

Public Document Pack



Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 2 June 2009 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David WR'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Alan Lowe (Vice- Chairman)	Labour
Councillor John Bradshaw	Conservative
Councillor Peter Browne	Conservative
Councillor Ellen Cargill	Labour
Councillor Mark Dennett	Labour
Councillor Susan Edge	Labour
Councillor Diane Inch	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Paul Nolan	Labour
Councillor Ulfar Norddahl	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Kevan Wainwright	Labour

*Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 or e-mail caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 8 September 2009*

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

Part I

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1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	
<p>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, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.</p>	
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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: Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board

DATE:

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

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(9).

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(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from 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 given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one 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 your 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 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 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** - none.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - none.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – none.

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – none.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – none.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 2 June 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes
WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes Relevant to the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2009

EXB103 DRAFT BUDGET 2009/10 – KEY DECISION

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services, which outlined a recommendation to Council in respect of the Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax for 2009/10.

It was noted that, at the time of writing the report, the Cheshire Police and Fire Authorities had not set their budgets and Council Tax precepts. However the Board were informed that the Fire Authority had now confirmed that its precept was 2.9% and it was advised that the Police Authority was to meet on 24th February to make a decision on its precepts.

The Board was advised that the Medium Term Financial Strategy, approved on 20th November 2008, had identified a funding gap of around £6m in each of the next three years. The Strategy had the following objectives:

- to prioritise investments in the five priority areas;
- to avoid excessive Council Tax rises;
- to deliver a balanced and sustainable budget; and
- to achieve significant cashable efficiency savings to enable this to happen.

As part of the Budget Strategy each Directorate had managed its budget to generate underspend of £500,000 each. This had generated £2m to be transferred to the Invest to Save Fund. The Board noted that it was anticipated that balances at 31st March 2009 would be around £6.6m broadly as planned when the budget had been set the previous year.

In order to close the £6 m funding gap a number of proposed savings had been identified. A list of the proposed savings was outlined in Appendix C to the report. The Policy and Performance Boards had been consulted on these proposals, and comments made in relation to the following items were noted:

- relocating Murdishaw and Woodlands Play Centre Services;

- Transport Services for Children's Services – it was noted that this saving was a reflection of the lower demand for the service;
- reorganise litter picking in Neighbourhood areas – it was reported that the current standard would be maintained by deploying staff in a more flexible way;
- revised arrangements for pest control;
- street lighting pilot – the proposal related to turning off lights on the Daresbury Expressway, A56 and Watkinson Way. However, an alternative for making equivalent savings within the Highways Department had been found from Street Lighting Efficiencies and following consideration of the feedback received this proposal was withdrawn; and
- delete attendants' posts at Widnes Town Centre toilets – it was noted that the toilets would still be cleaned but would no longer be staffed, and the situation would be monitored.

In relation to the item headed "Cease Trade Waste" it was noted that, although the Council was to cease providing this service directly, trade waste would continue to be collected by the private sector.

In addition, the Board noted that the Area Forums had been provided with the opportunity to feed into the consultation process and a list of comments made at the recent Area Forum meetings was provided for Members' consideration.

The Departmental analysis of the budget was shown in Appendix D to the report and the major reasons for change from the current budget were outlined for Members' information. It was noted that, after taking account of the windfall gain arising from the commutation adjustment in 2004/05 (the last year the Council could do this), the budget requirement was £105.117m.

Further information was provided in respect of the Local Government Finance Settlement, Halton's Council Tax, Parish Precepts, the Capital Programme, the Prudential Code and school budgets. In relation to the Council Tax, it was expected that Halton's total Council Tax would continue to be amongst the lowest in the North West, with residents in Band D experiencing a weekly rise of 71p per week and residents in Band A, ie half the properties in the Borough, experiencing a weekly rise of 47p.

RESOLVED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the resolution set out in Appendix A of the report, which includes setting the budget at £105.467m and the Band D Council Tax for Halton (before Parish, Police and Fire Precepts) of £1,116.69.

EXB104 TREASURY MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT STRATEGY 2009/10

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services proposing the Treasury Management Strategy for 2009/10.

The Treasury Management Strategy Statement was shown in Appendix A to the report and detailed the expected activities of the Treasury function in the forthcoming financial year (2009/10).

The Local Government Act 2003 required the Council to “have regard to” the Prudential Code and to set Prudential indicators for the next three years to ensure that the Council’s capital investment plans were affordable, prudent and sustainable. The Act therefore required the Council to set out its Treasury Strategy for borrowing as well as an Investment Strategy, which set out the Council’s policies for managing its investments and for giving priority to the security and liquidity of those investments.

Members noted that a new requirement for 2009/10 was the production of a minimum revenue provision policy statement: there was a detailed explanation of why this was required within the Strategy, together with a formal statement for approval.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Council adopt the policies, strategies and statements outlined in the Treasury Management Strategy; and
- (2) delegated authority be given to the Operational Director – Financial Services, in consultation with the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, to set the Minimum Revenue Provision repayment periods.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2009

EXB115 COUNCIL INTERNAL GOVERNANCE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which considered the way forward for the Council’s internal Governance arrangements in light of the Government’s latest Consultation document.

The Board was advised that on the 30th December 2007 Section 64 and Schedule 4 of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 came into force. This inserted new

provisions into the Local Government Act 2000. These compelled Councils to adopt one of the two new governance models. In Halton's case this decision must be taken by no later than 31st December 2010.

Members were advised that the two new governance models were as follows:

- (1) New-style Leader and Cabinet Executive OR
- (2) Mayor and Cabinet Executive.

No change was not an option and those were the only two models allowed. The report set out the key features of these two new models along with outlining a provisional timetable assuming final Government guidance was issued in May 2009.

The Board discussed both models in depth and noted that a most models that had an elected Mayor did not have a Ceremonial Mayor also.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the Council noted the Consultation Paper and deferred a decision on the consultation and on the choice between the two models for internal governance until the Government had published the final version of its guidance; and the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy be authorised to determine the Council's response to the Consultation Paper on the basis set out in paragraph 3.10 of the report.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2009

EXB124 POLICY FOR THE TRANSFER OF ASSETS TO THE THIRD SECTOR

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy which sought the Board's approval to an Asset Transfer Policy to be applied in circumstances where the transfer of land or property to the third sector could be seen to be addressing Community Strategy priorities and making financial sense to the authority.

It was noted that the Council had over many years supported organisations in the third sector in a variety of ways that provided support to the Council's priorities. This support had included the letting of surplus properties to such organisations. These arrangements had, however, been on an ad-hoc basis.

Following the publication of the Quirk Review (commissioned by the Government) in 2007 through which local community groups were encouraged to approach their local Councils to see if the local authority had any surplus assets capable of being used to support the delivery of their services, more requests were being made for the Council to transfer their assets to the third sector.

It was felt that in order to address such request, a more formal approach was needed to deal with them. The Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board included this topic in its 2008/09 work programme and had developed such a policy for consideration by the Executive Board. The Board had recommended the attached policy for adoption.

It was further noted that the first consideration in all cases would be whether the Council considered the land/ building to be surplus in the first place. This would precede any further application of the policy. This would need to be undertaken by balancing the potential commercial value of the asset against any potential use, always taking into account the wider financial implications for the Council. In particular, the need to generate capital receipts to support the Council's Capital Programme.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the work done by the Corporate Services Working Party be received;
- (2) the Asset Transfer Policy be formally adopted, subject to any final amendments; and

delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the relevant portfolio holder to approve final amendments as necessary.

EXB126 EFFICIENCY PARTNER – CONTRACT ARRANGEMENTS

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which advised Members of the contract arrangements with the Council's Efficiency Partner (KPMG), in accordance with the Executive Board Minute No. EXB74/2008 and to provide an update on progress.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 2ND APRIL 2009

EXB129 ANNUAL REVIEW OF THE CONSTITUTION

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which sought the approval of the Council to a number of changes to the Constitution.

Members had received a revised version of the Constitution, it was advised that this amended version picked up the changes to the Council's working arrangements that had taken place during the year, as well as other changes which were intended to assist the Council to operate more effectively.

It was advised that the proposals for change had been considered by the Chief Executive and the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services in accordance with Article 16.02. It was reported that apart from the purely technical changes, the proposed amendments that were considered to be of particular significance were listed as an appendix to the report.

The Board was informed of one change to the appendix which related to Citizen's Right's of Access to Information in terms of amending the acceptability of questions put to Area Forums. It was proposed that questions put to Area Forums should be the responsibility of the Lead Officer in Consultation with Members, rather than in consultation with the chair as not all Area Forums have a standing Chairman.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the changes to the Constitution as set out in the amended version detailed as follows.

Local Code of Corporate Governance

National Standard document which Council needs to adopt. Further enhances the Council's integrity framework.

Warrington BC Trading Standards arrangements

Delegated powers changed to reflect joint working with Warrington BC

1. Mental Health functions – officer delegation

A separate report seeking additional officer delegations in relation to the council's Mental Health functions. To the extent approved by Council these will be added to the final printed version of the 2009 Constitution.

2. Urgent Decisions

It is important that the Council is able to respond promptly within an accountable framework. For this reason an urgent measures delegation is proposed for approval in the Scheme of Delegation.

3. Procurement Standing Orders

Improvements have also been proposed to the Procurement Standing Orders to ensure that the reasons for decisions are documented. This will enhance accountability and transparency.

4. Call-In

Changes have also been made to the Call-In Procedure to allow withdrawal where Members initiating the Call-In wish to discontinue the process.

Citizen's Right's of Access to Information, meetings etc, Number 7.

Acceptability of questions put to Area Forums should be the responsibility of the Lead Officer in consultation with Members rather than the responsibility of the Chair since not all Area Forums have a Standing Chairman.

EXB130 SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITIES ACT 2007

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which informed Members of the provisions of the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 and reported on a consultation on local spending reports pursuant to the Act.

It was advised that the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 was introduced to parliament as a Private Bill. In summary –

- 1) Local authorities were invited to make suggestions to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government aimed at improving the sustainability of local communities. Suggestions must promote economic, social and environmental well-being.
- 2) Local authorities would be able to request Local Spending Reports to help them to prioritise actions. These reports would show all of the Government spending in their communities from Government Departments and their agencies.
- 3) The Act formally changed the name "Community Strategies" (as set out in the Local Government Act 2000) to "Sustainable Community Strategies".

The Board was advised that under the provisions of the Act, the Secretary of State had invited Local Authorities to make proposals which they considered would contribute to promoting the sustainability of local communities. It was advised that the expectation was that most proposals would originate from community organisations, parties and town councils, neighbourhood forums, residents and tenants associations, local strategic partnerships and other partnership bodies. It was further noted that proposals could also be developed by Councils themselves.

The Board was informed that there was no limit on the types of proposals that local authorities could make to the Secretary of State. It was noted that they could include a request for a transfer of functions from one body to another (for example from a national to a local body or from one local body to another). This could be accompanied by a request for transfer of funding linked to that function. In making such a proposal a local authority would have first to consult with both bodies concerned. It was noted there was no specific budget associated with this Act and proposals could be made requiring new funding but generally they would need to be resourced from existing public funds.

The Board was further advised that before submitting a proposal to the Government for consideration, the local authority must first establish and consult with a panel of “representatives of local persons”. Statutory guidance required that persons from under-represented groups were included on such a panel. It was noted that for the purposes of the Act “representatives of local persons” meant a balanced selection of individuals, groups or organisations likely to be affected by or have an interest in the proposal. It did not refer to formally elected or nominated members of the community.

It was advised that the deadline for submission of proposals to the LGA was 31st July 2009. It was noted the LGA planned to consult on some draft criteria for short listing proposals in March 2009 and to publish a final proposal form in April allowing three months for local consultation and decision making before the submission deadline. It was further noted that there would be further rounds for submission on proposals but no timetable had yet been set.

The Board also considered that the Act required the Secretary of State to make arrangements for the production of Local Spending Reports. These reports provided information about public spending in relation to a particular area. It was noted that this was intended to “promote the sustainability of local communities by providing access to high quality information about the public funding that was spent in the area”. The Government expected this provision to provide greater transparency and accountability.

It was reported that the Government had recently published a consultation on proposals for local spending reports. The consultation period would end on 15th May 2009. The consultation pointed out that the statutory requirement was potentially complex and expensive and suggested that the "first arrangement" would make use of information currently available and through the consultation it could be assessed how reports should be developed over time.

It was advised that the Government proposed that the first arrangement should comprise a list of items of expenditure for all local authorities, police authorities, fire and rescue authorities and primary care trusts. It was proposed that the items of expenditure would be broken down into more detailed tables as currently set out in the revenue out-turn returns made to Central Government.

The Board was advised of a response that would be sent to the consultation indicating that to be of any use, the reports must set out what was spent by agencies and Government departments. The proposed responses to the consultation questions were appended to the report for Members' consideration.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) a seminar be held for all Members to consider how the Council might respond to promoting sustainability within the framework of the Act;
- 2) the matter be discussed at the Halton Strategic Partnership Board; and

the draft response to the consultation on local spending reports set out in the in appendix be agreed.

EXB131 PREPARATION FOR COMPREHENSIVE AREA ASSESSMENT - CAA

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which outlined the key features of the new CAA framework that would take effect on 1st April, 2009. Appended to the report were signposts and specific information on the following aspects of the CAA for Members' consideration:

- a) The scope and architecture of CAA
- b) The Area Assessment
- c) The Organisational Assessment
- d) Timetable for Assessment
- e) Actions being taken to prepare for CAA

It was advised that a version of this report would be circulated to all members of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board, Specialist Strategic Partnerships and Sector Based Partnerships in the near future.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) the Board approves the initial actions to prepare for the Comprehensive Area Assessment set out in Section (e) of Annex 1 to the report; and
- 2) the Board supports and engages with the activities to prepare for CAA, across relevant areas of the Council and the Halton Strategic Partnership.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 12TH FEBRUARY 2009

ES80 SPENDING AS AT 31ST DECEMBER 2008

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services, which gave details of the Council's overall Revenue and Capital spending position as at 31st December 2008.

Members were advised of the spending against the revenue budget for each Department, up to the 31st December 2008 and it was noted that, in overall terms, revenue expenditure was below the budget profile. Areas of concern were outlined in detail within the report.

Members were advised of capital spending to the 30th December 2008, which totalled £25.3m, and which was 70% of the planned spending of £36.1m at this stage. However, this represented only 52% of the total capital programme of £48.3m, although the Department for Transport had approved the carry forward of £1.6m in respect of the Local Transport Plan expenditure.

It was noted that although, historically, capital expenditure was significantly higher in the latter part of the financial year, it was important that project managers maintained pressure to keep projects and spending on schedule and in particular to ensure that all external funding was maximised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 5TH MARCH 2009

ES89 NON-DOMESTIC DISCRETIONARY RELIEF

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which sought Members' consideration of an application for discretionary non-domestic rate relief and to review all of the current recipients, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

The Sub-Committee was advised that under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that were either a charity or a non-profit making organisation. This relief may also be awarded to Community Amateur Sports Clubs. A summary of the application was outlined within the report and a list of associated figures was attached as Appendix 1. Organisations currently receiving the relief were listed in Appendix 2 to the report.

It was reported that further information regarding three organisations was still required, namely Birchfield Park Sports & Social Club Ltd, Moorfield Sports & Social Club and Pavillions Arena Ltd. It was requested that these be deferred.

It was noted that there was an anomaly between the current awards of Discretionary Relief granted to the two 'Help the Aged' Charity Shops in the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisation at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1st April 2008 or the commencement of liability, whichever was the later, to 31st March 2013:

Halton Haven Hospice	20%
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- 2) A decision on the award of Discretionary Relief to Birchfield Park Sports & Social Club Ltd, Moorfield Sports & Social Club and Pavillions Arena Ltd be deferred;
- 3) Help the Aged, 34A Albert Square, Widnes be awarded 20% Discretionary Relief from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2013; and

All other current recipients of discretionary rate relief still satisfying the appropriate criteria, were re-awarded the relief from 1st April 2009 to 31st March 2013.

ES90 CORPORATE SCRUTINY CONTRACT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which notified Members of the intention to go out to tender with regards to procuring a new corporate security contract in line with the Council's procurement strategy. There were currently two security contracts in place, the smaller one of which would require a short extension granting in order to bring it in line with the timescales of the larger contract, as such a waiver of standing orders was requested in respect of this process.

The Committee was advised that there were two main security contracts in place. The larger contract which related to buildings was procured via Property Services and expired on 31st May 2009. The current service provider for this contract were Select Security who took over the contract when they bought out Druants in November 2008. The second security contract which related to parks and the operation of playing fields was procured via Leisure Services. This was due to expire on 31st March 2009 the current service providers for this contract were Athena Global.

As the existing contracts expire at different times it was necessary to extend the smaller contract in order to bring it in line with the timescales of the larger contract.

Members were advised that the new corporate contract would bring the services currently being provided under the two separate contracts together, in addition, to which it would also allow for other departments to purchase any necessary future security provision that may be required during the life of the contract.

It was further noted that it was intended to have the new contract in place for 1st June 2009 and it was envisaged that the new contract would be set up for a three year period with the possibility of a one year extension subject to satisfactory performance, ensuring the maximum timeframe was four years, in line with EU procurement rules.

Members were advised that the likely value of the contract over the three-year period would be in the region of £2.5m. Whilst this was above the EU procurement thresholds, security services were exempt from the full EU procurement process and, as such, the contract did not have to be advertised under OJEU notice.

Athena Global had been contacted and they had agreed to continue delivering the existing services in line with their contract until such time as the new contract was in place.

Funding for the contract came from a variety of sources and would be contained within existing budgets.

Members queried what the contract included. In response it was noted that it included the security provision for all parks and that the contract tender would be advertised in the wider North West area rather than just locally.

It was further confirmed that Councillor Wharton would oversee the procurement from the Members side and that the item would come back to the Executive Board Sub Committee for approval once the process was complete.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) in line with Procurement Standing Order 1.6 the Executive Board Sub Committee waive Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.7 in order to allow for the Operational Director Culture and Leisure Services to grant an extension to the existing security contract with Athena Global from 1st April 2009 until such time as the new contract was in place, which was envisaged to be 1st June 2009; and
- 2) the intention to procure a new corporate security contract in line with the procurement strategy be noted.

ES91 THE DIGITAL INCLUSION PILOT

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which requested the waiving of Procurement Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.7 which placed a requirement of the Council to tender for contracts with a value greater than £50,000 but not exceeding £1,000,000.

Members were advised that the Halton Strategic Partnership had approved a project to digitally enable around 120 households in an area with low levels of computer ownership and broadband uptake. It was a pilot project to establish that it could be successfully delivered. Households would be provided with a keyboard, mouse, flat screen and lightweight computing device (known as a thin client) connected to a managed computing service hosted at a central data centre. The service provided access to standard software such as Microsoft Office as well as to the Internet (which could be filtered if

necessary). In the absence of existing Broadband connections, a wireless connection would be provided.

It was further noted that the service to be procured would be the provision of a robust infrastructure with low running costs. The supplier would provide basic training on how to use the device, and a free connection for 12 months. Thereafter there may be a small charge (around £2 per month).

The partnership plan to build on this provision and develop local skills and to provide access to local services such as Job Centre Plus through a local portal.

Members were advised that residents in our deprived areas suffered from many forms of exclusion, one of which could be the lack of access to services provided over the internet. This project would address that, and also help to provide local residents with IT and other skills that may help in the job market. The pilot was to be located in part of Windmill Hill. This area had been selected because it was the most deprived area of the Borough and was relatively isolated. The proximity to the Daresbury Science facility was also a possible future benefit.

AIMES was a Community Interest Company. It was established by Liverpool University with funding from North West Development Agency and ERDF. It had established similar digital inclusion schemes in St. Helens, Liverpool and Wirral. It also provided commercial services, the profits from which were re-invested back into the social enterprise. The combination of the social objectives, specific expertise, technical solutions and experience in similar projects was believed to be unique in the region. The company had a local employment policy and a commitment to work with local partners on engagement and training provision. It was therefore recommended that for the purposes of this pilot, AIMES were engaged.

The contract would be for £200,000 and would provide approximately 120 households with a managed computer service, filtered internet access and access to other hosted applications, all the required equipment and connections, a user guide, and a free service for 12 months, and thereafter at a low cost.

Members were advised that there was no market in the provision of this service to enable value for money to be established through competition. However, AIMES would be procuring the equipment via competitive process. Thus although the co-ordination and management would not be market tested, much of the costs related to equipment which would be procured on a competitive basis,

and so there was reasonable comfort that the costs represented value for money.

Members were further advised that the procurement process was transparent by virtue of this report and the availability of information via the Freedom of Information Act. The project would be subject to the Council's normal internal and external audit and scrutiny procedures.

It was noted that to ensure propriety and security the usual integrity clauses would be built into the contract document and only staff with a need to know would have information about the contract.

It was further noted that accountability for the project would remain with the Operational Director Policy and Performance. Progress would be scrutinised through the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board and the Halton Neighbourhood Management Board.

Given the social aims of this initiative this would be a Part B contract as, as such was exempt from the tendering requirements of the Contract Regulations 2006. However, there was still a requirement to place Contract Award Notice in OJEU within 42 days of the award of the contract (supports transparency) and all other contracts including Part B were subject to the overarching EU Principles of Transparency and Non-Distortion of Competition.

Members raised concerns over the fact that this had not gone to tender and the need to waive standing orders to complete the project. In response it was noted that there was only one known supplier, and that due to the time scale involved for the use of Working Neighbourhood Fund money, there was no time to test this through a tender process.

Having expressed their views regarding the choice of ward selected to do the pilot project, Members offered their support. It was noted that officers would report back to the Employment Learning and Skills PPB with an update.

RESOLVED: That the Operational Director, Policy and Performance be authorised to award the contract for the provision of a Digital Inclusion Pilot to the contractor AIMES Grid Services CIC Limited in the sum of £200,000 and that in light of the exceptional circumstances and in accordance with Procurement Standing Order 1.6, Standing Orders 3.1 to 3.7 and 3.10 be waived on this occasion because the requirements can only be delivered by this particular supplier in that it can provide a technical solution, can host this solution and has successfully delivered similar projects.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE HELD ON 19TH MARCH 2009

ES116 MARKET RENTS

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which asked members to consider a request from Widnes Market Traders' Association to reduce stall rental at the Market for 2009/10, in light of current trading trends.

Members were advised that the Council had received a formal request from the Widnes Market Traders' Association for stall rentals to be reduced at the market for 2009/10, given the current trading trends. The Traders' Association had asked that the Council considers reducing rents by 50%, given what they described as "extraordinary " times.

It was noted that the Market was experiencing its first decrease in occupancy levels since it opened in 1995. The concern is that if more stall holders were forced to leave the Market, then its overall viability would be threatened. Whilst some new traders had tried to establish a business in recent times, three had had to cease trading within a six month period.

It was further noted that the Market, as a business, had made a significant financial contribution to the Council over many years and played an important part in the overall shopping offer within the Borough, employing many local people and attracting visitors from nearby towns.

Members were further advised that there was a fine balance to be struck in circumstances such as this and rent levels were already a key component of running a commercial operation such as a market. If they were too high for traders to sustain a healthy business and they therefore moved on, this had an impact on the view potential users of the Market and could lead to a downward spiral. However, any reduction had to be reviewed against the overall financial picture the Council was facing. Reducing rents in turn reduced income to the Council at a time when other sources of income were also reducing. Overall reductions in income required further efficiencies/savings to be found from elsewhere in the Council's budget.

Members were advised that in view of the above it was considered a 50% reduction, as requested, was too great a level to support at the current time, given that it would lead to a significant reduction in income to the Council, taking into account the wider responsibilities of the Council. However, the situation faced by traders was real and was recognised and the potential impact in the long term

on the Market was fully appreciated. In all the circumstances, it was suggested that a 10% reduction be introduced for 2009/10 and the inflationary rise that was due to be applied for that year no longer be applied.

The Sub-Committee noted that the Council had a direct interest to ensure Widnes Market continued to be successful, both as a business and as a key contributor to the Borough's shopping offer. It was agreed that a further report be submitted outline a future business plan for both markets and further reports be made on the performance of the market following the implementation of this decision.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) no inflationary uplift be applied to 2009/10 rents;
- (2) a 10% rent reduction be applied for 2009/10 and be subject to a further review before being applied beyond 2009/10; and
- (3) the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy be requested to identify compensatory savings from within that Directorate's Budget

ES119 FORMER INFORMATION CENTRE, CHURCH STREET,
RUNCORN

The Sub-Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which drew Members' attention to a request received from Halton Credit Union to utilise the building formally occupied by the Information Centre in Church Street, Runcorn.

The Sub-Committee was updated on the current situation in respect of a latest commercial interest in the Former Information Centre, Runcorn. In light of this information it was agreed that the report be deferred.

RESOLVED: That given the current commercial interest the report be deferred.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 2 June 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive
SUBJECT: Halton Strategic Partnership Board minutes
WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

None

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None

5.3 A Healthy Halton

None

5.4 A Safer Halton

None

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 None.

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

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

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

**Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 18 February 2009 at the Bridge Suite,
Stobart Stadium**

Present:

Board Members:	Cllr Rob Polhill	Chairman
	Cllr Ron Hignett	Chairman, Urban Renewal SSP
	Cllr Marie Wright	HBC
	Gerald Meehan	HBC
	Gary Finchett	Cheshire Police
	John Redmond	Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
	Jim Wilson	Halton & St Helens PCT
	Diane Sproson	Greater Merseyside Connexions Service
	Mark Wilson	Jobcentre Plus
	Rev. Ray Jones	Faith Communities
	Terry Parle	Halton Sports Partnership
	Mike Fry	HVA / Empowerment Network
	Beth Edwards	HVA / Empowerment Network
	Cllr John Swain	HBC
	Julie Holland	Riverside College
	Noel Sharpe	Halton Housing Trust
	Jane McCusker	GONW

Advisors to the Boards

Rob Mackenzie	HBC
Shelah Semoff	Partnership Team
Helen Slater	Partnership Team

In Attendance::	Andy Guile	Halton Voluntary Action (HVA)
	Irene Rutter	Audit Commission
	Michelle Simpson	HBC
	Wesley Rourke	HBC
	Steph Davies	HBC
	Jim Twomey	Pion Econonmics

40 Apologies

It was noted that apologies had been received from J. Lappin, D. Parr, C. Koral, N. Atkin, J.Rowlands and I. Williamson.

41 Minutes of the Last Meeting and Matters Arising

The Minutes of the meeting held on 19 November 2008, having been printed and circulated were agreed as a correct record.

In relation to Minute No. 30, the Board was updated on the progress made to date in respect of the Halton Observatory. A meeting with Local Futures had been held and a temporary extension of the Observatory had been negotiated. There was a consultation in relation to a longer-term solution and it was felt that the Observatory was a really exceptional powerful tool, which was not being used by partners on a regular basis.

RESOLVED: That the minutes be received.

42 Halton's Economic Review

The Board received a presentation from Jim Twomey from Pion Economics which outlined the following:

- Halton Economic and Tourism Review
- Background
- Positives
- Concerns
- Future and Overviews.

Arising from the discussion it was noted that ten years ago the Company was invited to undertake a review of Halton's economy. It was reported that the results over this period showed good progress in many areas, for example diversifying the economy. However improvement in unemployment and average income levels was slow. The level of worklessness had improved in certain areas but remained a persistent problem in some neighbourhoods.

It was reported that in terms of enterprise, a significant investment had been made and secured value for money in terms of business start-ups and growth. It was noted that it was better to equip people in order to find work. Overall the report was quite positive as Halton had made progress in a more broadly balanced effective economy. However, there was still more work to be done.

The Chairman thanked Jim Twomey for an informative presentation.

RESOLVED: That the presentation be received.

43 Community Cohesion and Community Engagement

The Board considered a report which detailed the work currently being undertaken within the Partnership and Borough Council in reviewing the structure that supports important areas of Equalities, Community Cohesion and Engagement.

It was advised that the Engagement Strategy was an umbrella strategy which shared best practice, it was now three years old and a lot of legislation over the last 12 to 18 months directed local authorities to look at the way it collectively worked around those agendas.

It was also advised that the Partnership had recently set up a Sub-Group with a strategic remit for Equality and Diversity. It was proposed that this Group would also pick up the strategic responsibility for Community Engagement and Cohesion. There was already a Partnership Community Cohesion Officers' Group which satisfied the tactical group requirement that would report every six months on the tension indicators to the Equalities Group and more frequently if required in response to heightened tension. Detailed in the report were the reporting structures for Members' consideration.

The Board was advised that Halton Borough Council was currently undergoing an audit of engagement activity which investigated the types of initiative for example an on-line survey. Should Members wish to share this template they were to contact Shelah Semoff.

RESOLVED: That Board Members:

- (1) support the ongoing review of the Community Engagement Strategy including a further audit of Partnership engagement;
- (2) note the revised infrastructure as detailed in the report, agree further updates on progress; and
- (3) the Board receives regular updates on the Equalities Cohesion and Engagement Group.

44 Local Area Agreement Delivery Plan

The Board received a report which outlined the proposals for updating of the Action Plans for each of the five strategic priorities in order to support the delivery of Halton's Local Area Agreement; and the approval of the funding allocations contained within them.

The report set out how the use of Working Neighbourhood Fund would support the five strategic priorities. It was reported that work had been carried out with the Specialist Strategic Partnerships in order to compile spending reports for this year and the next financial year. There was an opportunity to make allocations and agree and endorse the proposals which were outlined in the report for consideration.

Arising from the discussion it was noted that alcohol was a key focus for the areas of the PCT within the Local Strategic Partnership and it was paramount that the PCT worked alongside the Council to achieve success.

RESOLVED: That:

- (1) the five Action Plans accompanying the report be approved;
- (2) the allocation of the Working Neighbourhood Fund and Safer and Stronger Communities Fund for 2009/2010, and the indicative allocations for 2010/2011 referred to in this report and contained in the Action Plans, be approved subject to endorsement by the accountable body (the Borough Council);
- (3) delegated authority be given to the Chair to approve amendments to the Action Plans as necessary;
- (4) that progress in developing the Alcohol Harm Reduction and Anti-Social Behaviour commissioning pot proposals be reported to the next meeting of this Board; and
- (5) SSP chairs be asked to make sure that SLAs are approved for the activities in the Action Plans by 31st March 2009 so that they could commence (or in the case of existing activities continue) from 1st April 2009.

45 Local Area Agreement Review and Refresh Update

The Board was informed of the progress being undertaken to ensure meeting the Government's deadline for a refreshed 2008/2011 Local Area Agreement (LAA) (2nd March) and detailed the findings of the Government Office annual review of progress to date in delivering the LAA.

It was reported that the Annual Performance Review of the LAA had been undertaken by Government Office North West (GONW). It was advised that the review found that overall good progress had been made and some excellent examples of good practice identified including attainment and achievement on Children's Services, joint work on health lifestyles, effectiveness and inclusivity of the Safer Halton Partnership, and the increases in the rate of VAT business registrations and stock.

Key development issues facing the partnership included better promotion of health behaviours, NEET performance and the latest proposals for post 16 provision and attainment. The slides detailing the findings further were included in the report for Partners' consideration.

During the LAA refresh a number of indicators had to be reviewed for various reasons such as changing definitions in data figures and new data available following the Places Survey results. These changes were listed in the report for consideration.

It was requested that Board Members should note the outcome of the performance review and it was recommended that each SSP be asked to report back to the next meeting on improvement plans being in place for each of the development areas.

Due to the timescale involved with the process of refreshing the 2008/2011 LAA it would not be possible to bring the final document back to a Board meeting. Members were asked that due to these timescales, agree and endorse the indicators electronically.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board note progress with the refresh of the LAA;
- (2) note the outcome of the Annual Review of Halton's LAA;
- (3) request a report back to the next meeting of the Board from each SSP on each of the development areas with improvement plans; and
- (4) agree to an electronic endorsement of the final refreshed 2008/2011 LAA.

46 Sustainable Community Strategy Review

The Board was advised of progress with the mid-term review of Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy and a request was made to agree the next steps.

The main objectives of this mid term review were detailed in the report. Work had progressed in drafting amendments to the plan in conjunction with representatives from each SSP. It was noted that drafts were now available for each priority as well as cross-cutting issues section which were attached in the

report for consideration. It was noted that there was still work in progress in some cases, however, they did form a sound basis for discussion.

It was advised that these plans would be brought back for final approval at the meeting scheduled for May 2009.

Arising from the discussion it was agreed that there was a requirement for a workshop, as there had never been the opportunity for SSP members to discuss each other's work. This would help to close the gap with communication flows and would help set out a performance framework for the next two years.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the draft text attached to this report be approved for consultation;
- (2) SSPs and other thematic partnerships were requested to consider and respond to the draft text, and in doing so to consider the issues set out in section 7 of this report.
- (3) a draft of the full strategy document be circulated for comments; and
- (4) a final draft be brought back to the next meeting of the Board.

47 Performance Management Framework

The Board considered a report which provided an update on the progress to date with the review of the partnership performance management framework. Further to the report submitted to the Board on 19th November, a model framework was circulated for consultation in early January 2009. This model set out minimum reporting standards at various levels within the partnership structure.

Several responses had been received and were currently being considered. As a result of the responses, it had emerged that there was a desire not only to performance manage the strategic level targets but projects that were funded through the Working Neighbourhood Fund, as people were not always aware of how value for money was being obtained. It was noted that these comments would be taken on board.

RESOLVED: That the Board notes the progress made to date and endorses the completion of the review and implementation of a revised framework at the beginning of 2009/10.

48 Comprehensive Area Assessment Update (for discussion)

The Board received an update from Irene Rutter from Audit Commission which outlined the following:-

- The final framework was published on 10th February available on the Audit Commission website;
- The framework was still based around area assessment and organisational assessment.
- Area assessment would not be scored and a flag system would be used;
- Organisational assessment would be scored details of combinations of scoring systems were distributed at the meeting.

It was reported that background notes were produced and circulated to all areas and were a starting point for the work to be planned. It was advised that they drew on published national data as of November and comments regarding these would be appreciated. The emerging picture would be produced by April and regular feedback to partnerships would be provided.

RESOLVED: That the update be received.

49 External Funding in Halton

The Board considered a report from Wesley Rourke – Head of External Funding, HBC, which outlined improvements to the way in which Halton Strategic Partners co-ordinated access to and use of external funding in the Borough.

The Board was advised of the background and history of the External Funding Division in terms of successes in securing external funding from a wide range of sources. It was reported that there were a number of opportunities available and more work had been carried out in terms of obtaining limited resources. Quantitative and qualitative research had been carried out in order to strengthen the infrastructure.

It was reported that the External Funding group would provide strategic leadership in ensuring that External Funding bids developed in accord with the Borough's strategic priorities. A step by step approach to meeting this objective was outlined as an appendix to the report for Members' consideration. In

addition, detailed in the report was a work programme for the Group, benefits to partners participating in the sub-group and the way in which External Funding could be accessed.

Arising from the discussion it was noted that there was an added value element and it was critical that duplication was avoided. In addition, it was also reported that encouraging people to share information was a really important information source. The Board was advised that the Halton Voluntary Action had a database which was already in operation and could focus primarily around the External Funding with a focus on how they reach the priorities.

It was agreed that an External Funding Sub-Group be established and Mike Fry was appointed as Chair of this group. It was advised that the Board would write to other organisations to request membership on this Board.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board agree to the establishment of an External Funding Group for the Borough which would report to this Board;
- (2) the Board nominate individuals from respective organisations to sit on the Group by way of writing to each group; and
- (3) the Board nominate Mike Fry as Chair for the group.

50 Safeguarding Children

The Board received a report which outlined the findings of the Joint Area Review of Haringey Council and their statutory partners. In addition, it set out the analysis of current strengths in Safeguarding and Child Protection Services within Halton and its partners and it identified service trends in Safeguarding and Child Protection Services in Halton along with the Development Plan.

It was reported that in Halton Child Protection in Britain was amongst the safest in Europe. The findings Halton's Joint Area Review were outstanding in its Safeguarding and Child Protection Practice which meant that Halton had the highest overall rating in the North West in terms of Children's Services. This reflected on the Council's own services and work carried out by Officers and Members.

The report outlined findings from Haringey's JAR and Halton's strengths as a reflected process. Furthermore it was reported that there were significant challenges that needed to be addressed if Halton was to maintain its outstanding rating for Safeguarding and importantly improved outcomes for

children in need. Compromised parenting was most apparent in the levels of reported domestic violence, substance misuse, adult criminally and mental health problems.

There was a higher prevalence of these factors in vulnerable and unsupported families. There had been an increase in allocation rates and also resource implications for all the agencies and issues around fostering. Costs had risen in terms of residential care and there was a difficulty in recruiting Social Workers and Social Care Managers which had highlighted issues with regard to human resource processes.

The Board considered Halton's context and challenge and the development plan which detailed actions that were recommended on the basis of analysis of the strengths and areas for development in local safeguarding arrangements.

The Board was advised of a locality model for the future delivery of services (not including clearly identified child protection cases) that would be self-financing by using current resources differently. This would be subject of a separate report in March 2009. The LSP and Children's Trust would be central to the development of this model. It was proposed that a pilot would be carried out in an area of the Borough to look at the strategic process that would focus on a local field to the services model with a view to rolling out across the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Board endorse the Development Plan, enclosed as Section 4 of this report;
- (2) the Board requests partner agencies to review their safeguarding services to ensure they were fit for purpose (under the auspices of Halton Safeguarding Children Board); and
- (3) the Board considers the implications of a "Locality" model of service delivery.

51 Risk Assessment Review

The Board considered a report which advised the Members of the work required to ensure the Partnership's Risk Register was completed in line with the approved Improvement Plan. It was noted that the Risk Register was in two

parts, reviewing both strategic and operational risks. The Board was responsible for ensuring strategic risks were considered all partners involved with the work of the SSPs were encouraged to take ownership of the operational risks. The operational risks included the risks to the successful delivery of relevant objectives and targets in the LAA and Sustainable Community Strategy as well as any other key plans or strategies that the SSP may be responsible for delivering.

It was reported that the Partnership team would offer supporting guidance to thematic groups and maintain a central Register. This would help to maintain a consistent method across the Partnership and highlight cross-cutting areas of concern, provide potential for further joint working and reduction of risks.

SSP Chairs were asked to ensure the Partnership Risk Register was considered at future meetings of their thematic partnerships, with a completed Register returning to the Board for endorsement at its next meeting on 20th May 2009.

RESOLVED: That the Board Members, in particular, SSP Chairs:

- (1) endorse the process needed to ensure completion of the Partnership's Risk Management Register; and
- (2) encourage SSPs to take ownership of the Register and ensure its completion following discussion with their thematic groups.

52 Halton Borough Council's Budget Process

The Board received a report which set out the Budget setting process for Halton Borough Council, a draft version of which was outlined in the report for consideration. Board Members were asked to comment on the Budget proposals attached to the report and it was noted that there was a need to share resources between partners and agencies.

It was reported that the Council's total budget of £320m and details for how it was made up and how it was spent were outlined in the report. In particular, it was noted that Council Tax revenue equated to approximately 13% of the budget. In terms of balancing the budget it was noted that there had been a challenging financial settlement. Increasing cost pressures, and a subsequent funding of £6m meant that there were some difficult choices to be made in the near future.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

53 Economic Downturn - Verbal Report

The Board received a verbal report from Rob MacKenzie – Operational Director Policy and Performance which outlined issues concerning the economic downturn. It was reported that a Task Group had been established including Members and Officers to determine the response. The aim was to ensure that everybody was aware of what help and support was available from the Council. There was a business breakfast to be held on 27th February at The Brindley which would address these issues. Any further suggestions around this area would be welcomed.

Arising from the discussion it was felt that a brainstorming session would be beneficial and would make a contribution to these issues. The Board was advised of two leaflets which were being produced aimed at businesses and residents. Members of the Board were requested to e-mail any comments relevant to Rob MacKenzie.

It was noted that the Social Housing was not mentioned in the report and it was noted that this would be added.

RESOLVED: That the report be received.

54 State of the Borough - Update

The Board considered a report which detailed the findings of the 2009 State of the Borough report. It was noted that there was important information in the report and the SSPs should take this into account. The most significant changes since 2008 were detailed for consideration. It was further advised that the report provided further evidence to support the priorities. It did not however fully reflect the impact of the economic downturn. The recession should not deflect the Council from its long-term ambitions however, it may affect the pace at which the Council could move forward.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) Board Members note the revised State of the Borough report; and
- (2) Ensure the State of the Borough report was shared amongst their own organisations.

55 Neighbourhood Management Update

The Board considered a report which outlined the progress made in developing neighbourhood management in Halton.

It was advised that since April 2006 Halton had received funding from the neighbourhood element part of the then Safer and Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement to develop neighbourhood management in those areas of the Borough that fell within the 3% most deprived under the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Since April 2008 the funding had been part of Halton's Area Based Grant allocation would continue until March 2010. It was reported that work was being focused in Halton in three neighbourhoods, each of which fell within the above category; Central Widnes, Hallwood Park and Palacefields and Castlefields and Windmill Hill.

The Halton Neighbourhood Management Board (HNMB) had met twice since the last meeting and the key issues raised at the meeting were outlined in the report for Members' consideration.

Key issues raised at the January meeting were also outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That the information be received.

56 Working Neighbourhoods Fund : Financial Summary

Board Members were provided with a summary of spend for the second quarter of the Working Neighbourhoods Fund, October 2008 – December 2008 and were provided with information for a Board discussion on the use any potential WNF under spend. It was advised that the expenditure details in the report was from the Core Allocations to SSPs for the financial year 2008-09. There had been limited progress in developing service level agreements for the commissioning pot. So far the only expenditure authorised was for the Alcohol Harm Reduction Programme in 2008/09 and no commissioning pot spend had been notified to the Partnership team to date.

SSPs were asked to notify the Partnership of any possible under spend by 30th January 2009, however, due to delays with commissioning, start of projects and other administrative issues, a true picture of the under spend was unclear, although indications were that it would be between £150,000 and £250,000.

It was reported that it was vital that the hard work of colleagues to spend according to profile was maintained. Whilst WNF would be carried over into the other financial years, the Partnership did not want to see a large under spend at

the end of the funding period. This was also a responsibility to ensure the funding is spent in trying to narrow the gap and achieve its agreed priorities.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the financial summary stated in the report as being a true and accurate statement be noted;
- (2) identified WNF under spend at year end be used to create a “fighting fund” for the economic downturn and the process for managing this fund be delegated to the SSP Chair’s Group meeting (11th March 09); and
- (3) agreement that any project currently wishing to carry funds in the 09/10 financial year must provide a business case to do so and seek approval through agreed processes as detailed in the Quarter 2 report which was brought before the Board on 18th November 2008.

Meeting ended at 12.05 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 2 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Annual Report 2008/09

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To receive the Annual Report of the Corporate Service Policy and Performance Board for 2008/09 (attached), to comment in respect of the same, and to make any changes considered appropriate.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be approved.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Overview and Scrutiny Toolkit	2nd Floor Municipal Building	A Villiers



Chairman
Councillor
Gilligan

**ANNUAL REPORT
CORPORATE SERVICES POLICY
AND PERFORMANCE BOARD
APRIL 2008 – MARCH 2009**

“I would like to thank Members of the Board for their hard work and the contribution they have made to its activities over the past year. This year, key areas have included scrutiny of the Widnes and Runcorn Markets, involving the setting up of a Working Party, a review of compliments and complaints which has fed in to topic work on customer care, and ongoing scrutiny of Carbon Management and Neighbourhood Management”. Councillor Bob Gilligan Chairman of Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board”

MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES

During 2008/09 the Board comprised of eleven Councillors – Gilligan (Chairman), Lowe (Vice Chair), J. Bradshaw, Browne, E. Cargill, Dennett, Edge, D. Inch, Nolan, Nordall, and Wainwright.

The Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to Resources, Personnel and Training, ICT and E Government, Property, Committee and Member Services, Legal Services, Communications and Marketing, Stadium, Civic Catering, Procurement, Equalities (employment aspects), Corporate Complaints and Area Forums. The Board also has responsibility for monitoring the performance of the reporting departments, namely Policy and Performance, Legal and Member Services and HR, Finance, Exchequer and Customer Services (Revenues), Property Services and ICT

REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year, and in addition held a special meeting to consider Neighbourhood Management. Set out below are some of the main initiatives that the Board has worked on during that time.

DISABILITY DISCRIMINATION ACT

The Board received a report setting out the progress made

by the Council towards compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995, in particular on major refurbishment or repair works, findings of site visits and interviews, building modifications, emergency evacuation procedures and disabled toilet facilities along with secondary use of Council owned buildings. A number of recommendations were endorsed by the Board, in which it considered the need for emergency evacuation procedures to be updated as top priority.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS

The Strategic Director Corporate and Policy presented the findings of a review of the Council's Corporate Performance Management Arrangements and set out recommendations and conclusions of the topic group which were split into six areas; the role of Members, the Performance Management Framework and Service Planning, Risk Assessment, Monitoring and Reporting arrangements/use of information, the New National Indicator set and Local Area Agreements. The recommendations were approved and subsequently endorsed by the Executive Board.

COMPLIMENTS AND COMPLAINTS REVIEW

The Board received the findings of the Scrutiny Review undertaking in relation to Compliments and Complaints. The Board noted that Members received a number of complaints during surgeries and these were reported through the Councillors Complaints procedures. ICT were looking at implementing a system for Councillors which would link into the complaints process. A number of recommendations were approved and the findings were fed into a new topic brief for the review of customer care. In that regard, two strands to the topic were outlined;

- to explore how best to implement the new Customer Excellence Standard, to help drive improvement and consistency throughout the organisation
- to develop an overarching Customer Care strategy that would set out key areas upon which the Council needed to focus to secure improved outcomes.

It was noted that a pilot assessment of customer services at Halton Direct Link and Revenues would be carried out.

MARKETS

The Strategic Director Corporate and Policy set out the most up to date position with regard to the current performance of the Council's two markets based in Widnes and Runcorn. The presentation contained an outline of facilities, occupancy rates, financial performance and current issues of both markets. A number of initiatives were considered and Members agreed to set up a market working party to examine ways of possible improvements at both markets.

TRANSFER OF ASSETS

A Topic Group had been formed to develop a policy for recommendation to the Executive Board as to how the Council might approach the issue of transferring assets to the third sector. The draft strategy and policy statement was intended to provide both guidance and a process to follow if such transfers were deemed to be appropriate. The Board endorsed the Policy which was subsequently approved and adopted by the Executive Board.

NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT

The Board received an update at its September meeting, in which Members were informed that work was currently being focused in three pilot neighbourhoods, central Widnes, Hallwood Park and Palacefields, and Castlefields and Windmill Hill. It was reported that all three neighbourhood management boards would continue to develop and all had evolving neighbourhood action plans and growing programmes of events and interventions. The Halton Neighbourhood Away Day had been well attended and proved to be productive. It had set the following areas of work for the partnership over the coming months:-

- a re-statement of the partnerships neighbourhood management provision
- to track the closing of the gap with regard to key indicators between the Neighbourhood Management areas and Halton as a whole
- to investigate the value for money / business case for sustaining of neighbourhood management beyond 2010
- to reach a consensus about if and when to roll out neighbourhood management after 2010 beyond the current pilot areas.

A special meeting was held in February at which the

Board received a presentation from Councillor John Swain, executive member for Quality and Performance, and Mr. N. Mannion, the Neighbourhood Director. This detailed:-

- a brief overview of the Government's expectations and key objectives
- how and why the three pilot neighbourhoods were chosen
- how the Halton Neighbourhood Management Partnership was structured and operated
- Halton's approach to developing neighbourhood management including how the government funding has been used
- the key tools and techniques being utilised
- the future challenges and opportunities for neighbourhood management
- Members were also advised of the funding profile over the four years of the project and of Government guidance on the use of funding
- Members were advised that the next steps of the initiative would be to complete an evaluation of the impact of larger interventions, negotiate the inclusion of local targets in Halton's Local Area Agreement, explore options as part of a business case to sustain neighbourhood management beyond 2010, and continue to increase residents' involvement.

PERFORMANCE ISSUES

During the year the Board has focused a significant amount of effort on monitoring the performance of its reporting departments. Among the performance issues overseen by the Board during the year are:-

- School catering and the operation of the Stobart Stadium, Halton
- The process of hearing Job Evaluation Appeals and dealing with the Equal Pay litigation
- Sickness Absence in respect of which members asked for a report to be presented to its Meeting in June 2009
- Ongoing scrutiny of Treasury Management.

WORK PROGRAMME 2009/2010

The Board has decided that during the current municipal year (2009/10) it would carry out detailed work on the use of natural resources. In the first instance the Board would

	<p>establish a baseline of how green the Borough is at present and then use this overview as a basis for selecting areas of priority for closer examination by Members, dividing the task into manageable pieces which would provide Members with choices so that they contribute according to individual interest and expertise.</p> <p>Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Committee Services in the first instance, telephone 0151 471 7394 or email caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk</p>
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REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 2nd June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: 2009/10 Work Programme

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To agree a frame work for carrying out the topic work for the next Municipal Year

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board receive a further report at its next meeting dealing with the baseline with how green Halton is at present and then use this as an overview to select areas of priority for a closer examination by Members.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Members will recall that at the last meeting, a presentation was given examining the carbon management issue, and the possibility of broadening work to include natural resources more generally. The presentation covered the CAA, questioning whether the Council was making effective use of its natural resources, and what the Audit Commission would be looking for in making its assessment of key line enquiry 3.1, and what sort of resources are included (energy, water, clean air, land and soil and materials). A case for broadening the initial carbon management topic proposal was explored to include natural resources more generally.

3.2 It is suggested that the Board receive a detailed report at its next meeting to assist it in establishing a baseline which will be used as a basis for selecting areas of priority for closer examination. It is recommended that it would be appropriate to set up smaller topic groups at that stage with lead officers to enable work to be carried out in greater detail according to the individual interests and expertise of members.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – None

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – None

6.3 **A Healthy Halton** - The topic work envisaged will inform and equip the Council as it deals with the vital issue of use of natural resources

6.4 **A Safer Halton** – None

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** – None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 No key issues have been identified which require control measures

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: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE: 2 June 2009
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT: Sickness Absence
WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a report on the number of working days lost in 2008/09.
- 1.2 To report on absence management and interventions currently being introduced to assist managers in effectively managing employee absence.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the report be noted; and**
- (2) quarterly progress reports be brought to the Board.**

3.0 SICKNESS STATISTICS

- 3.1 The total number of days lost due to sickness, per employee, for 2008/09 is 13.52. This is an increase from the third quarter BVPI which was 10.07 days. Many of those days lost were due to colds/flu over the Winter period. By comparison the figure for 2007/08 was 12.46 days.

4.0 OBSERVATIONS

- 4.1 Sickness levels are a key indicator for any organisation, given their impact on both cost and productivity. However, of equal importance is for the Council to have a healthy workforce. Sickness levels can reflect current issues within the Authority. Undoubtedly, Efficiency Programmes and the current economic climate can have an impact on people's morale and wellbeing. Of course, these issues can also be found across workforces up and down the Country.
- 4.2 Given the increase in sickness levels it was agreed by Management Team that certain actions be undertaken to:
 - better understand the reasons behind the figures; and
 - increase the pro active management of sickness absence across the Authority.

Detailed below are those actions and activities being undertaken.

5.0 Absence Management and Interventions

- 5.1 The Chartered Institute of Personnel and Development Annual Absence Management Survey 2008 suggests that the main cause of short-term absence is minor illnesses such as colds, flu, stomach upsets, and that the return to work interview is rated as the most effective approach to the management of this. The three most highly rated approaches to managing long term absence are occupational health support, rehabilitation programmes and flexible working.
- 5.2 To support the Managing Absence Policy, Halton provides a range of measures such as Return to Work interviews to, amongst other things, help to identify if there is an underlying cause for the absence, remind employees that they were missed etc.
- 5.3 The Council also balances the approach to absence management by having in place, significant support and flexibility to help individuals with health problems and assist people to balance their work and home lives, such as OHU (Occupational Health Unit) support through counselling, physiotherapy, periods of rehabilitation following long term sickness absence, ill-health redeployment where necessary, flexible working practices, home working. There are also a raft of associated personnel policies such as Stress Management Policy, Dignity at Work Policy, No Smoking Policy to improve employees well being and ensure that workplace stress is not a feature of employees working lives. The starting point is always to understand the reasons for absence.

In addition, the Working Flexible for You Strategy has identified a range of supportive measures and much working is undertaken with regards to Health, i.e. healthy eating, back strengthening workshops, yoga workshops, and encouraging activity with walks, cycle routes etc.

- 5.4 To ensure all managers are fully conversant with the Corporate Sickness Absence Policy a series of refresher training sessions have been rolled out over the last three months. The training includes how to undertake return to work interviews, when absence becomes a capability issue and when to move into that procedure, monitoring absence and what they should be doing to identify and improve problems, both at individual employee level and/or team level, agreeing periods of rehabilitation etc. A total of 185 managers have attended the training. The feedback received from all managers has been extremely positive. Managers are supported in addressing staff absences with the support of the Assistant Personnel/Welfare Officers. As a result of these interventions managers across the Authority are reporting improvements in the levels of absence. Careful monitoring is taking place and it is hoped that overall rates should improve.

5.5 The Assistant Personnel/Welfare Officers attend Directorate Management Teams, on a monthly basis, to provide information on levels of absence, reasons, costs and to provide advice on any problem areas.

5.6 The Management Team will also receive a report on sickness absence on a quarterly basis outlining trends and patterns of sickness, so that comparative performance can be assessed. It is suggested that this Board also receives those monitoring reports in future.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The Managing Absence Policy, was reviewed and jointly agreed with the trade unions in January 2007. As sickness absence continues to be monitored across the Authority the Sickness Absence Policy will be kept under review to ensure absence is managed effectively.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

Clearly sickness absence has an impact across all priorities and it is important that it continues to be managed effectively.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 Failure to monitor absence levels and trends may lead to increased levels of ill health and appropriate support may not be given to employees. Sickness absence also increases costs and reduces productivity.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 The Council is better protected from future challenge of Disability discrimination or other discrimination if all employees are treated equally and fairly with regard to their sickness absences.

10.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Failure to address levels of sickness absence will lead to increasing costs for the Authority.

11.0 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: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 3rd June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Job Evaluation - Appeals

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide a progress report on the hearing of the appeals received following the implementation of the National Job Evaluation Scheme.

2.0 RECOMMENDED:

- 2.1 That the content of this report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Council implemented the outcomes of the pay and grading review at the end of January 2008. All affected employees were given the right to appeal if they were unhappy with the grade outcome and a total of 446 appeals were received.
- 3.2 These appeals covered 900 employees and members were previously provided with an analysis of appeals in terms of whether they were informal or formal appeals, if the post holder had gone up, down or stayed the same in February 2008.
- 3.2.1 In terms of formal appeals 375 were received and a small, joint team of Personnel Officers and Trade Union representatives was established on a part time basis to sit on the appeals panels along with senior managers from the Authority. Each panel is advised by a JE advisor/Assistant Personnel Officer
- 3.4 Managers were trained to undertake this role and share this workload across all Directorates and a decision was taken to hear the appeals on a Directorate by Directorate basis, starting with the Directorate which had received the most appeals.
- 3.5 The panels commenced hearing appeals in early November 2008 and to date have heard 114 appeals covering the Health and Community Directorate and commenced the appeals for the Environment Directorate. There are a few appeals outstanding from the Health and Community hearings which had to be re-arranged, following which employees will be written to with the outcome of the appeal.

- 3.6 There are approximately 331 appeals outstanding (at date of writing this report) and working on the experience of the JE Team to date, allowing for cancellations/ staff holidays etc, it is anticipated that the process will be complete by March 2010.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 Undertaking the Pay and Grading Review will potentially reduce the financial implications of the failure to eradicate any discriminatory pay practices from the Councils current pay arrangements.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 The Council is better protected from future challenge of equal pay based on gender through the action it has taken by undertaking a Pay and Grading review.

7.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has made provision over recent years through the medium term financial planning process to deal with the eventualities of the Pay and Grading.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THIS COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The completion of the Review will greatly assist the efficient carrying out of the Council's business.

8.1 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: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 02nd June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Local Area Agreement Refresh and 2008-09 Performance Report

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report on progress towards meeting Local Area Agreement targets at the end of the first year of the Agreement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION THAT:

- i. The report is noted.
- ii. The Board considers whether it requires any further information on the actions being taken to deliver the LAA targets.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The revised Local Area Agreement (LAA) was signed off by the Secretary of State in June 2008. The purpose of the LAA is to agree a set of targets for Halton with government and local partners. Named partners have a duty to co-operate in striving to achieve these targets. There were 34 indicators in the LAA, together with statutory education and early years targets. The agreement covers the period April 2008 to March 2011.

3.2 The Agreement was "refreshed" in March 2009. The indicators and targets were reviewed with Government Office. There were a number of gaps and estimates in the original agreement, and the principle changes were to fill these gaps using information that had become available between June 2008 and March 2009 such as the results of the Places Survey. A summary of the changes is attached as appendix 1. It is not expected that there will be many further changes, except in one respect. The economic downturn will inevitably have an impact on the likelihood of achieving some targets relating to the economy and housebuilding, and the government has identified a list of indicators for which targets will be reviewed before the end of March 2010, by which time the impact of the downturn will be clearer.

3.3 A report on progress over the first year of the Agreement is attached at Appendix 2, covering those indicators which fall within the responsibilities of this particular Policy and Performance Board. This is based on the targets in the refreshed agreement.

3.4 In reading the report members should bear in mind that:

1. All the national indicators are built into the quarterly service plan monitoring reports. The intention of this report is pick out the LAA indicators from the different service plans so that it is possible to see a clearer picture of progress overall.
2. Certain indicators are only reported some time after year end, so in those cases no progress report is yet available. There are also some survey based indicators for which no further data will be available until the survey is repeated in 2010.

4.0 CONCLUSION

4.1 The Local Area Agreement reflects the priorities in our community strategy for improving the quality of life in Halton. It is the main mechanism by which government will performance manage local areas. It is therefore important that we monitor progress, and that members are satisfied that adequate plans are in place to ensure that the improvement targets are achieved.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Local Area Agreement acts as a delivery plan for the sustainable community strategy and as such is central to our policy framework.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Achievement of our Local Area Agreement targets has direct implications for our comprehensive area assessment. Further consideration of any areas of under-performance may give rise to other implications for the Council and its partners.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 This report deals directly with progress and delivering one of our five priorities.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The key risk is failure to improve the quality of life for residents of Halton in accordance with the objectives of our community strategy. This risk can be mitigated by regular reporting of performance, and reviewing the action being taken where under-performance occurs.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 One of the guiding principles of the LAA is to reduce inequalities in Halton.

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

10.1 Document:

Local Area Agreement 2008. Place of inspection 2nd floor Municipal Building.
Contact officer – Rob MacKenzie (0151 471 7416)

CHANGES TO HALTON'S LAA OUTCOMES FRAMEWORK – March 09

Ref	Description	Reason for Change
NI 5	Overall satisfaction with the area	Targets now agreed, provisional data became available early 2009 following Places Survey.
NI 7	Environment for a thriving third sector	Targets now agreed, data became available early 2009 following survey conducted by Office of the Third Sector.
NI 8	Adult participation in sport	Had used local data, now have national data which became available early 2009 following Sports Participation survey.
NI 16	Serious acquisitive crime rate	Minor typing error corrected.
NI 17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour	Small changes to targets as provisional Places Survey data now being used instead of local data.
NI 20	Assault with injury crime rate	Presentation style was changed by GONW, and more up to date data was made available.
NI 30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders.	Presentation style changed.
NI 32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence	Small changes to targets as national definitions now being used instead of local data.
NI 33	<i>Arson Incidents</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates – Rate per 100 000 admissions	Baseline updated which impacted on targets.
NI 40	Drug users in effective treatment	Baseline updated which impacted on targets.
NI 53	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth	Baseline has been changed, but targets remain the same as previously agree.
NI 56	<i>Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6</i>	<i>No Change.</i>
NI 63	<i>Stability of placements of looked after children</i>	<i>No Change.</i>
NI 80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19	Baseline has been changed, but targets remain the same as previously agree.
NI 111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17	Small changes to targets as baseline supplied has been revised by GONW.

APPENDIX 1

Ref	Description	Reason for Change
NI 112	Under 18 conception rate	Updated baseline, targets remain the same.
NI 115	Substance misuse by young people	Survey data now available and being used.
NI 116	<i>Proportion of children in poverty (To be reviewed in 2010)</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 117	16-18 year old not in education, training or employment WNF Reward Indicator (To be reviewed in 2010)	National data now available and being used.
NI 120	<i>All-age all cause mortality</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 123	<i>16+ current smoking rate prevalence</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 139	People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently.	Places survey data now available and being used.
NI 142	<i>Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 150 C4	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment	This indicator has been deferred and used as a placeholder due to lack of relevant data available. Will be reviewed in the next refresh.
NI 153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods WNF Reward Indicator (To be reviewed in 2010)	Minor typing error corrected.
NI 154	<i>Net additional homes provided (To be reviewed in 2010)</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 163	Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher WNF Reward Indicator	Baseline has changed and targets reviewed, taking into account the economic climate.
NI 171	VAT registration rate (To be reviewed in 2010)	National data now available and being used.
NI 175	<i>Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 186	<i>Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area</i>	<i>No change.</i>
NI 192	<i>Household waste recycled and composted</i>	<i>No change.</i>

APPENDIX 1

PLEASE NOTE THAT TWO INDICATORS HAVE BEEN DELETED FROM HALTON'S LAA.
THESE ARE:-

Ref	Description	Comment
NI 124	People with long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition	Data unavailable
NI 173	People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits	Data unavailable

LAA Outcome Measures - Progress as at March 2009

This report provides a summary of progress in relation to the achievement of targets for Halton Local Area Agreement.

It provides both a snapshot of performance at 2008 – 09 year-end and a projection of expected levels of performance to the period 2011.

The following traffic light convention has been adopted to illustrate both current and projected performance in relation to each of those measures and targets within the LAA.

Traffic light convention 2008 / 09



2008 – 09 target has been achieved or exceeded.



2008 – 09 target has not been achieved

Traffic light convention for 2011 projection



2011 target is likely to be achieved or exceeded.



The achievement of the 2011 target is questionable




2011 target is highly unlikely to be / will not be achieved.

The following indicators are not included within this performance report:

NI	Descriptor	Reason
5	Overall satisfaction with the area	Survey Based Data. Next survey to be undertaken in 2010.

NI 186 Per capital CO2 emissions in LA area

Baseline 2007 – 08	2008 - 09			2011	
	Target	Actual	Progress	Target	Projected
10.1 tonnes per capita (2005)	- 3.76% (9.72 tonnes)	- 1.9% (2006)	Refer to comment	- 11.1% (8.98 tonnes)	

Supporting information / commentary**Housing**

Partnership with EPPLUS to deliver a programme of advice and grant access to residents. Halton BC work with the Energy Savings Trust Advice Centre (ESTAC) to promote energy efficiency to householders within the Borough, both fuel rich and fuel poor. They have a free energy advice line for householders and offer free impartial advice on energy saving measures ranging from renewable energy to driving techniques. We can also through ESTAC provide grants to householders for loft and cavity wall insulation through 2 schemes Energy Zone and HEARTH and ESTAC also provide access to the Government's Warm Front grants. There are also additional grants to which HBC contribute, including a top up scheme to help people with health problems access warm front grants where appropriate and Warmth which is a crisis fund, generally used for improved heating measures such as a new boiler.

Business

Partnership with Groundwork to deliver environmental best practise to business through the ENWORKS programme. 8 businesses provided with Resource Efficiency Reviews with cost savings identified

Transport

Increase use of sustainable transport modes through the LTP.

As part of Halton's staff travel plan we have introduced a car share database, use of pool bikes and homeworking initiatives.

HBC are looking at road charging and encouraging public transport use, through dedicated bus lanes.

We are working to get freight off the roads and improve passenger rail and opportunities for cycling and walking through travel plans.

Halton's Neighbourhood Travel Team provide advice, planning and training to staff, businesses and business. Their work is recognised nationally as best practice.

Increase accessibility of services by public transport

Arriva and Halton Transport all have Euro 4 compliant vehicles.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 2 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Mid-term Review of the Sustainable Community Strategy

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide the Board with an amended version of the Sustainable Community Strategy for comment.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy and Performance Board considers the draft mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy and that any observations or comments the Board makes are reported to Executive Board.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Local Authorities are required to prepare and implement a Sustainable Community Strategy. We are expected to work with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership to agree priorities and to engage and involve local communities. The current Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted in 2006. It contains a long-term vision and objectives with delivery targets for the period 2006-2011. Since it was prepared a number of changes have taken place making it necessary to conduct a mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is an update, not a complete revision. Recent perception surveys and the revised State of the Borough Report (2009) confirm that the underlying vision and priorities from 2006 remain relevant. Widespread engagement has therefore not been undertaken for this mid-term review. However, in 2010/11 work will commence on a full review and roll forward of the strategy with wide engagement, linking up with work being done on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

The main objectives of this mid-term review were:

- i. To explain what our vision statement means – what will Halton be like in 2025 if we are successful? The statutory guidance on the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires that a Sustainable Community Strategy should include a long-term vision for the area.

- ii. To review the indicators and targets for each priority. Since the current strategy was produced the National Indicator set and LAA targets have been introduced. The aim is to have a single coherent set of indicators and targets in the Sustainable Community Strategy which encompasses both LAA targets and key local targets.
- iii. Incorporate the Housing and Homelessness Strategy (a requirement of the Statutory Guidance referred to above)
- iv. To ensure that appropriate cross-cutting targets are agreed, covering social inclusion, cohesion, equalities and closing the gap.

4.0 WAY FORWARD

The attached draft of the mid-term review has been drawn up following consultation with partners and will be considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board on 20 May 2009. Any resulting changes will be reported verbally to the Board. The revised Sustainable Community Strategy has to be adopted by full Council (Local Government Act 2000). Following consultation with the Policy and Performance Boards it is planned to take the final draft to the full Council meeting on 22 July with a recommendation from Executive Board for final adoption.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The opportunities and challenges facing Halton are well-known. The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the steps we need to take to bring about real improvement and how we will measure progress. The Local Area Agreement is a set of targets agreed with Government which reflects the Community Strategy. The mid-term review is an opportunity to bring these together in a single coherent document.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the primary policy document for the Council and its partners who have a statutory duty to have regard to it.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of the Strategy will require the application of resources by all the partners in Halton, and consideration of impact on priorities is already part of the Council's budget setting process.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The Community Strategy sets out our priorities for Children and Young People, Employment Learning and Skills, Healthy Halton, Safer Halton and Urban Renewal in Halton.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The key risk to the revision of the Strategy is lack of consensus. This is mitigated by consulting key partners and Policy and Performance Boards.

The risks to delivery of the Strategy are set out in the Partnership Risk Register.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Addressing inequality is a key theme in the Strategy.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

DRAFT V7

MAKING IT HAPPEN IN HALTON – A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE HALTON

What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

A key role for local authorities and their partners is to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy for their area. This should aim to enhance the quality of life of local communities through actions to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area and its inhabitants. They must also:

- allow local communities to express their aspirations, needs and priorities;
- co-ordinate the actions of the council and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally;
- focus and shape the existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs; and
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely.

They must have four key components:

- a long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
- an action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
- a shared commitment to implementing the action plan, and proposals for doing so;
- arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy, and for reporting progress to local communities.

Sustainable community strategies will reflect local circumstances and needs. They will:

- engage and involve local communities;
- involve active participation of councillors within and outside an Executive Steering Group;
- be prepared and implemented by a broad 'local strategic partnership', through which the local authority can work with other local bodies;
- be based on a proper assessment of needs and the availability of resources.

This Sustainable Community Strategy has been prepared in accordance with these principles. It lies as the centrepiece of a portfolio of documents which help define the task for partners in improving life in Halton. The portfolio includes:

- The State of Halton Audit
- Consulting the Communities of Halton
- Priority Baseline Reports
- A Local Development Framework
- A Community Engagement Strategy
- The joint strategic needs assessment for Health
- The joint strategic needs assessment for Community Safety
- The Halton Economic Review

The Sustainable Community Strategy provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of all the partners can contribute. Of particular note is the newly emerging relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework. This is the replacement for the Unitary Development Plan, made up of a Core Strategy and individual planning documents for particular areas or issues. It gives a more flexible and responsive approach to planning in Halton.

Importantly, the Local Development Framework takes forward the land use elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It takes into account all of the plans and strategies which affect the quality of life in Halton (such as health, housing and education) and impact upon future development. The Sustainable Community Strategy is based on the socio-economic profile of the borough and listening to the views and aspirations of the local community. The Local Development Framework provides a vehicle through which the planning process can enable these to happen.

FOREWORD

The Halton Strategic Partnership brings together key representatives from all the major organisations that are vital to building a better future for Halton. Its role is to agree on a common purpose and a common sense of direction which is set out in this Sustainable Community Strategy. Having done so, it provides a framework through which organisations, groups and individuals can co-operate to achieve our common goals. The Partnership is committed to making life better for everyone who lives, works, invests or visits the borough.

This is a refresh of Halton's second Sustainable Community Strategy and whilst we can take pride in what has been achieved to date, there is still much more to do. This document sets out a vision of the Halton we would like to see emerge by 2025. It sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. Those steps concentrate on the things that matter most to most people. The Strategy is about focusing on the issues that will make the biggest difference in the long-term.

This Strategy is relatively short. However, it is based on a significant body of research and consultation. This document outlines some key goals, some headline actions, and a scorecard of key performance measures by which we will be judged. It aims to guide the development and implementation of more detailed plans and actions to be undertaken by the Council, the Police, Health Agencies and others. Everyone has a role to play in making it happen in Halton. Working together we can make a difference and build a better future for the borough.

INTRODUCTION

Halton has inherited more than its share of issues over the years, many rooted in the area's industrial past. Making the borough a better place to live and work presents some major challenges and opportunities for us all.

This Sustainable Community Strategy is for all the communities of Halton. It sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. In particular, we need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes that are set out clearly in this plan:

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

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from the facts and figures about conditions in Halton. However, the strategy also recognises that Halton is not insular or isolated. Halton is an important component in the development of a thriving and successful Liverpool City Region, and more widely in a dynamic and sustainable North West region. Halton can only succeed as part of a successful and thriving North West. This Sustainable Community Strategy builds upon the wider strategic developments which are taking place in the region. Partners from Halton play a key role in shaping sub-regional and regional plans and arrangements. This connectivity – both strategically and operationally – is an important part of the Halton approach.

Halton's local strategic partnership (LSP) – the Halton Strategic Partnership has developed the Strategy. As partners we have built on existing collaboration and are fully committed to working more effectively together and with the community to help improve the quality of life for people in our borough.

This Strategy outlines key goals for the borough, some of the headline actions to be taken, and measures by which progress can be judged. It guides the development of more detailed plans and actions – to be undertaken by the Council, Health Trusts, the Police, Fire Service, community and voluntary sector, and others – whose actions are the important step that makes a difference to people on the ground. We all have a part to play in making it happen.

ABOUT THE HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board brings together representatives from all sectors in the borough. It is the strategic level Board and a key part of the broad-based Halton Partnership. It serves the function of a 'local strategic partnership' (LSP) for the area. Local Strategic Partnerships are promoted by the Government and designed to help ensure that action taken at local level by a whole range of groups and organisations is properly 'joined up' and meets the needs of local communities.

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board, and this Sustainable Community Strategy, provides a common sense of direction for the community and an overarching framework within which different partnerships, organisations and groups can co-operate together, committed to common goals and dedicated to improving life for people in the Borough.

Members of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board

Halton Borough Council
Cheshire Police
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust
Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council
Halton Housing Partnership
Halton Sports Partnership
Riverside College Halton
Halton Voluntary Action/Community Empowerment Network
Jobcentre Plus
North West Development Agency
Faith Community
Greater Merseyside Connexions Service
Halton Association of Secondary Heads
Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
Government Office North West

PLANNING A BETTER FUTURE FOR HALTON

This Sustainable Community Strategy is about what is most important for Halton and about working together to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the borough. It sets out key priorities and shows the direction we need to progress in together, and gives us challenging improvement targets to work towards. It provides an overall guide and framework for the activities of partners and other organisations in Halton. It will guide the development of more specific plans and projects working across Halton.

To make real progress we will need to pool ideas and resources, and work even more closely and effectively together. Working in partnership and concentrating on what matters most will make the difference in planning a better future for Halton. This includes:

- knowing where we are heading, focusing on the priorities and agreeing clear objectives
- working productively together, sharing understanding of the borough's problems and their root causes, and joining up and co-ordinating our efforts to tackle them
- championing Halton's cause in the wider world, lobbying at regional and national levels, and working with wider UK and European partners for mutual benefit
- learning from experience, finding out and putting into practice what works best
- checking on our achievements, monitoring progress and keeping on track

The process to develop this Strategy was important. It was vital that the process was inclusive. Many people and groups were involved so we could build a clear picture on what was important and how we should go forward. Some of the key steps included:

- A review of our achievements since the first Sustainable Community Strategy was launched in 2002, and an honest assessment of how well partnership arrangements have worked
- Commissioning new State of Halton reports to look objectively at statistical conditions and changes and trends in social, economic and environmental conditions
- A major telephone survey of residents was carried out to seek their views on what life is like in Halton
- A review of regional and national strategies, and those of partners, was carried out to assess the likely impact of this activity in Halton

- An inclusive process of debate and discussion on the way forward took place with members, officers, officials and volunteers of all the organisations involved with the partnership
- A thematic assessment of the challenges facing the borough, and a thorough review of outcomes, outputs and targets was carried out. These helped to demonstrate how the strategy and partnership working could make a difference in the future.

This process of engagement with people and partners was vital. It is only if there is a shared view of the challenges that Halton faces, and a broad sense of ownership of the resulting strategy, that there will be any chance of its ambitions being realised.

WHAT IS HALTON LIKE?

Halton is a largely urban area of 119,500 people. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool.

Since 2001 the population of Halton has increased steadily to its current estimate of 119,500 (2007) and is projected to continue to increase to 124,200 in 2016. Following national and regional trends, Halton has an ageing population, which is increasingly making up the majority of residents in the borough.

As a result of its industrial legacy, particularly from the chemical industries, Halton has inherited a number of physical, environmental and social problems. We have been working to resolve these issues ever since the borough was formed in 1974. Gaining unitary status in 1998 has helped to bring together more wide reaching activities and has increased the resources that the Council and its strategic partners, have been able to invest in Halton.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2007 is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 30th nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), which is third highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10th highest in the North West, although this is an improvement on being fifth highest in 2004). Other authorities, St Helens (47th), Wirral (60th) and Sefton (83rd), are all way down the table compared to Halton.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2007 suggests that deprivation has improved in the borough, since ranking 21st in 2004 there has been a decrease in 2007 to the 30th most deprived Authority in England. The proportion of Halton's population in the top category (i.e. the top 20% of super output areas) has also decreased from 50% in 2004 to 47 % in 2007. However, there is still room for improvement. Halton's concentration of deprivation has improved from 20th worst in England in 2004 to 27th in 2007. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. Of England's 975 'Super Output Areas', which form the top 3% most deprived areas within England, eight are situated in Halton. The most deprived neighbourhood in Halton is ranked 306th out of 32,482 and is situated in Central Runcorn. Much has been done but clearly there is still much to do. Highlights of the key successes and challenges to date are:

- Claimant unemployment in the borough had fallen from 5.0% in January 2000 to 3% in December 2007, but this was still the 3rd highest claimant count rate in the North West. Due to the current economic climate, recent trends in unemployment have shown a sharp rise over the past twelve months, up to 4.8% in December 2008 and 5.9% in March 2009. The claimant count rate only includes those

people who are eligible for Jobseekers allowance and therefore underestimates the true number of people who are unemployed. The Annual population Survey for July 2007-June 2008 estimates that the unemployment rate in Halton was 6.8% compared to an England average of 5.4%, at a time when claimant unemployment averaged 3.1%.

- The employment rate, i.e. the proportion of the potential workforce actually working at 70.4% in the 2007-2008 Annual Population Survey shows that Halton is in the bottom 12 of 43 Local Authority districts in the North West. The borough rate is also significantly lower than the England average of 74.5%.
- Life expectancy in the borough has improved in the past decade. Between 2001-2003 and 2004-2006 female life expectancy in the borough increased from 78.2 years to 78.4 years. Life expectancy at birth for men in Halton also increased over the same time period from 73.9 in 2001-2003 to 74.3 in 2004-2006. This increase in life expectancy in Halton has kept pace with other Authorities. Between 2001 and 2006 Halton has risen from a rank of 374 for females to 370 out of 376 authorities with 376 being the lowest rank. For men the ranking has risen from 371 to 356. Standardised Mortality Rates for all causes, all ages, ranks Halton 2nd highest (i.e. worse) out of 354 English Local Authorities for 2006. At 127 it is 27% above the national average.
- GCSE passes in the borough are improving, between 1997-2008 the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*- C increased by 38.3 percentage points to 71.1%. This is now greater than the national rate of 65.3%. Pupils gaining no GCSE passes (or equivalent) was 2% in 2008 compared to 1.4% nationally. Skills among the workforce remain low, with 20% of working age people lacking any qualifications in 2007.

OUR VISION FOR HALTON

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.

How Halton will look in 2025 depends on a variety of factors, both local and national. True, the Halton Strategic Partnership will be able to influence the outcome through how successful its joint working on cross cutting issues has been, but the overriding influence will be the state of the national economy at the time and how quickly Halton will have been able to leave the effects of the current recession behind. Recessions traditionally last 12 –18 months on average, but their effects on the economy, employment levels and wealth can take 3 – 4 years to recover their pre-recession position.

Physically, the main change in this period will be the completion of the second Mersey crossing upstream from the existing road bridge. This will help relieve the Borough's road network of the regional traffic currently using and congesting the existing bridge at peak times. The new bridge will help open up sites in the south Widnes/north Runcorn corridor for employment development that could create many hundreds of new jobs taking advantage of the improved traffic flows. 3MG will also be able to capitalise on this extra capacity to establish itself as one of the most computerised transport interchanges in the UK.

However the Borough's success in 2025 will not just be dependent on new physical facilities (not understating their importance) but also on the social, community and environmental characteristics of the time. Halton Strategic Partnership enthusiastically embraces the Government's agenda on such issues as:

- Social inclusion and community cohesion
- Closing the gap between the most deprived parts of the Borough and the most affluent.
- Equality and diversity among the population
- Sustainability
- Climate change
- Improving the health of local residents
- Improving life skills and opportunities for Halton residents

Closing the gap between the poorer and richer parts of the Borough embraces many of these issues because the spatial pattern is repeated. The worst health, the lower employment levels and lower skill levels are concentrated in the more deprived areas. Initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management with the backing of the Halton Strategic Partnership are very important in tackling these issues.

Paradoxically the gap appears to widen in times of economic growth because at such times all areas improve but the more affluent areas tend to improve more, thereby widening the gap. However when times are harder, for example in the recession, then the gap is less pronounced. This emphasises the importance of intervention as market forces cannot be relied on to narrow the gap.

A Healthy Halton

Of the five priorities, poor health continues to be the one that affects most people, with 33% of Halton's population placed in the worst 4% for health deprivation in England. The cancer rates and life expectancy figures, particularly for women, are among the worst in the country.

To overcome this we envisage a focused effort by all the partners that will improve Halton's overall position by concentrating on the areas with the worst health outcomes. The target will be to reduce early deaths.

Halton's Urban Renewal

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

To achieve our vision we will

- Work with partners and the local community to support The Mersey Gateway scheme to fully realise its benefits. This will be a major focus over the coming years
- Provide affordable housing for sale and rent for those who need it most.
- Upgrade and fully utilise the borough's rail, road, commercial waterways and power infrastructure in order to maximise the potential for economic development.

Children and Young People in Halton

For children and young people, three specific ambitions have been set, which better define what we are trying to achieve for children and young people. These are that:

- Every Young Person is successful when they leave school
- Children and young people will do well whatever their needs and wherever they live
- Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy.

Work will continue on specific responsibilities or issues, which affect specific groups of children or young people. These chosen ambitions are relevant to

all children and encapsulate some of the specific difficulties experienced by particular cohorts of children and young people. Each ambition is a condition of well being for all children and young people that no one single agency can achieve on its own. Rather a coherent partnership approach is vital if we are to succeed in making the necessary difference to each of these outcomes.

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton - Our long-term vision

Historically, high economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion, have been endemic in the local economy. Progress has been made in recent years but the current economic downturn has meant rising levels of unemployment and inactivity with worklessness rates currently standing at 17.8% in Halton, with some wards experiencing levels as high as 30.6% against a national average of 11.7%.

Our vision is the creation of a strong economy able to compete in the challenging global market. This can only be achieved by targeted investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and creating a strong culture of entrepreneurship. Our target will be to ensure that no area of Halton has unemployment at more than 20% above the borough average and to reduce the number of adults of working age claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods.

A Safer Halton - Our long-term vision

We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Halton has seen a 16% reduction in total recorded crime from 2005 and 2008. In the same time period vehicle crime has reduced by 29% and criminal damage by 34%. The Safer Halton Partnership - with its focus on action at the neighbourhood level - has contributed to these welcome reductions. However, this remains a pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives.

Taking the successes to date and working to improve on them, the Safer Halton Partnership aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods through coordinated enforcement and communication. Safeguarding adults is a key issue for the partnership, therefore policy and performance is scrutinised by the Safer Halton Partnership Board at every meeting. And whilst further guidance on the National review of 'No Secrets' is still awaited, work on the views of service users and carers, training and protecting adults will continue. Improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved to help shape what happens in their local area is key to the partnership. With the continued provision of Area Forums, Police Community Action Meetings (CAMs), Community Watch Schemes and 'Face the People' Sessions, the Safer Halton Partnership offers opportunities for local people to have their say and help make a difference.

WHAT IS THE FOCUS?

Taking action is one thing, but unless it is focused on the right things it is unlikely to yield the right results. This is why the Partnership invested a good deal of time and resources sounding out public opinion and gathering the facts and figures needed to identify the overall priorities for the borough.

Between 2000 and 2009, five separate State of Halton reports have been researched and published, highlighting a range of challenges and opportunities facing Halton. Their findings have been checked and challenged by the Partnership and tested against public opinion. This led to the identification of a number of priorities for the borough over the medium term which, in combination, addresses the overall aim of making it a better place to live and work. These include:

- Improving Health
- Improving the skills base in the borough
- Improving educational attainment across the borough
- Creating employment opportunities for all
- Tackling worklessness
- Tackling the low wage economy
- Improving environmental assets and how the borough looks
- Creating prosperity and equality of opportunity
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Improving amenities for all age groups
- Furthering economic and urban regeneration
- Tackling contaminated land
- Creating opportunities/facilities/amenities for children and young people
- Supporting an ageing population
- Minimising waste/increasing recycling/bringing efficiencies in waste disposal
- Increasing focus on community engagement
- Running services efficiently

The key challenge is how best to frame the response to these through the Sustainable Community Strategy. To do this challenges have been grouped into five key themes as set out in the vision, which are:

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Children and Young People in Halton

- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton

Each of these thematic areas has been examined more closely in a series of Baseline Reports, which identify in detail the issues where we need to concentrate our improvement efforts. The Partnership intends to focus heavily on these key issues and to focus its future investment into achieving the challenging targets in each chosen theme.

To help do this, five Specialist Strategic Partnerships (SSPs) have been established. Their task is to design and deliver strategies and action plans to address priorities. Their plans are based on the information from the Baseline Reports and on the expertise of the Partnership members. Each of the five major themes is addressed in turn in the next part of this Strategy.

The Partnership also works to improve the quality of life at a neighbourhood level. It does this by working through the seven geographical Area Forums established by the Council and supported by the partners. Each Area Forum has dedicated resources to draw on to help deliver improvements in their area and expenditure proposals are expected to support one or more of the five priorities.

Halton is enthusiastic about extending neighbourhood management as a means to engage and empower local communities. This will address problems in deprived neighbourhoods by managing and co-ordinating resources and services to achieve a greater combined impact. A sound neighbourhood approach will lay the foundations for delivery of improvements to liveability and public services, transforming neighbourhoods and empowering local people. Halton already has many front line services organised on a neighbourhood basis. Community Support Officers, policing, community development workers, housing management, street-scene teams and youth workers are organised on an area basis. Children's Centres will also co-ordinate service delivery at a local level. A neighbourhood focus will provide management and co-ordination mechanisms for joining these, and other services such as health and social care up on a local basis. This Sustainable Community Strategy provides a framework through which these arrangements can be brokered.

A Healthy Halton

Our overall aim: To create a healthier community and work to promote well being and a positive experience of life with good health, not simply an absence of disease, and offer opportunities for people to take responsibility for their health with the necessary support available.

Why Health?

Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country. Because of this health has been singled out as a priority in most urgent need of improvement across the borough. As previously discussed the population in Halton is ageing which could put even greater demands on health and social care services. At the same time lifestyle choices in the borough especially amongst the young, in terms of diet, smoking, alcohol, exercise and other factors continue to give cause for concern for the future.

Key Objectives

- A. To understand fully the causes of ill health in Halton and act together to improve the overall health and well-being of local people.
- B. To lay firm foundations for a healthy start in life and support those most in need in the community by increasing community engagement in health issues and promoting autonomy.
- C. To reduce the burden of disease and preventable causes of death in Halton by reducing smoking levels, alcohol consumption and by increasing physical activity, improving diet and the early detection and treatment of disease.
- D. To respond to the needs of an ageing population by addressing the needs of older people, improving their quality of life and thus enabling them to lead longer, active and more fulfilled lives.
- E. To remove the barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health by working across partnerships to address the wider determinants of health such as unemployment, education and skills, housing, crime and environment.

Background

The recent State of the Borough Report identifies Halton as one of the most deprived districts in England. In terms of health deprivation the borough currently ranks 371st out of 408 districts in the country. The Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies 53 'Super Output Areas' in Halton that fall within the top 20% of most health deprived wards nationally and that approximately 40,000 people (33% of the population) live in the top 4% most health deprived wards in England.

When compared with other areas in England, Halton is within the worst 10% of areas for life expectancy. In particular female life expectancy is the third

worst in England (78.4). Male life expectancy (74.3) is also 3 years less than the national average.

The two biggest killers in Halton are heart disease and cancer. Heart disease is still the single biggest cause of premature death in Halton, and more people have it in this borough than they do in other boroughs across the country. For those under 75, men are more likely to have heart disease than women.

In terms of cancer, Halton has the worst early death rate in the country (167.8 per 100,000 population). Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in Halton. There has also been a steady increase in the number of women developing breast cancer and death rates from the disease have increased recently. Breast cancer is the second largest cause of cancer death in Halton.

Some of the reasons why Halton residents suffer disproportionately high death rates from major causes of death include poor diet, high smoking rates and inadequate levels of physical activity.

In recent years, the burden of ill health caused by alcohol consumption has also increased significantly. Recent statistics show that approximately 24% of adult residents in Halton binge drink. Whilst twice as many men as women drink above safe limits the number of women doing so has increased significantly from 6.9% in 2001 to 12.4% in 2006.

The latest Alcohol Profiles for England show that Halton is amongst some of the worst districts in the country in terms of months of life lost due to alcohol, alcohol specific and attributable mortality and hospital admissions due to alcohol.

In 2003 the Halton Health Partnership appointed a team of consultants from Lancaster University to examine the reasons for Halton's poor health record. Whilst there was much speculation around the role of Halton's industrial legacy and existing levels of pollution, the study revealed that economic, social and lifestyle factors were largely responsible for the high rates of illness and death.

When taking these factors into consideration, it becomes easier to understand why some communities suffer disproportionately from poorer health than others. Therefore, we would expect to set specific neighbourhood targets where appropriate.

During 2008 Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust produced two key documents, 'Ambition for Health' and the 'Commissioning Strategic Plan'.

Ambition for Health is a key document for Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust in terms of improving the health of the local population. The document sets out key "ambitions" that are based on understanding of the needs of the local population. These are as follows:

- To support a healthy start in life
- To reduce poor health that results from preventable causes
- To ensure that when people do fall ill from some of the major diseases, they get the best care and support
- To provide services which meet the needs of vulnerable people
- To make sure people have excellent access to services and facilities
- To play our part in strengthening disadvantaged communities

Following on from this Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust then produced the Commissioning Strategic Plan. This document turns the Ambition for Health goals into action by delivering transformational change in a number of key areas that support the strategic priorities.

The six priority areas identified in the Commissioning Strategic Plan are:

- Alcohol
- Obesity
- Early detection: Diabetes, respiratory, heart disease, cancer
- Early Detection: Depression
- Prevention: Tobacco Control
- Safety, Equality and Efficiency: Planned and Urgent Care

In addition to this, addressing the wider determinants of ill health is a key issue for Halton if it is to effectively respond to national and local targets. This will mean working across partnerships to achieve our goals. The list below highlights some of the areas where further joint working is required:

- Taking steps to reduce unemployment in areas with poor health statistics
- Improving educational attainment and increasing access to training opportunities for those living in deprived areas
- Improving the quality and provision of social housing
- Improving access to services such as social and leisure facilities, supermarkets, health services and transport.
- Understanding how knowledge and perceptions of health related issues can affect the local population
- Reducing social isolation
- Reducing crime and improving community safety
- Maximising community resources and facilitating effective community engagement and participation

Individuals also have a role to play in improving their own health and well being. Lifestyle factors such as a poor diet, smoking, and lack of exercise can all have a negative impact on an individual's health. Actions and services aimed at increasing participation in sport and leisure activities and promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle can contribute towards improving the health of local people. However, whilst agencies can work together to improve access, affordability, and quality of services, it is also important to encourage local residents to play an active role in improving their own health.

Well being is about more than health. It is about the ability to enjoy a range of activities that actually make life worth living. This is about having access and the ability to enjoy culture in all its forms - sport, arts, libraries, leisure, entertainment, hobbies, friends and family, and shopping. We aim to enhance these opportunities for people. Happy people are more likely to be healthy people and vice versa.

We therefore also need to address all of the determinants of mental health and well-being for different population groups. Children and young peoples emotional and mental well-being is addressed within Children's Trust structures.

Linkages to other priorities

Halton's Urban Renewal

A high quality built environment is an important contributory factor in determining the health and well-being of local people. Good quality, accessible buildings, served by a good quality transport infrastructure create a more vibrant community where people are proud to live and work. In turn this contributes to the health and well-being of local residents.

Children and Young People in Halton

Improving the health and well-being of children and young people is a key priority. Being healthy as a child can have an influence on long term health outcomes. The Healthy Halton Specialist Strategic Partnership works closely with the Children and Young Peoples partnership to address issues such as childhood obesity and teenage pregnancy. In addition low educational attainment is one of the key determinants of poor health outcomes and leads to many health inequalities within neighbourhoods.

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Improving access to employment opportunities is a key determinant in improving the health of the local population. Being in employment increases choice and opportunity and enhances quality of life. Areas of high unemployment are shown to have higher levels of poor health therefore anything we can do to increase wealth creating factors within those communities will automatically improve health outcomes. Linked to this is the need to increase access to learning opportunities and offering people the chance to improve their skills thereby improving their chance of gaining employment.

A Safer Halton

Personal experience of crime and anti-social behaviour can have a significant impact on our health and well-being. Tackling crime is high on the public agenda and a key priority for neighbourhoods. One of the key areas for both the Health Partnership and the Safer Halton Partnership is the current issues surrounding alcohol harm. Both partnerships are working together to address these issues.

Improvement Targets

Halton Local Area Agreement Indicators relating to Health

By 2011 we aim to:

- Increase adult participation in sport from 20.13% (2006 baseline) to 24.02% :Sport NI8
- Slow the rate of increase in alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates from 2180 (07/08 baseline) to 2323 in 2009/2010 and 2309 in 2010/2011: Alcohol harm NI 39
- Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment from 513 (07/08 baseline) to 544: Drug Treatment NI 40
- Increase the prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth from 12.1% (Quarter 2 2008) to 23%: Breastfeeding NI 53
- Reduce the number of primary school age children who are obese from 22.4% to 21.3%: Obesity NI 56
- Reduce the conception rate in girls under 18 by 55%, compared to 1998: Conception: NI 112
- Reducing the proportion of young people frequently misusing substances from a baseline of 12.6% in 07/08, to a target of 9.8% by 2010/2011: Substance Misuse NI 115
- Reduce all age all cause mortality for Males from 906 per 100,000 population (07/08 baseline) to 755 and females from 673 (07/08 baseline) to 574: Life expectancy: NI 120
- Smoking- Increase the number of people age 16+ who have stopped smoking from 914 per 100,000 population (07/08 baseline) to 1128: Lifestyle: NI 123
- Improve the number of people over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently from 30.4% (2008 base) to 32.8%: Independent living: NI 139
- Improve the number. of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living from a Baseline in 07/08 of 98.17%, to a target of 99.04% in 2011: NI 142
- No. of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment – target to be set by March 2010.: Mental Health: NI150

Local targets

- ***Reduce the death rate (in under 75s) by 57% (from 2009-11) (???)
A slightly over ambitious!): Circulatory Disease:***
- Reduce the death rate (in under 75s) by 25% (from 2009-11): Cancer
- Increase the number of people with a long term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition from 43% (07/08 baseline) to 49% (2010/2011): Managing long term conditions: NI 124

Halton's Urban Renewal

Our Overall aim: To transform the urban fabric 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 and see a promising future for themselves and their families.

Why Urban Renewal?

Modern day Halton has inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that undermines the development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is a key to greater prosperity and boosting the image of the borough. This is why Urban Renewal is Halton Borough Council's second most important priority.

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 promote regional employment sites at 3MG, Daresbury and the Widnes Waterfront;
- C. To secure the commencement of the construction of the Mersey Gateway bridge;
- D. 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;
- E. To support and sustain thriving neighbourhoods and open spaces that meet people's expectations and add to their enjoyment of life;
- F. To ensure Halton designs in and maintains high levels of accessibility to places and spaces, so that opportunity and need are matched, and provide excellent connectivity to the wider world through transport and ICT links;
- G. 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.

Background

Halton helped maintain the momentum of the industrial revolution in the 19th Century and was a cradle to both 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.

Much has already been achieved to green the environment, both within the town centres and at our gateway approaches. Town centres have experienced new private sector investment, whilst small businesses have taken advantage of grant assistance to rejuvenate tired, rundown or unproductive premises. Award-winning leisure facilities have been provided around the borough and new housing and jobs are being provided because of the confidence in Halton's future.

The business environment is expanding thanks to developments on the Widnes Waterfront, 3MG, Daresbury, The Heath and the key infrastructure development of the Mersey Gateway river crossing:

- The Widnes Waterfront is located in South Widnes, fronting onto the River Mersey. The programme aims to regenerate 80 ha., of low quality industrial land, supported by a cocktail of funding opportunities. Work includes commercial, retail and leisure developments, together with environment, infrastructure and public realm enhancements - all of which will have been completed by 2015. This programme has been identified as a North West Strategic Site and supports the borough's Employment, Learning & Skills priority amongst others;
- 3MG (Mersey Multi-modal Gateway) in Ditton is quickly becoming a regionally and nationally significant intermodal freight park which anticipates an approximate total investment of £100m. This major scheme will create up to 5,000 new jobs and 3 million sq.ft of rail-related distribution facilities by 2015. In addition, the Stobart Group have acquired the Mersey Gateway Port at Weston in Runcorn, which will offer an integrated transport and logistics facility;
- The Mersey Gateway project will provide a landmark new bridge over the River Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes. It will transform the borough of Halton, improve the lives of local people and create new opportunities for business and investment in Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool city-region, the north west and beyond. The new bridge will cross the river 1.5km east of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB), be a tolled crossing, have three lanes in each direction and be linked to the major road systems in the area, keeping traffic moving and raising the profile of the borough. The Mersey Gateway bridge is due to open to the public in 2014 and will overcome one of the biggest congestion problems in the region. Modifications will be made to the existing SJB to improve facilities for local public transport, walking and cycling;
- The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy will support and promote significant developments in both Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres, continuing regeneration programmes such as the Canal Quarter (Runcorn), Ashley Retail Park and Windmill Centre (Widnes), which are under way in both towns;

- The Daresbury Science & Innovation Centre is a state-of-the-art facility offering high quality office, workshop and laboratory space. The Innovation Centre aims to bring together science and technology-based businesses into an innovative scientific environment. The building provides facilities and specialist support critical to young businesses whether at the creation, growth or acceleration stages of their development.

Exciting new expansion developments are also anticipated at The Heath Business Park and the Halton Lea and Widnes retail areas.

Halton together with our partners in St.Helens and Warrington has been awarded Growth Point Status. This will help foster increasing partnership working across traditional boundaries, better integrating the provision of new housing and employment opportunities across the sub-region whilst promoting sustainable development and the timely provision of supporting infrastructure (including Green Infrastructure).

Two large sites for private sector-residential developments in the borough over the past decade have been at Upton Rocks, Widnes and Sandymoor, Runcorn. The focus of these developments has been a concentration on the executive end of the housing market, in order to encourage managerial and professional socio-economic groups to move to the borough. However, land remediation has cleared the way for housing development at Halebank and plans are being progressed to develop residential accommodation at the Canal Quarter in Runcorn, where leisure and retail facilities will also be delivered along the banks of the Bridgewater Canal. In addition, a £130 million major sustainable regeneration programme is taking place in Castlefields, where high quality mixed-tenure housing is replacing grim deck access flats. The existing local centre will be demolished and redeveloped to create a new community hub centred around a Village Square, offering shops, residential accommodation and health and community facilities – all amidst many and varied environmental and leisure enhancements, including the very successful Phoenix Park. Further housing renewal opportunities have been identified including areas of Runcorn New Town and West Bank, Widnes.

The creation and maintenance of high quality places and spaces that support a twenty- first century economy and lifestyles which are accessible and well connected, is a pre-requisite of Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Urban Renewal Strategy. Much of this is dependent upon the borough's extensive expertise for land reclamation, which has been developed out of need to address and overcome the borough's legacy of contamination from the chemicals industry. This is detailed in the Borough's Contaminated Land Remediation Strategy.

Land is being reclaimed at the rate of approximately 10 hectares per annum. Much of this reclamation is located on the historical chemical sites adjacent to and part of the Widnes Waterfront. For example, Moss Bank Park and further additions to the Trans Pennine trail have been completed adding valuable

amenity space within a modern industrial environment. Development of new 'Alternative Technologies' by Halton, to make safe the severe contamination on these sites, will provide the economic solution to bring forward significant industrial and intermodal developments in the borough, e.g. as in the Widnes Waterfront and the 3MG Intermodal Logistics Park.

Environmental improvements and better quality open spaces, in addition to a better quality built environment and transport offer, 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.

Linkages to Other Priorities

A Healthy Halton

Providing a better, cleaner and greener built environment where employment and leisure opportunities are fostered and resident prosperity overcomes health issues associated with deprivation. Improved access to hospitals.

Children and Young People in Halton

Creating an environment that provides the basis in which our children are able to flourish

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Developing employment opportunities for all in a thriving business environment where skills meet business needs. Improved access to further education facilities

A Safer Halton

Instilling pride in our local community where residents feel safe and cherish their neighbourhoods, wishing to help eradicate violence and unsocial elements

Improvement Targets

Halton LAA Indicators relating to Urban Renewal

By 2011 we aim to:

- Assist in raising residents' overall satisfaction with the area from 70% in 2008 to 73.4% in 2010. (baseline and target provisional pending publication of final places survey data): Residents' Satisfaction NI 5
- Reduce per capita CO2 emissions within the local authority area, from 10.1 tonnes per capita in 2007/08, (based on Defra 2005 data) to 8.98 tonnes per capita, by 2010/11 (based on Defra 2008 data): Climate Change NI 186
- Ensure 34% of municipal waste is recycled or composted in the local authority by 2010/11, from 25.1% in 2007/08: Waste NI 192

- Build additional homes within Halton, at an annual rate of 518 between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011: Housing NI 154
- Improve access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling. Targets set for access to Whiston and Warrington Hospitals (100%) and Runcorn and Widnes comprises of Riverside College (89% and 93% respectively): Transport NI 175

Local Indicators

- ***Assist in achieving an increase in the numbers of jobs in Halton by?????***
- Annually, to bring 10 hectares of derelict land back into beneficial use;
- Facilitate the relocation of businesses affected by the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge;

Children and Young People in Halton

Our Overall Aim: Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and are ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future

Why Children and Young People?

Children and young people are the future of Halton. In time they will become the adults that take responsibility for all aspects of life in the borough. Therefore, it is self-evident that we should invest in Halton's future by investing in them. This will make sure they have the best possible start in life, have places to go and things to do that are positive and life enhancing, and the opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed.

Key Objectives

Halton's Children's Trust has identified three entrenched areas, where a strong partnership approach is needed to improve outcomes for children and young people. These will form the foundation for the new Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12. These areas under which the key outcomes can be clustered, are:

- A. Children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs
- B. Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy
- C. Young people are successful when they leave school

Background

Development in early childhood, success while at school through educational and other achievement, and the acquisition of important, employable skills, are key determinants of individuals' life and employment chances. They have a major effect on people's ability to access employment, the income they earn, their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life.

The Government policy, Every Child Matters: Change for Children, describes a vision of improving outcomes for all children and young people and narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not. In Halton, as elsewhere, this requires radical change in the whole system of children's services including:

- The improvement and integration of front line services - in early years settings, schools, the health service and play and recreation - and to raise standards of achievement for all learners

- More specialised help to promote opportunity, prevent problems and act early and effectively if and when problems arise
- The further development of services around children, young people and families through the delivery of better and more easily accessible services may involve co-location through, for example, extended schools, children's centres, and the bringing together of professionals in multi-disciplinary teams
- Dedicated and enterprising leadership striving for the highest standards at all levels of the system
- The development of a shared sense of responsibility across agencies for safeguarding children and protecting them from harm
- Listening to children, young people and their families when assessing and planning service provision, as well as in face-to-face delivery

To bring about improvement in the life chances and employment prospects for children and young people in Halton, we need to remove socio-economic barriers to early development, and deliver the Every Child Matters agenda through the Children's Trust, and through better joint commissioning and integrated delivery of services through the widely agreed Children's and Young People's Plan.

The key agencies that have an impact on children and young people need to build on existing cooperation. Firstly we need to develop policies based on evidence of what works most effectively that are focused on delivering the outcomes highlighted above. Then we must create a model of what measures and services to enhance life chances and employment need to be like to make the most positive impact in Halton. Finally, we should devise an action plan to make any changes needed to shift from the measures and services that exist now, to what they need to be in the future.

Linkages to other Priorities

A Healthy Halton

Children's health is a key priority mainly because being healthy is the best basis from which children can go on and develop throughout their lives. Education is a key influence on health and affects health-related behaviour such as smoking, drinking, drugs and exercise. To tackle the issues such as obesity and teenage pregnancy in Halton, Children and Young People work closely with the Health Partnership to ensure there is a joined up approach.

Halton's Urban Renewal

Investment in Halton's urban fabric and infrastructure will help to make Halton a place where our children and young people will want to live as adults. Also the provision of access to quality transportation links for education and leisure opportunities is a key priority.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training will involve close working with partners from Employment, Learning & Skills. Employment opportunities and training offers a number of key options to our young people post-16 as they look for the best pathway going forward.

A Safer Halton

The provision of pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhoods will provide children and young people with a safe environment in which to play, grow and prosper. Providing positive activities for young people are delivered through the Safer Halton Partnership to discourage crime and anti social behaviour.

Improvement Targets

Halton LAA Indicators relating to Children & Young People

By 2011 we aim to:

- Increase the stability of placements for looked after children from 69% in 2008 to 81.5% by 2011: Children in Care NI 63
- Reduce the proportion of children in poverty from 27% in 2008 to 24.2% by 2011: Children in Poverty NI 116
- Reduce obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 from 22.4% in 2008 to 21.3% by 2011: Child Obesity NI 56
- Reduce the under 18 conception rate by 55% by 2011 from the 1998 figure: Teenage Pregnancy NI 112
- Increase the proportion of young people achieving a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 from 33.5% in 2008 to 42.2% by 2011: Level 3 Qualification NI 80
- Reduce the number of 16-18 year olds not in education, training or employment from 11.5% in 2008 to 7.7% by 2011: NEET NI 117
- Reduce the number of first time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 from 249 in 2007/08 to 234 by 2010/11: First time entrants NI 111
- Reduce substance misuse rates by young people from 12.6% in 2008 to 9.8% in 2011: Substance Misuses NI 115

Local indicator

- Reduce the 5 A*-C GCSEs, including English and Maths, attainment in Halton gap by 25% between those living in the worst 10% LSOAs nationally and the Halton average by 2011 (currently 36% vs. 49%).
- Reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents: Road Traffic Fatality NI 48

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Our overall aim: To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, enterprise and business growth, and improves the opportunities for learning and development together with the skills and employment prospects of both residents and workforce so that they are able to feel included socially and financially.

Why Employment, Learning and Skills?

A robust economy lays the foundation for any prosperous and successful place and provides jobs, opportunities, wealth and aspirations for local people. Historically, in Halton there has been a sustained mismatch between the needs of local business and the skills of local people, low rates of entrepreneurship and high levels of welfare dependency, meaning that opportunity and need are out of balance and contributing to the widespread deprivation in Halton. Sustainable economic growth and prosperity requires a commitment to encourage and support a vibrant business sector together with a renewed commitment to creating sustainable employment, and high quality learning and skills opportunities to satisfy all stakeholders in Halton.

Key Objectives

- A. To foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and make Halton an ideal place to start and grow economic activity
- B. To develop a culture where learning is valued and raise skill levels throughout the adult population and in the local workforce
- C. To promote and increase the employability of local people and remove any barriers to employment to get more people into work
- D. To develop a strong, diverse, competitive and sustainable knowledge-based local economy.
- E. To maximise an individual's potential to increase and manage their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services.

Background

Despite a range of local and national initiatives, Halton is still characterised by widespread deprivation. Attainment at school, in further education and the acquisition of employable skills are key determinants of individuals' life and employment chances. They have a major effect on people's ability to get a job, on the income they earn, on their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life. This means that the creation of a strong economy able to compete in today's challenging global market can only be achieved by continuing targeted investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and a strong culture of entrepreneurship.

Research shows that the skill base of the local area is relatively poor compared to Great Britain as a whole and to other surrounding local economies. Halton has a relatively low percentage of adults with further education qualifications and a high number of adults experiencing problems with numeracy and literacy. Looking to the future, estimates indicate that the majority of new jobs will require some form of recognised education qualification. Over 95% of new jobs will need qualifications of at least NVQ 2 level and over 70% at NVQ 3 and above. In addition, in an increasingly technologically developed society and in a borough where up to 30% of adults experience some form of difficulty with literacy there is a danger that a digital divide is created between those able to access and navigate jobs and services and those who cannot.

High economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion, are endemic in the local economy. Halton continues to display higher than average rates of benefit dependency, whilst at the same time many people are not claiming their full entitlements which would enable them to enjoy a minimum standard of living. Targeted information, advice and advocacy are crucial to allow people to access the support, whether related to work or to benefits, they need for the benefit of both themselves and local economy.

The Halton economy is heavily reliant upon a narrow range of industry sectors and, in common with the rest of the UK, is becoming susceptible to national and global pressures, which may have a negative effect upon the business sector, employment opportunities and could increase the numbers of individuals and families at risk of becoming financially and socially at risk.

Linkages to Other Priorities

A Healthy Halton

Being out of work or suffering financial exclusion have been shown to be significant contributors to health inequalities, whilst being in employment has been proven to have significant benefits for an individual's physical and mental health. By providing opportunities for skills, training and employment and enabling people to move from inactive benefits to employment, the Employment, Learning and Skills priority contributes towards improving the Health and mental wellbeing of Halton's residents.

Halton's Urban Renewal

Halton residents will need a high quality, responsive skills and training infrastructure to take full advantage of the new opportunities for employment and business development being afforded through Halton's programme of Urban Renewal.

Children and Young People in Halton

In addition to the importance of attainment at school, it is vital that Children and Young People are offered a wide range of good quality learning, skills

and employment opportunities in order for them to fulfil their potential to succeed and to ensure that they are not at risk of poverty or financial disadvantage.

A Safer Halton

By enabling people to become engaged in employment, learning and skills opportunities, they are encouraged to move away from becoming involved in anti-social behaviour or crime. The Employment, Learning and Skills priority aims to ensure that positive progression routes to training and employment are available to all Halton residents to enable them to improve their life chances.

Improvement Targets

Halton LAA Indicators relating to Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

By 2011, our aim is that:

- The proportion of working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods is reduced from 31.5% in 2007/2008 to 28.5% by 2010/2011: Benefits NI 153
- The proportion of the working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher is increased from 60.1% in 2007/2008 to 67.5% by 2010/2011: Level 2 Qualification NI 163
- Maintain the VAT registration rate at 42.8% by 2010/2011: VAT Registration NI 171

Local Indicators

- The proportion of adults with no qualifications is reduced by 15%
- Increase the proportion of adults qualified to level 3 by 25%
- Increase average household income in Halton to more than 90% of the national average
- ***Increase the rate of self-employment by 20% compared to 20XX?***
- Ensure unemployment in any LSOA is less than 20% above the borough average

A SAFER HALTON

Our overall aim: To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live.

Why a Safer Halton?

Crime and the fear of crime affect everybody's lives. It is a major concern according to every survey of Halton residents. These surveys also show that cleaner, tidier neighbourhoods would make the biggest difference to improving life for people in their local area. We want Halton to be a clean, green, safe and attractive place to live. People should tolerate value and respect each other, their property and the places where they live.

Key Objectives

- A.** To investigate and tackle the underlying causes of crime and disorder and respond effectively to public concern by reducing crime levels
- B.** To improve the understanding of alcohol and drug/substance misuse problems, their impact in Halton, and reduce the harm they cause
- C.** To create and sustain better neighbourhoods that are well designed, well built, well maintained, safe and valued by the people who live in them, reflecting the priorities of residents
- D.** To understand and tackle the problem of domestic abuse in all its forms
- E.** To reduce the levels of crime that disproportionately affects some of the more deprived areas within the borough

Background

The Safer Halton Partnership has a wide-ranging remit focused on two major concerns of Halton people. Crime and the local environment have consistently been two areas the public have raised as high priorities in successive consultations over the last few years.

We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Recent years have seen a 16% reduction in total recorded crime from 2005 and 2008. In the same time period vehicle crime has reduced by 29% and criminal damage by 34%. The Safer Halton Partnership - with its focus on action at the neighbourhood level - has contributed to these welcome reductions. However, this remains a pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives.

At the same time, whilst general satisfaction levels with Halton as a place to live have risen, it is the condition of their local environment which is of most concern to residents. Therefore, the Strategy aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods. This is about improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved in helping to shape what happens in their local area. Area Forums, Police Community Action Meetings (CAMs), Community Watch Schemes and 'Face the People' Sessions, offer opportunities for local people to have their say and help make a difference. They also help make the police, council and others more accountable to residents, check that the priorities are right; that they respond to local concerns, and will take more effective action against the issues that most impact on their quality of life.

Tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of neighbourhood issues are a responsibility shared by all partners. Increasingly, they will look to better co-ordinate their activity through neighbourhood management arrangements to have a greater impact. This will increase the effectiveness of work that can prevent and intervene early in the conditions which lead to dissatisfaction.

Linkages to other priorities

A Healthy Halton

Personal experience of crime or anti social behaviour can have a significant impact on our health and mental wellbeing. Tackling crime is high on the public agenda and a key priority for neighbourhoods.

Halton's Urban Renewal

When designing and planning new buildings such as housing estates and shopping areas, it is important that we consider community safety issues and design out crime. This may be through better lighting, CCTV, removing inappropriate planting etc

Children and Young People in Halton

Providing positive activities for young people and raising their aspirations will make them less likely to commit crime or anti social behaviour. Working with young people and their families is vital if we are to change behaviour, where their behaviour has already become a problem.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Creating employment opportunities and training for residents to access jobs is key to driving down crime. In particular those who have already committed crime, or have drug and alcohol problems are much less likely to re-offend if they can gain employment.

Improvement Targets

Halton LAA Indicators relating to a Safer Halton

By 2011 we aim to:

- Raise residents overall satisfaction with their local area from 70% in 2008 to 73% in 2010 (baseline and target provisional pending publication of the final places survey data)awaiting Places Survey data): Overall satisfaction NI5
- Creating a strong environment for a thriving Voluntary and Community Sector – Increase third sector satisfaction from 22.2% (2007/8) to 29.7% (2010/11): Thriving third Sector NI 7
- Reduce serious acquisitive crime from 16 per 1000 population in 2007/08 to 15 per 1000 population by 2010/11: Serious acquisitive crime NI 16
- Reduce the perceptions of anti social behaviour from 24% in 2008 to 21% by 10/11: Perceptions of anti social behaviour NI 17
- Reduce the assault with injury crime rate by 75% compared to 2008/09: Assault with injury NI 20
- **Reduce the re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders from 19% in 07/08 to XX by 2010/11 (Target to be set based on the relevant cohort): Re-offending rate NI 30**
- Reduce the repeat incidents of domestic abuse from 127 in 2007/08 to 108 by 2010/11: Repeat incidents of domestic violence NI 32
- Reduce the number of arson incidents from 1277 in 2007/08 to 855 by 2010/11: Arson NI 33
- Slow the rate of increase in alcohol-harm related hospital admissions from 2180 in 2007/08 to 2323 in 2009/10 and 2309 by 2010/11 : Alcohol related hospital admissions NI 39
- Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment from 513 in 07/08 to 544 by 10/11: Drug users in effective treatment NI 40

Local Target

- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents: People killed or seriously injured NI 47
- Reduce by 10% the number of incidents of anti social behaviour in the worst 5 super output areas by 2010/11 from a 2007/8 baseline

Cross Cutting Issues

Introduction

The Sustainable Community Strategy is concerned with addressing local needs in order to make the 2025 vision a reality. This strategy tries to take a positive view of the future. It will be better to shift our focus to prevention measures, to promote positive lifestyles and the many excellent aspects of life in Halton, including more timely interventions to help people at the times when they most need support. At the same time a number of issues that cut across the key priority areas contained within this Strategy must be kept in mind as we meet the challenges faced within each priority area.

The Halton Strategic Partnership wants to develop policies and programmes which leave a lasting and positive effect on future generations of people in Halton. We also want to look forward and help to achieve sustainable development both locally and more widely to promote regional, national and global aims. Our approach will be guided by the following principles:

- Anti-discrimination
- Equality of opportunity
- Independence not dependence
- Individual needs
- Accountability
- Integration
- Involvement in decision making

The people of Halton and a focus on their full range of needs, is the key cross cutting theme that underpins this strategy. Analysing needs allows us to anticipate likely changes and plan accordingly. We want to sustain progress and increasingly provide a much greater range of opportunities, and the ability to take advantage of them. We want to sharpen up service delivery and focus on the things that will make the most difference. The key measure of whether service delivery is transformed is how far and how fast we can narrow the gap in outcomes for the most disadvantaged in Halton, as measured by comparison with both Halton and national averages.

In short, we 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 Partnership has identified the following components as being crucial to success.

(a) Respect and Enjoyment

The communities of Halton have a strong sense of community identity and belonging. They also tolerate and respect differences, and believe in 'live and let live'. Co-operation, collaboration and helpfulness are vital. There needs to be plenty of things to do and places to go - culture, leisure, sport, community, shopping - for all members of the community, young and old alike. People should feel their chances in life are good and crime, drugs or anti-social behaviour does not taint their lives.

(b) Thriving Places

The local economy has to flourish and provide a range of opportunities for all Halton people for both training and work. The economic infrastructure has to be top quality with a variety of land and premises (industrial, commercial and retail) available to support economic prosperity, growth and change. In addition, we want to see a strong business sector, which feels valued locally, and is well supported to create new enterprises and new jobs which can benefit local people.

(c) Well Planned

We need to retain a clear sense of place and retain features that make Halton distinctive. We want to see buildings and open spaces that are accessible, well designed and of the highest quality. Places and spaces that are safe, valued and promote a feeling of well-being. The housing market has to be dynamic and inclusive with a range of options available that are affordable for local people.

(d) Accessibility

People make places work, and all the communities and facilities of Halton (jobs, schools, town centres, health) need to be well connected and well served by the transport network. We need appropriate levels of car parking in the right places, a well managed and maintained road network, and a properly functioning public transport network to help people get about and reduce car dependency. We need to further develop opportunities for walking and cycling, and ensure our connection to the outside world through motorways, railways, ports and airports remain excellent. The further development of technology and digital opportunities will also enable Halton to be more accessible to the world.

(e) Well Served

People need to have good access to a range of services that are appropriate to their needs and that make their lives worthwhile. This includes good schools, further and higher education opportunities and lifelong learning, high quality health, leisure and social care facilities, including quality services for vulnerable adults, children and families. In addition a good range of information, advice and signposting is needed, and wherever possible services should be situated together to make access easier.

(f) Well Run

There has to be a sense of pride, responsibility and civic values which present themselves in a place that is well governed and managed. This includes democratic, representative and accountable governance through Halton Borough Council with community wellbeing at its heart. It also encompasses effective community engagement and enabling active participation by local people in the decisions that affect their lives. A strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector is a sign of success along with effective partnerships that lead by example.

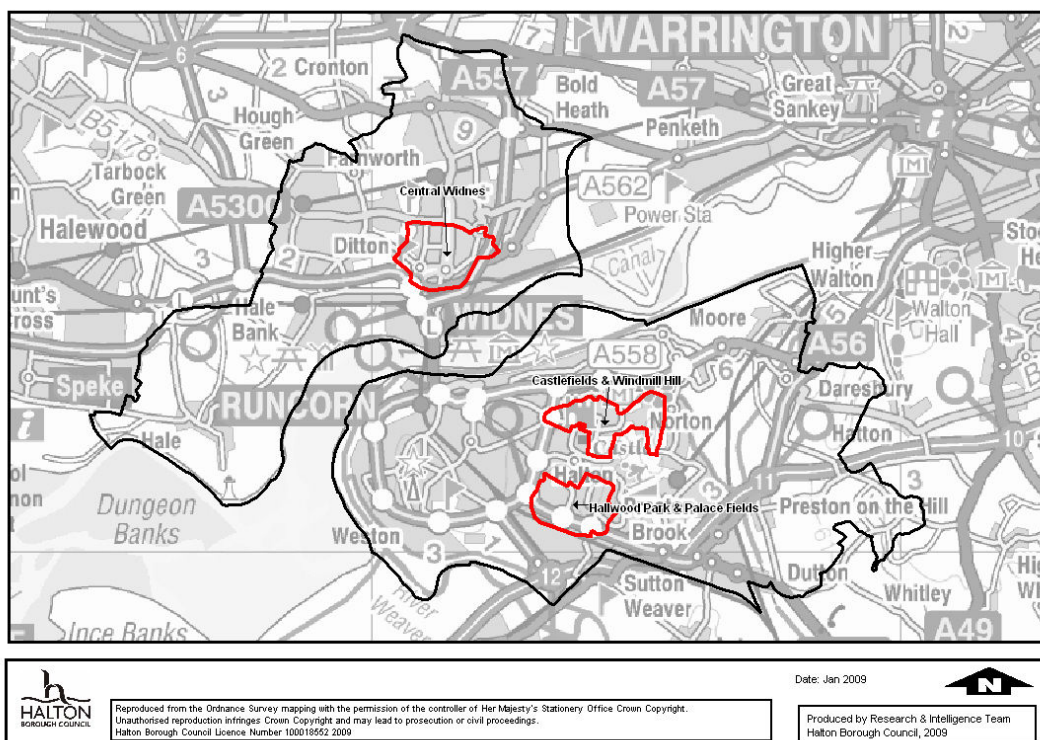
The objectives and targets outlined in this Strategy and all the improvements aspired to need to be adequately resourced in order to make happen. A key purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the Borough.

Issues

1. Social Exclusion

This is about what happens when people face a multitude of problems such as poor housing, high crime, poor health, worklessness, discrimination and poor relationships. These problems link and reinforce each other creating a vicious circle for people. Often they are clustered in specific neighbourhoods.

Since 2006 Halton has received ring-fenced funding from the 'neighbourhood element' part of the then Safer & Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement. The money is to develop Neighbourhood Management in those areas of the Borough that fall within the 3% most deprived nationally under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2005. The funding runs until 2010. In Halton work is focused on three pilot neighbourhoods, each of which falls within the above category; Central Widnes, Hallwood Park & Palace Fields and Castlefields & Windmill Hill. The map below shows the boundaries for these 3 neighbourhoods.



Neighbourhood Management is designed to help close the gap between the most deprived parts of the Borough and the rest, with regards to health, education, employment and crime. The development of neighbourhood management in Halton is being directed by a strategic partnership board that

consists of many of the key local service providers and partners. This board reports directly to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board

One key example of this is the effort to reduce worklessness in the neighbourhood management areas. The gap between out of work benefit claimants within the neighbourhood management areas and Halton overall had reduced since 2006, but has increased slightly in the last months, probably as a result of the economic downturn.

According to the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2007 Halton has again improved its overall deprivation score but it remains amongst the 30 most deprived areas of England. Halton has become less deprived overall on a national scale but the gap between the most affluent and deprived areas of the borough is growing. Serious progress must be made to increase wealth and to narrow the gap for those who are most disadvantaged if residents are to enjoy the quality of life that many others take for granted.

Overall poverty, unemployment and material deprivation have diminished in crude terms. However, Halton continues to display high rates of benefit dependency, which may increase in the current economic climate. At the same time many people are still not claiming their full entitlements which would allow them to enjoy a minimum standard of living. Therefore, information, advice, guidance and advocacy are crucial in allowing people to access the help they need to navigate an extraordinarily complicated benefits system. This is not only beneficial for the recipients themselves but also for the local economy as research shows that most transfer payments are spent locally. Halton is also characterised by high levels of personal debt, with up to 10% of households struggling to support debt levels. This in turn impacts on people's health and well being and the positive contribution they can make to the local economy. Therefore, debt advice and innovative community finance initiatives are a continuing need.

2. Economic Climate

The adverse economic climate now has major implications for us all. The Halton Strategic Partnership has a role to put in place measures to support residents and businesses and where possible provide intervention measures to try and prevent house repossessions, loss of jobs, etc. Where they do occur we need to ensure services are there to help pick up the pieces, whether this is access to training, benefits, debt advice, target hardening against burglary, alcohol abuse support or counselling.

On top of the implications of the current economic climate on the residents of Halton, there are implications for partners in terms of meeting its Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets by March 2011. Several of Halton's LAA indicators are likely to be severely affected by the current climate, with others indirectly impacted upon.

3. Climate Change

Halton has adopted a climate change indicator, per capita CO₂ reduction, as part of its LAA. This cross cutting indicator includes CO₂ emissions from domestic housing, business and the public sector and road transport. Local, regional and national partners and organisations will work together to encourage and influence residents, businesses and other organisations to make CO₂ reductions and also to put our own house in order.

There has already been much progress around tackling climate change. Halton is committed to the Carbon Strategy and Reduction Plan and a target of reducing CO₂ by 20% by 2015. As part of the strategy, we have invested in a number of areas to reduce energy costs and consequently CO₂ emission reductions.

4. Sustainability

The goal of sustainable development – integrating and improving environmental, economic and social outcomes both now and in the future – is at the heart of the strategy. This Strategy sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of Halton through to 2025 that will contribute to the overall sustainable development across the UK.

Part of Halton's success has been its ability to change and evolve, and its resilience in the face of adversity. It has had to cope with the loss of much of the manufacturing industry it formerly depended on. The effect of this was dramatic, leading to population loss and a legacy of deprivation across the communities of Halton. However, the position has stabilised and welcome signs of an improvement can now be seen. This resilience is the key to the future. The Halton Strategic Partnership sees this as one of the strengths on which a sustainable future can be built.

The vision for the future is of a Halton that has sustained itself. This is 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. This Strategy is all about giving people opportunities and choice. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here.

5. Equality & Diversity

Building stronger communities through community engagement must be a key outcome for the strategy. There has been much progress in this area of work since 2006. For example, an Equalities and Community Cohesion Group now meets regularly and reports to the Halton Strategic Partnership.

The Partnership is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not accept discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

This commitment to equity and social justice is clearly stated in the adopted equal opportunities policy of the Partnership. This states that the Partnership:

- is committed to promoting equal opportunities in Halton
- values diversity and encourages fairness and justice
- wants equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation
- will combat discrimination and will use its position of influence in the borough, wherever possible, to help overcome discriminatory barriers

As well as accepting our legal responsibilities, we are committed to broad principles of social justice. The Partnership is opposed to any form of discrimination and oppression and looks to enhance quality of life by supporting individuals and communities who experience marginalisation and exclusion. Our policies apply to all of those who come into contact with us. This includes current users of directly provided services, users of services provided on our behalf, potential users of services, other agencies and professionals, employees and job applicants, and the general public.

The Partnership wants to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated, valued and able to participate fully and constructively in the life of the local community. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable reason will not be tolerated. As a Partnership we are committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

Halton is committed to equality of opportunity for disabled people and to ending discrimination. The passing of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 has given a new focus to our commitment to disabled people. Underlying this Strategy is a commitment to turn policy into practice. We want to identify and support all family carers and cared for people with disabilities in Halton by striving to improve their quality of life and life chances. We want disabled people living and working in Halton to be able to realise their full potential. We will make progress towards this by removing barriers and changing the attitudes which prevent disabled people from gaining access to employment and to the services provided by partners.

Partners will work collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. They will ensure that all services are provided fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate

to these needs. Partners will monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and delivery. Equality Impact Assessments will also be carried out on Partnership policies and services to assess how policies and services impact on different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will highlight areas for improvement, which will be dealt with through the Partnership Improvement Plan.

6. Population

Following national and regional trends, Halton’s population continues to age with older people making up an increasing proportion of the population:

Younger	people	(0-14	year	olds):
projected to grow by 2% (2006-2021).				
Working	age	(15-64	year	olds):
projected to decline by 2% (2006-2021).				
Older	people			(65+):
projected to grow by 43% from 16,400 in 2006 to 23,500 in 2021.				

The growth in older people will increase the demands for both formal and informal support. While small decreases in the working age population mean there are fewer people to provide and pay for this additional support.

7. Housing

The priorities set out within the Halton Housing Strategy 2009-11 mirror the priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is recognised that many housing objectives can make a contribution to more than one of the Sustainable Community Strategy’s aims and objectives. This is a summary of some of the main areas that link to the Sustainable Community Strategy. A full breakdown of these areas is set out in the table attached to the Housing Strategy.

The Government and the regional housing board have identified the “big issues” for housing for the next decade. Halton does not necessarily exhibit these problems to the same degree as other areas, so the challenge for Halton is to develop solutions and secure resources for local problems that are not reflected in national or regional policy.

Partnership working will be key to this process and we will endeavour to work with partners across local authority boundaries to seek joint solutions to common issues and to help shape sub regional policy.

There is an emerging affordability issue in the Borough, caused by the relationship between house prices and local incomes. Consequently the demand for social rented housing has increased in recent years but the number of available social rented dwellings has declined. Equally the private rented sector cannot fully meet the demands of those unable to afford to buy or access social rented housing due to low supply and high rents.

Other housing demand issues include a mismatch between demand for private sector terraced housing and the number of terraces available (which could result in market decline in poorer areas) and the predicted demographic change in the elderly population which is likely to result in increased demand for supported housing and related services.

In terms of housing condition, the private sector is generally in good condition although there are concentrations of older terraced housing with the potential to fall into decline without investment by the owners. The condition of privately rented property is generally poorer.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are on target to meet the 2010 target of making all homes decent, which in turn should improve energy efficiency. Although vacancy levels are generally comparable with national and regional figures the proportion of private sector dwellings vacant for more than six months is a growing cause for concern.

Overcrowding is higher in the social rented than owner occupied sectors, though there is potential to alleviate this through making better use of the housing stock.

In relation to local populations and communities, Halton has a very small Black and Minority ethnic population, although the demographics of that population are rapidly changing due to Eastern European migration.

Although homelessness remains an issue in Halton, the number of presentations has dropped considerably since the last Housing Strategy was produced. Recent prevention service developments for homeless people are proving successful and should have a positive impact on acceptances and the number of people in temporary accommodation.

Worklessness is an issue on many social housing estates across Halton and the Council is working with RSL partners to develop projects aimed at tackling worklessness on these estates.

The Council is improving provision for Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with the recommendations of the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, with the development of a 14 pitch transit site.

Supply and demand analysis for particular client groups reveals a need for increased accommodation for the elderly, particularly extra care accommodation, making better use of the existing stock of adapted dwellings

and a range of accommodation for people with mental health problems offering varying levels of support.

Government expenditure on housing is set to increase nationally; however, this will be specifically targeted at housing growth and affordable housing at the expense of private sector renewal. It will also be targeted at specific interventions developed at a sub regional level.

The Council is likely to receive a reduced capital allocation over the term of the Strategy and there is uncertainty over the levels of funding available for adaptations and new supported housing schemes.

8. Community empowerment and engagement

It is now recognised that both individuals and whole communities can and should take some responsibility for improving quality of life. This requires action especially through Local Government and other public and voluntary sector services, to empower local communities so that they develop skills and can access resources to play their part effectively.

9. Cross Cutting Targets

There are many key targets that we work towards achieving in partnership, all of which are included in the improvement targets in each of the five priority areas within this document. See pages 19, 24, 28, 32 and 35 for detailed target information.

HOW WILL WE MAKE IT HAPPEN IN HALTON?

All the objectives and targets outlined here are achievable. How well and how quickly this happens depends crucially on the availability of resources and how smartly they are used. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information, allied with the strength of will to use them in the best way. A key purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the borough. This means:

- Being clear and agreeing about what we need to achieve so we are all pulling in the same direction
- Maximising the funding we can generate or draw in to benefit Halton and developing our own resources and the capacity to help ourselves
- Co-operating to be more effective, cutting out duplication and waste, and pooling the budgets, knowledge and efforts of different organisations and groups where this makes sense
- Listening and responding to what matters most to people locally
- Targeting what we do to where it can make most difference
- Doing the kind of things that experience has shown will really work and be successful
- Checking on progress, letting people know how we are doing, and adjusting where necessary to keep on track

Without the tools and the will to do the job, the improvements set out in this Strategy will not happen.

Money

The organisations that make up the Partnership already spend hundreds of millions of pounds of public money each year in Halton. Much of this goes to maintain essential services like health, policing, schools, transport and waste collection that we tend to take for granted. The way money is spent on these statutory services – ‘mainstream budgets’ – has to be steadily re-focused to achieve the specific objectives and improvement targets within this Strategy. The Sustainable Community Strategy provides a tool to help partners refocus their budgets.

The Strategy also provides a framework to help identify and secure additional funding for the borough from a variety of sources. It sets out shared policy objectives along with clear aims and targets across the five agreed key themes. This gives a framework in which partners can make budgetary decisions that reflect Halton's priorities.

Halton received Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, which provided tremendous support (more than £30million) to the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In 2007 Halton was awarded a further £16million from the Working Neighbourhood Fund, to continue with the important projects already serving the communities needs, up until 2011.

Local Area Agreements provide a mechanism for the partners to genuinely work together to achieve the same goals and to spend the resources discussed above. They provide an opportunity to map resources and activity, streamline current processes, pool and align budgets, eliminate duplication, attract new funding and to target activity to where it is most needed to achieve the overall vision for Halton. In particular agreements will target funding at the most deprived neighbourhoods and towards specific at-risk groups.

People & Assets

Allied to cash, the efforts, skills and determination of people living and working in the borough are key to success. This applies to individuals interested or already active in helping their local community as well as to those who work in public, voluntary and other organisations serving Halton. We need to boost skills and knowledge and stimulate confidence and motivation that will strengthen the Borough's capacity to help itself. We must ensure that we are organised and co-operate in ways that are effective and deliver real benefits. Also, we need to provide better ways for people to work collaboratively and across organisational boundaries to increase their own job satisfaction and their impact on the challenges they deal with.

Most of the steps we need to take in moving Halton forward will involve some use of land, buildings, equipment and materials. Hundreds of millions of pounds are currently invested in publicly owned physical resources of various kinds within the borough. We need to make optimum use of these assets, cutting out any unnecessary duplication and ensuring they are well adapted to local requirements.

In particular we have to respond to the rise of consumerism and the desire of people to access a range of services through a single portal. The advent of Halton Direct Link, Health Care Resource Centres, extended schools and Children's Centres provide models of exemplary service delivery which are highly valued by local people. Increasingly, partners will need to look at much greater efforts towards co-location and joint use of facilities. Not only is this more cost efficient, but it gives partners a proper customer focus.

Intelligence

Without proper information, and making it easily accessible to people, we are working in the dark in trying to bring about improvement in Halton. This covers information about local needs and conditions, and what people think is most important for their communities. It is about the information we need to understand what is likely to work well in achieving our targets for Halton. It's about keeping people – local people and partner organisations – in the picture about the progress we are making together.

The Partnership has made a big commitment to improving the way information is gathered, used and shared. Of particular note are:

- a) A data 'Observatory' that holds key statistical information on all aspects of living conditions in Halton. The Observatory provides data at a variety of spatial levels – super output area, ward, neighbourhood and district level – and allow for comparison with our neighbours and regional and national averages. It will greatly help people to understand the geography and nature of disadvantage in Halton.
- b) The Partnership has a database of consultation and community engagement in Halton. This will enable people to access a rich source of attitudinal data on a range of issues. It will also help people to plan and execute better community engagement in the borough.
- c) The Partnership website provides an easy to access source of material on all aspects of the Halton Strategic Partnership's work throughout the borough. The site covers the full range of activities from events and award ceremonies to new policy changes. There are dedicated sections for each of the priority areas that outline the aims and objectives plus provide access for meeting minutes. There is also a newly added policy section, developed to keep partners up to date with any changes.

MANAGING RISKS

The Partnership recognises the scale of its ambition and is realistic in its expectations of what can be achieved given the scale of resources being deployed. It also recognises that risk management must be an integral part of the performance management framework and business planning process. This will increase the probability of success (and reduce the likelihood of failure) by identifying, evaluating and controlling the risks associated with the achievement of its objectives.

The risk management process focuses attention and resources on critical areas, provides more robust action plans and better informed decision-making. It also fosters a culture where uncertainty does not slow progress or stifle innovation and ensures the commitment and resources of the Partnership to produce positive outcomes.

As part of implementing this Sustainable Community Strategy the Partnership will adopt a Risk Management Strategy and establish a Strategic Risk Register. The Strategy will set out the risk management objectives, the role and responsibilities for risk management of the Board and individual Specialist Strategic Partnerships, and will categorise risks and the approach to risk management action plans.

The risk management objectives include the;

- Adoption of Risk Management as a key part of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Identification, evaluation and economic control of strategic and operational risks
- Promotion of ownership through increased levels of awareness and skills development

The Partnership's risks can be broadly categorised as either "strategic" or "operational". Strategic risks cover those threats or opportunities which could impact upon the achievement of medium and long-term goals.

A major review of strategic risks was carried out in 2006 when this Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted. That was followed up by an assessment of operational risks through each of the Specialist Strategic Partnerships as part of their action planning and Local Area Agreement process.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The targets in this plan are a first step towards aligning our vision for Halton in 2025. If we succeed in achieving our targets they will translate into real improvements for local people, building on the work done to date. This is why it is important to know how we are doing and what progress we are making in meeting the improvement targets we have set ourselves. By monitoring progress closely we can identify and build on successes, provide necessary assistance or support where progress has not met expectations, and adjust our efforts and resources to adapt to changing circumstances.

A range of high level outcomes have been set in the Strategy. These provide a benchmark and clarity in how our progress can be measured in the future. For all five themes there are several key objectives and a small number of key targets for each. In particular these reflect the government floor targets, local public service agreements and key desired outcomes. Together these form a 'score card' for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

We want to be judged by what we do and not by what we say. Every year the progress on the Sustainable Community Strategy will be reviewed and the scorecard published as part of our Annual Report. This will allow for scrutiny of the work of the Partnership. Local people are the best judges of how well we are doing. The Partnership works on their behalf and they are best placed to venture an opinion on how the quality of life in Halton rates. As well as the scorecard the Partnership will repeat its Quality of Life survey at regular intervals to track public perceptions of how well the Strategy is being implemented. This regular dialogue is a key part of our performance-monitoring framework. We genuinely want to know what people think of the things we do, how we go about tasks and what we should pay attention to in the future.

The forward programme of the Partnership in pursuit of the Strategy will be reviewed and updated to ensure it responds to changing circumstances. As well as the high level scorecard, each Specialist Strategic Partnership will have a more detailed action plan. This will contain a richer hierarchy of outcomes, outputs, targets and milestones. Each Partnership will be accountable for its own performance and the Board will seek qualitative monitoring reports on how work is progressing. One of the key features of the Strategy is the understanding of how each of the themes are linked and impact on each other. The Strategy establishes the importance of a number of key crosscutting themes that are common across all Partnership activity. A Performance and Standards Group reporting directly to the Board has been established. This group takes responsibility for all aspects of performance management and ensure proper oversight, scrutiny and accountability of all activities that take place under the auspices of the Partnership and this Sustainable Community Strategy.

ENGAGING THE PEOPLE OF HALTON

Wholesale improvement in the quality of life enjoyed by local people can only come about if a significant part of the community is involved in making it happen. This can take place informally, in many different ways within the community itself. However this has to be complemented by action taken with the support of a variety of public, voluntary and other bodies.

The views of the public were an important factor in deciding the overall themes and direction of this Sustainable Community Strategy. Channels of communication like the borough's Area Forums and the Police Community Action Meetings provide extra ways to share, discuss and resolve local issues. A whole range of services actively consult with and involve their customers, and staff from a range of organisations work closely with local people on a day-to-day basis.

The Halton Strategic Partnership sees itself, through this Strategy and the actions of partners, as providing leadership. This can only be achieved if they remain in touch with the people and communities they represent and serve. The Strategy aims to create an environment in which everyone can get involved in making things happen in Halton. We want to foster active participation by as many people and agencies as possible. The Partnership will look for ways to make itself more accountable to communities through events, panels, area forums and open and transparent decision-making processes. A number of steps define this:

Customer focus – Services and processes have to be designed around the needs of the people who actually use them. At the same time users need to have an appropriate role in specifying the services that are delivered.

Consultation & engagement – Partners will create specific and purposeful opportunities for people to give their views on what is needed and how it should be delivered. Wherever possible people should be actively involved in decision-making, service specification and design.

Communication – Letting people know what is happening, how they can get involved and encouraging dialogue between partners and local communities is vital. Various media and methods will be used in appropriate and sensitive ways to build and maintain the communication effort.

The Partnership has spent a considerable effort in developing an inclusive approach to engagement through its bespoke strategy and network arrangements. Full details are available on the Partnership website. Community empowerment is about members of a community feeling able to achieve their own goals, with some measure of control over the processes and strategies to attain these. It is a process whereby communities are encouraged to become increasingly self-reliant in improving their neighbourhoods and livelihoods. It is a cyclical, participatory process where local people co-operate in formal or informal groups to share their knowledge and experiences and to achieve common objectives. It is a process rather

than a blueprint, and one that underpins this Sustainable Community Strategy.

THE WAY FORWARD

This Sustainable Community Strategy highlights key objectives for each strategic theme and improvement targets by which success can be judged. These targets collectively form the Partnership Scorecard. We will report back to partners and the public each year on progress against this Scorecard.

If we succeed in achieving our targets, they will translate into real improvements for local people, including:

- longer, healthier lives
- a better urban environment and reasons to feel pride in Halton
- higher standards of education and skills and the greater employment and other life chances that go with them
- fewer people trapped by poverty, excluded or held back through some form of deprivation or disadvantage
- the freedom to feel safe and enjoy life in an attractive neighbourhood

If you have any queries or comments you would like to make about this Sustainable Community Strategy, please contact:

The Halton Strategic Partnership Team,
c/o Halton Borough Council,
Municipal Building,
Kingsway,
Widnes,
WA8 7QF

Telephone 0151 424 2061
or email lsp@halton.gov.uk

You can find out more detail on the work of the Partnership on our website:
www.haltonpartnership.net

REPORT TO:	Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	2 June 2009
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT:	Area Forum Annual Report 2008/9
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To inform members of the spending by the Area Forums for 2008/09.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Area forums were set up in 2001 as a way of bridging the gap between key agencies working within the Borough. Each Area Forum is led by local councillors and supported by a senior officer from the Council. Other partner organisations such as the Police, Fire Service, Housing Associations, Youth and voluntary sector bodies also attend Area Forums to keep the community informed of local developments and to respond to local concerns.
- 3.2 Funding was allocated to the Area Forums to spend on small-scale projects that are identified by the community. In 2008/9, a total of £600,000 was allocated to the Area Forums, made up of £300,000 WNF and £300,000 from Halton Borough Council Priorities Fund. It is allocated on a per capita basis across the seven Area Forums that cover the Borough.
- 3.3 The local community are invited to raise ideas for neighbourhood projects, which would help improve their local area. The Forum then considers these ideas, and an action plan agreed. Actions must have community support and not result in a long-term financial commitment.

4.0 AREA FORUM EXPENDITURE

- 4.1 The projects funded through the Area Forums are wide and varied.. They have been categorised into a number of key areas, which are listed below. . The proportion of the overall budget spent on each category is indicated in brackets after each heading.

4.2 Landscape (24%)

This covers a wide range of projects such as increased planting, improved allotments and provision of dog bins

4.3 Safety (7%)

This category includes road safety improvements, traffic calming and speed surveys.

4.4 Youth Facilities (20%)

Improvements to youth and community centres including facilities, lighting, creation of kick about areas, contribution to positive futures for local young people, and purchase of sporting equipment,

4.5 Improved Parks (18%)

This initiative puts gardeners into parks at the weekends, which helps deter vandalism, improves public reassurance and the general appearance of the parks. Funding has also been made available for improvements such as additional planting and seats..

4.6 Pedestrian Access (4%)

This funding has been used to make improvements to the local infrastructure, such as improving paths.

4.7 Security (11%)

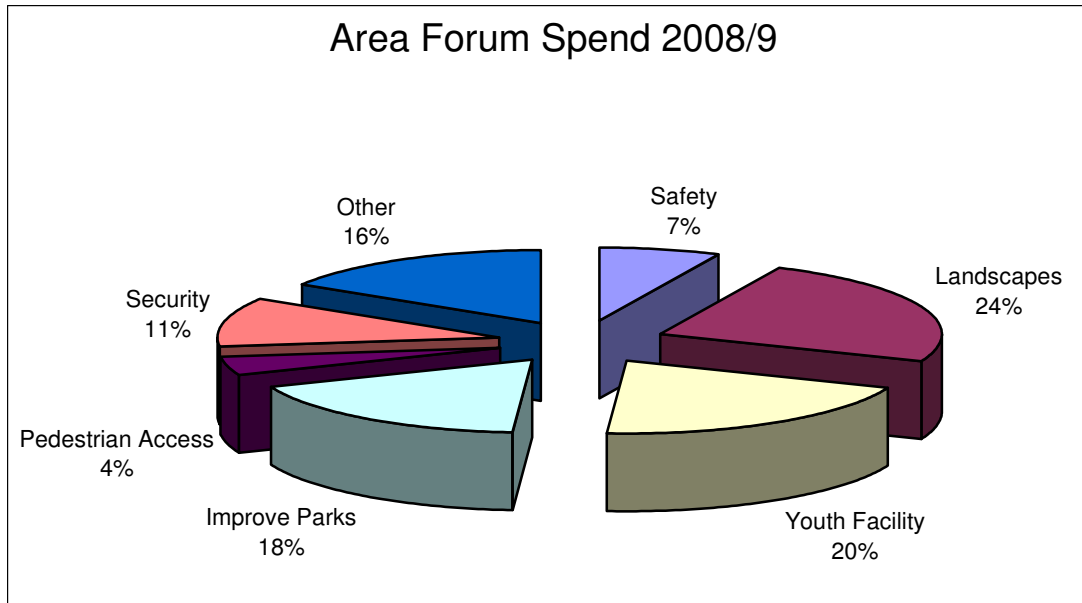
Area Panel funding has been used to continue the successful and highly valued Alley gating initiative as well as providing additional fencing.

4.8 Other (16%)

This includes general support for local initiatives for Community groups and Centres, local amenities, Parish Councils and facilities for older people

5.0 BREAKDOWN OF FUNDING

5.1 The graph illustrated in Appendix 1, show the breakdown of funding allocated across the above categories for 2008/09. The largest proportion of funding has been spent on Landscaping and youth facilities.



6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Area Forums are a key tool in engaging with local residents, and the budget provides a means of funding minor schemes in response to local needs. The projects funded are all required to demonstrate a contribution to priority areas such as safety, health and so on. There are no ongoing financial implications, as it is a strict criterion that area forum projects should not incur ongoing costs.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

There are no significant risks associated with this report which is for information only.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Efforts are made to ensure that all sections of the community can benefit from Area Forum funding. For example participation by young people is encouraged through the youth forum

10.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

10.2 The eligibility criteria for Area forum Funding requires the projects should support one or more of the Council's priorities.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Minutes of Area Forums	3rd floor Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes	Rob MacKenzie Operational Director Policy and Performance, 0151 471 7416 Rob.mackenzie@halton.gov.uk

REPORT TO: Corporate Services PPB

DATE: 02ND June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Performance Management Reports for Q4
Year-end 2008/09

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the 3rd quarter performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for the following services;

- Exchequer & Customer Services
- Financial Services
- ICT Services
- Legal, Personnel and Organisational Development
- Policy and Performance
- Property Services
- Stadium and Hospitality Services

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Policy & Performance Board;

- 1) Receive the 3rd 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.

3.0 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.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications associated with this report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The quarterly performance monitoring reports demonstrate how services are delivering against the objectives set out in the relevant service plan. Although some objectives link specifically to one priority area, the nature of the cross-cutting activities being reported means that to a greater or lesser extent a contribution is made to one or more of the priorities listed below;

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

6.6 Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

N/A

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
N/A		

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Corporate and Policy Directorate
SERVICE: Exchequer and Customer Services
PERIOD: Quarter 4 to period end 31st March 2009.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This monitoring report covers the Exchequer and Customer Services fourth quarter period up to year end 31 March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 Financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 5.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Revenues & Benefits

- **Customer Service Excellence Accreditation.** An initial self assessment has been completed by HDL and Revenues & Benefits against the CSE Standards. This self assessment will be discussed with the company recently appointed to carry out the accreditation inspection. During the first quarter of 2009/10 the two Sections will start to collate the agreed supporting evidence. Further work after this will be required to meet those areas of the CSE Standards which the Sections have identified as not currently meeting the CSE requirements.
- Introduction of Employment Support Allowance (ESA) From October 2008 this new allowance replaced Incapacity Benefit, Severe Disablement Allowance and Income Support. Monitoring results have shown a much slower transition onto ESA than first anticipated, leading to a lower level impact for staff and systems. This however needs to continue to be closely monitored during 2009/10 as more customers move onto this new benefit.

- **Welfare Benefits** In the financial year 2008/09, the activities of the Welfare Rights Service brought nearly £2.5m of benefit income directly into the pockets of Halton residents (17.3% increase on 2007/08). Almost £1m of this was Disability Living Allowance (34% increase). The team undertakes representation work at benefit appeals and the demand for this skilled service and the numbers of clients represented has increased from 97 (2006/7), 106 (2007/08) to 115 (2008/09). The team maintains an 80% success rate at these hearings. Money Advice work undertaken by the unit has increased by 73% in the last financial year.
- **Benefits Express** The Benefit Express has been a major asset to the Borough for a number of years but it is soon to be rebranded as the Halton Advice Bus to reflect its wider use by partner agencies.

Customer Services

- **National Indicator 14 (NI14).** This indicator came in to force on the 1st October 2008 and records avoidable contact from the Council's customers. The indicator measures the 'Avoidable Contact' to the Council across all channels. The HDL system has already been amended to record Avoidable Contact but other areas of the Council also have a responsibility to measure their Avoidable Contacts.

HDL has modified its system to record not only the number of avoidable contacts but also the reason this will allow Directorates to understand the issues and put in place effective remedies. The total measured contacts across the Council in this period were 98,641 contacts of which 12,235 were deemed to be avoidable (12.4%).

- **HDL Statistics**

This table summarises the enquiries by type, made through the Contact Centre and the One Stop Shops in 2008/9

Service Area	Total	%
Benefits	15,767	24.59%
Council Tax	13,897	21.68%
Neighbourhood	6,798	10.60%
Social Services	3,729	5.82%
Transportation	2,952	4.60%
Health & Community	2,214	3.45%
Environmental	2,074	3.24%
Misc Services	2,043	3.19%
Support Services	1,972	3.08%
Highways	1,698	2.65%
HHT Out of hours service	3,281	5.12%
Emergency Duty Team	1,176	1.83%
Switchboard Enquiries	1,056	1.65%
Personnel	999	1.56%
Revenues	803	1.25%
Registrar	787	1.23%
Education	661	1.03%
Legal and Licensing	529	0.83%
Children's Duty Team	437	0.68%
Planning	385	0.60%
Corporate	327	0.51%
Tourist Information	264	0.41%
Property Services	173	0.27%
External Agencies	88	0.14%
	64,110	100.00%

Procurement & Finance Support

- **Improved Payment Terms for SMEs** Performance on payments to Small & Medium Enterprises (SME's) has increased from 44% paid on time at the end of December 2008 to 62% at the end of March 2009. Electronic scanning and matching of all appropriate invoices is in place for the central invoice processing function, in Corporate and Policy, Health and Community and Environment. Children and Young Peoples Directorate are part way through implementation.

- **Electronic solutions** A Project Implementation workshop has been undertaken for the Electronic Contracting System. Training dates are scheduled for May 2009. A cross directorate group has been identified to implement 4 modules -Electronic Request for Quotes-Contract Advertising/OJEU Advertising and Electronic Tendering. These will go live in the target groups by 31st July.
- **Multifunctional Devices (MFD's)** The roll out of the MFD implementation program will continue into the new year.
- **Reducing Transactions** The number of purchase card transactions has been increased to produce lower processing costs for the Council and better cash flow and lower collection costs, for our suppliers. Embedded Purchase cards are used for purchases of foods for school meals, hotel accommodation and the purchase of second hand books. There were 6555 transactions made via the purchase card amounting to £864,500 during 2008-9.
- **IDEA Marketplace** Two new corporate suppliers Alexandra, and Monks and Crane have added their catalogues to be accessible through our electronic marketplace.
- **Agresso Procurement Training** Training sessions have been delivered to 450 Agresso users to refresh their skills and demonstrate best practice and how to get the most from the system. We incorporated some basic procurement training into the sessions to underline the close links between procurement and our purchasing system.
- **Procurement Savings.** The table below shows the savings to date achieved through the introduction of corporate contracts across the Council. Two new contracts have been entered into since December 08 with Alexandra for uniform clothing, and Frozen Foods from Brakes under a new framework agreement. Projected savings for the financial year were forecast to be in the region of £300k. The table demonstrates savings in excess of anticipations. These have been brought about by strict adherence to good procurement methods, restricting access to non contract suppliers, joining framework agreements which provide greater financial savings and by working with non procurement personnel in service areas to help them understand how to apply procurement best practice.

Contract	YTD Contract Savings £
Agency Workers	174,086
Rail Tickets	21,494
Post	68,858
Stationery	17,048
Stationery –change from branded to own brand products	31,774
Office Furniture	31,653
PPE - Personal Protective Equipment New Contract commences January 09	-53
Professional Uniform and Clothing	2,584
Civic Newspaper	11,692
In-Touch Magazine	1,856
MFD's	13,796
MFD's - Toner Savings	73,859
Frozen Foods new Contract	26,143
Total Savings	474,790

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

Procurement & Finance Support

New topics have been identified for action this year

- The Flexible Framework for Sustainable Procurement -this requires a more co-ordinated approach and training for key procurement and contracting staff.
- The Agency Staff Framework Agreement is currently out to tender. Halton have again joined forces with other Merseyside Authorities in order to secure the best possible deal from our supply community.
- A review of the amount spent corporately on external printing and associated work has identified this as an area for improvement. The Procurement Unit is working collaboratively with Public Relations and the Print Unit to identify a better way forward.
- Halton is leading on a framework tender for specialist print paper that will be open to all Merseyside Authorities to join.
- Spend on hygiene services are to be brought together under a Framework Agreement let by Liverpool City Council.

- The Procurement Unit are working with Internal Audit to determine best practice in the procurement of consultancy services.
- The Procurement Unit is investigating the possibility of integrating electronic invoices into the Agresso system from one of our large corporate suppliers. There are initial costs with developing this functionality and an outline business case is being developed.




Customer Services

- **Transfer of Back Office Processes** Work is continually being undertaken to transfer back office functions to the Contact Centre. Queries regarding payments to Creditors will soon be handled by the Contact Centre.
- **Tell Us Once Project** Currently HDL has a process whereby any significant life events e.g. notification of death and Change of Address are disseminated to all appropriate Council Departments. There is a National Project currently being run by DWP as part of the Service Transformation Agreement for multi government agencies e.g. General Register Office, Identity and Passport Service, HMRC, DWP etc to work together and respond in a co-ordinated way (Tell us Once) This programme was lead by DWP and was piloted with some local authorities and agencies and is at the stage where other local authorities are being asked to be included - Customer Services along with the BPR team are currently looking at how Halton can become involved with this project.

Revenues & Benefits

- KLOE/ Audit Commission Inspections. Since the announcement that The Audit Commission has taken over the role of inspecting Benefits services a substantial amount of work has been undertaken to carry out an initial self-assessment against the new requirements. This work is now almost complete with most of the identified minor shortcomings being dealt with. However there do remain a number of more involved requirements that need to be addressed, some of which require corporate involvement. It is planned to present a paper to Management Team on the findings and implications early in the near future.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST SERVICE OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES




Total	9		9		0		0
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All of the objectives for the service are proceeding as planned and additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW




No service reviews in this period

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	5		3		0		2
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With the exception of payment of invoices and proportion of Council Tax collected, which are only very marginally below their target, all key performance indicators have achieving or exceeding their target at year end, additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	1		1		0		0
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There are a total of four 'other' indicators, NI 14, NI 180, NI 181 and ECSLI 04. The one indicator for the service that can be reported at year end is ECSLI 04, which has been achieved. The other 3 indicators had no targets as they are new indicators but baseline information has been/is being created, information is provided within Appendix 3.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were deemed to be necessary.

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2008 – 2009




10.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

11.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
Appendix 4- Debtor Summary Statistics
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols

Progress against service objectives/milestones



Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone(s)	Progress Quarter 4	Commentary
ECS O1	Home working	Continue to roll out to staff where appropriate.		Home working continues to be rolled out across the Division. Staff are still joining the scheme. The pilot has now finished and there are now 32 staff successfully working from home
ECS O2	Business Improvement Districts	Bill properties in BID area		Implemented on time. Business Improvement Districts were introduced in April at Halebank and Astmoor. Collection rates were 97% for Halebank and 96.23% in Astmoor.
ECS O3	Implementation of Local housing allowance	Purchase new system software, install and test Staff training on both system and legislation General awareness for all key stakeholders (RSLs, local landlords, claimants etc.)		Project completed on time.

Progress against service objectives/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone(s)	Progress Quarter 4	Commentary
ECS 04	Implementation of Empty Property Relief	<p>Install new software</p> <p>Test and train staff on system and legislation</p> <p>Publicity for scheme to local businesses</p> <p>Bill businesses</p>		This project was successfully implemented on time
ECS 05	Move all staff to new Revenues & Benefits software (Version 6)	<p>Plan of action for transfer</p> <p>Train all new staff on new version of system</p> <p>Assess and monitor impact of new system</p>		Completed. New version of software operational.
ECS 06	Rollout NVQ to Cheshire LAs	<p>Carry out presentations to interested LAs</p> <p>Assess current Halton staff on scheme</p>		Completed. The Division is an accredited NVQ assessment Centre for the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation. The course of study has been offered to staff within the Division. 2008 also saw this being offered to staff from other LAs in Cheshire. Staff from various Las are studying at Halton.
ECS 07	To continue to promote and introduce more effective procurement	Further develop ongoing spend analysis identifying for potential saving		A number of quick wins highlighted and reviewed from the Spend Analysis Report in 06/07 have resulted in a number of Corporate Contracts being implemented. See table in the main body of this report.

APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (Exchequer & Customer Services)


Progress against service objectives/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone(s)	Progress Quarter 4	Commentary
ECS 08	Continue to develop appropriate e-solutions in conjunction with ICT / Directorates to further enhance service delivery through HDL	Review available service options Continue BPR		This is an ongoing project as the teams are continuing to examine service delivery options to free back office resources through business process re-engineering.
ECS 09	Examine implications/implementation of "Government Gateway"	Feb 08 - Undertake risk analysis		<p>Government Connect is a centrally driven common national infrastructure for government that HBC will be connecting into. It will allow the authority to securely share, transfer and receive data.</p> <p>It mandates a set of guidelines that define how we will use, access and store data within HBC. "If" we wish to interact with any Government bodies into the future. A risk analysis has been undertaken and a working party led by IT heading the project. It is anticipated that the Council will be compliant by the end of qtr 1.</p>

Progress against Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
<u>ECSLI 01</u>	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days	96.80	98.00	97.63		Annual corporate performance fell marginally short of target. Final Directorate Performance was as follows: C&YP 91% C&P 98% Environment 99% H&C 99%
<u>ECSLI 02</u> (BVPI 9)	Proportion of Council Tax collected	96.41	96.85	96.77		Fell marginally short of target, probably as a result of the economic downturn. It was nevertheless the highest Council Tax collection rate achieved by Halton
<u>ECSLI 03</u> (BVPI 10)	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	99.93	98.85	99.95		The annual collection rate was marginally higher than the previous year
Service Delivery						
<u>ECSLI 05</u> (BVPI 78a)	Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit)	17.77	23 Days	16.16		<i>Performance achieved is better than target and better than last years performance</i>
<u>ECSLI 06</u> (BVPI 78b)	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	3.99	6 Days	5.63		<i>Performance achieved is better than target</i>

Progress against Other Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
NI 14	Average number of customer contacts per received customer request.	New for 2008	TBA	Refer comment	N/A	The requirement to report this indicator only commenced on 1st October 2008. We have measured avoidable contact across 98,641 contacts and had 12,235 avoidable contacts giving an output of 12.4%.
NI 180	Changes in HB / CTB entitlements during the year.	New for 2008	TBA	750.9	N/A	New Indicator
NI 181	Time taken to process HB / CTB claims and change events (days)	New for 2008	TBA	8.86	N/A	New indicator
Quality						
ECSLI 04	% Of fairer charging assessments completed within 10 days of referral	100	98.00	100		Performance is ahead of target

Summary of Debtor Statistics



EXCHEQUER AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Analysis of Outstanding Debts at 31st March 2009

Department / Directorate	Arrears b/f	Raised in Year			Total Debits	Receipts / Refunds in Year		Total Receipts	Manual Adjustments	Other Adjustments	Balance Outstanding
		Debits	Credit Notes	Write- Offs		Payments	Refunds				
Education	522,931	4,499,400	-254,374	-4,174	4,763,783	-4,162,865	10,824	-4,152,041	-11,229	0	600,513
Children & Young People	522,931	4,499,400	-254,374	-4,174	4,763,783	-4,162,865	10,824	-4,152,041	-11,229	0	600,513
Benefits	808,590	373,795	-40,536	-16,135	1,125,713	-185,371	5,227	-180,144	-7,261	-30	938,278
Executives	6,894	235,456	-6,994	-40	235,316	-214,033	0	-214,033	-20	0	21,263
Legal	34,123	23,493	-2,431	-6,797	48,389	-2,390	57	-2,333	-3,101	0	
Resources	722,509	4,417,236	-185,413	-56,934	4,897,398	-3,827,959	8,565	-3,819,394	-136,910	-2,528	
Corporate & Policy	1,572,115	5,049,980	-235,373	-79,906	6,306,815	-4,229,753	13,849	-4,215,904	-147,292	-2,558	1,933,103
Environment	431,177	2,544,790	-111,397	-15,713	2,848,858	-2,306,317	1,859	-2,304,459	-19,162	-318	
Neighbourhood Services	320,647	4,251,801	-168,407	-9,584	4,394,457	-4,021,205	9,376	-4,011,828	-8,446	-239	
Regeneration	-50,000	9,829	0	0	-40,171	-6,369	0	-6,369	50,000	0	
Environment	701,824	6,806,419	-279,803	-25,298	7,203,143	-6,333,890	11,235	-6,322,655	22,392	-557	850,079
Culture & Leisure	195,692	2,098,151	-179,132	-1,036	2,113,676	-1,727,536	55	-1,727,481	-498	0	385,697
Social Care & Housing	336,986	6,266,657	-32,901	-3,476	6,567,266	-5,455,920	1,520	-5,454,400	-1,268	5	1,111,604
Social Services	825,460	4,276,191	-298,833	-15,169	4,787,649	-3,853,807	33,016	-3,820,791	-40,162	-1,450	925,247
Health & Community	1,358,139	12,641,000	-510,865	-19,682	13,468,591	11,037,264	34,592	11,002,672	-41,927	-1,445	2,422,547
Suspense	-15,752	0	0	0	-15,752	-106,832	0	-106,832	131,811	4,095	13,322
Grand Total	4,139,256	28,996,799	1,280,416	-129,059	31,726,580	25,870,605	70,500	25,800,105	-46,245	-464	5,879,766

Explanation of Traffic Light Symbols

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 Indicates that the <u>objective</u> has been <u>achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has been achieved</u> or exceeded.
<u>Red</u>	 Indicates that <u>the objective</u> <u>has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has not been achieved</u>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Corporate and Policy

SERVICE: Financial Services

PERIOD: Quarter 4 to year end 31st March 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This monitoring report covers the Financial Services fourth quarter period up to year end 31 March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 Financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 4

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The downturn within global financial markets has continued with the UK economy now being considered to be in deep recession. The action taken by the Government has injected stability into the banking system, but has not yet provided the stimulus for the UK economy as a whole. The Council will continue to act prudently so as to minimise financial risk during this uncertain period.

The Monetary Policy Committee continued to reduce the Bank of England Base Rate, from 2.0% in December 2008 to 0.5% in March 2009.

Inflation, as defined by the Consumer Prices Index (CPI), reduced from 3.1% in December 2008 to 2.9% in March 2009. The Retail Price Index (RPI), which includes mortgage costs, became negative in March 2009 for the first time since 1960, reducing to -0.4%. Inflation is expected to continue to fall over coming months with further reductions particularly in energy prices and the slowdown in consumer spending.

The final Local Government Finance Settlement was announced on 28th January 2009, without any changes to Halton's Settlement compared to the provisional figures.

The Council's 2009/10 Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax were approved by Full Council on 4th March 2009.

The Audit Commission issued their Annual Audit and Inspection Letter in March 2009 relating to the 2007/8 financial year, which confirmed;

- that the Council retained its four-star status and continues to improve well
- that improvements have continued to be made in a number of priority areas and there are ambitious and robust plans for further improvement
- an unqualified audit opinion on the 2007/08 accounts

Work is underway, with assistance from all Directorates, to prepare the Council's 2008/09 year-end accounts in accordance with regulatory requirements and statutory deadlines.

An evidence pack has been prepared for the Audit Commission, to assist with the 2009 CAA Use of Resources assessment. The assessment is significantly different this year, being part of the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA) and also being "outcome" rather than "output" based. The Audit Commission will report the results of their assessment to the Business Efficiency Board on 23rd September 2009.

The Department is involved in the development of the detailed delivery strategy, in respect of the efficiency themes identified by the Council's efficiency partner KPMG.

Support continues to be provided on the financial aspects of the Mersey Gateway development, the partnership with Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority for the procurement of waste treatment and disposal facilities, equal pay claims, and Building Schools for the Future.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

On 22nd April 2009 the Chancellor presented his Budget Report which included; increasing the annual efficiency target to 4% from 2010/11, continuing with the existing three year local government finance settlement to the end of 2010/11, significant reductions in capital spending, and tightening of public sector spending from 2011.

Major changes to accounting and financial disclosure requirements will be introduced from 2009/10, with the public sector's adoption of International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). A working group has been established with representatives from across the Council, to assess the implications of IFRS for Halton and prepare an action plan to implement the necessary changes.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	6		6		0		0
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All six of the objectives / milestones for the Service have been achieved and details are provided within Appendix 1.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

An action plan and self-assessment were prepared following last year's Use of Resources assessment and in preparation for the 2009 assessment, which have also been used as the basis for ensuring continued improvement across the Department.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	2		2		0		0
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Two of the 3 key performance indicators for the Department have been achieved. The third indicator cannot be reported until the second quarter of 2009/10. Details are provided within Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	6		6		0		0
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The remaining six performance indicators for the Department have been achieved and details are provided within Appendix 3.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were deemed to be necessary

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2008 – 2009



10.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.




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Progress against objective/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
FS O1	Set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and recommend Council Tax	<p>Report Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) to Executive Board November 2008.</p> <p>Report to Council in March 2009</p>		<p>The MTFS was reported to Executive Board on 20th November 2008.</p> <p>The Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax were approved by Council on 4th March 2009.</p>
FS O2	To effect financial prudence by assisting managers to control their budgets by monitoring spending and providing timely and accurate financial reports	<p>Provide monthly financial reports to budget holders within 8 days of month end (CA – Chief Accountant).</p> <p>Provide quarterly financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports (GA – Group Accountant).</p> <p>Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board Sub Committee. (CA)</p>		<p>Reports issued on schedule to date</p> <p>Quarter 3 reports were provided on schedule to Operational Directors.</p> <p>Quarter 3 was reported to Executive Board Sub Committee on 12th February 2009, showing that revenue and capital expenditure to date was below the budget profile.</p>



Progress against objective/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
FS 03	Provide for public accountability by reporting the Councils stewardship of public funds and its financial performance in the use of resources by preparing the final accounts as required by statute and in accordance with the latest accounting standards.	<p><i>Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts and report to the Business Efficiency Board by 30th June 2008.</i></p> <p><i>Publish the Abstract of Accounts by 30th September 2008.</i></p>		<p>The draft Abstract of Accounts was approved by the Business Efficiency Board on 26 June 2008.</p> <p>The 2007/08 Abstract of Accounts was published on 29 September 2008 along with a brief Summary of the Accounts. Both documents have been made available via the Council's website, HDL, Libraries and information points.</p>
FS 04	Make best use of cash resources available to the Council and meet its statutory responsibility by setting, implementing and monitoring the Treasury Management Policy	<p><i>Establish treasury Management Policy and report to the Executive Board Sub-Committee by April 2008.</i></p> <p><i>Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis.</i></p>		<p>The Treasury Management Policy was approved by Executive Board Sub-Committee on 20 March 2008.</p> <p>Quarter 3 was reported to Executive Board Sub Committee on 29th January 2009.</p>
FS 05	Ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable, prudent, and sustainable by setting and monitoring prudential borrowing indicators.	<p><i>Report prudential indicators to Council in March 2008.</i></p> <p><i>Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee on a quarterly basis</i></p>		<p>Prudential Indicators for 2008/09 were approved by Full Council on 5 March 2008.</p> <p>Quarter 3 capital spending was reported to Executive Board Sub Committee on 12th February 2009, showing 70% of planned spending at that stage.</p>




Progress against objective/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
FS O6	Provide an independent and objective opinion of the Council's control environment by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the Council's objectives.	<p><i>Obtain approval from the Business Efficiency Board for the Internal Audit Plan for 2008/9 June 2008.</i></p> <p><i>Carry out sufficient audit work across the whole of the organisation to ensure that a confident, evidence based audit opinion can be provided on the Council's control environment. A commentary on the audit work undertaken will be provided in quarterly progress reports to Business Efficiency Board.</i></p> <p><i>Provide an overall opinion on the Council's system of internal control in the Internal Audit Annual Report (2007/8) to the Business Efficiency Board June 2008.</i></p>		<p>The 2008/9 Internal Audit Plan was approved by the Business Efficiency Board on 27th February 2008.</p> <p>The third quarter Internal Audit progress report was presented to the Business Efficiency Board on 25th February. The fourth quarter report and annual internal audit report will be presented to the Business Efficiency Board on 3rd June 2009.</p>

Progress against key performance indicators




Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
FSLI 1	Receive an unqualified audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	Yes		The Audit Commission reported the findings of their audit of the 2007/08 final accounts to the Business Efficiency Board on 25 September 2008.
Cost & Efficiency						
NI 179	Value of (organisational) cashable efficiency gains.	New PI from 2008	£2.6M	N/A	See commentary	The value of forecast efficiency gains for 2008/9 is £2.6M. Actual efficiency gains will be reported at half year.
Quality						
FSLI 6	Undertake the external assessment for 75% of the Council's schools undergoing the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) accreditation process.	N/A	75 %	100%		Internal Audit completed the external assessment of all the Council's schools that were assessed against the Financial Management Standard in Schools in 2008/9.

Progress against other performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
FSLI 2	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	Yes	Yes	Yes		<p>In the Annual Audit & Inspection letter, published in March 2009, the Audit Commission stated: <u>Financial standing</u></p> <p><i>'The Council's arrangements for ensuring its financial standing is sound and effective. It has a history of setting balanced budgets and a proven track record of maintaining spending within overall budget with no major surprises in terms of over/under spends being reported'.</i></p> <p><u>Internal control</u></p> <p><i>'Risk management continues to develop and become embedded within the Council. Systems of internal control are generally good and arrangements for promoting and ensuring probity and propriety in business conduct are robust'.</i></p>
FSLI 3	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor concerning reliability of internal audit work.	Yes	Yes	Yes		<p>The Audit Commission's latest triennial review of Internal Audit concluded that:</p> <p><i>'Internal Audit is an important element of the control environment within the Council. Internal Audit provides an effective review of major elements of internal control and the quality of its work is good. It is proactive and its work covers the full range of the Council's activities. We are able to place reliance on the work of Internal Audit where it is relevant to our audit objectives'.</i></p>
FSLI 4	Maintain the Use of Resources scores achieved in CPA last year.	3 out of 4	Maintain 3 out of 4	3 out of 4		<p>The Audit Commission announced the results of the 2008 CPA Use of Resources assessment in December 2008 and the Council successfully maintained a score of 3 out of 4.</p>



APPENDIX THREE – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Financial Services)

Progress against other performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Cost & Efficiency						
FSLI 5	Achieve investment returns for the year higher than benchmark	5.72%	4.69%	5.98%		Despite the downturn in the financial markets, interest on investments exceeded the benchmark rate by year-end. This was primarily due in the early part of the financial year to having secured advantageous fixed rates on a number of investments for reasonably long periods.
Quality						
FSLI 7	Maintain the proportion of all eligible schools buying back financial services.	83%	83%	83%		All existing SLA schools bought back from Financial Services for 2008/09.
Service Delivery						
FSLI 8	Issue 75% of draft audit reports within 15 working days of completing the audit fieldwork.	77%	75%	81%		Target achieved.

Explanation of Traffic Light Symbols

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 Indicates that the <u>objective</u> has been <u>achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has been achieved</u> or exceeded.
<u>Red</u>	 Indicates that <u>the objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has not been achieved</u>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Corporate and Policy
SERVICE: I.C.T. Services
PERIOD: Quarter 4 to year end 31st March 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the I.C.T. Services fourth quarter up to period end 31st March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 Financial Statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 5

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Throughout the year the Code of Connection compliance requirements have dominated the ICT work stream, with a large amount of behind the scenes changes and upgrades required to enable the authority to comply with this drive towards securing both the corporate network, servers, desktop and working environment.

The compliance requirement will continue to increase over the next 12 months, and a new focus related to the security and integrity of data sources and sharing mechanisms will also start to fall under the wider remit of this requirement.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

All projects are on track but the Code of Connection will continue to dominate the programme in 2009/10, as it will require significant input over Q1 and Q2 of 2009/10 to meet with the key milestone of the 30th June, which is the date for initial compliance with the standard for the authority.

A detailed survey of Citrix and its effective use has identified the need for a number of changes over the coming months. Citrix services maintain a highly resilient and secure route for all external partners and remote users but as an internal solution the ongoing strategy will be to replace this technology with PC and Laptop based services that will better serve emerging software requirements and issues.

The following steps are being undertaken:

- Project plans/strategies are now under review.
- Review of all desktop equipment with a view to deploy mobile devices to those requiring such flexibility and PC devices for those that are primarily office based.
- Test and review of Windows Vista and the newer Version Windows 7 for compatibility with all third party software solutions.
- New Blackberry devices will be made available to provide a mobile e-mail solution
- New more secure password measures are being introduced
- Member laptops will be rebuilt to accommodate the new Code of Connection

A new project named 'I want IT' for internal use and Direct Dial phone numbers will be launched to deal with issues such as password reset and general enquiries. This contact number will be directed into the call centre increasing the number of operatives available and allowing 24 hour access to base services. It is the department's intension to increase the number of services through this route as quickly as possible.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



All objectives/milestones have been achieved with 2 exceptions: the Quality of Service Project, which was put on hold due to competing priorities and, the manufacturing delays imposed upon the PC replacement programme. With regard to the latter delivery dates are now confirmed and completion will be expected by June 2009. Appendix 1 provides details.

4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



All 'other' objectives/milestones have been achieved and additional details are provided in Appendix 2.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

The opportunity to review the departmental service solution as a whole through the current efficiency review process is underway. The department will embrace this opportunity to structure not only the service delivery platforms but review support structures.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Two out of the three the 'key' performance indicators for the service have been achieved above targeted level. The remaining key indicator did not achieve its target within the 2008/09 period, but is still improving and should be achieved by the end of June 2009. Additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Of the remaining performance indicators for the service 3 have marginally failed to achieve their target due to the level of end of year demand for ICT services across the authority compounded by the manufacturing delays imposed by HP for new desktop devices and circumstances beyond the control of the service. But these issues have now been dealt with and will be resolved and back on track for achievement by the end of June 2009. The remaining five were all on or above target. Additional details are included within Appendix 3.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were deemed to be necessary.

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2008 – 2009









10.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.








11.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Other Objective/Milestones
Appendix 3- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 4- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols

Progress against Key Objective/Milestones









Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
ICT O1	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network Infrastructure	PC Replacement 95,98,NT. June 2008		Completed as planned
		Implement Clientless VPN PC June 2008		As above
		VM Ware Phase 2 March 2009		As above
		New Citrix Farm March 2009		As above
		Schools Internet May 2008		As above
		Active Directory Phase 1 June 2008		Completed as planned
		3 Node Corporate Internet July 2008		Completed as planned
		Quality of Service Provision June 2008		Project on hold due to competing priorities.

Progress against Key Objective/Milestones







Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
ICT O1 cont'd	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network Infrastructure	End of life PC replacement programme March 2009 SAN and NAS replacement Sept 2008	 	Project underway, all non windows devices and devices under Win2K standard have been removed and all devices now locked down, with the new replacement programme starting Nov 2008. Completed as planned
ICT O2	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust hardware infrastructure	Complete exchange server upgrades (e-mail facility) June 2008 . Introduce data encryption to all laptop and tablet devices June 2008 Complete annual technology replacement programme (Elected Members) May 2008 . Complete annual PC / laptop replacement programme (377 devices) March 2009 Complete planned upgrades to CITRIX software systems March 2009	    	As above Completed within target date, to be rolled out with new device strategy. Completed within target date, changes due to CoCo compliance will impact upon this project due to new requirements. Underway and the 1 st of the new HP devices will be ready for delivery this month. Phase 1 complete as all member devices now work through the latest version of citrix. Laptop upgrade to commence.

APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (ICT Services)






Progress against Key Objective/Milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
ICT O3	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust software platform	Implement Corporate web reporting tools September 2008		Completed within target date
		Complete provision of intranet services to all secondary and primary schools June 2008		Completed within target date
		Implementation of corporate spyware for servers and PC's September 2008		In place and ready to rollout but held awaiting confirmation of the CoCo requirement set.
		Complete planned operating system upgrades Phase 2 March 2009		Tests are in place with XP Service pack 3 – standard build portfolio completed – Vista/Windows 7 tests underway.
		Share point evaluation and trial December 2008		Project underway with test system complete, and test environment under development.
		CSD back office rollout Phase 1 December 2008		Completed within target date
		Planning services links to CSD June 2008		as above
		CMS rebuild September 2008		Capital Bid for April 09 under review.



Progress against Key Objective/Milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
ICT O4	The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal.	Implementation of document imaging supporting adoption records Phase 1 December 2008		Completed within target date
		Planning and Building Control document imaging October 2008		As above
		Pilot workflow, internal ICT processes November 2008		As above
		EDT Delivery through HDL Phase 2 - in partnership between H & C, CYP and St Helen's MBC September 2008		Completed within target set, for the HBC aspect of the delivery – St Helens awaiting technology upgrade to comply.
		Staff Harassment system- corporate wide system meeting legislative requirements April 2008		Completed within target date
		Mayrise Highways and Streetworks integration into HDL September 2008		AS above




Progress against Other Objective/Milestones

Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
ICT O5	Improve service efficiency and improvement through the use of Business Process Re-engineering	<p><i>CSD Phase 2</i> March 2009</p> <p><i>Publication of further BPM diagrams via corporate intranet to facilitate communication of business transformation efficiencies</i> March 2009</p> <p><i>Deliver business transformational projects identified by the corporate BPR programme</i> March 2009</p> <p><i>Complete phases 2 and 3 of Trent software application</i> December 2008</p>	   	<p>Project ongoing and to plan</p> <p>Ongoing programme of works with a number of major developments released</p> <p>Ongoing programme of works with a number of major developments released</p> <p>ICT aspects complete awaiting departmental input.</p>
ICT O6	Evolve, improve and redevelop customer contact and reactive fix services, access channels and availability.	<p><i>Replacement of helpdesk software solution</i> March 2009.</p>		<p>Service Desk now moved to the call centre, all processes are currently under analysis and on target for a wider delivery of service.</p>

Progress against Other Objective/Milestones

Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
ICT O6 cont'd	Evolve, improve and redevelop customer contact and reactive fix services, access channels and availability.	<i>Improved Self Help Web Services March 2009.</i>		The "I want IT" portal is available with a number of online services to be made available.
	Evolve, improve and redevelop customer contact and reactive fix services, access channels and availability.	<i>Satisfaction survey March 2009</i>		Planned for Q1 - 09, following the delivery of the CoCo standards.




Progress against Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
ITCLI 1	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.82	99	99.12		Extremely high levels of performance ensure that the Council's IT operating environment ensures that business stability has been achieved throughout the year.
ITCLI 2	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.62	99	99.76		
Service Delivery						
ITCLI 6	Member Support: % of calls responded to within 1 working day.	100	95	94		Printing issues during the mid-year had an adverse affect upon performance. However with the new version of Citrix introduced in the Autumn performance increased and annual target was only marginally missed.

Progress against Other Performance Indicators



Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Service Delivery						
ITCLI 3	% Of all calls received that were resolved at the Help Desk.	88.9	60	58		An enhanced process of resolution has now been fully developed and implemented and this will have a positive impact upon this measure in the coming year.
ITCLI 4	% Of all responsive repairs completed within 2 working days.	84	80	82		Admittedly slightly lower than average but to target must be noted that 70% of repairs are within 1 day.
ITCLI 5	School Support SLA: % of calls responded to within <u>agreed</u> target*.					Again a solid quarters performance exceeding the target areas with the SLA.
	Priority 1	100	85	100		
	Priority 2	100	90	98		
	Priority 3	100	95	100		
	Priority 4	100	100	98		
ITCLI 7	% E-mail accounts set-up within 3 working days of receipt.	100	79	92		Slight drop due to new procedures issued through the code of connection.
ITCLI 8	Average working days from order to completion of a new PC	20.9	10	22		Within both the laptop and PC targets, delays have been due to stock levels and the delays forced upon ICT with the new contracts currently under development.

Progress against Other Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
ITCLI 9	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC	13.6	5	9		This is expected to roll over into the fourth quarter as the authority will be in the early stages of a new contractual arrangement. Also with the start of the Code of Connection lock down process this will impact upon installations as technical teams will have to focus upon priority areas for compliance.
ITCLI 10	Average working days from order to completion of a thin client device	13.4	7	1		Step change due to new stock procedures and installation process, also the resource improvements through new agency staffing have made this possible.
ITCLI 11	Average working days from delivery to completion of a thin client device	9.2	2	1		As above

Explanation of Traffic Light Signals

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 Indicates that the <u>objective</u> has been <u>achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has been achieved</u> or exceeded.
<u>Red</u>	 Indicates that <u>the objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has not been achieved</u>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Corporate & Policy

SERVICE: Legal and Member Services, Organisational Development & Human Resources

PERIOD: Quarter 4 to year end 31st March 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Legal and Member Services and Organisational Development & Human Resources fourth quarter period up to period end 31st March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 Financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 5.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Department's accreditation for the Lexcel & ISO standard was renewed in January.

A working group completed proposed revisions to the constitution, which were approved by Executive Board prior to being referred to Annual Council.

The Conveyancing Team has been involved in the completion of significant land acquisitions.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

The equal pay litigation is reaching an important phase.

The Mersey Gateway public inquiry will open on 19th May involving considerable support from the Department.

HR are playing an important role in supporting and refreshing training for Managers to deal with sickness absence.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	7		6		0		1
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All targets have been met apart from the completion of job evaluation appeals, as previously reported. Further details are included within Appendix 1.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

There are no issues regarding service review to be reported for the period.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	9		3		0		6
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As predicted last quarter, indicators relating to sickness absence and BME/Disabled staff and ill-health retirements have marginally failed to achieve annual targets. Details are in Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	7		4		0		3
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It is pleasing to report the all 'service delivery' targets have been met. With regard to 'fair access' work continues to be done in relation to public attending Council meetings and under 'corporate health' Considerable work continues to reduce sickness absence. More information is contained Appendix 3.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk treatment areas were deemed to be necessary.

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

No high priority actions have been identified as a result of undertaking the Equality Impact Assessment.






10.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.



11.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
Appendix 4- Explanation of traffic light symbols





Progress against objective/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
LOD O1	To provide a high quality legal service to the Council and its departments to ensure that the Council is able to deliver its services effectively.	Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation January 2009		Accreditations secured as planned.
LOD O2	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities.	Review Constitution May 2008		Constitution was reviewed as planned.
LOD O3	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively.	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting		MAP interviews continue to take place as planned.
		To induct all new members – by October 2008		Induction completed on 7 th May 2008.
LOD O4	To ensure the Council’s strategic approach to the management of Human Resources is reviewed and is consistent with best practice and reflects a modern, excellent authority.	Implement Priority Actions identified within the new HR Strategy March 2009		As previously reported, as a result of emerging issues and to ensure synergy and consistency with best practice, the HR Strategy will now become an integral part of the People Strategy that is currently being developed.



Progress against objective/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
LOD O5	To ensure that the Council rewards staff in accordance with legislation through a modern pay and grading system.	Implement the outcomes of the completed Pay and Grading Review and undertake any appeal hearings that may arise March 2009		Appeals are well under way but the sheer volume means that they will not be completed until later in the year.
LOD O6	To ensure that the Council has a modern and effective Human Resource management IT system to improve the relevance, availability and use of HR information.	Implement the remaining modules of the Trent IT system. March 2009		Implementation continues to progress on a phased basis.

Progress Against Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
LOD 2	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total)	51	52 (92%)	52		Target achieved
LOD 4 (BVPI 11)	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: -					
	Women	46.86	45.00	45.58		Target Achieved
	From black and ethnic minority communities	1.84	2.00	0.83		We had three employees in the top 5% c earners last year who were from an ethnic minority background - two of them left in the year so we only have one employee fitting that criterion now.
	With a disability	3.05	3.30	2.87		Staff turnover in the final quarter has resulted in the target being slightly missed. With this and the preceding indicator, small changes in numbers can result in significant percentage variations.

Progress Against Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
<u>LOD 5</u> (BVPI 12)	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	12.58	11.25	13.52		A significant amount of work to support effective sickness absence management across the Council has been completed to date and further work is programmed for implementation during 2009 - 10.
<u>LOD 6</u> (BVPI 14)	Early retirements (excluding ill-health) as a percentage of the total workforce.	0.08	0.14	0.05		Target achieved



Progress Against Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health Cont'd						
<u>LOD 7</u> (BVPI 15)	% Of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of total workforce	0.15	0.12	0.18		Each of these 3 indicators very narrowly failed to reach target, despite some improvement in LOD 10 in the final quarter. Work continues to attend to address these issues.
<u>LOD 8</u> (BVPI 16a)	No of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act as a % of the total workforce.	1.41	1.50	1.21		
<u>LOD 10</u> (BVPI 17a)	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.83	1.00	0.78		

Progress Against Other Performance Indicators



Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
LOD 1	Proportion of departmental working days lost to sickness absence (%)	5.2	4.5	7.3		Considerable work has been put in place to re-enforce procedures and carry out training with a view to driving down figures.
LOD 3	% of Members attending at least one organised Training Event	100	100	100		Target achieved.
Fair Access						
LOD 12	Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	686	600	492		Targets have not been met despite significant improvement in the final quarter. Levels of public participation are of course largely determined by subject matter under discussion.
LOD 13	No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	138	150	91		
Service Delivery						
LOD 14	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of instructions (working days) ^{NB}	7.3	10	9.3		Target achieved.

Progress Against Other Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Service Delivery cont'd						
LOD 15	Average time taken to complete Conveyancing Transactions	321	350	351		Target achieved.
LOD 16	Average time taken to complete Child Care Cases (calendar days)	222	275	238		Target achieved.

Application of Traffic Light Symbols

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 Indicates that the <u>objective</u> has been <u>achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has been achieved</u> or exceeded.
<u>Red</u>	 Indicates that <u>the objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has not been achieved</u>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Corporate and Policy

SERVICE: Property Services

PERIOD: Quarter 4 to year end 31st March 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Property Services fourth quarter period up to year-end 31st March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 Financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Asset Transfer Policy has now been completed and approved by both the Policy and Performance and Executive Boards.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

The current financial climate continues to have a significant affect on rental income from the Council's investment portfolio. A number of occupants have gone into liquidation within the year and many others are having difficulty meeting the rental payments, both of which have lead to an increased workload for the Estates department. It is anticipated that this situation is only likely to get worse over the coming months, as such the Council have agreed to a 10% reduction in market rents from April 1st in order to try and stimulate occupancy levels.

The continuing advance purchases for the new Mersey Gateway is further increasing the pressure on Property Services in managing these properties for both Estates and maintenance staff.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	6		6		0		0
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All objectives and milestones have been achieved as planned with no significant issues to report

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

The efficiency agenda continues to have an impact on Property Services and, in respect of this, a service review has been undertaken with regards to identifying the most appropriate way forward for the continued delivery of the service to ensure efficiencies are maximised. The report outlining the findings of this review will be completed in due course. It is likely that these may have a significant impact on the continued method of delivery of the functions of the Property Services department.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	4		1		0		3
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The problems with occupancy levels caused by the current financial climate have meant that the targets for both markets have not been achieved. However, the occupancy levels of the industrial portfolio have reached the target set, but it will be difficult to maintain this into 09/10.

Of the 3 indicators relating to energy management cannot be reported as information will not be available until the end of June 2009, due to the quarterly billing regime.

These are:

NI 185, 'CO₂ reductions from LA operations', and

NI 194 'Air quality - %reductions in NO_x and primary pm₁₀ emissions through local authority estate and operations'; because. The figures for the third indicator for CO₂ emissions which relates to per capita change in emissions are taken from Defra as such Property Services have no influence over them.

Please refer to Appendix 2 for additional details.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	7		3		0		4
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Progress against the 3 indicators which relate to rental income have all failed to reach their target due to the current financial climate. The other indicators which failed to reach the target set was that of time performance on contracts let, whilst the target was not reached there was a significant improvement over last years figures. See Appendix 3 for details.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were deemed to be necessary.

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

As a result of undertaking a departmental Equality Impact Assessment no high priority actions were identified for the service for the period 2008 – 2009







10.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

11.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones
 Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
 Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
 Appendix 4- Explanation of traffic light symbols

Progress against service objectives/milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
PS 01	Review of Property Assets for potential disposal	Annual review to produce disposal programme complete March 2009		List produced now to be submitted to Asset Management group
PS 02	Reduce backlog of maintenance on property portfolio (currently £3.5m)	£3.4Million		Achieved, however there has been a £250k reduction in maintenance money for 09/10 as such this will have a negative impact next year.
PS 03	Review Value of Property Assets for Councils accounts (20%)	<i>Annual Review of Value complete March 2009</i>		All completed on time
PS 04	Rationalise accommodation requirements through the refurbishment of Runcorn Town Hall office accommodation.	<i>Relocate staff to refurbished office accommodation at Runcorn Town Hall July 2008</i>		Achieved
PS 05	Fulfil requirements of Asbestos Audits and Management Regulations	Confirm 100% compliance		Achieved
PS 06	DDA Works Corporate (Non Schools) subject to funding (currently £200k per annum)	Complete 60% of Priority 2 works by March 2009		Achieved






Progress against Key Performance Indicators

Ref ¹	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
PYSLI 3	Occupancy of Industrial Units	83	80	89%		Achieved but forward look for 09/10 suggests this level will not be maintained
PYSLI 5	Occupancy of Market (Widnes) %	86.5	90	76%		Market continues to struggle against fierce competition from discount stores
PYSLI 7	Occupancy of Market (Runcorn) %	50	90	50%		Stable occupancy but at low level. Street Market being introduced to see if it improves occupancy
NI 185	CO ² Reduction from LA operations	New PI for 08-9	New PI for 08	N/A	See Comment	Figures for CO2 emissions for 008/09 will not be available until the 2 nd quarter 09/10 due to quarterly billing.
NI 186	Per capita reduction in CO ² emissions in the local authority area	New PI for 08	New PI for 08	6.24% increase		All figures for this indicator are produced and reported by Defra. The latest figures available which are for 2006 indicate Halton's per capita CO2 emissions increased by 6.24% over the 2005 baseline year



Progress against Key Performance Indicators

Ref ¹	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
NI 194	Air quality - % reduction in NO _x and primary pm10 emissions through local authority estate and operations	New PI for 08	New PI for 08	N/A	See Comment	Figures for NO _x and primary PM10 emissions for 008/09 will not be available until the 2 nd quarter 09/10 due to quarterly billing.

Progress against 'Other' Performance Indicators



Ref ²	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
PYSLI 1	% Of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	100	100	100%		Achieved
Cost & Efficiency						
PYSLI 2	% Cost Performance on projects over £50k (Contract Let to Practical Completion within 5% of the allotted cost – excluding Client changes)	81	90	90%		20 projects were completed within the year, 18 of them being within +/- 5% of the cost at contract let. The other 2 projects both came in well under budget.
PYSLI 4	% Of rent collected as % of rent due (Excluding bankruptcies and the like) (Industrial units)	92.5	95	87%		All of these measures have been adversely affected by the continuing economic climate. A number of initiatives have been implemented to try to mitigate as far as is possible against this back drop and the situation is being monitored closely as we move throughout 2009 – 10.
PYSLI 6	% Of rent collected as % of rent due Widnes market	95	95	94%		
PYSLI 8	% Of rent collected as % of rent due Runcorn market	95	95	88%		

Progress against 'Other' Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Fair access						
PYSLI 9 (BVPI 156)	The percentage of Authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people (previously BVPI 156)	65	70	72		Target achieved but future increases will be difficult because of the nature of the remaining buildings (changing rooms and the like)
Service Delivery						
PYSLI 10	Time performance on projects over £ 50 K (Contract let to practical completion within a margin of 5% - excluding Client changes)	63	90	85%		20 projects were completed within the year, 17 of them being completed with +/- 5% of the programmed timescale. The 3 projects that failed, 2 of them were down to contractor delays the other was due to unforeseen problems on site. Whilst the target has not been achieved there has been a significant improvement over last year's figures.

Explanation of the Traffic Light Symbols

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> has been <u>achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has been achieved</u> or exceeded.</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that <u>the objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has not been achieved</u></p>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Corporate and Policy

SERVICE: Policy & Performance

PERIOD: Quarter 4 to year end 31st March 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Policy & Performance Department third quarter period up to period end 31st March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 Financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 4.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

New web site Content Management System now purchased and web /IT staff have received training. Detailed implementation planning is now underway.

New performance management software has now been purchased for use by Council and Halton Strategic Partnership. Implementation and training to take place during first 6 months of 2009/10. This will enhance the flexibility and robustness of existing arrangements and its web based platform will reduce duplication between the Council and its partners.

The Head of Risk and Emergency Planning commenced a six month secondment to the Cabinet Office Civil Contingencies Secretariat in January.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

There are no significant emerging issues that have not been previously reported.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	16		11		0		5
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The majority of key objectives and milestones have been achieved. Of the five remaining objective/milestones all are underway and due to be completed in 2009/10. Details are provided in Appendix 1

4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES


Total	3		2		0		1
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All 'other' service objective/milestones have been achieved or will be achieved by the end of June 2009. Details are provided in Appendix 2

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

A review of the Data Observatory and Local Intelligence databases is presently underway.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	3		2		0		1
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Due to a review and revision in the approach to commissioning one target was missed due to a delay in the start of some projects, but there was no negative financial impact to the Council. Details are available in Appendix 3.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	12		11		0		1
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NI 1, 2, 4, 5 and 37 are new indicators for 2008/09 and form part of the new Place Survey; results of which should be available by the end of 2009. PPLI 12, 13 and 14 and NI 140 are no longer applicable. Of the 12 'other' indicators that can be reported 11 are on or above target and the remaining indicator will be available by the end of June 2009. Details can be found in Appendix 4.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

No 'high' risk, treatment measures were deemed to be necessary

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

There were no high priority actions identified as a result of undertaking the equality impact assessment.







10.0 DATA QUALITY

The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

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Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols





Progress against 'key' objectives

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
PP 01	Improve the effectiveness of the support intelligence and advice provided by the Council and its partners to review policy, resource planning service delivery and performance.	Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans June 2008.		Progress report completed and information reported to all PPB's
		Agree new Local area Agreement with government and secure ministerial sign-off June 2008.		LAA signed June 2008. Revised version signed off 2 April 2009 following "refresh".
		Review Community Engagement Strategy and agree annual Action Plan March 2009.		Work has commenced on the review. However, in the course of the detailed planning of the project it was decided to conduct an Audit of all our engagement activity. This is underway, but has delayed completion of the review.
		Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners March 2009		Mid year review completed November 2008. Full year progress report completed and received by Halton Strategic Partnership 20 May 2009.
		Complete design of and Undertake Place Surveys September 2008		Completed by December 2008
		Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences February 2009		Not yet available because the DCLG have intervened to question the weightings methodology




APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (Policy & Performance)

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
PP O2	Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's external communications	Undertake customer survey November 2008 .		Three surveys have been completed – an Inside Halton reader survey; plus two Halton 2000 surveys covering 'soft' communications issues and web usage
		Complete analysis of data and produce report and recommendations by March 2009 .		Data included in web strategy, reader feedback incorporated in plans for future editions of Inside Halton. Communications Guide update underway to address issues of creating 'trustworthy', plain English and effective communications
		Implement revised Communications Strategy March 2009		Communications strategy updated. Progress report presentation to PPB to be arranged for Summer 09
PP O3	Address inequalities and improve opportunities by narrowing the gap between the most deprived wards in the borough and the rest through the delivery of neighbourhood management arrangements.	Evaluate impact of Neighbourhood Management Teams and review delivery plans March 2009 .		There has been a slight delay in signing-off the Neighbourhood Action Plans because of the need to align with Halton's 2008 LAA and the mid-term review of the Community strategy. This will be completed by June 2009
		Produce and publish NM Update Quarterly .		It was decided not to issue a released in Q4 as this was replaced by an inaugural partnership celebration event in Feb 2009 at the Stobart Stadium.
PP O4	To ensure that the organisation remains fit for purpose through the ongoing development of business continuity, risk management and health and safety arrangements.	Implement current action plan and further review arrangements for business continuity in Directorates by December 2008 .		Plans reviewed, and exercise held in May 2008. Updated templates have been issued to directorates to enable them to produce more detailed plans during 2009.



APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (Policy & Performance)


Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
PP O4 cont'd	To ensure that the organisation remains fit for purpose through the ongoing development of business continuity, risk management and health and safety arrangements.	<p>Review the embeddedness of strategic risk management arrangements December 2008</p> <p>Corporate & Directorate Risk Registers reviewed by Corporate Risk Group, performance monitoring reports delivered and manager / member training provided by December 2008</p> <p>Secure external accreditation for Health and Safety March 2009.</p> <p>Review the Council's preparedness for pandemic flu and have appropriate plans in place March 2009.</p>	   	<p>Reviewed as part of the Audit Commission Use of Resources process and found to be embedded</p> <p>Corporate Risk register reviewed by corporate Group in March 2009. Directorate Risk registers not yet reviewed Work delayed by secondment of Head of Risk and Emergency Planning to the Cabinet Office</p> <p>The Legal Services and Organisational Development Department was assessed for accreditation in January 2009, but was unsuccessful. A new external adviser is to be appointed before re-applying.</p> <p>Plan produced, with further work being carried out with directorates.</p>

Progress against 'other' Service Objectives / milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Year end	Commentary
PP O5	<i>Improve the effectiveness of the service improvement and overview and scrutiny framework for the Council to deliver efficient, effective and high quality services through a programme of continuous improvement.</i>	Review progress on implementing Overview and Scrutiny Action Plan March 2009		Plan review undertaken in conjunction with PPB Chairs, December 2008
PP O6	<i>Work with the Policy and Performance Boards to develop and review policy proposals and hold Executive to account.</i>	Complete 07 – 08 Work Programme by 30th June 2008		2007/8 topics complete or withdrawn excepting 2 late additions and 1 delayed by Govt guidance. All due to complete June 2009
		Agree 08-09 Work Programmes for each PPB by 30th June 2008		Agreed by 30 th June 2008


Progress against Key Performance Indicators







Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
PPLI 1	% Of LAA / WNF Spend (%)	100	100	92		A number of partnerships undertook in depth reviews of their commissioning approach during 2008/9 leading to delayed starts for projects. No money has been lost from Halton.
PPLI 5	% Of Departments with up to date Risk Registers	100	100	100		Target achieved


Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Cost & Efficiency						
PPLI 11	% of departmental working days lost due to sickness absence.	4.5	4.0	3.85		Target achieved.





APPENDIX THREE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS (Policy & Performance)

Progress against 'other' performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health						
NI 1	% of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together	N/A	N/A	74.5	Refer comment	New indicator for 2008/09 compiled in accordance with the new Place Survey. Full results are still awaited from the DCLG who are questioning the weighting methodology.
NI 2	% of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.	32 (2006 Best value survey)	N/A	54		
NI 4	% of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality.	N/A	N/A	23.9		
NI 5	Overall / general satisfaction with local area.	66 (2006 Best value survey)	N/A	70		
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	N/A	N/A	17.4		
PPLI 3	% of neighbourhood element funding committed / spent	100 %	100 %	100%		Fully committed/spent



Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Corporate Health cont'd						
PPLI 4	% of Departments with up to date Business Continuity Plans	100 %	100 %	100%		BC plans were updated during 2008 and Directorates have now been issued with updated templates.
PPLI 6	Number of accidents resulting in injuries to staff	38	50	36		This year has seen a slight reduction in accidents, particularly in schools. This is primarily due to a programme of raising awareness and implementing control measures around Health and Safety.
PPLI 7	% of employees attending emergency planning training exercises.	100	100	100		Briefings have been held for all First Responders
PPLI 8	% of Objective 2 Action Plan ERDF committed.	96	N/A	96		Programme ended Dec 2008. Not all ERDF was taken up as a result of the slowdown in the economy. Government did not take up the option to extend the Objective 2 Programme
PPLI 9	% of Objective 2 Action Plan ERDF outputs achieved.	57	80	75 (Estimate)		Final claims for the programme are currently being collated and audited. Final figures will, therefore, be available in the for quarterly monitoring report at the end of June 2009. The indications are that 75% of programme targets will be met. This slightly below the target but there is a need to reflect on the impact the economic down turn had particularly on capital economic development projects.
PPLI 10	% of invoices paid within 30 days	93	94	98		Annual Target achieved.

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Fair Access						
PPLI 12	The duty to report Race Equality (Does the authority have a Race Equality scheme in place (%))	84	84	N/A	N/A	No longer applicable following introduction of new framework and standard
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services	N/A	N/A	68.1	N/A	New indicator for 2008/09 compiled in accordance with the new Place Survey. Full results are still awaited from the DCLG who are questioning the weighting methodology
Quality						
PPLI 13	Overall satisfaction with the communications of the Council (%)	48% (2006 BVUS Survey)	N/A	49%	N/A	Question changed in survey to Satisfaction with amount of information from the Council. Similar levels of satisfaction with clarity (47%) and accuracy (45%)
PPLI 14	Satisfaction with internal communications of the Council (%)	78% (2006/7 survey)	75	-	N/A	Survey to be incorporated within Staff Survey, due to take place in Sept 09
PPLI 15	% of residents in Halton's NM pilot areas reporting an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhoods.	47% Telephone survey	Survey undertaken every 2 years	Survey undertaken every 2 years		Work started with Research and intelligence Unit and Halton Strategic Partnership team to commission external contractor to deliver the next survey by the end of December 2009 in line with the biennial requirement.

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Actual 2008/09	Progress	Commentary
Quality cont'd						
PPLI 16	% Of NM pilot area residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area	18% Telephone Survey 32.9%?	Survey undertaken every 2 years	Survey undertaken every 2 years		Work was commissioned as part of 2008 Places Survey confirmation of the results is awaited (see commentary for NI 1 above). The NMA report has not been completed pending confirmation of weightings by DCLG. The next survey is due to be undertaken before the end of December 2010.
PPLI 17	% of residents in NM pilot areas engaged in Neighbourhood Partnership activity.	2931 (17.8%)	3224 (19.6%)	4074 (24.7%)		Target exceeded. Totals include only those residents actively engaged (attending events & participation etc) but excludes 'passive' engagement such as receiving newsletter or information
Service Delivery						
PPLI 18	Value of external funding bids supported (£000's)	1722	1000	2631		This figure relates to the total amount of grant awarded during 08/09, where the division wrote an application. However, the division has also contributed to a number of joint bids, by providing specialist support on respective funding regimes. Successful co-written bids in this quarter alone amount to £2.8 million.
PPLI 19	% of neighbourhood management improvement targets achieved	77	80	85		PPLI 19 and 20 are now combined. 23 out of 27 targets, milestones and objectives have been met. Of the remaining 4, the Neighbourhood Champions project did not proceed due to lack of resources. The other 3 will be completed by the end of June 2009.
PPLI 20	% of milestones and objectives within annual Neighbourhood Management Action Plan achieved.	76	80			

Explanation of the use of Traffic Light Symbols

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> has been <u>achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has been achieved</u> or exceeded.</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that <u>the objective</u> <u>has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 08/09 <u>target has not been achieved</u></p>

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Environment
SERVICE: Stadium & Hospitality
PERIOD: Quarter 4 to period end 31st March 2009

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This monitoring report covers the Stadium & Hospitality Department fourth quarter period up to year end 31st March 2009. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment. The final 2008/09 financial statements for the Department will be prepared and made available via the Council's Intranet once the Council's year-end accounts have been finalised. A notice will be provided within the Members' Weekly Bulletin as soon as they are available.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 4.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

SCHOOL MEALS

PSHE Conference

A conference was held at the Stadium in March for all the Healthy School leads from each school. They were given a presentation on the school meals service and also on the Million Meals Campaign which the School Food Trust are promoting in schools to try and increase the uptake of meals. The campaign encourages schools to investigate 10 areas that may restrict children from having a meal.

Fairfield Infants Meal for £1 Trial

A reduced price pilot was conducted at Fairfield Infants School, Widnes, from January until February half term. All paid meals were charged at £1 instead of the normal £1.90. The result saw a rise, compared to the same period last year, from 19% to 40%. In addition, since the trial ended, a substantial part of the increase has been maintained, the current paid meal uptake is 32%.

The trial was supported by both the school and parents, the latter informing that the most significant barrier to their children taking a school meal was the cost.

The results of the trial will be used to aid development of strategies to increase school meal uptake.

Free School Meals Bid (extension of the entitlement for free school meals to include families on family tax credit)

A bid has been submitted to DCSF to be one of the Authorities in the Country to pilot the extension of the free school meals pilot for a period of 2 years, this bid has had the full support of SMT and the PCT the latter having agreed funding in the region of £100,000 per year.

THE STADIUM

Weddings

The Stadium is now recognised as the number 1 venue in the area for Wedding Fayres, a recent event attracting over 40 exhibitors and in excess of 300 attendees. A dedicated room is to be developed in one of the Executive Suites that will allow wedding couples to sit and discuss their requirements, the room will contain graphics of previous weddings/events and also letters of commendation. The next event in November will include a change in format to introduce showcases on Make-up, Flowers, Diet & Fitness and other areas that would be of interest to Bride, (and Groom).

Adult Learning

The Adult Learning Department has taken occupancy of the IT Suite and an Executive Suite. They have provided a range of computer courses that have proved popular with tutors and user groups.

Everton Ladies Football Match

Everton Ladies are to play Arsenal Ladies on Sunday 10th May at the Stadium in what is likely to be the match that will decide who the Champions will be of this year's Ladies Premiere League.

Conferences and Events

A Business Fair will take place on Tuesday 19th May, the second year this event is being held at the Stadium. The event will be organised by an external company but plans are underway that will see Halton Chamber of Commerce, the Stadium and the Council's Economic Regeneration Department take the lead for any future events.

Business Breakfast

A Business Breakfast event was recently held at the Stadium that attracted over 100 local businesses for a meeting on "how the Council can help local businesses cope with the present financial downturn"; key speakers included the Chief Executive. Further events are planned.

Stadium Sports Bar and Reception Refurbishment

Refurbishment is planned, over the next 2/3 months, to the Stadium's Sports Bar and Main Reception.

Cabaret Nights

Following the success of the themed party nights over the Christmas Period, 3 events have been planned, they include a 70's "Boogie Nights" and the nationally acclaimed Queen tribute band "GAGA".

Stadium Fitness

Membership has seen a decline (120 fewer permanent full members), that is consistent with this market sector in general, that can be attributed to the current financial down turn.

Stadium Fitness has a current membership of over 2500, this is a combined membership of permanent full members, casual users & Halton Leisure Card users. An extensive promotion of facilities is ongoing and development of the "Offer" is continuous. Such development has included,

- ladies only exercise and diet class, including a free crèche.
- Junior training that has proved so popular that there is now a waiting list.
- A GP referral scheme (recipe for health), designed for an outcome of improved mobility, reducing stress and weight loss.
- Cheeky Monkeys, a toddler group session, with a criteria of bringing an adult who is required to participate.
- Good Companions an over 50's social dance group.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

THE STADIUM

Possible Flu Pandemic

The Stadium has been identified as an excellent venue for an anti-viral distribution centre by the PCT. Additional security has been installed and wireless connectivity introduced so that it would be ready and fit for purpose.

Public Inquiry

The Mersey Gateway Inquiry commences on Tuesday 19th May and could run for a number of months, a number of rooms within the Stadium have been allocated and additional IT support systems will be put in place.

Oak Meadow Re-location

During the recent refurbishment of Oak Meadow (Day Centre), service

users have been relocated to the Stadium Social Club, where they enjoyed the facilities and ambience of the Club. To make the move permanent is an option if the temporary arrangement proves beneficial to the service users.

Video Conferencing

Discussions are at an advanced stage with HBC IT Department and external contractors in connection with the provision of a high speed “real time” Video Conferencing facility being introduced in to one or more of the Executive Suites.

Semi Final Stand By

The Rugby League have enquired about the possibility of the Stadium staging a Semi-Final of The Challenge Cup should the competing teams fit geographically.

England School Boys Full International

Following the successful England Schoolboy’s trial match in the Autumn of last year, negotiations are underway to bring a full England Schoolboy International to the Stadium early in 2010.

SCHOOL MEALS




Food Cost Inflation

Although the headline rate of inflation is around 4% the actual rate of inflation on a number of food products is exceeding 20%. It will be difficult to pass these over inflation increases on to the customer without it having a serious effect on the levels of meal uptake.

Service Development

The Secondary School nutritional standards become law in September 2009. There is a National campaign that is trying to get Central Government to re-think the new standards as it is thought that it will be very difficult to get Secondary age Pupils to spend a set sum of money at lunchtime.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	16		15		0		1
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Good performance in respect of service objectives and milestones. For further details, please refer to Appendix 1.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

SCHOOL MEALS

Customer Satisfaction Survey

It was reported in Q3 that satisfaction with school meals was 92% in the period September to November, this against a target of 86.66%. This satisfaction level was maintained during January to March.

Internal Audit Review (follow –up)

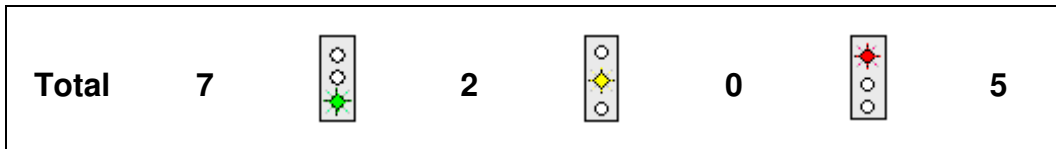
An internal audit of school meals has been completed and the findings have been presented to MT.

A recent review of the audit has confirmed that all the recommendations within the report have been actioned.

THE STADIUM

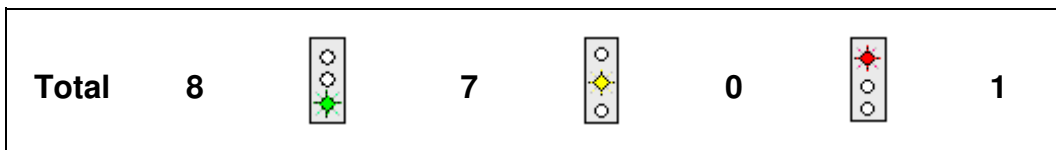
The Stadium is programmed for an Internal Audit within the next financial year.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Five targets set for “Key” indicators were not met, although good performance was achieved around nutritional standards in schools and in the uptake of meals. For further details, please refer to Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Good performance in respect of targets set for “Other” indicators. For further details, please refer to Appendix 3.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no LPSA targets for this service

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2008- 09 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.

No risks have been identified as High for the service.

9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

During 2007/08 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through assessments, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.







No actions have been identified as high priority for the service.







10.0 DATA QUALITY





The author provides assurance that the information contained within this report is accurate and valid and that every effort has been made to avoid the omission of data. Where data has been estimated, has been sourced directly from partner or other agencies, or where there are any concerns regarding the limitations of its use this has been clearly annotated.

11.0 APPENDICES

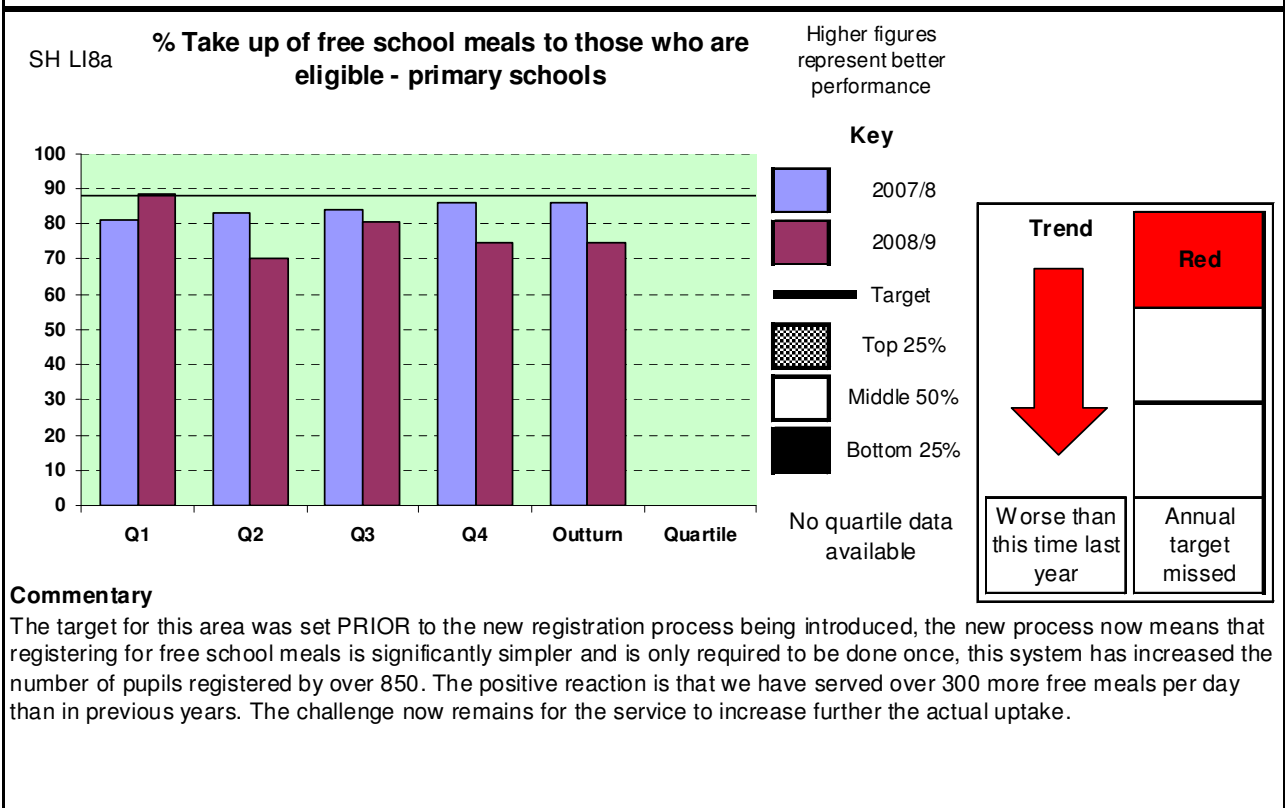
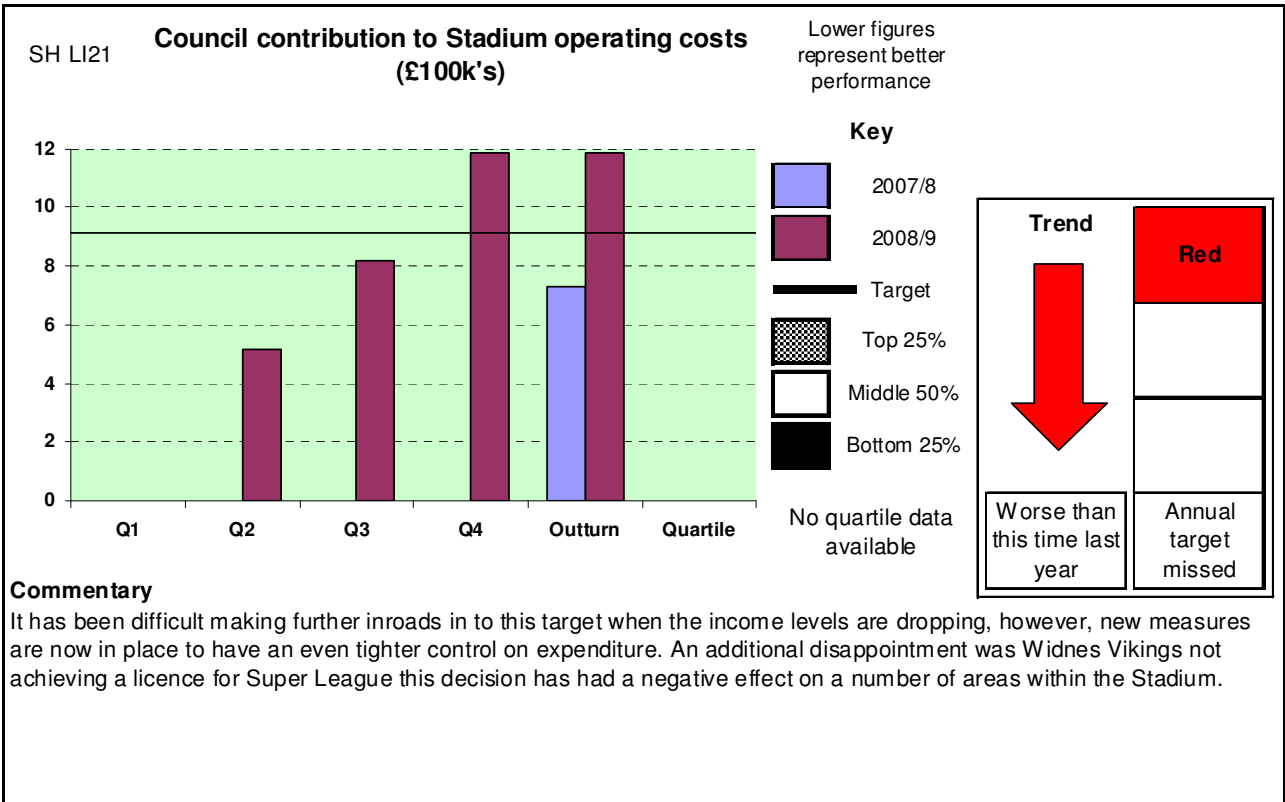
Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
Appendix 4- Explanation of traffic light symbols

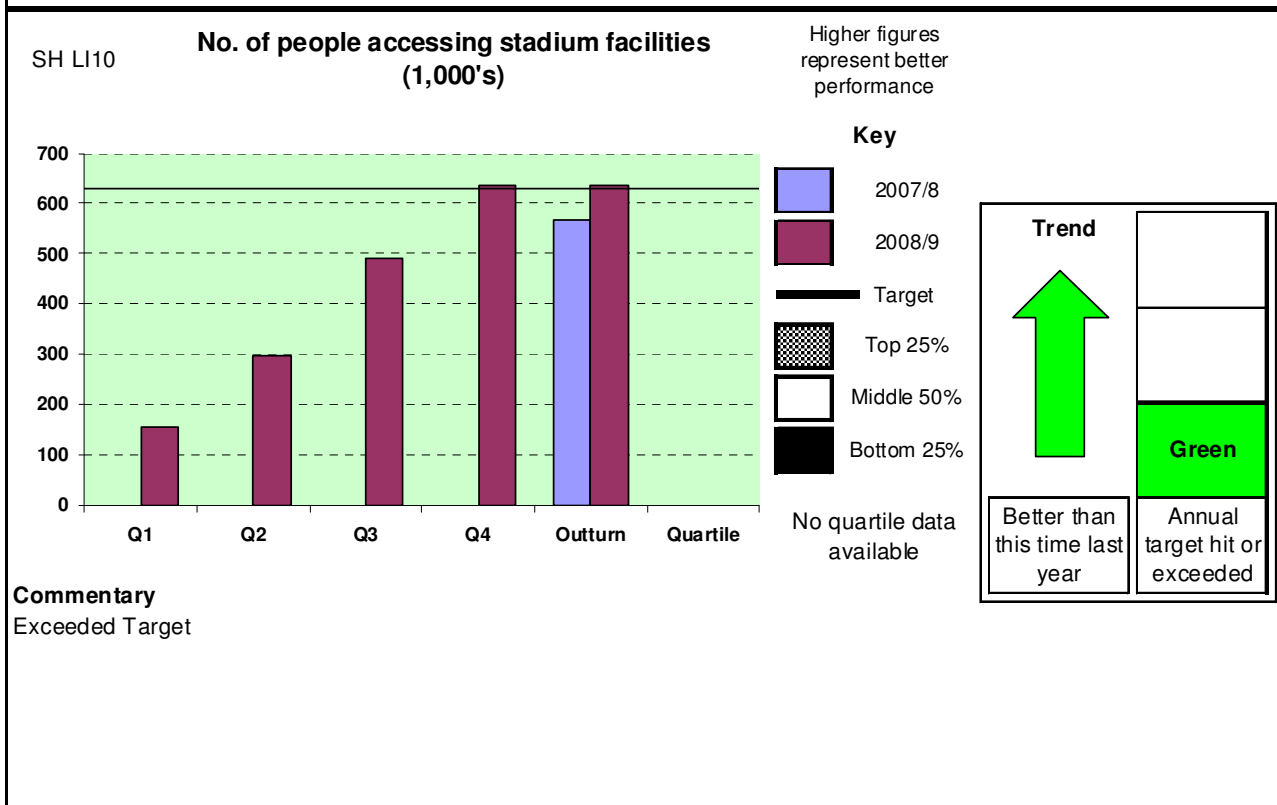
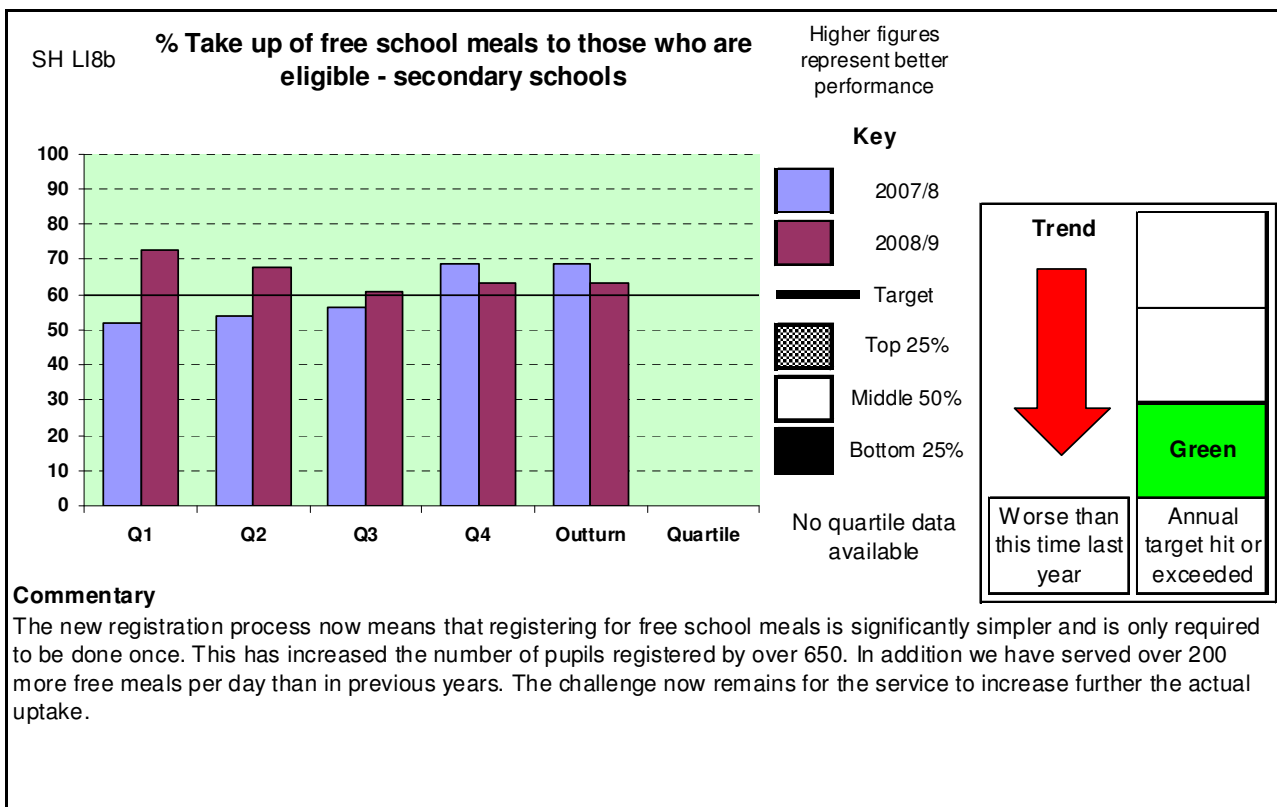
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SH 1	Increase the community usage of the stadium and to maintain and improve the health of Halton residents.	Identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan.(this will drive the development of milestones for 2009/10). Nov 2008		Completed. Detailed work is at an advanced stage for the new three-year Business Plan.
		Visit Riverside College Halton and local Sixth Forms to advise and promote to students the leisure facilities available at The Stadium. Sep 2008		Completed.
		Establish a regular forum to engage with all established community user groups to pursue development of activities and to encourage cross-activity cooperation May 2008		Completed, further meetings are to be programmed for 2009.
		Establish a formal process for measuring customer satisfaction with Stadium Community Services. Dec 2008		Completed.
		<i>Charitable and community organisations to utilise Stadium facilities during "off-peak" periods at a reduced price. Dec 2008</i>		Milestone achieved. Charitable and Community organisations utilise Stadium facilities during "off peak" periods at a reduced price. A promotional programme in respect of this is ongoing.
		<i>Host Capital Of Culture Youth event. July 2008</i>		Completed

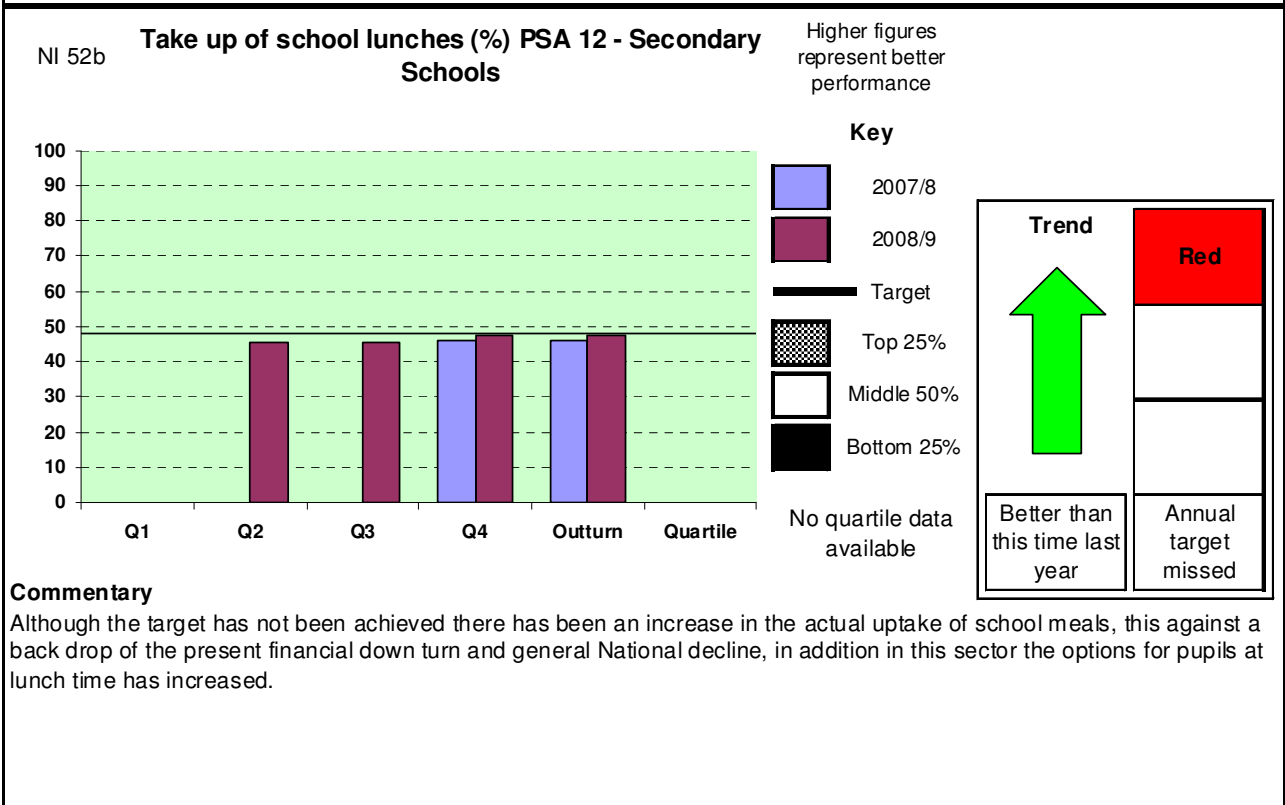
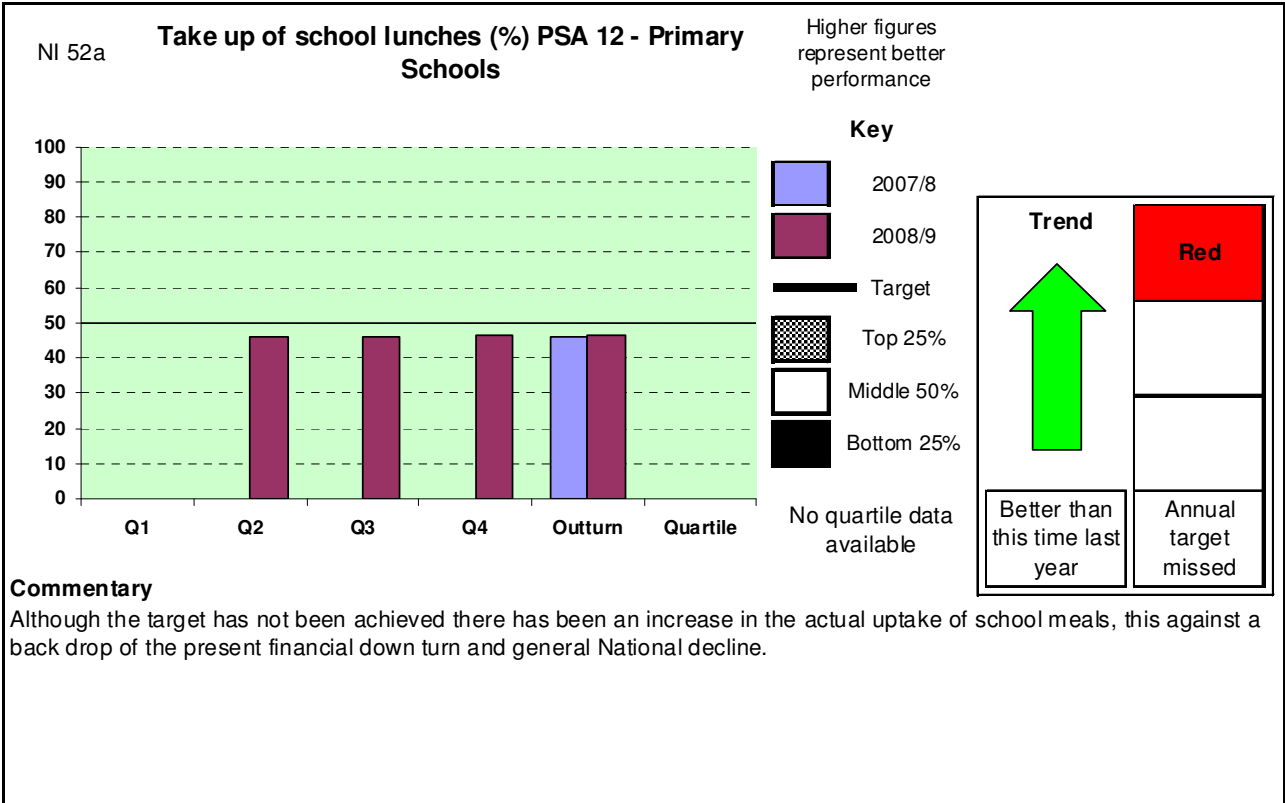
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SH 2	Increase the Stadium turnover and improve efficiency to reduce the level of Council contribution.	Implement promotional programme aimed at the Borough's school children to increase attendance at Widnes Vikings and Everton Reserve fixtures developed in conjunction with both clubs. Apr 2008		Programme developed and implemented. Further development of programme ongoing.
		Review and identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan. Nov 2008		Review completed, areas for improvement identified.
		Host a pitch based "Pop Concert". Sep 2008		The opening of the new Echo Arena coupled with the latest financial downturn has meant this milestone has not been achieved.
		Host a wedding and business fayre. Oct 2008		Hosted.
		Develop promotional strategy to attract large corporate events to the Stadium (new Marquee Suite). Dec 2008		Programme of events established that have included the Halton Chamber of Commerce and the Widnes Rotary Club annual dinners.
		<i>Increase the variety and quality of food offered on match days. Apr 2008</i>		Variety and quality of food improved, careful analyses of uptake figures are produced after each game.

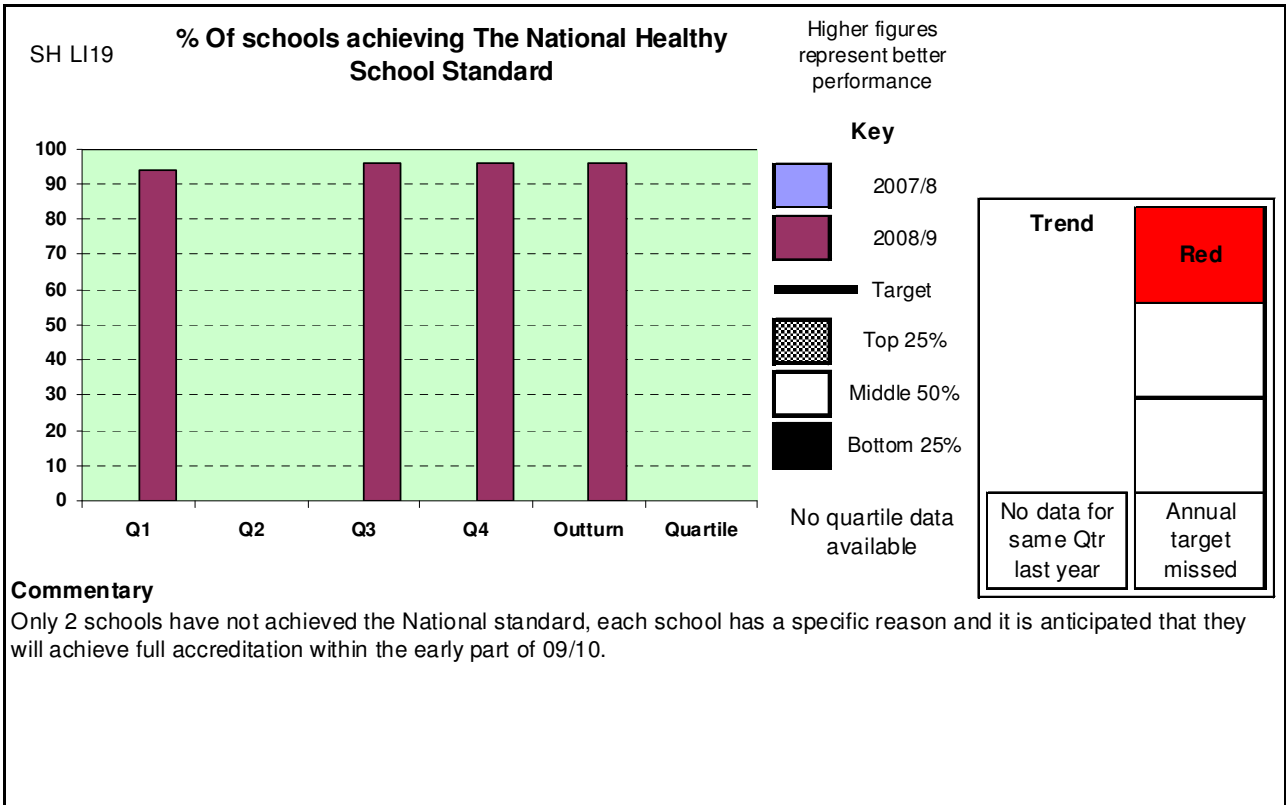
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SH 3	Increase the number of Pupils having a school lunch, to raise awareness, and increase levels, of healthy eating	Introduce an early academic school year promotion and educational campaign. Sep 2008		Completed.
		<i>Extend the cashless payment Smart Card scheme to additional schools which reduce queuing times and helps parental monitoring of actual spend and food consumption. Sep 2008</i>		Wade Deacon has adopted the system but as this initiative has to be funded by the school, although schools are showing an interest in the scheme, the initial capital outlay is proving to be a stumbling block for further expansion. It is hoped that the Building Schools For the Future initiative may allow more schools to adopt the scheme.
		<i>To conduct a benchmarking exercise which compares individual school performance? Good performance to be investigated and shared with all schools and producing individual School Action Plans including independently run schools. Dec 2008</i>		Action plans produced and implemented. This has included the introduction of a detailed profit and loss forecast for each school that lies within the Agresso system. This has met the recommendation of Internal Audit in the recent review.
		Conduct a questionnaire/satisfaction postal survey to all parents/guardians of pupils eligible to a free school meal, to learn of perceived		Survey completed. The new system has resulted in an increase of around 450 meals per day; there are still a large number of entitled pupils who do not take up their

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		barriers restricting uptake. Evaluate and produce Action Plan. Dec 2008		meal.












Ref ¹	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
Cost & Efficiency						
SH LI5	No. Of meals served versus hourly input of labour	8.52	8	8.53		Achieved Target.
SH LI16	Increase in the turnover of the Stadium	2.221	2.65	1.950		Due to the present financial down turn two main sectors of the Stadium appear to be suffering heaviest, social activities – weddings, parties etc, the Social Club and Stadium Fitness, these are seen as “luxuries” and are among the first things that people tend to cut back on when money is tight.
Quality						
SH LI3	% Of catering staff achieving a formal qualification	9	10	18%		Achieved Target.
SH LI22a	Food cost per primary school meal	62.4	70.0	66.89		Achieved Target.
SH LI22b	Food cost per secondary school meal	83.0	90.0	88.32		Achieved Target.
Service Delivery						
SH LI1	% Of schools complying with National Nutritional Guidelines (66 Schools)	100	100	100		All schools fully compliant.
SH LI11	Uptake of the Halton Leisure card	208	200	254		Exceeded Target

¹ Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.

Ref ¹	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
SH LI18	Average number of healthy food initiatives per school	4	5	5		Achieved Target.

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 has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 08/09 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded.</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 08/09 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>