

CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 10 February 2009 in the Council Box, Halton Stadium

Present: Councillors Gilligan (Chairman), A. Lowe (Vice-Chairman), Browne, E. Cargill, D. Inch, Nolan, Norddahl and Wainwright

Apologies for Absence: Councillors J. Bradshaw, Dennett and Edge

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: C. Halpin, M. Reaney, M. Cooil, I. Leivesley, R. Mackenzie, N. Mannion, A. Villiers and R. Richardson

Also in attendance: Councillor Swain (in accordance with Standing Order No. 33)

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

CS38 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

Action

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy on Neighbourhood Management.

Members were advised that since 2006 Halton had received Government funding to develop neighbourhood management in those areas of the Borough that fell within the 3% most deprived under the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Since April 2008 this had been part of Halton's area based grant allocation, and was to continue until March 2010.

The Board received a presentation from Councillor Swain, Executive Member for Quality and Performance Portfolio and Mr N. Mannion, Neighbourhood Director which detailed:

- a brief overview of the Government's expectations and key objectives, and that emphasised set out that neighbourhood management was designed to help close the gap between the most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the Borough, with regard to health, education, employment and

- crime;
- how and why the three 'pilot' neighbourhoods were chosen. The three pilot areas were Central Widnes, Hallwood Park and Palacefields and Castlefields and Windmill Hill;
- how the Halton Neighbourhood Management Partnership was structured and operated;
- Halton's approach to developing Neighbourhood Management including how the Government funding had been used;
- the key tools and techniques being utilised. A number of examples of how using these had worked in the pilot areas, including the Men's health project, Runcorn Subways and Hallwood Park Bingo Sessions; and
- the future challenges and opportunities for Neighbourhood Management.

In particular Members were advised of the funding profile over the four years of the project and that the guidance issued by the Government on the use of funding suggested that the majority of funding should be utilised on the employment of a Neighbourhood Management Team with a relatively small proportion remaining to be used to fund a local Community Chest for small grants for local community groups.

It was noted that Halton had only employed a small team of five staff in comparison with other neighbouring authorities who had used in the region of 80% of their budget on staffing costs. About 55% of the funding had been utilised for staffing costs with the rest being used to buy in services from partners by way of service level agreements, to fund a small portfolio of larger interventions and the Neighbourhood Quick Response Fund.

Members were advised that the next steps of the Initiative would be to complete an evaluation of the impact of larger interventions, negotiate the inclusion of local targets in Halton's Local Area Agreement, explore options as part of a business case to sustain Neighbourhood Management beyond 2010 and continue to increase residents' involvement.

Members raised a number of questions, which were answered as follows:

- what the cost implications of extending and expanding neighbourhood management to the next most deprived wards and what the exit

strategy would be. It was noted that a strong business case would need to be developed and options would be submitted to the Board for scrutiny before a final decision would be made on future arrangements;

- if any other companies, as well as the Co-op had provided any match funding for projects. In response it was noted that a number of businesses had been and continued to support neighbourhood management initiatives;
- what action had been taken to improve public transportation in Windmill Hill? In response it was noted that improvement works had been undertaken on accessibility of bus stops and to the Route 66 services. In addition a door to door taxi service was being piloted in Windmill Hill;
- the differences in roles and operation between the Community Development Teams in both the Council and local Registered Social Landlords and the Neighbourhood Management Team; and
- that there was a lack of play facilities in the Halton Lea and Beechwood wards of the Borough.

Members made a number of observations on a number of other initiatives with which the Neighbourhood Management Team had been involved.

The Board thanked Councillor Swain and Mr Mannion for an informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation be received; and
- (2) further reports be brought to the Board regarding the development of the business case for neighbourhood management in Halton.

Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.