

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 20 September 2011 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall

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

Apologies for Absence: Councillor Edge

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, L. Derbyshire, S. Doore, J. Hunt, P. McWade and H. Moir

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>
SAF12 MINUTES	
<p>The Minutes of the meeting held on 14 June 2011 were taken as read and signed as a correct record subject to Minute No SAF4, 7th paragraph be amended to read:</p> <p>“The Chairman reported that a consultation exercise had been previously undertaken with approximately 250 residents in the area. The results of the consultation exercise had highlighted that the majority of residents supported the installation of the alleygates.”</p>	
SAF13 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME	
<p>The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.</p>	
SAF14 SSP MINUTES	
<p>The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) Meeting held on the 10 May 2011 were presented to the Board for information.</p>	

The Chairman drew the Board's attention to SHP56 and the significant cost of the introduction of a Police and Crime Commissioner from the Cheshire budget. It was noted that this funding could have been used to benefit the community.

RESOLVED: That the report and comment raised be noted.

SAF15 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS

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

The Board was advised that Halton's Learning Disabilities Partnership Board had held a Business Planning Event where 'Keeping Safe' had been a key theme. The resulting Business Plan included priorities and actions drawn up during the event around safeguarding vulnerable adults and hate crime/hate incidents, including the following, some of which were already being progressed:

- Help people to understand the danger signs;
- Support for people and staff to understand how to keep safe; and
- Talk to more people who may have been a victim of abuse or hate crime.

The Board was further advised that the following priorities had been drawn up during the event around personalisation and which also had the potential to impact on the way in which we support people to stay safe from abuse and exploitation:-

- Train personal assistants;
- Check that support plans are making a difference to people's lives;
- Look at how we can check how good support plans are; and
- Check that people are being supported to become more independent.

It was reported that Safeguarding Adults and

Safeguarding Children brief presentations had been incorporated into Halton Borough Council's Corporate Induction Programme from September 2011.

The Board noted the key issues and progressions of the safeguarding agenda set out in paragraphs 3.2 – 3.14 of the report.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- Clarity was sought on what safeguarding measures were in place in private care homes. In response, it was reported that the Quality Assurance Team set out the standards in the contract and were responsible for undertaking risk assessments and monitoring the establishments. There was also a robust recording process in place to deal with any concerns that may arise. In addition, if a concern had been raised, the team would undertake home visits and consult with families and care managers to ensure the issue was dealt with quickly. It was also reported that some care and support was funded by the NHS Trust / PCT who also had contractual standards and an overarching Safeguarding policy embedded in their service to deal with such matters;
- It was suggested that a report be presented to a future meeting of the Board on the policy and the contracts that were in place for care homes. The Members of the Board indicated that they would like to review the contracts and how they were formulated. It was also suggested that the contract should include that Elected Members could undertake regular visits.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments made be noted; and
- (2) a report be presented to a future meeting of the Board on the care home contracts and the people assessing the care homes.

Strategic Director
- Communities

SAF16 DOMESTIC ABUSE AND SEXUAL VIOLENCE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members an update in relation to the activities being supported across the Borough on domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Board was advised that domestic violence and abuse could be experienced regardless of race, gender, age, disability, sexuality and lifestyle. It was reported that at least 1 in 4 women and 1 in 6 men would experience domestic abuse in their lifetime, whilst 750,000 children would witness it per year. Tackling domestic abuse and sexual violence was vital to building stronger, safer and healthier communities.

The Board was further advised that Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) had been established and was a multi agency partnership across statutory and voluntary agencies working to increase the safety of victims and take steps to reduce repeat victimisation common with domestic abuse and sexual violence. A number of initiatives locally had also been supported and implemented. The Portfolio Holder for Community Safety was also an important member of the Forum.

It was reported that many victims of domestic violence were reluctant to pursue the prosecution of perpetrators as it could put them at risk of further incidents in the future. Victims were also known to be reluctant to speak in court because of their relationship with the perpetrator, particularly where children were involved. In addition, it was reported that many feel vulnerable and intimidated and find the prospect of going to court daunting.

In order to address this issue, the SDVC (Specialist Domestic Violence Court) had been established to tackle the problem of low levels of prosecutions for domestic violence cases. Halton SDVC aimed to provide an increased level of support to victims to address the issues of victims withdrawing for the criminal justice system.

It was also reported that on the 14th April 2011, it had become a statutory duty to conduct Domestic Homicide Reviews (DHR). A Multi-Agency Domestic Homicide Review process for Halton was currently in draft, which would ensure that Halton was able to respond to the need should a Domestic Homicide take place in the Borough.

Furthermore, it was reported that during quarter one 42 cases were discussed at the Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences (MARAC) involving 31 children. Increasingly younger victims and perpetrators were coming to the attention of the MARAC, and Connexions were also offering additional support to young people through the Sexual Health Team.

During quarter one of this year 218 incidents of domestic abuse had been reported from the Halton area to Cheshire Constabulary. This represented a reduction of 100 compared to the same period for 2010-11.

There had also been a significant reduction in the incidents of domestic sexual offences during this quarter with only one being recorded compared to 10 during the same period on 2010-11.

In conclusion, it was reported that in order to work toward nationally recognised guidelines, (to increase referrals to MARAC from agencies other than the Police), DASH (Domestic Abuse, Stalking and Harassment and Honour based Violence) training had been offered free of charge to a number of partnership agencies and teams across Halton to raise awareness of the risk assessment tool and encourage increased usage.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- The reduction in the incidents of domestic abuse reported from the Halton area to Cheshire Constabulary compared to the same period for 2010-11 was noted. It was also noted that the figures only represented a small number of people as there was a considerable number of repeat offenders. In addition, the importance of magistrates giving increased penalties for repeat offenders was noted;
- It was suggested and agreed that information be obtained from the court on sentences and offences;
- It was noted that nationally a significant number of people were not reporting incidents of domestic violence. It was also noted that in the current economic climate it was possible that the number of domestic violence incidents could increase;
- It was noted that domestic violence was strongly linked to alcohol abuse. The Board acknowledged the work that was being taken to address this matter;
- The issue relating to the offenders and the offended remaining in the relationship was noted. In addition, it was suggested that it would be interesting to identify how many repeat offenders had remained in

the same relationship; and

- It was reported that the courts had numerous leaflets for victims and witness. It was suggested that they could be more pro active and these could be given to people when they arrived at the court, rather than just being on display.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

SAF17 COMMUNITY SAFETY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which gave Members an update on a range of community safety issues.

The Board was advised of the issues relating to the following:-

- Future funding 2012/2013;
- The Governments approach to community safety and policing;
- The ASB Tools and Powers Review;
- The new powers to tackle gang problems;
- The new 'RESPECT' standard for housing providers;
- The key points of cutting crime together;
- Community Safety Partnerships; and
- Police Crime Commissioners.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the new Respect Charter had been launched in Harrogate on 22 June 2011 and it was agreed that a link be provided to Members of the Board for information;
- It was noted that the introduction for the Police Crime Commissioner would now be in November 2012. It was also noted that the Chief Executive of Halton Borough Council would be the Returning Officer for this area;

- It was agreed that the Topic Group consider the new Respect Standard for Housing Providers for private landlords;
- It was noted that Cheshire Police had not incurred any costs as a result of the riots;
- It was noted that there was co-operation between the various police forces on a regular basis i.e. the Olympics in 2012. In addition, they could rapidly respond on an ad-hoc basis as the situation required;
- It was noted that £1.9m had been collected out of the proceeds of crime. It was also noted that a small percentage of these proceeds were re-invested in the police service; and
- It was suggested and agreed that the statistics on prolific offenders would be obtained from the court and be circulated to Members of the Board.

After considerable discussion, the Board agreed that a letter of objection to the cost of the introduction of the Police Commissioners be sent to the Home Office on behalf of the Board.

The Chairman reported that a request had been received for the Board to consider and review the parking on match days in Halton. He added that the Board could also consider the police plan when reviewing this matter.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) a report of parking issues on match day be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

Strategic Director
- Communities

SAF18 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT STRATEGY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which informed Members of the development and adoption of the partnership's Community Engagement Strategy and associated action plan.

The Board was advised that this was the second Community Engagement Strategy that the Halton Strategic Partnership had developed. The first had been approved in

2005 and laid the foundation for improved Community Engagement in Halton. The purpose of this strategy was to build on the foundations created by the first strategy to create a comprehensive partnership approach to community engagement.

The Board was further advised that the strategy had been developed over the last twelve months with input from all partnership agencies and with significant resident involvement. The strategy and action plan was set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

The report gave details of the five objectives:-

- Citizen – focused local decision making;
- Accessible and inclusive engagement;
- Open, Efficient and Effective Engagement;
- Innovative Engagement; and
- Using and Responding to Citizen-initiated Engagement.

It was noted that Elected Members already undertook such activities in the community and the strategy was to enable Officers to be more aware of and have a clearer understanding of the role of the Elected Member.

The Chairman emphasised the importance of Officers contacting the appropriate Ward Councillor of any activities / proposed actions that would be taking place in their wards, prior to the action being taken.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) the Community Engagement Strategy and Action Plan be supported.

SAF19 PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORTS

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources regarding the First Quarter Monitoring Reports for 2011/12 from, April to June 2011 for:-

- Communities Directorate – Community Safety, Drug & Alcohol Action Teams, Domestic Violence and Environmental Health (Extracts); and
- Area Partner indicators from the Police, Fire and Probation Services were stated where available.

Strategic Director
- Communities

It was noted that questions had been submitted prior to the meeting and responses provided which had been circulated at the meeting and would be attached as Appendix 1 to the minutes.

Clarity was sought on whether one crime number was being used for several crimes in order to keep the crime numbers down. In response, it was reported that each crime should have an individual crime number.

The Board noted that there was no longer a national performance indicator for serious acquisitive crime (previously NI 16) which included, domestic burglary, robbery and the theft of cars and theft from cars (reference CCC25 Page 83 refers). However, it was reported that these incidents were monitored by the police. In addition, it was agreed that the statistics for the theft of cars and theft from cars would be circulated to Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments / questions raised be noted.

SAF20 ANNUAL REPORT SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD 2010-11

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which presented the Annual Report for the Safer Policy and Performance Board for April 2010-March 2011 attached as Appendix 1 to the report.

The Chairman of the Board reported that safety and people's perception of being safe in all its form remained a major issue in Halton. The Board had, and would continue to focus its energy on making Halton residents feel safe. He took the opportunity to offer his sincere thanks to Board members who had worked hard to this end.

The Chairman reported that the Board had a very challenging programme of monitoring, scrutiny, and policy development, because 'Safer Halton' was a truly cross-cutting agenda. The Board, he reported was making a considerable contribution to improving the way the Council and its partners worked together to improve the quality of life for people in Halton.

Councillor Osborne, took the opportunity to thank everybody who had contributed to the work of the Board in 2010/11 and to Members who had given up their time to serve on Topic Groups. In addition, he offered particular

thanks to Cllr P Wallace and to Mr B Hodson from the Police Authority for their help and support during the last 12 months.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

Meeting ended at 7.50 p.m.