

AGENDA ITEM NO. 8

REPORT TO: Halton Strategic Partnership Board
DATE: 28 September 2005
REPORTING OFFICER: Local Authority Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Halton Festival and Halton Show evaluation

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To inform the Board about the Partnership's involvement in this year's Halton Festival and Halton Show

2. RECOMMENDATION: That the Board notes the feedback

3. BACKGROUND

Halton Festival

The first Halton Festival took place in July, and proved to be very successful with more than 80 events taking place across the borough. The Festival opened with two major events – Take Part in Halton at Norton Priory, and It's a Knockout with Stuart Hall at the Halton Stadium.

The events on offer provided something for people of all ages, and the overall Festival proved to be much bigger than was anticipated in its first year. Initial feedback was very positive, with good coverage in the local media and pleasing turnouts for many events.

A structured evaluation of the week took place at the start of September, and a report from this will be circulated as soon as it is available.

Halton Show

The Partnership hosted a marquee at this year's Halton Show, which featured:

- A dedicated area for each of the five priorities
- Over 100 display panels
- Giveaways
- Interactive activities

The contents of the marquee were brought together for the first time this year under the recognisable brand of the Partnership. Previously individual services and organisations have set up their own displays, leading to confusion as to overall ownership and purpose.

The approach taken this year worked well in providing a clear brand, and large numbers of people visited the marquee over the weekend.

The evidence of this year's Show suggests that this approach to communicating the Partnership's work is partly effective - but whilst many people followed the displays round and looked at all the information, a greater majority drifted round the marquee searching for freebies.

It is important to remember that people are at the Show for a fun day out – so we need to ensure there is a fun element to our offering. For next year's Show it is proposed that the Partnership still has a presence, but with a different focus – featuring a smaller number of display panels about the new priorities for Halton, and a range of interactive activities clearly related to them.

There may also be scope for changing the dynamic of our area – simply having a covered area with a back wall would make it more accessible and showcase the work taking place more effectively.

The Show provides us with access to thousands of people over the weekend – it is proposed that for next year we concentrate on bringing the work of the Partnership to life, and on giving key messages about Halton's new set of priorities.