

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 7 December 2006 2.00 p.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

Chief Executive

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

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Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
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*Please contact Lynn Cairns on 0151 471 7529 or e-mail lynn.cairns@halton.gov.uk for further information.
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 7 December 2006
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community
SUBJECT: Alley gates
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To consider the scheme for installing alley gates across the Borough, and the financial implications of maintaining them.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive Board endorse the approach to the:

- i) **management of alley gates as set out in Paragraph 4.0 below;**
- ii) **financial management of alley gates as set out in Paragraphs 5.3 and 5.4 below.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The gating of rear entries or alleys known as “Alley gating” has proved to be a very successful crime prevention measure, contributing to reducing burglaries, criminal damage, graffiti and vandalism. It has also reduced incidents of anti-social behaviour and fly tipping.

3.2 The scheme simply involves erecting a gate to block off the narrow back alleys at the rear of people’s dwellings. Each householder has a key to the gate and access for refuse collection and emergency services is guaranteed.

3.3 Halton ran a pilot scheme for alley gating of 13 gates in 2001. Its success led to many requests for alley gates across the Borough. By 2003 over 100 gates had been installed. A formal review was carried out in 2003 by Mott MacDonald on behalf of the Borough Council on the perceptions of those residents that had alley gates installed.

This showed that: -

- 95% agreed with the use of alley gating, feeling that the

introduction of gates had made them feel safer in their homes.

- 75% felt that anti-social behaviour had reduced.
- 68% felt that burglary had reduced.
- 57% felt that violent crime had reduced.
- 79% felt that vandalism had decreased.
- 77% felt that fly tipping had reduced.
- 83% felt that youth annoyance had declined.

3.4 The evidence suggests that alley gates have been highly successful. Police statistics show reduced levels of rear-entry burglaries. Currently approximately 300 gates have been erected. Whilst opportunities still exist to extend the scheme it is felt that many premises that are suitable to be alley gated have been.

4.0 **GENERAL ISSUES AND PROPOSED NEW OPERATIONAL PRACTICES**

4.1 From what started as a pilot scheme alley gates have become a major project. There is a need to review the managerial and financial arrangements for alley gates to put in place systems that ensure they are sustainable. The following operational processes are therefore proposed.

4.2 All new requests for gates should be directed to the Community Safety Team who have the strategic overview for alley gates and who will carry out risk assessments to determine if new gates are appropriate. This involves full consideration of planning issues and local consultation, in conjunction with Area Forums and ensuring that financial packages are in place to fit and maintain the gates.

4.3 It should be noted that although all previously erected gates went through the formal process of acquiring planning permission, these permissions were invariably given in the knowledge that the works could not be countenanced by the Highway Authority, as highway legislation could not permit the gating of the highway. The Clean Neighbourhood Act and the insertion of Section 8A into the Highways Act changes this position. The criteria and tests now to be applied are explained in the attached document (Appendix 1).

4.4 If new gates are to be fitted the Community Safety Team will commission the Council's Property Services Department to install them. Property Services will also monitor the maintenance of the gates and undertake any repairs.

4.5 Any other on-going issues (e.g. lost keys; each key costs £5) should be directed to the Community Safety Team, who will be the interface with the public at all times, and who will commission Property Services if work is required.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Initially alley gates were funded through the Council's Community Safety Project Budget and Government Office North-West grants. This included installation and maintenance. The total project budget for Halton Borough Council is £15,000 but this is also used to support all community safety initiatives. This budget is not enough to support the current network of gates. It also needs to be directed to other community safety initiatives. The rapid increase of gates has latterly been funded through Area Forums, but this has not included any maintenance monies.
- 5.2 It is proposed that funding for new gates continue to be funded by Area Forums through Property Services. Capital costs for new gates range from £625 to £873, including fees, depending on the size of the alley to be gated. Planning fees are £135 per application. The cost per gate is dependent on the number of gates per application.
- 5.3 All the gates currently installed have never had a maintenance budget. In the early days this was subsumed by Community Safety's Project budget. Now, however, given the number of gates and their age maintenance has become a major unbudgeted issue. Property Services estimate the maintenance cost of a gate over a 5 year period to be £565 (including fees). There are at least 300 gates in Halton. The total cost, therefore, is £169,500 over a 5 year period. Averaged out the annual cost is £34,000. There is currently no budget to meet such costs.
- 5.4 It is proposed that: -
- a) Any new gate installed should include the 5 year maintenance cost in the financial package. In other words, if an Area Forum agreed to fund installation they should also take on the maintenance responsibility.
 - b) For the maintenance of current gates a growth bid for £34,000 will be submitted as part of the 2007/08 budget to cover maintenance costs process. If this is not successful however Area Forums would have to take funding responsibility for maintenance. Area Forums should be asked to agree a commuted sum to cover repair/maintenance for a 5 year period. If there is no Area Forum money or the Area Forum decline to fund repair and maintenance the gates would have to be removed if they fell into disrepair or become a health and safety risk.
 - c) Officers continue to seek alternatives to reduce projected maintenance costs. The Pride of Place Team could undertake some basic maintenance, if trained. Similarly those under Community Service Orders might undertake basic maintenance.

Further work would need to be done to test the feasibility of such options.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 Evidence suggests that the gates are successful in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. To remove them, or allow them to fall into a state of disrepair could affect crime statistics, Government Floor targets and LAA agreements.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None associated with the project. Local consultation is always carried out before gates are fitted.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer

Gating Orders

Note:

Gating Orders were introduced by section 2 Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 which inserted a new Part 8A into the Highways Act 1980. Detailed procedures are set out in the Highways Act 1980 (Gating Orders)(England) Regulations 2006.

Who can make a gating order?

The Highway Authority

Can any kind of highway be the subject of a gating order?

The 2005 Act lists certain major roads which cannot be subject to a gating order but most minor roads (including footpaths) could be subject to a gating order.

Are there any pre—conditions to be met before a gating order can be made?

Yes. There are THREE tests which must be satisfied before a gating order can be made. The Council must be satisfied that:

1. premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway are affected by crime or anti-social behaviour;
2. the existence of the highway is facilitating the persistent commission of criminal offences or anti-social behaviour; and
3. it is in all the circumstances expedient to make the order for the purposes of reducing crime or anti-social behaviour.

The first two tests are matters of fact and require statistical evidence to satisfy them.

The circumstances referred to above include:

- the likely effect on the occupiers of premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway;
- the likely effect on other persons in the locality; and
- in the case of a through route the availability of a reasonably convenient alternative route.

Isn't the highway authority supposed to keep highways open?

Yes. This is a duty under section 130 highways Act 1980 which states: "It is the duty of the highway authority to assert and protect the rights of the public

to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority.” However, this is just one more factor to take into account in deciding whether it is expedient to make a gating order.

What does a gating order do?

A gating order restricts, to the extent stated in the order, the public right of way over the highway to which it relates.

This could include restricting access for certain periods or times of the day or at all times.

Access for occupiers of premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway cannot be restricted, nor can a gating order be made if it forms the only or principal means of access to dwellings. If it forms the only or principal access to premises used for business or recreational purposes, it cannot restrict access during the times of day when these premises are normally used.

Certain people may be specified in the order to be exempted from the restriction, such as emergency services and those with a legitimate reason for accessing any premises adjacent to the highway. In practice, this would involve the provision of keys to such people, or the opening of the gates during certain times/periods when such people would expect to use the highway.

A gating order does not necessarily involve erecting a gate or physical barrier but in practice they would be unenforceable without them.

What is the procedure for making a gating order?

Detailed procedures are set out in the 2006 Regulations. Before an order can be made occupiers adjoining and adjacent to the highway in question must be notified of the proposed gating order. A press advert (with a copy on the Council's website) must be placed. A list of statutory consultees must also be notified of the proposed order. All representations made in response to these notices must be considered by the Council. Some of the statutory consultees (if they object to the gating order) have the right to call for a public inquiry before a gating order is made. Otherwise the Council can decide if a public inquiry is appropriate. There is a right to challenge the making of a gating order in the High Court.

Gating orders –v- stopping up

Section 192B(8) Highways Act 1980

A highway in relation to which a gating order is made shall not cease to be regarded as a highway by reason of the restriction of the public right of way under the order (or by reason of any barrier authorised under this section).

In other words although a gating order restricts the use of a highway, the highway remains a highway.

This needs to be distinguished from sections 118B and 118C Highways Act 1980 which deal with the stopping up of “relevant” highways for the purposes of crime and disorder, etc. Sections 118B and 118C were inserted by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These deal with **special extinguishment orders**.

"Relevant highway" means-

- (a) any footpath, bridleway or restricted byway,
- (b) any highway which is shown in a definitive map and statement as a footpath, a bridleway, or a restricted byway, but over which the public have a right of way for vehicular and all other kinds of traffic, or
- (c) any highway which is shown in a definitive map and statement as a byway open to all traffic,

but does not include a highway that is a trunk road or a special road.

The grounds for making an order depend on whether the relevant highway crosses land occupied by a school.

For non-school premises the grounds are as respects any relevant highway for which they are the highway authority that:

- the highway is in an area designated by the Secretary of State by order for the purposes of this section;
- premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway are affected by high levels of crime;
- the existence of the highway is facilitating the persistent commission of criminal offences.
- it is expedient, for the purpose of preventing or reducing crime which would otherwise disrupt the life of the community, that the highway should be stopped up.

For school premises the grounds are that:

as respects any relevant highway for which they are the highway authority and which crosses land occupied for the purposes of a school, it is expedient, for the purpose of protecting the pupils or staff from-

- (i) violence or the threat of violence,

- (ii) harassment,
- (iii) alarm or distress arising from unlawful activity, or
- (iv) any other risk to their health or safety arising from such activity,

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 7 December 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director
Health & Community

SUBJECT: North West Homelessness Strategy 2006

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To advise the Executive Board that a Regional Homelessness Strategy has been produced by the North West Regional Housing Board for consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

- i) That the Executive Board notes and comments upon the report and agrees the response as detailed in Appendix B.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1** The document (attached at Appendix A) outlines the legislative and policy context. Statistical evidence is also presented to highlight the regional position in comparison to the position in England as a whole. This comparison provides some interesting details for consideration, for example, in 2005/06 there were 13,190 households accepted as homeless and in priority need in the North West. This equals 14% of the total acceptances in England, slightly more than the region's share of the total population (11%).
- 3.2** Homelessness acceptances are reducing in the North West at a faster rate than for England as a whole. Between 2004/05 and 2005/06 there was a reduction in the number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need. In the North West there was a 24% reduction compared to 22% in England as a whole.
- 3.3** Interesting comparisons are made in relation to the use of temporary accommodation. In the North West Local Authorities use of hostels is significantly higher at 39% than the figure of 9% for England as a whole. The use of the private rented sector (private sector leasing) is dramatically lower in the North West at 3% in comparison with 52% in England as a whole.
- 3.4** The North West Regional Housing Board advocates that prevention is better than a reactive response to homelessness. The Board believes that a Regional Homelessness Strategy should focus on

the main causes of homelessness in the North West, where local authorities and the voluntary sector may make a difference by adopting changes in policies and practices.

3.5 The strategy considers that affordability issues are a contributory factor to homelessness, however there is not a straightforward linear relationship. For instance there is little correlation between areas where homelessness has increased the most and where house prices have increased the most. However the North West Regional Housing Board recognises that the increasing affordability problem does make it more difficult for many households to find permanent accommodation.

3.6 The North West Regional Housing Board suggests that the issue of homelessness can be addressed partly by looking at the processes adopted to administer housing stock and partly by looking at the needs of groups who are vulnerable to homelessness.

The processes covered are :

- Local Authority's nomination agreements with registered social landlords;
- Local Authority's capacity to carry out their homelessness responsibilities;
- The region's use of hostels and supported accommodation;
- Making better use of the private rented sector.

The groups of people more likely to be at risk of homelessness are:

- Victims of domestic violence
- BME communities
- Refugees and asylum seekers
- Prisoners being released without a home to go to.

3.7 The strategy then proceeds to give good practice examples for each of the above mentioned process areas and client groups. For example Halton Borough Council's Nominations Agreement with Registered Social Landlords is included in the document as an example of good practice in the section on nominations.

3.8 The document concludes with a section entitled 'next steps', which lists a number of actions that the North West Regional Housing Board expects its partners in the region to pursue. Eleven themes are covered such as 'making more use of the private rented sector' and 'capacity issues'.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 This document is consistent with Government good practice and the overall prevention agenda and as such is consistent with the aims

and objectives of the Borough's Homelessness Strategy.

- 4.2 It is anticipated that work will soon start on the next Homelessness Review for the Borough, the results of which will feed into a new Homelessness Strategy for Halton. The Borough's strategy will need to show that any national or regional strategies, or 'agendas' have been considered and addressed.
- 4.3 This document asks a total of 43 consultation questions (see pages 57 & 58 Appendix A). The document has been discussed at the Cheshire and Merseyside Strategic Homelessness Fora. (Halton is affiliated to both groups currently) and the attached response at Appendix B is recommended for submission to the North West Regional Housing Board.
- 4.4 The North West Regional Housing Board have acknowledged the complexities of the issues and planning cycles of Committees and agreed that partner agencies can submit their consultation responses beyond the deadline. Glynn Newton from Government Office North West has agreed therefore to a response from Halton on 7 December 2006.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 There are no new funds available as a direct result of this strategy. Although arguably efficiency savings may be made if some of the good practice examples highlighted were put into effect.
- 5.2 The Directorate has put forward a growth proposal for next years budget to address some of these areas. Further consideration towards prevention will need to be considered in 2007.

6.0 **RISK ANALYSIS**

- 6.1 This document raises local authority capacity to deal with homelessness issues, recognising that some homelessness teams are very small. This is the situation in Halton. There are currently two Homelessness Officers and no dedicated Homelessness Prevention Officers. The real risk is that homelessness acceptances in Halton will not reduce on the same level that other local authorities have seen and that efficiency savings as a result of prevention work will not be realised.
- 6.2 Failure to address many of these areas could result in repeat homelessness applications and effective strategies will need to be in place to avoid such situations.

7.0 **EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 7.1 The Strategy document highlights the need to have effective

systems in place to ensure that BME groups have access to services as proportionally BME groups are more likely to experience homelessness.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Homelessness Strategy Executive Board 24 July 2003	Municipal Building Widnes	Terry Upton Service Development Manager Homelessness
Annual Review of Homelessness Strategy Executive Board 20 January 2005	Municipal Building Widnes	Terry Upton Service Development Manager Homelessness
North West Regional Homelessness Strategy 2006	Runcorn Town Hall	Terry Upton Service Development Manager Homelessness



North West Regional Homelessness Strategy 2006

**A Consultation Paper by the
North West Regional Housing Board**



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North West Regional Homelessness Strategy 2006

A consultation paper by the North West Regional Housing Board (August 2006)

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Introduction

1. The North West Regional Housing Board carried out an extensive public consultation exercise in early 2005 as part of the process of reviewing and updating the Regional Housing Strategy. This consultation exercise sought stakeholders' views on the region's housing priorities. Feedback from this showed continuing support for the priorities in the 2003 Regional Housing Strategy – delivering urban regeneration in the North West, providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities, delivering decent homes and helping those in housing need. The Board's approach has been that of targeting resources at the first three priorities in order to have the biggest impact which will in turn go a long way to addressing the fourth priority, housing need issues.
2. However the 2005 consultation exercise also showed widespread concern at the rise in homelessness in the region. The number of homeless households in the North West had increased by 48% in the four years up to March 2004. Since then, homelessness in the region has fallen in each quarter, primarily because of the prevention efforts of local authorities and the voluntary sector, but it remains a cause of great concern.
3. Homelessness is not just about sleeping rough. In most cases it is about vulnerable individuals and families living in temporary accommodation. There is also the phenomenon of hidden homelessness and "sofa surfers" – people staying with family or friends in often overcrowded conditions. This can have adverse knock-on effects on health, employment, and children's education and behaviour.
4. The Board decided that the best way it could address this problem of rising homelessness was to develop a Regional Homelessness Strategy promoting preventative measures and illustrating good practice.
5. The Board decision to proceed with a Regional Homelessness Strategy echoes the Government's further commitment to prevent homelessness "Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes, Changed Lives", published in March 2005, which set out the target of halving the number of households in temporary accommodation by 2010.

How you can contribute

6. You will find questions for you to consider and respond to throughout this consultation paper. The Board welcome your views on those questions, on other issues raised by this paper, or on issues not mentioned here but which you feel are relevant. We would also welcome your ideas for achievements we can highlight in the final Strategy. The questions have been summarised in Annex A for ease of reference. They are intended to help spark off discussion, and not to restrict you in responding, although it would be helpful if you could refer to the question numbers in your response. Please note that you don't need to give your views on all the questions – just refer to the ones that are most relevant for you or your organisation.
7. Please note that this Strategy does not aspire to address each and every cause of homelessness as these are many and varied. Instead, the Board aims to concentrate on the main causes of homelessness, pointing to where it and its partners can make a difference by changing policies and practices, and by showcasing examples of good practice. In responding, we would welcome your views on whether the draft Strategy has identified the right priorities and whether it is proposing feasible and effective actions to prevent homelessness. In responding, it is crucial to providing evidence to back up your points or to support or refute the Board's views.
8. The Board intend to publishing written responses to this consultation paper on their website (www.nwrhb.org.uk), and in due course to produce a consultation response document to fit alongside the final Strategy. The Board will assume that any responses received are for publication unless you clearly state otherwise.

Please send responses to :

glyn.newton@gonw.gsi.gov.uk or
alastair.bishop@gonw.gsi.gov.uk

9. If you can send your views electronically, that will help us to share them quickly among the team working on the final Strategy. However, if that's not possible, please send them to the following address anyway, they will be considered:

Glyn Newton
Government Office for the North West
City Tower
Manchester M1 4BE
0161 952 4026

10. The deadline for all responses is 17 November 2006.

Acknowledgements

11. The Board wishes to recognise the contribution from colleagues in GONW – Alastair Bishop and Glyn Newton – for their efforts in leading this work on our behalf.

Policy context

12. Local authorities have a duty to find accommodation for the homeless under the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002. Under the 1996 Act, local authorities have responsibilities to those who they have reason to believe are either homeless or threatened with homelessness. A person is homeless if he or she has no accommodation in the UK, has accommodation but cannot secure entry to it, or has accommodation but where it would be unreasonable to for him or her to continue to occupy it. A person is threatened with homelessness if he or she is likely to become homeless within 28 days.
13. If a local authority has reason to believe that a person is homeless or threatened with homelessness, it is required to make inquiries and decide whether it owes the applicant a duty to find accommodation for him or her. In each case local authority staff need to conduct assessment interviews to determine whether each applicant is actually homeless, eligible for assistance, in “priority need” and not intentionally homeless. If an applicant meets these criteria, the local authority has an immediate duty to provide temporary accommodation for him or her and for anybody who normally resides with them.
14. Local authorities owe a lesser duty to applicants who are not in priority need or who are intentionally homeless. In some circumstances, local authorities must help these applicants find temporary accommodation for long enough to find their own accommodation. They may also be under a duty to provide them with advice and assistance in finding their new accommodation.
15. Where an applicant is threatened with homelessness and meets the above criteria, local authorities have a duty to take reasonable steps to ensure that the accommodation remains available for his or her occupation.
16. The 2002 Act shifted the emphasis away from crisis management to preventing homelessness. Local authorities are required to carry out a homelessness review and then draw up a homelessness strategy which should then be periodically updated. These homelessness strategies should include measures to prevent homelessness, ensure that sufficient accommodation is available for the homeless, and to provide support services for people who may become homeless.
17. The homelessness legislation categorises certain groups of households as being in “priority need”. These are households:-
 - with dependent children
 - with pregnant women
 - with people who are vulnerable due to old age, mental illness, handicap, physical disability or other special reason
 - rendered homeless or threatened with homelessness because of a disaster such as a fire or flood.

18. In 2002 these priority need categories were extended to include:-

- children between 16 and 17
- care leavers under 21
- people who are vulnerable as a result of having been a member of the armed forces
- people who are vulnerable as a result of having been in prison or on remand
- people who are vulnerable as a result of threats of violence.

Question :

- 1 Is the national policy emphasis on homelessness prevention appropriate to the North West?
- 2 Are there other objectives which should be included in a Regional Homelessness Strategy for the North West?

Regional context

19. In 2005/06 the number of households in the North West accepted as homeless and in priority need amounted to 13,190, according to the Department of Communities and Local Government's (DCLG) national data base of homeless households. This amounted to 14% of the total of 93,980 acceptances in England, slightly more than the region's 11% share of the total population
20. However homelessness is now falling. There was a 24% reduction in the number of households accepted as homeless and in priority need in the North West between 2004/05 and 2005/06, compared with a 22% reduction in England as a whole.
21. Nearly 60% of all homeless households in the North West contained dependent children or pregnant women.
22. The DCLG data for 2005/06 also record the causes of homelessness:-

REASONS FOR HOMELESSNESS	North West	England
Parental Eviction	18%	23%
Eviction by Other Relatives	11%	15%
Non-violent Relationship Breakdown	8%	6%
Violent Relationship Breakdown	16%	13%
Termination of Tenancy	12%	13%
Other Reasons	35%	30%
Total	100%	100%

23. Nationally, the single biggest identifiable cause of homelessness was family break-up with parents evicting their grown up or teenage children, though this was rather less common in proportional terms in the North West than elsewhere.
24. The North West Regional Housing Board believes that this shows the importance of local authorities interviewing all applicants claiming that they are about to be evicted, along with their parents, preferably at their home if possible, and offering a mediation service to heal a family rift. The Board also believes that such interviews are necessary to counter the urban myth that young people can queue-jump the housing waiting list and get their own accommodation by claiming that they are about to become homeless.
25. The second most significant cause of homelessness in the North West is domestic violence, which is more prevalent in this region than in the rest of England. The Board considers domestic violence in more detail later in the Strategy.
26. However over a third of all homelessness recorded in the ODPM data is due to "other reasons". This shows that the causes of homelessness are extremely diverse and that further work is needed to identify these causes.
27. Blackburn with Darwen Borough Council, for example, carried out an exercise to examine the households that were accepted as homeless for "other reasons". Members of these households were mostly found to be suffering from medical conditions which made their current accommodation unsuitable.
28. Further insights into the nature of homelessness may be obtained from Multi-Agency Monitoring (MAM) initiatives in parts of the region. The purpose of MAM initiatives are to bring together all agencies involved with the homeless or those in housing need and to

develop common monitoring arrangements so that they can share information and get a better understanding of their client groups.

29. Shelter has developed an exploratory MAM initiative in Cheshire (including Halton and Warrington). Although it looked wider than statutory homeless households in priority need, it does afford a separate analysis of those with accommodation difficulties. MAM is discussed further in Annex B.
30. Most of those presenting themselves to Cheshire housing agencies were young and single, with only slightly more males than females. (In contrast, most of the homeless which the DCLG data recorded were families, but the MAM data picked up a variety of housing needs in addition to those who were statutorily homeless in priority need.) Other findings were that:-
 - One third had previously stayed with friends or relatives, 11% had previously stayed with their parents, 11% had slept rough, and others had previously stayed in hostels, private tenancies, prisons or young offenders institutions.
 - About a third of those recorded were on means tested benefits and nearly half of the households had incomes of less than £10,000.
 - The most significant contributory factors to their housing need were a family breakdown (26%), relationship breakdown (15%), offending (14%), alcohol problems (12%), drug abuse (11%), eviction (8%) and household friction (8%).
 - About a third had had some form of prison or probation involvement.
31. DCLG data records where homeless households are found temporary accommodation.

WHERE DO THE HOMELESS GO?		
Temporary Accommodation	North West	England
B&B	9%	5%
Hostels	39%	9%
LA / HA Stock	35%	23%
Private Leasing	3%	52%
Other	14%	11%
Total	100%	100%

32. Traditionally, North West local authorities had their own plentiful housing stock. In many areas this provided an easily accessible source of temporary accommodation. The position is beginning to change as stock has been transferred to registered social landlords and arms length management organisations. Local authorities need to reflect this change in stock management in their homelessness strategies.
33. The North West also makes considerable use of hostels to provide temporary accommodation for the homeless, nearly three times as much as the national average.
34. In contrast, the North West makes conspicuously little use of the privately rented sector as a source of temporary accommodation. The Board considers that local authorities in the region might be under-using this resource. This is discussed later in the Strategy.
35. DCLG data shows where the greatest numbers of homeless households are found and where homelessness is growing and falling.

WHERE ARE THE HOMELESS?		
Local Authorities with the Greatest Number of Homeless, 2005/06 (% change from 2004/05)		
Salford	1,376	(-15%)
Manchester	1,341	(-2%)
Wigan	1,120	(-20%)
Liverpool	847	(-26%)
Oldham	255	(-22%)
Rochdale	585	(-21%)
Bolton	556	(-24%)
Wirral	525	(-20%)
Stockport	378	(-33%)

36. The implication is that most of the homeless are found in the major population centres in the region, though it is higher than expected in Wigan.

WHERE IS HOMELESSNESS GROWING 2004/05 – 2005/06	
Carlisle	34%
Chester	31%
Ellesmere Port & Neston	23%
Salford	15%

WHERE IS HOMELESSNESS DECLINING 2004/05 – 2005/06	
Hyndburn	-75%
Tameside	-72%
Pendle	-58%
Burnley	-56%
Preston	-56%
Wyre	-55%
Blackburn	-53%
Vale Royal	-50%

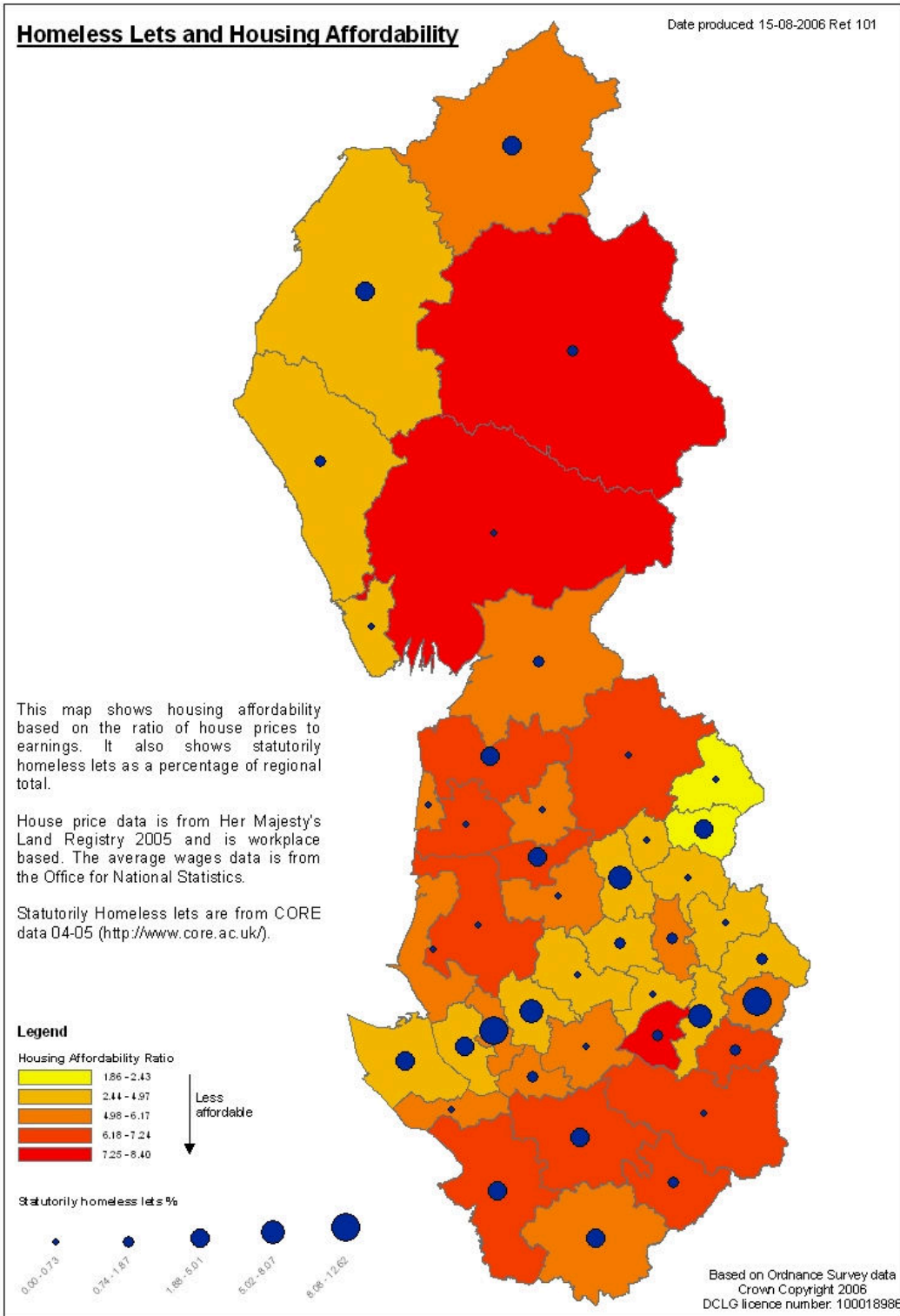
37. Apart from the effects of the floods in Carlisle, there seems to be little pattern explaining as to where homelessness is rising or falling. It seems from this data that local factors causing homelessness can change very quickly. It also shows that there is no correlation between Housing Market Renewal (HMR) and an increase in homelessness. In fact homelessness has fallen in the East Lancashire HMR authorities.

Questions:

- Does this analysis reflect your understanding of the region's homelessness issues?
- Should the analysis reflect sub regional or City region groupings of local authority areas?

The way forward

38. The Board shares the view that it is better to prevent homelessness, although unfortunately this cannot always be the case. It recognises that people can become homeless for a wide variety of reasons. Rather than try to address every single cause of homelessness, the Board believes that the Regional Homelessness Strategy should focus on the main causes of homelessness in the North West, where local authorities and the voluntary sector can make a difference by changing their policies and practices, and showcasing best practice. These issues are addressed in turn in the next sections.
39. In its 2005 Regional Housing Strategy the Board considered that the rise in house prices between 2002 and 2004 was almost certainly a contributory factor behind the rise in homelessness in the North West. However this is not a straightforward linear relationship. For example, information from the Housing Corporation (see map opposite) has found that there has been little correlation between the areas where homeless has increased most sharply and where house prices have increased the most. This suggests that there may be other immediate and complex causes of homelessness, or differences in the capacity of local authorities to deal with homelessness.
40. Nevertheless, the Board feels that the increasing affordability problem does make it more difficult for many households to find permanent accommodation. Therefore 45% of the regional housing pot is being allocated to Priority 2 of the Regional Housing Strategy, providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities.



41. A key part of homelessness prevention is making sure that households get information about the housing options and services that are available. Similarly, as rent arrears can lead to eviction, some households need access to advice about budgeting and debt management. Annex C describes the work of the Legal Services Commission in providing advice about housing and financial management.
42. Homelessness can lead to health problems. The Department of Health White paper “Our Health, Our Care, Our Say” requires joint needs assessments between local authority social services directorates and the NHS from 2006/07. Homelessness should be a specific issue for consideration in the new joint needs assessment processes. Health and social care needs should be included in local negotiations within the NHS on primary care and practice-based commissioning arrangements. These should ensure specific actions are defined for local delivery to address the needs of the homeless population and put in place arrangements for monitoring service delivery.

Questions:

5. Have you had evidence on the linkage, or lack of linkage, between increases in house prices and trends in homelessness?
6. Should the matter of affordability receive greater attention in this Strategy?



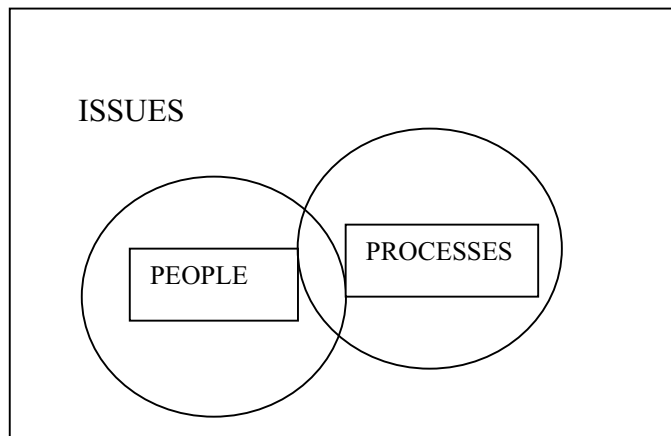
Addressing the region's issues

43. In addressing Priority 4 of the RHS, the Board suggested:

“The RHS cannot, and should not, attempt to address in detail the needs of every community and all individuals. These needs are as diverse as the region itself making it unfeasible to cover them in any detail and housing provision will often need to be linked with funding streams, support and care services that lie outside the Board's remit.”

44. Similarly the Board should not attempt to address in detail the needs of all client groups at risk of homelessness. Instead it has set about focussing on the key areas where it can make the most difference.

45. The focus of the Board can be separated into two distinct themes, People issues and Places issues. It is recognised, as with Priority 4, that there exists significant interconnectivity between these factors and that addressing one may go some way towards alleviating the problems with the others.



46. The issue of homelessness can be addressed partly by looking at the processes by which we administer our housing stock and partly by looking at the needs of groups which are vulnerable to homelessness.

47. The Process issues are:-

- Local authorities' nomination agreements with registered social landlords;
- Local authorities' capacity to carry out their homelessness responsibilities;
- The region's use of hostels and supported accommodation; and
- Making better use of the privately rented sector.

48. In addition, the Board has identified the following People issues where groups of people are at risk of homelessness:-

- Victims of domestic violence;
- Homelessness amongst the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities;
- Refugees and asylum seekers; and
- Prisoners being released without a home to go to.

49. The following sections together with the supporting annexes will address these issues in turn, offering examples of best practice and a regional direction of travel.

Process Issues

Nomination Agreements

50. Traditionally, most local authorities in the North West used to use their own housing stock to provide temporary accommodation for homeless households. Any household that became homeless could quickly be given the keys to an empty council house. However there has been a sea change in social housing provision in recent years. Virtually all new social housing stock is owned by housing associations, and an increasing volume of former local authority stock is being transferred to housing associations or arms length management organisations. Therefore local authorities will increasingly need to cooperate with housing associations to discharge their duties to find suitable accommodation for the homeless.
51. The Board recommends that local authorities draw up nomination agreements with registered social landlords so that they offer them a proportion of their stock, including households nominated because they are homeless. The DCLG's "Effective Co-operation in Tackling Homelessness: Nomination Agreements and Exclusions", written with the co-operation of the Housing Corporation, the National Housing Federation and the Local Government Association, explains the legislative foundations to nomination agreements and provides advice about how they should work.
52. The Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code expands on the statutory requirements of registered housing associations. It provides that "When requested to do so by the local authority and to such an extent as is reasonable in the circumstances, housing associations provide a proportion of their stock to local authority nominations and temporary accommodation to the homeless."
53. However, there is evidence that at least some North West local authorities are not making best use of housing association stock. Only about 10% of all social lettings in the region – i.e. in both local authority and housing association stock combined – go to homeless households. In contrast, between 20% and 30% of social lettings in London go to the homeless.
54. The Board notes that some local authorities seeking to make nomination agreements with housing associations and other registered social landlords seek ambitious targets for accepting their nominees, including homeless nominees. The Board generally supports this approach, but urges some flexibility in the operation of these agreements so that nominated households are only put in suitable accommodation. The Board does not want to encourage nominating households to unsuitable accommodation simply to meet a quota or a target in the nomination agreement.

Contents of Nomination Agreements

55. Local authorities' nomination agreements with housing associations should set out what is expected from both parties.
56. Nomination agreements should cover such issues as:-
- A nomination entitlement figure expressed as a percentage of new lets;
 - The profile of the housing association stock to be offered for local authority nominations;
 - The nominations process, eg whether the process begins with the local authority nominating an applicant to the housing association ("applicant-led"), or the housing association informing the local authority about a vacancy they have available ("vacancy-led");
 - The number of nominees to be referred for each vacancy under a vacancy-led system;
 - The respective roles of the local authority and the housing association in selecting and prioritising applicants;
 - The agreed method for identifying and counting referrals to housing associations as a nomination and for counting lettings to nominations;
 - The information about nominations and vacancies to be supplied by the respective parties;
 - Grounds under which housing associations might refuse nominations, and a dispute mechanism where a local authority and housing association disagree;
 - The agreed procedures for the acceptance and rejection of nominees;
 - Agreed timescales for each stage in the process;
 - Monitoring arrangements to see how the nomination agreement is working, recording both successful and failed nominations, and a process for reviewing the agreement so that it meets the changing needs of both parties.
57. Further advice is contained in the DCLG's "Effective Co-operation in Tackling Homelessness: Nomination Agreements and Exclusions".
58. Particular attention should be paid to outlining the sort of information which local authorities provide with their nominations for potential tenants. The main reasons for "nominations failure" are local authorities providing inaccurate or outdated information and nominating vulnerable applicants without saying how their support needs are to be met. The information on nominated applicants should include:-
- Details of long-term illnesses and health problems that require specialist housing, care or support;
 - Details of other support needs, eg vulnerability due to learning difficulties
 - Existing or previous care packages
 - Relevant history of previous anti-social behaviour that might impact on community safety
 - Nationality and immigration status

Exclusions

- 59. Whilst nomination agreements set out the basis for co-operation between local authorities and housing associations in finding accommodation for the homeless, there may be some households for whom a housing association is unable to provide a suitable letting.
- 60. The Board believes that blanket exclusions of types of potential tenants, eg not accepting tenants under a certain age, should not be used. Each nomination should be considered on its own merits. The Housing Corporation's Regulatory Code expects "efforts [to be] made to resolve any possible ineligibility" and advises that applicants should only be excluded if their "unacceptable behaviour makes them unsuitable as a tenant." The Board also recommends that local authorities should resist any insistence from housing associations that all nominees should be economically active, as this discriminates against the homeless.

Halton Borough Council's Nomination Agreement

Halton BC is drawing up a nomination agreement with Halton Housing Trust Ltd, which has taken over the Council's former stock, and other Housing Associations in the area. The agreement gives the Council the right to nominate potential tenants for all new housing association schemes in the first round of lettings and 50% thereafter. The Council will also have a right to nominate 50% of tenants for other housing association schemes. The agreement states that nominees will include homeless households as well as households drawn from the Council's housing needs register, the exact mix being left to the Council's discretion. It adds that the associations are expected to play a full role in accommodating the homeless, those in priority housing need and the vulnerable.

The agreement states that the housing associations will offer a range of property types and that the Council will take into account the suitability of the property when making a nomination.

Where a homeless nominee has a history of debts or unacceptable behaviour, a different housing association will be asked to assist. The Council will provide information on the nominee's past debt or conduct that it considers relevant.

The agreement recognises that housing associations must be free to determine who they house, but they should accept nominations in accordance with agreed published guidance. Where an association rejects a nomination it must give reasons, and if the Council considers these to be inadequate it will seek to resolve differences.

The agreement sets out procedures for nominations. When a dwelling which is eligible for nomination becomes vacant, the housing association will inform the Council which will provide three nominations in priority order within three working days. For new build schemes, nominations will be invited about two months before expected completion. If none of the three nominees accept the property, the Council will nominate three more. If none of these accept, the association may offer the property to other applicants.

Supporting tenants

61. Local authorities may be able to overcome some registered social landlords' reluctance to take vulnerable tenants by providing a support package, drawing on the resources and expertise of other agencies and the voluntary sector.

Knowsley High Priority Panel

Knowsley Council's Housing Strategy Team has set up a High Priority Assessment Panel consisting of representatives from the Supporting People team, Social Services, the Mental Health team, and Registered Social Landlords to find accommodation for vulnerable people whilst ensuring that a support package is in place.

The Panel meets monthly. All agencies can make referrals, whilst the Registered Social Landlords bring along information on vacant properties. The aim is to find accommodation for the would-be tenants and to identify their support needs to make a tenancy feasible. In its first 9 months the Panel found accommodation for half of those referred.

"Peter" is a disabled man with cerebral palsy and epilepsy requiring wheelchair accommodation. He had been in emergency accommodation for six months after his mother became unable to cope. The Panel found a property which could be adopted for a wheelchair, and "Peter" has now been re-housed.

"Susan" had been in hospital for 4 months with mental problems. Whilst there, she agreed to renounce her part of a joint tenancy she held with her husband meaning that she had nowhere to live when she was due to be discharged and so was blocking a bed for other patients. The Panel found her suitable accommodation within a month of being referred.

Debt

62. Registered social landlords are wary of taking tenants who have a history of rent arrears. However they can also take on some of the responsibility for teaching tenants how to better manage their budgets. For example, Calico, which has taken over Burnley Council's former housing stock, requires all new tenants to have an interview with an income adviser. They will offer another interview if tenants get into arrears

Anti-social behaviour

63. Anti-social behaviour can put tenants on the road to homelessness. The Government is committed to tackling anti-social behaviour, but registered social landlord tenants who perpetuate anti-social behaviour risk eviction. Similarly, registered social landlords may be reluctant to offer new tenancies to households with a history of anti-social behaviour.
64. Local authorities should see if there are ways of supporting perpetrators of anti-social behaviour so that they are helped to change their behaviour, become acceptable tenants and cease to be at risk of homelessness.

Tenancy Support Plus Service

Manchester City Council's Tenancy Support Plus Team provides support for homeless families who often have complex needs and have been involved in anti-social behaviour. The service works intensively with families and develops a good working relationship. It challenges anti-social behaviour with the aim of breaking its cycle and enabling them to live in their new home and in their neighbourhood. It discusses with families what being a good neighbour means, ensures that they understand the consequences of anti-social behaviour, tells them the impact anti-social behaviour has on them as a family, and what such behaviour has on the community.

Families are assisted with basic parenting skills, finance and budgeting, training and employability. The Team encourages parents to attend local parenting classes. Particular emphasis is placed on good school attendance, as school is one of the most protective environments for young people.

The Team works intensively with families to identify the root causes of anti-social behaviour, and in doing so help them to help them accept support. A key element is building a family's confidence and understanding so that they recognise the need to change their behaviour. Once the root cause has been recognised, the Team makes referrals for specialist help with such issues as drug and drink misuse, mental health, parenting and training. The Team also identifies activities for the children such as football clubs, dance classes and youth clubs.

The families that have been supported have gone on to live successfully in their new homes and have become part of the community. Some parents have found employment. They have not become involved in further acts of anti-social behaviour.

65. The Board believes that voluntary sector, working in partnership with local authorities, can play an important role in turning around anti-social behaviour.

The Inclusion Project, Rochdale

Shelter and Rochdale Council have developed the Inclusion Project to pilot an approach to tackling anti-social behaviour. It works with households in their own homes to identify and deal with the causes of anti-social behaviour and to build on the skills they need to resolve these problems. Ultimately the Inclusion Project aims to prevent the risk of eviction and to provide a route back to settled housing.

The Project works with households who are homeless or are at risk of becoming homeless due to their behaviour. It works on the basis that anti-social behaviour is often the result of unmet support needs.

Referrals come from a variety of sources, such as housing services, social services, housing associations, school nurses, health visitors and drug and alcohol workers. All those referred had been warned about their anti-social behaviour, nearly half had received written warnings and nearly one-third were under threat of eviction. The commonest problems were noise, rowdy children, neighbour disputes, vandalism, untidy gardens, rubbish hoarding, and ill-behaved visitors.

After an initial assessment, a multi-agency support plan is drawn up and the household is required to comply with it. The support plan may include:-

- Working with children to address their behaviour and improve school attendance;
- Advice on parenting skills;
- Support in developing self-confidence and social skills;
- Advice on benefits, money management and debt repayment;
- Support on health issues, particularly depression;
- Practical assistance on tidying up their property.

The Project is overseen by a multi-agency steering group including the housing department, education and social services and Registered Social Landlords.

The main source of funding is Supporting People, with additional funding coming from the Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Children's Fund, Shelter and the DCLG's Housing and Homelessness Directorate.

In the first two years, all action against adults for anti-social behaviour had ceased, anti-social behaviour amongst children had been drastically reduced, and none of the households were now at risk of eviction and homelessness.

66. Often the main causes of complaint about bad tenants is their failure to control their children's behaviour, usually due to bad parenting skills but sometimes compounded by substance misuse or drink or drug addiction. Sometimes rowdy households are headed by a lone parent in need of support. The Board believes that local authorities and the voluntary should work together to identify the root cause of poor parenting, provide the support that is needed, improve children's behaviour and school attendance, remove the risk of eviction, and improve the children's life chances.

NCH Foundations Project, Manchester

NCH Foundations is a project set up to offer support to families experiencing difficulties with their tenancies. It will help families involved in anti-social behaviour and who are at risk of eviction. It is managed by NCH, an independent children's charity, in partnership with Manchester City Council. It provides an outreach service for 23 families and a residential unit for up to four families.

Families who are referred to the project are asked to enter into a commitment with a support worker, with whom they work on a one-to-one basis, to identify the reasons why they have been referred, to develop skills in parenting, create more stable family lives, and to promote more consistent school attendance. The support worker will liaise with other agencies to provide a support package.

The aim is to help parents better cope with family responsibilities, develop a package of support and sanctions to help improve their children's behaviour, and remove the risk of eviction.

Questions:

7. Do paragraphs 49-53 present an accurate picture of nomination arrangements in the region?
8. Do paragraphs 54-56 capture the key ingredients of robust but fair nomination agreements?
9. Are the steps proposed to address nomination failures realistic? Are there any issues around sharing personal data?
10. Are there any other examples of support for problematic tenants who might be included in the Strategy?



Local authority capacity

67. The North West Regional Housing Board believes that local authorities should be sufficiently resourced to carry out their responsibilities to the homeless. However some of the region's local authority homelessness units are very small.
68. The Board recognises that there have been changes in the way in the region's local authorities have had to tackle homelessness. When they owned large amounts of housing stock themselves, it was a relatively easy task to give the key of an empty council property to any family presenting themselves as homeless. However now that most local authority stock has now been transferred, or is in the course of being transferred, to registered social landlords, local authorities' role has changed from one of providing accommodation themselves to one of finding accommodation with other providers.
69. The Board recognises that tackling homelessness can be resource-intensive. It shares the DCLG's view that homeless applicants should be interviewed first to see whether they are indeed in priority need for temporary accommodation, or whether another remedy is more applicable. It also considers that some form of mediation should be offered when the immediate cause of homelessness is family or relationship breakdown. In addition, the Board also considers that additional outreach workers may be needed to offer an effective homelessness service to BME households and to victims of domestic violence. Dedicated staff may also be needed to liaise with private landlords if the local authority wishes to make use of the privately rented sector and also to liaise with any local prisons to prevent ex-offenders becoming homeless, as discussed elsewhere in this Strategy.
70. The Board believes that employing temporary staff in homelessness units is a false economy. Inexperienced staff may be more prone to accept households with housing problems as being homeless and in priority need than may be the case.

Local Authority Homelessness Fora

71. The Board believes that local authorities can help themselves by collaborative working. Most local authorities in the North West are now in sub-regional homelessness fora, often involving other organisations with an involvement with the homeless. They can discuss homelessness issues in the area and swap best practice.
72. The homelessness fora also offer a method of cascading training to its members. Local authorities who have sent officers on a training course or to a conference can provide feedback to their colleagues from other authorities and thereby help each other reduce the cost of training.

Cumbria Homeless Forum

The Cumbrian local authorities have set up the Homelessness Forum to discuss homelessness issues in the county. The Forum includes statutory and voluntary homelessness service providers or those with an involvement in homelessness prevention such as registered social landlords, Primary Care Trusts, the Citizens Advice Bureau, the Youth Offending Service, the Prison Service and Shelter. The Forum has produced the Cumbria Homelessness Strategy and monitors its implementation.

The Forum has two sub-groups.

The Homelessness Strategy Group aims to improve homeless services in the county by developing policies and protocols between the relevant agencies and to progress implementation of the Homelessness Strategy.

The Front Line Officers Group consists of homelessness officers from each local authority and is involved in sharing best practice and ensuring consistency in service provision for homeless applicants. The group is involved in producing advice booklets, common service standards and monitoring customer feedback

Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's)

73. ODPM has introduced BPVI's to measure local authority performance in addressing and reducing homelessness and to show that Ministers take homelessness prevention seriously. The BPVI's for 2005/06 are set out in Annex D.
74. The Board believes that local authorities in the region's sub-regional homelessness fora can use this data to compare their own performance and to tease out good practice lessons.

Regional Champions

75. ODPM has appointed a number of local authorities with a good record of tackling homelessness as regional champions. In the North West the regional champion for 2006/07 is Blackpool Borough Council. Manchester and Burnley have previously been regional champions.
76. Regional champions are asked to visit other local authorities, not in their immediate area to preserve objectivity, to offer peer review and act as a critical friend. They are also asked to promote networks and good practice in their own areas.

User Feedback

77. The Board believes that feedback from homelessness service users can often help to shape and improve the services that local authorities and registered social landlords can offer. The problem, however, is that some service users are sometimes difficult to reach. Nevertheless, local authorities have started to establish innovative ways of involving the homeless.

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations

In February 2006 the Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations, in partnership with the 10 Greater Manchester Supporting People teams, held a consultation event for service users. The event included live theatre and a video box to encourage service users to give their opinion on the Supporting People programme and homelessness services. A DVD was produced of the event.

Oldham Service User Strategy

In Oldham, joint working between the Housing Strategy and Supporting People teams produced a Service User Consultation and Involvement Strategy. The action plan for implementing this Strategy includes a 'speak out' event, consultation with specific groups of service users, documenting experiences of homelessness and surveys of service users. Following on from this, a number of service users expressed an interest in becoming more involved in shaping future services and the Council is now arranging for them to meet.

Questions:

11. Do paragraphs 66-69 present an accurate picture of local authority capacity issues in the region?
12. Are there any other steps that might be taken to improve local authorities' capacity to deal with homelessness?
13. Is there scope for building on the work of sub-regional fora of local authorities in tackling homelessness?
14. Is there scope for building on the work of regional champions?

Hostels and Supported Accommodation

78. The North West makes extensive use of hostels to provide temporary accommodation for the homeless, more than three times the national average. The Regional Housing Board believes that, as well as providing accommodation, hostels should also provide access to lifeskills and / or vocational training (either themselves or in partnership with another agency) so that their clients can move towards independent living. The Board also believes that there is a need for more “move on” accommodation, either in the privately rented sector or provided by registered social landlords, to reduce the amount of time people spend in hostels.
79. The Board therefore welcomes the work of Homeless Link, an umbrella organisation for frontline homeless agencies, to assist hostel providers to develop and increase the range of services that they deliver. The aim of the programme is to transform hostels to places where people can address the reasons for being homeless and to develop the skills and confidence necessary to move on with their lives.
80. Homeless Link’s role is to increase opportunities for people living in hostels by providing access to education, training and employment, promoting service user involvement, reducing the number of abandonments and evictions, and improving access to suitable “move on” accommodation. Homeless Link aims to achieve these outcomes through developing partnerships, providing networking opportunities for hostel providers, disseminating good practice and promoting staff training.

Victoria House

Victoria House is a 38 bed supported accommodation project for single homeless in Manchester which aims to change people’s lives through training and support and providing a clear pathway from homelessness to independence.

All service users have to sign a contract, which changes depending upon their needs, and to engage in a wide range of activities. These include a one-week personal development course, arts, IT, gardening, drama groups and a wide variety of taster courses run by experienced tutors. Achievements on these courses are recognised by prize-giving days which are open to the wider community. There is also access to courses run by local colleges.

Staff at Victoria House encourage residents to address the issues that led to their homelessness and can offer access to a wide range of services such as health, alcohol and drugs counselling and debt management. They aim to develop residents’ skills and confidence to enable them to move on and live independently. They also aim to empower residents to make decisions and choices affecting their own lives.

Victoria House also offers a resettlement and floating support service to its residents as they make the transition to independent living.

The Foyers Project

The London-based Foyers Federation accredits hostels for young single homeless such as the Access Housing Association's Foyers Hostel in Chester which offers an ethos of living and learning. Young people up to the age of 25 are referred by Social Service, Probation, the Housing Department and other hostels. There are also self referrals.

The key feature of Foyers is a licence agreement between the client and the hostel. The hostel will provide accommodation and training, the client has to draw up an action plan for personal development and remain drink and drug-free on the premises. Action plan objectives might include building relationships with one's family or cutting down on drink. The action plan is revisited monthly and its objectives changed according to the progress that has been made.

Training can cover cooking, cleaning, washing, housing advice, budgeting and communication skills. There is also training by an external provider which can lead to a City & Guilds qualification.

Not everyone is ready to undertake a licence agreement. Youngsters who are not yet ready to make a commitment are found another hostel with suitable support needs. Clients who breach their licence agreement are told to leave, but are found a place to stay beforehand.

The aim of the Foyers project is to make clients capable of running their own homes. The Chester Foyer has nomination agreements with two local registered social landlords, though Foyer staff usually find move on accommodation through personal contacts rather than formal arrangements. The Foyer will also continue to provide support for clients for 6 months after they leave, arranging housing benefit, fixing them up with utilities and finding furniture.

81. The Board looks to hostels to work with their clients to develop lifeskills, tackle the causes of homelessness such as drink or drugs, seek vocational training and build up their self esteem to enable them to live independently.
82. The Board also welcomes the DCLG's £90m Hostel Capital Improvement Programme which, alongside the development of staff and services, aims to change the physical environment of hostels so that they become "places of change". In the North West this programme is currently financing large scale investment in both Liverpool and Blackburn to build hostels fit for the 21st century.

Day Centres

83. Day centres provide a valuable service for the homeless as they are often the first organisation with which homeless people come into contact. They provide an important link into other services such as temporary accommodation and healthcare. They provide a vital service for rough sleepers to address their basic needs. Day centre staff are also able to deal with enquiries which can prevent or minimise homelessness, such as assisting with people's benefits, housing problems and legal issues, in a non-threatening environment.
84. Day centres are able to offer an individual service to their users and will have the knowledge to assist them finding suitable accommodation depending on their needs. Staff are able to spend time with often challenging clients, help them to address their issues at their own pace and enable them to move on with their lives.
85. Day centres provide access to other services such as health, drugs and alcohol which can act as a catalyst for people to move away from homeless and access mainstream provision. Many day centres also provide activities which can help to build self esteem, confidence and skills, as well as access to education and training to enable people to progress their lives.

The Booth Centre

The Booth Centre in Manchester is visited by over 100 people a week. It provides advice and support for people who are sleeping rough or in temporary accommodation. It also helps those in accommodation to keep it through tenancy support. A health link worker registers people with a local GP. Local authority outreach workers run advice sessions at the Centre. Special provision is made to help street drinkers address their alcohol problems. The Centre employs a drug and mental health dual diagnosis worker to provide extra help for people with very complex problems, enabling them to access treatment services. A full programme of activities including education, training, creative arts, sports and outdoor activities helps people build up their skills and self esteem and to work for nationally recognised qualifications. The Centre also runs a supported employment project to help people get back into work.

Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations

Staff working in hostels and day centres work at the cutting edge of need and deprivation, but many do not possess formal health and social care training.

The Greater Manchester Centre for Voluntary Organisations (GNCVO) has provided training for over 600 members of staff within 200 different organisations involved in providing housing and support to vulnerable people in the North West. It is also developing six Open College Network accredited training courses covering the core supporting people competencies. This is a unique initiative and could have a real impact on the quality of supported accommodation within the North West.

Emmaus

86. Emmaus is a worldwide secular movement that has been running Communities offering a holistic long-term solution to homelessness since the 1950's. They provide a home and work in a supportive environment. There are currently over 400 Communities world-wide. There are 13 in the UK, including two in the North West, at Mossley and Bolton. Others are proposed at Preston, Salford, Burnley, Carlisle and Merseyside.
87. Emmaus Companions (as Community residents are known) sign off benefits and work full time collecting, refurbishing and re-selling furniture and household goods donated by the public. For this they receive a weekly allowance together with a sum which is put aside for when they move on.
88. Emmaus helps people to regain a sense of purpose and self-worth through work rather than relying on hand-outs. Training is available for those wishing to learn new skills. This could include life skills such as literacy or computer skills, or work-related activities like driving or woodwork.
89. Once established, Emmaus Communities are self-sustaining. Any surplus generated by the business is directed too support other charities and people in need. They provide a useful service to the wider community as a recycling service and as a source of affordable furniture for households on low incomes.
90. There is no limit on how long people can stay within an Emmaus Community. Some will stay for only as long as it takes to get back on their feet, whilst for others it will be a long-term home. Companions are required to live by a few basic rules. No drink, drugs or violence is allowed within the Community, all are expected to participate in Community, and all are expected to work to the best of their ability.



Questions:

15. Are there any practical lessons in providing lifeskills and vocational training which could be included in the Strategy?
16. What can be done to encourage the provision of “move on” accommodation?
17. Are there any other recommendations that could be included in the Strategy to enable hostel residents to achieve independence?

Privately rented sector

90. The North West makes very little use of the privately rented sector to accommodate homeless households. This may be a legacy of the days when local authorities had their own housing stock in which to accommodate the homeless, or to an historic unease about the use of this sector.
91. The Board recognises that the North West contains relative large quantities of privately rented stock, especially in some of the older urban areas where homelessness is concentrated. For example, in 2001, the Manchester / Salford Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder had 16.5% of its stock in the privately rented sector, nearly twice the national average. Most of the privately rented sector is owned by small landlords. Nearly 73% of the stock is run as a sideline by people with other jobs, 17% is run by business landlords, and 10% is owned by churches, charities and other organisations.
91. The Regional Housing Board considers that the privately rented sector may be an under-used resource, at least in some parts of the North West. The Board recognises that the capability of the privately rented sector to accommodate the homeless will depend upon its size and upon rent levels. In some parts of the region, especially where the privately rented sector is small, rental levels may be above housing benefit levels. However in other parts of the region where the sector is bigger and rents are not as expensive, there may be more scope for accommodating homeless households.
92. The Board considers that the privately rented sector may be particularly useful in accommodating large homeless households where social landlords may not have suitable properties.

Rent Deposit Schemes

93. Many local authorities already have rent deposit schemes to help homeless households access privately rented accommodation. These are designed to pay the rent deposits frequently demanded by landlords before they are prepared to let property to new tenants, and which homeless households might be unable to afford.

Chester Rent Deposit Scheme

Chester and District Housing Trust, in conjunction with Chester City Council, operates a rent deposit scheme for rough sleepers and for statutory homeless households. The aim is to increase the use of privately rented properties and to reduce dependence upon bed and breakfast.

The scheme provides upfront cash deposits to landlords for households who would otherwise be unable to provide this deposit from their own pockets. Rent deposits are provided before the clients move in, up to a maximum of £500 except where this has been agreed in advance. The Trust also assesses the support needs of the household when the tenancy commences and arranges for any such support to be delivered.

The Trust will help applicants to identify potential landlords and obtain a tenancy. At the end of the tenancy the Trust asks for the rent deposit to be returned and takes action to recover any outstanding money.

The Trust advertises the scheme in the local media and has posters and leaflets available at service providers' premises. It accepts referrals from the Council and other agencies providing support for the homeless, reports back to the referring body, and gives a reason for any non-acceptance.

94. The Board endorses the development of rent deposit schemes. It considers that these schemes offer private landlords the security which they would normally expect from non-homeless tenants. It considers the cost of providing a rent deposit well worth the savings from otherwise having to provide bed and breakfast or other forms of accommodation, even if not all of the deposit is recovered.

Lancashire Probation Service Rent Bond Scheme

The Lancashire Probation Service has set up a rent bond scheme aimed at helping high risk offenders and those difficult to place find a home of their own. The scheme was originally piloted in East Lancashire. The Service currently has sufficient funding for 8 people.

The Service will help ex-offenders find a landlord who is willing to offer a tenancy. The Service then meets the landlord, explains the terms of the scheme, takes an inventory, and offers a sum of up to £250 should the ex-offender damage or destroy the property. The Service does not provide cash upfront and only parts with money if the landlord incurs a loss.

The ex-offender then pays the Service either £5 or £10 a week, depending on whether or not he/she is employed, until this accumulates to £250. The money will then be returned to the ex-offender so that he/she can use this as a future bond. The agreement with the landlord will then transfer to the ex-offender and the Service ceases to have any involvement. The Service will then offer the scheme to another offender.

Landlords

95. The Board believes that local authorities can have an important role in demonstrating to private landlords that homeless households are not necessarily bad tenants. They can also assure landlords that support packages can be put in place for tenants where necessary.

Letwise

Letwise is an initiative set up by Manchester City Council designed to help families, and in some instances singles and couples, obtain accommodation in the privately rented sector. It is also designed to assist landlords and letting agents who might be deterred from letting accommodation to people on low income because of their inability to pay a deposit in advance.

To qualify, applicants must either receive Housing Benefit or earn less than £183 a week (or £200 for a couple).

Once a prospective landlord and tenant have agreed a potential viewing, the Letwise service will advise on the rent that can be achieved, whether the property is in a decent state of repair, and whether it meets applicable fire and health and safety standards.

Letwise can then help to provide a cash deposit upfront or a bond against damage to the property during the course of the tenancy. It will also assist in establishing rent payments and provide a support package throughout the tenancy.

At the end of the tenancy all parties will meet at the property and inspect its condition and sign off the inventory. If the landlord can show that there has been damage he/she can submit a claim for compensation subject to the cash limits agreed

Improving the Private Sector

96. The Regional Housing Board considers that recent innovations in the management of the privately rented stock can improve the supply of accommodation available to the homeless or at risk of homelessness.
97. Many local authorities have already started voluntary accreditation schemes with private landlords, setting out a code of standards for the physical condition of the property and its management. Although the schemes are voluntary, landlords benefit from the status of being publicly identified as a good landlord and from being distanced from incompetent or unscrupulous landlords. Local authorities can help accredited landlords with promises of advice about council services, fast-track access to the Housing Benefit Department, information on housing management and training, access to grants and loans to bring properties up to the standards set out in the codes, advice on how to tackle anti-social behaviour, and access to rent deposit or rent guarantee schemes operated by the Council.
98. The Board believes that an efficient and high quality privately rented sector is in everyone's interest. It considers that successful accreditation schemes can increase the supply of good quality accommodation to the benefit of both existing and potential new tenants.
99. New private sector licensing provisions in the Housing Act 2004 came into force in April 2006. The Board believes that these can further help to drive up the quality and availability of privately rented accommodation.
100. The Act has introduced selective statutory licensing of privately rented housing in areas of low demand or where there is a significant and persistent problem of anti-social behaviour. This is designed to tackle the phenomenon of inexperienced and unscrupulous landlords buying cheap properties in these areas, carrying out little or no maintenance work, installing poor quality tenants on housing benefit who engage in anti-social behaviour, help to drive other people out of these areas and further add to the problems of abandonment. Managing a rented dwelling in these areas without a licence and without a reasonable excuse will be a criminal offence. Registered social landlords will be exempt from the scheme.
101. The Board sees opportunities for local authorities to coordinate the licensing of privately rented accommodation in these areas with their overall housing strategies and their approach to dealing with homelessness, empty properties and anti-social behaviour.

102. The Act has introduced Interim and Final Management Orders which enable local authorities to take over responsibility for empty properties, carrying out repairs and installing new tenants. The Board considers that these Orders have the potential to open up long-standing empty properties to homeless households.

103. The Act has also introduced new licensing arrangements for Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMOs). The Board considers that these new licensing arrangements can raise the standard of accommodation available to the region's most vulnerable households.

Cheshire Landlord Links

The Cheshire local authorities submitted a successful innovation bid to the ODPM's Homelessness Innovation fund to reduce homelessness by using the private sector and meet their 2001 target for reducing the use of temporary accommodation.

The aim is to employ three Private Sector Liaison Officers to work across the six Cheshire districts, whose role will be to maximise the use of the private rented sector to provide settled accommodation and to prevent homelessness arising due to the termination of tenancies in the private sector.

The role of the Private Sector Liaison Officers will be to:-

- Encourage private landlords to take homeless referrals,
- Redefine the way in which both private landlords and letting agents view housing benefit tenants,
- Encourage landlords to give extended assured shorthold tenancies (preferably 6 months) as a means of either preventing homelessness or providing a settled home for someone who has been accepted as homeless,
- Encourage private landlords to contact the local homelessness team prior to terminating a tenancy,
- Provide mediation in disputes between landlords and tenants,
- Provide an advice service to private landlords and tenants on duties and responsibilities and best practice,
- Liaise with the Housing Benefit service,
- Refer tenants to floating support services to prevent the breakdown of tenancies,
- Link potential tenants with rent deposit schemes, and develop schemes where none exist, and
- Work with Housing Benefit sections to use discretionary housing payments to prevent homelessness.

Questions:

18. Can you provide details of the benefits and difficulties of operating a rent deposit scheme?
19. What other steps can local authorities and registered social landlords take to make more use of the privately rented sector?
20. How can North West local authorities disseminate lessons learned from implementing the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 to bring rented property back into use?

People Issues

Domestic violence

104. Domestic violence accounts for 25% of all recorded violent crime. Domestic violence is not just something that happens to women; up to 10% of violence happens against men. Nevertheless, a woman is 9 times more likely to be attacked in the home than on the street, and on average, a woman is likely to experience 35 physical assaults before seeking help. Local authorities have a statutory duty to work in partnership with the police and other agencies to reduce crime and disorder. They also have a responsibility to find accommodation for those made homeless as a result of domestic violence. This accounts for 16% of all homeless in the North West, slightly more than the national picture.

Information

105. The North West Regional Housing Board believes that local authorities should provide easily accessible information about the availability of accommodation for those suffering or threatened with domestic violence. This information should be available not only at Council housing offices but also at other places where victims normally go, such as libraries and GP surgeries. This information should also be available in BME languages at places where potential BME victims of domestic violence normally go.

Refuges

106. The Board believes that local authorities and housing providers should work together across administrative boundaries, perhaps in the existing sub-regional Homelessness Fora, to assess the need for women's refuges and to ensure adequate provision. The Board believes that the advantage of the sub-regional approach is that it enables victims of domestic violence to move away from the immediate vicinity of their home, and this may reduce the risk of intimidation from former partners. In the longer term, choice-based lettings schemes will allow victims to move away if they want to.
107. The Board urges local authorities and registered social landlords to adopt a sympathetic approach to applications for re-housing from victims of domestic violence. Shelter reports that it is not uncommon for victims to be refused a tenancy because of arrears, outstanding repairs bills or bad behaviour attributable to the former partner.

Sanctuaries

108. The Board also supports the move towards sanctuary schemes, allowing victims to remain in their homes if they wish, rather than being forced to move. Forced moves can disrupt children’s education, employment and family networks, especially if victims are forced to move on numerous occasions. Apart from the social benefits, the cost of keeping victims and their families in their homes can be less costly than the provision of emergency accommodation.
109. Key features of the sanctuary scheme include:-
- It provides additional security such as extra locks and lighting, enabling victims of domestic violence to remain in their homes if they wish;
 - It only works if the violent partner no longer lives with the victim;
 - Arrangements are tailored to meet the needs of the individuals concerned;
 - It is voluntary and available to all tenures;
 - It should operate in conjunction with the police and support services;
 - The fire service should also be involved to prevent building fire traps.
110. As well as changing or installing additional locks on the external doors and windows and possibly bars on the windows, sanctuary schemes often include a safe room, generally the master bedroom. The door is replaced with a solid core door, revised to open outwards, the frame is reinforced, locks are fitted at the top and bottom of the door, strong hinges and bolts are fitted and a door viewer is installed. A phone is installed so that the victim can call the police. Fire safety equipment is provided.
111. It is important that security work is installed quickly once victims asks for help or are referred by another agency, or else they may move.
112. Funding for sanctuary schemes can come from a variety of sources. It can come from the local authorities’ homelessness prevention funds and justified on the “invest to save” approach in that it avoids the cost of finding alternative temporary accommodation. It could be funded through the local authorities’ Private Sector Renewal Strategies. Alternatively, it could be funded by the victim’s landlord as all social landlords have a duty of care to their tenants. Providing a sanctuary is a clear example of keeping tenants safe in dangerous circumstances. However the Board believes that means-testing may deter victims who need help from asking for it.

The Manchester Sanctuary Scheme

Between January and March 2006, Manchester City Council ran a pilot sanctuary scheme in the ten central wards for those likely to become homeless as a result of domestic violence. It was run by the Council’s Domestic Violence Outreach Team, part of its Homelessness Service, in conjunction with “Safe”, a provider of security installations. The police, fire service, health and safety and Women’s Aid are also consulted. Where the property is rented, the landlord’s permission is needed to install the security devices.

The scheme has had its successes. One service user said “The scheme has changed my life. I can now freely move around the house and I can now sleep at night”.

However not all referrals have been acted upon. One case was not pursued as it was decided that the internal walls were so thin that it would be pointless installing a new secure door when the partner, who had a history of using weapons, could break through the walls.

113. However the Board recognises that a secure room on its own may not always be the best approach in all circumstances. Sometimes it might be more appropriate to make the whole property secure.

Rochdale Safer Homes Project

Rochdale has a high incidence of domestic violence. In 2005 it ran a short feasibility study of providing tailored packages of security measures to those fleeing domestic violence. This enabled victims to remain in their homes should they wish to do so. The scheme proved a success. Not only did it improve the confidence of domestic violence victims, but installing 18 packages of security measures saved the Council over £160,000 when measured against the costs that would have been incurred in providing alternative accommodation.

Clients can be identified by either the Council's homelessness department or another referring agency. The homelessness team will then organise a property inspection and organise the works at a time which is agreed with the client. The council will also get the landlord's permission when this is required. The work is done by staff who have been trained in dealing with victims of domestic violence and vulnerable adults. A follow-up inspection is then undertaken to check that the added security has worked. Where additional support is needed, the Council will put the victim in touch with the relevant agency.

A feature of the scheme is that it aims to make the whole property secure, not just one room within it. Sometimes the security work might appear to be modest, eg cutting down a hedge to assure a victim that her former partner was not spying on the property.

114. The Board believes that sanctuary schemes should operate as part of a package in conjunction with Supporting People and the police and probation services. It also believes that if victims of domestic violence still feel insecure and ask to be rehoused elsewhere, they should not be refused on the grounds that they have already been provided with a sanctuary.

Questions:

21. Can sub-regional homelessness fora assess the need for refuges in their area for victims of domestic violence?
22. Do you have other examples of sanctuary schemes working in the North West, and are there any practical lessons that can be learned from them?

Homelessness amongst the Black and Minority Ethnic communities

115. Nationally, households amongst the Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) communities are about three or four times more likely to figure amongst the homeless than their share of the overall population. This happens in all regions. In the North West, the 2001 Census showed that non-white households accounted for 15% of all households accepted as homeless, but accounted for only 4% of the total population.
116. Homelessness data may actually under-estimate the scale of the BME homelessness problem. Amongst the ethnic minority populations, those of Black African or Caribbean origins are twice as likely to be accepted as homeless as those of Indian, Pakistani or Bangladeshi origins, although the Asian population is bigger than the Black population.
117. There is evidence that hidden homelessness is a particularly significant problem amongst the younger BMEs, who may seek accommodation from extended family members or friends rather than present themselves as homeless or seek housing advice from the local authority. For example, research carried out for the Oldham / Rochdale Housing Market Renewal Pathfinder found that 6% of the households within the Pathfinder were overcrowded, compared to 1% outside, but this rose to 26% for the Pakistani community and 44% for the Bangladeshi community.
118. Local authorities are carrying out housing needs assessments to help in the preparation of new development plans, the Local Development Frameworks. The North West Regional Housing Board recommends that local authorities work with the voluntary sector and BME registered social landlords to assess the extent of overcrowding in BME communities.

Advice on housing

119. As some homeless BME households may be reluctant to come forward and present themselves as homeless, the Regional Housing Board considers that local authorities and housing providers should be pro-active and innovative in getting information on housing entitlements and housing services to them. There is a statutory duty under race relations legislation to make sure that services are available to all.
120. One means of achieving this objective might be for local authorities and their partners to provide information on housing, in English and other languages, in accessible venues where members of the BME communities go during their daily lives. These might include GP surgeries, health centres, Job Centres, public libraries, post offices, local authority or registered social landlord one-stop shops, Age Concern Luncheon Clubs, youth services and places of worship. They should consider using different agencies to target different groups, eg targeting families through places of worship and targeting single homeless through the youth service. They should also consider ways of using the voluntary sector to convey housing information to BME groups as an integral part of their own in-house services to the BME community. These would normally include advice on homelessness, housing rights, debt counselling and welfare benefits. The Regional Housing Board also recommends that local authorities monitor the effectiveness of these advice initiatives.
121. Information should also be provided to help potential victims of domestic violence.

CDS Housing Association – Tenancy Support

The CDS Housing Association analysed their housing turn-over and found that tenancy failure was particularly high amongst refugees. They responded by developing a targeted support service, funded by an Innovation Good Practice grant.

The service ensured that all new refugee tenants are supported at the start of their tenancy by being given help in setting up payments, benefits, utilities and furniture. For some tenants this help at the start of the tenancy was all that they needed. Others, such as those with health problems or mental health issues, require continuing support and involving other agencies and specialist help

Staffing

122. The Regional Housing Board considers that it is not enough to rely on written advice on housing issues for members of the BME communities. There is no substitute for face-to-face contact. The Board recognises that this has resource implications for many local authorities, but considers that adequate investment in community development is needed to prevent both homelessness and hidden homelessness in BME communities.
123. Local authorities should ensure that they have enough bi-lingual staff drawn from the BME population on their front line services so that inquiries from BME residents can be answered in their own language.
124. Local authorities should also consider employing bi-lingual outreach staff to make contact with BME communities and provide help and information on housing issues. This outreach work should be mainstreamed rather than seen as a short-term add-on. BME outreach work should not be left to one individual on a short-term contract.
125. If local authorities do not have in-house staff that are able to speak the languages of homeless BME households, they should consider using telephone interpreting services or employing interpreters when required. Front line staff should have clear guidance on when to use these services.

“Living in Rochdale in 2011” – A Housing Strategy for Rochdale’s Asian Communities

Rochdale Council and the Ashiana Housing Association have produced a strategy to eliminate housing disadvantage in Rochdale’s Asian communities by the time of the 2011 census.

Its objectives are to:-

- Identify the housing needs in Rochdale’s Asian communities
- Take action to meet these needs
- Monitor changing housing needs
- Improve the quality of life for the Asian communities
- Implement an action plan involving renewing inner Rochdale, improving access to social housing and meeting housing and community care needs.

Rochdale’s Asian communities were found to be suffering from severe overcrowding due to a young and growing population, extended families and a concentration within the town’s inner areas where they felt safe from harassment. Whilst the structural quality of the stock was relatively good, there was a mis-match between house and family size.

The Council aims to significantly increase the number of its housing staff from the Asian communities so that it mirrors the composition of the borough’s population, and to provide positive action training for BME housing employees.

The Council aims to increase access to socially rented housing amongst the Asian communities and to provide support for people moving into new areas. It has set up a multi-agency racial harassment forum involving the Housing Department, the Police and the Racial Equality Council to monitor and respond to racial harassment.

The Council has researched the needs of Asian women fleeing domestic violence and has found a lack of awareness within the BME communities of the housing support that is available to victims. The Council has appointed an Asian female housing officer to raise awareness of domestic violence and the help that is available. The Council is also prepared to interview women facing domestic violence at a “place of safety” such as a community centre rather than at the Homelessness Advice Centre.

126. The Regional Housing Board considers that housing associations should consider similar practices to ensure that they cater for BME tenants.

127. The Housing Corporation expects housing associations to ensure that their governing bodies reflect the composition of the local community and provide suitable training for new board members. The Corporation monitors associations’ recruitment statistics against local BME population data to ensure that legislative requirements are being followed and that good practice is in evidence encouraging BME applicants. The Corporation promotes equal opportunities in career development and training for BME employees to equip them for middle management. It also provides guidance on good practice on BME tenant participation.

128. The Housing Corporation also encourages local authorities and mainstream housing associations to transfer good quality stock to the region's 6 registered BME Housing Associations (Tung Sing, Arawak Walton, Ashianna, Aksa, Pine Court and Steve Biko).

The Right Sort of Houses

129. In order to tackle hidden homelessness in the BME communities, the Regional Housing Board believes that local authorities should have a clear understanding of their local housing needs.
130. There is evidence in some areas of a mis-match between the supply of and demand for large houses to accommodate large or extended BME families, causing chronic overcrowding. However some housing providers also report changing housing needs amongst BME people, with younger households in particular aspiring to similar types of dwellings as the white population and to move away from traditional BME areas.
131. Emerging regional and national planning advice calls on local authorities to work with their neighbours and other partners in carrying out housing market assessments, including the need for different types and sizes of dwellings. Whilst these studies are designed to inform their development plans, the Board believes that they can equally inform the formulation of their housing strategies and plans to tackle homelessness.

The Right Sort of Areas

132. The Regional Housing Board recognises that homeless BME households may wish to live close to their communities so that they can have access to shops catering for their cultural and religious needs, community facilities and places of worship. However the Board also recognises that the wish to be close to their communities and live in areas with which they are familiar can sometimes accentuate homelessness and overcrowding problems and perpetuate the phenomenon of parallel communities or racial segregation within the region.
133. The Board therefore encourages local authorities and registered social landlords to provide opportunities for BME households to move into non-traditional areas. They should also provide support for these households as they move into new neighbourhoods. However the Board recognises the need for caution in introducing BME households into new areas. Local authorities should not try to encourage BME households to move to areas with a reputation for racial harassment.

New Communities

134. In recent years the North West has seen a net increase in international migration. However many of the recent immigrants have come from new areas – southern and eastern Europe, particularly following EU enlargement.
135. Many of these new immigrants have tied accommodation provided with their work, so that they have not yet impacted on homelessness statistics within the region. However these workers may need to find their own accommodation if they leave their jobs, which could lead to an increase in homelessness in the future.

136. The Board considers that local authorities should try to anticipate and prevent homelessness arising within the new communities by making sure that information on housing is easily available and in the right format.

Questions:

23. Do we have a sufficient understanding of BME homelessness, or where would more research be helpful?
24. Would planners' housing market assessments pick up hidden homelessness amongst BME communities?
25. Are there any additional lessons on targeting housing advice to BME communities that the Strategy might convey, and how might local authorities swap best practice?
26. Are there any additional lessons on staffing and language issues that might be set out in this Strategy?
27. Should specific housing be designated for BME groups?
28. Is there any further advice which the Board can give to help BME's to move to non-traditional areas?
29. Can more be done to prevent potential homelessness amongst the new communities?

Asylum seekers and homelessness

137. The North West is a major dispersal area for asylum seekers and many, if granted refugee status, are likely to settle in the area. The North West Regional Housing Board considers that there is scope for improving the way in which refugees are found accommodation once they are given leave to remain in the country. The Board considers refugees as a potential asset to the region as they are entrepreneurial individuals who often start their own businesses. The region can only benefit if refugees are quickly found settled accommodation and integrated into the community.
138. Asylum seekers in the North West are looked after by the National Asylum Support Service (NASS) whilst they are waiting to be granted refugee status and be given leave to remain in the country. Asylum seekers typically spend their first couple of weeks in the UK in induction centres whilst NASS determines whether or not they are destitute and qualify for state assistance under S.95 of the Immigration and Asylum Act 1999. About one-third of asylum-seekers make their own accommodation arrangements with family or friends and receive subsistence support from NASS. Two-thirds are provided with accommodation by NASS, usually with private landlords. Asylum seekers receiving accommodation support are dispersed away from London and the South East to other regions.
139. In December 2005 there were 57,845 asylum seekers in the UK receiving help from NASS, of which 35,140 were receiving accommodation support from NASS. The main countries they came from were Iran, Iraq, Somalia, Eritrea and Sudan. Nationally, there was an 11% reduction in the number of asylum claims in the second quarter of 2005. This is projected to continue to fall.
140. Asylum seekers who are refused permission to stay in the UK are told that NASS support will end within 21 days and are expected to make arrangements to leave the country.
141. However successful asylum seekers who are granted refugee status, or given leave to remain in the UK on another basis, lose their NASS accommodation 28 days after the decision.
142. Refugees usually manage to avoid street homelessness by staying with members of their community or faith groups. However this can lead to overcrowding and public health risks.
143. This situation is far from ideal as new refugees experience the following difficulties once NASS support ends:
 - They are unfamiliar with local services on offer and cannot navigate “the system”;
 - They do not know their entitlements or have low expectations;
 - There are language and cultural difficulties;
 - They may not have the cash or benefits to access private sector accommodation;
 - They often lack a fixed abode from which to access employment or training;
 - Local authorities may be informed by the NASS providers that an asylum seeker is to be evicted, but they get fewer than 28 days in which to respond and offer housing advice and support.
144. The Home Office and Department for Communities and Local Government have commissioned pilot studies in the North West and the West Midlands to develop good practice in preventing homelessness amongst new refugees.

Early Local Authority Involvement

145. From March 2006, NASS accommodation providers are contractually obliged to notify local housing authorities of all positive asylum decisions within two days of being asked to terminate NASS accommodation support.
146. The North West Regional Housing Board encourages local authorities to react quickly to such notifications from NASS accommodation providers and aim to prevent homelessness where ever possible.
147. All local authority homeless units are encouraged to provide the NASS accommodation providers with named points of contact to receive these notifications.
148. A simple referral form has been devised which NASS providers and immigration officers should use to notify local authorities of potential refugee homelessness. The form includes details of household composition, health and support needs. Local authorities should then be in a position to arrange a rapid housing options interview and attempt to prevent homelessness.
149. NASS accommodation providers will be providing successful claimants with a “move on” information pack. There is a blank text box in the pack for local authorities to provide clear housing advice and service navigation messages. All local authorities are strongly encouraged to provide as much information as possible to prepare asylum seekers for their transition from NASS support to mainstream housing options.

Delayed Evictions and Tenancy Conversions

150. The Board believes that it should be cheaper and more cohesive to keep refugee households in their NASS – provided accommodation instead of providing bed and breakfast or other temporary accommodation, until a planned move to a more settled home can be achieved. It also causes less disruption for local schools where the frequent movement of children with multiple language needs can impact upon educational attainment.
151. Local authorities are strongly encouraged to enter into block agreements with NASS accommodation providers to delay the eviction of households given leave to remain in the country – ideally creating short assured tenancies - whilst they look for a more settled home.
152. Two of the three NASS accommodation providers in the North West have already provided an indicative menu of the cost of delaying eviction and, in effect, buying extra periods of accommodation for different types and sizes of dwelling and for different timeframes. This will inform negotiations between local authorities and accommodation providers on individual contracts.
153. The third NASS provider may be in a position to agree tenancy conversion and the establishment of short assured tenancies for new refugees. The Board believes that, in the longer term, this should be an aspiration for all of the NASS providers once the transition to the new NASS contracts has been completed in July 2006.
154. Delayed eviction and tenancy conversion can be made a reality if local authorities are creative in using spend to save homeless prevention funds and discretionary housing benefit payments to bridge any potential funding gaps. Similarly local authorities have a key role in supporting refugees and landlords to ensure that the tenants know how to

budget, claim benefits, pay bills and access services and that help is available upon any non payment of rent.

155. The Board believes that the vast majority of refugees want to make a legitimate success of their new lives, and will not run up debts if properly advised.
156. The Board also believes if the number of asylum seekers continues to fall, landlords will wish to keep good tenants as a means of minimising voids and will be prepared to offer assured short hold tenancies to refugees.

Prevention of Homelessness Good Practice Pilot

The North West Consortium (East) of local authorities has been granted £160,000 over 2006/07 and 2007/08 under the DCLG's Ethnic Minorities Innovation Fund to underwrite a pilot project to prevent homelessness amongst refugees and asylum seekers. The aims are to:-

- Foster better links between refugee communities and local authorities and key agencies to facilitate refugee resettlement and integration;
- Work with accommodation providers to delay eviction, develop move-on accommodation and encourage tenancy conversion; and
- Encourage the development of local refuges to build capacity and provide community support.

The pilot will cover Liverpool, Manchester, Salford, Bolton, Bury and Wigan.

Community Support

157. The Board believes that finding and sustaining settled accommodation plays a vital role in helping refugees to integrate into the local community. However refugees will also need help from local authorities and the voluntary sector to attain access to the services they need and to develop their capacity. Local authorities might consider employing outreach workers to develop contact with emerging new communities.
158. Local authorities may need to ensure that their Supporting People Services are geared up to meet the needs of refugees. They may consider developing specialist refugee floating support services in partnership with Refugee Community Organisations (RCOs). If there are no specialist support services for refugees, they should ensure that general Supporting People staff are aware of specific refugee issues – eg help in accessing benefits and services, setting up accounts with the utility companies and opening bank accounts.
159. The Board believes that local authorities can benefit from developing two-way training programmes with RCOs. Local authorities can deliver training sessions on their housing services to refugee groups. In turn, RCOs can deliver refugee awareness training for local authority staff.
160. The Board believes that local authorities may find it useful to encourage feedback from RCOs on the effectiveness of their services to refugees and other BME communities.

MANCHESTER REFUGEE SUPPORT NETWORK

Manchester has a long history of offering a home to refugees from all parts of the world. Over the past three decades it has become home to over 10,000 refugees.

Manchester Refugee Support Network (MRSN) is a grass-roots charitable organisation serving the needs of Manchester's refugee communities. It began in the early 1990's as a network serving the more established Chinese, Bosnian, Sudanese and Kurdish communities. It has since expanded to work with other communities with 6 paid staff and 17 volunteers. It currently has representatives from Zimbabwe, Iraq, Somalia, Sudan, Sri Lanka and Ethiopia on its management committee.

MRSN provides practical help, training and advice to new and established refugee groups on organisational, funding and other capacity building issues. It currently works with 50 refugee organisations within Greater Manchester. It publishes a bi-monthly newsletter, provides access to IT and provides a comprehensive range of advice on issues such as housing benefit to all refugees. It also provides the organisational support for Manchester's Refugee and Migrants Forum.

MRSN and Manchester City Council are developing a two-way training programme whereby the Council uses the Network to inform refugees about housing options and the network raises awareness of refugee issues within the Council.

SUNRISE

SUNRISE (Strategic Upgrade of National Refugee Integration Services) is a Home Office – funded pilot project to help refugees integrate into the UK. There are four SUNRISE pilot areas, one of which is in central Manchester.

SUNRISE aims to help asylum seekers granted refugee status and leave to remain in the UK quickly integrate into the community. Each household asking to use the service is assigned a Refugee Action caseworker who provides intensive face-to-face advice within the 28 day period before NASS support is withdrawn and at regular 30 monthly reviews throughout their first year of settlement. Each household is given a Personal Integration Plan and access to a free phone help line.

SUNRISE gives help and advice to refugees on homelessness services, housing providers, employment and national insurance, welfare benefits, health services, education, English language tuition, information on family reunification and contacts with community and faith organisations.

Language

161. Language difficulties often act as a barrier for refugees in accessing accommodation and other services. The Board believes that, as with BME communities in general, local authorities should ensure that information about housing and other services is available in refugees' own languages. Interpreters should be present at any home visits or interviews.
162. All local authorities are encouraged to develop effective interpretation and translation policies and ensure that housing advice is delivered in a range of accessible community locations and in conjunction with refugee community organisations.

Allocations

163. The Board believes that local authorities should check that there are no provisions in their allocations policies that inadvertently discriminate against refugees, e.g. requiring households to have resided in the area for at least 6 months before they are eligible for local authority accommodation or a nomination to a registered social landlord. They should also ensure that there is appropriate support for refugees wishing to bid for

accommodation through a choice-based lettings scheme, eg that they have enough information in their own languages to be aware of the scheme and to be able to make an application.

Questions:

30. Do paragraphs 138 – 145 reflect your perception of the problems of preventing homelessness amongst refugees and asylum seekers?
31. What can be done to encourage landlords to delay evicting asylum seekers once they are given leave to remain in the UK?
32. What can be done to encourage landlords to convert asylum seekers' tenancies into long term ones?
33. What more can be done to encourage community support for asylum seekers to help them settle and integrate?
34. Do you have experience of helping asylum seekers to overcome their language problems?

Homeless ex-offenders

164. Prisoners released from jail without any accommodation to go to are a small but significant contributory factor in the region's homeless population. Evidence from the Cheshire Multi-Agency Monitoring Study, mentioned earlier in this Strategy, shows that ex-offenders figure significantly amongst those in housing need.
165. The National Offenders Management Service (NOMS) is currently initiating a regional Reducing Re-offending Action Plan (RRAP) to prevent prisoners committing further crimes when they are released from prison. Accommodation issues are recognised as an important aspect of preventing re-offending. If offenders cannot find accommodation quickly after being released from prison they will have difficulty getting benefits, let alone a job, and there is a strong likelihood that they will return to crime to provide an income. The Social Exclusion Unit found that 75% of those who have served a short sentence for burglary or theft are re-convicted within two years of release. It also found that homeless ex-offenders are twice as likely to be reconvicted as those with stable accommodation. The Home Office suggests that finding accommodation for ex-offenders could reduce re-offending by 20%.
166. The Prison Service has set itself a target of releasing at least 77% of prisoners into known accommodation. This target compares with the Social Exclusion Unit's finding that 42% of offenders have no fixed abode when released from custody. Similarly, the Youth Justice Board has set targets for Youth Offending Teams to find accommodation for juvenile offenders when they are released.
167. The North West Regional Housing Board is working with NOMS on the RRAP initiative to prevent homelessness amongst ex-offenders.
168. Nationally, about one-third of offenders lose their accommodation whilst in prison. The region has about 11,000 prisoners, although not all of them hail from the North West. The Board considers that released ex-offenders could be a significant addition to the region's homelessness total if they cannot be found accommodation quickly. The Board also considers that it is in local authorities' own interests to help ex-offenders with accommodation problems to prevent them returning to crime when released into their home communities.

"No ex-offender can really hope to be fully rehabilitated without a home, a physical base which gives them security and stability. At present, about 1 in 4 of prisoners serving short-term custodial services who had previously had stable accommodation lose their homes while they are in prison. The goal we must move towards is that every individual who leaves the prison gates should have planned and guaranteed accommodation, which in the vast majority of places is proper housing rather than a hostel or temporary bed."

Charles Clarke, Home Secretary, speech to the Prison Reform Trust, 19th September 2005.

A Joined Up Approach

169. Local authorities owe a duty to find accommodation for the homeless, and prisoners who are vulnerable as a result of their imprisonment and who do not have any accommodation to go to upon their release are a priority need. The Board believes that ex-offenders need help. Many have poor life and coping skills, have a history of poor relationships with those who might help them, and are disengaged from support services.
170. The Board believes that NOMS, the Youth Justice Board and local authorities should act together and plan ahead for the release of prisoners without any accommodation rather than wait until they are released.
171. The Board believes that the keys to reducing homelessness amongst ex-offenders are:-
- Early intervention to prevent offenders losing their accommodation;
 - Management information systems within prisons which record prisoners' accommodation needs and pick up those prisoners without any accommodation to go to;
 - Advice to offenders on housing options and debt management to help them prepare for release; and
 - Assessing accommodation requirements and finding permanent accommodation for prisoners in advance of their release.
172. The Board wants to avoid the situation where homeless prisoners are released without any prior assessment and being left to their own devices to make their way to the Council's office and present themselves as homeless.

Early intervention

173. Ideally, information should be made available to offenders in court before they start their sentence. The information booklet "Facing Prison? What to do with your Home" provides advice to those arrested or on remand on either keeping or surrendering their homes. It provides information on entitlements to housing benefit (up to 52 weeks) or, if the home is mortgaged, entitlement to income support for the interest part of the mortgage payment. Prisoners on remand should be encouraged to apply for these so that they keep their homes.
174. Once sentenced, housing benefit is then limited to 13 weeks (including time already spent on remand). Prisoners in rented accommodation are advised on how to give up their tenancy if they are to be away for a longer period of time or to transfer the tenancy. Prisoners in mortgaged accommodation are advised to make an arrangement with the mortgage lender, let out the property or to sell it. The Board encourages the Prison Service and the voluntary sector to help prisoners fill in the relevant forms.

Management information

175. The North West Regional Housing Board looks to prisons to have management information systems in place to identify which offenders risk being homeless when they are released. Prisons should inform the offender's local authority (or another local authority playing a coordinating role) of the imminent release date and the risk of homelessness.
176. Initial housing assessments should be carried out when prisoners are first sent to their local prison, and should be transferred with them when they are subsequently sent to other prisons to complete their sentence. The new end-to-end Offender Management Model should ensure that these records are up-dated after their periodic reviews. It is particularly important that these assessments are updated shortly before the end of the sentence as this is often a crisis stage for prisoners and their families and arrangements may break down shortly before release. If good management information systems are in place, then the local authority should be notified immediately.
177. The Prison Service's North West Area Office is working with NOMS to develop standard housing needs assessments documentation for use at all of the region's prisons.

Advice to offenders in prison

178. The Board believes that offenders spend a better chance of avoiding homelessness if they are given advice on debt management and on housing options. There is a risk that prisoners can run up arrears whilst serving their sentence, be evicted, and then have difficulty in finding accommodation upon release.
179. Individual prisons and young offenders' institutions have done much to provide housing advice, often in partnership with the voluntary sector. However there is little consistency across the region's establishments in terms of the type, frequency and quality of the advice that is provided.
180. The Board welcomes the willingness of individual prisons to forge links with the voluntary sector and the Legal Services Commission (see Annex C) to provide advice on debt management and housing options to their inmates so that they are better prepared to face up to accommodation issues upon release. The Board particularly encourages prisoners to help themselves in developing advice services as it can lead to them qualifying for professional NVQ qualifications.

HMP Haverigg Foundation Centre

Haverigg Prison in Cumbria has developed its own housing advice service, the Foundation Centre, involving the prisoners themselves in the advice provision. The aim of the Centre is to ensure that prisoners have somewhere secure to live when they are released. Without accommodation, ex-offenders find it difficult to get employment and access to healthcare. Having a place to live reduces the chances of re-offending and reduces risk to the community.

The Foundation Team consists of a Housing Manager plus 3 Housing Advice Workers – prisoners who have been trained to carry out housing needs advice. The Team works in partnership with Shelter, who hold weekly surgeries on housing

issues, and with the Citizens Advice Bureau which advises on debt management.

The Housing Advice Workers carry out weekly inductions for all new prisoners and help them fill in a Housing Assessment Form. If a prisoner's housing needs change at any time during their sentence they can contact the Foundation Centre and receive advice.

Prisoners will be seen by a discharge board ten weeks prior to their release and any housing issues will be dealt with by an individual action plan. This will also provide advice on training and employment opportunities.

The Foundation Centre sees success in the small number of prisoners leaving Haverigg going to no fixed abode. It sees the secret of its success as early intervention with the induction process, developing individual action plans for each prisoner, and good communications with outside agencies.

It would like to see local authorities getting involved earlier in accommodation issues, assessing prisoners' accommodation needs before the day of their release, perhaps using a video link to interview offenders in view of the prison's remote location. It would like to see a bond scheme to enable ex-offenders to access the privately rented sector. It would also like to see a community worker appointed to meet prisoners upon release and take them to their new home.

The prisoners acting as Housing Advice workers have qualified as NVQ Level 3 in Advice and Guidance.

Early Assessments

181. Prisons generally start to assemble information about offenders at least 4 weeks before they are released – whether they will have accommodation, whether they will have a job and whether they are being picked up on the day of their release.
182. The Regional Housing Board looks to prisons, young offenders' institutions and local authorities to work together at this stage to assess housing needs and arrange temporary accommodation for offenders who would otherwise be homeless. The Board considers that local authorities should plan ahead for the release of ex-offenders rather than wait for the release to trigger their statutory responsibilities.
183. The Prison Service's North West Area Office is drawing up minimum standards for housing advice services across all of the region's prisons to raise standards of advice across the estate. These standards include such issues as mechanisms for identifying housing need, closing or maintaining existing tenancies, offering advice on housing benefits, promoting awareness of housing issues amongst prisoners, providing advice on housing options before release and ensuring that housing providers have access to prisoners for interviews. They are keen to develop the role of prisoners in working alongside housing advice service professionals. They are also developing monitoring systems to assist the Prison and Probation Services in measuring performance against NOMS targets.

Pre – Release Housing Needs Assessments.

184. The Board believes that it is essential for local authorities with a statutory duty to the homeless in priority need to carry out housing needs assessments of potentially homeless prisoners before they are released in order to find suitable accommodation.
185. The Board recognises that visiting prisons to assess the needs of potentially homeless offenders may place a burden on local authority staff resources. The alternative would therefore be video conferencing or, if this is not possible, an assessment by telephone interview. The Board notes that the Criminal Justice Act 2003 requires all prisoners to come out to Probation supervision by December 2008, so video conferencing facilities should be available at Probation offices.
186. The Board also recognises the practical problems for prisons in dealing with a number of local authorities as offenders can come from different parts of the country. The Board suggests that groups of local authorities nominate lead authorities to deal with individual prisons, and then pass on information about offenders' accommodation needs to the relevant authorities.

Service Level Agreements

Individual prisons and local authorities are drawing up service level agreements to help prevent offenders being homeless upon release.

One such agreement is between HMP Lancaster and Pendle Borough Council and is designed to ensure that Pendle residents or those with a local connection with the borough get the best possible service when they are released from the prison.

Key points include:-

- The prison will inform the local authority of any prisoner serving a short sentence or approaching release who is likely to be homeless;
- The prison will inform the landlords of prisoners serving short sentences if they wish to return to the property, or will arrange for the termination of tenancies for long-sentence prisoners;
- Prisoners are given advice on rent arrears;
- The council ensures that the prison has a supply of housing application forms; and
- Potentially homeless prisoners will be interviewed by phone as near as possible to 28 days before release, and will be informed of the progress of any housing application.

187. The Board also recommends that sub-regional groups of local authorities agree to pool resources and share accommodation resources. They should also be prepared to find accommodation for each other's ex-offenders should they request a move away from their home areas. One key to preventing re-offending is to move the ex-offender away from his old criminal acquaintances or drug supplier.
188. The Board also recognises that ex-offenders may need support on release, eg advice on how to balance budgets and pay bills. Landlords may need the assurance of such a support package before they are willing to take on ex-offenders as tenants. The Board believes that early assessments of housing needs also provides that opportunity to work out what support package is needed and involve Supporting People and other agencies.

Vale Royal Turning Point Scheme

Vale Royal Borough Council, in partnership with Turning Point, Cheshire Probation and Weaver Vale Housing Trust, provides six self-contained properties across the Borough for offenders leaving prison who have a substance misuses problem. Whilst the scheme offers what may seem a simple solution – accommodation plus intensive support – this is the client group which often slips through the net.

Weaver Vale Housing Trust leases the properties to Turning Point, who in turn give the ex-offender an assured shorthold tenancy and provide intense floating support to enable the individual to address their substance misuse and behavioural problems. They also provide the support necessary to enable the individual to gain the skills needed to live independently and maintain a tenancy. At the end of the programme (usually two years) the individual will be offered a secure tenancy with Weaver Vale Housing Trust at the property where they have lived. Weaver Vale will then offer another suitable property for the scheme.

To date, three people have now secure accommodation with Weaver Vale Housing Trust. Although some individuals have relapsed, the scheme has been remarkably successful in preventing re-offending, given the nature of the client group.

35. Do you share this draft Strategy's perception of the problems of homelessness amongst ex-offenders and the possible remedies?
36. What are the impediments to developing management information systems to identify offenders due to be released shortly but without a home to go to?
37. Are there any further steps that might be taken to provide advice to offenders on housing and debt management whilst they are serving their sentences?
38. How can local authorities and prisons work together to do housing needs assessment of potentially homeless offenders before they are released?
39. Is it feasible for local authorities to work together with prisons and arrange lead authorities to liaise with particular prisons on homelessness issues?
40. How can local authorities agree to accommodate each others ex-offenders to help them go straight?

Next steps

189. There are many causes of homelessness and it is not possible to address all of them in a single Strategy. It is also impossible for the Regional Housing Board to prevent homelessness on its own. However housing providers and other organisations with an interest in preventing homelessness may find that the examples of good practice cited in this Strategy provide lessons that they can carry forward.
190. Nevertheless, this Strategy has identified a number of actions which the Board expects its partners in the region to pursue. These are:-
- Nomination agreements. The Board's Support Group will work with the National Federation of Housing Associations and sub-regional fora of local authorities to consider what more can be done to encourage local authorities to draw up nomination agreements with registered social landlords whereby they can nominate homeless households for permanent tenancies.
 - Support for vulnerable households to prevent eviction or to assure landlords that they would make suitable tenants. GONW and other members of the Board's Support Group will discuss with the local authorities and the voluntary sector how the lessons from initiatives such as the Rochdale Inclusion project can be applied elsewhere and how support packages can be provided to help these vulnerable households in the forthcoming Supporting People Strategy.
 - Making more use of the privately rented sector. GONW will discuss with sub-regional homelessness fora of local authorities whether greater use can be made of rent deposit schemes. It will also explore with them how the new powers introduced by the Housing Act 2004, such as landlord licensing and Management Orders, can best be implemented.
 - HomelessLink will continue to develop lifeskills and vocational training for residents of hostels and supported accommodation.
 - GONW will encourage sub-regional homelessness fora to discuss the provision of sufficient refuge accommodation for the victims of domestic violence. GONW will also input into the Home Office's Regional Domestic Violence Reduction Action Plan to explain local authorities' statutory responsibilities and to showcase examples of sanctuary schemes.
 - Housing information. GONW will discuss with the Department of Health how to provide information on housing for vulnerable people, including victims of domestic violence or BME, in GP surgeries and health centres.
 - BME homelessness. The North West BME Forum will consider how the good practice identified in this Strategy can be disseminated and carried forward.
 - Refugees. The North West Consortium's pilot project will disseminate the lessons learned on developing closer links with refugee communities and fostering community groups, delaying eviction from NASS accommodation, developing move-on accommodation, and making tenancies permanent. The Consortium will also consider whether member authorities' allocation policies unreasonably discriminate against refugees.
 - Prisoners. NOMS will work on developing management information systems to identify potentially homeless prisoners before they are released. The Prison Service will raise across-the board minimum standards of housing advice within prisons. NOMS and GONW will discuss arranging early housing needs assessments of prisoners due for release with sub-regional fora of local authorities.
 - NOMS will also explore the feasibility of setting up a pilot project with a prison, a local authority, registered social landlords and the probation service on providing

accommodation for ex-offenders and developing suitable support packages to help them become good tenants.

- Capacity issues. The Board will work with sub-regional fora of local authorities to disseminate good practice.

41. Do you agree with this list of actions needed to implement this Strategy?

42. Do you see the need for additional action, and who should undertake it?



Annex A.

Summary of Consultation Questions

1. Is the national policy emphasis on homelessness prevention appropriate to the North West?
2. Are there other objectives which should be included in a Regional Homelessness Strategy for the North West?
3. Does this analysis reflect your understanding of the region's homelessness issues?
4. Should the analysis reflect sub regional or City region groupings of local authority areas?
5. Have you hard evidence on the linkage, or lack of linkage, between increases in house prices and trends in homelessness
6. Should the matter of affordability receive greater attention in the Strategy?
7. Do paragraphs 49-53 present an accurate picture of nomination arrangements in the region?
8. Do paragraphs 54-56 capture the key ingredients of robust but fair nomination agreements?
9. Are the steps proposed to address nomination failure realistic? Are there any issues around sharing personal data?
10. Are there any other examples of support for problematic tenants which might be included in the Strategy?
11. Do paragraphs 66-69 present an accurate picture of LA capacity issues in the region?
12. Are there any other steps that might be taken to improve local authorities' capacity to deal with homelessness?
13. Is there scope for building on the work of the sub-regional fora in tackling homelessness?
14. Is there scope for building on the work of regional champions?
15. Does the strategy capture enough detail on the work of regional champions?
16. Are there any practical lessons in providing like skills and vocational training which could be included in the Strategy?
17. What can be done to encourage the provision of "move on" accommodation?
18. Are there any other recommendations that could be included in the Strategy to enable hostel residents to achieve independence?
19. Can you provide details of the benefits and difficulties of operating a rent deposit scheme?
20. What other steps can local authorities and registered social landlords take to make more use of the privately rented sector?
21. How can North West local authorities disseminate lessons learned from implementing the provisions of the Housing Act 2004 to bring empty rented property back into use?
22. Can sub-regional homelessness fora assess the need for refuges in their area for victims of domestic violence?
23. Do you have other examples of sanctuary schemes working in the North West, and are there any practical lessons that can be learned from them?
24. Do we have a sufficient understanding of BME homelessness, or where would more research be helpful?
25. Would planners' housing market assessments pick up hidden homelessness in BME communities?
26. Are there any additional lessons on targeting housing advice to BME communities that the Strategy might convey, and how might local authorities swap best practice?
27. Are there any additional lessons on staffing and language issues that might be set out in this Strategy?
28. Should specific housing be designated for BME groups?
29. Is there any further advice which the Board can give to help BME's to move to non-traditional areas?
30. Can more be done to prevent potential homelessness amongst the new communities?

31. Do paragraphs 138-145 reflect your perception of the problems of preventing homelessness amongst refugees and asylum seekers?
32. What can be done to encourage landlords to delay evicting asylum seekers once they are given leave to remain in the UK?
33. What can be done to encourage landlords to convert asylum seekers' tenancies into permanent ones?
34. What more can be done to encourage community support for asylum seekers to help them settle and integrate?
35. Do you have experience of helping asylum seekers to overcome their language problems?
36. Do you share this draft Strategy's perception of the problems of homelessness amongst ex-offenders and the possible remedies?
37. What are the impediments to developing management information systems to identify offenders due to be released shortly but without a home to go to?
38. Are there any further steps that might be taken to provide advice to offenders on housing and debt management whilst they are serving their sentences?
39. How can local authorities and prisons work together to do housing needs assessments of potentially homeless offenders before they are released?
40. Is it feasible for local authorities to work together with prisons and arrange lead authorities to liaise with particular prisons on homelessness issues?
41. How can local authorities agree to accommodate each others' ex-offenders to help them go straight?
42. Do you agree with this list of actions needed to implement this Strategy?
43. Do you see the need for additional action, and who should undertake it?

Annex B.

Multi – Agency Monitoring Systems

Often a number of different agencies have contact with the homeless or those in housing need – local authority housing and social services departments, Citizens Advice Bureaux, service providers such as Connexions, Probation, Police, hostels and registered social landlords. A Multi – Agency Monitoring (MAM) system piloted by Shelter in Cheshire identified 142 agencies which needed to be involved.

The aim of MAM systems is for all these agencies with an interest in housing provision to collect data in a common format so that it can be analysed and shared. This will then provide the foundation of improved homelessness prevention services.

Some of the data that could be collected might seek to improve agencies' understanding of homelessness, eg:-

- The number of people presenting themselves to different agencies with housing or homelessness problems;
- A profile of each household, (eg. age, household size, type gender, ethnicity, disability);
- Where each household previously lived;
- The types of housing problem faced by different households, (eg. eviction, relationship breakdown, mortgage repossession); and
- Other complicating problems, (eg. drug / alcohol dependency, learning problems, leaving care, an offending record).

Other data might help provide a better understanding of the roles of different agencies in preventing homelessness or tackling other housing problems, eg:-

- Measuring the number of cases dealt with by each agency;
- Understanding what types of household approach which agency;
- Recording when households threatened with homelessness approach someone for help, and who they approach;
- Recording the outcome of these initial approaches;
- Tracing which agencies refer homeless households to each other, and what the outcomes of these referrals are; and
- Measuring the extent to which homelessness can be prevented before a household presents itself to a local authority as homeless.

MAM can help to improve local homelessness prevention strategies by identifying unmet needs, identifying gaps or weaknesses in service provision, indicating where services could be redirected to better prevent homelessness, and showing where new services are needed. It also assists cross-agency planning and aligning of homelessness prevention and supporting people strategies. It supplements ODPM's data on homeless households by including information on non-priority need households and on households who are receiving help from another statutory agency without being statutorily homeless.

Annex C.

The Legal Services Commission

The Legal Services Commission (LSC) ensures that people get the information, advice and legal help they need to deal with a wide range of everyday problems. The LSC funds a network of solicitors, law centres and Citizens Advice Bureaux (CABs) and other advice providers to help more than 2 million people gain advice on a variety of issues including housing and homelessness, debt management, domestic violence, relationship breakdown and welfare benefits. Services provided include specialist legal advice and taking cases to court where necessary.

The LSC has also funded a number of innovative projects to test new ways of delivering advice and preventing homelessness and debt.

Homelessness Advice Service in Wigan

The LSC has funded Wigan CAB to work in partnership with the Council, Shelter and Wigan and Leigh Housing to develop a coordinated homelessness advice service in Wigan.

The aims of the project are to:-

- Establish an effective referral scheme and co-ordinated working between advice agencies, accommodation and support service providers;
- Analyse the options available for reorganising existing services to increase specialist provision;
- Analyse the causes of homelessness and how advice services can provide an effective response, including the incorporation of service provision at Hindley Young Offenders Institution, the Court Duty Rota and preventative services; and
- Establish a set of advice service standards for all agencies and ensure that best practices are incorporated into their methods of working.

Blackburn with Darwen “Facing Facts” Project

The LSC has funded Blackburn CAB to provide education, training and support aimed at preventing people getting into debt. The project has targeted priority groups, such as young people, women in ethnic communities, and people with disabilities and health problems, to make them aware of their rights.

The project has also developed links with the Housing Duty Advice Scheme at the County Court to work with clients with housing related debts.

Information Resources and Training

The LSC has developed information leaflets on common areas of advice needs such as “Divorce and Separation” and “Losing your Home” which can give basic information about rights and entitlements. These can be used by agencies and organisations which have routine professional contact with people who have a legal advice problem. The LSC also has referral lists of advice agencies that they fund to provide legal help.

The LSC is working in partnership with prisons in the North West and the probation service to provide training and information to staff on identifying legal advice problems of offenders and brokering referral arrangements with local advice providers in the areas of family, debt, housing and welfare.

Housing Court Duty Solicitor Schemes

The LSC has funded a number of schemes across the North West to provide an advice service at court for people who are faced with eviction or possession hearings. These schemes are delivered by solicitors, CABs, Shelter or law centres and ensure that people are aware of their housing rights and can be represented at the court hearing. Details of these schemes have been provided to social landlords and to local authorities in the region. A number of them now provide this information to customers at risk of eviction and / or in rent arrears.

Annex D. Best Value Performance Indicators (BVPI's) on Homelessness.

In 2005/06 the BVPI's were:-

- BV 183a – The average length of stay in bed and breakfast accommodation.
- BV 183b – The length of stay in hostel accommodation.
- BV 202 – The number of people sleeping rough on a single night within the local authority area.
- BV 203 – The percentage change in the average number of families which includes dependent children or pregnant women, placed in temporary accommodation under the homelessness legislation, compared with the average for the previous year.
- BV 213 – The number of households who considered themselves homeless, who approached the local authority's housing service for advice, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation.
- BV 214 – The proportion of households who were accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same authority within the last two years.

Annex E.

Further Reading

Homelessness Code of Practice for Local Authorities. DCLG. July 2006.

Homelessness Prevention: A Guide to Good Practice. DCLG. June 2006.

Tackling Homelessness: Consultation Paper. Housing Corporation. April 2006.

Homelessness Prevention and Housing Associations – Contributing to Efficiency. Chartered Institute of Housing & Housing Corporation. April 2006

Tackling Homelessness Amongst Ethnic Minority Households – A Development Guide. ODPM. September 2005.

Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Common Monitoring System Briefing Note. Shelter. September 2005.

BPVI 213 Guidance on the Prevention of Homelessness through Housing Advice. ODPM. July 2005.

The Harrow Sanctuary Project. ODPM. July 2005.

Sustainable Communities: Settled Homes; Changed Lives. ODPM. Summary - June 2005, Strategy Document March 2005.

Facing Prison? What to do with your Home. National Probation Service – Greater Manchester. March 2005.

Hostels Review Toolkit. ODPM. March 2005.

Black and Minority Ethnic Action Plan. Housing Corporation. March 2005.

Government Response to the ODPM Select Committee's Report: Homelessness Inquiry. March 2005.

Shelter Summary: Housing Act 2004. Shelter. February 2005.

Population Dynamics within Rochdale and Oldham. University of Manchester.

Housing Act 2004 Factsheets. ODPM. December 2004.

Effective Co-operation in Tackling Homelessness: Nomination Agreements and Exclusion. ODPM, Housing Corporation, National Housing Federation, Local Government Association. November 2004.

Housing Corporation Regulatory Code. January 2002.

Black and Minority Ethnic Housing Strategy for the North West. Housing Corporation. May 1999.

The Housing Needs of Ex-Prisoners. Jane Carlisle. Joseph Rowntree Foundation. 1996.

Summary of Responses to the Consultation Questions

1. Yes the emphasis on prevention is appropriate to the North West. Reductions in acceptances would appear to support this view. Preventative measures should also ensure a reduction in repeat homelessness applications. However safeguards against 'gate keeping' must be built into the prevention agenda.

4. A sub regional analysis would be useful. It would allow for more detailed interpretation of any trends over a smaller area.

6. Affordability is an issue. In Halton net social lettings have reduced by 21% in three years. It is suspected that where a number of social housing tenants would have previously accessed the open market they can no longer afford to do so, with house prices now out of the reach of many households. The average age of first time buyers has risen significantly over recent years from 25 to 34. Sales to first-time buyers are at an historic 20 year low.

 Many areas are seeing an increased demand for social housing. In Halton @ 19.10.06 there were 2955 cases registered for housing, @ 1.4.06 there were 2523, @ 1.4.05 there were 2257 and @ 1.4.04 1931. Additional pressure from the waiting list will in turn exacerbate existing pressures regarding 'move on' accommodation.

 Also market rents in the PRS are an issue, especially where Rent Officer determinations are lower than market rents, making it difficult for households reliant on HB to access the PRS. Also there could be benefit trap issues.

7. Anecdotal evidence from the Cheshire and Merseyside Homelessness Forums suggests that nominations are generally not well monitored by a number of LAs and that some RSLs are reluctant to accept some households perceived to be 'problematic'. Hard evidence is required to analyse the position further.

11. The strategy does not give any detail on LA capacity issues. A study of caseloads per officer across the region might be helpful. Or an analysis of spending on homelessness per head of population?

12. The DCLGs grant to LAs could be reassessed. There appears to be significant differences in the resources made available that do not seem equitable given population differences. LAs may also be experiencing significant differences from the benchmark position of the P1E returns utilised to set initial grants.

15. More emphasis could be given to the benefit of working with the regional champions. Including feedback from LAs who have found the experience beneficial.

17. See answer to question 6. A lack of decent affordable housing in places where people want to live and in communities that are sustainable has an impact on the supply of move on accommodation. Also the region needs to consider the benefits of accessing the PRS, including PSL. The HB rule re. under 25s needs looking at.

18. Hostel residents ability to achieve independence will be greatly facilitated by programmes to increase economic activity and employment and which address barriers to employment.

37. It is suspected that many ex-offenders become homeless within a short period upon leaving prison as arrangements with family and friends is often very short-term and fragile. Perhaps more could be done to try to maintain this accommodation by offering support? Even where it is known that an offender has nowhere to live on release, LAs often do not get enough prior warning to realistically try to access the PRS or social housing. As stated previously the pressure on waiting lists is increasing, net lets are reducing in this area. Many ex-offenders are not deemed vulnerable so there is no statutory duty to accommodate.

40. Certainly it is unrealistic to expect LAs/RSLs to accommodate every ex-offender upon release, given the rise in the prison population, reduction in social lets and other housing groups that an LA has to give preference to in accordance with the HA 1996. Perhaps there should be increased funding for capital housing schemes to be developed via Housing Corporation funds and increased SP provision to cover the revenue costs of providing support to assist LAs to increase provision for this client group?

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	7 th December 2006
REPORTING OFFICER:	Council Solicitor
SUBJECT:	Gambling Act 2005 Statement of Gambling Policy
WARDS:	Boroughwide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

To recommend the Council to adopt the statement of gambling policy attached to this report.

2. RECOMMENDED: That the Council be recommended to adopt the statement of gambling policy attached to this report.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Under section 349 Gambling Act 2005 the Council is required to adopt a three-year licensing policy. Such policies are known as statements of principles or, more commonly, statements of gambling policy.
- 3.2 At its meeting held on 7th September the Executive Board approved a draft statement of gambling policy for consultation.
- 3.3 A public consultation exercise was then undertaken in respect of the draft statement. The consultation period ended on 23rd October.
- 3.4 Responses were received from: Cheshire Constabulary, the British Beer and Pub Association, BIIAB, BACTA and GAMCARE.
- 3.5 The detailed responses to the consultation exercise are summarised in Appendix 1 to this report. Each response has a corresponding reply.
- 3.6 No changes to the draft statement (attached as Appendix 2) are proposed as a result of the consultation exercise.
- 3.7 Under the Gambling Act 2005 the statement of Gambling policy must be adopted by full Council (on 13th December) and then advertised in the local press. All statements must be in place by the end of January 2007.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

Once adopted, the statement of gambling policy will be used by applicants and the Regulatory Committee in accordance with the Gambling Act 2005.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

There are no other implications arising out of this report.

6. LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

This report is based on the Gambling Act 2005 and the written responses to the consultation exercise. In addition the DCMS and LACORS web-sites have provided background information.

Statement of Gambling Policy replies

Cheshire Constabulary

The police have confirmed that they have no comments to make.

British Beer and Pub Association

Apart from background information the following specific points were made

Request 1: Grants of additional permits for machines in licensed premises should be granted if they comply with the Gambling commission code of practice.

Reply 1: This is not appropriate. This would effectively pre-determine applications and would not allow the Council to take into account additional matters which might be relevant to a particular application.

Request 2: The policy should include an outline of application procedures for permits for more than two machines.

Reply 2: The procedures have not yet been determined. As with the Statement of Licensing Policy issued under the Licensing Act 2003 the Statement and the Regulations are out of phase. The position will be remedied on future reviews but at present it is not possible to include references to procedures. In any event, when the procedures are known they will be posted on the Council's Website (which is probably more appropriate than mixing policy and procedural matters in a single document).

Request 3: The policy or separate guidance should make reference to transitional arrangements.

Reply 3: When the transitional arrangements are known they will be posted on the Council's Website in the form of separate guidance.

BIIAB (British Institute of Innkeepers Awarding Body)

Apart from background information the following specific points were made

Request 4: Door Supervision

The BIIAB have requested the following wording to be added to the policy "...there is no evidence that the operation of betting offices has required door supervisors for the protection of the public. The authority will make a door supervision requirement only if there is clear evidence from the history of trading at the premises that the premises cannot be adequately supervised

from the counter and that door supervision is both necessary and proportionate.”

Reply 4: The Council is not in possession of any evidence on this subject. Any conditions which may be imposed on the matter of door supervisors will be imposed according to the merits of the individual application.

Request 5: Betting Machines

The BIIAB have requested the following wording to be added to the policy “While the authority has discretion as to the number, nature and circumstances of use of betting machines, there is no evidence that such machines give rise to regulatory concerns. This authority will consider limiting the number of machines only where there is clear evidence that such machines have been or are likely to be used in breach of the licensing objectives. Where there is such evidence, this authority may consider, when reviewing the licence, the ability of staff to monitor the use of such machines from the counter.”

Reply 5: A machine is not a gaming machine if it is designed or adapted for use to bet on future real events: such machines are referred to as betting machines. The Council is not in possession of any evidence on this subject. All applications will be dealt with on their individual merits.

Request 6: Re-Site applications

The BIIAB has requested that “the policy positively encourage, or at least state that the authority will give sympathetic consideration to, re-sites within the same locality and extensions in order to enhance the quality of the facility provided for the benefit of the betting public”.

Reply 6: This is not appropriate. All applications will be dealt with on their individual merits.

Request 7: Enforcement

The BIIAB have requested the policy includes wording along the following lines:

“The authority recognises that certain bookmakers have a number of premises within its area. In order to ensure that any compliance issues are recognised and resolved at the earliest stage, operators are requested to give the authority a single named point of contact, who should be a senior individual, and whom the authority will contact first should any compliance queries or issues arise.”

Reply 7: This matter is not limited to bookmaker premises. The Council has no power to direct large organisations to nominate single points of contact. However, where appropriate, procedural guidance will point out the advantages of such an approach.

BACTA (British Amusement Catering Trade Association)

Apart from extensive background information the following specific point was made:

Request 8: Door supervision

“It should be noted that it was not Parliament's intention to require door supervision other than in relation to casinos under Section 176. Therefore a condition for door supervision should not be imposed unless justified on the basis of the application of pre-requisites applying to the addition of conditions set out under the heading above”.

Reply 8: See Request 4 and Reply 4 above.

GAMCARE (National Association for Gambling Care Educational Resources and Training)

An extremely vague standard set of comments was received from GAMCARE a number of which are not intelligible. The points made seem to be all related to operators being made to have regard to best practice by organisations that represent the interests of vulnerable people. Unfortunately this is far too vague for a statement of gambling principles. The input from organisations such as GAMCARE will hopefully advise the Council in its work in the future.

Halton Borough Council
STATEMENT OF
GAMBLING POLICY
Gambling Act 2005

**Approved by Halton Borough
Council on 2006 (Minute)**

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Statement of Gambling Policy s349 Gambling Act 2005

PART A**1. The Licensing Objectives**

In exercising most of their functions under the Gambling Act 2005, licensing authorities must have regard to the licensing objectives as set out in section 1 of the Act. The licensing objectives are:

- Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime
- Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way
- Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling

It should be noted that the Gambling Commission has stated: "The requirement in relation to children is explicitly to protect them from being harmed or exploited by gambling".

2. Introduction

Halton Borough Council ("the Council") is situated in the County of Halton and is a Unitary Authority. Halton Borough comprises the towns of Widnes and Runcorn and surrounding villages of Hale, Daresbury, Moore, and Preston Brook. It is predominantly an urban area with a population of 118,208 (2001 Census).

Licensing authorities are required by the Gambling Act 2005 to publish a statement of the principles which they proposed to apply when exercising their functions. This statement must be published at least every three years. The statement must also be reviewed from "time to time" and the any amended parts re-consulted upon. The statement must be then re-published.

The Council consulted upon this policy statement before finalising and publishing it. A list of the persons we consulted is provided below. It should

be noted that comments were also received from a number of other persons who were not individually consulted but we have not listed all of these.

The Gambling Act requires that the following parties are consulted by Licensing Authorities:

- The Chief Officer of Police
- One or more persons who appear to the authority represent the interests of persons carrying on gambling businesses in the authority's area
- One or more persons who appear to the authority to represent the interests of persons who are likely to be affected by the exercise of the authority's functions under the Gambling Act 2005

List of persons this authority consulted:

- Cheshire Constabulary
- Halton Borough Council Children & Young People Directorate
- Halton Borough Council Health & Community Directorate
- The Bingo Association
- Association of British Bookmakers
- British Amusement Catering Association
- Responsibility in Gambling Trust (U.K.)
- GamCare
- The general public through local advertisement and the Council's website
- Showboat Unit 29-33a Forest Walk Halton Lea Runcorn

It should be noted that this policy statement will not override the right of any person to make an application, make representations about an application, or apply for a review of a licence, as each will be considered on its own merits and according to the statutory requirements of the Gambling Act 2005.

3. Declaration

Statement of Gambling Policy s349 Gambling Act 2005

In producing this licensing policy statement, this licensing authority declares that it has had regard to the licensing objectives of the Gambling Act 2005, the guidance issued by the Gambling Commission, and any responses from those consulted on the policy statement.

4. Responsible Authorities

The licensing authority is required by regulations to state the principles it will apply in exercising its powers under Section 157(h) of the Act to designate, in writing, a body which is competent to advise the authority about the protection of children from harm. The principles are:

- the need for the body to be responsible for an area covering the whole of the licensing authority's area
- the need for the body to be answerable to democratically elected persons, rather than any particular vested interest group etc

The Council designates the Halton Borough Council Children & Young People Directorate for this purpose.

The contact details of all the Responsible Bodies under the Gambling Act 2005 are available from Legal Services Licensing Section

5. Interested parties

Interested parties can make representations about licence applications, or apply for a review of an existing licence. These parties are defined in the Gambling Act 2005 as follows:

“For the purposes of this Part a person is an interested party in relation to an application for or in respect of a premises licence if, in the opinion of the licensing authority which issues the licence or to which the applications is made, the person-

- a) lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be

affected by the authorities activities,

- b) has business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities, or
- c) represents persons who satisfy paragraph (a) or (b)”

The licensing authority is required by regulations to state the principles it will apply in exercising its powers under the Gambling Act 2005 to determine whether a person is an interested party. The principles are:

Each case will be decided upon its merits. The Council will not apply a rigid rule to its decision making. It will consider the examples of considerations provided in the Gambling Commission's Guidance to local authorities. Note that decisions though on Premises Licences must be “in accordance” with Gambling Commission Guidance.

The Gambling Commission has recommended that the licensing authority states that interested parties include trade associations and trade unions, and residents' and tenants' associations. This authority will not however generally view these bodies as interested parties unless they have a member who can be classed as one under the terms of the Gambling Act 2005 e.g. lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the activities being applied for.

Interested parties can be persons who are democratically elected such as Councillors and MP's. Other than these persons, this authority will require written evidence that a person 'represents' someone who either lives sufficiently close to the premises to be likely to be affected by the authorities activities and/or business interests that might be affected by the authorised activities. A letter from one of these persons, requesting the representation is sufficient.

If individuals wish to approach Councillors to ask them to represent

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their views then care should be taken that the Councillors are not part of the Licensing Committee dealing with the licence application. If there are any doubts then please contact the licensing department (*insert contact details*).

6. Exchange of Information

Licensing authorities are required to include in their policy statement the principles to be applied by the authority in exercising the functions under sections 29 and 30 of the Act with respect to the exchange of information between it and the Gambling Commission, and the functions under section 350 of the Act with the respect to the exchange of information between it and the other persons listed in Schedule 6 to the Act.

The principle that this licensing authority applies is that it will act in accordance with the provisions of the Gambling Act 2005 in its exchange of information which includes the provision that the Data Protection Act 1998 will not be contravened. The licensing authority will also have regard to Guidance issued by the Gambling Commission to Local Authorities on this matter, as well as any relevant regulations issued by the Secretary of State under the powers provided in the Gambling Act 2005.

7. Enforcement

Licensing authorities are required by regulation under the Gambling Act 2005 to state the principles to be applied by the authority in exercising the functions under Part 15 of the Act with respect to the inspection of premises; and the powers under section 346 of the Act to institute criminal proceedings in respect of the offences specified.

This licensing authority's principles are that:

It will be guided by the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities and as per the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities, it will endeavour to be:

- Proportionate: regulators should only intervene when necessary: remedies should be appropriate to the risk posed, and costs identified and minimised;
- Accountable: regulators must be able to justify decisions, and be subject to public scrutiny;
- Consistent: rules and standards must be joined up and implemented fairly;
- Transparent: regulators should be open, and keep regulations simple and user friendly; and
- Targeted: regulation should be focused on the problem, and minimise side effects

This licensing authority will endeavour to avoid duplication with other regulatory regimes so far as possible.

This licensing authority will also, as recommended by the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities, adopt a risk-based inspection programme.

The main enforcement and compliance role for this licensing authority in terms of the Gambling Act 2005 will be to ensure compliance with the Premises Licences and other permissions which is authorised. The Gambling Commission will be the enforcement body for the Operator and Personal Licences. It is also worth noting that concerns about manufacture, supply or repair of gaming machines will not be dealt with by the licensing authority but will be notified to the Gambling Commission. This authority also understands from LACORS that the Gambling Commission will be responsible for compliance as regards unlicensed premises.

This licensing authority will also keep itself informed of developments as

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regards the work of the Better Regulation Executive in its consideration of the regulatory functions of local authorities.

licensing remote gambling at all. This will fall to the Gambling Commission via Operator Licences.

8. Licensing Authority functions

Licensing Authorities are required under the Act to:

- Be responsible for the licensing of premises where gambling activities are to take place by issuing *Premises Licences*
- Issue *Provisional Statements*
- Regulate *members' clubs* and *miners' welfare institutes* who wish to undertake certain gaming activities via issuing Club Gaming Permits and/or Club Machine Permits
- Issue *Club Machine Permits* to *Commercial Clubs*
- Grant permits for the use of certain lower stake gaming machines at *unlicensed Family Entertainment Centres*
- Receive notifications from alcohol licensed premises (under the Licensing Act 2003) of the use of two or fewer gaming machines
- Grant *Licensed Premises Gaming Machine Permits* for premises licensed to sell/supply alcohol for consumption on the licensed premises, under the Licensing Act 2003, where more than two machines are required
- Register *small society lotteries* below prescribed thresholds
- Issue *Prize Gaming Permits*
- Receive and Endorse *Temporary Use Notices*
- Receive *Occasional Use Notices*
- Provide information to the Gambling Commission regarding details of licences issued (see section above on 'information exchange')
- Maintain registers of the permits and licences that are issued under these functions

It should be noted that local licensing authorities will not be involved in

PART B PREMISES LICENCES

1. General Principles

Premises Licences will be subject to the permissions/restrictions set-out in the Gambling Act 2005 and regulations, as well as specific mandatory and default conditions which will be detailed in regulations issued by the Secretary of State. Licensing authorities are able to exclude default conditions and also attach others, where it is believed to be appropriate.

This licensing authority is aware that in making decisions about premises licences it should aim to permit the use of premises for gambling in so far as it thinks it:

- in accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission
- in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
- reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives and
- in accordance with the authority's statement of licensing policy

Definition of "premises" - Premises is defined in the Act as "any place". It is for the licensing authority to decide whether different parts of a building can be properly regarded as being separate premises and as the Gambling Commission states in its Guidance for local authorities, it will always be a question of fact in the circumstances. The Gambling Commission does not however consider that areas of a building that are artificially or temporarily separate can be properly regarded as different premises.

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This licensing authority takes particular note of the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities which states that in considering applications for multiple licences for a building or those for a specific part of the building to be licensed, entrances and exits from parts of a building covered by one or more licences should be separate and identifiable so that the separation of different premises is not compromised and that people do not 'drift' into a gambling area.

This licensing authority will also take note of the Gambling Commission's Guidance to local authorities that: Licensing authorities should pay particular attention to applications where access to the licensed premises is through other premises (which themselves may be licensed or unlicensed).

Location - This licensing authority is aware that demand issues cannot be considered with regard to the location of premises but that considerations in terms of the licensing objectives can. As per the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities, this authority will pay particular attention to the protection of children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling, as well as issues of crime and disorder. Should any specific policy be decided upon as regards areas where gambling premises should not be located, this policy statement will be updated. It should be noted that any such policy does not preclude any application being made and each application will be decided on its merits, with the onus upon the applicant showing how the concerns can be overcome.

Duplication with other regulatory regimes - This authority will seek to avoid any duplication with other statutory / regulatory systems where possible, including planning. This authority will not consider whether a licence application is likely to be

awarded planning or building consent, in its consideration of it. This authority will though listen to, and consider carefully, any concerns about conditions which are not able to be met by licensees due to planning restrictions, should such a situation arise.

Licensing objectives - Premises licences granted must be reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives. With regard to these objectives, this licensing authority has considered the Gambling Commission's Guidance to local authorities and some comments are made below.

Preventing gambling from being a source of crime or disorder, being associated with crime or disorder or being used to support crime – This licensing authority is aware of the distinction between disorder and nuisance and will consider factors such as whether police assistance was required and how threatening the behaviour was to those who could see it.

Ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way - This licensing authority has noted that the Gambling Commission in its Guidance for local authorities has stated that generally the Commission would not expect licensing authorities to become concerned with ensuring that gambling is conducted in a fair and open way as this will be a matter for either the management of the gambling business, and therefore subject to the operating licence, or will be in relation to the suitability and actions of an individual and therefore subject to the personal licence. This licensing authority also notes, however, that the Gambling Commission also states in relating to the licensing tracks the licensing authorities' role will be different from other premises in that track operators will not necessarily have an operating licence. In those circumstances the

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premises licence may need to contain conditions to ensure that the environment in which betting takes place is suitable. This licensing authority understands that there may be further guidance from the Gambling Commission on this issue which it will have regard to, when available.

Protecting children and other vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling -

This licensing authority has noted the Gambling Commission Guidance to local authorities states that the objective talks of protecting children from being “harmed or exploited by gambling, but in practice that often means preventing them from taking part in or being in close proximity to gambling.

This licensing authority will pay particular attention to any Codes of Practice which the Gambling Commission issues as regards this licensing objective in relation to specific premises such as casinos. It is understood that a Code for casinos must:

- specify steps that the premises licence-holder must take to ensure that children and young persons (that is those under the age of 18) do not enter casino premises, or in the case of the regional casino do not enter the gambling area;
- amongst those specified steps, ensure that each entrance to the casino or gambling area is supervised by at least one person (“the supervisor”) who is responsible for compliance with the code of practice; and
- require that, unless the supervisor is certain that a person seeking admittance is an adult, evidence of age must be required of all those seeking to enter the casino or gambling area.

As regards the term “vulnerable persons” it is noted that the Gambling Commission is not seeking to offer a

definition but states that it will for regulatory purposes assume that this group includes people who gamble more than they want to; people who gambling beyond their means; and people who may not be able to make informed or balanced decisions about gambling due to a mental impairment, alcohol or drugs. This licensing authority will consider this licensing objective on a case by case basis. Should a practical definition prove possible in future then this policy statement will be updated with it, by way of a revision.

Conditions - Any conditions attached to licences will be proportionate and will be:

- relevant to the need to make the proposed building suitable as a gambling facility
- directly related to the premises and the type of licence applied for;
- fairly and reasonably related to the scale and type of premises:
and
- reasonable in all other respects.

Decisions upon individual conditions will be made on a case by case basis, although there will be a number of control measures this licensing authority will consider utilising should there be a perceived need, such as the use of door supervisors, supervision of adult gaming machines, appropriate signage for adult only areas etc. There are specific comments made in this regard under each of the licence types below. This licensing authority will also expect the licence applicant to offer his/her own suggestions as to way in which the licensing objectives can be met effectively.

It is noted that there are conditions which the licensing authority cannot attach to premises licences which are:

- any condition on the premises licence which makes it impossible to comply with an operating licence condition

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- conditions relating to gaming machine categories, numbers, or method of operation;
- conditions which provide that membership of a club or body be required (the Gambling Act 2005 specifically removes the membership requirement for casino and bingo clubs and this provision prevents it being reinstated and
- conditions in relation to stakes, fees, winning or prizes

Door Supervisors - The Gambling Commission advises in its Guidance for local authorities that licensing authorities may consider whether there is a need for door supervisors in terms of the licensing objectives of protection of children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling, and also in terms of preventing premises becoming a source of crime. It is noted though that the Gambling Act 2005 has amended the Security Industry Act and that door supervisors at casinos or bingo premises cannot be licensed by the Security Industry Authority. This licensing authority may therefore has specific requirements for door supervisors working at casinos or bingo premises.

2. Adult Gaming Centres

This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the premises. Appropriate licence conditions may cover issues such as:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Door supervisors
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry

- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours

This list is not exhaustive.

As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, this licensing authority will consider measures such as the use of self-barring schemes, provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

3. (Licensed) Family Entertainment Centres:

This licensing authority will specifically have regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machine areas. Appropriate licence conditions may cover issues such as:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Door supervisors
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours

This list is not exhaustive.

As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, this licensing authority will consider measures such as the use of self-barring schemes, provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

This licensing authority will, as per the Gambling Commission's guidance, refer to the Commission's website to see any conditions that apply to operator licences covering the way in which the area containing the category C machines should be delineated. This licensing authority will also make itself aware of any mandatory or

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default conditions on these premises licences, when they have been published.

4. Casinos

The Council did not make an application for new casinos under the Gaming Act 1968 (prior to the deadline of 26th April 2006). Consequently 'Section 4. Casinos' is not directly relevant to this Statement but is included for the sake of completeness.

No Casinos resolution - This licensing authority has not passed a 'no casino' resolution under Section 166 of the Gambling Act 2005, but is aware that it has the power to do so. Should this licensing authority decide in the future to pass such a resolution, it will update this policy statement with details of that resolution.

Casinos and competitive bidding - This licensing authority is aware that where a licensing authority area is enabled to grant a Premises Licence for a new style casino (i.e. the Secretary of State has made such regulations under Section 175 of the Gambling Act 2005) there are likely to be a number of operators which will want to run the casino. In such situations the local authority will run a 'competition' under Schedule 9 of the Gambling Act 2005. This licensing authority will run such a competition in line with any regulations issued under the Gambling Act 2005 by the Secretary of State.

Betting machines - This licensing authority is aware that, as explained in the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities: Section 181 contains an express power for licensing authorities to restrict the number of betting machines, their nature and the circumstances in which they are made available by attaching a licence condition to a betting premises licence or to a casino premises licence (where betting is permitted in the casino). When considering whether to impose a condition to restrict the

number of betting machines in particular premises, the licensing authority, amongst other things, should take into account the size of the premises, the number of counter positions available for person-to-person transactions, and the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by children and young persons (it is an offence for those under 18 to bet) or by vulnerable persons.

Credit - This licensing authority has noted that the Gambling Commission has stated in its Guidance for Local Authorities that section 177 does not prevent the licensee from permitting the installation of cash dispensers (ATMs) on the premises. Such machines may accept credit cards (and debit cards) and the arrangement is subject to a requirement that the licensee has no other commercial connection in relation to gambling (aside from the agreement to site the machines) with the service-provider and does not profit from the arrangement, not make any payment in connection with the machines. Guidance on the further conditions that may apply in relation to such machines will be included in the next version of this guidance

5. Bingo premises

This licensing authority notes that the Gambling Commission's Guidance states:

- Licensing authorities will be able to find information about the restrictions that apply in the codes of practice that will be published on the Commission's website.
- Further guidance will be issued in due course about the particular issues that licensing authorities should take into account in relation to the suitability and layout of bingo premises.

Once this information is available, this licensing authority will consider its application to premises licences for bingo premises.

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6. Betting premises

Betting machines - It is noted that the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities states: "Section 181 contains an express power for licensing authorities to restrict the number of betting machines, their nature and the circumstances in which they are made available by attaching a licence condition to a betting premises licence or to a casino premises licence (where betting is permitted in the casino). When considering whether to impose a condition to restrict the number of betting machines in particular premises, the licensing authority, amongst other things, should take into account the size of the premises, the number of counter positions available for person-to-person transactions, and the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by children and young persons (it is an offence for those under 18 to bet) or by vulnerable persons."

Credit - It has also been noted that the Gambling Commission Guidance states: section 177 does not prevent the licensee from permitting the installation of cash dispensers (ATMs) on the premises. Such machines may accept credit cards (and debit cards) and the arrangement is subject to a requirement that the licensee has no other commercial connection in relation to gambling (aside from the agreement to site the machines) with the service-provider and does not profit from the arrangement, nor make any payment in connection with the machines. It is also understood that the Gambling Commission will be placing restrictions and requirements on Operating Licences for betting premises as regards credit and this licensing authority will consider the guidance when it is available.

7. Tracks

This licensing authority is aware that the Gambling Commission may provide further specific guidance as

regards tracks. We have taken note of the Guidance from the Gambling Commission which highlights that tracks are different from other premises in that there may be more than one premises licence in effect and that the track operator may not be required to hold an operator licence as there may be several premises licence holders at the track which will need to hold their own operator licences.

There may be some specific considerations with regard to the protection of children and vulnerable persons from being harmed or exploited by gambling and this authority would expect the premises licence applicants to demonstrate suitable measures to ensure that children do not have access to adult only gaming facilities. It is noted that children and young persons will be permitted to enter track areas where facilities for betting are provided on days when dog-racing and/or horse racing takes place, although they are still prevented from entering areas where gaming machines (other than category D machines) are provided.

Appropriate licence conditions may be:

- Proof of age schemes
- CCTV
- Door supervisors
- Supervision of entrances / machine areas
- Physical separation of areas
- Location of entry
- Notices / signage
- Specific opening hours
- The location of gaming machines

This list is not exhaustive.

As regards the protection of vulnerable persons, this licensing authority will consider measures such as the use of self-barring schemes, provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

Betting machines - Licensing authorities have a power under the

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Gambling Act 2005, to restrict the number of betting machines, their nature and the circumstances in which they are made available, by attaching a licence condition to a betting premises licence. The Gambling Commission's Guidance will be noted in that it states: In relation to betting premises away from tracks, the Commission is proposing that licensing authorities should take into account the size of the premises and the ability of staff to monitor the use of the machines by vulnerable people when determining the number of machines permitted. Similar considerations apply in relation to tracks, where the potential space for such machines may be considerable, bringing with it significant problems in relation to the proliferation of such machines, the ability of track staff to supervise them if they are scattered around the track and the ability of the track operator to comply with the law and prevent children betting on the machine. Licensing authorities will want to consider restricting the number and location of betting machines, in the light of the circumstances of each application for a track betting premises licence.

This licensing authority also notes that, In the Commission's view, it would be preferable for all self-contained premises operated by off-course betting operators on track to be the subject of separate premises licences. This would ensure that there was clarity between the respective responsibilities of the track operator and the off-course betting operator running a self-contained unit on the premises.

Condition on rules being displayed - The Gambling Commission has advised in its Guidance for local authorities that licensing authorities should attach a condition to track premises licences requiring the track operator to ensure that the rules are prominently displayed in or near the betting areas, or that other measures

are taken to ensure that they are made available to the public. For example, the rules could be printed in the race-card or made available in leaflet form from the track office.

8. Travelling Fairs

It will fall to this licensing authority to decide whether, where category D machines and / or equal chance prize gaming without a permit is to be made available for use at travelling fairs, the statutory requirement that the facilities for gambling amount to no more than an ancillary amusement at the fair is met.

The licensing authority will also consider whether the applicant falls within the statutory definition of a travelling fair.

It has been noted that the 27-day statutory maximum for the land being used as a fair, is per calendar year, and that it applies to the piece of land on which the fairs are held, regardless of whether it is the same or different travelling fairs occupying the land. This licensing authority will work with its neighbouring authorities to ensure that land which crosses our boundaries is monitored so that the statutory limits are not exceeded.

9. Provisional Statements

This licensing authority notes the Guidance for the Gambling Commission which states that it is a question of fact and degree whether premises are finished to a degree that they can be considered for a premises licence and that requiring the building to be complete ensures that the authority could, if necessary, inspect it fully.

In terms of representations about premises licence applications, following the grant of a provisional statement, no further representations from relevant authorities or interested parties can be taken into account

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unless they concern matters which could not have been addressed at the provisional statement stage, or they reflect a change in the applicant's circumstances. In addition, the authority may refuse the premises licence (or grant it on terms different to those attached to the provisional statement) only by reference to matters:

- (a) which could not have been raised by objectors at the provisional licence stage; or
- (b) which is in the authority's opinion reflect a change in the operator's circumstances.

This authority has noted the Gambling Commission's Guidance on not taking into account irrelevant matter: one example of an irrelevant matter would be the likelihood of the applicant obtaining planning or building regulations approval for the proposal.

10. Reviews:

Requests for a review of a premises licence can be made by interested parties or responsible authorities, however, it is for the licensing authority to decide whether the review is to be carried-out. This will be on the basis of whether the request for the review is relevant to the matters listed below, as well as consideration as to whether the request is frivolous, vexatious, will certainly not cause this authority to wish alter/revoke/suspend the licence, or whether it is substantially the same as previous representations or requests for review.

- in accordance with any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission
- in accordance with any relevant guidance issued by the Gambling Commission
- reasonably consistent with the licensing objectives and
- in accordance with the authority's statement of licensing policy

The licensing authority can also initiate a review of a licence on the basis of any reason which it thinks is appropriate.

PART C

Permits / Temporary & Occasional Use Notice

1. Unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre gaming machine permits (Statement of Principles on Permits – Schedule 10 para 7)

Where a premises does not hold a Premises Licence but wishes to provide gaming machines, it may apply to the licensing authority for this permit. It should be noted that the applicant must show that the premises will be wholly or mainly used for making gaming machines available for use (Section 238).

The Gambling Act 2005 states that a licensing authority may prepare a *statement of principles* that they propose to consider in determining the suitability of an applicant for a permit and in preparing this statement, and/or considering applications, it need not (but may) have regard to the licensing objectives and shall have regard to any relevant guidance issued by the Commission under section 25. The Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities also states: In their three year licensing policy statement, licensing authorities may include a statement of principles that they propose to apply when exercising their functions in considering applications for permits...., licensing authorities will want to give weight to child protection issues. Further guidance on the information that should be obtained from the applicant and others will be provided in the next version of this guidance.

The Guidance also states: An application for a permit may be granted only if the licensing authority is satisfied that the premises will be used

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as an unlicensed Family Entertainment Centre, and if the chief officer of police has been consulted on the application. Relevant considerations to take into account would include the applicant's suitability, such as any convictions that they may have that would make them unsuitably to operate a family entertainment centre; and the suitability of the premises in relation to their location and issues about disorder.

It should be noted that a licensing authority cannot attach conditions to this type of permit and that the statement of principles only applies to initial applications and not to renewals.

Statement of Principles = This licensing authority will expect the applicant to show that there are policies and procedures in place to protect children from harm. Harm in this context is not limited to harm from gambling but includes wider child protection considerations. The efficiency of such policies and procedures will each be considered on their merits, however, they may include BRC checks for staff, training covering how staff would deal with unsupervised very young children being on the premises, or children causing perceived problems on / around the premises.

With regard to renewals of these permits, a licensing authority may refuse an application for renewal of a permit only on the grounds that an authorised local authority officer has been refused access to the premises without reasonable excuse, or that renewal would not be reasonably consistent with pursuit of the licensing objectives.

2. (Alcohol) Licensed premises gaming machine permits – (Schedule 13 Para 4(1))

There is provision in the Act for premises licensed to sell alcohol for consumption on the premises, to automatically have 2 gaming

machines, of categories C and/or D. The premises merely need to notify the licensing authority. The licensing authority can remove the automatic authorisation in respect of any particular premises if:

- provision of the machines is not reasonably consistent with the pursuit of the licensing objectives;
- gaming has taken place on the premises that breaches a condition of section 282 of the Gambling Act (i.e. that written notice has been provided to the licensing authority, that a fee has been provided and that any relevant code of practice issued by the Gambling Commission about the location and operation of the machine has been complied with)
- the premises are mainly used for gaming; or
- an offence under the Gambling Act has been committed on the premises

If a premises wishes to have more than 2 machines, then it needs to apply for a permit and the licensing authority must consider that application based upon the licensing objectives, any guidance issued by the Gambling Commission issued under Section 25 of the Gambling Act 2005, and "*such matters as they think relevant.*" This licensing authority considers that "such matters" will be decided on a case by case basis but generally there will be regard to the need to protect children and vulnerable persons from harm or being exploited by gambling and will expect the applicant to satisfy the authority that there will be sufficient measures to ensure that under 18 year olds do not have access to the adult only gaming machines. Measures which will satisfy the authority that there will be no access may include the adult machines being in site of the bar, or in the sight of staff who will monitor that the machines are not being used by those under 18. Notices and signage may also be help. As regards the

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protection of vulnerable persons this applicants may wish to consider the provision of information leaflets / helpline numbers for organisations such as GamCare.

It is recognised that some alcohol licensed premises may apply for a premises licence for their non-alcohol licensed areas. Any such application would need to be applied for, and dealt with as an Adult Entertainment Centre premises licence.

It should be noted that the licensing authority can decide to grant the application with a smaller number of machines and/or a different category of machines than that applied for. Conditions (other than these) cannot be attached.

It should also be noted that the holder of a permit to must comply with any Code of Practice issued by the Gambling Commission about the location and operation of the machine.

3. Prize Gaming Permits – (Statement of Principles on Permits - Schedule 14 Para 8 (3))

The Gambling Act 2005 states that a Licensing Authority may “prepare a statement of principles that they propose to apply in exercising their functions under this Schedule” which “may, in particular, specify matters that the licensing authority propose to consider in determining the suitability of the applicant for a permit”.

This licensing authority has not prepared a statement of principles. Should it decide to do so it will include details in a revised version of the policy statement.

In making its decision on an application for this permit the licensing authority does not need to have regard to the licensing objectives but must have regard to any Gambling Commission guidance.

It should be noted that there are conditions in the Gambling Act 2005 by which the permit holder must comply, but that the licensing authority cannot attach conditions. The conditions in the Act are:

- the limits on participation fees, as set out in regulations, must be complied with;
- all chances to participate in the gaming must be allocated on the premises on which the gaming is taking place and on one day; the game must be played and completed on the day the chances are allocated; and the result of the game must be made public in the premises on the day that it is played;
- the prize for which the game is played must not exceed the amount set out in regulations (if a money prize), or the prescribed value (if non-monetary prize); and
- participation in the gaming must not entitle the player to take part in any other gambling.

4. Club Gaming and Club Machines Permits

Members Clubs and Miners’ welfare institutes (but not Commercial Clubs) may apply for a Club Gaming Permit or a Clubs Gaming machines permit. The Club Gaming Permit will enable the premises to provide gaming machines (3 machines of categories B, C or D), equal chance gaming and games of chance as set-out in forthcoming regulations. A Club Gaming machine permit will enable the premises to provide gaming machines (3 machines of categories B, C or D).

Gambling Commission Guidance for local authorities states: Members clubs must have at least 25 members and be established and conducted “wholly or mainly” for purposes other than gaming, unless the gaming is

Statement of Gambling Policy s349 Gambling Act 2005

permitted by separate regulations. It is anticipated that this will cover bridge and whist clubs, which will replicate the position under the Gaming Act 1968. A members' club must be permanent in nature, not established to make commercial profit, and controlled by its members equally. Examples include working men's clubs, branches of Royal British Legion and clubs with political affiliations.

The Guidance also makes it clear that before granting the permit the authority will need to satisfy itself that the premises meet the requirements of a members' club and may grant the permit if the majority of members are over 18.

This Licensing Authority is aware that Licensing authorities may only refuse an application on the grounds that:

- (a) the applicant does not fulfil the requirements for a members' or commercial club or miners' welfare institute and therefore is not entitled to receive the type of permit for which it has applied;
- (b) the applicant's premises are used wholly or mainly by children and/or young persons;
- (c) an offence under the Act or a breach of a permit has been committed by the applicant while providing gaming facilities;
- (d) a permit held by the applicant has been cancelled in the previous ten years; or
- (e) an objection has been lodged by the Commission or the police.

It should be noted that there is a 'fast-track' procedure available for premises which hold a Club Premises Certificate under the Licensing Act 2003. As the Gambling Commission's Guidance for local authorities states: Under the fast-track procedure there is no opportunity for objections to be made by the Commission or the police, and the ground upon which an authority can refuse a permit are reduced and that

the grounds on which an application under the process may be refused are:

- (a) that the club is established primarily for gaming, other than gaming prescribed under schedule 12;
- (b) that in addition to the prescribed gaming, the applicant provides facilities for other gaming; or
- (c) that a club gaming permit or club machine permit issued to the applicant in the last ten years has been cancelled.

5. Temporary Use Notices

There are a number of statutory limits as regards Temporary Use Notices. It is noted that it falls to the licensing authority to decide what constitutes a 'set of premises' where Temporary Use Notices are received relating to the same building / site.

6. Occasional Use Notices:

The licensing authority has very little discretion as regards these notices aside from ensuring that the statutory limit of 8 days in a calendar year is not exceeded. The licensing authority will though need to consider the definition of a 'track' and whether the applicant is permitted to avail him/herself of the notice.

REPORT TO:	Executive Board
DATE:	7 th December, 2006
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Corporate & Policy
SUBJECT:	Corporate Equality Plan
WARD(S):	Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of the report is to ask the Executive Board to approve the revised Corporate Equality Plan and to submit it to public consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 That the revised Corporate Equality Plan be approved by Executive Board, and submitted for public consultation as outlined in the report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Earlier this year the Executive Board approved a Corporate Equality Plan for the Council. However, since then there has been significant new legislation in relation to both Disability Equality and Gender Equality.
- 3.2 The new legislation requires the Council to adopt a Disability Equality Scheme (December 2006) and a Gender Equality Scheme (April 2007). Rather than adopt separate schemes for each aspect of social identity, it is proposed that a single equality scheme be adopted to include the statutory requirements to produce a Race Equality Scheme, a Disability Equality Scheme and a Gender Equality Scheme. As the Council's Race Equality Scheme is already incorporated within the Corporate Equality Plan there is a logic to incorporating the other statutory schemes within the same plan. This is what the revised Corporate Equality Scheme seeks to do.
- 3.3 The revisions to the Corporate Equality Scheme attached are not substantial as most of the requirements for the relevant schemes were already included. Changes include updating the performance information in Appendix 2, and updating the Departmental Equality Plans in Appendix 3. The Plan is also now specific about references to gender including gender reassignment, and also includes an employment objective of looking for gaps in pay relating to social identity and considering whether action is needed to address those gaps.

- 3.4 In terms of public consultation, the following process is proposed:
- o Advertises in the press making the public aware of the consultation process
 - o Making the Plan available on the Council's website, at Libraries and at the one stop shops
 - o Copies to all the key stakeholders (Police, PCT etc) and voluntary groups that the Council has details of
 - o Item on the agenda of Corporate Services PPB.

Following this process any representations and further amendments proposed will be brought back to the Board for consideration.

4.0 POLICY, FINANCIAL AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are no direct additional financial consequences arising from the Plan other than the cost of consultation.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1 The revisions to the plan are necessary to ensure that the Council is complying with its statutory obligations to promote Disability and Gender Equality.

6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 6.1 The Plan is a key control measure for ensuring that the Council is set up to meet the diverse needs of its customers.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Codes of Practice on the Disability and Gender Equality Duties	Municipal Building	John Tradewell



**Corporate Equality Plan
2006-2009**

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1. Foreword

Welcome to Halton Borough Council's Corporate Equality Plan 2006-09. This plan contains important information about the work the Council is doing in the area of equality. It outlines the action that the Council will be taking to ensure equality of opportunity for both its employees and residents of the area who use the services it provides.

We have legal duties relating to equality and we are determined to meet these. However, our aim is not just to meet our legal duties, but to make Halton a place where everyone matters and is treated as an equal citizen, in the light of their different needs

We want Halton to be a place where no-one experiences discrimination or disadvantage because of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable reason.

The Council has already made some strides towards this aim. In July 2002 we adopted our first Race Equality Scheme committing the Council to assess each of its policies and services for their potential impact on different ethnic groups, and then in March 2004 we adopted a revised Corporate Equality Policy that commits us to taking action to prevent discrimination on any grounds. However, we recognise that we still have great deal to do in ensuring equality for all. We believe that the proposals contained in this document will pave the way for further progress in achieving genuine equality of opportunity for all.

As the work described in the plan takes place over the next three years we will continue to welcome comments on it and on any other aspect of our work to promote equality. We will continue to listen to views and amend the Plan in the light of those views as the Plan is intended to be a living document, continuing to change to reflect the needs and aspirations of local people.

Cllr. Tony McDermott,
Leader, Halton Borough Council

Mr. David Parr,
Chief Executive, Halton Borough Council

2. Introduction

The publication of the Corporate Equality Plan, which incorporates the Council's statutory Race Equality Scheme, Disability Equality Scheme and Gender Equality Scheme is further evidence of the ongoing progress being made by the Council towards its expressed commitment to promote equality in the Halton. The Council is committed to promoting equal opportunity for everyone, regardless of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable reason (for example HIV status, caring and child care responsibilities, union activity, unrelated criminal convictions). The Council recognises that to serve its population well it must meet the diverse and individual needs of its customers, and to do this it needs to reach into those parts of its community which are either excluded from, or find it difficult to access, the Council's services.

The Council intends, through its ongoing work on equality issues, that this document will become the focus for promoting equality across the Council. This will mean integrating equality into all aspects of our functions, policies and services. The Plan does not, however, offer a 'quick-fix' strategy. It sets out a process for long term and sustainable improvements as to how the Council promotes equality through the progressive adoption of the levels prescribed within the Equality Standard for Local Government.

Whilst some progress in this area can already be shown, it is recognised that there is some way to go to make sure all Council functions, services and policies are developed and delivered in accordance with that central commitment to equality.

The Plan provides the blueprint for carrying out the requirements laid down in the Equality Standard for Local Government. This Plan is, nevertheless, a living document and the Council would welcome views and comments to help us learn more and improve the Plan.

A copy of this document is available on request and it is also on the Council's website at www.halton.gov.uk.

Please send your comments and views to:-

John Tradewell
Council Solicitor,
Halton Borough Council,
Municipal Building,
Kingsway,
Widnes,
WA8 7QF

Tel: 0151 424 2061

e-mail: john.tradewell@halton.gov.uk

3. Purpose of the Corporate Equality Plan

We recognise that in order to improve our performance we have to take practical steps to promote diversity and equality of opportunity. Therefore the purpose of this Plan is to:

- Provide all staff and members of the Council, partner organisations and Halton residents with leadership, accountability and direction in promoting equality and diversity and eliminating discrimination in service delivery and employment.
- Make clear the Council's commitments in fulfilling its legal obligations to achieve equality of opportunity in the areas of race, gender (including gender reassignment), disability, sexuality, religion or belief and age
- Mainstream equal opportunities into all business decisions by developing systems and processes which are accessible and transparent, for example in contracting or grant aid;
- Create a positive, safe, accessible environment and culture in which discrimination has no part and where everyone can achieve their full potential;
- Value and respect diversity and benefit from our differences;
- Support positive action programmes where there is a clearly identified need, for example Corporate parenting responsibilities to Looked After Children;
- Motivate staff across the Council's various Directorates and Departments by showing how they contribute to our equality objectives;
- Ensure that our equality objectives are consistently applied throughout the whole council and taking necessary action when non-compliance with the Policy is identified;
- Listen to, engage and collaborate with a wide range of partners and staff in order to service users and employees to ensure our policies are effective and meet their needs;
- Draw together the different strands of equality work into one comprehensive plan with equality priorities for the next 3 years and an explanation of how we will achieve them;
- Ensure we meet the aims of our policies by target setting, monitoring, evaluating and reviewing progress on a regular basis;
- Secure resources to ensure that this commitment is achieved.

Appendix 1 sets out the detailed steps that the Council take over the lifetime of this Plan to deliver these aims.

4. Halton in Context

Halton's Vision

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people enjoy a good quality of life with;

- good health
- a high quality, modern urban environment
- opportunity for all to fulfil their potential
- greater prosperity and equality
- safe and attractive neighbourhoods

The Council is pledged to secure a better future for the people of Halton. Therefore, the Council will work vigorously to see this vision realised and will make sure that;

- The community is offered leadership which maintains open and democratic processes that encourage local people to become involved in decisions that directly affect them and future generations
- The community receives value for money services of the highest quality that are accessible, affordable and focused on local needs
- The Council is a first class employer that engages a well-trained, motivated and committed workforce in a working environment of trust, co-operation and respect.

Overview of Halton

Halton sits on either side of the River Mersey and is made up of the twin towns of Widnes and Runcorn together with the villages of Hale, Moore, Daresbury and Preston Brook. It provides a home for nearly 120,000 people. Halton is an urban, industrial area whose main businesses are in chemicals, food processing, clothing, metal products and furniture manufacturing. The main service sectors are retail, financial, public and health administration.

Halton Borough Council is the major employer in the area employing approximately 6,000 employees.

Age

The Census 2001 revealed the age breakdown for residents in Halton as follows:-

Age Range	Total	Percentage
0-4	7,200	6.1%
5-14	16,600	14.0%
15-24	15,300	12.9%
25-44	33,800	28.6%
45 – Retirement Age	26,600	22.5%
Retirement Age Plus	18,800	15.9%

(Note: Retirement Age for this purpose is 60 for women and 65 for men).

The Population in Halton is ageing, and the average age of the population increased from 35 in 1991 to 37 in 2001.

In relation to the Council's workforce (excluding school based employees) the age profile was as follows:

Age Range	Total	Percentage
19 or less	51	2%
20-29	429	17.3%
30-39	635	25.6%
40-49	714	28.8%
50-59	562	22.7%
Over 60	90	3.6%

Gender

Gender is essentially balanced in Halton with 51.7% of residents being female and 48.3% male.

In relation to the Council workforce (excluding schools based employees) 70.4% are female and 29.6% male. The gender balance is more equitable at Managerial level where 55% are female and 45% male. Traditionally the senior management of local authorities has tended to be male dominated but this is now changing, and the percentage of women in senior management in the Council (i.e. the top 5% of earners) has increased to 37.84%.

Ethnicity

The table below outlines the ethnic groups in Halton as reported in the 2001 Census. 1.2% of the population was recorded as belonging to an ethnic minority community, details of which are set out in the table below:-.

Population Group	Total Population	Percentage
White British	115,396	97.62%
White Irish	824	0.69%
Any Other White Background	563	0.48%
White and Black Caribbean	221	0.19%
White and Black African	151	0.13%
White and Asian	169	0.14%
Any Other Mixed Background	164	0.14%
(Asian or Asian British) Indian	149	0.13%
(Asian or Asian British) Pakistani	32	0.03%
(Asian or Asian British)Bangladeshi	45	0.04%
Any Other Asian Background	47	0.04%
(Black or Black British) Caribbean	54	0.05%
(Black or Black British) African	55	0.05%
Any Other Black or Black Background	23	0.02%
Chinese	240	0.2%
Other Ethnic Group	75	0.06%
Overall Total	118,208	

The ethnicity of the Council's workforce (excluding school bases staff) is as follows:

Ethnic Origin	Numbers	Percentage
White British	2326	94%
White Irish	14	0.56%
White and Black Caribbean	2	0.08%
Any Other Mixed, Black or Black British Background	3	0.12%
(Asian or Asian British) Indian	3	0.12%
Any Other Asian Background	10	0.4%
Chinese	2	0.08%
Not declared	116	4.7%
Overall Total	2476	

This shows that the proportion of the Council's workforce from an ethnic minority background is 1.46%.

Disability

There is no single measure of the proportion of the population with a disability, but in the 2001 census 21.5% of the population in Halton indicated that they had a limiting long-term illness (which is higher than the average for England and Wales which is 18.2%). The census figures are borne out by Benefits data which shows that in the last quarter of 2004, of the 14,900 people of working age claiming benefit in Halton 11,000 were claiming as a result of sickness or disability. In the same quarter, of the 20,500 people of pensionable age claiming benefit, 8,000 were claiming as a result of sickness or disability.

Of the Council's workforce, 0.84% have indicated that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act definition.

Religious Belief

The 2001 Census provides the following picture in relation to Religious Belief in Halton:

Religion	Numbers	Percentage
Christian	99,096	83.84%
Buddhist	114	0.1%
Hindu	98	0.08%
Jewish	40	0.03%
Muslim	148	0.12%
Sikh	33	0.03%
Other Religions	122	0.1%
No Religion	10,273	8.69%
Religion not stated	8,277	7.0%

The Council does not currently hold information on the religious beliefs of its workforce.

Sexual Orientation

The Council does not currently hold any data relating to sexual. It does not have any plans currently to gather such data as it would not wish to intrude into people's private and personal lives.

5. Equality Policy Statement

The Council wants to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. It is totally committed to achieving equality of opportunity in service delivery and employment. Service users, job seekers and employees will be treated fairly and without discrimination. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender (including gender reassignment), marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable reason will not be tolerated.

The Council is opposed to all forms of unlawful and unfair discrimination (including harassment of any kind). The Council will take appropriate action wherever instances of discrimination and harassment occur, in the delivery of services and in the course of employment. It will work with its partners to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice.

The Council will fulfil its legal obligations under the relevant legislation, including:

Gender

Equal Pay Act 1970 (as amended),
Sex Discrimination Act 1975 (as amended)
Equal Pay (Amendment) Regulations 1983
Sex Discrimination Act 1986
Sex Discrimination (Gender Reassignment) Regulations 1999
Sex Discrimination (Indirect Discrimination and Burden of Proof) Regulations 2001
The Gender Recognition Act 2004
Equality Act 2006

Race

Race Relations Act 1976
Race Relations (Amendment) Act 2000
Race Relations Act (statutory Duties Order 2001

Disability

The Disability Discrimination Acts 1995 and 2005,

Sexuality

The Employment Equality (Sexuality) Regulations 2003

Religion/Belief

The Employment Equality (Religion or Belief) Regulations 2003

Age

Employment Equality (Age) Regulations 2006

General

Human Rights Act 1998
Freedom of Information Act 2000
Crime and Disorder Act 1998
Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974
Protection from Harassment Act 1997

The Council will keep abreast of potential developments in the law so that it is well placed to implement new legislation quickly and effectively.

Delivery of Services

Halton Borough Council will ensure that all services are provided fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate to these needs.

The Council 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 on different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will highlight areas for improvement, which will be dealt with through service plans.

Before awarding contracts, enquiries will be made of potential contractors about their equality policies and practices. Contract documents will contain terms requiring contractors to comply with their statutory equality obligations and the Council's equality policies and practices.

Voluntary sector organisations grant aided by the Council will be expected to have equal opportunities policies and procedures covering employment and service delivery. They will be expected to comply with their statutory equality obligations and the Council's equality policies and practices.

The Council takes complaints seriously. Members of the public, including job seekers, who feel they have been unfairly treated, have the right to use the Council's complaints procedure.

The Council will work closely with the Police and other partners in the Halton Community Safety Partnership, and the Halton Hate Crime Panel, to deal effectively with all forms of Hate Crime in the area.

Employment

The Council will work towards creating a workforce which reflects Halton's population. It will ensure that no-one is unfairly discriminated against when applying for a job or during the course of their employment with the Council.

All employees have equal access to training and career development regardless of any of the considerations mentioned above. The training needs of particular groups of employees who are under-represented in specific occupations and management posts will receive positive attention.

Comprehensive monitoring of the workforce and job applicants by ethnic origin, gender and disability will be undertaken and published. Where required, we will consider introducing monitoring in other equality areas. The purpose of monitoring is to evaluate the effectiveness of the Council's policies and practices around equalities, and to take action where evidence shows unfair treatment or where particular communities are not adequately reflected within the workforce.

An employee who has a concern regarding unfair discrimination or harassment at work may use one of the Council's formal procedures e.g. grievance, bullying and harassment. This does not affect an employee's right of reference to an employment tribunal within the statutory time limits.

The Council recognizes that many working parents and carers of the sick, elderly or disabled, have caring responsibilities that do not fit well with standard working patterns. The Council has already introduced a number of family friendly policies, and will continue to take a positive approach to working practices that will assist those with caring responsibilities.

Responsibilities of all Council Members and Employees

Responsibility for ensuring that the Council operates in ways that promote equality and are non-discriminatory lies with all members and employees of the Council.

The Council will exercise leadership and commitment in promoting equality of opportunity and freedom from discrimination, and we will do this through our roles as:

- Community leader
- Service provider
- Employer

Employees and members should participate actively in measures introduced by the Council to ensure that there is equality of opportunity and non-discrimination. Employees and members should also draw the attention of management to alleged unlawful or unfair discriminatory acts or practices.

Should employees, through the course of their employment, be found to have caused or encouraged discrimination, this will be regarded as a particularly serious offence, rendering them liable to disciplinary action. Members have an obligation under the Council's Code of Conduct to treat others with respect and to promote equality by not discriminating unlawfully against any person.

6. Corporate Management of Equality

The Council has adopted the Equality Standard for Local Government as a means of performance managing the equality agenda. The basic principle behind the Equality Standard is *“that equality policy and practice must be part of the mainstream of all an authority’s activities for that authority to be able to demonstrate that it is a good employer and offers high quality services.”*

The Equality Standard provides a framework through which local authorities can manage and meet their legal obligations under anti-discrimination legislation. It has five levels of achievement which enable the Council to break down the process of mainstreaming equality into manageable stages:

Level 1 Commitment to a comprehensive Equality Policy

Level 2 Assessment and consultation

Level 3 Setting equality objectives and targets

Level 4 Information systems and monitoring against equality targets

Level 5 Achieving and reviewing outcomes

The Standard currently covers equality issues around race, gender and disability; however, any new statutory duties or legal requirements to assess and monitor other equality issues can easily be incorporated into the approach advocated by the Standard.

The following are examples of the commitments and work undertaken which assisted the Council in achieving level 2 of the Standard as at March 2006.

A. Leadership and Commitment

- A new Corporate Equal Opportunities Policy has been adopted
- An Executive Board Member and Senior Officer Lead on Equalities have been appointed
- A Corporate Equality and Diversity Group has been established, attended by senior managers from each of the Council’s Directorates and chaired by the Council Solicitor
- Equality groups have been formed in each Directorate
- Equality Impact Assessments of all the Council’s Services, Policies and Strategies have been carried out
- Departmental Equality Action Plans have been prepared based on the Equality Impact Assessments

B. Consultation and Community Development and Scrutiny

- A Community Engagement Strategy has been developed which gives advice on consulting hard to reach groups (e.g. disabled people, older people) and is available for use by services.
- Each department and service area is committed to contributing to the consultation and scrutiny element of this Plan implemented through the performance management framework of the Council.

- The action plan in this Plan sets out in detail how we will carry out our commitment to equality self assessment, scrutiny and audit processes.
- The Council has established mechanisms for responding to harassment on the grounds of race, gender, disability, sexuality and religion or belief and will review its policy and procedures.

C. Service Delivery and Customer Care

- Departments and service areas are implementing actions as a result of the equality impact assessments carried out
- Departmental and service plans for 2006/07 will include equality objectives and targets linked to the Corporate Equality Plan which will lead to improvements in the equality of access to services.
- Equality action planning and equality target setting within all departments and service areas is being achieved through the integration of equality within the Council's performance management framework
- Any additional resources needed will be identified through the service planning process.

D. Employment and Training

- The Council has reviewed its recruitment procedures and guidance to ensure that they are non-discriminatory and in line with current legislation and best practice
- Work will be started to carry out an employment equality assessment of the Local Labour Market Area
- The Council has produced its first Workforce Plan which provides a profile of its workforce and which will feed into target setting and service planning.
- The Council is in the process of introducing a new Human Resources Information System capable of more easily capturing equality monitoring information.
- The Council has published employee monitoring information under its Race Equality Scheme and will continue to do so on an annual basis
- An equalities and diversity training course has been developed and a programme for delivery of the training has been produced
- The Council as part of its commitment to fair employment and equal pay is undertaking a Job Evaluation exercise of its workforce
- The Council will use its monitoring systems to identify any disparity in pay between members of its workforce by reference to gender, race, disability or other aspects of social identity, and if any such disparity is identified will consider what action if any is appropriate to address the issue.

Specific Responsibilities

Executive Board – Overall responsibility for agreeing the Council's policies and plans relating to Equalities so as to ensure that the Council meets its statutory obligations and policy objectives. The Executive Board also has a key role in providing leadership to the Community and Partners in relations to Equality and Diversity

Lead Member – The Lead Executive Board Member will report to the Executive Board on a regular basis (at least annually) to update the Board on progress in delivering this Plan

Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board – The Board will act as a source of independent audit and scrutiny of the work being carried out within the Council's Directorates and Departments and will make recommendations to the Executive and Management Team as to how the Council's arrangements might be improved

Other Policy and Performance Boards – The various Policy and Performance Boards will monitor and scrutinize the performance of the Council's Departments for which they have responsibility in meeting the objectives and targets set out in the Departmental Equality Action Plans (incorporated within Departmental Service Plans)

Management Team – The Management Team (made up of the Council's Chief Executive and Strategic Directors) has responsibility for overseeing the delivery of the Equal Opportunities Policy and this Plan and for monitoring the Equality targets and objectives set by the Council

Lead Officer – The Lead Officer will Chair the Corporate Equality Group and provide leadership and direction to ensure that the Council continues to make progress in relation to Equality and Diversity

Corporate Equalities Group – Working with the Lead Officer, this group will provide leadership and guidance to the Council on implementing equalities and will keep Management Team updated on progress and any obstacles encountered

Directorate Equalities Groups – These Groups will support progress, provide guidance and build best practice within the Directorates as well as fostering the process of cultural change needed to embed equalities within the Culture of the Council

Strategic and Operational Directors – Strategic and Operational Directors will continue to ensure that Impact Assessments are undertaken, and kept up to date, in respect of the Services, Policies and Strategies for which they are responsible, and will ensure that Equality Action Plans are produced and delivered for the Services within their responsibility

7. Assessing Functions and Policies

The Council is required to include in its Race Equality, Disability Equality and Gender Equality Schemes all functions, policies and proposed policies that are relevant to the promotion of race, disability and gender equality, and to set out its arrangements for assessing their impact the promotion of equality in these areas. The Council has chosen to extend its obligation in this regard so as to assess the impact of its policies and services on the promotion of the wider equality agenda.

In order to carry out these assessments the Council has the Assessment Document included as Appendix 4. Altogether, well over 100 Assessments have been completed so far and these identify the whether services or policies have a high, low or no impact on the promotion of Equality. On the basis of these assessments Equality Action Plans have been produced for all those areas where services, policies and strategies have the potential to impact on the promotion of equality. A list of the various services, policies and strategies assessed and the associated Action Plans is attached as

Appendix 3 to this Plan. These Action Plans will be incorporated into Departmental Service Plans and delivery will be monitored via the Council's Performance Management framework.

The Council will continue to assess new functions, policies and services and when they are developed, and will ensure that the assessments already carried out are reviewed. It has given responsibility for this task to the Directorate Equality Groups which have been established in each of the Council's four directorates.

In addition to the assessment of functions and policies through the use of the Assessment Document procedure, the Council has also adopted a standard Report template which requires the equality implications of the subject matter of the report to be considered and explained in the report. As a result, when new policies or proposals are being considered, or when changes to existing functions and policies are proposed, the Report template requires that the equality implications are properly assessed. With the exception of a small number of confidential items, all the reports to the Council, the Executive Board and the various, Boards, Committees and Sub-Committees of the Council are freely available for public inspection on the Council's website and at the Council's One Stop Shops.

8. Communication and Consultation Arrangements

The Council is committed to engaging with the local community, staff and partner organisations to ensure that all those who live, work and contribute to the well being of the area have the opportunity to contribute to the development of the area. In order to engage effectively the Council has adopted a number of mechanisms, including the following:

- It has set up 7 Area Forums across the Borough at which local residents can attend and raise issues of concern with local councillors
- All Council publications now contain a statement (in a number of different languages) to indicate that the document can be made available in alternative languages and formats
- The Council makes all its key policies, plans, strategies and other documents and information available on its website and consults on new proposals via its website
- The Council has a series of processes by which it can communicate and consult with its staff (Cascade, Core Brief, In Touch) as well as working closely with the Trade Unions
- The Council publishes the Inside Halton Magazine and distributes it to all residents and business in the area on a quarterly basis.
- The Council works closely with its key partners in the Borough (e.g. the Police, Health Agencies, Community and Voluntary Agencies, local Business Representatives) through the Halton Strategic Partnership Board
- The Council, with its partners in the Halton Strategic Partnership, has produced a Community Engagement Strategy for Halton, which, among other things, provides a detailed toolkit for effective consultation and engagement with the local community, including hard to reach groups.

The Council intends to use these and other mechanisms on an ongoing basis to ensure that it consults and communicates effectively with local people, staff and partner organisations in relation to the planning and delivery of its work on equality and diversity, and in relation to the assessment, monitoring and review of the impact of its functions and policies on the promotion of equality.

The Council recognises that there will be a need for different means of consultation for different groups, and will use the methods most suited to the issue concerned. The Council will ensure that consultation information is available in accessible formats in a timely fashion (translations will be available if necessary), and that the information provided is sufficient to ensure meaningful consultation.

9. Monitoring Arrangements

Through the assessment process the Council will identify those policies and services which have the potential to impact (whether adversely or positively) on the promotion of equality. The Directorate Equality Groups will keep the assessments under review and will carry out monitoring to ascertain whether the potential impact is being effectively addressed through the relevant Departmental Equality Action Plan. In the event that the scale and implications of the impact of any particular policy or service are of wider corporate significance the Directorate Equality Group will refer the matter to the Corporate Equality Group for further review.

As well as the monitoring by the Directorate Equality Groups, monitoring will take place through the Council's performance management framework. This framework already involves the Council in monitoring a suite of performance indicators related to Equalities (Appendix 2). This monitoring of the Council's performance in relation to equalities will in future be enhanced by bringing the Departmental Action plans into the corporate performance framework.

The Departmental Action Plans addressing the impact of policies and services will be included in Departmental Services Plans. This will ensure that they are monitored through the performance management framework, which provides for quarterly performance reports to be produced setting out progress towards achieving the objectives and targets set out in the plan. These performance reports are then submitted to Management Team and to the relevant Policy and Performance Board for further monitoring and scrutiny.

The Corporate Equalities Group will undertake monitoring of the Council's progress in carrying out the actions set out within this plan, as well as monitoring compliance with the Council's statutory obligations (such as the publication of Ethnic Monitoring Data on the Council's workforce). It will report annually to Management Team on progress in delivering this plan.

The Prosperity and Equality Policy and Performance Board will carry out the role of independent scrutiny and monitoring of the Council's performance in relation to its statutory obligations and the commitments and objectives set out in the Corporate Equality Policy and Corporate Equality Plan. They may call for reports and require the attendance of Officers and Executive Members as they consider necessary in order to

carry out their responsibilities in this regard, and will report to the Executive board and Management Team if they identify any issues of concern.

10. Publication of results of assessments and monitoring

Impact Assessments of the Council's services and policies will be published on the Council's website and will be available in hard copy to anyone who requests a copy.

The annual report to the Executive Board from the lead Member for Equality will be published via the Council's website and will be available in hard copy to anyone who requests a copy. All reports to Policy and Performance Boards will be made available in similar fashion.

The Corporate Equality group will work with the Council's communication and Marketing Team to keep under review the effectiveness of the Council's publication policies to assess their effectiveness in reaching all sections of the community, and will make recommendations to Management Team if any changes are considered necessary to improve effectiveness.

11. Arrangements for Ensuring Public Access to Information and Services

The Council uses, and will continue to use, a number of means to ensure that the public have access to information. These include:

- Publication of a magazine on a quarterly basis for Halton residents
- Publication of detailed information about the Council's services via the Council's website
- Information and consultation campaigns on specific issues targeted at specific groups
- Public Notices and Advertisements in the local press
- Leaflets, brochures and other printed information about the Council and its services made available at the Council's One Stop Shops and at Libraries in the area
- The use of the Language Line service as a readily accessible translation service.

The Council is conscious of the need to ensure that this information is accessible to different groups. To achieve this the Council has committed to including information in different languages on its publication material explaining that publications can be made available in different languages and formats by contacting the Council. The Council is also aware of the need to improve the accessibility of its website. The Council's website is currently rated AA on World Wide Web Consortium (W3C) standard for website accessibility, and the Council is now working towards achieving AAA status, the highest rating.

The Council is also working towards making its services as accessible as possible. It has reconfigured the the arrangements for contact between the Council and service users by establishing Halton Direct Link, currently consisting of 2 One Stop Shops and a Contact Centre, as its customer services arm. The One Stop Shops are compliant

with the Disability Discrimination Act and the staff are trained to deal with the diverse needs of customers.

In addition the Council is using new technology to enable it to take its services out into the community. It has developed the award-winning Benefits Express which is a high-tech, mobile, door-step service dealing with benefits claims. As well as making it much easier for some customers to access benefits, this helps to greatly reduce the time it takes for thousands of people in the borough to get through their entitlement reviews. The Council is now looking to develop this service to offer the full range of services available at the Council's One Stop Shops.

The Council is also conscious of the need to ensure that access to its services is compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act and has put in place a significant investment programme to improve the physical accessibility of service locations.

12. Training Arrangements

The Council has carried out a significant amount of training on equality and diversity in recent years, but it recognises that ongoing training will be important to ensuring the successful delivery of this plan. The Council proposes to deliver the necessary training in a number of ways:

- A one-day course has been developed on Equality and Diversity and is run twelve times a year for a range of staff drawn from each of the Council's departments.
- The Council's Induction Process for new staff covers the issue of equality and diversity
- A New Manager Induction process is being developed and will incorporate training on Equality and Diversity
- The Council will the Cascade process (a mechanism for providing information and training to all Council staff) to make all staff aware of this plan and to keep them updated as to the Council's progress in relation to equality and diversity issues.
- Individual officers training needs will be identified through the twice-yearly employee development reviews carried out of all Council Staff.
- The training needs of elected members will be identified through the Member Action Planning process and training on equality and diversity will be provided when necessary
- Training on equality and diversity will be extended to drivers and escorts of the in-house fleet of mini-buses and rolled out to drivers of transport contracts both local buses and taxis.
- As and when new courses are developed or courses reviewed, they will be designed that equality and diversity issues are embedded (where appropriate)

13. Employment Issues

The Council is committed to promoting equal opportunities in relation to its own workforce. All of its employment policies have been reviewed to ensure that they are compatible with the aim of promoting equality of opportunity. The Council also carries

out monitoring against a number of targets to ensure that its employment practices are effective in this regard.

Under the Race Relations Amendment Act the Council has published ethnic monitoring data for its workforce relating to

- the numbers of staff in post
- applicants for employment, training and promotion
- the numbers who receive training
- the outcome of performance assessment procedures
- grievances
- disciplinary matters
- leavers.

The Council will continue to comply with this requirement but will in future extend this monitoring to cover gender, marital status, disability and age.

Reports on all the data and analysis produced as a result of this monitoring will be included on the Council's website.

14. Complaints Procedures

Complaints that the Council has not fulfilled its statutory obligations, its commitments under its Equal Opportunities Policy or this Plan may be received through one of the Council's various complaints mechanisms. Such mechanisms include:-

- Corporate Complaints System
- Social Services Complaints System
- Schools Complaints Procedure
- Departmental Complaints Systems (covering things such as Complaints about noisy neighbours, late refuse collection etc.)
- Racist Incident Reporting System

Such complaints will be dealt with as normal as part of that complaints systems. If anyone is in any doubt as to how to go about making a complaint, or which procedure to use, they should contact:

The Policy & Performance Department
Corporate & Policy Directorate
Halton Borough Council
Municipal Building
Kingsway
WIDNES
CHESHIRE WA8 7QF

Tel: 0151 471 7390

E-mail: corporate.complaints@halton.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1- Corporate Equality Action Plan 2006 – 2007

Target - Achievement of Level 3 by March 2007

Action	Responsibility
1. All Departments to set targets based on equality objectives	Operational Directors
2. Establish corporate guidelines for information gathering and equality monitoring	Corporate Equality Group
3. Seek agreement on equality targets with partners in “local partnerships”	Operational Director Policy and Performance
4. Establish Mechanisms for ensuring that equality targets are met by suppliers through contract management	Council Solicitor
5. Ensure completion of equality action plans at department level incorporating performance indicators	Operational Directors
6. Adopt where appropriate national targets/performance indicators as prescribed by Government Departments or by the Audit Commission	Operational Director Policy and Performance
7. Implement systems for reviewing progress and revising the Corporate Equality Plan and departmental action plans	Corporate Equality Group
8. Members and senior officer to endorse action plans as appropriate	Management Team & Executive Board
9. Link Action Planning to Best Value Process	Head of Best Value and Performance
10. Ensure that action on targets has started	Corporate Equality Group
11. Make public all service level and employment action objectives and targets that are available for consultation and scrutiny	Corporate Equality Group

12. Make provision of language services appropriate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups	Corporate Equality Group
13. Completion of a full and systematic consultation process with designated community staff and stakeholder groups	Corporate Equality Group
14. Consult on involving designated community, staff and stakeholder groups with scrutiny procedures	Corporate Equality Group
15. Consultation on equality to be linked with the continuing development of the Community Strategy	Head of Strategic Policy and Partnerships
16. Publicise how, where and when actions on targets will start	Corporate Equality Group
17. Complete access to services element of the Corporate Equality Plan and ensure consistency with the Race Equality Scheme	Corporate Equality Group
18. Ensure Equality objectives and targets developed within each department	Operational Directors
19. Service Planning to specifically address the importance, barriers, accessibility and reasonable adjustment in the provision of services	Operational Directors
20. Allocation of appropriate resources to achieve targets	Operational Directors
21. Establish structures of responsibility at departmental and service level to progress action plans	Operational Directors
22. Set timetable within action plans for creating/adapting information and monitoring systems within service areas	Operational Directors
23. For agencies delivering services on behalf of the authority, include within contracts a requirement to deliver an effective and appropriate service, fairly, and without unlawful discrimination	Council Solicitor
24. Establish Monitoring of Contracts to secure equal employment and equal service delivery targets	Head of Procurement and Financial Support Services
25. Start action on departmental and service area targets	Operational Directors
26. Complete Employment section of the Corporate Equality Plan and ensure consistency with the Race Equality Scheme	Corporate Equality Group

27. Set employment targets for recruitment, staff retention, workforce profiles	Management Team/Executive Board
28. Conduct an equal pay review and plan for equal pay adjustment	Operation Director Human Resources
29. Ensure that staff and members are aware of action plans and the implications for services and employment	Corporate Equality Group, Directorate Equality Groups, Operational Directors
30. Provide training for managers on the implementation of the Equality Standard with contractors and partners	Corporate Equality Group
31. Training for all staff involved in the recruitment of staff on the Equality Standard, setting service objectives, action planning, and monitoring, consistent with training arrangement sets out in the Race Equality Scheme	Corporate Equality Group
32. Provide training for all staff on the detailed implementation of the Equality Standard including action plans and updates on legal and other developments	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
33. Provide information and appropriate training on action plans to support scrutiny process	Corporate Equality Group
34. Ensure a system of guidance and training on relevant equality issues to short-listing and interviewers	Corporate Equality Group
35. Start action on all employment and pay targets	Corporate Equality Group

Corporate Equality Action Plan 2007 – 2008

Target - Achievement of Level 4 by March 2008

Action	Responsibility
36. Use corporate information system to assess adequacy of departmental information and monitoring systems	Corporate Equality Group
37. Set up system for review of service and employment monitoring reports by designated consultation and scrutiny group	Corporate Equality Group
38. Review targets against monitoring information and produce reports for corporate management team	Operational Directors
39. Prepare reports on progress against policy objectives for council executive/cabinet, scrutiny bodies and audit	Operational Directors
40. Take on board responses from designated consultation and scrutiny groups for revising policy objectives and targets	Corporate Equality Group
41. Make arrangements for the external scrutiny of the progress of action plans	Corporate Equality Group
42. Consult with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups about what kind of information will be collected and the reason for it	Operational Directors
43. Circulate monitoring reports to designated consultation and scrutiny groups	Corporate Equality Group
44. Undertake a consultation process that demonstrably engages designated consultation and scrutiny groups in review process	Operational Directors
45. Review by designated consultation and scrutiny groups of progress against targets	Operational Directors
46. Feed back response on monitoring reports to corporate and departmental teams, to directorate, council committees, employee representatives and members and to 'Community Strategy' partners	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
47. Require contractors to supply monitoring reports on service delivery and take-up	Operational Directors

48. All departmental and service level units are using information systems and effective and adequate equality monitoring procedures	Directorate Equality Groups
49. Apply procedures across contracts and partnerships	Operational Directors
50. Produce service delivery monitoring reports at specific and regular intervals	Operational Directors
51. Circulate Service delivery monitoring reports to all designated consultation and scrutiny groups	Corporate Equality Group
52. Report progress on employment targets to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups	Corporate Equality Group
53. Use monitoring to assess achievements against targets set in action plans and feed back results into policy review, targeting and revised action plans	Corporate Equality Group
54. Establish inter-departmental scrutiny process	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
55. Use existing or adapted personnel information systems to provide equality data relating to human resource targets (recruitment, promotion, training, grievance, disciplinary action, appraisal, dismissal and other reasons for leaving, retention, and equal pay)	Operation Director Human Resources
56. Produce monitoring reports at regular and specified intervals and circulate to designated consultation and scrutiny groups	Operational Directors
57. Use equality data to monitor use of all personnel procedures	Operation Director Human Resources
58. Use equality data to monitor the number of staff leaving employment and their reasons for leaving	Operation Director Human Resources
59. Use monitoring reports to assess whether authority employment profiles more closely fit the profile of local labour market area	Operation Director Human Resources
60. Report progress on employment targets to directorate members, council committees, members and consultation and scrutiny groups	Operation Director Human Resources
61. Report on implementation of pay review recommendations	Operation Director Human Resources
62. Meet the training need of staff appropriately	Operational Directors

Corporate Equality Action Plan 2008 – 2009

Target - Achievement of Level 5 by March 2009

Action	Responsibility
63. Demonstrate success in meeting a range of targets across the authority and for reviewing those targets for future action planning	Corporate Equality Group
64. Corporate review of targets for future action planning completed	Management Team/Executive Board
65. Benchmark the authority's performance against comparable others and share experience with others in developing good practice	Operational Directors
66. Review the Corporate Equality Plan	Management Team/Executive Board
67. Show that there has been increased involvement of community and scrutiny bodies and increased satisfaction with services and progress in meeting targets	Corporate Equality Group
68. Demonstrate positive results from consultation with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups in assessing how far they think targets have been met and were relevant to their needs/requirements and concerns	Corporate Equality Group
69. Demonstrate that there is trust and confidence among all stakeholders in the authority's consultation and scrutiny mechanisms	Corporate Equality Group
70. Assess methods of consultation and involvement with community, staff and stakeholders	Corporate Equality Group
71. Review the consultation, assessment and scrutiny elements of the CEP. The authority's consultation and scrutiny practice is benchmarked against comparable others and its experience shared with others in developing good practice	Corporate Equality Group
72. Complete department and service level reviews of target achievement	Operational Directors
73. Show that accurate service user profiles are being used to inform service changes and improvements	Operational Directors
74. Initiate inter-departmental scrutiny process	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups

75. Demonstrate that a full range of equality objectives are mainstreamed as part of their professional practice by managers	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
76. Demonstrate that effective systems are in place for managing equality across contracts and partnerships	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
77. Benchmark full range of equality achievements against other authorities in a similar position	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
78. Review equal access service objectives and targets	Corporate Equality Group/Directorate Equality Groups
79. Demonstrate movement towards greater equality in the workforce profile and other employment targets	Operation Director Human Resources
80. Demonstrate that the authority is paying its staff equally for work of equal value	Operation Director Human Resources
81. Complete human resource assessment of results of equal employment and equal pay target achievement	Operation Director Human Resources
82. Complete assessment of target relevance in terms of full range of equality target achievement and changing circumstances	Operation Director Human Resources
83. Demonstrate that staff are fully trained in the systems for delivering full range of fair employment and equal pay objectives	Operation Director Human Resources
84. Show that at all levels the full range of fair employment and equal pay objectives are mainstreamed as part of managers' professional practice	Operation Director Human Resources
85. Benchmark full range of equality achievements against other authorities	Operation Director Human Resources

APPENDIX 2 - Corporate Equality Measures and Targets

Ref:	Definition	2004/05	2005/06	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09
		Outturn	Outturn	Target	Target	Target
BV 2(a)	Level of the Equality Standard for Local government to which the authority conforms (higher is better)	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Level 4	Level 4
BV 2(b)	The duty to promote equality (higher is better)	53%	58%	63%	68%	75%
BV 156	The percentage of local authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for accessible to disabled people (higher is better)	39%	50%	58%	61%	64%
BV 11 (a)	The percentage of top 5% earners that are women	37.84%	39.54%	42%	44%	46%
BV 11 (b)	The percentage top 5% of earner from black and ethnic minority communities	3.12%	2.86%%	3%	3.2%	3.4%
BV 11(c)	The percentage top 5% of earner that have a disability	N/A	3.16%	3.2%	3.3%	3.4%
BV 16 (a)	The percentage Council employees declaring that they meet the disability definition in the Disability Discrimination Act	0.84%	0.72%	1.2%	1.4%	1.6%
BV 16(b)	The percentage of economically active disabled people in the Council's area	19.7%	19.7%	None set	None set	None set

BV 17 (a)	The percentage Council employees from black and ethnic communities	1.72%	1.91%	2%	2.3%	2.5%
BV 17 (b)	The percentage of economically active people in the Council's area from minority ethnic communities	1.1%	1.13%	None set	None set	None set
BV 174	The number of racial incidents recorded per 100,000 population	9.29	21.03	21	21	21
BV 175	The percentage of racial incidents that resulted in further action (higher is better)	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
BV 225	Actions against domestic violence (higher is better)	N/A	90.9	100	100	100
BV 56	The percentage of items of equipment delivered within 10 working days (higher is better)	89%	75.91%	90%	96%	97%
BV 195	Older people - Acceptable waiting time for an assessment (higher is better)	69%	83.5%	82%	83.5%	85%
BV 196	Older people - Acceptable waiting time for a care package (higher is better)	83.8%	91%	85%	91%	91%
BV 43 (a)	Percentage of SEN statements within 18 weeks (excluding exceptions) (higher is better)	69.7%	100%	98%	100%	100%
BV 43 (a)	Percentage of SEN statements within 18 weeks (including exceptions) (higher is better)	50.5%	91.2%	85%	92%	95%

BV 165	Percentage of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
DDA	To put in place a Disability Equality Scheme	N/A	N/A	December 2006	N/A	N/A
Equality Act 2006	To put in place a Gender Equality Scheme	N/A	N/A	By April 2007	N/A	N/A

APPENDIX 3 - Departmental Equality Plans

Corporate and Policy Directorate

Legal and Member Services Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/09	
Committee & Member Services	Low	Develop meeting accessibility checklist	X			Lynn Cairns
		Implement Checklist for all statutory meetings		X		Lynn Cairns
Licensing	Low	Devise Monitoring Systems for Social Identity of Applicants	X			Kay Cleary
		Introduce Monitoring		X		Kay Cleary
Elections & Electoral Registration	Low	Develop Checklist for accessibility of polling stations		X		Chris Kenny
		Review Accessibility of Polling Stations			X	Chris Kenny
Legal Services	Low	Include equality clauses in Council contracts	X			Rob Barnett
Land Charges	None	N/A	-	-	-	-

Policy and Performance Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/09	
All services	Low	Develop capacity/mechanisms to provide information in alternative formats/languages	X			All to Consider
Community Strategy	Low	E&D provisions to be embedded in new strategy	X			Ian Grady
Corporate Complaints	Low	Develop system to collect/analyse social identity data on complaints	X			Harry Woodall
Overview & Scrutiny	Low	Carry our O&S review of E&D policies and inclusiveness within O&S process		X		Alex Villiers
Halton 2000	Low	Examine membership against social identity profile for the borough and ways of ensuring it is representative	X	X	X	Richard Stevens
European Action Plan/Strategy & External Funding	Low	Evaluate impact on social identity groupings and future opportunities and impacts.		X		Wes Rourke
Communications Strategy	High	Introduce standard wording advertising availability of Council documents in alternative languages and formats	X			Michelle Baker
	Low	Improve Accessibility of Council Website to AAA rating			X	Martin Cousins
Research	None	None at present	-	-	-	-

Best Value & Performance Management	High	Ongoing monitoring and publication of Best Value and other performance targets and indicators relating to equalities	X	X	X	Harry Woodall
Halton Vale Royal European Action Plan.	High	We monitor outcomes on a quarterly basis. Equal opportunities is a cross-cutting theme throughout the strategy and all projects must demonstrate that they are proactively adhering to E.O principles	X	X	X	Wes Rourke
ICT Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Feasibility Studies	Low	Include Accessibility investigations and recommendations when undertaking feasibility studies	X			Julie Birchall
Homeworking	High	To provide the technology to make Homeworking possible	X	X	X	Julie Birchall
Human Resources Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Learning and Development	Low	Monitoring systems to be more structured through the new personnel /payroll system.	X			Hazelle Jones

Diversity Training	Low	Training on equality and diversity for members and employees. Ensure that all the learning opportunities offered embrace equality and diversity and any issues appropriately addressed	X	X	X	Jane Burgess
Recruitment	Low	Monitoring of the impact of recruitment on various groups through the new personnel/payroll system	X			Julie McCollom
Recruitment Training	Low	Continue recruitment and selection programme and refresher courses	X	X	X	Julie McCollom and Michelle Carruthers
Financial Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Internal Audit	Low	None at present time	-	-	-	-
Accountancy	Low	None at present time	-	-	-	-
Exchequer and Customer Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
HDL & Customer Services	High	Adapt customer surveys to identify the make up of our customers	X			Roy Wainwright

HDL & Customer Services	High	Draw up policy and guidelines informing staff how to recognise people with language issues and how ensure that service delivery can be achieved for these individuals	X			Roy Wainwright
HDL & Customer Services	High	Review signage within the One Stop Shops and consider whether signs in different languages are needed	X			Roy Wainwright
HDL & Customer Services	High	Undertake regular monitoring of our customer base to identify any issues	X	X	X	Roy Wainwright
Revenues and Benefits	Low	None at present time	-	-	-	Peter McCann
Procurement and Finance	Low	Establish Monitoring of Contracts	X			Jean Morris
Payroll	Low	None at present time	-	-	-	John Griffiths
Property Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Property Services	None	None at present time	-	-	-	-
Operations Property	High	Monitor compliance with Accessibility requirements and undertake work to improve accessibility of Council's operational property	X	X	X	John Hughes

Community and Health Directorate

Directorate Wide						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Data Collection	N/A	Improve data collection of service users in respect of race, gender, religion, age and disability in all service areas	X			Peter Barron Operational Director (OP & PSD) Audrey Williamson Operational Director (Adults Services)
Equality Standards	N/A	Ensure Equality Standards are applied to all Strategies, etc, which determine the work of the Directorate	X	X	X	Louise Wilson Service Planning Manager
Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004	N/A	Ensure all service areas monitor the impact of strategies, etc, on carers following implementation of the Carers Equal Opportunities Act 2004.	X			Louise Wilson Service Planning Manager
Workforce Development Plan & Training Plan	N/A	Train all staff on how to carry out Equality Impact Assessments	X			Emma Mookerji Service Development Officer (HR)
SMT Reports	N/A	Ensure that Equality Implications have been considered in all reports presented to Directorate SMT	X	X	X	All Operational Directors

Policy & Support Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Carers Strategy	High	Remove any reference in the Strategy to "socially acceptable sexual orientation". Review Strategy to ensure that all age groups receive an equal service.	X			Dave Trowbridge Service Development Officer (Carers)
Supervision Policy	High	Review Policy to include consideration of equal opportunity issues in all supervision contracts.	X			Louise Wilson Service Planning Manager
Housing Strategy	High	Collate data on all the demographic profiles within the Borough. Promote Housing in the Borough amongst BME populations, other under represented groups and young residents. Complete Equality Impact Assessments on all Housing related policies. Review Policy to address the BME issues raised.	X			Steve Williams Housing Strategy Manager
Private Sector Housing Policy	High	Research the level of need in the Borough amongst minority groups.	X			Steve Williams Housing Strategy Manager

		<p>Include in the Policy the requirement for landlords to comply with all equal opportunities legislation.</p> <p>The issue of eligibility and access of DFGs should be resolved as the continuation of the current situation is clearly discriminatory.</p>				
Exit Interview Guidance	High	Reconsider Policy to recognise the needs of minority groups or individuals.	X			Emma Mookerji Service Development Officer (HR)
Recruitment and Selection Policy	High	<p>Review Policy to give specific guidance on equality issues in the 6 defined groups.</p> <p>Analyse corporate equality data to improve recruitment practice.</p> <p>Provide specific guidance on recruitment from ethnic minorities.</p> <p>Review Recruitment and Selection procedures to ensure non-discriminatory practice.</p>	X			Emma Mookerji Service Development Officer (HR)
Ex Gratia Payments	Low	Review the Policy's application to adult placements.	X			Sandra Harris Support Services Manager
Debt Recovery Policy	High	<p>Review and update the Policy to address:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The provision of advocacy to service users 	X			Sandra Harris Support Services Manager

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The application of debt recovery across all service user groups • The consequences for all service users if charges are not paid. • The provision of information to make debt recovery procedures explicit at commencement of the service. 				
Contract Monitoring Policy	High	Revise Policy to include the requirement to collect equality data	X			Sandra Harris Support Services Manager
Core Values and Expectations	High	<p>Review Policy to address comments on bullying which state only that it won't be done in public, which suggests that it could take place on a private individual level.</p> <p>Review Policy to recognise that the provision of information is needed in different formats and languages to meet the needs of people with disabilities and whose first language is not English.</p>	X			Louise Wilson Service Planning Manager
Direct Payments	High	Revise Policy to reference meeting the needs of people from diverse communities.	X			Audrey Fearn Direct Payments Manager
Direct Payments & Equipment	High	Revise Policy to reference meeting the needs of people from diverse communities.	X			Audrey Fearn Direct Payments Manager

Older People's & Physical/Sensory Disability Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Allocations Policy	High	Review allocation processes to address the ineffective implementation of allocation processes in relation to cases of people with disabilities, which cross team boundaries.	X			Katy Hansford Service Development Officer (Older People)
Home Care Admissions & Discharge Policy	High	Revise the Policy to include statements about equal opportunity actions	X			Francine Coy Principal Manager (Intermediate Care & Rehab)
Home Care Statement of Purpose	High	Revise Statement to include a statement on equality issues	X			Francine Coy Principal Manager (Intermediate Care & Rehab)
Transfer of Care Protocol	Low	Review Policy to include a statement on equality issues.	X			Katy Hansford Service Development Officer (Older People)
		Review Policy to ensure it applies to carers.	X			
Adult Protection Policy, Procedure and Guidance	Low	Promote equality issues in adult protection training.	X			Julie Hunt Adult Protection Co-ordinator
Personal Safety at Work Procedures		Revise the Policy to include a statement on equality issues	X			Sue Wallace-Bonner Divisional Manager (Intermediate Care & Rehab)

Adults of a Working Age Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
ALD Day Services Re-design	High	Update analysis of need of day service users and use findings in the redesign of services with particular focus on gender issues and BME service users.	X			Nigel Parker Divisional Manager (ALD Provider Services)
Mental Health Act Procedures	High	Current legislative reference to sexual deviancy does include homosexuality. However this will be removed when the 2005 Mental Health Act comes into force. Incorporate revised guidance in revised Procedures Manual. The national situation in relation to the differential treatment of people from BME groups is acknowledged. Monitor and report on the local situation in the application of the procedures.	X			Lindsay Smith Divisional Manager (Mental Health)
Effective Care Co-ordination Strategy	High	Revise Policy to reference equality of access to all groups, demonstrating how this is done.	X			Lindsay Smith Divisional Manager (Mental Health)
ALD Housing and Support Options Strategy	High	Revise Strategy to actively address equality issues.	X			Nigel Parker Divisional Manager (ALD Provider Services)

ALD Workforce Strategy	High	Data on the age and ethnicity of the workforce is collated but not on the disability. To ensure the Strategy is most effective, this needs to be addressed.	X			Marie Mahmood Divisional Manager (ALD Integrated Services)
Supported Housing Network	High	Complete impact assessment on the Housing Allocation procedure. Develop a SLA with Contracts, which includes how all equality issues will be addressed.	X			Nigel Parker Divisional Manager (ALD Provider Services)

Culture and Leisure Services Departmental Equality Plan

Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
The Brindley & Arts Development	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Voluntary Sector Liaison & Partnership Co-ordination	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Community Development	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Library Service	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Parks and Countryside	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Community Centres	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-

Consumer Protection Division Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Age Restricted Sales	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Bereavement Services	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Cemetery Rules	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Consumer Advice Policy	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Consumer Protection Service	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Enforcement Policy	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-
Registration Service	Low	None in addition to the Directorate Wide proposals	-	-	-	-

Children and Young Persons Directorate

Children's Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Residential Procedures	High	Commission training following revision of the procedural guidance to reinforce best practice regarding equality issues	X			Divisional Manager (LAC)
Marketing Plan	Low	To be updated and an Equality Impact Assessment completed by the Marketing Officer	X			Marketing Officer
Student Services and Lifelong Learning Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer(s) Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Social Inclusion Policy	High	Review Social Inclusion Policy to ensure <u>all</u> pupils are supported to access their entitlement to learning	X			Jonathan Potter
Strategy for the Inclusion of Pupils with SEN	High	Implement SEN Review to ensure needs of pupils with SEN are identified early and pupils have access to mainstream education wherever possible	X			Jennifer John
Accessibility Strategy	High	Review strategy to ensure compliance with SEN & Disability Act 2002	X			Jennifer John/ Ann McIntyre

School Support and Advisory Services Departmental Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			<u>Officer(s) Responsible</u>
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Education Business Partnership 'To Develop Work-Related Opportunities for All Young People'	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Collect, collate and analyse work placement data Recruit extended range of employers Evaluate the value of work placement arrangements Ensure Risk Assessments include access issues 	X	X	X	Andy Page
Resources, Planning and Communication 'To Extend and Manage the Current Brokerage Arrangements to Provide Additional Range of Support Better to Meet Greater Diversity of Needs'	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Extend the range of providers Monitor and evaluate/quality assure support provided 	X	X	X	Ann McIntyre
Resources, Planning and Communication 'Review the Equitability of Funding Arrangements'	Medium	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Review the funding formula to ensure schools are able to meet "additional educational needs" of young people 	X			Ann McIntyre

Quality and Data 'Collect and Manage Data'	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify additional information held by schools about children's disabilities • Agree on data collection processes about Children/Young People's disabilities from school. • Produce advice and guidance to schools re: data collection • Identify areas in the CYP (Children and Young People's) database to store the information ensuring that the data is stored online with the system confidentiality • Agree on analysis about CYP disabilities 	X			Peter Richmond
Resources, Planning and Communication 'Ensure Accessibility in All Building Arrangements'	High	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include a section within the building briefs on Equalities/Access requirements. • Ensure CAD drawings/suitability assessments identify accessibility issues • Continue to evaluate accessibility of existing buildings • Produce advice and guidance to schools on securing access to buildings, curriculum and information 	X	X	X	Ann McIntyre

<p>School Improvement Service 'To ensure a Broad and Balanced Curriculum for All Learners/Learning Settings to Promote Diversity and Inequality'</p>	<p>High</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Monitor statutory requirements are met. • Support curriculum developments in PSHCE, Sex Relationships Education, Substance Misuse • Collect, collate and analyse data to ensure all learners' needs are met • Ensure provision meets the particular needs are of 'hot spot' areas • Continue to support schools in developing a curriculum which expects a diversity and equality in achieving the 9 themes of the Halton Healthy School Scheme • Manage the Schools' Update sessions which identify the range of resources across the Directorate thus for schools in order to meet the different needs of all pupils including the most vulnerable e.g. pupils from traveller families, 'statemented' pupils 	<p>X X X X X X</p>	<p>X X X</p>	<p>X X X</p>	<p>Billie Farrell</p>
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Environment Directorate

Major Projects Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			<u>Officer(s) Responsible</u>
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Castlefields Masterplan and Delivery Plan	Low	Ongoing consultation to ensure the project meets all the diverse needs of the community	X	X	X	Mike Curtis/Chris Leyshon/Sara Munikwa/Sally McDonald/Pat McDonald/Audoire/Derek Sutton to implement
Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park	Low	As above				
Economic Development Zone	Low	As above				
Halton Castle	Low	As above				
Projects Development	Low	As above				
Urban Renewal NRF Programme	None	As above				
Regeneration Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Town Centre Management	Low	Keep under review street scene and clutter in both town centres that prevents groups participating in town centre activities	X			Paul Smith

Growing eHalton	Low	Monitor assistance provided to woman owned/managed businesses to ensure project target (16) is achieved	X	X		Dave Unsworth
Inward Investment/Sector Development	Low	Develop contingency plan for handling non-English speaking telephone enquiries	X			David Lyon
Greening Employment Areas	Low	Assess venues for Steering Group meetings for disabled access and facilities	X			Gareth Bennett
Large Scale Events	Low	Continue with assessments of events sites and venues for disabled access and facilities	X	X	X	Iain Bisset
Employment Team	Low	Monitor effectiveness of the plan on a quarterly basis and report to DM.	X	X	X	Trish Cooney
Halton People in to Jobs	Low	Monitor effectiveness of the plan on a quarterly basis and report to DM.	X	X	X	Emma Marsh
Halton People in to Jobs		Ensure effective arrangements in place for increasing number of migrant workers	X			Emma Marsh
NWDA Aftercare	None	None currently proposed	-	-	-	-
Economic and Tourism Development Strategy	Low	Review evidence collection and monitoring arrangements	X			Gary Collins
		Review Strategy and Policy		X		Gary Collins

Business Improvement Area Scheme	None	None currently proposed	-	-	-	-
Business Parks Improvement Programme	None	None currently proposed	-	-	-	-
Supported Employment Service	High	Continued support from the service facilitates access to work for those with disabilities	X	X	X	Debra Getty-Cotterill
Adult Learning and Skills Team	Medium	Ensuring equality of access to Adult Learning and Skills Opportunities	X	X	X	Teresa Miskimmon
Highways and Transportation Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Highway Maintenance Strategy	None	N/A				Tony Wilkinson
Highway Improvements (Capital Works)	Low	Continue to ensure that the Physical highway infrastructure has apposite impact on access, social inclusion and disability issues	X	X	X	Dave Cunliffe
Routine Highway Maintenance and Management	Low	Ongoing provision of certain facilities for road users with disabilities (e.g. tactile paving for the visually impaired)	X	X	X	Colin Dutton
Street Lighting	Low	Collect evidence to assess impact of location of equipment (e.g. street lighting columns) on persons with disabilities	X			Stephen Rimmer
		Introduce Monitoring Arrangements		X		Stephen Rimmer

Transport Co-Ordination	High	Collect more evidence	X			David Hall
		Ensure robust monitoring arrangements		X		David Hall
		Publish more comprehensive assessment results		X		David Hall
Bridges	None	None at present time	-	-	-	-
Traffic & Road Safety	None	None at present time	-	-	-	-
Transport Policy & Planning	High	Adoption of policy	X			Steve Eccles
		Make monitoring arrangements		X		Steve Eccles
		Publish more comprehensive assessment results		X		Steve Eccles
Planning and Environmental Health Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Local Development Framework	Low	The Local Development framework will deal with spatial planning in the context of disability, age and race to a degree. It is therefore crucial to ensure that it is consistent with the Council's aspirations in this regard	X	X	X	Andrew Pannell
Development Control	Low	None at present time	-	-	-	-

Building Control	Low	Review current policy to ensure equity	X	X	X	D.Tierney
Dog Warden and Pest Control Service	Medium	Make monitoring arrangements Diversity awareness training	X	X	X	W. Salisbury
Enforcement Policy	Low	Diversity Training for Officers	X	X	X	S. Baxter
Environmental Protection Service	Medium	Make monitoring arrangements and continually review how accessible the service is to all groups across the community	X	X	X	S. Baxter
		Diversity Training for Officers	X	X	X	S. Baxter
		Ensure availability of translation service	X	X	X	S. Baxter
Food Law Enforcement	Low	Review procedures for customers and clients whose first language is not English	X	X	X	S. Baxter
		Make monitoring arrangements	X	X	X	S. Baxter
		Diversity awareness training	X	X	X	S. Baxter
Food Safety	Low	No action	-	-	-	-
Health and Safety Law Enforcement Plan	Low	Make monitoring arrangements Diversity awareness training	X	X	X	Yeemay Sung
Health and Safety Regulatory Service	Low	Make monitoring arrangements Diversity awareness training	X	X	X	Yeemay Sung

Neighbourhood Services Department Equality Plan						
Strategy/Policy/Service	Impact Assessment (High/Low/None)	Action(s) Proposed	Timetable			Officer Responsible
			2006/2007	2007/2008	2008/2009	
Catering	Low					
School Cleaning	Low					
Trees and Nature Service	None	None at present time	–	–	–	–
Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Low	Review to include issues of access to waste management facilities and services	X			Jimmy Unsworth
Biodiversity Action Plan	None	None at present time	–	–	–	–
Fleet Maintenance	Low	Roll out equality and diversity training to all fleet vehicle drivers.	X	X	X	Geoff Hazelhurst
Natural Assets Strategy	Low	Review – to include consideration of any equality issues	X			Ian Lifford
Landscape Services	Low	None at present time	–	–	–	–

APPENDIX 4 - EQUALITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

SCREENING DOCUMENT

Directorate		Division		Person Responsible for Assessment	
Name of the Policy/ Strategy/ Service		Date of Assessment		Is this a New or Existing Policy or Service?	
1	What are the aims and objectives of the Policy / Strategy / Service?				
2	What outcomes are wanted from the Policy / Strategy / Service?				
3	Who is intended to benefit from the Policy / Strategy / Service, and how?				
4	Who are the main stakeholders in the Policy / Strategy / Service?				
5	Who implements the Policy / Strategy / Service and has responsibility for it?				
6	Are there any associated Policies / Strategies or objectives?				
7	Could the Policy / Strategy / Service have a differential impact (positive or negative) :				
		Yes	No	Evidence	
a	On Racial Groups				
b	Due to Gender				
c	Due to Disability				
d	Due to Sexual Orientation				
e	Due to Age				
f	Due to Religion				
8	Available statistical/qualitative information relevant to the Policy / Strategy / Service and equality issues				
9	Could the Policy / Strategy / Service affect				

	relations between different groups in the Borough?	
10	Could the Policy / Strategy / Service damage relations between groups in the Borough and the Authority?	

DECISION

Does the Policy / Strategy / Service:	Eliminate unlawful discrimination	Yes		No	
	Promote equality of opportunity	Yes		No	
	Promote good relations between different groups in the community	Yes		No	
Impact Assessment: High / Low / None (delete as appropriate)					
Agreed By			Date		
Actions to Be Taken:					
			Yes	No	
1	Collect more evidence				
2	Conduct formal consultations				
3	Reconsider Policy / Strategy				
4	Resubmit Policy / Strategy				
5	Adopt Policy / Strategy				
6	Make monitoring arrangements				
7	Publish assessment results				
8	Other actions planned to deal with Equalities issues raised by the Assessment (if so, give details in comments box below)				

Additional Comments:




閣下如在中文語言上需要任何幫助，請致電下列號碼。

अगर आपको हिन्दी में सहायता चाहिए तो कृपया नीचे दिये गये नम्बर पर फोन कीजिए।

আপনি যদি বাংলায় সাহায্য চান তাহলে দয়া করে নিচে দেওয়া নম্বরে টেলিফোন করুন।

اگر آپ انگریزی میں بات چیت نہیں کر سکتے اور آپ کو اردو میں مدد کی ضرورت ہے تو براہ کرم اس نمبر پر فون کیجئے۔

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REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 7th December 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Financial Services

SUBJECT: Determination of Council Tax Base

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 There is a requirement for the Council to determine the 'Tax Base' for its area and also the tax base for each of the Parishes. It is required to notify the figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority, the Cheshire Magistrates' Courts Committee, the Cheshire Probation Committee and the National Rivers Authority by 31st January 2007. The Council is also required to calculate and advise, if requested, the Parish Councils of their relevant tax bases.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) **The Executive Board recommend to the Council that the 2007/8 Council Tax Base be set at 37,392 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority, and the National Rivers Authority be so notified; and**
- (2) **The Executive Board recommend to the Council that the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be set as follows:**

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	722
Daresbury	140
Moore	352
Preston Brook	331

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Tax Base

The 'Tax Base' is the measure used for calculating the council tax and is used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (the Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police Authority) in the calculation of their council tax requirements.

The tax base figure is arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula, and represents the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough, expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band 'D' dwellings.

3.2 The Council Tax Base for 2007/2008

The tax base is calculated using the number of dwellings included in the Valuation List, as provided by the Listing Officer, as at 18th September 2006. Adjustments are then made to take into account the estimated number of discounts, voids, additions and demolitions during the period 19th September 2006 to 31st March 2007.

An estimated percentage collection rate is then applied to the product of the above calculation to arrive at the tax base for the year.

Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 99% collection rate, the calculation for 2007/2008 gives a tax base figure of 37,392 for the Borough as a whole.

The appropriate tax base figure for each of the Parishes is as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	722
Daresbury	140
Moore	352
Preston Brook	331

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 Loss of Income to the Council if Council Tax Base is not agreed.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Working Papers	Catalyst House	P. McCann

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 7 December 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Liverpool City Region Business Case (LCRBC)

WARDS: Borough wide

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Executive Board of the development of the LCRBC and to seek support of the current draft.

2. RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1. Support the current draft of the Liverpool City Region Business Case.
- 2.2. The Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader have authority to agree the final version of the Liverpool City Region Business Case.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1. The DCLG is promoting the development of City Regions and City Region Governance. Liverpool is required to present a LCRBC to the Secretary of State. The attached document is the current version of the LCRBC.
- 3.2. Halton has played a significant role in the development of the LCRBC, which looks to integrate Halton within the strategic planning framework as part of the delivery of strategic functions for the Liverpool City Region. This strategic arrangement is critical to the further development of Halton locally, sub-regionally, regionally and nationally.
- 3.3. The LCRBC does not compromise Halton's position as the local authority for Halton's communities or its role as a community and neighbourhood leader, it very much complements these roles.
- 3.4. The LCRBC is supported by the six Merseyside Local Authorities.

4. FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

- 4.1. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

5. RISK ANALYSIS

- 5.1. Should Halton find itself outside the Liverpool City Region it will find it more difficult to deliver the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan

priorities. The LCRBC enables Halton to enhance its influence regionally and nationally and increase its capacity to deliver on strategic matters.

6. **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY**

6.1. None associated with this report.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Liverpool City Region Business Case (draft)		
Liverpool City Region Development Plan (draft)		

DRAFT



LIVERPOOL CITY REGION BUSINESS CASE



St. Helens Council

Sefton Council

 **WIRRAL**

 **HALTON**
BOROUGH COUNCIL

 **Knowsley Council**

 **the mersey**
PARTNERSHIP

 **The City of Liverpool**

 **Liverpool**
EUROPEAN
CAPITAL OF CULTURE

**It's our time.
It's our place.**

1. INTRODUCTION

Liverpool and its surrounding economic and political region is entering a period of renewed optimism and great opportunity.

Once defined by its problems recent successes have reversed what some believed was a city region in terminal decline and many more that it would settle into a second order existence amongst European and global cities. The trends are impressive:

- Large scale public and private investment, with an estimated £3 billion worth of current and planned development activity in the city centre alone;
- The development of the Mersey Gateway Bridge, the Widnes EDZ, 3MG, Castlefields, the Runcorn Canal Quarter, and Daresbury place Halton at the heart of the regeneration of the City Region
- Knowsley - the best performing Borough nationally in reducing unemployment over the last twenty years, including a massive 70% increase in self-employment in the five years to 2004.
- European Capital of Culture status and an improving image;
- A revitalised infrastructure with better schools, public facilities and housing renewal, and
- Population increases after 70 years of decline.

The City Region has the Core City of Liverpool at its centre surrounded by the local authority districts of St Helens, Wirral, Knowsley, Sefton, and Halton; a travel to work area of around 2 million people. However, its markets inter-act over a much wider catchment area; 6.75 million people live within 60 minutes drive time from Liverpool City Centre. 40% of the 219,000 jobs within the Liverpool local authority boundary are filled by workers from the wider city region and 40,000 Liverpool residents commute out of the city to work.

In addition to the 6 local authorities, the city region also includes Merseytravel, being the Passenger Transport Authority and Executive for 5 of the 6 local authorities on Merseyside. The Authority and Executive have legal responsibilities for issues ranging from travel information and concessionary ticketing to ownership and responsibilities for the Mersey Tunnels, Mersey Ferries and the Merseyrail Electrics Rail Franchise.

The Liverpool City Region is well established as an important economic driver of the North of England. Strong economic interrelationships are developing with the adjacent areas of Warrington, Chester, Ellesmere Port and Neston (West Cheshire), and North Wales (across to Denbighshire and down to Wrexham) and West Lancashire (beyond Skelmersdale and north to Burscough); and with the Manchester city region.

But it could achieve more. Merseyside's formal boundaries are now 32 years old and no longer meet the challenges of the city region. The distances travelled to work are now vastly greater than they were in 1974, and the destinations to which people will travel has also changed in line with economic restructuring (e.g. loss of traditional industry and replacement with "footloose" light industry, R&D, offices and service industries.)

The City Region Business Case provides an opportunity to rationalise and streamline these boundaries bringing Halton within the city region to facilitate strong, consistent planning and prioritisation. Logically, this should be achieved in part by extending,

the influence, powers and remit for the Merseyside Local Transport Plan and for the civil contingencies i.e Fire, Police and Magistrates.

The city-region's leadership recognise that this will require a radical new vision to move to the next level: a new partnership with greater commitment to, and from, the public, private and community sectors to enable the city region to accelerate economic progress further and to deliver a step change in quality of life and opportunities for local citizens.

We have already developed a solid evidence base upon which we have detailed our key challenges, assets, opportunities, and progress. These are detailed in the attached appendices:

- Core City Prospectus (2003);
- City Region Development Plan (2005);
- City Business Case (2006), and
- Merseyside Action Plan (2006).

2. WHERE WE ARE NOW

The City Region is a distinctive urban area, and is internationally recognised through Liverpool's attack brand. It is of pivotal importance as a strategic sea and air gateway into the European Union. Its success is of essential importance to the North West and the North's economy.

It is an economy on the move – one of the fastest growing regions in the UK. Economic forecasts project continuing economic expansion with 23,000 jobs protected for Liverpool and 36,000 in Merseyside by 2010:

- In the most recent year the economy of the core of the city region grew by 6% (Gross Value Added (GVA); and GVA per capital grew 6.2%; higher than any other region in the UK except for inner London
- Per-capita GVA levels remain lower than the UK
- Between 1998-2003, 46,352 new jobs were created – a rate of growth of 9.4% outstripping the North West (7.5%) and the UK (5.9%)

Liverpool is the economic centre with a stabilising population of 442, 000 and 217,000 jobs. As the key economic driver, Liverpool achieved a 7.2% growth in both GVA and GVA per capita in 2002, outperforming national, regional and all other core cities' growth rates. Economic forecasts project continuing economic expansion with 23,000 jobs protected for Liverpool and 36,000 in Merseyside by 2010.

The outer parts of the city region, embracing West Cheshire, Warrington and North Wales also provide a significant economic asset base to support the transformation of the economy. They have high levels of productivity and several very important clusters and sectors including automotives, aerospace, science & innovation, logistics/freight transport, chemicals and professional services.

3. ASSETS AND OPPORTUNITIES

Liverpool City region is fortunate to possess a number of significant attributes that cannot be replicated to the same extent in other parts of the UK:

- International profile and strong inward investment brand
- Liverpool European Capital of Culture 2008
- UNESCO World Heritage Status
- World Class Waterfront
- Super Port Concept including Liverpool John Lennon Airport
- Low land and property values
- Strong recent economic growth to build on
- Liverpool City Centre comprehensive regeneration
- Over 2 million citizens across the Liverpool City region – talent, passion, culture, workforce
- Untapped Labour Force
- 3 universities and effective schools
- Biotechnology and life sciences
- Critical Mass Sporting and Entertainment
- Strong Knowledge Economy
- Science Base – School of Tropical Medicine, science Park (inc Universities – Daresbury)
- Merseyrail Electrics network

The first steps of our economic transformation and the re-establishment of our status as a premier and distinctive European City Region is underway. Building on these assets will provide the platform to improve the competitiveness of the city region and make the necessary step change in economic growth.

4. CURRENT PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

It is clearly important to understand how the city region functions in terms of its economic geography and to develop better ways of working with partners across more functional boundaries.

This is why partners from across the city region collaborated to produce the City Region Development Plan (CRDP). The CRDP process has developed new ways of working, and strengthened existing processes and partnerships to facilitate work across local authority boundaries e.g. Mersey Maritime, Mersey Waterfront, Port and Airport plans, the City Region Employment Programme, Housing Market Renewal and the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative bid.

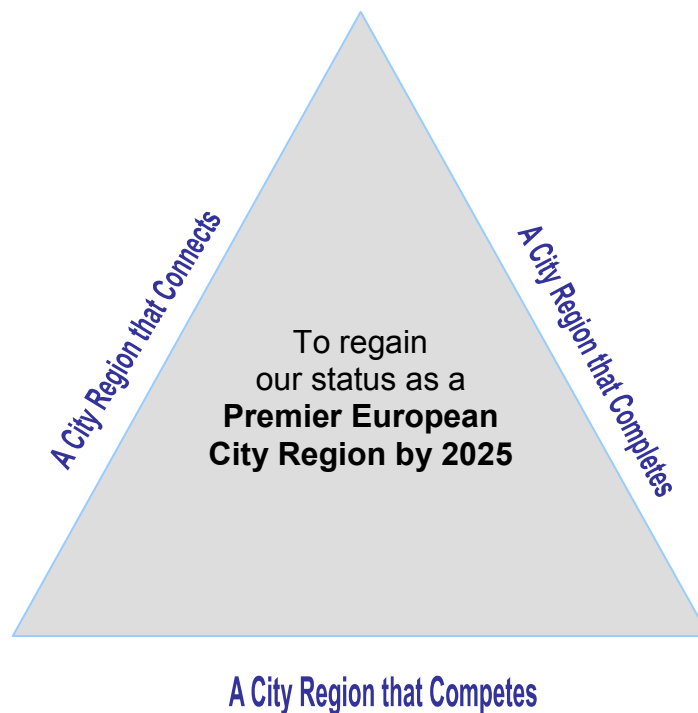
- Mersey Partnership bringing together public and private sector in a combined regeneration effort.
- Mersey-Dee Alliance exploring economic links between South Wirral / Ellesmere Port/ North Wales area.
- The Mersey Gateway Bridge a Public/Private Partnership – delivering the second Mersey Crossing

As partners working together we would recommend the following principles:

- Engagement –the need to engage local people in developing solutions, is an important part of current partnership arrangements
- Accountability – partnerships must not only be accountable for the decisions they make but should be able to be held to account
- Transparency – all decisions are transparent and open to scrutiny. The partnerships are required to develop communication plans for their work
- Outcome focused – all partnership activities need to demonstrate outcomes with a focus on improved Quality of Life
- Accessible – partnership structures must be streamlined and simple so that is easy for people to get involved
- Consistent – partnerships must be complementary to and not conflict with other structures with in the sub region and region
- Strong Leadership – clarity of purpose and an ability to take partners forward. The members of the partnerships act as stewards / champions within their organisations
- Inclusive – a commitment to involve all partners in helping to fulfil the city regions vision
- Representation - All key partners are represented on partnerships
- Consultative – partnerships will consult widely with key stakeholders on all key stages of their work.
- Objectivity – partnerships will seek to base their decisions on accurate, evidence based information.
- Integrated - partnerships will seek to co-ordinate activities and integrate this into the core activities of the region.
- Productive - partnerships will seek to bring about measurable change to the lives of the people of Merseyside including service users and the business community.
- Sharing Good Practice - partnerships will ensure good practice is shared across the region and with partners where appropriate.
- Monitoring and Review partnerships will keep the implementation of the overall business plan programme under review to ensure it is meeting objectives

Knowsley and Liverpool have worked collaboratively across local authority boundaries to achieve Inward investment. Within the context of the Strategic Investment Areas at Halewood/Speke and Kirkby/Gillmoss, economic impact has been achieved. Shared governance arrangements and shared decision making in the allocation of resources has enabled successful outcomes for both authorities over the last six years within the Objective 1 Programme.

5. MAKING LIVERPOOL CITY REGION WORK BETTER



There is no doubt that the Liverpool City Region has performed well over the last five years, with growth levels of GVA and employment across the City region being higher than both the North West and UK averages. However we are still not reaching our full potential – there are missed opportunities. Progress to date is not enough to meet our longer term ambition for accelerating economic growth and improving quality of life. Nor is it enough to help the city region or the North West to close the gap in economic growth with London and the SE, or with the accelerating economies of Asia and North America.

Accelerating the performance of the Liverpool City Region and increasing its competitiveness and productivity is our primary objective; but change will not happen overnight. Growth will be only achieved through a major step-change in our

competitiveness; building productivity increases; growing new businesses for the long term and providing a role for the private sector in the delivery of our vision.

Such a change will only take place as a product of development across a wide range of activities, from revenue based enterprise activities to improving the physical business infrastructure and environment.

The Challenges

- The relative economic position is still low – projected future growth is not enough to close the productivity gap with the average in the UK or cities in Europe and the US;
- Poor national image and perception – Liverpool City Region is still seen as a region that has been defined by its problems rather than its successes
- Current economic growth is not enough to address the concentrations of deprivation and worklessness in the city region, over 300,000 people who are economically inactive and over 60% of local neighbourhoods are in the worst 10% nationally on the national Index of Multiple Deprivation 2004.
- In some communities 60% of working age people has no qualifications and as few as 4 in 10 working age adults are in employment. The overall skill profile of the city region shows a deficit of higher-level skills (Level 4+) and a surplus of individuals with no skills, particularly among the working-age population.
- Self-employment rates in parts of the city-region are lower than elsewhere. The City Region has 22 VAT registered businesses per 1,000 people compared to average density in UK of 48 and North West of 32.
- Parts of Liverpool City Region are suffering severe deprivation (4 of the UKs most deprived super output areas are found in either Liverpool or Knowsley).
- Housing quality, choice and range remains an issue for parts of the city-region - low quality stock is an important constraint on the regeneration and renewal of distressed areas, restricts mobility and restrains the efficient function of the labour market.
- Liverpool City Region has areas of higher than national average poor health, with 28% of Liverpool's local neighbourhoods ranked in the worst 1% nationally for health deprivation.
- Life expectancy in the City Region is 3 years shorter than the national average. For every 1000 babies born this year
 - 85 will be underweight;
 - 17 will die in the first year;
 - 450 will live in low income households;
 - 200 will have no qualifications when they reach working age, and
 - 383 will be out of work at any one time between the ages of 16 and 64.

6. TAKING US TO THE NEXT LEVEL

Building Confidence

Liverpool City Region needs to raise its game – accelerating the performance of the Liverpool City Region and increasing its competitiveness and productivity is key. To achieve this we need to work differently. We are well positioned to achieve this.

If the Liverpool City Region is to complete and consolidate its economic renaissance it will need to clearly demonstrate within its argument for devolution of key powers, freedoms, and flexibilities the appropriate governance arrangements.

The central issue will be to develop a governance framework that is manageable; is driven by a coherent economic approach, is politically deliverable; and does not add additional tiers of bureaucracy nor fragment the complex partnerships which are already in place.

The changes over the last year in the political landscape and the well established joint working arrangements between the Greater Merseyside Local Authorities offer an opportunity to make the Liverpool city region work better; to see radical proposals for 'raising the game', particularly for collaboration around the 'real' economic geographies of cities and their hinterlands, and related issues of governance and devolution.

However, there is currently a complex arrangement of public organisations and government agencies delivering services across the city region. Each with competing pressures to hit national and local targets with varying accountability at the local, city and regional level.

The economy is growing but it has structural weaknesses across worklessness, skills and exclusion which are holding back the prosperity of the Liverpool city region.

The current governance arrangements whilst working well across a number of areas provide insufficient strategic co-ordination and accountability amongst partners to deliver an accelerated programme of activity to close the productivity gap.

Most importantly, effective sustained engagement by the private sector will only be achieved if they are convinced local government is capable of making strong decisions and can drive forward change.

Public money alone with its labyrinth of European, state or agency intervention cannot lever in the necessary economic development and therefore the private sector must also have a strong voice in economic planning for the city region.

What is required is:

- greater improvement in our collective capacity at a sub-regional level including public sector agencies;
- far better engagement of private sector partners across the conurbation and beyond;
- flexibility in terms of how we work with areas outside the immediate sub-region;
- greater legibility and visibility in terms of overt sub-regional governance;
- to "redraw" historical boundaries to achieve great efficiency and cohesion' and most importantly;

- To make the city region sustainably competitive in a global economy to the benefit of those who live, work and visit here; the wider region and UK PLC. To do this we will give priority to developing and exploiting global logistics, securing coherent integrated transport and being at the forefront of digital connectivity

To achieve this we need:

- medium and long term strategic planning
- full alignment of resources and activity
- to scrutinise and hold service deliverers to account
- to focus and prioritise integrated activity in key areas of inequality and disadvantage.

- a new way of working across the city region.

7. A CITY REGION THAT COMPETES

Promoting the skill sets, enterprise and well being of its people to underpin its infrastructure and image in attracting, securing and growing the knowledge economy

Sustainable communities fundamentally depend on strong economic performance. Cities and their hinterlands which are economically successful provide a strong base for creating sustainable communities. Unless the Liverpool City Region can develop an image as an attractive place to do business, to live, study and visit – a quality of place; unless skills levels are radically improved we will be unable to compete in the increasingly globalised economy; and we will be unable to generate the opportunities needed to ‘narrow the gap’. Growth in business, jobs and enterprise is at the centre of our ambitions.

We have some way to go. A clear productivity gap exists between Liverpool City Region, the North West and the UK (£2.8Bn with the NW and approximately £6.6Bn with the UK). The overall skill profile of the city region shows a deficit of higher-level skills (level 4 plus) and a surplus of individuals with no skills, particularly among the working age population. There are significant levels of worklessness across the city region with over 300,000 people economically inactive, many with their talents trapped in concentrations of worklessness. Self-employment rates in parts are lower than elsewhere and housing quality, choice and range remains an issue for parts of the city region – low quality stock is an important constraint on the regeneration and renewal of distressed areas, restricts mobility and restrains the efficient function of the labour market.

How we are progressing?

Creating an environment for Economic Growth

However, we are moving forward on a number of fronts, albeit not fast enough. Economic analysis demonstrates that Liverpool City Region needs to develop the existing business base to drive up the productivity and competitiveness and raise the overall level of enterprise and business density. The City Region has the opportunity to accelerate its productivity through development in Bio-technology / life sciences, Health and public health, ICT and creative industries and Maritime and emerging opportunities in accelerator science, engineering and nano-technology. In the last year Daresbury has been designated as one of the two National Science and Innovation Campuses marking a significant stage in the development of the region’s world-class science infrastructure.

In progressing the issues the city region will: -

- Continue the development of the Daresbury Science and Innovation Centre, including expansion of the 4GLS project.
- Implement the Liverpool Science Park phase 1b, and development of the Edge Lane MTL site to include both digital and science based facilities.
- Continue linkage across the City Region with major industries through sector organisations to promote knowledge transfer and spin offs.
- Accelerate development of health science research capacity within the City Region.

The Sector and Cluster Development Programme has already delivered £130million of additional net value added to the City Regions economy. There has been major progress in the revitalization of Liverpool City Centre and the waterfront, as part of

the Liverpool Vision Business Plan. These include the £900M private sector Liverpool One project, the £97M Kings Waterfront Conference and Arena. Progress has also been made on plans for key sites and premises projects at Wirral Docklands and Northshore (North Liverpool / South Sefton) which are being developed in partnership with Peel Holdings Plc and will maximise key waterfront locations for commercial, residential and leisure / retail developments. In addition the Liverpool City Region has significant capacity for expansion through sites available within the seven SIAs, the Widnes EDZ, the Ellesmere Port MEDZ and the NWDA strategic regional sites.

Health

The Health is Wealth agenda is exploring the link between productivity and health and is taking specific actions to address health related worklessness and reduce the level of incapacity benefit. It will also attempt to maximise the opportunities presented by health related assets, especially the Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine and in the last year a £50M investment by the Gates Foundation into Liverpool School of Tropical Medicine has been made to facilitate expansion and further research capacity and a £30million National Bio-manufacturing centre at Speke has been completed.

European Capital of Culture 2008

Liverpool's status as European Capital of Culture is a one off opportunity for the city region to showcase itself to the world. With continued support from Government the successful delivery of the £93M 12 month programme of cultural events (much of which will be unveiled on 6th Nov 06), is expected to generate 11M visitors spending £½Bn and leave a lasting legacy for the region.

The Destination Management Plan (DMP) is on course to deliver a doubling of visitor spend to £2bn, a growth in new tourism jobs from 20k to 30k and a £75M package of Southport Classic Resort projects all by 2015. Progress in delivering the DMP is being accelerated by an estimated £1.2Bn of private sector investment over the next 7 to 10 years and further boosted by new high-profile routes into North America into LJL Airport.

Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy

Liverpool City Region Employment Strategy (2006) has been created which centres around three key priorities: -

- Increasing the supply of suitably skilled labour to meet demand from growth and for replacement labour across the whole travel to work area.
- Building skilled, working communities, eliminating child poverty and increasing opportunity and social mobility
- Making a real difference to businesses and communities around the opportunities of European Capital of Culture 2008 and related economic growth.

A consortium has been set up consisting of Strategic Partners, Fund Holding Partners and Employer Representatives and its focus will be on a number of key priorities:

- Engaging and supporting employers
- Providing support services to workless people in targeted wards
- After-care and workforce development
- Tackling barriers at the strategic level
- Monitoring, evaluation and sharing best practice
- Linking employment initiatives with LEGI and enterprise growth

What is stopping us accelerating forward?

- Lack of clarity around the identity of the City Region
- Low level skills base linked to a comparatively low tech economy
- Lack of agreement on priority investment projects for the region and declining public sector investment
- Imbalance between public/private sector employment
- Lack of focus on attracting inward investment - the need to better engage and harness private sector expertise to increase private sector investment
- Lack of effective and specialist funds for investment in business start up and retention and mixed messages and poor focus by the public sector to support business
- Complexity of delivery arrangements for major infrastructure and investment

Where should policy go from here?

With a tight CSR in 2007 and a reduced post 2006 EU funding package we recognise that the City Council and indeed the public sector alone will not be able to sustain this progress without the focussed and co-ordinated activities of the public, private and community sectors all working to one goal. If we are to accelerate progress we will need the support of government to:

- Engage with the private sector more effectively
- Promote stronger links with universities and businesses.
- Promote development opportunities and work closely with developers / land owners.
- Restructure Inward Investment arrangements and increase spending on marketing and promotion.
- Introduce an accredited entrepreneurship programme to all secondary schools.

8. A CITY REGION THAT CONNECTS

Developing and exploiting global logistics, securing coherent integrated transport and being at the forefront of digital connectivity

Progress has been made against the general transport connectivity priorities outlined in the CRDP of May 05. Improvements to the West Coast Mainline are aiding the economy by providing enhanced connectivity to London but much more work is needed, with the support of Govt, to enhance key linkages across the city region such as the electrification of Bidston to Wrexham and various infrastructure improvements in moving freight to and from the ports.

How we are progressing?

Ports of Liverpool

The Ports of Liverpool is a major strategic asset for both the north and the UK as a whole, carrying more than 5M tonnes of cargo each year. Sector network Mersey Maritime has coordinated the production of the Ports Growth Strategy setting out the vision for the ports over the next 20 years, key features of which are; enhancing the maritime skill base, an £80M investment in increased container capacity and putting in place new supporting road and rail infrastructure. The aim is to develop the Ports of Liverpool into the international sea gateway to the North of England:

- Goods – primarily a container market with existing transatlantic routes and a route for Irish trade, as well as a Western European reception centre
- People – existing Irish and Isle of Man links and an emerging facility as a Cruise Liner trade and people

Liverpool John Lennon Airport

Liverpool John Lennon Airport, the fastest growing regional airport in the UK, has issued its response to the Govt. White Paper “The Future of Air Transport” in the form of a 24 year Masterplan, outlining customer growth and infrastructure expansion plans. Exciting new routes announced to New York and Toronto (starting in Spring 07) and improved rail access with the opening of Liverpool south Parkway underline the progress that has been made in the last 18 months. The vision is to reach over 12M customers by 2030 and a million tonnes of freight by 2015, employing nearly 10,000 people. However future success is dependent on developing key routes to major London airports and the implementation of new and improved road and rail infrastructure.

With the successful ports and the airport under common ownership there is a unique opportunity to integrate freight and passenger handling into a global gateway to create a “Super Port”.

Mersey Gateway

A key economic driver for the borough of Halton and the region in general is the creation of a second crossing of the Mersey at Runcorn/Widnes, an area that suffers chronic congestion daily. The proposals, which are estimated to create 3,600 jobs and add 100k sq m of new commercial floor space has now secured entry onto the Department of Transport’s major schemes programme for a delivery date of 2014, with agreed Government funding of £86M in grants and £123M in private finance initiative credits.

What is stopping us accelerating forward?

36% of people within the Liverpool City Region area do not have access to a car. This reinforces the need for there to be much greater investment in public transport

not just to improve competitiveness and accelerate economic growth, but to empower local communities. Transport, regeneration and economic growth need to be fully integrated in policy thinking and delivery. This is not happening in Whitehall, and it is holding us back. Transport policy making and decision-making is currently fragmented. It needs to reflect cross-boundary travel to work needs and our formal working arrangements with Halton. It also needs to consolidate the plethora of transport strategies in existence across the wider city region into a single Liverpool City Region Transport Plan.

Where should policy go from here?

In order to begin to make the step change in the structure of decision making necessary to achieve more effective leadership and stronger accountability:

- Greater controls of the city regions bus networks, to allow greater influence over bus frequencies, routes, fares and timetables is required
- A fully integrated Transport strategy covering all modes of transport is required.

9. A CITY REGION THAT COMPLETES

Becoming best in class for the delivery of effective projects and interventions which add value and secure regeneration

The scale of the problem of multiple deprivation and unemployment requires radical solutions and a twenty year commitment to funding streams. We are using our distinctive and truly world class heritage and cultural assets to enhance city competitiveness resulting in more people choosing to live, work, visit and do business in Liverpool. This priority is more than a tourism initiative, it is fundamental to re-defining the city region in the 21st century; and it is essential to get the core economic attractors such as premises, skills right.

What is stopping us accelerating forward?

Much has been achieved but there remain obstacles to progress in a number of key areas. One of the biggest challenges is to maintain the regeneration momentum that has built up over the last decade, to create further opportunities for growth into a competitive advantage.

Effective delivery will be the key to our success. However we are unable to develop a truly integrated approach to delivery due to the limited capacity of individual public agencies to develop specific, spatially focussed, approaches to delivery of key services. The public sector for the most part is driven by nationally determined targets and priorities at the expense of local consideration. We welcome the recommendations in the Local Government White Paper in terms of performance framework proposals. However we need an effective accountable strategic framework within which priorities can be developed and performance arrangements put in place.

Where should policy go from here?

We need a radical change to the commissioning, delivery and scrutiny arrangements for all public services including a statutory planning process which is proactive and focussed if we are to be able to:

- Effectively engage with the private sector
- deliver major developments and infrastructure projects
- To continue to improve to improve the city's infrastructure, urban environment and its management
- To raise standards of customer service

11. WHAT DO WE ASK OF GOVERNMENT?

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION BUSINESS CASE PROPOSALS – COMPETE, CONNECT AND COMPLETE	
1. TO TRANSFORM THE CITY REGION ECONOMY TO CREATE A THRIVING ECONOMIC PLATFORM TO ACCELERATE THE RATE AT WHICH WE ATTRACT & DEVELOP PRIVATE SECTOR INVESTMENT	
<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Ask from Government</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • develop effective arrangements for Business Support at the city region level • use Liverpool’s distinctive & world class heritage & cultural assets to enhance the city regions competitiveness • position the city region building on the “Super Port” as a major international gateway to global markets for foreign investment • Deliver an integrated strategy for physical & economic development across the city region • Develop a city region strategic approach to tackling worklessness to tackle the scale & specific nature of the worklessness problem across the city region 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Flexibilities to vire across grant regimes, create integrated funding pools, to raise revenue without clawback & relaxation of capital restrictions • A range of planning powers to be held at city region level to accelerate delivery of designate projects & interventions through a masterplan approach: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Relaxation of Stamp Duty Land Tax as a government financial contribution to specific regeneration initiatives in defined regeneration areas - Freedom to waver current concessions on business rates for derelict or disused property • Pilot new approaches & flexibilities • A robust & long term commitment to the HMRI programme to allow us to proceed with confidence along the path of intervention knowing we have commitment & resources to see it through <p><i>DCLG to facilitate cross departmental negotiations</i></p>
2. TO DEVELOP A FULLY INTEGRATED TRANSPORT SYSTEM ACROSS THE CITY REGION INCLUDING INTERNATIONAL & NATIONAL TRANSPORT CONNECTIONS	
<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Ask from Government</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrate evaluation of transport strategy & investment planning with the wider economic regeneration agenda • ensure bus services play a more effective role in underpinning economic growth & Social Inclusion 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • greater clarity & direction over national road users charging policy • Breakdown current modal based divisions in transport investment budgets & devolve greater power over transport spend to the city region to support delivery of strategic transport schemes • Amend Bus Quality Partnership legislation to include fares, frequencies, integration aspects & a performance regime • Amend Quality Contract legislation to allow local determination • Regional funding allocations being specifically built up from city region analysis & prioritisation <p><i>DCLG to facilitate cross departmental negotiations</i></p>
LIVERPOOL CITY REGION BUSINESS CASE	

PROPOSALS – COMPETE, CONNECT AND COMPLETE	
3a. FORMAL INTEGRATION OF HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL INTO THE LIVERPOOL CITY REGION	
<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Ask from Government</i>
<p>Rationalise & streamline existing local authority boundaries to facilitate strong consistent planning & prioritisation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a strengthened PTA/E delivery arm across the city region covering all modes of transport • Establish city region priorities for investment & delivery based on clear analysis of the drivers of crime & disorder 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Endorse the development of a single Transport Plan to cover the geographical areas of the existing 6 local authority boundaries • 1 single Police Authority to cover the 6 local authority boundaries to include an integrated approach to target setting & performance measurement with appropriate weight to national & local priorities <p><i>DCLG to facilitate cross departmental negotiations</i></p>
3b. TO DEVELOP A NEW MODEL OF GOVERNANCE AT THE CITY REGION LEVEL REGION WHICH WILL DELIVER	
<i>What we will do</i>	<i>Ask from Government</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a formal partnership with Merseyside Police, Merseytravel, MWDA, LSC, NWDA, English Partnerships & the private sector to set a clear framework for an agreed set of priorities for partnership interventions • To work with NWDA in light of any changes in city region governance agreed by government to develop a comprehensive 3 year investment plan 	<p>To work with Leaders to take forward a new structure of governance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To devolve resources at a level commensurate with the challenge on a rolling three year cycle for better planning & securing confidence with the private sector • To develop a tightly focussed outcome led performance monitoring requirement with minimal bureaucracy & full cross departmental & agency buy in • NWDA to develop investment plans to meet specific city region priorities & agree the appropriate devolution of activity • Ensure that all regional strategies are aligned & give due emphasis to the importance of city regions in developing competitiveness • Powers to hold other designated regional & sub regional bodies to account where they impact upon the priorities <p><i>DCLG to facilitate cross departmental negotiations</i></p>

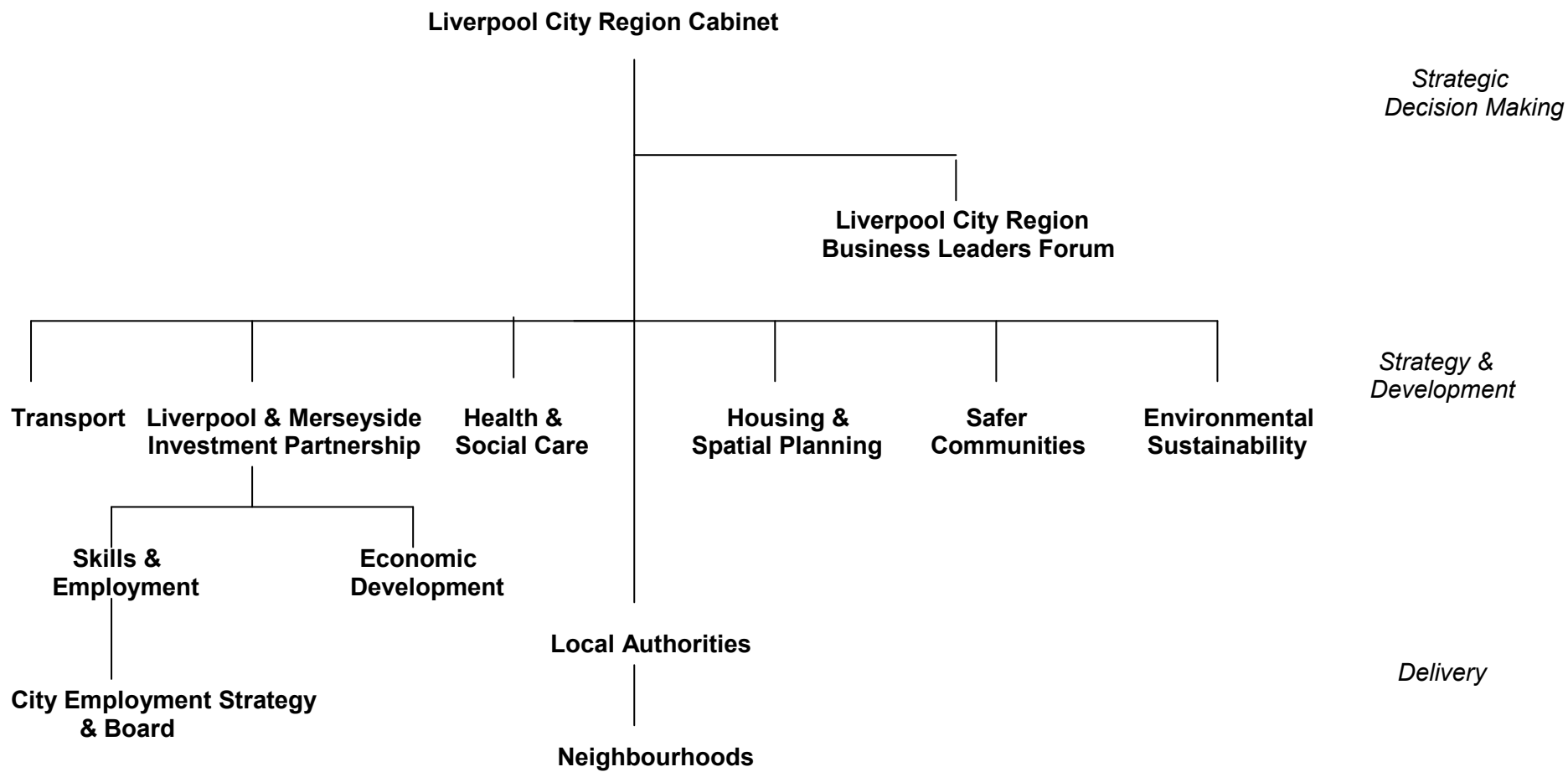
11. ENHANCED COLLABORATION

If we are to secure the powers necessary to deliver a step change in our economic growth we need to demonstrate we have the capability:

- We must demonstrate that we can have a strong democratically accountable leadership and an executive function at a city region level that has the mandate to plan and take the tough decisions at this level of governance.
- The City Region vision must be agreed and accepted and we must use that to promote our economic agenda on an international stage through appropriate branding and marketing.

To do this we require a new structure of governance; one that establishes the right balance between partnership, leadership and accountability; one that builds relationships and partnerships that work; and one that enables us to do the right things at the right level. To this end we propose to build on existing strengths and relationships with clear collective political leadership driven by the six local authorities.

LIVERPOOL CITY REGION GOVERNANCE STRUCTURE



12. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The proposals set out will present a logical development of existing structural arrangements that will enable us to generate greater legibility, focus and flexibility in the way in which the city region is managed and led.

Current arrangements have delivered much but a lot remains to be done, in particular to align activities in order to reinforce effectiveness and eliminate duplication. In presenting a new model of governance there will need to be further refinements in the operation of the model and what individual role each of the 6 authorities would take. However it is important to recognise that such a change will need to be organic and based on a further strengthening of mutual confidence and trust.

The aim of the submission is to show that through a more coherent, overt and directive form of city region governance the performance of the Liverpool City Region can be more effective, building on the successes we have achieved so far, but with a step change in performance and delivery. The intention is to introduce a system that enables strategic decisions in key policy areas to be taken collectively at the city region level but within a framework of:

- regional agencies and strategies which recognise appropriately the importance, value and contribution city regions make to regional economies; and
- existing local authorities remaining key agents of delivering and commissioning local public services for their neighbourhoods.

This submission sets out a programme of change that would enable the City Region to move to a new level of achievement. It provides the catalyst for further dialogue with Government and other partners both locally and regionally in successfully developing further the initial ideas we have put forward.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 7 December 2006

REPORTING OFFICER: Director of Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Local Area Agreements

WARDS: Boroughwide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a 3-year protocol that sets out the priorities for a local area. This must be agreed between central government and the area itself, as represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnership. Government has stipulated that Halton will be in Round 3 of the programme. This means that an Agreement must be negotiated by next April. The purpose of this report is to seek formal Board approval to the final LAA document.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

It is recommended that the Board:

1. Endorse the final agreement, and agree its submission to Government;
2. Agree that the Leader and Chief Executive be given delegated powers to make any necessary minor drafting amendments to the submission following Executive Board.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Executive Board received a progress report on the LAA on 21 September. As previously noted Government has set out a fairly specific timetable for the process leading to the adoption of an LAA. This is as follows:

- By end September - areas had to submit first draft LAAs to Government Office for the North West (GONW). These had to include outcomes, indicators and indicative targets, funding streams, the business case for Enabling Measures, a draft Statement of Community Involvement, and partnership arrangements.
- By 20 December, final drafts must be received by GONW. Ministerial sign-off will be during February 2007, with LAAs being implemented from April 2007.

At its meeting in September the Board endorsed the draft Agreement that was subsequently submitted to GONW on 29 September. Since that time there have been a number of developments:

- I. Individual meetings have taken place between the Governments Block Leads and Halton Priority Leads to discuss the outcomes framework and enabling measures as they relate to the specific blocks;
- II. A seminar for partners was hosted jointly by Council officers and GONW to carry out a sustainability appraisal of the draft LAA using the standard toolkit developed by North West Regional Association. This gave us a number of insights into ways of managing the Agreement forward to take account of wider sustainability issues.
- III. Formal review meetings took place between the GONW and Halton LAA teams on 25 October and 22 November.

It is clear from these sessions that the draft fully fits the requirements of the Government's LAA guidance. Some of the key observations, which emerged from Government, were as follows:

- The LAA is not encyclopaedic i.e. it is only a small sub-set of the range of activity going on in Halton, but it cleverly addresses key transformational issues that will make a big difference to the quality of life if properly delivered. This is a clear statement of priorities.
- GONW would like the number of outcomes/indicators to be reduced to the minimum number consistent with the value that the LAA can add through the transformational issues (TIs) identified – anti-social behaviour, alcohol harm reduction, liveability and worklessness.
- In terms of presentation it needs to draw out more the impact the TIs will have – possibly by including key targets in the narrative section. This should also provide clearer signposting to the raft of other strategies and plans that support regeneration in Halton.
- The mandatory, discretionary and LPSA outcomes and indicators need to be more clearly delineated from each other (colour coding?) in the Outcomes annex.
- A contents page would help readers to navigate through the document (108 pages) more easily.
- A number of the enabling measures are considered feasible and will now move to the next stage of Government consideration.

The recent Local Government White Paper has reaffirmed the importance of LAAs, their role as key documents formalising central-local relations, and the ideal of them being framed around a small number (35-40) of key outcomes and indicators.

A revised version of the LAA has been produced in light of these discussions. The key changes from the draft version considered by the Board last time are in the narrative and outcomes framework. The final LAA must be submitted to

Government by 20 December. Halton Borough Council will be the accountable body for the LAA. Therefore, the Executive Board is asked to formally endorse the Agreement prior to its submission to GONW and subsequent sign off by the Minister.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a 3 year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and a local area, represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships. Halton will negotiate an appropriate Agreement to come into force by next April. The LAA provides a service improvement tool for helping to implement Halton's adopted Community Strategy.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

A number of existing grant regimes (detailed in Appendix 2 of the LAA) will automatically be pooled by Government into a single LAA grant. Although allocations of certain elements are not yet clear, this is likely to amount to around £7M. It should be noted that this is not new money, it is merely existing funding rebranded by Government. The Council, acting as accountable body for the LSP, will receive a formal grant offer letter in the spring. It is important to note that the Council is taking full financial and legal responsibility for receipt and use of the grant.

The Council's Financial Services Department has already developed robust arrangements for accounting, monitoring and evaluating for this expenditure. This is in line with best practice used for other programmes of external funding. It is proposed to mirror the service level agreement and quarterly monitoring arrangements that hitherto have been used for NRF. A draft performance management framework for the LAA has been developed, which is at Appendix 4 of the LAA. A full report on proposed activity for 2007/08 will be set out in a separate LAA Delivery Plan, which will be brought for Executive Board approval in February 2007.

Within an LAA the Government offer local partnerships the opportunity pool or align other funding outside of the mandatory LAA grant. The Halton LAA makes it very clear that Halton will not be doing this, outside of pooling arrangements that already exist.

6. RISK ANALYSIS

The final LAA includes proposals for a robust risk management process. This will focus attention and resources on critical areas, provide more robust action plans and better-informed decision-making.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The LAA will be based on the same values that underpin the Community Strategy, of which a commitment to equality and diversity is paramount. The LAA reinforces this value-driven system of partnership working.

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

Halton Local Area Agreement – 2007-2010.

A Local Area Agreement For Halton

April 2007 – March 2010



www.haltonpartnership.net

Halton's Local Area Agreement

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Introduction

People want to live in pleasant and thriving places. They want good quality services, a safe and attractive physical environment, accessible transport links, a strong sense of community and for there to be opportunities for all. Whilst that is the ideal, Halton is not alone in not meeting this standard. The intractable nature of many problems proves that long lasting remedies are not easy. Public services have improved markedly in recent years. However, despite this increasing efficiency significant and lasting improvements are only possible if underlying issues are addressed.

Change and uncertainty are at the heart of modern existence. To respond and make sense of this, communities need strong strategic leadership that brings together local partners to build a vision of how to address an area's problems and challenges in a coordinated way. In Halton, the introduction of the Halton Strategic Partnership (the LSP) and its development of a sustainable community strategy has helped the "place-shaping" of the borough to gather momentum. The essential ingredients of a successful partnership are a common vision, shared values and mutual respect. Effective partnership also needs strategic leadership together with robust mechanisms for agreeing priorities and monitoring the impact of interventions.

A Local Area Agreement (LAA) is three-year agreement, based on local Community Strategies that set out the priorities for a local area agreed between Central Government (represented by Government Office North West - GONW) and a local area, represented by its Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) – in our case the Halton Strategic Partnership. LAAs relax central government constraints and allow better decision-making at the local level. Greater freedoms provide the opportunity to think innovatively, and develop new solutions to local priorities.

Halton's Local Area Agreement provides a further tool for the Partnership to develop its strategic leadership role and to tackle some of the big crosscutting challenges that Halton faces. It provides an outcome-based approach that gives a framework for deciding what is delivered and how best to do it. It forms the delivery plan for Halton's sustainable community strategy focused on a relatively small number of priorities for improvement.

This LAA has been prepared in accordance with these principles. The Community Strategy is key, and provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of all the partners can contribute. The LAA provides a mechanism by which key elements of the strategy can be delivered over the next three years.

Background

Making Halton a better place to live and work presents some major challenges and opportunities for us all. This LAA sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. In particular, we need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes that are set out clearly in the Community Strategy and mirrored in this LAA:

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal

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

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from facts and figures about conditions in Halton.

Halton is a largely urban area of 118,900 people. 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. Between 1991 and 2002 the estimated Borough population decreased by 6,500 people from 124,800 to 118,300 in 2002. However, in 2003 there was a small increase in the population and between 2003 and 2004 the estimated population increased by 500 people.

As a result of its industrial legacy, particularly from the chemical industries, Halton has inherited a number of physical, environmental and social problems. The Council has been working hard to resolve these issues ever since the borough was formed in 1974. Gaining unitary status in 1998 has helped to co-ordinate more activity over a wider front and increased the resources the Council, and its strategic partners have been able to invest in Halton. However, there still remains much to be done.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. The latest Index of Multiple of Deprivation (IMD) for 2004, not only contains some of the latest data available, but also is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 21st nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), but this is 3rd highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 5th highest in the North West. St Helens (36th), Wirral (48th) and Sefton (78th) are way down the table compared to Halton.

The Index of Multiple of Deprivation for 2004 suggests that levels of deprivation have decreased in the borough. In 2004 the IMD ranked Halton as 21st most deprived Authority in England for rank of average score compared to a rank of 16th in the 2000 Index. The proportion of Halton's population in the top category (i.e. the top 10% of wards in 2000 and the top 20% of super output areas in 2004) has also decreased from 54% in 2000 to 50% in 2004. However, there is still room for improvement. Halton's concentration of deprivation has gone up from 38th position in 2000 to 20th worst in England in 2004. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. Within Halton there are 6 super output areas in the top 975 Super Output Areas in England, i.e. within England's top 3% most deprived. The highest neighbourhood is ranked 193rd out of 32,482 and is situated in southern Widnes.

Bespoke research to get a better picture of life in Halton was commissioned in 2005. The Local Futures Group produced a 'State of the Borough' Audit of economic, social and environmental conditions. This is a timely and necessary assessment of the challenges and issues that face Halton. Performance is assessed according to how well the borough scores on a range of carefully selected benchmark indicators of economic, social and environmental well being. It provides a perspective on the state of Halton by looking at how it compares with other districts, how it rates within the North West Region, and also how it performs compared to the country as a whole.

The Audit demonstrates that the borough is performing well in terms of its current economic performance and structure. However, the level of human capital and trends in economic growth may present problems for the future. This is particularly so given the district's poor performance in terms of social and environmental indicators, which may create difficulties attracting the best qualified people to the borough. Halton's performance on education and skills, and low levels of home ownership point to problems of inclusiveness, with groups of residents not sharing in the current levels of economic prosperity.

The Forward Vision

This Local Area Agreement sets out a clear vision of making changes across many issues that will make a big difference to life in Halton. It aims to give people opportunities and choices. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here. This approach mirrors that set out in Halton's recently adopted Community Strategy.

LAAs are normally based upon four blocks established around the shared priorities for Government. However, the priorities agreed for Halton's Community Strategy were framed with the advent of the LAA in mind. They largely mirror the four blocks, with the addition of Urban Renewal. Local flexibility in how LAAs are structured is allowed - therefore, the starting point for the Halton LAA is that it is being framed around our agreed five priorities from the Community Strategy rather than the four blocks.

The strategic framework of the LAA is largely drawn from the Community Strategy. The sections that follow summarise our strategy and approach.

Vision

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

Priorities

- **A Healthy Halton** - To create a healthier community and work to promote well being - a positive experience of life with good health.
- **Halton's Urban Renewal** - To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough.
- **Halton's Children and Young People** - To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy.
- **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** - To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth.
- **A Safer Halton** - To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.

Approach

- **Closing the gap** between the most deprived communities in the borough and in Halton overall.
- **Tackling inequality** and promoting community cohesion, so that no community is disadvantaged.
- **Making what we do sustainable** so that our quality of life is protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.
- **Investing in preventative activity** that stops problems occurring rather than paying for actions to fix things that are going wrong. We need to invest more in success, rather than in failure.

Principles

- **Leadership** – *the Partnership's role is to give clear strategic leadership to the borough and enable people to make the necessary contributions to make a difference.*
- **Fair and inclusive** – *promoting equal access to opportunities and facilities. This includes the need to positively target activity at the most deprived geographical areas or particular groups of people.*
- **Good value** – *being economical, efficient and effective in delivering 'Best Value' for the public.*
- **Collaborative** – *this is about collective responsibility for making things better and embedding partnership approaches in everything that we do.*
- **Evidence-based** – *ensuring we learn from best practice elsewhere and make good use of research about what works in addressing the borough's priorities.*

Structure

The LAA has to be read alongside Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy. It forms the operational plan of that strategy. The structure of the LAA – its framework and delivery – is based clearly on the strategy. It is worth just summarising the current standpoint on our five priorities:

Health - is a key strategic priority and supporting an aging population is a medium-term driver to achieving this. It is clear that the health problems of Halton will only be addressed by a more discriminating approach in how services are delivered. We need to better concentrate on the wider determinants of health. We also need to target specific initiatives both geographically and demographically, especially recognising the needs of an increasingly ageing population. In essence our approach to health follows the model of good practice recommended in the Choosing Health White Paper:

- Local authorities and PCTs as commissioning organisations developing a new partnership as leaders in promoting health, well being and inclusion based on a robust assessment of the health and care needs of local populations.
- Promotion of outcomes that address health inequalities, inclusion and well-being across the range of public services that affect people's lives – beyond health and social care to housing, education, careers, transport and leisure.

- Trying to shift the focus from acute hospital care to preventative services, health promotion and services in community settings.
- A sustained realignment of health and social care systems into a 'whole system' so that services in community settings are delivered in an integrated way.

The drivers to achieve this include: shared outcomes, performance measures, inspection regimes, aligned budget cycles, increased joint commissioning, and integrated workforce planning. All of this is starting to be reflected in the LAA, and is better exemplified in the emerging Delivery Plan for Health. Our Commissioning Strategy has identified changing patterns of need and expectations and, an overall aging population in Halton. Existing provision has been overly focused on meeting crisis and emergency problems rather than preventing them getting to the point they need more intensive intervention. The health outcomes in the LAA Delivery Plan will include a range of targets shared across the system. Targets will be specifically focused on those people most at risk of using higher level services - or at risk of exclusion from mainstream services.

Children & Young People - Development in early childhood, success while at school through educational and other achievement, and the acquisition of important, employable skills are key determinants of individuals' life and employment chances. The Children and Young People's Alliance aim to build on existing cooperation. Firstly, through developing policies based on evidence of what works most effectively that are focused on key areas for policy development. We must then create a model of what measures and services to enhance life chances and employment need to be to make the most positive impact in Halton. Finally, capture this in an action plan to make any changes needed to shift from the measures and services that exist now, to what they need to be in the future.

All children's services priorities agreed with Government inspectors (Halton's 9 priorities) are included in the LAA. Those targets identified in the Community Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan which are not included in the LAA will be addressed by the Children and Young People's Alliance Board using the "Halton Ziggurat" performance management framework. This has been established to bring together national and local outcomes, outputs, targets and funding streams. The system is used for performance self-assessment and review, both within the Alliance Board structure and commissioned services. In addition, they are managed via robust action plans. Performance against the priorities will be reported via priorities conversations and the Annual Performance Assessment.

Safer Halton - The Safer Halton Partnership has a wide-ranging remit focused on two major concerns of Halton people. Crime and the local environment have consistently been two areas the public have raised as high priorities in successive consultations over the last few years. We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Recent years have seen reductions in total recorded crime and for key crimes such as burglary and car crime. However, this remains the most pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives. At the same time, whilst general satisfaction levels are rising with Halton as a place to live, it is the condition of the local environment which is of most concern to residents.

Therefore, the LAA aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods. This is about improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved in helping to shape what happens in their local area. We want to encourage active citizenship, volunteering and community activism. Tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of neighbourhood distress is a responsibility shared by all partners. Increasingly, we will look to better co-ordinate activity through neighbourhood management arrangements for greater impact. This will increase the effectiveness of work that can prevent and intervene early in the conditions that lead to dissatisfaction.

Employment & Skills - Despite a range of Government and Halton's own initiatives, the borough is still characterised by widespread deprivation. Skills and employment are key factors. Educational attainment at school and the acquisition of important, employable skills are key determinants of individuals' lives and employment chances. They have a major effect on the ability of people to get a job, on the income they earn, on their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life. The creation of a strong, knowledge-based economy able to compete in the increasingly global market can only be achieved by investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and a robust culture of entrepreneurship.

High economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion are endemic in the local economy. The Halton economy is heavily reliant on a narrow range of industry sectors and is susceptible to global pressures which could have a negative effect. There is a lack of an enterprise culture in Halton, with generally low levels of business start-up, survival and growth. However, Halton has the basis of a thriving knowledge economy and key sectoral opportunities especially around its science and environmental technologies offer. These form the basis of the issues which the LAA seeks to address.

Urban Renewal - Whilst much has been done in recent years to improve the quality of the urban fabric and quality of life, the job is far from complete. The creation and maintenance of high quality places and spaces that support a twenty-first century economy and lifestyles, and are accessible and well connected is a pre-requisite of the Community Strategy. Failure to address the challenges that Halton faces, which are often concentrated in particular locations, will seriously damage the economic regeneration effort. A thriving and prosperous economy supporting dynamic urban living is the foundation of the Halton approach. This is one of the underlying root causes of the more obvious signs of social distress which define the continuing deprivation of Halton, such as poverty, crime or poor health outcomes.

Negative perceptions about Halton still prevail. Environmental improvements and better quality open spaces, in addition to a better quality built environment, are vital as steps to promote Halton's assets. An important step forward is the emphasis placed on sustainable construction methods and design codes bringing forward physical development. A positive image is a key requirement if we are to boost the confidence and aspirations of local people and business.

Strategic & Geographic Focus

This LAA is concerned with addressing social exclusion. This is about what happens when people face a multitude of problems such as poor housing, high crime, poor health, worklessness, discrimination and poor relationships. The people of Halton,

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

- Poverty and material deprivation.
- Choice and quality in neighbourhoods and housing.
- Equality of opportunity for everyone and ending discrimination.
- Responding to the needs of older people as the population ages.
- Policies and programmes that look forward and help to achieve sustainable development.

The LAA has developed out of the established partnership structure and strategic planning process. It is important that it adds value to the established landscape of partnership plans and activity. It can do this by helping to refocus current activity and drive concerted actions on key challenges, neighbourhoods and target beneficiaries. Using evidence and intelligence we intend to close the gap between the most deprived people and places and national norms.

The Halton Strategic Partnership exists to meet the needs of all of Halton. However, we recognise that a successful Halton depends on the vibrancy of both Greater Merseyside and the North West Region overall. Many of the partners involved in Halton, and many of the issues we deal with, have a remit beyond the borough. Part of the task is to narrow the gap between Halton and its neighbours, and indeed with national averages. Therefore, the Halton Strategic Partnership works adeptly to contribute to sub-regional and regional arrangements, and ensure the commitment of others to helping to address Halton issues.

In addition a key focus is to narrow disparities in outcomes between neighbourhoods in Halton. In order to focus on “closing the gaps” we needed to identify a coherent set of priority geographic areas. In the past, available analysis has largely been at ward level. We now have excellent information available at the ward level of around 25,000 people and are developing information at the “Super Output Area” level of around 3,000 people.

The following wards have been selected as those for which “closing the gap” targets across the LAA will be monitored. The wards were identified on the basis of census and IMD data and are:

- Castlefields
- Windmill Hill
- Halton Lea
- Riverside
- Kingsway
- Appleton

Progress in outcomes will be monitored to evidence “closing the gap” between these wards and Halton average outcomes. These wards have amongst the highest Multiple Deprivation Index scores in Halton and in England. All six wards have unemployment rates above the Halton average of 3.5%. All priority wards have instances of long term limiting illnesses above the national rates.

For some targets, there are additional parts of Halton with poor outcomes in particular areas. In these cases the individual target specifies which additional areas are involved. During the first year of the Agreement, we will refine this analysis to look at smaller Super Output Areas to identify patches of poor outcomes within wards across Halton, and look at neighbourhoods which “make sense” to local people.

Detailed maps of the key target outcomes across Halton, down to “Super Output Area” level, are being developed as part of the Halton Data Observatory. They will enable very targeted approaches to achieving improvements in these outcomes. Some of our neighbourhoods face particularly widespread and deep difficulties. Areas of Halton have already benefited from local initiatives such as SRB. We will use a new Government grant (the Neighbourhood Element) to co-ordinate local services and support community engagement, starting in neighbourhoods in the six eligible LAA priority wards. It will employ innovative neighbourhood management practices and models to deliver sustainable change. This will include the reconfiguration of local public services so that they better meet the needs of local people, and thereby help to close the gap by reducing a number of deprivation differentials, which exist between the area and more affluent parts of Halton.

Transformational Issues

The purpose of the LAA is to take the joint thinking of the Partnership enshrined in the Community Strategy, and make it happen through joint planning and delivery. As set out above, the key challenge is how best to frame the response to the major issues that Halton faces through the LAA. To do this we intend to focus heavily on key challenges and through the LAA to channel extra resources year on year into efforts to achieve challenging targets in each chosen priority area.

The question that the Halton Strategic Partnership has been addressing is: What added value can be brought by an LAA to existing partnership frameworks and activity? The Partnership believes that the answer lies in using the LAA to focus on a small number of issues, which, if we were successful at addressing, would make a significant improvement to quality of life in the borough. These transformational issues have been identified on the basis of two criteria:

- Those where progress has not been as significant as we would have liked – identified from statistics, public perception and concern, and areas for focus in recent LSP reviews.
- Those which would have a positive impact across a range of our objectives and targets.

We want the LAA to bring a greater concerted effort to those key issues. We want the LAA to focus on our most intractable problems, and in doing so make a significant impact upon them. It has been agreed that the following four areas best fit the criteria outlined above - Employment & Skills, Alcohol Harm Reduction, Anti-Social Behaviour and Liveability.

We intend to use the “energy” and focus an LAA brings to make measurable progress in those intractable areas. Our intention is to use these as a means to exemplify the joined-up nature of how the Halton Strategic Partnership addresses key issues which cut across all five blocks of the LAA. The following table gives a summary of the current position on the four transformational issues.

Alcohol Harm

Why is this an issue?

Alcohol misuse can be a source of considerable harm. The National Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy identifies certain critical harms connected to alcohol misuse:

- Health – up to 22,000 premature deaths per year
- Crime and antisocial behaviour – 1.2 million associated violent incidents per year
- Loss of productivity and profitability – calculated at £6.4bn. per year
- Harms to family and society – between 780,000 and 1.3 million children are affected by parental alcohol problems

Halton itself suffers from more than its fair share of alcohol related issues. A recent study on alcohol misuse in the North West conducted by the North West Public Health Observatory highlights Halton's position against some of the key indicators for alcohol, and on all Halton ranks in the worst quartile.

Indicator

Figure plus North West ranking (out of 43 L.A.s)

Synthetic estimates of binge drinking.
23.8%, 5th highest

Hospitalised admission for alcohol specific conditions
Males: 6.14 per 1k, 7th highest
Females: 3.13 per 1k, 6th highest

Hospitalised admissions for all conditions attributable to alcohol
Males: 13.68 per 1k, 4th highest
Females: 7.56 per 1k, 3rd highest.

All violent offences attributable to alcohol
8.63 per 1k, 10th highest.

Reduced life expectancy for all causes attributable to alcohol
Males: 13.46 months of life lost, joint 4th highest.
Females: 10.43 months of life lost, 2nd highest.

How will we work to address this issue across the LAA?

The cost of alcohol misuse, both social and economical provides serious cause for concern in Halton, particularly given the latest statistics. We know that if we can reduce alcohol harm across the borough we will make an impact on improving a range of associated issues. Our Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy prioritises certain key aims:

- To improve the information available to individuals and to start the process of change in the culture of drinking to get drunk.
- To better identify and treat alcohol misuse.
- To prevent and tackle alcohol-related crime and disorder through better coordination and enforcement.
- To work with the alcohol industry to promote responsible drinking.

How will we work differently?

Halton aspires to be a place where:

- People can enjoy alcohol in moderation in a good quality environment that is safe and attractive, and as part of a healthy and pleasurable lifestyle.
- Alcohol is supplied responsibly, in a way that contributes to the quality of leisure, social life and a thriving local economy.
- Alcohol ceases to be a significant cause of crime or ill-health, anti-social behaviour, family disruption, abuse or neglect, violence, including domestic violence, or any other related harm.
- The costs to the general public from alcohol misuse are kept to a minimum and where possible eliminated.

No single partnership or agency can act alone on such a complex issue. In order to meet the significant challenge of reducing the harm caused by alcohol all partners in Halton must recognise the relevance of alcohol to their core business and must include it as a cross-cutting issue. A multi-agency task group has been established and a comprehensive Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy developed. An Alcohol Intervention Officer has the primary purpose to ensure the delivery and implementation of the Strategy and Action Plan, which aims:

- To increase people's awareness of the harms associated with alcohol misuse.
- To increase knowledge and understanding of what works to reduce the harms associated with alcohol misuse.
- To reduce the level of alcohol-related health problems.
- To reduce alcohol-related crime, disorder and antisocial behaviour.
- To prevent the harm caused to children and young people by alcohol misuse.
- To reduce the economic impact of alcohol misuse.
- To strengthen local communities to respond effectively to the problems caused by alcohol misuse.
- To increase the positive contribution of alcohol consumption to regeneration developments in Halton.

How do we propose to deliver on this area?

The achievement of Halton's vision depends on certain guiding principles:

- Everyone has responsibilities.
- Cooperation and partnership is the key to success.
- Costs must be shared fairly.
- Health and safety are paramount.
- Clear regulations and enforcement set the standards.

In order to deliver on this area of the LAA we intend to focus on 5 key priorities, which bring together the strategic priority areas identified in Halton's Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy. These are Health, Crime and Licensing, Children and Young People, Workplace and Communities and Regeneration. Under each area we have picked the key outcomes and targets that we feel the LAA can help us to achieve. This action plan will be monitored and delivered by the Alcohol Task Group and will sit alongside the main Alcohol Harm Reduction Strategy and action plan. Relevant Specialist Strategic Partnerships (SSPs) will also need to take responsibility for outcomes relating to their priority area.

How Will We Measure Success?

Our approach is long term and preventative, and will look to:

- Reduce premature mortality rates from heart disease and strokes.
- Reduce alcohol-related hospital admissions.
- Drive up social responsibility standards in the industry.
- Increase provision of education and advice on alcohol impacts.
- Reduce alcohol related crime and disorder.

Employment & Skills

Why is this an issue?

Since the mid 1990's the number of people employed in the United Kingdom has risen. However, for some areas of the country such as Halton, this masks the stubbornness of the rates of economic inactivity that have largely stayed the same. Despite a concentration on residents who are unemployed, there is a much larger group of working age people that are economically inactive, many of whom want to work. In May 2006 36% of the Halton population were economically inactive.

The analysis of the spatial concentration of economically inactive people in Halton shows that 6 wards have inactivity rates at or in excess of 25% - Castlefields, Windmill Hill, Halton Lea, Kingsway, Riverside and Grange.

How will we work to address this issue across the LAA?

The LAA mirrors the strategic priorities of the Community Strategy which were arrived at through extensive consultation with both the community and partners, and through research and analysis into the prevailing conditions within the borough. Although the worklessness agenda and associated strategy lie within the Employment, Learning and Skills Strategic Priority, inroads can only be made to addressing the issue through a comprehensive cross-partnership and multi-agency approach.

The structure of Government funding often prevents pooling as national organisations lack freedom due to the existence of nationally delivered schemes. This is an area for further consideration within the context of this Local Area Agreement.

How will we work differently?

It is evident that there is a need to achieve a step change in employment-related work if the level of worklessness in Halton is to be significantly reduced. The key elements in achieving this should include:

- A formal recognition that worklessness and not just JSA claimants should be the focus.
- Targeting will be necessary to achieve step change – both in terms of groupings and geography.
- To be effective, interventions will need to be holistic and personalised to individual people's needs – this must involve a full range of partners all working together.
- Enterprise must be put at the heart of addressing worklessness.
- Connectivity with jobs must be improved.
- More work needs to be done to address the basic skills gaps.
- There is substantial scope for the voluntary sector to be developed in employment-related activity, particularly social enterprises.
- Stronger links need to be made between investment opportunities and local labour markets.

How do we propose to deliver on this agenda?

Whilst Halton has made great strides in the creation of new jobs and the general reduction in unemployment the gap between individuals and the labour market in some instances has not improved as much for certain groups. It is our intention to specifically target certain key groups and tailor interventions to their needs:

- Over 50's
- Economically inactive women
- Lone parents with dependent children
- Young long-term unemployed
- Sick and Disabled

There is clear evidence that the more general borough-wide approach towards unemployment has produced real progress. However, there is now a need to focus on those areas where unemployment and worklessness remain stubbornly high and where levels of worklessness are way above the borough average.

How Will We Measure Success?

We have a broad-based strategic approach that looks to tackle employability, workforce development and the creation of enterprise. At the same time we want to ensure equity in the economy i.e. that the wealth that is created in the borough is better shared around Halton. Specifically, we have targets to:

- Increase the overall employment rate.
- Markedly reduce the economic inactivity rate.
- Increase the number of adults qualified all levels.
- Reduce the number of adults with no qualifications.
- Increase the rate of self-employment.
- Increase the number of VAT registrations.

Anti-Social Behaviour

Why is this an issue?

The government has made a commitment to tackle anti-social behaviour. Social responsibility, respect for others and appropriate community behaviour are fundamental requirements of a thriving and successful community. The majority of our communities recognise this and contribute positively to community life, however, a minority do not. The conduct of this minority adversely affects the ability of people to enjoy the communities and facilities where they live, work and visit. This is not acceptable, and anti-social behaviour is not welcome in Halton and will not be tolerated.

Our Strategy advocates a holistic approach to achieving safer communities where people are not only safe but also feel safe, and where they are confident those who do not contribute positively to their community and behave inappropriately are dealt with quickly and effectively.

How will we work to address this issue across the LAA?

Halton's Strategy focuses on three specific areas:

- Prevent & Deter
- Protect & Punish
- Rehabilitate

Central to the strategy are the principles of prevention, education and community building, enabling communities to take action, supporting victims and taking quick and robust action against those who behave inappropriately.

The Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy relies for its success on the commitment and complementary working practices of a number of partner agencies within Halton Borough Council. It is therefore an overarching strategy embracing all 5 strategic priorities in achieving the strategic vision.

How will we work differently?

Dealing with anti-social behaviour (ASB) is a key element in the Crime and Disorder Strategy and the Community Strategy already developed by Halton.

The purpose of this strategy is to:

- Clarify ways of encouraging decent behaviour.
- Prevent Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Solve the problems which lead to Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Respond rapidly and effectively.
- Make perpetrators aware their behaviour is not acceptable and that they will face robust enforcement action if it continues.

These are robust categories that encompass the experiences of people living, visiting and working in Halton. We will develop a rounded response to ASB through:

- Integration of the strategy into the statutory framework for joint agency co-operation set out in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998.
- Accessing partnership resources to maximise service provision.
- Ensuring commitment to a borough-wide response to anti-social behaviour.
- Facilitating the flow of appropriate information to enable effective interventions.
- Recommending the realignment of mainstream resources to improve multi-agency service delivery and response to anti-social behaviour.
- Continuous improvement of the multi-agency response by developing common protocols and assessment pathways.
- Addressing the capacity, knowledge and skill requirements of key staff.

How do we propose to deliver on this area?

Prevent & Deter

- Identifying those perpetrators of ASB or those at risk of becoming perpetrators of ASB and intervening at an early stage to bring about behavioural change.
- Identifying appropriate routes to divert the focus of groups and individuals towards positive activity.
- Minimising the opportunity for anti-social behaviour by addressing the factors that support it. These may be physical e.g. 'uncared for' environments, or social e.g. influenced by alcohol or substance misuse.

Protect And Punish

- Use of civil and criminal legal remedies where appropriate.
- Harassment Notices and Orders, Anti-social Behaviour Orders, injunctions, housing-related measures, crack house closures, fixed penalty notices for disorder and litter etc.
- Providing support to the vulnerable and ensuring that complainants and witnesses are supported and informed throughout the process.

Rehabilitation

- Encouraging and reinforcing positive citizenship and pro-social behaviour, including activities aimed at wide groups e.g. community projects and citizenship programmes within schools as well as other activities targeted at groups who are at risk of social exclusion.
- ASB is not age restricted and adult education is equally important in shifting attitudes.
- Taking this work to the street or neighbourhood level, a factor recognised by the national 'Respect' agenda, will be crucial in making this strategy work.

How Will We Measures Success?

Overall, we aim to reduce the perception and reports of anti-social behaviour being an issue of concern to residents. More specifically, we will aim to:

- Reduce levels of expressed fear of crime and anti-social behaviour.
- Reduce the perception and reports of anti-social behaviour being an issue of concern by residents.
- Increase the percentage of people who feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area.

Liveability

Why is this an issue for Halton?

The visual quality of an area, namely the way an area looks, including levels of litter and rubbish, scruffiness of gardens and the prevalence of high rise flats or open space is of crucial importance in

determining quality of life in a local area.

A recent Mori poll asking people what most needs improving in their own local area found liveability issues are still top of the public priority list, well ahead of health and education. In Halton, the opinions of 2,500 local residents were surveyed in 2005. Removing rubbish and cleaning the streets and verges was felt to be the biggest environmental improvement that could be made. In the 2005 LSP consultation, residents thought that one of the most effective factors in improving the environment was to 'improve local parks and make them safer and tidier'.

How will we work to address the issue across the LAA?

The quality of the local environment impacts on people's health, their fear of crime, and the social and economic vibrancy of the area. Poor quality spaces are visible indicators of decline and disadvantage. Graffiti, street litter, abandoned vehicles and dog fouling drag down a local area and there is evidence that their presence signals a spiral of decline which can undermine communities. It is only through partners working together to tackle these issues and their causes that we are to bring about improvements in the liveability agenda and quality of life for local residents.

How will we work differently?

Working in partnership to deliver joint initiatives has proven to be particularly effective and this approach will be developed across partner agencies, and in particular through the Safer Halton Partnership. Recent Police drug raids were supported by partner organisations that helped to deliver local environment improvements once the raids were completed - thus re-assuring the local community.

Three of the more deprived areas of the borough have been selected for the neighbourhood management pilot. A Neighbourhood Management Board has been established and Neighbourhood Boards will soon follow. By tailoring services to meet the needs of local communities across the LAA it is hoped that we can make a significant difference to their quality of life. Neighbourhood management is seen as an opportunity for partners to work more closely together and pilot new ways of working, which if successful can be rolled out across the borough.

How do we propose to deliver on this area?

The recently revised Safer and Stronger Communities Fund (SSCF) Agreement sets out a number of liveability targets across the borough and more specific targets for the neighbourhood management pilot areas. The SSCF Agreement will be monitored by the Performance Management Group of the Safer Halton Partnership (SHP), and also by the SHP's Engagement and Liveability Task Group which will take the lead in delivering on the liveability agenda.

How Will We Measure Success?

The liveability agenda is about creating places where people choose to live and work. In particular making Halton cleaner, safer and greener is a vital part of our sustainable community strategy. Our research demonstrates that clean, safe and green are key issues for Halton residents. Halton has restructured its service delivery around high visibility 'streetscene' services. These have already been found to have a huge impact. The current best value performance regime specifies a large number of liveability measures around:

- Street-scene
- Quality of Life
- Environmental services
- Community Safety

The LAA Delivery Plan will reference all of these.

Obviously, this is merely a very short summary position on each of these issues. Partners have strategies and action plans in place to take forward each of them.

Underlying each of the transformational issues are some important unifying concepts, like individual responsibility and self-respect. These are complex social issues with many dimensions, connections and impacts. They have many causal factors. The ongoing delivery of services will only take us so far in delivering our ambitions. The Partnership needs to better understand the aspirations, motivations and ambitions of people in Halton, and what causes certain behaviours to manifest themselves in certain key challenges. Underpinning our approach to the transformational issues is a strong commitment to social marketing i.e. the process of understanding individual motivations and designing interventions that incentivise positive behaviours.

The Development Process

The process to develop the LAA was important. It was vital that the process was inclusive. Many people and groups were involved so we could build a clear picture on how we should go forward. The LAA's timescales meant that there has been limited scope to involve residents directly in the LAA negotiation. However, the community strategy was built upon a 12-month period of intense engagement with residents, the voluntary and community sector, and other partners. Some of the key steps included:

- A review of our achievements since the first Community Strategy was launched four years ago, and an honest assessment of how well partnership arrangements have worked.
- A new State of Halton Report was commissioned to look objectively at statistical conditions and changes and trends in social, economic and environmental conditions.
- A major telephone survey of residents (3000 people) backed up by focus groups was carried out to seek their views on what life is like, and should be like in Halton.
- A review of regional and national strategies, and those of partners, was carried out to assess the likely impact of this activity in Halton.
- An inclusive process of debate and discussion on the way forward took place with members, officers, officials and volunteers of all the organisations involved with the Partnership.
- A thematic assessment of the challenges facing the borough, and a thorough review of outcomes, outputs and targets was carried out. These helped to demonstrate how the strategy and partnership working could make a difference in the future.

This process of engagement with people and partners was vital. More specifically, Halton established a Lead Officer Group (LOG) to lead the development of the LAA. This is made up of key leaders from all partners, including the VCS. This cross-agency corporate steering group has met regularly to co-ordinate the development of the LAA and ensures a consistent and holistic approach. In addition, a wide variety of organisations, teams and individuals have been involved in developing the detail for each of the blocks. This process has been actioned through the SSPs – our well-established thematic working groups. Wherever possible we have ensured that the work has been integrated into existing cross-agency structures, e.g. the Older Peoples Local Implementation Team.

Within each block various methods have been used to engage people such as workshops and mini-conferences. Regular activities have involved monthly LOG meetings to discuss the focus and content of the LAA, backed up by regular meetings with GONW to test this; thematic partnership meetings to discuss the detail, agree outcomes, map resources and relationships, and identify enabling measures; all partner seminars and workshops to develop coherence and consensus around the

overall agreement; and a micro-website as part of an overall communication effort to keep all partners in touch with progress (already set up on www.haltonpartnership.net).

Key milestones in the process include:

- An early decision to align our Community Strategy with the LAA blocks. We were also able to use the consultation that had been done on the Community Strategy to inform the LAA.
- Extensive briefing across sectors; putting in place the appropriate project management structures and disciplines; identifying lead officers and forming working groups and teams;
- Stimulating thinking across agencies and across the 5 blocks to clarify our ambitions and develop them into a cohesive statement, together with identifying the key challenges to Government and ourselves;
- 14 July – an ‘all-partners’ conference at Halton Stadium to agree the ambitions and the challenges;
- July/August – cross agency teams for each block focused on developing the outcomes framework for the block; identifying appropriate indicators, and proposals for pooled funding and freedoms and flexibilities;
- September – meetings of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board and the Council’s Executive Board Cabinet to endorse the LAA.

Involving the Communities of Halton

The voluntary and community sector (VCS) is an integral part of the structure and activities of the Halton Strategic Partnership, and has been since its inception. In addition, the Partnership has spent a considerable time over the last year in developing a radical new approach to community engagement in the borough. The VCS plays a powerful role in developing the LAA, and will continue to do so in its implementation. The HSP Board has already agreed that compact-plus principles will underpin the governance and operation of the LAA. HVA Together (the CEN) has taken the responsibility of working with partners to develop the Statement of Community Involvement that maps out the principles of this relationship in the LAA. This is attached at Appendix 3.

We have worked closely with HVA Together to involve the voluntary and community sectors in the development of the LAA. At the outset there were briefings with the HVA Together Executive. In September, HVA Together organised a series of Forum Meetings which focused on developing the LAA and the involvement of groups and individuals. Representatives of groups and networks have been involved both in the Lead Officers Group and the SSPs developing each block.

In response to developing the LAA and the subsequent challenge to deliver and achieve the outcomes, HVA Together has established its forums, corresponding to the blocks. This enables it to select its nominees to the SSPs and also provides a forum for them to debate issues and give feedback. Within the agreement we have outcomes and indicators to show the growth and vibrancy of the sector and its capacity to contribute to the delivery of the LAA.

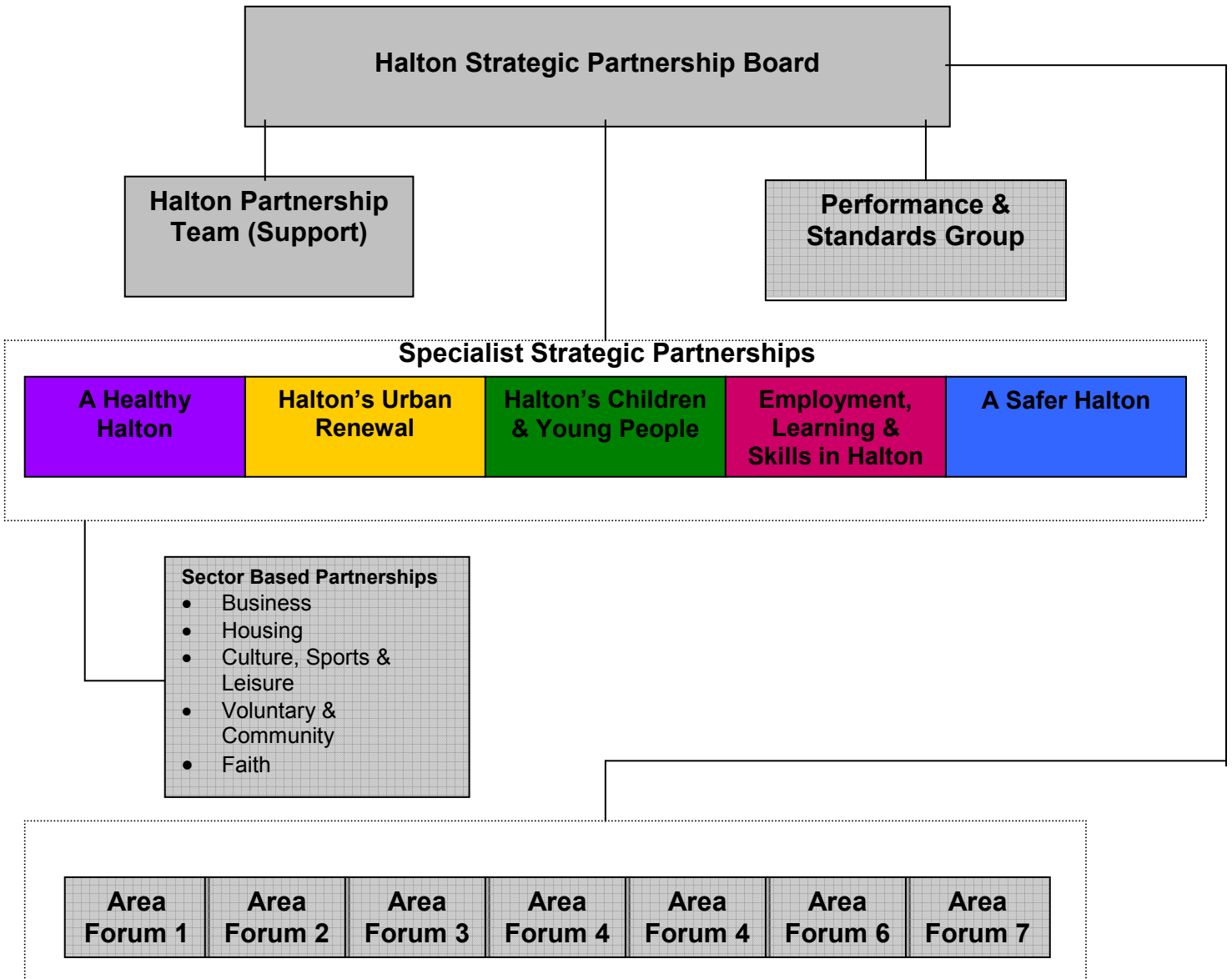
Governance

Halton already has in place well established and robust partnership arrangements. These are based on a Strategic Board supported by five thematic partnerships, a performance management group and a number of specialist subsidiary partnerships. This includes representation at all levels by all stakeholders including significant representation from the voluntary and community sectors. The structure has been recently reviewed, refreshed and rationalised through an overhaul of governance arrangements supported by Manchester Business School. The current governance structure is represented overleaf.



Halton Strategic **PARTNERSHIP**

The Virtual Organisation



The recent governance review took place in the knowledge of the advent of LAAs and was framed accordingly. It is proposed that the LAA will be managed through the existing Partnership structure, which along with the adopted performance management framework is considered wholly fit for purpose.

Any successful organisation must ensure that its strategy, structure and culture are perfectly aligned. Therefore, the latter is as important in achieving outcomes as the structure itself. The building and nurturing of relationships inside and outside the Partnership is crucial. The LAA has proved an ideal vehicle to strengthen relationships amongst partners in Halton, with Government Office and other agencies in the region. It has helped forge a wider shared understanding of Halton and the factors that influence its vitality. In its delivery, the LAA gives an opportunity to further bolster these relationships and drive up performance and efficiency. The issues we face are many and complex. The governance arrangements are framed to be flexible, responsive and allow a greater sense of responsibility and accountability to be shared across the Partnership.

Funding

The LAA represents only a small, albeit important, subset of Partnership activity in Halton. Currently, the Partnership invests £450M annually in the borough, and address almost 1000 targets. However, we recognise that the ambition of the LAA is to achieve marked and sustained change in the quality of life for Halton people. That crucially depends on how mainstream resources are used alongside welcome injections of specific and targeted special grants. The opportunity to join up funds to better effect is a boon, especially when used alongside a smarter performance management framework. This should allow us to target interventions where performance is not strong or happening quickly enough. Over time we will see a convergence of investment on the key priorities set out in the LAA.

Halton partners have noted the funding arrangements for LAAs. The mandatory pooling by Government of a number of external funding streams is welcomed. It is felt that this will simplify the performance management arrangements, reduce the transaction costs of programme management and lead to efficiencies. Given that Halton is a single-pot authority, the scope to make investments unfettered by the block structure is a welcome flexibility.

The Halton Strategic Partnership does not propose to pool any other funding streams within the LAA in Year 1. Some local and specific pooling of funding by partners will take place, as indeed it does now. However, we do not seek to embed these pooling arrangements within the auspices of the Agreement. Instead Partners will concentrate their efforts on wider moves to align appropriate budgets behind the Agreement. This position will be reviewed for Years 2 and 3 of the Agreement and we may seek to pool additional funding in later years of the agreement where this is helpful in achieving the outcomes agreed.

Partners are committed where appropriate to aligning the use of resources (including funds, personnel, buildings and land use) to support the aims of the LAA. Appendix 2 outlines our current thinking on aligning and pooling funding in the LAA. Our approach has been mainly to align funding in this first year.

A distinct financial benefit of the LAA can be the reward element. Halton has already agreed its LPSA2 with Government. This is being incorporated into the LAA, and a copy of the agreement is attached at Appendix 5.

Resources Management

All the objectives and targets of the LAA are set out in the Outcomes Framework, attached at Appendix 1. How well and how quickly progress happens depends crucially on the availability of resources and how smartly they are used. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information, allied with the strength of will to use them in the best way. A key purpose of the LAA is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the borough. This means:

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

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

- A data observatory has been set up to hold key statistical information on all aspects of living conditions in Halton. This will keep data at a variety of spatial levels – super output area, ward, neighbourhood and district level – and allow for comparison with our neighbours and regional and national averages. It will greatly help people to understand the geography and nature of disadvantage in Halton. It will be especially useful in informing the spatial targeting of activity under this LAA.
- The Partnership is setting up a database of consultation and community engagement in Halton. This will enable people to access a rich source of attitudinal data on a range of issues. It will also help people to plan and execute better community engagement in the borough - a key underpinning of this LAA.

Enabling Measures

Halton takes a pragmatic view of the opportunity offered to negotiate freedoms and flexibilities. The development process has identified a number of key enabling measures, which would benefit the LAA in its operation. These potential freedoms and flexibilities are summarised below:

Children & Young People

- Flexibility on benefits – Residence Order Allowance; Special Guardianship Allowance; Adoption Order Allowance.

Health & Older People

- Continued use of Supporting People Funding if Halton Borough Council fails to retain its excellent status.

Employment Learning & Skills

- Incapacity Benefit -rewarding the Halton LSP for a reduction in IB recipients. Savings could be counted if the individual did not go through Pathways to Work, and would be 50% of the saving. This would be allocated to the LSP by adding it onto Deprived Area Funding in order to support city employment strategies.
- Permitted Work Lower Limit Rules - Ability to amend the earnings disregard rules in targeted areas so that people can earn 6 hours of minimum wage without affecting other benefits.
- Data Sharing - There is a need to give greater freedom around data sharing protocols, i.e. in the case of seconded JCP staff where they lose access to data, particularly around individuals. Data should be accessible by seconded JCP staff (they will not share the details of that data with others).

Safer & Stronger Communities

- Paying the NTA pooled treatment money - in whichever form it comes - to the Council instead of the PCT. Criminal justice money is paid to the Council and having both funding streams in one place makes it easier for us to manage as Council Employees, and strengthens/simplifies our contracting arrangements with commissioned agencies.

We realise that it is a major task for Government to consider these properly. However, each is commended as being important if we are to fully realise our ambitions. An initial business case for each has now been presented separately to Government. We hope that these are resolved before the LAA receives final sign off.

Sustainability

The focus in Halton is to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. Sustainability is about linking cohesion into the mainstream of service delivery and ensuring that our vision can be delivered over time and in the face of conflicting demands and diminishing resources. It involves more than changing plans and policies as it involves changing hearts and minds. What is important is that foundations are properly and securely laid at the outset for enabling any project or initiative to make an impact into the future. The LAA has been developed by adopting this approach.

In short, we want to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. The Partnership has identified the following components as being crucial to success.

- Respect and Enjoyment*
- Thriving Places*
- Well Planned*
- Accessibility*

- (e) *Well Served*
- (f) *Well Run*

Halton already has a number of key strategies that commit to sustainability – detailed in the linkages section of the LAA. However, the Partnership believes that this is not enough. It recognises that there is growing scientific consensus about the environmental reality of climate change. Therefore, it has resolved to produce a bespoke climate change strategy. This will look to encompass the sustainability implications of everything the Partnership does. This will include the actions to take forward the LAA and the operational management of the Partner's organisations themselves.

A key element will be the need for the strategy to specify tangible outcomes and targets that can be actioned and monitored. Some of these are already contained in other strategies, for example our work in tackling fuel poverty in the housing strategy. It will be our intention to add a number of sustainability indicators to this LAA at the "Review and Refresh" stage.

Managing Risk

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

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

As part of implementing this LAA the Partnership will use its agreed Risk Management Strategy and establish a Strategic Risk Register. This will set out the risk management objectives, the role and responsibilities for risk management of the Board and individual SSPs, and will categorise the risks and the approach to risk management action plans.

The risk management objectives include the;

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

The Partnership's risks can be broadly categorised as either "strategic" or "operational". Strategic risks cover those threats or opportunities which could impact upon the achievement of medium and long-term goals. The review of strategic risks will be carried out when the LAA has been adopted. This will be followed up by an assessment of operational risks through each of the SSPs as part of their Action Planning of the LAA implementation process.

Equality & Diversity

The Partnership is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not accept discrimination, victimisation or harassment. This commitment to equity and social justice is clearly stated in the adopted equal opportunities policy of the Partnership, and covers this LAA.

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

Partners will work collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. They will ensure that all services are provided fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate to these needs. Partners will monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and delivery. Equality Impact Assessments will also be carried out on Partnership policies and services to assess how policies and services impact on different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments will highlight areas for improvement, which will be dealt with through the Partnership Improvement Plan.

A key focus of this work is to ensure mainstream service delivery is adequately meeting the needs of the diverse communities of Halton. Equity and accessibility are the two key drivers of how we will do this. Work is underway to examine the full range of community cohesion issues in Halton. As part of this a dataset of cohesion indicators has been developed, based on the Home Office model. They have been baselined in 2005/06 and will now form part of the datasets held by the Halton Data Observatory. This gives us a mechanism to track changes over the life of this LAA and beyond.

Performance management arrangements

The LAA seeks to raise the bar in terms of achieving challenging outcomes. This requires a step change in Partnership performance and will need careful management. The revised governance structure of the Partnership means that the Board and SSPs have all set up performance management groups. In order to support them considerable resources have been invested in the Data Observatory. The purpose of this is to provide a repository of real time performance data on all of the outcomes, indicators and targets set out in the LAA. The performance management framework then allows for this intelligence to inform the investment decisions of partners and helps hold them to account for the quality of those decisions in terms of actual performance achieved.

The LAA sets out clear targets for outcomes in the five thematic block areas and on key crosscutting transformational issues. The Halton Strategic Partnership Board

(HSPB) has delegated responsibility for developing and monitoring delivery of the annual LAA Action plan to the Performance and Standards Group (PSG). The PSG will review delivery of the LAA targets and operational plan actions on a six-monthly basis, with lighter-touch intermediate quarterly reviews of financial performance. The HSPB and PSG are supported by a dedicated performance management capacity from the Halton Strategic Partnership Team. The existing performance management framework of the Partnership has been updated and revised to take account of the needs of LAA management. This is attached at Appendix 4.

The performance management framework is comprehensive, strategic and operational. It will test the vision and approach of the LAA, including its preventative, sustainable and targeted aspects, and the priorities. This will include taking account of existing and emerging borough-wide, regional and national frameworks and initiatives that provide useful information and intelligence about the performance of Halton. It is designed to plan, monitor and review in a timely manner and will include targeted and LAA-wide evaluations. During the first year of LAA we will develop an annual trajectory for each of the three years of the Agreement, building on the trajectory analysis produced for the LSP review in 2006.

Our thematic partnerships – the SSPs - will be responsible for the delivery of the relevant “block” outcomes of the LAA. SSPs will review their arrangements to ensure these are “fit for purpose” to ensure delivery of the LAA. Responsibility for individual targets in the LAA will be clearly designated in the action plan to be developed before the spring with particular lead partners and named lead officers. Each partner’s normal accountability and corporate governance procedures apply to the initiatives they take responsibility for. The Service Level Agreements with individual projects will task project deliverers with addressing key outcomes of the LAA, including underpinning issues such as sustainability and social inclusion.

All action plans will include appropriate tracking of performance at six-monthly or more frequent intervals (except where outcome data is only available annually – for example, for school examination results). A “monitoring level” will also be set for targets: this will be the level that triggers performance management action. The PSG will agree all targets and “monitoring levels” through its oversight of annual action plans.

Ladder of intervention

Our annual planning cycle is designed to fit with the established budgetary and project management cycles of partners in Halton. In summary, the planning cycle for the LAA is as follows:

Timing	Activity	Outputs
July - Sept	Annual review of progress against LAA outcome targets and delivery of previous year’s action plan	Report to HSP Board Annual report. Financial report.

Aug – Oct	Draft action plans submitted by SSPs (covering proposed activities, outcomes and funding arrangements). PSG to challenge prioritization and plausibility.	Feedback to SSPs. Report to HSP Board on draft plans, including recommendations for changes. Financial report.
Nov	Mid-year (Apr-Sept) update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs.	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Performance report. GONW Monitoring Meeting
Dec	Finalised action plans submitted by SSPs. PSG challenge as appropriate.	Final proposed operational plan to HSP Board. Financial report.
Feb/March	Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Financial report.
May	End of year update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Performance report.

Tackling under-performance will be the greatest challenge for the performance management regime in the wider LAA context. A three-stage process is proposed for the LAA. This ladder of intervention will be reviewed over time. However, from the outset we intend to put in place systems which provide clear monitoring and reporting and make available a mutually accountable and supportive approach to enable partners to improve performance. This reporting would result in a clear picture of performance against the LAA in our annual report and then provides the basis for future planning as LAA implementation rolls forward.

For specific funding streams, performance management action could be triggered when performance against a particular target fails to achieve the agreed "monitoring level".

- Stage 1 If a six monthly monitoring report shows that performance against the action plan or a particular target has failed to achieve the agreed "monitoring level", the lead partner will be expected to take appropriate action, working as appropriate with other agencies. It will be asked to report on progress to the relevant SSP within three months.
- Stage 2. If a six monthly monitoring report shows that performance against the action plan or target has failed to achieve the agreed monitoring level for two consecutive six monthly periods, the SSP will be expected to agree a plan with the relevant agencies to tackle the under-performance. It will be asked to report on progress to the PSG within three months.

- Stage 3. If performance continues to fall below expected levels despite action by the SSP, the PSG will nominate one of its members to agree a revised plan to tackle under-performance, details of which will be reported to the PSG within three months.

The PSG will retain the right, in consultation with the relevant SSP, to trigger performance management action at either Stage 1, 2 or 3 in other circumstances where there is evidence of under-performance against target. The PSG will report every six months to the Board on all performance management actions, and especially those at Stages 2 and 3. These arrangements will be implemented and tested during the first year of the LAA 2006/7.

Linkages

As noted above, the LAA itself covers a small, albeit very important, subset of actions to which the Partnership is committed to deliver our agreed sustainable community strategy. That strategy provides clear signposting to the full range of activities, which the Partnership undertakes to deliver our vision. This LAA forms part of the medium term delivery plan for the Strategy. Delivering on the LAA also means ensuring that all our strategies and plans fit together. The main strategies and plans which underpin our priorities are:

- Local Development Framework.
- Integrated Equality & Diversity Policies.
- Economic Development & Tourism Strategy.
- Town Centre Strategies.
- Local Transport Plan.
- Crime and Disorder Reduction Plan
- Education Development Plan.
- Children & Young People's Plan.
- Health Strategy.
- Sport Strategy.
- Joint Commissioning Strategy for Older People.
- Air Quality Action Plan.
- Household Waste Management Strategy.
- Halton Community Strategy.
- Crime and Drugs Strategy.
- Housing Strategy.
- The National Service Framework for Children, Young People and Maternity Services
- Healthy Schools Standards and Plan
- Local Safeguarding Children Board Plan
- Looked After Children Strategy
- Building Bridges Strategy for Children with Disabilities
- Halton and Warrington Youth Justice Plan
- The Local Delivery Plans of the Health Trusts
- Cheshire Fire Service Plan
- Cheshire Constabulary Plan
- Cheshire Probation Plan
- Cheshire Criminal Justice Board Plan
- Safer Halton Partnership Plan

The LAA 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.

Attachments

- Appendix 1 Outcomes Framework
- Appendix 2 Funding
- Appendix 3 Statement of Community Involvement
- Appendix 4 Performance Management Framework
- Appendix 5 LPSA2 Agreement

Halton Local Area Agreement – Initial Outcomes Framework

Those indicators highlighted **in blue** are those included in the LPSA2 agreement which now merges into the LAA. Those indicators highlighted **in red** are the mandatory items. Those indicators **in black** are the local discretionary targets

Children & Young People Block

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baselines 2006/07 (Unless otherwise stated)</i>	<i>Targets 2007/08 (including any stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09 (including any stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10 (including any stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<u><i>Lead partner</i></u>
Help achieve economic well-being	Reduce Percentage of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training to fewer than 7%	10.3%	9.4%	8.6%	7.7%	Connexions
Tackle the underlying determinants of ill health and health inequalities	By reducing the under-18 conception rate by 50% by 2010 as part of a broader strategy to improve sexual health (1998 Baseline)	-7.0% (2004 data)	-15%	-30%	-50%	Preventative mini-trust

Be Healthy	The percentage annual increase in the number of schools with an approved school travel plan (STP) required to achieve 100% STP coverage by March 2010	Baseline – 18% in 2003/04	64%	76%	88%	HBC Travel Adviser
Target 1	Increase the % school attendance of children who have been looked after for at least 12 months	89.6%	91%	92.6%	93.5%	HBC CYPD
Target 2	Increase % of LAC under 16, looked after for more than 2.5 years, that have been in their current placement for at least 2 years (LAC 24)	77%	81.5%	83%	85%	HBC CYPD LAC mini-trust
Target 3	Increase the percentage of year 11 pupils gaining 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or DfES agreed equivalents, including English and Maths	37.1%	40.5%	42.0%	45.5%	HBC CYPD
Have security, stability and are cared for	Reduce the ratio of children looked after per 10,000 child population	57.1	56.2	55.0	53.5	HBC CYPD

To help children attend and enjoy school	To reduce unauthorised absence towards the national average in both primary and secondary schools by 6% and 10% respectively	Primary 5.65 Secondary 9.52	Primary 5.54 Secondary 9.20	Primary 5.43 Secondary 8.88	Primary 5.31 Secondary 8.56	HBC CYPD
To help children attend and enjoy school	Reduce number of days lost through chronic ill health through the development of joint working with the health sector.	Primary 5.25 Secondary 7.50	Primary 5.22 Secondary 7.46	Primary 5.19 Secondary 7.42	Primary 5.16 Secondary 7.37	HBC CYPD
Achieve stretching educational standards inclusively	To reduce the proportion of pupils with statements of special education needs to 2.8%.	3.0%	2.95%	2.9%	2.8%	HBC CYPD
Prepare young people for employment	To increase the number of 19 year olds with Level 2 qualifications.	55%	60%	65.5%	71.5%	LSC
Prepare young people for employment	Increase the % of young people achieving Level 3 by 19	(2004/05) 36%	Targets to be agreed in 2006-07			HBC CYPD

Give young people the chance to attend and enjoy school	Reduce the number of pupils permanently excluded from Halton Schools	40 (pending confirmation of 2005-06 figure by DfES)	32	To be agreed	To be agreed	HBC CYPD
Give young people the chance to attend and enjoy school	To reduce the number of schools with over 25% surplus capacity	January 2006 29% of Primary Schools and 25% of High schools	Reduction to 12% primary and 12.5% secondary – based on revised net capacity – will be effective in September 2008 unless adjudicator allows in year change from 2007	12% primary and 12.5% secondary	To be agreed	HBC CYPD
Children and young people are mentally and emotionally healthy	A full range of CAMH services is commissioned for children and young people with learning disabilities	(component rating) 3	(component rating) 3	(component rating) 4	(component rating) 4	CAMHS mini children's trust
Children and young people are mentally and emotionally healthy	16 and 17 year olds have access to mental health services appropriate to their age and level of maturity	(component rating) 2	(component rating) 3	(component rating) 4	(component rating) 4	CAMHS mini children's trust

Children and young people are mentally and emotionally healthy	24 hour cover is available to meet urgent mental health needs of children and young people and specialist mental health assessment undertaken within 24 hours.	(component rating) 2	(component rating) 3	(component rating) 4	(component rating) 4	CAMHS mini children's trust
Children and young people are mentally and emotionally healthy	Protocols are in place for partnership working between agencies for children and young people with complex, persistent and severe behavioural and mental health needs.	(component rating) 2	(component rating) 3	(component rating) 3	(component rating) 4	CAMHS mini children's trust
Children have security, stability and are cared for	Children with disabilities will have improved security, stability and care within their home environment by all eligible families being offered a carers' assessment by 2009	Baseline and targets to be established in 2006-07				Children with Disabilities Mini trust
Develop self-confidence and successfully deal with significant life changes and challenges	100% of young people with disabilities progress into further education, work or other positive destinations each year	Baseline and targets to be established in 2006-07				Children with Disabilities Mini trust

*** All school performance baseline data refers to 2004/05 academic year.

Halton Local Area Agreement – Initial Outcomes Framework

Healthier Communities & Older People Block

Outcomes	Indicators	Baselines 2006/07 (Unless otherwise stated)	Targets 2007/08 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)	Targets 2008/09 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)	Targets 2009/10 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)	Lead partner
Improved Health and reduced health inequalities:	Reduce health inequalities between Halton and the England population by narrowing the gap in all-age, all-cause mortality by at least 10% by 2010 (2009-11)	802 (2003-05)	750	733	717	Halton & St Helens PCT and Partners
Reduce premature mortality rates and reduce inequalities in premature mortality rates between wards/neighbourhoods with a particular focus on reducing the risk factors for heart disease, stroke and related diseases (CVD) (smoking, diet and physical activity)	Reduce the death rates from All Circulatory Diseases (in under 75s) by 53% by 2010 (2009-11)	2003-2005 Data Period 112.0 per 100,000	2004-2006 Data Period 107.6 per 100,000	2005-2007 Data Period 103.2 per 100,000	2006-2008 Data Period 98.8 per 100,000	Halton & St Helens PCT and Partners
	Reduce the death rate from all cancers (in under 75s) by 26% by 2010 (2009-11)	2003-2005 Data Period 168.2 per 100,000	2004-2006 Data Period 163.1 per 100,000	2005-2007 Data Period 158.0 per 100,000	2006-2008 Data Period 152.9 per 100,000	Halton & St Helens PCT and Partners

	Reduce health inequalities within Halton, by narrowing the gap in all-age, all-cause mortality between the 20% of wards experiencing the highest rate and the Halton average by at least 25%	2003-2005 Data Period Halton: 803.7 Highest wards: 1368.4 Gap: 70.3%	2004-2006 Data Period Gap: 67.3%	2005-2007 Data Period Gap: 64.4%	2006-2008 Data Period Gap: 61.5%	Halton & St Helens PCT and Partners
	Reduce adult smoking rates to under 22%. With focus on most deprived wards which have the highest smoking prevalence	2004 estimate: 34%	33%	32%	31%	Halton & St Helens PCT and Partners
	People reporting to NHS Stop Smoking Services who set quit date and still stopped at 4 week review	850 (2005/06)	1000	1200	2000	Halton & St Helens PCT and Partners
Enhance the health & well being of Halton people inc. vulnerable seldom heard group i.e. Older people, BME, C & YP, carers	Increase take up of physical activities by adults including carers* by 5%	24% Sport (2004) 35% Culture (2005)	25% 36%	27% 38%	29% 40%	HBC and partners

Improved care for long term conditions and support for carers	Unplanned emergency bed days (for aged 65+)	58,649 (04/05)	2% reduction	4% reduction	6% reduction	HBC & partners
	Carers receiving specific carer service after assessment or review	195 (04/05)	250	400	600	

Halton Local Area Agreement – Initial Outcomes Framework

Employment Learning & Skills Block

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baselines 2006/07 (Unless otherwise stated)</i>	<i>Targets 2007/08 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Lead partner</i>
<p>Within each NRF district, for those living in the wards identified by DWP as having the worst labour market position (as at February 2004), significantly improve their overall employment rate and reduce the difference between their employment rate and the overall employment rate for England</p>	<p>Within that NRF district a reduction by 2007-8 of at least 1.6 percentage point in the overall benefits claim rate for those living in the Local Authority wards identified by DWP as having the worst initial labour market position.</p>	<p>Appleton 24.9%</p>	23.9	22.9	21.9	<p>Job Centre Plus</p>
		<p>Castlefields 34.9%</p>	33.9	32.9	31.9	
		<p>Halton Lea 34.3%</p>	33.3	32.3	31.3	
		<p>Kingsway 26.3%</p>	25.3	24.3	23.3	
		<p>Norton South 25.4%</p>	24.4	23.4	22.4	
		<p>Riverside 30.0%</p>	29.0	28.0	27.0	
		<p>Windmill Hill 45.4%</p>	44.4	43.4	42.4	
	<p>Stats DWP website 9/06 (dated 2/06)</p>					

Within that NRF district a reduction by 2007-8 of at least 1.6 percentage point in the difference between the overall benefits claimant rate for England and the overall rate for the local authority wards with the worst initial labour market position.						
Increase number of adults qualified to Level 3 by 5%	12,200 (Jan-Dec 05)	150	200	260	LSC	
Increase number of adults qualified to Level 2 by 1%	14,300 (04-05)	250	300	314	LSC	
Reduce number of adults with no qualifications by 6%	14,400)	400	500	720	LSC	
Increase rate of self-employment by 9%	5.7%	5.8%	6.0%	6.2%	Chamber	
Increase number of VAT registrations by 9%	235 p.a.	242	249	256	Private Sector	

	Adults gaining Skills for Life 1or 2 or ESOL SfL at Entry level 1 to 3	19 (04/05)	30	40	46	HBC
Helping people improve their literacy, numeracy and spoken English	IB recipients sustaining 16 hrs+ employment for 13weeks+	18 (05/06)	50	100	179	HBC
Increase IB recipients into work or self employment						

Halton Local Area Agreement – Initial Outcomes Framework

Urban Renewal Block

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baselines 2006/07 (Unless otherwise stated)</i>	<i>Targets 2007/08 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Lead partner</i>
Increase job supply for Halton residents	Increase the numbers of jobs in Halton by 5%	53,086 (2005)	53,686	54,486	55,740	Private Sector
Improvement of the environment through land reclamation	Bring 24ha of derelict land back into beneficial use	0	8	8	8	HBC
Secure private sector investment in commercial premises in order to create more jobs for local people	Facilitate bringing to market of at least 60,000 sq. m. of new and replacement commercial floorspace	0	20,000	20,000	20,000	Private Sector

As part of an overall housing strategy for the district ensure that all social housing is made decent by 2010, <i>unless a later deadline is agreed by DCLG as part of the Decent Homes programme</i>	Proportion of social housing meeting required standard	64.3%	75%	85%	100%	RSLs
Reduce waste to landfill and increase recycling	Reduce household waste arisings sent to landfill (BVPI 82d)	76.8%	74%	72%	70%	HBC Env. Dir.
Reduce waste to landfill and increase recycling	Ensure 40% of municipal waste is recycled or composted	24% (2005/06)	26%	32%	40%	HBC Env. Dir.

Halton Local Area Agreement – Initial Outcomes Framework

Safer & Stronger Communities Block

<i>Outcomes</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baselines 2006/07 (Unless otherwise stated)</i>	<i>Targets 2007/08 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10 (including stretch targets, and their annual unstretched targets)</i>	<i>Lead partner</i>
Reduce overall crime in line with Halton's Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership targets and narrow the gap between the worst performing wards/neighbourhoods and other area across Halton (Source ((PSA 1) SSCF Agreement))	Reduction in overall British Crime Survey comparator recorded crime (PSA1)	9421 (03/04)	7776	To be negotiated	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police
	Narrow the gap between worst performing wards and Halton average	Appleton Castlefields Halton Lea Kingsway Norton South Riverside Windmill Hill	Baseline data currently being agreed from I-Quanta analysis	To be negotiated	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police
	Reduce violent crime rates from serious wounding and common assault	2,133 (03/04)	1,999	1913	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police

	Reduce criminal damage	4349 (03/04)	3462	To be negotiated	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police
	Reduce burglary from dwellings	593 (03/04)	356	To be negotiated	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police
	Reduce the number of thefts of vehicles	753 (03/04)	625	588	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police
	Reduce the number of thefts from vehicles	1108 (03/04)	920	749	To be negotiated	Cheshire Police
Reduce the proportion of prolific and other priority offenders who re-offend:	The reoffending rates of PPO's currently on the scheme measured against the equivalent period prior to entering the scheme.	To be confirmed on Jan 07 figures showing both actual cohort numbers and percentages	-20%(on 07 baseline)	-25%(on 07 baseline)	TBC	Cheshire Police

	Adults (over 18)	Being negotiated nationally				Cheshire Police
	Youth (under 18)	97 in cohort 41.2% recidivism (2004)	39.2%	37.2%	36.2%	YOT
	Youth (under 18)	Proportion subject to ISSP completing their order				
Reduce the harm caused by illegal drugs	Increase the total numbers of individuals in treatment	604 (2004/05)	665	790	810 (based on current funding)	DAT
	Increase the retention rate in treatment for 12 weeks	80% (2004/05)	85%	88%	89% (based on current funding)	DAT
	Increase number of young people with a substance misuse problem choosing to have treatment	37 (2005)	59	94	150	Preventative Services Mini- Trust

	Increase number of young people and their families accessing specialist support services	7 (2005)	20	40	60	Preventative Services Mini-Trust
	Reduce public perception of local drug dealing or drug use as a problem	Establish baseline April 07 Source – Halton 2000 Survey				DAT
Build respect in communities and reduce anti-social behaviour	Increase in percentage of people who feel informed about what is being done to tackle anti-social behaviour in their local area	LoGUS data expected Dec 06				SHP
	Increased percentage of people who feel that parents in their local area take responsibility for the behaviour of their children	LoGUS data expected Dec 06				SHP

	Increased percentage of people who feel that people in their area treat them with respect and consideration	LoGUS data expected Dec 06					SHP
	Reduce people's perception of anti-social behaviour (using the 7 issues stated in the survey).	Baseline 2005 33.6%	27%	25%	23%		SHP
	Reduce ASB incidents recorded by Police	3086 (05/06)	2870	TBA	TBA		Cheshire Police
	Increase the perception of safety after dark	2003 baseline 50%	55%	60%	65%		Cheshire Police/ HBC

	Increase Percentage of residents who feel they can influence decisions affecting their local area	2005 baseline 30% (Consulting Communities in Halton Survey)	33%	34%	35%	HSPB
Reassure the public reducing the fear of crime	Maintain the capacity of the local VCS in the borough as measured by volume of public service delivery (CSCCF Mandatory)	1.3% (05/06)	1.3%	1.3%	1.3%	HSPB
Empower local people to have a greater choice and influence over local decision making and a greater role in public service delivery	Increase number of people who feel that their local area is a place where people from different backgrounds can get on well together	80% (Consulting Communities in Halton survey2005)	82%	84%	85%	HSPB

	Increase the number of people recorded as or reporting that they have engaged in formal volunteering on an average of at least two hours per week over the past year.	Baseline 2005 26% (Consulting Communities of Halton Survey)	28%	29%	30%	HSPB
Cleaner, greener and safer public spaces	Increase the number of parks and green spaces with Green Flag Award	5 (2006)	6	7	8	HBC Env. Dir
	Increase the number of residents satisfied with local parks and open spaces (BV119e)	71% (03/04) (Triennial survey & local fill-in survey)	73%	75%	77%	HBC Env. Dir

	An increase in the percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours from the point where the local authority is legally entitled to remove the vehicle (BVPI 1218b)	Respond to report within 24 hours – 70.76% (05/06)	85%	100%	100%	HBC Env. Dir.
		Legally remove – 77.31% (05/06)	85%	93%	100%	HBC Env. Dir.
	Graffiti % of incidents of offensive graffiti responded to within 24 hours of notification	77.22% (05/06)	85%	100%	100%	HBC Env. Dir.
	Reduce detritus and litter density (BVPI 199(a))	16% (3 year average 03/04 - 05/06)	16%	14.25%	13%	HBC Env. Dir.
Improve the quality of the local environment by reducing the gap in aspects of liveability between the worst wards/neighbourhoods and the district	Percentage of residents in Halton's NM Pilot areas reporting an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhoods	72% (NM Resident Survey autumn 2006)	TBA	TBA	TBA	HBC NM Unit

as a whole, with a particular focus on reducing levels of litter and detritus	Raise satisfaction levels with the neighbourhood area where people live (BVPI 89)	57.9% (04/05)	63.7%	69%	70%	HBC Env. Dir.
Increase domestic fire safety and reduce arson	Reduce deliberate number of incidents of vehicle arson to non-derelict vehicles	195 (Jan – Dec 05)	160	135	130	Fire Service
	Reduce fly tipping (fly capture)	2,100 (05/06)	1890	TBA	TBA	HBC
	Reduce deliberate property fires by 10%	111 (2005)	100	90	82	Fire Service
	Maintain the number of accidental fire related deaths in the home at current level	Nil	Nil	Nil	Nil	Fire Service
	Reduce Accidental dwelling fires	101	94	87	80	Fire Service

	Increase the number of victims of domestic abuse accessing support	270	324	Target to be agreed at end of 07/08		The Relationships Centre
	Increase year on year the arrest of perpetrators where a crime has been committed (LCJB)	36 per month	38	40	42	Cheshire Police
	To increase the number of incidents of domestic abuse reported to the police (directly or through a third party)	1613 (05/06)	1774	1863	1956	Cheshire Police
	Increase the number of incidents of domestic abuse, which result in sanctioned detections	269 (20% of all incidents for 05/06)	282	288	294	Cheshire Police

	To reduce the number of repeat victims of domestic abuse reported annually to the police (directly or through a third party) in the same period who are repeat victims	Baseline 162 (21% of all victims)	154	146	139	HDAF
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Appendix 2

FUNDING : LOCAL AREA AGREEMENTS

SINGLE POT

Category	Funding Stream	2006/07 (£000)	2007/08 (£000)	2008/09 (£000)	2009/10 (£000)
Centrally Pooled (Mandatory)	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	6,049	5,377	TBC	TBC
	Children's Services Grant	462	585	TBC	TBC
	Kerbcraft	30	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Key Stage 3 – Behaviour and Attendance	68	68	TBC	TBC
	Key Stage 3 – Central Co-ordination	332	128	TBC	TBC
	Primary Strategy Central Co-ordinator	326	140	TBC	TBC
	School Travel Advisers	17	17	TBC	TBC
	School Development Grant (LA element)	1,132	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Anti-Social Behaviour Grant	25	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Building Safer Communities	149	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Neighbourhood Element	413	516	413	258
	Domestic Violence	7	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Partnership Support Grant (Drug Action Team)	66	TBC	TBC	TBC
	Single Community Programme	115	TBC	TBC	TBC
Waste Performance & Efficiency	252	252	TBC	TBC	

Centrally Pooled (Discretionary)	Extended Schools (Standards Fund)	254	-		
	Teenage Pregnancy Grant	106	106		
	Children's Fund	483	-		
	School Improvement Partners	23	-		
	Supporting People	7,931	7,535		
	Rural Bus Subsidy Grant	37	37		
Aligned *	Connexions	1,400			
	14-19 Funding and Organisational Pilots	280			
	Direct Schools' Funding	83,600			
	LEA Music Services	143			
	School Meals	162			
	Youth Opportunity Fund	34			
	Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services	270			
	Basic Command Unit	100			
National Treatment Agency (Drug Treatment)	1,207				
PCT Mainstream (adult drug treatment)	369				

Code

Black
Red
Green
Blue

General
C&YP
Health
Safer Halton

HALTON LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

Introduction

This statement of community and voluntary sector involvement (SCI) demonstrates how we have worked together so far, and how we will build on this for the future.

There are many voluntary organisations and community groups in Halton. Their objectives and activities are shared with other stakeholders in the borough. Since 2001 all of these interests have come together to jointly commit to improving life in the borough under the banner of the Halton Strategic Partnership (HSP).

The Halton Strategic Partnership is committed to ensuring that a diverse range of voluntary and community groups are involved in decision-making, resource allocation, neighbourhood renewal and service delivery at an area level. This is fully set out in the recently adopted sustainable Community Strategy for Halton. In taking this forward through the Local Area Agreement (LAA) it is vital that it is based on a shared understanding that all partners are responsible for achieving this.

Engaging residents

The LAAs timescales meant that there has been limited scope to involve residents directly in the LAA negotiation. However, the Community Strategy was built upon a 12-month period of intense engagement with residents and the voluntary and community sector. It was vital that the process was inclusive. Many people and groups were involved so we could build a clear picture on what was important and how we should go forward. Some of the key steps included:

- A review of our achievements since the first Community Strategy was launched four years ago, and an honest assessment of how well partnership arrangements have worked
- A new State of Halton report was commissioned to look objectively at statistical conditions and changes and trends in social, economic and environmental conditions
- A major telephone survey of residents backed up by focus groups was carried out to seek their views on what life is like, and should be like, in Halton
- A review of regional and national strategies, and those of partners, was carried out to assess the likely impact of this activity in Halton
- An inclusive process of debate and discussion on the way forward took place with members, officers, officials and volunteers of all the organisations involved with the partnership
- A thematic assessment of the challenges facing the borough, and a thorough review of outcomes, outputs and targets was carried out. These helped to demonstrate how the strategy and partnership working could make a difference in the future.

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

We are committed to consulting and listening to local people and ensuring that their priorities shape the strategic direction of Halton. To underpin this commitment the Partnership has adopted a new and innovative approach to community engagement enshrined in a strategy adopted in October 2005. This has begun to identify best practice models of community empowerment and work to support all partners to develop their practice further. There is a commitment to continue this approach as the LAA is developed.

While partners are effectively consulting local residents in a variety of ways, and can demonstrate that their priorities are shaping the strategic direction of the partnership, we recognise that there is more work to be done. In the first year of the LAA (and the final months of this year) we will focus on further developing the links between our LAA and the community engagement strategy.

Building on existing partnership working

Halton's LAA is built on a broad base of existing partnership working, especially with the voluntary and community sector. Halton already has well established and robust partnership working arrangements. As detailed in the LAA this is based on a hierarchy of Partnership Board, SSPs (thematic partnerships), Performance and Standards Group, and a range of subsidiary partnerships. The community is well represented on all of these bodies with at least 2 representatives per partnership, and indeed the Community Empowerment Network's Chair is the HSP's Vice-Chair.

In addition there are geographical engagement mechanisms through area forums, participation and delivery meetings and putative neighbourhood management boards in our three pilot areas. The Area Forums will shortly refresh area action plans and take on board any ramifications from the LAA. They will be based on wide consultation with local residents, neighbourhood based groups and cross-borough communities of interest and communities of identity. The Area Action Plans will both reflect the emerging priorities of the LAA and act as a mechanism for understanding local priorities to feed into the LAA.

Developing the LAA together

From the outset there has been a commitment to informing the Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) about the LAA process and to consulting on the developing LAA. Underpinning this, the LAA Lead Officers Group includes two voluntary sector members from HVA Together.

A range of activities have been planned to keep all stakeholders informed of the development of the LAA and to shape its direction at critical points. In response to demand events will be held during working hours and also evenings / weekends so that the needs of smaller community organisations and Board Members are met. Even at this early stage we can demonstrate that concerns raised during stakeholder events have influenced the developing LAA. For example:

- The importance of poverty as across cutting issue

- Transport and accessibility
- Properly representing the full range of needs of older people
- A strategic approach towards funding the voluntary sector, moving away from short-term project based funding.

The LAA is now a standing agenda item for monthly Community Empowerment Network (CEN) Executive Board and network meetings so that the VCS infrastructure organisations of the Borough are consulted and informed at regular intervals. Lead negotiators for each block will ensure that the VCS are involved in and inform the emerging priorities targets and actions.

Implementing the LAA

There is a clear opportunity for the LAA to enable an increase in opportunities for the voluntary and community sector organisations to be delivery agents. We welcome the mandatory outcome on the growth of the voluntary and community sector and partners are considering how to support this. Work to achieve this mandatory outcome will build on the continuing work of the Partnership who:

- Support commissioning agencies to develop models for commissioning services that enable VCS organisations to hold contracts
- Promote the contribution the VCS can make in public service delivery
- Build the capacity of VCS organisations to develop the standards, systems and skills required to become 'fit for purpose', bidding for and potentially winning contracts for service delivery.

Making a financial contribution

There is considerable scope for the voluntary and community sector to add value to the LAA:

- In Halton for each £1 of local authority grant investment, the sector levers in a further £6
- When volunteer time is recognised with a notional value of £8 per hour, it would amount to a further £50 million added value to Halton.
- The Small Grants Fund offers voluntary and community groups grants of up to £5,000 to achieve their goals.

We have not addressed in detail whether and how specific funding streams will be brought into the LAA, but Change Up investment plans and the Big Lottery Fund are under discussion.

Purpose of the SCI for Halton

Acknowledging the diversity and independent status of all partners, the SCI for Halton's purpose is to:

- Be a fundamental reference document setting out processes for improving, monitoring and evaluating the input of local people and partners, relationships, partnerships and cross-sectoral working, at all levels.
- Establish key principles, shared vision and undertakings.

- Promote understanding between the sectors, and work together to develop a culture of mutual trust and empowerment.

The SCI for Halton is a framework for the way in which organisations from the community voluntary & public sectors work together. It is based on a number of shared principles:

1. Voluntary action is an essential part of a democratic society.
2. If society is to thrive and work well, it needs to have an independent and diverse community and voluntary sector.
3. All partners are committed to working in partnership towards common aims, whilst recognising that each contributes in different ways.
4. It is recognised that policies and services will be much closer to peoples real needs and wishes if they are engaged and involved in putting their ideas into action.
5. By involving people in decisions and helping them take part in the delivery of services, long-term relationships with the partners are built.
6. All partners recognise and respect equality and diversity and will work to enhance and encourage the implementation of these principles.

To be successful, the SCI aims to involve residents and the VCS in developing the LAA, and more importantly in its implementation. It will:

- Widen access for communities to be involved in or influence the decision-making process.
- Develop the relationship between all sectors and at all levels.
- Improve the flow of information and communication channels between and in, all sectors and the community.
- Develop the network and networking, between and across, all sectors.

Established protocol

The Halton Strategic Partnership has already agreed a protocol, which sets out the expectations in terms of the actions and relationships between partners. The Board has also stated its intention that each of the blocks of the LAA should be underpinned by a similar commitment to involve and engage all partners, and especially the community and voluntary sector, in the design and implementation of the LAA. It is worth highlighting some of the key commitments included in the Halton protocol:

Shared Commitments for Halton Strategic Partnership and HVA Together

1. All involved in the HSPB, HT and all the relevant sub partnerships will be aware of and sign up to the Community Strategy, priorities process, partnership strategies and terms of reference as required.
2. All members' organisations must comply with the equality and diversity policies of HSPB, adhering to the principles and values of the Partnership on equality and fairness.
3. At all levels of representation HSPB and HT will work towards eliminating any barriers for members to access and fully participate in the process. This will include an induction for new representatives, and relevant training and ongoing support from Partnership and HT staff.
4. HSPB and HT will actively work towards a relatively even spread of representation over the geographical area of Halton.

5. The HSPB will recognize the full range of responsibilities that HT is charged with by central government and the relevant levels of emphasis placed on each.
6. Whilst recognizing that Members represent organizations, within Partnership structures they will act in the best interests of the borough rather than advancing their own personal or organizational agendas.

Commitment of Halton Strategic Partnership Board to support the full involvement of HVA Together

1. There will be at least 2 HT representatives on the HSPB and each of the Specialist Strategic Partnerships (SSPs)
2. Wherever possible, each SSP will invite representation from HT onto all sub partnerships and working groups.
3. All representatives are entitled to receive appropriate support and assistance from the Halton Partnership Team, Halton Together support team and or SSP coordinators to enable them to fully participate in meetings

Commitment of HVA Together to support the advancement of the LAA

1. HT representatives will be openly and democratically elected through the Halton Together Network and its recognised sub networks and forums.
2. Halton Together will endeavour to ensure that all representatives have the relevant expertise or are provided with opportunities to develop their knowledge.
3. HT representatives will have the responsibility to ensure that they gather information from and feed back to the wider network the content and context of their involvement and will in turn report to and inform the relevant aspect of the HSPB of the work of HT.

This SCI will form the basis on which the working protocol for involvement of partners in managing the LAA will spring from.

Conclusion

This Statement of Community Involvement seeks to be a fundamental reference document which will establish key principles, shared vision and undertakings, to promote understanding between partners so that they may work together to build trust and improve the lives of people who live and work in Halton through the Local Area Agreement (LAA).

This provides a basis to help the Halton Strategic Partnership (HSP) to utilise the LAA to streamline and improve service provision, with the maximum inclusion of local people and the community and voluntary sector at every level and to respond to and be driven by the needs of the local community.



Halton Strategic Partnership Board

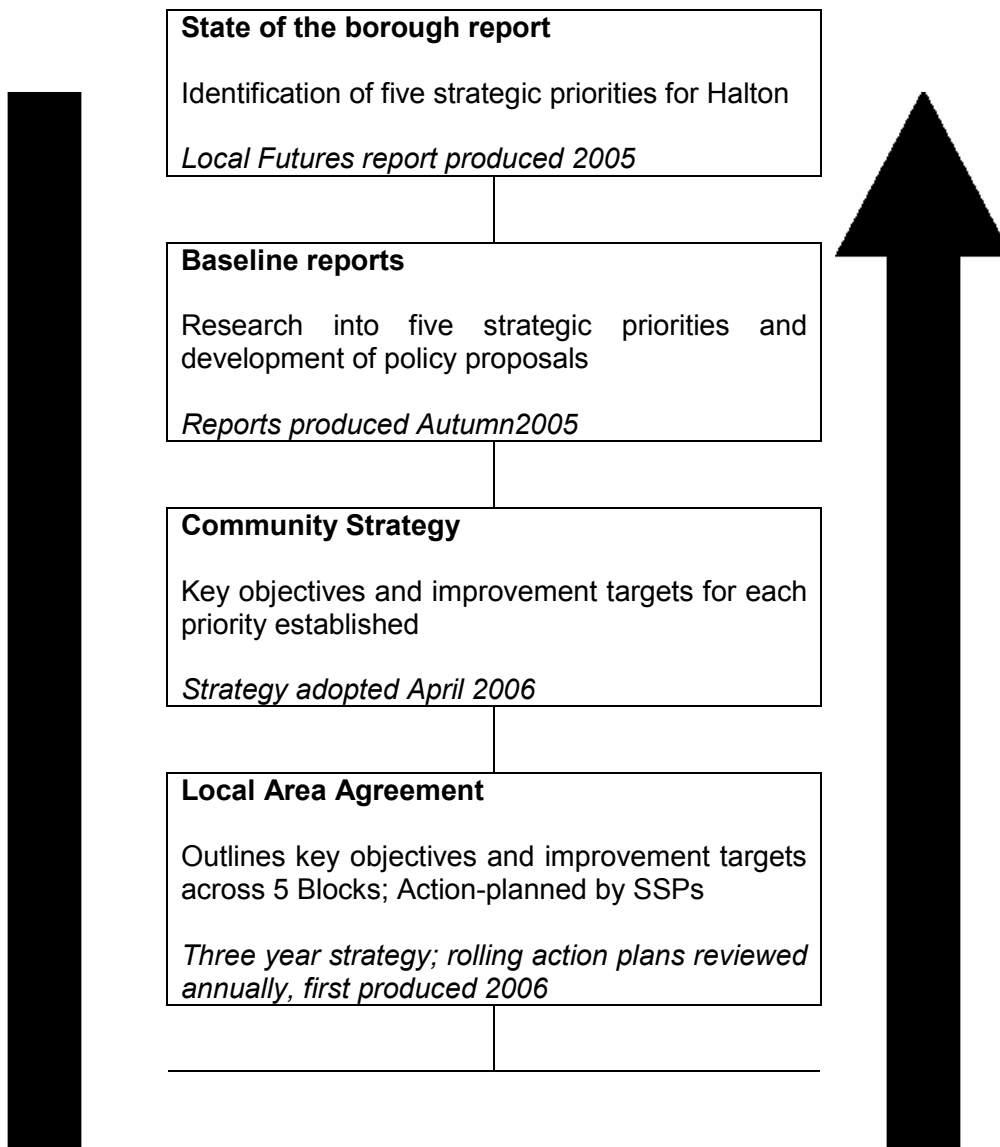
LAA Performance management framework (Draft)

August 2006

Section 1: reviewing delivery

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB) has a structured strategic planning and performance management framework in place, with strong linkages between the two processes. This has been revised and extended to encompass the needs of Local Area agreements (LAA).

The following diagram illustrates the Partnership's strategic planning process.

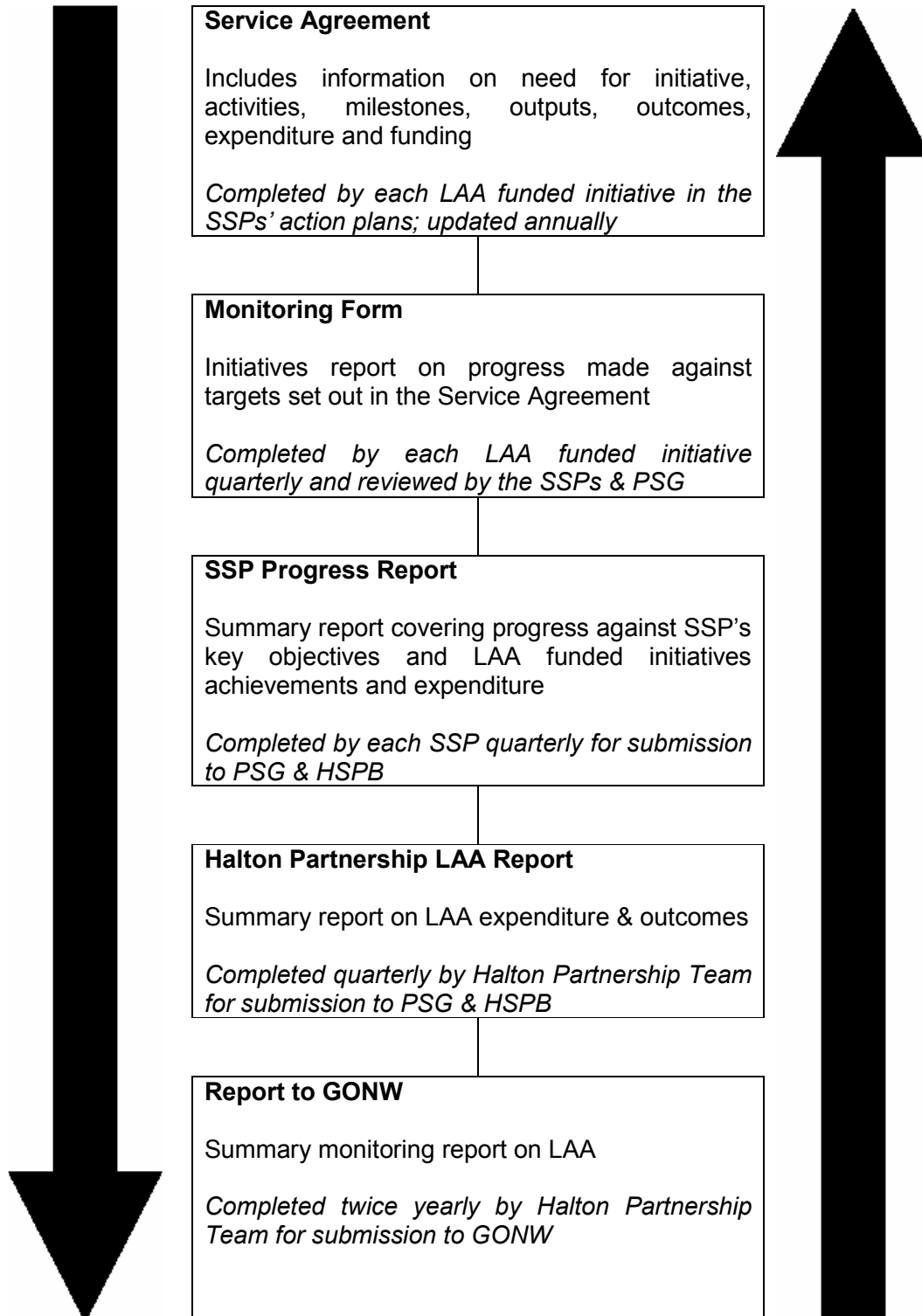


Performance review

Partnership analyses progress against the improvement targets and national floor targets

SSP Review by Block, Performance & Standards Group; Annual away day

The following diagram illustrates the Partnership's performance management process for Halton's LAA Funding.



Section 2. Annual Performance Review

The annual performance review is used to monitor progress against the Community Strategy's improvement targets and national floor targets. It provides an opportunity for a rounded assessment of progress across all aspects of Partnership activity. Partners are provided with a review of progress against the Community Strategy improvement targets and the national floor targets. This forms a central element published Annual Report of the Halton Strategic Partnership.

Each target is placed in one of the following categories:

- achievement likely (green)
- achievement difficult (amber)
- achievement unlikely (red)

A presentation is given to partners analysing the targets categorised as red and amber in more detail. Partners identify gaps in current service provision that need to be addressed to improve performance against these targets. Action points are drawn up following the discussion and agreed by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board at their next meeting. All the agreed action points are SMART and have clear lead individuals/agencies. Progress is reported to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board throughout the year.

The annual review of the SSPs strategies and action plans is used to challenge the plausibility of the actions aiming to deliver the targets. As part of the process for allocating LAA resources, clear links are established between the grant funded initiatives, the LAA outcomes framework and SSP Action Plan, and the Community Strategy improvement targets and key objectives. The criteria for LAA funded initiatives (attached) states that to receive grant initiatives should be based on evidence of what works and existing good practice in circumstances relevant to Halton.

When reviewing their strategies and action plans, the SSPs are required to use information from the performance review and from the monitoring of LAA funded initiatives to revise their plans to ensure they remain focused on what works in the achievement of the LAA and Community Strategy improvement targets and national floor targets.

The performance review and the SSPs updated strategies and action plans inform the updating of the LAA and the regular refresh of the Community strategy itself.

The information collected from each initiative through the monitoring process also includes the following in addition to the information outlined in the above diagram:

- progress towards sustainability, including mainstreaming where appropriate
- partnership working and development
- community engagement activities

The financial monitoring collects information on the use of LAA resource and on investment from other sources, including:

- cash match funding
- in-kind match funding
- leverage/complementary funding

Section 3. Performance management arrangements

The LAA sets out clear targets for outcomes in the five thematic block areas and on key cross-cutting transformational issues. The Halton Strategic Partnership Board (HSPB) has delegated responsibility for developing and monitoring delivery of the annual LAA Action plan to the Performance and Standards Group (PSG). The PSG will review delivery of the LAA targets and operational plan actions on a six-monthly basis, with lighter-touch intermediate quarterly reviews of financial performance. The HSPB and PSG are supported by a dedicated performance management capacity from the Halton Strategic Partnership Team. The existing performance management framework of the Partnership has been updated and revised to take account of the needs of LAA management.

The performance management framework is comprehensive, strategic and operational. It will test the vision and approach of the LAA, including its preventative, sustainable and targeted aspects, and the priorities. This will include taking account of existing and emerging borough wide, regional and national frameworks and initiatives that provide useful information and intelligence about the performance of Halton. It is designed to plan, monitor and review in a timely manner and will include targeted and LAA-wide evaluations. During the first year of LAA we will develop an annual trajectory for each of the three years of the Agreement, building on the trajectory analysis produced for the LSP review in 2006.

The thematic partnerships – the SSPs - will be responsible for the delivery of the relevant “block” outcomes of the LAA. SSPs will review their arrangements to ensure these are “fit for purpose” to ensure delivery of the LAA. Responsibility for individual targets in the LAA will be clearly designated in an action plan, with particular lead partners and named lead officers. Each partner’s normal accountability and corporate governance procedures apply to the initiatives they take responsibility for.

The role of the PSG is to:

- Prepare an annual LAA action plan for Board approval
- Review, and where necessary challenge, the annual action plans prepared by thematic partnerships (SSPs) and recommend their approval to the BSP Board
- Monitor performance against LAA targets twice a year and monitor financial performance quarterly
- Ensure effective arrangements are in place to collect and analyse information to support the development, monitoring and delivery of the LAA
- Undertake performance management action as outlined below

The Halton Partnership team supports the PSG. It is advising on the development and maintenance of information systems and analysis to support the LAA and its implementation. The Team will help join-up the performance management arrangements across all partnerships and help to ensure that action is effectively coordinated

The Role of SSPs – is to take responsibility for the overall delivery of the relevant block outcomes. They are primarily accountable for delivery against the LAA, including:

- Prepare an annual action plan for the block for submission to the PSG
- Monitor performance against LAA targets twice a year and monitor financial performance quarterly
- Undertake performance management action as outlined below.

SSPs must ensure their management arrangements are adequate for managing delivery of the relevant LAA outcomes. They will agree how responsibility for individual targets in the LAA is allocated to a lead partner and named lead officer. All agencies contributing to the delivery of a target will be expected, as part of their normal accountability and governance arrangements, to ensure:

- Appropriate delivery plans are in place
- Robust data on performance against target is collected and reported in accordance with overall arrangements for monitoring the LAA
- Under-performance against agreed targets and outcomes can be promptly addressed.

All action plans will include appropriate tracking of performance at six-monthly or more frequent interval (except where outcome data is only available annually – for example, for school examination results). A "monitoring level" will also be set for targets: this will be the level that triggers performance management action. The PSG will agree all targets and "monitoring levels" through its oversight of annual action plans.

Ladder of intervention

Tackling under-performance will be the greatest challenge for the performance management regime in the wider LAA context. The LAA has established a three-stage management process. This ladder of intervention will be reviewed over time. However, from the outset we intend to put in place systems which provide clear monitoring and reporting and make available a mutually accountable and supportive approach to enable partners to improve performance. This reporting should result in a clear picture of performance against the LAA in our annual report and then provides the basis for future planning as LAA implementation rolls forward.

For specific funding streams, performance management action could be triggered when performance against a particular target fails to achieve the agreed "monitoring level".

- Stage 1 If a six monthly monitoring report shows that performance against the action plan or a particular target has failed to achieve the agreed "monitoring level", the lead partner will be expected to take appropriate action, working as appropriate with other agencies. It will be asked to report on progress to the relevant SSP within three months.
- Stage 2. If a six monthly monitoring report shows that performance against the action plan or target has failed to achieve the agreed monitoring level for two consecutive six monthly periods, the SSP will be expected to agree with the relevant agencies a plan to tackle the under-performance. It will be asked to report on progress to the PSG within three months.
- Stage 3. If performance continues to fall below expected levels despite action by the SSP, the PSG will nominate one of its members to agree a revised plan to tackle under-performance, details of which will be reported to the PSG within three months.

The PSG will retain the right, in consultation with the relevant SSP, to trigger performance management action at either Stage 1, 2 or 3 in other circumstances where there is evidence of under-performance against target. The PSG will report every six months to the Board on all performance management actions, and especially those at Stages 2 and 3. These arrangements will be implemented and tested during the first year of the LAA 2006/7.

The annual planning cycle is designed to fit with the established budgetary and project management cycles of partners in Halton. In summary, the planning cycle for the LAA is as follows:

Timing	Activity	Outputs
July- Sept	Annual review of progress against LAA outcome targets and delivery of previous year's action plan	Report to HSP Board Annual report. Financial report.

Aug – Oct	Draft action plans submitted by SSPs (covering proposed activities, outcomes and funding arrangements). PSG to challenge prioritization and plausibility.	Feedback to SSPs. Report to HSP Board on draft plans, including recommendations for changes. Financial report.
Nov	Mid-year (Apr-Sept) update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs.	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Performance report. GONW Monitoring Meeting
Dec	Finalised action plans submitted by SSPs. PSG challenge as appropriate.	Final proposed operational plan to HSP Board. Financial report.
Feb/March	Quarter 3 (Oct-Dec) update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Financial report.
May	End of year update on spending and activities (against action plan) from SSPs	Exception / summary report to HSP Board. Performance report.

Our ladder of intervention is framed to be able to inform the annual planning cycle in a timely and appropriate way.

Section 4: reviewing partnership working

The Core requirements have been introduced to ensure that LSPs do not just measure progress on delivery of targets, but also to ensure that what they are doing is right in the light of local circumstances. All actions need to be Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Resourced and Realistic, have a Time Limit and have clear lead individuals/agencies and progress reporting scheduled. The core requirements of LSP performance management arrangements are:

Reviewing outcomes - Monitor the implementation of the LAA (and Community Strategy) - measuring progress against relevant floor and local targets set out in the outcomes framework, and challenge the plausibility of actions to deliver. This is reviewed on an annual basis by the Board and twice a year by the PSG.

Reviewing partnership working - Assess the effectiveness of the partnership - ensuring that the LSP is strategic, inclusive, action-focused, performance managed, and

addresses skills & learning. This is reviewed annually as part of the LSP Improvement Plan and refreshed as a minimum every three years.

Improvement planning - Strengthen delivery arrangements. Devise action/improvement plans to address weaknesses. This is reviewed quarterly and refreshed annually following the GONW review.

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board's recently reviewed all aspects of its partnership working. Amended governance arrangements came into place in May 2006, which included strengthened performance managements and scrutiny arrangements through a dedicated Performance and Standards Group (PSG).

The PSG reports every six months on progress in implementing the SSP/LAA Action plans, highlighting issues for concern. The annual performance review away day is used to report on progress against the actions and for partners to raise any issues of concern and identify weaknesses that need action taking to address them.

Conclusion

The performance management framework is crucial to the delivery of both the LAA Outcomes Framework and Community strategy targets. It is also a way of each tier of the Partnership holding to account the next tier for delivery of their tasks and targets. However, this needs to be in a structured format that follows the same principles down through the tiers, and horizontally across the partnership groups at each tier. This performance management framework sets out how the Partnership will:

- agree improvement plans to build on strengths and overcome weaknesses;
- ensure that any proposed actions to meet targets are robust;
- monitor progress against defined targets; and
- review the effectiveness of the Partnership and its impact on services.

It focuses in particular on the relationship between the main Partnership, the Performance and Standards Group (PSG) and the thematic partnerships, and clarifies the roles that each undertakes. The performance management framework includes scrutiny arrangements to provide opportunities to look at and challenge annual performance and to promote accountability and transparency in monitoring the delivery of the Community Strategy and LAA.

Halton Borough Council

Local Public Service Agreement

**LOCAL PUBLIC SERVICE AGREEMENT
BETWEEN HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL AND
THE GOVERNMENT**

Introduction

1. Halton Borough Council and the Government have made this Local Public Service Agreement (Local PSA) with the intention of further improving the services to local people that Halton Borough Council provides. This agreement covers the period 1 April 2005 to 31 March 2008.
2. The agreement records the present intentions of the Council and the Government. It is entered into by both in good faith, but it is expressly recognised that neither can fetter the future discretion of the Council or of Ministers and Parliament. The agreement is therefore not intended to create legal relations. Subject to that, the following points are agreed.

The Intentions of Halton Borough Council

3. Halton Borough Council will use its best endeavours to achieve more demanding performance targets than those it would be expected to achieve in the absence of this Local Public Service Agreement. These enhanced targets are specified in Schedule 1 to this agreement.

The Intentions of the Government

4. The intentions of the Government set out in this agreement are subject to the outcome of any statutory consultations and any necessary approval of the Treasury and Parliament.
5. The Government will pay Halton Borough Council a grant of £868,429 in 2006 in support of the expenditures described in Schedule 3 to this agreement. The conditions attached to this “pump-priming” grant are also set out in Schedule 3.
6. The Government will pay a performance reward grant to Halton Borough Council, as set out in Schedule 4 to this agreement, if it achieves all the enhanced targets (“performance target with Local PSA”) specified in Schedule 1. Schedule 4 also sets out the grant it intends to pay if the Council secures a substantial improvement in performance that falls short of the target. The Schedule also stipulates the intended timing of payments of the grant. Halton Borough Council undertakes to provide audited information confirming the extent of improvement in their performance relative to the Local PSA performance targets set out in Schedule 1, as a precondition for the determination and payment of the performance reward grant.

Date of Agreement: April 2006

For Halton Borough Council

**For Her Majesty's
Government**

.....
Councillor Tony McDermott
On behalf of Halton Borough Council

.....
Phil Woolas MP
Minister of State, Office of the
Deputy Prime Minister

.....
Mr David Parr
Chief Executive

.....
**The Right Hon Des Browne
MP**
Chief Secretary to Her
Majesty's Treasury

The above ministers sign on behalf of their colleagues listed below:

The Right Hon John Prescott MP
Deputy Prime Minister

The Right Hon Gordon Brown MP
Chancellor of the Exchequer

The Right Hon Patricia Hewitt MP
Secretary of State for Health

The Right Hon Ruth Kelly MP
Secretary of State for Education and
Skills

The Right Hon Charles Clarke MP
Home Secretary

The Right Hon Tessa Jowell MP
Secretary of State for Culture, Media
Sport

The Right Hon John Hutton MP
Secretary of State for Work and
Pensions

SCHEDULE 1: PERFORMANCE TARGETS**Summary table**

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12	To increase the number of local residents currently on incapacity benefits moving into work or self-employment.	17

Target 1

Outcome

Reduce the level of violent crime

Indicator by which performance will be measured

Number of recorded incidents of violent crime within Halton (serious woundings and common assault).

Current Performance (2003/04)

2,133

Performance at the end of the period of the Local PSA (2007/08)

Performance expected without the LPSA

1,967

Performance target with the Local PSA

1,913

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

54

Target 2

Outcome

Reduction in vehicle crime in Halton

Indicators by which performance will be measured

- i) The number of thefts of vehicles in Halton
- ii) The number of thefts from vehicles in Halton

Police recorded crime data

Current Performance (2003/04)

- i) 753
- ii) 1108

Performance at the end of the period of the Local PSA (2007/08)

Performance expected without the LPSA

- i) 625
- ii) 920

Performance target with the Local PSA

- i) 588
- ii) 749

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

- i) 37
- ii) 171

Target 3

Outcome

Improving the health and well-being of residents.

Indicator by which performance will be measured

The percentage of adults in Halton participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on 3 or more days a week, as measured by Sport England's Active People survey.¹

Current performance (November 2006)

X%²

Performance at the end of the period of the LPSA (November 2009)

Performance expected without the Local PSA

X% (no change)

Performance expected with the Local PSA

X% + 5%

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

5%

Notes

¹ This indicator will be measured using Sport England's Active People survey. Results will be published in November 2006, with a follow-up survey being undertaken in October-November 2009. It is anticipated that the survey will attain a confidence interval at a 95% confidence level of 3%.

² X% = the result of the November 2006 Sport England Active People survey in relation to Halton. If Halton Council does not communicate the results of this survey question to ODPM and DCMS, within two months of receipt of the results from Sport England no PRG will be payable in respect of this target. Upon receipt, a definitive version of the target will be issued by ODPM.

Target 4

Outcome

Tackling the problems of domestic violence

Indicators by which performance will be measured

1. The number of incidents of domestic violence¹ reported to the police (directly or through a third party) in Halton.
2. The proportion of incidents of domestic violence¹ which result in a sanction detection².
3. The proportion of the total number of incidents of domestic violence reported annually to the police (directly or through a third party) in the same period who are repeat victims.³

Current performance

1. 1613 (1/4/04 - 31/03/2005 - CAVA data)
2. **S% = The proportion of incidents of domestic violence¹ which result in a sanction detection in 2005/06 - CAVA data)**
3. 23% (1/04/03 - 31/03/04 - MIU data)

Performance at the end of the LPSA period

The period over which the with LPSA performance will be measured will be 01/04/2007 to 31/03/2008

Performance expected without the LPSA

1. 1694
2. S% + 2%
3. 21%

Performance target with the LPSA

1. 1774
2. S% + 5%
3. 18%

Enhancement in performance with the LPSA

1. 80
2. 3 percentage points
3. 3 percentage points.

Notes

¹ The definition of incident of domestic violence is: any incident of threatening behaviour, violence or abuse psychological, physical, sexual, financial or emotional) between people who are or have been intimate partners or family members, regardless of gender.

² A sanctioned detection occurs when (1) a notifiable offence (crime) has been committed and recorded; (2) a suspect has been identified and is aware of the detection; (3) the CPS evidential test is satisfied; (4) the victim has been informed that the offence has been detected, and; (5) the suspect has been charged, reported for summons, or cautioned, been issued with a penalty notice for disorder or the offence has been taken into consideration when an offender is sentenced.

³ The definition of repeat is: an incident where the victim is the same victim as a previous incident (where the previous incident took place not more than 12 months before the incident to be counted).

The Performance Reward Grant on this target will be split between the above indicators in the following proportions:

1. 50%
2. 25%
3. 25%

With regard to indicator 2 above, Halton Borough Council undertake to let the LPSA team at ODPM know the actual figure represented by "S" by 30/8/2006.

Target 5

Outcome

Reducing the harm caused by drug misuse.

Indicators by which performance will be measured

- 1: The number of individuals in Halton who are in contact with structured drug treatment services as per the LDP definition and measured by the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS March 2006 methodology).
- 2: The percentage of individuals in Halton starting treatment who are retained in treatment for over 12 weeks as defined by the NTA methodology and measured by the National Drug Treatment Monitoring System (NDTMS March 2006 methodology).

Current performance (2004/05)

- 1: 604
- 2: 80%

Performance at the end of the LPSA period

This will be measured over the period 1/4/2008 to 31/3/2009

Performance expected without the Local PSA

- 1: 680
- 2: 85%

Performance target with the Local PSA

- 1: 790
- 2: 88%

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

- 1: 110
- 2: 3%

Note

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 4 of this agreement, it is agreed that the potential Performance Reward Grant attributed to this target is £358,765.94.

Target 6

Outcome

Reducing vehicle arson.

Indicator by which performance will be measured

The number of incidents of arson occurring to non derelict vehicles.

Current Performance

200 (Jan - Dec 2005)

Performance at the end of the LPSA period

This will be measured over the period (1/4/2007 to 31/3/2008)

Performance expected without the LPSA

170

Performance target with the Local PSA

140

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

30

Note

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 4 of this agreement, it is agreed that the potential Performance Reward Grant attributed to this target is £146,000.00.

Target 7

Outcome

Improving health and well-being

Indicator by which performance will be measured

The number of people reporting to NHS stop smoking services in Halton who had set a quit date and who are still not smoking at the four weeks review, counted according to DH protocol.

Current performance (2005/6)

850

Performance at the end of the LPSA period

This will be measured over the period 1/4/2008 to 31/3/2009

Performance expected without the Local PSA

1200

Performance target with the Local PSA

2000

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

800

Note

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 4 of this agreement, it is agreed that the potential Performance Reward Grant attributed to this target is £424,337.25.

Target 8

Outcome

Improved care for long term conditions and support for carers

Indicators by which performance will be measured

- i) Number unplanned emergency bed days¹ (Halton PCT registered population aged 65+)
- ii) Number of carers receiving a specific carer service² from Halton Council and its partners, after receiving a carer's assessment or review.

Current performance

indicator (i) 2004/05,

indicator (ii) first six months of 2004/05

(i) 58,649

(ii) 195

Performance at end of LPSA period

Indicator (i) 2008/09

Indicator (ii) 2008/09

Performance expected without the Local PSA

(i) Reduction of 2% from finalised 04/05 figure (provisionally 57,476)

(ii) 400

Performance target with the Local PSA

(ii) Reduction of 6% from finalised 04/05 figure (provisionally 55,130)

(ii) 600

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

(i) 4% of finalised 04/05 figure (provisionally 2,345 bed days)

(ii) 200

Notes

¹ Bed Days Figures are produced by Halton PCT based on HES data.

Bed days exclude primary diagnostic codes A00- B99 and 000 – Q99

The reconfiguration of Primary Care Trusts will require former Halton PCT GP practices to be monitored separately for the period 2005 – 2008.

² The definition of a specific Carer Service as identified in the guidance of the RAP in Adult Social Services.

<http://www.dh.gov.uk/assetRoot/04/09/91/56/04099156.pdf> pages 92 to 96

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 4 of this agreement, it is agreed that the potential Performance Reward Grant attributed to this target is £424,337.25.

Target 9

Outcome

Improve educational attainment at Key Stage 4

Indicator by which performance will be measured

The percentage of year 11 pupils gaining 5 GCSEs at grades A*-C or DfES agreed equivalents, including English and Maths

Current Performance (2004/05)

32.5%

Performance expected without the LPSA (academic year 2007/08)

39%

Performance target with the Local PSA

40.5%

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

1.5%

Target 10

Outcome

Helping people improve their literacy, numeracy and spoken English.

Indicator by which performance will be measured

The number of adults who gain a Skills for Life Level 1 or Level 2 qualification in Adult Literacy (and or Numeracy) or an ESOL Skills for Life national qualification at Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 or Level 2

Current Performance (2004/05)

19

Performance at the end of the LPSA period
(measured in academic year ending 31/8/2008)

Performance expected without the LPSA

52

Performance target with the Local PSA

116

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

64

Target 11

Outcome

Improved opportunities and levels of participation in education, training and employment by children in the care of the Halton Council.

Indicators by which performance will be measured

1. The percentage school attendance of children who have been looked after for at least 12 months
2. The percentage of children in the care of Halton Council who are under 16 years old and have been looked after for more than 2.5 years, that have been in their current placement for at least 2 years (LAC 24)

Current Performance

1. 89.6% (May 2005)
2. 64.4%

Performance at the end of the LPSA

This will be measured between:

1. 1/9/2007 to 30/5/2008
2. 1/4/2007 and 31/3/2008

Performance expected without the LPSA

1. 90.6%
2. 77%

Performance target with the Local PSA

1. 92.6%
2. 81.5%

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

1. 2 percentage points
2. 4.5 percentage points

Notes

The Performance Reward Grant allocated to this target is £107,071.56 and will be apportioned between the indicators on this target in the following proportions:

1. 14%
2. 86%

Target 12

Outcome

To increase the number of local residents currently on incapacity benefits moving in to work or self-employment during the period April 2006 – March 2009.

Indicator by which performance will be measured

The number of people who have been claiming an incapacity benefit* helped by Halton Borough Council into sustained employment of at least 16 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks or more, as measured by Halton Borough Council performance data

* Incapacity Benefit (IB), Severe Disablement Allowance (SDA (TP)), Income Support (IS) on the basis of incapacity and those awarded National Insurance Credits (NICS) on the basis of incapacity.

Current performance (year ending 31 March 2006)

18

Performance at the end of the period of the Local PSA (three year cumulative for year ending 31 March 2009)

Performance expected without the Local PSA

54

Performance target with the Local PSA

179

Enhancement in performance with the Local PSA

125

Special conditions

1. When Pathways to Work is operational in Halton, the qualifying period for a beneficiary of this LPSA target will be 8 months or more on an incapacity benefit.
2. An individual will not be counted more than once for the purposes of this target.
3. For the purposes of this target, people gaining work during the period of the agreement may be claimed as sustained for up to 13 weeks after 31/3/2009.

Notwithstanding the provisions of Schedule 4 of this agreement, it is agreed that the potential Performance Reward Grant attributed to this target is £375,000.50.

SCHEDULE 2: FREEDOMS & FLEXIBILITIES

No freedoms and flexibilities were requested.

SCHEDULE 3: PUMP PRIMING GRANT

IN SUPPORT OF INVEST TO SAVE OR INVEST TO IMPROVE PROJECTS

To assist in achieving the targets set out in this Agreement, the Government will make a pump priming grant of £868,429 to Halton Borough Council as a contribution towards expenditure of an “invest to save” or “invest to improve” nature. This grant will be paid no later than the financial year following that in which this agreement was concluded.

The grant is intended to assist the authority in achieving the targets set out in the agreement. Conditions protecting the proper use of public funds will apply.

SCHEDULE 4: PERFORMANCE REWARD GRANT

The provisions of this Schedule are subject to any additional provisions on the performance reward grant elsewhere in the Agreement.

The total potential grant

The total potential grant is equivalent to 2.5% of the authority’s net budget requirement for 2004/2005. It is divided equally among the targets unless the description of a target in this agreement specifies otherwise. Where a target has sub-targets, the amount for the target is sub-divided equally among the sub-targets unless otherwise specified. The relevant net budget requirement was £146,841,000.

The reward for achievement on a target

The proportion of the potential grant attributed to a target or sub-target that is payable is the same as the proportion of the ‘enhancement in performance with the Local PSA’ specified in Schedule 1 that the authority achieves, subject to a maximum proportion of 100% and a minimum of 60%. If the authority achieves less than 60% of that enhancement in performance, nothing is included in the grant in relation to that target or sub-target.

Payment of the grant

The grant will be paid in two equal instalments in the financial year following that in which the end date of the Local PSA falls, and the next financial year. Half of each instalment of the grant will be paid as a capital grant, and half as a revenue grant.