

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 9 January 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Policy & Resources

PORTFOLIO: Resources

SUBJECT: Sustainable Community Strategy Mid-Year
Progress Report and Annual Review of Measures
and Targets 2013-16

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To provide information to the Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board on the progress in achieving targets contained within the 2011 - 2016 Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton, and highlight the annual “light touch” review of targets and measures.

2.0 RECOMMENDED THAT:

- I. The report is noted; and
- II. The Board considers whether it requires any further information concerning actions taken to achieve the performance targets contained within Halton’s 2011-16 Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS).

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy, a central document for the Council and its partners, provides an evidenced-based framework through which actions and shared performance targets can be developed and communicated.

3.2 The previous Sustainable Community Strategy included targets which were also part of the Local Area Agreement (LAA). In October 2010 the coalition government announced the ending of government performance management of local authorities through LAAs. Nevertheless, the Council and its Partners need to maintain some form of effective performance management framework to:-

- Measure progress towards our own objectives for the improvement of the quality of life in Halton.
- Meet the government’s expectation that we will publish performance information.

- 3.3 Thus, following extensive research and analysis and consultation with all stakeholder groups including Elected Members, partners and the local community and representative groups, a new SCS (2011 – 26) was approved by the Council on 20th April 2011.
- 3.4 The new Sustainable Community Strategy and its associated “living” 5 year delivery plan (2011-16), identifies five community priorities that will form the basis of collective partnership intervention and action over the coming five years. The strategy is informed by and brings together national and local priorities and is aligned to other local delivery plans such as that of the Halton Children’s Trust. By being a “living” document it will provide sufficient flexibility to evolve as continuing changes within the public sector continue to emerge, for example the restructuring of the NHS and Public Health delivery, and the delivery of the ‘localism’ agenda.
- 3.5 As such, articulating the partnership’s ambition in terms of community outcomes and meaningful measures and targets to set the anticipated rate of change and track performance over time, will further support effective decision making and resource allocation.
- 3.6 Placeholder measures have also been included where new services are to be developed or new performance information is to be captured, in response to legislative changes; for which baselines for will be established in 2011/12 or 2012/13, against which future services will be monitored. The availability of information is currently being reviewed with partners.
- 3.7 Attached as Appendix 1 is a report on progress for the six month period April - September 2012, which includes a summary of all indicators for the Employment, Learning and Skills Priority within the SCS.
- 3.8 An annual ‘light touch review’ of targets contained within the SCS, has also been conducted to ensure that targets remain realistic over the 5 year plan to ‘close the gaps’ in performance against regional and statistical neighbours. This review has been conducted through the Employment, Lifelong Learning and Skills SSP Executive Group; with all Lead Officers being requested to review targets for 2013/14, 2014/15 and 2015/16. Targets were thus updated where appropriate in the light of actual/ anticipated performance, with supporting commentary submitted to explain the rational for changes to targets set, in the target setting templates as shown in Appendix 2. All SCS measures are included in the draft medium term Children and Enterprise Directorate and Communities Directorate Business Plan 2013-16.
- 3.9 The Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy & Performance Board is also asked to consider the inclusion of any additional measures to the above set to “narrow gaps” in performance

where appropriate or respond to legislative/ policy changes; thereby ensuring that all measures remain “fit for purpose”.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton, and the performance measures and targets contained within it will remain central to the delivery of community outcomes. It is therefore important that we monitor progress and that Members are satisfied that adequate plans are in place to ensure that the Council and its partners achieve the improvement targets that have been agreed.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton is central to our policy framework. It provides the primary vehicle through which the Council and its partners develop and communicate collaborative actions that will positively impact upon the communities of Halton.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The publication by Local Authorities of performance information is central to the coalition government’s transparency agenda.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

7.1 This report deals directly with the delivery of the relevant strategic priorities of the Council.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The key risk is a failure to improve the quality of life for Halton’s residents in accordance with the objectives of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This risk can be mitigated thorough the regular reporting and review of progress and the development of appropriate actions where under-performance may occur.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 One of the guiding principles of the Sustainable Community Strategy is to reduce inequalities in Halton.

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

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| Document | Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 – 26 |
| Place of Inspection | 2 nd Floor, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes |
| Contact Officer | Hazel Coen DM (Performance & Improvement) |