

**REPORT TO:** Environment & Urban Renewal  
Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 14<sup>th</sup> March 2012

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Communities

**PORTFOLIO:** Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport  
Health and Adults

**SUBJECT:** Halton Healthy Homes Network

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

### 1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to introduce a presentation regarding the Halton Healthy Homes Network.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Members of the Policy and Performance Board note and comment on the content of the presentation.**

### 3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1. The Halton Healthy Homes Network was launched in February 2012 with the help of funding from the Department of Health under their Warmer Homes, Healthy People programme. The aim of the network is to increase awareness of the health implications of poor housing and fuel poverty so that front line staff from the Council and partner organisations and community advocates are able to identify those at risk and signpost them to organisations who can offer appropriate assistance.

3.2 The Policy and Performance Board will receive a presentation which will contain an overview of the following:

- Housing conditions and fuel poverty in Halton;
- The health implications of poor housing and fuel poverty;
- The assistance that is available to help tackle poor housing and fuel poverty;
- The challenges faced by the Council and partners in tackling the issues;
- Progress to date in implementing a Healthy Homes Network approach.

### 4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Council's approach to tackling poor housing conditions and fuel poverty is described in the following policies:

- Draft Housing Assistance Policy (this will be presented to a future Policy and Performance Board meeting);

- Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-15
- Enforcement Policy

## 5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Resources to tackle poor housing and fuel poverty have reduced significantly since April 2011. The Healthy Homes approach aims to maximise the role of front line staff from the Council and partner organisations in identifying those most at risk and signposting effectively for appropriate and accurate advice and assistance.

## 6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

### 6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Living in poor housing can have a detrimental impact on children's health, wellbeing and educational attainment.

### 6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Investing in the energy efficiency of housing can help stimulate the labour market and economy, as well as creating opportunities for increasing the skills of the construction workforce, particularly where new technologies are involved.

### 6.3 A Healthy Halton

Improving housing conditions and reducing levels of fuel poverty can help to reduce excess winter deaths, levels of heart and respiratory disease and the number of hospital admissions due to Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD). It can also help to improve mental health.

### 6.4 A Safer Halton

The removal of category 1 hazards (under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System) within homes can help to reduce the risk of accidents and injuries within the home and increase home security.

### 6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Studies have shown that poor housing can have a detrimental impact on the sustainability of the wider community. Improving the energy efficiency of dwellings will help to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions and have a positive impact on climate change.

## 7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 While the Network aims to improve the awareness of front line staff from other services and organisations so that they are able to make direct referrals to appropriate agencies for assistance, there is a risk that it could also lead to an increase in demand for already over stretched Council services offered by the Environment and Welfare Rights teams and the Landlord Accreditation Officer.

## 8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The Network aims to help those most at risk of poor housing conditions and fuel poverty including older and disabled people as well as families with young children.