

**Halton Borough Council
Corporate Plan 2011-2016**

Version control

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Foreword

Halton is a place of ambition and enterprise. Together with our partners we are successfully restructuring the local economy around a diverse range of sectors including science and research, transport and logistics, creative, media and advanced manufacturing. We see our strong economy and economic prosperity as our key focus, with the local population accessing and retaining employment to provide a clear route out of both poverty and poverty related poor health. Economic success gives our local people improved choice and control in the way they live their lives.

Our reinvigorated economy is in turn delivering wealth and confidence, the evidence of which is the local developments that fly in the face of recession. Examples include the Widnes Shopping Park attracting major high street retailers such as Marks and Spencer and Next, construction beginning on a new Premier Inn and Tesco Extra, the substantial investment at the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus and the 3MG site; and the development of significant new facilities such as an ice rink, bowling alley and cinema .

Such developments bring much needed jobs to our area. Access to a variety of sectors provides opportunities for the local workforce to develop careers, and our programmes of education, qualifications and skills equip people of all ages with the knowledge they need to become successful and economically active. Continued learning throughout life is important and we are delivering new centres of learning at Wade Deacon School (Widnes) and the Grange School (Runcorn) through the Building Schools for the Future Programme.

We are making the most of our location between two major cities and we are well connected to these hubs by road and rail connections. London is now less than 2 hours away on the West Coast Mainline. Close proximity to Liverpool John Lennon Airport gives access to international travel and we are investing in key infrastructure, such as the Mersey Gateway Bridge which will reinforce Halton's position as a key gateway into the Liverpool City Region. Digital infrastructure, encompassing both fibre optic and wireless communications, is high on our agenda to allow industry and commerce to do business faster and with the global market.

We want people to make healthier lifestyle choices and take advantage of some of the fantastic outdoor venues and facilities we have in Halton. Examples include Town Park and Runcorn Heath in Runcorn, Hale coastline and lighthouse, Victoria Park in Widnes, the TransPennine Trail cycle route, Stobart Stadium and The Brindley.

For those who are at a time in their lives when they may need additional support, we invest in a range of services to help them re-adjust and become as self sufficient as possible. We have implemented personalisation of care budgets and transformation programmes to give service users choice in the way they receive support and allow us to ensure that older people and those with complex care needs get the help they need. The safeguarding of vulnerable children and adults is of paramount importance and in 2010/11 our Adults and Children and Young People Services have been externally inspected and are able to demonstrate high performance.

The Borough already has a formidable track record in intervention and prevention, but in light of increased challenges we need to ensure that they continue to be as aligned as

possible to ensure we deliver on our promises to the people of Halton. We are always trying to find the most cost effective way to deliver services and we are already two years into our rolling Efficiency programme which is contributing significantly to the savings we have to make. From April 2011 we moved to a leaner management structure to reduce costs and minimise the impact of reduced grant funding on frontline services.

We have had to be bold and imaginative when it comes to service delivery; reviewing income and expenditure and finding new and more cost-effective ways of working, however, our priority remains protecting critical outcomes for the people who rely on us, and providing quality services.

As part of the 2011/12 budget, we had to acknowledge that these are difficult financial times for everyone. Halton already has one of the lowest levels of council tax in the North West and this year we have ensured no increase in council tax at all. In doing so we want to help Halton residents spend their money as they wish, easing the tax burden on all households and supporting those on low and fixed incomes. Despite a contraction in budgets, the combined public sector will still be spending £500 million next year delivering services – and will be continuing with the major projects, like the Mersey Gateway, to help transform our Borough.

As an organisation we remain focussed on being responsive to local needs. This Corporate Plan explains how we will deliver a better, stronger Borough for us all to live and work in.

Councillor Rob Polhill
Leader, Halton Borough Council

Introduction

This plan outlines the goals the Council wants to achieve to help build a better future for Halton, redefines our priorities and examines how we will deploy our resources. It concentrates on the fresh challenges, priorities and achievements planned over the next five years to help improve the quality of life for people in Halton.

Our vision remains constant. It is that:

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

Our Corporate Plan sets out what, within available resources, we plan to achieve over the next five years to improve lives within all the communities of Halton. It will guide the development of more detailed strategy and actions to be undertaken by the Council. Within this plan we explain the steps that need to be taken to deliver on the strategic priorities and key themes that are set out here and within Halton's fifteen year Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 – 2026. These are:

- A Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Environment and Regeneration in Halton
- Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency

This Plan has been developed at a time of considerable challenge for local authorities brought about by significant public spending cuts and changes in the way public services are delivered. Consequently, care has been taken to ensure that the activities contained in this Plan are realistic and achievable within expected resources, whilst remaining sufficiently challenging to make a real difference to people's lives and meet residents' expectations. We know that in anything that we do our key goal is to raise the quality of life in the borough. To do this, we need to deliver our services in the most efficient and effective way possible. Councils play a crucial role in providing essential services in the communities they serve. Making sure that these key services are provided to the highest possible standard and at reasonable cost is fundamental, and the Council will continue to strive for service excellence in all areas.

In developing this Plan we have reflected on the Council's Community Leadership role orchestrating limited resources not just on behalf of the organisation, but for the area as a whole. We need to continue to look beyond our boundaries and champion Halton's cause in the wider world, lobbying at regional and national levels, and working with wider UK and European partners for mutual benefit. To this end the Council is promoting partnerships and alliances to dovetail and mainstream strategies of other agencies working in the borough and will explore opportunities to develop shared services and resources where appropriate. It is essential all partners work productively together, sharing understanding of the Borough's problems, their root causes, and co-ordinating our efforts to tackle them. We acknowledge that reducing resources will mean that there will be greater pressures in delivering high quality services and that a change in

approach will be needed to further promote community 'buy-in' and change in customer behaviour.

Our vision for Halton remains a pledge to secure a better future for the people of Halton. It is about giving everyone the opportunity to fulfil their potential and the Council will work vigorously to see this vision realised. To achieve our vision we are committed to closing the gap between those communities most in need in Halton, compared to the rest of the country. We will do this by tackling inequality and promoting community cohesion, so that no community is disadvantaged.

A range of more specific strategies and initiatives will translate the broad aims and objectives of this Plan into action on the ground.

Our Guiding Principles

Halton Borough Council should be expected to maintain high standards in the way it conducts its business. In implementing actions that flow from this plan, the Council will follow a set of guiding principles. In all that we do we aim to be:

- Community focused - ensuring that residents' concerns are of prime importance in defining how we deliver effective services. We must maintain our open and democratic processes that encourage local people to become involved in decisions that directly affect them and future generations, working within the emerging policy context such as the localism agenda in developing new models of customer engagement
- Sustainable - improving the quality of life for today's Halton residents without jeopardising that of future generations whilst also enhancing the biodiversity of the area.
- Leaders - the Council's role is to give clear strategic leadership to the Borough and to agree roles, responsibilities and relationships that are fit for purpose and enable people to contribute and to make a difference.
- Fair and inclusive - promoting equal access to opportunities and facilities, and helping to ensure that everyone in the community can access the opportunities and progress being made in Halton.
- Good value – enabling and coordinating the delivery of services and ensuring that the community receives value for money services of high quality that are accessible, affordable and focused on local needs. It makes sense to invest in preventative activity that stops problems occurring rather than paying to fix things that go wrong.
- Collaborative - taking full advantage of the benefits for Halton from the community, organisations and groups working constructively in partnership and sharing responsibility whilst also recognising the changing roles of some of our key partners and working with emerging new structures
- Evidence-based – In making decisions and policy we will ensure that we learn from best practice elsewhere and making good use of research about what works in addressing the Borough's priorities. Halton's Corporate Plan is about focusing on the issues that matter the most and investing in priorities and approaches that are based on evidence.

Delivering Progress

During 2010/11 there have been several significant developments for the Council highlighting the improvement in performance that we continuously strive to achieve:

- A new strategic management structure was implemented on 1st April 2011, moving from four directorates to three, giving an opportunity to organise services differently and innovatively. We are also introducing shared responsibilities for children's services with Cheshire West and Chester Council, including a Joint Strategic Director post.
- As part of the annual assessment of safeguarding for Adult Social Care during 2010, the Care Quality Commission judged Halton to be performing excellently across all seven domains, being one of only three councils in the country to be awarded such a prestigious rating.
- During February 2011, the Ofsted Inspection of Safeguarding and Looked After Children judged Halton to be outstanding and good across all elements of the Inspection.

Progress against our priorities continues to be made. A few examples include:

- Extensive outcome-focussed work to ensure that the health and wellbeing of the people of Halton improves. We are in the process of establishing new alliances with GPs and the formation of a new Health and Wellbeing Board.
 - Transformation and the increased use of individualised budgets are improving the way in which the Council supports vulnerable people in the community.
 - Road Safety has improved significantly in recent years from 77 Killed or Seriously Injured in 2005 to 41 in 2010.
 - Recycling levels have increased from 25% in 2007 to over 38% in 2011. The amount of waste produced per household is continuing to fall as is the level of waste sent to landfill for disposal. All households in the borough are now provided with kerbside multi-material recycling services.
 - The Council delivers a co-ordinated approach to ensuring a cleaner, greener, safer Halton and significant progress has been achieved through the provision of high quality cleaning services, as well as a programme of education and enforcement to deter environmental crime.
 - Establishing the Halton Employment Partnership,
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- Restructuring has taken place in Children's Services including the establishment of the Team Around Family (TAF) and embedding the use of the Common Assessment Framework process. This has already shown an emerging positive early intervention/reduction in Children's Social Care referrals.
 - Delivery of Castlefields Regeneration Programme continues at a pace, by 2016 the majority of the 1392 unpopular deck access flats will have been demolished. In their place at least 1000 new homes will be occupied. The new Village Square is due for completion in the summer of 2011 bringing much needed local shops and a community centre. The addition of a new health centre in spring 2012 will complete

the transformation of the old local centre, to put the heart back into the Neighbourhood.

What is Halton Like Now?

Halton is a largely urban area of 119,300 people (2010 population estimate). Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. The population of Halton was in decline for over a decade, but has recently started to increase. This in part is due to a concerted effort to build new houses, particularly larger executive homes in Sandymoor (East Runcorn) and Upton Rocks (NE Widnes) to try to stem population decline, to provide a more balanced housing stock, and to retain wealth in the community. It is also in part due to increased inward migration. The population is projected to grow to 122,900 by 2023.

The number of jobs in the borough is largely the same as it was 10 years ago but the proportion employed in manufacturing has fallen and the reliance on a small number of large employers is beginning to reduce. The wealth of the borough has improved overall during the last 10 years as illustrated by rising numbers of detached houses, rising car ownership and increases in professional and managerial households in parts of the borough. There are currently approximately 52,000 employee jobs in Halton, of which 37,900 are full time.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2010 is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 38 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 27th nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), which is third highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 9th highest in the North West. Other authorities, St Helens (51st), Wirral (60th) and Sefton (92nd), are all less deprived compared to Halton.

The IMD score suggests that deprivation has stayed relatively level in the borough from being ranked 29th in 2007 to being rated 27th in 2010. The proportion of Halton's population in the most deprived areas (i.e. the top 10% of super output areas) has also remained relatively constant at about 25% in 2007 and 2010. The most deprived neighbourhood in Halton is ranked 264th out of 32,482 in England and is situated in Widnes. There are two neighbourhoods in Halton which fall in the top 1% most deprived super output areas nationally. Much has been done but clearly there is still much to do.

Since 2000, a range of research has been carried out, which has highlighted key challenges and opportunities facing Halton. This research tells us that Halton is:

- an area where over 70% of people are satisfied with their local area as a place to live
- an area whose population is projected to grow by 4% (2008-2026), with a large increase in the older population
- tackling deprivation, however it still remains one of the most deprived areas in the North West with unemployment rates higher than the North West and National rates

- an area where health issues are still evident with life expectancy lower than the North West and England averages
- an area with high quality open spaces; 12 areas within Halton have been designated with Green Flag awards
- improving its GCSE results and reducing the number of 16 to 18 year olds not in education, employment or training (NEET).
- an area with a diverse and prospering economy, with increasing average incomes for residents, improvement in skills and with higher rates of employment in the manufacturing sector
- an accessible and convenient place to live and work
- an area which provides a functional base for the community
- an area offering many innovation and development opportunities to improve quality of life

More detailed information on these issues can be found in the State of the Borough Report and the Local Economic Assessment for Halton.

Corporate Planning and Performance Framework

The Corporate Planning Framework is the means by which this plan will be delivered. It consists of a hierarchy of plans that are directly aligned to ensure that the corporate priorities and strategic objectives of the Council are cascaded down the organisation through properly outcome-focused targets. This is known as the 'Golden Thread'.

As part of this Golden Thread, the Sustainable Community Strategy outlines how the Halton Strategic Partnership intends to transform Halton over the next fifteen years. This will be supported by 3 five year delivery plans. This Corporate Plan sets out how the Council will deliver its contribution to achieving the Sustainable Community Strategy. The Plan provides focus for all that the Council will do over the next five years.

Directorate Business Plans set out how the Council's Directorates intend to deliver their particular responsibilities and address the key challenges facing them to help deliver the Corporate Plan.

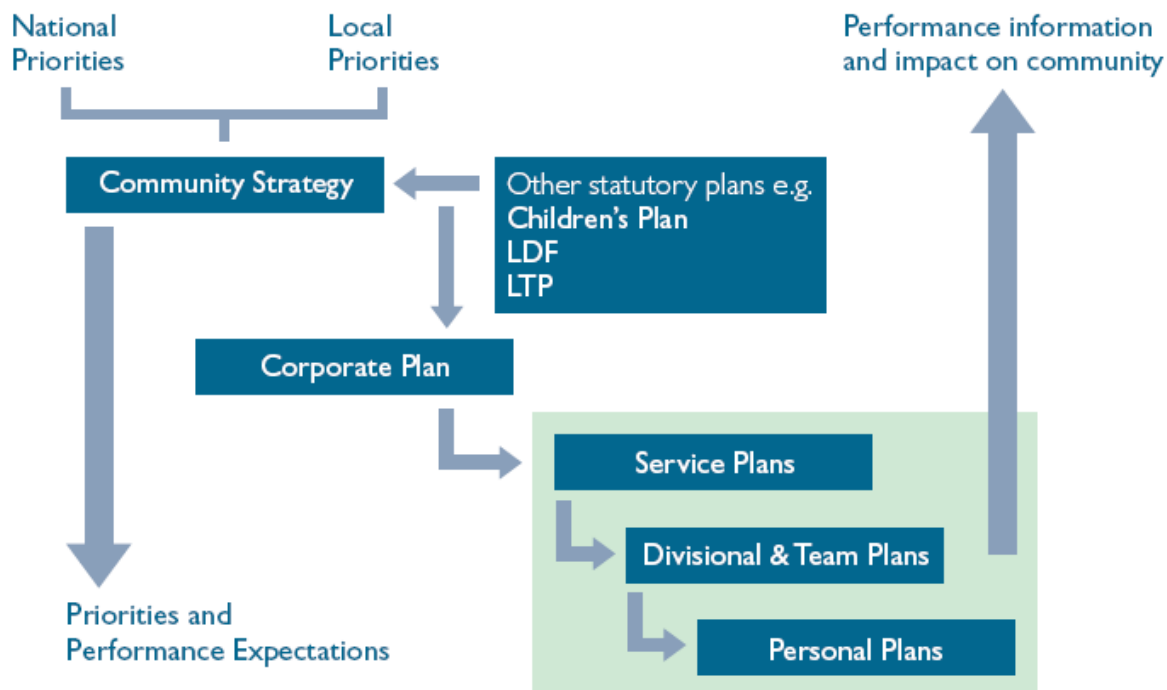
Divisional Plans outline the key tasks needed to help deliver the Directorate Plans and ensure that tasks are properly managed and delivered.

The Personal Development Plans of individual employees ensure that every employee has a set of professional and personal objectives that will help to deliver the corporate objectives, and that their training and development is focused on corporate aims.

Integrating service planning with resource planning is essential to make sure we can achieve our vision. An essential part of the Corporate Plan is the Council's medium term Financial Plan and its Workforce Development Plan. These are part of the framework for managing the resources that will help to deliver the Corporate Plan. The service plans provide the focus for the Council's performance management system.

Figure 1: ‘Golden Thread’ Integration within the Planning Framework

Halton’s Strategic Planning Framework



Much has changed since the last Corporate Plan was updated in 2009. For example, Comprehensive Area Assessments, Local and Multi Area Agreements have been abolished by Central Government and been replaced with a new single data list, based on the principle of greater transparency for communities, from 1st April 2011. Unlike Local Area Agreements which had a broad partnership focus, this data list will solely focus on data to be collected by local authorities and fire and rescue services. This plan highlights key objectives for each priority and improvement targets by which the Council’s, and Halton’s, success can be judged.

The primary vehicle for measuring our performance and that of our partners in previous years was Halton’s Local Area Agreement (LAA) which contained 32 shared targets selected from the National Indicator dataset. However, as previously stated, the National Indicator dataset and requirement to produce an LAA ended in October 2010. We therefore aim to improve our performance, as measured by the indicators contained in this data list, by retaining the former national indicators that remain relevant to Halton and through other monitoring other locally determined targets, year on year, through the life of this plan. Checking on our achievements and regularly monitoring progress will ensure we keep on track.

Developing this Corporate Plan

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

The views of the public were an important factor in deciding the overall themes and thrust of this Corporate Plan. Channels of communication like the Borough's Local Area Forums provide extra ways to share, discuss and resolve local issues. A whole range of services actively consult with and involve their customers, and staff from a range of organisations work closely day to day with local people.

The Corporate Plan presents Halton Borough Council's response to how it will help to implement the Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-26 and the Sustainable Community Strategy itself was developed on the back of a comprehensive and inclusive consultation process. Some of the key steps included:

- Public perception research through the Places Survey and Halton 2000 panel.
- A review of our achievements.
- The State of Halton Report was updated to look objectively at statistical conditions, changes and trends in social, economic and environmental conditions.
- A review of regional and national strategies was carried out to assess the likely impact of this activity in Halton.
- Partner ownership and involvement in drafting the document via Specialist Strategic Partnership meetings.
- An inclusive process of debate and discussion on the way forward took place with Elected Members and interested partners.
- Residents were invited to give their views on the Strategy via an online survey which was publicised in press advertisements, press releases and posters. Hard copies of the survey and document were available at Halton Direct Links.
- Young people were asked for their views on the Strategy via a presentation to the Halton Youth Cabinet.

The Council sees itself, through this Plan, as providing leadership. This can only be achieved if we remain in touch with the people and communities we represent and serve. This Plan aims to create an environment in which everyone can get involved in making things happen in Halton. We want to foster active participation by as many people and agencies as possible and the Council wants to look for ways to make itself more accountable to communities through customer focus, consultation and communication.

The Council constantly canvases public opinion, gathering the facts and figures needed to identify the overall priorities for the Borough. From the information provided by local residents and businesses it has been possible to identify a number of challenges for the Borough over the medium term which address the overall aim of making it a better place to live and work. These include:

- Providing for the ageing population.

- Narrowing the gap between most and least deprived areas within the borough through addressing health and socio-economic inequality.
- Improving educational attainment and access to training opportunities for those living in the area.
- Improving access to services such as social and leisure facilities, supermarkets, health services and transport.
- Understanding how knowledge and perceptions of health related issues can affect the local population.
- Reducing social isolation.
- Maximising community resources and facilitating effective community engagement and participation.
- Integrating delivery of services.
- Increasing community satisfaction with Halton as a place to live.
- Increasing focus on community involvement in public sector activities in Halton.
- Running services effectively and efficiently to meet customer needs and increase public satisfaction with all public services in Halton.

The key challenge is how best to frame the response to these through the Corporate Plan. To do this challenges have been grouped into six key themes, primarily reflecting those contained within Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy, but also adding a council- specific priority:

- A Healthy Halton
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton
- A Safer Halton
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Environment and Regeneration in Halton
- Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

The next section looks at how we organise ourselves to deliver our priorities; and the measures we intend to take over the next five years to improve our effectiveness.

Each section comprises:

- A statement of the priority.
- Its overall aim.
- Why the priority was chosen.
- Key objectives.
- The Council's contribution and key areas of focus.

A Healthy Halton

Our overall aim

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

Why Health?

Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country and single it out as the aspect of life in the borough in most urgent need of improvement. The population is ageing which could put even greater demands on health and social care services. At the same time lifestyle choices in the borough especially among the young, in terms of diet, smoking, alcohol, exercise and other factors continue to give cause for concern for the future.

The recent State of the Borough Report identifies Halton as one of the most deprived districts in England. In terms of health deprivation the local authority currently ranks 11th out of 326 local authorities in the country.

Key Objectives

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

Council Contribution and Key Areas of Focus

In order to contribute towards meeting these key community objectives for a Healthy Halton the Council, during the lifetime of this Corporate Plan, has identified the following Key Areas of Focus: -

Area of Focus 1 – Healthy and Active Lifestyles

Improve the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through encouraging and providing opportunities to lead healthier and physically active lifestyles.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Improving the current and future health of Halton school children by increasing children's intake of a variety of fresh fruit and vegetables through

increasing the access and availability of healthier nutritionally balanced school meals.

- Increasing the take up of free school meals by eligible children.
- Increasing the number of pupils having a school lunch, to raise awareness of, and increase levels of, healthy eating.
- Improving the health of Halton school children by increasing the percentage of children participating in sport for fun and fitness.
- Working with schools to develop initiatives school travel Plans that promote walking and cycling, road safety schemes and walking school buses.
- Improving access to information on healthier lifestyles and services. (e.g., gym membership, healthy eating, stress counselling).
- Promoting healthy lifestyle through implementation of the school sports Co-ordinator programme.
- Reviewing and updating the Sports Strategy and Facilities Strategy and beginning their implementation during 2011/12.
- Using promotional events to increase participation and raise awareness associated with Sporting Excellence and 2012 Olympics e.g. Halton Sports Fair Week 18-24 July 2011 (Olympic Weekend – 23/24 July 2011).
- Increasing the number of new participants through Sport and Physical Activity Alliance delivery plan i.e. sports participation.
- Promoting active travel options (walking / cycling) as viable alternatives to the car.
- Deliver a programme of awareness raising, education, and ultimately enforcement, to reduce incidences of environmental crime, such as littering, dog fouling and fly-tipping in public opens spaces and parks.

Area of Focus 2 – Good Public Health

Providing services and facilities to maintain and promote good public health and well-being.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Implementing the Local Affordable Warmth Strategy, in order to reduce fuel poverty and health inequalities.
- Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
- Safeguarding the health of Halton residents by continuing to review and assess air quality against the Government's health-related air quality standards and seek to ensure that existing standards are being met.
- Safeguarding the health of Halton residents by identifying the contaminated sites within the Borough, which present a significant risk to human health, to implement a programme of inspection prioritised by high, medium and low risk.
- Continuing to identify and classify potentially contaminated sites from available data.
- Developing relevant and accessible information for young people on drugs and alcohol, their effects and support services across Halton.
- In partnership with the PCT and GP Consortia reviewing access to services and activities to secure improvements in breast feeding rates.

- Building capacity in educational settings: improving the sexual health of Halton school children by increasing the percentage of schools participating in PHSE/SRE training and development.
- Developing and re-programming supporting people services.
- Support provision of transport to hospital and health facilities serving the Borough's residents

Area of Focus 3 – Intervention and Prevention

Working with service users to provide services focussed around intervention and prevention and where this is not possible, helping people to manage the effects of long term conditions.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Considering the implications of Autism Act 2009 and review working practices to ensure they are 'fit for purpose'.
- Continuing to implement a behaviour solutions approach to develop quality services for adults with challenging behaviour - Models of good practice to continue to be developed.
- Reviewing Integrated Community Equipment Service to ensure the service is meeting the requirements of the community of Halton.
- Improving the long-term health of children and young people by reducing incidences of sales of products such as tobacco, solvents and alcohol to this group.
- Improving the health and well-being of children with disabilities in Halton and their families by increasing the number of short breaks available to them.
- Improving the health and well-being of looked after children via the joint work of Social Care and health partners, by increasing the proportion of looked after children with up to date immunisations, dental checks and health assessments.
- Implementation of the Engagement Strategy aimed at ensuring service user views are taken into account when redesigning/evaluating services.
- Improving the health and well being of vulnerable adults particularly older people by increasing the number of older people gaining access to holistic care packages.
- Increasing and delivering an improved range of services and support for carers, according to the Halton Carers Strategy.
- Enabling community centres to deliver programmes for vulnerable adults.
- Establishing a single service for drug users and those in recovery.
- Providing travel planning, advice and training to increase the accessibility of health facilities.

Area of Focus 4 – Maintaining Individual Independence

Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people and those with complex care needs within our community.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Implementing recommendations following the Challenging Behaviour review/project to ensure services meet the needs of service users.
- Reviewing and evaluating new arrangements for integrated hospital discharge.
- Maintaining the number of carers receiving a break.

- Maintaining the numbers of carers provided with assessment leading to the provision of services, to ensure Carers needs are met.
- Implementing the Telecare strategy and action plan.
- Implementing the Local Dementia Strategy, to ensure effective services are in place.
- Implementing the redesign of the Supported Housing Network to ensure that it is meeting the needs of those with the most complex needs.
- Continuing to develop the Single Point of Access to ensure that it delivers an effective mechanism for access into Services.
- Revising and updating the Supporting People Plan to ensure effective services are in place.
- Implementing and delivering the objectives outlined in the Homelessness and Housing Strategies and Repossessions Action Plan.
- Continuing to ensure that the Re-ablement service is meeting the requirements of the community of Halton.
- Implementing the Early Intervention/Prevention Strategy to improve outcomes for Older People in Halton.
- Contributing to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults and children in need, by ensuring that staff are familiar with and follow safeguarding processes.
- Continuing to establish effective arrangements across the whole of adult social care to deliver self directed support and personal budgets.
- Provision of appropriate transport to facilities.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Our overall aim

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

Why Employment, Learning and Skills?

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

Key Objectives

- To develop a strong, diverse, competitive and sustainable local economy.
- To foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and make Halton an ideal place to start and grow economic activity.
- To develop a culture where learning is valued and skill levels throughout the adult population and across the local workforce can be raised.

- To promote and increase the employability of local people and tackle barriers to employment to get more people into work.
- To maximise an individual's potential to manage and increase their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services.

Council Contribution and Key Areas of Focus.

In order to contribute towards meeting these key community objectives for Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton the Council, during the lifetime of this Corporate Plan has identified the following Key Areas of Focus: -

Area of Focus 5 – Strong Local Economy

To develop a strong, diverse, competitive and sustainable local economy and to foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and make Halton an ideal place to start and grow economic activity

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Providing support for local businesses to exploit the potential of the internet.
- Supporting the development of digital service networks.
- Providing cohesive support for businesses to relocate to and within Halton.
- Continuing the development of STAM (Science, Technology & Advanced Manufacturing) Routeway and curriculum offer for Halton's young people.
- Strengthening the strategic partnership arrangements with the sub-region's Higher Education institutions.
- Developing a formal Business Engagement Plan.
- Continued support for the strategic development sites at 3MG, Widnes Waterfront and Daresbury.
- Develop a formal business engagement plan and further promote a one-stop approach to how we engage with employers and businesses.
- Supporting business formation and survival.
- Continued promotion of the regeneration of Halton's town centres through private development, redevelopment and renewal opportunities as appropriate.
- Maximising the leverage into Halton of external funding for capital development projects.
- Offering targeted financial support, training and incentives to new business start-ups.
- Encouraging greater levels of 'inter-trading' between Halton businesses.
- Promoting regional and national business start-up programmes, e.g. Princes Trust.
- Providing advice to local businesses to help them participate in public sector and larger companies' procurement and construction processes.
- Encouraging the acquisition of business and budgeting skills by Halton's young people.
- Delivering Enterprise Halton 'Kickstart Enterprise Training' and business start-up grants.
- Delivering an Enterprise Week Programme.
- Encouraging and supporting Community Enterprises.
- Promoting economic diversity and competitiveness within an improved business environment.

- To implement a regeneration plan for the Widnes Waterfront.
- To Implement the Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy.
- To implement a regeneration plan for Castlefields according to the Castlefields Team Plan and Regeneration Masterplan resulting in the delivery of The Masterplan's vision of a holistically improved estate.

Area of Focus 6 – Skilled Local Workforce

To develop a culture where learning is valued and skill levels throughout the adult population and across the local workforce can be raised.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Continuing the borough wide Skills for Life assessment and delivery service.
- Mapping and assessing the quality of current provision and identify gaps and areas for improvement.
- Promoting and improving access to the Nextstep service and the All Age Guidance service as it rolls out from September 2011.
- Enhancing existing information, advice and guidance on opportunities within higher education.
- Working with employers, providers and key stakeholders to ensure provision matches current and future demand for apprenticeships, internships and work placements more effectively and supporting them in offering post-entry career development opportunities for existing staff.
- Undertaking a Business Perceptions Survey.
- Implementing the Construction Halton model, focused on delivering community benefits from construction related work in the form of apprenticeships, training and work experience opportunities.
- Continuing the development of Science Halton Routeway.
- Devising & delivering employability programmes responsive to Halton's employment needs
- Continue with programmes aimed at ensuring a highly skilled and highly motivated workforce to have a positive impact upon business growth.
- Promote and support the provision of more apprenticeships by Halton Employers and the delivery of enhanced apprenticeship support.

Area of Focus 7 – Increased Local Employment

To promote and increase the employability of local people and tackle barriers to employment to get more people into work

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Putting in place clearly defined strategies to remove barriers faced by the long-term unemployed seeking to return to work. (e.g. Jobcentre Plus Focused Partnership Delivery Pilot).
- Providing better access to affordable and accessible local childcare.
- Creating pathways into employment in new and growing sectors of the economy and link into Job Centre Plus service academies.
- Continuing to provide employers with a 'complete employment offer' (Halton Employment Partnership offer).
- Providing sector/employer specific pre-employment support services for Halton residents.

- Offering a brokering role to link residents with potential volunteering and employment opportunities.
- Working with the Apprenticeship Service to raise employer's knowledge and understanding of the benefits of apprenticeships, internships and work placements.
- Providing structured employment 'tasters' as part of NEET (Not in Education, Employment or Training) engagement programmes.
- Delivering Extended Apprenticeship Support Programme.
- Developing Apprenticeships within the Council.
- Work with the Prime Contractors Ingeus and A4E to deliver the Single Work Programme in Halton.
- Providing suitable transport to enable people to access employment.
- Providing travel planning advice for prospective and existing employers.

Area of Focus 8 – Support and Advice

To maximise an individual's potential to manage and increase their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Ensuring that relevant Council activity contributes towards the targets in the Halton Child & Family Poverty Strategy.
- Facilitating the provision and take-up of 'out of hours' financial information, advice and guidance services.
- Working alongside partners to increase the provision and promotion of affordable credit, targeting Halton's most disadvantaged communities.
- Continuing effective employer engagement.
- Support provision of community transport / innovative solutions to ensure accessibility to employment opportunities.

A SAFER HALTON

Our overall aim

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

Why a Safer Halton?

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

Key Objectives

- To investigate and tackle the underlying causes of crime and disorder and respond effectively to public concern by reducing crime levels, with a particular

focus on reducing the levels of crime that disproportionately affect some of the more deprived areas.

- To tackle alcohol and drug/substance misuse problems, and the resulting harm that is caused to communities, families and individuals.
- To tackle the problem of domestic abuse in all its forms, supporting the victims and their families and taking enforcement action against perpetrators.
- To safeguard adults who are more vulnerable to physical, financial, sexual and emotional abuse and vulnerable children who are often part of families where there are drug and alcohol problems or where relationships are abusive or violent.
- To consult and engage with communities to identify problems and put in place effective measures to address them, with a particular focus on promoting community cohesion and adopting a zero tolerance to all forms of hate crime within Halton, so that no-one is victimised.
- We will work together to reduce fear of crime and increase public confidence in the police, council and other agencies to respond to reports of crime and anti social behaviour and tackle any potential tensions within communities, in particular those that may lead to extremist activity.

Council Contributions and Key Areas of Focus

In order to contribute towards meeting these key community objectives for a Safer Halton the Council, during the lifetime of this Corporate Plan has identified the following Key Areas of Focus: -

Area of Focus 9 - CONFIDENCE AND COMMUNICATION

To enable Halton residents to feel safer in their homes, neighbourhoods and when out and about in the Borough.

Examples of future planned activity could include:-

- Respect Weeks.
- Provision of activities for young people to tackle Anti Social Behaviour.
- Reparation – communities a say on the type of reparation activity in which offenders should engage and facilitating contact between victims and offenders so that offenders are able to better understand the impact of their actions.
- Development of the Home Watch Scheme to increase residents' involvement in helping to tackle crime and anti social behaviour within their neighbourhoods.
- To inform residents of community safety activity within Halton, so they feel reassured that we are tackling the issues that matter to them.
- To consider the impact on crime and alcohol related disorder through the Licensing Process.
- Burglary Days of Action - to engage directly with those communities that are most at risk of becoming victims of burglary, bringing the services of the Community Safety Team to those areas identified as being most in need of support.
- Designing out crime through the planning process.
- Provision and monitoring of a CCTV system to help identify and tackle crime particularly in the town centres
- Town centre management to work with business to reduce crime.

- Facilitate expansion of FaceWatch scheme from retail areas to include transport operators
- Managing our parks, footpaths and open spaces to reduce the opportunity for crime to take place and to make users feel safer.
- To engage with partners to help ensure there are adequate housing, employment and training opportunities for ex offenders to assist them in changing their lifestyle and offending behaviour patterns.
- Striving to improve safety on Halton's transport network.
- Maximising the use of the Council's legislative powers to deter and reduce environmental crime, thus building community confidence and reducing the fear of crime, increasing resident's satisfaction and improving the "liveability" of their area

Area of Focus 10 - SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE ADULTS AND CHILDREN

To improve the outcomes of vulnerable adults and children, so they feel safe and protected and when abuse does occur there are local procedures and processes in place to ensure that the abuse is reported and appropriate action taken against perpetrators and to support victims.

Examples of future planned activity could include:-

- Stay Safe Project – taking vulnerable young people whose behaviour or whereabouts places them at risk of significant harm to a place of safety
- Developing a 'Family Focused' approach to young people and their families who are currently accessing many different services to prevent duplicate service intervention and achieve better outcomes for families

Area of Focus 11 - DOMESTIC ABUSE

Everyone is able to live in an environment free from abuse, and where abuse does occur support is given to individuals and their families and action is taken against perpetrators to prevent any re-occurrence.

Examples of future planned activity could include:-

- Co-ordinating a multi agency approach through MARAC to commission interventions such as the Sanctuary Scheme and an Independent Domestic Violence Advocate.
- Supporting a 'Service User' Group to inform services within Halton.
- Adopting a family centred approach to support victims and their families to feel confident to identify abuse, and where appropriate to give evidence so that action is taken against perpetrators.

Area of Focus 12 - SUBSTANCE MISUSE

Supporting individuals and their families to address the problems caused by drug and alcohol misuse, enabling them to become active citizens who can play a full and meaningful part in the community

Examples of future planned activity could include:-

- To commission a substance misuse service that supports more people to become free from their drug or alcohol dependence.

- To work closely with Jobcentre Plus, Halton People into Jobs and the Halton Employment Partnership to support individuals in accessing meaningful employment, education & training opportunities.
- To work closely with the various Health Services to provide opportunities for individuals, carers & families to improve their physical & mental well being.
- To increase the number of community pharmacists providing clean injecting equipment to protect individual & public health.
- Using the experiences of service users & carers to develop our responses to substance misuse.
- To celebrate the successes of individual's in substance misuse services, showing that recovery from addiction is possible, and addressing the negative stereotyping of those with drug and alcohol problems.
- Test Purchasing of underage alcohol sales.
- Introduction, implementation and enforcement of Alcohol Byelaws in Halton.
- Provision of appropriate mental health, drug and alcohol treatment services to offenders to help them turn their life around.

Children and Young People in Halton

Our overall aim

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

Why Children and Young People?

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

Key Objectives

Halton's Children's Trust has identified three overarching areas where a strong partnership approach is needed to improve outcomes for children and young people. These form the foundation for the Children and Young People's Plan 2011-14. These areas, under which the key outcomes can be clustered, are:

- Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning.
- Improve outcomes for our most vulnerable children and young people by targeting services effectively.
- Improve outcomes for children and young people through embedding integrated processes to deliver early help and support.

Safeguarding plays a significant role in each of these identified areas of work and will be a consistent factor as each priority is addressed.

Council Contribution and Key Areas of Focus

In order to contribute towards meeting these community objectives for Children and Young People in Halton the Council, during the lifetime of this Corporate Plan, has identified the following Key Areas of Focus: -

Area of Focus 13 - Educational Attainment

To improve outcomes for children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Improving outcomes for children in care and care leavers.
- Increasing the percentage of schools where Ofsted judge overall effectiveness to be good or better.
- Increasing GCSE attainment for 5 or more at grades A*-C including English and Maths.
- Analysing the levels of absence, including persistent absence, across all phases on a termly basis.
- Narrowing the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers through early identification of need, and effectively targeted school improvement support.
- Conducting data analysis for children in care (including CICOLA – Children in Care of Other Local Authorities) and with schools ensure that action plans for individual pupils are in place.
- Work with transport providers to ensure children have access to safe / affordable transport to allow participation in full range of after school activities and social events.

Area of Focus 14 – Effective Family Services

To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Ensuring that the Children and Families workforce have Managers who have the appropriate skills and that social workers have the support, skills and competence to enable them to contribute to improving outcomes for children and to maintain professional standards.
- Developing a model of early intervention and prevention providing seamless service delivery to children and families from universal to specialist services.
- Integrating the universal and early intervention services for Disabled Children within the Team around the Family model to reduce the need for more specialist intervention by March 2012.
- Undertaking a comprehensive review of Early Years provision.
- Further developing and implementing commissioning to improve outcomes for Children and Young People.
- Ensuring that service redesign results in the most efficient use of available resources to meet local needs and also delivers the requirements of the Education White Paper/Education Act and the SEN Green Paper.

Area of Focus 15 – Vocational Learning

Provide a seamless transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Further developing a 14-19 commissioning framework to improve outcomes for young people.
- To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support.
- Refreshing the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS) Strategy and implement the agreed actions.
- Reviewing and improving Sixth Form provision.
- Implementing the action plan from the review of quality and sustainability of The Gateway Key Stage 4 provision
- Provision of appropriate transport to enable young people to access education, employment, voluntary and community work.

Area of Focus 16 – Safeguarding Children

To ensure a safe environment for where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Ensuring that children requiring interventions at level 3b and 4 of Halton's Levels of Need receive high quality assessments and interventions to improve outcomes.
- Developing, implementing and embedding Child in Need reviewing processes for Halton.
- Developing a shared adoption service.
- Implementing a multi agency Children in Care Strategy for Halton.
- Implementing a Placement Strategy to increase accommodation for care leavers and the number of foster carers in Halton.

Environment and Regeneration in Halton

Our overall aim

To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.

Why Environment and Regeneration?

Modern day Halton inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that continues to present major challenges in terms of development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is a key to greater prosperity by boosting regeneration opportunities and improving the image of the borough. A good quality of life can affect investment decisions. High quality schools, good quality affordable housing and attractive open spaces are all strong reasons for investing or relocating to an area.

Good successful economies have robust infrastructures and are well connected, otherwise growth is hampered. Improving the ICT and broadband infrastructure will support businesses in promoting the knowledge economy and support efficiency and innovation.

In terms of the environment, climate change is recognised as one of the most serious challenges facing the UK. The impacts of climate change may be felt within the Borough through warmer summers and wetter winters and an increased frequency of severe weather events. By ensuring that the Borough is resilient to the adverse effects of climate change and by reducing Halton's carbon footprint these climatic shifts will have less of a pronounced effect on Halton's natural and built environments.

This is why the quality of the environment and regeneration in Halton is a priority for the Council.

Key Objectives

- Guide the development of a high quality and sustainable built environment to support Halton's new low carbon economy.
- Provide a well connected, sustainable and accessible borough, including the provision of the Mersey Gateway. Ensure a variety of safe efficient travel and infrastructure options for people, goods, communications and freight.
- Conserve, manage and enhance Halton's physical and natural assets in order to maximise community and other benefits by improving environmental quality.
- Achieve high standards of sustainability by tackling climate change. Minimise waste generation and maximising the reuse, recycling, composting and energy management and recovery from waste resources.
- Provide sustainable, good quality, affordable and adaptable residential accommodation to meet the needs of all sections of society.

Council Contribution and Key Areas of Focus

To contribute towards meeting these key community objectives, the Council has identified the following Key Areas of Focus:-

Area of Focus 17 – Improved Transport

To promote sustainable, safe and accessible transport that meets the needs of Halton's residents, businesses and visitors

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Implementing the transport strategies and programmes of work contained within Halton's third Local Transport Plan (LTP3).
- Progression of the Mersey Gateway Project
- Implementing the Mersey Gateway Sustainable Transport Strategy that contains a range of transport measures to enhance facilities and encourage walking, cycling and public transport, including the development of a bus based rapid transit network for Halton.

- Continuing to work with public and community transport operators to improve the quality and accessibility of public transport services in Halton to encourage the use of sustainable transport and increase its accessibility by vulnerable groups.
- Making Access improvements to rail services.
- Continuing to enhance transport infrastructure and services to major educational and employment sites in Halton including: 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway), Widnes Waterfront and the Daresbury sites.
- Continuing to maintain and manage the transport network in Halton to ensure that safety and efficiency are maximised.
- Developing a bid to gain funding through the Government's Local Sustainable Transport Fund, focused on measures to promote low carbon economic growth including sustainable transport to employment sites.
- Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB) Complex Major Maintenance Scheme – Delivery of the remaining programme of major works identified within the revised SJB Complex Maintenance Strategy to ensure continued unrestricted availability of the SJB crossing and to allow future maintenance to be delivered on a steady state, lifecycle planned basis.
- Reducing road casualties within the borough.
- Continuing to work with our neighbouring authorities to facilitate cross boundary movements and improve access to services and job opportunities.

Area of Focus 18 – Quality Built Environment

Provide a high quality built environment that is sustainable, affordable and adaptable to meet the needs and aspirations of all sections of society.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Continuing to negotiate with housing providers and partners in relation to the provision of further extra care housing tenancies, to ensure requirements are met.
- Facilitating new housing planning permissions (with good supporting facilities and settings) at a level that respects the net housing growth figure in the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provide quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
- Management and delivery of the Castlefields Regeneration Programme.
- Implementing and keeping current Halton's Housing Strategy.
- Ensuring that all development, not just housing, is sustainable, adaptable and meets the requirements of future users in the long term.

Area of Focus 19 – Public Space

Conserve, manage and enhance public spaces for leisure and recreation and foster conservation by protecting key areas.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Developing and implementing a Greenspace Strategy which will incorporate biodiversity action planning in line with the Cheshire Region Biodiversity Action Plan
- Promoting the reclamation of derelict or contaminated land for greenspace and/or regeneration.

- Continuing to promote horticultural excellence within the wider urban environment.
- Maintaining the current 12 Green Flag Award Parks to the standard. Promote sponsorship of greenspace assets, including highway greenspace in order to sustain quality standards Borough wide;
- Maintaining local nature reserves and wild spaces to support the Council's efforts to deliver regeneration and a better quality of life in Halton.
- Continuing to promote habitat diversity through existing SLAs and partners.
- Developing and implement the Play Strategy, Sports Strategy and Playing Pitch strategy.
- Continuing to manage development in conservation areas and to listed buildings through the Local Development Framework.
- Improving community sports facilities and increase the community usage of the Stobart Stadium.
- Continuing to improve Parks, Sports Grounds, Open Spaces and Local Nature Reserves.
- Ensuring the Rights of Way Improvement Plan is implemented.

Area of Focus 20 – Environmental Quality

Improve environmental quality by tackling climate change, minimising waste generation and maximising reuse, recycling, composting and energy recovery.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Developing and implementing the Corporate Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan.
- Implementing the Councils Carbon Management Plan by continuing to promote energy efficiency in all Council buildings.
- Updating the Council's the Waste Management Strategy and developing action plans and implementing services and initiatives to meet the aims and objectives of the Strategy
- Ensure that all residents in Halton have easy access to advice, support and services to help them reduce their waste and to recycle more of what they produce.
- Developing and implementing the Waste Management Strategy.
- Reducing carbon emissions from the council's own activities by 20% and to work with partners, the community and business to help reduce their carbon emissions.
- Growing the low carbon economy, developing low carbon infrastructure and promoting low carbon business clusters.

Attracting investment from environmental industries, exploiting the niche markets of the future and developing low carbon skills.

- Developing and implementing the Affordable Warmth strategy.

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

Our overall aim

To deliver continued and positive improvement on the quality of life in the communities of Halton through the efficient use of the Council's resources.

Why Effectiveness and Efficiency?

The preceding sections of this plan set out some vital and challenging objectives and targets for Halton. For the Council to make the fullest contribution to achieving these objectives, it must make sure that the action it takes is effective, and that its resources are deployed in the most efficient way possible to maximise that effect.

The 2010 Comprehensive Spending Review undertaken by Government has reduced the resources available to us. The challenge remains to transform services, looking beyond organisational boundaries to reduce duplication and increase effectiveness, and supporting people through early intervention and prevention in the first place rather than focusing on the problems (prevention is better than cure).

To ensure effectiveness our actions must be targeted on our priorities, be evidence based, and be focused on the needs of the community, especially those identified as disadvantaged. To achieve this, the Council will need to work in partnership with others and demonstrate clear vision and leadership.

The Council has regard to the environmental impact of the goods and services we procure and commission and work together to achieve improvements. The Council will continue to work together with our partners, the community and business to reduce environmental impacts and address climate change. We will monitor our environmental compliance, manage any risks and monitor and improve our environmental performance.

There is a strong commitment to tackling climate change and completing the evolution to a low carbon local economy. The Council is demonstrating leadership in the use and refurbishment of operational assets. Examples include installing voltage optimisers in buildings, a programme of lighting and boiler control improvements, installation of Multi Functional devices across the Council's buildings and the setting up of a Green Champion Network. Additionally, where refurbishment has been necessary, energy efficient measures have been installed. The improvements at Runcorn Town Hall have included an increase in insulation to the roof, double glazing and cladding, solar shading, photovoltaic tiles, sensory lighting, water saving WCs, water saving taps and heating control zoning.

Through democratic accountability and full engagement the Council will ensure that our vision and the actions to deliver it reflect the priorities of the community we serve.

Key Objectives

- To empower local people to have a greater voice and influence over local decision-making and the delivery of services.
- To deliver services in a fair, equal, accessible way to all residents.

- To translate vision and priorities into action and delivery - both directly and through influencing others.
- To redirect resources (financial, human and physical) towards the delivery of the objectives and targets set out in this plan.
- To improve continuously the quality and efficiency of services.
- Ensuring a skilled, motivated, flexible and diverse workforce is in place which will deliver value for money services and in turn make a positive difference to the people of Halton.

Council Contribution and Key Areas of Focus

All organisations require a foundation from which to operate and the resources to provide the goods or services that they deliver. These resources may be financial, physical (i.e. land, buildings and equipment), intellectual (i.e. peoples skills and knowledge), or organisational (i.e. communication, policies, strategies etc).

To manage the efficient alignment of the Council's resources and enhance its organisational capability to deliver upon its priorities as detailed earlier in this plan the Council has identified the following resource priorities.

Area of Focus 21 - Effective partnership working

Engaging with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are shared, evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and help narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.

Examples of future planned activity could include: -

- Delivery of the Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026.
- Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Community Engagement Strategy.
- Delivering the framework of statutory plans and other key strategies to provide a clear corporate direction for Council services and external partners.
- Improving the effectiveness of the support, intelligence, and advice provided to the Council and its partners to inform decisions on policy, resource planning, service delivery and performance and improvement; demonstrating transparency and accountability to our stakeholders and compliance with inspection and regulatory frameworks.

Area of Focus 22 – Customer Experience

Build on our customer focus by involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equal access for all users.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Evolve, improve and redevelop customer contact systems, access channels and availability.
- Embedding the principle of 'the customer experience perspective' in everything we do, making best use of customer intelligence.
- Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Equality Strategy to ensure that customers are treated fairly and have appropriate access to services.

- Service transformation such as the ‘Team around the Family’ approach in the Children and Young People Directorate.

Area of Focus 23 – Operational Land and Property

Ensure that all Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and contribute to reducing energy use and the consumption of natural resources.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Implementing the Accommodation Strategy to reduce costs and dispose of surplus assets.
- Acting on climate change through behaviour change; more energy efficient buildings; products which consume less energy; more renewable energy and microgeneration; sustainable low carbon transport; more efficient use of water; and by producing less waste.
- Reducing the amount of outstanding Disability Discrimination Act works (non schools) and the backlog of maintenance on our property portfolio.
- Fulfilling the requirements of Asbestos Audits and Management Regulations.
- Undertaking cyclical Property Condition Surveys.
- Increasing the proportion of the Council’s public buildings that are fully accessible to 100%.
- Delivering the Building Schools for the Future Programme at The Grange and Wade Deacon.
- Implementing the Council’s Carbon Management Plan which includes energy efficiency measures in corporate buildings.
- Managing the Council’s energy consumption to meet the requirements of the Government’s Carbon Reduction Commitment.
- Reviewing and modifying the Council’s industrial property portfolio to support new and developing enterprise.
- Ascertaining the full cost of holding surplus properties and to identify possible sales.
- Development of a strategic approach to the management of the Council’s land and property portfolio.

Area of Focus 24 - People

Ensuring that we are properly structured, resourced and organised with informed and motivated staff with the right skills who are provided with opportunities for personal development. This ensures decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Managing our human resources to ensure that we attract and retain staff in an equitable way, ensure that they have the skills and knowledge that meet organisational need, and provide opportunities for them to achieve their full potential.
- Annually reviewing the Constitution of the Council to ensure that it remains fit for purpose.
- Ensuring that arrangements are in place to ensure business continuity.

- Embedding risk management business planning processes.
- Launching the People Plan to ensure our human resource management is reflective of a modern, excellent authority and consistent with best practice.
- Implementing, monitoring and reviewing the Council's workforce development and learning plans to ensure that the organisation develops, and that employees are attracted, retained and equipped with the skills needed to deliver its priorities; and that a high performance, learning culture is embedded.
- To enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of corporate training opportunities through the design and implementation of appropriate learning interventions.
- Provide Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively.
- Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's communications.

Area of Focus 25 - Financial Resources

Manage financial resources effectively whilst maintaining transparency, prudence and accountability to our stakeholders. Enhance our procurement arrangements to further reduce the cost of acquiring goods and services.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Implementing the Corporate Efficiency Programme combining the principles of best value with business process re-engineering to identify efficiency gains in priority areas.
- Providing for public accountability by reporting the Councils stewardship of public funds and its financial performance in the use of resources by preparing the final accounts as required by statute and in accordance with the latest accounting standards.
- Setting and delivering the Annual Audit Plan.
- Setting the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and Council Tax.
- Ensuring that the capital programme is affordable, prudent and sustainable by setting and monitoring Prudential Borrowing Indicators.
- Developing, identifying and exploiting the potential for further efficiency, including a category management approach to procurement.
- Extending the range of corporate procurement contracts.
- The Council are working towards being at level 3 on the Sustainable Framework for Flexible Procurement by 2010 and reaching level 5 by 2013.

Area of Focus 26 – Innovation and Entrepreneurialism

Take a fresh approach to service delivery, including exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council.

Examples of future planned activity could include:

- Supporting the above objectives by maintaining a strategic approach to securing external funding, and maximising external funding secured for the Borough through the promotion of funding sources and the development of high quality grant applications for Council projects and the voluntary and community sector.
- Continuing to identify and exploit the potential for further efficiency gains by enhancing the authority's approach to the procurement of goods and services.

- Ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
- Delivering the phased implementation of the Information Management Strategy.
- Improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network Infrastructure
- Satisfying the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scalable and robust hardware infrastructure and software platform.
- Implementing a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal.

Making it Happen in Halton

All the objectives and targets outlined here are achievable. However, all of our aspirations will not happen unless we do the job properly. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information must be allied with the strength of will to use them in the best way. Resources are already allocated to the priorities set out in this plan. However, we need to allocate resources more selectively if we are to achieve our objectives.

There are a number of changes taking place in the way in which government allocates funds to local authorities, leading to uncertainty about the future levels of such funding, but the rate of growth in government funding is likely to be much lower than in recent years. There are also considerable internal pressures on the Council's budget - for example, pressures caused by rapidly increasing demands in Children's and Adult Social Services.

Given the pressures outlined above, it is clear that there will be little or no new money. We will have either to increase our efficiency and use the savings produced to fund priority areas, or redirect resources from non-priority areas.

Efficiency

Greater inventiveness and innovation will be required in the future given reducing resources. The Council is part way through the implementation of its Efficiency Programme to reduce costs whilst minimising impact on service delivery, the emphasis is very much on shifting to using resources "smartly".

Efficiency is making best use of resources available for the provision of services and efficiency gains are achieved by one or more of the following:

- Reducing inputs (money, people, assets etc) for the same outputs.
- Reducing prices (procurement, labour cost etc) for the same outputs.
- Greater outputs or improved service quality (extra service, productivity etc) for the same inputs.
- Getting proportionally more outputs or improved quality in return for an increase in inputs.

The resources of the Council and its partners are being focused to enable a real impact on the strategic priorities. As a result, the Council will continue to develop services to achieve the objectives and improvement targets within this Corporate Plan.

The Council has a robust performance monitoring framework that will be used to monitor the impact of efficiency measures on service quality. This means:

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

In allocating resources and determining the overall level and make up of our budget, we have to balance the achievement of our priorities against the impact of spending levels on the council taxpayer. We are proud of having one of the lowest levels of council tax in the region, allied with our ability still to deliver top quality services to local people.

To implement this, an Efficiency Strategy Group has been established. It will aim to maximise the employment of efficient business practices to maximise efficiency gains, translate them into cash, and allow choices on their re-direction to delivery of quality front line services. Key actions already identified include:

Procurement

A procurement strategy has been developed and the Council will strengthen the corporate procurement function. A new financial management system, with an e-procurement module, has been introduced. The Council is also working closely with the North West Improvement & Efficiency Partnership

Technology

Investment in ICT has allowed strong progress toward lean working. Technology allows remote service delivery, integration with partners and local authorities through secure network links. Safeguarding the personal data held within the many council and partner systems

Partnerships

Partnership working in service delivery will continue to be developed. The Council uses framework contracts for professional services. Pooled budgets have been established with the Health Service, and a joint commissioning framework has been agreed with the PCT. This will enable joint service development to take place in such areas as mental health services and learning disability services.

Energy Management

Control over energy consumption by improving our purchasing, operation, motivation and training practices will result in energy savings for reinvestment into a rolling programme of further energy saving measures.

Productive Use of Time

The Council's Managing Absence policy has been reviewed, the aim is to reduce levels of sickness absence year on year. In addition, a home working pilot is to be evaluated later in the year.

Strong Council Workforce

During major service and organisational transformation it is imperative that we take our workforce with us to help us to create the 'fit for the future' local public services needed to deliver our community priorities. We will be involving our workforce in making these changes and by supporting them in learning both new skills and new ways of working.

The Corporate People Plan, which will provide an over-arching Workforce Strategy across the Council in which all Directorate workforce strategies is currently being developed. This will ultimately ensure a skilled, motivated, flexible and diverse workforce is in place which will deliver value for money services and in turn make a positive difference to the people of Halton.

Managing Risks

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

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

As part of implementing this Corporate Plan the Council has adopted a Risk Management Strategy and established a Strategic Risk Register. The Strategy sets out the risk management objectives; the role and responsibilities for risk management of the authority; the categorisation of risks and the approach to risk management action plans.

The Council's risks can be broadly categorised as either "strategic" or "operational". Strategic risks cover those threats/opportunities that could impact upon the achievement of medium and long-term goals. Operational risks cover those threats/opportunities that could impact upon the quality of service delivery.

Complementing this is the Council's business continuity management planning. This provides plans and procedures to ensure the Council can continue its functions in the event of a major emergency.

Equality & Diversity

The Council is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not accept discrimination, victimisation or harassment. This commitment to equity and social justice is clearly stated in the adopted Equal Opportunities Policy of the Council. This states that the Council:

- Is committed to promoting equal opportunities in Halton.
- Values diversity and encourages fairness and justice.
- Wants equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation.
- Will combat discrimination and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help overcome discriminatory barriers.

The Council will work collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. It will ensure that all services are provided fairly in order to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity, and foster good relations in the course of developing our policies and delivering services.

Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. Cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate to these needs. Partners will monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and delivery.

Equality Impact Assessments will also be carried out on Council policies and services to assess how policies and services impact upon different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments highlight areas for improvement that are dealt with through an Equalities Improvement Plan.

The Council takes complaints seriously. People who feel that they have been unfairly treated have the right to use the complaints procedure established by the Council.

Performance Management

This plan runs for five years, at which point we expect it be reviewed. It is an important step, but only a step, in a much longer journey to build a better future for people in Halton. If we succeed in achieving our targets, they will translate into real improvements for local people, including:

- Longer, healthier lives.
- A better urban environment and reasons to feel pride in Halton.
- Higher standards of education and skills and the greater employment and other life chances that go with them.
- Fewer people trapped by poverty, excluded or held back through some form of deprivation or disadvantage.
- The freedom to feel safe and enjoy life in an attractive neighbourhood.
- This is why it is important to know how we are doing and what headway we are making in meeting the improvement targets we have set ourselves.

By monitoring progress closely we can identify and build on successes, provide necessary assistance or support where progress has not met expectations, and adjust our efforts and resources to adapt to changing circumstances.

The performance management framework provides a mechanism through which those responsible for service delivery can be held to account. It also provides a process highlighting areas where performance has not moved on as expected, so that necessary assistance and support can be made available.

The framework for monitoring and review is essential in making judgements as to whether progress is being made against our stated targets and provides a basis for continued improvement. The Council has spent a considerable effort in developing an inclusive approach to engagement through an innovative community engagement strategy and network arrangements.

We will regularly review activities and services, to ensure that they are addressing the priorities identified within this plan. We will allocate resources to these priority areas, and monitor their effective use in the short and longer term.

We recognise that the solutions to some of these issues will take time to implement, and involve close working with our partners if we are to see real improvements. However, we do expect to see some benefits in the short term in all areas, and where we find progress is not being made then resources will be re-allocated. The Council is revising its performance management framework that will assist in the monitoring and review process. This framework identifies the audiences involved in monitoring performance and the frequency and approach required to undertake it effectively.

This Plan highlights key objectives for each strategic theme and improvement targets by which success can be judged. The Council will report back the public each year on progress against its performance framework in its Annual Performance Plan.

Integration with Council Strategies and Plans

Delivering our priorities also means ensuring that all our strategies and plans - and the plans of other relevant organisations - dovetail together. The main strategies and plans which underpin our priorities include:

- Halton Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 - 2026
- Local Development Framework including the Core Strategy
- Integrated Equality & Diversity Policies and Corporate Equality Scheme.
- Town Centre Strategies.
- Local Transport Plan 3.
- Children & Young People's Plan.
- Sport Strategy.
- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People.
- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Carers
- Air Quality Action Plan.
- Climate Protection and Sustainable Energy Strategy.
- Municipal Waste Management Strategy.

- Hate Crime and Harassment Reduction Strategy
- Crime and Drugs Strategy.
- Housing Strategy.
- Corporate People's Plan and associated workforce strategies
- Community Engagement Strategy
- Child and Family Poverty Strategy
- Intergenerational Strategy
- Climate Change Strategy
- Volunteer Policy
- Digital Economy & Inclusion Strategy
- State of the Borough Report
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment for Health
- Local Economic Assessment
- Waste Development Plan Document

The Corporate Plan has been prepared in the context of other key local plans and strategies. It does not stand alone in isolation; it is an overarching high level strategy that is supported by a multitude of detailed strategies that deal with specific topics and coordinate the delivery of services and projects. It has been drafted to conform to the Halton Sustainable Community Strategy and in this respect this Plan has been prepared to dovetail with other key Partnership plans and strategies. Figure 2 shows this relationship, the SCS forms a central core surrounded by the specific plans that allow the Council and its partners to deliver improvements that make a real difference to the people of Halton.

The Council's Corporate Plan is linked to this whole range of other plans, strategies and reports. These fit together as a system designed to achieve progress on Halton's key strategic priorities and to deliver improvement for local people.

Figure 2: Integration between the priorities of the Sustainable Community Strategy with the Corporate Plan and other key plans and strategies.



The Halton Sustainable Community Strategy has been prepared in the context of other key local plans and strategies. It does not stand alone in isolation; it is an overarching high level strategy that is supported by a multitude of detailed strategies that deal with specific topics and coordinate the delivery of services and projects