

## SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 17 September 2013 at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Cllr Osborne (Chairman), N. Plumpton Walsh (Vice-Chairman), Gerrard, Gilligan, M Lloyd Jones, Nolan and Sinnott

Apologies for Absence: Councillors: Edge, V. Hill and Lea

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, L. Derbyshire, H. Moir, C. Patino, S. Semoff and E Sutton-Thompson

### ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

#### SAF10 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 June 2013 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

#### SAF11 CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENT

The Chairman of the Board reported that he had requested a response to his concerns regarding the incident on the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) and the child walking home from a nursery in Halton. He read out the responses as follows:-

#### **The Silver Jubilee Bridge Incident**

Cheshire Police have been contacted and they are trying to find out some more information, regarding how access was gained to the bridge. When I get a response I will circulate to Members of the Board.

In the meantime the Bridges Section have prepared the following comments:-

With reference to unauthorised access of the SJB

*Action*

structure i.e. climbing, we have a range of systems currently in place to deter this activity. We have installed locked gates at footway level and at a higher level on the arch. These are surrounded by anti-climb fencing to prevent anyone from bypassing them by climbing around. There are anti-climb devices on the steelwork at the approach to the bridge and also on the lower arch. There is also signage in place stating it is an offence to climb the bridge. However, if someone wanted to climb the bridge it offered almost unlimited possibilities due to the nature of its construction for an agile person.

### **NURSERY RESPONSE**

Windmill Hill Nursery is a private and voluntary setting. The role of HBC officers is to provide advice and support. It does not act as a regulatory body, this is the remit of Ofsted who check through inspection, the compliance of settings with the statutory requirements of the Early Years Foundation Stage Framework.

Following the incident Ofsted were carrying out investigations and the outcomes of any investigation or inspection would be made public in due course, via the Ofsted website.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the new bridge would commence next year and there would need to be a plan in place to prevent people from climbing the bridge during the construction phase and after it had been built;
- It was noted that the Chairman had arranged a meeting with various agencies to look at additional preventative measures being placed on the bridge; and
- It was noted that the Council only had an advisory capacity in respect of private nurseries.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

#### SAF12 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

The Board was advised that no public questions had been received.

#### SAF13 SSP MINUTES

The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 15 May 2013 were presented to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF14 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS QUARTER 1, 2013-14

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Policy and Resources, which introduced, through the submission of a structured thematic performance report, the progress of key performance indicators, milestones and targets relating to safety in Quarter 1 of 2013-14. This included a description of factors which were affecting the service.

RESOLVED: that the report be noted.

SAF15 DRAFT HATE CRIME AND HARASSMENT REDUCTION STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which presented Members with the draft Hate Crime and Harassment Reduction Strategy and Action Plan as part of a wider consultation process.

The Board was advised that the Strategy and Action Plan has now been reviewed and updated, following the launch of the Government's plan to tackle Hate Crime "Challenge It, Report It, Stop It: The Government's Plan to Tackle Hate Crime" March 2012. This document followed the "Hidden in Plain Sight Inquiry into Disability-Related Harassment" and the later "Out in the Open Tackling Disability related harassment – A manifesto for change", both published by the Equality and Human Rights Commission.

The Board was further advised that Cheshire Constabulary had responded to the Government's Plan to tackle hate crime by updating their Hate Crime Action Plan. Work had taken place in conjunction with Cheshire Constabulary and the Council's Action Plan had been aligned with theirs. The attached Action Plan was based on the Criminal Justice Board's Plan.

It was reported that the revised Strategy and Action Plan continued to promote effective and co-ordinated action against hate crime. Work continued with the Safer Halton

Partners, including the Police, voluntary sector support groups and the Council to gain a better understanding of reported incidents within Halton. Consideration was also being given to how better support could be given to victims by developing confidence in the criminal justice system to bring perpetrators to justice, more alliance of services and reporting mechanisms and more importantly preventing hate crime from occurring in the first place.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the Anti-Bullying Policy was available for any schools to adopt, It was also noted that the Anti-Bullying Launch would take place on 15 November 2013;
- It was noted that a Hate Crime Scrutiny Panel had been established; and
- It was noted that Halton's ethnicity was growing rapidly and the strategy would help the Authority to deal with any issues

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board endorse the Draft Strategy and Action Plan, before its submission to the Strategic Partnership Board and Executive Board for approval; and
- (2) the comments raised be noted.

#### SAF16 SAFEGUARDING ADULTS UPDATE

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' (i.e. adults at risk of abuse) in Halton.

The Board was advised that the Integrated Adult Safeguarding Unit was now fully operational and funded jointly with the CCG. The Unit operated with a multidisciplinary team, including: Social Workers, Positive Behavioural Analyst, GP, Registered Nurse and Pharmacy Technician. The integrated approach ensured that the unit had the right mix of skills and knowledge to enable them to lead on the investigation of complex safeguarding investigations across Health and Social Care.

The Board was further advised that events at Winterbourne had highlighted the particular vulnerability of people with learning disabilities/Autistic Spectrum Disorder who challenged services. There was now a strong and growing evidence base for the effectiveness of behaviour analytic approaches and these had been shown to significantly reduce the frequency, intensity and duration of challenging behaviour. Having a Positive Behaviour Analyst within the Unit also helped to focus exclusively upon that group of people who are funded (in part or fully) by the NHS and who exhibited behaviour that challenged services.

The Board noted the various activities that had taken place that were set out in paragraphs 3.3 to 3.9 of the report.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- Concern was raised that Members had agreed to undertake visits to care homes and Members had been CRB checked but visits were not being undertaken. In addition, it was reported that the Quality Assurance Manager post was vacant and clarity was sought on whether the vacancy would have a negative impact on the service. In response, it was reported that visits to care homes was part of the Quality Assurance Team and information would be circulated to Members on why the visits were not taking place. It was also reported that recruitment would take place to fill the Quality Assurance Manager post in the near future.
- Clarity was sought on which PPB was responsible for monitoring deaths in homes. In response, it was reported that it was a complex issue and clarity would be sought.

RESOLVED: That the reports and comments raised be noted.

## SAF17 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 in response to domestic abuse and sexual violence.

The Board was advised that the Home Office definition of domestic abuse had been amended from March 2013 with two important changes: firstly, the inclusion of and the

recognition of 16 and 17-year-olds as victims of domestic abuse and; secondly, spelling out controlling and coercive behaviour in the definition strengthened the message that all domestic violence was abuse but not all domestic abuse was violence. Many victims were constantly being controlled by their partners but may not realise the implications on their safety and safety of their children.

The Board was further advised that a locally delivered perpetrator programme was currently under development. Initial discussions with Halton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and a locally commissioned provider had all been well received; funding was in place to deliver a one 26 week programme for 8 male perpetrators. The programme would be initially delivered as a pilot. However, it was reported that if it was successful the CCG had agreed to assist in determining a sustainable pathway. It was highlighted that the service would only be available to adult male perpetrators as some of the content would be delivered in a group setting.

Furthermore, it was reported that the Children and Enterprise Directorate were currently commissioning a service for children and young people affected by domestic violence, based on an analysis of need in Halton. The Board noted the activities the service would provide.

It was also reported that following the amendment of the definition of domestic violence to include 16 and 17 years old young people, the Government had funded Co-Ordinated Action Against Domestic Abuse (CAADA) to support local authorities to train a Young Persons Independent Domestic Violence Advocate (YIDVA), and to develop performance reporting systems to help each area to identify their local issues. The YIDVA for Halton had recently started and would be attending training by September 2013.

In conclusion, it was reported that the Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre (RASASC) had published a review of the service (Cheshire and Merseyside) - Supporting Survivors: The value.

The report summarised the hard and soft findings of the review and the importance of the service in the current environment - an environment that was financially challenging but where demand was increasing. The profile of sexual violence had increased on the political, health and criminal justice agenda, but better funding was required to enable RASASC to support and counsel more survivors through the legal system and beyond, and to launch vital

prevention schemes.

The following comments arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the UK Children and Families Minister MP Edward Timpson had stated that a new law placing a legal duty on social workers, doctors and teachers to report child abuse would not have saved Daniel Pelka, and that mandatory reporting was not the answer to providing better protection for children against physical and emotional abuse and neglect;
- The Board agreed that lessons should be learned from the Victoria Climbé and Daniel Pelka incidents and agencies should be sharing information;
- It was agreed that the case histories enabled Members to have a greater understanding of the issue;
- It was noted that Halton Borough Council had very good reporting structures in place and good working relationships. However, concern was raised regarding the future with the budgetary situation and staff losses;
- The Board noted that a lot of good work was taking place in the Borough to address domestic and sexual violence. It was also reported that the Police and Crime Commissioner was keen on dealing with this issue, particularly the malicious use of Police time; and
- The Board congratulated Officers on the work they had undertaken and the content of the report. It was also agreed that the Board receive regular update reports.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

#### SAF18 BONFIRE REMOVAL INITIATIVE

The Board received a verbal update from on the proposed operation of the 2013 Bonfire Removal Initiative.

The Board was advised that each year, the Safer Halton Partnership delivered a 'Bonfire Removal Initiative'

which set out to improve community safety by removing unauthorised and uncontrolled bonfires before they were ignited. The Initiative, which had been successfully operating in Halton since 1999, covered 'Mischief Night' and not only resulted in the physical removal of unauthorised bonfire material and debris, but also included preventative measures being put into place in known 'hot spot' areas and education and community safety messages being delivered across the Borough.

The Board was further advised that most of the initiatives would remain the same as last year. The fencing had been very well received by everyone last year, and it had resulted in significantly reducing the number of waste ground that needed to be cleaned up. Therefore, the fencing would be put into place again this year.

It was reported that discussions had taken place with housing partners, the Police and Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service and funding had been jointly established to deal with issues around Mischief Night and Bonfire Night.

Furthermore, it was reported that the event may be policed differently but all the activities would be the same as last year.

It was noted that only five housing associations had contributed to the cost because they were the only ones that had land that may be used for a bonfire;

It was noted that the Board would receive a full debriefing report after the event had taken place;

The Chairman reported that the Area Forums had previously contributed to the cost of the bonfire event and mischief night, but that funding had now ceased. He asked Members to support a funding application to all the Area Forums to contribute a small amount of money, whatever they felt was appropriate, to the initiative. He highlighted that the initiative benefitted the community and helped prevent serious incidents in the Borough from burns etc. He added, that if the initiative ceased young people in the Borough would be at risk and there would be an increase in litter, rogue fires and fly tipping. In reply, a Member commented that a strong case should also be put forward for it to be provided from mainstream funding in order to retain its sustainability.

It was reported that the Bonfire event and the Vintage Rally event provided Halton with a unique opportunity to



secure a sponsor and this would offset the cost of the events. In addition, sponsorship was a way forward for events that are held in the future.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report and comments raised be noted.

SAF19 DRAFT NIGHT TIME ECONOMY SCRUTINY REVIEW REPORT & RECOMMENDATIONS

The Chairman vacated the Chair to allow the Vice Chairman to present the findings of the Topic Group

Councillor N Plumpton Walsh  
Vice Chairman of the Board  
(in the chair)

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which presented Members with the draft Scrutiny Review of the Night Time Economy Report and recommendations.

The Board was advised that the report, attached as Appendix 1, had been commissioned by the Board. A scrutiny review working group had been established with seven Members from the Board, the Operational Director, the Community Safety Manager, the Commissioning Manager and Principal Policy Officer.

The Board was further advised that the report had been commissioned because the night time economy brought many positive benefits to the Borough, from job creation, spending in the local economy and provision of a diverse range of activities for local people, including restaurants, arts centre, ice rink, cinemas, etc. However, to continue the development of the thriving night time economy, it was important that it was accessible, safe, clean, well-managed and offered a range of activities to suit residents across a wide age range and attract visitors to the Borough.

The Board noted the recommendations set out in paragraph 5 of the report.

The Vice Chairman reported that it had been a good review and thanked all the Officers and Members who had taken part for their excellent work. He reported that due to budgetary restraints he would highlight the key priorities within the recommendations in the report and sought agreement for the report's recommendations, with the

priorities highlighted to be presented to the Executive Board for approval.

The following priorities were highlighted and agreed by Members:-

- 1 Area Forums be consulted regarding the possibility of funding a pilot radio scheme for taxi operators in Halton;
- 2 Whilst Members recognised that it cannot be an enforceable condition through licensing, Members were keen for establishments to be encouraged to participate in the Pub Watch Scheme, which was recognised as best practice;
- 3 Investigate the possibility of developing a mandatory Code of Conduct for licensed premises;
- 4 Look to introduce an alcohol free bar in Halton;
- 5 The NTE Scrutiny Group recognised that we needed to build on the existing partnership approach, but we also needed to investigate potential ways to get local landlords and businesses on board to bring about change. A possible example was for landlords who were often best placed to identify vulnerable people who regularly drank to excess working with health care teams to help signpost individuals to services where appropriate;
- 6 Look to extend the wrist band scheme (used to identify over 18's, following age checks) at the Stadium to other establishments;
- 7 The Council was currently exploring the opportunity of a scheme to enforce Fixed Penalty Notices. As yet no decision had been made;
- 8 Investigate the possibility of working with food establishments in town centres and colour coding packaging from each business establishment, so that we could identify where the litter is from;
- 9 Investigate options to provide additional CCTV monitoring capability at peak times, possibly by using police officers on restricted duties. Other options may be possible but required further

consideration due to Data Protection and cost issues.

Councillor S Osborne  
Chairman of the Board  
(In the Chair)

The Chairman congratulated everyone who had taken part in the review and indicated how important it was as it had an effect on waste, waste enforcement, domestic violence and alcohol abuse.

The Board supported all the recommendations in the report and the priorities highlighted above and recommended that they be presented to the Executive Board for approval.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted:
- (2) Members and Officers be congratulated on the excellent work they have undertaken on the review;
- (3) the Board endorse the recommendations in the report, including the priorities listed in 1 – 9 above; and
- (4) the report recommendations be presented to the Executive Board for approval, with the recommendations listed in 1-9 above be given priority for approval.

*Meeting ended at 7.37 p.m.*