

## Item: 6

**REPORT TO:** Halton Strategic Partnership Board

**DATE:** 28 September 2005

**SUBJECT:** A New Community Engagement Strategy for Halton

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

Community engagement forms an essential part of everything the partnership does. The purpose of this report is to update the Board on the work in progress to develop a new community engagement strategy for the borough.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

It is recommended that the Board note the position.

### 3.0 BACKGROUND

In the autumn of 2004 the Board endorsed a proposal to develop a new community engagement strategy for Halton. Work with stakeholders has enabled three key "products" to be drafted - a new engagement strategy and plan for its implementation; a toolkit of advice and best practice for practitioners and a protocol for managing/sharing the results of participation processes. The Board at its last meeting endorsed these drafts. The Board also agreed that a formal process of consultation be undertaken on the new approach

### 4.0 PROGRESS

The new approach has been widely shared with many partnership groupings throughout the borough. The key points which have emerged from the consultation (so far) are as follows:

- Partners fully support the concept and basic principles of the strategy and the amended approach being suggested.
- The toolkit is seen to be a valuable resource, but it may be cumbersome and complex which could militate against its use.
- The Network Group and the support they could offer appear to be a welcome step forward.
- Further detail; on resourcing and remit of the Group would be welcome.
- Having a web-based resource with proper prominence on the Partnership website and portals through partner sites is helpful.

- ❑ Some questions about the functionality of the site and whether it has been adequately tested.
- ❑ General consensus the amended approach will really help to sharpen up what is thought to be working quite well already.

The feedback to date has been largely positive. The consultation events for community groups organised through Halton Together take place on 21 September. The feedback from these will be reported to the Board at its meeting.

## 5.0 **Way Forward**

A trial version of the documentation is currently being piloted on a dummy website. A key partners session later this month will test its functionality. The same group will also look at firming up arrangements for the Network Group.

It is intended to launch the new engagement strategy at the LSP conference on 5 October. The conference has a theme around inclusivity which fits well with the spirit of the engagement strategy.

Following the launch there will be a need to cement the new arrangements and for partners to adopt the amended approach. It is proposed that a further report will be brought back to the Board in the new year with an action plan, review arrangements and future resource implications for carrying this forward.