

**ANNUAL REPORT
SAFER HALTON POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2011 – MARCH 2012**



Cllr. Shaun
Osborne
Chairman

“Safety and people’s perception of being safe in all its forms remain a major issue in Halton. The Board has, and will continue to focus its energy on making Halton residents feel safe. I would like to offer my sincere thanks to Board members who have worked hard to this end.

The Board has had a very challenging programme of monitoring, scrutiny, and policy development, because ‘Safer Halton’ is a truly cross-cutting agenda. I believe it is making a considerable contribution to improving the way the Council and its partners work together to improve the quality of life in Halton.

I would like to thank everybody who has contributed to the work of the Board in 2011/12 and to Members who have given up their time to serve on Topic Groups. I want to offer particular thanks to Mr B Hodson from the Police Authority and Cllr Wallace and Cllr Ratcliffe for their help and support during the last 12 months.

Councillor Shaun Osborne
Chairman, Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2011/12 the Board comprised eleven Councillors – Councillors Osborne, Wallace, Plumpton Walsh, Fraser, Cole, Edge, J Gerrard, Lloyd Jones, M Ratcliffe, Shepherd and Thompson.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Community Safety, Domestic Abuse, Safeguarding Adults and the Safer Halton Partnership.

Topic Groups for 11/12:-

- Registered Social Landlords
- Bonfire Review

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met 5 times during the year.

The main initiatives of the Board’s work for 2011/12 are as follows: -

Community Safety

The Board continued its scrutiny and policy development role in this crucial area, and established a Bonfire Topic Group which was tasked to consider the possibility of subsidised bonfire events, one in Widnes and one in Runcorn. The Board also continued with the RSL Topic Group which The topic group was set up to examine the authority's approach to anti social behaviour and housing conditions in the private rented sector. The group scrutinised the legal remedies available to landlords and the local authority to deal with anti social behaviour; the powers available to the local authority to deal with poor housing and environmental conditions in the sector and the authority's Landlord Accreditation Scheme. The review included a visit to Wirral Borough Council to examine their approach to the issues. The topic group made a number of recommendations to the Board including piloting a co-ordinated, project management approach to problems in the sector in two areas of the Borough, holding an event for landlords and tenants in the areas, changing the Landlord Accreditation Scheme to a Property Accreditation Scheme and more widespread promotion of the scheme. The bonfire topic group is ongoing.

The Board contributed to the review of community safety, which was prompted by loss of Government funding for Community Safety Partnerships. The review considered future priorities and how best to structure the team to address these priorities, whilst adopting an approach that will put us in a robust position to meet new challenges, both with the arrival of the new Police and Crime Commissioner in 2012 and the changing legislative and funding framework.

From November 2012, Police Authorities will be replaced by a Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC). A new Police & Crime Panel (Panel) will also be established to scrutinise the activities of the PCC. The introduction of the PCC and Panel will also change the relationship with the Council and the Community Safety Partnerships and other partners involved in crime reduction, crime detection and the criminal justice system. What is proposed is the most radical reform in crime and community safety for many, many years.

Domestic Abuse

A multi-agency partnership, the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum (HDAF) was established, to increase the safety of victims and reduce repeat victimisation. The Portfolio Holder for community safety is an important member of this Forum. The HDAF Strategic group members have completed the Audit Commission's Self-Assessment on local area response to domestic abuse. The findings of this piece of work have overall been extremely positive and highlighted several areas of local good practice. Notably Halton's commitment and culture to support joint work, well-established and efficient partnership arrangements, priorities and strategies for development and improvement. The Board also received a report following the Halton Survivors of Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence Conference in support of 'The White Ribbon Campaign'. The conference was organised by the Halton Survivors Forum who have been supported by the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum as we have sought to strengthen the voice of the survivor in local service provision.

Safeguarding Vulnerable Adults

The Board endorsed a pilot project in Halton based on the 'Safe Around Town' scheme. The scheme's purpose is to provide a safe sanctuary for people with learning disabilities. Halton Speak Out has a lead role in the project and it is hoped that collaboration can also be achieved with other voluntary groups, community centres and employers. The Safeguarding Adults Board's priorities, structure, reporting arrangements, membership and work plan have been reviewed, taking into account the establishment of the Health and Well-Being Board in shadow form, and the need to look creatively at mechanisms for engaging as partner agencies and individuals at a time of reducing resources and major change. The revised work plan will demonstrate a greater focus on prevention, aim to strengthen links with Dignity and Domestic Abuse agendas, and examine Safeguarding provision in self-directed support and Personalisation.

WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2011/12

The following topics areas will continue into 2012/2013: -

- Bonfire Review

Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work, please contact Paul McWade (0151 471 7437) or email at paul.mcwade@halton.gov.uk.