

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 9th February 2005 at the Halton Stadium, Widnes.

Present:

Board Members:	Councillor John Swain	Halton Borough Council (Chair)
	Supt Dave Booth	Cheshire Constabulary
	Debbie Dalby	Halton Voluntary Action
	Ray Dowd	Halton College
	Kirsty Evans	Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council
	Mike Fry	Halton Together
	Liz Gill	Government Office North West
	Arthur Graley	St. Chad's RC High School
	Andy Guile	Halton Together
	Ray Jones	Halton Together
	Gill Mortlock	Job Centre Plus
	Terry Parle	Sports Partnership
	David Parr	Halton Borough Council
	Stephen Parry	Halton Primary Care Trust
	Pauline Ruth	Halton Children's Fund
	Diana Terris	Halton Borough Council

Advisors to the Board:

Rob Mackenzie	Halton Borough Council
Karen Marcroft	Halton Borough Council
Dominic Harrex	Halton Borough Council
Ian Grady	Halton Borough Council

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Rob Polhill, Bill Badrock (Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise) and Daniel Seddon (Halton PCT/Halton Borough Council)

140 MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 8th December 2004 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chairman welcomed Kirsty Evans and Ray Jones who were attending the meeting for the first time replacing David Brennan and David Felix respectively. The Chairman paid tribute to the services to the Board by David Brennan and David Felix and requested that letters be sent to them thanking them for their contribution to the work of the Board.

Action

141 PRESENTATION

The Board received a presentation from D. Parr Chief Executive of Halton Borough Council which set out the key themes and issues for the Council in the forthcoming year.

It was **AGREED** that the presentation be noted.

142 SPECIALIST STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP ACTION PLANS 2005/06

The Board, in April 2003, had previously considered three year Strategies and Action Plans for each of the five strategic priorities. These Strategies still held good and had informed the mid term review of the Corporate Plan and the Community Strategy. The Action Plans, however, needed to be updated in the light of experience and Halton's increased Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations. Accordingly the Board considered updated Action Plans.

In drawing up the original strategies and plans a number of principles were adopted, and the same principles had been applied in all the updated Action Plans. Proposals within the Action Plans were expected to:

- (i) address the priorities;
- (ii) be based on evidence of need and best practice;
- (iii) focus on prevention;
- (iv) have an exit strategy;
- (v) help the most disadvantaged;
- (vi) be cost-effective and good quality; and
- (vii) bring an appropriate level of match funding

In 2002, the Board had ensured that there was a Specialist Strategic Partnership for each of the five priorities. These partnerships were commissioned to produce the original Strategies and Action Plans and had produced the updated Action Plans.

The updated Action Plans were for one year only. This was because although the national NRF allocation had been confirmed for 2006/08 at 2005/06 levels, Halton's share had not been announced.

The proposed Action Plans allocated £1,660,000 of the Revenue Priorities Fund available. A further £340,000 was committed to Council's baseline expenditure relating to priorities last year (Executive Board 20 February and 18 March 2004). It was recommended that this year's additional £500,000 be set aside to support the development of the Mersey Gateway.

The initiatives receiving NRF and PF expect to attract Match Funding of £23m in 2005/06.

The NRF required by the Action Plans for 2005/06 exceeded the amount available by £177,550 (2.6%). NRF was an annual cash grant, and in order to ensure that it was fully spent, it had proved necessary in the past to build in an element of over programming in the expectation that some projects would slip or under-spend. In 2004/05, 12.5% over-programming had been allowed to ensure there was no underspend. By April 2005 many of the projects would be up and running and so the likelihood of underspend was much reduced.

The Specialist Strategic Partnerships would be responsible for regular and careful monitoring of expenditure and progress would be reported to the Board. The position would be reviewed in October 2005 and any necessary adjustments made then.

It was **AGREED** that;

- (1) the Action Plans and Proposed Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocations be approved; and
- (2) the production of a protocol between the Board and the Specialist Strategic Partnerships be endorsed.

143 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND CONSULTATION PROCESS

As part of the 2004 spending review, the Government had announced the extension of the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund for two more years to the end of March 2008. £525 million of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund was allocated nationally for each of the two years.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit had stated that after the spending review they would be reviewing the current methodology used to allocate Neighbourhood Renewal Fund before announcing what amount individual authorities would receive.

As part of this process a consultation had been issued in December 2004, this had been circulated to Board members and key officers at Halton Borough Council and a report summarising the responses received was submitted.

It was **AGREED** that the response be approved.

144 PRIORITIES PROCESS PROGRESS

Halton's Community Strategy ran until March 2006, and it had always been envisaged that a review of the priorities process would also be required by this time. A report, suggesting refinement of the process was considered.

A detailed project plan was being developed in respect of the timetable and work had commenced on developing the new State of the Borough Report. A presentation on this research was proposed for January 2005.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

145 LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT

The Board considered a report giving an update on the development of Halton's second generation Local Public Service Agreement.

Initial, informal feedback had been received from the LPSA business manager, and formal feedback was expected shortly. The initial comments were in agreement with the priority areas but had suggested that proposed targets in the following areas might need to be examined;

- (i) reduction in re offending of prolific offenders;
- (ii) the response to drugs/substance misuse;
- (iii) health and social care commission and prevention systems;
- (iv) Adult Skills
- (v) looked after children
- (vi) enterprise; and
- (vii) targeted leisure activities for young people to improve school attendance and reduce youth nuisance.

The IdeA had offered a free LPSA pre negotiation consultancy and this had been accepted. The consultancy would be tailored to provide advice on;

- (i) defining outcome targets and developing a greater understanding of what the ODPM expected in terms of targets and value for money;
- (ii) preparation and advice on the stage 2 and 3 negotiations with government departments;
- (iii) advice on flexibilities and freedoms for targets; and
- (iv) tips and techniques on planning for reward grant.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

146 SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

The basis of the safer stronger communities fund was the Halton received a funding allocation and agreed to achieve a set of outcomes based on local and national priorities. A mini Local Area Agreement would detail the funding and outcomes required for the period 2005/06 to 2007/08.

The Community Safety Strategy Group / Drug Action Group had a membership meeting the requirements of the guidance an remit for the fund and the Board considered recommendations agreed by that group together with a draft summary of outcomes and targets.

It was **AGREED** that

- (1) the recommendations agreed by the Community Safety Strategy Group / Drug Action Group be endorsed;
- (2) the arrangements for this Board to oversee the mini local area agreement and receive regular reports on the expenditure of the safer and stronger communities fund be agreed; and
- (3) Halton Borough Council be requested to act as accountable body for the Safer Stronger Communities Fund.

147 HALTON PRIMARY CARE TRUST LOCAL DELIVERY PLAN

The Board received a report dealing with the main issues in the 3 year Local Delivery Plan for the Halton Primary Care Trust. The Board suggested that:

- the complementarity with the objectives of the Community Strategy be highlighted;
- the fact that the Primary Care Trust has preventive work at the heart of its decision making be raised in profile;
- the challenge of responding to the changing face of Children's Services be recognised.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

148 RESULTS OF THE GENERAL BEST VALUE SATISFACTION SURVEY OF LOCAL SERVICES

The Board considered the results of the quality of life questions from the latest general best value satisfaction survey of local services.

The top three most frequently highlighted responses were;

- (i) Low Level of Crime (58.7%);
- (ii) Health Services (44.7%); and
- (iii) Clean Streets (28.7%).

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

149 MERSEY GATEWAY

It was estimated that costs to be incurred for project management and technical, legal and final advice for the Mersey Gateway would range from £12m to £16m. This would include a project team that was expected to cost £1m to £1.5m annually for a four year period.

It had been suggested that a large part of these project development costs could be met through prudential borrowing, by contributions from neighbouring local authorities, the European Regional Development Fund, and other agencies. Utilisation of the £500,000 of Halton Borough Council's Priorities Fund would support £6m of prudential borrowing at the present time.

It was **AGREED** that the use of £500,000 of Halton Borough Council's Priorities Fund to support the development of the Mersey Gateway be supported.

150 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND REPORTS

The Board considered a report summarising the progress and expenditure in Quarter 2 2004/05 of initiatives receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

151 CEN UPDATE

The Board received an update from the Chair of the Community Empowerment Network on developments since the last meeting.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

152 REPORT FROM AWAYDAY NOVEMBER 2004

The Board received an update on the outcomes of the awayday which took place on 3rd November 2004.

It was **AGREED** that the report be noted.

153 ANY OTHER BUSINESS

Debbie Dalby referred to arrangements which placed Halton's voluntary and community sector's structure within Cheshire rather than Mersyside. She considered that this caused difficulties for the sector and suggested that it be an item for a future Agenda. Liz Gill reported that she was not aware of any change and would investigate this issue further.

The Neighbourhood Renewal Fund / Local Strategic Partnership conference had been arranged for 9th March 2004 and 4 places at the conference had been offered.

It was **AGREED** that

- (1) the Chair (Councillor J. Swain), the Vice Chair (Andy Guile) and Karen Marcroft be nominated to attend the Conference; and
- (2) any further volunteer for the final conference space contact the Strategic Policy and Partnership section.

*Meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m.
and ended at 12.15 p.m.*