

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 10 September 2008 at the Halton Suite, Halton Stadium

Present:

Board Members:	Councillor Rob Polhill Nick Atkin Debbie Dalby Beth Edwards Gary Finchett Pat Grunwell Fiona Johnstone Gerald Meehan Kevin Mothersdale John Redmond John Rowlands Dianne Sproson Councillor John Swain Councillor Marie Wright	Chair Halton Housing Trust Halton Voluntary Action Community Empowerment Network Cheshire Police Halton College PCT Children and Young People Learning and Skills Council Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service Halton High School Greater Merseyside Connexions Service
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Advisors to the Boards

David Parr Rob MacKenzie Shelah Semoff Helen Murphy Nick Mannion Lynn Derbyshire	Chief Executive Policy and Performance Unit HBC HSPB Team HSPB Team Neighbourhood Management Committee Administrator
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In Attendance: Colin Billingsley (Job Centre Plus), Jane McCusker (Government Office North West), Jim Wilson (Halton & St Helens PCT) and Peter Forrester (Audit Commission).

15 APOLOGIES

Apologies had been received from Mike Fry, Jo Lappin, Mark Wilson, Rebecca Burke-Sharples, Terry Parle and Chris Koral.

16 MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 21st May 2008 having been printed and circulated were agreed as a correct record.

In relation to Minute Number 6, Page 4 on the agenda, Local Area Agreement Process it was reported that they had been signed of now and congratulations to everyone who had been involved. Preliminary discussions had also taken place regarding the LAA's and a matrix would be circulated shortly outlining the timetable.

17 COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT

The Board received a presentation from Peter Forrester, Audit Commission regarding the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) which:-

- Explained the CAA and the key differences from existing assessments;
- Outlined the November 2007 proposals and the current proposals and how they would align with other performance frameworks;
- Set out how the CAA would be carried out and that they would be based around three questions:-
 1. How do local priorities express community needs?
 2. How well are outcomes and improvements needed to be delivered; and
 3. What are prospects for future improvements?
- Explained the green (innovation and excellent practice) and red flag (areas for improvements, significant concerns) system and that there would be an overall score;
- Highlighted that the organisational assessments for Councils and fire and rescue authorities will cover three areas, finance, governance and managing resources. Managing performance and use of resources would be scored 1 – 4 (1= poor and 4 = excellent);
- Outlined that CAA would be reported via the website to enable the community to look at what was happening in their areas. An example of what an Area Assessment would look like on the website, including details on red and green flags was given;
- Explained that there were ten sites currently trialling the process; and
- Outlined the timeline as follows:-
 1. the consultation period ends on 20th October 2008;
 2. October/November the consultation responses and learning from the trialling sites would be analysed;

3. early 2009 the final CAA framework will be published;
4. February 2009 – the final council CPA results will be published; and
5. November 2009 – Publish the first CAA results.

The following arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that the criteria for the flag system had as yet to be determined. There would be no amber flag as such, but this could be considered to be the dialogue between the audit commission and the council during the process;
- Concerns were raised that the flag system could be interpreted as league tables by the media. It was reported that there would be a press strategy in place to deal with this issue. It was highlighted that the audit commission were keen to avoid the issue of league tabling and the strategy would aim to manage this issue;
- It was noted that the use of Short Notice Inspections could be considered more widely;
- It was noted that the assessments would be compared nationally and with other similar authorities and a judgement would be taken within a local context;
- It was noted that there needed to be a close dialogue between the Audit Commission and Government Office in respect of the assessment. If there was a difference of interpretation, there would be discussions between Government Office and the Commission. However, it was also noted that a close dialogue between the two currently existed in this area; and
- It was noted that the assessments would focus on better outcomes for local people. The process and implications of the flag system was also noted. Managing resources and performance was also be part of the assessment process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the presentation and comments made be noted;
- (2) Mr Forrester be thanked for his informative presentation.

18 AMBITION 4 HEALTH

The Board received a presentation from Fiona Johnstone, Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust concerning Ambition for Health which:-

- Outlined the aims for the Ambition for Health strategy and explained the six key themes:-

How to make a difference in;

1. supporting a healthy start in life;
2. managing long term conditions effectively;
3. preventing avoidable ill health;
4. meeting the needs of vulnerable people;
5. strengthen local communities; and
6. improving access to services and facilities;

- outlined the ambitions in respect of the six key themes above;
- set out the strategic plan initiatives in respect of the six priority areas, alcohol, obesity, early detection (diabetes, reporting heart disease, cancer), early detection (depression), preventative tobacco control and safety, quality and efficient services planned and urgent care;
- set out what would be delivered in the next five years in respect of the six priorities above; and
- outlined the next steps as follows:-
 1. Development of detailed plans – finalised 10th October 2008;
 2. Consider the role of the Board in respect of designing solutions and delivery against outcomes;
 3. the final Ambition 4 Health Commissioning Plan would be published in January 2009; and
 4. Propose an assurance of progress against the Plan is provided through the Health SSP.

The following arose from the discussion:-

- It was noted that proxy indicators would be built into the plan year on year to monitor outcomes;
- It was noted that the communications group would be looking at the possibility of organising training in respect of alcohol and this would help promote greater awareness in the community;
- The link between mental health and worklessness and the role of the Board regarding this issue was noted;
- The importance of feeding back the outcomes and effectiveness of the plan to the community was noted;

- The issues relating to the lack of dentist provision in the area and the obstacles keeping health high on the communities agenda was noted; and
- The support mechanisms that had been put in place to enable the Voluntary Sector Organisations to involvement of the delivery of the Commissioning services was noted.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The presentation and comments made be noted: and
- (2) Fiona Johnstone be thanked for her informative presentation.

19 NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

The Board considered a report on the progress in respect of developing Neighbourhood Management in Halton.

The Board was advised of the key developments that had taken place over the past quarter. An awayday had been held at Norton Priory on 8th July 2008 which had been well attended. The main focus of the day was to scrutinise in detail the recommendations contained in the Winchurch report relating to the future development of the partnership, to discuss partnership development priorities between now and the end of external funding in 2010. Participants also considered how best to maintain the ongoing development of neighbourhood management in Halton after 2010.

The Board was further advised that the following key areas of work had been identified for the partnership over the coming months:-

- A review of the partnership's neighbourhood management 'vision';
- To track success with 'closing the gap' regard to key indicators between the neighbourhood management areas in Halton;
- To build the value for money/business case for sustaining neighbourhood management beyond 2010; and
- To reach a consensus about if, when and how to roll out neighbourhood management after 2010 beyond the current pilot areas.

The Board noted the importance of Neighbourhood Management and the difference it has made to the community. However, it was also recognised that during the next few months evidence would need to be collated on how effective it had been.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) a value for money/business case is developed for sustaining Neighbourhood Management beyond 2010;
- (2) the partnership's SSP's are urged to work with neighbourhood management on 'closing the gap' issues and where appropriate, agree neighbourhood level objectives etc; and
- (3) consideration be given to including more gap targets in the Community Strategy at the time it is next reviewed.

20 MID TERM REVIEW OF THE SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY / VISION 2025

The Board considered a report which proposed a mid term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy to ensure that the vision for Halton in 2025 was set out and to update the targets in the light of changes to the national performance framework.

The Board was advised that the Community Strategy required updating to be more explicit about the long-term vision and to bring some of the indicators and targets in line with the new framework. The revised strategy needed to be based on up to date local intelligence and consultation in order to maintain our approach to sustainability. It would also link to or embrace other strategies for housing and homelessness,

The Board was further advised that there were a number of reasons for conducting a mid-term review of the plan and it would be helpful to complete this at the same time that the refreshed LAA was finalised so that there was a single, clear planning and performance framework. The next step would be to establish a timetable.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the principle of a mid term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy be approved;
- (2) the next steps as set out in section five to the report be agreed; and
- (3) a project report and a more detailed project plan be presented to the next meeting of the Board.

21 EQUALITIES AND COMMUNITY COHESION

The Board considered a report which highlighted progress on a range of issues surrounding equalities and community cohesion.

The Board was advised that since January 2008 the group had met three times and attached to the report was the groups terms of reference. Considerable progress had been made during the first six months including:-

- Completion of a baseline information exercise mapping issues of commonality across partner organisations;
- Agreement of priorities following the baseline exercise. These were described in the report;
- A meeting with the Housing Partnership Board to explore equality and community cohesion issues and agreed further work with the North West Housing Federation Group;
- Contact with Government Office North West (GONW) to prepare a community cohesion planning and tension monitoring strategy. A meeting had been arranged for next week; and
- Assist and support Halton Borough Council with their aim to achieve Level 3 of the National Equality Standard.

The Board was further advised that the group had considered a range of issues surrounding migrants and it was felt that further work would need to be undertaken as follows to:-

- Provide clearer data on the number of migrants living in the Borough for both short and long term stays;
- Work with private sector landlords and the Council tax team in an attempt to support the above;
- In line with the communities and Local Government Department Guidance, develop a strategy for community cohesion, contingency planning and tension monitoring;
- Develop a welcome pack for migrants;
- Prepare strategies to assist the LSP with issues surrounding migrants; and
- Work with educational organisations who are assisting migrants with their learning.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) The report be noted; and
- (2) the LSP Equalities and Community Cohesion Group should co-ordinate issues surrounding migrants on behalf of partner organisations.

22 COMMUNICATIONS UPDATE

The Board considered a report regarding communications activities to date, in particular the recent formation of the partnership communications group.

Helen Murphy introduced herself as the new communications officer within the team. The Board was advised that since Helen had commenced in the post she had re-established the e- newsletter and updated the partnership website.

The Board was further advised that the Community Radio was now operational and there was an opportunity for everyone to advertise, be interviewed and relay key messages.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

23 WORKING NEIGHBOURHOOD FUND: FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Board considered a report which provided Members with a summary of financial spend for the first quarter of Working Neighbourhood Fund, April 2008 – June 2008.

The Board was advised that there was still some concern regarding how SSP's were revising their allocations, and members were asked to remember that any changes to agreed allocations must be approved by relevant Chair and David Parr in his capacity as Chief Executive of the accountable body.

The Board was further advised that the lack of completed paperwork had also made the quarterly return process rather complicated with the central team not in possession of all contact details for relevant project managers.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the financial summary set out in the report as being a true and accurate statement be noted; and
- (2) the Board, especially SSP chairs note the concern regarding outstanding paperwork and low spend in the first quarter, and ensure approval to revised allocations is agreed by those required.

24 WNF COMMISSIONING AND LAA PROCESSES

The Board considered a report which provided an update for the Board on the Working Neighbourhoods Fund Commissioning Pot and work being undertaken for monitoring the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The Board was advised that a meeting with individual SSP Chairs would be arranged in the near future regarding the LAA processes.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report and the support future working be noted.

25 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

The Communications Officer reported that she had not received any responses to an email concerning the Annual Conference Awards. The Board Members were encouraged to nominate a winner and runner up for these awards as soon as possible.

Meeting ended at 11.50 a.m.