

Agenda Item: 6

REPORT TO: Halton Strategic Partnership Board
DATE: 17 May 2006
SUBJECT: LSP Annual Review

1.0 PURPOSE

As reported at the last meeting, each year the Government Office carry out a performance review of all Local Strategic Partnerships. This takes the form of a self-assessment by the Partnership and a formal review process by Government officials. The purpose of this report is to share this with partners.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Halton Strategic Partnership Board endorses the attached self-assessment and the supplementary evidence suggested for submission to GONW.

3.0 BACKGROUND

The Government view that the primary purpose of the annual performance management review process is to provide LSPs with evidence of how they are delivering better outcomes for local people and help identify what might be done to improve performance. In particular LSPs are asked to assess progress against targets and in improving conditions in deprived neighbourhoods, as well as effectiveness as a working partnership. This should lead to an Improvement Plan of the key actions necessary to improve performance.

We are expected to provide Government office with three key things:

- An assessment of progress against floor targets;
- An Improvement Plan
- A Partnership self-assessment

This material need to be submitted by the end of May and the formal review meeting has been set up for 21 June.

4.0 CONSIDERATION

The self-assessment and supplementary evidence to accompany it needs some consideration. An initial draft was circulated to the SSP Chairs for refinement and addition of evidence last month. Attached to this report is the proposed self-assessment for Halton. The Board is asked to agree this for submission to GONW by the end of the month. It should be noted that the topic headings are those which the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit use to define regeneration (Health, Education, Crime, Housing, Employment, Liveability), not the priority headings defined in our Community Strategy.

The following is a list of the documentation it is suggested that with Board agreement we provide to GONW to back up the summary statements in the assessment:

- Community Strategy
- 2006/07 Action Plans
- 2005/06 Annual Performance Review
- NRF Evaluation Report
- 2005/06 NRF Outturn Report
- Improvement Plan
- Trajectory Review
- Narrowing the Gap review

The Board will note that most of this evidence relates to established documentation. The one exception is the trajectory reviews. These aim to provide a fuller assessment of how we are tackling neighbourhood renewal by topic heading. This gives us a fuller opportunity to present our approach and provide evidence for the statements in the self-assessment. These are termed "Trajectory reviews" because they focus on progress on floor targets and our direction of travel.

Their purpose is to tell a fairly simple story of the scale of the problem and what we are doing about it. These drive home the message about how our policies and processes are focused on by the SSPs and use evidence, intelligence, innovation and best practice to make difference in our most deprived communities are target groups. The most important thing is that these focus on what has been achieved - not what is planned. In particular they examine progress on outcomes, and the plausibility of what we do

In order not to burden Board members with unnecessary paperwork the trajectory reviews and other supplementary evidence can be accessed on the Partnership website.

4.0 CONCLUSION

The review is an important annual milestone for the Partnership. It provides external validation of our approach and activities, and it generates important learning points on which we can base our improvement plan. This year, the outcome of the LSP reviews will feed directly into the Comprehensive Spending Review planned by treasury next year. Therefore, it is important that LSPs demonstrate the impact they have in order to help justify that continuing priority be given by Government to neighbourhood renewal.

Draft Annual Performance Assessment

LSP 2006 Performance Review Report – Halton Strategic Partnership

LSP Overall Assessment –

GREEN

Health	
Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green
Strengths (to include progress towards targets)	Issues to be addressed
<p>Good focus on preventative issues, health promotion and healthy living. Acting on evidence of ongoing Halton health study & track record of achievement and right measures in place. Recent 5-year figures show above national average improvements in circulatory disease and cancer. Borough health study recommendations implemented with strong community input and will to address. Good use of health impact assessments and equity audit tool. Life expectancy target for women is at risk; whilst male rate is more encouraging. Teenage conceptions back on track but very sensitive to small fluctuations.</p>	<p>Life expectancy for women needs continued strong focus. Teenage conceptions are difficult to track and small numbers can affect percentages significantly. Whilst this year the direction of travel has been thankfully positive, it remains an area for focus. Looking at ways to track health outcomes at ward level as part of planning process for neighbourhoods. Infant mortality and overall death rate are revealing areas of slight concern. Attention is increasingly focused on smoking cessation and alcohol harm reduction as part of underpinning to further accelerate progress.</p>
Education	
Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green/Amber
Strengths (to include progress towards targets)	Issues to be addressed
<p>Floor target progress at GCSE and KS3 is on target. GCSE performance in Halton is now touching 50%, and in all schools exceeds the 25% floor target. KS2 has held up close to England rate and good progress at Foundation Stage. Considerable programme of work in place to strengthen attendance and attainment, with strong links to College and other agencies to provide alternative curriculum options. Interventions draw on good practice and are already yielding results. Positive Ofsted report for LEA and in particular the Pupil Referral Unit. Excellent progress on Children's Trust has been made and Alliance is in place and adopted a Children & Young People Plan in line with Government expectations.</p>	<p>The "conversation" with GONW has generated 9 immediate priorities for Children's Services in Halton. Improving attendance (particularly at secondary level); improving attainment at all levels (and particularly for vulnerable groups), and improving behaviour in all schools remain the challenge. There is now good evidence of joining up of partnership efforts to address these. Changing the culture will not be easy but is a key focus for the Children's Alliance</p> <p>The improving performance at KS1&2 can be seen to be working through to improvement at KS 3&4, but further momentum is necessary</p>
Employment	

Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green/Amber
Strengths (to include progress towards targets)	Issues to be addressed
<p>There is a proactive approach to linking potential job opportunities eg Daresbury, Widnes EDZ., with areas of need with high levels of worklessness. Halton People into Jobs continues to provide an excellent brokering service for getting the economically inactive engaged. Strong links to relevant partners including Chamber, JobCentre+ and GME, and good joint working. Good understanding of economic base and its vulnerability.</p> <p>Floor targets are very challenging but the rate of employment is improving faster than the national average. Unemployment levels have now fallen to almost reach the North west rate. There is evidence of greater levels of enterprise, which is exemplified in the Local futures analysis.</p>	<p>There is a continuing culture of low participation levels and low expectations which represents a risk to narrowing the gap. High levels of incapacity persist. These will continue to provide a focus for the future</p> <p>More information has been gathered on groups at greatest risk of non-participation - this has been addressed through the recent strategy development on employability & workforce development. Has now been action planned in context of new direction set out in new Community Strategy.</p>
Crime	
Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green
Strengths (to include progress towards targets)	Issues to be addressed
<p>Recent figures show welcome reductions in volume crime. Violent crime is increasing. Complicated by changes in reporting methodology, but remains key area of focus. Fear of crime remains low as testament to efforts to provide reassurance, especially in the most deprived areas. Significant improvements in adults accessing and being retained in drug treatment programmes. Good partnership working continues. Developing strategic approach to the growing night time economy as part of the LSP approach to alcohol harm reduction. Overall focus remains on reducing overall crime and fear of crime. Partnership arrangements refreshed, reinvigorated and relaunched behind Safer& Stronger Communities Fund.</p>	<p>Better intelligence has helped to target activities and this will continue. Especially need to understand approaches to violent crime. Improving links between Community Safety Team and DAT need to continue. Partnership keenly progressing prolific offenders initiative. Looking at even greater emphasis on domestic abuse and anti-social behaviour.</p> <p>Looking at developing neighbourhood management pilots, which will initially focus on liveability and community safety. Must look to mainstream work and funding of CSOs.</p>
Housing	
Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green
Strengths (to include progress towards targets)	Issues to be addressed
<p>LSVT for council stock successfully concluded and Housing trust took over December 2005. RSL study shows decency standard achievable by 2010. RSL stock already 95% decent and Castlefields remodelling being comprehensively addressed. RHB funding for work on vulnerable groups. Housing partnership is working to align</p>	<p>Emerging pockets of low demand are now regularly monitored. Some suspicion that the focus of Regional Housing Board on investment through HMRI may disadvantage areas like Halton, which share similar problems, but on a different scale. Danger most apparent in older private rented stock. Condition survey planned for 2007 to inform initiatives in older residential areas.</p>

policies on choice based lettings, nominations and equality standards - working together to agree optimum delivery model.	
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Liveability	
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Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green/Amber
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Strengths (to include progress towards targets)	Issues to be addressed
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<p>Strong performance on environment/liveability, because of increasing focus. Councils environmental staff have been reorganised into area based streetscene teams; "Pride of place" initiatives target the most deprived areas based around SOAs; partners are sharing experience of neighbourhood management initiatives in 3 most deprived areas; high profile fly-tipping and graffiti initiatives are having an impact; the trend in road traffic casualties still indicates the achievement of national targets, and baseline measures of BV199 are encouraging.</p> <p>"Consulting the Communities of Halton" study showed that 82% of residents were satisfied with their local area as a place to live (a 6% increase on the survey 2 years before)</p>	<p>Whilst the "Consulting the Communities of Halton" study shows encouraging public recognition of areas getting better, it also shows that liveability issues remain the top priority for local residents. This applies to all areas but in particular the most deprived areas demonstrate greater need. Formal neighbourhood management models are being developed for the four most deprived areas (within worst 3% SOAs). These will focus on liveability, applying good practice already developed, and act as "laboratories" for interventions and approaches that are applicable elsewhere.</p>
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Performance Management (including review of partnership working & NRF spend)	
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Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green
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Strengths	Issues to be addressed
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<p>PMF meets core requirements. All partners committed to PM approach, and revamped system. Commitment to subsidiarity evidenced through power shift to SSPs. CEN Protocol has been agreed and a compact approach to LAA development. The Major process of long term strategic planning has been completed and a new Sustainable Community strategy agreed by LSP. The run down in NRF funding has shown the capacity and evidence for mainstreaming with focus of partners on pooling and aligning of budgets behind the SSP action plans.</p>	<p>All partners are being asked to look at their approach to supporting the LSP long term. Governance structures have been refreshed behind new Community Strategy. There is a need to ensure proper induction and training of all partners as they revalidate their commitment to the LSP. CEN position is challenged by Government funding cuts and shift to routing through S&SCF. LSP Team is providing support to help CEN regather and restructure itself.</p>
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Improvement Planning	
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Self Assessed Traffic Light	Green
Strengths	Issues to be addressed
<p>Improvement Plan identifies key actions needed and resources/accountabilities. Progress towards Floor Targets is well documented. Actions are based on what works. Challenge process in place. This has been ramped up by creating a Performance and Standards group to monitor, evaluate and challenge partners on behalf of the Board. Move to strengthen partnership activity through embracing LAA approach to strategic management of initiatives. Community Strategy remodelled behind LAA principles to pave the way for speedy negotiation of the Halton (single pot) agreement. A massive effort was made by partners to develop new approach to community engagement in the borough.</p>	<p>Delivery elements of the PMF are now starting to identify impact on disadvantaged groups. Work done to examine datasets at varying spatial levels and set up Halton Data Observatory. Now need to ensure that partners use this (and other evidence) to better focus interventions and investment decisions.</p>

Performance Summary

Halton LSP faces significant challenges in delivery of employment, enterprise, female life expectancy and teenage pregnancy floor targets. Anti-social behaviour and youth nuisance issues continue to animate residents. Tremendous progress is being made but narrowing the gap remains extremely challenging. There is strong partnership working and NRF is allocated to risk areas using a commissioning process. Excellent baseline information - State of Halton report, which is now dynamic with the advent of the web-based Halton Data Observatory. An independent evaluation of the NRF management process found plausibility and good challenge process. Neighbourhood plans are in place. There is a systematic and targeted approach to communication and community engagement. Partners have worked to develop a wholly new, innovative and collaborative approach to engagement in the borough.

The partnership faces considerable challenges in achieving floor targets but has not ducked the issues. It has a thorough baseline analysis, shared priorities and a commitment to joint strategic planning to focus investment in areas of most need. The last year has seen a wholly new Sustainable Community Strategy developed collaboratively. This provides the route map for the next 5 years for everything that the LSP hopes to achieve. Audit studies have found evidence of regular monitoring and robust challenge. NRF is being used strategically and management is strong. A good deal of attention has been given to the health of the Partnership, the ways it works and the leadership it generates. A new governance structure is in place following a process led by Manchester Business School.