

## **AGENDA ITEM NO: 7**

**REPORT TO:** Halton Strategic Partnership Board  
**DATE:** 28 September 2005  
**SUBJECT:** Neighbourhood data

### **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To outline how the Board and partners could use data to identify priority neighbourhoods in Halton.

### **2. RECOMMENDATION**

That the Board:

- a. Agree that strategically the Partnership must have the ability to share, analyse and utilise data at various spatial levels to inform its decision making;
- b. Agree that the Local Futures system be implemented as the partnership data management system; and,
- c. That Partners agree to look at their contributions to supporting the system over the medium term

### **3. BACKGROUND**

The Neighbourhood Renewal Unit has strongly encouraged local strategic partnerships to identify priority neighbourhoods, i.e. the most deprived neighbourhoods. In addition, there is a logical imperative that in order to achieve the overall goal of the neighbourhood renewal strategy that LSPs need to use data and intelligence to help target their investments and interventions. LSPs are expected to have measures and targets to ensure that these neighbourhoods improve more quickly than other areas.

In May the Board agreed that this was an important issue. It was clear that over the past few years that the Halton Strategic Partnership would have benefited greatly from the ability to share and store data in one place accessible to all partners and to the general public.

This would assist with:

- consistency in statistics used by partners
- information sharing between partners
- monitoring and review of performance
- easier access to information to assist planning and policy making
- provision of information to the public

#### **4. CONSIDERATION**

Over recent months an evaluation has taken place of five systems used by other local authorities and local strategic partnerships for these purposes. All are web-based but work quite differently. Appendix 1 summarises the services offered through the five systems. They are marked against the services viewed as essential or desirable for a system for Halton. A small team of data management specialists drew up the criteria. Whilst cost is an important issue, the team concentrated on the quality and efficacy of the systems in question to test their fitness for purpose for Halton.

It can be seen that the most effective system is that provided by Local Futures. This is the only system, which fulfils all of the essential criteria. It also covers two of the desirable criteria. Two of the other desirable criteria (area profiles and research database) can be met locally already and can be aligned to the Local Futures system. The fifth desirable criterion, time series tool, could be developed for the service.

The system can hold both national and local datasets. Local Futures would set up the system, input all national datasets, and maintain this information base into the future. The Partnership would take responsibility for gathering and inputting local datasets. It is suggested that the Halton Partnership Team and Halton Borough Council's Research and Intelligence team would best lead this. The extra-over cost of technical support from the Research team is £5,000 p.a. Local partners would be asked to information that would then be entered. Information sharing agreements will be agreed with partners setting out what information will be provided when and by whom to ensure the system stays up to date. Over time, the system can be developed to allow partner organisations to enter data themselves. Halton Borough Council's Research and Intelligence team would maintain a quality assurance role.

Of the other services, the Planweb and Strat-e-gis services are the least useful as they are hardest to share with partners. The Black Country Observatory and Intelligence Network systems are bespoke systems developed for the authorities using them. The cost for the Black Country Observatory reflects this. While maintenance costs are lower, the Observatory system places higher demands on the organisation(s) running it.

#### **5. WAY FORWARD**

It is suggested that the Board agree that the Local Futures system be implemented to fulfil the data needs of the Partnership. We also have an established relationship with Local Futures having used them for the State of the Borough report earlier this year, and they have an excellent reputation. The initial cost can be met through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocated to Central Partnership Activity, as can the ongoing costs until March 2008 when Neighbourhood Renewal Fund expires. From that point on, partners will need to agree a mechanism to contribute to and share these

costs. The current rate of £15,000 would fall if more local authorities subscribe to the Local Futures service.

In making this decision it is important that Partners recognise that this is a strategic decision. It is based on a recognition of the importance of relevant, accurate and timely data to all partners in taking forward our ambitions for the borough. It is important that all partners look at what the system can do for them and suggestion to how it can be further developed to better meet their needs. The Partnership Team will be looking to have a network of key contacts within each organisation as a reference group to ensure the system remains fit for purpose over time.

## Appendix 1

Essential	Black Country Observatory	Intelligence Network	Local Futures	Planweb	Strat-e-gis
Data for all of England held			✓	✓	
Census datasets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Floor target datasets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Community strategy datasets	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Mapping tool	✓ (for some data)		✓	✓	✓
Ranking tool			✓		
Comparison tool			✓		
Metadata available	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Printable view	✓		✓	✓	
Downloadable files	✓		✓		
Accessible to all partners	✓	✓	✓		Possibly
No dedicated staff needed			✓		✓
<b>Desirable</b>					
Time series tool	✓				
Cross-tabulation tool			✓ (for some data)		
Point data			✓	✓	✓
Area profiles		✓			
Research database	✓	✓			
<b>Cost</b>					
Set up costs	£50,000	Not known	£35,000	£0	£0
Ongoing costs	£4,500 per year	Not known	£15,000 per year	£0	Subscription cost for each partner