

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 4th November 2010

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Resources

SUBJECT: Public Consultation on the Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 – 2026

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks Executive Board approval of the content of the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS), in order that the document is approved for an eight-week period of public consultation from 29th November 2010 to 24th January 2011.
- 1.2 The consultation period allows for a combined consultation to be run alongside the Core Strategy Publication Document and Local Transport Plan 3.
- 1.3 Appendix 1 comprises the Sustainable Community Strategy for public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The draft Halton Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) 2011-2026 be approved for the purposes of a eight-week period of public consultation;**
- (2) Further editorial and technical amendments that do not materially affect the content of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026 document be agreed by the Operational Director – Policy and Performance in consultation with the Leader of the Council, as necessary, before the document is published for public consultation; and**
- (3) The results of the statutory public consultation exercise on the Sustainable Community Strategy document are reported back to the Executive Board following the consultation period.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Local authorities and their partners have a statutory duty to develop a Sustainable Community Strategy which sets out the strategic direction and long term vision for the economic, social and environmental well being of an area. The targets in Halton's existing strategy run to 31 March 2011, and so Halton Strategic Partnership must produce a new Sustainable Community Strategy for adoption by the Council by April 2011.

3.2 The SCS is a long term plan that will guide Halton's Strategic Partnership over the next 15 years and it is important to remain aspirational in outlook. In the short term, the financial climate and uncertainty over the impact of the Comprehensive Spending Review on available budget may constrain our ability to deliver change on the ground. This uncertainty will be dealt with via a 5 year delivery plan that will be prepared once the budgetary position becomes clear (see section 3.5 below).

3.3 The attached draft SCS has been produced through extensive research and analysis of baseline data followed by wide consultation with Elected Members and partners to identify key themes and related strategic objectives. This has included reports on the detail of the emerging strategy to all Policy and Performance Boards during the September 2010 meeting cycle.

3.4 Public Consultation

An extensive consultation plan has been prepared, and a number of methods will be employed with the aim of ensuring that the SCS and other documents reach as many interested parties as possible. The Council's Communications and Marketing Division have played an important role in the planning of the consultation activities. Examples of methods to be employed include (please note that this is not a comprehensive list):

- **Use of the Consultation Database:** A comprehensive database has been created, over a number of years, of people and companies with an interest in the development of Halton. These parties will be sent a letter or e-mail informing them of the publication of the suite of strategy documents for public consultation, and of how they will be able to comment.
- **Public Exhibitions and Posters:** Officers will schedule a number of exhibitions for the consultation period, to take place at key town centre locations. Posters stating information about the consultation will also be hosted at Council buildings, including libraries, and in other key locations.
- **Online Materials and Deposit Locations:** Information about the SCS and other consultation documents, including copies of the document and its supporting material, will be available online and in a number of deposit locations in Halton, including the Halton Direct Links and libraries.
- **In Touch / Inside Halton Magazines:** These publications are being used to publicise the SCS consultation among Council staff and Halton residents respectively.

3.5 SCS Delivery Plan

The final adopted SCS will contain a five year delivery plan that will set out in detail the policy responses the Partnership intends to implement to

tackle the challenges facing the Borough. Until the strategy has been consulted upon, it is not possible to generate a delivery plan. In addition, the financial climate is not clear and will remain so until after the Comprehensive Spending Review in October. For this reason the consultation in November will focus on the strategic vision for the future of Halton and will not contain a delivery plan for the strategy at the time of public consultation.

3.6 Timescales to Adoption

The key dates in the drafting process are as follows:

Date	Stage
29 Nov 10 – 24 Jan 11	Public consultation on Core Strategy Development Plan Document and draft Sustainable Community Strategy.
Dec 10 – Jan 11	Finalisation of SCS Delivery Plan
11 February 11	Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB) to sign off final document.
17 March 11	Approval of SCS for adoption - Executive Board.
20 April 11	Adoption at Full Council.
April 2011	Implementation begins.

3.7 New Corporate Plan

The new SCS offers the opportunity to revisit our Corporate Plan and to set out our ambitions for the next five years. Taking a strategic outlook, the Council can set its direction and align this with the Key Objectives of the SCS. The drafting of a revised Corporate Plan will commence in January 2011.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The new edition of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) will look over a longer time period allowing strategic planning over 15 years to 2026. This will bring major plans into alignment, such as the Core Strategy and Local Transport Plan, allowing coordinated delivery.

4.2 The SCS will impact upon all policy areas and have wide ranging impacts on, but not exclusively, social inclusion, poverty, equality and diversity, physical development, environmental quality and health care.

5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The draft SCS takes into account Government guidance on the development of Sustainable Community Strategies and the duty to inform, consult and involve local people. It is imperative that partners continue to play an integral role in the delivery of the Strategy through the Halton Strategic Partnership structure.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

A significant component of the content of the SCS is aimed at raising aspirations of children and young people, assisting them to do well whatever their needs or wherever they live. Ensuring that feel safe at school, home and in their community is a central objective. Health and well-being is a key policy driver for the SCS with a long term focus on ensuring children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

One of the main thrusts of the SCS is the support, maintenance and enhancement of the Borough's economy including promoting economic growth and diversification. This includes the enhancement of local employment opportunities, as well as support for learning and skill development opportunities at the Borough's educational establishments and workplaces.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The SCS contains a wide variety of policy guidance focussed on addressing the Borough's health problems; hence the priority for a healthier Halton is strongly reflected across the document. Emphasis is placed on reducing the inequalities gap that forms when the health of the population as a whole improves, but the health of the least and less well off either improves more slowly than the rest of the population or in some cases gets worse in absolute terms. The SCS focuses on early intervention and prevention initiatives, particularly for obesity, alcohol and drug harm, mental health, cancer and circulatory disease.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Making Halton safer is a key priority for the SCS, aiming to ensure that Halton's communities, businesses and visitors enjoy access to a safe environment with reduced fear of crime, increased community cohesion, and reducing reported crime and anti-social behaviour. Safeguarding vulnerable people from all forms of abuse is an essential strand of the SCS.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

It is proposed that this priority area becomes "Environment and Regeneration in Halton" to give the theme a wider focus covering issues beyond urban renewal such as environmental quality, climate change, and digital infrastructure and accessibility. Through the identification of key areas of change, those major development projects affecting the Borough over the SCS period, the SCS caters for the renewal and enhancement of the Borough's built and green environment, with a particular focus on housing areas, employment land and the Borough's centres.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 It is vital that rapid progress is made on the Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure that Halton Strategic Partnership continues to be clear about its priorities for service delivery, setting out the steps needed to bring about improvements to those areas of greatest concern to the people of Halton.

7.2 Delay to the SCS will:

- Reduce the Partnership's ability to take account of the local community's aspirations, needs and priorities;
- Have serious implications for Partnership co-ordination between all the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally.
- Potentially reduce the effectiveness of the Partnership through fragmentation of strategies.

7.3 These risks are mitigated by a monthly review of all significant risk factors highlighted by the project's risk assessment.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Building stronger communities through community engagement must continue to be a key outcome for the strategy. The Halton Strategic Partnership is already committed to equality regardless of age, sex, caring responsibility, race, religion, marital status, maternity issues, gender reassignment, socio economic need, sexuality or disability. A Community Impact Review and Assessment (CIRA) will be undertaken on the document to ensure the strategy does not discriminate, promotes equality for all, and meets the duties under the Equality Act 2010.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
A Community Strategy for a Sustainable Halton 2006-2011	Municipal Building, Widnes	Tim Gibbs
Refresh SCS 2006-2011 (published September 2009)	Municipal Building, Widnes	Tim Gibbs