next year. He emphasised the importance of retaining the Community Safety Team and highlighted the positive impact and success the team had achieved in reducing crime, alcohol reduction and anti-social behaviour in the Borough. He indicated that the team provided an excellent quality service and linked with all multi agencies / partner agencies and that it would be catastrophic to the Borough if the team changed or was reduced. He asked Members to consider what could be funded via mainstream and to suggest ways of retaining the current level of service. He requested that Members contact Paul McWade with any suggestions.

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The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was suggested that Registered Social Landlords's (RSL's) could contribute / pay a surcharge towards the funding of Police Community Support Officers (PCSO's);
- It was noted the team worked closely with the probation service and the Youth Offending Service, supporting offenders to change their behaviour and to access training and employment opportunities;
- the Members of the Board noted the excellent work undertaken by the team and the negative knock on effect and financial implications to the Council should the team cease in March 2012; and
- the Members of the Board unanimously supported the continuation of the Community Safety Team and recognised the importance of retaining the current level of service.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the terms of reference be noted and a final report be presented to the Board when the review was complete;
- (2) the use of the attached draft electronic questionnaire, as a means of seeking the views of stakeholders to help inform the review process be approved (<http://www.halton.gov.uk/questionnaires/cstr.htm>); and

- (3) the list of stakeholders set out in Appendix 3 to the report, whose comments will be sought using the online questionnaire be approved (link in (2) above).

SAF28 BUSINESS PLANNING 2012-15

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources which gave Members an opportunity to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

The Board was advised that each Directorate of the Council was required to develop a medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that was subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2012-2015 was just beginning.

The Board was further advised that at this stage members were invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3-5) that they would like to see reflected within those plans. Suggested proposals included:

- Safeguarding & Dignity;
- Review of the Community Safety Team; and
- Review of Domestic Violence Services

It was reported that Strategic Directors would then develop draft plans which would be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the New Year.

It was noted that plans could only be finalised once budget decisions had been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2012.

The report also detailed the timeframe for plan preparation, development and endorsement.

It was noted that in the current economic climate and the budgetary challenges the Council faced that cuts could affect the Council's ability to deliver the plans. However, the importance of ensuring that the limited resources aligned to local priorities was also noted.

After considerable discussion, it was agreed that Members of the Board would send their suggested priorities

to the Chairman who would identify the key priorities and respond on behalf of the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the Chairman, after receiving suggestions for priorities from Members of the Board, identify three priorities for development or improvement in the Directorate Business Plans 2012-15.

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Meeting ended at 8.40 p.m.