

Public Document Pack



Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

Monday, 10 September 2007 at 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', positioned above a faint rectangular stamp.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Eddie Jones (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Frank Fraser (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Peter Blackmore	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Susan Edge	Labour
Councillor David Findon	Conservative
Councillor Harry Howard	Labour
Councillor David Lewis	Conservative
Councillor Stan Parker	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrat
Councillor John Stockton	Labour
Councillor Philip Worrall	Liberal Democrat

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The next meeting of the Board is on Monday, 12 November 2007*

**ITEMS TO BE DEALT WITH
IN THE PRESENCE OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC**

Part I

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1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation

procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10TH September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 34 (11).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(11) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows: -
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
 - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
 - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be submitted by 4.00 pm on the day prior to the meeting. At any meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
 - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
 - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter, which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak: -

- Please keep questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note that public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

6.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10th September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Minutes relating to the Employment Learning and Skills Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub since the last meeting are usually attached for information. However, in this instance, there have been no minutes relating to the remit of this Board since the last meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

There are no background papers under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10 September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Merseyside Sports Partnership

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To receive a presentation by the Director of the Merseyside Sports Partnership on its work and achievements 2006-07, and its priority areas of work 2007-08.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The presentation be received.
- (2) The Board questions/comments on the work of the Partnership and in particular its relevance to Halton.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The principle activity of the Partnership is the strategic co-ordination, performance measurement and marketing of sport and physical activity across Greater Merseyside.
- 3.2 It is primarily funded through Sport England and contributions from each local authority (£10k each). There is some sponsorship and income generated. Service Level Agreements exist between the Local Authorities and the Partnership.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Local Authorities are consulted regarding the strategic direction of the Partnership, and are represented on the Partnership Board.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Council contributes £10k per annum. This is in the Council's core budget. Local Authority contributions draw down £550k from Sport England.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Sport and physical activity improves individuals quality of life, contributing to health improvements, employment opportunities and social inclusion.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None

9.0 List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10 September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Sports Facilities Strategy

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To review progress of the Sports Facilities Strategy

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) The PPB comments on and questions progress against the Sports Facilities Strategy.
- (2) The PPB requests an annual report on progress against the strategy.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Halton Borough Council published its first sports strategy in 2002. Part of this was a Sports Facilities Strategy agreed after extensive consultation with the 'sporting community'.
- 3.2 The Strategy highlighted a number of key priority areas. These included: -
- Improving pitches and changing facilities.
 - Improving all weather provision, floodlit training provision.
 - The need for an athletics facility.
 - Investment in Leisure Centres.
 - Multi-use games areas and outdoor pursuits.
- 3.3 Much has been achieved. The Council has invested in facilities, but funding has also been brought into the borough from a range of sources; Big Lottery, Sport England, W.R.E.N, private sector, etc. Improvements have seen: -
- A 3-year pitch drainage and improvement programme.
 - 3 new floodlit all-weather pitches.
 - Upgrades of all leisure centres.
 - Floodlit training areas.
 - A full athletics facility.
 - A baseball diamond.
 - 2 skate parks.
 - 2 climbing boulders.
 - New changing facilities.

- 3.4 The Strategy was reviewed in 2006 in consultation with Halton Sports Partnership, local residents and organisations with a vested interest in sport in Halton. A new strategy covering 2006-2009 was produced. From the consultation the following priority areas were identified.
- Continue grass pitch drainage programme.
 - Develop floodlit provision for local amateur sport.
 - Improve changing rooms for outdoor pitches.
 - Develop grass training pitches.
 - Development of two show pitches.
 - Expand multi-use games activity areas.
- 3.5 This PPB's Sports Topic Group has also considered and contributed to the review. In addition to the above it has identified the need to improve High School Sports Facilities for public use, increase the number of pitches, identify training provision for disable sports.
- 3.6 The table below summaries proposals for improvement. It must be stressed that funding is not fully in place to implement it. A major task is to try and secure the funding to make the proposed improvements.

Proposed Development	Location	Sources of Funding	Timescale	Estimated Cost at 2005
Football/Rugby Pitches drainage and changing facilities at the Heath Park	Already completed Arley Drive The Heath Park 2006/07 The Heath Park Haddocks Wood King George 5 th Leigh Recreation Ground (upper) 2007/08 Halton Sports (upper) Wilmere Lane (football) Prescot Road Woodside	HBC	1-3 years	£1.5m
New changing facilities convert shale pitch to grass pitch	Halton Sports	To be determined	2+ years	£400,000
Runcorn show pitch (post and rail fence and dugouts)	The Heath Park	HBC	1-2 years	£20,000
Widnes show pitch (post and rail and dugouts)	Wade Deacon/St Peter and Paul Or ICI Recreation Club	HBC HBC subject to SLA	1-2 years	£20,000
Athletics Track & Floodlit grass pitch	Wade Deacon/St Peter and Paul	HBC UK Athletics Sports	Construction Summer 2006 Completion Dec	£1.75m

		England	2006	
Resurface, line mark and floodlight for multi use sports e.g. tennis, basketball courts and make available as a training venue for football and rugby etc.	Runcorn Hill £55k Victoria Park £50k	HBC	1-2 years	£105,000
Floodlit multi use sports Facilities/training areas	6 sites to be determined Area Panels	Area Panels Government funds	1-3 years	£360,000
Indoor multi use training barn	Wade Deacon/St Peter and Paul	To be determined	2+ years	£700k
Stand for Athletics facility	Wade Deacon/St Peter and Paul	To be determined	2+ years	£700k
Remediation work required at St Michaels Golf Course	St Michaels Course, Dundalk Road	DEFRA	4+ years	To be determined
Explore joint use sports facilities in partnership with Halton College	Runcorn	LSC Lottery FA	3+ years	To be determined

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Strategy has been endorsed by the Borough Council and the Sports Partnership.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Sources of finance will need to be identified to fully implement the strategy. Other needs may also emerge. There is a need to monitor progress on a regular basis and consider any new proposals.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Sport and physical activity not only helps to improve the quality of life of an individual, but also contributes to achieving a broad range of social issues including health improvement, education and lifelong learning, crime reduction and community safety, social inclusion and community cohesion, regeneration and improvements to the environment. Opportunities will arise to consider school and community provision in the context of Building Schools for the Future.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Lack of adequate, well-maintained facilities will not allow the aspirations in Paragraph 6 to be achieved. Currently facilities and resident satisfaction contribute to the CPA and participation to the LSPA. The Council's performance will suffer if there is a lack of adequate facilities.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Conforming to the Disability Discrimination Act is a requirement of any new development. Disability Sport is a fast growing area in HALTON and overall facilities for the disable are being reviewed.

9.0 List of Background Papers under Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10 September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health and Community

SUBJECT: Capital of Culture – Youth Festival

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To bring to the PPB'S attention a report taken to Executive Board Sub Committee on 6th September 2007 about the Youth Cultural Festival (Attached as Appendix 1).

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) **The PPB endorse the approach to the Youth Cultural Festival.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The PPB has previously supported the Capital of Culture programme and recommended to Executive Board the concept of the Cultural Festival.

4.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Executive Board Sub Committee 06.09.07	Municipal Building, Widnes	Howard Cockcroft Operational Director Culture & Leisure
Executive Board Committee 29.03.07	Municipal Building, Widnes	Howard Cockcroft Operational Director Culture & Leisure

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee
DATE: 6 September 2007
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health and Community
SUBJECT: Capital of Culture – Youth Festival
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider proposals for a Youth Cultural Festival in July 2008 as part of Halton's Capital of Culture programme, and to seek approval to begin to commit expenditure to support the event.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

That orders can be placed to a maximum value of £110,000 to enable the Youth Cultural Festival in July 2008 to take place.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At its meeting of 29th March 2007 the Executive Board approved Halton's approach to its involvement in Capital of Culture.

3.2 As part of this approved approach was the proposal to host a major Youth Festival in 2008. It was envisaged that all Merseyside's Authorities and their twin towns would be invited to participate in a two day show which highlighted youth performance and offered opportunities to exchange different local cultures.

3.3 A budget akin to the Halton Show (£150,000) is required to host the event. £40k would be made available via the Capital of Culture Company and other forms of funding through sponsorship, grants would be sought.

3.4 To allow the event to go ahead with confidence however, the event needed to be underwritten to a maximum of £110,000. The Executive Boards agreed this in principle at its meeting of 29 March 2007.

3.5 The venue for the event will be Spike Island. It will include the culmination of many events which have taken place in the preceding months. These will include workshops, "The Best of" style competitions such a Battle of the Bands or other theatrical performance and sporting competitions. All the other Boroughs within the Merseyside region and the Twin Towns have similar programmes and therefore welding the items together should not prove a problem.

- 3.6 To ensure the event is as inclusive as possible, the use of new technology will allow the posting of messages and images from other parts of the Merseyside Region and their Twin Towns. Opportunities will then exist for everyone to be involved without the need to travel. This style of activity although ensuring freedom to post for everyone will be monitored to ensure integrity. The technology will also allow video images to be seen which could be sent from the event itself.
- 3.7 The bulk of the resources will be spent of providing infrastructure such as stages, marquees, toilets, stewards and other necessary safety and welfare expenditure.
- 3.8 There will also be the opportunity to engage in the event itself. By providing other activity as well as the best of Merseyside, young people will be able to take part in on the day activities such as rock climbing, skateboarding, fashion shows and many other activities which have been brought forward through consultation with the Youth Parliament and young people of Halton.

5.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The inclusion of the event within the Liverpool Capital Of Culture 2008 will enhance the reputation of the Borough within The Merseyside District.
- 5.2 At the outset this will be a one year only event.

6.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 A budget of £150,000 is required to host the event. Capital of Culture Company is contributing £40,000. This leaves a shortfall of £110,000. This sum should be reduced through sponsorship and income, but ultimately this cannot be guaranteed. Such an event needs a significant lead in period, and organisers need to be assured that they can commit budgets to allow the event to go ahead. The budget does not include any costs associated with bringing delegates and parties from our twin towns, which would be covered by existing Town Twinning arrangements. Further details, including financial estimates will be presented to the appropriate PPB(s) on a regular basis.

7.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 7.1 The risk of running an event such as this present many challenging issues
- a) Ensuring the success of the event by inclusion of other towns. This will be addressed through the Cultural forums within Merseyside and through the Capital of Culture Company.
 - b) The production of an event of professional quality. The Event will be organised by the Promotions and Tourism Team who have over 20 years experience of organising events such as The Halton Show, Vintage Fair Rally and the annual Fireworks event.
 - c) The Investment of resources. To release resources of this

magnitude could incur a risk of criticism from residents. The issues surrounding the Local Authorities prominence in the Merseyside Region and its growing reputation as a Council which engages with the local population will drive this event forward, Consultation with Young people and The Youth Parliament will ensure representation and an ability to show the event is for the whole of Halton.

- d) Cancellation. There could be many reasons for contemplating cancellation of an event of this magnitude. The experience of running major events in the past has shown that even in poor weather the event can still take place with careful management.

8.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Every effort will be made to ensure the event is as inclusive as it can be within the limitations of the budget and resources available.

9.0 **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972**

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Executive Board Report 29 th March 2007	Municipal Buildings	Howard Cockcroft

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills PPB

DATE: 10th September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Health and Community

SUBJECT: Library Service update

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To update Members on the developments of the Library Service and to highlight the range of activities organised to promote the service

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The report be received
- (2) Members comment on the developments and promotional activities of the service

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Big Lottery

3.1.1 A Big Lottery application was submitted to the Community Libraries Fund at the end of March this year. The bid for just under £1.5 million will, if successful, modernise and redevelop the space and facilities at Halton Lea Library. The aim will be to provide a more accessible, flexible learning space for learning and reading activities and a welcoming community space that meets the needs of all users. The outcome of the bidding process should be known in September.

3.2 Outreach Collections

3.2.1 The service has developed a number of deposit collections in outreach venues. At present these comprise, Riverside College on the three campuses, Mind Halton, Ashley House, Excel (Tibbert and Brittain), Daresbury All Saints Church, Connexions and Bridgewater Day Centre. New collections are currently being considered for Halton Lodge Children's Centre and Halton Hospital.

3.2.2 Nursery deposit collections are also available in the following locations, Halty's Den, Butterflies, All Saints, Ladybirds, Kingsway and Murdishaw Health Centre for their PEEP's (Peers Early Education Partnership) group.

- 3.2.3 Collections are regularly exchanged and people using the service are encouraged to visit the static libraries or mobile to enjoy a wider range of material.

3.3 Bookstart

- 3.3.1 The Library Service co-ordinates the delivery of the Bookstart Scheme in the Borough in partnership with Health Visitors. Booktrust administer the scheme nationally and have recently completed a framework review of the scheme in Halton. This highlighted areas of good practice that included the percentage reach of packs delivered across all age groups and the work being undertaken to provide the scheme to service users of Ashley House.
- 3.3.2 The Department for Children, Schools and Families is supporting the expansion of the gifting scheme Booktime, which aims to give a free book pack to every reception age child in England. The Booktime scheme promotes reading for pleasure by encouraging parents and carers to read aloud to their children and help foster a love of books at a key stage in their child's education and development. The Library Service will be involved in delivering these to schools in the Autumn and adding value by holding family reading events and class visits linked to the gift book.

3.4 Summer Reading Challenge

- 3.4.1 To encourage children to continue reading throughout the summer holidays the service participated in the annual Summer Reading Challenge. The theme this year was the Big Wild Read and a series of events was organised to support the scheme. Over 800 children participated each child received a collectors card and used this to record the details of the books they had read during the summer. Stickers and bookmarks were awarded for each book read and for those children who read at least 6 books a medal and certificate were presented. The Woodland Trust has been involved this year and has planted new trees throughout the country for every book read.
- 3.4.2 Activities supporting the Big Wild Read included Mini-beasts, Big Wild Rhymes and a Rainforest Roadshow. Over 200 children attended the events, a significant increase on previous years attendance.

3.5 Young People's Projects

- 3.5.1 The various lottery and regionally funded projects working with young people are progressing well. The teenage reading group at Halton Lea Library now have a regular membership of 10-12 and call themselves "Booking Mad". They have been involved in choosing stock for the teenage section and following a book-buying visit took part in a social event in Halton Lea's coffee bar, which was attended by 35-40 young people. This social event proved so popular that a

Young Persons Café now takes place every Wednesday between 3.30pm and 5.30pm. It is regularly attended by 10-30 young people who meet to chat, play cards, listen to their music and take part in workshops such as Manga, Anti-makeover, Rapping and Drama.

- 3.5.2 In February the young people took part in a website building workshop and the "Booking Mad" website was created supported by young people who chat, write reviews and send in artwork and photos. In May they worked with the BBC Big Bus to produce a film promoting the Booking Mad group to other young people. Most of the young people who are part of this group will also form the steering group involved in the Book Bars project that will design and create a new space for teenagers in Halton Lea Library

3.6 Heritage Open Days

- 3.6.1 The service is participating in the Civic Trust's Heritage Open Days this year, which are taking place during September. A Heritage Trail in Runcorn is planned for the afternoon of September 19th. A free Runcorn Heritage Walk leaflet has been produced in partnership with Runcorn Historical Society and Tourist Information.
- 3.6.2 An open event will take place at Kingsway Learning Centre on 22nd September with tours of the building and the opportunity to find out more about local history, tracing family trees and the special collection of Railway materials housed in Widnes Library.
- 3.6.3 The regular events, Reading Groups, Family History Clinics, Halton Daemons and MARA (Merseyside Anomalies Research Association) Paranormal talks continue to be well supported. Following customer feedback several MARA events have been held at Ditton Library, over 40 people have attended and the feedback has been with very positive.

3.7 Other Reader Development Activities

A programme of diverse activities is planned for the Autumn including Africa Day, the Mystery Men, Pure Passion and Black History Month and consideration is now being given to the range of activities for 2008 which has been designated the Year of Reading.

3.8 Mobile Library

- 3.8.1 As reported to the last PPB the new Mobile Library timetable has been well received and the level of use of the service continues to exceed expectations. At the end of July 2007 the number of new customers on the Mobile was 750. Both visits and membership have increased over 100% and issues have increased by 50%

- 3.8.2 Winchester Place along with Edendale are among the busiest and most vibrant stops. Stops in Sandymoor have been increased and Walsingham Drive is one of the busiest in Runcorn. The Park and Read stops are well used with the stop in Phoenix Park proving to be the busiest.
- 3.8.3 The Mobile has attended a number of community events including the Montgomery Road Community Action event, Halton Young People's Health event in Victoria Park, the Harry Potter event in Wicksten Drive and the Family Day on Wigg Island. These events have been used to promote the service as well as joining customers and lending books.
- 3.8.4 The extended Mobile service has been widely publicised with articles in the local papers and other magazines. The increased use of the service has also been featured on Wire FM and in the Liverpool Echo.
- 3.8.5 Members asked for information on the cost of providing an additional vehicle. The capital cost of a fully equipped vehicle is in the region of £100k with the revenue costs being approximately £48k per annum. There are clearly no identified resources to purchase and run a new vehicle. Indeed there has been no feasibility work done to assess the need for another mobile.

3.8.6

3.9 Levels of use

- 3.9.1 The range of reading development activities has been a contributing factor in the significant increase in visits the service has seen over the period April to July this year. Compared to the equivalent period in 2006, 33,000 extra visits were recorded. In July Halton Lea Library recorded its highest number of visits (26,291) this decade.
- 3.9.2 Issues figures have remained constant during this period which reflects the pattern that significant numbers of people now use the service for other purposes not just to borrow books, such as using the community facilities, using the computers and accessing information.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The Library Service improves individuals quality of life and contributes to achieving a broad range of social issues including education and lifelong learning, social inclusion and community cohesion

7.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer

REPORT TO:	Employment, Learning & Skills Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	10 September 2007
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Health & Community
SUBJECT:	Community Development
WARDS:	Borough Wide

3.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to inform the Employment, Learning & Skills Policy and Performance Board of the contribution that the Community Development Service has made in the delivery of the Cultural and Leisure Service Plan and the five key Corporate Priorities over the last municipal year, 2006/07.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- (1) **That the report be noted**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 It is the ambition of government to give citizens and communities a much bigger say in the services they receive and in the quality of the communities and environment in which they live. A wide range of policies designed to stimulate community engagement in public affairs and local regeneration has supported this aim.

The implementation of policies on community involvement and engagement depend fundamentally on adopting a community development approach. The role of community development is often overlooked at higher levels of policy although there is a wide reliance on its methods at the level of implementation. Community development plays an important behind-the-scenes role in achieving the objectives of a wide variety of public policies. The service is often delivered in a low-key style, the emphasis on the role as providing background support rather than leadership reinforces this low profile.

The Department for Communities and Local Government recognises the role Community Development plays in encouraging and empowering people to gain control over the conditions in which they live and the importance of providing practitioners with local and regional networks.

The rest of this report highlights the contribution Community Development makes to this agenda.

3.2 The Community Development Team is part of the Community Involvement Team (CIT) portfolio, which sits in Culture and Leisure Service. The team is headed by The Community Development Manager who in turn supports the Senior Community Development Officer; The Community Centre's Manager and The Voluntary Sector Co-ordinator.

3.3 The Community Development Team has been delivering services on a neighbourhood basis since January 2003. Each Community Development Officer is responsible for an Area Forum and wherever possible they are based within the patch. The team work with local residents, community groups and various organisations and agencies across Halton to positively tackle issues that affect the quality of life for residents.

3.4 The Community Development Team currently consists of: -

- Senior Community Development Officer
- Four full-time Development Officers
- Two part-time development officers

The team was fully staffed for the first time for a number of years until the last quarter of the year when two members of staff left to take up employment elsewhere. Cover for the vacant posts will be provided by the existing team members; enabling the delivery of a service across all wards in the borough.

3.5 To ensure that the service is managed effectively and in line with best practice, Performance Indicators have been set and Monitoring and Evaluation systems have been developed. Each community Development Officer has prepared and distributed an annual report to their Ward Councillors, which included these monitoring figures, a short outline of support given to community organisation and details of funding secured as a result of their involvement. Below is a summary of achievements in the year 2006 – 2007.

3.6 In 2006 – 2007 the Community Development Team provided direct and ongoing support to 99 community organisations, enabling and encouraging the development of the skills community groups need to ensure they can play a key role in improving their neighbourhoods. The Community Development Officers have also provided support and advice with 92 community led initiatives, where the emphasis has been on a local organisations driving a project or initiative of benefit to their community, 37, 382 participants have accessed or benefited from this activity through out the year. Good examples of this are the Kingsway

Bike Project and the Friends of Runcorn Hill who provide activities throughout the year in the park. The number of local people involved in this community activity as volunteers increased by a further 123 on the previous year giving a total of 1,139 in 2006 – 2007.

- 3.7 The Community Development Officers are active in developing and facilitating partnership activities at a neighbourhood and borough wide level. Improving networking and co-ordination with partners and other stakeholder groups this has assisted with improved targeting of resources and better service delivery to local communities. In 2006 – 2007 we worked in partnership with 83 partner organisations on 155 projects and initiatives benefiting local communities.
- 3.8 Community Development provides funding support to community organisations enabling them to access funding streams locally and nationally. Community Development Officers with local groups have assisted in securing £479,326 in external funding and £10,306 from internal funding pots for local projects and initiatives, a total of £489,632.
- 3.9 Community Development undertakes an annual evaluation with our community service users as part of our ongoing drive to improve the service. This provides a mechanism for users to comment and make suggestions for future service delivery that is open, clear, unbiased and robust. Demonstrating that customer input is valued and where possible leads to change in practice.

The community organisations supported by the Community Development Team last year were asked to participate in the evaluation of the service; 60% returned a completed evaluation forms.

The results of this exercise were very positive and demonstrated that local organisations valued the service; found it accessible; felt it made a difference to how they functioned; delivered the service they requested; and was a service they would recommend to others. There were no negative comments on the service delivered.

The following is a summary of suggestions made on how to improve the service: -

- Improve marketing material for the service, leaflets use of media etc
- Contact groups with updated funding information
- Publicise good ideas and successful projects to encourage other groups, use the internet
- Provide training opportunities for group members.

- Presentations on the service to small groups

Action is being taken on all of the above suggestions.

A number of additional comments were also received: -

- That personal contact with the groups was very important
- Gaps in provision because of staff vacancies were disruptive to groups
- It was important to maintain a pro-active approach
- Maintain staffing levels

We now need to take evaluating the service a step further in analysing who isn't benefiting from the service. This will allow us to identify any gaps in service delivery and target resources to tackle exclusion.

Borough wide Initiatives and Projects

3.10 The Halton Community Development Practitioners Forum provides a leadership role and facilitates a cohesive approach to community development across all sectors in the borough. The forum provides a mechanism for networking, sharing of best practice and common issues.

Halton Borough Council Community Development provides the lead and the forum meets quarterly. There 37 local agencies represented on the forum. The meetings are well attended and valued by participants.

Key outcomes for the year include: the continued strengthening of regional links, particularly with Merseyside; Raising awareness in the sector of the need for Business Continuity Planning and an understanding of the role the sector would need to play in the event of a Pandemic Flu outbreak; Strengthening of the links with the Halton Community Engagement Network.

3.11 Community Development has supported the implementation of the Neighbourhood Management Initiative in both a strategic context and in the grass roots delivery across the three patch areas. We have provided a pivotal role in providing links with established community activity and networks with stakeholders. We undertook a baseline assessment of community activity in the neighbourhood management area's and have re-focussed our service delivery to provide targeted support to the initiative.

This type of support is mirrored across many other initiatives and partnerships in the Borough as by its very nature, Community Development is well placed to provide a platform on which to engage with our communities and our team's support underpins a plethora of activity, initiatives and partnerships i.e. The Halton Community Engagement Network; Older Peoples Services and The Safer Halton Partnership

The Community Development service supports a strategic approach to community engagement ensuring we meet our requirements in a policy context and supporting evolving needs of engagement. Over the last municipal year Community Development has, along with our colleagues in Policy and the PPB working group been focussing on cohesion and what this means for the Borough. The service regularly provides support to other departments and partners in both reaching communities and shaping their plans for engagement.

- 3.12 Community Development administers two streams of internal funding, Starter and Community Development Grants and Voluntary Youth Grants.

Community Development and Starter Grants

These grants are available for pump priming and the delivery of community led initiatives.

In 2006 –2007 the budget was £6,900
25 Grants have been awarded

Total £6,670

STARTER GRANTS

Ward	Group Name	Total Awarded
Ditton	St Michaels Residents Association	£150
Norton North	Halton A.D.H.D. Support Group	£150
Castlefields	Crafty Sew' n 'Sews	£150
Windmill Hill	The Three C's	£150
	Total	£600

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT GRANTS

Ward	Group Name	Total Awarded
Hale	Hale Dance Club	£400
Appleton	Streets Ahead Tenants & Residents Ass.	£300
Riverside	West Bank Community Forum	£ 70
Hale	Hale branch Royal British Legion	£400
Hough Green	H.G, Millennium Arts Project	£400
Castlefields	Castlefields Community Forum	£400
Riverside	West Bank Community Forum	£200
Borough Wide	Widnes Rugby League Heritage Group	£320

Halton View	Friends of Crow Wood	£150
Heath	Friends of Runcorn Hill	£ 60
Borough Wide	Halton Diabetes UK Voluntary Group	£400
Appleton	St Bede's Jubilee Club	£400
Kingsway	Kingsway Tenants & Residents Ass.	£235
Borough Wide	Loose	£350
Norton South	Brookvale & Manor Fell Residents Ass.	£390
Borough Wide	Headway Halton	£175
Norton South	Murdishaw Arts Co-operative	£400
Norton North	Murdishaw Community Centre Ltd.	£120
Castlefields	Castlefields Community Forum	£250
Halton Brook	Halton Brook Carnival Committee	£400
Heath	Friends of Runcorn Hill	£250
	Total	£6,070

Voluntary Youth Organisations Grants and Bursaries for Young People

Voluntary youth grants are available to voluntary/community organisations who organise activity by and with young people in Halton. The Bursaries are available to young people between the ages of 13 – 18 who live in Halton and are pursuing personal development through recognised development courses like the Duke of Edinburgh Awards.

In 2006 – 2007 the budget was £13,959

18 Grants & Bursaries have been awarded

Total £13,359

Young people benefiting from grants

Total 577

GROUP AWARDS

Wards Covered	Group Name	Total Awarded
Runcorn Wards	1 st Runcorn Boys Brigade & Girls	£ 750
Widnes Wards	5 th Widnes (Highfield) Scout Group	£2,000
Borough Wide	Moorfield Junior Bowls Club	£ 381
Castlefields	Halton Access to Media	£1,000
Mersey	J Time and HTTK	£ 500
Runcorn Wards	Runcorn Comets Morris Dance	£1,000
Windmill Hill	Windmill Hill Community Forum	£1,000
Castlefields	Halton Access to Media	£1,000
Widnes Wards	Hough Green Guides & Scouts	£2,500
Runcorn wards	N W Cheshire Scout Federation	£ 283
	Total	£10,414

BURSARIES

Ward	Activity Funded	Total Awarded
Farnworth	Dance Studies	£ 500

Farnworth	Dance studies	£ 500
Halton View	Drama Summer School	£ 500
Brookvale	Music – Piano Lessons	£ 400
Windmill Hill	Lifeguard Qualification	£ 195
Murdishaw	Lifeguard Qualification	£ 100
Daresbury	21 st World Scouting Jamboree	£ 500
Riverside	Coaching Training	£ 250
	Total	£2,945

Joint Celebration Event

In February a joint celebration was held for those young people and community organisations that have received Community Development and Sports Development Grants from Halton Borough Council

The event was organised to showcase the good things young people do and to recognise their achievements in the community. It also highlighted the essential work of the adults who put in time and effort, as volunteers and coaches, making these achievements possible.

The evening was a great success and 96 local people attended to receive commemorative awards from the Mayor and Mayoress of Halton Cllr John and Mrs Margaret Swain.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None at this stage.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None at this stage.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None at this stage

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None at this stage

6.3 A Healthy Halton

None at this stage

6.4 A Safer Halton

None at this stage

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None at this stage

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 None at this stage

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 None at this stage

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 10th September, 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Halton's Urban Renewal Strategic Review & draft Action Plan 2007 - 2010

WARDS: Boroughwide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 At the request of the Urban Renewal PPB, to present to the Employment, Learning & Skills Policy & Performance Board a copy of the Urban Renewal Strategic Review and draft Action Plan 2007-10 for consideration.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The ELS PPB note the contents of the Urban Renewal Strategy and draft Action Plan and
- (2) Consider how the activities of Employment, Learning & Skills complement and support the Urban Renewal activities described therein.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The previous Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan covered the period 2003 – 2006. The new document is intended to update that version and inform Urban Renewal developments through to 2010.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This sets the Urban Renewal Strategy through to 2010 and is in accordance with national, regional, sub-regional and local regeneration strategies and policies as set out in the document itself.
- 4.2 The nature of the policies and activities described impact on, and are impacted upon, by activities which are the responsibilities of the Safer Halton and Employment, Learning and Skills Policy Boards. It is for this reason it was recommended that their consideration be given to the Strategy and Action Plan.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial and other implications are set out in the documents.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 All of the planned programmes and projects have been subject to formal risk analyses, the results of which are included in the Risk Register.

7.0 *EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES*

8.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer



URBAN RENEWAL IN HALTON

(DRAFT) ACTION PLAN 2007 – 2010

INTRODUCTION

The Community Strategy for Halton sets out an overall vision whereby:

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhoods.

In order to achieve this vision, activities and partnerships have been themed as follows:

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton and
- A Safer Halton.

Each thematic area has now developed a Baseline Report, identifying the issues where we need to concentrate our improvement efforts. The Urban Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership (SSP) will concentrate heavily on these key issues, focussing future investment into achieving the challenging targets set for that theme.

The Urban Renewal Strategy has been developed in conjunction with this Action Plan and these documents endeavour to address the policy areas identified in the Baseline Report, together with issues from key local and regional strategies and working with the expertise of Partnership members.

The Urban Renewal SSP is made up of Members drawn from key organisations across the private, public voluntary and community sectors operating in the field of physical regeneration and is currently chaired by Cllr Hignett, a representative of the community of Halton.

WHY URBAN RENEWAL?

Background

Halton helped maintain the momentum of the industrial revolution in the 19th Century and was a cradle of invention and innovation. Reflecting this industrial and manufacturing history, Halton has a legacy of ageing infrastructure, obsolete and redundant buildings, a relatively poor built and natural environment, an overly mature housing stock, and an under-provision of modern amenities to support a far more discerning population.

Whilst much has been done in recent years to improve the quality of the urban fabric and quality of life, the job is far from complete.

The creation and maintenance of high quality places and spaces that support a twenty first century economy and lifestyles, and which are accessible and well connected, is a pre-requisite of the Community Strategy. Failure to address the challenges that Halton faces, which are often concentrated in particular locations, will seriously damage the economic regeneration effort. A thriving and prosperous economy supporting dynamic urban living is the foundation of the Halton approach.

This is one of the underlying root causes of the more obvious signs of social distress, which define the continuing deprivation of Halton, such as poverty, crime or poor health and education outcomes. Negative perceptions about Halton still prevail.

Environmental improvements and better quality open spaces, in addition to a better quality built environment, are vital as steps to promote Halton's assets. A positive image is a key requirement if we are to boost the confidence and aspirations of local people and business.

Our Aim

Modern day Halton has inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that undermine the development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is key to greater prosperity and boosting the image of the borough.

A flourishing urban and business environment provides the foundation to a strong economy and the ultimate well-being of its residents. It provides jobs, opportunities, wealth, health and aspirations for local people. It supports sustainable economic growth and prosperity, thereby

providing an environment that will encourage inward investment and an upward spiral of prosperity and success.

The overall aim for Urban Renewal in Halton, as set out in the Community Strategy, is:

To transform Halton's landscape and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live.

The following is the main Action Plan for the Urban Renewal activities in the borough.

It supports the Key Objectives and Improvement Targets of the Urban Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership, as follows:

Key Objectives

- A.** To create and sustain a twenty first century business environment with the required variety and quality of sites, premises and infrastructure that can support high levels of investment and economic growth and increase Halton's competitiveness;
- B.** To revitalise the town centres to create dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors;
- C.** To support and sustain thriving neighbourhoods and open spaces that meet people's expectations and add to their enjoyment of life;
- D.** To ensure Halton designs in and maintains high levels of accessibility to places and spaces so that opportunity and need are matched, and provides excellent connectivity to the wider world through transport and ICT links;
- E.** To enhance, promote and celebrate the quality of the built and natural environment in Halton including tackling the legacy of contamination and dereliction, to further improve the borough's image.

Improvement Targets

By 2011 we aim to:

Growth	Sustain levels of Gross Value Added (GVA) capita at or above the regional norm;
Jobs	Increase the numbers of jobs in Halton by 10%;
Vitality	Increase prime rents on commercial property by 15%;
Reclamation	Bring 50ha of derelict land back into beneficial use;
Housing	Ensure the decency standard is met by all social housing;
Housing	Ensure 50% of all new housing is built on brownfield sites;

Premises	Facilitate bringing to market of at least 100,000m ² of new and replacement commercial floorspace;
Town Centres	Increase footfall by 25% across the borough;
Transport	Increase proportion of buses starting route on time to 98%;
Waste	Ensure 40% of municipal waste is recycled or composted;
Satisfaction	Improve the satisfaction rate of residents on quality of the built and natural environment by 10%.

Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan

This Action Plan is linked to the Urban Renewal Strategy, as Appendix 1 of that document, and aims to address not only the above Key Objectives and Improvement Targets, but also the main issues raised as matters of concern, including that of future funding which remains a major challenge for continuing regeneration of the borough.

Taking account of our Key Objectives and Improvement Targets, as identified above, the following is a review of initiatives in place to achieve both these targets and more, in order to address Halton's Urban Renewal agenda.

Given the extent of some of these projects/programmes of work, and their capital nature, it is very difficult to precisely determine funding, costs and processes. It should be noted, therefore, that the figures used in this document are likely to change and those used are subject to 'rounding errors'.

Programme/Project Name:
3MG - Mersey Multimodal Gateway

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton UDP
 Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park SPD
 DSRFP Sustainability Appraisal
 DSRFP Draft Masterplan
 DSRFP Landscape Strategy & Design Guide
 DSRFP Final Delivery Strategy
 DSRFP Draft Procurement & Management Proposals
 RPG 13
 North West Regional Freight Strategy
 Regional Economic Strategy
 NWDA SIP
 Merseyside Freight Study
 Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Secured planning permission for structural landscaping	Completed structural landscaping	Construction of rail related warehousing underway
Secured planning permission for rail sidings	Completed rail sidings	CPO progressing to complete site assembly
Secured planning permission for road link to A5300	Commenced road link to A5300	Additional rail pathways secured from Network Rail
Diverted sludge main	Network Rail completed the strengthening of Ditton Junction Bridge	Completed road link to A5300
Redeveloped O'Connor's terminal	Business Grants improvement to local businesses	Land acquisitions
Tessengerlo demolished and sold for freight park activities	Disposal of HBC Field	Upgrading road within 3MG
Refurbishment of	Land acquisitions	Landscaping works.

Halebank Rec. completed		
Land acquisitions		
3MG Management Co. established		

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	10 ha serviced land	16 ha serviced land
	200 jobs created	1,000 jobs created
	4,500m new & improved rail infrastructure	4,000m new & improved rail infrastructure
	600m of new and improved road infrastructure	600m new and improved road infrastructure
	5 ha of derelict land brought into productive use	6 ha of derelict land brought into productive use
	20 ha of contaminated land cleaned and remediated	30 ha of contaminated land cleaned and remediated
	14 ha of landscape improvements.	4 ha of landscape improvements.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	265	0	0	265*
ERDF	695	1,285	0	1,980*
NWDA	1,000	2,000	1,500	4,500
NRF	0	0	0	70*
Other (specify):				
Landfill Tax	103	0	0	103
Section 106	0	700	0	700
Land Receipt	0	20,000	1,520	24,320*
Total	2,063	23,985	21,480	33,860*

* Includes expenditure in previous and subsequent years.

Programme/Project Name:
Business Parks Improvement Programme

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton Local Area Agreement
 Halton Community Strategy
 Economic Development & Tourism Strategy for Halton
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Business Investment District (BID) Business Plans developed for Astmoor and Halebank	To be decided by businesses on Astmoor & Halebank	To be decided by businesses on Astmoor & Halebank
Formal BID vote on Astmoor and Halebank		
BIDs established on Astmoor and Halebank		

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
14 Business Steering Group Meetings held	To be decided by businesses on Astmoor & Halebank	To be decided by businesses on Astmoor & Halebank
12 Businesses in receipt of financial assistance		
12 Business premises visually enhanced		
100 Jobs safeguarded		
5 new jobs created		
1 Derelict/redundant building demolished		
1 Derelict area of land/building brought back into use		
500m2 Improved commercial floorspace		
15 Businesses assisted with environmental/sustainable working practices		

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	408	?	?	408
ERDF	172	0	0	172
NWDA	0	0	0	0

NRF	50	0	0	50
Other (specify):				
Private	350	?	?	350
BID funding	0	?	?	?
Total	980	?	?	980

Programme/Project Name:
Canal Quarter

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Runcorn Old Town Centre SPD
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Feasibility Studies/Site Investigations Completed.	Detailed Planning Permission obtained for Phase 1.	Key properties acquired for the scheme.
Development Agreement exchanged with Developer. Outline Planning Permission obtained. 2 Properties acquired.	Start on Site for Phase 1 works.	Detailed Planning Permission obtained for Phase 2 works.
		Start on Site for Phase 2 works.

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
2 Properties acquired.	Detailed Planning Permission obtained Ph. 1.	Key properties acquired for the scheme.
	Start on Site/ Ph. 1 works.	Detailed Planning Permission obtained/ Ph 2 works.
0.4 Ha. of land remediated.	4.5 ha. land remediated.	Start on Site/Ph. 2 works.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC (Capital Priorities Fund)	250	?	?	250
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	?	?	?
NRF	175	0	0	175

Other (specify):				
English P'ships	300	?	?	300
Total	725	?	?	725

NB: Total scheme is likely to be between £45m and £50m of private sector investment.

Programme/Project Name:
Castlefields Regeneration Programme

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Castlefields Masterplan
Castlefields Delivery Plan
Housing Strategy
Halton Community Strategy
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Acquire the existing local centre via CPO.	Demolish Castlefields Local Centre.	Complete new community centre.
Secure Planning Permission for HBC housing sites.	Commence development of the New Village Square.	Commence the construction of the new Health Centre.
Secure Planning Permission for the Village Square.	Commence construction of the new Community Centre.	Commence development of Ph1 of HBC housing sites.
Secure Planning Permission for the new conservation area.	Implement public realm projects, as per Masterplan.	Complete Ph3 of RSL housing programme.
Commence Ph2 of the RSL housing developments.	Commence RSL Ph3, subject to Housing Corp. Funding.	Implement public realm projects, as per Masterplan.
Implement public realm projects, as per Masterplan	Complete RSL Ph2 programme.	
Develop Ph3 proposals with RSLs/Housing Corpn.	Create the new conservation area.	
	Market and dispose of Ph1 of Halton housing sites.	

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Public realm projects	Site clearance of local	New community

implemented.	centre.	centre completed.
Planning Permissions secured.	New conservation area created.	Public realm projects implemented.
	Public realm projects implemented.	
	RSL Ph2 programme completed.	

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	840	1,000	980	2,820
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other:				
EP *	1,600	1160	2,600	5,360
Housing Corpn	?	?	?	?
Total	2,440	2,160	3,580	8,180

* EP figures are predicted contributions to Village Square development;

NB: Future Housing Corporation funding is dependent on the success of RSL funding bids in 2007/08.

Programme/Project Name: Contaminated Land

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
Halton Local Area Agreement
Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy
Halton Unitary Development Plan
Halton Corporate Plan 2006-2011
Halton Gateway to prosperity 05-08
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
10 Hectares (ha) of land reclaimed	10 ha of land reclaimed	10 ha of land reclaimed
Start phase 1 St.Michael's Golf Course	Complete phase 1; start phase 2	Complete phase 2
Complete Brindley		

Mound (prep. for Canal Qtr)		

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
10ha land remediated	10ha land remediated	10ha land remediated

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC (Capital Priorities Fund)	120	?	?	120
CPF roll-forward	403	?	?	403
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	162	0	0	162
Other (specify):				
DEFRA*	122	2,000	1,500	3,622
St. Modwen plc	125	0	0	125
Total	932	2,000	1,500	4,432

* DEFRA funding is committed but unconfirmed at time of going to print. Therefore, these figures should be used as a guide only.

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- AMEC Environmental Advice

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Provide advice and Site Investigations on the Widnes Waterfront EDZ.	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Progress development.	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	20	0	0	20
Other (specify):				
Total	20	0	0	20

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Environment Agency Partnership

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Facilitation of Planning Permission	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Planning Permission for development.	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	10	0	0	10

Other (specify):	0	0	0	0
Total	10	0	0	10

Programme/Project Name:
WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Earle Road Remedials & Bowers Brook

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:
NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Replace 5 no. Bowers Brook manhole covers	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
5 no. new manhole covers at Bowers Brook provided	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	50.2	0	0	50.2
Other (specify):	0	0	0	0
Total	50.2	0	0	50.2

Programme/Project Name:
WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Evaluation

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:
NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;

Regional Economic Development Plan
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
 Halton Economic Development Strategy;
 Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Tender process begins
		Appoint consultants
		Evaluation report completed and published.

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Evaluation Report.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	30	30
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Total	0	0	30	30

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
 - EDZ Marketing

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
 Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
 Regional Economic Development Plan
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
 Halton Economic Development Strategy;
 Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of each of 4	Completion of each of 4	N/A

Newsletters	Newsletters	
Website updates completed	Website updates completed	N/A
Public Art programme development.	Public Art programme launch.	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
4 Newsletters	4 Newsletters	N/A
Website development	Public Art programme	N/A
	Website development	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC - Capital	0	24.5	0	24.5
HBC - CPF	0	0	0	0
ERDF	51.1	20.5	0	71.6
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	61.3	0	0	61.3
Other (specify):				
Total	112.5	45	0	157.5

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Widnes Waterfront Programme Management

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Successful implementation of projects.	Successful implementation of projects	Subject to funding availability.
Successful management of programme	Successful management of programme	

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Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Continue Funding Waterfront team + .5 Engineer post and .5 Property Officer post.	Continue Funding Waterfront team + .5 Engineer and .5 Property Officer.	Subject to funding availability.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	89.4	150	239.4
ERDF	85	65.6	0	150.6
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	65	0	0	65
Other (specify):				
In Kind	20	20	0	40
Total	170	175	150	495

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Forward Partnership

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Negotiate office & industrial unit development.	Office & Industrial units completed	Office & Industrial units official launch
Official sod-cutting ceremony.		

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	Office & industrial units	N/A

	developed.	

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	232.8	308.9	0	541.7
NWDA	232.3	301.3	8	541.7
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Private Sector	1,668.2	1,739	847.1	4,254.1
Total	2,133.2	2,349.2	855.1	5,337.5

Programme/Project Name:
 WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
 - Linear Park

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
 Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
 Regional Economic Development Plan
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
 Halton Economic Development Strategy;
 Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Acquire Network Rail Land	N/A	N/A
Work starts on Linear Park development.	Linear Park completion & official opening.	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Land acquisition.	Linear Park development on EDZ.	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	100	100	0	200

NWDA*	103	103	0	206
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):	0	0	0	0
Total	203	203	0	406

* Funding to be secured

NB: Costs subject to change, due to land acquisition negotiations.

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME

- NWDA Project Appraisal

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
 Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
 Regional Economic Development Plan
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
 Halton Economic Development Strategy;
 Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Successful implementation of projects.	Successful implementation of projects	Subject to funding availability.
Successful management of programme	Successful management of programme	Subject to funding availability

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Continue NWDA project appraisals as they come forward and subject to funding.	Continue NWDA project appraisals as they come forward and subject to funding.	Progress subject to funding availability.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	42.1	25.2	0	67.3
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):	0	0	0	0

Total	42.1	25.2	0	67.3
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Programme/Project Name:
WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Landscaping Phase 2

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Start 2 nd Phase landscaping.	Complete 2 nd Phase of landscaping around Focus DIY, down Earl Rd & Carterhouse Way.	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	Completed landscape development.	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	15	16	0	31
ERDF	185.2	185.3	0	370.5
NWDA*	185.3	185.2	0	370.5
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Total	385.5	386.5	0	772

* Funding to be secured;

NB: Costs subject to change, due to land acquisition negotiations.

Programme/Project Name:
WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Sustainable Transport - Greenways

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
 Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
 Regional Economic Development Plan
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
 Halton Economic Development Strategy;
 Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of Cycleway	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
New Cycleway	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	108.4	0	0	108.4
NWDA*	108.4	0	0	108.4
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):	0	0	0	0
Total	216.8	0	0	216.8

* *Negotiations underway to extend this to 08/09.*

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
 - Tanhouse Lane Landscaping

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
 Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
 Regional Economic Development Plan
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
 Halton Economic Development Strategy;
 Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	Complete landscaping of Tanhouse Lane corridor	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	Landscaped corridor at Tanhouse Lane: to progress/promote further development.	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	100	0	0	100
NWDA	91.9	100	0	191.9
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Total	191.9	100	0	291.9

Programme/Project Name:

WIDNES WATERFRONT EDZ PROGRAMME
- Utility Upgrade.

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

NW Regional Economic Strategy 2006;
Liverpool City Region Economic Strategy & Action Plan;
Regional Economic Development Plan
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy;
Halton Economic Development Strategy;
Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan & Delivery Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Undertake negotiation for installation of United Utilities primary sub-station on EDZ.	Satisfactory negotiation and installation of United Utilities sub-station for EDZ.	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Agree way forward for utilities provision.	United Utilities sub-station installed on EDZ.	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA*	0	1,000	0	1,000
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Private*	0	3,850	3,850	7,700
Total	0	4,850	3,850	8,700

* Not yet secured.

Programme/Project Name:
Halebank Regeneration

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halebank SPD
Halebank Sustainability Appraisal
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Housing development completions.	Housing development completions	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
58** new units built	59** new units built	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0

NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Private Sector	?	?	?	?
Total	?	?	?	?

* 70 built units already achieved in period 2006/07;

* 07/08 and 08/09 construction figures are projections only;

NB: Private Sector development, therefore funding is private/business sensitive and consequently not available.

Programme/Project Name:

Housing

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton Housing Strategy

Regional Housing Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

*NB: NO INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE TO POPULATE THIS TABLE –
DETAIL IS SUBJECT TO PRIVATE SECTOR / REGISTERED SOCIAL
LANDLORDS AND HAS NOT BEEN PROVIDED.*

Issues for Halton: (from Regional Housing Strategy)

- The regeneration of the Castlefields estate.
- Provide supported housing to meet needs identified in the Supporting People Strategy.
- Improve services and provision to meet the objectives of the Homelessness Strategy.
- Ensure new housing provision in line with RPG target to improve choice, meet household growth, and stabilise
- Improve worst private sector housing through renovation grants.

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Achieve annual predicted build rate	Achieve annual predicted build rate	Achieve annual predicted build rate

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
544* housing development completions	544* housing development completions	544* housing development completions

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* *These figures are best estimate predictions, extrapolated from previous years achievements/targets.*

NB: Housing in the borough is provided through Private Sector development, therefore funding is private / business sensitive and consequently not available.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Private Sector	?	?	?	?
Total	?	?	?	?

Programme/Project Name:
Mersey Gateway Project

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Regional Economic Strategy (RES)
Liverpool City Region Strategy (LCRS)
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Agree LMVR	Project Review Group	Invite Tenders
Agree Forecasting Report	Submit Planning Application	Secretary of state decision.
Financial Case Review	Public Enquiry	
Consultation Results Published	Outcome of Public Inquiry	

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
1 LMVR agreed	1 Planning application submitted	Secretary of State decision
1 Forecasting report agreed	1 Public Enquiry completed	Tender Awarded
1 Published		

consultation report		

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	3,750	2,500	380	6,630
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):	?	?	?	?
Total	3,750	2,500	380	6,630

Programme/Project Name:
Street Lighting – Structural Maintenance

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton Safe & Attractive Neighbourhoods Strategy;
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	200	200	200	600
ERDF	0	?	?	?
NWDA	0	?	?	?
NRF	0	?	?	?
Other (specify):	0	?	?	?
Total	200	200	200	600

Programme/Project Name:
Town Centres Improvements

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Urban Renewal Strategy.
Town Centres SPDs
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
10 Properties improved.	?	?
2 Newsletters completed. 2 Properties acquired.		
1 Improvement scheme completed.		

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
2 Newsletters completed.	?	?
10 Properties improved.		
2 Properties acquired.		
1 Small Improvement scheme completed.		

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	?	?	?
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	55	0	0	55
Other (specify):	0	?	?	?
Total	55	?	?	55

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT
- 3MG Western Access Road

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
3MG Masterplan
Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Design	Tender	Construction
	Commence construction	Completion

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	New road
		Official opening

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	?	?	?	?
ERDF	?	?	?	?
NWDA	?	?	?	?
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):	?	?	?	?
Total	?	?	?	?

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Beechwood Station Design

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Completion of design for Beechwood station (subject to Halton Curve improvement proceeding)

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Design completed.

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Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	0	0	100	100
Total	0	0	100	100

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Contributions to Regeneration Schemes

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Contributions made to highways elements	Contributions made to highways elements	Contributions made to highways elements

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Contributions made to highways elements	Contributions made to highways elements	Contributions made to highways elements

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	40	40	35	115
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	40	40	40	120
Total	80	80	75	235

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- A56/A558 Daresbury Expressway Junction Improvements & Dualling (Phase 1)

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Road Improvement Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Design & Tender	Construction/completion Ph1 (Junction Improvement)	N/A
Commence construction Ph1 (Junction Improvement)		

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	1 Junction improved	N/A
	Reduced congestion	
	Reduced accidents	
	Increased take-8up at DSIP	

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	658.5	0	0	658.5
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
HBC/EP/NWDA	658.5	0	0	658.5
Total	1,317	0	0	1,317

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- A56/A558 Daresbury Expressway Junction Improvements & Dualling (Phase 2)

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Road Improvement Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Design	Tender & Award Ph2 (Dualling)	Construction/Completion Ph2 (Dualling)
	Construction	

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Road Junction Improvements

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Section 106	0	3,000	0	3,000
Total	0	3,000	0	3,000

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Gyratory Junction Improvements: Watkinson Way

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Widnes Waterfront Masterplan

Widnes Waterfront – NWDA Performance Plan

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Design & tender	N/A	N/A
Commence construction	Complete construction	

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Major junction improved

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	171	0	171
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	400	0	0	400
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	150	0	0	150
Section 106	431	0	0	431
Total	980	171	0	1,152

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Hough Green Railway Station Improvements

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Commence improvements to car parking, accessibility, environment and safety.

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	N/A	Improvements to car parking, accessibility, environment and safety achieved.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	0	0	250	250
Total	0	0	250	250

Programme/Project Name:
 TRANSPORT
 - Improved 'Door 2 Door' Services

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Introduction of new pre-bookable & accessible door to door public transport service in the Borough	As 2007-08	As 2007-08

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Provision of affordable and accessible transport for all Halton residents seeking employment, training and work based learning opportunities especially those living in the top five most	As 2007-08	As 2007-08

deprived Wards in the Borough.		

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC (HCT/Revenue)	130	160	30	320
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	215	0	0	215
Total	345	160	30	535

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Improved Public Transport Access: EDZ

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Introduction 1 new 30 min. daytime / evening bus service linking Widnes Waterfront EDZ	As 2007/08	As 2007-08

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Provision of an hourly shuttle bus service to Widnes Waterfront EDZ from key public transport interchanges in Widnes Town Centre.	As 2007/08	As 2007/08

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	18	18	36
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	24.8	24.8	24.8	74.4
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Developer Contrib.	39	0	0	39
Total	63.8	42.8	42.8	149.4

Programme/Project Name:
 TRANSPORT
 - Langtree Access Road

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Widnes Waterfront Masterplan
 Widnes Waterfront – NWDA Performance Plan
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Construction	Construction/completion	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
N/A	0.69 ha land serviced	N/A
	1 Transport corridor serviced	
	104 new jobs created	
	1,000m ² land remediated	

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	20	0	0	20
ERDF	205	0	0	205
NWDA	185	0	0	185
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):	0	0	0	0
Total	410	0	0	410

Programme/Project Name:
 TRANSPORT
 - Local Safety Schemes

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of programme of work	Completion of programme of work	Completion of programme of work

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Local safety schemes programme of work achieved.	Local safety schemes programme of work achieved.	Local safety schemes programme of work achieved.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	210	210	210	630
Total	210	210	210	630

Programme/Project Name:
 TRANSPORT

- Quality Corridor Improvements &
- Upgrade of Halton Lea North Bus Station

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of Grangeway & Runcorn / Widnes Cross-River Quality Bus Corridor Scheme & Completion of Halton Lea North Bus Station	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Grangeway & Runcorn / Widnes Cross-River Quality Bus Corridor Scheme & Halton Lea North Bus Station completed.	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	170	0	0	170
Total	170	0	0	170

Programme/Project Name:
 TRANSPORT
 - Runcorn Parking & Access Study

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Draft Runcorn Old Town Centre Strategy
 Canal Quarter Feasibility Study
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of study reports.	N/A	N/A

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Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Study report.	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Planning Del. Grant	7.5	0	0	7.5
EP	17.6	0	0	17.6
Total	25.1	0	0	25.1

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Silver Jubilee Bridge: Complex Maintenance Major Scheme Bid

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Highways & Transportation Service Plan

Local Transport Plan

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
HBC respond to DfT comments regarding Bid Submission.	Planning & procurement processes completed.	Continue maintenance programme.
DfT declare Programme Entry.	Commence maintenance programme.	

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Permanent traffic restrictions on SJB complex avoided.	Permanent traffic restrictions on SJB complex avoided.	Permanent traffic restrictions on SJB complex avoided.
	Continuing programme	Continuing

	of bridge maintenance delivered within time and budget with minimum disruption to travelling public.	programme of bridge maintenance delivered within time and budget with minimum disruption to travelling public.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP Capital	2,400	6,200	8,900	17,500
Total	2,400	6,200	8,900	17,500

Programme/Project Name:

TRANSPORT

- Silver Jubilee Bridge: Variable Message Signing (VMS)

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP

Halton Urban Renewal Strategy

Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of Phase 2 of VMS scheme	Completion of Phase 3 of VMS scheme	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Phase 2 of VMS scheme completed.	Phase 3 of VMS scheme completed.	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	0	0	0	0
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0

NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
LTP	200	45	40	285
Total	200	45	40	285

Programme/Project Name:
 TRANSPORT
 - Widnes & Halton Lea Parking Study

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton LTP
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Completion of study reports	N/A	N/A

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Study Report.	N/A	N/A

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC	?	?	?	?
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	?	?	?	?
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Yet to be identified	?	50	?	50
Total	?	50	?	50

Programme/Project Name:
 Waste Recycling

Strategies from which Priorities have been taken:

Halton Waste Management Strategy
 Halton Urban Renewal Strategy
 Halton Community Strategy
 Halton Waste Action Plan

Milestones

07-08	08-09	09-10
Implement a pilot multi-material kerbside recycling service	Extension of multi-material recycling services and garden waste collection services.	Multi-material recycling collections delivered to all properties.

Target Outputs

07-08	08-09	09-10
Pilot implemented.	Service extension achieved.	Service achieved.
26% Recycling.	28% Recycling.	30% Recycling.

Funding (£'000)

Source	07-08	08-09	09-10	Total
HBC - Revenue	Core	Core	Core	Core
ERDF	0	0	0	0
NWDA	0	0	0	0
NRF	0	0	0	0
Other (specify):				
Add'l requirement* (unsourced)	0	342*	228*	570*
Total	?	342*	228*	570*

* Waste Management Services are funded through HBC core revenue budgets. Achievement of targets will require additional revenue funding (as above) and further capital funding (not included above) and it has not yet been determined where this will be sourced.



It's all happening IN HALTON



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URBAN RENEWAL

URBAN RENEWAL
ACTIVITIES

Strategic Review
2007 - 2010



Summer 2007



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URBAN RENEWAL

Strategic Review 2007 - 2010



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Portfolio Holder for
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Specialist Strategic
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URBAN RENEWAL IN HALTON

In recent years, Urban Renewal and Regeneration has been at the heart of the renaissance of Halton and its economy.

This work needs to continue in order to ensure Halton provides a modern, vibrant environment where businesses can thrive and opportunity for all in employment is maximised.

This will include the further development of our Town Centres and the promotion of a Night-Time Economy, enhancement of our housing offer and improvement of the environment of Halton.

The Mersey Gateway Bridge is being progressed through the planning and procurement stages and will become a major focus for economic development in Halton and the wider region.

Halton needs to maintain its high profile regionally and sub-regionally on:

- o **Economic Development Planning**
(in particular the Regional Spatial Strategy)
- o **Transportation**
- o **Housing** and;
- o **Contaminated Land**

Our aim is to transform Halton's landscape and infrastructure, develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live.

In the current climate of public spending cuts, there are huge challenges to overcome. This Urban Renewal Strategy will review the issues and highlight achievements to date, while identifying the challenges of tomorrow.

1.0 FACTS & FIGURES

1.1 Population Trends

The population of Halton has been gradually falling by an average of 300-400 each year since 1990, reaching 118,200 by 2002. However since 2003 the population of Halton started to rise from 118,200 to 118,800 in 2005.

This was followed up by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) releasing its revised population projections for the next twenty five years. These are based on the 2004 baseline, which predicts that Halton's population will rise to around 120,000 by 2020 before stabilising at this figure until 2029.

This is a substantial improvement over the previous prediction undertaken in 1996, which showed that Halton's population would continue to slowly decline each year until it reached 110,000 in 2021.

2.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

2.1 With regard to economic development, Halton performs well in terms of its current economic performance and infrastructure. However, the findings suggest that current trends in economic growth may present problems in the future. Although Halton currently contains a high proportion of employment in the knowledge driven sectors, ranking 62nd out of 408 districts in the country, employment in the knowledge economy has been declining.

In 2002-03, just 30.7% of the employed workforce was engaged in knowledge intensive occupations, compared to 36.6% in the North West and 39.6% in Great Britain. The proportion of businesses operating in the knowledge economy is also low. In 2002, 25.7% of businesses fell into the knowledge driven sectors, compared to 26.7% regionally and 30.1% nationally. This suggests that we should place more emphasis on the knowledge economy in our urban renewal agenda and ensure that future policy drives this forward.

2.2 Halton also performs poorly in terms of skills and qualification levels, ranking 342nd out of 408 districts. Such a low skills base could not support a growth in knowledge economy based jobs, which would result in well paid positions being taken by people from outside the Borough. This is highlighted by the occupational breakdown for

Halton, which reveals that 'higher end' occupations (managerial, professional and technical jobs) are significantly under-represented in the Borough (11.4% compared to 14.4% in Great Britain).

As the predicted key growth sector, it is important that urban renewal links much more closely with education and training to balance out this skills mismatch.

3.0 ENVIRONMENT

3.1 Housing

3.1.1 Whilst house prices in Halton are below the national and regional averages, the latest Housing Needs Survey indicates an emerging affordability issue arising from house price increases over the last five years which have excluded many "first time buyers" from the owner occupied market.

The average house price in Halton was £134,493 in April-June 2006, compared to a regional average of £146,600 and a national average of £198,952 at June 2006. The percentage of owner-occupier housing is slightly below the national average at 65.8% compared to 68.3% nationally.

3.2 Commercial and Industrial Property

3.2.1 Between 1985 and 2003, the amount of industrial and commercial floorspace in Halton grew by 31.9% - slightly higher than the national rate of 23.5% and substantially higher than the regional rate of 12.9%.

The floorspace profile, however, shows a marginally higher proportion of industrial and commercial space at 77.7% compared to 69.3% in the North West and 66.3% in England as a whole. Retail and office space is under represented at 10.5% and 11.9% respectively, which is substantially lower than the national average of 19.2% and 16.8%.

Establishing more office accommodation and attracting suitable private sector business is important for the Borough, particularly in the town centre areas as it helps support other trade throughout the day and evening.

3.2.2 A commercial property review was recently presented to the Borough's Policy & Performance Board and this will no doubt have an impact on future actions with regard to commercial property developments.

3.3 *Action for Sustainability*

3.3.1 The main regional institutions are committed to the Action for Sustainability agenda, which aims to establish a firm foundation for balancing the region's economic, environmental and social needs. A toolkit has been produced to aid the development of environmental sustainability.

4.0 REGIONAL WORKING - ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

4.1 *The North West Regional Assembly*

4.1.1 Perhaps one of the most significant developments of recent times was the formation of the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) in 1997. This represents Local Authorities and other key economic and social stakeholder representatives in the region.

4.1.2 The NWRA presents a regional view to the Government and European Union institutions on issues or areas falling within the Assembly's competence and also provides a forum for considering and debating any issues or policy proposals, especially those of a relevant social, economic or environmental nature at a regional level and having an impact upon the people of North West England.

4.1.3 Their role has principally been in the promotion of planning, transport and sustainability in the region. They were also involved in the development of the Housing Strategy and the Regional Housing Board.

4.1.4 The 'no' vote on Elected Regional Assemblies subsequently forced the NWRA to review its core business and activities. However, in the light of the Sub-National Economic Development & Regeneration Review announced in July 2007 and the promotion of greater devolution, it is proposed to abolish Regional Assemblies in their current form. Instead, it is likely there will be Regional Ministers and a new duty on local authorities to promote economic development, with RDAs playing an even greater role in the strategic arena, taking on plan-making powers for housing, transport and spatial planning.

4.2 *North West Development Agency*

The NWDA leads on economic development in the region.

In April 2005 the NWDA produced its first Strategic Investment Plan, which outlines the Agency's priorities for financial support over the next three years. This is rolled forward annually. Halton will need to continue to promote its key capital projects for inclusion in the Plan.

4.3 *The Mersey Partnership (TMP)*

4.3.1 TMP is the economic development partnership for the Merseyside sub-region. It is now NWDA's Sub Regional Partner for Merseyside, with strategic responsibility across the region's six local authority areas. This adds to TMP's existing responsibilities in economic development, inward investment and tourism.

4.3.2 TMP's strategic goal is to encourage economic growth through building a positive image of the Liverpool City Region that will attract more visitors to the area and at the same time build confidence among those already living, working and investing in the region.

The members of TMP reflect a broad and diverse range of activities representing over 400 businesses across the Liverpool City Region including manufacturing and trading companies, six local authorities, government agencies, universities, media organisations, professional agencies, tourism and conference businesses.

4.3.3 The Mersey Partnership's activities take place in three core areas:

- o **Economic Development** - co-ordinating Merseyside's economic development activity through the Merseyside Action Plan.
- o **Investment** - bringing new business into Merseyside and encouraging growth in existing businesses.
- o **Tourism** - promoting Liverpool and Merseyside's tourism assets to increase visitor numbers and grow the economic benefit to the Liverpool City Region.

5.0 REGIONAL STRATEGIES

5.1 *Northern Way Growth Strategy*

5.1.1 Moving Forward: the Northern Way Growth Strategy was launched in September 2004 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Its key objective was to work with the three

northern Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to reduce the economic performance gap of £29 billion between the North and South-East of England by 2025.

The Growth Strategy sets out a framework for taking forward the key economic assets and opportunities of eight City Regions in the North of England, which includes the Liverpool City Region.

5.1.2 The Northern Way Business Plan was published in June 2005. This set out the plan to implement an economic development strategy for the North of England. It set out ten investment priorities, including improving transport links, bringing more people into employment, strengthening the North's knowledge base and driving innovation. To support the Northern Way, a £100m Growth Fund has been established by the ODPM and the RDAs.

5.1.3 This means that cities rather than regions are the focus for economic development, with the Government view that successful core cities will 'pull up' the economic performance of surrounding areas. It is therefore important for Halton to work with the Liverpool City Region to ensure that Halton's major projects are included.

5.2 City Region Development Plan

5.2.1 The Liverpool City Region is bringing forward a strategic prospectus or 'City Region Development Plan' which sets out priorities for growing the economy of the sub-region and the region as a whole.

5.2.2 The Liverpool City Region submitted an interim report for the Northern Way Steering Group in January 2005. The *Liverpool City Region - Transforming Our Economy* was produced in May 2005. It focused on issues, assets and opportunities which are of strategic significance to the North of England as a whole, and set out priorities for investment in the sub-region, aimed at generating major economic benefits and impacts. The implementation plan brings transformational projects for the sub-region to the fore.

5.3 Merseyside Economic Review

The latest Merseyside Economic Review was launched in February 2007 and provides an update on much of the economic evidence

underpinning the development of the City Region Development Programme, Regional Economic Strategy Review and other related strategic frameworks.

The review is published each year and the 2007 report reveals some notable successes against major economic indicators. Merseyside is performing well and in 2004 (latest data) produced a £17bn economy - keeping pace with the UK, regional and city comparators on most measures and in some cases doing rather better: closing the gap.

5.4 Regional Economic Review

The NWDA commenced work on its Regional Economic Strategy in April 2005. The new strategy was published in March, 2006. This placed emphasis on the issues arising from the Northern Way Growth Strategy, in particular focusing on Gross Value Added (GVA) and increasing jobs.

5.5 Regional Planning Strategy

5.5.1 *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

5.5.2 This Bill was given Royal Assent in May 2004. Part 1 of the Bill states that there will be a regional spatial strategy (RSS) for each region in England. The Regional Planning Body must keep the RSS under review and monitor and report on its implementation.

5.5.3 Part 2 provides for the preparation of local development documents (LDDs) to replace local plans, unitary development plans and structure plans. Part 3 of the Bill includes a duty to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. A series of development control measures are introduced in Part 4 of the Bill.

5.5.4 There are two types of LDDs: Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which are statutorily tested and form part of the Development Plan, and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which are not statutorily tested and do not form part of the Plan. It is expected that Halton will produce 22 SPDs including 3MG (Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park), Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone and transport in Halton.

Of these 22 documents 15 have been written and 7 adopted. It will also produce possibly seven DPDs including housing, employment and retail and leisure, in addition to the core strategy.

5.6 **Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Spatial Development Framework**

5.6.1 Sub-regional strategic spatial proposals have been developed. Further work is continuing, including a refinement of policies, spatial options and sustainability appraisals. The Merseyside partners are also working together to ensure there is synergy between the RSS and City Region Development Plan (CRDP), e.g., recognising land and spatial requirements emanating from the CRDP.

5.6.2 Due to the new status of RSS as part of the 'development plan', as set out in the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the issues arising in the new RSS are of significant importance to Halton Borough Council and the production of the new Halton Borough Local Development Framework (LDF).

5.6.3 The RSS will also be used in the determination of planning applications. Decisions will now have to be made in accordance with the RSS, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise. A number of policies within the UDP which are to be saved will have to be agreed with the Secretary of State by October 2007.

5.7 **Unitary Development Plan**

The Unitary Development Plan for Halton was adopted in April 2005. It is in two parts. Part 1 gives a written statement of Halton's strategic planning policies and Part 2 forms the framework for the use and development of land. It conforms with the Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (now the Regional Spatial Strategy), and describes the role that Halton will play in the development and regeneration of the region as a whole.

5.8 **North West Regional Housing Strategy**

The revised North West Regional Housing Strategy, published in 2005, sets out the priorities for strategic housing investment in the region. More information on the Strategy is available in the Housing section of this report. The Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy is likely to be adopted in the summer of 2007.

6.0 **FUNDING**

6.1 **Generally** - there are a number of funding pots to help deliver urban regeneration within Halton.

The main sources are identified below, but more specific funding for specialist areas such as contaminated land are considered under their appropriate headings.

However, many more exist and the sources of funding and funding criteria are constantly changing. For example the Kingsway Learning Centre accessed 14 different funding sources, many of which no longer exist, highlighting a continuing challenge for the Borough.

6.2 **Gershon** - The required 3% all-cash saving each year presents a real issue for local authorities and the urban renewal agenda has already suffered. This is likely to continue as attempts are made to achieve yet further 'savings'.

6.3 **North West Development Agency Funding**

6.3.1 When the over-programming funding problems of the NWDA were discovered, Halton went through a process of cutting back on all non-high priority schemes in order to concentrate available funding on those deemed to be the most important, such as Widnes Waterfront.

At the time, we were led to believe this would safeguard funding for those initiatives. This was not always the case, with a prime casualty being the economic initiatives contained within the Castlefields Regeneration Masterplan.

Other initiatives such as town centres, tourism and waterside developments are also no longer likely to receive funding, as the priorities have shifted.

6.3.2 Halton now comes within the remit of the NWDA's Merseyside Office. This means that we are competing with other Merseyside districts for funding. Land values are higher there and match funding is more easily available through Merseyside's ERDF Objective 1 'Phasing In' status. Given the competition for funding, this will be a challenging time for Halton.

6.4 **SRB**

After nine years, the Single Regeneration Budget programme ceased in March 2006. In the final year £865,760 was committed to nine projects. An Evaluation Report of Halton's three SRB schemes is to be published.

6.5 **NRF**

6.5.1 Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has been

awarded to areas with high levels of deprivation, in order to help bring them up to the standard of other areas.

6.5.2 It has currently been in place for 6 years, in which time Halton has received £31m, with a further £5.377m for 2007/08, after which time the NRF programme will cease. Successor funding, if any, will form part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, planned for Autumn 2007.

All indications are that renewal funding, in whatever guise, will be at a reduced level and far more targeted.

6.5.3 Urban Renewal, as a Halton priority, was awarded £768,000 in 03/04, £1.031m in 04/05, and £1.367m in 05/06. However, this dipped to £887,000 in 06/07 and to £769,700 in 07/08.

6.6 European Funding

6.6.1 Up to 31st December 2006, Halton lay within a European Objective 2 area where European Structural Funding has been available. The Objective 2 Programme has provided in excess of £22m of ERDF for the delivery of projects in the Borough.

6.6.2 Halton Borough Council was appointed as Accountable Body for the European funding on behalf of partners and has entered into an agreement with the Government to do this. State Aid support overall has been worth £61.3m to Halton businesses.

6.6.3 In 2004, the European Union increased from 15 to 25 Member States and then to 27 in January 2007. This led to an acceptance that the bulk of the funds would be allocated to the new Member States of Eastern Europe.

6.6.4 The National Strategic Reference Framework, used to allocate European Funding nationally, was approved at the end of 2006 and regional allocations for 2007-13 were set. The allocations for the North West are:

- o Rest of the North West £314m
- o Merseyside £213m

6.6.5 This represents a 50% cut in resources compared with the previous programme - a key challenge to the borough.

6.6.6 The North West Operational Programme (NWOP) is the guiding document which presents key priorities and actions with regard to how European Funding will be allocated and spent in the North West during the period 2007-2013.

6.6.7 The NWOP is expected to be published in September 2007. The new European Programme is therefore likely to start late in 2007 or early 2008.

It is expected that the European Programme will focus on the following priorities and action areas:

Priority 1 Stimulating Enterprise & Supporting Growth in New Sectors and Markets

AA1.1 Developing High Value New Enterprise

AA1.2 Developing Higher Added-Value Activity in Target Regional Sectors

AA1.3 Increasing Sustainable Consumption and Production

Priority 2 Exploiting Innovation & Knowledge

AA2.1 Exploiting the Science and R&D Base of the Region

AA2.2 Encouraging Innovation to Improve Productivity in All Companies

AA2.3 Developing Better Management and Leadership

Priority 3 Creating the Conditions for Sustainable Growth

AA3.1 Access to Major Gateways in Merseyside

AA3.2 Developing High Quality Sites and Premises of Regional importance

AA3.3 Supporting the Improvement of the Region's Visitor Offer and its Image

Priority 4 Growing & Accessing Employment

AA4.1 Stimulate Enterprise in Disadvantaged Communities

AA4.2 Supporting Linkages to Key Employment Areas

AA4.3 Supporting Employment Creation in Areas of Regeneration Need

6.6.8 It will be important for Halton to continue to develop links with the North West Development Agency since RDAs in the English Regions will be key players in the management and allocation of European and non-European resources earmarked for regional development.

Halton's attitude is that there must be some form of ongoing support for areas which have a continuing legacy of deprivation and decline. It would not be sensible to ignore the needs of areas such as Halton which have the potential to achieve and sustain regional economic growth.

6.6.9 There is a wish to strengthen work already undertaken through the use of the European Structural Funds to ensure that Halton continues to rise out of industrial decline and emerge with a leading 'knowledge based' economy for the 21st Century.

6.6.10 It is worth noting that Halton's unique position with regard to how Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures are collated could place the borough at a significant disadvantage in the allocation of successor funding. Whilst Halton is ranked as the 21st most deprived Borough in the Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004, the over-reliance on a high-value chemicals industry skews these figures, giving the result that Halton appears to be more affluent than is actually the case.

The chemicals industry is highly capital intensive, with relatively few people employed for the value of production. Capital (plant) and raw materials are imported from outside the borough, with little benefit to Halton. Similarly, in the chemicals industry much of the activity is undertaken by branch plants. This means that profit is extracted to and investment decisions take place in other countries.

Another difficulty faced by Halton is that the better-paid employees tend to live outside the borough, giving a clear mismatch between GDP per capita and levels of prosperity.

Work has been completed to disaggregate these figures for Halton and we have now started lobbying the Department for Trade & Industry and the NWDA accordingly.

6.6.11 Halton Borough Council sees it as vital that,

as part of its lobbying strategy, it is able to disaggregate GDP and GVA figures from the chemicals industry, together with an appropriate analysis of the Halton/Warrington Travel to Work Area, as Warrington's economic buoyancy statistically masks Halton's problems.

6.7 Regional Selective Assistance

Over the period 1st April 1999 - 31st March 2004, a total of £61.2m was invested in Halton businesses with the support of both Regional Selective Assistance and Enterprise Grant Schemes. This funding supported 63 separate organisations, a total of 4,971 jobs and includes £50m investment in Ineos Chlor. That funding has largely ceased to be available to Halton businesses.

6.8 Review of State Aid Rules

6.8.1 'State Aid' is public money used to support private sector business activities. European Commission rules are designed to ensure that if businesses do receive financial support then they should not be given an unfair commercial advantage.

6.8.2 Some form of support is allowed, providing this does not exceed permitted levels. Different parts of the European Union are allowed to provide different levels of support, dependent on how affluent or poor they are considered to be.

6.8.3 The 2006 review of the Assisted Areas Map left Halton outside the redefined area with effect from 1st January 2007.

This means that the level of financial support which the public sector can give to companies in Halton has been reduced significantly. However, despite this news, there are still opportunities to support economic regeneration projects through special exemptions and exclusions.

6.9 National Lottery

6.9.1 National Lottery funding has been very successfully used across Halton for a number of arts, community, heritage and sports projects. In 2002, 51 grants were awarded, totalling £1,719,651; in 2003 this increased to 63 grants totalling £3,393,076, whilst up until August 2004, 36 grants, totalling £487,053 were awarded. Between April 1995 and March 2005, Halton received £25,616,657 from a total of 394 grants.

6.9.2 By April 2006, Halton had moved up from 13th to 12th position in the league of North West authorities that record the amount of funding received from the National Lottery. In April 2004, regionally, Halton was in 18th position. By April 2005, we had improved by 6 places to 13th position.

6.9.3 Funding is allocated through the following lottery distributors:

6.9.3.1 Awards For All

'Awards for All' is a joint lottery programme funded by the Arts Council England; Big Lottery Fund; Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England. It offers grants for arts, heritage or community projects of from £500 to £5,000.

6.9.3.2 Big Lottery Fund

'The Big Lottery Fund' has been formed from the Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund. It is responsible for 50% of the money going to good causes and will offer a range of grant programmes, from smaller grants at a local level through to large capital projects. It will continue to fund charities, the voluntary sector, education, health and the environment, but will also support large-scale regeneration projects.

6.9.3.3 Arts Council England

Arts Lottery funding is spent on a wide range of projects, including the construction and refurbishment of arts venues, arts activity and public participation in the arts.

6.9.3.4 Heritage Lottery Fund

Halton was a priority area for Heritage Lottery funding until March 2006.

The Heritage Lottery Fund distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support all aspects of heritage, from historical buildings and museums to nature conservation. It helps community projects with relatively small amounts, as well as multi-million pound developments and can fund both capital and revenue projects. In the last 18 months, 14 heritage projects have been funded within Halton.

6.9.3.5 Sport England

Sport England is responsible for delivering the

Government's sporting objectives. It is committed to creating opportunities for people in the North West Region to start in sport, stay in sport and succeed in sport.

7.0 KEY URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS

Halton has a number of key urban renewal projects currently ongoing or to be delivered in the near future. These are:

7.1 The Castlefields Regeneration Programme

7.1.1 The Castlefields Masterplan was approved, following public consultation, by all partners (including English Partnerships) at the end of 2003 and became the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document, which was adopted by the Borough Council in 2005. Proposals included:

- The creation of a new link road to provide direct access to a proposed new local centre and existing community facilities.
- A programme of pedestrian and cycle link improvements, to improve access to facilities;
- Street lighting improvements on Castlefields Avenue North;
- The development of a state-of-the-art youth activity park, the Phoenix Park, including a skate park, flood-lit multi-use games area, a climbing boulder and play areas; the release of land for the development of new houses for sale.

7.1.2 Excellent progress has already been made in the selective demolition of over 700 problem deck-access flats and the building of almost 400 new homes.

7.1.3 NWDA funding has still to be secured to allow the skills and workforce development elements of the Masterplan to be delivered.

7.1.4 £7m of further funding, over and above that committed to the implementation of the Regeneration Masterplan has been secured from the Housing Corporation to continue housing renewal projects until 2010.

Coupled with additional funding promised by the RSLs, this will help deal with all but two of the remaining problem blocks.

7.1.5 However, further regeneration work under Phase 2 of the Masterplan will still remain to be

completed. Therefore funding is being sought from the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships to allow this to be effected.

7.2 Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone

7.2.1 The Widnes Waterfront EDZ area will become a strategically important 'Gateway' development, linking the region's 'Metropolitan Axis' along the M62 Corridor with the 'Southern Crescent' along the M56. The Council appointed the Manchester-based consultancy, building Design Partnership, to undertake a masterplanning exercise in 2002 which provided a framework for the transformation of the southern part of Widnes over six years to create around 2,700 new jobs.

7.2.2 This Masterplan was agreed in 2003 for the 80 ha. Widnes Waterfront site which is located adjacent to the River Mersey. It set out a key vision and outputs for the area, to be delivered through a set of projects. These include landscaping and environmental upgrades, enhancing existing business premises, road works and signage, marketing and training which engages with local businesses. This Masterplan has subsequently been converted into a Supplementary Planning Document.

7.2.3 £5.59m has been committed from the NWDA to add to the £8m of ERDF and £3m of Halton Borough Council funding to assist with the regeneration. This will support the considerable public and private sector investment which is already bringing forward new office developments with industrial park and commercial leisure facilities.

7.3 3MG - Mersey Multimodal Gateway (formerly known as Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park or DSRFP)

7.3.1 3MG will utilise brownfield land for rail-related warehousing (up to 325,160m²) new rail sidings, a new link road to the A5300 Knowsley Expressway and the generation of 5,000 jobs over a ten-year period.

7.3.2 The site is 26 hectares in total and will result in derelict and contaminated land being brought back into productive use. There will be lasting improvements to the environment and 195 million HGV kms will be removed from the UK road network per annum. The cost of the regeneration over five years has been estimated at

£80m. The UDP Public Inquiry Planning Inspectors' Report's recommendations gave clear support for the creation of 3MG, stating that "...through a rare combination of advantages the Rail Freight Park is accepted to be a project of exceptional potential worth."

7.3.3 The Masterplan for this site was approved by Halton Borough Council in December 2004.

7.3.4 The Supplementary Planning Document for 3MG has been approved for adoption by the Borough Council.

7.3.5 Planning Permission for 75,000m² of new rail-related warehousing space has subsequently been granted on the AHC at West Bank.

Planning permission for an extensive landscaping scheme at HBC Fields was secured by Halton Borough Council in January 2006 with implementation planned for 2007. Negotiations with Network Rail and design work are on-going over the replacement of the Ditton Junction bridge.

7.3.6 Common facilities will need to be effectively managed 'in common' for the effective working of 3MG. To this end, Halton Borough Council is negotiating the establishment of a management company with AHC Westlink and the O'Connor Group of companies.

A further opportunity for Halton Borough Council is the future disposal and development of 'HBC Fields' at the western side of the freight park, which will facilitate a further 9,300m².

7.4 New Mersey Crossing - The Mersey Gateway

The Mersey Gateway is being promoted by the Mersey Crossing Group which includes public and private sector bodies. A Major Scheme Appraisal was submitted to the Government in July 2003 and approved in 2006.

A project team has been established and work is ongoing, in preparation for the submission of a planning application expected in 2008.

7.5 Business Parks Improvement Programme

7.5.1 The Council is currently delivering a programme of regeneration to businesses on local industrial estates. Steering Groups have been set up on individual estates in order that businesses can formulate action plans to improve their own area.

7.5.2 The Business Parks Improvement Programme offers grants to enhance business premises, improve safety and security and improve the environment on older industrial estates.

To date, site improvements have been made on each of the Tanhouse and Gorsey Lane, Astmoor, Halebank and Riverview Industrial Estates.

7.6 St Michael's Golf Course

Major remediation works are planned at St Michael's Golf Course, to be funded by DEFRA, in order to seal in contaminated material and install a leachate collection and treatment facility.

Further phases will remould the land and re-establish fairways, greens and tees for the continued use of the site as a municipal golf course. More on this can be found in the contaminated land section of the report.

7.7 Halebank Regeneration

A new-build 'Co-op' convenience store opened in mid-August 2004, to coincide with the closure of the old ASDA supermarket. Planning permission was obtained for 156 new houses to be built on the former ASDA site and work is now underway. A Supplementary Planning Document has been approved by the Borough Council.

7.8 Halton Stadium

A new East Stand was opened in September 2005 as the final development stage of the Stadium. The East Stand has a capacity of approximately 2,500, taking the overall capacity of Halton Stadium to about 13,500. The Stadium is Council owned and provides an excellent events venue which is well patronised.

7.9 Halton Castle

7.9.1 Halton Borough Council was gifted this Grade I Listed Building by the Duchy of Lancaster in September 2002 under a 99yr Guardianship Agreement and Norton Priory Museum Trust (NPMT) has subsequently agreed to manage the site.

7.9.2 Halton Castle has problems with vandalism, youth nuisance and drinking. NPMT and the Council have been working together in an attempt to resolve these issues.

7.9.3 The Council has recently invested £50,000

to secure the site and make it safer. This has funded essential masonry repairs, together with interpretative fencing which reflects the history of the Castle.

7.9.4 A successful preliminary bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund was submitted in Spring 2005. This has funded consultancy work for a Conservation Management Plan and Access Plan in advance of submitting the main bid to HLF.

7.9.5 The ultimate aim is to renovate and enhance Halton Castle with links to Norton Priory and the Town Park.

It is hoped to develop a visitor centre, lighting of the castle (if vandalism issues can be addressed) and general enhancement of the site's special features, including sunken garden and 'lock-ups'.

7.10 Wigg Island

The second phase of landscape works on this site were completed in June 2005.

This includes new cycleways and footpaths, as well as an outdoor 'classroom'. A new Visitor Centre will be opened in summer 2007.

7.11 New Approaches

This programme of works aims to reclaim land adjacent to strategic corridors and gateways into Merseyside. £70,000 Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has enhanced the major routes through the Borough as part of the 'Strategic Routeways Programme'. This has involved major landscaping works, including new planting, management of existing trees and woodlands, tidying verges and bulb planting.

7.12 Town Centres

7.12.1 The Borough of Halton is unusual in having three distinct town centres, each of which provide an essential service for the community it serves. Since the end of the last century, Widnes and Runcorn have grown to meet the needs of their separate communities. The third centre, known as Halton Lea, is the result of a decision in the early 1960's to develop the New Town area of Runcorn.

7.12.2 All three town centres have changed in recent times and more change is planned with public and private sector involvement.

7.12.3 Such development in town centres is guided

by national and regional planning policy advice, including Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), which aims to sustain their vitality and viability. It requires local authorities to develop effective town centre strategies in partnership with the private sector, as part of the development plan process. Halton currently has an overall town centre strategy and three separate, more detailed strategies for each of the town centres dating from 1997. These are in the process of being updated.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for Runcorn Town Centre and Halton Lea are currently being developed, whilst Widnes will have an Area Action Plan - a detailed document, which will set and prioritise development objectives as well as specifying and co-ordinating requirements for new infrastructure and services. Funding for this work has not yet been identified.

7.13 Widnes Town Centre

7.13.1 Widnes is the largest of the three town centres, with approximately 46,450m² of retail floorspace in over 350 separate units.

It also has both an indoor and an outdoor market. Widnes has developed from a traditional 'High Street', with the addition of the new ASDA and the regeneration of Albert Square, Green Oaks and the Windmill Centre. There is a wide mix of retailers providing a more comprehensive shopping offer than at the other two centres. Widnes is one of the top 10 performing centres in the North West over the last 10 years, showing a 66% growth in prime retail rents.

7.13.2 Progress to date:

Widnes Town Centre has seen the addition of a number of new retail units and enhancement schemes in the last five years. These include:

- 1) Relocation of the ASDA store from Halebank to Widnes town centre, providing 4,180m² of retail space and 470 car parking spaces;
- 2) New 9,290m² JJB Fitness Centre and retail store;
- 3) New road at Marzahn Way;
- 4) Revamping of retail units at Albert Road;
- 3) New retail units at Gerrard Street, Liebig Court and Simms Cross, all adjacent to the new ASDA store;
- 4) New town centre housing at Alfred Court and 'The Element at Liebig Court';
- 5) 40 new homes provided at Lacey Street;
- 6) Streetscape improvements to both Widnes Road and Albert Road;
- 7) A Home Zone development of the 'Streets Ahead' project around the new ASDA site;
- 7) The Windmill Centre redevelopment and creation of new retail space;
- 8) Streetscape improvements to Victoria Square, including new paving and street furniture;
- 9) A new Mental Health Centre in Broseley Square, together with the new Primary Care Centre on Moor Lane;
- 10) Residential developments over bar/restaurant provision in two developments at Victoria Square;
- 11) A programme of shop-front improvements throughout the town centre.

7.13.3 What is planned for the future?:

1. Widnes Town Centre is constrained from widening by housing and road infrastructure, but consideration is being given to the future of adjoining sites such as the Widnes Waterfront and the 'P&O site' for development with appropriate uses.

For example, the P&O site has been considered in the UDP (Policy TC3) as suitable for retail, warehousing and leisure (after 2011), while the construction of a new B & Q store on Dennis Road will take retailing into the EDZ.

2. The Council is also welcoming plans for a leisure development on Venture Fields.
3. As Widnes Waterfront is developed, it is recognised that there is a need to develop better links to the town centre.

To facilitate this, junction modifications are being implemented. A new gyratory on Fiddlers Ferry Road is being created in order to improve access by foot and cycle and to reduce general congestion.

4. The production and adoption of the proposed Action Area Plan will be key to the delivery and change proposed to be delivered within Widnes.

7.14 Victoria Square/Queens Hall

7.14.1 Building upon the investment made by the Council and the private sector, particularly in the renovation of Victoria Buildings, further regeneration initiatives are currently in progress in this area to enhance the evening/weekend economy.

7.14.2 Progress to date:

The Kingsway Learning Centre, which is within the Victoria Square Conservation area, opened following a £7m refurbishment of the original Widnes Library/Widnes Technical College/St Paul's Youth Centre building.

A complete lifelong learning package is offered at the centre including an improved and extended Widnes Library, a Neighbourhood Nursery, Sure Start New Steps, Connexions & Youth Service, as well as Adult Learning facilities.

7.14.3 What is planned for the future?

7.14.4 The Council intends the redevelopment of the Halton Business Forum (the former Widnes Town Hall) into new bars and restaurants. However, this development has been delayed by the failure of private sector partners.

7.14.5 Encouraged by the regeneration successes to date, other private sector-led proposals have begun to emerge around Victoria Square.

Two prominent public houses are being redeveloped as bars with residential apartments above; a retail unit has been converted into a restaurant; and shop units have been, and are continuing to be, converted into wine bars.

7.15 Runcorn Town Centre

7.15.1 Runcorn 'Old Town' operates as a small market town and as such incorporates a number of individual niche market traders, some of whom have been there for many years.

7.15.2 Progress to date:

7.15.3 The centre has seen much private sector investment as a result of traders improving their shop frontages (with the aid of SRB and NRF funding). Although this centre serves a fairly localised catchment, the area is usually very busy, with parking often difficult to find. However, Runcorn Town Centre has fewer than half of the multiple retailers of the other two Halton centres.

7.15.4 The Brindley, Halton's purpose-built theatre and arts centre, opened in November 2004.

It provides a 420-seat theatre, 108-seat studio, other flexible space as well as exhibition and gallery space, together with associated refreshment facilities, all overlooking the Bridgewater Canal.

The Town Centre survey of people in Runcorn Town Centre worryingly identified a reluctance to visit that centre during the evening. The Brindley is overcoming this challenge with a vibrant Show and Events programme.

7.15.5 Runcorn Town Centre has seen many new developments in the last five years, which include:

- 1) A new campus for the Riverside College;
- 2) A new Market Hall with additional shop units;
- 3) The new Halton Direct Link facility that will offer residents a 'one-stop-shop' experience for council-related business;
- 4) A new Somerfields supermarket with associated car park
- 5) The new Bus Station interchange;
- 6) Upgrading of car parking and access at Runcorn Railway Station;
- 7) The new Brindley Arts Centre
- 8) A new link road at Leiria Way

7.15.6 What is planned for the future?:

A joint venture between Halton Borough Council and award-winning developers Urban Splash has been established to secure the development of the Canal Quarter alongside the Bridgewater Canal. This will bring new retail, residential and civic amenities to the town centre.

The development will also include the site of the former Crosville Bus depot, on the opposite side of the canal. Still the subject of further work and discussion, this programme technically began late in 2006 with a planning application, with the development due to commence in early 2007.

A DIY store for Homebase is being constructed on the Daresbury Expressway, while 450 residential apartments are being built in 'The Deck' development on the waterfront adding considerably to the vitality of the Town Centre.

7.16 Halton Lea

7.16.1 Halton Lea is a custom-built, elevated and covered shopping mall with 4 dedicated multi-storey car parks offering 1,950 free car parking spaces (excluding Trident and ASDA parking). Surrounding this main structure, the Trident Retail Park and ASDA superstore have been developed in the last ten years.

Halton Lea encompasses 46,450m² of shopping space with a range of national multiple retailers within the centre. It is also close to the police station, library and Halton Direct Link, together with Post Office and Job Centre.

7.16.2 The Town Centre User Survey showed general customer satisfaction with Halton Lea shopping centre. They were happy with the cleanliness of the main shopping area and public facilities were considered well maintained, whilst public perception of safety was very high.

7.16.3 What is planned for the future?:

There are proposals for an extension of the existing general retail provision at Halton Lea incorporating a new superstore. There are also plans for an extension to the ASDA development.

7.17 Astmoor Industrial Estate

Parts of the Astmoor industrial estate will be affected by the new Mersey crossing. The estate was built as part of the Runcorn new town development in the 1970s and 1980s. Many of the units no longer reflect the needs of modern business. For example the car parking provision is inadequate, servicing access is poor and the units are not of sufficient internal height for some industrial uses.

8.0 HOUSING

8.1 The two largest sites for residential developments in the Borough over the past decade or so have been at Upton Rocks in Widnes and Sandymoor in Runcorn. The focus on providing a broader range of housing types by concentrating on more executive styles of property has led to an increase in the number and proportion of managerial and professional socio-economic groups living in the Borough. At the time of the 1991 census, these groups accounted for just 14% of total households.

By 2001, this figure had increased to 19%, while the number of detached houses showed a similar increase. A wider choice of house types does seem to produce a more rounded spectrum of socio-economic groups.

8.2 Demand for housing is reliant upon prices and mortgage rates. When both of these rates were relatively low, demand for social housing significantly decreased. However after several years of large price rises in the housing market, home-ownership is no longer so affordable to those in lower income groups and demand for social housing is again on the increase. Indeed, the local housing waiting list has increased by 23% since 2004.

8.3 The Halton Housing Needs & Market Assessment Survey, completed at the end of 2005, provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available on current and future housing needs and preferences of households living in the Borough. The Survey found that, despite house prices in Halton being lower than the regional and national averages, there is an emerging affordability issue caused by the relationship between local incomes and the realistic supply of the cheapest stock available. The average price of a terraced dwelling increased by over 150% between 2000 and 2005, exceeding local income inflation by over 7 times. Consequently, access to the market for first time buyers is very limited. The cheapest 2 bedroom terraced house in the Borough requires a minimum income of £21,900 and 79% of concealed households (i.e. someone living within a household who wishes to move to their own accommodation and form a separate household) earn below £20,000.

8.4 The Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 176 affordable housing units per annum, after allowing for current re-let supply, and recommends this be achieved through the adoption of an affordable housing policy within the Local Development Framework, which contains a 25% target for new units to be developed as subsidised affordable housing.

8.5 The Needs Survey also recommended that the supply of small units be improved to address the future needs and preferences of increasingly smaller households and that a comprehensive delivery strategy to address future housing for the elderly and for care needs be developed to cater

for an increasingly ageing population, with a particular emphasis on extra care accommodation. The Survey found a relatively high proportion of households contained at least one person with a disability or limiting long-term illness and recommended the development of a register of adapted property and disabled people needing adapted accommodation to ensure their specific needs are met and that best use is made of the existing adapted stock.

8.6 The National Context:

8.6.1 In December 2000, the Government published 'Housing Policy Statement - The Way Forward for Housing'. This document set out a wide range of policies determining the Government's aim that everyone should have the chance of a decent home.

8.6.2 In 2003, 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future' was published, which seeks to create the framework for a sustainable housing plan for the nation. This set out a number of national priorities for housing under two broad headings:-

- 1) Achieving a better balance between demand and supply, which includes tackling low demand; ensuring 60% new build on brownfield land; increasing the supply of affordable housing to key workers and reducing homelessness;
- 2) By 2010, to make all social housing 'decent' and to reduce the proportion of private sector housing occupied by vulnerable groups that is not decent.

8.6.3 'The Sustainable Communities - Homes for All' Plan was published in 2005 and sets out an £18m investment for housing in the North West, to tackle low demand outside of the pathfinder areas. Both Liverpool and Manchester City Regions have commissioned consultants to develop City Region Housing Strategies, which will help to identify areas in need of this additional funding.

8.6.4 The Government also established Regional Housing Boards that have developed Regional Housing Strategies to target investment to regional housing priorities.

8.7 North West Regional Housing Strategy 2005

The North West Regional Housing Strategy

2005 sets out a number of key priority areas.

These are:

- 1) Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand;
- 2) Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities;
- 3) Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods;
- 4) Meeting the region's needs for specialist and supported housing.

8.8 Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand

This regional priority aims to address changing demand across the North West, particularly the contrast between the hot-spots and other areas where increasing numbers of properties are vacant, experience high turnover or are subject to falling house prices.

The North West has the largest concentration of low demand areas in the country. The 'Pathfinder' areas cover about half of the homes affected by low demand. There is also a great deal of housing which, although not suffering the worst extremes of low demand, can be classified as 'at risk.' This priority looks to maximise the impact of the market renewal Pathfinders, whilst also developing a targeted approach to preventing further market failure in other areas at risk.

8.8.1 The Halton Perspective:

In order to deliver this investment agenda, the NWDA, Government Office North West (GONW), the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships are seen as having important roles to play.

The reality is that Housing Market Renewal Areas, or 'Pathfinder' areas, will receive a significant proportion of the available funding.

Halton has not been identified as a priority Pathfinder area and therefore cannot hope to benefit significantly from this funding source.

However, the draft Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy identifies areas such as Castlefields, Windmill Hill and West Bank as vulnerable housing markets. It is hoped that this will strengthen the case for investment under this priority.

There are, however, limited funds available for investment outside of the Pathfinder area and Halton is only one of a number of authorities which will be seeking investment.

8.9 Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities

8.9.1 This priority aims to tackle areas where increasing house prices have forced many, including key workers, out of the housing market. The strategy hopes to address the shortages of affordable housing in these areas.

8.9.2 The Halton Perspective:

8.9.2.1 Despite the findings of the Housing Needs Survey, affordability issues in Halton are not as extreme as those experienced in some other areas of the region, e.g., Macclesfield and Southport, and the Borough does not experience particular problems with key workers being unable to afford to live in the area. Therefore, Halton is unlikely to benefit from this priority.

8.9.2.2 To bring a spatial dimension to the Regional Housing Strategy, the Regional Housing Board has devised a high level typology of housing markets which describes in general terms the ways in which housing markets function in different parts of the region.

The typologies used are: unbalanced markets, balanced markets, high value/demand, low value with potential, high value/rural towns, high value/potential, rural/commuter pressure and city centre market. Halton falls within the balanced market typology where demand/supply is roughly in equilibrium but with possible pockets of low demand or affordability problems.

The recommendation for this typology is for planning policies to continue to meet demand with an appropriate balance of affordable provision. Halton aims to develop an Affordable Housing Policy in 2008 as part of the Local Development Framework process on the strength of evidence from the Housing Needs Survey.

8.10 Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods

8.10.1 This priority aims to address the physical condition of properties in the North West. All social housing tenants are required to have 'decent homes' by 2010 in order to meet the Government target.

8.10.2 The Halton Perspective:

8.10.2.1 Although Council housing stock (6,680 dwellings in 2004) was generally well maintained, the scale of work required to meet this target required a much greater investment. It is estimated that 54% of the Council stock failed to meet the decent homes standard compared to a national average of just over 40%, with an investment of £85m required by 2010. As a result, Halton Borough Council transferred its stock to a newly created Housing Trust in December 2005, following a positive ballot of tenants.

8.10.2.2 Significant investment is not only required into public sector, but also into private sector housing, for which there is a secondary target 'to reduce the number of owner occupied dwellings occupied by vulnerable households that fail the Decent Homes Standard'. Halton's Private Sector House Condition Survey was undertaken in 2002, before this requirement came into being, and the Council consequently has no detailed information on how many households in Halton fall into this category.

Recognising this as a problem facing many authorities, the Government has developed a model based on the findings of the English House Condition Survey that will produce an approximation of the numbers in each authority area.

For Halton, the model suggests that 65.7% of the homes occupied by vulnerable households currently meet the decent homes standard, which matches the 65% target set by Government for achievement by 2006. This figure will be used as the baseline for future monitoring until the next housing condition survey can provide more accurate data. In the meantime, it is proposed that grants awarded under the new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy will be used to bring homes occupied by vulnerable households up to the Decent Homes Standard.

8.10.2.3 Halton Borough Council is working to establish a Home Improvement Agency, which will act as a 'one-stop-shop' to assist applicants through the grants process. A Landlord Accreditation Scheme has recently been established in conjunction with the Private Landlords Forum, to improve conditions and drive up standards of private rented property.

8.11 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)

(excluding the Halton Housing Trust) owned 7,668 dwellings in Halton in 2006. Most of these were constructed in the late 1960's and 1970's. However, latest information suggests that only 8% of these properties currently fail the decency target and there is confidence that they will meet the 2010 target.

8.12 Figures from the Private Sector Stock Condition

A Survey carried out in 2002 show that the average SAP value (a measure of energy efficiency on a scale of 1 to 120) of private sector dwellings is 48 - better than the national average of 44. It also indicates that 82% of private sector properties have central heating.

8.13 Regional Priority 4: Meeting the region's needs for specialist and supported housing looks at how best to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents. This includes older people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, people with physical disabilities, victims of domestic violence, people with drug and/or alcohol-addictions, teenage mothers and ex-offenders.

8.13.1 The Halton Perspective:

8.13.2 Current demographic predictions for Halton show a growing elderly population and increasing demands for a variety of housing types such as bungalows, supported housing and residential care. With existing waiting lists for such provision, this issue will be a key challenge for the future, as our elderly population increases.

8.13.3 Halton is in the process of developing an 'Extra Care Housing' scheme in Palacefields, Runcorn. This will provide over 40 units of supported accommodation for elderly people, giving older people more choice and independence.

8.13.4 A new private retirement homes scheme has also been developed in Peel House Lane, Widnes and there are proposals to provide at least one further such development in Widnes. However the public sector provision of bungalows and other suitable retirement homes is under pressure, with demand currently exceeding availability.

With a growing elderly population, as identified above, this situation is likely to worsen and needs to be addressed.

8.13.5 The Council's Planning Department has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for housing entitled Design of New Residential Development. This takes into account changing housing needs, promoting 'lifetime homes' which are built to be accessible and meet the occupants' lifelong needs. It encourages a greater provision of homes suitable for the elderly, e.g., bungalows, which developers are often reluctant to build because they have a greater footprint on the ground - allowing fewer to be built on available land, which makes them less economically viable. This is further exacerbated by planning guidance, which encourages house-building to be of increased density.

8.13.6 Because of the variety of people this priority is hoping to address, it is important that a wide range of partners work together to establish need, map existing provision and develop strategies accordingly.

8.13.7 Financial resources provided by the Regional Housing Board to local authorities will primarily be allocated to fund Priorities 1 and 3. Funding for Priorities 2 and 4 will be administered through the Housing Corporation via RSLs.

As Halton is unlikely to be allocated funding under Priorities 1 and 3, we will rely on funding under Priorities 2 and 4 from the Housing Corporation.

The Regional Housing Board has, in principle, agreed further significant funding for Halton toward the next phase of the Castlefields redevelopment. However, this may restrict the amount of additional funding we are allocated for other priority areas, leading to another real challenge for Halton.

8.13.8 This challenge is likely to intensify should there be a continuing realignment of the regional housing pot with the Regional Housing Strategy, which seems likely to happen.

The funding safety net currently in place for areas is likely to diminish, with areas allocated funding under Priorities 1 and 2 taking greater shares year on year and others such as Halton having to cope with fewer resources.

8.14 Halton Partnership Approach

The implications of the Regional Housing Strategy are addressed through the Halton Housing Partnership. This comprises representatives from

the Council and the larger RSLs. In addition Halton plays an active role in a number of cross authority/agency groups. These include the North West Housing Forum, the Merseyside Housing Forum, the Merseyside Planning and Housing Officers Group and the M62 Corridor Group. This enables us to further our understanding of market change and to adopt common goals where appropriate.

8.15 Housing Market Research

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken which helps inform Halton's Housing Strategy. The key issues and trends are summarised as follows:-

8.16 Population

The Council has sought to stabilise Halton's falling population through economic growth, improving the environment and providing attractive new housing. As mentioned earlier, the average household size is decreasing in Halton, whilst the proportion of single person households is increasing. According to the 2001 census, the number of households has increased by 3,000 from 45,857 in 1991. However, Council Tax records suggest an increase of nearly 6,000 to 51,000 showing that the trend towards smaller households is sustaining the demand for increased housing provision.

8.17 Housing Tenure

8.17.1 The social rented sector has remained relatively static within Halton for some time, whilst the private sector has nearly doubled. In 2006 there were 13,882 social rented properties (26%), as compared to 38,733 (74%) private sector properties. Despite this, the social rented sector still represents an unusually large proportion of the housing stock when compared to the North West figure of 20% and the national figure of 19% (Census 2001).

8.17.2 The Housing Needs Survey found that about 4% of the total of Halton's housing stock is privately rented and it is estimated that these properties are owned by approximately 600 different landlords.

8.18 The Private Sector

8.18.1 Housing markets in Widnes and Runcorn

operate separately, with little or no interaction (1997 DTZ Pinda Urban Capacity Study).

The Housing Needs Survey identified that 39% of households who moved into the Borough over the last 3 years were from Merseyside, 16% from Cheshire, 13% from Warrington, 17% from outside the North West and 6% from abroad.

The majority of households moving into the Borough were owner occupiers with a mortgage (56.2%) and a fifth of households said the most important reason for moving into the Borough was employment related, with a further fifth stating that they wished to move to a larger home. There are indications, therefore, that the local housebuilding policy has helped address population decline to some extent, whereas in the past the lack of such housing caused people to move away to neighbouring areas.

8.18.2 Average house prices within Halton tend to be lower than Merseyside and the North West, but are significantly lower than those for England/Wales. A high proportion of properties built in recent years have been in the upper price bracket. Reflecting land availability and demand, these have mainly been located on the fringes of the Borough. Land contamination and lack of available sites in the inner parts of the Borough has limited development. However, with 70% of properties in the lower Council Tax bands, this has helped to address the imbalance in the range and type of property available.

8.18.3 The Council estimates that to address population decline 500 dwellings a year need to be built, but Regional Planning Guidance in 2003 set a target of 330 for Halton. However, the draft revised Regional Spatial Strategy proposes a target of 500 for Halton, but with limits on how much of this can be built on greenfield land. Given the land contamination issues mentioned in a previous paragraph this could cause some difficulties in meeting the target.

8.19 The Social Rented Sector

In Halton, 26% of housing is within the social rented sector. This relatively high level has been sustained, due to significant unemployment, a low wage economy and other deprivation issues. Findings from the Housing Needs Survey found that the current market situation, in terms of affordable housing, is increasing demand in the social rented sector and that overcrowding in

social housing may be a result of this. The Survey also identifies that there may be a need for RSLs to consider restructuring their stock in the long term, to take account of the needs of elderly and disabled households.

8.20 Supported Housing Needs

8.20.1 There are clear links between the Council's Supporting People Strategy and its Housing Strategy, with a key aim being to enable vulnerable people to remain in their homes. The Supporting People Strategy for Halton identifies priority client groups as:

- o those with mental health problems,
- o single, homeless young people,
- o older people and
- o those with physical and sensory disabilities.

8.20.2 We also work in partnership, to ensure the necessary provision of supported housing for teenage parents, refuges for victims of domestic violence, together with suitable accommodation for ex-offenders, people who misuse drugs and alcohol and those with HIV/Aids.

8.21 Halton Stock Transfer

The transfer of Council owned housing stock to Halton Housing Trust, a newly created organisation, took place in December 2005.

8.22 Considerations for the future

8.22.1 With recent regeneration schemes in Castlefields and Dukesfield, the quality of housing in the Borough has increased. However there are pockets of housing which will require attention in the near to mid term. These will include West Bank in Widnes, which now has some of the oldest properties in the Borough.

Consultants have been appointed and are carrying out work to assess housing conditions in the area and carry out an environmental assessment. Links will also be made to the neighbouring Widnes Waterfront EDZ development.

A number of costed options are expected to be reported.

8.22.2 Windmill Hill requires regeneration work if the estate is to continue providing viable accommodation for local residents.

The design and layout of the estate no longer meets modern day needs, e.g., there is inadequate car parking provision and poor public transport links increase the isolation felt by residents of the estate.

8.22.3 Development at Upton Rocks and Sandymoor is likely to continue for the next few years. However, Upton Rocks has dwindling land availability. The emerging Local Development Framework will examine land availability and site supply.

9.0 TRANSPORT ISSUES

9.1 Halton Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance of nearly 500km of roads, 22km of busways and 200km of footpaths. In addition, we maintain the Silver Jubilee Bridge and a further 200 highway structures, including expressway and busway bridges.

9.2 Legislation

9.2.1 In 2004, the Government produced a review of its 10 year Transport Plan in the form of a White Paper entitled The Future of Transport. This had three key themes:

- o Sustained investment over the long term. The spending review settlement supports the Government's commitment to deliver sustained improvements to transport networks. Spending by the Department for Transport (DfT) will rise by an annual average of 4.5% in real terms between 2005-06 and 2007-08. An additional £1.7 billion transport reform package will be provided for the railways, over and above the 10 Year Plan provision.
- o Improvements in transport management. The rail industry is to be re-organised to improve performance, drive down costs and get better value from public spending. Better traffic management is proposed and where it makes sense economically and environmentally to increase the capacity of the road network, measures will be required to 'lock in' benefits e.g., road pricing. In addition, assistance will be given to local authorities to combine better bus services with local charging schemes.
- o Planning ahead, the long-term trends in travel are evident to all.

We cannot build our way out of the problems we

face on our road networks and doing nothing is not an option. The Government indicated its intention to lead the debate on road pricing and will ensure that transport decision-making will be shared with regional and local stakeholders. The Government also intends to ensure that regional and local planning will be based on a shared view of priorities, deliverability and affordability.

9.2.2 Underlining these themes is balancing the need to travel with the need to improve quality of life. This means seeking solutions that meet long-term economic, social and environmental goals.

Achieving this aim will clearly contribute to the objectives of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

9.2.3 The Traffic Management Act received Royal Assent in July 2004 and is being implemented over the next two years. It places responsibility on Local Authorities to be pro-active in the management of the road network. The aims of the Act are to tackle congestion and reduce disruption.

9.3 Regional Context

9.3.1 The North West Regional Transport Strategy is being reviewed as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The regional context currently remains as published in RSS 13, Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (March 2003). This lists the Mersey Crossing Study as a 'regionally significant transport study' and as a 'transport proposal of regional significance'.

9.3.2 The Regional Economic Strategy provides the economic development framework for the North West. Improving transport is key to delivering four of the five priorities of the strategy, e.g., business development, regeneration, infrastructure and image.

9.3.3 In January 2005, Merseyside produced 'The Liverpool City Region', which looks at how Merseyside will contribute to the Northern Way. This includes expansion of the John Lennon Airport (located just outside Halton) and the Mersey Gateway, which will help improve connectivity of the City Region.

9.4 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

9.4.1 In July 2000, Halton produced its first Local Transport Plan (LTP1) for the period 2001/02 to

2005/06. This document was well received by Government Office.

Halton has made significant progress on implementing the strategies, policies and schemes contained within LTP1. A delivery report detailing the impact of the work undertaken during this period was submitted to the DfT in July 2006. This report indicated that 77% of targets were either on track or achieved and our overall progress was assessed by the DfT to be 'Excellent'.

9.4.2 The Council's LTP2, covering the period April 2006 to March 2011, sets out our vision for local transport and its long-term strategy for tackling transport problems within the Borough. A five-year implementation programme of schemes and initiatives is included, together with performance indicators that will be used to monitor progress in delivering our objectives.

This plan was submitted to the DfT and was also assessed to be 'Excellent'. Only one other authority in the North West and only thirteen throughout England (excluding London authorities) achieved 'Excellent' status for both its delivery report and second LTP.

9.4.3 The Plan is structured around the four shared priorities for transport agreed between local authorities and the Government, which are:

- Tackling congestion
- Delivering Accessibility
- Safer Roads and
- Better Air Quality

9.4.4 Tackling Congestion - The biggest congestion problems within Halton are on the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, where up to 90,000 vehicles cross every day. See Section 10 for more information. This bottleneck stands in the way of economic development both within the Borough and across the wider Merseyside area.

However congestion at peak times also occurs at other key junctions, including the A56 Chester Road/A558 Eastern Expressway roundabout, the A557 approach to the M56; the Widnes Eastern Relief Road/Fiddlers Ferry Road and Kingsway/Milton Road junction of Widnes. There is also growing evidence that regeneration is bringing about local congestion within the town centres: this

not only constrains the economy, but also impacts on air quality.

9.4.5 As highlighted in Section 11, the approval and development of the second Mersey crossing, the Mersey Gateway, will lead to significant journey time savings for cross river traffic and will enable the Silver Jubilee Bridge to cater for sustainable local travel. A decision on the crossing is expected in the near future, but even if it gets the go ahead, it will not be completed before 2012.

9.4.6 Delivering Accessibility - The ability of people to be able to move around Halton and access services, such as schools, hospitals, work, shopping and leisure, has a big impact on their quality of life. The key objective is to ensure that vulnerable communities have good access to these services, which are fundamental to tackling problems of social exclusion. However, it is now widely recognised that accessibility problems cannot be addressed by transport authorities alone, but require close co-operation with providers and users of the services. The work on accessibility is being focused through Halton's Access Plan, which targets key areas for action.

In consultation with our partners, a wide range of measures are proposed, including focused improvements to non-commercial and accessible bus services, highways network travel planning advice and publicity and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, planning conditions on new developments will continue to be used to maximise opportunities to increase accessibility through sustainable travel. These will include use of Section 106 and Section 278 Agreements.

9.4.7 Safer Roads - Halton has made significant progress in reducing accident casualty rates and we are on track to meet Government targets. During LTP1, the average number of casualties in the categories of 'General' and 'Child' killed and seriously injured, fell by around 54% and slight injuries by 23%. However, there is still much to do to bring levels down further.

A comprehensive and holistic approach to casualty reduction will continue to be employed, incorporating targeted highway improvements, safety cameras, traffic-calming, road safety education, training and publicity, traffic management and safety audits.

9.4.8 Better Air Quality - There are clear linkages between high levels of air pollution and people's health. Extensive modelling of pollution in the Borough has shown that pollution levels are currently within acceptable air quality standards. However, we will continue to introduce measures and interventions to encourage sustainable travel, to reduce the potential for congestion and pollution and monitor air quality.

9.5 Local Transport Plan Funding

The Government has introduced a new system of allocating funding for the 'Integrated Transport' block which is based on a formula approach. This has had a major impact on the funding allocated to Halton and has resulted in a reduction of £0.237m compared to that awarded during LTP1. However, the situation would have been much worse if we hadn't secured an additional 25% of funding for achieving 'Excellent' grades for both our LTP1 Delivery Report and our second LTP.

The following table indicates the allocations for the Integrated Transport elements.

Year	Integrated Transport Block (£000s)
06/07	2.111
07/08	1.958
08/09	1.885
09/10	1.831
10/11	1.767
Total	9.552

The allocation for the Maintenance of Roads and Bridges for 2006/7 was £2,274,000 and that for 2007/8 is £2,786,000. Allocations for the remaining years up to 2010/11 have yet to be determined from a revision to the current formula.

In addition, two major scheme bids have been submitted to the DfT, as follows:

- o Construction of The Mersey Gateway - This proposal has secured entry into the DfT's Major Schemes Programme and work is continuing to secure full approval. The total cost of the scheme is estimated to be £390m of which £86m is proposed to be funded by the DfT; and
- o Silver Jubilee Bridge Complex - Maintenance

Scheme: - The scheme is awaiting approval to enter the DfT's Major Schemes Programme and is estimated to cost approximately £36m. Further details of both schemes can be found in Sections 10 and 11.

10.0 SILVER JUBILEE BRIDGE

10.1 The Silver Jubilee Bridge is a Grade II listed structure, opened in 1961. At that time, it was the third longest span steel arch bridge in the world. It was designed to carry 9,000 vehicles a day, but was widened in 1977 to increase capacity to 65,000 vehicles. This capacity has now been massively exceeded, with daily flow rates reaching 90,000 vehicles per day. As a result, traffic flow across the bridge is extremely sensitive to disruption, with the slightest incident during peak hours causing congestion over a wide area.

10.2 80% of vehicles using the Silver Jubilee Bridge have a final destination outside of the Borough, the remaining 20% being local traffic.

This demonstrates the high strategic importance of the crossing.

10.3 The Silver Jubilee Bridge is now over 40 years old and is operating beyond its original design capacity. Before Halton, as a new Unitary Authority, took on responsibility for the structure, its maintenance had been consistently under-funded for years and as a result of these factors, the bridge continues to require significant investment.

To date, it has benefited from £9m of essential structural maintenance. However, £25m is required for a further 10-year programme. This will be pursued through a major scheme bid as part of the LTP and will bring the bridge to a steady state condition to ensure its continued viability.

11.0 MERSEY GATEWAY

11.1 During 2006/07, £3.6m was spent on the development of the Mersey Gateway, a significant proportion of this funding coming through the NWDA. The development of this work has included the building of a major traffic model that will predict the effect of the scheme, including choice of route, with tolling taken into account. There are also extensive studies of the impact of the scheme on river hydrodynamics, ecology, landscape and the economic benefits.

11.2 In March 2006 the scheme gained entry into the Government's Major Schemes Programme. Since then, the Mersey Gateway Team has been established within Halton Council to progress the scheme through the planning process.

In June 2007, the Council approved the scheme for public consultation which will progress until September 2007. It is intended that a planning application will be made early in 2008.

11.3 The Mersey Gateway will be more than just a bridge for Halton. It will support the regional economy and act as a catalyst for regeneration within Halton and the surrounding areas. In particular, it will be a major boost to the Widnes Waterfront EDZ, 3MG and the developments at Daresbury.

11.4 The new bridge will provide three traffic lanes in each direction, allowing the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge to be used as a local crossing, with enhanced provision for walking, cycling and public transport.

12.0 CONSULTATION

As part of the LTP development, a series of consultation events were carried out, including a household survey, which went to 6,935 residents, and a series of LTP conference events for stakeholders.

13.0 FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

13.1 There is huge scope for future transport opportunities:

13.2 Improved public transport links to Liverpool John Lennon Airport will benefit the development of this important regional airport and, as a consequence, the economy of the whole region.

13.3 Liverpool Capital of Culture in 2008 is on the near horizon and improved transport links will have a beneficial impact on this important year-long series of events, together with the anticipated economic expansion we can expect, as seen in recent Capital of Culture cities such as Dublin and Glasgow.

14.0 RAIL

14.1 Halton Curve Rail Link is a scheme which, if implemented, would lead to new local services

between Liverpool-Halton-Chester-North Wales, a possible new local station at Beechwood in Runcorn and the re-opening of Ditton Station.

14.2 Car parking, access and environmental improvements are proposed to be made at both Widnes and Hough Green stations, to encourage greater use of rail travel.

14.3 3MG is a large-scale road/rail freight interchange to undergo considerable expansion in south west Widnes. It will provide major investment into existing rail freight businesses and be of regional and national significance. Other road infrastructure improvements are also being worked on, including an upgrade of Ditton Junction Bridge by Network Rail.

14.4 A Masterplan for this site was approved in December 2004 and details a five-year implementation programme.

15.0 BUSES

15.1 The vast majority of the bus network within the Borough is operated commercially, with the remainder supported by Halton Borough Council. Over the last two years, the decline in local bus use has been reversed following a series of network service improvements and the introduction of the improved national concessionary travel scheme.

During 2006/7 the number of passengers grew by 10% on local bus services within Halton. Key improvements introduced over the last eighteen months include:

- o Major investment by Arriva in their operations within Halton including the introduction of thirty nine new low floor, environmentally friendly buses;
- o A range of new improved services by Arriva including improvements to evening and Sunday services across the Borough on key corridors including the Runcorn Busway;
- o The award by the DfT of 'Kickstart' funding to Halton Borough Council and Halton Borough Transport Ltd., to improve bus services in the north Widnes area:
- o The introduction of a family of new prepaid multi-operator travel cards administered by Halton Borough Council, all designed to improve travel choice, and;

- o Improvements have been made to passenger facilities at Halton Lea North Bus Station.

15.2 There is a good, high frequency core bus service in the Borough, which includes a unique 20km dedicated Busway in Runcorn. However there are opportunities for improvement such as:

- o Improved connections between local bus services and passenger rail services at local stations (including through ticketing);
- o Improved passenger facilities at the key bus stations within the town centres and other key interchange points;
- o Improved sub-regional public transport links (e.g., the recently introduced service 700, which links Widnes Town Centre to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Manchester City Centre - a service jointly funded with Halton Borough Council).
- o More responsive pre-bookable 'door-to-door' services to complement and feed into improved conventional bus and rail services in the Borough;
- o Improved passenger information including the further roll-out of 'real time' bus passenger information.

15.3 Key Issues

15.3.1 There is a need to ensure the local bus network meets the changing travel needs of communities across the area. Halton Borough Council will continue to ensure it seeks best value for the funding it provides to supported bus services. A key priority over the next 2 years will be to support improvements to Warrington General, St. Helens and Whiston Hospitals, as well as key post-16 education and training facilities across the Borough.

15.3.2 Need to continue to improve key public transport links to major employment and regeneration sites across the Borough such as providing a high quality and frequent link between Widnes town centre and the Widnes Waterfront EDZ.

15.3.3 Continue to work in partnership with the commercial bus operators to improve services across the Core Bus Network in line with the aspirations set out in the Halton Bus Strategy 2006/7 - 2010/11.

16.0 CAR PARKING

16.1 A study into Parking and Access in Runcorn Old Town has been commissioned as part of an overall feasibility study for the 'Canal Quarter' scheme, where a 130-space public car park is proposed for this new development.

The study is a key delivery objective of the draft supplementary planning document (SPD) for Runcorn Old Town: Town Centre Strategy (December 2006), which suggests that safe and attractive short stay shoppers' car parking is essential to the vitality of the centre.

The SPD states that the Canal Quarter scheme, and/or other schemes significantly affecting the existing parking provision or likely demand, should contribute or conform to a comprehensive access and parking study. This will also need to address issues of long stay parking for traders and commuters. It is likely that a parking management strategy will be recommended, to identify accessibility shortfalls when travelling into and around the town centre.

This study responds to the Council's Parking Strategy and its wish to form partnerships with private carpark operators. The impact of emerging regeneration of the town centres will be reviewed and management of both on and off-street car parking will be considered, with possible limited duration of stay and/or charging for car parks.

In the light of the Parking Strategy, similar studies in Widnes Town Centre and Halton Lea will be commissioned, where significant developments are also proposed.

- The Windmill Centre development in central Widnes is likely to place increased pressure on already well used town car parks and may result in the need for active parking management.
- Proposals to develop south Widnes for evening economy and residential uses are being introduced and may also cause management issues, particularly in surrounding residential streets.

The management issues of parking being provided or lost as part of extension proposals for the shopping area at Halton Lea/Trident Park/Asda complex in Runcorn are also a key issue.

These studies will collect current survey

information on parking habits considered in the light of proposed developments, and make recommendations for a parking management strategy with the primary objective of securing sustainable economic growth.

17.0 STREET LIGHTING

17.1 Currently, there are 19,200 lighting units in the Borough, about 46% of which are over 30 years old and are consequently at the end of their designed life.

17.2 Key Issues

17.2.1 Funding over recent years has not been sufficient to remove older and potentially dangerous units. Their removal therefore needs to be prioritised.

17.2.2 Increases in energy charges and the introduction of new lighting columns on new developments will significantly increase energy costs.

18.0 PRINCIPAL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

18.1 The Expressway network in Runcorn was built at approximately the same time as the Silver Jubilee Bridge and is wearing out. At the moment, discussions are underway with the DfT and GONW to review the allocation for road maintenance within Halton. Resources need to be secured to ensure that roads are suitably maintained to take modern loads and vehicle usage.

18.2 Key Achievements

18.2.1 As part of the CPA assessment, the environment, which includes transportation issues, was given full marks.

18.2.2 The annual programme reports submitted to show progress against the LTP have all been 'above average' with the last one 'well above average.' This currently places Halton 8th in the country.

18.2.3 Halton is a 'Centre of Excellence' for local transport services.

18.2.4 Halton is a 'Beacon Council' for better local public transport.

19.0 CONTAMINATED LAND

19.1 The Environmental Protection Act, 1990

addresses some of the issues surrounding contaminated land: in particular, the retention and treatment of contaminated land on site rather than removal to tip, and a 'source-pathway-target' approach for dealing with risks to health.

19.2 The 'source-pathway-target' approach involves local authorities using historical records of land use and other information to identify contaminated or potentially contaminated sites within their area. Site investigation works then need to be carried out at these sites, to establish the types and location of the contamination.

The Council is able to prioritise key sites depending on location, current land use and the likely contaminant present. This then establishes that a contamination or a 'source' is present. Contamination on its own will not always present an immediate health risk and the next step is to identify if there is a pathway, such as a watercourse or drainage system, which would give the contamination the means to move or 'leach' from the site.

Once contamination is no longer locked into the ground, it is able to cause harm to the health of humans and wildlife. When contamination can be shown to be causing or have the potential to cause harm, the Council is required to act. If contaminated land is in private ownership, we can serve notice requiring remediation to be implemented. If the Council own the site then we need to remediate it. Sites meeting these criteria are categorised as 'Special Sites' under the Environmental Protection Act.

19.3 The National Land Use Database (NLUD), produced in 2004, shows that 27.69% of Halton's previously developed land remains derelict - a significant decrease from 36% in 2003. This represents 3% of the entire land in the Borough: 217 sites covering 248 ha., with 173 sites and 75 ha., in Widnes and Runcorn respectively.

Unsurprisingly, these sites tend to be concentrated on land either side of the River Mersey, as for many years this was dominated by the chemical industry. Bringing these sites back into productive use is a key aim of the Council and of the Council's Unitary Development Plan. However, this legacy presents a major disincentive for development and makes it impossible to meet Government Policy objectives

i.e., for most new development to take place on previously used land. Up to 75% of this land is economically and environmentally beyond reclamation for a hard end use. Despite this, since 1974 the Council has brought back into use 190 ha., of derelict and contaminated land, 71% of which was so badly contaminated it is suitable only for green end use.

20.0 REMEDIATION FUNDING

20.1 DEFRA

20.1.1 Derelict Land Grants

20.1.2 Between 1974 and 1990, over 397 acres of derelict land within Halton was reclaimed through funding from the Government's Derelict Land programme. It represented a public investment figure of over £20m.

Derelict Land Grant aid and our success in attracting such funding has made an immense difference to the image of Halton. However with our industrial heritage there still remains much to do. In fact, some of the sites which have already been reclaimed now fall below the environmental standards that are currently expected.

The Municipal Golf Course is a good example of this. Following a reclamation, leachate continues to enter Steward's Brook, but because we are not allowed to attract two lots of grant for different contamination problems on the same piece of land, this remains unresolved.

20.1.3 The Council continues to try to access the various forms of Derelict Land Grant each year. This has gone towards the reclamation of sites such as Percival Lane, Barrows Green Lane, Southern Widnes, the Coal Stock Yard, Derby Road and Factory Lane.

Derelict Land Grants are issued from the Government's Derelict Land Programme, controlled by English Partnerships (EP). The NWDA act as administrator and our contact. There are various funds that deal with contaminated areas that are linked into different end uses.

20.1.4 Under part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act, funding is now disbursed by Defra. This is provided for three specific areas:

- 1) Site investigation;

- 2) Risk assessments/consultants reports;
- 3) Costs for remediation work.

20.1.5 Funding for Parts 1) and 2) is available for all potential contamination sites identified, but money for Part 3) is only available for sites that are designated as 'Special Sites'.

Halton currently has only one designated special site: St Michael's Golf Course, which was reclaimed many years ago using Derelict Land Grant. However, this site no longer meets today's more stringent environmental standards and obtaining designation has proved a lengthy process, which the Council originally embarked upon back in 2003.

20.1.6 The process has involved putting a case together for designation to the Environment Agency (who need to formally support the proposal), as well as carrying out site investigation works and developing a design scheme.

Although funding was available for the site investigation works, the design scheme had to be funded by the Council at a cost of £270,000.

As Defra has agreed to designate the golf course as a Special Site, these costs will be refunded as part of the overall reclamation costs. Closure of the golf course while this process continues is incurring additional costs for security - currently running at in excess of £150,000 per annum, which will not be eligible for refund from Defra.

20.1.7 Such a lengthy and costly process presents some real issues for Halton. As an area with more 'blackfield' than 'brownfield' sites, we potentially have some way to go to prove our need to Defra. We are, however, continuing with a programme of testing to identify sites and categorise any possible risks. This work is funded through Defra.

20.1.8 Key sites in Halton which may possibly require future designation as special sites are Weston Quarries, Johnson's Lane Tip, Weston lagoons. Although some of these are currently in private ownership, they may eventually become the responsibility of the Council.

20.1.9 In Halton, site contamination is often severe and the consequent cost for remediation is therefore very high. St. Michael's Golf Course could, for example, cost in the region of £4.5m to remediate.

20.2 Landfill Tax Credits

This is a further source of funding that can be used for smaller scale projects involving site contamination. As its name suggests, it is funded from Landfill Tax, which is a tax levied on all waste that currently goes to landfill. The Coal Stock Yard received £300,000 from Landfill tax credits towards the costs of site remediation.

20.3 NWDA Funding

NWDA single pot funds can also be used for land reclamation, but this has become increasingly difficult for Halton to access due to the NWDA's changing priorities.

21.0 CONTAMINATED LAND REMEDIATION TECHNOLOGIES

21.1 The variety of technologies for treating contamination and remediating sites is advancing all the time.

Halton Borough Council has carried out pioneering works using 'Cement Stabilisation Technology' at a number of sites in the Borough. This process is particularly suitable for a commonly occurring contaminant in Halton called 'Galligu.' This semi-liquid substance causes major land stability problems and poses a risk to watercourses, etc.

The cement stabilisation technique locks up the contamination and changes its consistency to a hard solid, thus preventing further risk and improving the quality of the site for potential further development.

This technique was used on the Coal Stock Yard site in Widnes which is now a demonstration project being monitored by the Environment Agency and the University of Greenwich.

To date, tests have proven the technology to be successful. This method also has the advantage of being relatively cheap and is thus more cost effective when compared to landfill. The cement stabilisation technology is also likely to be used on parts of St. Michael's Golf Course and the Widnes Waterfront EDZ.

21.2 Other technologies include:

- bio-remediation and vacuum extraction, which remove oils and solvents; and

- o permeable reactive barriers, which treat collected leachate from sites with suitable chemicals in order to make them safe.

21.3 Land Reclamation Schemes

21.3.1 Halton Borough Council is currently reclaiming approximately 10 hectares of contaminated land each year. These sites, e.g. Wigg Island, are mainly being reclaimed for green, soft end uses: generally most appropriate given the site conditions. However the cement stabilisation technique has been so successful that it may be viable to build on sites in the future.

Sites treated in this way, e.g., the old Crosville Bus Depot, Runcorn, could be viable for a number of uses, including housing, as the ground conditions are much more suitable.

21.3.2 One site which has recently been reclaimed:-

21.3.3 The Brindley Arts Centre is the former site of an old tannery and soap works in Runcorn Town Centre, where various contaminants were left in the ground.

21.3.3.1 The first phase of this development involved dealing with the contamination which, due to environmental regulations, had to be retained on site.

Temporarily encapsulated as 'the mound' adjacent to the Brindley, it was prevented from causing further harm. However, as part of the nearby new development for the Runcorn Canal Quarter, the mound is being removed.

21.3.3.2 In addition, the foundations for the Brindley were piled in order to accommodate the ground conditions.

21.3.4 Reclamation schemes proposed in the future:

21.3.4.1 St Michael's Golf Course

It is hoped that work will begin on the golf course in the near future, but it is estimated that it will be four years before the site will again be open to the public. As the site was a 1970s design, consideration is being given as to how it can be improved and updated, for example through the inclusion of a golf driving range.

21.3.4.2 HEDCO or Hutchinsons Tip, West Bank

Currently in private ownership, this heavily contaminated site, adjacent to Stewards Brook and

the Mersey estuary, will require some remediation in the near future to prevent leachate from entering these watercourses. Work is currently underway to look at the possibility of collecting the leachate and burning it.

21.3.4.3 3MG

This site has two watercourses, Ditton Brook and Stewards Brook, into which leachate could potentially escape. The site adjacent to Stewards Brook has been sheet-piled, which will prevent further contamination from entering the brook. However, other parts of the site may require additional treatment.

22.0 KEY URBAN RENEWAL ACHIEVEMENTS

22.1 The Highways and Transportation Department won Beacon Council status in 2004, under the theme 'Better Local Public Transport'.

22.2 In November 2003, the Planning Department achieved runner up status in the Local Government Award category of the AGI Awards (Association of Geographic Information) for its on-line planning application system and were short-listed in the 2004 Local Government Chronicle Awards category of 'Improving Services with E-Technology'.

22.3 Landscape Services won Beacon Council status in 2002, under the theme 'Improving Urban Green Spaces'.

22.4 In the Best Value Audit Inspection carried out in 2003 for urban renewal, the service was awarded a Good 2* Service with 'Promising Prospects for Improvement.' Halton was praised for having a strong track record over many years of reclaiming contaminated and derelict land and of completing re-development projects on the land released.

Inspectors felt that Halton had been successful in creating employment opportunities by attracting private sector investment into the Borough. In addition, they found that Halton had good working relationships with locally based businesses and that progress had been made in demonstrating leadership in partnership-working and devolving influence over the use of resources to local communities.

Relative data showed Halton compared well with others on refurbishing derelict housing.

22.5 Awards Won for Halton Regeneration Schemes in 2004/5/6:

22.5.1 Green Apple Awards for:

22.5.1.1 Halton Business Forum, Victoria Square, Widnes (2004);

22.5.1.2 Transporter House, Widnes (2004);

22.5.1.3 The regeneration of the Kingsway Learning Centre, Widnes (2005);

22.5.2 Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Award for The Brindley Arts Centre, Runcorn (2005);

22.5.3 Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) for the Wigg Island reclamation project in Runcorn (2004);

22.5.4 2005 Regeneration Award: Best Design-led Regeneration Project awarded for The Brindley Arts Centre, Runcorn (2005);

22.5.5 Civic Trust 2005: Centre Vision Special Award for The Brindley Arts Centre, Runcorn;

22.5.6 'Green Flag' for Parks & Open Spaces for Wigg Island, Runcorn (2006);

22.5.7 Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Environment Award 2006 for the development of the former Coal Stockyard (now Ted Gleave Fields) into playing fields.

22.5.8 Chartered Institute of Housing: Excellence in Delivering Regeneration Award for Castlefields area (2006).

22.5.9 Regional Property Awards: Best Partnership Project (with Plus Housing Group) for the Waterbridge Mews Development (2006) in Castlefields.

22.5.10 Daily Post Regional Property Awards 2007: Best Partnership Project for the Phoenix Park Pavillion, Castlefields.

22.5.11 RENEW Exemplar Learning Project 2007: Castlefields Regeneration Programme.

22.5.12 RICS Awards 2007: Phoenix Park - shortlisted in Community Benefit category.

22.6 In addition, a number of other projects have been shortlisted for awards for this year, but results have, to date, not been announced.

23.0 URBAN RENEWAL WORKING STRUCTURES AND PARTNERSHIPS

23.1 The process of urban renewal is a highly complex, cross-cutting issue. As the Government's White Paper makes clear, the requirements for success go well beyond the relatively tight definition of urban renewal used in this paper, which emphasises the physical environment.

23.2.1 Halton Borough Council recognised the importance of bringing responsibility for the delivery of physical regeneration programmes under one roof, by creating the Major Projects Department in 2002. This department, together with other directorates within Halton Borough Council, various partners, agencies and organisations having an input into urban renewal, are brought together in several ways:

23.2.2 The Urban Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership (UR SSP), reporting to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board, manages Halton's Urban Renewal Strategy. It approves, disburses, monitors and co-ordinates Halton's NRF allocation for Urban Renewal projects and acts as Management Board for the NWDA funding for the Widnes Waterfront EDZ.

23.2.3 The Castlefields Regeneration Partnership agreed the Castlefields Regeneration Masterplan and Action Plan and oversees its implementation. The Castlefields Implementation Group monitors progress on the Council's behalf.

23.2.4 The 3MG Steering Group has brought together land-owners and public sector partners in the formulation of the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park Masterplan and monitors progress against the agreed Action Plan. Halton Borough Council's Executive (Transmodal Implementation) Sub Board manages the implementation of the programme.

23.2.5 The Widnes Waterfront EDZ Steering Group consists of officers with an interest in delivering the Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan and Action Plan.

23.2.6 The Council's Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board monitors and reviews progress on all Urban Renewal matters.

23.3 In addition there are other informal and

formal partnerships with private sector developers driving forward Urban Renewal. These are:

23.3.1 Widnes Regeneration Ltd., established in February 1999 as a joint venture development company between Halton Borough Council and St. Modwen Properties plc., to tackle the regeneration issues facing Widnes Town Centre and other named sites in Widnes. This partnership has delivered:

- Widnes Road redevelopment with a new ASDA store, Albert Court 20-unit residential scheme, Gerrard Street shops, the Lacey Street housing development and the Liebig Court mixed residential and retail developments.
- The North Albert Road redevelopment with the JJB leisure/retail development and Streetscape Improvement scheme;
- Two Streetscape Improvement schemes, one in Widnes Road and one in Broseley Square;
- Halebank Local Centre;
- The Simms Cross Redevelopment, incorporating retail and commercial floorspace;
- Following the purchase of the former Lafarge and Clariant sites, the Heron Business Park development on the Widnes Waterfront EDZ;
- The sale to Barratt's of a housing development site with planning permission for 204 houses on the former ASDA site at Halebank;
- the commercial leisure development at Widnes Waterfront.

23.3.2 Halton Development Partnership Ltd., which is a joint venture company with Peel Holdings Ltd., to promote development/regeneration initiatives targeted solely to Council-owned land. The joint venture company has delivered the Runcorn Old Town Central Area Redevelopment Scheme and is currently progressing the proposed District Centre at Upton Rocks, Widnes.

23.3.3 The Council has entered into an exclusivity agreement with Urban Splash to bring forward development proposals for the 'Canal Quarter', a collection of sites alongside the Bridgewater canal in Runcorn.

The development will include residential, commercial, retail and civic elements.

23.3.4 The Council is in discussion with private sector developers wishing to procure the Halton Business Forum for redevelopment.

23.3.5 Pochins plc - A joint venture company that has built and is now managing industrial units at Dock Road, Runcorn.

23.3.6 An informal private sector regeneration partnership was also established with Maryland Securities in developing a proposal for one of the key buildings (the former Co-op store) in Victoria Square, Widnes.

23.3.7 There are also partnerships within both Runcorn Town Centre and Widnes Town Centre, which are aimed at increasing the vitality and viability of these two town centres.

- In Widnes, the Widnes Traders Group has 70 members concerned with retail and commercial interests in the Town Centre.
- In Runcorn Town Centre the business community there has established the Runcorn Traders Group with 7 member representatives for 100 commercial interests in the town.

These groups meet bi-annually.

23.3.8 Halton Borough Council is a member of two regional partnerships which include developments in Halton within their programmes:

- The 'New Approaches' programme aims to reclaim under-used land on strategic corridors and gateways to and from Merseyside;
- The 'River of Light' scheme aims to create light beacons to form 'lighting routes' throughout the Merseyside coastline.

23.4 Comments on partnership working

23.4.1 Substantial progress is being demonstrated in achieving the desired outcomes, as measured through the Floor Targets and action plans in place to address areas where challenges remain and to focus on continuing needs.

23.4.2 Successful expenditure of all external resources committed to the borough in line with strategic plans. Partners have demonstrated their commitment through dedicating their own

resources to Partnership activity and in examining mainstreaming.

23.4.3 An exemplary strategic planning process is in place, which allows partners to address the needs and aspirations of our communities. This is reflected in a very favourable Audit Commission report on the Partnership's Performance Management Framework, which is deemed to meet all necessary criteria. In addition, the Government Office assessment of the Partnership and its work places it in one of the upper ("green/amber") bands for the annual review for the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

24.0 COMMUNITY STRATEGY

The Community Strategy 2006-11 was developed following considerable research and consultation locally. It identifies what is most important for Halton and how we should work together to improve the quality of life for all those who live and work in the borough. It sets out key priorities and the direction in which we need to progress, providing a guide and framework for the activities of partners and other organisations in Halton and into which this Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan fits.

The Community Strategy reflects on the need to pool ideas and resources and to work even more closely and effectively together. It encourages the need for partnership working and concentrating on what matters to the residents of Halton, in order to make the difference in planning a better future for them.

It identifies the process of engagement with people and partners as vital, in order that there is a shared view of the challenges that Halton faces. In addition, there is a recognition of the diversity of residents and the requirement to be sensitive to a range of needs - giving people opportunities and choice, building people's aspirations and abilities, in order that they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives.

With this recognition we will be able to ensure the quality of life and opportunities locally, so that people choose to live and work here - a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs

and which respects the diversity of the place and the people.

All of these values have subsequently moulded Halton's Local Area Agreement, which was formally ratified by Government on 1st April, 2007, and addresses the five main areas of concern in the borough, including Urban Renewal, as well as a range of cross-cutting themes.

25.0 EMERGING POLICY ISSUES

The Local Government Bill, currently before Parliament, will have profound implications for areas like Halton. It reinforces the need for councils to pursue the well-being of residents in an holistic way; strengthens the role of Partnerships by placing a duty on many organisations to co-operate; and places engagement with residents and businesses as a cornerstone of the approach to be taken. Key to this is a radical reworking of Local Area Agreements as a means to promote and facilitate partnership working across cross-cutting themes.

25.1 Local Area Agreements

From April 2007, there is a requirement for every area to produce a Local Area Agreement (LAA). It is important that we work together to deliver key outcomes for the Borough as part of this process. Halton has developed a robust LAA, which mirrors the focus on five strategic themes, including Urban Renewal, set out in the local Sustainable Community Strategy.

25.2 Funding

25.2.1 As has been explained previously, external funding changes are likely to result in Halton receiving far less resource than we have had in the past, as a number of funding sources upon which urban renewal has relied in recent years are now coming to an end. The task will be to work in a smarter way to make best use of what resources are available.

25.2.2 In addition we are not identified as a Pathfinder area and are therefore likely to miss out on many of the resources allocated for housing.

25.2.3 Halton is now allocated NWDA resources via The Merseyside Partnership (TMP) and is therefore having to compete for funding with the Merseyside area generally. As mentioned earlier, this is likely to be a key challenge for Halton.

25.2.4 It is important that Halton continues to develop links with the NWDA as RDAs in the English Regions are likely to be key players in the management and allocation of European and non-European resources earmarked for regional development in the immediate future.

25.2.5 There are, therefore, major challenges for Halton in delivering Urban Renewal. It is likely that we will increasingly have to focus on private sector funding and partnership.

However, we must acknowledge that much of the private sector intervention to date has relied upon public sector funding to attract it to the Borough, or to provide improvements which have acted as a catalyst to private sector development. With diminishing public funding support, opportunities may be fewer or on a smaller scale.

25.3 Best Value Review

25.3.1 The Audit Commission Inspectors for the 2003 Best Value Review of Urban Renewal felt that Halton did not have sufficiently well defined service delivery outcomes and that the focus had been on managing existing projects as well as securing funding for future projects, rather than on identifying how projects would meet the needs of local people and their environment.

As a consequence, they felt that this had led to a 'piecemeal' approach to physical renewal and regeneration in the past. Comparative data showed that performance was poor in respect of some indicators associated with housing, economic development and the environment.

25.3.2 Although much has since changed and improvements have been made following that review, more still needs to be done to address this challenging agenda.

26.0 SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT

26.1 Although considered as part of 'Employment, Learning & Skills', skills and employment issues also cut across part of the urban renewal agenda. Halton generally performs poorly in terms of skills and qualification levels, ranking 342nd out of 408 districts.

The 19+ age group has a particular lack of employment skills and qualifications, leading to new

Halton businesses recruiting from outside the Borough. Halton is, therefore, not fully benefiting from the inward investment to areas such as Daresbury Park. This issue needs to be addressed by both the Urban Renewal and the Skills and Employment priorities, with better links made between the two.

Intelligence needs to be provided to schools and colleges, to support curriculum development and provide more informed careers advice to students. There is also a question as to whether colleges are catering for local businesses in offering students what businesses need in terms of flexibility and vocational training opportunities.

26.2 Education in Halton, and the UK generally, is currently very focussed on academic qualifications. This option may not suit some students, who could learn valuable vocational skills and gain greater employment opportunities through a more structured approach to learning.

26.3 While we need to focus on the knowledge economy, the current skills mismatch is unlikely to be able to support a growth in this sector. This is further impacted upon by a loss in our youth population, predicted at 20% decline over the next ten years in the 10-19 yrs., age group and 6% in the 20-30 yrs., age group. It is likely that these losses will be due to families moving out of Halton, to Cheshire and surrounding areas, and students moving to university. This presents us with the challenge to:

- make Halton a more attractive and viable place to live and
- meet the needs and quality of life issues

and in order to keep families here and attract new graduates back to the area, businesses should also be encouraged to employ local graduates. These issues will need to be addressed if we are to have a young, local, skilled workforce in place that will underpin Halton's economic growth.

27.0 THE FUTURE OF HOUSING

27.1 Housing may present the key to reversing Halton's population decline amongst young people. As mentioned above, current predictions suggest that by 2015, the number of young people aged 10-19 and 20-39 will decline by 20% and 6%

respectively (based on a 2003 baseline). If we are to attract graduates and young families into the area, we need to meet the demand for high quality residential property. Otherwise, people will continue to 'vote with their feet' and leave the borough. However, regional restrictions placed upon the Authority with regard to new-build housing, together with diminishing land reserves (particularly in Widnes) present key challenges for the borough.

27.2 For a variety of reasons, the problems facing the borough do not correlate with the priorities of the Regional Housing Strategy, which may result in Halton not securing funding for the housing investment we require.

27.3 As the Regional Housing Board has, in principle, agreed significant funding for Castlefields, the amount of additional funding which we are allocated for other priority areas may be restricted, leading to a major challenge for Halton.

27.4 Within Halton there are a few housing areas where properties may require attention in the near to mid-term. These include West Bank in Widnes, which has some of the oldest properties in the borough. Consultants are currently carrying out a condition survey in the area, which will inform the future housing strategy.

27.5 Current demographic predictions for Halton show a growing elderly population, with projected rises in the over 60's and the over 75's by 27.5% and 19% respectively by the year 2015 (based on a 2003 baseline). This dramatic rise will put increasing demands on a variety of housing types, including bungalows, supported housing and residential care. With existing waiting lists for such provision, this will present another key challenge for Halton, as its elderly population increases.

27.6 The 2001, census figures showed a trend towards a smaller household size within Halton, which is expected to reach an average size of about 2.2 within the next decade. This may lead to an increase in demand for apartments or smaller properties, rather than large houses. The trend towards smaller households is currently sustaining the demand for increased housing provision and it is likely that this will continue into the future.

27.7 The Housing Needs Survey has identified an emerging affordability issue in the Borough and

recommends that 25% of new units should be the target for subsidised affordable housing, subject to site viability. Officers from the Housing and Planning Departments of the Council plan to work together, with a view to developing an affordable housing policy for the borough to address this. The current market situation has implications for the social rented sector, which is beginning to experience an upturn in demand.

27.8 The housing stock transfer took place in December 2005 and the Council has committed to work closely with Halton Housing Trust, in order to ensure the delivery of the significant investment required to the stock.

27.9 Halton Borough Council is strengthening its links with private sector landlords in order to bring about improvements in the condition and management standards required in the private rented sector, with the introduction of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

28.0 TOWN CENTRES

28.1 Halton's town centres are currently being developed to support a night-time economy. However, restaurants and bars may suffer from sparse trade during the day, due to the low number of other businesses and commercial offices available to be serviced. This detracts from the vibrancy of the town centres during the day and affects the mix and viability of gustatory premises in the borough.

If we are to attract quality night-time investment and have vibrant town centres, then we also need to develop office space which will provide the trade to ensure that restaurants and bars remain viable and thrive.

Linking the Widnes Waterfront EDZ area to the town centre should help enhance the economic development of Widnes, particularly during the day, but possibly with employees also going for a drink or meal after work.

28.2 Within Halton, retail and office floorspace is relatively under-represented commercially, at 10.5% and 11.9% respectively - substantially lower than the national average of 19.2% for retail and 16.8% for office floor space. This presents a further important challenge for our town centre development.

28.3 There are a number of private sector investment projects proposed within our town centres, including those of Urban Splash in Runcorn. Halton needs to work with these investors and attract further private sector investment to the town centres in order to ensure their continued regeneration.

As mentioned earlier, this will become increasingly difficult as public sector funding diminishes. The remarkable regeneration of both Widnes and Runcorn is far from complete and new developments, such as the Canal Quarter in Runcorn and Liebig Court in Widnes, need to be supported by continuing the physical improvements of the established areas.

Over the last three years, schemes such as the Streetscapes Enhancement and Shopfront Improvements schemes have used NRF funding to supplement private sector investment with other funding such as Local Transport Plan and Section 106 monies. It is vital that the improvement of these town centres remains a high priority for future funding, whilst available.

29.0 REGIONAL ISSUES

29.1 NWDA Funding

29.1.1 The North West Development Agency has now produced a Strategic Investment Plan, setting out their priorities for funding. Castlefields no longer features as a priority in this plan.

As this programme's employment and skills initiatives were reliant upon NWDA funding, a major review of spend for these projects has been necessitated. This is a real issue for Halton, both in the short and longer term. As NWDA funding priorities change, support is increasingly diverted to areas outside of Halton.

29.1.2 Halton has recently been placed within the remit of the NWDA's Merseyside Office. This means that we are now competing with areas where land values are higher, land more sought after and match funding more easily accessed through European Objective 1. **28.2** City Region Development Plan.

29.2 City Region Development Plan

29.2.1 The City Region Development Plan builds on a detailed mapping of key actions and initiatives

across Merseyside, which together form an Action Plan for the years 2006-2009.

This Action Plan and the Development Plan itself are designed to show how the Merseyside Region can make a significant contribution to initiatives such as the Northern Way Growth Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy.

29.2.2 The Liverpool City Region does not feature significantly in the Northern Way Growth Strategy, which seems to be Leeds-Manchester focused, and Halton's major strategic initiative, the Mersey Gateway, is barely mentioned in the document.

29.2.3 The New Mersey Gateway is, however, named and given prominence in the North West's Regional Economic Strategy, a document that will give a significant steer to projects and programmes to be supported by NWDA and key regional partners both in the short and the long term.

29.3 The North West Regional Assembly

The North West Regional Assembly position is currently on hold, awaiting the outcome of the Sub-National Economic Development & Regeneration Review, as referred to earlier, in 4.1.4.

29.4 Planning

The draft Spatial Development Framework for the Regional Spatial Strategy recognises both Liverpool and Manchester as regional centres (Policy RDF1).

Halton and sub-regional partners will need to push to ensure that the Liverpool City region is identified as being of equal significance as a regional centre, placing emphasis on joint working between the two areas.

29.5 Transport

29.5.1 Mersey Gateway

29.5.1.1 The Mersey Gateway means much more to Halton and the region than just a means to get across the Mersey Estuary. For far too long the Borough and the North West region have been constrained by the current inadequate capacity of the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

Over time, this has cost the North West economy a significant amount of money through delayed orders, late arrival of employees at work and companies taking business outside of the region to avoid such potential problems and delays.

29.5.1.2 The new Mersey crossing will deliver a real boost to the regeneration of the North West. It will make transport and access across the region much faster, more reliable and more efficient, thus increasing confidence in the area. It will also open up new areas of land in Widnes and Runcorn - in particular the Widnes Waterfront EDZ - bringing much needed investment.

29.5.2 The Silver Jubilee Bridge

The Silver Jubilee Bridge presents a daily problem at peak times, with the slightest incident causing major traffic tailbacks across the region. The infrastructure of the bridge is also struggling to cope with traffic flows, as it now takes well in excess of its designed capacity of traffic, on narrow and substandard width carriageways.

Essential works are difficult and costly to programme, due to the heavy and constant traffic demand. This presents a major challenge for Halton Council, responsible for the maintenance of the structure, and it is currently struggling to keep abreast of the necessary work. Ideally, the bridge needs to be closed for significant blocks of time and over a long period, which is simply not feasible.

Unless a new crossing can be put in place, it remains only a matter of time before this work will become essential, regardless of the resultant traffic chaos. It is also key that necessary funding for maintenance is made available through the LTP process, to try and bring the bridge to a steady state of maintenance.

29.5.3 Public Transport

29.5.3.1 Supported bus networks are necessary for accessibility but are not commercially viable. Some networks are available, although there is currently a lack of funding for these services. These will be extended to include late night and weekend services to support the night-time economy, as well as those serving industrial areas and hospitals.

The costs for providing the same services each year are rising. This will lead to cuts in provision unless budgets are increased.

29.5.3.2 Bus operators do not currently operate busway routes after 9:30pm due to the number of anti-social behaviour incidents and attacks on bus drivers.

With the promotion of the night-time economy, this presents a difficult challenge.

Halton has developed the 'Travelsafe' scheme, which puts police and community support officers on buses during the day. This scheme has been successful in tackling these issues, but more needs to be done.

29.6 Street Lighting

The funding available for street lighting over recent years has not been sufficient to remove older and potentially dangerous units and their removal therefore needs to be prioritised.

30.0 MAJOR PROJECTS

30.1 Castlefields

30.1.1 There are three key issues with regard to this programme of works:

30.1.2 Castlefields has now been downgraded by the NWDA and is no longer viewed as a priority area, despite an initial agreement to invest £1.9m. An ongoing debate is continuing in an attempt to move this forward and secure funding.

30.1.3 The current and approved programmes of works will leave the renewal of two residential areas unfunded, together with several other regeneration projects. Support needs to be sought for the completion of this scheme.

30.1.4 A Compulsory Purchase Order has been served to enable the Regeneration Partnership to acquire Castlefields local centre as the precursor to the creation of a new Village Square. This development will include new retail, residential, community and health facilities constructed around a high quality public space.

30.2 Widnes Waterfront EDZ

The EDZ area includes some of the previously reclaimed area known as 'Venture Fields.'

30.3 3MG

30.3.1 A key issue for Halton Borough Council concerns the disposal and development of 'HBC Fields'.

30.3.2 The establishment of a Management Company to administer common facilities will involve both the Borough Council and the private sector.

30.4 Contaminated Land

30.4.1 Although significant achievements have been made in reclaiming contaminated sites within Halton, much remains to be done. As an area with such significant contamination this presents a challenging agenda.

As the birthplace of the chemical industry, many of the contamination problems within the Borough are much worse and more difficult to deal with than other areas of the country. This makes it both difficult and expensive to develop these sites.

30.4.2 Halton has long been leading the way in utilising new technology and has made great progress in remediation techniques, which will assist with future site development.

However there are a number of key challenges still facing Halton. These include the uncertainty of public funding, generally, in the medium term and the lengthy and costly process involved in accessing government funding.

Other key issues include the severity of the contamination and the ongoing liability of these sites for the foreseeable future.

30.5 Economic Development

30.5.1 The knowledge economy needs to be placed at the heart of the economic development agenda. Although Halton has a high proportion of

employment in the knowledge driven sectors, this is declining. The proportion of businesses operating in the knowledge economy is also low.

Growth in this sector would need to be supported by an increase in the skills and qualifications of Halton's workforce. A current occupational breakdown for the Borough, reveals that 'higher end' occupations are under-represented.

30.5.2 The likely reduction, if not removal, of grant aid from areas such as Halton will prevent us from offering financial grant incentives to potential investors. This will leave us in open competition with other areas which are perhaps much easier to develop and will be a key issue for the area.

30.5.3 We are currently losing young people from the Borough and, as already stated, predictions suggest that by 2015 the number of young people

aged 10-19 and 20-39 will decline by 20% and 6% respectively.

If we are to attract graduates and young families to the area, we need to meet the demand for high quality jobs and investment in Halton.

Without this, the young people of the Borough will have no choice but to seek better job opportunities elsewhere.

30.5.4 Retail and office space is under-represented at 10.5% and 11.9% respectively, which is substantially lower than the national average of 19.2% and 16.8%.

Establishing more office accommodation and attracting suitable private sector business is important for the borough, particularly in the town centre areas, to help support their trade throughout the day and evening.

31.0 CONCLUSION

Much has been done; there is still much to do and with diminishing public funds available over the period covered by this review, it will be difficult to maintain the momentum of the last five years.

The key challenges for the Urban Renewal agenda in Halton are:

- Strategic positioning within Merseyside and the North West region;
- Potential downgrading of Urban Renewal as a national priority;
- Progressing the Contaminated Land Reclamation programme;
- Continuing the focus on the delivery of current regionally-significant programmes at Castlefields, 3MG, Widnes Waterfront and the Mersey Gateway Bridge; delivering local priority projects such as the Canal Quarter;
- Bringing forward new programmes in accordance with regional and local priorities at Windmill Hill and West Bank;
- Diminishing resources, including the impact of the ending of ERDF and NRF;
- Funding support, increasing calls on diminishing Local Authority budgets etc.

Urban Renewal is a fundamental and cross-cutting theme in any community, but particularly so in Widnes and Runcorn where the legacy of the chemical industry has been so pernicious - Urban Renewal here usually demands land reclamation and remediation prior to development, thus adding significantly to overall costs.

The attached Action Plan at Appendix 1 sets the proposed Urban Renewal programme and the timescales within which it is anticipated this will be achieved. It also details funding availability - but more importantly, it identifies where the gaps in the funding provision lie.

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 10th September 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director of Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Community Cohesion in Halton

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

Community cohesion is a complex issue which touches on a range of inter related matters. Community cohesion was identified as a scrutiny topic for the Employment Learning and Skills PPB for its 2006/07 programme. The Board set up a Community Cohesion Working Party to consider the issue and how it might be taken forward to fulfil the Council's responsibilities. This topic seeks to examine and define the concept in the Halton context and consider how Cohesion can best be mainstreamed or exemplified in service delivery.

The purpose of this report is to provide the final report of the Working Party, which includes a series of recommendations to Executive Board.

2. RECOMMENDED:

That the Policy and Performance Board (PPB) welcome the report and findings of its Community Cohesion Topic Group and make the following recommendations to Executive Board:

1. **It is recommended that the "Vision story" developed during the scrutiny process be adopted as the community cohesion statement for Halton, and form part of the overall corporate equalities statement used in service planning**
2. **It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments be extended in scope, in line with LGA guidance, to cover the potential community cohesion impacts of all council policies and programmes. This should be carried out as part of the established service planning process.**
3. **It is recommended that an Officer Working Group be established, as a sub-group of the Corporate Equalities Group, to specifically look at the needs of new migrants in the borough and to monitor the joint delivery of services to them.**
4. **It is recommended that the cohesion implications of council activities are monitored and reported to the various Policy and Performance Boards as part of the normal service planning monitoring process. In addition, a data**

set of cohesion indicators should be set up and populated. These should form an annual progress report on cohesion, which will be monitored by the Employment Learning and Skills PPB

- 5. It is recommended that the Corporate Services PPB be alerted to emerging concerns about perceived barriers to accessing services. These include opening hours, disabled access, transport, difficult locations, information and communication, bureaucracy, quality of response and perceived attitudes to certain client group. Corporate Services PPB may wish to consider whether it is worthy of further investigation or scrutiny.**
- 6. It is recommended that the council and its partners be informed of the results of this scrutiny topic and recognise that anti-social behaviour has profound implications for cohesion in Halton. It is one of its defining issues. The anti-social behaviour scrutiny topic team and Haltons Community safety Team should take note of the impact of their work on community cohesion and be aware that this will form part of the cohesion monitoring system in Halton.**
- 7. Inter-generational myths and conflicts were identified as a key defining feature of cohesion in Halton. It is recommended that the appropriate teams within the Children's Services and Health and Communities Directorates collaborate on joining up activity to specifically address inter-generational issues within Halton.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The Topic Group has been in operation since last summer. Its methodology has encompassed the following components:

- a) Initial scoping and feasibility report presented to the PPB in June 2006.
- b) Collection of Government reports and strategies.
- c) Collection of materials from other local authorities considered exemplars in the field
- d) Best practice study visit to Sefton.
- e) Evidence gathering sessions with a number of agencies and witnesses
- f) Focus groups with recent migrants and with the voluntary and community sector
- g) Data gathering on cohesion indicators and migrant workers

All of this background material was placed on a CD-Rom for the convenience of members and distributed at a previous meeting. The Topic Group has now produced its final report. This is attached for information, along with an Executive Summary report.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Community cohesion is now an established part of the policy framework underpinning the work of local government and its partners. Cohesion forms a key element of the Local Government Bill now before Parliament.

5. RISK ANALYSIS

The true risks associated with cohesion are around actions, or the failure to take appropriate actions, that undermine the cohesion of communities and impact on the quality of life of local people. There is a dedicated section on risk management in the final report.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report. A number of actions are suggested which should form part of the normal service delivery programmes of Council Directorates. As such these will be funded through mainstream budgets and will not need dedicated resources.

7. RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report. A number of actions are suggested which should form part of the normal service delivery programmes of Council Directorates. As such these will be funded through mainstream budgets and will not need dedicated resources.

Employment Learning & Skills PPB

*Final Report of the Community Cohesion
Topic Group*

September 2007

FOREWORD

Community cohesion is a complex issue which touches on a range of inter related matters in Halton. Community cohesion was identified as a scrutiny topic for the Employment Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board (PPB) for its 2006/07 programme. The Board set up a Community Cohesion Topic Group to consider the issue and how it might be taken forward to fulfil the Council's responsibilities. The Group sought to examine and define the concept in the Halton context and consider and make recommendations as to how Cohesion can best be mainstreamed or exemplified in service delivery.

This report provides the final summary of the Topic Group's work on how best Halton should discharge its duties with regard to Community Cohesion. The report is structured to provide a thoroughgoing review of all aspects of cohesion in Halton, reflects on national policy developments, and based on evidence gathered during the review develops a number of key recommendations for the Executive. These are embedded in the report itself and are summarised for ease of reference below:

- 1. It is recommended that the "Vision story" developed during the scrutiny process be adopted as the community cohesion statement for Halton, and form part of the overall corporate equalities statement used in service planning**
- 2. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments be extended in scope, in line with LGA guidance, to cover the potential community cohesion impacts of all council policies and programmes. This should be carried out as part of the established service planning process.**
- 3. It is recommended that an Officer Working Group be established, as a sub-group of the Corporate Equalities Group, to specifically look at the needs of new migrants in the borough and to monitor the joint delivery of services to them.**
- 4. It is recommended that the cohesion implications of council activities are monitored and reported to the various Policy and Performance Boards as part of the normal service planning monitoring process. In addition, a data set of cohesion indicators should be set up and populated. These should form an annual progress report on cohesion, which will be monitored by the Employment Learning and Skills PPB**
- 5. It is recommended that the Corporate Services PPB be alerted to emerging concerns about perceived barriers to accessing services. These include opening hours, disabled access, transport, difficult locations, information and communication, bureaucracy, quality of response and perceived attitudes to certain client group. Corporate Services PPB may wish to consider whether it is worthy of further investigation or scrutiny.**
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issues. The anti-social behaviour scrutiny topic team and Haltons Community safety Team should take note of the impact of their work on community cohesion and be aware that this will form part of the cohesion monitoring system in Halton.

7. **Inter-generational myths and conflicts were identified as a key-defining feature of cohesion in Halton. It is recommended that the appropriate teams within the Children's Services and Health and Communities Directorates collaborate on joining up activity to specifically address inter-generational issues within Halton.**

INTRODUCTION

The scrutiny function within Local Government gives non-executive members a lead in examining executive decisions and a role reviewing and making recommendations to improve areas of policy and service provision by the Council, which affect local residents. It is part of the wider community leadership role of Councillors with a mandate to examine local services and well-being. Examination of community cohesion issues is now widely considered as essential for carrying out this responsibility. Community cohesion touches on key aspects of people's engagement in their communities, their access to opportunities, and their ability to live rich and fulfilling lives.

In January 2005, the Government published its strategy for increasing racial equality and community cohesion - *Improving opportunity, strengthening society*. Local Authorities were asked to assess their vision, strategy and actions against the targets set by Central Government within this document. Halton's scrutiny process offers a ready framework for this task.

Cohesion is an over-arching goal that should inform all actions taken by a Council. Ensuring fairness in resource allocation, mutual understanding and openness between communities, along with equality and opportunity for individuals are all brought together under the "Community Cohesion" Agenda. Home Office pilot programmes have demonstrated good practice and are experimenting with new ways of bringing people together. The guidance on community cohesion (2002) published by the Local Government Association provides the commonly adopted working definition. A cohesive community is one where:

- There is common vision and a sense of belonging for all communities.
- The diversity of people's different background and circumstances are appreciated and positively valued.
- Those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities.
- Strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, in schools and within neighbourhoods.

Hence, community cohesion is present when different groups interact peacefully and constructively in every day life - different age groups, people from different housing estates, different ethnic groups, groups from different faith backgrounds and so on. For communities to thrive people need to feel that the local environment provides safety, opportunity and belonging. The term community cohesion is used by Government to encapsulate these and other qualities of a good and local environment.

BACKGROUND

Building and strengthening a cohesive community contributes to our vision to make Halton a place where people choose to live and work. It will improve awareness and understanding of the different communities living in the borough amongst partners, general public, and the local people. We would hope to strengthen relations amongst different communities and community groups living and working in the borough by understanding and taking positive action to tackling barriers to integration. The geography, history, location and demography of Halton mean that in absolute terms we do not have the quantum of cohesion challenges of others. However, we take the issue seriously and want to re-engineer service delivery to ensure that existing largely good relations between communities are nurtured.

The background to the topic commenced in June 2006 with the presentation of a scoping report to the PPB. In summary, the scoping paper, had the following central tenets:

- Halton used the same definition of community cohesion as used by central government as its starting point
- Halton took a holistic approach to community cohesion and believed a good deal of best practice already existed
- A recognition that without equality and diversity, and a degree of respect for difference, that there can be no cohesion
- Recognised the relevance of a complex set of issues such as race, place, class, age, sexual orientation, faith and gender in addressing issues around community cohesion
- That there was a need to address poverty, health inequalities, public space and street scene issues, housing and crime and anti-social behaviour issues
- The Council viewed community cohesion as being key to achieving its Vision and therefore community cohesion was prioritised in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan in the adoption of sustainability principles.

Community cohesion is a complex issue which touches on a range of inter related matters e.g. how cohesion impacts on community safety, educational standards, health improvement, community engagement in priority setting etc. It is acknowledged that there are no quick fixes.

Following the 2001 riots in Bradford & Oldham, community cohesion was coined as a term reacting to suggestions that a lack of interaction between individuals from different cultures, religions, and racial backgrounds contributed to the disorder. The aim of community cohesion is to promote greater contact, knowledge, and respect between

people from different backgrounds, and to establish a greater sense of citizenship and civic pride.

From the outset it was important to recognise that community cohesion works differently from established equality policies, which focus on tackling discrimination and providing equal access regardless of a person's background. Rather it is about examining the full range of issues which communities perceive to make life worth living in Halton. In a council context, there is particular emphasis on community development and the role and function of community centres as underpinning infrastructure for cohesion.

An additional key consideration is the national context around choice available within many aspects of public service provision such as schools, housing, transport, and health care provision in light of whether certain groups benefit more than others. If true at a local level of implementation does choice hinder or promote community cohesion?

AIMS OF THE SCRUTINY TOPIC

At the outset it was agreed that the remit of the Topic Group would be to examine a series of key questions, as follows:

- Can we define the challenge of cohesion in the Halton context and its overall scope?
- *Can we make a clear statement of vision and values in this area and how we will take it forward?*
- *Does the Council's current strategic framework adequately cover cohesion or is there a need to develop a bespoke strategy or action plan?*
- *Does the council's community infrastructure (development function and centres) work to properly promote cohesion in the borough?*
- *Can we agree data sets that help to conceptualise and measure the issue which both define the scale of the challenge and against which progress can be monitored?*
- *Can we map the web of relationships (with RSLs, police, health etc), which will help to tackle cohesion issues, and how they will be managed?*
- *How can we build cohesion into the council's decision-making processes?*
- *How can we mainstream cohesion into service delivery?*
- *What is the overlap between cohesion and equality and diversity, civic pride, reputation management and community development and engagement?*

The full terms of reference of the Topic Group are attached at Annex 1.

The Topic Group was made up of the following members of the Employment Learning and Skills PPB:

- Cllr Eddie Jones
- Cllr Mike Hodgkinson
- Cllr Susan Edge
- Cllr Margaret Ratcliffe
- Cllr Harry Howard
- Cllr David Lewis

The following council officers provided support for the Working Party:

Ian Grady	Policy & Partnerships Manager
Nicki Goodwin	Community Development Manager

The Working Party also worked closely and took evidence from a range of partners. They are detailed in the feedback report at Annexe 4.

METHODOLOGY & WORK PROGRAMME

The Topic Group began its work in September 2006. Its methodology had the following components:

- Initial scoping and feasibility report had been presented to the PPB in June 2006.
- Collection of Government reports and strategies.
- Collection of materials from other local authorities considered exemplars in the field.
- Best practice study visit to Sefton.
- Focus groups with migrants and the voluntary and community sector.
- Data gathering on cohesion indicators and migrant workers.
- A review of data and public consultation exercises to establish what people in Halton feel about the community and their part in it.
- Evidence from front-of-house service around accessibility to services, and how queries are processed and staff knowledge and understanding of different communities they serve.
- Evidence about the function, location and utility of community centres across the borough.
- Evidence from community development practitioners about its practice around the borough and its impact on cohesion issues.
- Evidence from Children's services and schools as to what initiatives are in place to promote community cohesion, and other relevant service areas across the council.
- Evidence from staff from Registered Social Landlords.
- Evidence from police and fire service on their experiences in the borough and initiatives they use to serve local people fairly and equitably.
- Evidence from the voluntary and community sector, especially for tenants and residents groups about their perceptions of cohesion issues in Halton.
- Evidence from Health & Community on the local response to the needs of older people and inter-generational issues.

- Case studies of particular exemplars of good practice that already exist in the borough, identified by stakeholders.
- Best practice research from other local authorities to see how they may have used tools such as a 'citizens code', civic pride initiatives or monitoring systems to help to foster a cohesive community.

In taking forward its work programme the Topic Group chose to focus on areas of the subject specifically, as follows:

- What are the views of Young People aged 12 – 19 years old around levels of integration within schools, what the school's role is in promoting the breadth of cultural knowledge about different traditions and customs of people from different communities, does local policing improve or affect cohesion?
- What are the views of Older People around choice and access to housing options and local services? Does this result in segregation of communities within housing complexes? Does perception impact on behaviours and relationships between different communities, public bodies and general public?
- What level of cultural and religious understanding is there of different communities living and working in the borough amongst children and adults? Where do they learn this? Are there stereotypes of individual communities, which need to be broken down? Is there guidance and support for people who are victims of unlawful discrimination?
- Do we have high levels of unemployment? Is there evidence of discrimination in recruitment and retention in the local employment market? How are local training needs addressed? What initiatives tackle gaps in training and education? What range of employment opportunities are there which cater for the different needs of the local workforce? Is this causing segregation? Are local bidding processes causing tensions?
- What is the role of our local media in influencing public opinion? Are they biased? What is the relationship between the police and local people?
- How does the council communicate with its different communities? Do we get key messages across to communities and how do we know this? How do our stakeholders communicate their plans, aspirations and services? What methods are used to get messages across effectively (written/verbal/stalls/ events?)
- How does the council provide community development services in a fair, equitable and accessible manner?
- Do housing policies contribute to promoting community cohesion or hindering it? Do the local housing agents play a role in separating communities?
- Is the changing demographic of the borough, and in particular the recent inflow of migrants from abroad, impacting upon cohesion in the borough?

A summary of the main evidence gathering day is attached at Annex 4.

NATIONAL POLICY DEVELOPMENTS

The Government's key cohesion outcome is to encourage "widespread social participation and a valuing of all local cultures". The Government's intention is to give a greater emphasis to promoting a sense of common belonging and cohesion among all groups. The recent Local Government White Paper refers to Community Cohesion as being about recognising change and responding to it. It refers to eight guiding principles to cohesion as follows:

- Strong leadership and engagement
- Developing shared values
- Preventing the problems of tomorrow
- Good information
- Visible work to tackle inequalities
- Involving young people
- Interfaith work
- Involving partners such as local third sector organisation.

Central government has adopted the definition of community cohesion agreed by the Office of Deputy prime Minister (ODPM), Home Office, Local Government Association (LGA), Improvement Development Agency (IdeA), Commission for Racial Equality (CRE), the Interfaith Network and the Audit Commission in 2002 where a cohesive community was one where 'there is a sense of belonging for all communities; diversity is appreciated and valued; people from different backgrounds have similar opportunities; and strong and positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds'. This is the working definition we have used for the purposes of this scrutiny topic.

Following further findings from subsequent research, central government have added that 'people feel they can trust local politicians and councillors and feel that their views are being represented'

Central Government understanding was that poor community cohesion may be present where communities were polarised and lived in fear and ignorance of each other; residents had a lack of identity with the area; local people were disengaged from local decision-making; and there was weakness in political and community leadership. This was based on findings by the Ministerial Group on Public Order and Community Cohesion, which was set up following the 2001 disturbances in Bradford and Oldham. Central government measures community cohesion using a range of indicators that were linked to the understanding of community cohesion as outlined above (and which we have echoed in the data analysis for this review).

The key cohesion indicator used, and which was applied in the Home Office Citizenship Survey became a mandatory question in the Best Value performance Indicator (BVPI) General Household Survey was: 'The percentage of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds get on well together'. The halton figure is 56%, which compares to a national rate of 49%

The other nationally comparable statistical indicators remain:

- Percentage of respondents who felt that they belong to their neighbourhood/town/county/England/Wales/Britain (common vision and sense of belonging)
- Key priorities for improving the area (common vision and sense of belonging)
- Percentage of adults who felt that they could influence decisions affecting their local area (common vision and sense of belonging)
- Percentage of people who felt that local ethnic differences were respected (diversity of people's background is valued)
- Number of racial incidents recorded by police authorities per 100,000 (diversity of people's background is valued)
- Local concentration of deprivation (those from different backgrounds have similar opportunities)
- Percentage of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*-C or equivalent (similar opportunities)
- Percentage of unemployed people claiming benefits who have been out of work for more than a year (similar opportunities)
- Percentage of people from different backgrounds who mixed with other people from different backgrounds in everyday situations (positive relationships are being developed between people from different backgrounds)

The Halton data for these indicators is given at Annex 6.

The Government is reporting statistical links between the key cohesion indicator and a range of factors and believe that focusing on these factors may improve community cohesion. These factors include: people willing to help neighbours, people pulling together to improve the area, fear of crime, how people feel they treated by the local housing department or housing association, having a mix of people made the local area a more enjoyable place to live, and perceptions of discrimination. There are a range of drivers of cohesion, some playing a stronger roles e.g. enjoying living in one's neighbourhood and feeling like one belongs to Britain were much stronger drivers than visiting friends/going out at least monthly and feeling a sense of belonging to one's neighbourhood, which were both much lower down on the scale

Central government's strategy for working on community cohesion, *Improving Opportunity, Strengthening Society* (January 2005) focused on young people from different backgrounds growing up with a sense of belonging; new immigrants being integrated; ensuring racism was unacceptable; creating opportunities for a greater understanding of different cultures and marginalising extremists. Last years Local Government White Paper, *Strong and prosperous communities*, stated that cohesion outcomes would be secured through the new local government performance framework and new Overview and Scrutiny guidance would be issued looking at how local authorities could take cohesion into account. The White Paper also made a commitment to support areas experiencing difficulties and work with local government to spread good practice

The Cohesion and Faiths Unit are undertaking this work. It includes:

- direct support for local areas
- mainstreaming in policy and practice
- extremism and hate crime

- area-based initiatives
- monitoring community tensions; and
- contingency planning

Work has been carried out by the Commission on Integration and Cohesion to investigate issues negatively impacting on community cohesion, the role of local community and political leadership, empowering local communities and developing approaches that build local areas' own capacity to prevent/recover from problems. A major consultation exercise was launched – to which Halton responded robustly (copy at Annex 9) The Commission on Integration and Cohesion made the following recommendations in June 2007:

- 'Shared futures' – focusing on what we have in common while valuing our diverse histories
- A focus on 'local distinctiveness' and local approaches
- This focus to be balanced by a shared national vision, with clear leadership from central government and recommendations for national policy initiatives
- A strong focus on migration, both in terms of integration and in the context of 'settled communities'
- A shift of focus away from 'extremism' and a conscious shifting of the spotlight from Muslim communities
- The development of five 'typologies' of authorities, based on the three factors found to have the most influence on cohesion – level of deprivation, rate of change, and rural/urban

In Halton we may have some concerns around the conflation of race, faith and cohesion given our history and demographics. It is perhaps an over-simplified conceptualisation on the part of Government; implying community cohesion is driven by faith and race alone. Poverty, class, location, inter-generational issues may be larger factors damaging cohesion in Halton. We have concluded that a more sophisticated approach is required to address these issues. It is all too easy to give too much focus on general perceptions of communities and not enough on the real barriers to community cohesion experienced by individuals and communities. Community cohesion is about any fractures e.g. sexuality, urban versus rural, haves-versus-have-nots, young versus old. Whilst the community cohesion agenda that came out of the 2001 disorders was at the time racial, now it is being thought of more in terms of faith and extremism. However, background circumstances and other equality factors are now being recognised as relevant.

The Government is probably less certain about its model of community cohesion now than it was three years ago, when Community Cohesion strategies were de-rigueur. In taking the issue forward the Topic Group were very aware of the more nuanced approach of Government.

COUNCIL ROLE

Developing and maintaining community cohesion is a major community leadership responsibility. The policies and actions of the Council play a key part, but cohesion needs to be a priority for the community at large. It was felt that conducting this scrutiny of cohesion could make a significant contribution to better define this community

leadership role. It could help to assess the way the Council addresses the resilience and cohesion of Halton by:

- Members addressing cohesion issues and bringing their perspective to bear on executive decisions.
- Contributing to the mainstreaming of cohesion as a part of the strategic components of Council governance.
- Considering the impact of policy proposals and service issues through the conduct of cohesion based assessments.
- Contributing to the development of Council policies and the recommendations that are based on broadly based evidence from the locality.
- Helping to identify any threats to cohesion, which immediately become known to members who can then address them.
- Influencing non-Council bodies especially through the local strategic partnership, to address cohesion issues.
- Helping Councillors to keep in touch with the views of people in the communities they represent and the diverse range of opinion within them.

Cohesion issues are frequently sensitive. Within the community there may be different views and prejudices about different groups and their impact on cohesion. There can be a great deal of misinformation, for example about the allocation of public funding. Because of the sensitivity of the issues examined it was essential that the scrutiny enquiry have broad base from within the Council.

Information gathering lies at the heart of all scrutiny. Not only is the role to uncover information and interpret it in a critical manner, information gathering is also the shared foundation on which members can form their analysis and opinions. Comparative data will be helpful in placing Halton issues in perspective. This refers not just to statistics, but also to examples of best practice from other authorities and organisations that can be used to benchmark Halton's position and progress. In particular the aim has to be to use the scrutiny function to anticipate events. For example, this can be done by examining the impact of community cohesion on any major future decisions and plans – e.g. the Mersey Gateway Scheme, Local Transport Plan, Corporate Plan etc. It has also formed part of the wider strategy for Risk Management within the Council. Under this the Council will try to identify cohesion risks – clarifying the information that needs to be routinely collected and how it would be collected – so that Councillors are made aware of any potential impacts that Council decisions might have on the cohesion agenda.

It was identified in the scrutiny process that it was important to have a system to identify potential cohesion impacts arising out of council policies or programmes. The Council has successfully instigated a system of equality impact assessments (EIAs) for equality and diversity issues. The good practice guide from the LGA recognises the overlaps between cohesion and equalities issues. Therefore, as part of its advice on standard setting it recommends using impact assessments that cover the widest possible range of issues. ***Hence, it is recommended that EIAs be extended in scope, in line with LGA guidance, to cover the potential community cohesion impacts of all council policies and programmes. This should be carried out as part of the established service planning process.***

Defining the Scope of Cohesion

Since each Local Authority is unique in its demographic and social makeup, the meaning of community cohesion in any area needs to reflect an understanding of local circumstances. Promoting community cohesion involves addressing fractures, removing barriers and encouraging positive interaction between groups. Community cohesion aims to build communities where people feel confident that they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others. Whatever the local circumstances, building cohesion between communities is a necessary step towards improving people's quality of life and their opportunity to achieve their potential. Viewed from outside, a cohesive community is one in which people will want to live and invest. This ethos is the same as that which underpins the visions and values statement set out in Halton's new Corporate Plan.

An effective community cohesion strategy underpinned by a shared vision is vital for every area. The Council in its community leadership role is best placed to begin the process in developing this and to ensure that with their partners this takes shape. It should inform all key policy areas of the Council and the activities of all local stakeholders. To be effective the vision will have to be developed with local people and partnerships and be rooted in the ideas and values, which local people understand and support. People should be encouraged to share a sense of responsibility, for themselves, their family, friends and neighbourhoods and take pride in being residents of Halton. Some of the key questions asked as part of the evidence gathering process included:

- What makes for a cohesive community?
- How can we develop pride in Halton?
- What are the values, which we believe should underpin our vision for a cohesive Halton?
- How can we work together to address common concerns?
- How can we welcome new families into the Borough and help them to adjust?
- How can we combat discrimination on any basis?
- How can we promote the mixing and contact between members of our communities?

Out of the evidence gathering arose a conviction that cohesion in Halton needed a clear visionary statement as its backbone. However, this could not take the form of an anodyne vision statement. What was needed was a compelling vision story that could paint a picture of the cohesive Halton we wish to create. From this could flow a number of firm commitments on cohesion which mirror the values of the council and its partners. From this debate has arisen the following vision story:

Community Cohesion – Vision Story

The long-term vision for Halton seeks to imagine an idealised Halton in 2015. It is based around building communities that are more prosperous, healthier, cohesive and diverse. Communities that draw strength from their distinctive identity and contribution to life in Halton. Places that have a common sense of ownership and pride. Places where people feel connected to Halton because of its distinctive history and heritage and because it is a place whose future they are helping to shape.

Halton will have a thriving local economy, good transport links, access to culture and sport, an attractive and sustainable local environment, free from crime and fear of crime, where people benefit from education for all ages and enjoy healthy fulfilling lives. A place where people respect and care for each other and share a sense of responsibility and pride. Statistics are not the only measure of success. What is important is that local people experience their lives and neighbourhoods as better than they are now.

Good public services are the bedrock of life in the borough. Every year they improve in quality and responsiveness, are tailored more closely to users' needs and provide choice where appropriate. They are more joined up and easier for people to access. Users are involved in the design and delivery of services, and better communication mean people are well informed about what is going on.

The established vision statement for Halton is:

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhood.

This is a pledge to secure a better future for the people of Halton. It is about everyone having the opportunity to fulfil their potential and pursue the sort of life that suits them. It is about equal access to opportunities and facilities, and helping ensure that no one is left behind but can access the opportunities and progress being made in Halton. This means positively targeting activity at the most deprived neighbourhoods or particular groups of people in greatest need.

Part of Halton's success has been its ability to change and evolve, and its resilience in the face of adversity. This resilience is the key to the future. The vision for the future is of a Halton that has sustained itself. A place where people want to live and work. It is somewhere that provides a high quality living environment, sensitive to a range of needs, and recognises the diversity of its residents. A place where people have opportunities and choice. People have high aspirations and increasing abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Halton is a place that provides the quality of life and opportunities that people choose to live and work here.

In short, Halton is a place that meets current expectations, prepares for future needs' and respects the diversity of the place and people. A place that is at ease with itself and the outside world. There is the confidence and capability of taking on future challenges and opportunities. A place that is inclusive, and we make sure that no one gets left behind. *In working towards this, we believe that*

- Everyone should feel they have a sense of belonging and pride in Halton
- Every person feels valued equally, and can play their own part in shaping Halton;
- Everyone understands that there are standards and expectations of behaviour, and will work together to enforce these collectively.
- Everyone has a right to enjoy a good quality of life;

- Everyone can play an active part in the community; it is safe and its sound, and their actions do not inconvenience others.
- Everyone should be able to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the Borough, and be able to contribute their views as part of democratic decision-making processes;
- All agencies recognise they have a collective duty of care for the area
- Making the Borough a safe and pleasant place to live is vitally important, and this environment also needs to be protected and preserved for future generations;
- We should work towards a just society, in which there is understanding and tolerance between and within communities, so that people feel they have a voice and a stake in their community;
- The Borough can be a multi-faith, multi-cultural and multi-racial society, where this diversity is an asset not a problem;
- We will oppose prejudice and discrimination.
- There should be a sense of identity based on acceptance, not stereotypes; and, shaped less by how people see themselves as individuals with rights and expectations, but rather as part of groups and as part of communities.
- Everyone has a right to do things for themselves, to maximise their independence, while agencies ensure they have the necessary levels of support.
- Everyone has fair and easy access to services they need and barriers to participation are removed; and,
- No one is stigmatised because of who they are, or perceived to be, or because of their circumstances or poor choices in their lives.

It is recommended that this be adopted as the community cohesion statement for Halton, and form part of the overall corporate equalities statement used in service planning.

Measuring Cohesion

Measuring community cohesion is not easy. However, a detailed understanding of the communities of Halton is essential to planning service delivery and monitoring progress towards more cohesive communities. We already collect and analyse a whole series of data on conditions in our communities. At Annexe 2 is a compilation of key facts and data that give a picture of cohesion in Halton. These give a starting point on which we can interpret the local context and use them to build an understanding of cohesion within in Halton. It provides a platform for discussion. There is no single measure of community cohesion and we must think carefully about developing key indicators that give a clear understand of the challenges and progress that we make. As the Annexe shows we have produced a basket of indicators, which reflect different aspects of cohesion. In building up this profile of community cohesion in Halton we have tried to look at performance across a whole range of policy areas. This has allowed us to build a cohesion map of Halton. Looking over a whole series of themes this allows us to map cohesion issues across the geography of Halton. This is attached at Annex 3.

KEY COMPONENTS

From the evidence collected locally it is possible to state a number elements that are crucial in building and maintain cohesion in Halton.

The Role of the Local Strategic Partnership

In Halton the most significant partnership is the Halton Strategic Partnership. This brings together the key public sector bodies alongside the community, voluntary and business sectors. The Partnership exists to tackle issues that matter most to local people such as crime, jobs, education, health and housing. It has been given the task of developing and implementing the community strategy and is a key contributor to the development of community cohesion. Community strategies are key tools for showing a strategic commitment to community cohesion and demonstrating ownership of the subject. The Halton Strategy includes targets and commitments for cohesion that we expect to be reflected in the individual strategies of partners. The Halton Community Strategy has been constructed after extensive consultation and engagement with local people. This process has in itself helped to build cohesion by giving them an opportunity to get involved in the area, sign up to the local vision and bolster a sense of belonging and involvement in setting the aspirations for the area.

Successful community cohesion policies and programmes must ensure that they address the change in dynamics of race relations within local communities. This involves building positive relationships between different racial and ethnic communities. An essential part of this is to address the exclusion that many minority communities experience. Community cohesion requires local agencies to put in place appropriate packages of support and an engagement strategy to provide all communities with the skills, confidence and motivation to access programmes. Whilst BME communities and issues are on the margins within Halton it should be remembered that we host a sizeable gypsy and traveller community and there are increasing numbers of new families arriving from Eastern Europe. Both provide an ongoing challenge to the way Halton delivers services in a fair and equitable manner.

One of the key strengths of the Halton Strategic Partnership is the leading role played within it by the Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS). The VCS covers a wide spectrum of organisations, many of which can be key partners in building community cohesion. Organisations range in size and capacity, from highly professionalised national bodies with the capacity to act at this strategic level, to small informal associations at neighbourhood level. One of the strengths of the Halton approach is that a good many services are delivered by local small Voluntary and Community Sector organisations. This gives us the opportunity to build community cohesion from the bottom up, and help with the effective delivery of services. This can help to ensure that policies are based on the real live experiences of people in Halton. One of the great strengths of the VCS can be its sensitivity and responsiveness to local issues and culture. We may need to work with other public sector agencies and with the VCS to strategically assess and develop capacity building and infrastructure support that is sustainable, a high quality and accessible to a wide range of organisations.

Working with the VCS can provide excellent opportunities for understanding the views of local people and for involving people from groups who are often difficult to reach. Many parts of the VCS have experience of involving users and others in decision-making and

services for the community. Halton already has in place a protocol based on compact principles which governs the relationships between the public and Voluntary and Community Sectors in the Borough. This is now being implemented in a dispersed way through the local area agreement for Halton to better define expectations in terms of services delivered to local people.

To strengthen and exemplify the commitment to cohesion the Partnership has established BME and faith networks. These aim to provide a forum for these communities within Halton to have a voice and get it heard by the key strategic decision makers in the borough.

The media

Positive media relations can help in building community cohesion. The media can help frame the perceptions of local people both positively and negatively. Good liaison between the media and community representatives is essential in helping to project clear messages to the whole community. We must ensure that information provided to the media is accurate, fair and responsible. This will be instrumental to building a coherent communication strategy. It is important to have a communication strategy to provide a comprehensive basis for working with the press and other media. It appears that relations with the editors of local papers in Halton are very good and they can be very fair and supportive on sensitive parts of the council's agenda. Evidence gathered during the process helped outline some key components that could form part of a specific communication strategy around cohesion. Working with the media will involve encouraging press to put across the importance of respect and tolerance for diversity and to educate people about the lives and conditions of others. It will also involve working with them to encourage balanced reporting when there are problems within Halton.

It has been agreed to explore better ways of raising the profile of cohesion issues, talking about them explicitly and plainly, and finding ways with the local, press to fix positive perceptions of the various communities and areas of Halton.

Service Delivery

Obviously community cohesion has a far-reaching agenda, which means it has to be mainstreamed within the delivery of all Council services. This demands that we consider the community cohesion consequences of all key decisions. We must also encourage partners to do the same. At a basic level community cohesion requires services that are sensitive to the needs of individual users and accessible to everybody who wants to use them. Discrimination can happen indirectly, for example when a particular facility is placed far from a community, which might want to use it, or is inappropriate for their use. So to contribute fully to cohesion relevant services should not just avoid discrimination, they should actively encourage interaction and provide opportunities for local people to meet others. Services can also provide an interface for us to reach out to hard to help communities. As a minimum, any public service should meet its duties under the full body of equalities legislation to assess and consult on the likely proposed policies on the equality of all social identity groups and have arrangements in place to monitor provision for adverse impact on different racial groups. But we can also ask the question whether our work force is representative of the community it serves, are services appropriate to users, are any groups indirectly discriminated against, are services being used to help

hard to reach groups and communicate our approach to community cohesion? In addition to these general principles there are a number of services, which have particular roles to play in cohesion – for example the Education Sector - in teaching people about the benefits of equality, diversity and mutual respect and understanding of others.

The Topic Group came to firm conclusion that cohesion must not become “ghettoised” within council services. Cohesion has to form part of the warp-and-weft of mainstream service delivery. An analysis was carried out of the council service plans. This demonstrated the range of activities being carried out already in support of the cohesion agenda. This is attached at Annex 5. This demonstrates that the Council is already committed to policies and activities in support of its corporate plan, which have cohesion at their core.

It is recommended that the cohesion implications of services are monitored and reported out to the various Policy and Performance Boards as part of the normal service planning monitoring process. In addition, a data set of cohesion indicators should be set up and populated. These should form an annual progress report on cohesion, which will be monitored by the Employment Learning and Skills PPB. These are attached at Annex 6

Policing

Of particular note is that good and effective policing makes a vital contribution to cohesion and the Police Force is a key partner in delivery. Community cohesion is central to the work of the Police. Policing strategies and operations should be consistent with Halton policy on community cohesion. An important task of the Council is to know how best it can work with Cheshire Constabulary to best effect, to mutually support each other's work in Halton. Section 6 of the 1998 Crime and Disorder Act places a statutory obligation on Local Authorities and the Police to co-operate in the development and implementation of a strategy for tackling crime and disorder. Community cohesion is a key theme throughout crime reduction strategies and for Halton's Community Safety Team. This reflects the seriousness of the impact that crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour has on individuals. It also provides opportunities for working together to consider and address the impact of crime and community cohesion. Obvious work on removing graffiti, anti-social behaviour and implementing the Government's "Respect" agenda go hand in hand with raising awareness across communities and maintaining civic pride.

Effective policing requires meaningful community links. This not only helps with maintaining community relation but also is also vital in dealing with community tension and reassurance. In Halton the Police are working hard to develop and implement a neighbourhood response to policing. In the Blue Lamp Initiative dozens of Community Support Officers are complimenting mainstream police service delivery throughout Halton. The Police PAD/CAM meetings have been a mechanism for generating local intelligence and providing the direct response to community concerns. This helps the Police to prioritise their work.

Other emergency services, particularly the Fire Service, can also play an important role in promoting community cohesion. This is partly because they are not involved in law enforcement but have a strong presence within local communities. Fire Fighters are

widely seen as contributing much to a positive community ethos and can be seen as role models for young people. In Halton Fire Fighters have taken the lead in working with young people through a number of initiatives and outreach programmes, such as Kooldown, Home safety checks, cadets etc. They take fire safety lessons to schools and community groups. The Cheshire Fire Authority has a clearly set out strategy which aims to “secure a safe and cohesive society” based on a vision of total community protection. For example, at risk groups are normally characterised by other factors such as age, inequality, high crime, poor health and poor socio-economic conditions. By directing resources to these areas a big impact has been made on fire related issues and as a consequence has contributed to improving the quality of life and cohesion within Halton. Most recently the Fire service has taken a leading role in kick starting activities in the neighbourhood management areas.

Housing

Overcoming segregation in housing essential to building community cohesion. In certain areas, housing estates have become mono-cultural and different communities exist in parallel. Separation between groups living in different localities is not necessarily problematic, but compounded by deprivation and a lack of interaction; segregation can lead to fear and mistrust. This can be passed on through generations where residential segregation leads to segregated schooling and access to leisure and other facilities. Neighbourhoods may become unsustainable were housing cannot be accessed equally by all communities. This, combined with a lack of support networks, can give rise to tensions between individuals and groups, and between generations.

The Council and the Housing Associations within Halton need to address the conditions, practices and attitudes affecting public and private sector housing. A strategic approach to tackling community cohesion will ensure that housing operates alongside other services within the neighbourhood context to address community development and community safety issues. This must involve other partners such as the Police, Schools and Local Tenant Groups. Services need to be flexible and sensitive to local needs and especially to changing needs and aspirations of all groups. Halton is currently piloting Neighbourhood Management Initiatives in the 3 most deprived areas in the Borough. This partnership working on housing and regeneration issues makes a vital contribution to community cohesion and social exclusion agendas by generating learning that can be applied elsewhere in the Borough. In particular it offers the opportunity to establish resident led approaches to the way neighbourhoods are managed and services are delivered. For this to happen there is a need for Tenant Groups to be inclusive, properly representative and to recognise diversity.

Within this context a particular relevance is the tackling of anti-social behaviour. The Government has acted to increase the powers available to Local Authorities, the Police and other agencies to tackle this problem no matter where people live. There are also a number of powers available specifically to social Landlords to protect both their tenants and the wider community and these were broadened in 2004. The new Housing Bill provides powers to help Local Authorities tackle anti-social behaviour in the private rented sector. The current Government gave new impetus to this in 2006 with the launch of its Respect Agenda. RSLs in Halton are all committed to achieving the Respect Standard in housing management.

It was clear from the scrutiny study that anti-social behaviour is one of the key issues that agencies and communities identify as the cause of fractures amongst Halton communities. It was recognised that much work was being undertaken to address this. In fact a new anti-social behaviour strategy was recently launched and is the result of in-depth work by the Community Safety Team. **However, it is recommended that the council and its partners be informed of the results of this scrutiny topic and recognise that anti-social behaviour has profound implications for cohesion in Halton. It is one of its defining issues. The anti-social behaviour scrutiny topic team and Halton's Community safety Team should take note of the impact of their work on community cohesion and be aware that this will form part of the cohesion monitoring system in Halton.**

Arts, sport and other leisure services can be a powerful tool to engage all sections of the community and break down barriers between them. People take part in leisure and sport activities through choice. Marginalised groups are often more willing to engage with such activities. Physical activities and sport can be used as a means of bringing people together from different communities to share positive experiences and gain greater understanding of each other. This has been recognised in the broadening of the priorities within the new Halton Community Strategy to encompass art, sport and culture within the definition of health and well-being.

Children and Young People

Engaging with children and young people is essential to building cohesive communities because they are the future of a community. By encouraging in them a sense of belonging, ownership and responsibility for their locality we can make a sustainable investment in community cohesion. Young people can be powerful catalyst for change. In evidence gathering the Group came across numerous examples of the positive impacts young people have on life in Halton. However, if they are disenfranchised from society or disaffected this can re-enforce division and fragmentation between groups and areas. This can be manifested in anti-social behaviour and in conflict between young people and older people. Therefore, engaging with young people and giving them a chance to interact with others requires us to listen and respond to their needs and concerns. This is one of the key underpinnings of the new Children and Young People's plan for Halton. A key raft of activity in the future is the further developments of the Young Peoples Participation Group to give them a greater stake in local decision-making.

Underpinning this is the role that education has to play in building cohesion. Schools are an important part of the community and can play a critical role in promoting the values of equality, diversity and mutual respect and understanding between people. The curriculum needs to promote shared values of respect for diversity. By targeting young people at an early stage schools can help communities develop a common sense of belonging. Schools are mixing bowls through which we can ensure that those from different backgrounds have similar life opportunities. Young people should leave the education system with the skills they need to progress in life. It is critical to encourage young people from all backgrounds to reach their full potential and do as well as they can in school, further and higher education. Schools also provide a base for wider community participation and can be an important resource at the centre of communities. They have the potential to play a central role in providing opportunities for people to mix. All of these strands underpin the universal services delivery element in the Children and

Young Peoples Plan and the developing of ideas around developing extended schools within the Borough.

Older People

Older people have much to contribute and much to gain from community cohesion. As demographically the population ages there are increasing numbers of fit and active older people in communities and they bring significant resources in terms of knowledge, skills and experience. Increasingly older people want to take an active part in making choices about their own lives and the communities that they are part of. On the other hand, where communities are divided older people can suffer from fear, isolation and feelings of disempowerment. The Council needs to consider how to involve and support them.

Like many others, older people are not a homogeneous group and they are members of many different communities. However, older people can face discrimination and exclusion not just on the grounds of age. Therefore we must ensure we include a diverse range of older people. This may involve making special effort to involve them in consultations or considering accessibility problems they may have in using services. When planning service delivery we must look ahead at the way in which the population will age in the coming years and that there will be some services which older people use more than the rest of the population such as Health and Social Care Services.

Stereotypes abound about both older and younger people and it is very easy to stigmatise age groups. Older people are sometimes fearful of young people. Younger people may not always see what older people have to offer. Both have a lot to give and building community cohesion should take into account the need and benefits of bringing these groups together. Intergenerational work can be crucial in addressing the myths that proliferate about different age groups and can help foster mutual understanding and tolerance. In Halton there have been many successful projects that have allowed both older and younger people to share their experiences and develop new skills and ease the tension between age groups. A forthcoming, and fine, example is the collaborative work to renovate the moat in Palacefields between young and older people. Intergenerational myths and conflicts were identified as a key defining feature of cohesion in Halton. **It is recommended that the appropriate teams within the Children's Services and Health and Communities Directorates collaborate on joining up activity to specifically address inter-generational issues within Halton.**

Gypsy and Travellers

As we know the terms Gypsy and Traveler describe many different and distinctive groups. Given Halton's history as part of the story of the Irish diaspora, and its location close to the ports of Holyhead, Mostyn and Liverpool, Halton has always been a favoured stopping point for gypsies and travelers. Since the 1970's there has been a well-established municipal gypsy site, which has been supplemented by two private sites in Halton. In more recent times the Council has established a temporary transit site for short term stays. It is also investing over £1M in refurbishing the Gypsy site, and looking to establish a further site in Runcorn.

The council has a dedicated Gypsies Officer who carries out sterling work in linking the community into services in the borough. In particular we have worked with the community to help resolve some of the inherent tensions within the community itself and

with indigenous and established population. Halton is held up as a model of good practice within Cheshire. Whilst tension remains, especially when major site incursions happen, the Council and its partners take a mature and pro-active approach in trying to manage the situation sensitively and to the mutual benefit of all.

These communities can often be isolated from mainstream service provision and viewed with suspicion in areas where they live. Whilst Halton has not suffered some of the high profile problems of other areas there are continuing tensions. We need to ensure that Travellers are appropriately advised and informed about involvement in local community life and that the rest of the local community respect their culture and traditions. We need to consider whether Gypsies and Travellers in Halton have similar life opportunities to members of other communities and full access to services that are appropriate to them.

The Gypsy Liaison Officer manages both Council sites with the support of an identified liaison person selected from the Gypsies and Travellers on each site. The Police and PCSOs have supported the Council and intervene where appropriate. This approach has seen a greater understanding develop between the local population and the Gypsy/Traveller community. It has also enabled the Council to offer schooling, and health & welfare to Gypsy/Traveller families. Our schools in particular have an expertise in children's services support Gypsy and Traveller children. The Police have also taken action on Domestic Violence, which is a major success.

New Migrants

In recent times the demographic make up of the borough has been altering, especially in regard to attracting new residents born overseas. The preliminary work of the Group shows that these come largely from 3 groups:

- Migrant workers from the EU Accession countries
- Foreign students studying at Riverside College
- Professional families from Asia/South Asia

There is an obvious economic driver underpinning these movements. Statistically the shifts are hard to pin down because of the lag in official data picking them up. However, evidence from the Workers Registration Scheme and presentations at school for children needing help with English gives an idea of the relative significant shift taking place. A research paper on migrant numbers was commissioned, which is attached at Annex 7.

Initial discussion groups with migrants demonstrated the high levels of skills, confidence and ambition they possessed. Their impressions of Halton were almost wholly favourable. Whilst the group was not homogenous some common concerns were difficulties with the language, the cost and quality of housing, trouble in accessing banking facilities, getting a dentist, the limiting nature of employment through agencies, cultural issues and trouble accessing some services. It should be noted that, language apart, a similar discussion group with indigenous residents could well have generated the same issues.

On the other side of the fence, discussions with service providers showed that they were concerned about the nature and scope of the challenges in meeting migrants needs; how to make their services fully accessible; planning for the future given the data vacuum that currently exists; and how to develop communication channels and positive

outreach work with new arrivals. Given this position, the question was raised about how the Council should address this challenge in the future. **It is recommended that an Officer Working Group be established, as a sub-group of the Corporate Equalities Group, to specifically look at the needs of new migrants in the borough and to monitor the joint delivery of services to them.**

MOVING FORWARD

So, community cohesion describes the ability of communities to function and grow in harmony together rather than in conflict. It has strong links to concepts of equality and diversity given that community cohesion can only grow when we recognise that individuals have the right of equality and respect and appreciate the diverse nature of our communities. The Home Office has published a practitioner's tool-kit on community cohesion. The tool-kit identifies 7 steps to developing community cohesion. These are:

- Leadership and commitment
- Developing a vision and values for community cohesion
- Programme planning and management
- Engaging communities
- Challenging and changing perceptions
- Community cohesion and specialist areas
- Ensuring sustainability of programmes

It is about inclusion and making the effort to treat each other with respect and build good relations between different parts of the community. It is not just about race, but equally about relationships between young and old, between residents of different estates or parts of estates and between the haves and have-nots within Halton. The Topic Group wholeheartedly endorse the toolkit and think it provides a valuable framework for embedding cohesion in the Council's own strategic planning and management structures.

1. Leadership and Commitment

These are essential qualities of the development of community cohesion since somebody needs to take responsibility for managing and driving through the required changes. However, there is no single leadership model to achieve this. What is clear is that someone needs to exercise leadership and demonstrate commitment and often this will bring other partners on board.

The role of the Halton Strategic Partnership (LSP) is an obvious place to start with its responsibility for taking a strategic approach to community planning and links with our local partners. So getting the LSP on board is the first step to developing a community cohesion programme. This needs to involve the time and commitment of individual partners including the Police, health authorities and the voluntary and community sector. However, first amongst equals within any LSP is the role of the Local Authority. Members in particular have a very important role to play in championing community cohesion and demonstrating that this is part of how the Council goes about its daily business. It may be a good idea for an Executive Board member to have responsibility

for championing community cohesion within the Authority. However, all members may need to be supported in order to fulfil all their roles as champions of this Agenda.

2. Vision and Values

Developing a common vision is an essential first step in working towards a cohesive society. Community cohesion as a concept will mean different things to different people and consequently can become a misunderstood term. Uncertainty exists around subtle distinctions between cohesion and other terms or concepts such as diversity, equalities, equality of opportunity, sustainable communities, community development and civic renewal. The Council is best placed to define cohesion for the community of Halton around these distinctions and draw it into a coherent vision. This has been attempted in the “vision story” outlined above. Creating and then communicating the vision sends a clear message that cohesion is in the forefront of the Council’s agenda.

The need to build and sustain cohesive communities is a key-underpinning principal of the vision set out in the new Halton Corporate Plan. That vision sets out a clear, bold, succinct statement of our aspirations for Halton. The vision is focused on achieving outcomes through a well-defined corporate agenda. The Corporate Plan itself mirrors the aspirations set out in the Community Strategy, which was developed with partners over the last 12 months. The commitment to community cohesion is equally large within the community strategy.

3. Programme Planning and Management

Having established our vision and values the next focus for consideration is around ensuring we have a clear understanding of what the service delivery programmes in Halton looked like, and that these perhaps include for community cohesion audits. This is also about determining arrangements for management and accountability – who will play what role in driving forward the cohesion agenda. Underpinning this is the need to establish a base line and determine the relevant indicators that can demonstrate progress. There is also a need to establish mechanisms for monitoring and reviewing success.

In developing smart and relevant performance indicators and establishing a base line, we need to be aware of the factors that underpin our approach. These include:

- Building a sense of community i.e. having pride in Halton and our neighbourhoods and trusting in our neighbours;
- Providing similar life opportunities were people are treated equally by a range of organisations;
- Building a sense of belonging to a neighbourhood or local area and knowing others in that area;
- Normalising perceptions of diversity so that differences are respected and it is agreed that having a mix of different people makes an area a better place to live, and;
- Developing political trust so members represent the views of local people and now how much they are trusted.

4. Engaging Communities

Promoting community cohesion involves addressing fractures, removing barriers and encouraging positive interaction between groups. It aims to build communities where people feel confident they belong and are comfortable mixing and interacting with others. Engaging and involving communities in this process can be very difficult but this is what it is all about – reaching out to different groups and communities and bringing them closer together. Over the past 12 months a wholly new approach to community engagement has been pioneered in Halton. A new community engagement strategy was adopted in October 2005 and a partnership stakeholder group is now helping to take forward the Strategy.

5. Challenging and Changing Perceptions

People generally base what they believe in from what they have experienced or heard through hearsay or through the media. In this sense, perception quickly becomes reality and a basis for belief. When beliefs start to impact on or are divisive to individual or community relationships this causes a threat to cohesion. This is why it is fundamentally important to find ways to define, test and then change perceptions of individuals and groups where these perceptions are misplaced or misunderstood. Part of the Council's role is to find and provide gateways to enable people to make informed choices and decisions and not accept at face value whatever may have been portrayed by the media, pressure groups or even people in the community.

6. Cohesion and Specialist Areas

There are clear links between community cohesion and other areas such as the local economy, health and housing. Poor planning of housing developments and decisions about the local economy can adversely affect community cohesion. Equally it is more difficult for people to get actively involved in their communities unless they have access to health and good quality housing and a degree of financial security within their family.

Encouraging local employers to think about recruiting people from the local area is an important aspect of community cohesion. Anecdotal evidence from within Halton suggests that people believe job applicants from certain areas or estates are stigmatised by local employers and denied job opportunities.

Community cohesion has a critical role to play in housing renewal programmes. New house building and the massive programme of modernisation proposed by RSLs within Halton should generate significant economic regeneration within these areas. It is also important that the bricks and mortar elements of the programme should take into account the impact on cohesion and settled communities. These programmes should be planned well because Halton badly needs housing investment in areas of entrenched poverty and deprivation and it gives a chance to overcome one aspect of parallel lives by creating new areas of integrated housing. However, there is a threat that these programmes could break up well established communities, or create tensions over who is seen to benefit and who is seen to lose out. The redevelopment of Castlefields would seem to provide a test-bed of how this can be done properly.

Community cohesion is also closely associated with the health of an area and inequalities in access to health. There are a number of established tools that can be

used to map the relationship between cohesion and health. These include health needs assessment, health impact assessment and integrated impact assessment. These all form part of the toolkit being used by the Halton Health Partnership to tackle health inequalities in Halton.

Community cohesion has strong links with community safety since much of the cohesion agenda is about defusing tension between groups and a perceived threat posed by others. The work of the Safer Halton Partnership focuses on this. The partnership has developed work around town centres and key estates reducing crime and fear of crime and in particular looking at the tensions that arise in the evening with hotspots of anti-social behaviour and alcohol fuelled nuisance in and around the town centres.

Anti-social behaviour has many forms. It can be noisy neighbours, graffiti, litter, abandoned cars or drunken disorder. Anti-social behaviour holds back the regeneration of disadvantaged areas and damages the quality of life. It also has a negative effect given that it can make people afraid to go out or visit others, can cause resentment and unhappiness, and can cause people to stigmatise and scapegoat others.

7. Ensuring Sustainability

Sustainability is about linking cohesion into the mainstream of service delivery and ensuring that our vision can be delivered over time and in the face of conflicting demands and diminishing resources. Mainstreaming can be simply defined as the process of moving from time-bound, area based or ad hoc programmes to universal services, which are available to everyone and become part of the long-term landscape of service provision. It involves more than changing plans and policies as it involves changing hearts and minds. This is one of our greatest challenges and it may be many years before we evidence of this coming to fruition. What is important is that foundations are properly and securely laid at the outset for enabling any project or initiative to make an impact into the future.

There are a number of factors that can help to ensure that this takes place. Firstly is the buy-in from partners through the LSP, which widens the pool of resources and people who can carry projects and programmes forward. It is also essential that long-term planning policies and documents are cohesion proofed. Halton already carries out equality impact assessments of all policies and it is being recommended that these be extended to cover community cohesion as well. Community cohesion projects are more easily integrated into longer term programmes, such as neighbourhood management and community safety, and these are often underpinned by training and development of the people involved who can pick up community cohesion messages.

WHAT DOES COHESION MEAN FOR HALTON?

The national debate on community cohesion has evolved since the summer of 2001 and the Government recognises that the concept may be interpreted widely. What is important is that it is firmly rooted in the particular circumstances and characteristics of an area. It is clear that in Halton the definition of community cohesion is not based around issues of race, ethnicity and faith. The key issues appear to be around inter-generational conflict, perceived inequalities between areas and estates, and worries about unequal access to services, transport, jobs, retail and leisure facilities etc.

The Topic Group did not feel it necessary to commission specific research around community cohesion in Halton. This was because in recent times a number of major studies have been undertaken to underpin the Crime and Community Safety Audit and Priorities Process that led to the development of the new Community Strategy, Corporate Plan and Local Area Agreement. In addition the Group held a number of workshops with local groups in Halton to ask specific questions around community cohesion. Therefore, It is possible to analyse the findings from these consultations and focus group work through the lens of community cohesion to come up with some tentative conclusions about what cohesion means for Halton. In summary there is probably a perception that Halton has a friendliness and warmth about it that people appreciate and value. This gives a basis for building confidence and a sense of belonging for everyone, which is at the heart of community cohesion. There is a history of a “live and let live” philosophy among people, which at an individual level is about respect and being accepted for who you are. It is possible to draw out the following most common issues which have been mentioned through this consultation process. These include the need to:

- tackle broad social problems such as anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime, poverty, and the differences and tensions between generations;
- strengthen social networks such as families, friends, neighbours and also ensure that activities are based within defined neighbourhoods;
- get people together to tackle local issues and problems and share experiences;
- address the decline in the quality of life due to the impact of wider decisions around schools, housing and the unreliability of funding to many local projects; and
- encourage and foster the role of the voluntary and community sector in Halton.

One of the most telling qualities about Halton people that come out of these consultations is the strength of feeling that they have about their local area and about Halton. People have a definite view about how different communities get along, how tensions are managed and about how different communities can share issues and concerns – whether they are from different geographical areas or community groups or how young people are acknowledged and supported within the Borough. This points to the importance of existing channels of communication and information, which must be reviewed and improved. This is a prerequisite if misperceptions are to be replaced by more accurate information and a broader understanding of how others live their life in Halton.

The individual sense of belonging largely comes from the presence of family and friends, but other important community ties included work, sports groups, crèches and children’s groups, and other social links. These lead to values, which include security, a sense of belonging, a sense of support, comfort, self esteem, recognition and particularly the strength of action that could be achieved as a group. People believe that they have good caring neighbours, the feeling of security, and a sense of community spirit, a similar social background, similar houses and similar living experiences. People reported that their area was often full of people of similar ages and professions born of growing up with each other and shops and schools and public places that were shared.

The negative issues include the fear of crime, the lack of spirit, feeling unsafe, the anti-social behaviour of young people, lack of respect across generations, unequal access to schools and health facilities, and a general feeling that society did not care about them. It is interesting to note that the ties that bind and the ties that divide are often the reverse sides of the same coin. On the whole there is a great deal of consensus amongst all people about the issues that drive communities apart and those that bring them together. Obviously, the importance of personal networks was consistently mentioned in sustaining good personal and community relationships. At a higher level there is widespread recognition that communities are often disconnected from the mainstream of life in Halton by social exclusion issues such as crime, disaffected youth, low standards of housing, high unemployment, poor education standards and degraded and unattractive environments. These contribute to a sense of poverty and deprivation that is difficult to address and in turn provide an environment where a sense of belonging would be hard to develop. The Community Strategy and Corporate Plan recognise the problems of crime and disorder, the lack of long term activities around community development and community engagement, problems of disaffected young people, lack of jobs and employment prospects, and indeed have long term plans in order to address them. Perhaps the greater difficulty is the perception of lack of trust and unkept promises by public agencies, the lack of understanding of others, ignorance, fear of isolation, the impact of drugs and alcohol and long term prejudice.

Certainly in the workshop sessions the core values at the heart of community cohesion were widely accepted by all people, i.e. the need for greater respect and tolerance, for mutual understanding and for greater fairness and equity in all that happens in Halton. In particular, it was recognised that communities need to integrate and collaborate more and especially that young people need support. Halton is a place undergoing rapid social change with greater social mobility, a faster turnover of population, and changing demographic make up with migrants from abroad joining our communities. It is perhaps an issue that the ingrained perceptions within Halton are not keeping speed with this agenda.

As part of the study the Topic Group mapped services and facilities across Halton – attached at Annex 8. In the evidence gathering it was clear that communities believed that across Halton there was a wide range of services and facilities on offer. However, given the geography and topography of Halton, low levels of car ownership, and poor public transport (especially after 6 pm) many people found it difficult to access the services available. In addition, the different lifestyles people now lead are sometimes out of kilter with the 9-5 availability of many services. It was also suggested that for some groups – especially the youth and the vulnerable – that there were a range of other barriers that prevented people accessing services. ***It is recommended that the Corporate Services PPB be alerted to emerging concerns about perceived barriers to accessing services. These include opening hours, disabled access, transport, difficult locations, information and communication, bureaucracy, quality of response and perceived attitudes to certain client group. Corporate Services PPB may wish to consider whether it is worthy of further investigation or scrutiny.***

Cohesion Strategy

Taking this agenda forward involves a huge range of inter-related activities. An analysis has taken place of the key areas of focus and proposed actions set out in the Halton Corporate Plan – attached at Annex 5. This shows that many facets of the community

cohesion task are already being directly addressed in the plans and strategies of the Council. To this can be added the broader approach that is being delivered through the Community Strategy under the auspices of the Halton Strategic Partnership. A key question the Topic Group considered is whether it is believed that the current approach will actually deliver a definitive improvement in cohesion or whether a specific community Cohesion Strategy would be appropriate.

The recent Local Government White Paper, Strong and prosperous communities, now being enacted as a Local government Bill, stated that cohesion outcomes would be secured through the new local government performance framework. New overview and scrutiny guidance will be issued looking at how local authorities could take cohesion into account. The White Paper also made a commitment to support areas experiencing difficulties and work with local government to spread good practice. The White paper reveals a focus by Government on issues of race, faith and extremism. However, it is probably less certain about its model of community cohesion now than it was three years ago, when Community Cohesion strategies were de-rigueur. In taking the issue forward the Topic Group was aware of the more nuanced approach of Government. Whilst government does not yet demand explicit community cohesion strategies, there is a clear feeling within those circles that some mechanism is needed to exemplify issues and make transparent the expected responses of local partners. On balance, the Group believe the current business-planning framework of the Council in pursuit of the Corporate Plan is sufficient. However, The Group wants the cohesion vision story (set out earlier) to be communicated through the service-planning element for equality, diversity and cohesion. In addition, there will be a bespoke annual performance monitoring system for cohesion (as set out earlier).

Managing Risks

Our main cohesion risks are around the potential failure to:

- Develop an understanding of what community cohesion means in Halton, all its various facets, and how the work of the Partnership can make a difference.
- Develop positive relationships and trust between partners to work collaboratively to improve cohesion in Halton.
- Embed cohesion into the warp-and-weft of how services are designed and delivered, so it is part of core, mainstream activity and not seen as an add-on.
- Develop a communication strategy to explain clearly what we mean, what we are doing, and how we can make a difference.
- Build bridges and understanding between our communities and the generations to get to the root of the myth building about others.
- Develop a set of measures/indicators so that we can baseline the Halton position; compare ourselves to others in an objective way, and track progress over time.

- Develop early interventions – especially in schools and through the youth service – to inculcate a sense of belonging and social responsibility.
- Target interventions properly so people get what they need, when they need, whilst maintaining equity in how services are delivered.
- Develop bespoke (and compulsory) training for all stakeholders on diversity and cohesion issues and approaches in Halton.

Halton uses a risk management model to assess and manage all aspects of its strategic activity. When Executive Board endorses the outcome of the scrutiny review in the autumn, the strategic risk register will be reviewed and amended to incorporate the cohesion risks identified, and to look at using them in the process to develop the new Local Area Agreement for Halton from 2008-11.

Social Capital

Using a broad analysis of cohesion and progress in recent years, it could be said that that overall social capital in Halton is improving. A sense of community is growing across the borough, which is a key element of people's quality of life. Factors such as trust between neighbours, relationships with local service providers and the extent to which people from different backgrounds get on well together all have an important relationship with people's health, perceptions of crime and even educational performance. For this reason, perhaps the concept of social capital has important implications for community cohesion policy and practice in Halton. Social capital, like cohesion, is difficult to define but it is multi-layered, but three common elements stand out:

- the social networks made through places such as work, school or place of worship,
- the norms that encourage co-operative behaviour,
- the trust that we have in other people.

Three forms of social capital are referenced extensively:

- Bonding social capital – the horizontal ties among people who are similar to each other in certain respects (age, ethnicity, social class etc.), which contribute to social support.
- Bridging social capital – the horizontal ties among people who are different from one another which contribute to cohesion and dialogue.
- Linking social capital – the vertical ties between communities and those in some form of authority, which give legitimacy to public institutions and nurture democratic life and responsive public services.

The overall picture is therefore positive: social capital in Halton is probably improving, particularly the all-important 'bridging' social capital which contributes to community cohesion. The Council has a critical role in understanding and nurturing the conditions that will help social capital develop. To this end there are a number of policy implications for Halton:

1. To establish better conditions for social capital through the way in which the council performs its core service functions, for example, in making the street a more attractive place to spend time, encouraging communal gardens, through resident-officer 'walkabouts', residential courses for young people, and community fun days.
2. To nurture the Council's role as a community leader. Part of this involves moving beyond traditional methods of consultation and involvement to find activities that promote more interactivity and deliberation between citizens, particularly on some of the more profound challenges facing the local authority area, for example, the need for affordable housing; or the trade-off between economic development and preserving local heritage and business.
3. The need to measure and understand more about the factors driving social capital outcomes and where it is possible to attribute cause and effect, for example, the links between increased trust in the police and police visibility. In Halton we can identify the particular challenge there is in 'closing the gap' concerning social capital between areas of deprivation and those that are less deprived.

Developing a methodology for measuring cohesion/social capital is difficult, but could use four components as a basis for developing indicators for a quantitative questionnaire - participation, reciprocity (or altruism), trust, and sociability. These would need to recognise the dangers of 'bonding social capital' when used to exclude diversity: - some of the 'closest' neighbourhoods can also be those that try to exclude outsiders. We also need to resolve some of the 'real structural barriers', such as the configuration of social housing, which can prevent 'bridging social capital' from forming. We need to recognise the connections between building social capital and policies that promote equal opportunities and cohesion.

Social capital is clearly a significant factor in determining the quality of life for local residents. It has strong linkages with most aspects of service provision but has particularly important implications for the physical environment, health, community cohesion and tackling deprivation. The importance of mainstream activity which can have a direct bearing on levels of social capital cannot be overstated.

A Picture of Community Cohesion

As we have seen community cohesion is important to the success of strategies and initiatives which aim to improve the quality of life in Halton. To achieve and direct this it is important that we have a clear understanding of communities. The Home Office has suggested ten indicators that can be used to build a picture of community cohesion in any area. Whilst not mandatory it is fairly clear that in the future these ten indicators would provide a comparative picture nationally of the state of community cohesion in Britain, and are likely to be used by Government for this purpose.

There is a headline indicator – The proportion of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from *different backgrounds can get on well together (CC01)*. This probably captures the main essence of community cohesion in a survey question. The other nine indicators are grouped under themes of the broad definition of community cohesion which was stated in the first section of this document. We know that measuring cohesion is not straightforward and that indicators used for this purpose will need to be interpreted in the light of local knowledge. In this sense they should be seen as a basis for discussion and not simply regarded as a measure of performance. However, we do

not need to be prescriptive about the ways in which cohesion should be measured. We should recognise that other data is available which helps to provide an overall picture of cohesion in Halton. Much of that data is already set out in Annexe 2. In addition Annexe 6 also shows a range of Best Value Performance Indicators which may be relevant in giving a picture of cohesion in Halton. The Annex lists the ten community cohesion indicators.

Halton Strategic Partnership Charter

The Halton Strategic Partnership has developed a policy on equality diversity and cohesion and supplemented this with a working protocol governing the relationships between partners in the Borough. This provides an example of how community cohesion can be presented in a user-friendly way that seems to address local issues. The protocol arose from subsidiary discussions from the debate around developing a community engagement strategy in Halton. The key element of the policy is that we want to create a Halton that is a place where:

- the diversity of people's backgrounds and life experience is appreciated and valued;
- there are positive relationships between individuals from different backgrounds in the partnership, in the workplace, in schools and in the community;
- every individual is treated equally and has the same life chances;
- working together we will move forward in ways that acknowledge difference but build on shared hopes and values.

This commitment will establish a strong and robust community based upon a common understanding of respect and we will strive to ensure that we:

- respect other people's freedoms within the law to express their beliefs and convictions;
- learn to understand what others believe and value and allow them to express this in their own terms;
- recognise that all of us at times fall short of our own ideals;
- work to prevent disagreement from leading to conflict;
- reflect the right of others to disagree with us.

CONCLUSIONS

The purpose of this report has been to provide a summary of the work of the Topic Group and an overview of community cohesion issues in Halton. In particular the aim has been:

- to understand more about the factors that contribute to community cohesion and cohesion risk within Halton;
- to identify some of the key issues that the Council need to address within communities to help form the basis for future work programmes;
- to identify models of good practice including existing interventions that are examples of good practice;

- and to make recommendations for how the Council may want to carry forward its commitment to community cohesion through its activities.

In general we believe Halton to be a fairly cohesive place. Its history and demography give it certain challenges. Halton is not a “natural” district having been formed in 1974 as part of local government reorganisation. It has three main clearly identifiable communities – the historic towns of Widnes and Runcorn, and the New Town of Runcorn built in the late 1960’s and 1970’s to accommodate the Liverpool overspill. Many local people consider that the fact that these three distinct communities fit alongside each other and function as one district, with only minor jealousies, to be a huge success.

Overall satisfaction amongst local people is very good. The BVPI general needs survey conducted by Mori in Autumn 2006 shows that Halton people are fairly satisfied with life, and the satisfaction rate has improved over the years. Whilst there can be some element of insularity and low aspiration being at play, the core of cohesion is about people feeling a sense of belonging and contentment in their lives. Whilst difficult to measure the satisfaction survey, and the survey work carried out in Halton show this to be the case.

We can conclude that in Halton cohesion is about feeling comfortable and positive about living and working alongside your neighbours and taking a sense of pride in Halton and the belief that the future is positive. Therefore, it is about:

- building community links;
- bringing communities together;
- countering prejudice and misperceptions;
- combating prejudice and discrimination;
- providing and promoting opportunities for all;
- listening to all voices in the community;
- addressing community concerns and tensions;
- celebrating life in Halton in all its aspects;
- understanding, valuing and sharing community differences;
- giving young people a voice and choice in life in Halton.

So, it is about relationships and because of this we need to think about policies, actions and services in slightly different ways. Our approaches to policy and resources need to be seen to be fair and promote access for all. We need to support and promote contact between people and develop understanding, tolerance, and a greater sense of community pride. Emerging from this is that the two most important factors are equality and deprivation. These and other cohesion issues are already addressed in the many plans and strategies carried forward by the Council and its partners. We need to recognise that we are already doing a great deal to improve cohesion and that there are many examples of good practice. Therefore, we can perhaps divide future efforts into the following headings:

- Understanding the Local Context
- Brokering Debate in Local Communities
- Providing Community Leadership
- Focusing on Young People and Learning
- Providing Support for Individuals and Groups
- Intelligence Gathering

- Re-engineering Services to Deliver Accessibility for All
- Celebrating Success and Successful Communities
- Mainstreaming Cohesion in All That We Do

A key way for community cohesion to be understood and valued is to improve communications. We need to communicate to all the audiences within Halton the value of diversity and respect for different approaches to the way people live their lives. We need to challenge myths and to promote what is being done. We need to clarify the message, identify key themes, improve support processes, counter misinformation, and develop a communication strategy. At Annex B is an outline of an approach to communicating community cohesion that can be added to the corporate communications approach. The key theme is that all actions need to take place at a local level and that a process of monitoring and review is needed to ensure that the cohesion approaches remain fit for purpose.

As previously stated the Council can already point to a great deal of activity, which takes place to address cohesion in the borough and promote good community relations. This is demonstrated by the analysis of the current Corporate Plan. In order for local government to be effective and responsive to local demands it needs to have in place a robust strategic planning framework. This is especially true in the field of community cohesion, which cuts across so many service delivery boundaries.

The Council response to cohesion is already captured in its adopted strategies, and it is important that the actions to implement it are planned and documented in a robust way. The Council already has an established service planning system in place. This also encompasses processes for the monitoring and evaluation of activity. Therefore, it should be relatively straightforward to identify cohesion activities in service plans and operationalise them through normal service planning process. In turn this would allow those actions to be monitored so that the action plan progress can be assessed.

In completing its work the Topic Group has identified a number of key recommendations for note and action. These have been highlighted in bold in the body of this report, and summarised at the beginning.

Attachments

Annexes not included

Employment Learning & Skills PPB

*Executive Summary of the Community
Cohesion Topic Group Final Report*

September 2007

Introduction

The council and its partners published Halton's sustainable community strategy in April 2006. That is based on sustainable community principles and implicitly recognises the importance of community cohesion. Halton developed a new approach to community engagement in parallel to the development of the community strategy and partner discussions of cohesion took place through that process. The community engagement strategy focuses on civil renewal and ever-greater levels engagement as a mechanism for brokering more cohesive communities.

Halton Borough Council initiated an overview and scrutiny topic on cohesion in Halton in the spring of 2006. Its starting point was some of the difficulties identified that whilst "fashionable", cohesion is a relatively new and abstract concept that is poorly understood in the public sector. Therefore, the scrutiny investigation was primed to generate a debate on cohesion and what it means to Halton. Key to this was not to rely on standard Government definitions but to define it for Halton. The Working Party has thoroughly examined the issue over a 12 month period and come to some well-founded recommendations on the way forward.

Recommendations

In completing its work the Topic Group has identified a number of key recommendations for note and action:

1. It is recommended that the "Vision story" developed during the scrutiny process be adopted as the community cohesion statement for Halton, and form part of the overall corporate equalities statement used in service planning
2. It is recommended that Equality Impact Assessments be extended in scope, in line with LGA guidance, to cover the potential community cohesion impacts of all council policies and programmes. This should be carried out as part of the established service planning process.
3. It is recommended that an Officer Working Group be established, as a sub-group of the Corporate Equalities Group, to specifically look at the needs of new migrants in the borough and to monitor the joint delivery of services to them.
4. It is recommended that the cohesion implications of council activities are monitored and reported to the various Policy and Performance Boards as part of the normal service planning monitoring process. In addition, a data set of cohesion indicators should be set up and populated. These should form an annual progress report on cohesion, which will be monitored by the Employment Learning and Skills PPB
5. It is recommended that the Corporate Services PPB be alerted to emerging concerns about perceived barriers to accessing services. These include opening hours, disabled access, transport, difficult locations, information and communication, bureaucracy, quality of response and perceived attitudes to certain client group. Corporate Services PPB may wish to consider whether it is worthy of further investigation or scrutiny.

6. It is recommended that the council and its partners be informed of the results of this scrutiny topic and recognise that anti-social behaviour has profound implications for cohesion in Halton. It is one of its defining issues. The anti-social behaviour scrutiny topic team and Haltons Community safety Team should take note of the impact of their work on community cohesion and be aware that this will form part of the cohesion monitoring system in Halton.
7. Inter-generational myths and conflicts were identified as a key defining feature of cohesion in Halton. It is recommended that the appropriate teams within the Children's Services and Health and Communities Directorates collaborate on joining up activity to specifically address inter-generational issues within Halton.

Definition of Cohesion

The Government's Commission on Integration and Cohesion recently recommended a new definition of an integrated and cohesive community, which Halton are content with as a national definition. However, the local view clearly expressed in the scrutiny review is that cohesion in Halton needs a clear visionary statement as its backbone. What is needed is a compelling vision story that paints a picture of the cohesive Halton we wish to create. From this debate has arisen a vision story, which includes the following components:

- Everyone should feel they have a sense of belonging and pride in Halton
- Every person feels valued equally, and can play their own part in shaping Halton;
- Everyone understands that there are standards and expectations of behaviour, and will work together to enforce these collectively.
- Everyone has a right to enjoy a good quality of life;
- Everyone can play an active part in the community; it is safe and its sound, and their actions do not inconvenience others.
- Everyone should be able to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the Borough, and be able to contribute their views as part of democratic decision-making processes;
- All agencies recognise they have a collective duty of care for the area
- Making the Borough a safe and pleasant place to live is vitally important, and this environment also needs to be protected and preserved for future generations;
- We should work towards a just society, in which there is understanding and tolerance between and within communities, so that people feel they have a voice and a stake in their community;
- The Borough can be a multi-faith, multi-cultural and multi-racial society, where this diversity is an asset not a problem;
- We will oppose prejudice and discrimination.
- There should be a sense of identity based on acceptance, not stereotypes; and, shaped less by how people see themselves as individuals with rights and expectations, but rather as part of groups and as part of communities.
- Everyone has a right to do things for themselves, to maximise their independence, while agencies ensure they have the necessary levels of support.
- Everyone has fair and easy access to services they need and barriers to participation are removed; and,
- No one is stigmatised because of who they are, or perceived to be, or because of their circumstances or poor choices in their lives.”

What Are the Key Cohesion Issues in Halton?

The Council and its partners want to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. The vision and priorities are set out in the community strategy and corporate plan.

The Halton view is that these encompass everything that is needed to build a more cohesive community, and that these things define the issues that enable people to feel a sense of belonging to their community. In sum, the strategic objectives in relation to cohesion are embodied in these strategic components of the community strategy. Halton will probably not develop a bespoke community cohesion strategy. Our view is that cohesion should underpin everything the council and its partners do.

- The key issue remains poverty and deprivation. We need to radically improve the socio-economic well-being of Halton people.
- Differences in wealth remain the defining characteristic in segregating communities and limiting choices in how people take part in society.
- There are concerns about perceived barriers to accessing services. These include opening hours, disabled access, transport, difficult locations, information and communication, bureaucracy, quality of response and perceived attitudes to certain client groups.
- Anti-social behaviour has profound implications for cohesion in Halton. It is one of its defining issues for all residents. This will have to form part of the cohesion monitoring system in Halton.
- Inter-generational myths and conflicts were identified as a key defining feature of cohesion in Halton.
- The pace of demographic change in Halton is accelerating, some of which government statistics are not adequately capturing. Of particular note is the influx of migrant workers from Eastern Europe. Service delivery needs to be sharpened up to cope with the pressures this can bring and adequately support new arrivals.

Potential Risks

Our risks are around the potential failure to:

- Develop an understanding of what community cohesion means in Halton, all its various facets, and how the work of the Partnership can make a difference.
- Develop positive relationships and trust between partners to work collaboratively to improve cohesion in Halton.
- Embed cohesion into the warp-and-weft of how services are designed and delivered, so it is part of core, mainstream activity and not seen as an add-on.

- Develop a communication strategy to explain clearly what we mean, what we are doing, and how we can make a difference.
- Build bridges and understanding between our communities and the generations to get to the root of the myth building about others.
- Develop a set of measures/indicators so that we can baseline the Halton position; compare ourselves to others in an objective way, and track progress over time.
- Develop early interventions – especially in schools and through the youth service – to inculcate a sense of belonging and social responsibility.
- Target interventions properly so people get what they need, when they need, whilst maintaining equity in how services are delivered.
- Develop bespoke (and compulsory) training for all stakeholders on diversity and cohesion issues and approaches in Halton.

Halton uses a risk management model to assess and manage all aspects of its strategic activity. When Executive Board endorses the outcome of the scrutiny review in the autumn, the strategic risk register will be reviewed and amended to incorporate the cohesion risks identified, and to look at using them in the process to develop the new LAA for Halton from 2008-11.

Measuring Success

Measuring community cohesion is not easy. However, a detailed understanding of the communities of Halton is essential to planning service delivery and monitoring progress towards more cohesive communities. There are 54 indicators in the community strategy and 87 in the Local Area Agreement. All of these are in some way relevant to the measurement of cohesion. There is no single measure of community cohesion and we must think carefully about developing key indicators that give a clear understand of the challenges and progress that we make. Therefore, the scrutiny review specifically recommends the adoption of a community cohesion dataset - a basket of indicators, which reflect different aspects of cohesion. In building up this profile of community cohesion in Halton we have tried to look at performance across a whole range of policy areas. These have been baselined and can be monitored over future years.

Halton has put in place a data observatory to collect intelligence on all aspects of life in Halton, both quantitative and qualitative. It is proposed that the Observatory will hold and report on the cohesion indicators. These will form part of the ongoing performance management of the partnership and be included in the annual review process.

Cohesion Strategy

What is important is that it is firmly rooted in the particular circumstances and characteristics of an area. It is clear that in Halton the definition of community cohesion is not based around issues of race, ethnicity and faith. The key issues appear to be around inter-generational conflict, perceived inequalities between areas and estates, and

worries about unequal access to services, transport, jobs, retail and leisure facilities. It is possible to draw out the following most common issues which have been mentioned through this consultation process. These include the need to:

- tackle broad social problems such as anti-social behaviour, crime and the fear of crime, poverty, and the differences and tensions between generations;
- strengthen social networks such as families, friends, neighbours and also ensure that activities are based within defined neighbourhoods;
- get people together to tackle local issues and problems and share experiences;
- address the decline in the quality of life due to the impact of wider decisions around schools, housing and the unreliability of funding to many local projects; and
- encourage and foster the role of the voluntary and community sector in Halton.

Whilst government does not yet demand explicit community cohesion strategies, there is a clear feeling within those circles that some mechanism is needed to exemplify issues and make transparent the expected responses of local partners. On balance, the Group believe the current business-planning framework of the Council in pursuit of the Corporate Plan is sufficient.

Conclusions

We can conclude that in Halton cohesion is about feeling comfortable and positive about living and working alongside your neighbours and taking a sense of pride in Halton and the belief that the future is positive. Therefore, it is about:

- building community links and bringing communities together;
- countering prejudice, misperceptions and discrimination;
- promoting opportunities for all creating a sense of shared futures;
- listening to all voices in the community, especially young people;
- addressing community concerns and tensions;
- an emphasis on a new model of rights and responsibilities ;
- an emphasis on mutual respect and civility;
- celebrating life in Halton in all its aspects;
- understanding, valuing and sharing community differences.

So, it is about relationships and because of this we need to think about policies, actions and services in slightly different ways. Therefore, we should make efforts on:

- Understanding the Local Context and focus on 'local distinctiveness' and local approaches, including brokering debate in Local Communities
- 'Shared futures' – focusing on what we have in common while valuing our diverse histories – and celebrating success
- Providing Community Leadership and support for individuals and groups
- Focusing on Young People and Learning
- Intelligence Gathering
- Re-engineering Services to Deliver Accessibility for All
- Mainstreaming Cohesion in All That We Do
- A focus on migration, both in terms of integration and in the context of 'settled communities'

REPORT TO: Employment, Learning & Skills PPB

DATE: 10 September, 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for 2007/08

WARDS: Boroughwide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the 1st quarter performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for:

- Economic Regeneration
- Culture & Leisure

2. RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board

- 1) Receive the 1st quarter performance management reports;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Policy and Performance Board.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The departmental service plans provide a clear statement on what the services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. The service plans are central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.

3.2 The quarterly reports are on the Information Bulletin to reduce the amount of paperwork sent out with the agendas and to allow Members access to the reports as soon as they have become available.
It also provides Members with an opportunity to give advance notice of any questions, points or requests for further information that will be raised to ensure the appropriate Officers are available at the PPB meeting.

4. POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5. RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 Not applicable.

6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 Not applicable.

7. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTIONS 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
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QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Health & Community
SERVICE: Culture & Leisure Services
PERIOD: Quarter 1, 2007/08

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Culture & Leisure Department first quarter period up to 30 June 2007. It describes key developments and progress against 'key' objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 5.

It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Department has moved its Headquarters from Runcorn Town Hall to Grosvenor House (Abbeystead 3) for a one year period.

Halton was awarded six 'Green Flags', a quality mark for excellence in parks and open spaces. Victoria Park was a new award.

Visits to public libraries rose by 25,000 in the first quarter. This represents an increase of 14%.

The Specialist Domestic Violence Court was re-launched in April.

Halton successfully hosted the European Student Rugby League Games in April. The Halton Community Games attracted over 100 11-16 year olds. Friday Night Football at the Bankfield School began, working with the 'On the Streets' project and attracting 80 young men. Halton's Sports Fair in June offered a week of structured free activities for young people.

The Active People Survey is to be repeated annually so interim scores will now be available to monitor progress against C17/LPSA 3 prior to 2009 survey.

The Library Service will be co-ordinating the delivery of the national Booktime scheme in Halton which aims to give a gift of a free book pack

to every reception age child. Booktime promotes reading for pleasure by encouraging parents and carers to read aloud with their children, the first packs will be delivered to schools in September.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

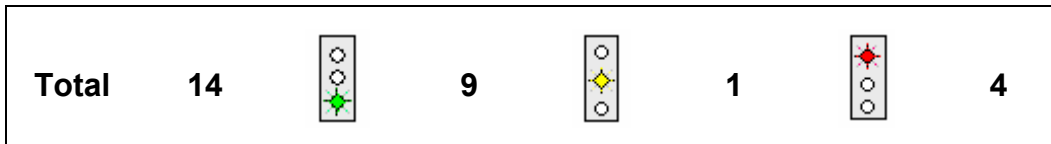
The Home Office has produced a new strategy 'Cutting Crime – a new partnership 2008-2011'. There is also to be a review of the Crime and Disorder Act.

A full review of the Drug Intervention Programme is being undertaken. It will be concluded by the end of August and will inform the commissioning decisions of this area of service for the treatment plan 08/09 onwards.

'Our Community, Your Say' is a national consultation exercise on the new drugs strategy, taking place over the summer and autumn of 2007.

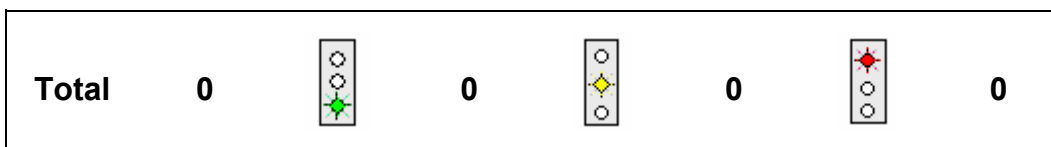
The contract with Groundwork Mersey Valley comes to an end on 30th September 2007. Groundwork are currently proposing a merger with Groundwork Wirral to form a new organisation covering the whole of Greater Merseyside. The Council will have to consider its future relationship with the new organisation.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



Overall progress towards objectives is good. There are delays in the achievement of some milestones, further details can be found in Appendix 1.

4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



There are no "Other" objectives for this Department.

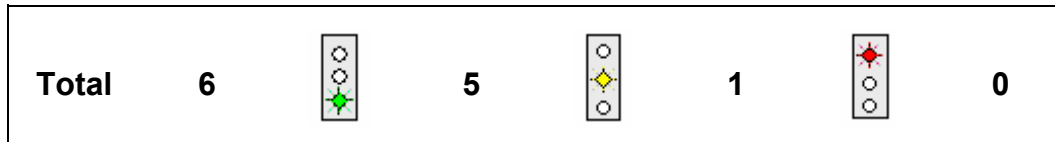
5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

A highly complimentary Regional Stakeholders Commentary has been received from Government Office North-West.

An equally pleasing review has been received from the IDeA from the self-assessment process 'Towards an Excellent Service'. An action plan for improvement has been developed. The IDeA are using Halton as a case study for their improvement agenda.

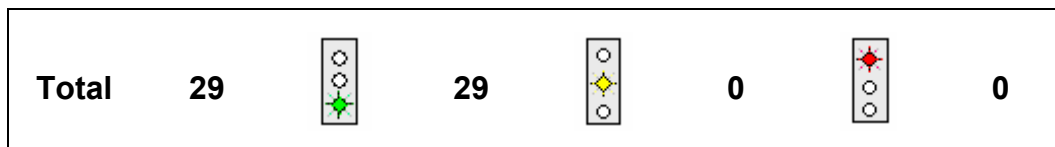
The Active People Survey is to be repeated annually so interim scores will now be available to monitor progress against C17/LPSA 3 (relating to participation in sport and physical exercise) prior to the 2009 survey.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Overall progress towards targets for key Indicators is good, however some concern is expressed regarding performance for BVPI 127a, Violent Crime. Further detail can be found in Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



There are no "Other" performance indicators that are a cause for concern at this time.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

Detail regarding progress towards LPSA targets can be found in Appendix 4.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2007-08 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.





Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.





9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS






During 2006/07 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.


10.0 APPENDICES

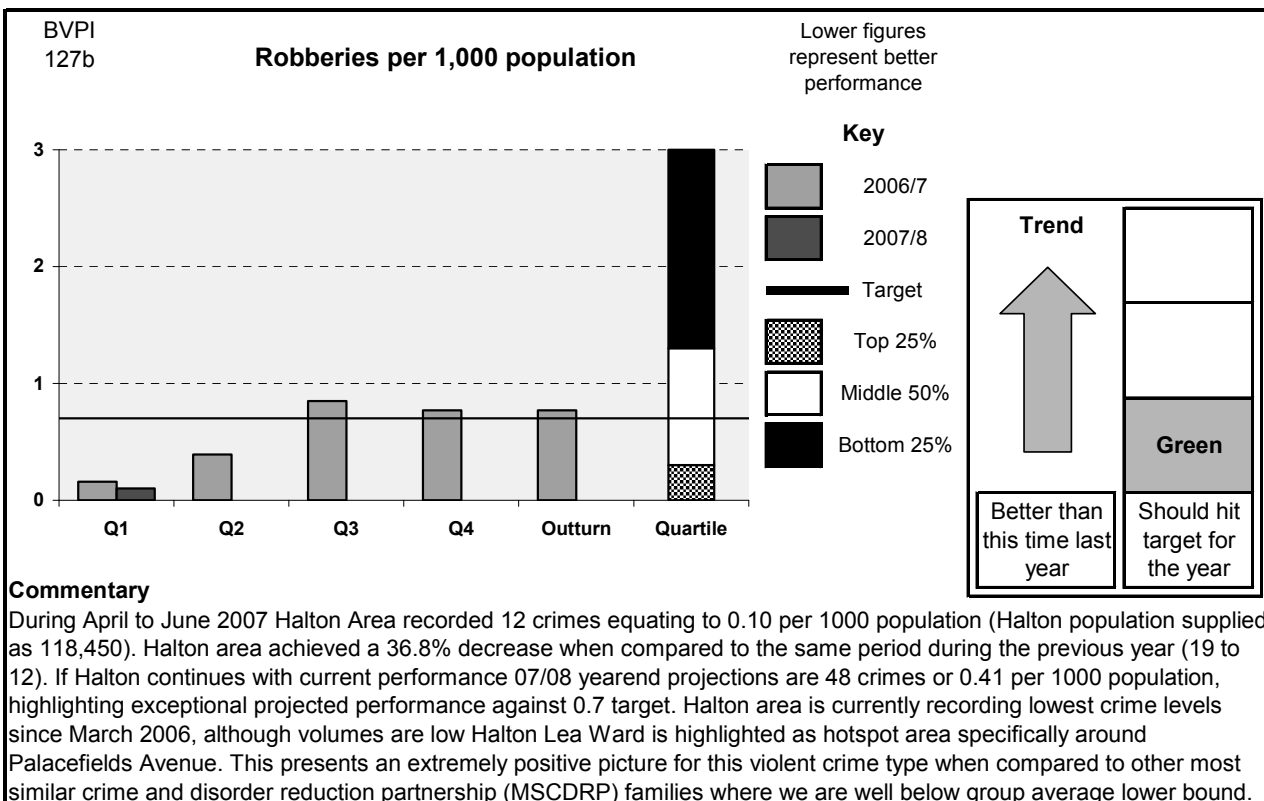
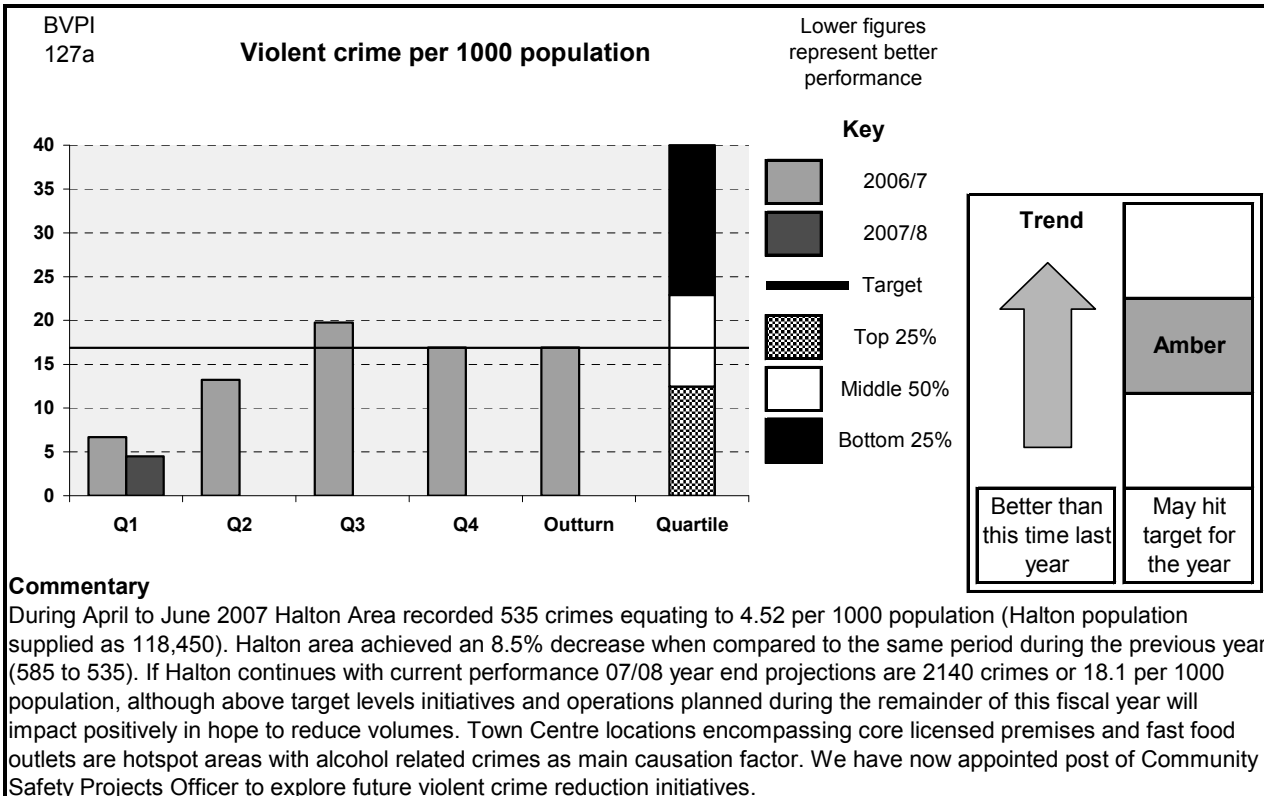
Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators Appendix 3- Progress against LPSA targets Appendix 4- Financial Statement Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols
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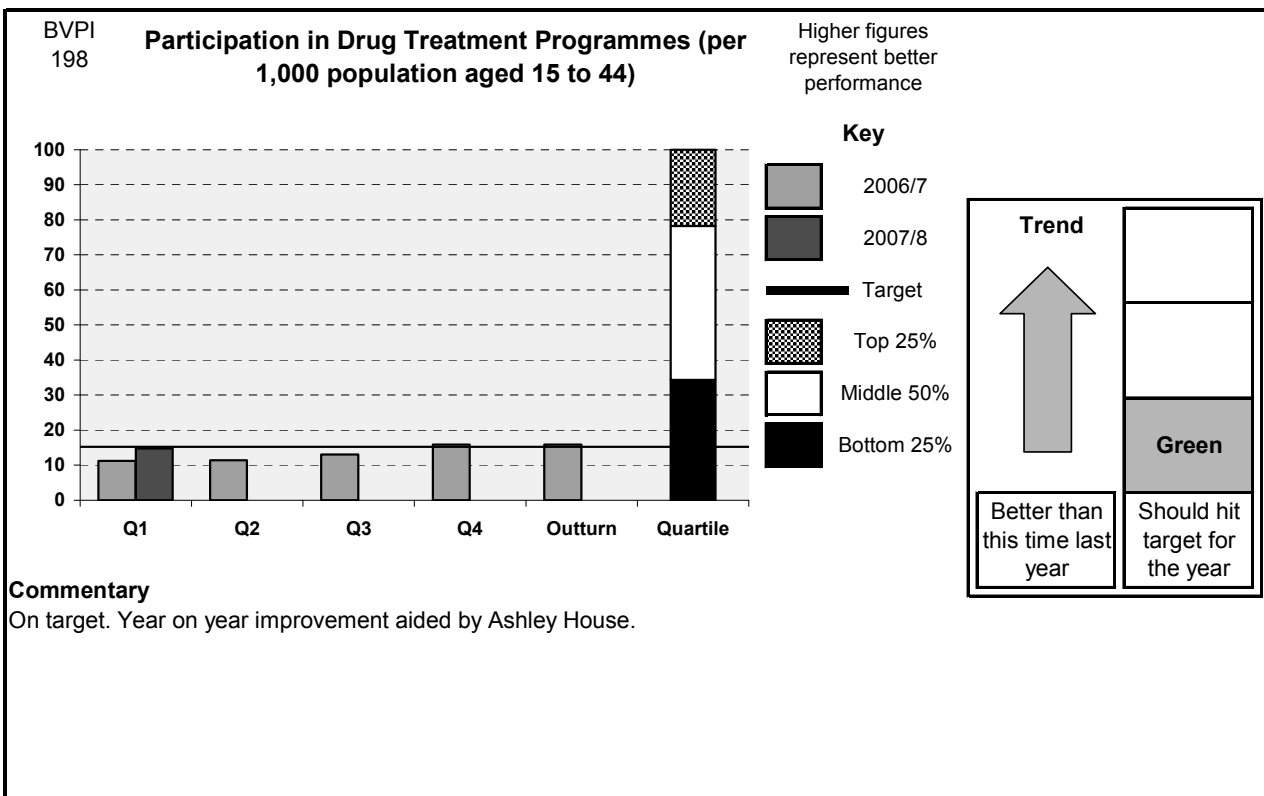
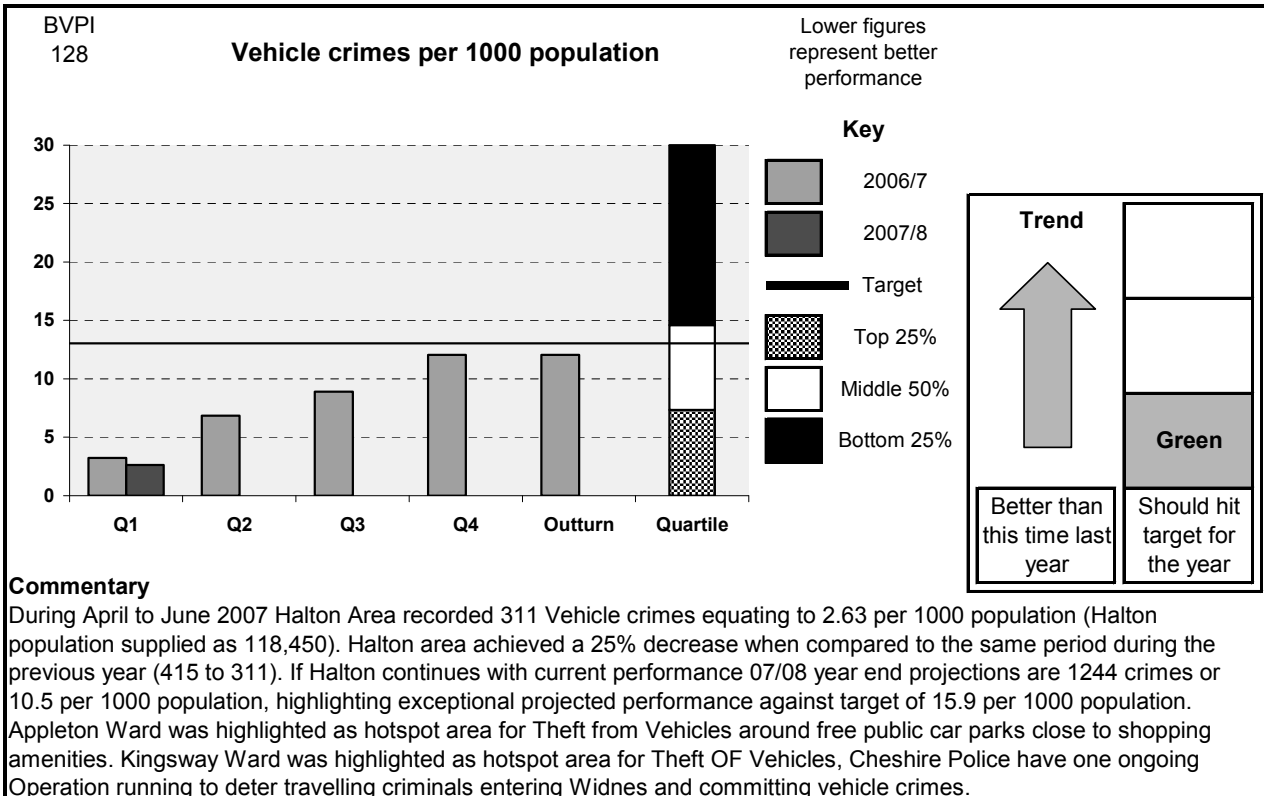
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
CL 1	To contribute to the health and well-being of the people of Halton by developing self-confidence, providing opportunities for self-achievement, enjoyment and recreation by promoting healthy lifestyles through sporting and cultural opportunities.	<p>Secure funding to implement proposed programme of activity as part of Liverpool's Capital of Culture status.</p> <p>Ensure that Halton's people and their twin towns are able to participate in Liverpool's 800th Birthday celebrations in August 2007.</p> <p>Establish youth development/exchange programme with Newham B.C. (hosts of Olympics 2012) in respect of sporting and cultural opportunities.</p> <p>Establish an 'Olympics Support Fund', with appropriate criteria to allow young Halton talent to bid for funding to improve their chances of being able to participate in 2012.</p>	   	<p>£40k secured from Capital of Culture Company; HBC to underwrite Youth Cultural Festival, pending Exec Board sub approval on 6 Sept.</p> <p>3 Twin Towns to attend. Halton's Samba Band to perform.</p> <p>Contacts established. Dialogue regarding possibilities on-going. Will be invited to 2008 Youth Cultural Festival.</p> <p>Fund established. Criteria for applications being developed.</p>

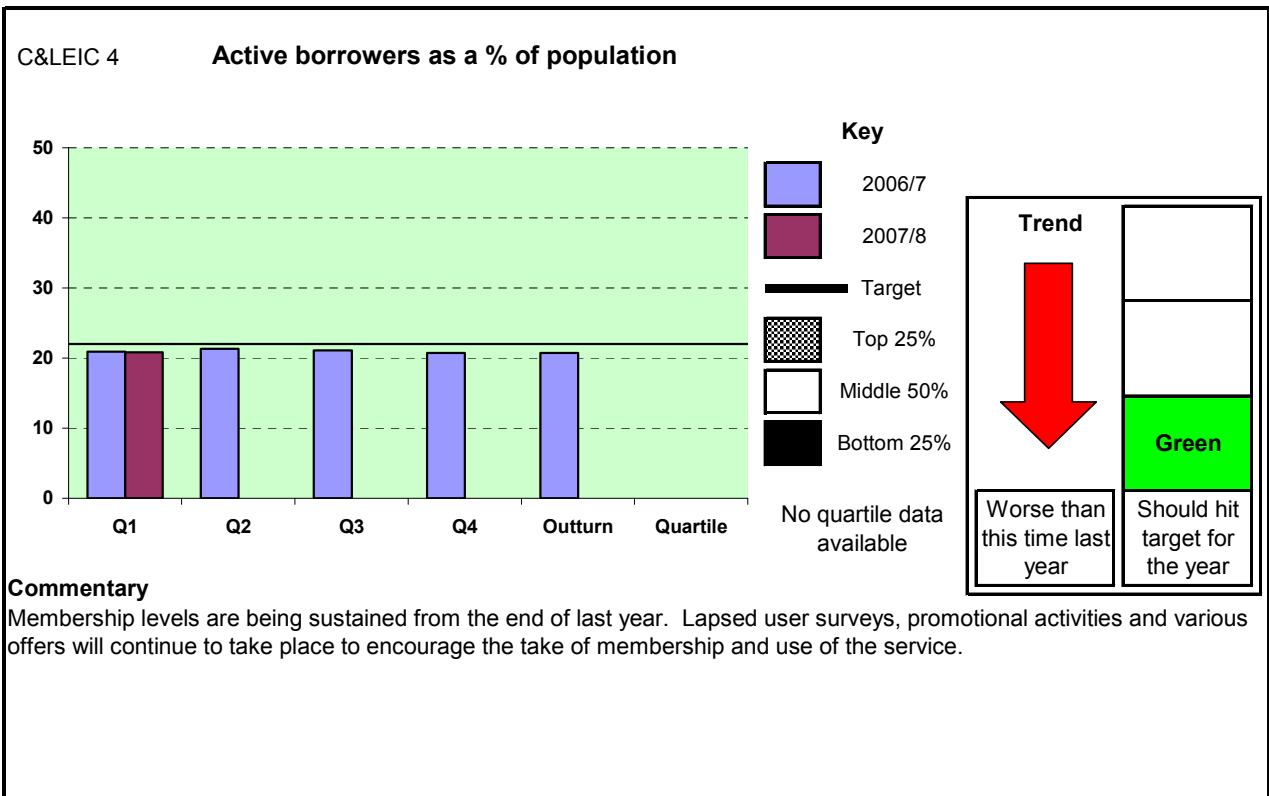
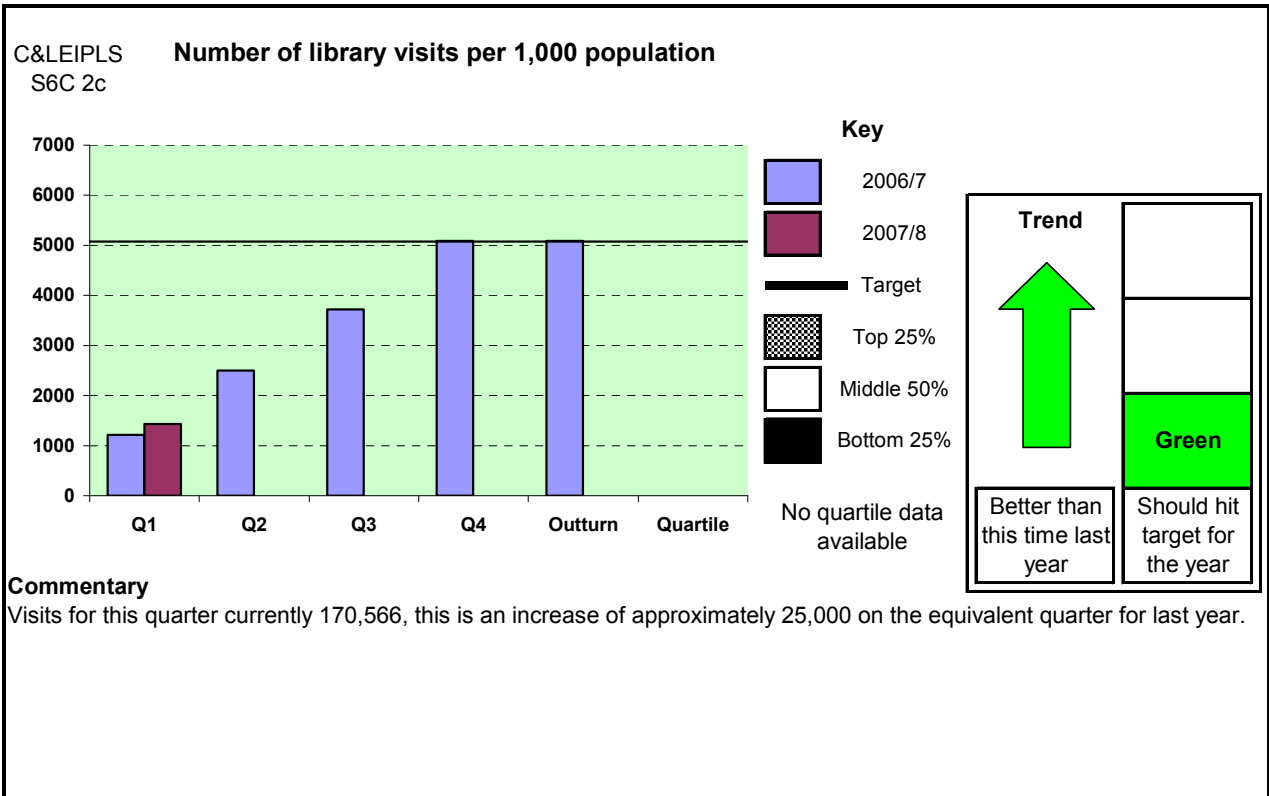
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Establish funding and final work programme for St Chads Big Lottery Fund Sports Hall Scheme. Work to be completed October 2007.		Work on schedule. Lottery Budgets established.
		Complete design of the new Castlefields Community Centre as part of the the Castlefields Regeneration Scheme by June 2007. Establish funding package by March 2008 to allow work to proceed.		Designs complete. Public consultation being undertaken. Gap still exists in funding package.
		Develop local PI's for in-house ALD Day Services and SLA between Community Centres and ALD Services to measure and improve performance by June 2007.		PI's not yet fully developed. SLA's in place. Performance monitored by ALD through their personal action plans.
		Consult with users and local communities to prepare a Lottery Fund bid to upgrade Halton Lea Library in line with user expectations (May		Awaiting outcome of bid.


Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		07). Outcome of bid known by September 07. If successful, develop detailed scheme by January 08.		
CL 2	To develop strategies and action plans to reduce anti-social behaviour and the perceptions of crime.	<p>Launch new Strategy April 07. Safer Halton Partnership to monitor Action Plans on a quarterly basis.</p> <p>Establish new structure for Community Safety Team Sept 07.</p> <p>Introduce system of dedicated Police Community Safety Officers (PCSO's) into Parks to manage security and anti-social behaviour issues by May 07. To be reviewed on a quarterly basis.</p>	  	<p>Strategy launched. Number of reports reduced.</p> <p>Appointment to senior post delayed until October.</p> <p>Team in place. Their duties still need to be developed more.</p>
CL 3	To implement the Action Plan of the self-assessment of 'Towards an Excellent Service' model as prescribed by the Department of Culture, Media and Sport. The plan will prioritise areas for self-improvement.	<p>Action plan agreed with IDEA by April 07.</p> <p>Plan to be presented to PPB/Executive Board in first cycle of Municipal Year.</p>	 	<p>Draft Plan agreed. Awaiting final sign-off.</p> <p>Report to Executive Board in September.</p>


Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Culture and Leisure Services Management team to monitor Action Plan on a quarterly basis.		Quarterly monitoring will commence once the Action Plan has been signed off.












LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
1	<p>Reduce the level of violent crime:</p> <p>The number of recorded incidents of violent crime within Halton (serious woundings and common assault).</p>	2133 (2003/4)	1913 (Mar 08)	2128	535		<p>Data as supplied is based on objectives supported within LAA targets and therefore Violent Crimes consist of Common Assault and Woundings (serious and other) only.</p> <p>During April to June 2007 Halton Area recorded 535 crimes equating to 4.52 per 1000 population (Halton population supplied as 118,450). Halton area achieved an 8.5% decrease when compared to the same period during the previous year (585 to 535).</p> <p>If Halton continues with current performance 07/08 year end projections are 2140 crimes or 18.1 per 1000 population, although above target levels initiatives and operations planned during the remainder of this fiscal year will impact positively in hope to reduce volumes.</p> <p>Town Centre locations encompassing core licensed premises and fast food outlets are hotspot areas with alcohol related crimes as main causation factor.</p> <p>If we compare Halton performance</p>

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
							<p>against MSCDRP for total violent crimes up to June 2007 Halton area is currently 10th position out of 15 in line with our peers and performance is clearly improving.</p> <p>Halton Safer Halton Partnership Team have now appointed post of Community Safety Projects Officer to explore future violent crime reduction initiatives.</p>
2	<p>Reduction in vehicle crime in Halton:</p> <p>i) The number of thefts of vehicles in Halton</p>	753 (2003/4)	558 (Mar 08)	530	113		<p>During April to June 2007 Halton Area recorded 113 crimes equating to 0.95 per 1000 population (Halton population supplied as 118,450).</p> <p>Halton area achieved a 31.9% decrease when compared to the same period during the previous year (166 to 113).</p> <p>If Halton continues with current performance 07/08 year end projections are 452 highlighting exceptional projected performance against targets.</p> <p>Kingsway Ward was highlighted as hotspot area for Theft of Vehicles, Cheshire Police have one ongoing Operation running to deter travelling criminals entering Widnes and committing vehicle crimes.</p>

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
							<p>If we compare Halton performance against MSCDRP for theft of vehicle crime up to June 2007 Halton area is currently 5th position out of 15 and performance is well below MSG average.</p> <p>Total Vehicle crime (Theft From and Theft Of Vehicles) is currently showing no apparent change and performing better than our peers when compared to MSCDRP</p>
	<p>ii) The number of thefts from vehicles in Halton</p>	<p>1108 (2003/4)</p>	<p>749 (Mar 08)</p>	<p>905</p>	<p>198</p>		<p>During April to June 2007 Halton Area recorded 198 crimes equating to 1.67 per 1000 population (Halton population supplied as 118,450).</p> <p>Halton area achieved a 20.5% decrease when compared to the same period during the previous year (249 to 198).</p> <p>If Halton continues with current performance 07/08 year end projections are 792 highlighting achievable projected performance against targets.</p> <p>Appleton Ward within Widnes Area was highlighted as hotspot area for Theft from Vehicles around free public car parks close to shopping</p>

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
							<p>amenities</p> <p>If we compare Halton performance against MSCDRP for theft from vehicle crime up to June 2007 Halton area is currently 5th position out of 15 and performance is well below MSG average lower bound.</p> <p>Total Vehicle crime (Theft From and Theft Of Vehicles) is currently showing no apparent change and performing better than our peers when compared to MSCDRP.</p>
3	<p>Improving the health and well-being of residents:</p> <p>The percentage of adults in Halton participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on 3 or more days a week, as measured by Sport England's Active People survey.</p>	19.62 (Nov 2006)	20.60 (Nov 2009)	19.62			Data not yet available
4	<p>Tackling the problems of domestic violence:</p> <p>1. The number of incidents of domestic violence reported to the police (directly or through a third party) in Halton.</p> <hr/> <p>2. The proportion of incidents of domestic violence which result in a sanction detection.</p>	1613 (2004/5)	1774 (Mar 08)	2132	640		<p>Numbers of reports increasing as a consequence of publicity campaigns.</p> <hr/> <p>Slightly below projected targets. Police will review situation at half year.</p>
		269 (2005/6)	282 (Mar 08)	242	57		

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
	3. The proportion of the total number of incidents of domestic violence reported annually to the police (directly or through a third party) in the same period, who are repeat victims.	23% (2003/4)	18% (Mar 08)	20%	Data not available	N/a	Data not available
5	Reducing the harm caused by drug misuse:						Has exceeded 2008/09 target
	1. The number of individuals in Halton who are in contact with structured drug treatment services.	604 (2004/5)	790 (2008/9)	879	796		
	2. The percentage of individuals in Halton starting treatment who are retained in treatment for over 12 weeks.	80% (2004/5)	88% (2008/9)	83%	94%		Percentage has been consistent since start of year. (see above)

Financial Statement
Cultural & Leisure Services

Revenue Budget as at 30th June 2007

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Expenditure</u>					
Employees	3,812	924	905	19	918
Grounds Maintenance	2,648	0	0	0	0
Premises Support	829	0	0	0	0
Other Premises	653	279	273	6	274
Book Fund	256	48	46	2	47
Hired & Contracted	464	84	70	14	157
Promotions	151	38	33	5	74
Other Supplies & Serv.	445	107	95	12	202
Transport	71	18	8	10	8
Leisure Mgt. Contract	1282	214	215	(1)	215
Grants	650	331	330	1	332
Other Agency	139	67	57	10	92
Asset Charges	1,570	0	0	0	0
Support Services	3,432	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	16,402	2,110	2,032	78	2,319
<u>Income</u>					
Sales	-118	-30	-54	24	-54
Fees & Charges	-652	-157	-176	19	-176
Rents	-17	-4	-10	6	-10
Support Recharges	-1,521	0	0	0	0
Grant Funding	-270	0	0	0	0
Reimbursements	-536	-34	-34	0	-34
Total Income	-3,114	-225	-274	49	-274
Net Expenditure	13,288	1885	1758	127	2,045

Comments on the above figures:

In overall terms revenue spending to the end of quarter 1 is under budget. The budget savings which arose from the 2007/08 budget setting exercise have been allocated to specific cost centres, and it is anticipated that these savings will be achieved in full.

The underspend on Employee costs relates to a number of posts which are vacant, but which are in the process of being filled. It is not anticipated that this budget heading will be underspent at the year-end.

The Brindley continues to perform well in respect of income generation. Budgets were revised for 2007/08 to reflect the increased income generated, and the resulting increase in income generating costs. However, current performance suggests these budgets may need to be further revised to reflect increased activity levels.




At this stage it is anticipated that overall revenue spending will be in line with the Departmental budget by the end of the financial year.

Cultural & Leisure Services

Capital Projects as at 30th June 2007

	Actual Spend To 30 June.	2007/08 Capital Allocation	2008/09 Capital Allocation
	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Show Pitches</u>	0	40	0
<u>Hale Park</u>	0	35	0
<u>Athletics track</u>	108	301	0
<u>Improvements To Pavilions</u>	0	30	0
<u>Brindley Forestage</u>	0	30	0
<u>Victoria Park CCTV</u>	0	28	0
<u>Skate Park</u>	0	100	0
	108	564	0

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u>.</p>
<u>Amber</u>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain that the objective will not be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Environment
SERVICE: Economic Regeneration
PERIOD: Quarter 1, 2007/08

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Economic Regeneration Department first quarter period up to 30 June 2007. It describes key developments and progress against 'key' objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 5.

It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Following advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), that the scale of the funding being sought from the HLF to develop a Lewis Carroll Visitor Centre in the former Parish Rooms in Daresbury village would not be approved, the Daresbury Church Council and Daresbury Parish Council have decided not to continue with the plan. Instead, work is now progressing on developing an HLF bid based on a scaled down Lewis Carroll interpretation project centred on a new annexe to All Saints Church, Daresbury. Planning permission has been applied for. If the plans are approved and the necessary funding is in place, the anticipated completion date for the project is October 2008.

Executive Board on 7 June gave approval to progress the development of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) on Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates. Consultants have now been appointed to assist in the preparation for the formal vote by businesses that is scheduled for later this year. The same report approved the expansion of the Business Parks Improvement Programme (BPIP) to cover the Widnes Waterfront and adjacent areas. As such, the inaugural Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group meeting will take place during August. Both these initiatives were recommended by the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board Scrutiny Panel that reviewed the BPIP during 2006/07.

The new Events Calendar has been posted on the homepage of the Council's Website. The calendar offers the facility to view, on line, the comprehensive range of events taking place in Halton. In the first two months there were over 61,000 visits by 34,000 users.

A new Victoria Square Traders Group has been established by the Town

Centre Manager to promote and improve the management of the area. As a way of encouraging local traders to become more involved in the day-to-day management of the town centres the three traders groups (Runcorn, Widnes and Victoria Square) have each been allocated part of the town centre management budget and asked to identify proposals for projects and events that would benefit the centres. The balance of the budget is being used by the town centre manager for key initiatives such as gum cleaning.

Preparations are underway to host this years national DICIDA Conference (Development Initiative for Chemical Industries Dependent Areas), which is being held on 11 and 12 October at the Daresbury Laboratory in Runcorn. The Conference will feature keynote speakers, from both the public and private sector, giving talks on the current challenges and topics of interest to the chemicals industry.

Following a Jobcentre Plus (JCP) competitive tendering exercise, the department has secured a contract worth £44,500 to deliver an 'In Work Support Service' across the boroughs of Halton, St. Helens, Knowsley and Sefton (the Greater Mersey JCP District). The project provides 26 weeks in-work support for up to 175 JCP Incapacity Benefit customers who move from Pathways to Work programme into employment to help them to acclimatise to work and keep their job. This is the first time that a district wide contract has been secured.

Following a Learning and Skills Council (LSC) competitive tendering exercise, the department has secured a contract worth £183,000 to deliver the 'Halton Public Sector Routeway'. This will provide 60 local residents with 13 weeks unpaid work experience within public sector organisations e.g. Halton BC, NHS, Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire Service etc..

Following the establishment of the new Enterprising Halton service, 81 new business start-up enquiries have been received this quarter, all of which receive 1:1 business advice and support. 9 new business start-ups have been established with a further 5 business start-up plans pending approval from the external assessor.

The Halton People into Jobs service has been awarded Matrix in recognition of the quality of Information, Advice and Guidance, services (IAG) available to residents. Matrix is a quality standard mark awarded by ENTO – a national standard for IAG providers that is increasingly becoming a tendering requirement by funding bodies such as LSC and JCP. The Matrix Assessment Report recommended that HPIJ should seek the prestigious Matrix Excellence Award that is only held by 26 other organisation in the UK.

Children's Centre funding of £99,000 has been secured for provision and co-ordination of adult and family learning in CYPANs (Children & Young People Area Networks). This will enable enhanced levels of support over and above what the Learning and Skills Council funds.

The adult learning service has obtained Centre Approval from CACHE (Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education) for the delivery of childcare courses e.g. NNEB, CCE, Teaching Assistants

An expression of interest has recently been approved by the Big Lottery Fund for a Family Science project – it will now be fully worked up and submitted for

final approvals. The project involves a series of fun and interactive science workshops featuring 'hands on' experiments, science museum trip, industry site visits and progression support. Workshops will be fully accessible and delivered in the community in schools, children's centres and community learning venues, after school and at weekends, with creche and some transport support. The project will be delivered through partnerships with the Catalyst museum, Kings Cross project and the Daresbury Laboratory. It is hoped that by learning as a family, parents and children will develop a mutual appreciation of science and technology in their local community and the opportunities it affords/offers.

The Learning and Skills Council requires that each local authority establishes a PCDL (Personal and Community Development Learning) Partnership. In Halton, rather than develop another partnership, it has been agreed to utilise those partnerships that already exist, namely the Employment Learning and Skills SSP and its Skills Task Group. A PCDL mapping exercise is now underway to establish the total level of PCDL activity that takes place (as opposed to activity that is just LSC funded)

As a direct result of business surveys and follow up work, the adult learning service has introduced a range of cost effective quick fix courses for local businesses. These can be delivered on site and it is hoped that they will encourage both employers and employees to pursue more structure qualification based activity.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

An E survey of over 800 local businesses is taking place investigating what businesses think of council procurement. To date, some 190 businesses have returned the survey.

Lead by Cultural Services, a cross directorate steering group has been established to develop and deliver the Council's proposed Spike Island Capital Of Culture event next year. The event itself will be managed 'on the day' by the Promotions and Tourism team.

The Chief Executive will host a dinner on July 26 2007 for key players in the science and technology sector locally. It is intended that the dinner will kick start the 'Halton Science Initiative'

The creation of a Liverpool City Region Single Investment Agency (SIA) will have a profound effect upon the way investment enquiries are managed locally. Over the coming months it will be necessary to integrate new 'sub-regional' ways of working into existing, local, service delivery to ensure that the Borough isn't disadvantaged with respect to the generation of investment projects. A number of issues still need to be resolved with respect to the funding of the SIA. Each LA has agreed to contribute £50,000 per annum for a period of three years to support the SIA. The Borough Council has identified funding to support the initiative in Year 1.

The department currently has a small Next Steps Contract that provides Information Advice and Guidance to the unemployed. HPiJ has submitted a re-contracting application to Learning and Skills Council/Connexions to continue to deliver IAG services for 12 months from August 2007; a decision is expected

end of July 07.

The department has recently started developing a relationship with HMP Altcourse Liverpool, where, on average, 10-20 ex offenders are released each month that re-settle in Halton. A pilot pre-release programme will start in July that includes delivery of Next Steps IAG services and pre-HPIJ registration for those due for release in the next 6 weeks who wish to resettle in Halton.

The department is developing a 3-week pilot pre-employment programme for residents from priority groups and wards to better prepare them for interview with O2. HPIJ staff have been trained in the O2 recruitment process and have developed interview technique training guidelines to support applicants attending the pre-employment training. Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has been secured to run a pilot programme of activity.

The North West Regional Development Agency has now let a region wide contract for the provision of business start up activity. A consortium lead by A4E has been appointed though the local service will be provided by Blue Orchid that has been active in the borough in the past through the Merseyside Social Enterprise Initiative. A meeting has been arranged to find out more about the plans for Halton.




The Learning and Skills Council has released the budget figures for the Adult Learning Service for next academic year. There is no increase at all. This is in addition to the 6.5% cut for the present year. The impact of this is being assessed. It is already clear that the cost of some courses will have to rise.

Changes to legislation around ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners will need to be taken into consideration when planning the curriculum for September 2007. Currently all ESOL provision is free to all ESOL learners and the changes will mean that non-EU learners will have to pay for learning, unless they fit particular categories. The cost of delivery compared to outcomes will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

The LSC is introducing a new comprehensive performance assessment framework for the FE Sector (all adult learning providers are now included within the Further Education Sector) – Framework for Excellence. It is intended that this will provide a single unified framework for assessing and reporting achievement in key areas of performance. It will also provide information to providers for benchmarking purposes and will inform inspectors' planning decisions and assessments. The framework will provide clear numerical information for learners and employers to make informed choices. Initially it was to be introduced for adult learning providers from 2009/10, however this appears to have now been brought forward to 2008/09.




The FE Bill currently before Parliament will require FE providers to develop their own learner involvement strategy for the academic year 2007/08, for which there is no additional funding. Providers will have a duty to consult learners, employers and prospective learners about their provision. The Framework for Excellence will set a standard and criteria for providers to develop their own learner involvement strategy. It will have to be inclusive and also cover disadvantaged and potentially excluded groups.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	20		18		1		1
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Progress against the majority of objectives is on track. Two of the service objectives have not progressed as anticipated. Additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES




Total	0		0		0		0
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There are no “Other” objectives for this service.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW




There have been no service reviews this quarter.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	9		6		3		0
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The majority of indicators are progressing well with the exception of those relating to inward investment and job creation/safeguarding. Additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	4		4		0		0
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None of the remaining indicators for the service are presently showing cause for concern and are therefore not being reported at this time.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

Appendix 3. Both LPSA 10 & 12 show satisfactory progress towards their targets.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2007-08 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.








Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.







9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

During 2006/07 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

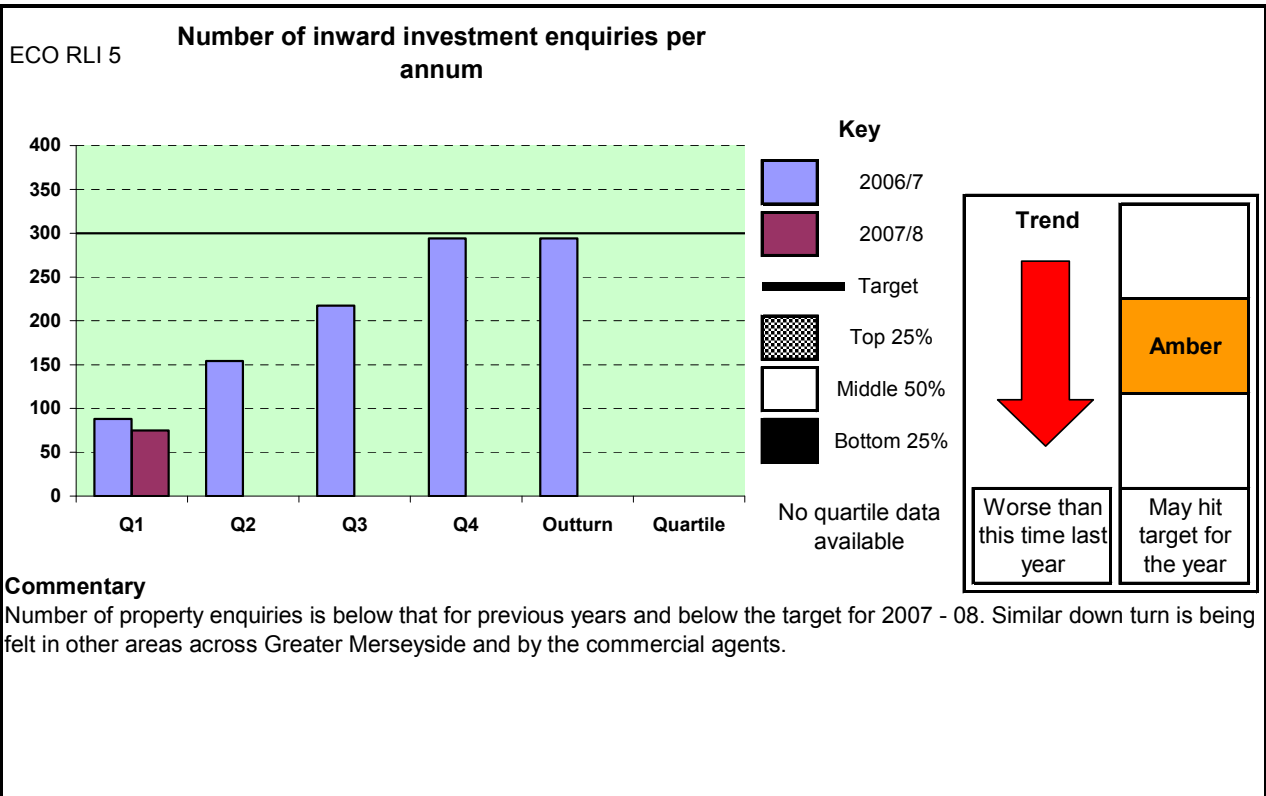
10.0 APPENDICES

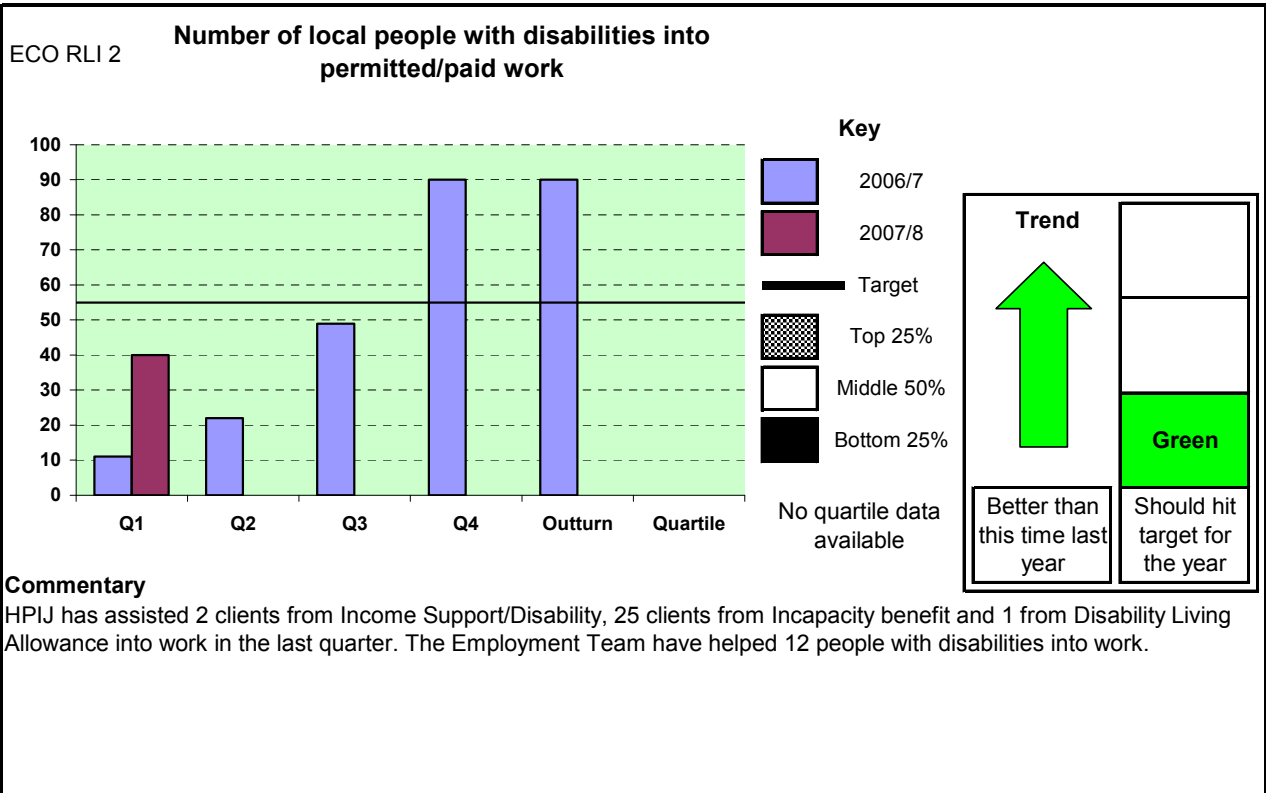
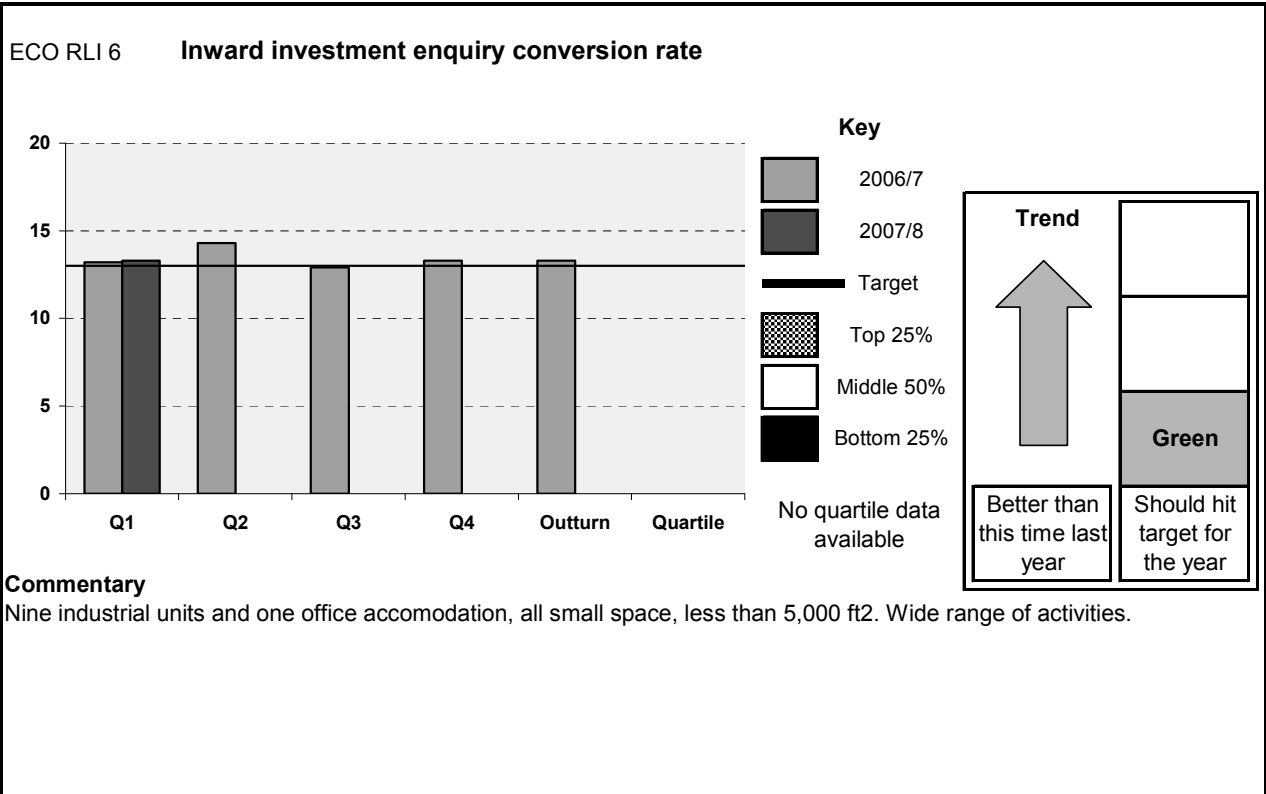
Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against LPSA targets
Appendix 4- Financial Statement
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols

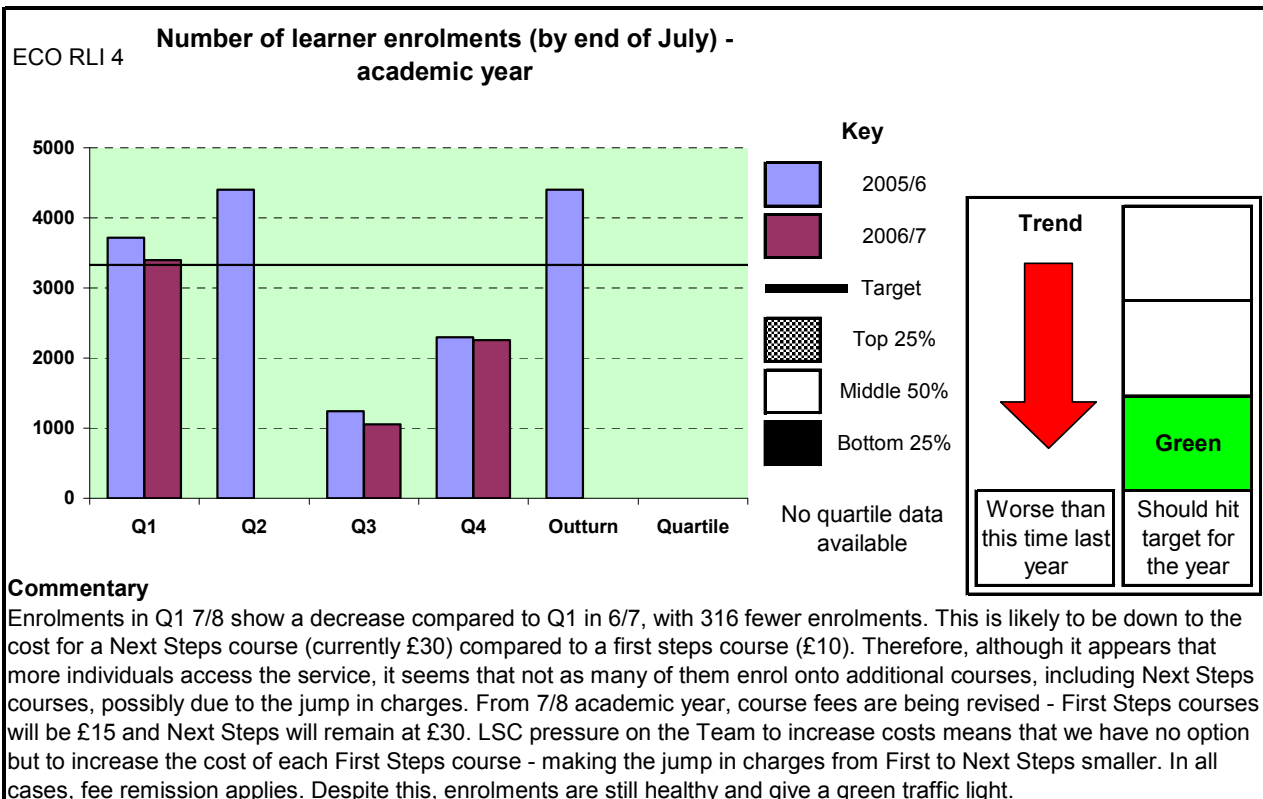
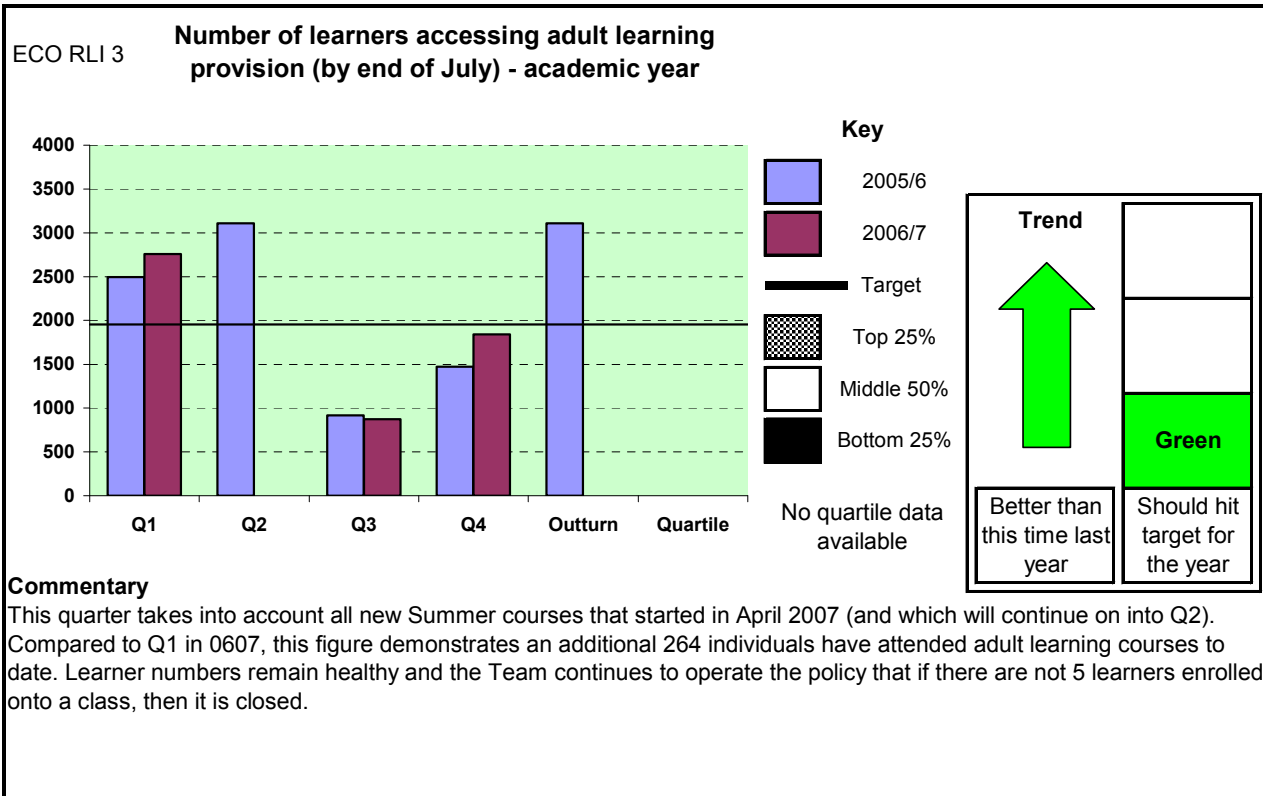
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER01	Promote diversity and competitiveness, in order to develop a modernised and more competitive business base to provide greater employment security for the Halton community.	Implement Phase 2 marketing action plan by 30-3-08		On track
		Forward Strategy for eHalton by 30-9-07		In development
		Expand business Parks to another estate by 30-6-07 (dependent on funding)		Executive Board approved the expansion of the programme on 7 June 2008. Inaugural meeting August 2007
		Present options for future of eHalton to Strategic Director Environment by 31-10-07		On track.
ER02	Develop sectors and clusters with a view to developing stronger business inter-linkages and stronger overall business performance in Halton	Implement phase2 sector plans for tourism, science and chemicals – by 31-3-08		Halton Science Forum Steering Group to formulate Action Plan for science sector.
		Facilitate the development of Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (DISC)		Business Development Team is fully engaged with DSIC master Planning Group and negotiations with the new owners of Daresbury Park
ER03	Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to develop an enterprise culture that encourages people to consider starting a business and give new ventures every chance of success.	Explore on-line enterprise game by 30-9-07		The EBP are progressing several versions of the Game including separate Maritime and Primary School versions as well as an 'On-line game'.

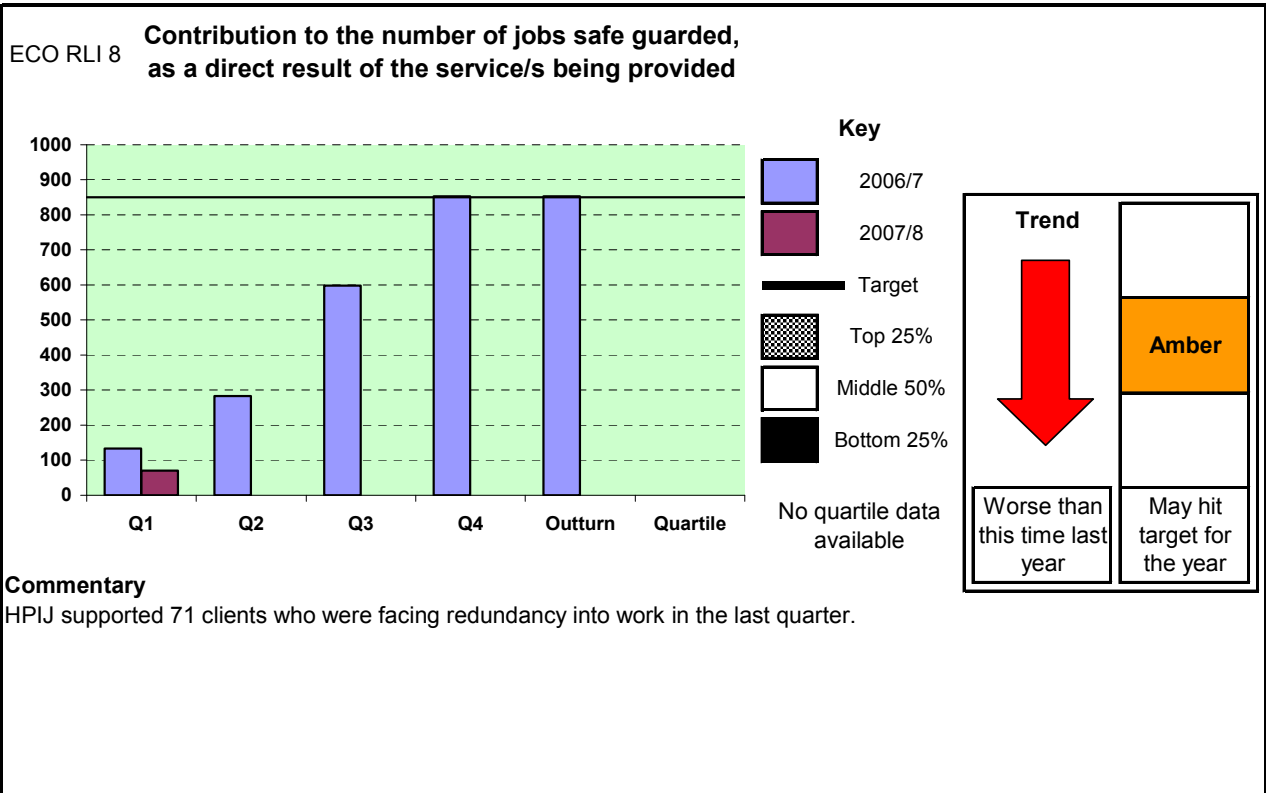
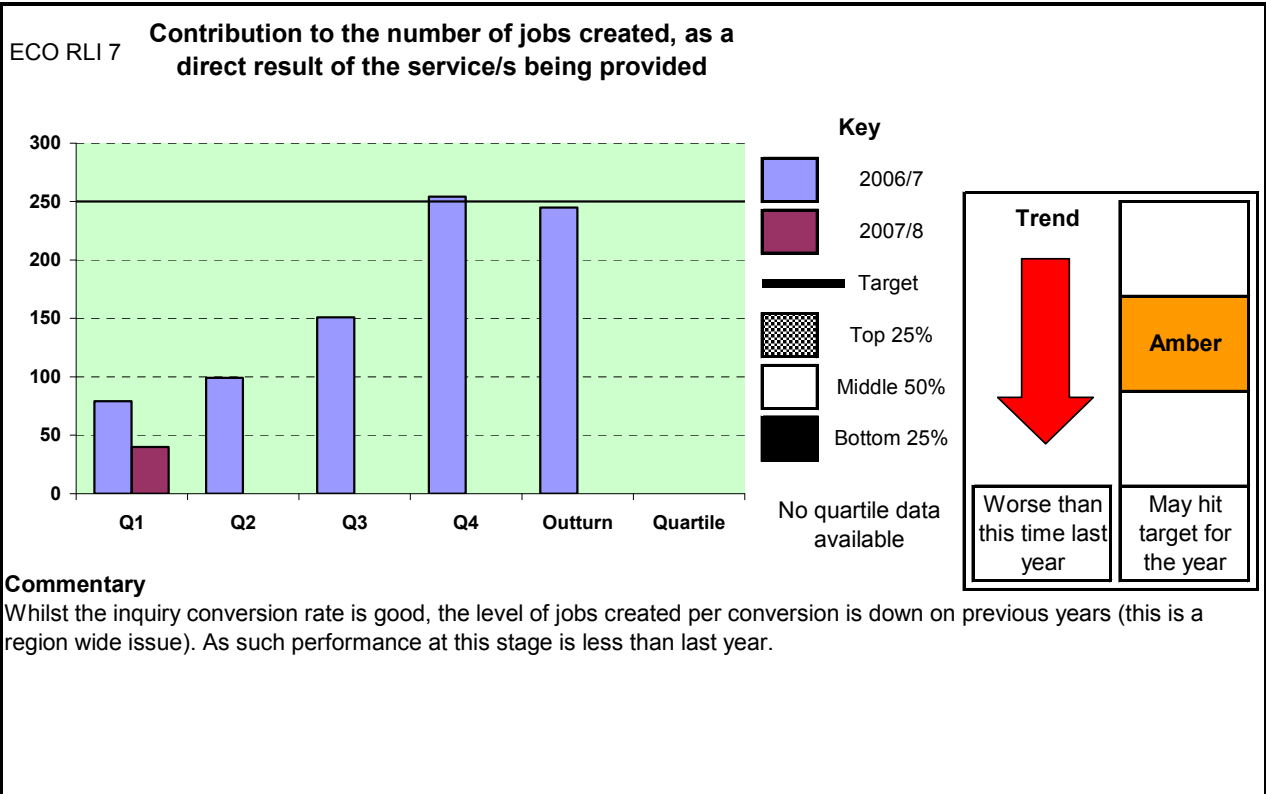
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Establish Halton Enterprise Island pilot by 30-9-07		The Enterprising Halton Challenge pilot is on schedule for a summer launch.
		Develop LEGI bid by 31-3-08 (subject to round three taking place)		The Enterprise Action Plan has been refreshed in readiness for a Round 3 LEGI bid.
ER04	Reduce unemployment and increase employment by equipping people with the basic skills and assisting them to secure employment.	Review Basic Skills Strategy by 30-9-07		The Skills for Life Strategy is now being finalised and an executive summary is being developed.
		Outreach pilot programme to be evaluated by 31-12-2007		Programme was being delivered though secondments. However, Jobcentre Plus has recalled staff as part of a head count reduction programme.
		Deliver JCP co-finance contracts by 31-3-2008		All JCP co-financed contracts are running satisfactorily and meeting or exceeding targets.
		Deliver ILMs programme by 31.3.2008		Stepping Stones (Halton ILM) continuing to deliver job outcomes. Steps2Work (PCT funded Mental Health ILM) commenced. Preferred supplier status to LHT Jigsaw Environmental Services secured but start of project uncertain.

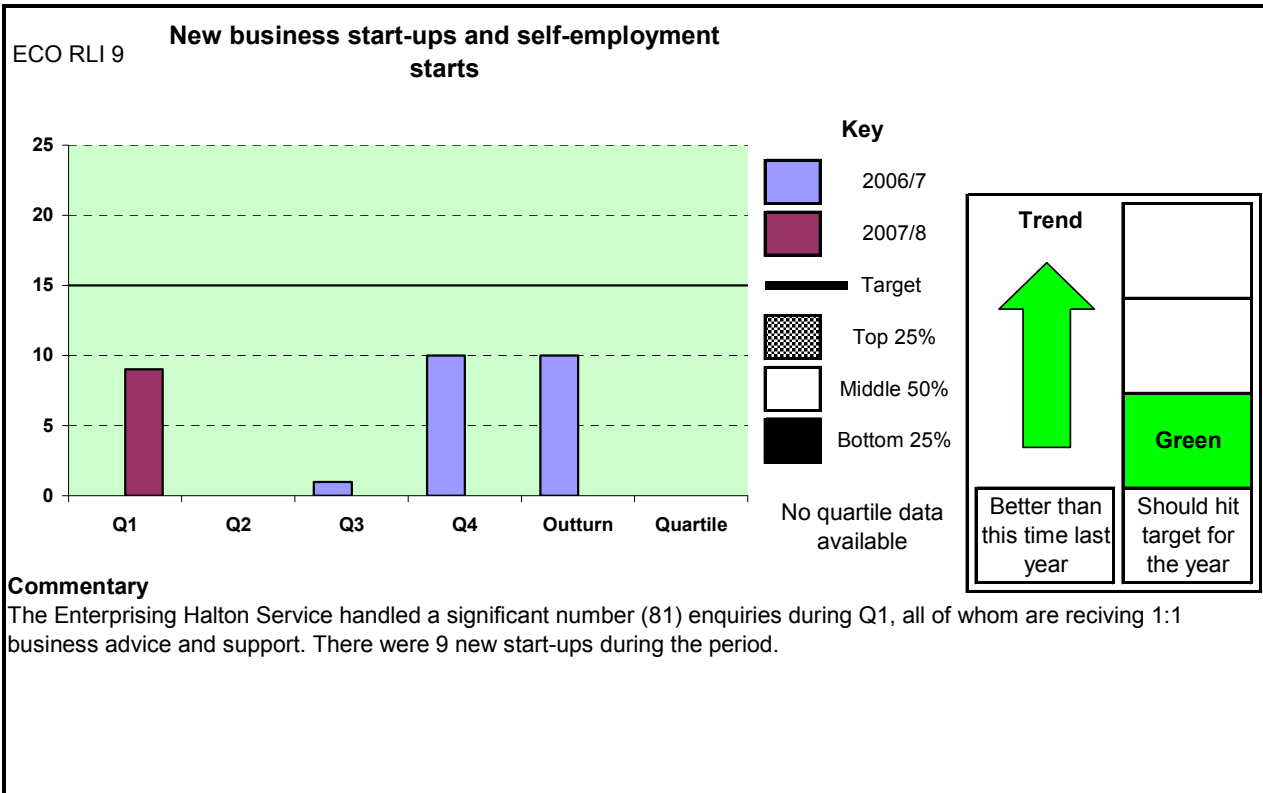
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER05	Raise workforce skill levels by reviewing and addressing the skills deficit in Halton	Review TNA provision between 30-6-06 & 30-6-07		Targets set within the NRF WFD project in 2006/7 were overachieved with 89 individual employees benefiting from workforce training. TNA will now be delivered through the Train to Gain programme.
		Develop a Skills Sub-Group of the ELS by 30-6-07		Skills Sub-Group has met 3 times in Q1. To date, it has reviewed the Business Perceptions Survey and made changes to the survey planned for 2007/8.
		SSP to consider customer satisfaction post LSC revamp by 31-3-08		On track.
ER06	Encouraging investment in land and property to develop assets that meet business needs and help to produce an attractive and prosperous Borough.	Commence implementing commercial property plan by 30-3-08		Astmoor Master Planning Group constituted. Position statement prepared
		Complete delivery of BIA scheme by 31-3-08		One new application received this quarter and a further five pending
ER07	Improving the environment and image of the borough including town centres, to appeal to residents, encourage visitors, businesses and investors.	Annual footfall statement by 30-9-07		Footfall counters installed and operational
		Finalise night time plan for Victoria square by 31-12-07		Risk assessment prepared













LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
10	Number of adults gaining a national Skills for Life qualification at level 1, 2 or 3 in literacy, numeracy or ESOL	19 04/05	116 measured in academic year ending 31/08/08	35	13		13 learners achieved Adult Literacy/Adult Numeracy Level 1 qualifications in Q1. Online testing (GOLA) has continued to open up access to nationally recognised qualifications.
12	Increase the number of people who have been claiming an incapacity benefit into sustained employment of at least 16 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks or more	18 for year ending 31/03/06	179 3 year cumulative to 31/03/09	38	17		A further 25 IB claimants have been assisted into work during Q1 who are yet to complete 13 weeks.

REGENERATION**Revenue Budget as at 30th June 2007**

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (Overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1,319	328	284	44	284
Premises Support Office	2	0	0	0	0
Accommodation	110	1	1	0	1
Marketing Programme	53	1	2	(1)	2
Promotions	29	7	0	7	0
Development Projects	21	0	0	0	2
Supplies & Services	155	23	20	3	27
ICT Investment for Growth	20	0	0	0	0
Halton People into Jobs	125	0	0	0	0
Transport	33	8	7	1	7
Central Support Services	148	0	0	0	0
Departmental Support Services	29	0	0	0	0
Agency	4	1	1	0	1
Asset Charges	7	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	2,055	369	315	54	325
Income					
Sales	0	0	0	0	0
Fees & Charges	-13	-3	-1	(2)	-1
Reimbursements	-65	-9	-10	1	-10
Government grants	-382	-166	-166	0	-166
Employment Service	-257	-44	-44	0	-44
Recharges to Capital	-12	0	0	0	0
Total Income	-729	-222	-221	(1)	-221
Net Expenditure	1,326	147	94	53	104

Comments on the above figures:

In overall terms revenue spending to the end of quarter 1 is slightly under budget.

With regards to expenditure the staffing underspend relates to savings against costs for the Supported Employment Team, external funding is being used to fund eligible salary costs. There is also an underspend in salaries against the Foundation Modern Apprentice scheme as actual numbers going through the scheme are lower than estimated. A staffing vacancy also exists in the Tourism & Promotions team.

At this stage, it is anticipated that overall revenue spending will be within departmental budget by year-end.

Local Strategic Partnership Schemes as at 30th June 2007

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (Overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Halton People into Jobs	180	45	54	(9)	54
HPIJ	143	27	18	9	18
Neighbourhood Employment Outreach					
Halton ILM	163	41	35	6	35
Enterprise Development	84	21	16	5	16
Workforce Development	44	11	0	11	0
Supported Employment	129	32	27	5	27
Skills for Life	99	20	10	10	10
Town Centres Initiatives	75	19	10	9	10
Total Expenditure	917	216	170	46	170




External or Grant Funded Schemes as at 30th June 2007

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (Overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
ERDF					
Halton People into Jobs	69	17	37	(20)	37
ICT Investment for Growth	112	28	26	2	26
Total Expenditure	181	45	63	(18)	63

Capital Projects as at 30th June 2007

	Actual To 30 th June	07-08 Capital Allocation	08-09 Capital Allocation	09-10 Capital Allocation
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Multi-Funded Projects</u>				
Business Improvement Area Scheme	0	458	0	0
Total Capital	0	458	0	0

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective</u> is <u>on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u>.</p>
<u>Amber</u>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain that the objective</u> will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target</u> will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>