

SAFER POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD

*At a meeting of the Safer Policy and Performance Board on Tuesday, 20 January 2015
at the Council Chamber, Runcorn Town Hall*

Present: Councillors Thompson (Chairman), Edge, Gerrard, V. Hill,
M. Lloyd Jones, Ratcliffe, Sinnott and Zygadllo

Apologies for Absence: Councillors Lea, Gilligan and Nolan

Absence declared on Council business: None

Officers present: M. Andrews, E. Anwar, N. Chase-Caffyn, L. Derbyshire,
N. Hallmark, C. Patino and J. Williams

Also in attendance: Mr M Shone (Cheshire Fire and Rescue Services),
Councillor P Lloyd-Jones and in accordance with Standing Order 33, Councillor
D Cargill, Portfolio Holder, Community Safety.

ITEM DEALT WITH UNDER DUTIES EXERCISABLE BY THE BOARD

SAF32 CHAIRMANS ANNOUNCEMENT

Action

It was reported that a New Partnership Inspector had been appointed Paul Hughes and it was hoped that he could attend this evening, but due to an incident was unable to do so. It was also reported that he would attend the next meeting of the Board.

Councillor P Lloyd-Jones in his role as substitute for the Police and Crime Panel gave the Board an update on the last meeting of the Panel.

The Chairman invited Members of the Board to a walk about to observe the night time economy. It was reported that four/five members would undertake a visit around Runcorn at 12/1.00 am in order to observe the night time economy. The following Councillors were nominated: Thompson, Edge, Ratcliffe and Zygadllo.

The Chairman reported that the Leader had indicated that Members from the Board could be nominated as substitutes to attend the Informal Police Meetings when the

Chair and Vice Chair were not available. The following Councillors were nominated as substitutes:- Ratcliffe, Sinnott and Zygadlo.

The Board took the opportunity to congratulate Mike Andrews on his recent promotion which he would undertake two days a week.

The Chairman reminded Members of the Board and Officers that the next meeting would be held at Halton Stadium.

RESOLVED: That the verbal report be noted.

SAF33 MINUTES

The Minutes of the meeting held on 11 November 2014 were taken as read and signed as a correct record.

SAF34 PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

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

SAF35 SSP MINUTES

The minutes from the last Safer Halton Partnership (SHP) meeting held on 15 September 2014 were presented to the Board for information.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be noted.

(Note: Councillor Edge declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as she has undertaken work for the Fire and Rescue Service).

SAF36 CHESHIRE FIRE AND RESCUE SERVICE SAFETY EDUCATION CENTRE

The Board received a presentation from Mr Mark Shone, Safety Centre Manager, Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service on the development of a new Safety Education Centre.

The Board was advised that Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service had been successful in securing a grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government. The grant would contribute to the establishment of a Safety Education Centre.

The Board was further advised that the Centre would have a purpose-built facility dedicated to public safety. Visitors would learn how to stay safe, well and independent by experiencing a range of hazards in four realistic learning zones that simulated the environments in which injury and harm were most likely to occur.

The presentation gave Members information on:-

- The Safety Centre Movement;
- The progress and rationale of the project in Cheshire;
- The Programme Design;
- The Centre Design; and
- How the focus was on collaboration.

The Board noted the significant number of red and amber indicators for Halton in respect of the Public Health England Health Profiles 2014. The Board agreed that the centre would be an excellent facility but also felt that it would have been more advantageous for it to have been located closer to Halton. It was also agreed that an update report be presented to a future meeting of the Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation be received and comments raised noted; and
- (2) Mr Mark Shone be thanked for his informative presentation.

SAF37 PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORT 2014-15 - QUARTER 2

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities which outlined the progress of key performance indicators, milestones and targets relating to Safer in Quarter 2 of 2014-15. Appendix 1 to the report contained a progress update regarding the implementation of all Directorate high-risk mitigation measures that were relevant to the remit of the Board

Further information was sought on permits – the preliminary work for implementing a Permit Scheme for street works. It was reported that information on this would circulated to all Members of the Board.

RESOLVED: That that the report and comment raised be noted.

SAF38 SPECIALIST COMMUNITY SUBSTANCE MISUSE SERVICES REMODELLING

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which provided the Members with an update on plans for the remodelling of the Halton Specialist Community Substance Misuse Service.

The Board was advised that Halton Borough Council commission substance misuse services (drug and/or alcohol), which support local people who had substance misuse problems. The contract that delivered across the Halton area by Crime Reduction Initiatives (CRI) would be remodelled throughout 2015 establishing two new venues, and continuing to develop community venues and outreach with partners.

The Board was further advised that a key part of that programme would be to focus on public health information and prevention agenda to reduce the number of individuals taking drugs and misusing alcohol and ensuring robust and accessible information was provided to the residents of Halton. It was reported that there were appropriately 650 people accessing Halton's Drug and Alcohol service at any one time, with some 7,500 people in Halton who had taken illicit drugs in the last 12 months. CRI had delivered services to Halton residents since February 2012, performance had increased during their contract period and Halton continued to improve the performance against national targets.

It was reported that the lease at Ashley House was due to end in March 2015. Due to the unique nature of the building, alongside an increase in maintenance costs, it had been prudent to review usage and explore other local options. Therefore, Halton's Runcorn service would be opened in January/February 2015 followed in March 2015 with the relocation to Aston Dane House, Widnes. All partners would be relocating to continue the effective joint working. The move would provide an opportunity to redesign the substance misuse service and to build upon the recovery model established across Halton. The establishments would also be used to support the development of service user led enterprises, which in turn would promote independence and service user resilience.

Furthermore, it was reported that the lease would be the responsibility of the provider. Any future procurement/contract award from the Local Authority for

Specialist Community Substance Misuse Services would tie the transfer of the lease to the incoming provider to maximise investment and maintain service continuity.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

SAF39 NOVEL/NEW PSYCHOACTIVE SUBSTANCES (NPS)-
'LEGAL HIGHS'

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which provided Members with an overview of Novel/New Psychoactive Substances (NPS) also known as 'Legal Highs'.

The Board was advised that overall drug use had reduced in the UK. However, a significant recent development had been an increase in the range of new and easily available novel psychoactive substances (NPS), also known as "legal highs". These chemical substances were newly created, and hence, were not automatically controlled under legislation.

The Board was further advised that these drugs had been designed to evade drug laws, were widely available and had the potential to pose serious risks to public health and safety and could even be fatal. The emergence of NPS and the pace at which they had developed was a concern to policymakers, law enforcement personnel and healthcare professionals locally, nationally and across Europe and beyond.

It was reported that in the UK NPS could be purchased on the internet, via dealers on the streets and in clubs and pubs, and in shops. Test purchasing had found that NPS could contain legal substances, illegal substances, or a mixture of both. It was also reported that the number of NPS available was constantly changing and growing. A record number of 81 substances had been identified for the first time in Europe in 2013 - an increase on previous years.

Furthermore, it was reported that the marketing and sale of NPS was often designed specifically to avoid legislation under the Medicines Act 1968. They were often sold in brightly coloured packaging under a variety of brand names with "not for human consumption" clearly stated. They may variously be described as "plant food", "fish food", "room odouriser" or other terms with labelling commonly stating that they were "research chemicals". Generally safety data was not provided.

Across the UK, the number of people seeking treatment for NPS use had increased significantly. In Halton local treatment data suggested that the reported use of NPS was low, although these figures only reflected those who had presented for treatment or support not actual community prevalence.

Nationally the number of deaths involving NPS was low compared with the number of deaths from heroin/morphine, methadone and cocaine poisoning. However, over the past few years there had been an increasing trend in the number of deaths linked to NPS use. Such deaths across the UK increased from 29 in 2011 to 52 in 2012, to 60 in 2013. It was also reported that the link to the BBC website regarding information on legal highs being banned in Lincolnshire would be circulated to all Members of the Board.

The Board noted the significant dangers to people using legal highs and that the number of people who had died had doubled during the last few years. The Board acknowledged that it was an emerging issue and noted the difficulties and challenges they presented as they were classed as 'legal' and therefore the Police were unable to address the situation. The Board also noted that Northern Ireland had banned the use of legal highs.

After considerable discussion, the Board agreed to set up a Working Group to look at what Halton could do to raise awareness of the dangers of legal highs and what practical approaches could be used to discourage the use of these substances. The Board also supported the recommendations for a local response to NPS.

The Board requested that the report be circulated to all Members of the Council to raise awareness of the issues relating to legal highs. It was also suggested that Halton's MP be contacted so that the issue could be raised in Parliament, with a view to legislation being formulated to illegalise such substances.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report and comments raised be noted; and
- (2) a Working Group be established and the following Councillors be nominated onto the Group:- Councillors Thompson (Chair), M Lloyd Jones, Ratcliffe and Zygadlo.

(Note: Councillor Zygaddlo declared a Disclosable Other Interest in the following item of business as he was a member of the Working Group).

SAF40 HALTON SUICIDE PREVENTION STRATEGY 2015-20

The Board considered a report of the Director of Public Health, which presented the final draft of the Halton Suicide Prevention Strategy 2015-20.

The Board noted the impact that suicide had on families and took the opportunity to place on record their support for the Strategy.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the Strategy recommendations and actions be supported.

SAF41 CHESHIRE CONSTABULARY PCSO BLUE LAMP REPORT

The Board received a verbal update report on the work of the Halton based Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs).

The Board was advised that PCSOs had been introduced under the Policing Reform Act of 2002 to increase the police presence on the streets, provide reassurance to the public and free up the time of regular police officers. Now fundamentally embedded within neighbourhood teams, the focus of PCSOs had been on engagement rather than enforcement.

The Board was further advised that PCSOs in Cheshire work at the heart of Neighbourhood Policing Teams, providing a visible and reassuring presence on the streets, working with the community to help tackle the menace of anti-social behaviour. It was reported that PCSOs roles differed according to the needs of the local community, but they usually patrolled a beat and interacted with the public, while also offering assistance to police officers at crime scenes and major events.

It was reported that the Blue Lamp reports would be circulated to Members of the Board and that any comments could be sent to Mike Andrews directly.

RESOLVED: That the verbal update be noted.

SAF42 CONTINUATION OF SAFE IN TOWN SCHEME

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Communities, which updated Members on the ongoing work to ensure the scheme's sustainability.

The Board was advised that it had been agreed to run a six month pilot scheme called Safe in Town. This had been based on similar schemes operating in other parts of the country, and was to provide a safe haven for people who may feel vulnerable for whatever reason.

The Board was also advised that when an individual entered a shop which had the Safe in Town sticker in the window, and declared themselves part of the scheme by showing a laminated card, staff members would phone a dedicated number on their behalf, and a family member or carer would come out and collect them. The Halton scheme had widened the range of beneficiaries and included adults and young people (14+) who had a learning or physical disability, and anyone over 60 years of age.

It was reported that the initial pilot had been overseen by a Steering Group consisting of a variety of interested Partners. Following the achievements of the pilot, successful funding applications were made to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and Halton's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) for a total match funding pot of £10,000. This was due to finish on the 31st March 2015. This had enabled 10 hours of staff time to be dedicated to the project, along with an allocation for branded merchandise.

Furthermore, it was reported that the scheme had now been in place since September 2012, and the report gave a breakdown of beneficiaries and premises that had signed up to the project as of the end of November 2014. It was anticipated that by the end of the current funding (March 2015) the numbers would have increased, with targeted activity to sign up more local shops, non-commercial premises and in particularly health centres and GP surgeries.

The Board noted the financial costs set out in the report and that the Steering Group had anticipated that the continuation of the project would remain approximately the same, with perhaps a small reduction related to sundaries

and promotional material. The Board also noted that currently there were no financial costs and/or implications for the Council except a small amount of staff time from the Partnership Officer. Previously costs for the pilot had been met by Halton Strategic Partnership funds.

The Board noted the positive comments in relation to the project. The Board also noted that there had been a more positive response in Runcorn than Widnes and that the next phase of the scheme would address this issue.

The Board discussed the next phase of the scheme and it was suggested and agreed that Council buildings should be an integral part of the scheme. The Board also took the opportunity to place on record their support for the scheme.

RESOLVED: That the report and comments raised be noted.

Meeting ended at 8.10 p.m.