

Public Document Pack



Executive Board Sub Committee

Thursday, 29 March 2007 at 10.00 a.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

Chief Executive

SUB COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

| | |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------|
| Councillor Mike Wharton (Chairman) | Labour |
| Councillor Phil Harris | Labour |
| Councillor Steff Nelson | Labour |

Please contact Gill Ferguson on 0151 471 7395 or e-mail gill.ferguson@halton.gov.uk for further information.

The next meeting of the Sub Committee is on Thursday, 19 April 2007

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

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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 Sub Committee

DATE: 29 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health and Community

SUBJECT: New governance arrangements for the delivery of the Halton Registration Service

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek the Board's support for the pursuance of new governance arrangements for the delivery of the Halton Registration Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the Board agrees to the pursuance of new governance arrangements for the delivery of the Halton Registration Service, and in doing so specifically agrees to the Council's commitment to the code of practice that will form part of the new scheme; and**
- (2) the Board agrees the Halton Registration District Service Delivery and Improvement Plan for 2007/2008.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The White Paper "Civil Registration: Vital Change" published in 2002, set out an agenda for a modern, effective and high quality registration service in keeping with the Government's wider reform agenda and four guiding principles to improve customer service:
- Setting national standards within a framework of clear accountability, designed to ensure that citizens have the right to high quality services wherever they live
 - More flexibility so that public service organizations and their staff are better able to provide modern public services
 - Devolution and delegation to the front line, giving local leaders responsibility and accountability for delivery, and the opportunity to design services around the needs of local people
 - More customer choice and the ability, if provision is poor, to have an alternative provider.
- 3.2 To underpin the changes, the White Paper proposed that local authorities should be given responsibility for delivering the local

registration service, and that superintendent registrars and registrars should become local authority employees.

- 3.3 In the absence of primary legislation to take forward the changes outlined in the White Paper, the General Register Office (GRO) and the Local Authorities Coordinators of Regulatory Services (LACORS) jointly developed proposals for a more modern governance framework for the delivery of the local service. The proposals were consulted upon in the position paper 'Registration Modernisation' published in 2005 and agreed by the Government - in a written statement to Parliament by the Financial Secretary to the Treasury - on 25 May 2006.
- 3.4 The Registration Service Act 1953 requires local authorities in England and Wales to prepare a registration scheme for the management and delivery of the local registration service within its area. Under the existing governance framework, once a scheme has been approved, local authorities must operate within those arrangements, with no discretion to vary the terms of the scheme without a formal amendment being made to the scheme or a new scheme being made.
- 3.5 The new governance arrangements provide for a more flexible, less prescriptive, scheme, allowing local authorities greater discretion to deliver local services which meet both national standards and local community needs. In this respect Proper Officers acquire increased responsibility and accountability for the delivery of the local service. Other benefits include:
- the opportunity to explore more innovative ways of delivering the service;
 - the strengthening of the management of the local service;
 - the potential to make more efficient use of resources;
 - the increased flexibility to determine staff numbers to cope with peaks and troughs in service demands;
 - implementation of changes to staffing levels, location of offices etc without the need for a formal scheme change;
 - the bringing of the registration service into line with other local authority service strategies for setting, maintaining and monitoring performance (though in this respect it must be noted that the Halton service is already covered by the authority's performance management regime).
- 3.6 In order to seek approval for a scheme under the new arrangements, local authorities must agree to the terms of the Code of Practice attached to the new scheme, deliver local registration services which meet at least the national standards set out in the Good Practice Guide, prepare an annual Service Delivery Plan setting out the local authority's plans and targets for the year ahead, and have in place a reliable system for monitoring performance and annual reporting to the Registrar General.

- 3.7 Local authorities that gain approval to operate under the new governance arrangements will additionally benefit from a new compliance regime. Over time this would see a shift from the current arrangements whereby individual registration officers are inspected by GRO, to a more wide-ranging, and less frequent, assessment of operational standards. In this respect Proper Officers would satisfy themselves that the service is being delivered in accordance with statutory requirements and national standards, and ensure adequate staff training and development. Central monitoring of the delivery of the registration service will increasingly be undertaken by analysing local data from the web enabled registration on-line (RON) system, and supplemented by self-assessment and annual performance reports received from local authorities. This approach will allow a risk-based assessment of performance to be used to direct inspection activity to those authorities most likely to benefit.
- 3.8 Her Majesty's Inspectors have satisfied themselves that the Halton Registration Service is in a position to seek approval for a new Registration Scheme, in order to benefit from the new governance arrangements. A draft of the likely scheme is attached as Appendix A to this agenda item (though the actual scheme is drafted by the General Register Office). Of particular importance is the Code of Practice appended to the scheme, a copy of which is attached as Appendix B to this agenda item. By agreeing to the new scheme, the authority is committing to the terms of the code of practice.
- 3.9 There are various requirements contained in the code of practice which the authority / service must meet, prior to its application for a new scheme being agreed. None of the requirements pose any issues for Halton. Members will however note that one requirement relates to the development and publication of a Service Delivery Plan. The draft Halton Registration District Service Delivery and Improvement Plan is attached to this agenda item as Appendix C. This is based on the corporate format for Divisional (or Unit) plans, with the necessary additions to comply with the requirements of the General Register Office.
- 3.10 This matter was considered by the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board on 20 March 2006, when it was agreed that the Executive Board be requested to support the recommendations detailed in Section 2.0 above.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The new registration scheme will provide the framework within which future Registration Service policy decisions may be made, though such schemes are less prescriptive under the new governance arrangements (see 3.5 above). As such, the authority will have the freedom to make more policy decisions locally, without recourse to the General Register

Office for the sort of scheme amendments that would previously have been necessary.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no financial implications flowing directly from this report. Job evaluation may have an impact on the salaries received by three part-time officers, but it is anticipated that any such impact will be minimal, and will therefore be met from within existing budgets.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 An advantage of pursuing these new governance arrangements is that three of the Service's five statutory officers will become local authority employees, resolving the presently unsatisfactory employment status of these officers. The employment status of the remaining two statutory officers is likely to be resolved in the next twelve months, once the necessary legislation reaches the statute book.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 There are no equality and diversity issues associated with this report.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| REGISTRATION | Rutland House | John Downes |
| MODERNISATION | Halton Lea | |
| Good Practice | Runcorn | |
| Guide for Local | WA7 2GW | |
| Registration | | |
| Services | | |

APPENDIX A

BOROUGH OF HALTON

REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES

SCHEME UNDER SECTION 14 OF THE REGISTRATION SERVICE ACT 1953

The Council of the Borough of Halton, in exercise of the powers conferred upon them by section 14 of the Registration Service Act 1953 makes the following Scheme:-

TITLE

1. This Scheme may be cited as "The Halton Registration Scheme 2007" and shall come into operation on the fourth day of July 2007.

INTERPRETATION

2. In this Scheme, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions have the meanings hereby assigned to them:-

"the 1953 Act" means the Registration Service Act 1953;

"the 1949 Act" means the Marriage Act 1949;

"the Council" means the Council of the Borough of Halton;

"the Code of Practice" means the Registrar General's Code of Practice for Local Authorities in place at the time of the making of this scheme;

"principal officer" means superintendent registrar or registrar of births and deaths and "principal office" shall be construed accordingly;

"the Proper Officer" means the officer appointed by the Council for the purposes of the 1953 Act.

REGISTRATION DISTRICTS AND SUB-DISTRICTS

3. The Council shall, in accordance with the Code of Practice, divide its area into registration districts and sub-districts..
4. The Council shall determine the location of offices and stations, and provide, equip and maintain those offices and stations so as to meet the delivery targets in the Code of Practice and relevant legal requirements.

OFFICERS

5. The Council shall determine the number of superintendent registrars, registrars of births and deaths and other officers so as to provide sufficient staff resource to ensure delivery of services in accordance with the service standards contained in the Code of Practice. There shall be a minimum of one superintendent registrar and one registrar of births and deaths for each registration district and sub-district respectively.

DEPUTIES

6. (1) It shall be for the Proper Officer to appoint deputies under section 8(1) of the 1953 Act.
- (2) The Proper Officer shall notify the Registrar General of all deputy appointments. Such notification may be made electronically.
- (3) A deputy shall be civilly responsible to the exclusion of the principal for his own acts and omissions while acting as deputy.
- (4) A deputy shall continue to hold office notwithstanding a change in the holder of the principal office.

SALARIES AND CONDITIONS OF SERVICE

7. The Council shall fix the salary and allowances of all officers attached to each office in accordance with the Code of Practice.

FUNCTIONS OF REGISTRAR OF MARRIAGES

8. Every registrar of births and deaths appointed within the area may perform the functions of a registrar of marriages.

MISCELLANEOUS SERVICE PROVISIONS

9. The Council shall put in place such other miscellaneous service provisions in accordance with the Code of Practice.

POWERS OF THE PROPER OFFICER

10. There shall be vested in the Proper Officer, subject to any regulations that may from time to time be in force under section 20(b) of the 1953 Act, the powers and key responsibilities as set out in the Code of Practice.

REVOCAATION

11. The Halton Registration Scheme 1997 is revoked but without prejudice to anything done or to any right, privilege, obligation or liability acquired, accrued or incurred under it.

REVISION TO THE CODE OF PRACTICE

12. The local authority may adopt any revision to the Code of Practice by means of the Proper Officer confirming their acceptance of the revision to the Registrar General.

Code of Practice

1. Preface

1.1 Civil registration is a vital service that affects everyone at some point in their lives. It provides a name and identity within society; a facility for marriage and civil partnership; evidence of parentage; and evidence of entitlement to inheritance.

1.2 The organisation of the registration service in England and Wales is based on the Registration Service Act 1953. It establishes the post of Registrar General, whose role is to oversee the standard of the service, including the making of regulations and, in practice, the issuing of guidance on performance of registration functions.

1.3 The Registration Service Act 1953 places a duty on each council to prepare a local "scheme" for the approval of the Chancellor of the Exchequer, and to appoint a "Proper Officer". The Proper Officer provides the Registrar General with details of organisation and coverage of registration services within the authority. The Proper Officer also manages the local service.

1.4 Under the revised governance arrangements the Scheme commits the local authority to comply with the service delivery standards contained in this Code of Practice. Taken together, the Scheme and the Code provide a formal governance agreement between the Registrar General and local authorities, the framework of which enables the local authority to plan, develop and deliver a registration service which meets the needs of the local community.

1.5 The Code of Practice is supplemented by a Good Practice Guide which contains guidance on both the application of the Code, and more generally on national standards as well as good and better practice service delivery. In this respect the Code has a strategic focus whereas the Good Practice Guide advises on application and operational delivery.

1.6 The Code of Practice also reflects the need for a customer focused, output driven local registration service, one which is delivered sensitively, economically and efficiently to the satisfaction of users.

1.7 The principal outputs from the service are accurate and timely:

- registrations of births deaths and marriages
- marriage notices and ceremonies
- certificates.

In relation to records and registers the principal outputs are:

- safe and secure custody of records and registers.

1.8 The Code of Practice does not extend to other statutory duties such as civil partnerships, citizenship ceremonies, or to discretionary / non-statutory registration services. However, authorities are recommended to adopt and apply common standards for all statutory, partnership, discretionary and non-statutory services, and to include all such services in the Service Delivery Plan. The Good Practice Guide contains guidance in this respect.

2. Application

2.1. Each authority is required to consult locally and commit to the delivery of a registration service which meets both local needs and national standards, and to publish a Service Delivery Plan. The Registrar General will expect to be satisfied in this respect before she recommends approval of a Scheme to the Chancellor of the Exchequer (or approves a Scheme with the Chancellor's agreement where there are no unresolved representations).

2.2. The Code of Practice is complemented by a Good Practice Guide that provides further information on:

- specific national standards that authorities must meet
- good performance standards that authorities should aim to meet
- better performance standards representing the highest levels of registration service that an authority could meet
- guidance and advice on applying the requirements of the Code of Practice.

2.3. The Good Practice Guide has been developed jointly by the General Register Office and the Local Authorities Coordinating Office on Regulatory Services (LACORS). Both parties have agreed to periodically review the guide, initially after twelve months and then every two years; amendments to be agreed by the Registrar General. The national standards which an authority must achieve will contain both national and local elements. The national elements ensure that users of the registration service across England and Wales are able to discharge their statutory responsibilities within the timescales set out in the Marriage and Registration Acts, and have reasonable access to all statutory registration services.

2.4. A formal commitment to the Code of Practice will result in the adoption of a 'lighter touch' inspection regime by the Registrar General, with greater reliance on central monitoring, self assessment and annual reporting. This approach will allow risk based assessments of performance to be used to direct inspection effort to those authorities that would most likely benefit.

3. Service Responsibility

3.1. The Proper Officer is the person appointed by the local authority to manage the service, and is the link between the Registrar General and the registration authority, especially in relation to governance issues and the Scheme.

3.2. The Proper Officer has the following key responsibilities:

- developing a Service Delivery Plan for the authority
- consulting, assessing and periodically reviewing the effectiveness of the service
- assessing and managing the resources needed to deliver a registration service which meets customer needs
- stakeholder management of related services (e.g. Coroner services)
- staff discipline (other than dismissal of statutory post holders), seeking advice from the Registrar General on technical matters
- ensuring records are stored safely and securely
- liaising with the Registrar General on service delivery and issues related to the Code of Practice and the authority's Service Delivery Plan
- applying the Good Practice Guide - as appropriate - to improve customer service standards.

4. Service Delivery

4.1. Service delivery includes all the aspects of the registration service that deliver registration services to customers, including structure, location, service availability and accommodation.

4.2. Structure

A registration authority will determine, taking into account the Good Practice Guide, the number and boundaries of registration districts and sub-districts that best meet local requirements.

4.3. Location of Offices

The registration authority will determine, taking into account the Good Practice Guide, the number and location of service outlets within each district and sub-district that best meet local requirements.

4.4. Access and Service Availability

The registration authority will:

- establish customer demand and preferences
- develop and publish a Service Delivery Plan that reflects customers requirements and reasonable expectations and the council's access to services/customer strategy, where appropriate
- publish service delivery targets and results
- assess accommodation requirements that reflect customer needs and delivery standards
- provide registration services that are accessible and available to the public at reasonable times
- ensure safe and secure custody of registers and other records in accordance with the Good Practice Guide.

The service commitments contained in the authority's Service Delivery Plan must be such that the public are able to provide information for the registration of births and deaths within the statutory time limits. Furthermore, that the public's reasonable expectations are met in respect to the giving of marriage notices, marriage ceremonies, and the issue of certificates.

4.5. *Good Practice Guide – Service Delivery*

The Good Practice Guide sets out specific targets and standards that a registration authority must meet together with preferred 'good' and 'better' service standards. It also provides advice and guidance on how to meet each of the headings above, and in respect to the development and content of a Service Delivery Plan.

5. **Quality**

5.1. Quality refers to the standards of registration service that the customer expects and receives and how satisfied they are with them. Also, quality management should include consideration of compliance, accuracy, customer service and complaints.

5.2. *Quality - Compliance*

Delivery of the local registration service shall be undertaken in accordance with the Marriage and Registration Acts and regulations, and in line with the Good Practice Guide.

5.3. *Quality – Accuracy*

A registration authority will ensure that accurate registration records are made and maintained.

5.4. *Quality - Service Delivery Plan*

A registration authority shall include in its Service Delivery Plan:

- registration office opening times (including emergency and out of hours arrangements)
- consultation procedures
- service delivery monitoring and reporting procedures
- complaints procedures.

5.5. *Quality – Complaints*

A registration authority shall record and monitor complaints and other responses received and be prepared to show how it has taken account taken of customer feedback, where appropriate.

6. Staffing

6.1. A sufficient number of staff, trained appropriately in registration service matters is essential to meeting statutory requirements and customer aspirations.

6.2. Staff numbers

A registration authority must ensure that sufficient staff are appointed to deliver the local registration service to the standards set out in the authority's Service Delivery Plan.

6.3. Staff salaries

A registration authority shall determine the salaries of its registration staff having regard to

- existing NJC arrangements and
- any local conditions and agreements that apply.

Registration staff holding office in a registration district or sub-district existing immediately before the commencement of any new scheme, and continues to hold office following the commencement of the scheme, may elect to have his salary paid according to either the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service or the Council's salary and allowance scales. Such an election may be made at such intervals as determined by the local authority.

6.4. Miscellaneous Service Provisions

The Council shall put in place such service provisions regarding security, ordinary, sick and maternity leave and travelling and removal expenses in accordance with either the National Joint Council's Scheme of Conditions of Service or the Council's Conditions of Service.

6.5. Training and Development

Registration staff shall be trained so that they can demonstrate an appropriate level in the knowledge and conduct of registration matters and the law applying to them.

6.6. Staff - Disqualification

A registration authority should enforce appropriate disqualifications to ensure registration service staff conflicts of interest are avoided. The Proper Officer's Manual contains guidance on this.

7. Information Technology

7.1. A registration authority must provide appropriate hardware, software and internet links to allow reliable access to the central national database and an appropriate level of technical support to ensure a high standard of systems availability locally.

7.2. A registration authority shall exercise reasonable measures to protect the integrity of the national database and access to it. The Registrar General will issue specific guidance in this respect.



Health & Partnerships

Halton Registration District

**Service Delivery and
Improvement Plan**

April 2007 to March 2008

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities**, which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Halton's Urban Renewal**
- **Halton's Children & Young People**
- **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**
- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

The primary purpose of this Service Delivery and Improvement Plan is to provide a clear statement on what the Halton Registration Service is planning to achieve over the forthcoming twelve months and to show how this contributes towards achieving the Service aims and corporate priorities of the Council.

2.0 TEAM PROFILE

2.1 Team Composition

The Registration Service Team comprises six posts, as follows:

- One Registration Service Manager / Superintendent Registrar (statutory officer)
- One Senior Registration Officer / Registrar of Births and Deaths (statutory officer)
- One Senior Registration Officer
- Two Registration Officers
- One Registration Assistant

In addition to the permanent staff detailed above, the Service has appointed 2 casual (sessional) Senior Civil Ceremonies Celebrants who are also Deputy SRs / Deputy RBDs, plus 4 casual (sessional) Civil Ceremonies Celebrants, who are also Deputy RBDs.

The Registration Service provides the public with a comprehensive service for registering births, still births and deaths as prescribed by the Birth and Death Registration Act 1953.

It provides for the correct and lawful conduct and registration of civil marriages both in the Register Office and in various approved buildings in the Borough, and for the attestation of notices of marriage for all non-conformist churches, as prescribed by the Marriage Act 1949.

The Service has operational responsibility for the delivery, and related duties, of civil partnership registrations as laid down in the Civil Partnership Act 2004.

It administers the Council's function of approving suitable premises as venues for civil marriage under the Marriage Act 1994.

It maintains birth, death and marriage records from 1837 and issues certified copies of these records on request. Advice and assistance is given to those persons interested in genealogy.

Under the Immigration and Asylum Act 2002, it is responsible for the provision of Citizenship Ceremonies for all applicants living in the Borough, who have been granted British Citizenship.

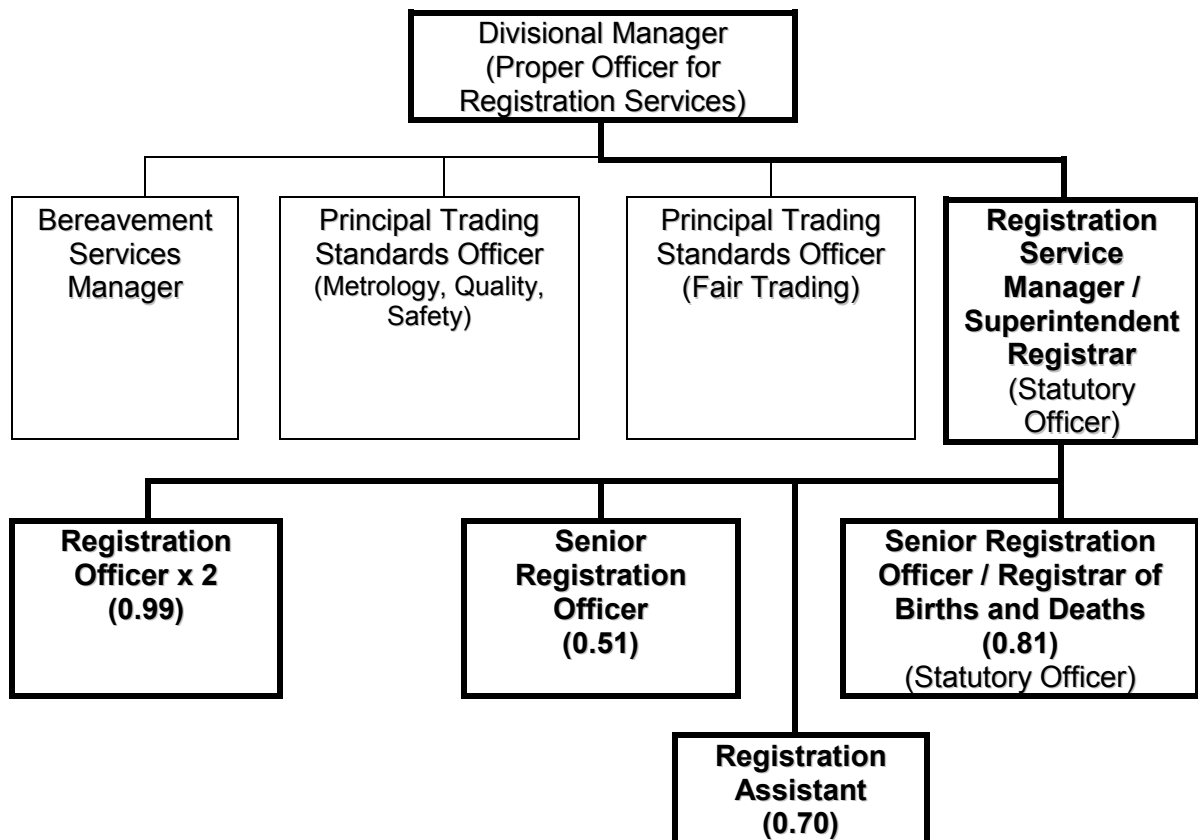
The Registration Service works in partnership with external bodies, for example HM Coroner, doctors' surgeries, the hospital, funeral directors, the Clergy, the Area Health Authority and the Home Office. In addition it works with the Council Tax Section, Bereavement Services and Environmental Health Division of the Council. A registrar attends both HDL offices in Widnes and Halton Lea to register births and deaths.

2.2 Organisation Structure

The Registration Service Act 1953, as amended by the Local Government Act 1972, under which England and Wales is divided into registration districts, governs the Service. The boundaries of these are determined by registration schemes made under the Act and approved by the Chancellor of the Exchequer (see 2.3 below).

The Divisional Manager for Consumer Protection is the Proper Officer for the District and has a statutory responsibility for overseeing the running of the Service.

The two statutory officers have an individual and personal responsibility for every registration they carry out.



Excluding the Divisional Manager post shown in the above organisation structure, the full-time equivalent team roles are as follows:

| | |
|---------------------------|------|
| Managerial | 1 |
| Professional / Technical | 2.31 |
| Administrative / clerical | 0.70 |

2.3 Boundaries and Locations

The Registration District of Halton comprises one district that covers the local authority area encompassed by the Borough of Halton. This includes the parishes of Hale and Daresbury. The Registration Sub-district of Halton covers the same area.

The Register Office and head office is located at the Town Hall, Heath Road, Runcorn. Additional service delivery points are provided at Halton Direct Link offices at Widnes and Halton Lea, Runcorn.

2.4 Service Access

The Register Office is open between 9.30 am – 1.00 pm and between 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm on weekdays and by appointment on Saturday mornings.

The Head Office is open between 9.30 am – 1.00 pm and 2.00 pm – 4.30 pm on weekdays with the exception of Thursday morning, when the service is available at Halton Direct Link, Halton Lea.

In addition, the service is available at Halton Direct Link, Widnes on Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings between 9.30 am and 12.30 pm.

The Service has an arrangement with the Contact Centre (which is staffed 24/7) to route any emergency calls to a member of the Registration staff.

3.0 LINK TO SERVICE PLAN

The Council has identified six key strategic priorities that are detailed within the introduction of this plan. Whilst the majority of Council services will contribute in some way to each of these priorities, those that are most relevant to the Registration Service, and the relevant areas of focus that flow from the particular key priorities, are shown below. The Service Aims that flow from the key priorities/areas of focus are taken from the Health & Partnerships Departmental Service Plan covering the period 2007 to 2010, whilst the Registration Service aims for 2007/2008 are listed below as Unit Aims.

Corporate Priority 6

Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

Area of Focus 38

Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.

Service Aim

- SA10** To ensure local people receive an excellent and well-informed service, with improved choice and greater flexibility in the range of services provided.

Unit Aims

- UA1** To provide an open and accountable Service that is responsive to individual and collective local needs, is committed to customer care and excellence in public service, and that exceeds its declared performance standards.
- UA2** Identify and implement improvements to the Service highlighted by customer comments when surveyed.
- UA3** Develop and improve the choices and flexibility provided by the Registration Service.

4.0 SERVICE DEVELOPMENTS

4.1 Completed Review Work

The Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board has considered and supported the Service's pursuance of new governance arrangements at the earliest opportunity. Such arrangements provide for a more flexible, less prescriptive registration scheme covering the management and delivery of the local Registration Service. This will provide the Council with greater discretion to deliver a local service that both meets national standards and local community needs.

Additionally during 2006/2007, the Policy and Performance Board was informed of registration modernisation developments via the wider departmental quarterly monitoring reports. Issues included the employment status of statutory officers and the launch of the Good Practice Guide for Registration Services.

The Service carries out a number of surveys over a three-year period, targeting various customer groups and partners. Couples marrying during September 2006 were surveyed and as a result of feedback received from that survey the Service is exploring a suggestion to provide an improved keepsake version of the marriage ceremony brochure. Customers visiting the Service during a week in February 07 were surveyed on customer satisfaction, service standards and access to services. Feedback received has not yet been analysed.

The whole of the Registration team were consulted on plans to pursue a new governance scheme change in February 2007, as required under Section 14(4) of the Registration Service Act.

During December 2005 the Registration Service was the subject of an internal audit. The auditor concluded that the control environment was adequately designed and established controls were consistently applied. The report action plan contained five recommendations, all of which were implemented during 2006. This was confirmed via a follow-up internal audit conducted in January 2007.

In the latter half of 2006, the Service appointed two casual (sessional) Senior Civil Ceremonies Celebrants who are also Deputy SRs / Deputy RBDs, plus four casual (sessional) Civil Ceremonies Celebrants, who are also Deputy RBDs. These appointments are aimed at increasing flexibility and efficiency, particularly with regard to meeting customer needs.

In December 2006, Service managers met with HM Inspectors of Registration so that they could assess the Service's preparedness to pursue a new governance scheme change. Subject to the completion of certain specific, planned actions, the Inspectors concluded that Halton was well prepared to take this forward.

In addition, one member of staff received an individual inspection of their statutory duties and customer care skills as part of the normal inspection regime. This officer was assessed with an overall efficiency/standard of 'A'.

Halton is part of the North West Registration Managers Group. As part of this group, staffing, numbers of activities performed and financial data are submitted annually for comparison with other registration districts, initially in the North West, but subsequently over England and Wales. Ten NW districts submitted data in 2004-05. The results showed that the gross cost per head of population (£1.91) was in line with the majority. Data for 2005-06 has been submitted and will be analysed during 2007/08.

Whilst the Service's Charter Mark award has lapsed, the Service has maintained its Charter Mark infrastructure to support its customer-focussed service delivery ethos. The Service benefits from the Council-wide Investor in People status.

4.2 On-going Review Work

As indicated earlier, the feedback from a survey of customers visiting the Service during a week in February 07 has yet to be analysed.

General Service developments linked to the pursuance of new governance arrangements are on-going.

4.3 Planned Review Work

During 2007/2008 P & P Board scrutiny activity is likely to focus on the Service's performance against the Good Practice Guide national standards, changes to the employment status of the statutory officers and the annual stewardship return that must be submitted to the Registrar General as part of the new governance arrangements.

Each year the Service conducts two postal surveys of its customers to gain feedback on the quality of service provision and information on other aspects of the Service. There is a general survey of all customers visiting the office during one particular week, and a survey of all couples marrying during a month. Emphasis will be placed on the availability of the service and the increased choices for marriage, naming ceremonies and re-affirmation of vows.

The Civil Partnerships Act has been in operation for 12 months. Couples who have registered a civil partnership in Halton during 2006 will be consulted to ascertain their views on the service provided and the content and choices of the ceremony offered.

The move to web-based registrations of births and deaths will have an impact on the Service as registration staff will be able to make two or more registrations at the same time (whereas they were previously restricted by the availability of a limited number of registers. Customer surveys will be used to analyse customer needs.

The Service may take a slot in a Halton 2000 panel survey during the year, in order to assess the public's perception on certain specific aspects of Registration Service delivery.

HM Inspectors of Registration will maintain contact with the Service during the year, to ensure that the new governance arrangements operate smoothly following the scheme change.

The Service will take part in the NW benchmarking group exercise during 2007/2008.

5.0 RESOURCES

5.1 Budget Summary

Council budgets will be agreed in March 2006, following which the Service's budget will be published. No significant changes are expected for 2007/2008 and no changes are anticipated with regard to staffing, ICT or accommodation compared to last year.

5.2 Future ICT Requirements

In order to produce copy certificates locally, the transfer of registration data to a standard, proprietary Microsoft database would be necessary on the cessation of the present Registration Service software. The Register Office would also benefit from access to a suitable document scanner in order to provide copy certificates.

The Service is to research electronic diary options with a view to installing a system that will provide Service performance data. In addition, the installation of a web-cam in the ceremonies room is being considered.

5.3 Future Accommodation/Property Requirements

The Register Office is located in Runcorn Town Hall and comprises a ceremonies room, public reception areas and two offices. It includes secure storage for registers of births, marriages and deaths together with related paperwork. It is unlikely that there will be a change in accommodation needs in the next twelve months. However, office accommodation for the team is tight.

6.0 SERVICE PERFORMANCE

Plans are no use if they do not produce real results. We need to set targets and measure our performance to know if we are achieving the improvements intended. Various types of indicator are used here to do this:

- **Objectives.** These show the major events in the work of the Team that are planned to take place during 2007–08, such as the launch of new initiatives, production of key plans and strategies and progress on major projects†
- **Performance Indicators and Targets.** These show performance on indicators that are prescribed by central Government as part of their drive to ensure that councils deliver best value in serving their local communities.

† Against each key objective the overall residual risk assessment (after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown in a column headed 'RISK SCORE'. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. This is represented by a number with the associated level of assessed risk.

| Risk Score | Overall Level of Risk |
|------------|-----------------------|
| 1 – 4 | LOW |
| 5 – 10 | MEDIUM |
| 11 – 16 | HIGH |

6.1 Objectives 2007/08

Attached at Appendix 1 is a table outlining the team's objectives and how these link into the Department's Service Aims.

6.2 Performance Indicators and Targets

Attached at Appendix 2 is a table outlining all the statutory indicators and local non-statutory indicators that will be monitored via the team.

6.3 Risk Control Measures

None of the key objectives outlined in the departmental Service Plan, that relate to and fall within the direct control of the team, were initially assessed as 'medium' risk (or above) on the corporate risk assessment register. Hence, there are no risk control measures that the Registration Team would be required to monitor (in accordance with Council procedures).

6.4 Equality Action Plan

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity and combating discrimination and victimisation within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services it delivers.

The Council fully supports the broad principles of social justice and will oppose any form of discrimination and oppression. Council policy will apply to all of those who come into contact with it, i.e. those who presently use directly provided services of services provided on the Council's behalf; potential users of services; other agencies and professional; employees and job applicants; and the general public.

During the course of 2006 – 07 all Council Services conducted Equality Impact Assessments (EIAs) to examine the equality implications of all policies, procedures and practices within their area.

EIAs continue to be completed on all new/revised policies, procedures and practices within the Directorate to ensure they eliminate unlawful discrimination and promote equality of opportunity and good relations between racial groups. Where specific actions are identified then progress of these will be monitored by the Directorate Equal Opportunities Working Group.

None of the actions from equality impact/needs assessments undertaken during 2006/2007 that fall within the direct control of the team, were initially regarded as 'medium' priority (or above) within the impact/needs assessments. Hence there are no specific initiatives or actions that the Registration Team would be required to monitor (in accordance with Council procedures).

6.5 Level of Service

Halton Borough Council is committed at all times to meeting the national standards of service as outlined in the GRO/LACORS Good Practice Guide for Registration Services. For certain aspects of the Service these minimum standards are exceeded and the Service meets the "Good Practice" or "Better Practice" criteria.

Details of the level of service met for each of the criteria addressed by the guide, together with proposed service (including customer service) improvements planned for the year ahead, can be found in Appendix 3 of this plan.

6.6 Suggestions and Complaints Procedure

The Council's clear procedure for dealing with complaints applies to the Registration Service. The Council is fully committed to respond fully to a complaint within 14 days. In addition, as part of the Registration Service's

standards, the Service pledges that an initial written response will be given within 5 working days.

The procedure is described in the leaflet “Any Complaints” which is available at the Register Office and all Council offices and Halton Direct Links.

A notice in the Register Office informs members of the public about the complaints procedure asking them in the first instance to contact the Superintendent Registrar.

The Register Office has not received any official complaints during the last 15 years.

Customers are regularly asked in surveys if they are aware of the Council’s complaints procedure. During the period 2002 – 2005, an average of 60% said that they were not aware. However, an average of 94.7% said they would feel able to complain if necessary.

In addition, customer feedback forms are available at all offices to allow users to comment on any aspect of the service. Staff write or telephone those users who have given contact information. Users of the Service are also asked as part of the customer surveys, if they have any suggestions for improvements to the Service.

The Service logs all informal complaints and suggestions, however they are made, including those on feedback forms. These are discussed and analysed, and a summary of suggestions and the actions that have been taken, is published in waiting rooms and in customer surveys.

6.7 Business Continuity Plan

The aim of business continuity planning is to ensure continuity of service delivery following an unexpected disruption to normal working.

The Health & Community Directorate produced its Business Continuity Plan in 2006 and work is currently taking place on updating the plan. For further details, please refer to the Directorate Business Continuity Plan.

The Business/Service continuity plan for the Halton Registration Service is attached at Appendix 4.

7.0 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

One of the main purposes of having a Service Delivery and Improvement Plan is to enable Service managers to keep track of how the team is doing and to see whether the team is performing as planned and achieving its targets.

Progress will be monitored through:

- Weekly / daily monitoring by the Proper Officer and Registration Service Manager through their regular interaction with team officers
- The production of monthly statistical information which is considered by managers and by all officers at monthly team briefings
- Quarterly progress reports to Departmental Management Team meetings

6.1 Objectives (2007/08)

| Service Plan Aims <i>(Reference only)</i> | Divisional Objective | | Milestones | | Monitoring Frequency | Responsible Officer |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | Ref | Description | Actions needed to achieve the objective | Target / Deadlines | | |
| SA10 | RO1 | Adopt new governance arrangements for the Halton Registration Service | Secure the installation of a new Registration Scheme which must be signed and sealed by the Council and the Minister | 4 July 07 | Monthly | J Downes |
| SA10 | RO2 | Prepare historical index of marriages, 1926 - 1930 | Input data | 31 Oct 07 | 2-Monthly | Y Macleod |
| | | | Check index | 31 Jan 08 | 2-Monthly | Y Macleod |
| | | | Arrange binding | 31 Mar 08 | Feb 2008 | Y Macleod |
| SA10 | RO3 | Survey customers to ascertain their views on quality and scope of services provided | Survey all couples marrying in Aug 07 | 31 Aug 07 | 3-Monthly | J Eager |
| | | | Survey clients during 1 week in Feb 08 | 29 Feb 08 | 3-Monthly | J Eager |
| | | | Analyse results of calendar year surveys | 30 Nov 07 | 3-Monthly | J Eager |
| | | | Determine the resultant service Improvements that are to be introduced | 31 Dec 07 | Monthly | J Downes / S Jones |
| | | | Implement service improvements flowing from above analysis | 31 Mar 08 | 3-Monthly | J Downes / S Jones |

6.2 Performance Indicators and Targets

| Service Plan Aims | Performance Indicator | | | 2006/07 | | | 2007/08 Target | Monitoring Frequency | Responsible Officer |
|-------------------|-----------------------|------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------|--------|-------------------------|----------------|----------------------|---------------------|
| | | | | Actual | Target | Achieved / not achieved | | | |
| (Reference only) | Category | Ref | Description | | | | | | |
| SA10 | Service Delivery | RP 1 | Submit occasional copies of corrected entries within 7 days of correction being made – (these are amended copies forwarded to the GRO to replace the original copy of a register entry | New PI | New PI | New PI | 100% | Monthly | S Jones |
| SA10 | Service Delivery | RP 2 | Complete weekly Health Authority returns (of number of deaths occurring within the Borough) within 7 days – | New PI | New PI | New PI | 100% | Monthly | S Jones |
| SA10 | Service Delivery | RP 3 | % of times birth registration / declaration informant offered appointment within 3 working days | New PI | New PI | New PI | 90% | Monthly | S Jones |
| SA10 | Service Delivery | RP 4 | % of times still birth registration / declaration informant offered appointment within 2 working days | New PI | New PI | New PI | 99% | Monthly | S Jones |
| SA10 | Service Delivery | RP 5 | % of times death registration / declaration informant offered appointment within 2 working days | New PI | New PI | New PI | 99% | Monthly | S Jones |
| SA10 | Service Delivery | RP 6 | % of times marriage / civil partnership notice informant offered appointment within 5 working days | New PI | New PI | New PI | 90% | Monthly | S Jones |

**HALTON REGISTRATION DISTRICT
2007 / 2008**

**Performance level when measured against the Code of Practice – see the
GRO/LACORS Good Practice in Local Registration Services**

The performance level shown by a ✓ in the bottom left-hand corner of the cell indicates the present level of service in Halton, and therefore the minimum level of service that will be met throughout the whole of the 2007/2008 financial year. The symbol ↑ in the bottom left-hand corner of a cell highlights those Good Practice or Better Practice standards that the Service plans to attain, during the course of the year.

Certain events happen so infrequently in Halton and whilst there is no doubt that the National Standard will be met or exceeded for all such events, the evidence of this is not readily available. Such matters are identified by the symbol ①.

For some matters indicated by the symbol 📊 statistics are presently being collated to complete the table below, but these will all be available and the table will be updated before the end on March 07.

The numbering in the table below is carried over directly from the GRO/LACORS Good Practice Guide.

APPLICATION of CODE of PRACTICE

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|-------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------|
| 2.1 Consultation | <input type="checkbox"/> Local service delivery plans to be informed through annual consultation with customers, staff and partners. ✓ | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 2.2 Service delivery and improvement plan | <input type="checkbox"/> Publication of Service Delivery Plan reflecting the needs and expectations of local customers, and the rights of the general public. ✓ | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 2.3 Performance management and reporting | <input type="checkbox"/> Local systems to be in place to monitor performance and customer satisfaction rates, and the results made publicly available. ✓ | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |

**ORGANISATION and CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY
(OVERALL STANDARD)**

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|--------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.1 **Customer satisfaction | <input type="checkbox"/> 85% or more of customers satisfied. | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% or more of customers satisfied. | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% or more of customers satisfied. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.2 Suggestions and complaints | <input type="checkbox"/> A well publicised, easy to use suggestions and complaints procedure. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Summary of suggestions and complaints published, together with the improvements made as a result. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Number of formal complaints received fewer than 0.5% of all registrations. | <input type="checkbox"/> Suggestions and complaints procedures made available for all as widely as possible. <input type="checkbox"/> Number of formal complaints received fewer than 0.3% of all registrations. | <input type="checkbox"/> Number of formal complaints received fewer than 0.1% of all registrations. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

**ORGANISATION and CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY
(ORGANISATIONAL STANDARDS)**

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|-------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.3 Service points | <input type="checkbox"/> Location of service points to take account of consultation with partners, staff, users and potential users of the service, and to reflect their needs. | <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of stakeholder views used to effect change in service delivery <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder view-led changes publicised on website or customer notices for example. |
| 3.4 Service and access availability | <input type="checkbox"/> Service to be easily accessible and available to users, taking into account customer preferences and expectations. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of stakeholder views used to effect change in service access and availability. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Extended hours availability either early mornings, late evenings or weekends. | <input type="checkbox"/> Stakeholder view-led changes publicised on website or customer notices, for example. <input type="checkbox"/> Access to service at times customers want and this should be tested by regular customer feedback as appropriate. |
| 3.5 Accommodation | <input type="checkbox"/> Private interview room for registration and notice taking and public waiting area. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Ceremony room available at statutory fee for 6 – 20 people. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceremony room available at statutory fee for 20 – 40 people. | <input type="checkbox"/> Ceremony room available at statutory fee for 40+ people. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.6 Approved Premises | <input type="checkbox"/> Applications for approval processed according to statutory requirements. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Local authority register of approved premises compiled and maintained according to statutory requirements. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Clarity of local authority venue approval process. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Availability of on-line application process. <input type="checkbox"/> Venues confirm couples booking on-line with Register Office. |

ORGANISATION and CUSTOMER SERVICE DELIVERY
CUSTOMER FOCUSED STANDARDS

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Waiting times – offices with appointment systems | | | |
| 3.7 General | <input type="checkbox"/> Customers without appointment should be allowed to complete their business that day if they attend within advertised opening hours and choose to wait. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of customers seen within 10 minutes of appointed time. | <input type="checkbox"/> Customers attending without appointment notified of time they can be seen that day if requested. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of customers seen within 10 minutes of appointed time. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of customers seen within 10 minutes of appointed time. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.8 Births Figures to be collated during Dec 06 – Feb 07. | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of informants offered an appointment to register (or make a declaration) within 3 working days of request. <input type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of informants offered an appointment to register (or make a declaration) within 3 working days of request. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of informants offered an appointment to register (or make a declaration) within 3 working days of request. |
| 3.9 Still-births and deaths | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of informants offered an appointment to register (or make a declaration in the case of a death) within 2 working days of request. | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of informants offered an appointment to register (or make a declaration) within 2 working days of request. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of informants offered an appointment to register (or make a declaration) within 2 working days of request. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 3.10 Marriages and civil partnerships Figures to be collated during Dec 06 – Feb 07 | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of people able to give notice offered an appointment within 5 working days of request. <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Marriage and civil partnership notices to be taken in sufficient time to allow the event to take place as planned (subject to legal constraints). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of people able to give notice offered an appointment within 5 working days of request. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of people able to give notice offered an appointment within 5 working days of request. |

| | | | |
|----------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 3.11 Time and venue for civil marriages and partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Bookings made up to 12 months in advance. | <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional bookings made up to 12 months in advance. | <input type="checkbox"/> Provisional bookings made beyond 12 months in advance. ✓ |
| 3.12 Arranging citizenship ceremonies | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of prospective citizens offered a date to attend a citizenship ceremony at no extra cost within 90 days of the Home Office invitation letter. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of prospective citizens offered a date to attend a citizenship ceremony at no extra cost within 60 days of the Home Office invitation letter. ✓ | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of prospective citizens offered a date to attend a citizenship ceremony at no extra cost within 30 days of the Home Office invitation letter. |

BIRTHS REGISTRATION

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 4.1 Registering births | <input type="checkbox"/> All births registered. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 4.2 Timely and accurate recording of births | <input type="checkbox"/> 98 % registered within 42 working days of event. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% registered within 42 working days of event. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% registered within 42 working days of event. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.3 Requisition unregistered births Figures unavailable at present | <input type="checkbox"/> Requisition procedures followed for 100% of unregistered births. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Information letter sent to mother of baby after 30 days. | <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with health authorities over specific cases of non-registration. |
| 4.4 Declarations | <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration facility available. Completed declarations sent to receiving authority on the same day. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of declarations registered within 24 hours of receipt. | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of declarations registered within 24 hours of receipt. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of declarations registered within 24 hours of receipt. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 4.5 Timely and accurate corrections and re-registrations Figures unavailable at Present | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% offered appointment within 7 working days of GRO notification. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% offered appointment within 7 working days of GRO notification. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% offered appointment within 7 working days of GRO notification. |
| 4.6 Collection of statistics | <input type="checkbox"/> All statistical information to be identified, requested and recorded where supplied. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |





STILL BIRTHS REGISTRATION

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 5.1 Still-births | <input type="checkbox"/> All still-births registered. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> All still-births registered at a location of the customers convenience. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 5.2 Timely and accurate recording of still-births | <input type="checkbox"/> 98 % registered within 42 working days of event. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% registered within 42 working days of event. <input type="checkbox"/> Liaise with health authorities over prospective registration after 10 days if no approach by informant. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% registered within 42 working days of event. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 5.3 Burial/cremation documents issued | <input type="checkbox"/> All relevant documents issued at the appropriate time. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 5.4 Collection of statistics | <input type="checkbox"/> All statistical information to be identified, requested and recorded where supplied. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |

DEATH REGISTRATIONS

| Key activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.1 Registering deaths | <input type="checkbox"/> All deaths registered. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 6.2 Timely and accurate recording of deaths. Figures to be collated Oct 06 – Dec 06 | <input type="checkbox"/> 98% of deaths (excluding inquests) registered within 5 working days of the death. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of inquest cases registered on day of receipt of coroner's certificate. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of deaths (excluding inquests) registered within 5 working days of the death. <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of inquest cases registered on day of receipt of coroner's certificate. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of deaths (excluding inquests) registered within 5 working days of the death. <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of inquest cases registered on day of receipt of coroner's certificate |
| 6.3 Deaths referred to coroner Figures to be collated Oct 06 – Dec 06 | <input type="checkbox"/> All reportable deaths referred to the coroner prior to the registration. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> All reportable deaths referred to the coroner on a Form 52 prior to the registration. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 6.4 Burial/cremation documents issued | <input type="checkbox"/> All relevant documents issued at the appropriate time. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 6.5 Declarations Figures unavailable at present | <input type="checkbox"/> Declaration facility available. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Completed declarations sent to receiving authority on the same day. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of declarations registered on day of receipt. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of declarations registered on day of receipt. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of declarations registered on day of receipt. |
| 6.6 Timely and accurate corrections Figures unavailable at present | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% offered appointment within 7 working days of GRO notification | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% offered appointment within 7 working days of GRO notification. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% offered appointment within 7 working days of GRO notification. |
| 6.7 Collection of statistics | <input type="checkbox"/> All statistical information to be identified, requested and recorded where supplied. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |

MARRIAGES / CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS

| Key Activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.1 Availability of notice taking service for marriage or civil partnership. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of all marriage and civil partnership notices to be taken in sufficient time to allow the event to take place as planned (subject to legal constraints).  | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 7.2 Solemnisation of civil marriages and registration of civil partnerships. | <input type="checkbox"/> Time and date of marriage ceremony/civil partnership registration offered to meet request of couple where this is available.  | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 7.3 Recording civil partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of schedules entered within 2 working days of formation.  | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 7.4 Timely and accurate corrections Figures unavailable at present | <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of customers offered appointments within 7 working days of GRO notification.  | <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of customers offered appointments within 7 working days of GRO notification. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of customers offered appointments within 7 working days of GRO notification. |

CITIZENSHIP

| Key Activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.1 Dating Citizenship Certificates | <input type="checkbox"/> **100% of certificates dated correctly and without amendment. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 8.2 Notification to Home Office following a Citizenship Ceremony. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of notifications confirming the ceremony sent to the Home Office within 14 working days of the ceremony. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of notifications confirming the ceremony sent to the Home Office within 7 working days of the ceremony. | <input type="checkbox"/> 100% of notifications confirming the ceremony sent to the Home Office within 1 working day of the ceremony. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |

STATUTORY and ADMINISTRATIVE RETURNS

| Key Activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|-------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 9.1 Quarterly and occasional copies | <input type="checkbox"/> Quarterly copies prepared, certified and submitted within 28 days of the end of each quarter. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional copies of corrected entries submitted within 7 days of correction being made. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional copies of corrected entries submitted within 3 days of correction being made. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. <input type="checkbox"/> Occasional copies of corrected entries submitted within 1 day of correction being made. |
| 9.2 Health Authority returns | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly returns made within 14 days. | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly returns made within 7 days. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Weekly returns made within 1 day. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 9.3 Council returns | <input type="checkbox"/> Deaths notified to council tax and electoral registration officer within 7 days. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Births notified to the Education Authority within statutory timescale. (if required). <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |
| 9.4 Sham marriages and civil partnerships | <input type="checkbox"/> Any suspected sham marriages and civil partnerships reported to the Home Office. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |

CERTIFICATES and DOCUMENT MANAGEMENT

| Key Activity | National Standard | Good Practice | Better Practice |
|----------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 10.1. Issue of certificates (at the statutory fee) | <input type="checkbox"/> Requests for certificates required urgently to be dealt with on the day. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 90% of applications dealt with within 5 working days of application. | <input type="checkbox"/> Multi-channel facilities to order, and pay for, certificates. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> 95% of applications dealt with within 5 working days of application. | <input type="checkbox"/> 99% of applications dealt with within 5 working days of application. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> |
| 10.2. Records access | <input type="checkbox"/> Statutory compliance. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | | |
| 10.3 Records custody and care | <input type="checkbox"/> Registers stored to prevent deterioration and in accessible location. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Registers stored in accommodation with environmental controls to limit fluctuation in humidity and temperature. <input type="checkbox"/> Registers shelved so as to avoid damage in handling; little-used volumes stored in archive-quality boxes. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> Conservation survey of physical state of registers undertaken. | <input type="checkbox"/> Registers stored in accommodation meeting BS 5454. <input type="checkbox"/> Program of conservation and rebinding for damaged registers. |
| 10.4 Indexes | <input type="checkbox"/> Indexes prepared to meet statutory requirements. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> Indexes available online. <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> | <input type="checkbox"/> None recommended at this stage. |



Health & Community Directorate

REGISTRATION SERVICE BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLAN

1 January 2007

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1.0 BUSINESS CONTINUITY PLANNING in HALTON

As instructed by the Civil Contingencies Act 2004, Halton Borough Council prepared and maintains a major emergency plan for the district to ensure that they can continue to exercise their functions, as far as is reasonably practicable, in the event of an emergency. It is this plan that underpins all other plans. The Corporate Business Continuity Plan provides the overall framework for the Council and Directorate Business Continuity Plans have been developed as part of this to complement the overall risk arrangements and help to maintain critical services during and after any major disruption.

The Registration Service is covered by the Health and Community Directorate Business Continuity Plan for:

- Initial actions / contact / liaison with other departments
- Arrangements for contacting staff
- Action Plan for Priority 1 Services – to be restored within 0-24 hours
- Action Plan for Priority 2 Services – to be restored within 3 days
- Action Plan for Priority 3 Services – to be restored within 14 days

Since the Registration Service must document its Business Continuity arrangements as part of its Service Delivery and Improvement Plan (required by the Code of Practice that forms part of the new Registration Scheme) this “Service” Business Continuity Plan has been produced as the next level down in the hierarchy of Halton Business Continuity Plans.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

In the event of any emergency situation or disaster, which resulted in the total or partial loss of one or more of the elements of accommodation used by the Registration Service, it is unlikely that the service would be able to function normally and the daily routine / services to customers could be disrupted considerably.

Pandemic flu is considered inevitable and will have a considerable impact on the delivery of Registration Services. Estimates vary, but it is anticipated that up to one third of staff may be absent due to sickness or care commitments combined with a potentially overwhelming demand for services.

Thus, in order to eliminate, minimise or otherwise manage these or indeed any other situations that might impact upon business continuity, a risk analysis was carried out against four risk scenarios:

- Damage/denial of access to premises
- Loss/damage to IT systems and data
- Non availability of key staff
- Loss/damage to other resources

The length of time needed before normal working can be resumed will be dependent upon the extent of the emergency or disaster, the numbers of staff temporarily incapacitated, and any damage to buildings or equipment. In extreme situations a return to the existing accommodation may not be feasible at all.

The risk analysis showed that for the Registration Service the non-availability of key staff carried the highest risk, with damage to premises having a medium risk. The other two factors (loss/damage to IT systems or other resources) carried a low risk.

The core activities of the Registration Service were prioritised and together with the above scenarios, an action plan was produced that set out the procedures to be followed and identified the key areas of work to be considered to enable these priority services to be restored within set time-scales (see Sections 13 to 15 of this plan).

The first contact member for each office will be required to hold a copy of the Plan in a safe and confidential manner at home. Copies should also be kept in individual office safes.

3.0 AIMS AND OBJECTIVES

The aim of this Business Continuity Plan is to minimise the delay in returning to normal after a crisis thus enabling the Registration Service to continue to deliver the services it currently provides with as little disruption as possible to the general public and other client groups within identified timescales.

The Business Continuity Plan will allow the determination of responses to a major incident by identifying:

- The priority between services and sections
- Action Plans for Services
- Minimum resources required for the continuation of service delivery
- Accommodation
- Key staff and staffing implications
- Working procedures

4.0 REGISTER OFFICE LOCATIONS & CONTACTS

Halton Register Office

Heath Road
Runcorn
WA7 5TN

Tel: 0151 471 7636 / 7635 Fax: 01928 575616

Contact:: Mrs Sandra Jones - Superintendent Registrar & Local Manager
Mrs Pam Moore – Registrar births/deaths & Deputy Supt. Registrar
Mrs Christine Ditchfield – Additional Registrar & Deputy SR
Mrs Yvonne Macleod – Additional Registrar & Deputy SRths

Outstation – HDL Widnes

Brook Street
Widnes
WA8

Tel: 01228 607432 (or 607433 & 607630) Fax: 01228 607434

Contact:: Mrs Jean Eager – Registrar births/deaths & Deputy Supt. Registrar

Outstation – HDL Halton Lea

Halton Lea
Runcorn
WA7

Tel: 01900 325960 (or 325961) Fax: 01900 325962

Contact:: Mrs Pamela Moore – Registrar Births/deaths & Supt. Registrar

Proper Officer for Registration

Mr John Downes
Divisional Manager Consumer Protection
Health & Community
Rutland House
Runcorn

Tel: 0151 906 4864

Fax: 0151 471 7516

5.0 PRIORITY BETWEEN SERVICES AND SECTIONS

The core function of the Registration Service is the administration and management of the Registration of Births, Deaths and Marriages / Civil Partnerships. This includes the following core activities, listed in priority order:

1. Death registration (registration required within 5 days under normal circumstances)
2. Marriage & Civil Partnerships ceremonies
3. Copy Certificates (for passports and other official bodies/groups)
4. Births registration (registration required within 42 days under normal circumstances)
5. citizenship ceremonies
6. Citizenship ceremonies
7. Notices of Marriage and Civil Partnership
8. Copy certificates (for family history and research purposes)
9. Renewal of vows & Baby Naming ceremonies

If the situation reaches a critical point no further ceremony bookings will be taken.

A key action that must be considered in relation to any interruption or issue that impacts upon the service is that of publicising the situation as widely as possible. If the public is aware of the problem, then they are at least informed and it should reduce any stress on the Service, and in particular on front-line officers.

For example, following a fire the Service should publicise the fact and advise of alternative arrangements that have been put into place, so that the public are aware of the location of any temporary register office, and the impact that such a temporary / emergency arrangement will have on the level of service.

A business impact assessment was carried out in 2006. The findings are listed in Section 12 of this plan.

6.0 ACTION PLANS FOR SERVICES

As a result of the business impact assessment, action plans were developed for:

- Priority 1 Services – to be restored within 0 – 24 hours
- Priority 2 Services – to be restored within 3 days
- Priority 3 Services – to be restored within 14 days.

These are reproduced in Sections 13 to 15 of this plan, but the numbering in the tables is carried over from the Health & Community Directorate Business Continuity Plan.

7.0 MINIMUM REQUIREMENTS FOR CONTINUATION OF SERVICE DELIVERY

The equipment and resources required to maintain the Service will be dependant upon two key factors. Firstly, the type and scale/severity of any emergency or disaster situation, and secondly, the numbers and locations of the offices affected.

By transferring to another office within the service, it may be possible to resume activities immediately. In other cases it may be that a complete inventory of resources and equipment is required. Listed below are the key resources required:

- Office accommodation
- Room for Civil weddings/partnerships (see Section 16 of this plan)
- Telephones – Landline or mobile
- GRO Documents and secure stock
- Fax machine
- Computers - PC's or Laptops (ultimately, to match current inventory)
- Modem and access to the Internet (network/broadband)
- Printer
- Photocopier
- Stationary (paper for printers, photocopier etc, envelopes etc)
- Furniture – desks, tables, chairs
- Diary
- Secure storage for cash and registers

(See Section 11 of this plan, “Template for Assessing Core Requirements”.)

A ‘Grab-bag’ system should be implemented. The bag would contain key items required in the event of an emergency or disaster. These could include items such as the business continuity plan, staff contact details, venue contact details, lists of doctors, etc., stationery, blank draft forms, birth/death declaration pads, pens, mobile phone etc.

8.0 ACCOMMODATION

If there is the need for relocating any Registration Service offices or premises in the event of an emergency, or the lack of availability of staff at one site, alternative premises would be required. This may occur in the event of any major incident such as a fire, flood, explosion, or a flu pandemic. Offices should relocate as follows:

OUTSTATIONS: Any outstation that experiences difficulties will be closed on a temporary basis and any operations carried out from main office, or its nominated replacement, should the Register Office close for any reason.

MAIN REGISTER OFFICE: Priority will be given to keep open and maintain services at the Register Office, Runcorn Town Hall. Outstations will be closed.

Civil marriage and partnership ceremonies are held in the Register Office, Runcorn Town Hall, and at various approved premises, such as hotels, in the Borough. If the Register Office cannot be used, temporary approval of alternative accommodation can be given by GRO. The alternative accommodation should ideally be other council accommodation and be a suitable place for the superintendent registrar to have their office and to conduct marriages / civil partnership ceremonies etc. The place in which ceremonies will take place will be approved for the conduct of marriages / civil partnerships.

A local hotel or public house should be avoided unless there is no alternative.

The accommodation would ideally have a reception and a place where the couple could be asked their pre-ceremony questions in private.

The General Register Office, at Southport, must be notified and the building given temporary approval before any ceremonies take place.

In exceptional circumstances the Registrar General will allow the repository (for registers) to be split from the temporary Register Office i.e. it would be unreasonable to expect a temporary repository to be set up if in the long term the temporary accommodation was not to be the Register Office. It could be that repairs are made to the original Register Office. The crux is that the repository is made secure and fireproof as soon as possible.

Alternative venues for marriage/ civil partnership / citizenship ceremonies, together with contact details, are given in Section 16 of this plan.

9.0 KEY STAFF AND STAFFING IMPLICATIONS

The registration of births, deaths, and marriages is a statutory duty. Those staff who carry out these duties, therefore, have to be appointed as deputy registration staff by the Registrar General. In order to provide greater flexibility and increased cover should there be a flu pandemic the Service has appointed six sessional civil celebrants.

The Service also attends two outstations at Halton Direct Link Widnes and Halton Lea. In the event of staff shortages these outstations would be closed and staff utilised at the Register Office, Runcorn Town Hall, or alternative venue if necessary.

Whilst each member of staff has some form of written job profile, which indicates what their core responsibilities are under normal circumstances, additional duties may need to be undertaken by some members of staff in times of crisis in order that a return to a normal state of working may be expedited for the Unit as a whole.

In all situations the safety and well-being of staff are of paramount importance. It must be accepted, however, that in order to continue to function it may be necessary for staff to work in an environment which is unfamiliar, and possibly, inconvenient immediately after a crisis.

Unavailability of Staff

- In the event of staff not being available the GRO should be contacted in order to appoint Deputies (by Temporary Authority) over the telephone. Ideally the Deputies would be registration officers from other districts but if it was an immediate emergency, for example to allow a marriage to go ahead, a member of staff from another department, could be made a deputy registrar and be led through the registration by the person acting as the superintendent registrar.
- Recently retired staff from the district or surrounding districts should be asked if they would help and be appointed deputies temporarily by GRO. Advice has been drafted on options available when a registration officer does not attend an approved premise marriage which may be applicable in some emergency situations.

See Information and guidance from the General Register Office (GRO) on staff availability in Section 17 of this plan.

10.0 WORKING PROCEDURES

Under the present scheme and existing arrangements the following procedures could be utilised.

- Extend opening hours and the introduction of evening / weekend working.
- Train other Local Authority employees to register births and deaths (appointed as Deputy RBD) if sessional staff were unavailable.
- Block out the registration of births to one particular day a week, enabling the rest of the week to be dedicated to death registrations (allowing of course for any "drop-in" callers).
- The RBD and deputy working in tandem on a death registration to possibly shorten appointment times.
- Stockpile all certificate applications that are not urgent and / or required for evidential purposes.
- Prioritise death registrations and stillbirth registrations, and then birth registrations close to the 42 days.
- Prioritise notice taking to people who need to / wanted to marry urgently.

Other Issues to Consider

Registers

- If these are destroyed or cannot be accessed then customers can be directed to GRO.

(If the registers have been destroyed (such as is the case for some of Bristol's records that were destroyed in the war) then GRO fees will be at the local rates. It is unlikely that one would not occur without the other. If a situation did arise and GRO was the only option for issue then the rate would be decided on the case merits.)

Stock (*Secure and otherwise*)

- Stock is kept in two locations; the Register Office, and Halton Direct Link Widnes. However, if stock (including certificates, forms, registers, ink etc.) were not available, could not be accessed or is damaged/destroyed, stock can be transferred from other districts. Most registrars have spare registers and secure and non-secure stock that they can give to a colleague from another district. GRO should be advised of the transfer of secure stock. This is the quickest resolution so that a break in service was kept to a minimum.
- Alternatively, GRO will issue any stock required.

(For General Register Office contact numbers – see Section 18 of this plan.)

11.0 TEMPLATE for ASSESSING CORE REQUIREMENTS

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Core Activity | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conduct of Civil Weddings / Partnerships • Registration of Deaths • Provision of current B/M/D certificates • Registration of Births • Provision of historical B/M/D certificates |
| Is the Services a Statutory Requirement | Yes |
| Resources required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Registration staff • Access to ICT facilities (including databases and other information sources) • Registers and Certificates • Access to paper records • Transport |
| Accommodation required | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Accommodation for staff incl. desks etc</i> • Room for Civil Weddings / Partnerships • <i>Access to RTH if possible</i> |
| List of equipment requirements | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Landlines / mobile phones • Office diary • PCs with RSS installed and Internet access • B/M/D registers • All certificates required for registration • Pen and Ink • Secure store for records |
| How would you communicate with your staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Face-to-face • Landlines / mobile phones • E-mail |
| Have you suggestions for alternative accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office in another Council Building (incl. HDLs / Community Centres etc.) • Council Conference Rooms or Approved Buildings for ceremonies |
| Can any of your staff work from home, have you considered implications | Yes to provide telephone service, but security and harassment issues would preclude home working for face-to-face role |
| OTHER COMMENTS | |

12.0 BUSINESS IMPACT ANALYSIS

(List in order of priority the **main** functions and the implications in the long and short term if they were disrupted. **Where possible** identify any significant cost implications.)

| Priority | Service | Impact / Implications (e.g. stakeholders / vulnerable groups) |
|--------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1, to be restored within 0-24 hours | Conduct of civil weddings / civil partnership registrations | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of significant disrepute for Council as guests may have travelled from abroad to attend • Significant cost implications for Council if sued for costs of wasted reception, honeymoon, cars, flowers, suit hire etc. |
| | Registration of deaths | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Potential of significant disrepute for Council as families would be unable to bury their loved ones • Other post-death arrangements would have to be put on hold, adding to the distress of the bereaved • Increasing backlog of bodies to be buried / cremated with knock-on effect for other services |
| 2, to be restored within 3 days | Provision of current birth, death and marriage certificates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unable to provide copy certificates for passports etc. which could have significant consequences for certain individuals and bring the Council into disrepute |
| 3, to be restored within 14 days | Registration of births | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Parents unable to access benefits with significant impact on the poorest in the community |
| | Provision of historical birth, marriage, death certificates | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Dissatisfied customers pursuing growing hobby / interest in genealogy |

13.0 Action Plan for Priority 1 Services – to be restored within 0 - 24 hours

| Service | Nature of Loss | Recovery Strategy |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 6.4.6 Conduct of civil weddings / Civil partnership registration | Damage or denial of access to premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain list of suitable alternative Council rooms plus relevant contact / booking details. • Agree arrangements for short-notice bookings with approved marriage / partnership premises. • Agree phone referral protocol with HDL Contact Centre. |
| | Loss or damage to IT systems / voice networks / hardware / software / data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure paper backup systems available at RO and HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). |
| | Non-availability of key staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider appointing Deputies on a temporary basis. Casual posts have been advertised. |
| | Loss or damage to other resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain spare set of registers and certificates at HDL Widnes. |
| 6.4.7 Registration of deaths | Damage or denial of access to premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure infrastructure in place to deliver service at RO, or HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). • Revise appointments protocol with HDL. |
| | Loss or damage to IT systems / voice networks / hardware / software / data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure paper backup systems available at RO and HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). |
| | Non-availability of key staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider appointing Deputies on a temporary basis. • Agree reciprocal cover arrangements with neighbouring authorities. |
| | Loss or damage to other resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain spare set of registers and certificates at HDL Widnes. • Buy, lease or borrow (e.g. from other Council services) the necessary office resources. |

14.0 Action Plan for Priority 2 Services - to be restored within 3 days

| Service | Nature of Loss | Recovery Strategy |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 7.4.10 Provision of current birth, death and marriage certificates | Damage or denial of access to premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure infrastructure in place to deliver service at RO, or HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). • Agree phone referral and amended appointments protocols with HDL Contact Centre. |
| | Loss or damage to IT systems / voice networks / hardware / software / data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure paper backup systems available at RO and HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). |
| | Non-availability of key staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff are trained and authorised in this duty. • Agree reciprocal cover arrangements with neighbouring authorities. |
| | Loss or damage to other resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure RO records storage room is secure and equipped with fire door / cupboards. |

15.0 Action Plan for Priority 3 Services – to be restored within 14 days

| Service | Nature of Loss | Recovery Strategy |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 8.4.10 Registration of births | Damage or denial of access to premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure infrastructure in place to deliver service at RO, or HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). • Agree phone referral and amended appointments protocols with HDL Contact Centre. |
| | Loss or damage to IT systems / voice networks / hardware / software / data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure paper backup systems available at RO and HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). |
| | Non-availability of key staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Consider appointing Deputies on a temporary basis. • Agree reciprocal cover arrangements with neighbouring authorities. |
| | Loss or damage to other resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maintain spare set of registers and certificates at HDL Widnes. • Buy, lease or borrow (e.g. from other Council services) the necessary office resources. |
| 8.4.11 Provision of historical birth / marriage / death certificates | Damage or denial of access to premises | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure infrastructure in place to deliver service at RO, or HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). • Agree phone referral and amended appointments protocols with HDL Contact Centre. |
| | Loss or damage to IT systems / voice networks / hardware / software / data | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure paper backup systems available at RO and HDLs (Widnes and Halton Lea). |
| | Non-availability of key staff | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure all staff are trained and authorised in this duty. • Agree reciprocal cover arrangements with neighbouring authorities. |
| | Loss or damage to other resources | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensure RO records storage room is secure and equipped with fire door / cupboards. |

16.0 Venues for Marriage / Civil Partnership or other celebratory services

| Venue | Nos. | Comments | Charges | Contact Details |
|----------------------------------------------|----------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Municipal Building Mtg Room 1 Mtg Room 2 | 10 6 | Only rooms which can have layout changed | - | Support Services, Municipal Bldg. 0151 471 7648 (Internal 1013) |
| Runcorn Town Hall Civic Suite | 50 – 60 | Layout can be changed | - | As above |
| “ “ Council Chamber | 80 – 90 | Layout cannot be changed | - | As above |
| Kingsway Learning Centre (Widnes Library) | 60 – 70 | Upstairs Large Meeting Room (Divided into 3) Disabled Facilities Lift | £10 per hour for 3 rooms | Heather Smith (4274) Andrew Lucas (4275) 0151 471 7369 |
| Castlefields Community Centre | Variable | | £7.75 per hour - £4.00 per hour weekdays, depending on room. Charges - double on Sat. Treble on Sundays – by arrangement | Gayle Pickering 01928 563839 castlefields.cc@halton.gov.uk |
| Ditton Community Centre | Variable | | _____ “ _____ | Ken Neale 0151 423 3121 ditton.cc@halton.gov.uk |
| Grangeway Community Centre | Variable | | _____ “ _____ | Bev Peyton 01928 569474 grangeway.cc@halton.gov.uk |
| Upton Community Centre | Variable | | _____ “ _____ | Ste Grice 0151 423 1386 upton.cc@halton.gov.uk |
| Murdishaw Community Centre | Variable | | _____ “ _____ | Mark McGlinchey 01928 718185 murdishaw.cc@halton.gov.uk |

17.0 INFORMATION and GUIDANCE from the GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE

Staff Availability

With regards to staff availability, a summary of what can be done:

- (i) *“Where the RBD attends but not the SR - a member of the public should be deputised as DSR and sign the register (the RBD will lead the ceremony);*
- (ii) *Where the SR attends but not the RBD - a member of the public should be deputised as DRBD and be led through the pre-marriage questioning (by the SR), sign the register and issue a certificate; (s58 of the Marriage Act 1949 empowers the registrar to ask*
- (iii) *the pre-marriage questions. I understand Marriages policy is to interpret the section as meaning the questioning must take place, and it has to be done by the registrar)*
- (iv) *If the officer who attends is a DSR/RBD (or some other combination i.e. DSR/DRBD or DSR/AR or DSR/DAR) that officer should take the role of registrar i.e. follow (i) above”.*

Other points

- *If the officer who attends is the SR or ASR (rather than a DSR), that officer cannot be deputised as a deputy registrar (an SR or ASR is excluded by regulation from being a registrar or deputy registrar).*
- *The officer who attends should not take on both roles.**
- *For the temporary appointment, by the Marriages Branch, of a deputy in an emergency situation, the rules for disqualification should be applied by Marriages.Branch. ***
- *Local Services, GRO, should be informed of the name and address of the person so deputized the following Monday where the temporary appointment is made by Marriages Branch over the weekend (the details are kept for record purposes; no letter will be sent to the individual).#*
- *If neither officer attends, it would not be possible for two members of the public to be deputised as DSR and DRBD, since the SR certificate probably won't be available for pre-marriage checks nor will the marriage register (the couple need to use their best efforts to contact one of the officers, possibly the RO will have left emergency telephone numbers with the local authority or the police will have an emergency number for the SR or the LA might operate a help line, in one LA this is called a Community Alarm System)”.*

* The marriage must be in the presence of the SR and the RBD must hear the words of D&C being spoken - normally, but not necessarily, led by the SR.

** The rules of disqualification are:

No person shall be qualified to any registration post if:

- 1. He is a bankrupt.*
- 2. He has been dismissed by the RG and the RG does not consent to his appointment.*
- 3. He has been, 12 months preceding the appointment, a member of the council or of a committee of the council having duties in relation to the appointment of registration officers.*
- 4. He holds office as an authorised person, secretary of a synagogue or registering officer of the Society of Friends.*
- 5. He is a minister of religion, medical practitioner, midwife, undertaker or other person concerned in a burial or cremation business, a person engaged in any business concerned with life insurance, or a person engaged in any other calling which would conflict with or prevent the proper performance in person of the duties of the office for which he is a candidate.*
- 6. He has been appointed by the council to carry out proper officer duties.*

It would be preferable if the above points could be checked by the member of staff present before getting approval for any deputy appointment. If the volunteer from the wedding party turns out to be disqualified, hopefully another volunteer will be found. In terms of privacy, and because the officer present may have their hands full coping with the absent officer, a copy of the above list should be kept in the "Grab Bag". Otherwise, the member of Marriages staff could help to go through the list with them.

18.0 GENERAL REGISTER OFFICE CONTACT NUMBERS

Registration Officers can contact the General Register Office by telephone (between 9.00 am to 5.00 pm Monday to Friday on the following numbers:

| | |
|--------------------|---------------------------------|
| Marriages / | 0151 471 4803 |
| Civil Partnerships | if unavailable use 01704 563146 |

| | |
|----------------|---------------|
| Local Services | 0151 471 4817 |
|----------------|---------------|

Should it be necessary to telephone outside office hours, one of the officers nominated in the Registration Handbook (Marriages) Section M16.10 should be contacted.

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 29 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health and Community

SUBJECT: British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons (BRAMM)

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek the Board's support for the pursuance by the Council of Burial Authority registration with the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons, and for the requirement that only BRAMM accredited memorial masons may operate in the Council's cemeteries.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the Board agrees to the Bereavement Services Manager submitting an application for Halton to be a registered Burial Authority with the British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons; and**
- (2) the Board agrees to the re-wording of section 7.5 of the Cemetery Rules as detailed in paragraph 3.14 below, with the proviso that the amended wording comes into effect on 1 October 2007.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The national problem of unsafe headstones in the country's cemeteries led to the setting-up of the British Register of Memorial Masons (BRAMM) in 2004.
- 3.2 The primary aims of the BRAMM registration scheme are:
- To establish a recognised, uniform standard of workmanship and business practice throughout the UK.
 - To promote BRAMM accredited businesses and registered fixers.
 - To ensure all businesses, fixers and burial authorities on the BRAMM register follow current health & safety guidelines to protect both the public and their employees.
 - To ensure that BRAMM businesses give a guarantee of the stability of their memorial.

- To ensure the scheme will be effectively policed ensuring that acceptable standards of fixing are maintained.
- To encourage ongoing training and education within the memorial masonry industry.
- To promote a closer working relationship between memorial masons and burial authorities.

3.3 Burial authority registration is presently free, but represents a clear demonstration that the authority takes its responsibility for the safety of memorials as seriously as the masons who register on the scheme. In particular, registration requires the authority to meet the following obligations:

- **Commitment to training** – burial authorities should train their own staff to ensure they have a basic understanding of the NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) code of working practice or similar installation specification. They should also ensure they are fully aware of burial and grave digging procedures, particularly where this could affect the stability of the memorial.
- **Compliance with NAMM standards** – burial authorities should ensure that any work that relates to memorial safety, e.g. provision of concrete beams, repair of memorials, removal and replacement of memorials etc. should comply to NAMM standards or equivalent.
- **Compliance with the ICCM Code of Safe Working Practice** – all burial and grave digging procedures should be carried out in accordance with ICCM guidance or equivalent, particularly in relation to the re-instatement of graves.
- **Monitoring of memorial masons** – a degree of monitoring will be required by the burial authority, which is still directly responsible for maintaining safe sites. Staff should be aware of the NAMM code or equivalent and should monitor the installation of memorials on a random basis. Risk assessments and safe systems of work will be sent to the burial authority by BRAMM but the authorities will be responsible for approving them or otherwise. The dismantling of memorials as a form of control, is discouraged and should only be carried out in exceptional circumstances. The disciplinary process will be available to burial authorities where masons fail to comply with burial ground standards.
- **Responsibility for local disciplinary procedures** – registered and licensed masons will be expected to work to local management rules and regulations as well as the rules of BRAMM. Where any of these are breached, the burial authority will be expected to deal with the disciplinary process as they have direct responsibility for their own burial grounds. Any action taken should be reported to BRAMM head office.
- **Commitment to providing undisturbed ground or concrete beams for all new memorials, where this is possible** – where it is feasible, the burial authority should provide sufficient room

within the grave space to ensure memorials can be erected on undisturbed ground (never to be disturbed by burial) or provide a concrete beam (to NAMM standards). It is understood that this will not be possible on some old sections and where new rows have been started in new sections.

- 3.4 Halton Borough Council is presently in a position to satisfy the above obligations.
- 3.9 So far as the industry is concerned, the BRAMM register will effectively regulate both accredited businesses and licensed fixers. Accredited businesses are required to re-register on an annual basis and will only be able so to do, if they are able to demonstrate that they continue to meet the business accreditation requirements. Unless they have obtained a higher level qualification, with evidence of continuous professional development, licensed Fixers will be required to re-register after a period of three years upon a retest, or on the production of documentary evidence of relevant ongoing training.
- 3.10 Moreover, the rules of the scheme applicable to the industry require that:
- **Eligibility** – any business or fixer who has been barred from performing work in any cemetery within the previous two years may be ineligible to be accredited within the BRAMM scheme. In these circumstances, each case will be considered individually. Businesses or Fixers must submit details of such disciplinary actions with their application. Failure to disclose details of disciplinary actions, which subsequently come to the attention of the BRAMM Board, may result in disciplinary action.
 - **Insurance** – every business must be covered for public liability insurance to the value of £5 million for any one incident. Similarly, employers liability insurance cover to the value of £10 million must be obtained.
 - **Health & Safety policy** – every business must be compliant with current health and safety legislation. Proof of compliance is required in the BRAMM business accreditation requirements documentation.
 - **Risk Assessment** – every business must be compliant with current risk assessment legislation for its practical work within its workshop, cemeteries and churchyards. Proof of compliance is required in the BRAMM business accreditation requirements documentation.
 - **Written guarantee** – every business must provide its customers with a written company guarantee which, at the very least, provides a stability and safety guarantee for a minimum of 10 years. (It is strongly advised that this is tied into a 5-year maintenance check.)
 - **BS8415** - every business is expected to have a copy of the British Standard “Monuments within burial grounds and memorial sites – Specification BS8415: 2005” on its premises, and understand clearly what it means.

- **NAMM code of working practice** - every business must have at least one copy of the current NAMM code of working practice on its premises and conform to it. It is also recommended that a copy of the current code of working practice be carried in any vehicles used for fixing. Masons must also ensure that they have evidence that all materials purchased in from wholesalers meet the standards defined within NAMM's code of working practice.
- **Spot check visits** - every business may receive a random visit from a BRAMM representative to ensure on-going compliance with the BRAMM rules and regulations. 48 hours notice will be given of an intended visit and the relevant documentation must be made available to the representative for inspection. The representative may also wish to inspect the workshop to ensure that working practices, supplies, materials used, etc. are in line with current NAMM code of working practice.
- **Burial authority** - every business must provide details of any burial authority cemeteries where it normally works. BRAMM will apply for any references it considers relevant.
- **Disciplinary procedures** – every business or individual listed on the BRAMM register is deemed to have agreed to fully comply with the disciplinary procedures and abide by its decision in all matters.

3.11 One benefit of permitting only BRAMM accredited memorial masons to carry out memorial works within the cemeteries is that the Council will no longer need to maintain its own local Register of Memorial Masons. Whilst this will result in a small loss of income (see paragraph 5.1 below) it will free-up resource to police memorial masons operating under the new scheme.

3.12 Nationally over 40 burial authorities have applied for burial authority registration under the scheme and this figure is rising over time. As a consequence, the majority of memorial masons are now BRAMM registered or are pursuing registration.

3.13 Members will be well aware of the financial and resource costs that have had to be met by this Council over recent years as a result of unsafe headstones in the Council's cemeteries. The issue has also resulted in distress and financial cost to bereaved families. The BRAMM scheme is a well-constructed industry response to these problems and it goes a considerable way towards providing quality assurance in headstone fitting for the future. It is a positive scheme for the burial authority, it will provide for a recognised uniform standard of workmanship and business practice within the industry, and it would appear to be a very good consumer protection measure.

3.14 If members are in support of the requirement that only BRAMM accredited memorial masons may operate in the Council's cemeteries, then Section 7.5 of the Cemetery Rules will require amending. It is suggested that this amendment is effective from 1 October 2007 to give

all Memorial Masons sufficient notice of the change. The present rule states “Memorial works must only be carried out by memorial masons who are registered with the Council to carry out such work”. The rule then continues by detailing the insurance cover that is a pre-requisite to registration. The amended rule could simply state “Only BRAMM (British Register of Accredited Memorial Masons) accredited memorial masons may carry out memorial works within the Council’s cemeteries”.

- 3.15 This matter was considered by the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board on 20 March 2006, when it was agreed that the Executive Board be requested to support the recommendations detailed in Section 2.0 above.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 This main effect of pursuing the recommendations would be the change to the Cemetery Rules outlined in paragraph 3.14 above, which would mean that from the appointed date, only BRAMM accredited memorial masons would be able to carry out memorial works in the Council’s cemeteries.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As indicated in paragraph 3.11 above, the fact that the Council will no longer need to maintain its own local Register of Memorial Masons will mean that it will no longer collect local registration fees. In a full year these fees amount to £470. However, Bereavement Services collect approximately £580k and this loss of £470 will be offset by the general increases in fees and charges that are likely to be applied, for the 2007 / 2008 financial year.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no additional resource implications flowing from this report as Bereavement Services can meet the obligations placed on a registered burial authority from within existing resources.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Given that the memorial industry has taken the BRAMM scheme on board, there is no perceived risk flowing from this report. On the contrary its effect should be to minimise the future risk of a repetition or prolonging of the unsafe headstone problem.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 There are no equality or diversity issues flowing from this report.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| BRAMM Application Pack | Rutland House Halton Lea Runcorn WA7 2GW | John Downes |

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 29th March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Health & Community

SUBJECT: Review of Fees & Charges – Health & Community Directorate 2007 -2008

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 In accordance with the annual budget review, to seek the Boards approval of the proposed increases in fees and charges for Health & Community care services and Consumer Protection services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION

- (1) **that the results of the survey about charging for social care services be noted;**
- (2) **Changes to charges for care services outlined in section 3.5 to 3.13 of this report be approved; and**
- (3) **that the proposed changes in fees and charges outlined in Appendix 2 and 3 be approved.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 A consultation exercise on proposals for changes to charges for social care services was undertaken in February 2007. All service users/carers were sent a copy of a survey form to complete and return and 8 open forums were held in locations across the Borough so that people could come and talk to officers about the proposals and make their views known.
- 3.2 Appendix 1 attached to this report summarises comments made by service users and their carers and copies of the detailed individual comments are available upon request.
- 3.3 The results of the survey have been considered on charging for social care services and recommendations for changes to charges for social care services are detailed in Appendix 2 for Health and Social Care and Appendix 3 for Consumer Protection.

- 3.4 Fees and charges for services have been increased by the amounts show in Appendix 2 and 3 to meet proposed income targets for 2007/08.
- 3.5 Increase the cost of domiciliary care services to those who pay the full cost of care services delivered at home by 6%. This still results in full cost payers being subsidised as fees paid to providers by the Council still exceed the rates charged.
- 3.6 Increase the automatic amount taken from Disability Living Allowance/Attendance Allowance (DLA/AA) from £9.19 to £10.00 a week i.e. an increase of (9%). Service users are still able to detail all of the additional spending they have as a result of their disability/illness/age under the Fairer Charging Policy and consequently the amount taken from DLA/AA may be reduced as a result of this.
- 3.7 Charge those who receive High Rate DLA/AA the amount of Benefit they receive to pay for night care services in proportion to the amount of night care service that the Council pay to provide them with. A night care service is defined as a service either under a sleep in session or waking night service between the hours of 10pm to 8am.
- 3.8 Introduce a charge for transport to those aged under 55 of fifty pence a trip with a maximum charge of £2 per day/£8 per week.
- 3.9 Increase the charge for the delivery of a community meal from £2.37 a meal to £2.55 (7.5%) to cover the unit cost of delivering meals to people's homes.
- 3.10 Increase charges for services to other Local Authorities (LA's) where these LA's use Halton Borough Council's facilities to provide service to their service users. Increase charges for Learning Disability services provided to other LA's from £34.64 to £56.00 a day (61.66%) and for Physical and Sensory Disabilities services from £27.80 to £78.00 per day (281%).
- 3.11 Charge for securing property at £75.00 a day and for continuous monitoring of property at £20.00 an hour when the property owner is unable to do so.
- 3.12 Introduce additional charges for Appointee and Receivership services including storage of wills etc £15.00/annum, charges for property searches, meter readings etc £20.00 an hour and the actual cost of Duchy of Lancaster referrals where people have died intestate.
- 3.13 For the most part, the Bereavement, Consumer Protection and Registration Service charges have increased, some above inflation. There are some exceptions as the schedules include a number of statutory fees over which the Council has no control, and there are a small number of fees for bought-in products which are sold on to the public at cost plus a reasonable administration charge. Additionally, one or two adjustments have been made (above or below inflation) to rectify some perceived imbalances in the schedules.

3.14 Appendices 2 and 3 attached to this report detail the current and proposed fees and charges :

- Appendix 2 - Health & Community Care Services
- Appendix 3 - Consumer Protection

3.15 Fees and charges for Health and Community Care will be increased with effect from 2nd April 2007 to coincide with the date of the annual increase in Benefits rates. Fees and charges for Consumer Protection Services will be increased with effect from 1st April 2007.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Travel Policy, Procedure and Practice April 2007 has been amended to reflect the changes to charges for transport and the Health PPB have supported the revised policies.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Provision exists to meet any increased expenditure to providers within the Council's approved budget.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 As anticipated service users and carers expressed some dissatisfaction at the proposal to introduce a transport charge, compounded by their view that the quality of transport provision was poor. There is a risk that some service users will not pay if their views are not taken into consideration.

6.2 Charges would be administered through existing processes used for administering social care charges. In instances where service users do not pay and accrue a debt, existing debt recovery processes would be administered as per the recovery of social care charges. However, every effort will be made to encourage service users to travel independently, to apply for benefits and concessions to which they are entitled and to utilise direct payments.

6.3 During the consultation process Halton Carers Forum wrote to the Council expressing some concerns over the consultation process and charging proposals. The Council will need to ensure that they have ongoing dialogue with the Forum to monitor any future impact on care and services.

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

7.1 None.



Health and Community
Directorate

**Health & Community
Directorate**

**Summary results of the
consultation on
charges for community
care services
MARCH 13th 2007**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Charges for community care services were introduced in 1993. Halton Borough Council inherited its current Charging Policy from Cheshire County Council when it became a unitary authority in April 1998.

1.2 Charges for residential and respite care services are governed by the statutory 'Charging for Residential Guidelines'.

1.3 In 2003 the Department Of Health produced guidelines for the implementation of Fairer Charging Policies for community services by local authorities. Halton devised a Fairer Charging Policy in conjunction with service users, Members and local voluntary organisations. This policy ensures that no service user is left with less than Income Support + 25% after they have paid for items related to their disability/illness/age and their rent/mortgage and Council Tax. The Council has no plans to change this policy and service users will continue to be visited in their own homes and encouraged to provide details about the extra spending they have before a charge for care services is assessed.

1.4 From April 2006 to December 2006, 284 service users were visited so that a Fairer Charging assessment for care services could be undertaken. A total of £112,750 of benefits were generated for service users as a result of these visits. 4 service users were supported to appeal against a benefits decision made by the Department of Work and Pensions (DWP).

1.5 Central Government allows Local Authorities to determine whether they charge for community care services or not. However Central Government when determining funding allocations for local authorities assume that Councils will meet shortfalls by raising income.

1.6 Charges for community care services have been raised by the rate of inflation since April 1998. The only exception to this being in 2006/07 when charges to full cost payers were raised by 10%.

1.7 The current full cost charges for community care services are:

- 1 hour home care = £10.14
- Day care = £13.28
- No charge for transport
- There is currently no charge for night care services when service users are in receipt of night care benefit.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 A survey form to capture people's ideas and opinions on charging options for care services was designed. The survey form was posted out during early February 2007 to:

- 177 Direct Payment service users.
- 991 service users who received a service at the beginning of February 2007.

2.2 Eight open forums were held across Runcorn and Widnes so that service users and or their carers could come and talk to Halton Borough Council (HBC) officers about charging proposals. The HBC officers who attended were:

- Councillor Ann Gerrard, Executive Board Member, Health & Social Care
- Peter Barron, Operational Director, Older People Services
- Sandra Harris, Divisional Manager, Business Support
- Anne Jones, Principal Finance Manager
- Welfare Rights Service Officers
- Neighbourhood Travel Team Officers

2.3 Separate meetings were also held between officers and representatives of:

- Age Concern
- Halton Carers Forum
- Deafness Support Network
- Mental Health Forum

2.4 The deadline for the return of survey responses was 28th February 2007. A summary of the responses made is provided in Section 3 of this report.

3.0 Summary of Results

3.1 Service Level Provision

Overall 75.68% of respondents thought the same level of social care service should continue to be provided whilst 13.51% would have preferred an increase in the level of care service provided. Therefore cutting services is seen as the least preferred option.

3.2 Charges for home care services to full cost service users

The majority of respondents 52.70% had no opinion either way whilst 35.14% thought people should pay less. However there was no overall indication of what the full cost charge for care service should be as the majority of responses 73.66% were left blank. The next most favourable response 19.60% was that people should be asked to pay less than the current rate of £10.14 per hour.

3.3 Charges for day care services to full cost service users

The majority of respondents 52.70% had no opinion either way whilst 35.14% thought people should pay less. However there was no overall indication of what the full cost charge for care service should be as the majority of responses 75.68% were left blank. The next most favourable response 18.27% was that people should be asked to pay less than the current rate of £13.28 per session.

3.4 Amount taken from Disability Living Allowance and Attendance Allowance (DLA/AA)

The majority of respondents 64.19% thought people should be asked to pay less than the current £9.19 a week or the same from their DLA/AA for the care services. Respondents who thought people should pay less from their DLA/AA were asked to indicate what they thought a fair charge from DLA/AA would be and 50% stated it should be less than £9.19 a week.

3.5 Comments about how the Council should raise money to fund the cost of services where people thought service users should pay less or the same for DLA/AA

The range of comments provided indicate that respondents feel strongly that the Council should manage budgets across Directorates more carefully and that expenses and benefits for both staff and Members should be stringently managed. Opinions were also expressed that Central Government should provide additional funds to the Council. Comments clearly indicate that the Council should scope increased efficiencies across all Directorates.

3.6 Paying for Night Care Services

66.89% of respondents indicated that they thought those in receipt of benefits to pay for night care services i.e. higher rate DLA/AA should be asked to use this to pay for night care services which were provided and paid for wholly or partially by the Council. 80.81% of those who responded yes to this question indicated that only a proportion of the night care element should be paid in proportion to the night care service provided.

3.7 Charging for Transport Services

Transport services were a cause of major concern to service users and carers and overall the service users impression of the transport service provided is poor. People clearly thought that if transport was charged for that services would have to improve. This is noted in Section 5 and action will be taken to quality assure test the transport service provided so that improvements can be made.

33.78% of respondents thought people should pay for their transport services and 31.75% had no opinion either way or did not respond. 34.46% were opposed to introducing charges for transport for a number of reasons including: -

- Day services modernisation meant that costs for care had increased anyway.
- The need for the Council to manage its budget more effectively and stringently manage expenses and benefits paid to staff and Members.
- The need to manage providers more effectively so that value for money is obtained and to secure additional funding from Central Government.
- Free public transport is available to bus pass holders.

74.00% of those who thought that charges should be made for transport services indicated that they thought it was reasonable to ask people to pay £1.00 a trip up to a maximum of £4.00 a day.

3.8 Overall comments about how the Council could raise money to pay for services

Comments from respondents ranged from securing additional funding from Central Government to managing the budget more effectively across all Directorates. Clearly there is an expectation that the Council should review charges for services across all Directorates as a whole and ensure that income raised is used to fund social care services more effectively.

APPENDIX 2

SOCIAL CARE FEES & CHARGES

SECTION 1 – CHARGES FOR CARE

| | CURRENT £ | PROPOSED £ |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------|-----------------------------------------|
| Maximum Weekly Charge for Residential Carer | | |
| Residential care for Older people in council homes (per week) | 318.37 | 327.92 (<i>pending review</i>) |
| Dementia Residential Care for Older People in Council Homes | 418.65 | 431.21 (<i>pending review</i>) |
| Adults with Learning Disability receiving respite services | 463.65 | 477.56 (<i>pending review</i>) |
| Adults in Family Placements – Weekly | 350.00 | 350.00 |
| Family Placement Breakfast | 1.58 | 1.63 |
| Family Placement Lunch | 1.97 | 2.03 |
| Family Placement Tea | 1.82 | 1.88 |
| Meals – Delivered to people in their own homes | 2.37 | 2.55 |
| Meals – Community Day Care Meals | 2.76 | 2.84 |
| Meals – Visitors and Guests | | |
| Accommodation (per night) | 9.56 | 9.85 |
| Breakfast | 2.42 | 2.49 |
| Light Meal | 3.10 | 3.19 |
| Main Meal | 4.22 | 4.35 |
| Meals – Day Centre users | | |
| Light Breakfast | 1.07 | 1.10 |
| Cooked Breakfast | 1.64 | 1.69 |
| Light Meal | 1.51 | 1.56 |
| Cooked Meal | 2.03 | 2.09 |
| Maximum Charges for Community Care | | |
| Domiciliary Care (per hour) | 10.14 | 10.75 |
| Day Care (per session) | 13.28 | 14.08 |
| Family Placement (per session) | 13.28 | 14.08 |
| Charges for Transport | | |
| Those aged under 55 to pay 50 pence a trip to a maximum of £2.00 a day where transport is assessed as being needed. | New Charge | 50 pence a trip to maximum of £2.00/day |

SECTION 2 - COMMUNITY WARDENS/LIFELINE CHARGES FOR SERVICE

| Service level | Response | Current £ | Proposed £ |
|----------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|-------------------|
| 1 75% of clients | Call centre monitoring plus community warden reactive response. Assessment and support plan, review within the first 6 weeks and then 6 monthly, unless further review is indicated. | 5.00 Council Tenant 5.00 Private Tenant | 5.13 5.13 |
| 2 20% of clients | Call centre monitoring plus reactive call out. Community warden visits, up to two weekly, according to assessed need and support planning. | 6.00 | 6.15 |
| 3 5% of clients | Call centre monitoring plus reactive call out. Community warden daily visits according to assessed need and support planning. Assistive technology is provided according to assessed need. | 8.00 | 8.20 |
| 4 | Intermediate care, short-term assessment and monitoring, including assistive technology. | Non Chargeable | Non Chargeable |
| Medication Service | Medication support service | 10.00 per hour | 10.00 per hour |

People's ability to pay charges for Residential Care are assessed under Government Guidelines (CRAG). Charges for Community Care are assessed under the Councils Fairer Charging and service users are given the opportunity to detail the extra spending they have as a result of their special needs before their charge for care is calculated.

SECTION 3 – FEES PAID TO CARE PROVIDERS AND SERVICE USERS

| Payments for Adult Family Placements | Current £ | Proposed £ |
|------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------|-------------------|
| Family Placement (per week) | 350.00 | 350.00 |
| Family Placement (per 6 hour session) 1 person | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| Family Placement (per 3 hour session) 1 person | 15.00 | 15.00 |
| Family Placement (per 6 hour session) 2 persons | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| Family Placement (per 3 hour session) 2 persons | 25.00 | 25.00 |
| Family Placement (per 6 hour session) 3 persons | 60.00 | 60.00 |
| Family Placement (per 3 hour session) 3 persons | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| Family Placement (night care per night) | 50.00 | 50.00 |
| Charges to other Local Authorities | | |
| Older People in Residential Council Homes (per week) | 365.40 | 376.36 |
| Older People in Residential Dementia placements in Council homes | 524.89 | 540.64 |
| Older People in Intermediate Care Placements in Council Homes | 495.43 | 510.29 |
| Adults in Supported Accommodation (per week) | 463.65 | 477.56 |
| Day Care – Older People (per session/day) | 23.42 | 37.71 |
| Day Care – Adults with Learning Disability per day | 34.64 | 56.00 |
| Day Care – Adults with Physical/Sensory Disability per day | 27.80 | 78.00 |

APPENDIX 3

SECTION 1 - CEMETERIES CHARGES

| | | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| RESIDENTS of HALTON | | £ | £ |
| 1. | Purchase of exclusive right of burial of single full size grave | | |
| | (a) for maximum of 3 interments | 535.00 | 565.00 |
| | (b) for maximum of 2 interments | 480.00 | 505.00 |
| <u>Interment's - (Including Those in Public Graves) – 16 Years and above.</u> | | | |
| 2. | Within the times 1 pm to 3 pm Mondays, 10 am to 3 pm Tuesdays to Thursdays and 10 am to 2 pm Fridays | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | 565.00 | 600.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | 460.00 | 485.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | 405.00 | 430.00 |
| 3. | Mondays to Fridays, outside the times in 2 above (by agreement only) | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | 655.00 | 690.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | 550.00 | 580.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | 495.00 | 525.00 |
| 4. | Saturday, between 10 am and 12 noon (by agreement only) | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | 725.00 | 765.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | 620.00 | 655.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | 565.00 | 595.00 |
| 5. | Saturday, between 12 noon and 3pm (by agreement only) | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | - | 885.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | - | 775.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | - | 715.00 |
| <u>Interment's – children (Including those in Public Graves) - from 12 months and under 16 years</u> | | | |
| 6. | Within the times 1 pm to 3 pm Mondays, 10 am to 3 pm Tuesdays to Thursdays and 10 am to 2 pm Fridays | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | 305.00 | 325.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | 245.00 | 260.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | 220.00 | 235.00 |
| 7. | Mondays to Fridays, outside the times in 2 above (by agreement only) | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | 345.00 | 370.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | 285.00 | 305.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | 260.00 | 280.00 |
| 8. | Saturday, between 10 am and 12 noon (by agreement only) | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | 385.00 | 405.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | 325.00 | 340.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | 300.00 | 315.00 |
| 9. | Saturday, between 12 noon and 3pm (by agreement only) | | |
| | (a) when excavating to depth of 7'6" | - | 465.00 |
| | (b) when excavating to depth of 6'0" | - | 400.00 |
| | (c) when excavating to depth of 4'6" | - | 375.00 |
| <u>Interments – stillborn or child not exceeding 12 months in a private grave</u> | | | |
| 10. | Stillborn or child not exceeding 12 Months in Private Grave | Nil | Nil |
| 11. | Purchase of Exclusive Right of Burial of single cremated remains grave | | |
| | Exclusive Right of Burial for a single cremated remains grave | 276.00 | 295.00 |
| <u>Interment of cremated remains</u> | | | |
| 12. | (a) When cremation has taken place at Widnes Crematorium (Monday to Friday) | 75.00 | 80.00 |
| | (b) When cremation has taken place at Widnes Crematorium (Saturday) | 105.00 | 112.00 |
| | (c) When cremation has taken place outside the Borough (Monday to Friday) | 150.00 | 160.00 |
| | (d) When cremation has taken place outside the Borough (Saturday) | 180.00 | 190.00 |

Note that Saturday interments are subject to staff availability and are therefore accepted by agreement only.

Continued ...

CEMETERIES CHARGES (continued)

PRESENT

PROPOSED

NON RESIDENTS of HALTON

13. Non residents charges for fees 1 to 12 above

- (a) Non-residents of the Borough will be charged double the above stated fees for items 1 – 12 above. These charges may be reduced on application in writing when it can be shown that the person to be buried:
 - (i) is using a pre-purchased family grave which has been Previously used; and
 - (ii) has lived within the Borough of Halton, paying all due rates/Council charges for a period of not less than 90% of their life span; and
 - (iii) has been forced through ill-health to leave the Borough during the final phase of their life (medical evidence may be sought)
 - (g) In certain cases the non-resident's loading may be waived on application in writing to the relevant Operational Director. Proof may be requested.
- N.B. Persons choosing to leave the Borough for any other reason will not be able to apply for fees and charges applicable to Halton residents.

SECTION 2 - CREMATION CHARGES

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| 1. Person whose age at time of death exceeded 16 years | | |
| (a) Monday to Friday | 363.00 | 393.00 |
| (b) Saturday | 534.00 | 565.00 |
| 2. Child under 16 years whose age at time of death exceeded 12 months | | |
| (a) Monday to Friday | 175.00 | 185.00 |
| (b) Saturday | 261.00 | 275.00 |
| 3. Child whose age at time of death did not exceed 12 months | | |
| (a) Monday to Friday | 15.00 | 17.00 |
| (b) Saturday | 47.00 | 50.00 |
| 4. Cremation fee after anatomical examination | | |
| (a) Monday to Friday | 188.00 | 200.00 |
| (b) Saturday | 220.00 | 232.00 |

Notes:

(i) Cremation fees include Includes Medical Refs. fees, use of Chapel, plastic container, strewing of remains without an appointment and Cremation Certificate, if required.

(ii) Note that Saturday cremations are subject to staff availability and are therefore accepted by agreement only

SECTION 3 - MEMORIALS – CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| * 1. Book of Remembrance | | |
| – 2 line entry | 69.00 | 73.00 |
| – Each additional line, or part thereof over 2 lines | 19.00 | 20.00 |
| – Crests and Coats of Arms | 44.00 | 47.00 |
| * 2. Miniature Books of Remembrance | 56.00 | 59.00 |
| Inscriptions in Miniature Books of Remembrance – per line of part thereof | 8.00 | 8.50 |
| Memorial Cards | 8.00 | 8.50 |
| Photo Miniature | Price | on Price |
| Handling Charge | Application | Application |
| | 18.00 | 19.00 |
| * 3. Bronze Plaques | | |
| – Display for initial 10 year period | 165.00 | 175.00 |
| – Renewal for additional 10 year period | 72.00 | 76.00 |
| * 4. Granite plaque on planter (Four Seasons Garden) | | |
| -Display for initial 10 year period | 287.00 | 303.00 |
| -Design | 42.00 | 45.00 |
| -Renewal for additional 10 year period | 106.00 | 112.00 |
| * 5. Tablets on Wall of Remembrance – No new Tablets available | | |
| – Engraving of Tablets – per letter | At Cost | At Cost |
| – Handling Charge | 18.00 | 19.00 |
| * 6. Memorial Benches | | |
| (a) 5 ft standard hardwood bench supplied and fitted on base, with engraved plaque attached (initial 10 year lease) | from 577.00 | From 609 |
| (b) Additional plaque | 36.00 | 38.00 |
| (c) Extension of hardwood bench lease for a further 10 years (includes replacement bench on existing base) | from 454.00 | From 480 |
| (d) Granite memorial bench for the four seasons garden of remembrance (initial 10 year lease) | 1010.00 | 1065 |
| (e) Extension of granite bench lease for a further 10 years | 412.00 | 435 |
| 7. The right to erect or place on a grave or vault in respect of which the exclusive right of burial has been granted | | |
| (a) A memorial with or without vases and/or flower containers included in memorial | 124.00 | 131.00 |
| (b) Vase/Books/Tablets (each) – not in headstone memorial not exceeding 12" x 12" x 12" | 33.00 | 35.00 |
| (c) Vase/Books. Tablets (each) – not in headstone memorial exceeding 12" x 12" x 12" but not exceeding 18" width x 12" x 12" | 47.00 | 50.00 |
| 8. The right to add each further inscription to headstone after initial inscription | 25.00 | 26.50 |
| Per inscription | 25.00 | 26.50 |
| 9. Inscriptions on Memorial Stone donated by Rev. Phillip Mears (Hospital Chaplain) | | |
| Per inscription | 40.00 | 42.50 |
| 10. Registration of Memorial Masons | | |
| Annual registration fee | 36.00 | 38.00 |
| (Reduced for one off jobs) | 16.00 | 17.00 |
| Note that a local register of memorial masons will not be maintained (and hence these fees will no longer apply) once the Council allows only BRAMM accredited memorial masons to operate in the Council's cemeteries | | |

Continued ...

Items marked with an asterisk are subject to VAT at the standard rate.

MEMORIALS - CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM (continued)

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| * 11. Memorial Tree with (a) bronze plaque or (b) Laminated Plastic plaque displayed for an initial 10 year period | | |
| (a) New Tree - Bronze Plaque | 356.00 | 376.00 |
| - Laminated Plastic Plaque | 229.00 | 242.00 |
| (b) Selected Existing Tree - Bronze Plaque | 256.00 | 270.00 |
| - Laminated Plastic Plaque | 128.00 | 135.00 |
| (c) Renewal for additional 10 year period | 108.00 | 114.00 |
| * 12. Memorial Rose with laminated plaque displayed for an initial 5 year period | | |
| (a) Selected existing or new bush rose depending on availability | 172.00 | 182.00 |
| (b) Renewal for additional 5 year period | 108.00 | 114.00 |

Items marked with an asterisk are subject to VAT at the standard rate.

SECTION 4 - MISCELLANEOUS SERVICES AND CHARGES – CEMETERIES AND CREMATORIUM

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------|------------------------------|
| | £ | £ |
| 1. Use of Crematorium Chapel for full Burial Service Per half hour or part thereof | 59.00 | 63.00 |
| 2. Exclusive rights of burial | | |
| (i) Indemnity Fee (if exclusive right of burial cannot be produced) | 39.00 | 42.00 |
| (ii) Registered Assignment of Exclusive Right of Burial (Transfer of Ownership) | 39.00 | 42.00 |
| 3. Caskets and Urns | | |
| – Plastic | Included in Cremation Fee | Included in Cremation Fee |
| – Aluminium(Including brass effect plate) | 26.00 | 28.00 |
| – Wood (Including brass effect plate) | 42.00 | 45.00 |
| – Small Caskets | 17.00 | 18.00 |
| – Token Boxes | 15.00 | 16.00 |
| 4. Register of Cremations Certified extracts | 25.00 | 27.00 |
| 5. Storage of Cremated Remains | | |
| (a) First calendar month | No Charge | No Charge |
| (b) Thereafter per calendar month or part thereof to maximum of 3 additional months, after which they will be scattered in Garden of Remembrance | 39.00 | 42.00 |
| 6. Postage of Cremated Remains Per casket | At cost | At cost |
| 7. Scattering of Ashes | | |
| (a) Scattering of Ashes in Garden of Remembrance when cremation has taken place other than at the Widnes Crematorium | 76.00 | 80.00 |
| (b) Additional charge for attending scattering of Ashes, Monday to Friday (by appointment only) | 27.00 | 29.00 |
| (c) Additional charge for attending scattering of Ashes, Saturday (by appointment only) | 57.00 | 60.00 |
| 8. Hourly rate For any matters not covered in this schedule of fees and charges, the Bereavement Services Manager may levy a charge based on an hourly rate per officer for miscellaneous services provided. | - | 30.00 |

SANCTUM 2000 VAULTS

| | <u>PRESENT</u> £ | <u>PROPOSED</u> £ |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------|----------------------|
| <u>RESIDENTS of HALTON</u> | | |
| 1. Initial purchase | | |
| (a) including first placing of ashes from Monday to Friday, when cremation took place at Widnes Crematorium | 649.00 | 685.00 |
| (b) including first placing of ashes on a Saturday, when cremation took place at Widnes Crematorium | 679.00 | 716.00 |
| (c) including first placing of ashes from Monday to Friday, when cremation took place elsewhere | 812.00 | 856.00 |
| (d) including first placing of ashes on a Saturday, when cremation took place elsewhere | 842.00 | 888.00 |
| 2. <u>Placing second casket of cremated remains in Vault</u> | | |
| (a) Monday to Friday, when cremation has taken place at Widnes Crematorium | 27.00 | 29.00 |
| (b) Saturday, when cremation has taken place at Widnes Crematorium | 57.00 | 60.00 |
| (c) Monday to Friday, when cremation has taken place elsewhere | 33.00 | 35.00 |
| (d) Saturday, when cremation has taken place elsewhere | 63.00 | 67.00 |
| <u>NON RESIDENTS of HALTON</u> | | |
| 3. Initial purchase | | |
| (a) including first placing of ashes from Monday to Friday, when cremation took place at Widnes Crematorium | 649.00 | 685.00 |
| (b) including first placing of ashes on a Saturday, when cremation took place at Widnes Crematorium | 679.00 | 716.00 |
| (c) including first placing of ashes from Monday to Friday, when cremation took place elsewhere | 974.00 | 1030.00 |
| (d) including first placing of ashes on a Saturday, when cremation took place elsewhere | 1004.00 | 1060.00 |
| 4. <u>Placing second casket of cremated remains in Vault</u> | | |
| (a) Monday to Friday, when cremation has taken place at Widnes Crematorium | 27.00 | 29.00 |
| (b) Saturday, when cremation has taken place at Widnes Crematorium | 57.00 | 60.00 |
| (c) Monday to Friday, when cremation has taken place elsewhere | 40.00 | 43.00 |
| (d) Saturday, when cremation has taken place elsewhere | 70.00 | 75.00 |
| DESIGNS and LETTERING | | |
| * 5. <u>Designs and lettering</u> | | |
| Lettering, per letter | 2.50 | 2.60 |
| Small Design | 45.00 | 50.00 |
| Large design | 70.00 | 70.00 |
| Photo tile – portrait (i.e. featuring one person) | 103.00 | 105.00 |
| Photo tile – landscape (i.e. featuring two people) | 134.00 | 135.00 |

Items marked with an asterisk are subject to VAT at the standard rate.

SECTION 5 - THE REGISTRATION OF BIRTHS, DEATHS AND MARRIAGES FEES (ORDER) 1999

(FEES 1 to 4 MAY BE SUBJECT TO STATUTORY CHANGE)

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| 1. GENERAL SEARCH | | |
| Superintendent Registrar | £ | £ |
| – For general search in indexes in his office not exceeding 6 successive hours | 18.00 | 18.00 |
| 2. CERTIFICATES | | |
| Superintendent Registrar | | |
| – Standard Certificate of Birth, Death or Marriage | 7.00 | 7.00 |
| – Photographic copy of an Entry of Birth, Death or Marriage | 7.00 | 7.00 |
| – Certificate of Birth, Death or Marriage for certain statutory purposes | 7.00 | 7.00 |
| – Short Certificate of Birth | 5.50 | 5.50 |
| Registrar | | |
| – Standard Certificate of Birth, Death or Marriage | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| – Photographic copy of an Entry of Birth, Death or Marriage | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| – Certificate of Birth, Death or Marriage for certain statutory purposes | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| – Short Certificate of Birth (other than the first issued at the time of registration of birth) | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| – Certificate of Death issued to certain professional bodies | 3.50 | 3.50 |
| 3. MARRIAGES / CIVIL PARTNERSHIPS | | |
| Superintendent Registrar | | |
| – For attending at the residence of house-bound or detained person to attest Notice of Marriage / Civil Partnership | 47.00 | 47.00 |
| – For entering a Notice in Marriage Notice Book / Civil Partnership Register | 30.00 | 30.00 |
| – For attending a marriage / signing the civil partnership schedule at the residence of a house-bound or detained person | 47.00 | 47.00 |
| – For signing the civil partnership register of the schedule in the Register Office | 40.00 | 40.00 |
| Registrar | | |
| – For attending a marriage solemnised in the Register Office | 40.00 | 40.00 |
| – For attending a marriage in a registered building | 47.00 | 47.00 |
| – For attending a marriage at the residence of a house-bound or detained person | 47.00 | 47.00 |
| 4. CERTIFICATION FOR WORSHIP AND REGISTRATION FOR MARRIAGE | | |
| Superintendent Registrar | | |
| – Certificate of a place of meeting for religious worship | 28.00 | 28.00 |
| – Registration of a building for the solemnisation of marriages | 120.00 | 120.00 |
| In addition to the above fees which are statutory, there are three further charges which apply in respect of premises approved under the Marriage Act 1994 and Civil Partnership Act 2004 as venues for conducting civil marriages and civil partnerships | | |
| – Registration of a building under the 1994 and 2004 Acts | 630.00 | 650.00 |
| – Attendance by Senior Registrar/Registrar at the Boston Suite, Runcorn Town Hall (a venue approved under the 1994 / 2004 Acts) | | |
| – Monday to Thursday | 40.00 * | 40.00 * |
| – Friday, commencing prior to 12 noon | 40.00 * | 40.00 * |
| – Friday, commencing at or after 12 noon | 75.00 | 77.00 |
| – Saturday, commencing prior to 12 noon | 40.00 * | 40.00 * |
| – Saturday, commencing at or after 12 noon | 100.00 | 103.00 |
| – Attendance by Senior Registrar/Registrar at all other buildings in Halton, approved under the 1994 /2004 Acts | | |
| – Monday to Friday | 212.00 | 218.00 |
| – Saturday | 260.00 | 267.00 |
| – Sunday | 310.00 | 318.00 |
| – Bank Holidays | 415.00 | 425.00 |

* Note, these fees must remain equivalent to the equivalent statutory "Register Office" fee

5. REAFFIRMATION of MARRIAGE VOWS CEREMONIES and NAMING CEREMONIES

| | | |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| – Attendance by Superintendent Registrar/Senior Registrar | | |
| - Monday to Friday in the Boston Suite, Runcorn Town Hall | 110.00 | 113.00 |
| - Saturday in the Boston Suite, Runcorn Town Hall | 140.00 | 144.00 |
| - Other approved premises (Monday to Friday) | 130.00 | 133.00 |
| - Other approved premises (Saturday) | 155.00 | 159.00 |
| - Other approved premises (Sunday) | 180.00 | 185.00 |
| - Other approved premises (Bank Holiday) | 222.00 | 228.00 |
| - Each extra child when the naming ceremony covers more than one child | | 40.00 |
| - Commemorative certificate | | 3.50 |

6. INDIVIDUAL CITIZENSHIP CEREMONIES

| | | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------|--------|--------|
| – Attendance by Superintendent Registrar/Senior Registrar | | |
| - Monday to Thursday in the Boston Suite, Runcorn Town Hall | 32.00 | 33.00 |
| - Monday to Friday in a hotel | 145.00 | 149.00 |
| - Saturday in a hotel | 195.50 | 199.00 |
| - Sunday in a hotel | 245.00 | 250.00 |
| - Bank Holiday in a hotel | 350.00 | 355.00 |

NOTE

The charges in Section 5 are subject to VAT. None of the other charges in the schedule above are subject to VAT.

SECTION 6 - CONSUMER PROTECTION FEES AND CHARGES**SCHEDULE 1****Fees to be paid in respect of Section 11(3) of the Weights and Measures Act 1985**

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| A | | |
| <u>MEASURES</u> | | |
| 1. Linear measures not exceeding 3m, for each scale | 14.75 | 15.10 |
| 2. (i) Capacity measures without divisions not exceeding 1 litre If submitted in quantities of 1 gross or more – per dozen | 6.00 11.45 | 6.15 11.75 |
| (ii) Capacity measures with divisions | 11.45 | 11.75 |
| (iii) Capacity measures without divisions exceeding 1 litre | 11.45 | 11.75 |
| 3. Cubic ballast measures (other than brim measures) | 150.8 | 155.00 |
| 4. Liquid capacity measures for making up and checking average quantity packages | 23.80 | 24.40 |
| 5. Templets | | |
| (i) Per scale – first item | 41.70 | 42.75 |
| (ii) Second and subsequent items | 15.30 | 15.70 |
| B | | |
| <u>WEIGHTS</u> | | |
| 1. Weights between 1 mg and 25 kg inclusive (i.e. Crown Stamping) | 6.60 | 6.80 |
| C | | |
| <u>MEASURING INSTRUMENTS FOR INTOXICATING LIQUOR</u> | | |
| 1. Not exceeding 150 ml | 14.75 | 15.10 |
| 2. Exceeding 150 ml | 17.25 | 17.70 |
| 3. (i) Exceeding 150 ml where between 10 and 79 instruments are submitted at any one time at manufacturers premises | 6.85 | 7.00 |
| (ii) Exceeding 150 ml where 80 or more instruments are submitted at any one time at the manufacturers premises | 5.20 | 5.35 |
| D | | |
| <u>WEIGHING INSTRUMENTS</u> | | |
| 1. Calibrated to weigh only in metric or imperial | | |
| – Not exceeding 15 kg (not exceeding 34 lb.) | 26.20 | 26.85 |
| – Exceeding 15 kg to 100 kg (34 lb. - 224 lb.) | 36.05 | 37.00 |
| – Exceeding 100 kg to 250 kg (224 lb. - 560 lb.) | 53.00 | 54.35 |
| – Exceeding 250 kg to 1 tonne (560 lb. - 1 ton) | 89.05 | 91.30 |
| – Exceeding 1 tonne to 10 tonne (1 ton - 10 ton) | 142.60 | 146.20 |
| – Exceeding 10 tonne to 30 tonne (10 ton - 30 ton) | 304.05 | 312.00 |
| – Exceeding 30 tonne to 60 tonne (30 ton - 60 ton) | 463.3 | 475.00 |
| Additional costs involved in testing instruments calibrated to weigh in both metric and imperial units and/or checking remote display/printing facilities – 125% of appropriate fee | | |
| DISCOUNT when all weights/equipment provided by submitter – 25% | | |
| 2. Automatic or totalising weighing machines – per officer/hour | 62.00 | 64.00 |
| 3. Equipment designed to weigh loads in motion – per officer/hour | 62.00 | 64.00 |
| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |

| | £ | £ |
|----------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|
| E | <u>SPECIAL WEIGHING AND MEASURING EQUIPMENT</u> | |
| 1. | Equipment tested by means of statistical sampling – per officer/hour | 62.00 64.00 |
| 2. | The establishment of calibration curves for templets – per officer/hour | 62.00 64.00 |
| 3. | Templets graduated in millimetres – per officer/hour | 62.00 64.00 |
| F | <u>MEASURING INSTRUMENTS FOR LIQUID FUEL AND LUBRICANTS</u> | |
| 1. | Container type (unsubdivided) instruments) | 60.90 62.50 |
| 2. | Other types – Multigrade, single or multi outlet instrument (per visit) | |
| | (a) 1 meter tested | 90.20 92.45 |
| | (b) 2 meters tested | 174.60 179.00 |
| | (c) 3 meters tested | 238.75 244.75 |
| | (d) 4 meters tested | 292.90 292.00 |
| | (e) 5 to 10 meters tested – at the rate of £64.75 per meter tested | 63.15 64.75 |
| | (f) 11 to 20 meters tested – at the rate of £59.15 per meter tested | 57.70 59.15 |
| | (g) 21 or more meters tested – at the rate of £59.15 per meter tested for the first 20 meters then at the rate of £42.85 per meter tested for the 21st and subsequent meters tested | 57.70 59.15 41.80 42.85 |
| 3. | A charge to cover any additional costs involved in testing ancillary equipment which requires additional testing on site, such as credit card acceptors, could be based upon the basic fee given above plus additional costs at the rate of £64.00 per extra officer/hour | 62.00 64.00 |
| G | <u>ROAD TANKER LIQUID FUEL MEASURING EQUIPMENT (ABOVE 100L)</u> | |
| 1. | Meter Measuring Systems | |
| | (a) Wet hose type with two testing liquids | 163.35 167.45 |
| | (b) Wet hose type with one testing liquid | 137.95 141.40 |
| | (c) Dry hose type with two testing liquids | 184.10 188.70 |
| | (d) Dry hose type with one testing liquid | 154.90 158.80 |
| | (e) Wet plus Dry hose type with two liquids for each type | 275.90 282.80 |
| 2. | Dipstick Measuring Systems | |
| | (a) Up to 7600 litres (for calibration of each compartment and production of chart) | 141.25 144.80 |
| | Over 7600 litres – basic fee and additional costs at £64.00 per hour | 62.00 64.00 |
| | (b) Initial dipstick | 16.90 17.35 |
| | (c) Spare dipstick | 15.85 16.25 |
| | (d) Replacement dipstick (including examination of compartment) | 35.55 36.45 |
| 3. | Regulation 23 or 24 occurrence – £64.00 per officer/hour (relate to the Measuring Instruments (EEC Requirements) Regulations 1988) – (or Regs 65 or 66, SI 1983:1390) | 62.00 64.00 |
| 4. | Re-sealing of plates on tankers or re-sealing where previous seals broken in presence of Inspector – £64.00 per officer per hour | 62.00 64.00 |

NOTE

All Schedule 1 fees relate to work undertaken within the flexible working hour's bands. For work undertaken at other times, once the total fees have been calculated in the normal way an additional charge of 25% will be levied for amounts of up to and including £260.00 (255.15), or 20% for amounts exceeding £260.00.

SCHEDULE 2

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| A <u>EEC (OTHER THAN G ABOVE)</u> | | |
| 1. | | |
| 1. | | |
| 2. | 62.00 | 62.00 |
| B <u>SECTION 74 (4)(a) or (b)</u> | | |
| 1. | | |
| 2. | 62.00 | 64.00 |
| C <u>PRODUCTION OF CALIBRATION CERTIFICATES UPON REQUEST</u> | | |
| 1. | 41.80 +VAT | 42.85 +VAT |
| 2. | 41.80 +VAT | 42.85 +VAT |

NOTE

All Schedule 2 fees relate to work undertaken within the flexible working hour's bands. For work undertaken at other times, once the total fees have been calculated in the normal way an additional charge of 25% will be levied for amounts of up to and including £260.00 (255.15), or 20% for amounts exceeding £260.00.

SCHEDULE 3**POISONS ACT 1972**

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|----|----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| 1. | 50.85 | 52.15 |
| 2. | 22.65 | 23.25 |

SCHEDULE 4**PERFORMING ANIMALS (REGULATION) ACT 1925**

| | <u>PRESENT</u> | <u>PROPOSED</u> |
|----|----------------|-----------------|
| | £ | £ |
| 1. | 81.15 | 83.20 |
| 2. | 14.20 | 14.55 |

SCHEDULE 5**PETROLEUM (CONSOLIDATION) ACT 1928 ETC.****(THESE FEES MAY BE SUBJECT TO STATUTORY CHANGE)**

| Petroleum (Consolidation) Act 1928 c32 | | Present Fee Maximum Fee | or | Proposed Fee Maximum Fee |
|------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| Section 4 (See Notes 1 and 2) | Licence to keep petroleum spirit of a quantity | | | |
| | – not exceeding 2,500 litres (per licence) | 38.00 | | TBA |
| | – exceeding 2,500 litres but not exceeding 50,000 litres (per licence) | 53.00 | | TBA |
| | – exceeding 50,000 litres (per licence) | 108.00 | | TBA |
| Petroleum (Transfer of Licences) Act 1936 c27 | | | | |
| Section 1(4) | Transfer of petroleum spirit licence | £8 | | TBA |
| Non Statutory Fee | Environmental searches Re:Petroleum/former petroleum Installations £64.00 - per officer hour | £64.00 + VAT (Subject to a minimum fee of £64.00 + VAT) (was £62.00) | | |

SCHEDULE 6**MANUFACTURE AND STORAGE OF EXPLOSIVES REGULATIONS 2005****(THESE FEES MAY BE SUBJECT TO STATUTORY CHANGE)**

| Provision under which application made | Purpose of application | Present Fee Maximum Fee | or | Proposed Fee Maximum Fee |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| The Manufacture and Storage of Explosives Regulations 2005 | | | | |
| Regulation 10 (See Notes 1 to 3) | Licence to store explosives: one year's duration | 120.00 | | TBA |
| | Renewal of a licence: one year's duration | 77.00 | | TBA |
| Regulation 11 (See Notes 1 to 3) | Registration in relation to the storage of explosives one year's duration | 72.00 | | TBA |
| | Renewal of registration: one year's duration | 36.00 | | TBA |
| Regulation 16 | Varying a licence: a) varying name of licensee or address of site b) any other kind of variation | 31.00 | | TBA |
| | | The reasonable cost to the licensing authority of having the work carried out | | |
| Regulation 20 | Transfer of licence or registration | 31.00 | | TBA |
| | Replacement of licence or registration referred to above if lost | 31.00 | | TBA |

FIREWORKS REGULATIONS 2004**(THESE FEES MAY BE SUBJECT TO STATUTORY CHANGE)**

| Provision under which a fee or maximum fee is payable | Purpose of application | Present Fee Maximum Fee | or | Proposed Fee Maximum Fee |
|-------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|----|-----------------------------|
| Fireworks Regulations 2004 | | | | |
| Regulation 9 | Licence for the supply, or exposing for supply adult fireworks at any time of the year | 500.00 | | TBA |

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 29 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Renewal of The Mersey Forest Agreement

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek Members approval to sign the new Mersey Forest Agreement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the existing Mersey Forest Agreement be renewed and the Strategic Director - Environment be authorised to determine the terms of the new Agreement following the principles outlined in this report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Mersey Forest is the biggest of the UK's 12 Community Forests. It covers 420 square miles (1,082 km²) and is part of a 30-year plan to transform the landscape across Merseyside and North Cheshire. The regeneration of The Mersey Forest is being achieved by a partnership comprising the Forestry Commission, Natural England, nine local authorities, The Mersey Forest Team and various other organisations and individuals who share the vision for creating The Forest.

3.2 In the 12 years since it was established, over 3,750 hectares of new habitat have been created in the Mersey Forest, and around 10 million new trees planted. In Halton itself during this period, there have been 110 hectares of new woodland planted, 45 hectares of non-woodland habitat created, £2.9 million additional funding brought in, and 2,073 community events organised.

3.3 Halton Borough Council has been a partner in the Mersey Forest since its inception, and the current Agreement is now due for renewal. The new Agreement will run until 2010.

3.4 The Agreement empowers the nine local authorities to work together to support the work of the Mersey Forest. The new Agreement is very similar to the previous one, with some minor changes made to bring it in line with the Local Government Act 2000.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Halton Unitary Development Plan Policy No. GE28 supports the work and aims of the Mersey Forest.
- 4.2 The Mersey Forest helps to achieve several of the objectives in the Corporate Plan, particularly those connected with 'A Healthy Halton' and 'Urban Renewal'.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial: An annual sum of £16,000 is allocated within the Council's Revenue budget as a contribution towards the Mersey Forest. The proposed agreement would commit the Council to this annual contribution until 2010.
- 5.2 Sustainability: The Mersey Forest helps to achieve several objectives of the Local Agenda 21 Strategy and A Local Compact for Halton.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 No significant risks have been identified.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 No significant Equality and Diversity Issue have been identified.

(NB ONLY INCLUDE 8.0, 9.0 AND 10.0 BELOW IF THE REPORT RELATES TO A KEY DECISION INCLUDED ON THE FORWARD PLAN)

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|----------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Agreement to Support The Mersey Forest Initiative | Picow Farm Depot | Philip Esseen |

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 29th March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Disposal of Ethel Hanley Care Home,
Coronation Drive, Widnes

WARD(S): Broadheath

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to dispose of the Ethel Hanley Care Home. The area of the site shown as edged red on the attached plan

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) approval be given to dispose of the property by auction;
and**
- (2) approval be granted to accept the highest offer with the
details being reported to Board at the earliest opportunity**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Ethel Hanley Care Home comprises a detached two-storey building with a total area of 1231sq m, which has been used as a residential care home for the elderly, since it was built in 1973. It occupies a self-contained site of 0.38Ha (0.95 acres), which has an open frontage to Coronation Drive and secure fencing to the rear and its side frontage along Borrowdale Road. Access to the car park and service area are from Coronation Drive.
- 3.2 Halton Borough Council owns the freehold interest of the premises, which were recently occupied CLS Care Services Group by way of an internal repairing and insuring lease at a rental of £35,500 per annum.
- 3.3 The lease contained a flexible break option in favour of the tenant to enable terminate the lease which they exercised on the 13th November 2006.
- 3.4 Section 123 of the local Government Act 1972, requires Local Authorities to achieve the best possible consideration when disposing of land and property interests. To ensure this, other potential uses of the property will be examined, following which the property will be extensively marketed.

- 3.5 A further report will be submitted to Board with details of the highest bid together with a recommendation

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A financial loss of £35,500 p.a. income against a possibility of a capital receipt. It should be noted, however, that the rental income ceased on the 13th November 2006 and there is currently a rental void. It should be noted that there are few Care Home operators who are actively seeking accommodation and the property could remain unoccupied for a considerable time.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There is a risk that the reserve price is not achieved at the auction in which case the property will remain unsold. However, potential purchasers of such properties are more likely to be regular auction goers and this method of sale is likely to maximize the capital receipt for the Council.
- 6.2 Holding and being responsible for the property, whilst it is unoccupied pending the disposal. The site is in a prominent corner location which has already been subjected break-ins and acts of vandalism. It is inevitable that its condition will continue to deteriorate the longer it is left empty.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising as a result of the recommendation contained in this report.

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

- 8.1 To maximise potential income for the Council.

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The only alternative option to the sale of the property would be to re let the property. There would appear to be few Care Home providers who are currently seeking additional facilities.

Another method of sale is by private treaty which can be a drawn out process both in terms of a marketing campaign and negotiating terms with a potential purchaser. There is also a greater risk of an abortive sale compared to a sale by auction. The consequential risk is that

property is likely to be subjected to further vandalism and break ins giving rise to increased management and repair costs.

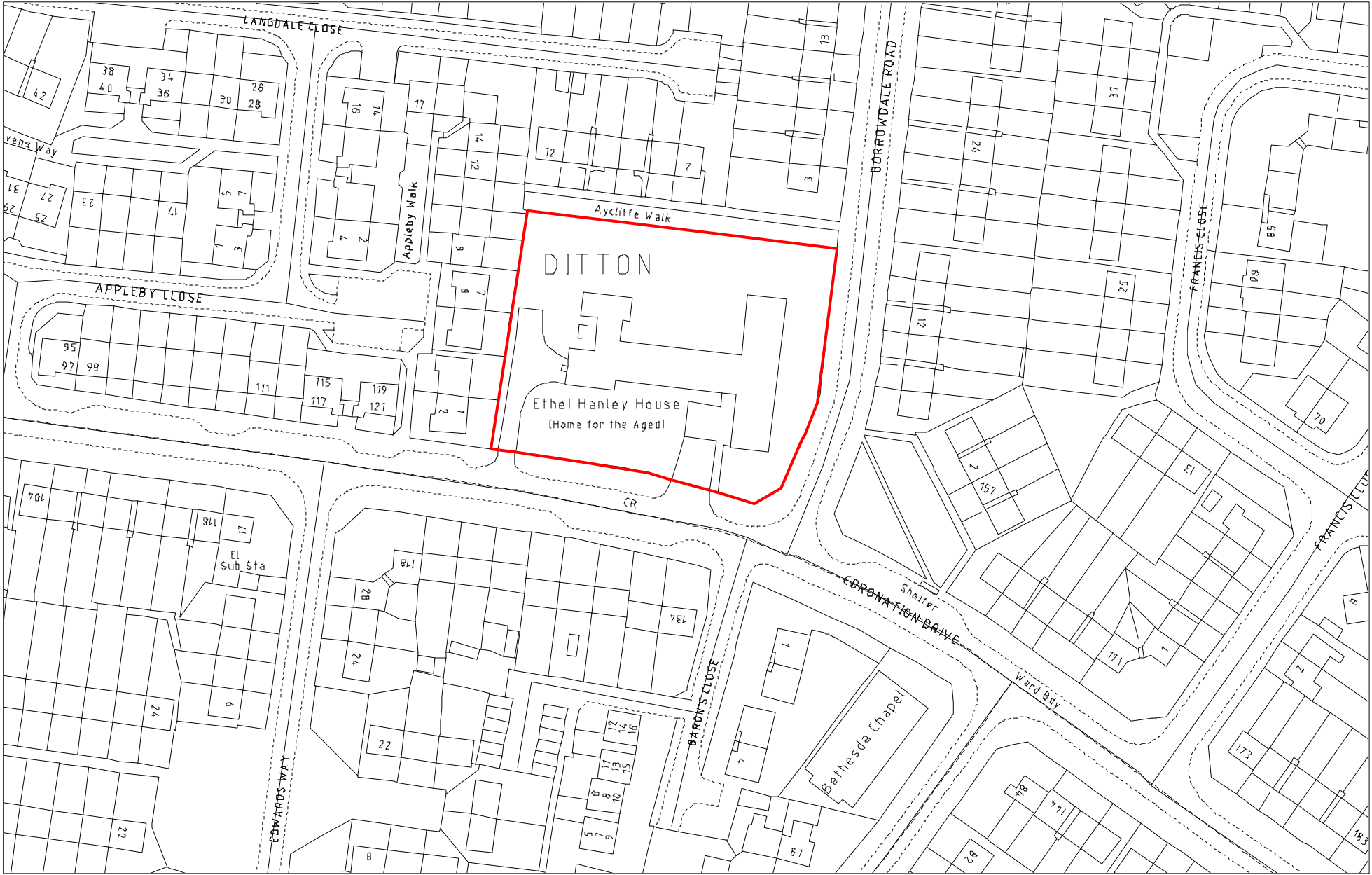
10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

10.1 Marketing upon receipt of approval being confirmed.

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

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
|-----------------|----------------------------|------------------------|



REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 29th March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Disposal of the Community Centre, 9/11
Lugsdale Road Widnes

WARD(S): Appleton

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to obtain approval to dispose of the Community Centre, 9/11 Lugsdale Road, Widnes. The area of the site shown as edged red on the attached plan

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That

- (1) approval be given to dispose of the property at auction; and**
- (2) approval be granted to accept the highest offer with the details being reported to Board at the earliest opportunity**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Community Centre comprises a detached two-storey building with a total area of 193sqm (2077sqft), which is currently used by Social Services. The area includes a single storey annex which is accessed via a separate side gate. It occupies a self-contained site of 0.04 Ha (0.11 acres) which is bounded to the front by a low brick wall and metal railings with frontage onto Lugsdale Road. The external area to the rear comprises a paved yard and children's play area enclosed by a 2m high brick wall.
- 3.2 Halton Borough Council owns the freehold interest of the premises, which is currently occupied by Social Services as an operational building.
- 3.3 Operations from Lugsdale Road will be transferred to Midwood House, on the 23rd March 2007, which will save the Council £25,000 per annum in running costs.
- 3.4 Section 123 of the local Government Act 1972, requires Local Authorities to achieve the best possible consideration when disposing of land and property interests. To ensure this, other potential uses of the property will be examined, following which the property will be extensively marketed.

- 3.5 A further report will be submitted to Board with details of the highest bid together with a recommendation

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 A

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 When disposing of a site by auction there is a risk that that it may not reach the reserve price in which case the property would not be sold. The auction market is quite popular at this moment in time and it is therefore considered that this risk is minimal
- 6.2 Holding and being responsible for the property, whilst it is unoccupied pending the disposal. The site is in a prominent location and already been subjected to vandalism. It is inevitable that its condition will continue to deteriorate the longer it is left empty.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising as a result of the recommendation contained in this report.

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

- 8.1 To maximise potential income for the Council.

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 9.1 The only alternative option to the sale of the property would be to let the property. Demand for Community Hall facilities is limited and in its current layout as offices, demand would be limited due to a lack of on site parking and limited parking in the immediately vicinity. Consideration has been given to using the building for Council Office accommodation but the building is dated and would require adaptation to meet modern day standards (DDA etc.) making it therefore unsuitable.

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

10.1. Given the need for printing auction material the earliest auction date is June 2007.

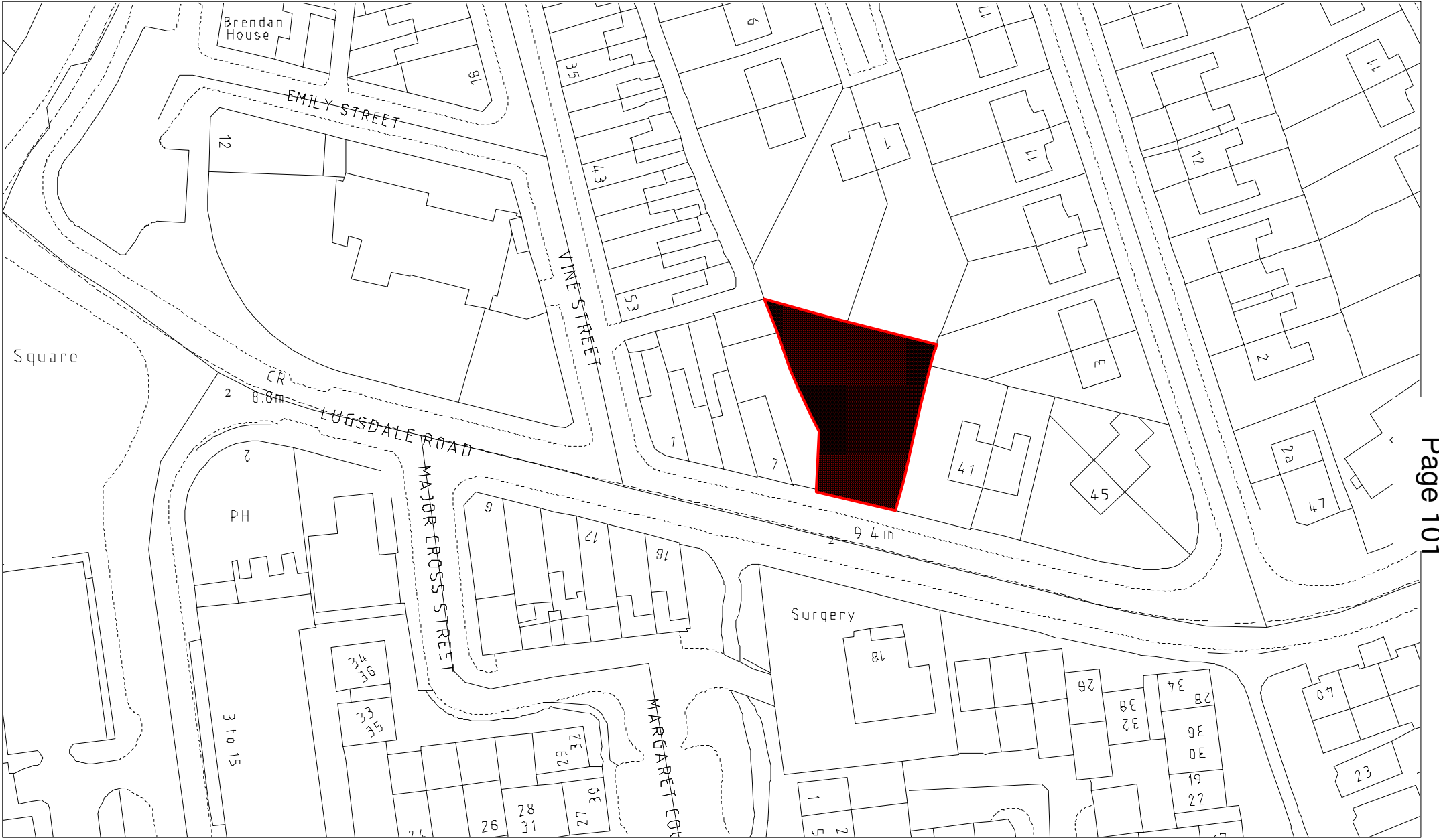
11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

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

Document

Place of Inspection

Contact Officer



REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub Committee

DATE: 29th March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Procurement of Local Bus Service Using Single Quotation.

WARDS: Boroughwide.

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform Executive Board Sub Committee's of a decision taken by the Operational Director Highways and Transportation to enter into a single quote contract (Procurement Standing Orders 1.5 and 3.1), with Arriva (North West and Wales) to divert an existing express coach service linking Manchester City Centre and Liverpool John Lennon Airport to serve the Borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 A key element of the Halton Local Transport Plan and accompanying Halton Bus Strategy covering the period 2006/7 – 2010/11 is the provision of improved bus services linking Halton to other major urban centres and attractions within the Mersey Belt, including Manchester City Centre and the rapidly expanding Liverpool John Lennon Airport.

3.2 During 2005/6 all the major local bus operators within the Mersey Belt were approached by officers with a view to identifying potential improvements to bus / coach services linking the Borough to major urban areas across the Merseybelt. These schemes were to be funded out of the Department for Transport (DfT) "Kickstart" initiative.

3.3 The national "Kickstart" scheme involves local authorities bidding to the DfT for revenue grants to "pump prime" improvements to local bus services. Typically under these arrangements, the DfT funds the improved service for a period of three years, thereafter the bus operator agrees to assume all of the ongoing revenue risk and operates the service fully commercially. However at the time no operator was willing to enter into an agreement to operate such inter urban services under the DfT's funding regime.

3.4 During the Summer of 2006, Arriva (North West and Wales) commercially introduced a new inter urban express bus service 700 linking the rapidly expanding Liverpool John Lennon Airport to

Manchester City Centre on an hourly basis in each direction (05.00 – 01.00) seven days per week.

- 3.5 In November 2006, Council officers met with Arriva (North West and Wales) to discuss the potential to divert this key Mersey Belt service to serve Halton. Arriva subsequently offered to divert the service 700 to drop off and set down in Widnes Town Centre (Vicarage Road). This would be implemented through a clause in the 1985 Transport Act, which permits local authorities to make De Minimus payments (without tendering) to operators to divert existing commercial services.
- 3.6 There are no other local bus operators running similar services, with the exception of ‘Terravision’ (an Italian based coach operator) who is also operating an express coach service linking Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Manchester. However this is not registered as a local bus service, and therefore is not eligible under the 1985 Transport Act for financial support from local authorities.
- 3.7 The above proposal is based on an agreed financial revenue contribution from Halton BC of £87,000 over three financial years (2006/7 – 2010/11). This arrangement follows a “Kickstart” style funding profile, whereby the Council’s revenue contribution would decline over three years as follows:

| | |
|---------|---------|
| 2007/8 | £43,500 |
| 2008/9 | £29,000 |
| 2009/10 | £14,500 |

- 3.6 This initiative will be funded from the Local Supported Bus Service Budget for the three years.
- 3.7 The above arrangements have been agreed by the Operational Director (Highways and Transportation) in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal. The Executive Board of 20th January 2005 resolved (EXB 6) to delegate powers to the Operational Director (Highways and Transportation) in consultation with the Executive Board Member to agree changes to the local supported bus network. The decision together with other recent service changes agreed will be reported to Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board for information and scrutiny. The need to trial local bus “Kickstart” arrangements with Operators was identified in the recently completed Halton BC Best Value Review of Transport and Accessibility.

4.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 4.1 A service contract will be entered into with Arriva (North West and Wales) in line with the Council’s standard supported local Bus Service Contract Terms and Conditions. In addition Arriva (North West and Wales) have guaranteed to operate the service commercially for a

minimum of seven years after the initial grant period – from 2010/11 onwards.

5.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

5.1 The proposed new service will be operated by low floor fully accessible buses.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------|
| Service 700 contract documents. | Transport Co-ordination, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn | David Hall |

REPORT TO: Executive Board Sub-Committee

DATE: 29 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Environment

SUBJECT: Renewal of Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Agreement

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To seek Members' approval to sign the new Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Agreement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the existing Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Agreement be renewed and the Strategic Director - Environment be authorised to determine the terms of the new Agreement following the principles outlined in this report.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Mersey Waterfront Regional Park was set up in 2004 to "transform, energise and connect the collective potential" of areas along the Mersey Waterfront. The initial three year period was funded by £8.5 million from the Northwest Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and £13.25 million of European Regional Development Fund Objective 1 money. During this period, Halton has benefited from substantial grants towards Wigg Island Visitors' Centre, Widnes Warth boardwalk and viewing platform, and the Waterfront Maintenance Team.

3.2 £16.5 million of NWDA Funding has now been secured for the 'Succession Programme', which will run until 2009. No major schemes have been identified within Halton for this period, although money may be available for smaller schemes within the 'Pride in our Promenades' and 'Coastal Spaces and Places' programmes. Halton will also benefit from marketing and publicity initiatives for the wider Waterfront Park. In addition, a Spatial Framework (which is currently being produced for the Waterfront area) identifies Halton as one of the key 'Windows on the Waterfront' (i.e. key destinations within the Regional Park), which could help to draw in future funding.

3.3 Halton Borough Council has been a partner in the Mersey Waterfront Regional Park since its inception, and the current Agreement is now due for renewal. The new Agreement will run until 2009.

- 3.4 The new Agreement is a simplified version of the previous one. There are no direct financial contributions from Partner Authorities.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Mersey Waterfront Regional Park helps the Council to achieve several of the objectives in the Corporate Plan, particularly those connected with 'A Healthy Halton' and 'Urban Renewal', and also several key objectives within the Waterside Development Strategy.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Financial: There are no direct financial implications. Officers' time spent attending the Management Group and Board are counted as match funding by the Mersey Waterfront project.
- 5.2 Sustainability: Mersey Waterfront Regional Park helps to achieve several objectives of the Local Agenda 21 Strategy.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 No significant risks have been identified.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 7.1 No significant Equality and Diversity Issue have been identified.

(NB ONLY INCLUDE 8.0, 9.0 AND 10.0 BELOW IF THE REPORT RELATES TO A KEY DECISION INCLUDED ON THE FORWARD PLAN)

8.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|----------------------------------------------|----------------------------|------------------------|
| Draft Mersey Waterfront Agreement | Picow Farm Depot | Philip Esseen |