

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 25<sup>th</sup> May 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Resources

SUBJECT: Area Forum 2009/10

WARDS: Borough Wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To Inform members of the spending profiles of the Area Forum for Year 2009 to Year 2010.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:** That

(1) The report be noted.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Area forums were set up in 2001 as a way of bridging the gap between key agencies working within the Borough. Each Area Forum is led by local councillors and supported by a senior officer from the Council. Other partner organisations such as the Police, Fire Service, Housing Associations, Youth and voluntary sector bodies also attend Area Forums to keep the community informed of local developments and to respond to local concerns. The Police Participation and Delivery (PAD) meetings are at a separate time and location to the Area Forums.

3.2 Funding was allocated to the Area Forums to spend on small-scale projects that are identified by the community. In 2009/10, £600,000 was allocated to the Area, which is made up of £180,000 WNF and £420,000 from Halton Borough Council Priorities Fund. It is allocated on a per capita basis across the seven Area Forums that cover the Borough.

3.2 The local community are invited to raise ideas for neighbourhood projects, which would help improve their local area. The Forum then considers these ideas, and an action plan agreed. Actions must have community support and not result in a long-term financial commitment.

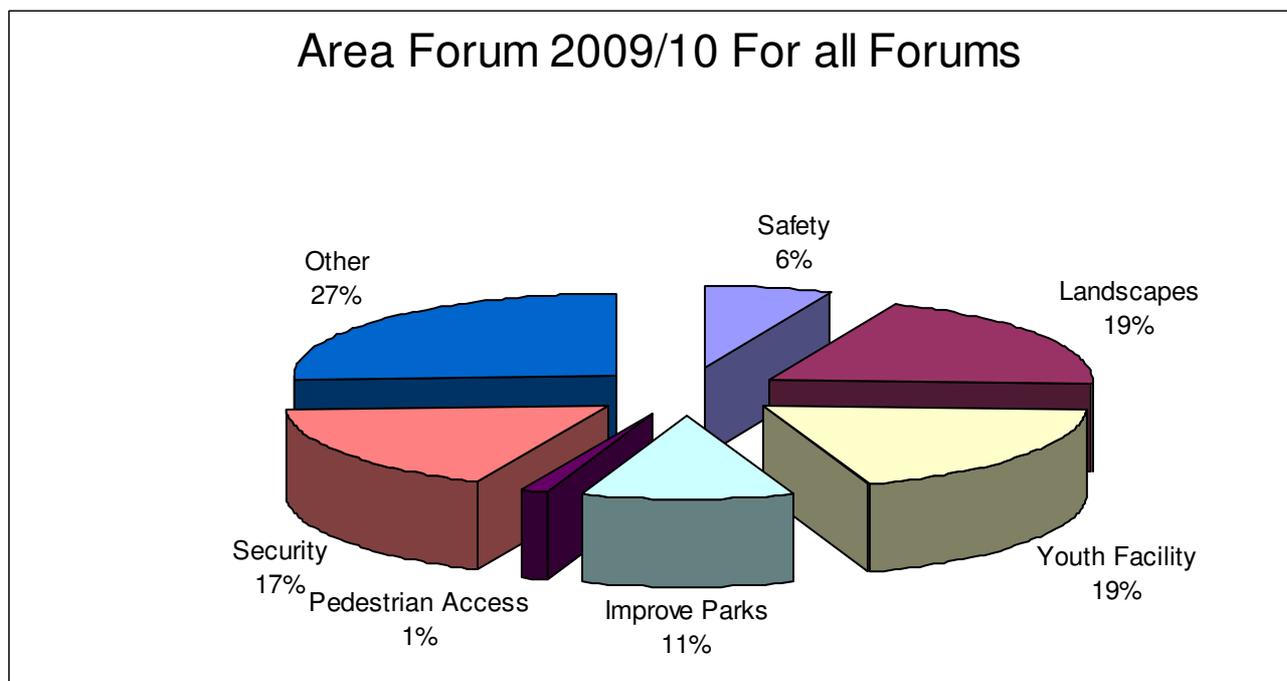
## **4.0 AREA FORUM EXPENDITURE**

4.1 The projects funded through the Area Forums are wide and varied. However they have been categorised into a number of key areas, which are listed below.

4.2 Landscapes 19%  
This category includes a wide range of projects such as increased planting, improved allotments and provision of dog bins.

- 4.3 Safety 6%  
This category includes road safety improvements, traffic calming and speed surveys.
- 4.4 Youth Facilities 19%  
Improvements to youth and community centres including facilities, lighting, creation of kick about areas, contribution to positive futures for local youths and sporting equipment,
- 4.5 Improved Parks 11%  
This initiative puts gardeners into parks at the weekends, which helps deter vandalism, improves public reassurance and the general appearance of the parks. In addition the forum provides additional planting.
- 4.6 Pedestrian Access 1%  
This funding has been used to make improvements to the local infrastructure, such as improving paths.
- 4.7 Security 17%  
Area Panel funding has been used to continue the successful and highly valued Alley gating initiative as well as providing additional fencing.
- 4.8 Other 27%  
This includes general support for local initiatives for Community groups and Centres, local amenities, Parish Councils and facilities for older people

**5.0 BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING**



5.1 The graph illustrated show the breakdown of funding allocated across the above categories for 2009/10. The largest proportion of funding would have been Improving Parks and Landscaping if they had been added together, however, the single highest is the category listed as "Other" which is mostly schemes requested by local people.

Although, it is worth stating that there are community schemes listed within the other categories as well.

## **6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

The Area Forums are a key tool in engaging with local residents, and the budget provides a means of funding minor schemes in response to local needs. The projects funded are all required to demonstrate a contribution to priority areas such as safety, health and so on. There are no ongoing financial implications, as it is a strict criterion that area forum projects should not incur ongoing costs.

## **7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

## **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no significant risks associated with this report which is for Information only.

## **9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Efforts are made to ensure that all sections of the community can benefit from Area Forum funding. For example participation by young people is encouraged through the youth forum

## **10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

10.1 Children and Young People in Halton  
Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton  
A Healthy Halton  
A Safer Halton  
Halton's Urban Renewal

10.2 The eligibility criteria for Area forum Funding requires the projects should support one or more of the Council's priorities.

## **11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

|                        |  |
|------------------------|--|
| Document               | Place of Inspection                                |
| Minutes of Area Forums | 3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Municipal Building, Kingsway |

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