

Public Document Pack



Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 20 March 2007 6.30 p.m.
River Suite, Halton Stadium

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

Chief Executive

COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Councillor Shaun Osborne (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor John Stockton (Vice-Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Susan Edge	Labour
Councillor Martha Lloyd Jones	Labour
Councillor Keith Morley	Labour
Councillor Ernest Ratcliffe	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Linda Redhead	Liberal Democrat
Councillor Colin Rowan	Conservative
Councillor Geoffrey Swift	Conservative
Councillor Dave Thompson	Labour
Councillor Pamela Wallace	Labour

*Please contact Michelle Simpson on 0151 424 2061 Ext. 1126 or e-mail michelle.simpson@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Date Not Specified*

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

Part I

Item No.		Page No.
1. MINUTES		
2. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)		
	Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached and (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members) to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26 February 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Public Question Time

WARD(s): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 33 (5).
- 1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Standing Order 34(11) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows: -
- (i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for members of the public who are residents of the Borough, to ask questions at meetings of the Policy and Performance Boards.
 - (ii) Members of the public can ask questions on any matter relating to the agenda.
 - (iii) Members of the public can ask questions. Written notice of questions must be submitted by 4.00 pm on the day prior to the meeting. At any meeting no person/organisation may submit more than one question.
 - (iv) One supplementary question (relating to the original question) may be asked by the questioner which may or may not be answered at the meeting.
 - (v) The Chair or proper officer may reject a question if it:-
 - Is not about a matter for which the local authority has a responsibility or which affects the Borough;
 - Is defamatory, frivolous, offensive, abusive or racist;
 - Is substantially the same as a question which has been put at a meeting of the Council in the past six months; or
 - Requires the disclosure of confidential or exempt information.

- (vi) In the interests of natural justice, public questions cannot relate to a planning or licensing application or to any matter, which is not dealt with in the public part of a meeting.
- (vii) The Chairperson will ask for people to indicate that they wish to ask a question.
- (viii) **PLEASE NOTE** that the maximum amount of time each questioner will be allowed is 3 minutes.
- (ix) If you do not receive a response at the meeting, a Council Officer will ask for your name and address and make sure that you receive a written response.

Please bear in mind that public question time lasts for a maximum of 30 minutes. To help in making the most of this opportunity to speak: -

- Please keep questions as concise as possible.
- Please do not repeat or make statements on earlier questions as this reduces the time available for other issues to be raised.
- Please note that public question time is not intended for debate – issues raised will be responded to either at the meeting or in writing at a later date.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 26 February 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Executive Board Minutes

WARD(s): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub since the last meeting are attached at Appendix 1 for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None.

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

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

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes Relevant to the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE 21st DECEMBER 2006

EB74 HIGHWAY SKIDDING RESISTANCE POLICY

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment outlining the current position regarding the measurement and treatment of highway skidding resistance and proposing the introduction of a policy for analysing skid resistance data to produce programmes of treatment. A copy of the policy was attached to the report for information.

It was noted that the Council had approved an overall policy document in relation to Highway Maintenance Strategy in 1998, incorporating the method by which the measurement of skidding resistance of highway surfacing was to be carried out. However, national guidance on skidding resistance had changed significantly since then and a specific policy was now required.

The Board was advised that the new policy had been prepared to take account of developments, meeting current requirements and recognising the contribution of accident analysis to the assessment process. The policy had been presented to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board on 15th November 2006 where it had been agreed that the policy should be recommended for approval.

RESOLVED: That the Skidding Resistance Policy, submitted as an appendix to the report, be adopted.

EXECUTIVE BOARD COMMITTEE 25th JANUARY 2007

EB79 VICTORIA SQUARE – DEVELOPING THE NIGHT TIME ECONOMY

The Board considered a report of the Chief Executive and the Strategic Director – Environment outlining the approach to be taken in developing a Management Plan for Victoria Square.

It was noted that much progress had been made in regenerating Widnes Town Centre over recent years and, of particular note, was the progress made in and around Victoria

Square. To ensure the benefits were maximised and the current momentum was maintained, it was considered appropriate to develop a Victoria Square Management Plan.

Much discussion had already taken place with the Police in this regard and the Board was advised that the Police saw that the development of such a plan was a good way forward for the partners and authorities to meet their duties to reduce crime and disorder within the areas they served (Section 17 Crime and Disorder Act 1998). To this end, a preliminary workshop session had taken place with representatives from all appropriate Council departments, and partners, to look at the issues and opportunities that would need to be considered in the Management Plan.

An integral part of the management plan related to the issues of "al-fresco" drinking and dining and, following discussions with the Police, it was proposed to permit al-fresco drinking/dining on designated parts of Victoria Square adjacent to certain buildings.

It was noted that the development of a Management Plan for Victoria Square at this time would be a very complex task. In addition, it was confirmed that this was a pilot and, if successful, the intention was to develop it across the Borough.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the development of a Management Plan including al-fresco drinking and dining on Victoria Square be approved, subject to resolving any legal, health and safety, and risk management issues; and
- (2) further reports be provided on the progress of the Victoria Square Pilot with a view to developing the night-time economy across the Borough.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB-COMMITTEE 25th JANUARY 2007

EBS70 INSTALLATION OF UNDERGROUND RECYCLING UNITS

The Sub-Committee was advised on four quotations received from Contractors to carry out excavation work for the installation of underground recycling units.

In considering the quotations received, it was proposed that the quote from Paddison Construction of £18,869.48 be accepted for the following reasons:

- (i) none of the other companies had direct experience of undertaking similar work;
- (ii) the requested work was very specialist and not just a standard excavation;
- (iii) when considering the variation in quotes there was uncertainty that the companies without the relevant experience completely understood the job specification;
- (iv) Paddison Construction Limited had the most relevant experience, having undertaken excavation work for several hundred underground banks, including 90% of the underground banks in the UK;
- (v) Paddison Construction was the appointed contractor of the Unit Manufacturers and used for installations of the underground unit following excavation;
- (vi) if problems occurred during the excavations it was felt that they would be able to deal with them much more efficiently due to their wealth of experience.

Due to the reasons outlined above, it was requested that Standing Orders be waived and Paddison Construction be appointed to carry out these works.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) for the reasons stated in the report, the quotation submitted by Paddison Construction Limited, be accepted and the Operational Director, Environmental and Regulatory Services, in consultation with the portfolio holder for Environment, Leisure and Sport, be authorised to make the necessary arrangements to enter into a contract with that company;
- (2) Standing Order 4.1 of the Procurement Standing Orders be waived accordingly.

ESB71 INVITATION TO TENDER FOR WASTE MANAGEMENT RELATED CONTRACTS

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought authority to carry out all the necessary steps in relation to the procurement of the following contracts:

- (i) Landfill Disposal; and
- (ii) Interim arrangements for the Management and Operation of Recycling and Household Waste Centres; (Civic Amenity Sites).

The Council's contractual arrangements for all Landfill Disposal and the Management and Operation of the Civic Amenity Sites end on 31st January 2008 and authority was sought to put in place contractual arrangements for these services as from 1st February 2008.

At its meeting on 21st September 2006, the Executive Board resolved that a formal partnership with the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority be established for the procurement of appropriate Waste Treatment and Disposal for Services and Facilities. (EXB40/2006 refers).

The Council was to be included in the joint procurement arrangements for the management and operation of the Council's Civic Amenity Sites as from October 2008, but not the Landfill Disposal Contract as the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority (MWDA) had already issued an OJEU Notice and PQQ for Landfill Disposal. The Council's Consultants had not finalised their advice to the Council as to future arrangements with the MWDA and as such a number of contingencies had to be provided.

The Landfill Disposal Contract would commence on 1st February 2008. Halton would seek to participate with the MWDA on joint landfill disposal arrangements at the first opportunity. Given the review periods within the MWDA contract, the period of contract could be between 5 years and 8 months and 8 years and 8 months. The estimated value was as follows:

- Estimated annual value - £621.000;
- Estimated value for 5 years and 8 months
 - £3.90m
- Estimated value for 8 years and 8 months
 - £6.98m

With regard to the provision of interim arrangements for the management and operation of recycling and household waste

centre (Civic Amenity Sites), it was proposed that the estimated value from 1st February 2008 for a period of 8 months would be £690,000 (excluding Landfill Tax), based on the existing specification.

Despite the position set out above, the Council's consultants were still evaluating the process of integrating into the arrangements being prepared by the MWDA. There were a number of potential outcomes of that evaluation which could impact on the Council's proposals for either or both of the contracts, details of which and the possible contingency arrangements were outlined in the report.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the Operational Director, Environmental and Regulatory Services, be authorised in consultation with the Portfolioholder for Environment, Leisure and Sport, to proceed with the procurement process as outlined in the report and to take all steps deemed appropriate (including the selection of tenderers) up to the point of receipt of tenders;
- (2) the tenders be reported back to the Executive Board Sub Committee for decision;
- (3) should negotiations with the MWDA result in a conclusion that the subject matter of proposed Landfill Disposal Contract (Contract A) could be included within arrangements being entered into by the MWDA, the Operational Director, Environmental and Regulatory Services, shall be authorised, in consultation with the Portfolioholder for Environment, Leisure and Sport, to negotiate with the MWDA on that basis and shall be authorised to proceed with Contract A on the basis of the same contract period as proposed in Contract B; and
- (4) subject to the sanction of the European Commission to the non- application of the Public Procurement Rules, authority be given to negotiate extensions to Contracts A and/or B.

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Environment

SUBJECT: Alley Gates and Gating Orders

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 This report is presented to both Safer Halton and Urban Renewal PPB to advise of new powers now available to the Council to make Gating Orders and proposes a policy to be adopted that would respond to all future requests for alley gates.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Executive Board be asked to adopt a policy requiring all future proposed alley gates to be supported by a Gating Order made under the provisions of section 129A of the Highways Act 1980.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Section 2 of the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 introduced a new power that allows councils to make, vary or revoke gating orders in respect of highways within their area. This has been effected by inserting new sections 129A to 129G in the Highways Act 1980 that enable councils to restrict public access to any public highway by gating (at certain times of the day if applicable), without removing its underlying highway status. Local authorities are now able to make "gating" orders on grounds of anti-social behaviour as well as crime.

3.2 Powers to close alleyways were first introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act 2000); this enables alleyways, which are also rights of way, to be closed and gated for crime prevention reasons. But they do not enable alleyways to be gated expressly to prevent anti-social behaviour and they exclude many alleyways that are public highways but not recorded as rights of way. Also, under these provisions the removal of rights of passage is irrevocable.

3.3 The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act 2005 enables a council to gate a highway in a similar manner to the CROW Act 2000 power but it:

- a) Does not first require an area to be designated as a crime area by the Secretary of State,
- b) Enables gating to take place if the highway suffers from crime and/or anti-social behaviour,
- c) Enables the council to determine a gating order, if it is considered in the best interests of the local community to do so.

- 3.4 Section 129A of the Highways Act 1980 sets out these general principles, asserting that a council must be satisfied, before making an order, that the area surrounding the relevant highway suffers from crime or anti-social behaviour and would act as a useful crime/anti-social behaviour reduction measure.
- 3.5 Local authorities should also be satisfied that residents and members of the public who use the relevant highway would not be inappropriately inconvenienced by its gating, and should be satisfied that alternative access routes exist.
- 3.6 The health and sustainability implications of the order should also be considered as gating orders could potentially encourage the use of cars if the alternatives are too long or lack pedestrianised sections. This should be balanced against the health impacts facing pedestrians from the ongoing crime or ASB in the alleyway.
- 3.7 Before proposing an order, local authorities should give consideration as to whether there are alternative interventions that may be more appropriate (and cost effective) for tackling the specific problems they are facing without having to gate the highway.
- 3.8 Gating orders can have implications for various groups of people, such as walkers who may oppose the termination of certain rights of way. For this reason, it is essential that gating orders are satisfactorily publicised before they are made. Local authorities must publicise a notice to this effect in a local paper and on their website.
- 3.9 The notice needs to:
- include a draft of the proposed order:
 - identify alternative routes that members of the public may take; and
 - invite representations (in writing) as to whether or not an order should be made, within a period of notice that is at least 28 days.
- A similar notice, including all the information stated above, should also be placed on or adjacent to the relevant highway at both ends, in order that people who want to use the highway can see that it is to be gated.
- 3.10 A number of individuals and groups will have legitimate purpose or business to pass through gates. These can include, but is not limited to, property owners and occupants, statutory undertakers, such as telecommunication companies and utility companies, the emergency services and council officers on business. The consequent distribution of keys will require careful consideration in each case. Too wide a distribution could lead to the gating order becoming ineffective and unenforceable.
- 3.11 In the past the Council has implemented a number of alley gating schemes. These have generally been confined to passages that provide access to the rear of terraced properties in the more traditionally laid out streets of the Borough. The Council has taken a pragmatic approach to implementing such schemes as

until now the legislation available has been cumbersome and inappropriate. This approach has worked well but difficulties can arise when there is evidence of anti-social behaviour on pedestrian routes that are well used and provide access to wider areas. A recent example has been the footpaths that connect Addison Square in Widnes with Leigh Road and Highfield Road.

- 3.12 It is proposed that in future all gating proposals should be supported by a Gating Order made under section 129A of the Highways Act. A more formal approach will allow the proper consideration of objections and representations. Such objections would be considered by the Executive Board Sub-Committee as is currently the case with Traffic Regulation Orders. In certain circumstances a public inquiry, conducted by the Council, may be required. Under the new legislation an objection from certain bodies will automatically cause a public inquiry to be held, if the relevant highway passes through their area. These authorities include:
- the chief officer of a police force;
 - a fire and rescue authority;
 - any council (including parish councils); and
 - an NHS trust, NHS foundation trust or NHS primary care trust.
- 3.12 It is proposed that a procedure similar to that followed for Traffic Regulation Orders be followed. Following the receipt of a request for gating, there would be consideration given to the issues discussed in 3.1 to 3.10 above. This consideration would involve officers from Highways and Transportation, Planning, Community Safety and Legal. If a Gating Order would appear to meet the requirements of the legislation, there would be consultation with ward Councillors and the statutory bodies listed in 3.11 above.
- 3.13 If there is general support for the proposal a draft order would be drawn up and advertised by the Operational Director Highways, Transportation and Logistics under delegated Highway Authority powers. Any unresolved objections would be referred to the Executive Board Sub Committee unless a public inquiry becomes necessary. Planning consents would continue to be sought in the normal way.
- 3.14 A similar process would be followed should there at a later date be a request to revoke or amend the gating order.
- 3.15 A draft procedure is shown as an appendix to the report and this is being followed on a trial basis for the gating of the three footpaths that access Addison Square in Widnes.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The administrative cost associated with promoting Gating Orders should be met by the promoting body e.g. an Area Forum. The gates would be maintained as now by Property Services and Highways would maintain the highway from existing budgets. There will be on-going resource implications as the Home office guidance suggests that gating orders should be reviewed every 12 months; that notices describing the orders should be displayed for as long as the

gates are in place; that the Highway Authority should keep a register of gating orders and updated maps should be issued to statutory authorities/emergency services etc.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Council has a number of conflicting policies and duties in relation to the issue of gating orders:

- A duty to do all that it reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in the discharge of all Council functions - contained in section 17 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998;
- A duty as the Highway Authority to assert and protect the rights of the public to the use and enjoyment of any highway for which they are the highway authority;
- keep the highway free of obstruction for the safe passage of the general public;
- Policies and strategies adopted through the Local Transport Plan (and UDP): promote accessibility to bus services; maintain and promote Rights of Way; seek to safely reduce the number of people who travel to school by car; increase foot, cycle and public transport journeys; seek to reduce road casualties, develop and promote pedestrian routes that connect to facilities such as education and recreation.

5.2 It is clear that alley gating has been successful in reducing crime and anti-social behaviour. However there will always be a balance to be struck when a proposed gating order affects a right of access for the general public rather than residents' rear access to a limited number of properties.

5.3 Each case will need to be considered on its own merits to avoid setting precedents that raise expectations for the gating of a large number of well-used paths across the Borough. This would significantly reduce accessibility on foot, whilst possibly just redistributing anti social behaviour.

5.4 Home office guidance states that the intention of the gating order is to restrict the highway temporarily whilst the crime or ASB is persistent. Once it is reduced the restrictions can be varied or revoked. It is therefore clear that under no circumstances should the existence of a gating order be used as a justification for a permanent closure of the highway on the grounds that it is "no longer necessary". To permanently close the highway on the grounds of crime, a Special Extinguishment Order (under the CROW Act powers) would be required.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There is a risk that if paths are gated the anti social behaviour may be redistributed elsewhere. However there is potentially a reduced risk for local residents resulting from anti social behaviour taking place on paths and alleyways. If there is not a safe and convenient alternative walking route there is

a risk of an increase in car journeys, congestion and potentially road traffic casualties.

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

7.1	<i>Document</i>	<i>Available for inspection</i>	<i>Contact</i>
	Guidance Relating to the Making of Gating Orders	www.respect.gov.uk	Jonathan Farmer Ext 3018

DRAFT PROCEDURE FOR MAKING A GATING ORDER UNDER THE PROVISIONS OF THE HIGHWAYS ACT 1980 (GATING ORDERS) (ENGLAND) REGULATIONS 2006 (SI2006/537)

1. Before making a gating order, the Council must be satisfied that:
 - a) premises adjoining or adjacent to the highway are affected by crime or anti-social behaviour;
 - b) the existence of the highway is facilitating the persistent commission of criminal offences or anti-social behaviour;
 - c) it is in all the circumstances expedient to make the order for the purposes of reducing crime or anti-social behaviour;
 - d) reasonable alternative routes are available.
2. If the above pre-conditions are met, approval in writing is sought from Operational Director to prepare and advertise order.
3. Initial informal consultation is undertaken with Utilities, Police, Fire, NHS, Parish Council etc and occupiers adjoining or adjacent to highway.
4. Planning application is made (can run concurrent with Gating Order).
5. Preparation of plan, location, description, alternative routes and statement of meeting criteria. Determine dates and times of restriction, details of persons excluded, check with legal for added clause and any others as appropriate given an assessment of their needs. Name of person responsible for maintaining gates.
6. Forwarded to legal to prepare order/notice and carry out formal consultations (including those who requested to be consulted on all proposed orders).
8. Publicised for 28 days, objections must be received in this period.
9. Objections are referred to Exec Board Sub who may decide to hold a public inquiry – inquiry must be held if unresolved objections remains from Police, Fire, NHS or Parish Council.
10. The Public Inquiry can be held no earlier than 42 days after the notice of the proposals are first published. The Public Inquiry must be publicised and the process would be expected to be lengthy.
11. Once the Order is made a notice of the Order is maintained indefinitely on site and is available for inspection at Council Offices explaining why gate is there.
11. A register and map of gating orders is kept and orders are reviewed on an annual basis.
12. Orders may be varied or revoked as necessary using the same procedure.

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 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 members' support for the pursuance of new governance arrangements for the delivery of the Halton Registration Service.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) the report be noted,**
- (2) comments and suggestions from Members be noted,**
- (3) the Executive Board be requested to agree to the pursuance of new governance arrangements for the delivery of the Halton Registration Service, and in doing so to specifically agree to the Council's commitment to the code of practice that will form part of the new scheme; and**
- (4) the Executive Board be requested to agree the Halton Registration District Service Delivery and Improvement Plan.**

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.

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 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 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.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

8.0 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.

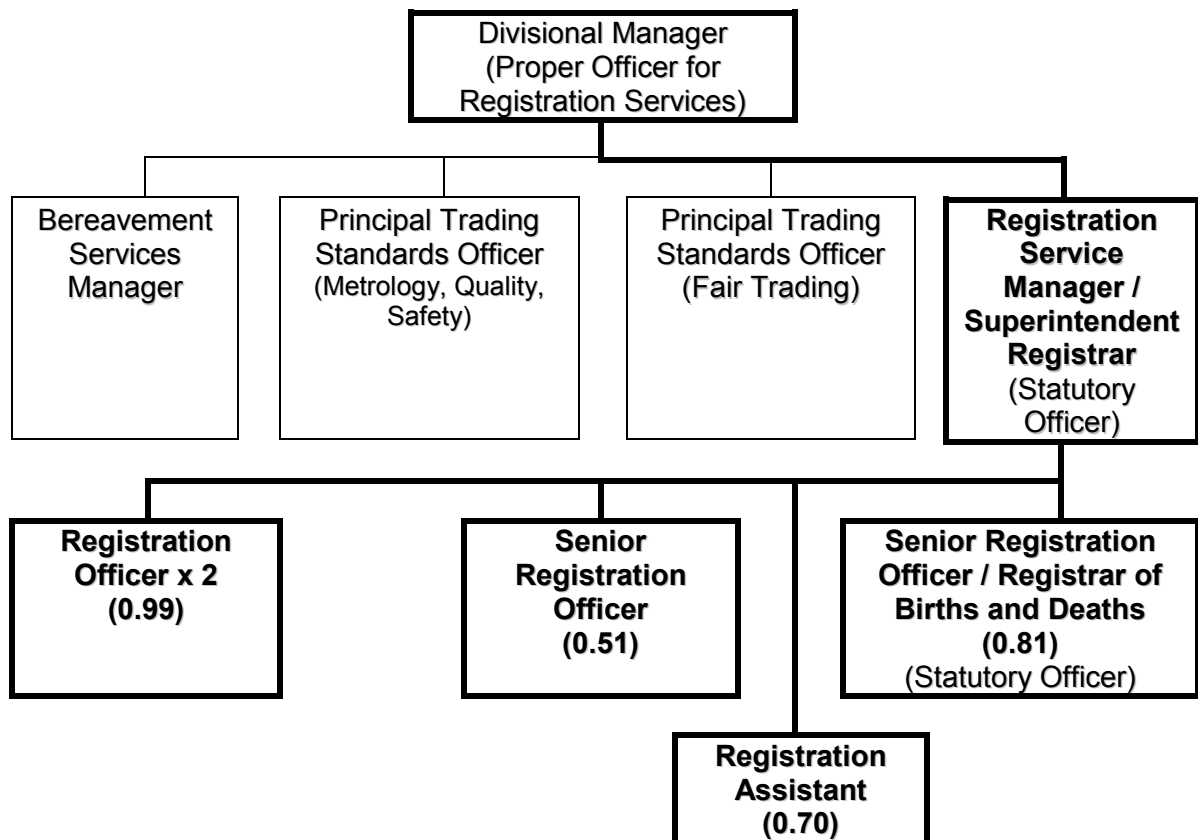
The Registration Service works in partnership with external bodies, for example HM Coroner, doctors' surgeries, the hospital, funeral directors, the Clergy, the Area Health Authority and the Home Office. In addition it works with the Council Tax Section, Bereavement Services and Environmental Health 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	90%	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	90%	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 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. 

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
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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: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 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 Members' 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 report be noted;**
- (2) comments and suggestions from Members be noted;**
- (3) the Executive Board be requested to agree 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**
- (4) the Executive Board be requested to agree 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".

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 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 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. There will be a small annual loss of income of approximately £470 (from a total income target of just under £600k), which would otherwise have been collected as memorial mason registration fees.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 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.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

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

8.0 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: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health and Community

SUBJECT: Domestic Abuse

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To advise the Board on the progress of the Domestic Abuse Forum.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) The Board note the contents of this report and comment appropriately.
- 2) The Board make recommendations in respect of the future funding of the Service.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Forum has recently taken part in a successful national campaign, involving local companies and the general public. This was featured in local press and on radio.
- 3.2 Halton's Domestic Abuse Forum has now been split into two tiers – strategic and operational – in line with recommendations from the National Delivery Plan.
- 3.3 A Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference workshop was attended by key agencies and a further workshop was held on January 18th to prepare individuals for the first MARAC meeting for Halton in 2007. The workshop was attended by Police, HBC Social Services, Probation, local service providers and Supporting People.
- 3.4 Cheshire Police is currently working closely with the Forum to establish a programme focusing on reducing the number of repeat victims who report incidents of domestic abuse on a regular basis.
- 3.5 At the last Forum meeting of 2006 plans were revealed to co-ordinate a Domestic Abuse Conference in Halton to discuss further implementation of the strategy and involve more professionals in the borough. The Conference is now arranged for 28th March 2007.

4.0 PERFORMANCE

4.1 Recent achievements include: -

- **Halton's One Stop Shop Support Service for victims of domestic abuse is receiving, on average, one referral a day and is currently supporting 12 clients through the Domestic Violence Court in Halton. Since the helpline was extended to cover a 24 hour period, more self referrals have been noted and the helpline is now being used by hospital staff to refer patients to advice and support**
- **Successfully applied for a district judge to work in the Runcorn area on reducing a backlog of youth nuisance and domestic abuse related trials. The Specialist Domestic Violence Court in Halton will, in the new year, be remodeled to run more like Chester's court – which has seen an increase of guilty verdicts**
- **Refreshed the Halton Domestic Abuse Forum to split membership into two groups - strategic and operational**
- **Christmas awareness raising campaign of the 24 hour helpline using local radio station**
- **Expanded service user groups to cover both Widnes and Runcorn – Women's Advisory Groups will run every six weeks with a representative to join the Forum's Operational Group**
- **Roll out of the Freedom Programme to women in Halton aimed at empowering those who have been affected by domestic abuse**
- **Delivered Halton's Level One domestic violence training to a further 50 hospital staff in Halton and 125 Cheshire police staff**
- **New literature designed for promotional material to market the support service**
- **Database established to record multi-agency statistics on domestic abuse**
- **Involved local businesses and the general public in a national campaign aimed at raising awareness of services available in the area for sufferers of domestic abuse**

4.2 Data

A completed record of Halton Police statistics for the October – December 2006 for targets set in the annual LPSA2 are set out below.

	Oct06	Nov06	Dec06	Q3 total	LPSA Target	LPSA baseline	Performance this quarter
Total 'Domestic' and 'domestic violence' incidents	170	165	198	533	371	337	Exceeded
Sanction detections	25	16	31	72	71	67	Exceeded
Repeat Victims	12	12	8	32	39	41	Not met

The Relationships Centre has seen an increase of self-referrals to the Support Service, as well as referrals from other agencies in the borough.

In Quarter three, sanctuary scheme was provided to a further four women to enable them to stay in their own home and feel safe.

	Oct06	Nov06	Dec06	Q3 total	Target	baseline	Performance this quarter
Referrals to Support Service	48	47	18	113	46	39	exceeding
Number taking up sanctuary scheme	2	1	1	4	3	N/A	exceeding
Number taking up Court support service	3	2	3	8	8	N/A	on target

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The budget for Domestic Abuse for 2006/07 is:

- a) Total spend for NRF 06/07 = £90,000
- b) Total spend for SSCF (Single Pot) = £35,000

5.2 As Members can see all the funding is external. Whilst the Single Pot monies should continue, and these monies fund the Domestic Abuse Officer, the other streams end in 2008. Without these the levels of service will be severely curtailed.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A Domestic Abuse Strategy is already approved.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Continuance of funding threatens progress in this area.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Service is consistent and even handed in all regards and as such does not react differently to any particular group.

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

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health and Community

SUBJECT: Notes of Working Party meetings

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To inform members of topics and issues discussed at meetings of Working Parties set up by the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Bereavement Services Working Party met on 20 December 2006 and 24 January 2007, notes of that meeting are attached as Appendix 1 and 2.

3.2 Where notes have not been produced for meetings held close to, or after the deadline for agenda items for the Board, members may be requested to receive oral reports of Working Party meetings, when the Policy and Performance Board considers this agenda item.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no new policy implications as a result of this report.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no other implications flowing from this report.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are no risks associated with this report.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 There are no Equality and Diversity issues associated with this report.

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

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

Minutes of extended Meeting of Anti-Social Behaviour Topic Group

Held on Wednesday 20th December 2006 at 5pm

Runcorn Town Hall, Civic Suite

Present: Cllr John Stockton (Chair), Cllr Pamela Wallace, Cllr Geoffrey Swift, Cllr Linda Redhead, Alex Villiers, Clare Myring, Cllr Martha Lloyd-Jones, Andy Williams, Howard Cockcroft, Christine Frazer, Jonathan Horsfall

Item	Details	Action
1	<p>Apologies Steve Eastwood, Dwayne Johnson, Cllr Margaret Ratcliffe, Inspector Andy Ross</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of meeting of 22 November 2006 and matters arising Cllr Ged Philbin included on circulation list. A number of Cllrs unable to attend, to be included on future Special ASB meetings. No matters arising.</p>	
3	<p>Halton s 2006 Protocol for Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Clare Myring – (Anti Social Behaviour Co-ordinator) gave presentation regarding current situation in Halton.</p> <p>Introduced protocol to help practitioners.</p> <p>National definition adopted for anti-social behaviour “acting in a manners that caused or was likely to cause harassment, alarm or distress or has caused or is likely to cause (such)”.</p> <p>In a wide-ranging discussion the following major points emerged: -</p> <p>Need to be pro-active in stopping people having to leave their properties; on injunction costs £8-9k on average.</p> <p>Tool-kit being established for partners/social landlords to use.</p> <p>Need to collect more data re: fly-tipping, abandoned cars, graffiti, etc.</p> <p>First draft of ASB strategy to be complete by 15 January 2007.</p> <p>Need to encourage all partners to participate in Multi-Agency Meetings.</p> <p>There were good relationships with RSL’s, but strategies need to cover those areas where no social landlords operate.</p> <p>Recognition that much was happening already to combat anti-social behaviour, with good partnership working.</p>	
4	<p>Timeline for Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy Timeline for ASB Strategy tabled. Major consultation event scheduled for 12th February 2007. Report to Executive Board on 15th March 2007.</p> <p>As part of process: -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 4-page summary to be produced for wide distribution. 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Summary to be posted on web site. - Local newspapers and radio stations to be involved. - Draft to be considered by ASB Topic Group who would then make recommendations to the wider group. 	
5	<p>Multi Agency Problem Solving Teams – proposed way forward</p> <p>Need to establish what is right for Halton. The West Lancs model is good, but does it fit “our” needs.</p> <p>Core issues need to be established (i.e. what is strategic and what is operational) Amongst all partners who does what?</p> <p>Halton already has Multi-Agency meetings. What do we need to add to these?</p> <p>Meeting agreed that a research exercise, carried out by Policy Unit, would be helpful to evaluate the different options available and the potential associated costs. Research to be completed by end of January 2007.</p> <p>Use of mediation services by RSL’s noted. Could this be a pooled resource?</p> <p>Possibility of ‘Respect’ funding for clinical psychologist post to support families noted.</p>	
6	<p>Next Steps</p> <p>Research approved, to include mapping of existing services.</p> <p>Data from Neighbourhood Management Surveys to be considered.</p> <p>Small Topic Group to meet before end of January 07 to consider draft ASB Strategy.</p>	
7	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>CCTV now operative 24/7, through contract with Remploy. 40 cameras currently operative. Meeting would appreciate a definitive position statement on where we are up to re: CCTV and what are the Councils future intentions.</p>	

Minutes of Anti-Social Behaviour Topic Group
Held on Wednesday 24th January 2007 at 5pm
Runcorn Town Hall, CR1

Present: Cllr John Stockton (Chair), Cllr Geoffrey Swift, Cllr Linda Redhead, Alex Villiers, Clare Myring, Cllr Martha Lloyd-Jones, Howard Cockcroft

Item	Details	Action
1	<p>Apologies</p> <p>Cllr Pamela Wallace</p>	
2	<p>Minutes of meeting of 20 December 2006 and matters arising</p> <p>Minutes accepted.</p> <p>Item 4 - clarification of ASB draft strategy consultation event on Monday 12th February 2007 at Halton Stadium.</p> <p>Item 5 - MAPS Agreed to take forward with large group on the Wednesday 28th February 2007 initial research findings and begin to identify preferred approach for Halton.</p> <p>Item 7 – position statement regarding arrangements for CCTV across the Borough were circulated. At a future meeting the Group to visit monitoring room at RTH. Su Dawber to be asked to attend to answer any questions.</p>	
3	<p>Anti-Social Behaviour Draft Strategy (Clare Myring)</p> <p>Clare outlined the approach of the strategy. Major focus was to be a detailed action plan.</p> <p>Agreed that members of the ASB Topic Group would meet after consultation day to give further feedback to Clare.</p>	
4	<p>Dealing with low to moderate Anti-Social Behaviour behaviour – draft research brief (Alex Villiers)</p> <p>Alex highlighted draft research brief. Group agreed main strands of research, role of PCSO's and reporting mechanisms for ASB to be included.</p> <p>Consideration also to be given to repeating previous surveys in respect of ASB and fear of crime.</p> <p>Alex to commission the research. Anticipated timescale 4-6 weeks.</p>	
5	<p>Any other Business</p> <p>Role of Group – Clarity was given the role of the Topic Group and role of wider MAPS Group.</p> <p>Agreed MAPS Group had single focus of agreeing strategic approach.</p>	

	The ASB Topic Group had wider operational remit regarding ASB.	
6	Date and time of next meeting Wednesday 14 th February 1.00pm CR1 RTH (lunch available from 12.30pm) Wednesday 28 th February 5.00pm Civic Suite RTH (refreshments available)	

REPORT TO: Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 20 March 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Performance Monitoring Reports for the 3rd quarter (2006/07)

WARDS: Boroughwide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The departmental service plans set out what the services are planning to achieve and demonstrate how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. The service plans are central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.
- 1.2 The 3rd quarter monitoring reports for the services that come within the remit of this Policy & Performance Board are available in both electronic and hard copy formats. These reports enable Board Members to scrutinise progress towards achieving the service objectives, milestones and performance targets contained in the 2006/07 service plans for the following:

Environment Directorate

1. Highways & Transportation
2. Environment & Regulatory Services

Health & Community Directorate

3. Health & Partnerships
4. Culture & Leisure

2. RECOMMENDED: That the Policy & Performance Board

- 1) **Scrutinise service performance and progress towards achieving objectives and targets and raise any questions or points for clarification in respect of the information contained in the quarterly monitoring reports; and**
- 2) **Highlight areas of interest and/or concern that require further information or action to be reported at a future meeting of the Policy and Performance Board where appropriate.**

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 At previous meetings, the Board received performance briefing papers that were intended to highlight aspects contained in the full versions of the monitoring reports (available electronically) that Members might wish to consider further. Although, the Board has requested that hard copies of the quarterly monitoring reports be available to Members prior to meetings, the

performance briefing papers will still be provided for the remaining two quarters of this year. (See Appendix 1)

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Any policy implications arising from emerging issues or key developments that will impact upon the service or any action required to address performance issues, will be identified in the respective quarterly monitoring report.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Any other implications associated with issues connected with the service will be identified in the respective quarterly monitoring report.

6. RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 The risk control measures associated with the service objectives that were initially assessed as having 'HIGH' risks are summarised in the quarterly monitoring reports to monitor their implementation.

7. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 The actions identified arising from the Equality impact/needs assessments that are regarded as 'HIGH' priority for each service are in the Equality Action Plans and progress on their implementation is included in the respective quarterly monitoring reports.

8. REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Not applicable

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable

10. IMPLEMENTATION DATE

Not applicable

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Quarterly monitoring reports for:		
1. Highways & Transportation	Municipal Building 2 nd floor	Martin Holland Performance Management Officer
2. Environmental & Regulatory Services		
3. Culture & Leisure Services		
4. Health & Partnerships		

PERFORMANCE CONSIDERATIONS

(3rd Quarter 2006/07)

SERVICE: Highways & Transportation *(Road Safety ONLY)*

Overview

These comments relate to the Road Safety elements in the service plan that fall within the remit of this PPB. The monitoring reports shows that the objectives and performance targets are on course to be achieved and therefore, the prospects for the service delivering on its commitments are very good.

SERVICE: Environment & Regulatory Services *(Waste Management and Environmental Health ONLY)*

Overview

These comments relate to those functions in the service plan that comes within the remit of this PPB. The monitoring reports shows that all the key objectives and the majority of the performance targets look set to be achieved. Therefore, the prospects for the year at this stage are very good. A number of key developments and emerging issues that will impact on the service are being satisfactorily progressed although one or two aspects might benefit from some further consideration.

Areas of Further Consideration

- The recommendations of the Hampton report are being implemented and one aspect will be the establishment of the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO) by the end of 2007. The LBRO will have statutory powers to issue guidance to local authorities in respect of the Hampton Report, tackle inconsistencies in enforcement practice and ensure local authority regulatory services and enforcement codes are consistent with the Hampton Code of Practice. Therefore, clarification on whether the impact of the LBRO raises any resource/service implications for the Council would be helpful.
- It is unclear if the % of abandoned vehicles investigated within 24 hours will achieve this year's target of 85%. Because abandoned vehicles add to the fear of crime as well as being a hazard in themselves, quick investigations of reports of abandoned vehicles is essential. Therefore, the factors that affect the Council's ability to investigate reports need to be highlighted to see if anything can be done to improve performance.

SERVICE: Culture & Leisure *(Community Safety & the Drug Action Team ONLY)*

Overview

There are no key objectives specific to Community Safety or Drug Treatment/Action highlighted in the monitoring report and therefore, an overview of progress is not available for the 3rd quarter. There is mixed picture regarding the crime performance indicators in terms of them achieving their targets. However, while robberies per 1000 population (*BV 127b*) will not hit its target, Halton's figure will still be in the top 25% of local authorities. Conversely, while participation in drug treatment programmes (*BV 198*) is on course to achieve its target, Halton's performance looks likely to remain in the bottom 25% of local authorities.

SERVICE: Health & Partnerships (*Registration Service, Consumer Protection & Bereavement Services ONLY*)

Overview

These comments relate to those elements in the Health & Partnership service plan that fall within the remit of the Safer Halton PPB. The majority of the objectives and all the performance targets look set to be achieved and therefore, the prospects for the year appear to be good. However, there is a financial matter highlighted in the monitoring report that may benefit from further consideration.

Areas of Further Consideration

- There is a significant income shortfall projected concerning the Cemeteries and Crematoria. Although it is difficult to forecast patterns or trends given the nature of the service, an indication of the possible reasons for the downturn, whether the situation is unique to Halton and if there is anything the Council can do in the circumstances to try and address the shortfall maybe appropriate.