

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning Skills and Community PPB
DATE:	20 November 2023
REPORTING OFFICER:	Corporate Director, Chief Executive's Delivery Unit
PORTFOLIO:	Leader
SUBJECT:	The Corporate Plan - The Big Conversation Update
WARD(S)	Borough Wide

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To share with Employment, Learning Skills and Community PPB an update on 'The Big Conversation', which is integral to formulating a new Council Corporate Plan, to take effect from April 2024.

2.0 **RECOMMENDED: That**

- 1) the report be noted; and
- 2) that **Employment, Learning Skills and Community PPB continues to endorse the approach to facilitate 'The Big Conversation'**.

3.0 **Supporting Information**

3.1 Background

The Big Conversation is about engaging with the public so that they understand the challenges that the Council is facing.

It is an approach between the Council and those who live or work in Halton to work together in order to create an improved borough in all aspects of everyday life.

A Stakeholder Analysis together with a Communications Plan was developed in order to generate and establish as many opportunities as possible to involve all our stakeholders in many different and varied ways.

The Big Conversation consultation is open until November 30th 2023.

3.2 Breakdown of responses by source, as of October 4th 2023:

Total Number of responses: 777

No reply	41
Inside Halton	37
HBC Staff	220
Councillors	-
Comms Flyer	9
Comms Poster	-
Comms Desktop	-
Comms Outdoor	-
Comms Partner	-
Comms Short URL	5
Comms Media	43
Comms Banner	-
Comms School	-
Comms Staff Poster	-
Comms Bin Wagon	-
Comms Meta Advert	197
Comms Organic Facebook	94
Comms Organic X	9
Comms Organic Threads	1
Comms Organic LinkedIn	4
Comms Chamber Newsletter	-
Comms Business Improvement Growth	-
Comms Carers Centre	116
Comms Adult Social Care	-
Comms TUC	1
TOTAL NUMBER OF RESPONSES	777

Promotion, Consultation & Engagement:

3.3

3.3.1

Consultation opportunity has been targeted to the following places / groups as detailed below. The number indicates the potential responses available;

- Social Media Impressions: 234,487 (times the survey was delivered to feeds on Facebook, Instagram, Messenger, Threads, LinkedIn and X)
- 1st Tuesday Business Event: 60

- Active Ageing Get Together Forum: 115
- Grangeway Community Centre: 30
- Dementia Group: 15
- Halton Patient Participation Group: 24
- Heads of Primary Schools: 60
- Runcorn Shopping city (specific) Adults: 44, Under 16`s: 6
- Widnes Market (specific) Adults: 30, Under 16`s: 10
- School Circular: 100 staff (serving 18,388 pupils)
- HBC Employees: 3000

Note that it's difficult to put an exact figure on the actual footfall for Runcorn Shopping Centre and Widnes Market, but based on estimated weekly footfall a conservative best guess would be:
 Runcorn Shopping Centre: 500 – 1,000
 Widnes Market: 500 – 1,000

Specific Forums and Venues attended / Scheduled to attend:

3.3.2

- **HBC Workforce**
 Email to HBC Workforce: July 28th

 Stephen Young Video message: September 5th
- **General Public**
 Inside Halton Magazine: Summer edition
- **Businesses**
 Halton Chamber of Commerce Network Meeting: September 5th

 Halton & Warrington Business Fair: November 9th

 Sci-Tech Daresbury Business Breakfast: November 10th

 Newsletters - Halton Chamber of Commerce
 Business Improvement Growth
- **Partners**
 Halton Patient Participation Group: September 28th

 Halton TUC

 Newsletters - Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS
 Halton Patient Participation Group
- **Adult Services**
 Healthy & Active Ageing Event (Runcorn Shopping Centre):
 September 18th

 Dementia Group: Widnes (September 29th) and Runcorn

(October 11th)

Partners in Prevention Event (Widnes Market): September 21st

Healthy and Active Ageing Event Get Together: Runcorn (October 9th) / Widnes (October 17th)

Newsletters – Young Carers and Adult Carers

- **Children Services**

Primary Schools Heads Meeting: September 21st
(with an email follow up: September 21st)

Children`s Provider Network Meeting: October 4th

Halton Youth Cabinet: October 12th

Family Hub Centres – Kingsway (October 12th) and Windmill Hill (October 24th)

Riverside College: October 17th

Newsletters – Schools e-circular: September 4th

Emerging Themes:

- 3.4 A reminder that the 5 suggested themes identified were:
- 3.4.1
- Tackling inequality, helping those who are most in need
 - Building a strong, sustainable local economy
 - Supporting children, young people and families
 - Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence
 - Working towards a greener future
- 3.4.2 Level of agreement to all of the 5 suggested themes is very high, with the highest level of agreement being: 'Improving health, promoting wellbeing and supporting greater independence', and the lowest being 'Working towards a greener future'.
- 3.4.3 In terms of how can the Council can support these themes, the top 3 identified so far are:
- 'Provide opportunities for young people to engage with their local community and do things that interest them, keep them safe and make them happy'.
 - 'Create vibrant town centres for everyone to enjoy across the Borough'
 - 'Continue to ensure local people are able to enjoy the Borough`s parks and green spaces'

- 3.4.4 In terms of the ways our stakeholders can support the identified themes, these were as follows:
- 'Spending money with local shops and businesses'
 - 'Doing their best to stay healthy and active'
 - 'Look out for children and the vulnerable'
- 3.4.5 Identifying other potential corporate themes, the top 3 were:
- Business / Regeneration / Employment
 - Environment: litter / pavements / greenery overgrowth
 - Crime / Police / Antisocial behaviour
- 3.4.6 Given only 1% of respondents were aged between 16-24 years to-date, the current desires and commitments could change significantly when we have engaged with a greater number of young people. Nationally, younger people appear to be more concerned about the climate change agenda, and therefore the lack of support for green spaces and recycling efforts may change in December once the final sum of raw data is available.

Nevertheless, there is evident support for the provision of learning and skills services that nurture young adults and provide sustainable career opportunities for the whole borough; which is subsequently supported by the desire of a strong local economy – which residents are willing to invest in.

3.5 **Gaps and actions required:**

- 3.5.1 Demographic – there is a clear gap in the 16 - 24 year olds age bracket.
Actions:
- Target young adults at Riverside college/post 16 education settings
 - Planned visits to Family Hubs (Kingsway and Windmill Hill)
 - Sharing the Big Conversation on forms of social media which would target specifically this age group, eg Instagram and Messenger.
- 3.5.2 Geographical areas – analysis has shown that response has been low in 4 wards, 2 in Widnes, (Ditton, Hale Village and Halebank and Bankfield) and 2 in Runcorn, (Halton Lea and Norton South and Preston Brook)
Action:
These areas will targeted by iWalkers on Saturday, November 4th. Ward members will be advised that this will be taking place.
- 3.5.3 Work on-going in terms of indenting specific stakeholder groups that we haven't actively engaged with as yet, such as Faith groups and the visually impaired.
- 3.5.4 The introduction of iWalkers, who wear screens that can feature

multiple images and videos, as well as pass out flyers and collect information. On the day they will also add someone to a Whatsapp group and send images for social media and updates about the days progress.

3.6 **Timeline:**

- Mid-October onwards – gaps identified and addressed
- November 30th 2023: Consultation ends.
- December 2023: Analysis undertaken – key priorities identified.
- January – February 2024: Summary developed / shared with stakeholders via drop-in sessions within council buildings and open engagement at community spaces.
- March 2024: Corporate Plan finalised and approved at key forums.
- April 2024: the New Corporate Plan is launched.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no specific policy implications at this stage; however ultimately there will be a new contemporary and relevant Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There will be a potential financial implication around the engagement of 2 iWalkers, at a cost of £1,200 per day for 8 hours.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 The Corporate Plan is Halton Borough Council's key strategic document. This plan sets out the main vision, themes and values of the Council.

'The Big Conversation' will help to determine the Council's new set of priorities, which will be translated into the plan.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 The major risk is that we do nothing and roll out the same priorities as we have done in previous years. To this end the current Corporate Plan is a losing relevance and doesn't fully engage with either the workforce or the people of Halton in the contemporary environment.

7.2 The Council is serious about ‘Reimagining Halton’, aligned with that commitment, this is a perfect opportunity to undertake a meaningful piece of work which will engage the people of Halton and together with our workforce determine a set of new priorities, which will make a difference and take Halton forward over the next 3 – 5 years.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Equality and Diversity may well be a specific Corporate Plan priority, but if not then it will certainly underpin the Plan. An Equality Impact Assessment will be undertaken as part of the policy development process.

The consultation process has been designed to be inclusive.

9.0 **CLIMATE CHANGE IMPLICATIONS**

9.1 At this stage there is nothing specific to highlight within the context of this report; however there is a distinct possibility that as a result of ‘The Big Conversation’ climate implications will form one, or a key part of on, of the Council’s key priorities.

10.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

10.1 None under the meaning of the Act.