

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 18th May 2005
at the Halton Stadium, Widnes.

Present:

Board Members: Councillor John Swain	Halton Borough Council (Chair)
Gary Finchett	Cheshire Constabulary
Andrew Ellams	Halton College
Mike Fry	Halton Together
Liz Gill	Government Office North West
Andy Guile	Halton Together
Pauline Ruth	Halton Children's Fund
Dwayne Johnson	Halton Borough Council
Bill Badrock	Halton Chamber of Commerce
Daniel Seddon	Halton PCT/Halton Borough Council
Diane Sproson	GM Connexions
Councillor Rob Polhill	Halton Borough Council
Neil Townsend	Riverside Housing
Andy Barratt	LHT

Advisors to the Board:

Rob MacKenzie	Halton Borough Council
Karen Marcroft	Halton Borough Council
Dominic Harrex	Halton Borough Council
Ian Grady	Halton Borough Council
Stephen Murtagh	Halton Borough Council
Matthew Atherton	Halton Borough Council

Apologies for absence:

Joe Bowen-Jones (Business Link) and David Parr, Halton Borough Council.

MINUTES

Action

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 9th February 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

The Chairman welcomed Andrew Ellams, Neil Thompson, Dwayne Johnson and Gary Finchett who were attending the meeting for the first time. Arising from the discussion K. Marcroft reported that an NRF announcement was now expected in the Autumn. It was also noted that an announcement on the Mersey Gateway was still awaited.

SAFER AND STRONGER COMMUNITIES FUND

The basis of the Safer and Stronger Communities Fund was that Halton received an allocation of funding and agreed to achieve a set of outcomes based on local and national priorities. The Safer Halton Partnership had approved the final mini Local Agreement and delegated

authority to the co-chairs to make any final changes prior to submission to Government Office North West.

Arising from the discussion it was recognised that certain output figures needed to be completed in the Safer Halton Partnership mini Local Agreement and the sub-group structure needed to be finalised. It was agreed that once the sub-group structure had been finalised it would be circulated to Board members.

It was **AGREED** that authority be delegated to the co-chairs of the Safer Halton Partnership to complete the mini Local Agreement for submission to Government Office North West.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS 2005/06

At its meeting on 9th February 2005 the Board agreed to delegate responsibility for the management of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund to the Specialist Strategic Partnerships. The Board considered a report which illustrated how the delegation would work and how the Board would receive full information on the use of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund so that it was able to meet the requirements placed on it by the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

The proposed specialist arrangements would ensure that the Specialist Strategic Partnerships would work within a set of guidelines for managing their allocation, ensuring that project were treated fairly and consistently, and that the good practice in managing Neighbourhood Renewal Fund in Halton established over the last few years continued.

It was **AGREED** that the arrangements for managing Neighbourhood Renewal Fund during 2005/06 be approved.

LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Government had been piloting Local Area Agreements (LAAs), the aim of which was to improve co-ordination between Central Government and Local Authorities and their partners working through the Local Strategic Partnership. The focus of the agreements was on agreed, shared outcomes in certain priority areas accompanied by more flexible use of certain targeted funding streams. The intention to pilot LLAs was announced in the 2004 Spending Review. Halton had made an unsuccessful bid in the autumn to be included as one of the 20 pilot authorities.

The Government was seeking expressions of interest for bids for the second phase of LAAs to cover 40 localities. It was suggested that Halton should respond enthusiastically to the Government's invitation and submit a bid for a Local Area Agreement.

It was **AGREED** that Halton should express an interest in developing an LAA for April 2006.

COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

In the Autumn of 2004 the Board endorsed a proposal to develop a new Community Engagement Strategy for Halton. Following initial consultation and discussion with partners a process for taking this forward had now been put in place. The intention was to work with all stakeholders in the Borough to develop three products – a new Engagement Strategy and Plan for its implementation; a toolkit for advice and best practice for practitioners; and a protocol for managing/sharing the results of participation processes.

A stakeholder meeting is planned for 28th June to agree a draft strategy. It was proposed that the draft strategy would be considered at the next meeting of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board in July.

It was **AGREED** that the process now in train be noted.

NEIGHBOURHOOD DATA

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit had strongly encouraged Local Strategic Partnerships to identify priority neighbourhoods (i.e. the most deprived neighbourhoods). Local Strategic Partnerships were expected to have measures and targets to ensure that these neighbourhoods improved more quickly than other areas.

The adoption of Super Output Areas by the Government for use in the latest index of multiple deprivation provided an opportunity to examine data at a much more local level than previously possible.

The Board considered a report which outlined an analysis of the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation which highlighted the most deprived Super Output Areas in Halton. It also outlined the problems of possible damage to community cohesion that could be inflicted by focusing on a small number of narrowly defined geographical areas. If community cohesion were to be adversely affected too greatly, the benefits of targeting particular neighbourhoods might be lost.

In addition, there was a danger of some neighbourhoods and areas not having their problems sufficiently addressed because of a focus on particular Super Output Areas. This was most likely where the criteria used to decide on the areas to focus on resulted in some areas not falling into that group but still having significant issues to tackle.

It was **AGREED** that the issues would be examined and debated further once the Government announces the criteria and allocations for Neighbourhood Renewal Fund spend in 2006/07 and 2007/08.

CHOOSING HEALTH IN HALTON

The Board received a copy of the Public Health Annual Report 2004.

It was **AGREED** that the report be received and at a future meeting it would respond to the three strategic recommendations:

- that individuals, families and organisations take steps to follow the ten health improvement tips in the report;
- that partner organisations and the Halton Strategic Partnership Board as a body, consider how to protect resources for preventing ill health and for promoting positive health; and
- that the Board suggest appropriate topics for future health reports.

COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK UPDATE

The Board received an update from the Chair of the Community Empowerment Network on developments since the last meeting. The major issue is the funding crisis precipitated by the withdrawal of part of the government's core funding. This has damaged trust within the sector and risks momentum faltering. Partners need to consider this and actions to help the CEN develop into the future.

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

INTEGRATION OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES

On 8th December 2004 a report was presented to the Board which outlined the initial response by the Council in relation to the requirements of the Children Act 2004 and the Council's approach to the national agenda of Integration of Children's Services.

The Board considered a report on the action taken to date in relation to Halton's response to the Integration Agenda contained within the Children Act.

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

PARTNERSHIP BRANDING

At a previous meeting the Board had considered proposals for the rebranding of the Partnership and approved an overall approach towards it. The Halton Strategic Partnership's suggested new logo had been well received and feedback had been positive in terms of design and in its use in aiding recognition of the Partnership. The logo had been featured across a range of media including local newspapers, leaflets and on the Internet.

With regard to the Specialist Strategic Partnership branding design proposals were put to the Partnerships, but on the whole were less warmly received. Feedback from co-ordinators suggested that the Learning Partnership already had its own logo; the Health Partnership and Safer Halton Partnerships wished to develop their own, and the Urban Renewal Partnership did not feel it was an appropriate point to rebrand, or may not like the suggestions put forward. Of the five Partnerships only the Wealth and Equality proposed that the new logo would be adopted.

Arising from the discussion it was agreed that an item would be placed on the next agenda of the Specialist Strategic Partnerships outlining the new logo proposals.

It was **AGREED** that:

1. the report be noted; and
2. an item be placed on the next Specialist Strategic Partnership agendas on the new logo proposals.

HALTON FESTIVAL

The Board considered an update report on the progress made in organising the first Halton Festival Week. A multi-agency steering group chaired by Councillor Polhill had been set up to organise the Festival, a Co-ordinator appointed and a Media Group formed. There were currently more than 70 Festival events confirmed across Halton with an equal split between the town centre areas. A schedule of advertising and promotion had been planned for the run-up to the Festival. This had commenced with the launch of a website, distribution of a leaflet, a media launch, and a series of press releases.

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

COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES PROCESS

The Board considered an update report on the progress made towards the completion of a new Community Strategy. The key elements of the process were:

- (i) identifying the strategic priorities – the State of the Borough report;
- (ii) preparing a baseline; and
- (iii) policy/strategic strategy development.

It was reported that the State of the Borough phase was now near its conclusion. The baselining phase which would last until July was getting

underway. It was still expected that the final draft of the new documents would be ready for Partnership endorsement in November.

The Board also received a full report on the outcome of the Halton Strategic Partnership Away Day held on 13th April 2005.

It was **AGREED** that:

1. the report be noted; and
2. the Away Day report be approved.

NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND REPORT

The Board considered a report summarising the progress and expenditure in Quarter 4 2004/05 of initiatives receiving Neighbourhood Renewal Fund.

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

At the conclusion of the meeting the Chairman, on behalf of the Board, thanked Karen Marcroft for her contribution, commended her on her commitment and enthusiasm towards the Partnership and wished her well for her new job in Shropshire.

Meeting ended at 12 noon