

# Our DREAM for HALTON

#Haltondream

## HIGH ASPIRATIONS

**BARRIERS**

- INEQUALITIES
- POVERTY
- FUNDING
- HOUSING
- TRANSPORT
- RESOURCES
- SYSTEMS
- HEALTH
- SILO WORKING

LACK of UNDERSTANDING, COMPASSION, INSPIRATION  
RED TAPE and BUREAUCRACY  
FEAR of CHANGE

Empowering Communities for better lives

Joined up Community

Accessibility

**LOCAL LIFE**

OPPORTUNITIES

JOB

BUSINESSES

SHOPS

EVERY CHILD A CHANGE MAKER

SCHOOL

WE WANT TO COME BACK

we have great ROLE MODELS

we are very Tolerant



LET'S CO-OPERATE

I NEED FAIR PAY

I'M LISTENING

I'D LIKE TO SEE

I LOVE all the GREEN Spaces

I LOVE the HEALTHY LIVING



LET'S CELEBRATE what's great

**LOCAL EMPOWERMENT**

CO CREATE

Rediscover CULTURAL ASSETS

BUILD & IDENTIFY

OWNERSHIP

Ownership - Value - Community Spirit

Cultivate and harness energy for change

There is potential

BROADEN HORIZONS

@visualminutes

Drawn by WWW.MORE THAN MINUTES.CO.UK



**"As you enter positions of trust and power, dream a little before you think."**

Toni Morrison



## **Why do we need A Dream for Halton?**

The past 2-3 decades have seen multiple national and local commitments to reducing health inequalities and tackling disadvantage and poverty in the UK. Yet, most indicators suggest that these efforts have not succeeded. Here in Halton, the health inequalities for local people are substantial with people spending, on average, a greater proportion of their lives with an illness or health issue that limits their daily activity (e.g. cancer and COPD) when compared to the average for England<sup>1</sup>. Linked to this, there are longstanding challenges in relation to tackling obesity, alcohol related harm and mental health problems, which are mirrored in neighbouring areas where levels of deprivation are similarly higher than the national average<sup>1</sup>. In Halton a significant proportion of children live in poverty<sup>1</sup>, and research has shown that issues associated with childhood poverty can have a negative impact on people's chances through the life course<sup>2,3</sup>. Moreover, life expectancy for both men and women is lower in Halton than the England average; by around 2 years for men and 2.5 years for women.<sup>1</sup>

A recent article by Scott-Samuel and Smith<sup>4</sup> argues that policies to try to reduce health inequalities in the UK have largely been unsuccessful because most interventions focus on 'downstream', easily tackled exposures (such as lifestyle-behaviours: smoking, diet, alcohol, drugs, etc), despite evidence that the causes lie 'upstream', with structural, systemic and societal problems. This is reflected in our experiences on the ground at Halton.

If we are to achieve real change then we need to move beyond short-term fixes and constant fire-fighting and instead focus on achieving a collective vision of where we want to get to ('the dream'). A Dream for Halton allows us to then work backwards to identify what needs to happen to achieve this dream, step-by-step. Collective visions of the future have the potential to inspire and motivate and, therefore, to achieve transformative change. This will empower local communities and local people.

This is our ambition for Halton.

## Who are the Dreamers for Halton?

This project had been enabled by the Halton Third Sector Consortium, which is made up of the following five organisations:

- **Age UK Mid-Mersey**
- **Citizens' Advice Halton**
- **Halton Disability Partnership**
- **Nightstop Communities North-West**
- **Wellbeing Enterprises CIC**

These organisations collectively have many years of experience working with local people in Halton to co-design and co-deliver community-led responses that help to tackle social problems, and build solidarity and resilience in times of hardship. These organisations agreed to come together to pool their practical knowledge and experience to develop a

dream for the borough working alongside the local people. A Dream for Halton is supported by Professor Katherine Smith, at the University of Edinburgh, who obtained funding support via a School of Social & Political Science Strategic Impact Grant.

Everyone involved was clear from the outset that any 'Dream for Halton' must be collectively created and owned if it is to have any local legitimacy. We began with a workshop in March 2018, in which staff and beneficiaries of the five organisations listed above came together to explore what a Dream for Halton might look like, facilitated by Halton & St Helens VCA and Professor Smith. A community artist provided visual minutes of the day. The rest of this leaflet sets out our collective Dream.

### The Long-term Dream (where we want to get to)

#### The community

- Everyone feels able to achieve their potential
- Everyone has something positive to live for
- People, whatever their disabilities and challenges, are enabled to access full inclusion and citizenship
- Children growing up in Halton are active citizens
- Halton functions as a joined-up community
- People live with dignity and feel valued
- There is no (or very little) crime

#### The economy

- Everybody has a job opportunity
- There is no poverty in Halton

#### The services

- Halton is known for its good schools
- Halton is known for its good healthcare
- Anyone with a problem is able to get the help and support they need

#### The environment

- Halton has plentiful green spaces (e.g. allotments)
- Halton is litter free

#### Engagement:

- Local people control local affairs





## The Near Dream (what we can achieve in next 3-5 years)

### The community

- Local communities begin to feel they have something positive to strive for
- Those involved in education/schools encourage children to become active and to make their voices heard (while encouraging others to listen and respond)
- People have high aspirations, especially for young people
- Everyone makes a contribution that is valued
- There is greater tolerance for different social groups and identities
- There is a strong, emerging community spirit
- More people have pride in Halton
- Local people feel listened to, engaged and empowered

### The economy

- Investment, and incentives for investment, in Halton increase

### The services

- Parents feel better supported
- Statutory services, the VCSE sector and private companies unite around a common, shared purpose
- The third sector forms pivotal part of healthcare services
- Services engage with, and respond to, community needs
- Services work with others to ensure they are sustainable
- Agencies look beyond institutional boundaries, building solidarity and complementing each other's efforts

### The environment

- More green spaces emerge and are used
- Halton becomes a more attractive place to live
- Litter decreases

### Engagement:

- Halton community is given a voice and listened to, with their input affecting local changes

## Taking Action

### Actions we have taken and will now build on:

- We are working collectively to co-create this Dream for Halton with our beneficiaries and the wider Halton community
- We will continue to work with the local community to develop this Dream, allowing it to evolve as Halton evolves

### Actions we will take:

- We will work together, and with our local communities, to celebrate Halton's existing positives and engender a sense of pride
- We will work collectively and with community members to identify local role models and facilitate leadership roles and dialogue with young people
- We will work to recognise local community champions
- We work to involve local people (particularly young people and those who are disempowered) in our decision-making, and to connect local people to higher level decisions, through dialogue, listening, meeting, respecting, sharing power and acting as interpreters
- We will work together to cultivate energy for change by identifying local allies, assets and people

- We will work together and with allies to establish a community fund to which local people apply (to run/develop clubs/events, etc)
- We will support existing services to keep running, in the context of cuts
- We will work to ensure new services and developments are sustainable
- We will work collectively to identify new ways of structuring and delivering services that prioritise preventative pathways
- We will work collectively and with community members to cultivate energy for change
- We will spot opportunities for quick wins and changes that can support our Dream
- We will broaden the employment horizons of local children by helping them to think about different types of jobs, including through apprenticeships & appropriate qualifications

### Policies/changes we will lobby for:

- We will push to ensure transport is accessible for people living in Halton
- We will encourage local businesses to work to help, and invest in, the local community
- We will work with decision makers to redistribute some decision making to local people
- We will help community members to utilise community assets

## Overcoming challenges

Our Dream for Halton is ambitious and although we are convinced it is achievable, there are some obstacles that we need to work to overcome...

### Overcoming challenges / turning challenges into opportunities

- We will build collective visions of hope that help us overcome feelings of hopelessness
- We will work collectively, rather than in silos
- We will keep our own egos in check
- We will express our understanding and compassion and work to actively support anyone experiencing disadvantage/discrimination or poor health
- We will avoid box-ticking and red-tape wherever we can
- We will work with others to generate revenue for Halton (rather than accepting that resources are always being cut)
- We will make long-term (not short-sighted) decisions for our organisations and communities
- We will overcome any fear of change we might have
- We will share the dream we have with local communities



### Overcoming higher-level obstacles by lobbying for change

- We will promote our vision for Halton to commissioners and other decision-makers and encourage their involvement in inspiring change and achieving this Dream
- We will lobby for more funding/ resource for Halton (and against funding cuts), particularly for young people and education, transport, housing and mental health.
- As part of this, we will encourage dialogue around revenue generation for Halton
- We will push back against negative accounts of Halton and its population
- We will work to encourage new investment in Halton high streets, particularly from ventures that are not health damaging
- We will support local commissioners and decision makers to engage with local communities
- We will draw attention to any negative consequences of higher-level decisions for Halton and collectively hold decision-makers to account



<sup>1</sup> Public Health England Fingertips (2018). PHE Fingertips website [online]. <https://fingertips.phe.org.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> Tyrka A. R., Ridout, K. K., Parade, S. H. (2016). Childhood adversity and epigenetic regulation of glucocorticoid signalling genes: Associations in children and adults, *Development and Psychopathology*, 28:1319-13313

<sup>3</sup> Marmot, M. (2010). *Fair Society, Healthy Lives: Strategic Review of Health Inequalities in England (The Marmot Review)*. Institute of Health Equity, London

<sup>4</sup> Scott-Samuel, A. and Smith, K.E. (2015) Fantasy Paradigms of Health Inequalities: utopian thinking? *Social Theory & Health*, 13(4): 418-36

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In partnership with:

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