

AGENDA ITEM NO. 7

REPORT TO: Halton Strategic Partnership Board

DATE: 13 July 2005

REPORTING OFFICER: Local Authority Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Local Area Agreements

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To report on developments related to Local Area Agreements.

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the Board

- **approves the production of a Halton Local Area Agreement in 2006/07 as a precursor to full Local Area Agreement in 2007/08**
- **sets up a time-limited task group to develop the process**

3. BACKGROUND

The Halton Strategic Partnership approved Halton's bid to be one of a further 40 pilot Local Area Agreements at its meeting in May. The Government have announced the further pilots and Halton is not among them. However, Halton, as a top-tier local authority, will be required to put a Local Area Agreement in place for 2007/08.

Elsewhere on the agenda, the Board is considering progress with the Priorities Process. The definition of Halton's priorities is key and part of the consideration is the need for them to be structured to allow sensible management of future Local Area Agreement arrangements. Given the fundamental review of the strategy and partnership arrangements in train, it will be sensible for them to be 'future proofed' in respect of the needs of the Local Area Agreement.

As the Board is keen to implement the Local Area Agreement approach, it is proposed to use 2006/07 as a pilot year for introducing the concept in Halton. This would involve developing agreements in line with the Government guidance and setting up the pooling and aligning of funding sources and targets. This will bring about improvements in partnership working and service delivery for 2006/07 and make the process of agreeing a full Local Area Agreement for 2007/08 easier. It will also allow the current work on Halton's second Local Public Service Agreement to be properly embedded in the new arrangements.

4. PROPOSAL

It is suggested that each Specialist Strategic Partnership should designate a lead officer for the Local Area Agreement. These will form a time-limited task group to look at the needs of the Local Area Agreement process and help dovetail this into the final stage of the Priorities Process. The group, supported by the Partnership Team, will produce a development plan for Local Area Agreement arrangements in Halton. The plan will be brought back to the Board for consideration in the autumn.