Digital Economy and Inclusion Strategy
Evidence Paper

Contents

1) Introduction

This evidence paper supports the Halton Digital Economy and Inclusion Strategy (DEIS). The paper establishes the baseline position to guide the strategy and includes other relevant research and references.

The DEIS builds upon other work being undertaken in this area, such as the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and Liverpool Vision. National Government has also taken a keen interest in the digital agenda with the Digital Britain Final Report was published by the Department for Culture, Media and Sport in conjunction with the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills in June 2009

The DEIS strategy's purpose is four fold:

1. Obtain Next Generation Access (NGA) Broadband for the Borough
2. Provide Businesses with the knowledge and skills to take advantage of NGA
3. Provide residents with the knowledge, skills and infrastructure for inclusion in the online world
4. Deliver more Council Services primarily online with backup via other channels.

Digital Inclusion

Digital inclusion is not the transitory problem it was once thought to be. Many people have assumed the digital divide was actually an issue of age, and the digitally excluded would therefore drop (dead) out of the equation over time. But longer life expectancy means a lower rate of demographic change. Age is in fact something of a red-herring. Not all older people are ICT illiterate, just as not all young people are ICT literate – 11% of 16 to 24 year olds are in fact digitally excluded. There must be something more complex at work.

Technological change has been grasped by other digital divide doubters as the key to digital inclusion, rather than a factor of exclusion. Given enough time, they say, market forces will naturally close the divide, with digital television and mobile-phone internet connections mopping up the late-adopters. Not so. The truth is web take-up has plateaued, with no more people using the internet now than were using it in 2004. In addition, less than 1% of mobile phone or digital television surfers aren't already regular internet-users from the comfort of a computer terminal.

In short, digital exclusion isn't going away, and it certainly isn't simple as a generation gap. Neither is it a small problem, with 39% of the population still not taking advantage of the opportunities and benefits computers and the internet can offer. But it isn't just about numbers. In focussing on counting digitally excluded people we do the digital divide the disservice of thinking it a one dimensional issue. One of the most useful models in this research looks at digital divide 2007 not just as a wide problem, but also a deep one. The fact is that those left on the wrong side of the divide today are more deeply excluded, harder to reach and further away from inclusion than ever before.

Community Benefits of Internet Use

The advantages of being part of the digital revolution will be vital for work, as well as central to family life and performing a community role:

- **Social Mobility**: through providing additional educational and vocational opportunities;
- **Financial Savings**: through competitive pricing, lower utility bills, price comparison websites and many other ways.
- **Educational Attainment**: through online learning, information provision and research and remote and virtual learning.
- **Improved Salary Prospects**: Computer skills already carry a wage premium.
- **Democratic Engagement**: through increased opportunities to participate in and discuss the democratic process.
- **Increased Satisfaction with Public Services**: online delivery of public services brings greater choice, flexibility and personalisation of service delivery.
- **Access to Services**: for example Health Services (NHS Direct Website), Online Shopping, Online Banking, Job Applications (searching and submission), Self Publishing (distribution of written word, audio, video to a global audience), and Communication (e-mail, instant messaging, for example MSN Chat, free worldwide phone calls on Voice Over Internet Protocol (VOIP) such as SKYPE.

Climate Change

Telecommunications is a green technology. It displaces the need to travel for face-to-face meetings. Mobile radio is now indispensable for efficient fleet management. Telecommunications networks also consume energy. A typical UK mobile radio operator's network consumes over 400 GW-h per years and produces 200,000 tons of carbon emission per year (Source O2 2005). On the other hand when this energy consumption is spread across the number of UK mobile users it has been estimated that the annual CO2 footprint of the average mobile subscriber is around 25kg – which is comparable to driving an average car on the motorway for one hour (Source: Ericsson).

2. Broadband Availability in Halton

Terminology & technologies demystified

The telecommunications industry is awash with terminology and acronyms. This section provides a brief overview of some of the key terms which are referred to in this report. It is not intended to be a comprehensive glossary.

Broadband; refers to a telecommunication network in which a wide band of frequencies is available to transmit information. This wide or broad band makes it possible for data to be multiplexed and sent on many different frequencies or channels within the band concurrently, allowing more information to be transmitted in a given amount of time. The technology therefore is able to cope with larger amounts of information being sent and received at relatively much higher speeds than traditional mediums. What people mean by "broadband" is a contentious subject, for the purposes of this project, we define broadband to be 2Mbps plus.

Cable: is a broadband internet network that uses the cable television infrastructure of coaxial cables or fibre optic cables to provide high speed internet access. The main cable service provider in the UK by far, is Virgin Media. There are also some smaller service providers that have a substantial market share in the specific areas in which they operate, such as SmallWorld in the Isle of Wight, Scotland and the north-west of England. The current maximum speed a cable customer can expect is 50 Mbps, but Virgin Media & Arris are carrying out trials of offering speeds of up to 100 Mbps.

Dark Fibre: originally referred to optical fibre infrastructure that is in place but currently is not being used. Basically it is "dark" because no data is being sent through fibre in the form of light pulses. Now the term commonly refers to the leasing of fibre optic cables from a network service provider. It is typical that network providers will install excess fibre as much of the cost of installing cables is in the civil engineering work required.

Digital Subscriber Line (**DSL**); It is a family of technologies that provides digital data transmission over the wires of a local telephone network.

- **Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line** (**ADSL**); It is a data communications technology that enables data transmission over standard copper telephone lines, where upstream bandwidth is lower than the downstream bandwidth. The technology can provide downstream speeds of around 2-12 Mbps, while upstream speeds are usually around 0.8 Mbps only. It can generally only be distributed over short distances from the central exchange, typically less than 4 kilometres, but has been known to exceed 8 kilometres in some cases. ADSL2+ is an extension to the standard ADSL service and increases the downstream speed per customer on the current generation of ADSL to up to 24 Mbps.

- **Symmetric Digital Subscriber Line** (**SDSL**); It is a data communications technology that enables data transmission over standard copper telephone lines, where both the upstream and downstream bandwidth is the same. The technology is known to provide up and downstream speeds of around 2 Mbps, but only has a maximum range of around 20,000 feet.

- **Very high bit rate Digital Subscriber Line (VDSL);** It is a data communications technology providing faster data transmission over a single flat untwisted or twisted pair of copper wires. These fast speeds mean that VDSL is capable of supporting high bandwidth applications such as HDTV, as well as telephone services (Voice over IP) and general Internet access, over a single connection. The technology can provide up and downstream speeds of around 100 Mbps.

Fibre To The *x* (FTT*x*); is a generic term for any broadband network architecture that uses optical fibre to replace, all or part of the usual metal local loop used for last mile telecommunications.

- **Fibre To The Node (FTTN);** fibre is terminated in a street cabinet up to several kilometres away from the customer premises, with the final connection being copper. FTTN architecture allows download speeds of up to 50 Mbps depending on the configuration.

- **Fibre To The Cabinet (FTTC);** this is very similar to FTTN, but the street cabinet is closer to the user's premises; typically within 300m.

- **Fibre To The Building (FTTB);** fibre reaches the boundary of the building, with the final connection to the individual living space being made via alternative means.

- **Fibre To The Home (FTTH);** fibre reaches the boundary of the living space, such as a box on the outside wall of a home. FTTH & FTTB architecture allows download speeds of 80 Mbps or more with current technologies.

Next Generation Access (NGA); is a replacement for existing communications networks, that will deliver unlimited, high speed and high quality broadband services. Again what constitutes as NGA is a disputed topic but it is certainly viewed to be higher than 2Mbps with greater levels of synchronicity. Some view this to be equal or greater than 20Mbps. Ofcom take the more all encompassing position which describes next generation access as:
"broadband access services that are capable of delivering sustained bandwidths significantly in excess of those currently widely available using existing local access infrastructures or technologies"

Leased Line: A leased line, often known as a 'private circuit' in the UK, is any symmetric dedicated bandwidth service that is delivered over a leased fibre connection. Unlike traditional PSTN lines it does not have a telephone number, and each side of the line is permanently connected to the other. Therefore unlike dial-up connections, a leased line is always active and since the connection doesn't carry anybody else's communications, the carrier can assure a given level of quality. The user can divide the connection into different lines for multiplexing data and voice communication, or use the channel for one high speed data circuit. Increasingly, leased lines are being used by companies, and even individuals, for internet access because they afford faster data transfer rates and are cost-effective for heavy users of the Internet. In the UK, leased lines offer speeds ranging from 64Kbps to 2Mbps via a channelized E1 tail circuit.

Local Loop Unbundling (LLU); is the regulatory process of allowing multiple telecommunications operators to use connections from the telephone exchange's central office to the customer's premises. Initially, Bulldog Communications in the

London area, and Easynet, through their sister company UK Online, were the only companies to have enabled exchanges across the country. Today, most companies are operating their own services using unbundled local loops, which have allowed them to offer much faster services with typical downstream speeds of up to 24 Mbps in certain areas. In doing so, they can offer products at considerably lower prices, because they don't have to conform to the same regulatory conditions as BT.

Peering point is a place where networks interconnect together to exchange traffic on a peering basis. Therefore peering points reduce the number of networks that data must traverse to get to its destination and therefore improve the speed and reliability of the Internet. If geographically close networks peer, then data can travel a short path no matter what the configuration of transit provider's networks may be. A peering point is also referred to as Internet Exchange Point (IXP) or a Network Access Point (NAP). The terms IXP and NAP are normally reserved for 'public' internet exchange points where a shared switch is provided to enable members to exchange traffic without having to install physical circuits (other than their own connection to the switch). In the UK, there are a few public exchanges which are neutral, member-owned, not-for-profit organisations whose aim is to enable its members to exchange Internet traffic reliably and more cost effectively. Outside the UK, some IXPs and NAPs follow the same model whereas others - for example the well known MAE East and MAE West NAPs in the US are commercially operated. Most IXPs are located either within, or adjacent to, commercial collocation facilities to give members the flexibility to collocate their equipment close to the switch. The most common method of switching uses managed Ethernet switches interconnected at speeds of up to 10 Gbps to which participants connect at 10 Mbps, 100 Mbps or 1 Gbps.

An Internet Point Of Presence (POP) is an access point to the Internet. It is a physical location that houses servers, routers, ATM switches and digital/analogue call aggregators. It may be either part of the facilities of a telecommunications provider that the Internet service provider (ISP) rents or a location separate from the telecommunications provider. ISPs typically have multiple POPs, sometimes numbering in the thousands. POPs are also located in Internet exchange points and collocation centres however a POP is not necessarily an Internet exchange point.

The Communication Revolution

A stage has been reached where conventional first-generation broadband is reaching its own speed limit and a new generational shift is needed. This means bringing optical fibre connections all the way to homes and businesses – so-called “fibre to the premises” or FTTP. Optical fibre has far greater capacity than copper. Researchers have already achieved speeds a million times faster than conventional broadband on an optical fibre. An optical fibre infrastructure can be made to last many years. The cost of replacing the cooper infrastructure with optical fibre however is very high and incumbent operators are reluctant to invest.

There are stop-gap measures that can be taken to help squeeze the last drop of speed from the existing copper telephone and cable TV networks. BT Open Reach is making a significant investment in Cities (Source: MCR CITY NET NGA PROJECT) in ‘superfast broadband’ using ‘Fibre to the Cabinet’ (FTTC) technology. This brings the fibre closer to the end user but not all the way. It allows for an increase in speed of perhaps five times but is still restricted by the fundamental limits of the copper connection between the cabinet and the premises. Evidence from regeneration areas in Manchester is that many households do not use their copper landline connections, preferring the lower commitment for pay-as-you-go mobile. In some areas this is as

high as 60% of households. This limits the potential take-up of 'superfast' broadband in these areas.

Virgin's deployment of the DOCSIS3 system (which also uses FTTC) has more scope for higher speeds – perhaps 10 times current speeds, but Virgin's network was designed for TV distribution, not for two-way internet traffic. And the coverage of Virgin's network in the Manchester City Region is limited, mostly to suburban residential areas. Any system that uses copper is limited by the physics of transmission over a copper connection.

Broadband infrastructure in Halton

Table x: Broadband availability details for Halton:

(Source: http://www.samknows.com/broadband/county-availability/Halton.html)

Summary:	
Total Exchanges:	6
Average provider penetration[1]:	5.33

BT Wholesale presence:	
ADSL (2Mbps) enabled:	6 (100.00%)
ADSL Max (8Mbps) enabled:	6 (100.00%)
"Exchange Activate" (512Kbps):	0 (0.00%)
With BT ADSL RFS date:	0 (0.00%)
Without BT ADSL:	0 (0.00%)
SDSL enabled:	1 (16.67%)
Without SDSL:	5 (83.33%)

LLU summary:	
Total unbundled exchanges:	3 (50.00%)
Average LLU operators per exchange:	3.17
Maximum LLU operators per exchange:	7

1. The "Average provider penetration" figure is calculated by taking an average of the number of distinct broadband providers operating at each exchange in this region. For the purposes of this calculation, a broadband provider is deemed to be any provider operating their own network or technology (i.e. those providers listed on this website). This includes BT Wholesale ADSL, BT Wholesale SDSL, the cable operators on this website, the wireless operators on this website and the LLU operators on this website. Retail providers who simply resell products are not included. The purpose of this figure is to provide a (crude) comparison of the broadband choices users have between the different regions.

LLU operator presence:					
AOL	3 (50.00%)	Lumison	0 (0.00%)	Pipex	0 (0.00%)
Cable and Wireless	2 (33.33%)	NewNet	0 (0.00%)	Sky / Easynet	3 (50.00%)
Edge Telecom	0 (0.00%)	Node4	0 (0.00%)	Smallworld Media (LLU)	0 (0.00%)
Entanet	0 (0.00%)	O2 / Be Unlimited	3 (50.00%)	TalkTalk	3 (50.00%)
HomeChoice	0 (0.00%)	Orange	2 (33.33%)	Tiscali	3 (50.00%)
Updata	0 (0.00%)	WB Internet	0 (0.00%)	Zen Internet	0 (0.00%)

Note: All percentages presented on this page are calculated over the total number of exchanges in this region (6 exchanges).

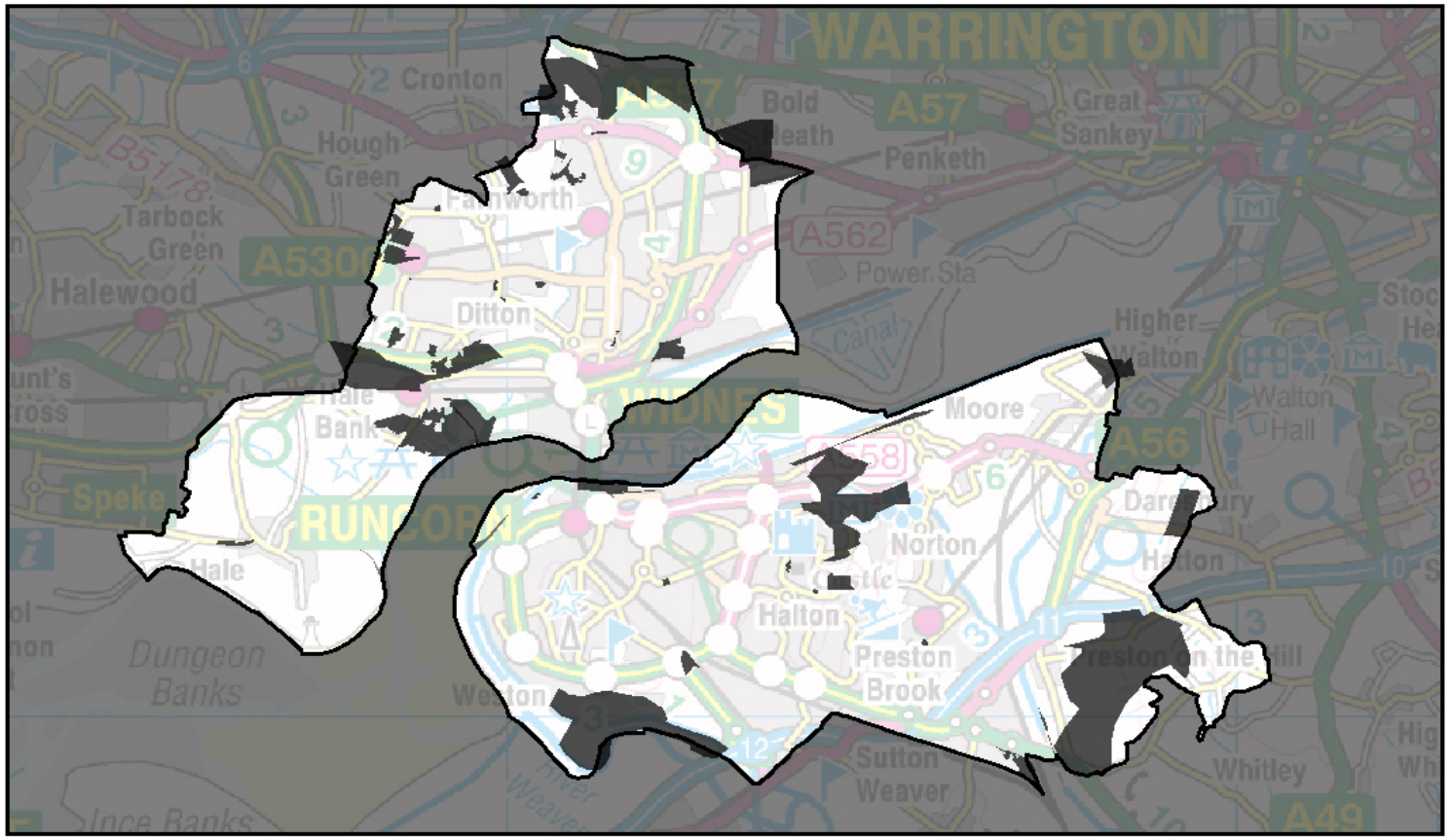
In 2006 the UK market was dominated by 6 companies, with Virgin Media and BT accounting for 28% and 23% of the total market share respectively. More than half of UK homes had broadband access by 2007, with an average connection speed of 4.6 Mbps. The popularity of bundled communications deals mixing broadband, digital TV and landline phone access had further spurred growth in the market, with 40 per cent of UK households having signed up for these services by 2007.

Asymmetric Digital Subscriber Line (ADSL) was introduced to the UK market in trial stages in the late 1990s, with a commercial product finally being launched in the year 2000. Today, most exchanges, local loops and backhauls in the country are owned and managed by BT, who then wholesale connectivity through various Internet Service Providers. BT currently operates 5,591 exchanges across the UK with the vast majority being enabled for ADSL services. Several exchanges, numbering under 1,000, have even been upgraded to support SDSL services, and the fact that these exchanges are often the larger exchanges based in major towns and cities, they would be able to cover a larger proportion of the population. As of today, SDSL services are currently aimed to cater to business customers, with the possibility of further expansion to cater to households.

	Connection speed					
	56kbit/s	512kbit/s	2Mbit/s	8Mbit/s	16Mbit/s	24Mbit/s
Download 250kB webpage	36 seconds	4 seconds	1 second	0.3 seconds	0.9 seconds	0.1 seconds
Download 5MB music track	12 minutes	1 minute 22 seconds	21 seconds	5 seconds	3 seconds	2 seconds
Download 25MB video clip	1 hour	6 minutes 50 seconds	1 minute 45 seconds	26 seconds	13 seconds	9 seconds
Download low quality film (750MB)	31+hours	3 hours 20 minutes	52 minutes	13 minutes 6 seconds	6 minutes30 seconds	4 minutes 22 seconds
Download DVD quality film (4GB)	7+ days	19 hours 38 minutes	4 hours 48 minutes	1 hour 11 minutes	36 minutes	24 minutes

Table X - Theoretical time taken to perform online activities (Source Ofcom)

Maps of broadband 'hot-spots and not-spots' in Halton



HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

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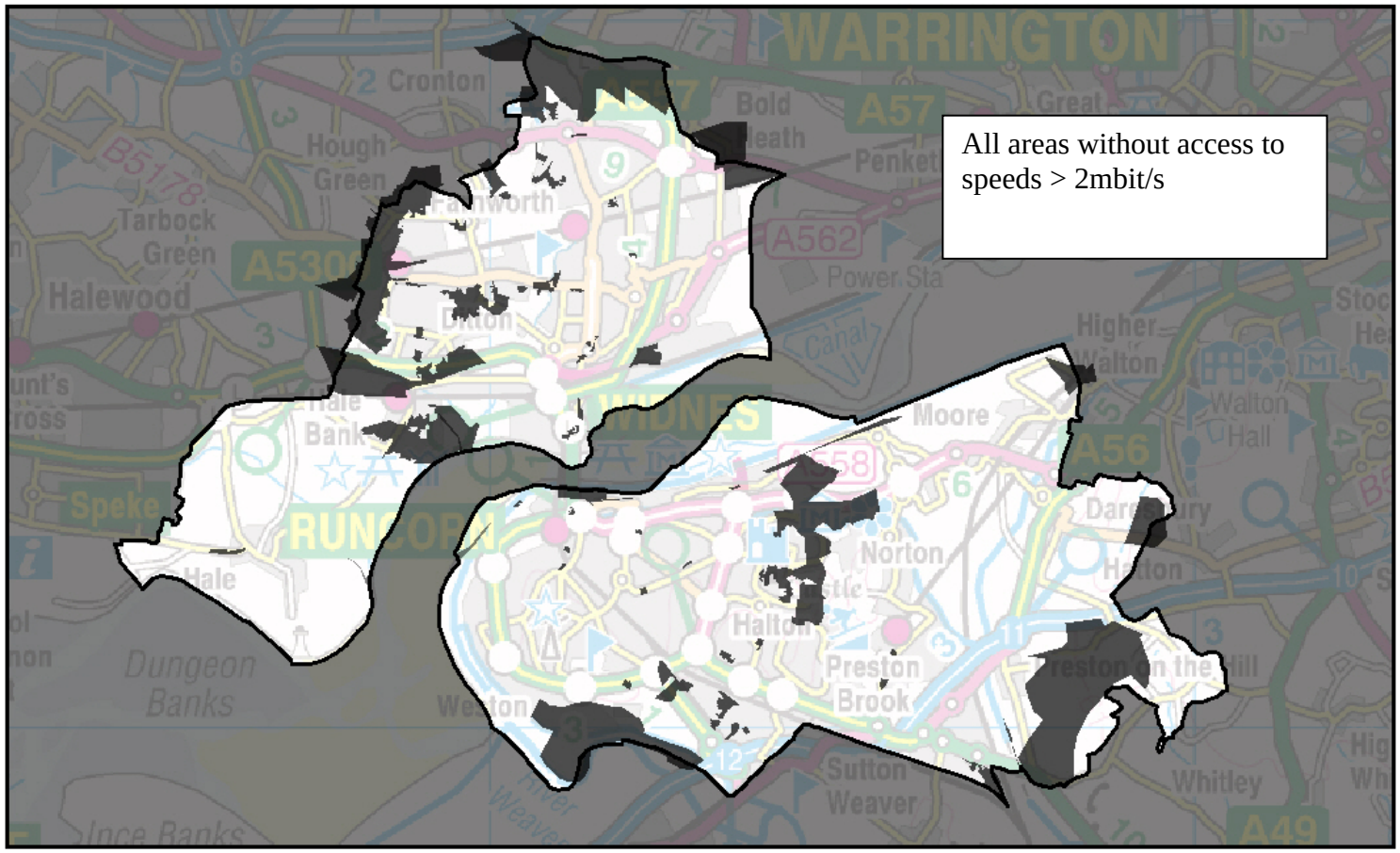
Produced by Research & Intelligence Team
Halton Borough Council, 2011



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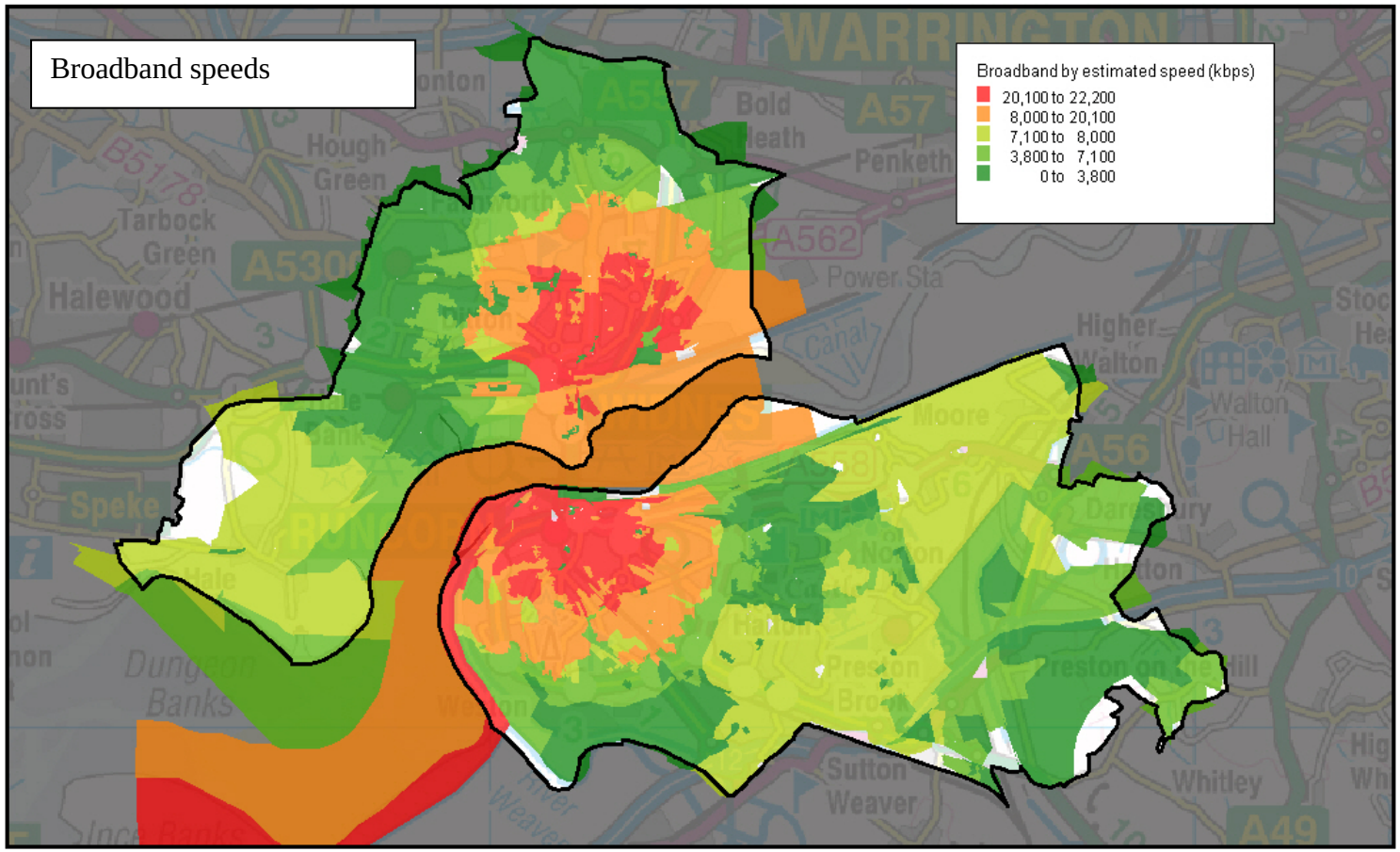
Produced by Research & Intelligence Team
Halton Borough Council, 2011

Broadband speeds



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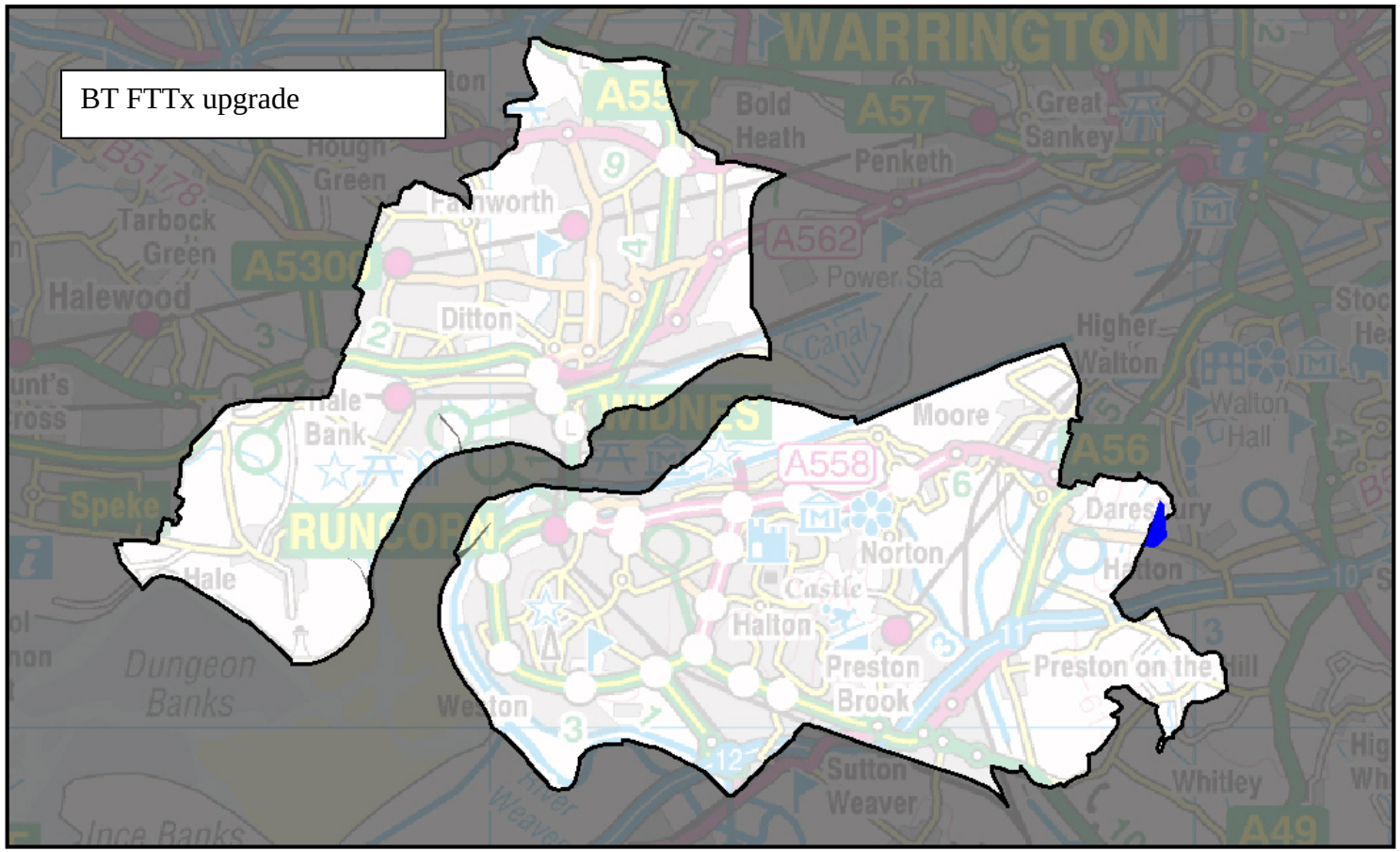
Produced by Research & Intelligence Team
Halton Borough Council, 2010



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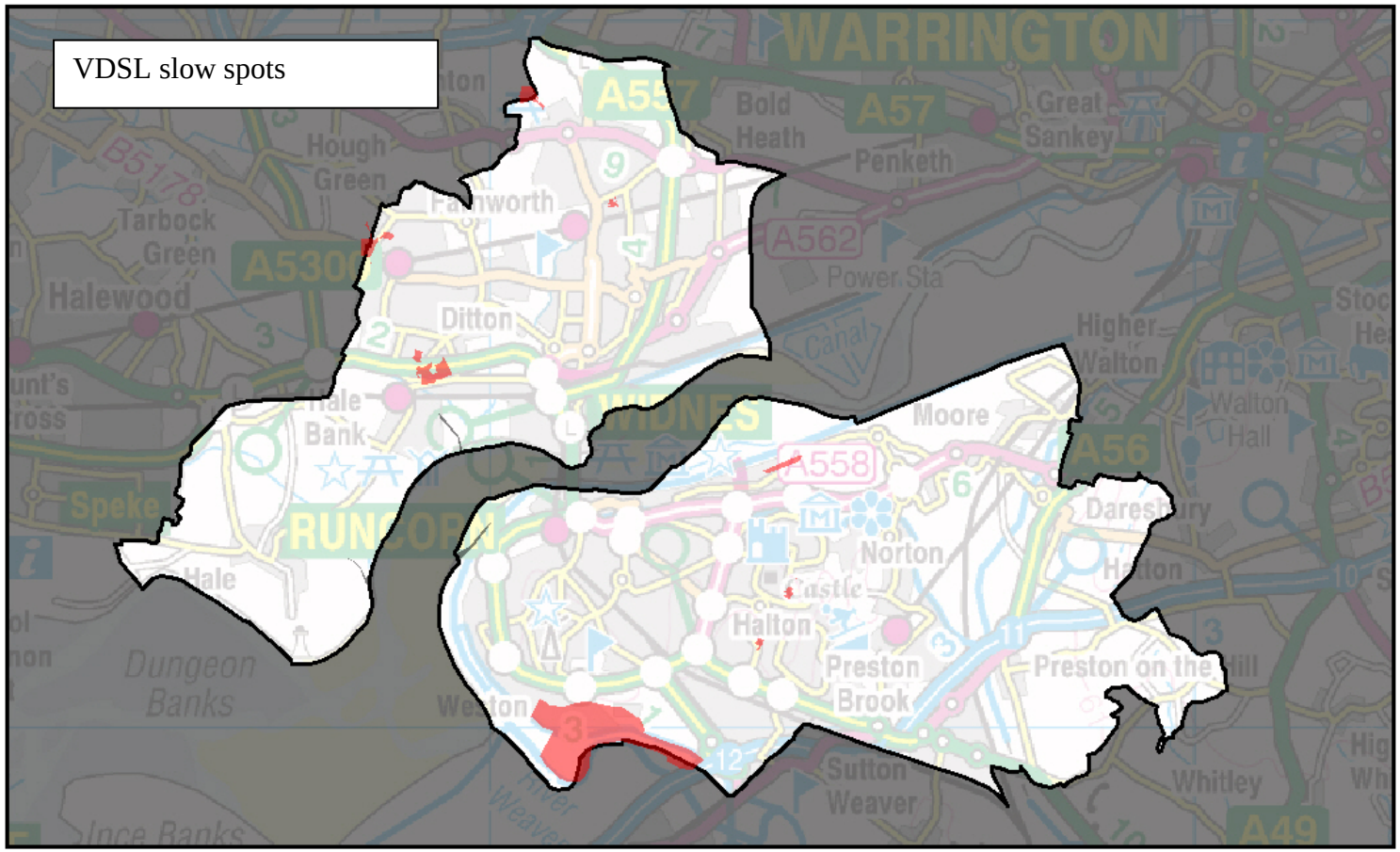
Produced by Research & Intelligence Team
Halton Borough Council, 2011



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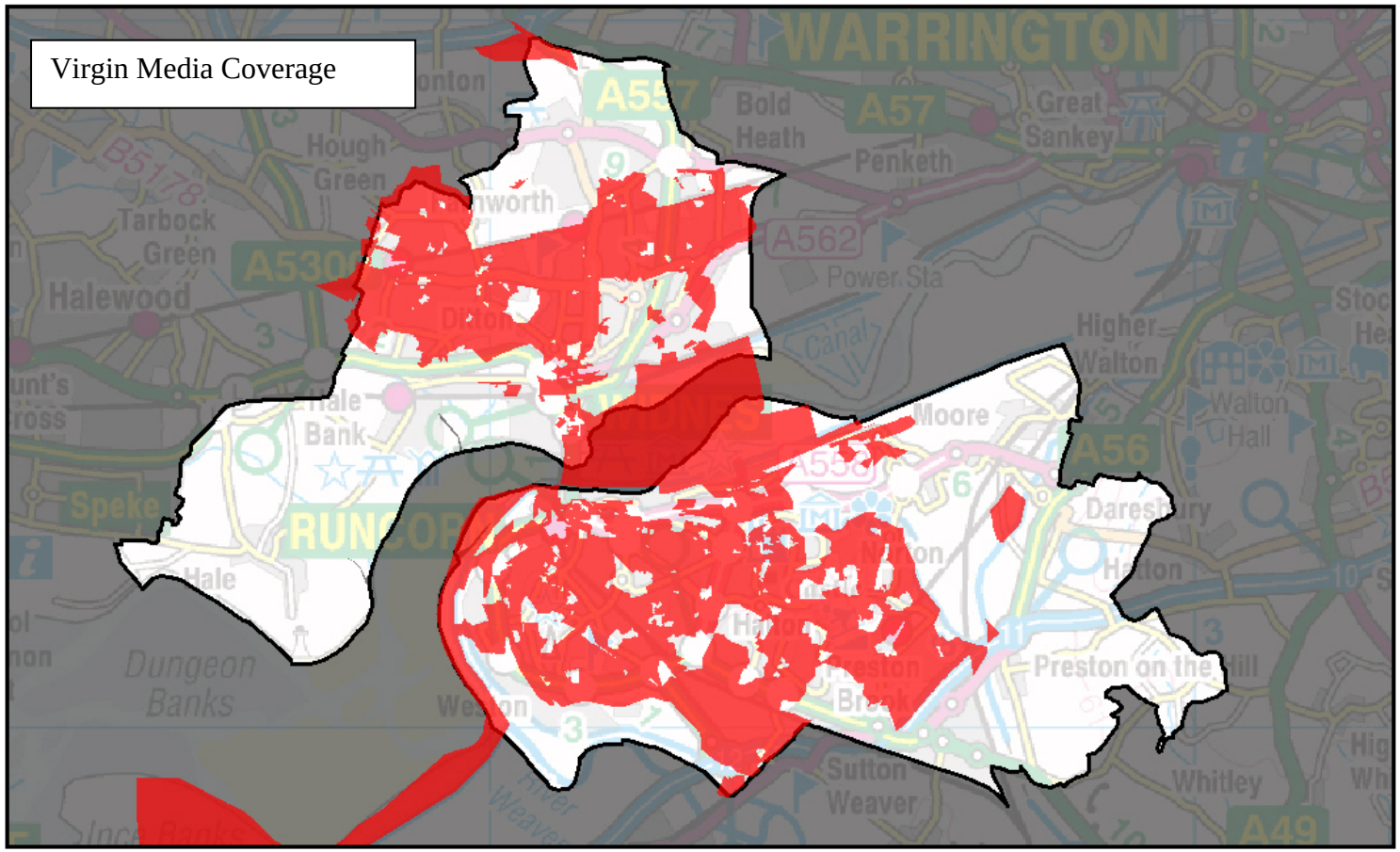
Produced by Research & Intelligence Team
Halton Borough Council, 2011


Virgin Media Coverage
WARRINGTON
A557
A57
Bold Heath
Great Sankey
Penketh
Hough Green
B5178
Tarbock Green
A530
Halewood
A562
Power Sta
Higher Walton
Walton Hall
A56
Moore
Hale Bank
Speke
RUNCORN
Hale
Dungeon Banks
Daresbury
Preston on the Hill
Sutton Weaver
Whitley
A49
© Crown copyright and database rights 2011 Ordnance Survey 100018552
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Halton Borough Council, 2011

3. Business Needs

Employment in Knowledge-driven sectors (2008)

Employment in Knowledge-driven sectors is available from the Annual Business Inquiry (ABI). The ABI produces workplace estimates based on the Inter Departmental Business Register (IDBR).

	Halton	North West	Great Britain
Total Knowledge-driven sector (employees)	15,888	670,343	6,552,918
Total (employees)	51,946	2,991,606	26,493,605
% in Knowledge-driven sector	30.6	22.4	24.7

Source: ABI 2008

The employment in knowledge driven sectors includes Aerospace (35.3), Electric machinery and optical equipment (30, 32, 33), Printing, publishing, recorded media (22.11-22.22), Chemicals (24), Energy (11, 23, 40, 41), Telecomms, computer & related services, R&D (72, 73, 64.2, 64.12), Finance, business services (65, 67, 74 (excluding 74.7, 74.82)), Air transport services (62), & Recreational & cultural services (92). All figures in brackets are 2003 Standard Industrial Classification (SIC). SIC Codes group similar industries together in a nationally recognised coding system.

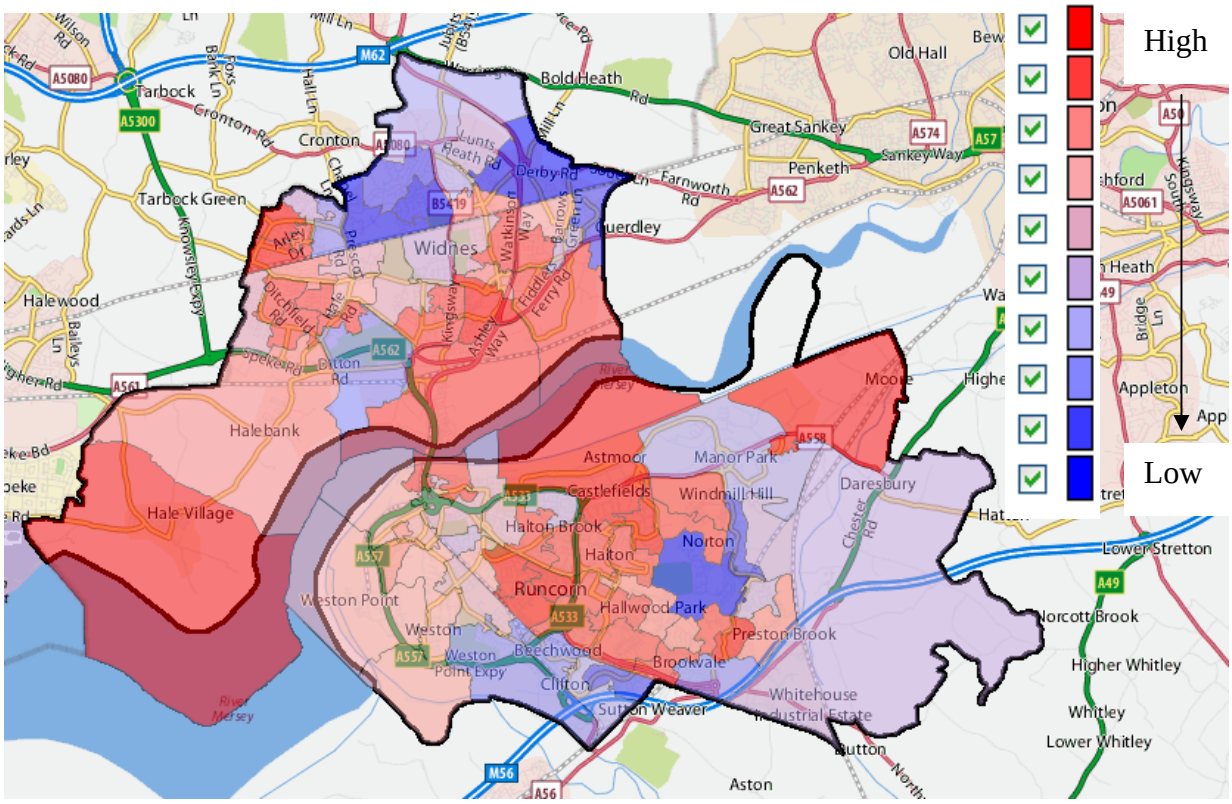
4. Communities in Halton

Key Facts

- 10.2 million adults have never accessed the internet including 4 million adults who are both digitally and socially excluded.
- If the 1.6 million children who live in families which do not use the internet got online at home, it could boost their total lifetime earnings by over £10bn.
- Unemployed people who get online could increase their chances of getting employment with an estimated lifetime benefit of over £12,000 for every person moved into employment.
- If 3.5% of the digitally excluded found a job by getting online it would deliver a net economic benefit of £560m.
- The total potential economic benefit from getting everyone in the UK online is in excess of £22bn.

Communities Needing Support

Map X: Electronic Service Delivery Toolkit: Digital Exclusion by Lower Super Output Area



Definition of Digital Exclusion: Being prevented (by skills, equipment, motivation or some other factor) from going online and using new technologies. It is derived from a combination of Deprivation, Web Attitude and Rurality values (see below for definitions).

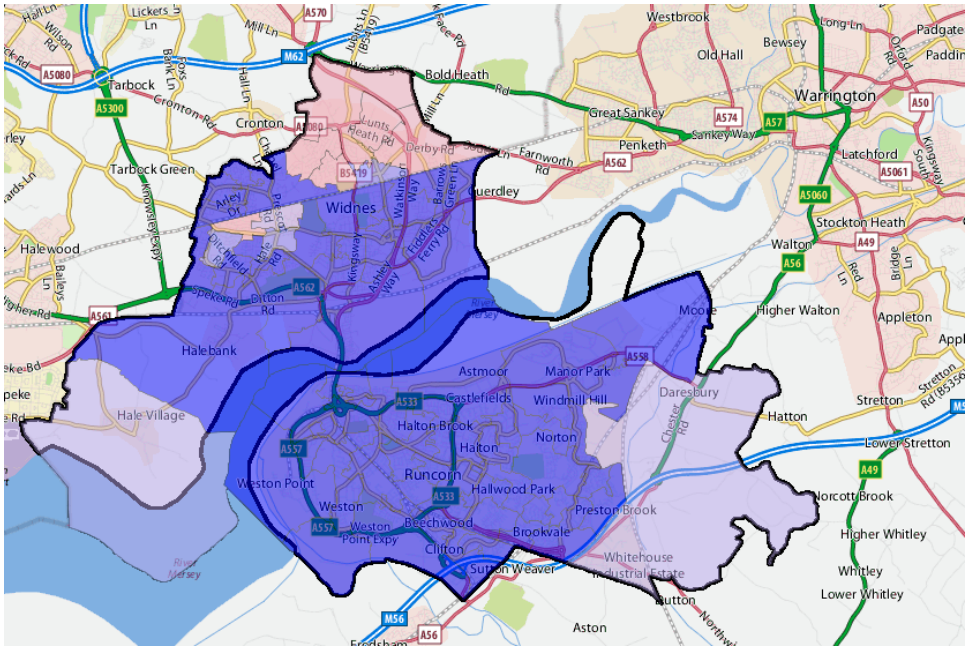
Deprivation: Level of socio-economic deprivation, which may contribute towards Digital Inclusion. Derived from the Communities and Local Government's Indices of

Multiple Deprivation, Experian's Mosaic and Demographics and CACI's Ocean and Paycheck.

Web Attitude: Attitudes towards the Internet and technology, which may influence the take-up of Next Generation Acess (NGA). Derived from Experian TrueTouch Types and CACI eTypes data.

Rurality: A classification of the degree of rurality of a postcode, as this can have an effect on the delivery of next Generation Technology (unlimited broadband services.). Derived from the National Statistics Rural and Urban Classification of Output Areas for England and Wales.

Map X - Electronic Service Delivery Toolkit: Next Generation Access by Lower Super Output Area



This figure indicates the percentage of households within the spatial unit that are expected to have Next Generation Technology (unlimited broadband services.) by **2015**, when it is expected that **75%** of UK households will have Next Generation Access (a mechanism that will deliver unlimited broadband).

- 51% to 75% of households within the spatial unit are expected to have Next Generation Access (a mechanism that will deliver unlimited broadband) access by 2015
- 76% to 85% of households within the spatial unit are expected to have Next Generation Access (a mechanism that will deliver unlimited broadband) access by 2015
- 86% to 95% of households within the spatial unit are expected to have Next Generation Access (a mechanism that will deliver unlimited broadband) access by 2015
- 96% to 100% of households within the spatial unit are expected to have Next Generation Access (a mechanism that will deliver unlimited broadband) access by 2015

The role of Partners

The authority recognises the strong role that RSLs can play in social and digital exclusion. Some 70% of people living in social housing are digitally excluded many are socially disadvantaged e.g. estimates are that 60% are financially excluded.

Existing Council Services to Communities

The promotion of digital life skills remains a priority for Halton Borough Council's Adult Learning & Skills Development service and, as such, the service has developed a wide range of ICT learning programmes for adults living or working in the borough. For example, in the 2008/9 academic year, 550 individuals enrolled onto 87 different courses across the borough in over 70 different community locations. In the academic year 09/10, there are already 324 individuals enrolled onto 32 different courses, indicating an increase in ICT provision and ICT learners compared to the autumn term 2008/9.

Courses are generally non-accredited although the new ITQ is now being offered at a number of venues. The range of courses is varied to accommodate individuals' starting points and pathways of progression are available, to allow individuals to build on the skills gained. The opportunity to have an ICT assessment prior to starting a course is also an option and ensures that individuals enrol onto a course that is most appropriate to their existing skills level. Courses are available in the following areas:

- Keyboarding
- Internet
- Microsoft Office
- Digital Photography
- Desktop Publishing
- Photoshop
- Multimedia
- ITQ level 1

In addition to the full range of ICT courses available, all adult learning courses across a range of curriculum areas, incorporate the use of ICT in line with the service's e-learning strategy. Equipment used is of a high standard, with interactive whiteboards, wireless laptops and visualisers being common place within all main centres.

Applications Available to Up-Skill Residents

Basic Internet User Skills

Some people may have access to broadband but struggle to use the web and the Council website effectively and these can be referred to http://www.myguide.gov.uk. This site provides online training such as 'Online basics' which includes five short modules showing how to use a mouse and keyboard, email, online search and stay safe online, ensuring that users have the confidence and skills needed to start enjoying the internet.

The 'Help pass IT on' campaign aims to get people to help others get online by making the Internet relevant to them and motivating them to get online http://helppassiton.co.uk/.

AIMES Project in Windmill Hill and Castlefields

The 'Community Grid' concept arose from the Government's 2006 UK Digital Challenge. This project emerged as the core of a bid submitted on behalf of the sub-region, and reached the national final, with its aim to help digitally excluded members of the community access the opportunities available to their 'online' neighbours.

HaltonNet offers a sustainable solution to digitally enabling communities, by providing easy-to-use, low cost, low-energy, home access to the internet and other computing resources. The service is scalable and can reach digitally excluded citizens in all areas of the community, complimenting existing provision.

£200,000 of Working Neighbourhoods Funding has been secured for this project and further funding opportunities within regional and national pots are being considered for later phases within the project development. The initial £200,000 will digitally enable 120 households, concentrating in areas where there is a very low level of computer ownership, and even less broadband internet uptake.

This project will have a transformational effect on people's lives – giving them access to the new, online economy and access to a multitude of services, for example: training, jobs, setting up in business. It will provide an alternative communications route for other agencies, to help them to provide the continued support, via email and access to websites, which would not normally have been available.

Home Internet Take-Up

UK

In 2009, 18.31 million households had Internet access. This represented 70% of households and an increase of 1.85 million households since 2008.

The region with the highest level of Internet access was London at 80% - Scotland had the lowest proportion of households with Internet access at 62%.

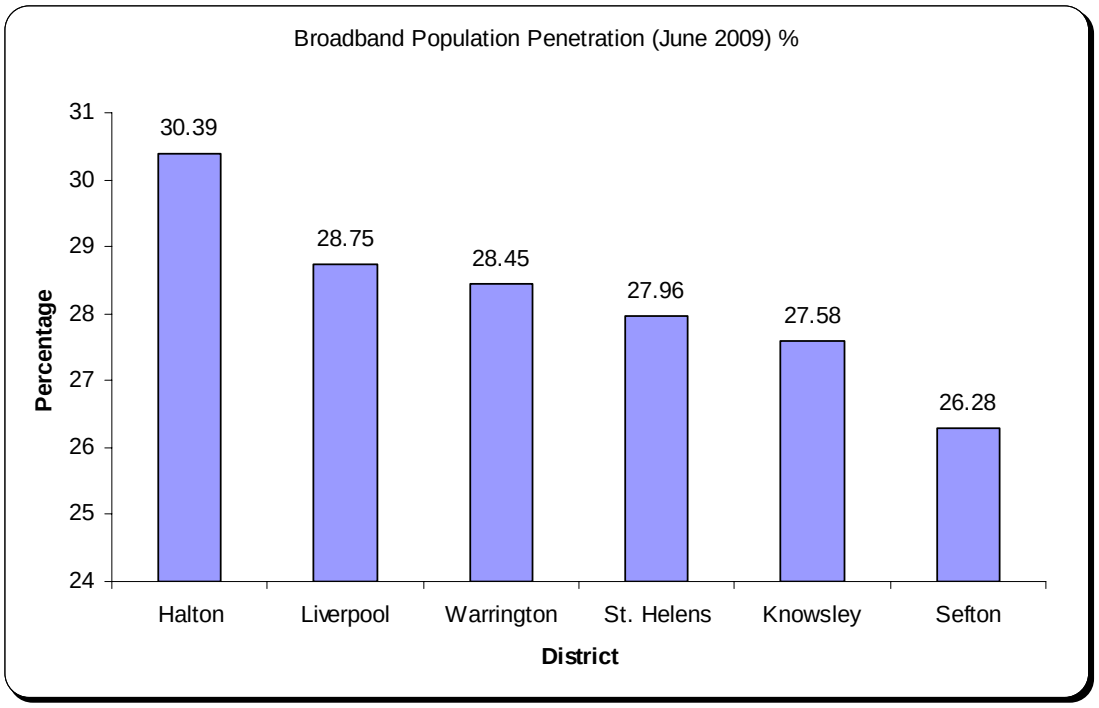
More than 19 out of 20 internet connections are via Broadband (ONS Dec 2008)

In December 2008, 59.6% of broadband connections had a speed greater than 2Mbps (An increase from 57.7% in September 2008)

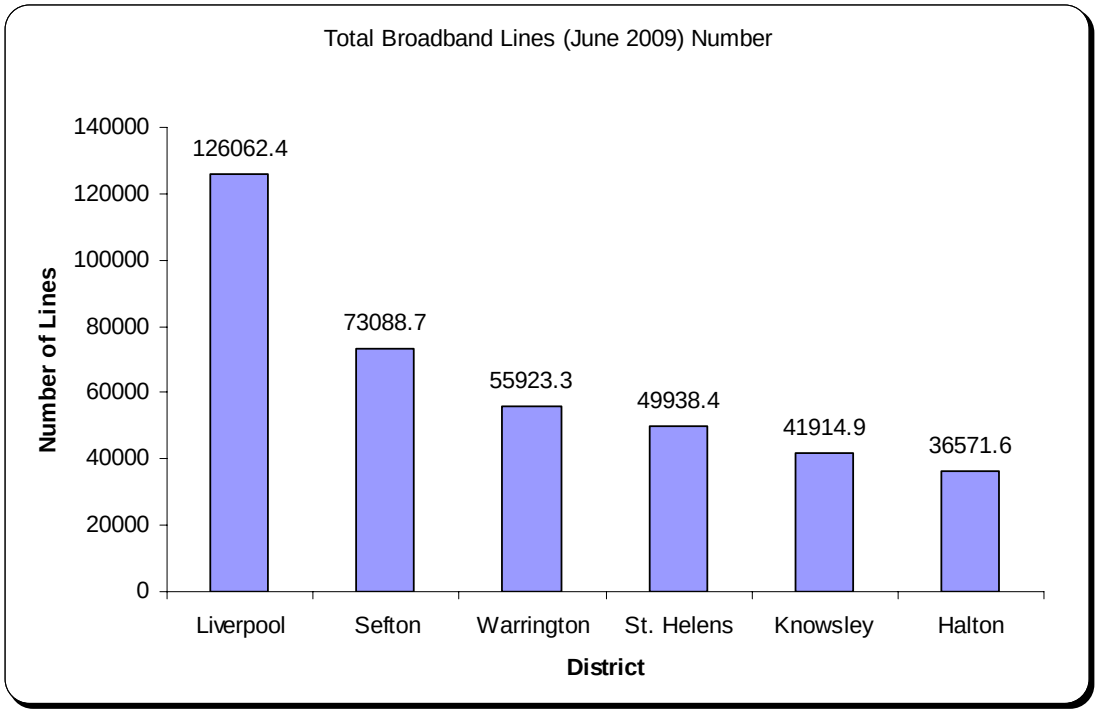
Halton data

Data availability is very limited at Local Authority level.

Broadband Population Penetration: Total number of broadband lines/total population*100, taken from Point Topic's broadband layer model which provides estimates of broadband take up



Total Broadband lines: Total number of broadband lines, estimates from Point Topic surveys of both the consumer and business markets combined with operator reports.



5. Council Services Online

- Each contact and transaction with government switched online could generate savings of between £3.30 and £12.00.
- Electronic transaction costs are less than £1, a face-to-face one will cost £20, with telephone or paper somewhere in between.

- If all digitally excluded adults got online and made just one digital contact each month instead of using another channel, this would save an estimated £900m per annum.

Beacon Councils for Digital Inclusion:
Sunderland (Social Inclusion through ICT)
Stratford upon Avon (Independent living)
Solihull (use of ICT in social housing stock)
Staffordshire Moorlands District Council (Isolated communities)

Telecare
A Telecare Strategy has been produced by Adults and Communities Directorate and is currently being implemented. The purpose of this strategy is to support vulnerable people remain in their homes.

Libraries
UK online
All libraries in Halton are registered as UKOnline Centres. The following are the all UKOnline centres:

Venue	Address
Halton Lea Library	Halton Lea, Runcorn, Runcorn, , WA7 2PF
Widnes Library	Kingsway Learning Centre, Victoria Road, Halton, Merseyside, WA8 7QY
Halton Mobile Library Service	Halton Lea Library, Halton Lea, , Runcorn, WA7 2PF
Runcorn Library	Egerton Street, Runcorn, HALTON, Merseyside, WA7 1JL
Ditton Library	Queens Avenue, Ditton, WIDNES, Ches., WA8 8HR
Widnes Connexions Centre	43 Albert Road, , HALTON, Merseyside, WA8 6JA
Exchange Group http://www.exchangegroup.co.uk/	Unit 73, Halton Lea Shopping Centre, Town Square Halton Lea, Runcorn Cheshire WA7 2GZ
Chester Lane Community Library	Four Acre Lane, Sutton, St. Helens, Merseyside, WA9 4DE
Halewood Library	The Halewood Centre, Roseheath Drive, KNOWSLEY, Merseyside, L26 9UH
Warrington Disability Partnership	Centre for Independent Living, Beaufort Street, Warrington, , WA5 1BA

The UK online centres network was set up by government in 2000 to provide public access to computers. It now plays a key role in exploiting information and communication technology (ICT) to help improve individual lives, strengthen communities and achieve social inclusion. There are thousands of UK online centres across England, and many use myguide and Online Basics to introduce people to the world of ICT.

UK online centres is a division of Ufi, and receives core funding from BIS via the Skills Funding Agency (SFA). Funding for the development of myguide comes from the Department for Education (DfE). Other partners include Ofcom, NHS Choices, 4IP's Talk about Local, and Microsoft.

The government created Ufi in 1998, in response to the New Labour concept of a University for Industry. Ufi was given a remit to use new technology to transform the delivery of learning and skills across England, Wales and Northern Ireland. Through **learndirect** this vision has been realised.

Library Services

The Library statistics presented here are taken from the latest CIPFA survey (Public Library Statistics 2009-10) http://www.peoplesnetwork.gov.uk/about.html:

- Number of terminals with Libraries catalogue, Internet access and OPACs at 31 March 2010 = 98
- Number of hours available for use of the People's Network Terminals from 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010 = 232,530
- Number of hours recorded for use of the People's Network Terminals from 1 April 2009 – 31 March 2010 = 70,452
- Total adult based ICT learning sessions attendee hours in year = 399

The new Library Management System to be implemented at the beginning of next year will allow the service to offer a richer "digital service" to users. Highlights will include:

Library website (designed to be very user friendly so that users do not need to know library terminology):

- Library catalogue (OPAC) fully integrating with the Library 2.0 concept (interactivity) - Amazon style functionality and look
- Our fifth library (our virtual branch) where user participation and interaction is a key ingredient.
- Users able to obtain info, communicate with others with similar interests – integrate with Facebook etc
- There will be user generated ratings and reviews of books etc.
- The OPAC will provide a unified search interface to all items and services.

New eServices

- Downloadable electronic items including ebooks, audiobooks, mp3s – users can borrow these free of charge in the same way they borrow physical items
- Online reference services e.g. Ask about Business.
- Signposts to other council, local government services – links to websites.

Adult Learning

In terms of Adult Learning ICT Course provision since September 09:

Adult Learning have run 81 different courses made up of the following:

Skills for Life with ICT
First Steps Keyboarding
First Steps to IT
Next Steps to IT
First Steps to Internet

First Steps to Desk Top Publishing
First Steps to Photoshop
Next Steps to Photoshop
First Steps to Multimedia
C&G ITQ Level 1

These have attracted 722 enrolments which is 493 actual learners (some attend more than 1 course). Of these, 218 have skills below Level 2 (GCSE level) and 230 are over 60. 201 come from disadvantaged wards, 192 are retired and 130 are unemployed.

Text Messages

Text messaging integrated into computer applications can provide substantial savings and improvement in service levels - particularly where applications deal with the general public or a mobile workforce.

Text messaging allows government departments to communicate with people on the move, or with people who have no fixed contact details e.g. licence or job applicants, or visitors approaching visa limits. People can be reminded about licence or document renewal dates, or final dates for submitting documents, and can be informed of the availability or receipt of documents. Text messaging is also a very effective way of quickly reaching a large number of key people in the event of an emergency.

Any large organisation can easily contact employees, organisation members or suppliers to pass them essential information. Text broadcasts can be used to keep people up to date, and incoming text messages can be used to request information and subscribe to events or mailing lists.

Hospital departments or doctor's surgeries can use text messaging to remind people of appointments, significantly reducing the number of 'no-shows'. Patients can also give notice of a delay, can check an appointment, or move an appointment, without waiting in a 'telephone queue'.

Text messaging is now used by schools for communicating with parents to tell them about events, changes to school schedules, vacation dates, or emergencies. Unexpected absence of students is being followed up immediately, significantly reducing truancy rates. Parents also use text messaging to send in routine details of absence, or lateness.

e-Messaging Solutions provides server software to link text messaging directly to computer applications, e-mail systems and web browsers. Also provided are specialist applications for message broadcasting using existing in-house databases, RSS server integration, or applications for schools.

Halton currently has a solution in place to provide this facility. Costs are 6p per text. In practical terms, services wanting to make use of the facility need to provide an Excel spreadsheet of numbers and the message that needs to be sent. If services want to send individual, tailored, messages then that is also possible.

Social Networking

Use by Communications & Marketing, Libraries.

Twitter
Facebook

6. National Context:

eAccessibility Plan

Plans to improve public websites, upgrade IT equipment and provide better online content to suit the needs of disabled people were unveiled by Communications Minister, Ed Vaizey.

Launching the eAccessibility Plan, the Minister announced a package of measures that will contribute to a more inclusive digital economy for people with specific needs. A successful digital economy can only be achieved if everyone can enjoy the same advantages that technology offers, like access to public services, online shopping and banking, interactive games and social media. The market already provides options to suit different disabilities but making use of these technologies can still be difficult, and expensive. Our eAccessibility Plan will help ensure that the UK offers better online opportunities and access to equipment and software for people with disabilities."

The key objectives of the plan include:

Improving technology and digital equipment to suit the needs of those with disabilities and tackling issues of affordability and availability of equipment (television, radio, computer) and software (such as Braille embossers, light signallers and screen readers);Implementing a new regulatory framework to enable OFCOM to specify measures to ensure disabled people have equivalent choice and access to digital communications services as non-disabled consumers; Improving the design of public sector websites to make them more accessible to disabled users; Making previously inaccessible online and television content accessible to disabled users, such as e-books for those with a visual impairment; and Promoting awareness of the issues facing disabled groups in the digital economy to achieve a more inclusive society.

The plan will be implemented by the eAccessibility Forum, a group of over 60 experts from Government, industry and the voluntary sector who will work to explore issues surrounding e-accessibility so that better and more inclusive services can be developed for both business and consumer benefit.

The Action Plan will be a 'live document' updated quarterly to incorporate new developments and monitor progress. The aim is to reach a step-change in eAccessibility by the time of the Olympics and Paralympics in summer 2012.

The eAccessibility plan can be found at:

https://cms.bis.gov.uk/policies/business-sectors/digital-content/e -accessibility-forum

Race Online 2012

Race Online 2012 has one proposed mission – to create life enhancing opportunities for the 4 million adults in the UK who have never been online. There is both a moral and economic imperative for the wider community to take the issue of digital inclusion much more seriously. It's also essential to business that the UK is near 100% online as this will create efficiency savings, attract investment, open opportunities and improve work force skills.

Race Online 2012 wants any organisation of any size to get involved and help tackle the issue. From encouraging business partners to sign up, to teaching friends and family to get online, or by donating old IT equipment locally - there are opportunities for all businesses to make a difference.

7. Internet References:

Intelligent Communities Forum
http://www.becta.org.uk/homeaccess

www.Youthnet.org – online charity guiding and supporting young people.
www.digitalengagement.org – networking for digital inclusion
www.commedia.org.uk jaqui.devereux@commedia.org.uk
www.abilitynet.org.uk – national charity helping with adaption of technology for the disabled.
http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk/social_exclusion_task_force/adults.aspx - Adults facing chronic exclusion.
www.ist-vital.org
www.durhamnet.net/docs
www.ukonlinecentres.com; hmilner@ufi.com
www.dc10plus.net ; Stephen.dodson@dc10plus.net (director)
http://www.esd.org.uk/solutions4Inclusion/

www.gps.communities.gov.uk/digital**inclusion/licenseagreement.aspx**,

Digital Inclusion Beacon Checklist (checklist@digiteam.org.uk),

~ eAccessibility Plan ~ eAccessibility Forum ~ Delivering inclusive websites ~ Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0 ~ The Business Case for Web Accessibility ~ Essential Components of Web Accessibility ~ PAS 78: A guide to good practice in commissioning accessible websites ~ RNIB Web Access Centre ~ RNID: The Disability Discrimination Act - a guide for service providers ~ Usability Exchange ~ The Web: Access and Inclusion for Disabled People ~ The Usability Professionals' Association ~ EU: eAccessibility – Opening up the Information Society ~ EU: Web Accessibility ~ Assessment of the Status of eAccessibility in Europe ~ European Disability Forum ~ Section 508 ~ Online basics ~ myguide courses ~ UK online centres ~ Digital Unite ~ 'Get Digital' Programme ~ Silver Surfers Day ~ Community Voices

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Digital Britain Final Report	Dept Culture Media & Sport; Business Innovation & Skills		June 2009	
Management Team Report on Digital Britain	HBC	T Gibbs	October 2009	http://hbcweb.halton-borough.gov.uk/exclude/manminutes/Man%20Team%202009/Man%20Team%20Mins%20Oct%2020th%202009.doc
Making NGA a reality in the North West: Strategic Framework	NWDA	Analysis Mason	September 2010	
RaceOnline 2012 manifesto				http://raceonline2012.org/manifesto