



**Employment, Learning, Skills and
Community Policy and Performance
Board**

**Monday, 14 November 2011 at 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn**

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads 'David W R'.

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Susan Edge (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Peter Lloyd Jones (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Chris Carlin	Halton Local Independent Party
Councillor Margaret Horabin	Labour
Councillor Harry Howard	Labour
Councillor Andrew MacManus	Labour
Councillor Stan Parker	Labour
Councillor Carol Plumpton Walsh	Labour
Councillor Joe Roberts	Labour
Councillor Christopher Rowe	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Geoff Zygadlo	Labour

*Please contact Michelle Simpson on 0151 471 7394 or e-mail michelle.simpson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Wednesday, 11 January 2012*

**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)	
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.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

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

DATE: 14 November 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Policy and Resources

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: Employment, Learning, Skills and Community
Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 14 November 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Community 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 Minutes Relevant to the Employment, Learning and Skills Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 22nd SEPTEMBER 2011

EXB51 CONNEXIONS UPDATE

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise, on the procurement options for future Information Advice and Guidance service for children and young people and the contractual implications between the six Greater Merseyside Local Authorities and the Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership.

The Board was asked to consider the service delivery requirements from 2012-13 and the arrangements needed to secure that delivery. At the meeting, it was confirmed that at the last Learn Together Partnership meeting, the Directors of Childrens' Services had agreed that 2012/13 service specifications be used with negotiations with Connexions and for the procurement exercise.

RESOLVED: That

- 1) Executive Board agrees that work can continue on a City Region level;
- 2) a parallel procurement process can be undertaken for 2012/2013; and
- 3) Subject to agreement by the Directors of Children's Services on 24th September 2011, service specifications can be used with negotiations with Connexions and for the procurement exercise.

REPORT TO: Employment Learning and Skills and Community
PPB Environment & Regeneration PPB

DATE: 14th November 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise

SUBJECT: Enterprise Zone Daresbury

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members that the Operational Director Economy, Enterprise and Property will provide a presentation on the recently approved Enterprise Zone for Daresbury

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) The proposal to provide a presentation is noted

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Enterprise Zone status (which uniquely has the full support of 3 LEP's - Liverpool, Manchester and Cheshire and Warrington) enables the accelerated delivery of the plans to build on Daresbury's continuing role as a nationally designated Science and Innovation Campus, containing internationally competitive facilities, developing world-class science, and maximising opportunities for knowledge transfer.

3.2 The Daresbury vision is to deliver 1 million sq ft of science and technology development and over 10,000 new jobs, making Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus the most ambitious project in this sector anywhere in the UK.

3.3 All Enterprise Zones will benefit from:

- A business rate discount worth up to £275,000 per business over a five year period
- All business rates growth within the zone for a period of at least 25 years will be retained by the local area, to support the Partnership's economic priorities and ensure that Enterprise Zone growth is reinvested locally
- Government help to develop radically simplified planning approaches for the zone using, for example, existing Local Development Order powers

- Government support to ensure that superfast broadband is rolled out throughout the zone, achieved through guaranteeing the most supportive regulatory environment and, if necessary, public funding.

Government will work with local enterprise partnerships on additional options, to suit local circumstances, **including consideration of:**

- Enhanced capital allowances for plant and machinery, in a limited number of cases and subject to State Aid, where there is a strong focus on manufacturing
- Tax Increment Finance to support the long-term viability of the area
- UKTI support for inward investment or trade opportunities in the zone.

The proposed timetable for implementation would be:

August 2012 – SCI TECH Zone at Daresbury designated as an Enterprise Zone

September – March 2012: Government will work with the SCI-Tech Zone partnership to agree the specific package required to address the local economic challenge.

October – March 2012: Planning authorities will need to establish local development orders (LDO's) to cover the zones

April 2012: Subject to agreement from government, the SCI-TECh Zone at Daresbury will be officially established.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Daresbury SIC is one of two national science and innovation campuses, the other being Harwell.

The vision for the Daresbury Science & Innovation Campus is to create:

- Nearly 100 acres dedicated to Science & Technology. The largest such Campus in the North.
- A growth location for world class Science & Technology businesses from SME to Multi-National Corporations.

- 4.2 However in order to realise this ambitious vision partners submitted a bid for Enterprise Zone status to further encourage and stimulate demand from high value businesses to the site.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Without Enterprise Zone status, Daresbury SIC could be dependent on potential interest from speculative developers acquiring land on a long-term lease basis or request from large blue-chips wanting to acquire land for corporate headquarter-type activity. All of these are very speculative

in the current economic climate and more difficult to deliver. The natural result is that the momentum of the Campus growth would slow and potentially stall. Enterprise Zone status provides added momentum in providing a vehicle for developing site infrastructure and bringing sites forward for development.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The report recognises the role Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus is playing in attracting major businesses to the Borough, thereby improving the Borough's overall employment offer.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

6.6 Again, Daresbury SIC is contributing to the diversification of Halton's business base and commercial premises portfolio; it is a site that combines high science, research and development and innovation with business opportunity.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

Reductions in public funding could impact on the speed at which development of the Science and Innovation Campus takes place. Therefore, it is a major boost to secure Enterprise Zone status to encourage businesses to relocate and invest in the area.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

As part of the submission seeking Enterprise Zone status, bidders were required to demonstrate how their proposals would engage with the wider community and contribute to ensuring equality of access for all to the new and emerging opportunities arising from the investment on the campus.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Enterprise Zone Daresbury bid to Government	Municipal Building	Wesley Rourke

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

DATE: 14th November 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Policy and Resources

SUBJECT: Employment, Learning & Skills Quarterly Policy
Update

WARDS; All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform the Board of recent national policy announcements relevant to employment, learning and skills.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

2.1 The report is noted.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 A steady flow of policy announcements, consultation exercises, reports and ministerial statements are issued by government departments and agencies that have varying degrees of relevance to issues on the employment, learning and skills agenda and related topics.

3.2 Therefore, it is proposed to provide brief summaries of key announcements in a 'digest' format to the board on a quarterly basis, along with observations of local relevance, where appropriate, so the Board can consider whether to initiate more detailed scrutiny and/or report to a future meeting.

4.0 RECENT KEY POLICY ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 Higher Education White Paper

In June the Government issued a white paper [Students at the Heart of the System](#) . This picked-up some of the recommendations of Lord Browne's enquiry into the funding of higher education and student finance (October 2010)

The paper set-out the Government's proposals for the reform and future funding of higher education in England. The key aims of the proposed changes are to deliver:

- a more responsive higher education sector in which funding follows the decisions of learners and successful institutions are '*freed to thrive*';
- a new focus on the student experience and the quality of teaching;

- encourage further education colleges and other alternative providers to offer a diverse range of higher education provision.

COMMENT; Many of the proposals in the White Paper are a significant departure from current arrangements, and will require legislative change. A Higher Education Bill is expected to be announced for the 2012 session of Parliament.

4.2 **DWP Worklessness Co-design Final Report.**

The Department of Work & Pensions ('DWP') worked intensively with five Local Authorities to co-design solutions to local issues of worklessness. This work built on the HM Treasury and Department for Communities and Local Government led initiative "Total Place".

The five Local Authorities involved were Birmingham, Bradford, Lewisham, South Tyneside and Swindon.

The final report explains what has been achieved, lessons learned and the next steps. It also highlights how DWP can work together with Local Authorities, providers, employers and community groups to co-design solutions to worklessness to fit local circumstances and needs. The final report includes a check list for Local Authorities setting out opportunities to work in partnership with JCP and Single Work Programme providers

COMMENT: Much of what the report suggests is already happening to some extent in Halton, especially through the work of the Halton Employment Partnership. Also, the recent work around enhancing partnership working on the theme of developing a stronger local workforce offers opportunities for further progress.

4.3 **Launch of Higher Apprenticeships Fund.**

Trailed in the 2011 Budget and the Government's Plan for Growth, in the summer the Government formally launched a £25 million fund to boost support for up to 10,000 more Advanced and Higher Apprenticeships, especially by small to medium size employers. Higher Apprenticeships, originally introduced in 2009, are aimed at giving firms in sectors such as advanced manufacturing, information technology and engineering the hi-tech skills they need to grow.

COMMENT; This represents a welcome, albeit small, additional funding stream to support efforts to attract and nurture inward investment and growth in the STAM (Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing) sectors in Halton. Details can be accessed though relevant local websites such as [Science Halton](#) and [Halton Science - Where Science and Innovation Succeed](#) .

4.4 **Flexible, effective, fair: Promoting economic growth through a strong and efficient labour market.**

As part of the launch of its 'Red Tape Challenge' at the Conservative Party Conference, the Government published a discussion paper setting out guiding principles to its approach for the reform of the UK labour market framework.

The Government wants a labour market is both strong and efficient. By strong and efficient, it sees a labour market that is:

- **flexible**, encouraging the creation of jobs by making to easy to get people into work and to stay in work;
- **effective**, enabling employers to manage their staff productively;
- **fair**, with employers competing on a level playing field and workers provided with a strong foundation of employment protections.

The document (which can be accessed [HERE](#)) goes on to pose a series of thematic questions. However, there was no commitment to 'next steps' other than the responses are to be fed into the Government's on-going Employment Law Review that may see legislation announced in the next Parliamentary session.

COMMENT; Not unexpectedly, responses have been polarised; on one side a warm welcome to an attempt to remove unnecessary bureaucracy faced by SME's seeking to take on or dismiss employees, whilst the alternative view is that the proposals are the start of an attack on employee's hard-won employment rights and safeguards.

4.5 **Launch of Lifelong Learning Accounts.**

Launched without a great deal of publicity in early October through the Next Steps section of the DirectGov website, Lifelong Learning Accounts are an on-line resource whose objective is to;

'...empower adults to take more control over their learning with clear information and advice on skills, careers and financial support all in one place.'

Account holders will have free access to a number of online tools;

- Skills diagnostic tool to identify their interests, strengths and needs.
- Localised course and job searches.
- A CV builder.
- 'Eligibility checker' to identify Government funding available to them
- Facility to store personal learner information – CVs, skills tests, job & course searches – in one place they can share with an adviser.

More details can be found here [Lifelong Learning Account](#)

COMMENT; A useful resource, albeit requiring some familiarity with IT and the internet. It will be interesting to see what the level of take-up is both geographically and by different sectors of the community.

4.6 **Europe 2020 Strategy.**

Issued earlier this year by the European Union, the core objective of the [strategy](#) is to raise the employment rate for women and men aged 20-64 to 75% in member states by 2020.

There will be two Europe 2020 flagship initiatives;

"An agenda for new skills and jobs: a European contribution towards full employment"

"Youth on the move" - aimed at "enhancing the performance of education and training systems" and "seeking to equip young people properly for labour market needs".

COMMENT: For the next nine years the EU will focus on the delivery of this strategy. Therefore, a significant proportion of its financial resources will be dedicated to achieving the target. The exact implications for Halton in terms of legislation and financial support available should become clearer during spring 2012

4.7 **Liverpool City Region - Building on its Strengths: An independent report.**

This report, commissioned by the Prime Minister, is an independent assessment of the potential for growth, job creation and investment in the Liverpool City Region. Available [HERE](#) .

However, it was only published on Thursday 20th October, as your agenda for today's meeting was being prepared, a verbal update will be made at your meeting.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The varied range of issues covered in this report potentially present a number of challenges and opportunities across a number of the Council's current priorities. Each would therefore require a thorough analysis at some point in the future.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There are no immediate risks or opportunities directly relating to the

information in the report at this point in time. Again, a full assessment could be necessary at some point in the future.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 Not applicable.

8.0 FURTHER INFORMATION

8.1 If members would like a more detailed analysis of any of the issues mentioned in this report, or paper copy of any of the documents referred to, they should contact;

Nick Mannion at Nicholas.mannion@halton.gov.uk 0151 906 4885

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

None under the meaning of the act.

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

DATE: 14th November 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Children and Enterprise and
Strategic Director Policy and Resources

SUBJECT: Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy, 2011-
2013

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek the Board's endorsement of the Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy, 2011 – 2013.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

2.1 **That the Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy, 2011-2013 be formally endorsed.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 At your March meeting you considered an early draft of the Strategy and it was agreed that the final version should be brought to a future meeting for formal endorsement.

3.2 Briefly, the 2010 Child Poverty Act, which received all party support, created a Government commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020. Specific duties imposed upon local authorities and designated partners include:

- To co-operate to mitigate the effects of child poverty
- To prepare a local child poverty needs assessment
- Child poverty to be taken into account when preparing or revising the Sustainable Community Strategy.

3.3 Whilst poverty can be measured by income alone, the European Union's working definition of poverty has been adopted by authorities in the Liverpool City Region;

“Persons, families and groups of persons, whose resources (material, cultural and social) are so limited as to exclude them from the minimum acceptable way of life in the Member State to which they belong.”

3.4 This definition recognises that poverty is not just about income but about effective exclusion from ordinary living patterns, customs and activities;

for example;

- Income poverty
- Service poverty (difficulty in accessing and benefiting from quality services e.g. housing, health, education and leisure)
- Participation poverty (affecting the ability to participate in the community and to engage in social activities)

3.5 It also has a negative impact on experience of education and training and affects the transition to independence.

3.6 The Liverpool City Region's ('LCR') commitment to reducing child poverty is prominent in both the City Employment Strategy ('CES') and the former Multi-Area Agreement ('MAA').

3.7 Therefore, in anticipation of the Child Poverty Act the CES Board had commissioned the development of a Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Framework, with Knowsley acting as the lead City Region authority for child and family poverty through the City Employment Strategy.

3.8 Halton has been an active partner and participant in this work, which has facilitated the adoption of common definitions, the sharing of data and good practice across the city region authorities.

4 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 One of the key outputs of the collaborative approach across the LCR is the report, '*A Brighter Future: working together to tackle child and family poverty*' (Liverpool City Region Child and Family Poverty Framework Analysis Report), published last summer. This has been a helpful resource in the development of our Strategy. It has also helped to gain a better understanding of cross boundary child poverty issues and assisted in identifying opportunities to join up activity across the city region

4.2 Halton's own detailed Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment was completed and published in December 2010. A copy can be downloaded by following this link; [Halton Child Poverty Needs Assessment](#)

4.3 It is currently planned to undertake a fresh needs assessment in 2013.

4.3 The strategy has been subject to extensive consultation; it has benefited from input from a range of organisations and groups, particularly with regard to the Development Plan, colleagues engaged on drafting the Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Wellbeing Strategy and the Halton Child and Family Poverty Steering Group.

4.4 The strategy has been endorsed by the Halton Strategic Partnership and the Halton Children's Trust Board, and was formally approved at

Executive Board on 13th October 2011. The Strategy is annexed to this report.

5.0 SUMMARY OF KEY ELEMENTS OF THE STRATEGY

5.1 Key underlying causes of child and family poverty in Halton identified;

- Some families feel that they will never move out of poverty which restricts their aspirations
- A cycle of benefit dependency which can be an intergenerational issue

5.2 Key priorities to tackle child and family poverty in Halton;

- Cultural challenge and realising aspirations
- Early intervention/help
- Whole family approach
- Providing a single point of access to support services

5.3 Key issues and barriers to overcome first to tackle child and family poverty in Halton;

- Ensuring that support services meet the needs of target groups now and in the future and are easily accessible
- Improving the sharing of information between partners to provide greater support to customers

5.4 There is a strong correlation between Halton's key issues and priorities with those of our LCR partners.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR EMPLOYMENT, LEARNING & SKILLS

6.1 Children in families where their parents are in work are much less likely to be poor in income terms. Also, paid employment can offer a sustainable route out of poverty for the longer term; because work is good for the physical and psychological health of parents and hence of their children. Finally, we know that children who grow up in workless households are themselves much more likely to be poor in adulthood.

6.2 Therefore, as well as ensuring that there are jobs available it is vital that our residents are 'work ready' through learning suitable skills and knowledge and that barriers to employment such as transport, and affordable childcare are accessible to those in greatest need.

7.0 NEXT STEPS

7.1 The Strategy's Development Plan reflects the fact that this is the first time that many of the partners have worked together on this specific topic, and the difficulty in setting concrete actions at this time.

7.2 The Steering Group believes that the Development Plan will provide the flexibility needed to remain effective and relevant. One consequence of this flexibility is that further work is underway to integrate the strategy within the emerging sustainable community strategy performance monitoring framework, along with appropriate 'SMART' indicators and outcomes.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 The Strategy is a statutory requirement upon the borough council and its key partners, and is a genuinely 'cross-cutting' challenge. A point recognised by its identification as a such in the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy.

8.2 Child and family poverty has also been recognised in the Halton Children's Plan, but if we are to make sustained progress in a time of great economic uncertainty it needs to be embedded into the work and priorities of **all** partners working with children and their families.

8.3 We know that children in families where their parents are in work are much less likely to be poor in income terms. Also, paid employment can offer a sustainable route out of poverty, because work is good for the physical and psychological health of parents and hence of their children. Finally, we know that children who grow up in workless households are themselves much more likely to be poor in adulthood.

8.4 The need for the Strategy to be embedded into all of the council's relevant priorities to varying degrees has an especially strong resonance in the areas of Children, Young People and Families and also the Employment, Learning and Skills agendas, as work is the best route out of poverty for most families and their children

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

9.1 The level of knowledge and understanding of the child and family poverty agenda in Halton is mixed. It is important that there is a common understanding of the issue and a wide awareness of the child and family poverty strategy and activity amongst our partners. This risk will be addressed through an effective and robust communication element in the Development Plan.

9.2 Achieving an effective approach to eradicating Child and Family Poverty in Halton requires strong strategic leadership from key partnership such as the Trust and the Halton Strategic Partnership. This is being addressed through the establishment and activities of the Halton Child & Family Poverty Steering Group, and also participation in the LCR Child and Family Poverty Commission.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

An Equality Impact Assessment of the draft strategy was undertaken by a multi-agency panel, with its key recommendations taken into account when developing the strategy's Development Plan.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
'A Brighter Future: working together to tackle child and family poverty'	Rutland House, Halton Lea	Nick Mannion Nicholas.mannion@halton.gov.uk 0151 906 4885

HALTON CHILD AND FAMILY POVERTY STRATEGY

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FOREWORD

The children and young people of Halton are our future. We are:

'A community committed to realising high aspirations, where all children, young people and families are valued and respected and where inclusion and diversity are promoted'

However, around 6,500 children in Halton are currently growing up in poverty, around a quarter of all our children.

We know that a child that grows up in poverty is more likely to do less well at school, have lower chances of getting a well paid job and is more likely to have poor physical and mental health during adulthood.

This is the reality of growing-up in poverty; where birthdays and Christmas are potentially times of crisis for families, and the spectre of spiralling debts at punishing rates of interest and repayment are the enduring memory. Also, in turn, their children are likely to suffer the same disadvantage, perpetuating the cycle of poverty from one generation to another.

However, in Halton we are not prepared to accept this, and before the 2010 Child Poverty Act came into force, tackling child poverty was a priority for the council and its partners in Halton.

It is our view that tackling child poverty is everybody's business. Our strategy is a child & family poverty strategy. This is because we all firmly believe that it is only by addressing poverty through a 'whole family' approach that we can help families make sustained progress out of poverty.

However, this strategy has been developed at a point in time when we are about to experience the greatest changes to the welfare system since its inception, together with the partners' most significant reductions in their budgets for a generation.

Perhaps not the most auspicious time to launch a new strategy!

In the light of the fact that there is unlikely to be significant extra money available for the foreseeable future, our strategy focuses on how we can work more effectively and efficiently together to make sure we deliver the right support and services to those families in greatest need in a way they can use them to their best advantage.

Everyone in Halton can contribute in some way to eradicating child and family poverty by 2020. We all have a role to play to provide a better future for ALL our children and young people in the Borough.

Councillor John Swain
Children, Young People and Families Portfolio Holder
Halton Borough Council

VISION FOR HALTON 2020

To create and sustain an environment in which **ALL** children and their families living in Halton are supported in achieving emotional wellbeing and prosperity to fulfil their potential through the elimination of child and family poverty by 2020.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Strategy outlines the extent of child and family poverty in Halton and our commitment to reducing it between now and 2013. The Strategy covers a relatively short timeframe because we will be reviewing the Halton Needs Assessment that underpins the strategy in 2013 to ensure that our actions are based on the most current information. We share the Government's goal of eradicating child poverty by 2020 and believe that partnership working is the best way to achieve this.

Our vision is;

'To create and sustain an environment in which ALL children and their families living in Halton are supported in achieving emotional wellbeing and prosperity to fulfil their potential through the elimination of child and family poverty by 2020.'

The Government definition of eradicating child poverty as set out in the Child Poverty Act is:

- Relative low income – to reduce the proportion of children who live in families with net income below 60% of the median to less than 10%.
- Combined low income and material deprivation – to reduce the proportion of children who live in material deprivation and live in a household where the net income is less than 70% of the median to less than 5%.
- Persistent poverty – to reduce the proportion of children that experience relative poverty for 3 or more consecutive years (target to be set by 2015).
- Absolute low income – to reduce the proportion of children who live in households where the net income is less than 60% of the average net income in 2010 to less than 5%. By fixing the comparator income at 2010 levels this indicator allows changes in average net income to be ignored. This is particularly important during recession as a fall in average net income will lead to a reported fall in the number of people in poverty using the other indicators.

In addition to these targets, the National Child Poverty Strategy includes an indicator aimed at tracking the poorest:

- Severe poverty – proportion of children who experience material deprivation and live in households where income is less than 50% of median household income for the financial year.

In Halton around 6,550 (26.4%) of our children live in poverty. Whilst this puts Halton below the Liverpool City Region average, it highlights the considerable challenge in front of us to meet the Government's targets.

We believe that achieving these financially orientated targets will be very challenging but despite this we have chosen, in common with Liverpool City Region partners, to adopt a wider definition of poverty. We believe that financial poverty is only one element and that other forms of poverty such as poverty of services (or accessibility of them), poverty of opportunity, and poverty of aspiration are equally important factors holding people back from achieving their full potential. In addition this Strategy overtly refers to family poverty in addition to child poverty, recognising the linkages between the two.

In order to assess the prevalence and distribution of child and family poverty within Halton a comprehensive Needs Assessment was undertaken. In recognition of Halton's position within the wider Liverpool City Region economic area, the Assessment was coordinated between the six authorities. This Strategy draws heavily on the conclusions of the Assessment.

The key priorities for action are:

Key underlying causes of child and family poverty in Halton

- Some families feel that they will never move out of poverty which restricts their aspirations
- A cycle of benefit dependency which can be an intergenerational issue

Key priorities to tackle child and family poverty in Halton

- Cultural challenge and realising aspirations
- Early intervention/help
- Whole family approach
- Providing a single point of access to support services

Key issues and barriers to overcome first to tackle child and family poverty in Halton

- Ensuring that support services meet the needs of target groups now and in the future and are easily accessible
- Improving the sharing of information between partners to provide greater support to customers

In consultation with our partners we have developed a development plan which tackles child poverty head on. The continued commitment to reducing child poverty displayed by all partners is central to our approach and will provide the best outcome for the people of Halton.

SECTION ONE: CHILD & FAMILY POVERTY IN CONTEXT

INTRODUCTION

This Strategy outlines why we need to tackle child and family poverty and the scale of the problem both nationally and here in Halton. Halton Borough Council and its strategic partners are committed to reducing the number of people living in poverty in Halton. We believe that achieving this aim will benefit not only those directly affected but everybody who lives in, works in, and visits Halton.

We recognise that tackling the causes of poverty requires partnership working both locally and regionally. With this in mind, during the development of this Strategy we have worked closely with both statutory partners and key colleagues in Halton. In addition we have also worked with partners across the Liverpool City Region to ensure that work is coordinated regionally. We feel that this gives us the best chance of maximising the positive work that is, and will, be undertaken to reduce child and family poverty.

We are determined to ensure that the work we undertake is targeted as effectively as possible to overcome the real issues that people face in our area. To do this we have undertaken a comprehensive needs assessment for Halton with our Liverpool City Region partners. The results of this have shaped this Strategy. We recognise that the needs of people will change over time, some of these changes will be due to the work undertaken to reduce poverty and some will be outside of our control. To make sure that our work remains as focussed as possible we are committed to undertaking a new needs assessment in 2013/14.

THE NATIONAL CONTEXT

Despite the best efforts of everyone involved, child and family poverty is still far too common in the UK today. In recognition of the fact that there needs to be a concerted effort to reduce the number of children living in poverty, the previous Government passed the Child Poverty Act in April 2010. This includes a commitment to eradicate child poverty by 2020 and imposes specific duties on key public sector organisations including:

- Local partners to co-operate to mitigate the effects of child poverty
- Local authorities to make arrangements to prepare a local child poverty needs assessment
- Local joint child poverty strategies to be produced
- Child poverty to be taken into account when preparing or revising the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The Act also sets out four challenging UK targets to be met by 2020 which frame the Government's definition of eradicating child poverty:

- Relative low income – to reduce the proportion of children who live in families with net income below 60% of the median to less than 10%.
- Combined low income and material deprivation – to reduce the proportion of children who live in material deprivation and live in a household where the net income is less than 70% of the median to less than 5%.

- Persistent poverty – to reduce the proportion of children that experience relative poverty for 3 or more consecutive years (target to be set by 2015).
- Absolute low income – to reduce the proportion of children who live in households where the net income is less than 60% of the average net income in 2010 to less than 5%. By fixing the comparator income at 2010 levels this indicator allows changes in average net income to be ignored. This is particularly important during recession as a fall in average net income will lead to a reported fall in the number of people in poverty using the other indicators.

In addition to these targets, the National Child Poverty Strategy includes an indicator aimed at tracking the poorest:

- Severe poverty – proportion of children who experience material deprivation and live in households where income is less than 50% of median household income for the financial year.

To provide a national focus for action the Government has published a national strategy to tackle child poverty. To support the development of the Strategy the Government has commissioned a series of reviews. The 'Graham Allen review of Early Intervention' and the Frank Field report 'The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults' both focus on early intervention and the importance of providing a structure to support children during these formative years. Both of these reports are discussed in greater depth in Section 3 of this report.

The most recent figures for England from 2008¹ show that 21.6% of children under the age of 16 lived in a relative low income household. This figure reduces slightly to 20.9% when all children are included (up to the age of 19). It is clear therefore that a significant amount of work remains.

THE REGIONAL AND SUB-REGIONAL CONTEXT

The North West of England has above average numbers of children living in poverty. With 23.5% of children under 16 and 22.8% of all children living in low income households, the region has the fourth highest rate of child poverty in England.

In recognition of this, the Liverpool City Region (LCR) is developing a Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy which will coordinate work to tackle poverty across the Region. The Strategy identifies four key areas of work:

- Foundation Stage/Early Years
- Learning and attainment
- Labour market
- Income and parenting

In addition seven key actions are identified:

- Support effective parenting and drive improvement in foundation years services
- Enhance children's school and emotional development and reduce gaps in educational achievement
- Promote prevention and early intervention approaches to reduce health inequalities

¹ <http://www.hmrc.gov.uk/stats/personal-tax-credits/lsoa-gov-off08.xls>

- Improve the quality of places and support strong communities to minimise the impact of disadvantage
- Improve access to suitable financial services and support families to make good financial decisions
- Optimise employment opportunities by removing barriers to good quality and sustainable employment
- Support parents to progress in work

The draft Liverpool City Region Child Poverty and Life Chances Strategy was published in August 2011, and is expected to be formally adopted before the end of 2011.

Considerable progress has been made since 1999 when the Government first stated its ambition to eradicate child poverty by 2020. Nationally 800,000 children have been lifted out of poverty but 2.9 million² remain below the threshold. Of these 726,000 reside in the North West and 167,770 live in the Liverpool City Region³.

In our region the task is made even harder by lower average wages. Average median wages in all six city region authorities are below the national average, and all but one lies below the average for the North West. The widest gap is found in Halton where the average annual median wage is £4,361 lower than the average for Great Britain. Due to the fact that the child poverty targets are a percentage of the national average wage, this makes it more likely that children will fall into the poverty category in our area.

Area	Average gross median wage 2010
United Kingdom	£26,510
North West	£24,062
Merseyside	£23,449
Wirral	£25,320
Knowsley	£23,442
Liverpool	£23,067
St Helens	£22,794
Sefton	£22,321
Halton	£22,149

LOCAL CONTEXT

In Halton just under 26.4% of children live in poverty. This places Halton below the Liverpool City Region average of 27.9%. The most recent figures from 2008 reveal that in total there are 6,550 children living in poverty in Halton. Of these 5,520 children live in out of work families and 1,030 live in households classified as in-work. This underlines that whilst being in work reduces the likelihood of child poverty it doesn't guarantee that children will be lifted out of poverty, particularly when there is only one working adult in the household.

[Insert some comparative statistics by way of tables/graphs here]

Whilst the Child Poverty Act requires local authorities to undertake a child poverty needs assessment, Halton in line with the Liverpool City Region has chosen to broaden the definition to child and family poverty. This recognises that child and family poverty are linked and are therefore best tackled together.

² Households below average income 2007/2008 (HABI) DWP.

³ 2008 HMRC Child and working tax credits statistics (2007/08) and child benefit geographical statistics (August 2008)

We share the Government's target of eradicating child poverty by 2020 and we want to start work as quickly as possible towards this goal. We know that this is a very challenging target which is made all the more challenging by the lower average household income in Halton compared to the North West and England and the economic uncertainty. We believe that paid employment is the best way out of poverty, although it is not a guaranteed route, the majority of people who find paid work are able to move out of poverty.

The uncertainty over the number of jobs that will be lost in the coming years and the number that will be created makes it hard to forecast how easy it will be for people to move into employment and we recognise that slow growth will make it much harder to meet the targets. However the need to tackle child and family poverty remains regardless of economic conditions so we remain committed to achieving the targets.

What we are already doing to combat poverty

Tackling poverty has been recognised as a major issue in Halton for a number of years, and there has been a considerable effort by partners to tackle specific aspects of poverty both through their own services, and as members of the Halton Strategic Partnership's neighbourhood renewal and working neighbourhood fund programmes.

Brief details of three examples of recent and current work aimed at breaking the poverty 'cycle' in Halton are:

1. Family Learning

Low levels of attainment, and in some cases aspiration, are recognised as leading to inter-generational poverty. One consequence of this are high levels of benefit dependency and poverty within 'workless' households.

One of the ways partners have worked hard to break this 'cycle' is through the provision of imaginative family learning services, designed in consultation with service-users and offered at over 20 venues across Halton, often in non-traditional settings and venues.

Halton's proportion of adults without any qualifications is falling, staying-on rates post-16 are improving steadily and we have worked hard to reduce young people categorised as 'NEET' (Not in Employment, Education or Training).

The results of this concerted effort are clear to see in the excellent GCSE results that were achieved by students in Halton in 2011. The percentage of students gaining five or more A* to C grades increased again to 83 per cent, which is above the national average.

The percentage attaining five or more A* to Cs, including English and Maths, increased by six percentage points to 56 per cent, broadly in line with the national average and represents Halton's best ever result. Given the socio economic make up of Halton, this is a real achievement which reflect the hard work of the students, parents, teachers, governors and the close working relationship between school's and Halton Borough Council.

2. Financial advice and access to affordable credit.

A range of partners from both the statutory and voluntary sector have worked together over many years in Halton to design and offer a range of services to help our poorest and most vulnerable residents maximise their income, tackle multiple debt problems and address

housing and employment issues. Mobile outreach and evening advice surgeries have also been offered.

One success story is the budgeting officer working in Halton's thriving Credit Union, who in 2009/10 worked with over a hundred clients and helped them to save/write-off a total of £749,444 of debt. 98% of these clients were parents with dependant children.

3. Team Around the Family

Team Around the Family ('TAF') is Halton's Children's Trust approach to meeting needs that are above universal but that do not require a specialist service response, ensuring that families in Halton receive an appropriate level of service in a seamless way.

TAF includes services delivered from Children's Centres and family support services, including Halton's Family Intervention Projects (FIPs). Access to TAF services is via the multi-agency Integrated Working Support Team (IWST), which includes Social Care (Social Services) and Primary CAMHS (Primary Mental Health) provision

The main elements within Halton's TAF model are:

- ✓ Via the Integrated Working Support Team (IWST) element of Team Around the Family, the delivery of an assessment, triage, consultation and signposting service for professionals/practitioners across all agencies and sectors working with families in Halton. This entails a comprehensive knowledge of, and joint working processes with, the full range of partner and commissioned services in the Borough.
- ✓ Delivery via IWST of the single point of entry to all services that work with families experiencing multiple problems. This includes commissioned services and partner services in the voluntary and community sectors, the Primary Care Trust (PCT) and NHS, Housing providers, specialist debt, welfare and legal (housing) support, Adult Learning, Drug and Alcohol services etc. The purpose of this structure is to ensure that families can access optimal bespoke packages of support while telling their 'story' once only.
- ✓ Support to agencies and practitioners in creating multi-agency plans to support children and families using the Common Assessment process.

Halton child and family poverty targets are that by 2020

- Relative low income – to reduce the proportion of children who live in families with net income below 60% of the median to less than 10%.
- Combined low income and material deprivation – to reduce the proportion of children who live in material deprivation and live in a household where the net income is less than 70% of the median to less than 5%.
- Persistent poverty – to reduce the proportion of children that experience relative poverty for 3 or more consecutive years (target to be set by 2015).
- Absolute low income – to reduce the proportion of children who live in households where the net income is less than 60% of the average net income in 2010 to less

than 5%. By fixing the comparator income at 2010 levels this indicator allows changes in average net income to be ignored. This is particularly important during recession as a fall in average net income will lead to a reported fall in the number of people in poverty using the other indicators.

SECTION TWO: THE 2010 NEEDS ASSESSMENT

INTRODUCTION

Halton Borough Council has undertaken a comprehensive Needs Assessment with the Liverpool City Region (LCR) partners. We are required to undertake a Needs Assessment but in recognition of the importance of this process we have gone beyond the minimum requirement by working with the LCR authorities.

The Needs Assessment provides information about the level of child poverty in Halton and also highlights the areas where poverty occurs within the borough. The Assessment uses statistical information from national sources and from local sources but also uses information gathered about people's experiences of poverty and services that are offered in the borough to tackle poverty. By using all of the information the Needs Assessment provides a detailed view of poverty in Halton.

The factors that contribute to child and family poverty can be complex and deep rooted and we believe that it is important to undertake the analysis with our sub regional colleagues in order to get a clear picture of the common issues that we face. The Liverpool City Region is made up of the five Merseyside authorities and Halton, and recognises that the six authorities share common issues and act as a single economic and employment area. By undertaking a coordinated assessment the LCR is in a stronger position to tackle the issues.

KEY MESSAGES

In overall terms, more neighbourhoods saw a fall in poverty during 2006-08 than those where it increased. However, for many neighbourhoods' it remains a very significant issue.

The average annual household income in Halton is £46 lower than the LCR average, £3,323 lower than the North West average and £5,492 lower than the England average.

Halton also contains the two wards with **the highest** average household incomes of all LCR wards in 2009. This highlights the considerable variation of household income across fairly short distances within the Borough.

Halton has a disproportionately high number (12,500) of people who are dependent on out of work benefits such as Incapacity Benefit/Employment and Income Support Allowance, and this dependency is very high across a relatively large part of the Borough, particularly in the wards of Halton Castle (Castlefields estate), Windmill Hill and Halton Lea.

The significant 13.2% reduction in the Halton Job Seekers Allowance ('JSA') claimant count suggests that the local Employment, Learning and Skills partnership has been effective in getting people off this benefit, particularly in comparison to elsewhere in the LCR. However, the destinations of these people (in terms of work and wage level) are less clear, and may contribute to the evidenced increase of in-work poverty.

Whilst not a direct indicator of general poverty, data on lone parent benefit claimants can be used to highlight neighbourhoods where some children are most likely to be living in relative poverty conditions, with potentially less parental or carer support, and limited potential for the household to move out of poverty.

The prevailing economic conditions create challenging circumstances for any district, but Halton's underpinning economic weaknesses make these challenges far more daunting. Halton has a narrow economic base and in common with the LCR the local economy and

jobs market is overly reliant on the public sector. This means that the area will be disproportionately affected by public sector budget cuts. In addition the Borough has a relatively low skills base which makes it harder for residents to access the full range of jobs available in the Borough.

The Borough ranks as highly resilient in terms of the export trade and foreign owner businesses resident in Halton. This is offset by the low rankings around community variables. Halton's resilience rankings for life expectancy and claimant count are amongst the lowest in the country.

Halton is heavily dependent on neighbouring areas and the wider City Region labour market for jobs, meaning that the economic resilience of other areas is very relevant to the Borough.

Residents in employment outside Halton are predominantly reliant upon the private car for their journey to work - increasing fuel and motoring costs will become a major pressure on their ability to afford to retain jobs.

Children and families living in poverty are more likely to experience a wide range of health inequalities. Examples of health related impacts include - children growing up in poverty are 37 times more likely to die as a result of exposure to smoke, fire, and flames; they are three times as likely to suffer mental health disorders; twice as likely to be homeless or trapped in unsuitable and/or poor housing.

There is a relationship between poverty and educational attainment, for example nearly one in five girls and more than one in four boys in receipt of free school meals leave school without at least five GCSEs. Whilst free school meals aren't a direct indicator of child poverty it does illustrate the link between poorer households and qualifications.

By the age of 19, only 14.3% of Halton residents have achieved a NVQ level 3 qualification, compared with 22.6% nationally. Almost 17% of working age residents in Halton have no qualifications, compared with 13.8% regionally and 12.3% nationally.

Inter-generational welfare dependency, worklessness and low aspirations can become accepted as the norm, perpetuating poverty from one generation to another. Some families have no experience of anything but benefits which can make it daunting to find work.

SECTION THREE: PRIORITIES FOR ACTION

INTRODUCTION

Work to reduce the causes and effects of poverty is not new, and significant work has been undertaken across Halton for a number of years on these issues.

Building upon this work it is the needs assessment that provides the basis for determining the priorities for Halton. In addition a workshop was held with stakeholders drawn from across Halton to ascertain what the key priorities should be. The workshop was well attended underlining that the desire to tackle child and family poverty is strong in the Borough.

Participants were asked to nominate actions that will help to reduce poverty in the area and then vote on which were seen as the key priorities. We have drawn heavily on the outcomes of this workshop in the development of the key priorities. The full results of this exercise are shown in Appendix 1.

In addition to this, the following national reviews have informed our work:

Frank Field's review of Poverty and Life Chances

In June 2010 Frank Field MP was commissioned by the Prime Minister to provide an independent review on poverty and life chances. The review resulted in the publication of "The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults" in December 2010. The findings of this review have been taken into account in the development of this Strategy and have informed the Development plan.

Some of the key messages from the review include the assertion that child poverty in its broadest sense is about more than household income and that income is not the dominant cause of restricted life chances. As a result measures that solely focus on income, whilst helping to address financial poverty, are not effective in tackling the wider issues such as poverty of aspiration, financial exclusion, physical and mental wellbeing and skills gaps that all contribute to intergenerational and persistent poverty.

We agree with this conclusion and support the model of providing strong support structures for families which provide tangible benefits to them. This is reflected in the priorities identified in the stakeholder workshop which are outlined in this chapter. In particular an emphasis on aligning services to needs, information sharing and supporting aspirations which were all strong themes, support these goals.

In addition the review found that focusing on the foundation years from 0-5 years of age is key. This aspiration was also highlighted at the workshop with early intervention identified as a key issue and focusing on the foundation years being seen as important.

Graham Allen review of Early Intervention

In June 2010 the Government requested that Graham Allen MP lead a review of early intervention. His interim report was published in January 2011. It highlights the importance of early intervention in improving children's and ultimately adults' lives and strongly recommends that early intervention actions are improved and expanded upon. He particularly focuses on the 0-3 age group as children's brains develop from 25% to 80% of their full capacity during this period.

The final report (*Early Intervention; Smart Investment, Massive Savings*) was published in July 2011, and makes recommendations for how the expansion of early intervention services could be financed.

Summary of key priorities

In developing this strategy we have taken account of local needs, consulted extensively with local partners and listened to the views and suggestions of a range of adult and young people. We have also considered the latest national research in this area to develop a set of priorities that will provide the biggest benefit to the residents of Halton.

As a result of this process we have identified the following:

A. Key underlying causes of child and family poverty in Halton

- Some families feel that they will never move out of poverty which restricts their aspirations
- A cycle of benefit dependency which can be an intergenerational issue

B. Key priorities to tackle child and family poverty in Halton

- Cultural challenge and realising aspirations
- Early intervention
- Whole family approach
- Providing a single point of access to support services

C. Key issues to overcome first to tackle child and family poverty in Halton

- Ensuring that support services meet the needs of target groups now and in the future and are easily accessible
- Improving the sharing of information between partners to provide greater support to customers

SECTION FOUR: IMPLEMENTING THE STRATEGY

Governance

In late 2010 the Halton Child & Family Poverty Group was established by the Halton Strategic Partnership.

The Group was formally inaugurated in November 2010 and, in addition to statutory partners prescribed by the Act, membership includes representatives from the voluntary sector and service users. Organisations represented on the group are set-out in Annex 2.

The key functions of the group are to;

- a) *Oversee the preparation and publication of a local child poverty needs assessment that understands the drivers and characteristics of child and family poverty in Halton, as prescribed in the act.*
- b) *Ensure all statutory partners are represented and engaged to carry out their duty to co-operate to reduce, and mitigate, effects of child & family poverty in Halton.*
- c) *Set-out a vision for reducing child and family poverty in Halton through the publication of a Child & Family Poverty Strategy which sets-out the contribution that each partner will make to address the issues and challenges raised in the needs assessment.*
- d) *Agree in consultation with statutory and wider partners, the delivery and monitoring of the Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy Development Plan.*
- e) *Ensure that child and family poverty issues and needs are taken into account in the preparation of plans and strategies such as the Sustainable Community Strategy, Children & Young People's Plan, Local Economic Assessment, and other plans and strategies relating to employment, skills, housing, transport, health and wellbeing and safer and stronger communities.*
- f) *Report periodically on progress to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board.*

Administrative support is currently provided by Halton Borough Council.

Consultation

As well as involving a wide range of our partners from the statutory and voluntary sectors at each key stage in the development of the strategy, we have also gone out into Halton's communities and listened to the views and suggestions of many families and young people in Halton on the three key questions;

- What do you think are the causes of child and family poverty in Halton?
- What should our priorities for action be?
- Where should we start?

The response has been overwhelmingly consistent and positive; that only by adopting a consistent and sustained 'whole family' approach will we eradicate child and family poverty in Halton.

Both 'providers' and 'consumers' of key services recognise that in the current difficult financial environment we need to make sure that scarce resources are carefully and sensitively targeted at those in greatest need if we are to meet this challenge and deliver sustained progress towards eradicating child and family poverty in Halton.

Links to Other Plans & Strategies

The Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy has been prepared in the context of our other key local plans and strategies. It does not stand alone in isolation; it is an overarching high level strategy that is connected to a wide and varied range of other plans strategies that deal with specific topics and co-ordinate the delivery of services and projects.

Therefore, this Strategy has been prepared to align with other key partnership plans and strategies. Figure 1 illustrates this relationship, the Strategy sits within a matrix of these plans that allow the Halton Strategic Partnership to deliver improvements that make a real difference to the people of Halton.

Challenges

At a time of major, and ongoing, reductions in the financial resources available to many key partners we are faced with the challenge of 'delivering more with less', without sacrificing quality.

Therefore, if we are to tackle the deep-rooted underlying causes of child and family poverty in Halton, it is only by working closely together towards shared tightly focused priorities that we will be able to have a significant impact on the underlying problem, and break the cycle of intergenerational poverty.

The primary challenge facing us will be to make effective early intervention and prevention with those families in the greatest need. In terms of definition, 'prevention' refers to activities to stop a problem arising in the first place. 'Early intervention' is activity aimed at helping to stop the development of a problem already evident before it becomes overwhelming.

Thus, the distinction between the two terms relates to the stage of problem development. Evidence shows that this early action can reduce a dependency culture emerging and can lead to improved quality of life.

There is considerable evidence in Appendix 1 that this is the way many of our partners are already working together in Halton. The challenge is to make this the way we all work.

There are also the emerging 'localism', 'personalisation' and 'Big Society' agendas, all of which will have an impact to some degree or another on the child & family poverty agenda. Finally, there are the radical changes to welfare benefits, with the introduction of the single Universal Credit welfare benefit and the allied Work Programme, both of which will have a significant but as yet undetermined impact on the income and lifestyles of many families in poverty.

Figure 1: Integration of the Child and Family Poverty Strategy with other key plans and strategies

Integration of the Child and Family Poverty Strategy with Key Plans and Strategies



The Halton Child and Family Poverty Strategy has been prepared in the context of other key local plans and strategies. It does not stand alone in isolation but is a crosscutting strategy that is linked to a multitude of detailed strategies that deal with specific topics and coordinate the delivery of services and projects

Equality Impact Assessment

Under the provisions of the Equality Act 2010 we have a duty to demonstrate that we have taken action to consider equality issues in the development of this Strategy.

This has been undertaken by way of an Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) which is the name of a process by which we have examined the Strategy in order to minimise the potential for discrimination against one or more groups that include people with one or more 'protected characteristics': - age, disability, gender and gender identity, race, religion/belief, marriage and civil partnerships, pregnancy and maternity and sexual orientation.

A copy of the EIA is available for inspection.

DEVELOPMENT PLAN

The issues that this Strategy commits us to tackle are long term difficult ones. It will take several years for the work underway to make a lasting impact. Early intervention and prevention in health, poverty and employability are examples.

It will take several years of sustained hard work before we will see a decrease in patients attending GP Surgeries and hospitals with established illnesses and a reduction in obesity, smoking and drinking to excess. Each of which in turn reduce people's capacity to fulfil their potential through learning, employment and prosperity.

The long timescales, together with the impact of the many current changes mentioned earlier mean we need to be flexible to cater for the unforeseen and allow partners to adapt to constantly evolving legislative and financial structures.

Therefore, the Development Plan covers the period from 2011-13 and is open to review at any stage. It sets out our starting point and sets partners progress targets to help to 'kick start' the delivery on the priorities set-out in this strategy. The Development Plan will be regularly reviewed with periodic progress reports to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board.

The end date for the Strategy and Development Plan is 2013. This is when the next child and family poverty needs assessment will be undertaken and the ramifications of some of the major national policy and legislative changes currently underway will be clearer.

In keeping with the Strategy, the Development Plan has been developed in consultation with our wider LCR partners to ensure that our local work contributes to reducing Child and Family Poverty across the city region.

Halton Children and Family Poverty Strategy Development Plan 2011-13

Outcome: Child and Family Poverty is eradicated in Halton

Our strategy is a statement of the fundamental commitment by the partnership to ultimately eradicate child and family poverty in Halton by 2020. It provides us with a cohesive overview and facilitates better co-ordination of our efforts towards this objective.

However, this is the first time many partners have worked together on this specific objective. Therefore, this development plan has been written to raise awareness, increase our knowledge and improve the way we work together to tackle child poverty during these initial stages. It is not intended to be prescriptive, but to lay down a solid foundation for our work over the coming years on this vital issue.

This document outlines some of the key outcome indicators which will measure the extent to which poverty is being reduced and families are supported to move out of poverty, some performance measures for partners to assess their contribution to this, and the actions and processes which will support the eradication of child and family poverty in Halton.

The following key objectives have been identified as methods to reduce poverty, within these a number of actions have been identified to assist.

- Objective 1: Supporting families to achieve their aspirations
- Objective 2: Working with the whole family
- Objective 3: Working more closely between partners
- Objective 4: Mapping services/New ways of working
- Objective 5: Maximise income

It is important to note that there is not a single indicator which will measure child and family poverty in Halton. The indicators and measures in this document have been chosen to illustrate how progress could be made across areas of work which together may improve the position for families according to the objectives and may assist in reducing poverty in the long term. It is best described as a dotted line between the outcome of reducing poverty with these indicators and measures contributing to the whole.

Key actions to be undertaken

Objective One: Supporting families to achieve their aspirations			
ACTION	TIMESCALE (all 2013 unless stated)	LEAD AGENCY	INTENDED IMPACTS
Work with 14 – 19 year olds to enable pathways into HE and employment and decrease participation poverty		Children and Enterprise Directorate – HBC	More young people progressing into higher education from deprived neighbourhoods.
Providing 12 -19 year olds with music making and other creative learning opportunities		LOOSE MUSIC	More young people accessing service from deprived neighbourhoods
Targeted support to reduce the outcome gaps at school between children in care, disadvantaged children, and their peers.		Children and Enterprise Directorate - HBC	Reduced attainment gap between children in care, disadvantaged children and their peers.
Better support to parents re/joining the employment market.		DWP/Jobcentre Plus	Lower proportion of benefit claimants with children
Deliver children’s Centre core offer – early intervention for families		Children and Enterprise Directorate - HBC	More vulnerable families able to access range of services to improve quality of life, and access to childcare.
Increase the staying-on rates for post 16 year olds		Children and Enterprise Directorate - HBC	More young people continuing in full time education post-16. A reduction in the NEET rates in deprived neighbourhoods.

Objective Two: Working more closely between partners			
ACTION	TIMESCALE (all 2013 unless stated)	LEAD AGENCY	INTENDED IMPACTS
Providing premises at a peppercorn rent to support Halton Credit Union in Widnes	Opening 2011	Halton Housing Trust	Premises open for business
Cross promotion of financial inclusion services		Halton and Warrington Trading Standards	Increased take-up rates of services on offer Reduced levels of irresponsible lending.
Complete A-Z employment offer from attracting business to the Borough to supporting local people into jobs		Halton Employment Partnership Group	Less unemployment, especially in worst performing neighbourhoods. A greater proportion of jobs with new/expanding employer filled by local people.
Embed the Integrated Working Support team as the first point of contact for professional needing support and advice.		Children and Enterprise Directorate	Vulnerable families receive timely and relevant support from appropriate partners/agencies.
Joint Commissioning of services through Children's Trust		Children's Trust Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board	Inclusion of challenging targets for service access and provision for poorer families.

Objective Three: Working with the whole family			
ACTION	TIMESCALE (all 2013 unless stated)	LEAD AGENCY	INTENDED IMPACTS
Assisting families affected by substance misuse		Children's Trust Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board	More clients with dependant children accessing substance misuse services.
Healthy Lifestyle education		Children's Trust Children & Families Partnership Commissioning Board	Lower obesity, smoking etc rates in poorer families.
Embed the Integrated Working Support team as the first point of contact for professional needing support and advice. CAF process is used and understood.		Children and Enterprise Directorate	Vulnerable families receive timely and relevant support from appropriate partners/agencies in order to meet their needs.
Continue to embed "Team around the Family" principles to ensure whole family approach to service delivery		Halton's Children's Trust	More successful outcomes for poorer families.

Objective Four: Mapping services / New ways of working			
ACTION	TIMESCALE (all 2013 unless stated)	LEAD AGENCY	INTENDED IMPACTS
Map current services and identify areas of collaboration	By end Sept 2011. Feed into 2012/13 business plans	Child and Family Poverty Group	Partners working together to eliminate gaps/overlaps in service provision.
Explore opportunities offered by the DWP/ESP programme for families with multiple problems.	Starts late 2011 to 2014	TBC	Better identification and co-ordinated support for families with multiple problems.
Identification of appropriate SMART targets and indicators	November 2011	Child Poverty Steering Group	Better targeting of scarce resources to points of greatest need and impact.

Objective Five: Maximise income			
ACTION	TIMESCALE (all 2013 unless stated)	LEAD AGENCY	INTENDED IMPACTS
Ensure that existing and new benefit claims are dealt with as quickly and accurately as possible		Revenues and Benefits administration - HBC	Fewer families resorting to doorstep and other unaffordable credit.
Support adults into employment		Halton People Into Jobs	Less unemployment, especially in worst performing neighbourhoods.
Attract and secure employment generating investment in the Borough. Ensure a good spread of skill requirement.		Development and Investment Services - HBC	Increased skill levels amongst local labour force. Increasing jobs in new and growing sectors of the economy. A greater proportion of jobs with new/expanding employers filled by local people.
Improve quality and range of the housing stock		HBC/Housing Partnership	Fewer families in unsatisfactory accommodation on social housing waiting lists.
Developing Financial Literacy		Halton CAB	Increased take-up of affordable credit and/or fewer repossessions/bankruptcies.
Provide supported bus services to key education and employment sites		HBC - Transport	More young people continuing in full time education post-16. Greater proportion of jobs with new/growing employers taken by local people.

This Development Plan is not exhaustive. Nor is it fixed, being subject to periodic review by the Halton Child & Family Poverty Steering Group on behalf of the Halton Strategic Partnership.

Outcome Indicators

Additional indicators may also indicate reduction in poverty for particular groups and/or improvements in ability to move out of poverty:

- *Children in Care attainment*
- *Attainment gap for free school meals*
- *Reduction in percentage of children eligible for free school meals*
- *Benefit claimants with children reduction*
- *Reduction in unemployment*
- *Reduce the number of families in unsatisfactory accommodation on social housing waiting lists*
- *Reduction in the number of repossessions*
- *Reduction in the number of bankruptcies*
- *Increase in the proportion of young people continuing in full time education post-16*

Performance Measures

The following measures may be used to indicate progress made with specific partners or specific programmes of work. *Please note that these are not in any specific order.*

- Numbers of young people accessing LOOSE music from deprived neighbourhoods
- Increase the number of Halton Credit Union premises across Halton
- Increase take up rates of financial inclusion services
- Proportion of new/expanding employer jobs filled by local people
- Increase the number of clients with dependent children accessing substance misuse services
- Reduction of obesity in poorer families
- Reduction in smoking rates in poorer families
- Increase speed and accuracy in dealing with benefit claims for new and existing claimants
- Reduce the number of families in unsatisfactory accommodation on social housing waiting lists
- Reduction in the number of repossessions
- Reduction in the number of bankruptcies

USEFUL LINKS

National Child Poverty Strategy - "A New Approach to Child Poverty: Tackling the Causes of Disadvantage and Transforming Families' Lives"

<http://www.education.gov.uk/publications/eOrderingDownload/CM-8061.pdf>

Frank Field review 'The Foundation Years: preventing poor children becoming poor adults'

<http://povertyreview.independent.gov.uk/media/20254/poverty-report.pdf>

Graham Allen review 'Early Intervention: The Next Steps'

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/g/graham%20allens%20review%20of%20early%20intervention.pdf>

National Child Poverty Unit

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/child-poverty/>

Halton's Child and Family Poverty Needs Assessment

<http://cid-9104d6a5e629b08f.office.live.com/self.aspx/ChildPoverty/CPFNeedsAssessment.pdf>

Department for Work and Pensions

<http://www.dwp.gov.uk/policy/child%2Dpoverty/>

Joseph Rowntree Foundation

<http://www.jrf.org.uk/child-poverty>

Child Poverty Action Group

<http://www.cpag.org.uk/>

End Child Poverty

<http://www.endchildpoverty.org.uk/>

GLOSSARY

Liverpool City Region – The LCR comprises of the five Merseyside Authorities of Liverpool, Sefton, Knowsley, Wirral and St Helens, plus Halton in Cheshire. The grouping recognises that these areas have similar underlying issues which can be best tackled through joint working.

Government definitions of Child Poverty

Relative low income - The relative low income target is that less than 10% of children who live in qualifying households live in households that fall within the relevant income group. A household falls within the relevant income group, in relation to a financial year, if its equivalised net income for the financial year is less than 60% of median equivalised net household income for the financial year.

Combined low income and material deprivation - The combined low income and material deprivation target is that less than 5% of children who live in qualifying households —
(a) live in households that fall within the relevant income group, and
(b) experience material deprivation.

A household falls within the relevant income group, in relation to a financial year, if its equivalised net income for the financial year is less than 70% of median equivalised net household income for the financial year.

Regulations must specify the circumstances in which a child is to be regarded as experiencing material deprivation in a financial year.

Absolute low income - The absolute low income target is that less than 5% of children who live in qualifying households live in households falling within the relevant income group.

A household falls within the relevant income group, in relation to a financial year, if its equivalised net income for the financial year is less than 60% of the adjusted base amount. “The adjusted base amount”, in relation to a financial year, is the base amount adjusted in a prescribed manner to take account of changes in the value of money since the base year.

- “the base amount” means the amount of median equivalised net household income for the base year;
- “the base year” means the financial year beginning with 1 April 2010.

Persistent poverty - In relation to a financial year (“the relevant financial year”), the persistent poverty target is that less than the target percentage of children who have lived in qualifying households during each of the survey years have lived in households that have been within the relevant income group in at least 3 of the survey years.

The survey years are—

- (a) the calendar year that ends in the relevant financial year, and
- (b) the 3 previous calendar years.

The target percentage is a percentage to be prescribed by regulations made before 2015.

A household falls within the relevant income group, in relation to a calendar year, if its equivalised net income for the year is less than 60% of median equivalised net household income for the year.

Instead of exercising the power conferred by subsection (3) of the Child Poverty Act, the Secretary of State may by regulations amend this section so as to substitute a different persistent poverty target for that set out in subsections (1) to (4).

Regulations under subsection (5) may only be made—

- (a) before 2015, and
- (b) with the consent of the Commission.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: STAKEHOLDER WORKSHOP

PRIORITIES FOR ACTION AND WHY

The following tables provide a summary of a workshop undertaken to determine key priorities for tackling child and family poverty in the Borough. Participants were able to suggest any measures that they felt would positively impact on poverty and then through a series of votes participants were asked to rank the measures to ascertain the key priorities.

The first task asked participants to identify the underlying causes of poverty in Halton having seen a presentation of the needs assessment.

The most important factor was identified as 'Family aspirations' followed by 'Cultural acceptance'. In Halton low aspirations are believed to be a key factor holding children back from achieving their full potential. In particular a lack of positive role models, lack of academic ambition and a fear of further education is restricting the academic achievements of Halton's young people which leads to a cycle of low paid employment and increases the likelihood of becoming dependent on benefits in adult life.

However it is recognised that low aspirations are often a *result of* living in poverty rather than the *cause of* poverty. In many cases families living with the day to day grind of poverty do have aspirations but they often feel that there are too many barriers in their way to achieve them. This is important because if the barriers can be removed people are often very committed to improving their own lives.

When asked to identify the second most important issue 'Benefit dependency' was seen as the key issue followed by 'Lack of secure employment'. Both of these issues are related to low aspirations but also highlight the need to support people in finding employment through providing individuals with the necessary skills to access employment and ensuring that the right mix of jobs are available in the Borough.

What are the underlying causes of child poverty in Halton?

Issue	1 st Vote
<i>Family aspirations</i>	11
Cultural acceptance	9
Lack of secure employment	3
Lack of long-term investment in services	3
Benefit dependency	1
Lifestyle	1
Educational attainment (post 16)	1
Financial lifestyle	0

Issue	2 nd Vote
<i>Benefit dependency</i>	9
Lack of secure employment	7
Cultural acceptance	3
Lifestyle	2

Family aspirations	2
Financial lifestyle	2
Lack of long-term investment in services	1
Educational attainment (post 16)	1

Having identified the key causes of poverty the group were then asked to determine the key actions to mitigate the issues.

The group identified 'Cultural challenge/aspirations' as the key area of focus. This follows on strongly from the priority causes. Alongside this 'Early intervention' was also highlighted as the best way to bring about long term change.

When asked to select the second most important actions 'Whole family approach (holistic)' and 'Flexible single point of access' were chosen. Adopting a whole family approach recognises that intergenerational poverty is a serious issue and an holistic approach is necessary to break the cycle of poverty. Adopting a flexible single point of access recognises that the range of services offered can be confusing and people would benefit from a simpler system which guides them to the most appropriate service as quickly as possible.

What should our key priorities be?

Issue	1 st Vote
<i>Cultural challenge/aspirations</i>	7
<i>Early intervention</i>	7
Focus on 0-5 years	5
Whole family approach (holistic)	4
Education – parentcraft	4
Identify 'frequent flyers'	2
Best practice evidence	1
Flexible single point of access	0
Celebration of success	0

Issue	2 nd Vote
<i>Whole family approach (holistic)</i>	6
<i>Flexible single point of access</i>	6
Cultural challenge/aspirations	5
Early intervention	3
Identify 'frequent flyers'	3
Best practice evidence	2
Education – parentcraft	2
Focus on 0-5 years	1
Celebration of success	1

In the third task participants were asked to select the issue that should be tackled first. The most popular choice was 'Mapping service user journeys to future provision' with 'Info sharing between partners' a close second.

Mapping of services was seen as a key tool in firstly simplifying the system for users and secondly in identifying which services provide the best support for lifting people out of poverty. This relates strongly to the identification of a single point of access as an important measure for helping people to access services more easily.

Increased information sharing between partners also figured strongly. This category of action supports the whole family approach where information sharing between partners is key. It

also supports early intervention and raising aspirations as a range of partners can provide a much broader overview of the contributory factors that lead to poverty than any one partner can. Once all of the factors are known, services are much better positioned to provide the right support to help families to escape poverty.

What should we tackle first?

Issue	1 st Vote
<i>Mapping service user journeys to future provision</i>	7
Info sharing between partners	6
Community engagement – priorities	4
Multi-agency co-located teams	4
Targeted information services	3
Online multi-agency directory of services	3
Communications – what’s happening?	1

Issue	2 nd Vote
<i>Info sharing between partners</i>	8
Mapping service user journeys to future provision	6
Community engagement – priorities	3
Communications – what’s happening?	3
Multi-agency co-located teams	2
Targeted information services	2
Online multi-agency directory of services	1

Financial Exclusion

In addition to the work undertaken through the needs assessment and the outcomes of the stakeholder workshop, this Strategy and the resulting Development Plan have been shaped by an assessment of the prevalence and effects of financial exclusion in Halton, which has been undertaken by Halton and Warrington Trading Standards.

Financial exclusion can mean that individuals have limited or no access to:

- **Bank Accounts:** vulnerable individuals can find it difficult to obtain bank accounts and difficult to understand how to use their account to avoid unnecessary bank charges. Individuals can be refused a bank or building society account because they cannot provide identity documents to show who they are and where they live. Many banks and building societies only accept a driving licence or passport, which some low-income families do not have. Basic bank accounts provide essential financial services such as enabling people to pay their bills by direct debit, pay in cheques and cash, and make cash withdrawals 24 hours a day and receive income and benefit payments.
- **Personal Credit:** vulnerable individuals can find it difficult to obtain personal credit from mainstream low-cost lenders.
- **Insurance:** vulnerable individuals can have difficulty accessing insurance products, particularly home contents insurance, either because they haven’t got the income to pay for a policy or because the area where they live attracts higher premiums.
- **Savings:** many individuals on lower or fixed incomes can find it difficult to get savings started and experience difficulty in accessing savings accounts.

- **Financial Advice:** individuals can find it difficult to get simple and independent explanations of financial services and easy access to money management information.
- **Employment:** not having a bank account often acts as a barrier to employment as more and more employers prefer to pay wages directly into a bank account.

Certain groups are at high risk of financial exclusion: social housing tenants, those who are unemployed, those claiming benefits and lone parents. There is an established link between social housing and child poverty and in Halton every Lower Super Output Area that has high levels of child poverty also has a high proportion of social housing - the highest correlation in the Liverpool City Region⁴.

The demographic profile of Halton provides the following estimates of those at high risk of financial exclusion:

Groups at high risk of financial exclusion	Estimated numbers 'at risk' in Halton
Tenants of Social Rented Housing	13,245 households
People who are unemployed and claiming Job Seekers Allowance	4,110 people (May 2010)
People claiming health-related benefits	8,420 people (May 2010)
Lone parents on income support	2,200 people (May 2010)

It should be noted that any one individual may experience several of these risk factors together and so it is difficult to estimate the actual number of households or people that are at risk of financial exclusion.

The need to tackle financial exclusion within the Borough will be a key consideration in the development of the Development Plan.

⁴ A Brighter Future: working together to Tackle Child and Family Poverty, Child and Family Poverty Framework Interim Analysis Report, Liverpool City Region, 2010, pg 30

ANNEX

Annex 1 Halton's Child and Family Needs Assessment**Annex 2 Membership of the Halton Child & Family Poverty Steering Group**

	Organisation
1	Portfolio Holder for Children, Young People and Families, HBC. (Chair)
2	Chair of Children & Young People Scrutiny Board, HBC
3	Operational Director for Learning & Achievement. HBC
4	Halton & Warrington Youth Offending Team
5	Job Centre Plus
6	Cheshire Constabulary
7	Local Transport Authority
8	Halton Childrens' Centre Manager
9	Halton & Warrington Trading Standards
10	Halton Citizens Advice Bureau
11	Halton Parents & Carers Forum
12	NHS Halton & St Helens

Partnership and Administrative Support is provided by Halton Borough Council

[As at July 2011]

REPORT:	Employment, Learning, Skills and Community Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	14 th November 2011
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Communities
SUBJECT:	Draft Sports Strategy
WARDS:	Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider the draft sports strategy and update The Board on operational issues.

2.0 RECOMMENDED That:

- (1) the report is noted; and**
- (2) Board Members comment on the draft Sports Strategy 2012 -2015.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Sport and Recreation Team reports its performance to this board through quarterly monitoring reports produced by Community and Environment Services. It describes key developments and progress against objectives and performance indicators for the service.
- 3.2 This year a key objective is to produce a new sports strategy for Halton. Consultation, essential for the success of the strategy, has already begun with sports forums and others with an interest in sport.
- 3.3 An outline draft copy of the Halton Sports Strategy 2012 -15 is attached at Appendix 1.
- 3.4 The strategy takes into account government policy, Sport England Strategy, National policies from other relevant bodies; relevant regional policies, sports specific policies and local plans, strategies and priorities.
- 3.5 The strategy identifies 6 key themes
- Increase Participation and Widening Access
 - Club Development
 - Coach Education and Volunteering
 - Sporting Excellence

- Finance and Funding for Sport
- Sports Facilities

It will be underpinned by the need for Partnership working with local and national key partners and active promotion and publicity to raise the profile of sport.

- 3.6 A key outcome is to increase participation in which Halton has made excellent progress. This is evidenced within the strategy. Many successes and initiatives of Halton Borough Council have contributed to the rise in performance since 2005;
- Improved leisure facilities, notably a new athletics facility, 2 AstroTurf Pitches, Indoor Tennis Centre, expansion of Gym facilities Kingsway Leisure Centre.
 - Partnership with DC Leisure to manage the council's Leisure Centre's and to develop participation.
 - Sports participation project, working with other sport providers especially within the voluntary sports club sector to improve and increase the opportunities available within community settings
 - Free access to Park activities including Tennis, Basketball and Bowling
 - Free junior sports pitch hire.
 - 100% rate relief for sports club
 - Extended programmes of activity across all providers e.g. partnership with Halton and St Helens Primary Care Trust including delivery of programmes, such as, Target wellbeing, Mens GO and specialist weight management programme
 - Comprehensive health walks programme
- 3.7 The council maximizes external funding that is available for Sport. The ability to secure grants and work with partners, to assist with future delivery, will be essential.
- 3.8 The Council's budgets are suffering significant reductions. As part of this process the Board should be advised that there are budget savings at the council's leisure centre's under consideration. These include the removal of the annual centre accreditation scheme, reducing the Halton Leisure Card discount, removing the Crèche facility, increasing some admission charges above inflation and reducing operating hours.
- 3.9 Investment in School Sport has significantly reduced since the government's withdrawal of funding to School Sports Partnership. As a consequence provision and policy for School sport is solely within the children and enterprise directorate and will be reported independently by that Directorate.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Sports Strategy 2012 -2015 provides a vehicle through which the Council and its partners develop and communicate actions that will contribute towards a coordinated approach to sports delivery in Halton.
- 4.2 The Sports Strategy is monitored by the Halton Sports Partnership, which comprises of key stakeholders from the voluntary sport sector.

5.0 BUDGET IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 These are contained within the report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Sport is cross cutting and the benefits gained from participation and involvement in sport contributes towards achieving wider council priorities, such as, improving health in Halton.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Failure to deliver actions. This can be mitigated by regular review and progress meetings.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Consultation with representative organizations and individual service users will be necessary for the successful adoption of the Sports Strategy and for the implementation of and service reductions at Leisure Centre's required to meet budget targets.

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

- 9.1 There are none within the meaning of the Act.



Sports Strategy 2012-2015

OUR MISSION

“ to enrich the lives of all Halton people through Sport and Physical Activity”

Foreword

Cllr Phil Harris & Terry Parle

Contents

- 1 Introduction
- 2 The Definition of Sport
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- 9 Key Themes and Objectives
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1. Introduction

This strategy is not a whole new approach to sports development in Halton. It builds on the foundations laid by our two previous sports strategies. Our [2002-2007 strategy](#) identified key action points to tackle some of the major weaknesses that needed to be addressed if there was to be a secure foundation on which to develop sport in Halton. The strategy set priorities for the council's delivery of sport and has acted as a foundation from which Sport and Physical Activity has been developed.

Our [2006-2009 strategy](#) developed eight key themes and objectives to develop sport and participation in sport in Halton. This new strategy will continue to direct our work on sports development and participation across Halton.

2. The Definition of Sport

For the purpose of this Strategy it is necessary to define what we mean by the term 'sport'. Therefore the following definition from the council of [Europe's European Sports Charter](#) (which has also been adopted by Sport England) has been embraced:

"Sport means all forms of physical activity which through casual or organised participation, aim at expressing or improving fitness and mental well-being, forming social relationships or obtaining results in competition at all levels."

Whenever the term 'sport' is referred to within this strategy, it means 'sport and physical activity'.

3. The National Context

Sport England

In 2011 Sport England, the government agency responsible for building the foundations of sporting success in England launched its Sport England Strategy 2011-2015. This new strategy proposes 5 themes:

- Maximise Value from current National Governing Body (NGB) investment
- Deliver Places, People, Play
- NGB investment and support
- Market development – creating an environment in which key providers continue to invest in sport
- Strategic Investment and market intelligence

Sport England funds NGBs to deliver their 3 outcomes:

- Growing the numbers of people taking part in sport
- Maintaining this growth;
- Improving talent to help more people excel

They are investing £480 million (2009 – 2013) through 46 Governing bodies. Each sport has developed a whole sport plan that explains how it will use money to achieve its targets. Other recognised sports may also receive funding for specific projects through other funding schemes, such as, small grants scheme.

Sport England and UK Sport merger is due to be completed by April 2013. It is proposed that the merged body will incorporate current responsibilities for community and elite sport.

4. Community Benefits of Sports Development

Social Inclusion

Sport brings people together and can contribute to a sense of community. Participating in sport and physical activity can help tackle isolation and allows people to develop social networks and raise self esteem and confidence. Sport can make a difference in the community by building pride, confidence and a sense of purpose to people's lives.

Community Cohesion

Sport can also play a major role in promoting greater knowledge, respect and contact between various cultures and establish a greater sense of citizenship. Sport can give people a sense of belonging; people from different backgrounds and cultures participating on equal levels.

Regeneration Programmes

The role of sport within regeneration programmes is recognised nationally and should be reflected locally. Sports provision results in employment and inward investment, via spending on both sports equipment and spectating. Capital projects often provide significant employment opportunities both during construction and the subsequent operation of facilities.

Community Safety and Crime Reduction

Whilst it is not possible to claim that sport alone can reduce levels of youth crime, there are an increasing number of examples of projects where sport has been a key tool in reducing levels of crime e.g. through Positive Futures schemes. Using sport as a constructive use of time has been shown to divert young people away from crime and engaging young offenders at risk of re-offending.

Lifelong Learning

There is increasing evidence to show a link between involvement in sport and physical activity and improved educational attainment. Sport also provides people with the opportunity to learn new skills and acquire qualifications that can lead to employment. However, a vast amount of sports provision relies on volunteers and ensuring volunteers receive the right training and support to improve and keep skills up to date is crucial for the ongoing delivery of sport within the community and voluntary sector.

The Environment

Open space, including green belt and formal parks, can accommodate a wide-range of formal and informal sporting activities, and as such is a valuable sporting resource. Using such spaces for sports provision can contribute to land-use management and help create awareness of, and support for, its continual existence. Sport and the provision of sports facilities can make an important contribution to the regeneration of 'run down' areas and can improve the quality of the local environment. The design of sports facilities should be such that they contribute to sustainability issues, through such considerations as energy efficient buildings and ensuring access by public transport or linkages to cycle networks.

5. Sport and Health

The World Health Organisation recognises the benefits of physical activity and identifies physical activity as one of the "best buys in public health", not only reducing the risk of certain diseases such as obesity, type 2 diabetes, osteoporosis, and coronary heart disease, but also the symptoms of health problems such as anxiety, hypertension, stroke and various forms of cancer. There is a direct link between low levels of physical activity and increasing levels of obesity. Nationally in 2008/09 there were 7,988 hospital admissions with a primary diagnosis of obesity. This was over eight times higher than the number in 1998/99 (954) and more than 50% higher than in 2007/08 (5,018). Over the period 1998/99 to 2008/09, in almost every year, more than twice as many females were admitted to hospital with a primary diagnosis of obesity than males. The North West Strategic Health Authority (SHA) has both the

largest number of admissions with either a primary or secondary diagnosis of obesity (19,184) and the highest admission rate (279 per 100,000 population).

Many people's lives are becoming increasingly sedentary. Levels of everyday physical activity are as high as those required for people to remain fit and healthy. The cost of inactivity on our health is clear. Inactivity places a significant burden on the NHS for the treatment of long-term conditions and of acute events such as heart attacks, strokes, obesity, diabetes, hypertension, heart disease, and many forms of cancer.

The Department of Health recognises that an active lifestyle is a key to better health. It estimates the cost of physical inactivity at £8.2 million annually (cost to the NHS and related costs e.g. absence from work etc). This excludes the contribution of inactivity due to obesity, which is estimated to cost £2.5 billion annually with levels of obesity having trebled since the 1980s. It is estimated that 70% of men and 63% of women are overweight or obese and approximately 16% of two to 15 year olds are now obese.

The Department of Health's *Start Active, Stay Active* strategy, published in July 2011, sets out the national approach to increasing participation in sport. This includes setting new targets for adults to achieve 150 minutes of moderate intensity activity (or 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity). However, across all age groups, the report recommends that people are active in some way every day. By being active daily, individuals will gain some health benefits which result from acute responses that occur for up to 24–48 hours following activity. Being active daily may also help to develop more sustainable, lifelong activity habits.

19-64 year olds

The Department of Health has recently issued new guidelines on the levels of activity people need to achieve to remain fit and healthy. It recommends that adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week.

Alternatively, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or combinations of moderate and vigorous intensity activity.

Adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week.

All adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

65 years +

Older adults who participate in any amount of physical activity gain some health benefits, including maintenance of good physical and cognitive function. Some physical activity is better than none, and more physical activity provides greater health benefits. Older adults should aim to be active daily. Over a week, activity should add up to at least 150 minutes (2½ hours) of moderate intensity activity in bouts of 10 minutes or more – one way to approach this is to do 30 minutes on at least 5 days a week. For those who are already regularly active at moderate intensity, comparable benefits can be achieved through 75 minutes of vigorous intensity activity spread across the week or a combination of moderate and vigorous activity. Older adults should also undertake physical activity to improve muscle strength on at least two days a week. Older adults at risk of falls should incorporate physical activity to improve balance and co-ordination on at least two days a week. All older adults should minimise the amount of time spent being sedentary (sitting) for extended periods.

NHS Halton and St. Helens

NHS Halton and St. Helens (also known as Primary Care Trust [PCT]) is the organisation responsible for providing healthcare services to the residents of Halton. As part of the modernization of NHS services PCTs as they currently operate will be disbanded as from April 2013 and the Commissioning of NHS services will transfer to local GP Commissioning Consortia.

As from 1st April 2011 community health services in Halton and St. Helens will be delivered through a new, expanded NHS Trust known as Bridgewater Community Healthcare NHS Trust. The transfer of services is taking place for an initial period of two years as part of the national Transforming Community Services (TCS) programme, which separates the commissioning and provision of community services.

The Health Improvement function is one of the areas that will be delivered by Bridgewater Trust. This includes work programmes such as Fresh Start, Cook and Taste, Health Trainers, Specialist Weight Management, GO Men's Health, Family Exercise, Family Eating, Accident Prevention Exercise (APEX), Recharge and Men's Recharge, Halton Healthy Schools, Recipe for Health (Exercise on prescription), Fit 4 Life and Passport 2 Health.

The Trust works closely with the Council and has developed a diverse range of physical activity sessions in Halton. This provides an ideal opportunity to integrate health care services and health promotion activities with sports and recreation activities within Halton.

6. Equality and Diversity in Sport

The Government has recently published its new [Equality Strategy – Building a Fairer Britain](#). Through this strategy the government has pledged to:

- Inspire a generation of young people to get involved in competitive school sport through the new Olympic and Paralympic-style competition. This will give all schools (mainstream and special) and all

pupils (including those with disabilities or special educational needs) the opportunity to get involved;

- Ensure a wider sporting, social and economic legacy from London 2012 across the UK and inspire a new era in public attitudes towards inclusion and equality. In particular, we are committed to using the opportunity of the Paralympic Games to help change attitudes and perceptions towards disabled people;
- Work with governing bodies of different sports to tackle homophobia and transphobia in sport.

7. The Local Context

Halton Borough Council and Halton Strategic Partnership have recognised the importance of developing a sustainable approach to sports development and have stated the importance of sport and physical activity through the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Council's Corporate Plan.

The Sustainable Communities Strategy

Halton's Sustainable Communities Plan has five priorities for action:

- A Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton
- Children and Young People in Halton
- Environment and Regeneration in Halton.

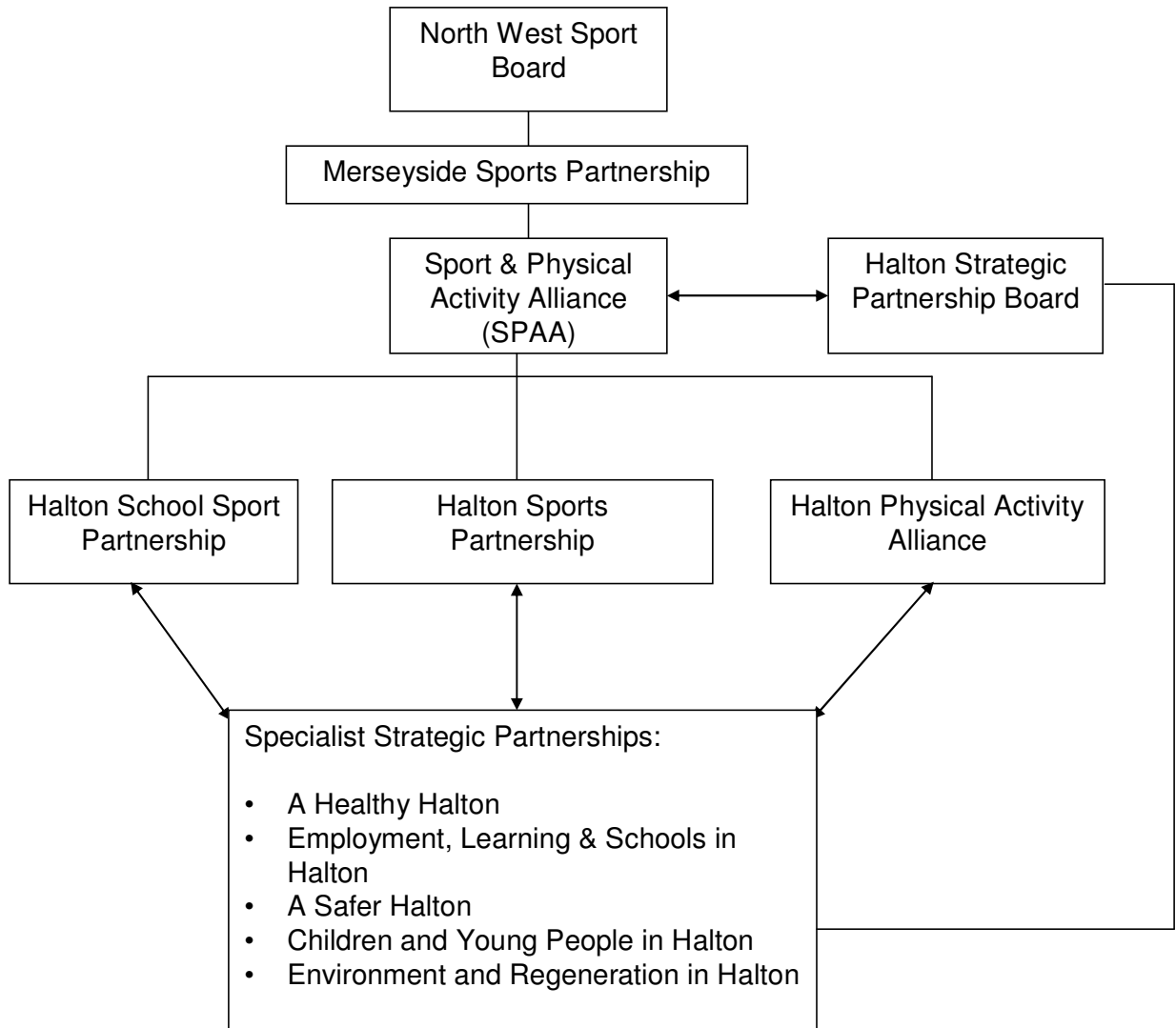
Sport and physical activity clearly has a role to play within all these priorities and especially in relation to supporting children and young people and improving health and well being. The council has also highlighted Sport as a key priority for improvement and the priorities and actions set within this strategy for sport and physical activity will help achieve this drive for a better service. The Healthy Halton Strategic Priority highlights the need to *increase physical activity, improve diet and early detection and treatment of disease*.

The Corporate Plan

Halton Borough Council's corporate plan has highlighted *Healthy and Active Lifestyles* as a specific area of focus. It pledges that the Council will strive to improve the future health and prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through encouraging and providing opportunities to lead healthier and physically active lifestyles. Future planned activity could include:

- Improving the health of Halton school children by increasing the percentage of children participating in sport for fun and fitness;
- Reviewing and updating the Sports Strategy and Facilities Strategy and begin their implementation during 2011/2.

The Partnership Framework



Halton has an independent sports council, [The Halton Sports Partnership](#) (HSP), which aims to promote sport throughout the borough, encouraging participation in sport and offering advice and assistance to clubs, organisations and individuals in their quest for sporting success and participation.

There is a good relationship between the council and HSP meetings take place regularly to discuss key issues. The HSP will continue to act as the voice of voluntary sports clubs in Halton, and co-ordinate and raise issues through its partners to increase participation and become accountable for local investment.

This strategy will direct all partners to produce implementation plans including sports specific action plans and partnership service plans for young people, parents, coaches, officials and volunteers; to help to improve local coaching and competitive opportunities; develop and support high quality clubs and to create Merseyside wide development squads. Halton needs to ensure that it

remains involved with the work of the County Sports Partnership (Merseyside Sports Partnership is the local CSPs) and supports the delivery of all programmes. Sport England invests in CSPs to deliver services for [national governing bodies](#) and [programmes for young people](#).

Halton's Young People and Sport

Since May 2010, the Coalition Government has introduced a number of reforms that have and will have a significant impact on the way services are delivered. Some of these reforms have directly affected the Children's Trust and these changes in policy and legislation will have a bearing on how the Children's Trust will prioritise its services.

Under the previous Government, Children's Trusts became statutory following the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning (ASCL) Act 2009. This statutory footing was revoked however by the Coalition Government reforms. Children's Trusts across the country were directly affected as:

- the duty on schools to co-operate through Children's Trusts was removed
- the requirement on local authorities to set up Children's Trust Boards and the requirement on those Boards to prepare and publish a joint Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP) was ended
- the regulations underpinning the CYPP and the statutory guidance on Children's Trusts were withdrawn

The Coalition Government has however reconfirmed its commitment to working in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people through locally agreed partnerships, such as Children's Trusts.

Through discussions between partner agencies within Halton Children's Trust, it became clear that there was a collective will to continue to work in partnership to improve outcomes for children and young people in Halton, and that should be within the existing partnership for children and young people arrangements – Halton Children's Trust.

With this commitment to continue to work in partnership through the Children's Trust, there was universal agreement that a new Children & Young People's Plan should be produced, taking into consideration the Coalition Government's reforms and the progress made in Halton, while also providing strategic direction for the next three years.

All work between all services and agencies within Halton that sit within the Halton Children's Trust structures falls within the framework outlined within the [Children & Young People's Plan 2011-14](#).

In October 2002 Central Government launched the PE, School Sport and Club Links (PESSCL) Strategy to ensure that "all children, whatever their circumstances or abilities should be able to participate in and enjoy physical

education and sport". The PESSCL strategy was driven through eight programmes:

- Specialist Sports Colleges
- School Sports Co-ordinator Partnerships
- Gifted and Talented Programmes
- QCA PE and School Sport Investigation
- Step Into Sport
- Professional Development
- School /Club links
- Swimming

The aim was to deliver high quality PE and Sport to all young people regardless of ability and Halton benefited from additional investment to support the infrastructure and delivery.

The Government removed funding for this programme during 2010. However, some of the elements of the programme are being retained. The new School Games Competition will encourage young people to get involved in sport. Halton has received support, until August 2013, to appoint a School Games Organiser (SGO) in its Children and Enterprise department. In addition to an annual calendar of competition the following programmes will continue to be offered to young people:

- Change4Life Sports Clubs
- Young Ambassadors
- Playground to Podium
- yoUR Sport
- National School Sport week

In recent years a large amount of external funding has gone into school sport provision as part of National Programmes aimed at increasing the amount and quality of PE in schools and improving school facilities for sport. Approximately £2.3 million of funding was awarded to Halton through the New Opportunities Fund (NOF) now known as BLF PE and Sport programme to improve primary and secondary schools sports facilities.

8. Health in Halton

One of the key priorities for Halton identified in both the Sustainable Communities Strategy and the Corporate Plan is to develop A Healthy Halton.

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.

This strategy forms part of the wider strategic priority to create a Healthy Halton. An increase in participation in sport and physical activity is a key part of creating A Healthy Halton and is proven to contribute to a healthy lifestyle, and tackling issues such as child and adult obesity, heart disease and early death. Halton currently has a number of serious health issues which an increase in sports participation and active lifestyle could play a significant role in improving:

- Halton has higher than average levels of adult obesity in England and higher than the average in the North-West;
- Halton has higher than average levels of child obesity in England and higher than the average in the North-West;
- Halton has higher than average levels of smoking in England and higher than the average in the North-West;
- Halton has lower than average levels of health eating in adults – the joint 26th worst in England;
- Halton has the 34th highest level of smoking in adults in local authority areas in England;
- Halton has the joint 2nd worst life expectancy for females and the 9th worst for males in England.

Halton Borough Council and Halton Strategic Partnership recognise that raising levels of sporting activity is a key part in tackling these health issues.

9. Key Themes and Objectives

The Sports Partnership has identified 6 key themes that guide the direction of this strategy and the development of sport in Halton. They are:

Key themes

- 1. Increase Participation and Widening Access:** To ensure sport and physical activity opportunities exist for all members of the community.
- 2. Club Development:** Supporting clubs to be safe, effective and child friendly and actively increasing club membership.
- 3. Coach Education and Volunteering:** Improving the quality of coaches and support for volunteers.
- 4. Sporting Excellence:** Improving the opportunities for individuals to reach their full potential from grassroots to excellence.
- 5. Finance and Funding for Sport:** We will maximise the funding available for sports projects and individuals within the borough.
- 6. Sports Facilities:** Diversify the range and improve the quality of sports facilities.

Key Theme 1: Increase Participation and Widen Access

To develop and support the provision of opportunities for sport and physical activity that promote integrity, fair play and respect that are accessible regardless of age, gender, race, ability or personal circumstances. We will encourage individuals to develop their ability and remain active through their lives.

We aim to sustain current participation levels and where possible encourage people to start participating in sport and exercise. Within this access, transport, pricing, marketing and programming will need to be addressed.

Actions:

- Focus on increasing 14 – 25 year old participation through Sportivate programme; develop additional opportunities for students studying at Further and Higher Education establishments to participate in sport and physical activity.
- Help NGB's achieve their grow and sustain targets
- Support existing sports clubs and community groups
- Encourage and support new community activity. Increasing adult participation, specifically women and older adults, through Sports Participation Project
- Continue to offer the Halton Leisure Card Scheme. A discount available for target groups to help reduce 'cost' as a barrier to participation.
- Support school activity programmes, such as, Fit 4 Life to contribute towards a halt in childhood obesity amongst children under 11.
- Facilitate Sports Fair Week to showcase sports and physical activities, which are taking place locally throughout voluntary sports clubs and venues in Halton. Promote come and try it sessions, demonstrations and competitions. (Majority free).
- Use sporting events such as the Olympics to inspire people to take part in sport.
- Encourage and support local events such as Run the Bridge (Halton's 5 mile Road Race), Widnes Football Cup and Vikings in the Community.

Halton currently has the 15th highest rate of adult participation in sport and active recreation of local authority areas in England. Figures for NI8 indicate that 27.4% of adults in Halton *participated in sport and active recreation, at moderate intensity, for at least 30 minutes on at least 12 days out of the last 4 weeks*. We have seen a 7.3% increase in adult participation in the past 5 years – the second highest improvement in England and the highest in the Liverpool City Region. This is a significant achievement and above the rate expected for a borough such as Halton. This can be attributed to the multi agency approach to tackling inactivity and coordinated investment in local programme delivery.

GRAPH insert?

Sports Development Officers

Halton Council employs three Sports Development Officers. Their role is to support, manage and organise a wide range of sports activities designed to increase participation in sport, both through direct provision and partnership working. Officers currently focus on creating opportunities that enables individuals to start, stay and succeed in sport, working to increase activity levels to help improve the health of Halton's less active residents and working to support and develop local sports clubs. Halton's Priority Fund and Sport England fund supports full and part-time officers to increase participation in sport in areas of social deprivation and amongst identified target groups. Examples of these include the Sports Participation Project, Community Sports Coach Scheme and Halton Sport Partnership Project.

The council needs to take a role in ensuring all sports development officers are aware of the different services they are providing to avoid duplication and share good practice and local knowledge.

The Sports Development Continuum is now a well-known model helping to outline the sporting stages of an individual. These stages are:

- Foundation – early development of basic skills; catching, throwing, movement of the body
- Participation – playing sport mainly for 'fun'; enjoyment, health and fitness
- Performance – playing sport at a competitive club or county level;
- Excellence – playing and competing at the highest level.

The sports development continuum is a dynamic process, with people moving in both directions at all ages of life. Consequently, it is important that sporting structures are in place to meet people's needs wherever they are within the continuum.

Sport England

[Sport England](#) is the government agency responsible for building the foundations of sporting success, by creating a world leading community sport environment of clubs, coaches, facilities and volunteers. Sport England's framework for community sport in England sets out how it will play the lead for the strategic development of sport.

Merseyside Sports Partnership (MSP)

Merseyside Sport Partnership, is our local County Sports Partnership, and is a network of agencies committed to establishing a fully inclusive structure that will enable people of all ages within Merseyside to benefit from Sport & Physical Activity. Its vision is to improve the quality of life for the people of Merseyside through Sport and Physical Activity. There are 49 County Sports Partnership in England and their aim is to create a multi agency partnership to deliver activities and services relating to Sport England's single system for sport. Sport England invests in CSPs to deliver services for national governing bodies, to support work with local government and with children and young people, and deliver Sport England's key legacy programmes Sportivate and Sport Makers.

National Governing Bodies

Some national governing bodies of sport such as the Lawn Tennis Association, the Rugby Football League and the English Cricket Board fund regional or county sports development officers with geographical responsibility to oversee the development of their sport. These officers are involved with all aspects of the promotion and development of their sport including the writing of county sports specific development plans. These plans show how the governing body wants their sport to develop. If sports specific development plans are produced in Halton they will need to accord with these governing body plans.

National Research / Trends

The General Household Survey (GHS) and research undertaken for Sport England has produced reports and research information into national levels of participation and general trends in sports participation. Over the last ten years, participation in sport in general has been rising steadily, although overall levels of participation are now starting to stabilise. As well as participating in sport, millions of people also watch or follow sport at a local or national level. As well as taking part in and watching sport, 2% of the national workforce is employed in sports related activity.

Local Research

A considerable amount of research and consultation into sports participation in Halton has been undertaken.

The Sports Participation Project works towards creating a more vibrant community in Halton by increasing opportunities for adults to be more physically active and participate in sport. Community based activities are developed following consultation with the local community and working partners. New activities are promoted and supported to become self sustainable in the long term. The project engages with hard to reach populations that need assistance to overcome barriers that have prevented regular participation.

The Active People Survey measures how many people participate, who they are, what sports they do and how this varies across England.

Active People Survey data is used to publish local sports profiles, which provide a detailed profile of each local authority, including data on sports participation, health, market segmentations and facilities.

Research has also been conducted to find out what barriers to participation there are in Halton. Pricing and poor transportation were the two most common reasons given as affecting people's ability to participate, especially amongst young people, disabled people and older people. Addressing equalities issues was considered as a significant barrier that needs to be addressed if participation levels are to be increased. The Active People Survey data, market segmentation profiles, local consultation through HSP and local studies all need to be considered when compiling local action plans.

SPORTS PARTICIPATION CASE STUDIES

Working with Cancer Support

Nicola Bashford Outreach Worker for Widnes & Runcorn Cancer Support Group remarked; "As part of our ongoing Cancer Prevention Strategy, I am always on the look out for activities that are suitable and fun for our members. "It can be a challenge to get the right instructors, venues and activities so the support and guidance from the Sports Participation Project has been invaluable.

Working in partnership with the Sports Participation Project ensures we have benefitted from existing knowledge and practical advice which has strengthened the quality of the work I do.

Being part of the 'Get Active' forum keeps me informed and up to date and further promotes the activities we operate. Our organisation has also had fantastic support and funding for taster activities for our Men's group (Grumpy Old Gents!) who have had hours of fun attending activities such as archery, golf and badminton, helping their group to bond and get active."

Table Tennis

Through targeted work membership has increased significantly during 2008 – 2011 with over 500 new members attracted to local clubs. Local sports clubs

have embraced a new way of working, for example, Family Table Tennis sessions allowed families to access activity for only £1 per person and those with a Halton Leisure Card free of charge. With other grants session such as Bounce into Action were planned and delivered for older adults.

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Key Theme 2: Club Development

We will offer a network of support to clubs to be safe, effective and child friendly to enable them to deliver their aims and encourage improved standards within the borough. We will work in partnership with sports clubs to facilitate and develop high quality sports opportunities for the local community

Actions:

- Support clubs with NGB club mark and Club Halton submissions to increase the number of club mark accredited clubs in Halton.
- Provide appropriate support and assistance, such as funding clinics, to enable sports clubs to maximise the use of their activities and facilities in order to increase opportunities available for residents.
- Continue to offer Sports Resource Centres to local sports clubs.
- Encouraging the formation of new sports clubs where demand exists.
- Each Leisure Centre to have a club call notice board to promote local opportunities
- Improve the links between sports clubs and schools, colleges, universities and other organisations.
- Promote local clubs on the Councils website.

It is estimated that there are over 150 voluntary sports clubs in the borough, catering for all ages and levels within the sports development continuum, covering a variety of sports ranging from athletics and swimming to boccia, curling and wheelchair Rugby. In addition to providing opportunities for participation, many sports clubs offer coaching and competition at all standards for their members. Runcorn Rowing Club has national and international representatives as club members. Rugby League and football are also strong in the borough. However there are some sports that currently have no clubs based in Halton such as archery and volleyball.

Some clubs in the borough have reported difficulties in maintaining membership levels in the light of competing leisure activities and the difficulty of retaining competent members and volunteers who are willing and able to support the club. All clubs need to consider their long-term future and how the club can be sustained. Clubs need to review the skills of their members, be it in terms of coaching, officiating or administration. In addition to a skilled volunteer base, clubs need to ensure that they have appropriate structures, policies and procedures in place e.g. a club constitution and child protection policies. As well as being 'good practice' such information is becoming essential if clubs intend to apply for funding or consider developing partnerships with schools. Many National Governing Bodies (NGBs) of sport now operate their own accreditation scheme that recognises good practice and clubs can gain 'clubmark' status. Halton has its own accreditation scheme, Club Halton, to support those clubs working toward their NGB accreditation and for those without a governing body scheme e.g. Sports 4 All Club (a multi sports club for young people with a disability).

There are two sport resource centres accessible to the voluntary sporting community of Halton. The sporting community is able to use the centres as a resource to assist with the development and running of their sports clubs, organisations or forums. Resources available include:

- Loan of sports specific and generic equipment, books, journals, magazines, DVDs and CDs
- Use of computer, printer and scanner equipment
- Internet access
- Photocopier
- Fully equipped meeting rooms

Key Theme 3: Coach Education and Volunteering

We aim to support coaches and volunteers in sport and increase the number and quality of sports coaches, officials and administrators working and volunteering in the Borough.

Actions:

- Coordinate an annual coach education programme, organize workshops to support high delivery, providing a subsidy for those supporting a Halton club accredited club.
- Increase the number of people gaining sports related qualifications. Focus on supporting individuals through NGB level 1 and 2 qualifications.
- Continue to support new and existing volunteers through the Halton Volunteer Incentive Scheme.
- Provide a young leader award programme, and mentor to sustain regular volunteering.
- Offer a recognition and reward programme for sport volunteers in Halton.
- Promote and facilitate the Sport Makers programme to Halton residents.
- Support Games Makers and sign post to local volunteering opportunities.

Halton's Sports Development Team, the NGBs, Merseyside Sports Partnership and voluntary sports clubs organise courses to develop individuals' skills in coaching, administration and officiating. Each NGB of sport has its own qualifications for coaching, and courses are organised to enable potential and existing coaches to gain qualifications and improve their coaching knowledge.

Courses in umpiring, refereeing and judging are also held to ensure the quality of officiating is maintained and improved. Many secondary schools now offer pupils the chance to study physical education as a GCSE or A Level subject as well as the opportunity to study for and obtain Sports Leader UK Awards.

Sports Coach UK Courses, Running Sport Workshops and Volunteer Investment Programme both aim to support the volunteers that sustain sports clubs. The Running Sport programme offers short workshops and literature in general administrative subjects such as 'funding and promoting your club', 'the role of the volunteer' and 'running a club'. Sportscoach UK provides generic coach education courses in topics such as safeguarding and protecting children, equity in your coaching and coaching children. Running Sport offers support to sports volunteers and the people who manage them, offering free information packs, a volunteer network and awards for recognition of good practice.

There is a need to develop a co-ordinated approach to sports education opportunities. All these programmes should be used as tools to help support the voluntary sports sector of Halton. The Sports Development Team currently produces an annual calendar of workshops.

Encouraging young people to join a club, particularly within a specific section for juniors will help to improve membership levels and hopefully provide the adult members of the future. Sports Development delivers a diverse activity programme in partnership with local clubs and schools, including Sports Leaders UK leadership courses that focus upon increasing junior membership of sports clubs and generally increasing physical activity amongst young people. This is only possible with clubs that can ensure safe, quality-sporting opportunities for all.

The Halton Volunteer Scheme has been devised in partnership with Halton Sports Partnership and Halton Borough Council, the scheme aims to recruit, reward and recognise and support volunteers aged 9+ years and mentors those who are dedicating their time voluntary to the sporting sector of Halton. The Incentive Scheme is divided into four sections 50, 100, 150 and 200 hours. On completion of each milestone a certificate and gift are awarded, all who complete the milestone are invited to the Annual Volunteer Recognition evening.

Many providers require the services of National Governing Body of sport qualified and experienced coaches who have been Criminal Record Bureau cleared. Consequently, there is an increasing opportunity for sports coaches who are engaged with sports clubs to obtain further employment opportunities as coaches, often at times which do not clash with club sessions e.g. during the day or during school holidays.

Key Theme 4: Sporting Excellence

We will provide support from grass routes to excellence for athletes, coaches and officials to help them reach their full potential.

Actions:

- Through sports specific development forums provide support to talented athletes, coaches and officials to help them reach their full potential.
- Work in partnerships with schools and sports clubs to discover, develop and support talented athletes to perform to the best of their ability at the highest standard.
- Support School Games Organiser and promote and facilitate schools participation in annual sporting calendar.
- Hold an Annual Sports Awards to celebrate success of local sporting individuals and clubs and highlight local achievements.
- Support and facilitate investment in local performers through access to grants, such as, Sports Development Grant Scheme; Merseyside Bursary Scheme; Town Twinning Grant and other sponsorship and scholarship schemes.
- Continue to offer a Platinum card to support National and international performer with free or subsidised access to Leisure Facilities.
- Holiday programmes to be delivered throughout the borough with a wide range of sports.
- Attract and support the hosting of Regional, National and International sporting events in Halton.

UK Sport is the nations high performance sports agency responsible for investing £100 million per year in Britain's best Olympic and Paralympic athletes. It has no direct involvement in community or school sport.

Sport England funds 46 National Governing Bodies of Sport. Each sport has developed a whole sport plan that provides a framework at all levels to increase participation and raise levels of achievement.

These sports are:

Angling, archery, athletics, badminton, basketball, boccia, bowls, boxing, cricket, canoeing and kayaking, cycling, equestrian, football, fencing, goalball, golf, gymnastics and trampolining, handball, hockey, judo, lacrosse, modern pentathlon, mountaineering, movement and dance, netball, orienteering, rounders, rowing, rugby union, rugby league, sailing, shooting, skiing/snowboarding, softball / baseball, squash and racketball, swimming, table tennis, taekwondo, tennis, triathlon, volleyball, waterskiing, weightlifting, wheelchair basketball, wheelchair rugby and wrestling.

Governing Body Services

National Governing Bodies of sport provide a major role in getting people to start, stay and succeed in sport. Sport England remains committed to providing support and guidance to governing bodies to ensure the development of individual sports. It is important on a local level that developments accord with the plans and strategies of the different governing bodies of sport.

Some of these strategies focus simply on facility development, whilst some include plans for the development of the sport at all levels of the sports development continuum, including plans for coach development, officials and administrators. Plans with excel outcomes have targets, such as, increase number of academy athletes and improve world ranking.

A number of National Governing Bodies have produced facility development strategies. These strategies vary greatly in the level of detail and the stages of production. Whilst it is not possible to discuss each of these strategies in detail, it is clear that any proposed new facilities within Halton will need to accord with the priorities laid out in these documents.

Where organisations are intending to develop facilities via external funding they will need to produce sports development plans to show how the new facilities will contribute to the development of that particular sport. Such plans will need to accord with the priorities of governing body strategies, and clubs will need to link into specific sports development initiatives.

Merseyside School Games

The Sports Development Team works closely with the Local Education Authorities School Games Organiser to ensure Halton enters as many teams as possible in the Merseyside School Games. The Merseyside School Games is held in July for primary aged children. The role of School Games Organiser is intended to help schools increase participation, competition and progression for young people in sport through the successful delivery of the new School Games. The council's School Games Organiser works closely with the sports development team, local schools, voluntary sports clubs, Halton Sports Partnership and coaches to organise borough squads to represent Halton at the Merseyside School Games and other inter borough events. Compared to most other Merseyside boroughs, Halton has a relatively small club base and therefore finds it difficult to enter all events, particularly in some of the more minority sports. However, Halton does do well in the sports with which it has a strong club base.

Representing your borough at a regional event can be a rewarding and inspiring occasion for young people, but overall position within the School Games should not be seen as the marker for the overall standard of sports participation and provision within the borough. As well as the main Merseyside School Games, there are stand-alone events, such as, cricket and rugby competitions.

The School Games Organiser, for Halton, coordinates and produces an annual competition calendar. The new School Games is a year round, inclusive sports competition that's designed to get young people of all ages and abilities enjoying the benefits of competitive sport. The UK School Games is an annual event for the most talented school-age athletes.

Sports Development Grant Scheme

There is a wealth of talent in the borough with many athletes achieving County and regional representation with some going on to gain international honours. The council's Sports Development Grant Schemes directly targets sports clubs and talented individuals, since the schemes introduction in 2000 over £350,000 has been given to organisations and individuals to fund sports activities.

Junior clubs have benefited from free pitch fees and 100% rate relief has been given to local clubs.

The Councils Platinum Card/Liverpool City Region Elite Card are designed to support the borough's top sportsmen and women who are participating in a sport recognised by Sport England and are in the top 10 in their national rankings or recognised squad. In addition referees and officials who are required to undergo a fitness test are also eligible. Card holders must be Halton residents and not receive salaried or professional earnings from sport. Card holders and bursary grant recipients have supported local and county activity such as coaching and personal appearances.

The council also supports professional and semi professional clubs, such as, Widnes Vikings and Runcorn Linnets. These clubs have the ability to involve and inspire local people in all areas of sport and are able to attract investment.

Key Theme 5: Finance and Funding for Sport

Actions:

- To train and develop an effective staff with the necessary skills, knowledge and values required to deliver this Strategy.
- Secure adequate and sustainable financial resources for sport and physical activity in Halton.
- Provide a Sports Development Grant Fund for distribution to individuals and sports groups.
- Provide good quality advice and support to all those seeking to access funding to improve the sports and physical activity facilities and programmes within Halton.
- Provide support to clubs wishing to gain Community Amateur Sports Club (CASC) status

Halton Council has committed increased revenue funding for sport in the borough over the past years in recognition of its commitment to improve Sports delivery. The council committed capital funding for a new athletics facility for which £1.5 million was invested. In addition, the council invested £1 million to improve sports pitch drainage to address issues.

To assist sports clubs and community groups to access funding that will enable them to implement some of the recommendations arising out of the Strategy for Sport, the Sports Development Team need to work closer

together to maximise use of limited resources. Funding clinics take place regularly to assist clubs.

Sport will need to establish an increasingly creative approach to financing sports provision. Measures will need to include maximizing the opportunities which exist for grant aid, lottery funding and revenue support, considering alternative methods of provision, improved partnership working and ensuring internal arrangements are efficiently and effectively organised, so that the objectives of this strategy can be achieved.

A number of previous funding routes are no longer available for sports development. Funding that has previously been available through the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund and its successor, Working Neighbourhood Fund. These funding streams are no longer available.

Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Leisure Centre and Runcorn Pool are managed on behalf of Halton Council by DC Leisure, a private leisure management company. The existing 10 year (2015) contract required DC Leisure to inject approximately £1.53 million of capital investment into the facilities. DC have continued to make capital investments into the ageing facilities and during 2010 they invested over £325,000 across the 3 sites including a Gym expansion and new sauna at Kingsway Leisure Centre, replacement IT and Access control system across the sites and new pool filters and flooring at Runcorn Swimming pool. In addition they continue to invest in an annual maintenance programme in order to keep the facilities up to the standards expected of modern sports facilities.

Sport England Funding Routes

Sport England is currently running a number of opportunities to apply for funding for sports development.

Small Grants

The Sport England Small Grants Programme uses lottery funding to make awards of between £300 and £10,000 to not-for-profit organisations to deliver new community projects to either grow or sustain participation in sport or to support talent development.

Sportsmatch

Sportsmatch makes awards to not-for-profit organisations that have secured sponsorship to deliver new community projects to grow or sustain participation in sport.

Sportsmatch uses money from the government to encourage new sponsorship of grassroots community sport. Priority is given to applications seeking to match sponsorship from the commercial sector but donations from private individuals or charitable trusts are also acceptable provided they meet the sponsorship eligibility criteria.

Awards of between £1,000 and £100,000 can be made to match funding from no more than five sponsors, with each sponsor contributing a minimum of £1,000. Sport England funding for the project must be spent by 31 March 2012.

Iconic Facilities Fund

Sport England's Iconic Facilities fund draws on the inspirational pull of London 2012 to create local beacons for grassroots sport. They are investing £30m over the next three years in innovative, large-scale, multi-sport facilities' projects that are regionally significant for at least two sports and can demonstrate long-term financial viability.

The Iconic Facilities fund is part of the £135m Places People Play initiative which will deliver an Olympic and Paralympic legacy of increased sports participation by bringing the magic of a home Games into the heart of local communities. It is being delivered by Sport England in partnership with the British Olympic Association, the British Paralympic Association, with the backing of The London Organising Committee of the Olympic Games and Paralympic Games.

Iconic Facilities is one of the three Places programmes which will transform the places where people play sport, in cities, towns and villages across the country.

The facilities supported through these programmes will be the only ones to carry the London 2012 Inspire mark, a permanent celebration of their role in the legacy of the Games.

In this way, Iconic Facilities will use the inspirational pull of London 2012 to enhance a successful existing funding programme, previously known as the Sustainable Facilities fund.

Inspired Facilities

The Inspired Facilities fund aims to help organizations refurbish, upgrade or convert sports facilities into a venue suitable for sport and accessible to the whole community. This programme forms part of Places People Play, Sport England's programme to deliver a London 2012 legacy of increased mass participation in sport. The programme is investing £50million of National Lottery funding in up to 1000 community sports projects between 2011 and 2014.

Key Theme 6: Sports Facilities

We will continue to modernise and develop a network of accessible, high quality, value for money facilities, to improve the quality and range of

provision for customers. We will protect, improve and promote parks and open spaces for sport and recreation.

Actions:

- Ensure existing facilities are well managed, well maintained, fully utilised, accessible and sustainable in the long term.
- Complete a full review of Haltons Playing Pitch Strategy.
- Complete an indoor and outdoor sport facility asset review.
- Work with partners to improve access for local people to existing community facilities and develop new facilities where deficiencies are identified.
- To protect playing fields, parks and open spaces from developments that would not enhance and improve the sports provision available.
- Continue to encourage the use of parks, playing fields and open spaces managed by the Council and other agencies, for organised and informal sport and physical activity.

Planning Influences

Halton's Unitary Development Plan (UDP) provides the statutory planning framework to transform the quality of Halton's environment and improve economic prosperity and social progress through sustainable development.

The UDP 's strategy to enable the provision of new and the protection of existing sports facilities in Halton is detailed in the 'The Green Environment Chapter' under the Sport, Recreation and Children's Play policies and proposals and 'Leisure, Tourism and Community Facilities Chapter' (this chapter deals with indoor facilities only). This strategy generally aims to: focus on the protection, enhancement and creation of outdoor playing spaces for sport and recreation and outdoor playing spaces for children, both equipped playgrounds and casual informal playing spaces in order to promote equity and participation. Several proposed schemes are shown on the UDP

The implementation of these strategic objectives will be enabled through the following specific policies:

GE12 – Protection of outdoor playing spaces for formal sport and recreation.

GE13 – Intensify use of existing outdoor sports and recreation provision.

GE14 – Noise generating sports

GE15 – Protection of outdoor playing spaces for children

LTC1, LTC2 & LTC3 – Development of Major Leisure and Community Facilities

LTC4 – Development of local leisure and community facilities

LTC5 – Protection of community facilities

LTC10 – Water based recreation

Several other policies are also relevant to the provision of indoor sports facilities. In addition to its UDP policies, the council must consider other organisations' strategies when determining planning applications involving the provision or loss of sports facilities, these include:

Government Planning Guidance – the most relevant for sports purposes are; Planning Policy Guidance Note 17, which requires the council to demonstrate that it has sufficient open space, including sports facilities, by undertaking an Open Space Audit. The council's needs to refresh its Playing Pitch Strategy to provide the guidance to inform future developments.

Sport England – in addition to providing the council with advice on all sporting issues, Sport England must be statutorily consulted on any development proposals that involve the loss of any council or other educational owner playing fields and the Government must be informed of their objections.

Surrounding Local Authorities Plans

There are five local authority areas, which are adjoined to Halton in the Merseyside/Liverpool City Region grouping. It is important that facility provision is developed in a coordinated manner to avoid duplication and poor use of resources.

Quest

The QUEST quality award scheme provides agreed quality standards for the management and operation of sports facilities and to sports development services. It allows service providers to assess their own service and make judgments on the quality of service delivered. This has a particular relevance with the need to ensure continual improvement within the council's Leisure services. Kingsway Leisure Centre, Brookvale Leisure Centre and Runcorn Pool where all awarded highly commended or excellent status in 2011 Quest assessments.

Active Places

Sport England has an active places website which provides a database of what sports facilities currently exist. The project provides a new media for increasing awareness and promotion of facilities with existing and potential new participants.

This section provides an overview of the current provision of indoor and outdoor sports facilities throughout the borough, further details can be found at www.activeplaces.co.uk.

Indoor Sports Provision - Council Owned Facilities

Indoor sports facilities in the borough are provided by the public, voluntary and commercial sector. Halton currently provides wet and dry indoor sports facilities at Kingsway Leisure Centre and Brookvale Recreation Centre.

Kingsway Leisure Centre in Widnes comprises a 25 metre pool and teaching pool, an eight badminton court sports hall, squash courts, aerobic/dance studio x 3, fully equipped gym, health suite sauna and steam room, and a crèche/activity room. Brookvale Recreation Centre in Runcorn comprises a 25 metre pool, six badminton court sports hall, 1 court hall, fully equipped gym, aerobics/dance studio, and Floodlit All weather Pitch. Runcorn Pool comprises a 25 yard pool and fully equipped gym.

The facilities are owned by Halton Council and operated under a 10 year contract by DC Leisure. These centres not only provide facilities for sport and physical activity, but they also organise activities to enable people of all abilities to take part in sport and physical activity. These classes can be as varied as tai chi to circuit training. The centres run specialist sessions and are partners in the Councils Leisure Card Scheme a discount scheme for target groups to help reduce 'cost' as a barrier to participation.

The three facilities represent a variety of different building types and ages. The age and internal layout within the buildings obviously affects the type and quality of services that can be provided. DC Leisure have implemented a programme of maintenance and facility improvements to their centres as part of their contract to ensure the buildings remain at an acceptable standard and have undertaken internal alterations to accommodate changes in 'leisure trends', including new and upgraded disabled changing facilities.

Halton Stadium

The Halton Stadium is a unique facility and Halton Borough Council's flagship leisure, conference and sports facility, it has 13,500 seating capacity on match days. The stadium is owned and run by Halton Borough Council. Designed and built to provide far more than a world class arena for sporting events, the Stadium also provides function and banqueting facilities for the residential area and outstanding hi-tech conference facilities for business communities of Halton and beyond. The stadium pitch has been converted to a state of the art 3 Generation pitch opening up the stadium as a world class training and competition venue. The Widnes Vikings will make their return to Super League in 2012 and introduce this playing surface to the countries top flight professional rugby league clubs.

The West Stand of the stadium contains the Halton Stadium Health & Fitness Suite consisting of the Halton Regional Table Tennis Centre, Café Bar, Health & Fitness suite, crèche, sports injury clinic and much needed leisure and lifestyle services for the local residential sports and business communities.

Other Indoor Facilities

In addition to Council owned sports centers, there are a number of small pools at commercial facilities plus pools at Chesnut Lodge and West Bank Primary Schools. These pools allow some limited community use.

Schools in Halton offer a range of indoor sports facilities. Four badminton court sports halls exist at some Secondary schools, whilst several schools have smaller sports halls or gymnasiums. Most Secondary schools now offer extensive use of the school sports facilities for community use in the evening and at weekends, this provision will be increased further on completion of Building Schools for the Future projects on current Grange and Wade Deacon School sites. Generally access is good at St Chads, The Heath, Bankfield and Sts Peter and Paul.

Around the borough there are also numerous small halls, which whilst not necessarily designed specifically for sport, are used for activities such as recreational badminton, keep fit, martial arts and yoga.

Commercial Indoor Facilities

There are several commercial facilities that are provided by different private leisure operators, located within Halton or just outside in neighbouring boroughs. The newest and largest commercial leisure facility in Halton is the Hive; this will consist of Widnes Superbowl an indoor bowling alley, ice rink operated by Planet Ice, Reel cinema, hotel and food outlets.

DW Fitness Club, which is located in Widnes. Facilities include a 20m indoor pool, large gymnasium, two exercise studios, spa and steam facilities.

Fitness First has one commercial site in Runcorn. Facilities include gymnasiums, fitness studios, sauna and steam rooms. There is a small commercial site operating from the Heath Technology Park. Both have been partners in Halton GP referral scheme.

The De Vere Daresbury Park has an indoor pool and fitness gym, spa, sauna and squash courts.

For further details on sports facilities please visit the Active Places website www.activeplaces.co.uk

Outdoor Sports

Outdoor Grass Pitches and Wickets

The local authority is the major provider of outdoor pitches for both summer and winter sports. Halton's Open Spaces Service provides 74 outdoor pitches for football, rugby, bowls, baseball, tennis and basketball. These facilities are located at 11 different sites across the borough; the distribution of pitches varies greatly. A Halton Playing Pitch Strategy, was produced in 2004, the key recommendations of this playing pitch strategy helped to allocate resources to improve pitch drainage. There is a need to refresh this strategy in order to inform future provision and attract investment.

Football is one of the most popular outdoor sports in the Borough and there are 36 full size football pitches and 25 junior/mini soccer pitches managed by The Open Spaces Service.

Over £200,000 has recently been invested in Halton Sports to provide a new home for Runcorn Linnets FC.

Within Halton there are currently no public cricket wickets. There are privately owned cricket facilities; at Runcorn CC, Widnes Cricket Club, Moorfield CC and Hale CC.

The majority of secondary schools have football and cricket pitches and a few of the primary schools have grass areas large enough to accommodate junior or mini soccer. A number of these pitches are available for community use.

The changing facilities at many of the Council sites was of poor quality and needed upgrading and refurbishing. The Heath now has new changing accommodation with £500,000 invested during 2006/07 season.

Many of the council's pavilions although having more than one changing room only offer communal showering facilities. This makes it impossible to accommodate males and females at the same time. One of the fastest growing sports in the country is women's' and girls' football. Whilst at present there are only two junior girls' football team, two rugby league clubs and one girls' cricket team in Halton, most schools now play girls football and an increasing number are beginning to play cricket and rugby. Adequate changing facilities adjacent to quality pitches are of significant importance in providing for and developing the women's game. As these sports develop in Halton there is likely to be an increasing demand for good quality pitches with suitable changing and showering facilities that can accommodate women's' and girls' teams.

The 2004 Playing Pitch Strategy identified that Halton had 1 pitch for every 1,236 adults above the national average of 1,840, the level of satisfaction with provision is relatively high. Statistically there are just enough pitches in the borough to accommodate existing and predicted demand although the strategy recommends that some of the adult pitches should be converted to junior pitches to accommodate the increasing demand for junior and mini soccer pitches. In addition, the growth in junior football and women's' and girls' football could mean that without improvements to the ancillary facilities a site with several pitches could only be used by one team as they are unable to share the changing accommodation with teams of different genders or age groups.

As well as the need for improvements to changing accommodation, the leveling and drainage at many of the sites was poor and needed improving to improve the quality of the pitch and also help to achieve optimum usage of the facilities. The Councils Open Space Service invested over £1 million in the drainage and playing service to address necessary improvements to the quality of grass pitches and Halton schools have identified poor drainage as being a main concern with regards to their outdoor facilities. An increase in unauthorised use and vandalism of all pitches, and ancillary accommodation is also affecting the quality of provision.

Within Halton there are a few sports clubs which either have their own facilities or lease pitches and ancillary accommodation from the council. Leasing facilities enables the clubs to manage and maintain the facilities themselves and can enable them to apply for funding to improve these facilities. However, leased facilities are often only used by one club during the weekends and evenings and more flexible use of the facilities and / or agreed sports development programmes should be considered when agreeing new leases.

Baseball and softball facilities are provided at Halton Sport. However, the vision of Halton Sports as a centre for baseball and softball is subject to the governing body securing external funding.

Synthetic Sports Pitches

There are currently three sites with outdoor synthetic sand based sports pitches in Halton. These facilities are located at Brookvale Recreation Centre, The Heath School and The Bankfield High School. These facilities provide opportunities for football and hockey all facilities provide good quality pitches and changing accommodation. At present community use at all these sites has the potential to increase. A new 3rd Generation pitch has been installed at Halton Stadium. This provides not only a training and competition venue for Widnes Vikings but a new all year round competition and training venue for local community sports clubs, in particular a much needed floodlit rugby training facility.

Outdoor Courts

There are a total of 9 tennis courts located at three different sites. Some of these sites have large numbers of courts and others just a few. The condition of the courts varies.

Lane Tennis Club relocated to Widnes Tennis Academy on the Sts Peter and Paul Catholic College and now provides 3 indoor and 2 mini indoor tennis courts and 6 outdoor courts. The club are seeking funding for the outdoor courts to be floodlit.

There is one site providing outdoor netball courts in the borough with indoor courts being provided to the community at St Chads and Sts Peter and Paul Schools. There are 24 outdoor basketball courts funded through the English Basketball Association's Outdoor Basketball Initiative (OBI). These OBI sites are located across the Borough. Various organised basketball activity sessions have been held on these facilities although no comprehensive programme of use exists. The Councils Open Space Service has developed new 'Multi Use Games Areas' within identified residential/community areas and these facilities include provision for outdoor basketball/football. These areas assist in the provision of activities for young people during school holidays and can be used as a tool in combating youth nuisance.

Athletics Facilities

Halton now has a state of the art athletics track consisting of a six lane floodlit synthetic track with field event facilities, new changing facilities, a club house/meeting room and fenced show pitch for football and rugby. The facility provides Halton with excellent training and competition facilities for athletics. The resident athletics club won promotion in 2011 for the first time in 20 years and has seen its membership grow with associate members coming from a recreational jog club.

Golf Courses

Phase 1 of the remediation of the northern section of St Michael's Golf Course was recently completed. The remediation refers solely to the clean-up of the

contaminated land and not the restoration of the site. We hope that some form of golf provision can be reinstated, once all the site works are complete, but we still appear to be some way off.

Bowls

There are 11 public bowling greens in the borough at 6 sites. Most have clubs based at the greens, which welcome both male and female members. However, there are clubs, which have no female changing or toilet facilities and would need alterations to their ancillary facilities if it were to develop a women's section.

Parks and Informal Recreation

Walking – There are a number of mapped routes and trails of differing lengths around Halton. The Urban walks programme highlights 6 circular walks around council key buildings. A programme of volunteer led walks has been developed across the borough, often in partnership with other local community groups as a means to encourage 'inactive' people to take part in physical activity. Moving on from walking people are now encouraged to start jogging at the 3 new Run in Halton sites. Phoenix Park, Runcorn Town Hall Ground and Pickering Pastures have measured course for residents to access all year round. Markers guide participants round the course and participants can challenge themselves to run/walk 100m to 1 mile or 3km courses.

Cycling – There are a number of cycle routes and networks around the borough and more routes have been proposed as part of Halton's Transport Development Plan.

10. Key actions for the Council

Having established the key themes the Sport and Recreation Service has identified key areas to ensure progress is made in delivering a Strategy.

Key areas identified include:

1. Partnership working with local and national key partners at strategic and operational level.

We will offer a network of support to the sporting sector to enable them to deliver their aims and encourage improved standards within the borough. We will assist in the structured development of sports by working with key partners including voluntary sports clubs, schools and national governing bodies and health bodies to offer programmes of activities that help improve health in the borough.

2. Raise the profile of Sport

We will effectively market and publicise the Sport Development Service to ensure we effectively promote and raise awareness of Sport Development Initiatives.

We will ensure that all members of the local community have access to information regarding sporting opportunities and physical activity and the

benefits of participation. We will promote sporting events and celebrate successes in order to raise awareness of sport and physical activity.

To encourage more people to join sports clubs, clubs need to ensure that as many people as possible are aware of their existence. Many clubs already have their own websites with detailed information about their clubs training, events, match reports etc and often the younger members can be encouraged to take a role in developing these sites for their club. In addition to the council's Sports Development website, the Halton Sports Partnership has developed a website which provides useful information and support for the voluntary sports sector. Further avenues for promoting clubs need to be considered and encouraged to ensure the public know about all the opportunities that are available for participation in sport.

11. Implementation and Monitoring

The responsibility for the implementation and monitoring of this strategy lies with the Halton Sports Partnership which comprises of key stakeholders from the voluntary sports sector. The council's Community and Environmental Department has given direction to the production of this strategy and have helped direct the key themes.

DRAFT

REPORT TO: Employment Learning & Skills & Community Policy
& Performance Board

DATE: 14th November 2011

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Policy & Resources

SUBJECT: Business Planning 2012-15

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To offer a timely opportunity for Members to contribute to the development of Directorate Business Plans for the coming financial year.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

That the Board indicates priority areas for service development and improvement over the next 3 years.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Each Directorate of the Council is required to develop a medium-term business plan, in parallel with the budget, that is subject to annual review and refresh. The process of developing such plans for the period 2012-2015 is just beginning.
- 3.2 At this stage members are invited to identify a small number of priorities for development or improvement (possibly 3-5) that they would like to see reflected within those plans. Strategic Directors will then develop draft plans which will be available for consideration by Policy and Performance Boards early in the New Year.
- 3.3 Service Objectives and Performance Indicators and targets will be developed by each Department and this information will be included within Appendices to the Directorate Plan.
- 3.4 These Departmental objectives and measures will form the basis of the quarterly performance monitoring received by the Board during the year. It is proposed that this Departmental information will be reorganised by priority in line with the new performance framework from 2012/13.
- 3.5 It is important that Members have the opportunity to provide input at this developmental stage of the planning process, particularly given the anticipated funding announcements, to ensure that limited resources may be aligned to local priorities.

- 3.6 It should be noted that plans can only be finalised once budget decisions have been confirmed in March and that some target information may need to be reviewed as a result of final outturn data becoming available post March 2012.
- 3.7 To assist Members in their considerations the Board may choose to invite each Operational Director to give a short presentation setting out the key issues and challenges for their service over the coming 3 years. This could be achieved via a presentation discussion at a scheduled PPB or a less formal briefing/ discussion before a scheduled PPB or at some other time.
- 3.8 The timeframe for plan preparation, development and endorsement is as follows:

	Information / Purpose	Timeframe / Agenda on Deposit
PPB	Discussion with relevant Operational / Strategic Directors concerning emerging issues, proposed priorities etc.	November 2011 PPB round
Directorate SMT's	To receive and endorse advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	SMT dates to be agreed with all Strategic Directors
Corporate Management Team	To receive and comment upon / endorse advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	By Mid December 2011
PPB's	Advanced draft plans including details of relevant departmental service objectives/milestones and performance indicators	January PPB Cycle
Executive Board	To receive advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	9th February 2012
Full Council	To receive advanced drafts of Directorate Plans	7th March 2012

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Business Plans form a key part of the Council's policy framework.
- 4.2 Elected member engagement would be consistent with the new "Best value guidance", announced in September 2011, to consult with the representatives of a wide range of local persons.

4.3 Plans also need to reflect known and anticipated legislative changes.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Directorate Plans will identify resource implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCILS PRIORITIES

6.1 The business planning process is the means by which we ensure that the six corporate priorities are built into our business plans and priorities, and thence cascaded down into team plans and individual action plans.

6.2 From 2012/13 it is proposed that with the introduction of the new performance framework Departmental Reports now be available to members via the intranet. Also priority based reports for each respective Policy & Performance Board be introduced, containing details stated within the Appendices of the Directorate Business plans.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Risk Assessment will continue to form an integral element of Directorate Plan development. This report mitigates the risk of Members not being involved in setting service delivery objectives.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Those high priority actions that result from Impact Review and Assessment will be included within Directorate Plans and will continue to be monitored through Departmental Performance Monitoring Reports.

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

There are no relevant background documents to this report