

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday 28th September 2005
at the Halton Stadium, Widnes.

Present:

Board Members: Councillor John Swain	Halton Borough Council (Chair)
Bill Badrock	Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
Alan Harrison	Halton College
Liz Gill	Government Office North West
Andy Guile	Halton YMCA
Ray Jones	(Diocese of Liverpool)
Nick Ingram	Cheshire Constabulary
Terry Parle	Sports Partnership
David Parr	Halton Borough Council
Pauline Ruth	Halton Children's Fund
Daniel Seddon	Halton PCT/Halton Borough Council
Diane Sproson	GM Connexions
Neil Townsend	Riverside Housing
Mike Fry	HAFS

Advisors to the Board:

Matthew Atherton	Halton Borough Council
John White	Halton Borough Council
Ian Grady	Halton Borough Council
Rob MacKenzie	Halton Borough Council

In attendance:

Karen Drake	Halton Borough Council
Lynn Cairns	Halton Borough Council

Apologies for absence:

Councillor Polhill (HBC), D Johnson (HBC), K Evans (LSC) and L McMurtrie (Halton PCT).

176 WELCOME

The Chairman welcomed the following to the meeting:-

- Nick Ingram – New Area Commander, Cheshire Police;
- Alan Harrison – Interim Principal of Halton College; and
- John White – Partnership Support Officer who officially commenced on 3rd October 2005.

In addition, it was reported that the Halton Healthy Schools Initiative, carried out in partnership between the LSP, the PCT, Health

Action

Promotion Staff and School Staff, had been found to be in the top ten in the Country.

177 MINUTES

The Minutes of the last meeting of the Board held on 13th July 2005 were agreed as a correct record.

Neighbourhood Issues (Minute 171):

At the previous meeting of the Board it had been agreed that, in the light of the Neighbourhood elements in recent Government documents and the current focus on neighbourhoods locally, the Halton Partnership Team co-ordinate a review of current practice in Halton. A small group had been formed and a report was to be submitted to the next meeting of the Board with some proposals.

178 PRESENTATION

The Board received a presentation from Mr Terry Parle, Chairman of the Halton Sports Partnership, and Ms Karen Drake, Halton Borough Council's Sports Development Officer regarding the contribution of sport to community priorities and the improvement agenda.

Following the presentation, the Board discussed a number of issues including:-

how resources were targeted and gaps in sports provision identified;
positive impact on disaffected families;
the impact on improving health;
the potential of working with the unemployed to raise self esteem;
work carried out by the Vikings in association with local schools; and
projects which dealt with youngsters at risk of offending or being excluded.

The Sports Partnership was congratulated for its excellent work which had a positive affect on thousands of people.

AGREED that the presentation be noted.

179 COMMUNITY STRATEGY PRIORITIES PROCESS

The Board received a report providing an update on progress being made in respect of the review of Halton's Community Strategy. Baseline reports had been drafted and were being considered by the Specialist Strategic Partnerships (SSPs) and an evaluation of the impact of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding (NRF) was being considered by the Council's External Funding Unit which would be available at the next Board meeting. It was noted that work was to be done everywhere to tighten how NRF was used and this would be reinforced through Local Area Agreements.

The most pivotal of the remaining priorities in the process was "Priority Setting" which provided the framework on which the rest of the process could be built. At its last meeting, the Board had endorsed a tentative realignment of thematic areas around the Key Priorities and these were discussed again by Members.

It was noted that a Partnership Away Day was planned for November and it was considered appropriate that this be used to bring the process to a close.

AGREED that the report be noted and a Partnership Away Day be held in November to agree the Priority Structure for the Community Strategy.

Chairman/I Grady

180 LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

The Board received a report providing an update on the implications of using Local Area Agreements (LAAs) from April 2006 as a means of operationalising the new Community Strategy; developing agreements in line with Government guidance and setting up the pooling and aligning of funding sources and targets.

It was noted that each Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) had now designated a lead officer to form a task group to look at the needs of the LAA process and the Group had produced an issues paper which was attached to the report for information.

The key considerations were outlined for the Board. It was noted that LAAs were the way to move forward although not yet having fixed priorities was a difficulty. However, it was proposed that a session on LAAs be held at the Partnership Away Day in November.

The Board noted that it would be valuable for the Partnership to go through this as a shadow process with GONW to ensure aims and objectives were lined up. This could also assist in deciding on the priorities for the Community Strategy.

AGREED that, once a consensus has been reached regarding priorities and partnership arrangements, a further report be submitted to the Board regarding LAAs.

I Grady

181 COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

The Board received a report providing an update on the work in progress to develop a new community engagement strategy for the Borough. The new approach had been widely shared with many partnership groupings throughout the Borough and the key points which had emerged from the consultation so far were outlined for consideration.

It was intended to launch the new strategy at the LSP conference on 5th October 2005. Following this, there would be a need to cement the new arrangements and for partners to adopt the amended approach.

The Chairman commented on the generally positive feedback received and commended those involved for their work on this project.

AGREED that the current position be noted and a further report be brought back in the new year with an action plan, review arrangements and future resource implications for carrying this forward.

I Grady

182 NEIGHBOURHOOD DATA MAPPING

The Board received a report outlining how it, and partners, could use data to identify priority neighbourhoods in Halton in order to assist in establishing measures and targets to ensure that these neighbourhoods improved more quickly than other areas.

Over recent months, an evaluation had taken place of five systems used by other local authorities and LSPs for these purposes and it could be seen that the most effective system for Halton was that provided by Local Futures. This was the only system which fulfilled all the essential criteria drawn up by a team of data management specialists: it also met two of the desirable criteria.

Further information regarding capabilities of the system and cost implications were outlined. It was noted that, in the first year, there would be a total cost of £50,000 (revenue and capital) followed by an annual revenue cost of £15,000 and Members discussed how this should be funded.

It was **AGREED** that:-

- (a) strategically, the Partnership must have the ability to share, analyse and utilise data at various spatial levels to inform its decision making;
- (b) the Local Futures system be implemented as the partnership data management system;
- (c) the initial capital cost of £35,000 be met through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund allocated to Central Partnership Activity; and
- (d) those partners with budgets share between them the ongoing revenue costs over the medium term.

I Grady

183 LSP ANNUAL REVIEW

The Board received a report outlining Government Office's assessment of the Partnership's annual performance self-assessment.

It was noted that, for this year's review, LSPs were asked to

assess their progress against targets and in improving conditions in deprived neighbourhoods, as well as effectiveness as a working partnership. This was to lead to an Improvement Plan of the key actions necessary to improve performance over the coming months.

Using the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit's traffic light system, the self-assessment of the overall performance in 2004-2005 was rated as Green. However, the report from Government Office stated that Halton had been given an overall Amber Green assessment. Although disappointing, this indicated that a clear evidence trail existed showing that activities and interventions across most of the LSP had been successful in delivery and there were clear actions to address the rest.

Ms Gill confirmed that the criteria had changed this year and had appeared later than was hoped. In addition, some of the underlying messages had been unclear. The Partnership already had an Improvement Plan (the Workplan) in place to manage forward the work on the Partnership. However, further amendment could be required in light of the specific observations made in Government Office's report about the need to be able to demonstrate the impact being made towards narrowing the gap for the most deprived neighbourhoods and disadvantaged groups. The Partnership was addressing this.

It was noted that the assessment was just on one area of the Partnership's work and further actions were being taken in order to improve performance. In addition, it was suggested that Performance Management be considered by the Board twice a year in order to highlight the process and encourage members to provide the evidence required. In particular, it was noted that the Improvement Plan would be submitted to the Board regularly for comment and review.

AGREED that the comments from Government be fed into the Partnership Improvement Plan and be reported to the SSPs.

I Grady

184 HALTON FESTIVAL AND HALTON SHOW EVALUATION

The Board received a report regarding the Partnership's involvement in this year's Halton Festival and Halton Show. The Partnership had hosted a marquee at the Show which featured:-

- a dedicated area for each of the five priorities;
- over 100 display panels;
- giveaways; and
- interactive activities.

This approach had worked well in providing a clear Partnership "brand" and large numbers of people had visited the marquee over the weekend. However, it was considered that further improvement could be achieved by having a presence with a different focus featuring a smaller number of display panels about the new priorities for Halton

with a range of interactive activities clearly related to them. There could also be scope for changing the lay-out.

The Board discussed the excellent work undertaken by Mr Ian Bissett and his team in organising the event and that of Mr Matthew Atherton who had focused on marketing and organising the Partnership's Marquee. It was noted that the work involved for the marquee had been considerably more than anticipated and consideration needed to be given to the resourcing of this for any future shows.

AGREED that the feedback be noted.

185 COMMUNITY EMPOWERMENT NETWORK REPORT

The Board received an update from the Community Empowerment Network on developments since the last meeting. It was noted that work was starting on organising an Annual Away Day expected to be held in January 2006.

AGREED that the report be noted.

186 NEIGHBOURHOOD RENEWAL FUND REPORT

The Board received the full Quarter 1 reports from the SSPs. It was reported that the Quarter 2 returns had just been issued to co-ordinators and were due back by the end of October. The full progress report would then be sent to the Board in November. Members noted that the timetable of Board meetings did not tie in well with progress reporting periods and needed to be looked at in 2006 and beyond to ensure they allowed the Board to consider up-to-date progress information.

The following oral reports were received:-

Urban Renewal

- Work was ongoing regarding partner involvement, particularly from the private sector.
- There had been constraints on the activities of the Partnership due to the nature, scale and level of external funding which was an issue yet to be resolved.

Wealth and Equality

- Lots of projects were being delivered by the voluntary sector and there was an issue about sustainability.
- A "Communities That Care Audit" had been carried out for secondary schools and the final report had been sent to each Headteacher with school specific data. An aggregate report, without this data, was now being drafted. The Audit gave a significant idea about what young

people thought and there were some critical messages to be considered.

Health

- A letter had been received from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister and a Health Partnership meeting had been held that morning to look at actions that could be taken to encourage participation.
- Partners also had the opportunity to respond to any area of interest and consultation feedback from staff or clients would also be welcome. Members were requested to contact Dr D Seddon who could resource this and who would be co-ordinating a response to be fed into the White Paper regarding Health Services in the Community.

All

Chairman

Contact had been made from Groundwork Mersey Valley seeking a position on the Board. Implications of this were considered by Members and it was **AGREED** that:-

- (1) the Membership of the Board be considered at the Partnership's Away Day; and
- (2) in the interim, the appropriate SSP be requested to invite Groundwork Mersey Valley to participate pending the broader review.

*Meeting commenced at 9.30 a.m.
and ended at 12.00 p.m.*