

# Public Document Pack



## Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

Wednesday, 20 June 2007 6.30 p.m.  
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

**Chief Executive**

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Councillor Ron Hignett (Chairman)</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Keith Morley (Vice-Chairman)</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Peter Blackmore</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
<b>Councillor John Bradshaw</b>	<b>Conservative</b>
<b>Councillor Ellen Cargill</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Dave Leadbetter</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Peter Murray</b>	<b>Conservative</b>
<b>Councillor Paul Nolan</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Christopher Rowe</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
<b>Councillor Tim Sly</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
<b>Councillor Dave Thompson</b>	<b>Labour</b>

*Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 or e-mail [caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk](mailto:caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk) for further information.  
The next meeting of the Board is on Wednesday, 19 September 2007*

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

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)</b>	
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.	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>	<b>1 - 2</b>
<b>4. EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</b>	<b>3 - 15</b>
<b>5. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES</b>	
(A) <b>POST OFFICE CLOSURE - HALTON LEA</b>	<b>16 - 25</b>
(B) <b>ANNUAL REPORT</b>	<b>26 - 30</b>
(C) <b>WIDNES WATERFRONT 3D ANIMATION</b>	<b>31 - 33</b>
(D) <b>BIRCHFIELD ROAD / HALTON VILLAGE CONSULTATION REVIEW</b>	<b>34 - 43</b>
(E) <b>URBAN RENEWAL STRATEGIC REVIEW &amp; ACTION PLAN 2007-10</b>	<b>44 - 81</b>
(F) <b>HALTON PUBLIC TRANSPORT ADVISORY PANEL AND TRANSPORT / ACCESSIBILITY BEST VALUE IMPROVEMENT PLAN UPDATE</b>	<b>82 - 86</b>
<b>6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>	
(A) <b>QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORTS</b>	<b>87 - 207</b>

*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:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20 June 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

**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 bare 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 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:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 20 June 2007  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Board Minutes  
**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Urban Renewal Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board, Executive Board Sub and Executive (Transmodal Implementation) Sub Board 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**

- 3.1 None.

**4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 None.

**5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 None.

**6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 None.

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

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

**APPENDIX 1**

**Extract of Executive Board, Executive Board Sub Committee and Executive (Transmodal Implementation) Sub Board Minutes Relevant to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board**

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 25 January 2007**

**78. MERSEYSIDE WASTE DEVELOPMENT PLAN DOCUMENT: ISSUES AND OPTIONS REPORT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment covering the Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service's report, which had been produced in accordance with the agreed governance arrangements for the preparation of the Joint Merseyside Waste Development Plan Document (DPD). This had been done in collaboration with officers from other Districts that were part of the Joint Waste DPD. The core contents and recommendations of the report were the same for all the local authorities involved in the preparation of the Joint Waste DPD to ensure that each district was following exactly the same statutory planning process.

It was noted that the report was seeking approval for the Issues and Options report for public consultation purposes as the first stage in the statutory planning process. A copy of this document, which asked specific consultation questions to structure the consultation process and guide the development of more detailed and specific policies at preferred options and submissions stages, had been circulated for Members' consideration.

It was noted that the consultation period would last for six weeks until 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007 after which a "results of consultation report" would be prepared along with the policy response to the issues raised. This would be accompanied by the required sustainability appraisal commentary.

**RESOLVED:** That

- (1) the issues and options report be approved for public consultation commencing 23<sup>rd</sup> February 2007;
- (2) a consultation response to the issues and options report be

prepared by 6<sup>th</sup> April 2007; and

- (3) further reports on progress of the Waste DPD project, including the results of the consultation on issues and options, preferred options report and financial matters, be received later in 2007.

79. **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 MEETING HELD ON 22<sup>ND</sup> FEBRUARY 2007**

### **82. LOCAL TRANSPORT EXPENDITURE SETTLEMENT 2007/08 AND LOCAL TRANSPORT PLAN IMPLEMENTATION PROGRAMME 2007/08**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment advising of the announcement made by the Secretary of State for Transport on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2006, giving details of the 2007/8 Local Transport Capital Expenditure Settlement and the classifications awarded to the Council's second Local Transport Plan 2006/07-2010/11 (LTP2) and the first Local Transport Plan 2001/02-2005/06 (LTP1) Delivery Report.

It was noted that, due to the high performance achieved in both these reports, the settlement had included an additional £392,000. In addition, the Board was advised that the DfT performance assessments had placed Halton in the top quartile of the 82 local transport authorities in England

Appendix A to the report provided details of the proposed LTP2 capital expenditure programme for 2007/08. The total settlement for 2007/08 was £4.15 million; this covered all items of transport capital expenditure apart from major schemes such as the Mersey Gateway and major maintenance on the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

It was noted that an additional 25% of performance funding had been allocated to the integrated transport block; 12.5% had been achieved by gaining "Excellent" for the LTP2 grading and 12.5% for gaining "Excellent" for the LTP1 Delivery Report. The Board congratulated officers on their outstanding achievement in this area.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the 2007/08 Local Transport Capital Expenditure Settlement, and the classifications awarded to the Council's second Local



Transport Plan, be welcomed; and

- (2) the implementation programme for 2007/08 at Appendix A be recommended to Council for inclusion in the Council's Capital programme.

*(NB Councillors McDermott and Polhill declared a personal interest in the following item of business due to being Board Members of Widnes Regeneration Ltd (WRL).)*

### **83. HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL (WIDNES WATERFRONT ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ZONE) COMPULSORY PURCHASE ORDER 2006**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment and the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy seeking approval to use the Council's statutory powers of compulsory purchase to assist with the comprehensive land assembly needed to achieve the successful development of the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone (EDZ).

It was noted that the EDZ comprised 80 hectares of low quality former industrial land located on the banks of the River Mersey to the south of Widnes Town Centre, which had been designated as a regeneration site of high priority. Funding to bring this land back into full economic use was available until 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009 using European Funding under Priority 3 of the North West England Objective 2 Programme, Northwest Development Agency Funds and Halton Borough Council monies. The redevelopment proposals were described in the report and outline plans were contained in Appendix D.

Detailed land referencing had taken place to identify the interests to be acquired for the development, and this schedule would form part of a proposed Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO). Despite lengthy discussions, it was unlikely that agreement would be reached with all interested parties within a reasonable timescale; therefore the Acquiring Authority had legitimate, deep-seated concerns that it would be unable to comply with the timetable set for the delivery of the scheme unless it pursued a CPO to assemble the land required.

It was considered that there was a compelling case for making the Order in the public interest and this was outlined for Members' information; however, negotiations would continue with a view to acquiring the properties voluntarily even after the CPO had been made.

The Board was advised that there were two small amendments to the boundaries shown on the plan:

- (a) there was an addition of site 17(b) which had been disclosed by the ongoing site referencing; and
- (b) the boundary around Tan House Garage on Tan House Lane needed to be revised to reflect the actual ownership.

An amended schedule was tabled outlining these changes.

In addition, it was noted that, following the publishing of the agenda, further comments had been received from Mr Routledge of White Moss Landfill, and Mr Adam Gilson, Company Secretary of British Gypsum-Isover Ltd. These were read out for the Board's consideration. Officers advised that discussions had been ongoing with both parties for some time and it was hoped that a mutually acceptable solution could be found in order that those properties could be withdrawn from the CPO; this could be done at any time, including after the start of the Public Inquiry.

### Reason for Decision

The draft Statement of Reasons (Appendix F) outlined the case and detailed the reasons for making the CPO. In summary, this was to facilitate the comprehensive redevelopment of the area.

### Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The Council and/or its joint venture partner had contacted and sought to commence negotiations with all the known freeholders and leaseholders to purchase land covered in the Order by agreement. These discussions were ongoing but it was unlikely that agreement would be reached with all parties within a reasonable timescale unless a CPO, to assemble the land required, was made.

### Implementation Date

It was anticipated that the CPO would be made within 3 months of the Executive Board decision.

RESOLVED: That with the inclusion of the amendments tabled at the meeting

- (1) the Council makes a Compulsory Purchase Order under Section 226(1)(a) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for the acquisition of all interests in the land (the Order Land)

shown edged red on the plan attached to the report, Appendix E, for the purposes of facilitating its development, redevelopment or improvement to secure a comprehensive and integrated scheme thereby achieving the promotion and improvement of the economic, social and environmental well-being of the area;

- (2) the Council makes a Compulsory Purchase Order under section 13 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1976 to acquire new rights over the land shown edged blue on the plan attached to the report, Appendix E, in order to secure the comprehensive redevelopment of this run down zone;
- (3) authority be given to the Strategic Director - Environment and the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal, the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, and the Council Solicitor, to take all necessary steps to secure the making and confirmation of the Compulsory Purchase Order and for any other actions necessary to give effect to the land acquisition and the implementation whether on a voluntary basis or otherwise;
- (4) the Strategic Director - Environment, and the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Council Solicitor, be authorised to enter into an Indemnity Agreement with Widnes Regeneration Limited (WRL) which will indemnify the Council in respect of all external expenditure concerned with the making and implementation of the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) and thereafter provide for WRL to develop those sites to implement the Widnes Waterfront Economic Zone in accordance with the principles of the Masterplan;
- (5) the CPO not be entered into until the Indemnity Agreement has been completed to the satisfaction of the Council Solicitor, the Strategic Director - Environment and the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy;
- (6) authority be given to the Strategic Director - Environment and the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transportation, Regeneration and Renewal and the Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services, to implement the Widnes Waterfront Relocation Strategy (Appendix A); and

- (7) authority be given to the Strategic Director - Environment and the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy, prior to making the Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO), to make such changes as might be necessary to the Order in the light of varying circumstances and information relating to properties/businesses which might be affected by the CPO including if necessary the authority to expand the Schedule 2 rights.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 15<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2007**

### **92. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which sought approval to change the Council's Allocations Policy with regard to offers to homeless households and undertaking first stage reviews of homelessness decisions.

It was noted that the changes outlined in the report were subject to consultation and a further report would be presented to the Board at the end of the consultation process.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the changes as set out in the report for consultation purposes be approved; and
- (2) a further report be presented to the Board on completion of the consultation exercise.

### **93. HOUSING CAPITAL PROGRAMME (KEY DECISION)**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Health and Community which outlined the forecast outturn for the 2006/07 housing capital programme.

It was noted that the Appendix to the report compared the approved 2006/07 programme with the forecast outturn position, and also showed the proposed programme for 2007/08.

It was noted that the Council had been successful in receiving £25,000 from a bid to the Regional Housing Board.

#### Reason for the Decision

The proposed programme would enable the Council to make

continued progress in addressing the priorities set out in its Housing Homelessness, Private Sector Renewal and Supporting People strategies.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected

The strategies referred to in paragraph 10.1 of the report had previously examined a range of options for meeting housing needs in the Borough, and the proposed programme of work has been based on the priorities that had already been identified.

Implementation Date

April 2007.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the position regarding the 2006/07 programme be noted; and
- (2) the proposed programme for 2007/08, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be recommended to Council for approval.

**EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2007**

**103. PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL STRATEGY**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community which sought approval to the proposed changes to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy, both to reflect recent legislative change and to amend the different forms of financial assistance provided to clients.

It was noted that Halton had introduced its Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy in 2003 and a number of factors now made it necessary to revise this Strategy; these factors were outlined for the Board's consideration.

An appendix was attached to the report summarising the principle changes being recommended in terms of the range of financial assistance to be offered to individuals and the rationale for them. Also appended was the full strategy, which included a new enforcement policy, HMO Licencing Policy, detailed eligibility criteria/conditions for financial assistance, and a policy for dealing with applications to reduce or waive requirements to

repay assistance.

The Board was advised that a consultation exercise had been undertaken through the press, the Council's website, the Landlords Forum, and directly with other local authority and stakeholder organisations: no responses had been received.

RESOLVED: That the Strategy be approved for implementation as soon as is practicable.

#### **104. LIVERPOOL CITY REGION HOUSING STRATEGY**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community outlining the development and draft findings of the Housing Strategy for the Liverpool City Region. It was noted that this Strategy was a major piece of work which had been funded by Government Office North West but commissioned by the Merseyside Housing Forum - it would provide an investment framework for future housing development across the City Region and it was a key element of the Sustainable Communities workstream of the Liverpool City Region Development Programme in response to the Northern Way Challenge.

The findings of work undertaken so far were outlined for the Board's consideration including information on:

- Housing Market Assessment;
- Vulnerable Housing Markets; and
- BME/Gypsy and Traveller households.

The draft strategy identified seven strategic enablers as the building blocks to meet the vision to create sustainable communities. The "Strategic Enablers", and the appropriate policy responses required to deliver them, were also summarised for the Board's information.

It was noted that the Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy undoubtedly had a new heartlands/Liverpool focus. Informal discussions with colleagues in St. Helens and Knowsley had revealed concerns about the degree of emphasis based on the pathfinder area. Nevertheless, the findings and recommendations of the strategy may present opportunities to increase investment in some of Halton's poorest neighbourhoods. The Strategy also supported continued

investment in Castlefields through the National Affordable Housing Programme as the area was identified as one of the top 15% Vulnerable Housing Markets.

There was a requirement to complete and pay for the commission by the end of March and this had led to challenging turnaround times for consultation and feedback. It was expected that the current draft of the Strategy would be signed off by Members of the Merseyside Housing Forum at its meeting on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2007 and endorsement of the Strategy would be sought at the Chief Executives and Leaders Group at the end of April. The authors of the Strategy had recognised that, given the deadline for completing the Commission, it was unlikely that agreement could be reached between partners on the relative merits of each vulnerable area. Therefore, the report restricted itself to suggesting a broad framework for partners to use to determine priority areas for investment.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the thrust of the comments identified in Section 6 – Conclusions – be supported.

## **EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 29<sup>TH</sup> MARCH 2007**

### **111. REQUEST TO APPROVE SINGLE QUOTE TENDER CONTRACT:- LOCAL BUS SERVICE 700**

The Sub-Committee considered a request for a Single Quote Contract (Procurement Standing Orders 1.5 and 3.1), to be entered into with Arriva (North West and Wales) to divert an existing express coach service linking Manchester City Centre and Liverpool John Lennon Airport to serve the Borough.

There were currently no other local bus operators running similar services. The proposal was based on an agreed financial revenue contribution from the Council of £87,000 over three financial years (2006/07 – 2010/11). This arrangement followed a kick-start style funding profile, whereby the Council's revenue contribution would decline over three years as follows:

2007/08     £43,500

2008/09     £29,000

2009/10     £14,500

A service contract would be entered into with Arriva (North West and Wales) in line with the Council's standard supported local bus service contract terms and conditions.

In addition, Arriva (North West and Wales) had guaranteed to operate the service commercially for a minimum of 7 years after the initial grant period from 2010/11 onwards.

RESOLVED: That Procurement Standing Orders in relation to tendering be waived accordingly.

**112. RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT WITH MERSEY WATERFRONT REGIONAL PARK**

The Sub-Committee considered a request for approval to sign the new Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Agreement.

The Mersey Waterfront Regional Park was set up in 2004 to transform, energise and connect the collective potential of areas along the Mersey Waterfront. The initial three-year period was funded by £8.5m from the North West Regional Development Agency (NWDA) and £13.25m of European Regional Development Fund Objective 1 money. During this period, Halton had benefited from substantial grants towards Wigg Island Visitors Centre, Widnes Wharf Boardwalk and viewing platform, and the Waterfront Maintenance Scheme.

It was reported that £16.5m of NWDA Funding had now been secured for the succession programme, which would run until 2009.

Although no major schemes had been identified within Halton for this period, money may be available for smaller schemes within the 'Pride in our Promenades' and 'Coastal Spaces and Places' programmes. Halton would also benefit from marketing and publicity initiatives for the wider waterfront park. In addition, a spatial framework identified Halton as one of the key windows on the waterfront, which could help to draw in future funding.

RESOLVED: That the existing Mersey Waterfront Regional Park Agreement be renewed and that the Strategic Director, Environment be authorised to determine the terms of the new agreement following the principles outlined in the report.



**EXECUTIVE (TRANSMODAL IMPLEMENTATION) SUB BOARD  
ON 19<sup>TH</sup> APRIL 2007**

**REVISIONS TO PROPOSED STRUCTURAL LANDSCAPING ON  
HBC FIELDS**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which gave Members an update on the revisions to the design, planning issues and implementation of the structural landscape around the area proposed for development on the 'Halton Fields' site.

In addition it was noted that a revised landscape master plan, albeit only a variation to that approved earlier would be submitted for a further revised planning approval in May 2007.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the report be noted; and
- (2) the submission of the revision to the existing planning application be approved.

**RAIL RECEPTION SIDINGS FOR 3MG - MERSEY MULTIMODAL  
GATEWAY**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director, Environment which sought approval to submit a planning application for Phase 1 of the Rail Reception Sidings for 3MG – Mersey Multimodal Gateway.

A query was raised in relation to noise levels, particularly at night and in response it was noted that this would be considered as part of the environmental survey which would be carried out by MDS Transmodal and 3MG.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the submission of the planning application as set out in the report be approved; and
- (2) delegated authority to develop and implement the scheme, be granted to the Strategic Director, Environment in consultation with the Executive Board Portfolio Holder for Planning, Transportation and Regeneration.

**REPORT TO:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20 June 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Environment

**SUBJECT:** Future of Halton Lea Post Office

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 The purpose of this report is to draw Members' attention to the consultation exercise being undertaken by the Post Office regarding the future arrangements for the provision of Post Office services in Halton Lea Shopping Centre. Representatives of the Post Office have been invited to attend the meeting and to address the Board on its proposals.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED that the Board:**

- (1) Hears from the representative of the Post Office the details of the changes proposed for the delivery of the post office service at Halton Lea**
- (2) Comments appropriately to the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy who, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Corporate Services, has been authorised by The Executive Board to make further comments to the Post Office.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Executive Board, at its meeting on 29th March 2007, considered a report which provided details of a consultation paper issued by the Department for Trade and Industry on the future of the Post Office network. The Executive Board supported the actions taken by the Chief Executive in expressing concern about any proposals that reduce the Post Office network in Halton.

3.2 The Council has now been consulted by the Post Office regarding proposals to change the arrangements for providing Post Office services in Halton Lea, Runcorn. Their proposal is to transfer the existing Post Office services from their existing location at 88 Forest Walk to the Branch of W. H. Smith within Halton Lea. This was to be have been considered by the Executive Board on 7<sup>th</sup>. June 2007.

3.3 Attached as Appendix 1 to this report is a copy of a letter received from the National Consultation Manager from Post Office Ltd. which provides more details of the proposals.

- 3.4 In order to understand better the proposals being put forward by the Post Office, the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board has invited representatives from the Post Office to address this meeting to provide more details on the proposed changes. These will be Peter Mylchreest (Lead Project Manager - WH Smith Transfers) and Wendy Martin (Senior External Relations Manager).
- 3.5 Unfortunately, this will be after the date set by the Post Office for the receipt of comments, 14th June 2007. With this in mind the Executive Board on 7<sup>th</sup> June 2007 resolved that the Council should write in the interim period to the Post Office objecting to the proposed new arrangements. The Council also asked to see the proposed physical layout of the new facilities in W. H. Smith, given concerns that have been expressed about the capacity of the W. H. Smith premises to house such a facility.
- 3.6 An informal discussion has been held with Fordgate, the owners of Halton Lea. Their comments included:
- They are very disappointed with the move, but within the existing lease agreements they cannot do anything about it.
  - The current post office is very busy and they have concerns about how W H Smith are going to cope with the management of the additional footfall.
  - The moving of the post office will leave the existing adjacent shops there with much reduced passing footfall. The danger is that this will result in a very dead corner in Halton Lea.
  - The post office has a residue of lease left on their current premises which Fordgate had not, at that time, been contacted about.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Council needs to fully understand the impact such a change will have on the vitality and visibility of the Town Centre. Post Offices play an important role in the community beyond the provision of services. The Council will want to be reassured that there will be no reduction in services.

#### **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 There are no direct risk implications for the Council.

#### **6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 The Post Office provides an important service access point for many individuals. It is vital the service remains accessible to all who need to use it.

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

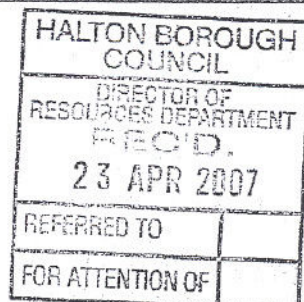
<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Consultation letter	I. Leivesley's Office, 6th Floor, Municipal Building, Widnes	I. Leivesley

6/07

POST  
OFFICE

# Branch change

David Parr - Chief Executive  
Halton Borough Council  
Chief Executive's Directorate  
Municipal Building  
Kingsway  
WIDNES  
WA8 7QF



18 April 2007

Dear Mr Parr

**Post Office® Runcorn Shopping City branch**  
118 River Walk, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2BZ

I am very pleased to announce our intention to extend our existing partnership with WHSmith and transfer a number of Post Office branches across the UK to their stores, including Runcorn Shopping City Post Office branch currently located at the above address.

At a time when Post Office Ltd is losing £4m a week, partnerships such as these enable us to continue offering Post Office services in the heart of Runcorn. Without them, we simply cannot safeguard high street branches or the services they provide.

At present, Post Office Ltd own and manage the above Post Office branch. Our intention is for WHSmith to manage Runcorn Post Office branch on behalf of Post Office Ltd from their existing premises at 88 Forest Walk, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GX, 120 yards away from the current site. In partnership with us, WHSmith will continue to provide the high standard of service and range of products currently available at Runcorn Shopping City Post Office branch. The new branch will be carefully integrated into their nearby store, and will remain fully accessible for customers, with open plan, level access into the branch.

The transfer of this branch follows the successful trial of six Post Office branches last year. I am pleased to say that feedback from customers has been good, with customers welcoming the pleasant environment, high standard of service and improved opening hours on offer at the new branches. WHSmith is one of the UK's leading retail groups, who currently operate more than 540 high street stores and around 130 travel stores at airport, station and motorway service locations nationwide, selling a wide range of newspapers, magazines, stationery, books and entertainment products. As one of the UK's leading retail groups, we are confident that WHSmith have the customer focus, appropriate knowledge and retail experience to enable them to continue to provide a high standard of service to our customers in Runcorn. This has been clearly demonstrated by the success of the trial branches and furthermore we are confident that the extensive range of stationery and associated goods that WHSmith offers complements the wide range of main Post Office services that will continue to be available following the transfer.

Enclosed with this letter is a summary of what the newly franchised Runcorn Post Office branch will offer and answers to frequently asked questions as to why Post Office Ltd franchise branches.

We have an agreed Code of Practice on how we deal with a range of branch network change with Postwatch, our independent consumer council. As part of that Code of Practice, Postwatch recognise that the decision to transfer a Post Office branch to a franchise partner is a commercial decision to be taken solely by Post Office Ltd and is, therefore, not subject to public debate or consent. However, it is important to us that our customers and local community representatives like yourself, understand the rationale behind our decision and that you also have the opportunity to comment on the facilities that will be available at the new branch.

In view of this, we are inviting feedback from yourself and from customers who regularly visit Runcorn Shopping City Post Office branch, on the following areas:

- (i) the proposed opening hours at the new branch;
- (ii) access arrangements into the new branch;
- (iii) the facilities that are planned for the new branch.

It is important to understand that we are not proposing the removal or downgrading of the Post Office service provided in Runcorn. On the contrary, our partnership with WHSmith will help us to continue to provide a main Post Office branch in the heart of the town. As you can see from the enclosed documents, customers will benefit from significant financial investment in the new Post Office.

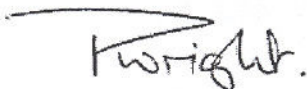
You may also wish to share this information with those you believe may have an interest in this matter.

Please note, exceptionally in this instance we have extended public consultation by two weeks to allow for the forthcoming local elections. If you wish to give us any feedback on the facilities at the new branch, please ensure that we receive this by close of business on 14 June 2007. I will write again, after this date, to update you on any comments we have received on our plans, and to confirm the arrangements we have made for Runcorn Post Office branch.

Among other local interest groups, we are also contacting the consumer council, Postwatch, and you may wish to consider copying your response to them at the following address: Postwatch, 22 Grosvenor Gardens, London, SW1W 0TT. You are under no obligation to do so and any correspondence sent to us will be treated in the strictest confidence.

Thank you for giving me the opportunity to explain our position.

Yours sincerely



Philippa Wright (Mrs)  
National Consultation Manager  
Post Office Ltd, c/o National Consultation Team  
PO Box 2060, WATFORD, WD18 8ZW

Telephone: 08457 22 33 44 Email via our website: [www.postoffice.co.uk](http://www.postoffice.co.uk)

The Post Office<sup>®</sup> is able to supply customers with this information, free of charge, in an alternative format for people who are visually impaired. To obtain a copy, call the Post Office<sup>®</sup> helpline on 08457 22 33 44 or textphone 08457 22 33 55.

Current Runcorn Shopping City Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch located at;

118 River Walk  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2BZ

Franchise partner;

WHSmith

New Runcorn Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch, located at;

88 Forest Walk  
Halton Lea  
Runcorn  
WA7 2GX

Distance from current site;

120 yards along level terrain

What will the new Runcorn Post Office<sup>®</sup> branch offer?

- Extended opening hours as follows;

Mon – Sat 09.00 – 17.30

- The same wide range of main Post Office services currently available at Runcorn Shopping City Post Office branch including; personal banking; financial services; car tax renewal; Post Office card account; passport application checking and foreign currency services, but with the exception of stamp vending machines.
- Ten serving positions, comprising of eight open plan and two traditional style positions designated primarily to Bureau de Change/Giro business banking that has the flexibility to be utilised for all other Post Office transactions, during busy periods.
- WHSmith is keen to ensure there is continued good access to Post Office services. There will be open plan, level access into the branch. The Post Office counter area will be carefully integrated into the current store, providing adequate room for Post Office and retail customers alike.
- Low level writing desk and serving counter, plus an induction hearing loop for those customers with hearing difficulties.
- Car parking facilities will remain the same.
- Public transport services are available to and from the surrounding residential areas.
- The new branch will be integrated into the existing WHSmith store, providing customers the opportunity to purchase an extensive range of newspapers, magazines, stationery, books and entertainment products under one roof.

Planned month of transfer: August 2007

# *Franchising*

*A Partnership approach to providing main Post Office® services*

**POST  
OFFICE**

If you have difficulty reading this leaflet please call

**08457 22 33 44**



## Frequently Asked Questions

### Why franchise Post Office® branches?

There are currently over 14,000 Post Office® branches in the UK. The vast majority of these - some 96% - are not directly operated by Post Office Ltd but are run by agents on our behalf.

The larger Post Office® branches in high street locations have however often been run by staff employed by Post Office Ltd. The cost of running these branches is very high, and we don't make enough money in the branches to cover their costs. We have experienced a steady decline in customers, due largely to the loss of some of our most traditional areas of business, for example pension and benefit payments. We are working hard to replace this lost business with income from new products and services such as the new Post Office® credit card, Car and Home Insurance and our very successful Post Office® HomePhone service.

Post Office Ltd is therefore actively looking at ways of maintaining services in the most cost effective way possible. One option is to transfer the management of more of our larger Post Office® branches to franchisees. This has many advantages for the business, while at the same time preserving a main Post Office® presence in the locality.

Franchise partners usually look to operate a Post Office® alongside their own retail offer. This improves the viability of Post Office® branches, as both the Post Office® and retail business can be operated from the same location. Equally, both the Post Office® and retail business can benefit from the regular customer footfall visiting the store; all of which helps to secure a viable and sustainable Post Office® and retail store for our customers in the longer term. Coupled with this, franchisees put significant investment into their branches, which Post Office Ltd simply cannot afford to do.

The savings we make from transferring a branch to a franchise partner are invested in such areas as the development of new products and services, which help to sustain our wider Post Office® network and therefore benefit all of our customers in the longer term. We, therefore, see franchising as a very positive step in modernising our network and maintaining our ability to continue to provide customers access to reliable and high quality services and products.



How will you ensure service standards are maintained at the franchised branch?

Post Office Ltd will train all customer advisors at the new branch to the same standards as our own employees. They will also be supported within the first few weeks of the branch transferring to our franchise partner. Inevitably, there will be a settling in period as the franchise staff adjust to their new roles. Experience shows, however, that following this initial period, our franchise branches achieve good standards of customer satisfaction, as measured independently by an external company, whilst at the same time offering a sustainable service to customers into the long term future. Additionally, as with any other Post Office® branch, a local Post Office Ltd Manager monitors service standards on an ongoing basis.

How are franchised branches staffed?

All customer advisors working at franchised branches are directly employed by our franchisee. A dedicated branch manager would also be appointed by the franchisee to run the branch on a day to day basis, similar to in branches directly managed by Post Office Ltd.

Naturally, concerns are sometimes expressed by customers about the future of the staff working at the current Post Office® branch. The decision to franchise a branch is not made lightly, and Post Office Ltd values the hard work, commitment and loyalty provided by our staff at directly managed Post Office® branches. We do however have to take difficult commercial decisions that, regretfully, will have implications for individuals. All staff will be given the opportunity to state their personal preferences for future employment within the organisation and whenever possible, we will try to ensure these preferences are met.

#### How are franchise partners selected?

All of our partners, whether they are independent business people or companies, are carefully selected. We only enter into agreements when we are entirely satisfied with their suitability to operate a Post Office®.

When considering the suitability of a future partner our criteria include, financial status; commercial and retail awareness; previous good employment record; motivation and excellent customer focus.

#### How long are franchise contracts for?

WHSmith are contracted to provide Post Office® services for seven years, with an option to continue at the end of that period. If the agent decides to relocate to alternative premises within this time, this must be agreed beforehand with Post Office Ltd. Any subsequent change of management would be with the agreement of Post Office Ltd and the appointment criteria applied would be the same as for any other franchisee at that time.

Registered in England number 2154540

Registered office: 80 85 Old Street, London EC1V 9NN

The Post Office® and the Post Office symbol are registered trademarks of Post Office Ltd in the UK and other countries.

**REPORT:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20 June 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment

**SUBJECT:** Urban Renewal PPB 2006/7 Annual Report

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT**

1.1 This report presents a draft Annual Report of the activities of the Urban Renewal PPB during 2006/7 for comment/amendment. Subject to endorsement by the PPB, the Annual Report will go forward with the Annual Reports of other PPBs to a forthcoming meeting of the full Council for adoption.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED: That**

- (1) the PPB consider, comment upon and if necessary agree amendments to, the attached Annual Report of the PPB's activities in 2006/7; and**
- (2) the PPB endorse the attached/amended Annual Report for the purpose of its adoption at a forthcoming meeting of the full Council.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Annex comprising the draft Urban Renewal PPB Annual Report for 2006/7

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None arising from this report itself.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None arising from this report itself.

## **6.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS**

6.1 2006/7 departmental service plans



Councillor  
Hignett

## **ANNUAL REPORT URBAN RENEWAL POLICY AND PERFORMANCE BOARD JUNE 2006 – MARCH 2007**

“Once again the Urban Renewal PPB has overseen the vast amount of activity which is contributing to Halton’s renaissance. The number of cranes which have appeared on the skylines of Widnes and Runcorn are testimony to the priority which the Council attaches to renewing the economy and the physical fabric of Halton. Also, the development programmes which the Board has agreed in the past year will ensure that this dynamism will continue to fuel Halton’s renewal into the future.”

**Councillor Hignett**  
**Chairman, Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board**

### **MEMBERSHIP AND RESPONSIBILITIES**

During 2006/7 the Board comprised eleven Councillors –

Councillor R. Hignett (Chairman)	Labour
Councillor D. Leadbetter (Vice Chairman)	Labour
Councillor Ellen Cargill	Labour
Councillor K. Morley	Labour
Councillor P. Nolan	Labour
Councillor C. Rowe	Liberal Democrat
Councillor D. Thompson	Labour
Councillor T. Sly	Liberal Democrat
Councillor P. Wallace	Labour
Councillor I. Whittaker	Conservative
Councillor P. Worrall	Liberal Democrat

The Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board is responsible for scrutinising performance and formulating policy in relation to the following areas:

- Highways and Transportation,
- Environmental Health and Planning,
- Economic Regeneration and
- Major Projects Departments with the additional responsibility for
- Contaminated Land (as from 2005/06)
- Strategic Housing (as from 2006/07).

## REVIEW OF THE YEAR

The full Board met five times during the year. As well as considering Executive Board decisions relevant to the work of the Urban Renewal Board, agreeing the Service Plans of the relevant Departments and monitoring their general activities and performance against them, set out below are some of the main activities and issues that the Board has worked on during the year:

### Corporate Responsibilities

- The terms of reference for the Board have been amended following changes to the Council's decision-making structures, implemented in 2006/07, in order to bring them into line with the Council's Strategic Priorities, as contained within the Corporate and Community Plans. One amendment to the terms of reference being that this Board be responsible for scrutiny of the strategic housing function.
- The Board received a report outlining the need for a Local Area Agreement, negotiated with Central Government.

### Major Projects Department

- Progress on the implementation of the Castlefields and Widnes Waterfront Regeneration programmes was considered and noted. The Board was asked to review and agree the Widnes Waterfront NWDA Performance Plan for 2006/7 and then, later, for 2007/8.
- The Board received a presentation on the Contaminated Land Inspection Strategy Review and noted the revised implementation timetable.
- A report reviewing the conclusions and recommendations outlined in a commercial property study, which assessed the supply of and demand for employment land and premises (industrial, office and retail) in Halton, was considered by the Board and resolved that recommendations set out in that report be supported.

### Planning

- Consideration was given to a report which advised on new powers available to the Council to make Gating Orders. The report proposed policy to be adopted in relation to these which was supported and it was recommended that the Executive Board adopt a policy requiring Gating Orders be made against future alley-gate proposals.

### Highways and Transportation

- The Board reviewed a Delivery Report of the First Local Transport Plan 2001/2 to 2005/6. Of particular note was the difference that the Plan had made in terms of the Council's strategic priorities at that time, as set out in the Borough's Corporate Plan.

- The Board was informed of the need to appoint a Chairman and three Members to the Public Transport Advisory Panel. As a consequence Cllrs Hignett, Leadbetter, Sly and Polhill's names were put forward.
- There was an update on the current position regarding the measurement and treatment of highway skidding resistance, which informed the proposal to introduce a policy for analysing skid resistance data in order to produce programmes of treatment, which was recommended for adoption.
- The Board received a presentation on the Best Value Review of Transportation and Access. Transport links to new developments and local hospitals were discussed and it was determined that the Public Transport Liaison Panel should scrutinise this further, to the benefit of Halton residents.
- The Street Lighting Topic Review was received.
- A petition requesting signals at Derby Road, Widnes, was considered by to the Board. A refuge was an option that was debated but not adopted due to the presence of the bus route. It was determined that this situation should continue to be monitored.
- The Local Transport Capital Expenditure Settlement 2007/8 was considered and welcomed. It was noted that this improved settlement rewarded the high performance achieved in both the LTP2 and LTP1 Delivery Reports and that Halton was now in the top quartile of the 82 local transport authorities in England.
- The Board reviewed and noted the Public Right of Way Milestone Statement Progress Report 2007/8 in which a reduction in core funding for Groundwork Mersey Valley was identified.

#### **Economic Regeneration**

- The Board considered a study undertaken in Runcorn and Widnes town centres to evaluate the level of support from traders and businesses for developing Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) and determined to support this initiative.
- The Board reviewed and noted the draft Town Centre Strategies for Halton Lea and Runcorn Town Centre, as Supplementary Planning Documents, which had been approved for public consultation. Widnes would, instead, have an Area Action Plan produced.

#### **Housing**

- The Board received a report on the Housing Needs Survey 2006, which had proved to be a comprehensive and robust housing market and needs assessment.
- An update on a review of Supported Housing by the Health PPB was given and, due to a change in the Board's remit, this will be considered as a future scrutiny topic.
- The Board reviewed an updated report on proposed changes to the Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy and determined that the document be accepted for public consultation purposes prior to being referred to the Executive Board.
- The draft of the House Extension Supplementary Planning Document was noted by the Board, prior to it going out to public consultation.

**Other**

- The Board reviewed the Natural Assets Strategy, which was adopted in 2000, together with associated DVD's entitled 'Swifts in Halton' and 'Pickering's Pasture'. The need to get the balance of vegetation right, particularly during the planning process was discussed, along with the regeneration works at Castlefields. The review was recommended to be published in 2007, as a document available to the public, and policies and actions contained therein be noted and followed by all services in the Council where this would have an impact.

**WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2006/7**

- A report on the topic brief 'Business Parks' was considered as part of the scrutiny programme and accepted, with key recommendations to be considered and decided upon by the Executive Board.
- The topic brief report on 'Raising Additional Revenue from Existing Services' was considered and recommendations made for further action.
- The Board considered a report on the topic brief for 'Street Lighting', which was noted and to be forwarded to the Executive Board for consideration of the various recommendations.

**WORK PROGRAMME FOR 2007/8**

The Board has contributed a number of Topic ideas to be considered by the 2007-8 PPB for inclusion in their work programme for the coming year.

- Future of Town Centre Management;
- Housing Strategy;
- Income Regeneration (continuation of).

**Members of the Public are welcome at the meetings of the Board. If you would like to know where and when meetings are to be held or if you would like any more information about the Board or its work please contact Committee Services in the first instance, telephone 0151 424 2061 extension 1125 or email [Lynn.Cairns@Halton.gov.uk](mailto:Lynn.Cairns@Halton.gov.uk)**



**REPORT TO:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20 June 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director - Environment

**SUBJECT:** Widnes Waterfront 3D Animation

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

**1.1** To describe the procurement process, development and marketing and other related opportunities associated with the creation of a 3D animation of the Widnes Waterfront programme (and adjacent) areas

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION:** That the Board consider the Widnes Waterfront 3D animation in the context of the wider Widnes Waterfront Marketing and Communications Strategy together with the potential of utilising the animation for other, major regeneration projects in the Borough.

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

**3.1** The Widnes Waterfront is one of only fourteen Economic Development Zones in the North West and will, over a six years period, utilise £8 million of European Regional Development funding together with £7.5 million of funding from the North West Development Agency and a further £1.5 million from Halton Borough Council to facilitate the wholesale regeneration of approximately two hundred acres of derelict, former industrial land in Southern Widnes.

**3.2** In 2003, as part of the overall Widnes Waterfront Marketing and Communications Strategy, a 3D graphical animation of the Widnes Waterfront Master Plan was produced. However, to more accurately reflect the commercial development that has taken place in the intervening period it became necessary to update and improve upon that original model.

**3.3** Three North West based specialist 3D mapping and animation companies were, therefore, invited to tender to produce a new 3D digital asset of the Widnes Waterfront programme area.

**3.4** The following companies submitted valid tenders :-

- |                         |            |
|-------------------------|------------|
| ○ Fudge Studios Limited | £46,850.00 |
| ○ DHI 3D Limited        | £49,800.00 |
| ○ T3D                   | £29,480.00 |

- 3.5 T3D supplied the lowest valid tender and were duly appointed.
- 3.5 The total area modelled is approximately 14 square kilometres, including a higher level of modelling for the Widnes Waterfront Programme Area. This includes approximately 45 office and commercial buildings, the proposed leisure and retail complex, new roads, junctions, landscaping area, public green space and, perhaps most, significantly the New Mersey Gateway.

The model is fully interactivity within the virtual environment of the internet effectively letting users 'walk' around the Widnes Waterfront development

The model features a two and a half minute animation which includes :-

- A virtual fly through starting upstream and moving towards the New Mersey Crossing and on towards the existing Silver Jubilee Bridge
  - A virtual flight along the New Mersey Crossing to the Widnes Waterfront programme area
  - A virtual flight around the Widnes Waterfront programme area, pausing at key developments and ending with high overview of the site looking south towards the New Mersey Crossing.
- 3.6 The digital asset will be a key element of the programme marketing and awareness raising activities in 2007. For example, it will form the centrepiece of an enhanced programme web site [www.widneswaterfront.co.uk](http://www.widneswaterfront.co.uk). The animation can also be delivered to specific, targeted individual and companies by email.
- 3.7 The animation will also be made available to individual developers and agents for marketing purposes who can, for example, choose to introduce a greater degree of interactivity to their individual buildings.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The availability of a 3D digital asset of the Widnes Waterfront programme area will be a key element of the programme Marketing and Communications Plan and will contribute positively to the realisation of the Borough's wider regeneration objectives.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The creation of a 22 square kilometre digital asset of the Borough will benefit many other regeneration projects. For example, the New Mersey Crossing Team intend using the model to analyse different road configurations associated with the new bridge. The model can also be employed to raise awareness of the New Mersey Crossing.
- 5.2 The model can also be employed as part of the planning process. For example, major new developments can be 'dropped into' the model

graphically illustrating the impact they will have on adjacent development and communities.

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 The model is accurate to 30 cm across a kilometre. However, it is important that when the model is employed to represent potential developments then firstly, similar tolerances are employed and secondly, it is made explicit that the model is only being used for indicative and illustrative purposes.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The model will make a positive contribution to the realisation of the overall Widnes Waterfront programme objectives which seek to provide inclusive employment and leisure and recreational opportunities for the people of the Borough .

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Valid tender documents	Economic Regeneration Office	Tim Leather

**REPORT TO:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20<sup>th</sup> June 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment

**SUBJECT:** Outcome of Consultation Review Panel Meetings

**WARDS:** Birchfield & Castlefields

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To report the outcome of two Consultation Review Panel meetings over the 2006/07 financial year.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION**

- 2.1 That the report be noted.

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In accordance with Council policy, Consultation Review Panel (CRP) meetings have been held to review two schemes on which public consultation exercises have been held during the 2006/7 financial year.
- 3.2 **Halton Village, Runcorn - Traffic Calming.** In March and May 2006 written complaints were received from residents of Norton Lane and Stockham Lane, Halton Village, requesting traffic calming measures to reduce vehicle speeds in the area. Previously, separate complaints had been lodged concerning damage to property at the Norton Lane/Castlefields Avenue South junction, allegedly caused by drivers approaching the junction at excessive speed and losing control. Norton Lane had hosted two traffic incidents involving injury in the previous three years.
- 3.3 A Local Transport Plan funded traffic calming scheme was designed to address the immediate issues, but given the relatively low cost of such work and the value of prevention of the casualties to be saved, the project was extended to offer calming over the whole of the Stockham Lane, Norton Lane and Norton view residential rectangle. Drg. no. 8920 (attached) refers. Consultation was undertaken with affected residents.
- 3.4 The consultation indicated support for the project in Norton Lane, mixed views in Stockham Lane and a majority against in Norton View. At the subsequent CRP meeting (minutes in Appendix 'A') it was agreed that the scheme be progressed in modified form over Norton Lane and Stockham Lane but that the Norton View section should be deleted. It

was also recommended that investigation be undertaken with a view to extending the scheme adjacent to St. Mary's Primary School in Castlefield Avenue South. This work is now in progress.

- 3.5 The recommendations have been incorporated into the scheme design and implementation will take place during the current financial year. Funding will be via the Local Transport Plan Local Safety Scheme budget.
- 3.6 **Birchfield Road, Widnes – Quality Transport Corridor.** This scheme was designed in consultation with the Police, bus operators and local schools. The design included the realignment of Victoria Avenue and the relocation of the pedestrian crossing and linking of existing cycleway provisions by widening the footpath and installing a combined use pathway. Other elements of the project included treatment of bus stops with bus border kerbs and associated road markings, the closing of bus lay-bys and road markings to narrow a section of carriageway fronting Wade Deacon School to slow traffic and give the appearance of entering a school zone. Drg. no. 8329/F/002 refers and will be displayed at the meeting.
- 3.7 A consultation exercise was carried out on the scheme to include as many interested parties as possible. The consultation exercise consisted of the following:
  - Pre consultation meeting was held 27 November 2006 with Councillors from the affected Wards – Kingsway, Birchfield, Farnworth and Appleton prior to public consultation.
  - A public consultation took place at Wade Deacon High School – 5 December 2006 between 2 pm – 7pm, with all the surrounding residents and businesses being invited via leaflet drop. Questionnaires were issued to all who attended.
  - The bike users group.
- 3.8 All questionnaires received were analysed and reported to a CRP held on 15 January 2007 attended by Councillors Dave Leadbetter and Ann Gerrard, senior officers and Cheshire Police. (Minutes in Appendix 'B'.) The following revisions to the scheme were recommended by the CRP:
  - Remove road markings narrowing road at Wade Deacon following comments regarding safety issues from the bike users group.
  - Bus lay-bys to remain open but lined with clearway marking prohibiting parking other than buses.
  - Approval of relocated crossing and conversion into a Toucan crossing. Properties immediately affected may object to the position but at the CRP the elected members and the Police felt this was the best position for a road crossing to serve the schools and park and felt it was worth pursuing.
- 3.9 These recommendations have been incorporated into the scheme design. Implementation is programmed for July/August 2007 to coincide

with the school holiday period. Funding will be via the Local Transport Plan Quality Transport Corridor budget.

**4.0 POLICY, RISK, FINANCIAL, EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None

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

5.1 **Halton View, Runcorn.** (Appendix 'A') Background information held in the Traffic Management Section, Environment, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GW. Contact: Jo Brussels

5.2 **Birchfield Road, Widnes.** (Appendix 'B') Background information held in the Highways Capital Section, Environment, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, WA7 2GW. Contact: Debbie Cragg

<b>Consultation Review Panel Agenda/Record</b>
--

Project Name: Quality Transport Corridor - Birchfield Road, Widnes	Project File: M I 047
--	-----------------------

Date: Monday 15 January 2007

Present:

Cllr Dave Leadbetter (DL) – Chair  
 Cllr Ann Gerrard (AG) – Kingsway Ward Councillor

Ian Stewardson (IS) – Cheshire Police  
 Alan West (AW) – Operational Director Highways and Transportation  
 Stephen Leng (SL) – Divisional Manager Highways  
 Dave Cunliffe (DC) – Section Leader Highways Capital  
 Debbie Cragg (DCr) – Senior Engineer Highways Capital

DESIGN STAGE:

FEASIBILITY	
PRELIMINARY DESIGN	✓
DETAILED DESIGN	

(Tick as applicable)

Agenda	Meeting Record	Action
1. Introduction.	<p>Apologies were received from Councillors Fraser, Horabin, Polhill and Hignett.</p> <p>DC introduced the scheme to all present and spoke around the original Consultation plan Drg. No 8329/F/002. DC explained some of the background to the scheme, which originally was envisaged to be a traffic signal junction to help movements of vehicles and pedestrians on Lockett Road, Victoria Avenue and Birchfield Road. This initial scheme was met with a lot of opposition from the local residents affected especially those living in Victoria Avenue who were concerned that the parking would become even worse. The scheme was then put on hold and was revisited as a Quality Transport Scheme to link in the principle of the transport corridors for an extended length of Birchfield Road (between Highfield Road and Lancaster Road).</p> <p>DC explained that the scheme was designed in consultation with internal officers, the Police, Bus Operators and the Schools. The design included the junction realignment of Victoria Avenue and relocation of the pedestrian crossing, and the linking of the existing cycleway provisions by widening the footpath and installing a combined use pathway. Bus stops were to be treated with bus border kerbs and lay bys where proposed to be closed. Road markings were to be used to narrow a section of the carriageway fronting Wade Deacon School to slow traffic and give the appearance of entering a school zone.</p> <p>A pre consultation meeting was held Monday 27 November 2006 with the Councillors of all Wards affected by the scheme being Kingsway, Birchfield, Farnworth and Appleton and minutes were taken recording their comments.</p> <p>A public consultation took place at Wade Deacon High</p>	

Agenda	Meeting Record	Action
	<p>School – Upper Wing, Victoria Avenue on Tuesday 5 December between 2:00pm – 7.00pm. Questionnaires where issue to all who attended, approximately 20 people attended although all surrounding properties and businesses were leaflet dropped. From the public consultation 8 written replies were received and the issues raised by these are to be discussed.</p>	
<p>2. Review of Design Options and Consultation Issues Raised</p>	<p>Following the consultation event and the return of questionnaires and feedback from Halton Bike Users the following main concerns where raised.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Parking</b> - Issues raised include the concerns of parking of parents for the schools – on yellow lines, obstructing junctions and parking in bus lay by and causing safety issues for people using the bus. DC said the parking for the station was being looked at with the various interested parties; Halton Borough Council had Section 106 monies allocated for improvements to the security and parking at the station. The issue of illegal parking was an enforcement issue. The problem with parents parking they are allowed a 10-minute grace and have usually moved on in this time scale. The police will respond to complaints from residents about obstructive parking. DC said the scheme proposals would be parking neutral.</li> <li>2. <b>Junction Realignment Victoria Avenue and Relocation of Pedestrian Crossing</b> – Concerns raised by realignment of the junction regarding larger vehicles accessing/ exiting and concern it will take longer exiting Victoria Avenue at peak times. DC again said the accessing/exiting would be neutral but the junction would be formalised and safer to cross for pedestrians. Vehicles would be channelled into the correct positioning for the junction operation. DC said the crossing was to be repositioned at the park side of Lockett Road and converted into a Toucan crossing for cyclists and pedestrians, the position linked in with the pedestrian movements especially to the schools. A resident who live adjacent to the position doesn't want the crossing to move fears it will make exiting her drive even worse than it is at present. DC said the scheme could work with the crossing in the same position albeit not the ideal location for movements and if it did stay insitu the realignment of Victoria Avenue would still be carried out. AG was very supportive of the new position, as it would give the greatest benefit to the schools and access to the park.</li> <li>3. <b>Bus Lay – Bys</b> – the closing of the lay bys had been met with a concerned response from the Bike Users Group due to the vulnerability of a cyclist passing a parked bus on the carriageway. DC said it was felt on this issue to keep the lay bys adjacent to Wade</li> </ol>	



Agenda	Meeting Record	Action
	<p>Deacon and the Park open but marked with clearway markings to prevent them being parked up and putting bus passengers in danger when alighting or bordering the bus. The Bus lay by adjacent to Lancaster Road is to be part filled and the remainder was left open for parking for the shops and allotments.</p> <p>4. <b>Combined Footway &amp; Cycleway Provision</b> – concerns raised regarding an enlarged footway being used for half on /off parking by parents picking up children. Concern with regard the removal of the guardrail on the bridge. DL / AG didn't think this was anymore of an issue regarding parking than existing. DC explained the guardrail would be staying on the other footpath giving no clear crossing position and that a guard railed footway would restrict down the footway width preventing development of a shared cycleway / footway.</p> <p><b>Other issued raised from the Consultation</b></p> <p>5. Can't cycleway be marked on the carriageway like Kingsway – No because of insufficient carriageway width.</p> <p>6. Suggestion of the installation of a roundabout at Victoria Avenue / Lockett Road and Birchfield – this is not feasible due to geometry and levels.</p> <p>7. Issue raised that coaches laid on by the Railway park at present at the bus stop adjacent to 121 Birchfield Road this would not be available as an option. DCr said contact had been made with Network Rail and a coach is only used when they have maintenance works on the network or do not have enough train drivers, they will be contacted and informed that this stop will no longer be an option after the scheme is implemented and coach parking would have to be moved to Lockett Road.</p> <p>8. Have HBC considered additional traffic calming to Victoria Avenue. No - felt speeds would slow down with the realigned junction mouth which will stop left entering vehicles shooting in.</p>	
<p>3. Recommendations made at Consultation Review</p>	<p>The following recommendations were made for AW to discuss with Rob Polhill to sign off the scheme.</p> <p>1. Crossing to be relocated and converted into a Toucan. The properties immediately affected will more that likely object to the position. AG and DL felt it was the best position and was worth pursuing.</p> <p>2. Red marking and hatching fronting the school to be removed to keep road width in response to safety concerns raised by the bike users group regarding being pushed into the channel.</p>	

Agenda	Meeting Record	Action
	<p>3. The bus lay bys would be left open at Wade Deacon and adjacent to the park but marked with clearway markings to prohibit parking other than buses.</p> <p>The next PP Board that the note of the Panel meeting can be reported to is on Wednesday 21<sup>st</sup> March 2007 at 6.30pm.</p>	

Distribution:	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/> File Copy

**Consultation Review Panel Agenda/Record**

Project Name:	Local Safety Scheme Traffic Calming – Halton Village (Norton View, Norton Lane and Stockham)	Project File:
---------------	--	---------------

Date: Tuesday 13 March 2007

Present: Cllr Ron Hignett (RH) – Chair

DESIGN STAGE:

Cllr Dave Leadbetter (DL) – Vice Chair  
 Alan West (AW) – Operational Director Highways and Transportation  
 Cllr Rob Polhill (RP) – Halton View Ward Councillor  
 Cllr Harry Howard (HH) – Castlefields Ward Councillor  
 Cllr Arthur Cole (AC) - Castlefields Ward Councillor  
 Ste Johnson (SJ) – Section Leader Traffic Management  
 Jo Brussels (JB) – Engineer Traffic Management

FEASIBILITY   
 PRELIMINARY   
 DESIGN   
 DETAILED DESIGN   
 (Tick as applicable)

Agenda	Meeting Record	Action
1. Introduction.	<p>Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs. Cargill.</p> <p>SJ introduced the scheme to all present and spoke around the original Consultation plan. SJ explained some of the background to the scheme. He explained that the project arose from requests from the residents on the corner of Norton Lane near the junction with Castlefields Avenue South. A scheme was developed and an extension of the works was offered to Norton View if there was local support. This meant that a 20 mph zone could be offered to the whole estate.</p> <p>SJ apologised to the ward councillors for not being involved with the consultation.</p> <p>The consultation did reveal strong support in Norton Lane, mixed views in Stockham Lane and a majority against in Norton View.</p> <p>(AC entered the meeting)</p> <p>AC raised some objections regarding what budget was funding this project and raised concerns over the ward councillors not being involved at the beginning. SJ apologised again for the councillors not being involved and informed ward councillors the funding was from Local Safety Scheme budget.</p> <p>A petition received by the residents of Norton View was reviewed.</p>	

Agenda	Meeting Record	Action
<p>2. Review of Design Options and Consultation Issues Raised</p>	<p>Following the consultation the following main concerns where raised.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <b>Norton Lane / Castlefields Avenue South Junction</b> – Most of the residents raised concerns over vehicles not stopping at the give way markings.</li> <li>2. <b>Norton Lane / Main Street Junction</b> – A majority of residents were also concerned with vehicles not stopping at the give way markings.</li> <li>3. <b>St. Mary’s Primary School</b> – Concerns regarding speeding along Castlefields Avenue South past the school and parents parking during home time.</li> </ol>	
<p>3. Recommendations made at Consultation Review</p>	<p>The following recommendations were made for AW to discuss with Cllr. Polhill to sign off the scheme.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Traffic calming on Norton View to be discarded completely and on most of Stockham Lane.</li> <li>2. A re-design of the scheme, concentrating on Norton Lane and Castlefields Avenue South junction.</li> <li>3. Ward councillors to contact St. Mary’s Primary School regarding implementation of traffic management outside the school to be incorporated into the re-design of the scheme.</li> </ol>	

<p>Distribution:</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>3 File Copy</p>
----------------------	----------	----------	----------	----------	--------------------



**ENVIRONMENT AND DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR**  
 R.G. Tregga B.A., M.A., M.R.T.P.I., M.I.Mgt  
 Executive Director Environment and Development  
 Grosvenor House, Halton Lea  
 Runcoorn, WA7 2GW. Tel: 0151 424 2081

Stockham Lane/Norton Lane  
 Traffic Calming Scheme

Scales: 1:1250

Date: JUN 07

Drawn by: JLB

Checked by:

Drawing No:

8120

Rev:

Notes:

- 11 no. Thumps (Diag. No. TM/TC/03)
- Renew Give ways and SLOW's
- Install Slow and red rumble strips (Diag. no. LM/TC/01)
- Install high friction surfacing.

REVISIONS



**REPORT TO:** Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 20<sup>th</sup> June, 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Environment

**SUBJECT:** Urban Renewal Strategic Review & Action Plan 2007-10

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To lay before the Urban Renewal Policy & Performance Board a draft of the Urban Renewal Strategic Review & Action Plan 2007-10 for consideration.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) **The Board review the attached Report with a view to setting priorities and creating an Action Plan;**
- (2) **The Board refer the Report to the Employment, Learning and Skills and the Safer Halton Policy Boards for consideration of how their activities complement and support the Urban Renewal activities described within it;**
- (3) **the 'Urban Renewal Strategic Review and Action Plan 2007-10', together with comments from the PPBs listed in 2 (2) be referred to be Executive Board for approval.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The previous Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan covered the period 2003 – 2006. This document is intended to update that strategy and inform Urban Renewal developments through to 2010.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Strategic review sets the Urban Renewal Strategy through to 2010 and is in accordance with national, regional, sub-regional and local regeneration strategies and policies as set out in the document itself.
- 4.2 The nature of the policies and activities described naturally impact on, and are impacted upon by, activities which are the responsibilities of the Safer Halton and Employment, Learning and Skills Policy Boards. It is therefore recommended that their views be sought on the report.

**5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The financial and other implications are set out in the Review.

**6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 All of the planned programmes and projects have been subject to formal risk analyses, the results of which are included in the Risk Register.

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 All of the planned programmes and projects have been subject to equality and diversity analyses, the results of which are included in the corporate E & D strategy.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
-----------------	----------------------------	------------------------



## It's all happening IN HALTON



Halton Borough Council  
Major Projects Department  
Environment Directorate  
Municipal Building, Kingsway,  
Widnes, Cheshire  
WA8 7QF

Tel: 0151 471 7347  
Fax: 0151 471 7418

[www.castlefields.info](http://www.castlefields.info)  
[www.widneswaterfront.co.uk](http://www.widneswaterfront.co.uk)  
[www.3-mg.co.uk](http://www.3-mg.co.uk)







**URBAN RENEWAL  
ACTIVITIES**

# **Draft URBAN RENEWAL**

## **Strategic Review & Action Plan 2007 - 2010**



**Spring 2007**

# URBAN RENEWAL

## Strategic Review & Action Plan

### 2007 - 2010

## Contents

	Page	
1.0	<i>FACTS &amp; FIGURES</i>	3
2.0	<i>ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT</i>	3
3.0	<i>ENVIRONMENT</i>	3
4.0	<i>REGIONAL WORKING - ROLES &amp; RESPONSIBILITIES</i>	4
5.0	<i>REGIONAL STRATEGIES</i>	5
6.0	<i>FUNDING</i>	6
7.0	<i>KEY URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS</i>	9
8.0	<i>HOUSING</i>	14
9.0	<i>TRANSPORT</i>	20
10.0	<i>SILVER JUBILEE BRIDGE</i>	22
11.0	<i>MERSEY GATEWAY</i>	22
12.0	<i>CONSULTATION</i>	23
13.0	<i>FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES</i>	23
14.0	<i>RAIL</i>	23
15.0	<i>BUSES</i>	23
16.0	<i>STREET LIGHTING</i>	24
17.0	<i>PRINCIPAL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE</i>	24
18.0	<i>CONTAMINATED LAND</i>	24
19.0	<i>REMEDICATION FUNDING</i>	25
20.0	<i>CONTAMINATED LAND REMEDIATION TECHNOLOGIES</i>	26
21.0	<i>KEY URBAN RENEWAL ACHIEVEMENTS</i>	27
22.0	<i>URBAN RENEWAL WORKING STRUCTURES &amp; PARTNERSHIPS</i>	28
23.0	<i>EMERGING POLICY ISSUES</i>	29
24.0	<i>SKILLS &amp; EMPLOYMENT</i>	30
25.0	<i>HOUSING</i>	31
26.0	<i>TOWN CENTRES</i>	32
27.0	<i>REGIONAL ISSUES</i>	32
28.0	<i>MAJOR PROJECTS</i>	34
29.0	<i>CONCLUSION</i>	35

## 1.0 FACTS & FIGURES

### 1.1 Population Trends

The population of Halton has been gradually falling by an average of 300-400 each year since 1990, reaching 118,200 by 2002. However since 2003 the population of Halton started to rise from 118,200 to 118,800 in 2005.

This was followed up by the Office of National Statistics (ONS) releasing its revised population projections for the next 25 years. These are based on the 2004 baseline, which predicts that Halton's population will rise to around 120,000 by 2020 before stabilising at this figure until 2029.

This is a substantial improvement over the previous prediction undertaken in 1996, which showed that Halton's population would continue to slowly decline each year until it reached 110,000 in 2021.

## 2.0 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

**2.1** With regard to economic development, Halton performs well in terms of its current economic performance and infrastructure. However, the findings suggest that current trends in economic growth may present problems in the future. Although Halton currently contains a high proportion of employment in the knowledge driven sectors, ranking 62nd out of 408 districts in the country, employment in the knowledge economy has been declining.

In 2002-03, just 30.7% of the employed workforce was engaged in knowledge intensive occupations, compared to 36.6% in the North West and 39.6% in Great Britain. The proportion of businesses operating in the knowledge economy is also low. In 2002, 25.7% of businesses fell into the knowledge driven sectors, compared to 26.7% regionally and 30.1% nationally. This suggests that we should place more emphasis on the knowledge economy in our urban renewal agenda and ensure that future policy drives this forward.

**2.2** Halton also performs poorly in terms of skills and qualification levels, ranking 342nd out of 408 districts. Such a low skills base could not support a growth in knowledge economy based jobs, which would result in well paid positions being taken by people from outside the Borough.

This is highlighted by the occupational breakdown for Halton, which reveals that 'higher end' occupations (managerial, professional and technical jobs) are significantly under-represented in the Borough (11.4% compared to 14.4% in Great Britain).

As the predicted key growth sector, it is important that urban renewal links much more closely with education and training to balance out this skills mismatch.

## 3.0 ENVIRONMENT

### 3.1 Housing

**3.1.1** Whilst house prices in Halton are below the national and regional averages, the latest Housing Needs Survey indicates an emerging affordability issue arising from house price increases over the last five years which have excluded many "first time buyers" from the owner occupied market.

The average house price in Halton was £134,493 in April-June 2006, compared to a regional average of £146,600 and a national average of £198,952 at June 2006. The percentage of owner-occupier housing is slightly below the national average at 65.8% compared to 68.3% nationally.

### 3.2 Commercial and Industrial Property

**3.2.1** Between 1985 and 2003, the amount of industrial and commercial floorspace in Halton grew by 31.9% - slightly higher than the national rate of 23.5% and substantially higher than the regional rate of 12.9%.

The floorspace profile, however, shows a marginally higher proportion of industrial and commercial space at 77.7% compared to 69.3% in the North West and 66.3% in England as a whole. Retail and office space is under represented at 10.5% and 11.9% respectively, which is substantially lower than the national average of 19.2% and 16.8%.

Establishing more office accommodation and attracting suitable private sector business is important for the Borough, particularly in the town centre areas as it helps support other trade throughout the day and evening.

**3.2.2** A commercial property review was recently presented to the Borough's Policy & Performance

Board and this will no doubt have an impact on future actions with regard to commercial property developments.

### 3.3 Action for Sustainability

**3.3.1** The main regional institutions are committed to the Action for Sustainability agenda, which aims to establish a firm foundation for balancing the region's economic, environmental and social needs. A toolkit has been produced to aid the development of environmental sustainability.

## 4.0 REGIONAL WORKING - ROLES & RESPONSIBILITIES

### 4.1 The North West Regional Assembly

**4.1.1** Perhaps one of the most significant developments of recent times was the formation of the North West Regional Assembly (NWRA) in 1997. This represents Local Authorities and other key economic and social stakeholder representatives in the region.

**4.1.2** The NWRA presents a regional view to the Government and European Union institutions on issues or areas falling within the Assembly's competence and also provides a forum for considering and debating any issues or policy proposals, especially those of a relevant social, economic or environmental nature at a regional level and having an impact upon the people of North West England.

**4.1.3** Their role has principally been in the promotion of planning, transport and sustainability in the region. They were also involved in the development of the Housing Strategy and the Regional Housing Board.

**4.1.4** The 'no' vote on Elected Regional Assemblies has forced the NWRA to review its core business and activities and focus on three main functions: the scrutiny of the North West Development Agency (NWDA), a role as the North West planning body and acting as a strategic focal point for the region.

Despite this, there is still uncertainty over future membership of the assembly and, therefore, whilst Halton needs to continue to form allegiances with the NWRA, it would also be prudent to strengthen

links with Government departments, and the Government Office.

### 4.2 North West Development Agency

The NWDA leads on economic development in the region. In April 2005 the NWDA produced its first Strategic Investment Plan, which outlines the Agency's priorities for financial support over the next three years. This is rolled forward annually. Halton will need to continue to promote its key capital projects for inclusion in the Plan.

### 4.3 The Mersey Partnership (TMP)

**4.3.1** TMP is the economic development partnership for the Merseyside sub-region. It is now NWDA's Sub Regional Partner for Merseyside, with strategic responsibility across the region's six local authority areas. This adds to TMP's existing responsibilities in economic development, inward investment and tourism.

**4.3.2** TMP's strategic goal is to encourage economic growth through building a positive image of the Liverpool City Region that will attract more visitors to the area and at the same time build confidence among those already living, working and investing in the region.

The members of TMP reflect a broad and diverse range of activities representing over 400 businesses across the Liverpool City Region including manufacturing and trading companies, six local authorities, government agencies, universities, media organisations, professional agencies, tourism and conference businesses.

**4.3.3** The Mersey Partnership's activities take place in three core areas:

- o **Economic Development** - co-ordinating Merseyside's economic development activity through the Merseyside Action Plan.
- o **Investment** - bringing new business into Merseyside and encouraging growth in existing businesses.
- o **Tourism** - promoting Liverpool and Merseyside's tourism assets to increase visitor numbers and grow the economic benefit to the Liverpool City Region.

## 5.0 REGIONAL STRATEGIES

### 5.1 Northern Way Growth Strategy

**5.1.1** Moving Forward: the Northern Way Growth Strategy was launched in September 2004 by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM). Its key objective was to work with the three northern Regional Development Agencies (RDAs) to reduce the economic performance gap of £29 billion between the North and South-East of England by 2025.

The Growth Strategy sets out a framework for taking forward the key economic assets and opportunities of eight City Regions in the North of England, which includes the Liverpool City Region.

**5.1.2** The Northern Way Business Plan was published in June 2005. This set out the plan to implement an economic development strategy for the North of England. It set out ten investment priorities, including improving transport links, bringing more people into employment, strengthening the North's knowledge base and driving innovation. To support the Northern Way, a £100m Growth Fund has been established by the ODPM and the RDAs.

**5.1.3** This means that cities rather than regions are the focus for economic development, with the Government view that successful core cities will 'pull up' the economic performance of surrounding areas. It is therefore important for Halton to work with the Liverpool City Region to ensure that Halton's major projects are included.

### 5.2 City Region Development Plan

**5.2.1** The Liverpool City Region is bringing forward a strategic prospectus or 'City Region Development Plan' which sets out priorities for growing the economy of the sub-region and the region as a whole.

**5.2.2** The Liverpool City Region submitted an interim report for the Northern Way Steering Group in January 2005. The *Liverpool City Region - Transforming Our Economy* was produced in May 2005. It focused on issues, assets and opportunities which are of strategic significance to the North of England as a whole, and set out priorities for

investment in the sub-region, aimed at generating major economic benefits and impacts. The implementation plan brings transformational projects for the sub-region to the fore.

### 5.3 Merseyside Economic Review

The latest Merseyside Economic Review was launched in February 2007 and provides an update on much of the economic evidence underpinning the development of the City Region Development Programme, Regional Economic Strategy Review and other related strategic frameworks. The review is published each year and the 2007 report reveals some notable successes against major economic indicators. Merseyside is performing well and in 2004 (latest data) produced a £17bn economy - keeping pace with the UK, regional and city comparators on most measures and in some cases doing rather better: closing the gap.

### 5.4 Regional Economic Review

The NWDA commenced work on its Regional Economic Strategy in April 2005. The new strategy was published in March, 2006. This placed emphasis on the issues arising from the Northern Way Growth Strategy, in particular focusing on Gross Value Added (GVA) and increasing jobs.

### 5.5 Regional Planning Strategy

**5.5.1** *Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.*

**5.5.2** This Bill was given Royal Assent in May 2004. Part 1 of the Bill states that there will be a regional spatial strategy (RSS) for each region in England. The Regional Planning Body must keep the RSS under review and monitor and report on its implementation.

**5.5.3** Part 2 provides for the preparation of local development documents (LDDs) to replace local plans, unitary development plans and structure plans. Part 3 of the Bill includes a duty to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. A series of development control measures are introduced in Part 4 of the Bill.

**5.5.4** There are two types of LDDs: Development Plan Documents (DPDs), which are statutorily tested and form part of the Development Plan, and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), which

are not statutorily tested and do not form part of the Plan. It is expected that Halton will produce 22 SPDs including 3MG (Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park), Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone and transport in Halton. Of these 22 documents 15 have been written and 7 adopted. It will also produce possibly seven DPDs including housing, employment and retail & leisure, in addition to the core strategy.

## **5.6 Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) and Spatial Development Framework**

**5.6.1** Sub-regional strategic spatial proposals have been submitted to the North West Regional Assembly. Further work is continuing, including a refinement of policies, spatial options and sustainability appraisals. The Merseyside partners are also working together to ensure there is synergy between the RSS and City Region Development Plan (CRDP), e.g., recognising land and spatial requirements emanating from the CRDP.

**5.6.2** Due to the new status of RSS as part of the 'development plan', as set out in the new Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004, the issues arising in the new RSS are of significant importance to Halton Borough Council and the production of the new Halton Borough Local Development Framework (LDF).

**5.6.3** The RSS will also be used in the determination of planning applications. Decisions will now have to be made in accordance with the RSS, unless other material considerations indicate otherwise.

A number of policies within the UDP which are to be saved will have to be agreed with the Secretary of State by October 2007.

## **5.7 Unitary Development Plan**

The Unitary Development Plan for Halton was adopted in April 2005. It is in two parts. Part 1 gives a written statement of Halton's strategic planning policies and Part 2 forms the framework for the use and development of land. It conforms with the Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (now the Regional Spatial Strategy), and describes the role that Halton will play in the development and regeneration of the region as a whole.

## **5.8 North West Regional Housing Strategy**

The revised North West Regional Housing Strategy, published in 2005, sets out the priorities for strategic housing investment in the region. More information on the Strategy is available in the Housing section of this report. The Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy is likely to be adopted in the summer of 2007.

## **6.0 FUNDING**

**6.1 Generally** - there are a number of funding pots to help deliver urban regeneration within Halton. The main sources are identified below, but more specific funding for specialist areas such as contaminated land are considered under their appropriate headings. However, many more exist and the sources of funding and funding criteria are constantly changing. For example the Kingsway Learning Centre accessed 14 different funding sources, many of which no longer exist, highlighting a continuing challenge for the Borough.

**6.2 Gershon** - The required 3% all-cash saving each year presents a real issue for local authorities and the urban renewal agenda has already suffered. This is likely to continue as attempts are made to achieve yet further 'savings'.

## **6.3 North West Development Agency Funding**

**6.3.1** When the over-programming funding problems of the NWDA were discovered, Halton went through a process of cutting back on all non-high priority schemes in order to concentrate available funding on those deemed to be the most important, such as Widnes Waterfront. At the time, we were led to believe this would safeguard funding for those initiatives. This was not always the case, with a prime casualty being the economic initiatives contained within the Castlefields Regeneration Masterplan. Other initiatives such as town centres, tourism and waterside developments are also no longer likely to receive funding, as the priorities have shifted.

**6.3.2** Halton now comes within the remit of the NWDA's Merseyside Office. This means that we are competing with other Merseyside districts for funding. Land values are higher there and match funding is more easily available through Merseyside's ERDF Objective 1 'Phasing In' status. Given the competition

for funding, this will be a challenging time for Halton.

#### 6.4 SRB

After nine years, the Single Regeneration Budget programme ceased in March 2006. In the final year £865,760 was committed to nine projects. An Evaluation Report of Halton's three SRB schemes is to be published.

#### 6.5 NRF

**6.5.1** Neighbourhood Renewal Fund has been awarded to areas with high levels of deprivation, in order to help bring them up to the standard of other areas.

**6.5.2** It has currently been in place for 6 years, in which time Halton has received £31m, with a further £5.377m for 2007/08, after which time the NRF programme will cease. Successor funding, if any, will form part of the Government's Comprehensive Spending Review, planned for Autumn 2007. All indications are that renewal funding, in whatever guise, will be at a reduced level and far more targeted.

**6.5.3** Urban Renewal, as a Halton priority, was awarded £768,000 in 03/04, £1.031m in 04/05, and £1.367m in 05/06. However, this dipped to £887,000 in 06/07 and to £769,700 in 07/08.

#### 6.6 European Funding

**6.6.1** Up to 31st December 2006, Halton lay within a European Objective 2 area where European Structural Funding has been available. The Objective 2 Programme has provided in excess of £22m of ERDF for the delivery of projects in the Borough.

**6.6.2** Halton Borough Council was appointed as Accountable Body for the European funding on behalf of partners and has entered into an agreement with the Government to do this. State Aid support overall has been worth £61.3m to Halton businesses.

**6.6.3** In 2004, the European Union increased from 15 to 25 Member States and then to 27 in January 2007. This led to an acceptance that the bulk of the funds would be allocated to the new Member

States of Eastern Europe.

**6.6.4** The National Strategic Reference Framework, used to allocate European Funding nationally, was approved at the end of 2006 and regional allocations for 2007-13 were set.

The allocations for the North West are:

- o Rest of the North West £314m
- o Merseyside £213m

**6.6.5** This represents a 50% cut in resources compared with the previous programme - a key challenge to the borough.

**6.6.6** The North West Operational Programme (NWOP) is the guiding document which presents key priorities and actions with regard to how European Funding will be allocated and spent in the North West during the period 2007-2013.

**6.6.7** The NWOP is expected to be published in September 2007. The new European Programme is therefore likely to start late in 2007 or early 2008. It is expected that the European Programme will focus on the following priorities and action areas:

#### **Priority 1 Stimulating Enterprise & Supporting Growth in New Sectors and Markets**

- AA1.1 Developing High Value New Enterprise
- AA1.2 Developing Higher Added-Value Activity in Target Regional Sectors
- AA1.3 Increasing Sustainable Consumption and Production

#### **Priority 2 Exploiting Innovation & Knowledge**

- AA2.1 Exploiting the Science and R&D Base of the Region
- AA2.2 Encouraging Innovation to Improve Productivity in All Companies
- AA2.3 Developing Better Management and Leadership

#### **Priority 3 Creating the Conditions for Sustainable Growth**

- AA3.1 Access to Major Gateways in Merseyside
- AA3.2 Developing High Quality Sites and Premises of Regional importance

AA3.3 Supporting the Improvement of the Region's Visitor Offer and its Image

#### **Priority 4 Growing & Accessing Employment**

AA4.1 Stimulate Enterprise in Disadvantaged Communities

AA4.2 Supporting Linkages to Key Employment Areas

AA4.3 Supporting Employment Creation in Areas of Regeneration Need

**6.6.8** It will be important for Halton to continue to develop links with the North West Development Association since RDAs in the English Regions will be key players in the management and allocation of European and non-European resources earmarked for regional development.

Halton's attitude is that there must be some form of ongoing support for areas which have a continuing legacy of deprivation and decline. It would not be sensible to ignore the needs of areas such as Halton which have the potential to achieve and sustain regional economic growth.

**6.6.9** There is a wish to strengthen work already undertaken through the use of the European Structural Funds to ensure that Halton continues to rise out of industrial decline and emerge with a leading 'knowledge based' economy for the 21st Century.

**6.6.10** It is worth noting that Halton's unique position with regard to how Gross Value Added (GVA) and Gross Domestic Product (GDP) figures are collated could place the borough at a significant disadvantage in the allocation of successor funding. Whilst Halton is ranked as the 21st most deprived Borough in the Index of Multiple Deprivation, 2004, the over-reliance on a high-value chemicals industry skews these figures, giving the result that Halton appears to be more affluent than is actually the case.

The chemicals industry is highly capital intensive, with relatively few people employed for the value of production. Capital (plant) and raw materials are imported from outside the borough, with little benefit to Halton. Similarly, in the chemicals

industry much of the activity is undertaken by branch plants. This means that profit is extracted to and investment decisions take place in other countries. Another difficulty faced by Halton is that the better-paid employees tend to live outside the borough, giving a clear mismatch between GDP per capita and levels of prosperity. Work has been completed to disaggregate these figures for Halton and we have now started lobbying the Department for Trade & Industry and the NWDA accordingly.

**6.6.11** Halton Borough Council sees it as vital that, as part of its lobbying strategy, it is able to disaggregate GDP and GVA figures from the chemicals industry, together with an appropriate analysis of the Halton/Warrington Travel to Work Area, as Warrington's economic buoyancy statistically masks Halton's problems.

#### **6.7 Regional Selective Assistance**

Over the period 1st April 1999 - 31st March 2004, a total of £61.2m was invested in Halton businesses with the support of both Regional Selective Assistance and Enterprise Grant Schemes. This funding supported 63 separate organisations, a total of 4,971 jobs and includes £50m investment in Ineos Chlor. That funding has largely ceased to be available to Halton businesses.

#### **6.8 Review of State Aid Rules**

**6.8.1** 'State Aid' is public money used to support private sector business activities. European Commission rules are designed to ensure that if businesses do receive financial support then they should not be given an unfair commercial advantage.

**6.8.2** Some form of support is allowed, providing this does not exceed permitted levels. Different parts of the European Union are allowed to provide different levels of support, dependent on how affluent or poor they are considered to be.

**6.8.3** The 2006 review of the Assisted Areas Map left Halton outside the redefined area with effect from 1st January 2007.

This means that the level of financial support which the public sector can give to companies in Halton has been reduced significantly. However, despite this



news, there are still opportunities to support economic regeneration projects through special exemptions and exclusions.

## **6.9 National Lottery**

**6.9.1** National Lottery funding has been very successfully used across Halton for a number of arts, community, heritage and sports projects. In 2002, 51 grants were awarded, totalling £1,719,651; in 2003 this increased to 63 grants totalling £3,393,076, whilst up until August 2004, 36 grants, totalling £487,053 were awarded. Between April 1995 and March 2005, Halton received £25,616,657 from a total of 394 grants.

**6.9.2** By April 2006, Halton had moved up from 13th to 12th position in the league of North West authorities that record the amount of funding received from the National Lottery. In April 2004, regionally, Halton was in 18th position. By April 2005, we had improved by 6 places to 13th position.

**6.9.3** Funding is allocated through the following lottery distributors:

### **6.9.3.1 Awards For All**

'Awards for All' is a joint lottery programme funded by the Arts Council England; Big Lottery Fund; Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England. It offers grants for arts, heritage or community projects of from £500 to £5,000.

### **6.9.3.2 Big Lottery Fund**

'The Big Lottery Fund' has been formed from the Community Fund and New Opportunities Fund. It is responsible for 50% of the money going to good causes and will offer a range of grant programmes, from smaller grants at a local level through to large capital projects. It will continue to fund charities, the voluntary sector, education, health and the environment, but will also support large-scale regeneration projects.

### **6.9.3.3 Arts Council England**

Arts Lottery funding is spent on a wide range of projects, including the construction and refurbishment of arts venues, arts activity and public participation in the arts.

### **6.9.3.4 Heritage Lottery Fund**

Halton was a priority area for Heritage Lottery funding until March 2006.

The Heritage Lottery Fund distributes money raised by the National Lottery to support all aspects of heritage, from historical buildings and museums to nature conservation. It helps community projects with relatively small amounts, as well as multi-million pound developments and can fund both capital and revenue projects. In the last 18 months, 14 heritage projects have been funded within Halton.

### **6.9.3.5 Sport England**

Sport England is responsible for delivering the Government's sporting objectives. It is committed to creating opportunities for people in the North West Region to start in sport, stay in sport and succeed in sport.

## **7.0 KEY URBAN RENEWAL PROJECTS**

Halton has a number of key urban renewal projects currently ongoing or to be delivered in the near future. These are:

### **7.1 The Castlefields Regeneration Programme**

**7.1.1** The Castlefields Masterplan was approved, following public consultation, by all partners (including English Partnerships) at the end of 2003 and became the basis of a Supplementary Planning Document, which was adopted by the Borough Council in 2005. Proposals included:

- The creation of a new link road to provide direct access to a proposed new local centre and existing community facilities.
- A programme of pedestrian and cycle link improvements, to improve access to facilities;
- Street lighting improvements on Castlefields Avenue North;
- The development of a state-of-the-art youth activity park, the Phoenix Park, including a skate park, flood-lit multi-use games area, a climbing boulder and play areas; the release of land for the development of new houses for sale.

**7.1.2** Excellent progress has already been made in the selective demolition of over 700 problem deck-access flats and the building of almost 400 new homes.

**7.1.3** NWDA funding has still to be secured to allow the skills and workforce development elements of the Masterplan to be delivered.

**7.1.4** £7m of further funding, over and above that committed to the implementation of the Regeneration Masterplan has been secured from the Housing Corporation to continue housing renewal projects until 2010. Coupled with additional funding promised by the RSLs, this will help deal with all but two of the remaining problem blocks.

**7.1.5** However, further regeneration work under Phase 2 of the Masterplan will still remain to be completed. Therefore funding is being sought from the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships to allow this to be effected.

## **7.2 Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone**

**7.2.1** The Widnes Waterfront EDZ area will become a strategically important 'Gateway' development, linking the region's 'Metropolitan Axis' along the M62 Corridor with the 'Southern Crescent' along the M56. The Council appointed the Manchester-based consultancy, building Design Partnership, to undertake a masterplanning exercise in 2002 which provided a framework for the transformation of the southern part of Widnes over six years to create around 2,700 new jobs.

**7.2.2** This Masterplan was agreed in 2003 for the 80 ha. Widnes Waterfront site which is located adjacent to the River Mersey. It set out a key vision and outputs for the area, to be delivered through a set of projects. These include landscaping and environmental upgrades, enhancing existing business premises, road works and signage, marketing and training which engages with local businesses. This Masterplan has subsequently been converted into a Supplementary Planning Document.

**7.2.3** £5.59m has been committed from the NWDA to add to the £8m of ERDF and £3m of Halton Borough Council funding to assist with the

regeneration. This will support the considerable public and private sector investment which is already bringing forward new office and industrial park, retail and commercial leisure developments.

## **7.3 3MG - Mersey Multimodal Gateway (formerly known as Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park or DSRFP)**

**7.3.1** 3MG will utilise brownfield land for rail-related warehousing (up to 200,000 M<sup>2</sup>), new rail sidings, a new link road to the A5300 Knowsley Expressway and the generation of 5,000 jobs over a 10-year period (and potentially up to 8,000 in 15/20 years time).

**7.3.2** The site is 26 hectares in total and will result in derelict and contaminated land being brought back into productive use. There will be lasting improvements to the environment and 195 million HGV kms will be removed from the UK road network per annum. The cost of the regeneration over five years has been estimated at £80m. The UDP Public Inquiry Planning Inspectors' Report's recommendations gave clear support for the creation of 3MG, stating that "...through a rare combination of advantages the Rail Freight Park is accepted to be a project of exceptional potential worth."

**7.3.3** The Masterplan for this site was approved by Halton Borough Council in December 2004.

**7.3.4** The Supplementary Planning Document for 3MG has been adopted by the Borough Council.

**7.3.5** Planning Permission for 75,000 M<sup>2</sup> of new rail-related warehousing space has subsequently been granted to Drawbridge Securities Ltd., for the Innovis development on land formerly owned by AHC at West Bank.

Planning permission for an extensive landscaping scheme at HBC Fields was secured by Halton Borough Council in 2006 with implementation planned for 2007. Negotiations with Network Rail and design work are on-going over the replacement of the Hale Road bridge.

**7.3.6** Common facilities will need to be effectively managed 'in common' for the effective working of 3MG. To this end, Halton Borough Council is

negotiating the establishment of a management company with the private sector to achieve this.

A further key issue for Halton Borough Council is the future disposal and development of 'HBC Fields.'

#### **7.4 New Mersey Crossing - The Mersey Gateway**

The Mersey Gateway is being promoted by the Mersey Crossing Group which includes public and private sector bodies. A Major Scheme Appraisal was submitted to the Government in July 2003 and approved in 2006.

A project team has been established and work is ongoing, in preparation for the submission of a planning application expected in 2008.

#### **7.5 Business Parks Improvement Programme**

**7.5.1** The Council is currently delivering a programme of regeneration to businesses on local industrial estates. Steering Groups have been set up on individual estates in order that businesses can formulate action plans to improve their own area.

**7.5.2** The Business Parks Improvement Programme offers grants to enhance business premises, improve safety and security and improve the environment on older industrial estates.

To date, site improvements have been made on each of the Tanhouse and Gorsey Lane, Astmoor, Halebank and Riverview Industrial Estates.

#### **7.6 St Michael's Golf Course**

Major remediation works are planned at St Michael's Golf Course, to be funded by DEFRA, in order to seal in contaminated material and install a leachate collection and treatment facility.

Further phases will remould the land and re-establish fairways, greens and tees for the continued use of the site as a municipal golf course. More on this can be found in the contaminated land section of the report.

#### **7.7 Halebank Regeneration**

A new-build 'Co-op' convenience store opened in mid-August 2004, to coincide with the closure of the old ASDA supermarket. Planning permission was obtained for 156 new houses to be built on

the former ASDA site and work is now underway. A Supplementary Planning Document has been approved by the Borough Council.

#### **7.8 Halton Stadium**

A new East Stand was opened in September 2005 as the final development stage of the Stadium.

The East Stand has a capacity of approximately 2,500, taking the overall capacity of Halton Stadium to about 13,500. The Stadium is Council owned and provides an excellent events venue which is well patronised.

#### **7.9 Halton Castle**

**7.9.1** Halton Borough Council was gifted this Grade I Listed Building by the Duchy of Lancaster in September 2002 under a 99yr Guardianship Agreement and Norton Priory Museum Trust (NPMT) has subsequently agreed to manage the site.

**7.9.2** Halton Castle has problems with vandalism, youth nuisance and drinking. NPMT and the Council have been working together in an attempt to resolve these issues.

**7.9.3** The Council has recently invested £50,000 to secure the site and make it safer. This has funded essential masonry repairs, together with interpretative fencing which reflects the history of the Castle.

**7.9.4** A successful preliminary bid for funding from the Heritage Lottery Fund was submitted in Spring 2005. This has funded consultancy work for a Conservation Management Plan and Access Plan in advance of submitting the main bid to HLF.

**7.9.5** The ultimate aim is to renovate and enhance Halton Castle with links to Norton Priory and the Town Park.

It is hoped to develop a visitor centre, lighting of the castle (if vandalism issues can be addressed) and general enhancement of the site's special features, including sunken garden and 'lock-ups'.

#### **7.10 Wigg Island**

The second phase of landscape works on this site were completed in June 2005.

This includes new cycleways and footpaths, as well as an outdoor 'classroom'. A new Visitor Centre will be opened in summer 2007.

### 7.11 *New Approaches*

This programme of works aims to reclaim land adjacent to strategic corridors and gateways into Merseyside. £70,000 Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has enhanced the major routes through the Borough as part of the 'Strategic Routeways Programme.' This has involved major landscaping works, including new planting, management of existing trees and woodlands, tidying verges and bulb planting.

### 7.12 *Town Centres*

**7.12.1** The Borough of Halton is unusual in having three distinct town centres, each of which provide an essential service for the community it serves. Since the end of the last century, Widnes and Runcorn have grown to meet the needs of their separate communities. The third centre, known as Halton Lea, is the result of a decision in the early 1960's to develop the New Town area of Runcorn.

**7.12.2** All three town centres have changed in recent times and more change is planned with public and private sector involvement.

**7.12.3** Such development in town centres is guided by national and regional planning policy advice, including Planning Policy Statement 6 (PPS6), which aims to sustain their vitality and viability.

It requires local authorities to develop effective town centre strategies in partnership with the private sector, as part of the development plan process. Halton currently has an overall town centre strategy and three separate, more detailed strategies for each of the town centres dating from 1997. These are in the process of being updated.

Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) for Runcorn Town Centre and Halton Lea are currently being developed, whilst Widnes will have an Area Action Plan - a detailed document, which will set and prioritise development objectives as well as specifying and co-ordinating requirements for new infrastructure and services. Funding for this work has not yet been identified.

### 7.13 *Widnes Town Centre*

**7.13.1** Widnes is the largest of the three town centres, with approximately 46,450M<sup>2</sup> of retail floorspace in over 350 separate units.

It also has both an indoor and an outdoor market. Widnes has developed from a traditional 'High Street', with the addition of the new ASDA and the regeneration of Albert Square, Green Oaks and the Windmill Centre. There is a wide mix of retailers providing a more comprehensive shopping offer than at the other two centres. Widnes is one of the top 10 performing centres in the North West over the last 10 years, showing a 66% growth in prime retail rents.

#### 7.13.2 *Progress to date:*

Widnes Town Centre has seen the addition of a number of new retail units and enhancement schemes in the last five years. These include:

- 1) Relocation of the ASDA store from Halebank to Widnes town centre, providing 4,180M<sup>2</sup> of retail space and 470 car parking spaces;
- 2) New 9,290M<sup>2</sup> JJB Fitness Centre and retail store;
- 3) New road at Marzahn Way;
- 4) Revamping of retail units at Albert Road;
- 3) New retail units at Gerrard Street, Liebig Court and Simms Cross, all adjacent to the new ASDA store;
- 4) New town centre housing at Alfred Court and 'The Element at Liebig Court';
- 5) 40 new homes provided at Lacey Street;
- 6) Streetscape improvements to both Widnes Road and Albert Road;
- 7) A Home Zone development of the 'Streets Ahead' project around the new ASDA site;
- 7) The Windmill Centre redevelopment and creation of new retail space;
- 8) Streetscape improvements to Victoria Square, including new paving and street furniture;
- 9) A new Mental Health Centre in Broseley Square, together with the new Primary Care Centre on Moor Lane;

- 10) Residential developments over bar/restaurant provision in two developments at Victoria Square;
- 11) A programme of shop-front improvements throughout the town centre.

### **7.13.3 What is planned for the future?:**

1. Widnes Town Centre is constrained from widening by housing and road infrastructure, but consideration is being given to the future of adjoining sites such as the Widnes Waterfront and the 'P&O site' for development with appropriate uses. For example, the P&O site has been considered in the UDP (Policy TC3) as suitable for retail, warehousing and leisure (after 2011), while the construction of a new B & Q store on Dennis Road will take retailing into the EDZ.
2. The Council is also welcoming plans for a leisure development on Venture Fields.
3. As Widnes Waterfront is developed, it is recognised that there is a need to develop better links to the town centre. To facilitate this, junction modifications are being implemented. A new gyratory on Fiddlers Ferry Road is being created in order to improve access by foot and cycle.
4. The production and adoption of the proposed Action Area Plan will be key to the delivery and change proposed to be delivered within Widnes.

### **7.14 Victoria Square/Queens Hall**

**7.14.1** Building upon the investment made by the Council and the private sector, particularly in the renovation of Victoria Buildings, further regeneration initiatives are currently in progress in this area to enhance the evening/weekend economy.

#### **7.14.2 Progress to date:**

The Kingsway Learning Centre, which is within the Victoria Square Conservation area, opened following a £7m refurbishment of the original Widnes Library/Widnes Technical College/St Paul's Youth Centre building. A complete lifelong learning package is offered at the centre including an improved and extended Widnes Library, a Neighbourhood Nursery, Sure Start New Steps,

Connexions & Youth Service, as well as Adult Learning facilities.

### **7.14.3 What is planned for the future?**

**7.14.4** The Council intends the redevelopment of the Halton Business Forum (the former Widnes Town Hall) into new bars and restaurants. However, this development has been delayed by the failure of private sector partners.

**7.14.5** Encouraged by the regeneration successes to date, other private sector-led proposals have begun to emerge around Victoria Square. Two prominent public houses are being redeveloped as bars with residential apartments above; a retail unit has been converted into a restaurant; and shop units have been, and are continuing to be, converted into wine bars.

### **7.15 Runcorn Town Centre**

**7.15.1** Runcorn 'Old Town' operates as a small market town and as such incorporates a number of individual niche market traders, some of whom have been there for many years.

#### **7.15.2 Progress to date:**

**7.15.3** The centre has seen much private sector investment as a result of traders improving their shop frontages (with the aid of SRB and NRF funding). Although this centre serves a fairly localised catchment, the area is usually very busy, with parking often difficult to find. However, Runcorn Town Centre has fewer than half of the multiple retailers of the other two Halton centres.

**7.15.4** The Brindley, Halton's purpose-built theatre and arts centre, opened in November 2004. It provides a 420-seat theatre, 108-seat studio, other flexible space as well as exhibition and gallery space, together with associated refreshment facilities, all overlooking the Bridgewater Canal. The Town Centre survey of people in Runcorn Town Centre worryingly identified a reluctance to visit that centre during the evening. The Brindley is overcoming this challenge with a vibrant Show and Events programme.

**7.15.5** Runcorn Town Centre has seen many new developments in the last five years, which include:

- 1) A new campus for the Riverside College;
- 2) A new Market Hall with additional shop units;
- 3) The new Halton Direct Link facility that will offer residents a 'one-stop-shop' experience for council-related business;
- 4) A new Somerfields supermarket with associated car park
- 5) The new Bus Station interchange;
- 6) Upgrading of car parking and access at Runcorn Railway Station;
- 7) The new Brindley Arts Centre
- 8) A new link road at Leiria Way

#### **7.15.6 What is planned for the future?:**

A joint venture between Halton Borough Council and award-winning developers Urban Splash has been established to secure the development of the Canal Quarter alongside the Bridgewater Canal. This will bring new retail, residential and civic amenities to the town centre. The development will also include the site of the former Crosville Bus depot, on the opposite side of the canal. Still the subject of further work and discussion, this programme technically began late in 2006 with a planning application, with the development due to commence in early 2007.

A DIY store for Homebase is being constructed on the Daresbury Expressway, while 450 residential apartments are being built in 'The Deck' development on the waterfront adding considerably to the vitality of the Town Centre.

### **7.16 Halton Lea**

**7.16.1** Halton Lea is a custom-built, elevated and covered shopping mall with 4 dedicated multi-storey car parks offering 1,950 free car parking spaces (excluding Trident and ASDA parking). Surrounding this main structure, the Trident Retail Park and ASDA superstore have been developed in the last ten years.

Halton Lea encompasses 46,450M<sup>2</sup> of shopping space with a range of national multiple retailers within the centre. It is also close to the police station, library and Halton Direct Link, together with Post Office and Job Centre.

**7.16.2** The Town Centre User Survey showed general customer satisfaction with Halton Lea shopping centre. They were happy with the cleanliness of the main shopping area and public facilities were considered well maintained, whilst public perception of safety was very high.

#### **7.16.3 What is planned for the future?:**

There are proposals for an extension of the existing general retail provision at Halton Lea incorporating a new superstore. There are also plans for an extension to the ASDA development.

### **7.17 Astmoor Industrial Estate**

Parts of the Astmoor industrial estate will be affected by the new Mersey crossing. The estate was built as part of the Runcorn new town development in the 1970s and 1980s. Many of the units no longer reflect the needs of modern business. For example the car parking provision is inadequate, servicing access is poor and the units are not of sufficient internal height for some industrial uses.

## **8.0 HOUSING**

**8.1** The two largest sites for residential developments in the Borough over the past decade or so have been at Upton Rocks in Widnes and Sandymoor in Runcorn. The focus on providing a broader range of housing types by concentrating on more executive styles of property has led to an increase in the number and proportion of managerial and professional socio-economic groups living in the Borough. At the time of the 1991 census, these groups accounted for just 14% of total households. By 2001, this figure had increased to 19%, while the number of detached houses showed a similar increase. A wider choice of house types does seem to produce a more rounded spectrum of socio-economic groups.

**8.2** Demand for housing is reliant upon prices and mortgage rates. When both of these rates were relatively low, demand for social housing significantly decreased. However after several years of large price rises in the housing market, home-ownership is no longer so affordable to those in lower income groups and demand for social housing is again on

the increase. Indeed, the local housing waiting list has increased by 23% since 2004.

**8.3** The Halton Housing Needs & Market Assessment Survey, completed at the end of 2005, provides the most comprehensive and up-to-date information available on current and future housing needs and preferences of households living in the Borough. The Survey found that, despite house prices in Halton being lower than the regional and national averages, there is an emerging affordability issue caused by the relationship between local incomes and the realistic supply of the cheapest stock available. The average price of a terraced dwelling increased by over 150% between 2000 and 2005, exceeding local income inflation by over 7 times. Consequently, access to the market for first time buyers is very limited. The cheapest 2 bedroom terraced house in the Borough requires a minimum income of £21,900 and 79% of concealed households (i.e. someone living within a household who wishes to move to their own accommodation and form a separate household) earn below £20,000.

**8.4** The Housing Needs Survey identified a need for 176 affordable housing units per annum, after allowing for current re-let supply, and recommends this be achieved through the adoption of an affordable housing policy within the Local Development Framework, which contains a 25% target for new units to be developed as subsidised affordable housing.

**8.5** The Needs Survey also recommended that the supply of small units be improved to address the future needs and preferences of increasingly smaller households and that a comprehensive delivery strategy to address future housing for the elderly and for care needs be developed to cater for an increasingly ageing population, with a particular emphasis on extra care accommodation. The Survey found a relatively high proportion of households contained at least one person with a disability or limiting long-term illness and recommended the development of a register of adapted property and disabled people needing adapted accommodation to ensure their specific needs are met and that best use is made of the existing adapted stock.

## **8.6 The National Context:**

**8.6.1** In December 2000, the Government published 'Housing Policy Statement - The Way Forward for Housing'. This document set out a wide range of policies determining the Government's aim that everyone should have the chance of a decent home.

**8.6.2** In 2003, 'Sustainable Communities: Building for the Future' was published, which seeks to create the framework for a sustainable housing plan for the nation. This set out a number of national priorities for housing under two broad headings:-

- 1) Achieving a better balance between demand and supply, which includes tackling low demand; ensuring 60% new build on brownfield land; increasing the supply of affordable housing to key workers and reducing homelessness;
- 2) By 2010, to make all social housing 'decent' and to reduce the proportion of private sector housing occupied by vulnerable groups that is not decent.

**8.6.3** 'The Sustainable Communities - Homes for All' Plan was published in 2005 and sets out an £18m investment for housing in the North West, to tackle low demand outside of the pathfinder areas. Both Liverpool and Manchester City Regions have commissioned consultants to develop City Region Housing Strategies, which will help to identify areas in need of this additional funding.

**8.6.4** The Government also established Regional Housing Boards that have developed Regional Housing Strategies to target investment to regional housing priorities.

## **8.7 North West Regional Housing Strategy 2005**

The North West Regional Housing Strategy 2005 sets out a number of key priority areas. These are:

- 1) Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand;
- 2) Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities;
- 3) Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods;

- 4) Meeting the region's needs for specialist and supported housing.

### **8.8 Urban renaissance and dealing with changing demand**

This regional priority aims to address changing demand across the North West, particularly the contrast between the hot-spots and other areas where increasing numbers of properties are vacant, experience high turnover or are subject to falling house prices. The North West has the largest concentration of low demand areas in the country. The 'Pathfinder' areas cover about half of the homes affected by low demand. There is also a great deal of housing which, although not suffering the worst extremes of low demand, can be classified as 'at risk.' This priority looks to maximise the impact of the market renewal Pathfinders, whilst also developing a targeted approach to preventing further market failure in other areas at risk.

#### **8.8.1 The Halton Perspective:**

In order to deliver this investment agenda, the NWDA, Government Office North West (GONW), the Housing Corporation and English Partnerships are seen as having important roles to play. The reality is that Housing Market Renewal Areas, or 'Pathfinder' areas, will receive a significant proportion of the available funding. Halton has not been identified as a priority Pathfinder area and therefore cannot hope to benefit significantly from this funding source. However, the draft Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy identifies areas such as Castlefields, Windmill Hill and West Bank as vulnerable housing markets. It is hoped that this will strengthen the case for investment under this priority. There are, however, limited funds available for investment outside of the Pathfinder area and Halton is only one of a number of authorities which will be seeking investment.

### **8.9 Providing affordable homes to maintain balanced communities**

**8.9.1** This priority aims to tackle areas where increasing house prices have forced many, including key workers, out of the housing market. The strategy hopes to address the shortages of affordable housing in these areas.

### **8.9.2 The Halton Perspective:**

**8.9.2.1** Despite the findings of the Housing Needs Survey, affordability issues in Halton are not as extreme as those experienced in some other areas of the region, e.g., Macclesfield and Southport, and the Borough does not experience particular problems with key workers being unable to afford to live in the area. Therefore, Halton is unlikely to benefit from this priority.

**8.9.2.2** To bring a spatial dimension to the Regional Housing Strategy, the Regional Housing Board have devised a high level typology of housing markets which describes in general terms the ways in which housing markets function in different parts of the region.

The typologies used are: unbalanced markets, balanced markets, high value/demand, low value with potential, high value/rural towns, high value/potential, rural/commuter pressure and city centre market. Halton falls within the balanced market typology where demand/supply is roughly in equilibrium but with possible pockets of low demand or affordability problems.

The recommendation for this typology is for planning policies to continue to meet demand with an appropriate balance of affordable provision. Halton aims to develop an Affordable Housing Policy in 2008 as part of the Local Development Framework process on the strength of evidence from the Housing Needs Survey.

### **8.10 Delivering decent homes in thriving neighbourhoods**

**8.10.1** This priority aims to address the physical condition of properties in the North West. All social housing tenants are required to have 'decent homes' by 2010 in order to meet the Government target.

#### **8.10.2 The Halton Perspective:**

**8.10.2.1** Although Council housing stock (6,680 dwellings in 2004) was generally well maintained, the scale of work required to meet this target required a much greater investment. It is estimated that 54% of the Council stock failed to meet the decent homes standard compared to a national average of just over 40%, with an investment of £85m required by 2010. As a result, Halton Borough



Council transferred its stock to a newly created Housing Trust in December 2005, following a positive ballot of tenants.

**8.10.2.2** Significant investment is not only required into public sector, but also into private sector housing, for which there is a secondary target 'to reduce the number of owner occupied dwellings occupied by vulnerable households that fail the Decent Homes Standard'. Halton's Private Sector House Condition Survey was undertaken in 2002, before this requirement came into being, and the Council consequently has no detailed information on how many households in Halton fall into this category. Recognising this as a problem facing many authorities, the Government has developed a model based on the findings of the English House Condition Survey that will produce an approximation of the numbers in each authority area.

For Halton, the model suggests that 65.7% of the homes occupied by vulnerable households currently meet the decent homes standard, which matches the 65% target set by Government for achievement by 2006. This figure will be used as the baseline for future monitoring until the next housing condition survey can provide more accurate data. In the meantime, it is proposed that grants awarded under the new Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy will be used to bring homes occupied by vulnerable households up to the Decent Homes Standard.

**8.10.2.3** Halton Borough Council is working to establish a Home Improvement Agency, which will act as a 'one-stop-shop' to assist applicants through the grants process. A Landlord Accreditation Scheme has recently been established in conjunction with the Private Landlords Forum, to improve conditions and drive up standards of private rented property.

### **8.11 Registered Social Landlords (RSLs)**

(excluding the Halton Housing Trust) owned 7,668 dwellings in Halton in 2006. Most of these were constructed in the late 1960's and 1970's. However, latest information suggests that only 8% of these properties currently fail the decency target and there is confidence that they will meet the 2010 target.

## **8.12 Figures from the Private Sector Stock Condition**

A Survey carried out in 2002 show that the average SAP value (a measure of energy efficiency on a scale of 1 to 120) of private sector dwellings is 48 - better than the national average of 44. It also indicates that 82% of private sector properties have central heating.

**8.13** Regional Priority 4: Meeting the region's needs for specialist and supported housing looks at how best to meet the needs of our most vulnerable residents. This includes older people, people with learning disabilities, people with mental health problems, people with physical disabilities, victims of domestic violence, people with drug and/or alcohol-addictions, teenage mothers and ex-offenders.

### **8.13.1 The Halton Perspective:**

**8.13.2** Current demographic predictions for Halton show a growing elderly population and increasing demands for a variety of housing types such as bungalows, supported housing and residential care. With existing waiting lists for such provision, this issue will be a key challenge for the future, as our elderly population increases.

**8.13.3** Halton is in the process of developing an 'Extra Care Housing' scheme in Palacefields, Runcorn. This will provide over 40 units of supported accommodation for elderly people, giving older people more choice and independence.

**8.13.4** A new private retirement homes scheme has also been developed in Peel House Lane, Widnes and there are proposals to provide at least one further such development in Widnes. However the public sector provision of bungalows and other suitable retirement homes is under pressure, with demand currently exceeding availability.

With a growing elderly population, as identified above, this situation is likely to worsen and needs to be addressed.

**8.13.5** The Council's Planning Department has produced a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for housing entitled Design of New Residential Development. This takes into account changing

housing needs, promoting 'lifetime homes' which are built to be accessible and meet the occupants' lifelong needs. It encourages a greater provision of homes suitable for the elderly, e.g., bungalows, which developers are often reluctant to build because they have a greater footprint on the ground - allowing fewer to be built on available land, which makes them less economically viable. This is further exacerbated by planning guidance, which encourages house-building to be of increased density.

**8.13.6** Because of the variety of people this priority is hoping to address, it is important that a wide range of partners work together to establish need, map existing provision and develop strategies accordingly.

**8.13.7** Financial resources provided by the Regional Housing Board to local authorities will primarily be allocated to fund Priorities 1 and 3. Funding for Priorities 2 and 4 will be administered through the Housing Corporation via RSLs. As Halton is unlikely to be allocated funding under Priorities 1 and 3, we will rely on funding under Priorities 2 and 4 from the Housing Corporation. The Regional Housing Board has, in principle, agreed further significant funding for Halton toward the next phase of the Castlefields redevelopment. However, this may restrict the amount of additional funding we are allocated for other priority areas, leading to another real challenge for Halton.

**8.13.8** This challenge is likely to intensify should there be a continuing realignment of the regional housing pot with the Regional Housing Strategy, which seems likely to happen. The funding safety net currently in place for areas is likely to diminish, with areas allocated funding under Priorities 1 and 2 taking greater shares year on year and others such as Halton having to cope with fewer resources.

#### **8.14 Halton Partnership Approach**

The implications of the Regional Housing Strategy are addressed through the Halton Housing Partnership. This comprises representatives from the Council and the larger RSLs. In addition Halton plays an active role in a number of cross authority/agency groups. These include the North West Housing Forum, the Merseyside Housing

Forum, the Merseyside Planning and Housing Officers Group and the M62 Corridor Group. This enables us to further our understanding of market change and to adopt common goals where appropriate.

#### **8.15 Housing Market Research**

A considerable amount of research has been undertaken which helps inform Halton's Housing Strategy. The key issues and trends are summarised as follows:-

#### **8.16 Population**

The Council has sought to stabilise Halton's falling population through economic growth, improving the environment and providing attractive new housing. As mentioned earlier, the average household size is decreasing in Halton, whilst the proportion of single person households is increasing. According to the 2001 census, the number of households has increased by 3,000 from 45,857 in 1991. However, Council Tax records suggest an increase of nearly 6,000 to 51,000 showing that the trend towards smaller households is sustaining the demand for increased housing provision.

#### **8.17 Housing Tenure**

**8.17.1** The social rented sector has remained relatively static within Halton for some time, whilst the private sector has nearly doubled. In 2006 there were 13,882 social rented properties (26%), as compared to 38,733 (74%) private sector properties. Despite this, the social rented sector still represents an unusually large proportion of the housing stock when compared to the North West figure of 20% and the national figure of 19% (Census 2001).

**8.17.2** The Housing Needs Survey found that about 4% of the total of Halton's housing stock is privately rented and it is estimated that these properties are owned by approximately 600 different landlords.

#### **8.18 The Private Sector**

**8.18.1** Housing markets in Widnes and Runcorn operate separately, with little or no interaction (1997 DTZ Pinda Urban Capacity Study).

The Housing Needs Survey identified that 39% of households who moved into the Borough over the last 3 years were from Merseyside, 16% from Cheshire, 13% from Warrington, 17% from outside the North West and 6% from abroad. The majority of households moving into the Borough were owner occupiers with a mortgage (56.2%) and a fifth of households said the most important reason for moving into the Borough was employment related, with a further fifth stating that they wished to move to a larger home. There are indications, therefore, that the local housebuilding policy has helped address population decline to some extent, whereas in the past the lack of such housing caused people to move away to neighbouring areas.

**8.18.2** Average house prices within Halton tend to be lower than Merseyside and the North West, but are significantly lower than those for England/Wales. A high proportion of properties built in recent years have been in the upper price bracket. Reflecting land availability and demand, these have mainly been located on the fringes of the Borough. Land contamination and lack of available sites in the inner parts of the Borough has limited development. However, with 70% of properties in the lower Council Tax bands, this has helped to address the imbalance in the range and type of property available.

**8.18.3** The Council estimates that to address population decline 500 dwellings a year need to be built, but Regional Planning Guidance in 2003 set a target of 330 for Halton. However, the draft revised Regional Spatial Strategy proposes a target of 500 for Halton, but with limits on how much of this can be built on greenfield land. Given the land contamination issues mentioned in a previous paragraph this could cause some difficulties in meeting the target.

### **8.19 The Social Rented Sector**

In Halton, 26% of housing is within the social rented sector. This relatively high level has been sustained, due to significant unemployment, a low wage economy and other deprivation issues. Findings from the Housing Needs Survey found that the current market situation, in terms of affordable housing, is increasing demand in the social rented sector and that overcrowding in social housing may be a result of this. The Survey also identifies that there may be a need for RSLs to consider

restructuring their stock in the long term, to take account of the needs of elderly and disabled households.

### **8.20 Supported Housing Needs**

**8.20.1** There are clear links between the Council's Supporting People Strategy and its Housing Strategy, with a key aim being to enable vulnerable people to remain in their homes. The Supporting People Strategy for Halton identifies priority client groups as:

- those with mental health problems,
- single, homeless young people,
- older people and
- those with physical and sensory disabilities.

**8.20.2** We also work in partnership, to ensure the necessary provision of supported housing for teenage parents, refuges for victims of domestic violence, together with suitable accommodation for ex-offenders, people who misuse drugs and alcohol and those with HIV/Aids.

### **8.21 Halton Stock Transfer**

The transfer of Council owned housing stock to Halton Housing Trust, a newly created organisation, took place in December 2005.

### **8.22 Considerations for the future**

**8.22.1** With recent regeneration schemes in Castlefields and Dukesfield, the quality of housing in the Borough has increased. However there are pockets of housing which will require attention in the near to mid term. These will include West Bank in Widnes, which now has some of the oldest properties in the Borough.

Consultants have been appointed and are carrying out work to assess housing conditions in the area and carry out an environmental assessment. Links will also be made to the neighbouring Widnes Waterfront EDZ development.

A number of costed options are expected to be reported.

**8.22.2** Windmill Hill requires regeneration work if the estate is to continue providing viable accommodation for local residents.

The design and layout of the estate no longer meets modern day needs, e.g., there is inadequate car parking provision and poor public transport links increase the isolation felt by residents of the estate.

**8.22.3** Development at Upton Rocks and Sandymoor is likely to continue for the next few years. However, Upton Rocks has dwindling land availability. The emerging Local Development Framework will examine land availability and site supply.

## 9.0 TRANSPORT

**9.1** Halton Borough Council is responsible for the maintenance of nearly 500km of roads, 22km of busways and 200km of footpaths. In addition, we maintain the Silver Jubilee Bridge and a further 200 highway structures, including expressway and busway bridges.

### 9.2 Legislation

**9.2.1** In 2004, the Government produced a review of its 10 year Transport Plan in the form of a White Paper entitled *The Future of Transport*. This had three key themes:

- Sustained investment over the long term. The spending review settlement supports the Governments' commitment to deliver sustained improvements to transport networks. Spending by the Department for Transport (DfT) will rise by an annual average of 4.5% in real terms between 2005-06 and 2007-08. An additional £1.7 billion transport reform package will be provided for the railways, over and above the 10 Year Plan provision.
- Improvements in transport management. The rail industry is to be re-organised to improve performance, drive down costs and get better value from public spending. Better traffic management is proposed and where it makes sense economically and environmentally to increase the capacity of the road network, measures will be required to 'lock in' benefits e.g., road pricing. In addition, assistance will be given to local authorities to combine better bus services with local charging schemes.
- Planning ahead, the long-term trends in travel are evident to all.

We cannot build our way out of the problems we face on our road networks and doing nothing is not an option. The Government intends to lead the debate on road pricing and will ensure that transport decision-making will be shared with regional and local stakeholders. The Government also intends to ensure that regional and local planning will be based on a shared view of priorities, deliverability and affordability.

**9.2.2** Underlining these themes is balancing the need to travel with the need to improve quality of life. This means seeking solutions that meet long-term economic, social and environmental goals.

Achieving this aim will clearly contribute to the objectives of the UK Sustainable Development Strategy.

**9.2.3** The Traffic Management Act received Royal Assent in July 2004 and is being implemented over the next two years. It places responsibility on Local Authorities to be pro-active in the management of the road network. The aims of the Act are to tackle congestion and reduce disruption.

### 9.3 Regional Context

**9.3.1** The North West Regional Assembly's Transport Strategy is being reviewed as part of the Regional Spatial Strategy. The regional context currently remains as published in RSS 13, Regional Planning Guidance for the North West (March 2003). This lists the Mersey Crossing Study as a 'regionally significant transport study' and as a 'transport proposal of regional significance'.

**9.3.2** The Regional Economic Strategy provides the economic development framework for the North West. Improving transport is key to delivering four of the five priorities of the strategy, e.g., business development, regeneration, infrastructure and image.

**9.3.3** In January 2005, Merseyside produced 'The Liverpool City Region', which looks at how Merseyside will contribute to the Northern Way. This includes expansion of the John Lennon Airport (located just outside Halton) and the Mersey Gateway, which will help improve connectivity of the City Region.

## 9.4 Local Transport Plan (LTP)

**9.4.1** In July 2000, Halton produced its first Local Transport Plan for the period 2001/02 to 2005/06. This document was well received by Government Office and resulted in a £2.227m increase in funding for 2001/02 over that awarded for 2000/01.

Halton has made significant progress towards achieving its transport aims and objectives. In the period 2003/04, 87% of Halton's targets were either already achieved or on track, with Halton achieving a 'well above average' classification from the Department for Transport. In 2006 it was deemed to be an Excellent Authority in this respect, one of only two in the North West.

**9.4.2** The Council's LTP 2, covering the period April 2006 to March 2011, sets out the Council's vision for local transport and its long-term strategy for tackling transport problems within the Borough. A five-year implementation programme of schemes and initiatives is included, together with targets and performance indicators that will be used to monitor progress in delivering objectives.

**9.4.3** The Plan is structured around the four shared priorities for transport agreed between local authorities and the Government, which are:

- Tackling congestion
- Delivering Accessibility
- Safer Roads and
- Better Air Quality

**9.4.4 Tackling Congestion** - The biggest congestion problems within Halton are on the approaches to the Silver Jubilee Bridge, where up to 90,000 vehicles cross every day. This bottleneck stands in the way of economic development both within the Borough and across the wider Merseyside area. However congestion at peak times also occurs at other key junctions, including the A56 Chester Road/A558 Eastern Expressway roundabout, the Widnes Eastern Relief Road/ Fiddlers Ferry Road and the A557 approach to M56. There is also growing evidence that regeneration is bringing about local congestion within the town centres. Congestion not only constrains the economy but also impacts on air quality.

**9.4.5** The approval and development of the second Mersey crossing, the Mersey Gateway, will lead to significant journey time savings for cross river traffic and will enable the Silver Jubilee Bridge to cater for sustainable local travel. A decision on the crossing is expected in the near future, but even if it gets the go ahead, it will not be completed before 2012.

**9.4.6 Delivering Accessibility** - The ability of people to be able to move around Halton and access services, such as schools, hospitals, work, shopping and leisure, has a big impact on their quality of life. The key objective is to ensure that vulnerable communities have good access to these services, which are fundamental to tackling problems of social exclusion. However, it is now widely recognised that accessibility problems cannot be addressed by transport authorities alone, but require close co-operation with providers and users of the services.

In consultation with our partners, a wide range of measures are proposed, including focused improvements to non-commercial and accessible bus services, highways network travel planning advice and publicity and facilities for cyclists and pedestrians. In addition, planning conditions on new developments will continue to be used to maximise opportunities to increase accessibility through sustainable travel. These will include use of S106 and S278 Agreements.

**9.4.7 Safer Roads** - Halton has made significant progress in reducing accident casualty rates and we are on track to meet Government targets. However, accident rates are still above the national average and more work needs to be done to bring levels down further. In particular, the number of children killed or seriously injured on Halton's roads is twice the national average. There has also been an increase in the number of injuries to users of two-wheeled motor vehicles, with the total casualty rate in Halton for the five years up to 2003 being 33% higher than the 1994-98 baseline figure.

A comprehensive and holistic approach to casualty reduction will continue to be employed, incorporating targeted highway improvements, safety cameras, traffic-calming, road safety

education, training and publicity, traffic management and safety audits.

**9.4.8 Better Air Quality** - There are clear linkages between high levels of air pollution and people's health. Extensive modelling of pollution in the Borough has shown that pollution levels are currently within acceptable air quality standards. However, we will continue to introduce measures and interventions to encourage sustainable travel, to reduce the potential for congestion and pollution and monitor air quality.

### 9.5 Local Transport Plan Funding

The Government is consulting on a new formula approach to allocating funding for the 'Integrated Transport' block. Current indications are that this will have a major impact on Halton's ability to undertake capital improvements to the transport system in future years. The following table indicates the potential allocations for the Maintenance and Integrated Transport elements.

Year	06/07	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	Total
Integrated Transport block- Indicative (£000s)	1,639	1,500	1,428	1,500	1,575	7,641
Maintenance of Roads & Bridges- Indicative (£000s)	2,089	2,131	2,237	2,344	2,467	11,268
<b>Total</b>	<b>3,728</b>	<b>3,631</b>	<b>3,665</b>	<b>3,844</b>	<b>4,042</b>	<b>18,909</b>

**N.B.** In addition, a major scheme bid of between £25m and £35m has been submitted to the DfT to enable the Silver Jubilee Bridge to be brought to a steady state of maintenance. (See immediately below for further information on the bridge).

Comparing the above indicative programme to that which was available for the period 2001/2 - 2005/6, it is possible that there will be an overall reduction over the next five-year period of £11.7m.

**9.6** The Government has provided Halton with an indicative allocation of Local Transport Plan funding of £8.334m for integrated transport and £11.458m for highway maintenance over five years.

## 10.0 SILVER JUBILEE BRIDGE

**10.1** The Silver Jubilee Bridge is a Grade II listed structure, opened in 1961. At that time, it was the third longest span steel arch bridge in the world. It was designed to carry 9,000 vehicles a day, but was widened in 1977 to increase capacity to 65,000 vehicles. This capacity has now been massively exceeded, with daily flow rates reaching 90,000 vehicles per day. As a result, traffic flow across the bridge is extremely sensitive to disruption, with the slightest incident during peak hours causing congestion over a wide area.

**10.2** 80% of vehicles using the Silver Jubilee Bridge have a final destination outside of the Borough, the remaining 20% being local traffic.

This demonstrates the high strategic importance of the crossing.

**10.3** The Silver Jubilee Bridge is now over 40 years old and is operating beyond its original design capacity. Before Halton, as a new Unitary Authority, took on responsibility for the structure, its maintenance had been consistently under-funded for years and as a result of these factors, the bridge continues to require significant investment. To date, it has benefited from £9m of essential structural maintenance. However, £25m is required for a further 10-year programme. This will be pursued through a major scheme bid as part of the LTP and will bring the bridge to a steady state condition to ensure its continued viability.

## 11.0 MERSEY GATEWAY

**11.1** By the end of the 2005/6 financial year total development costs for the Mersey Gateway since 2001/02 exceeded £5.7m. Halton's contribution was £3.2m from internal resources supported by £1m from LTP allocations, with the balance of £1.5m from partners. The development work has included modelling the impact of the new bridge on the motorway network and looking at the impact of the new crossing on river flows, water quality, the economy, wildlife and the landscape. There has also been extensive consultation with interested organisations and the local community, 97% of the latter being in favour of a new crossing, which emphasises the strength of support.

**11.2** In July 2003, a detailed bid was submitted to the Government for over £300m for the new crossing. In December 2003, the Government responded positively by awarding the project the status of 'super work in progress'. A revised and expanded appraisal was submitted in December 2004. It was approved in 2006.

**11.3** It is intended that a planning application will be submitted early in 2008.

**11.4** The Mersey Gateway will be more than just a bridge for Halton. It will support the regional economy and act as a catalyst for regeneration within Halton. In particular it will be a major boost to the Widnes Waterfront EDZ and 3MG. It will have the capacity to take up to 120,000 vehicles a day and provision for a light rail system, together with walking/cycling access. It will also enable the Silver Jubilee Bridge to cater for more sustainable local trips.

## 12.0 CONSULTATION

As part of the LTP development, a series of consultation events were carried out, including a household survey, which went to 6,935 residents, and a series of LTP conference events for stakeholders.

## 13.0 FUTURE OPPORTUNITIES

**13.1** There is huge scope for future transport opportunities:

**13.2** Improved public transport links to Liverpool John Lennon Airport will benefit the development of this important regional airport and, as a consequence, the economy of the whole region.

**13.3** Liverpool Capital of Culture in 2008 is on the near horizon and improved transport links will have a beneficial impact on this important year-long series of events, together with the anticipated economic expansion we can expect, as seen in recent Capital of Culture cities such as Dublin and Glasgow.

## 14.0 RAIL

**14.1** Halton Curve Rail Link is a £7.5m scheme which, if implemented, would lead to new local services, a possible new local station at Beechwood

in Runcorn and the re-opening of Ditton Station. It would also complement the Mersey Gateway.

**14.2** Car Parking and Access Improvements could be made at both Widnes and Hough Green stations.

**14.3** 3MG is a large-scale road/rail freight interchange to undergo considerable expansion in south west Widnes. It will provide major investment into existing rail freight businesses and be of regional and national significance. In order to deliver this programme, however, other road infrastructure improvements, which are part of the LTP, are being worked on. These include a new bridge on Ditton Road and the provision of an HGV bypass.

A Masterplan for this site was approved in December 2004 and details a five-year implementation programme. This has now been converted into a Supplementary Planning Document.

## 15.0 BUSES

**15.1** The vast majority of the bus network within the Borough is operated commercially, with the remainder supported by Halton Borough Council. In recent years, there had been a general decline in bus usage, but in the last year this has reverted to a small increase of 0.3%.

**15.2** There is a good, high frequency core bus service in the Borough, which includes a unique 20km dedicated Busway in Runcorn. However there are opportunities for improvement such as:

- More flexible bus services using low-floor vehicles, together with enhanced passenger infrastructure and frequency improvements;
- Direct bus links between the town centres and railway stations;
- Increased public transport information, advice and publicity;
- Re-alignment of the supported bus network, to better meet locally identified needs;
- Roll out of 'real time information' scheme;
- Introduction of a multi-operator, pre-paid bus ticket pilot covering all bus services.

### 15.3 Key Issues

**15.3.1** There is a lack of funding to local bus services. Supported bus networks are necessary for general public accessibility but are not commercially viable. Improvements should include late night and weekend services, as well as services to industrial areas and hospitals. The cost for providing the current level of service is rising each year and this will lead to cuts in services unless budgets are increased.

**15.3.2** At present, bus operators are reluctant to operate busway routes after 9:30pm due to the number of anti-social behaviour incidents and attacks on bus drivers. With the proposal and promotion of the night-time economy, this presents a key challenge. However, the 'Travelsafe' programme, which puts police and community support officers on the buses during the day, has been successful in tackling these issues and could be extended, but this would have resource implications.

**15.3.3** There are potential links to be made, to support the growing night-time economy, including late night bus services to take people out of the town centre areas as quickly as possible.

## 16.0 STREET LIGHTING

**16.1** Currently, there are 19,200 lighting units in the Borough, about 46% of which are over 30 years old and are consequently at the end of their designed life.

### 16.2 Key Issues

**16.2.1** Funding over recent years has not been sufficient to remove older and potentially dangerous units. Their removal therefore needs to be prioritised.

**16.2.2** Increases in energy charges and the introduction of new lighting columns on new developments will significantly increase energy costs.

## 17.0 PRINCIPAL ROAD INFRASTRUCTURE

**17.1** The Expressway network in Runcorn was built at approximately the same time as the Silver

Jubilee Bridge and is wearing out. At the moment, discussions are underway with the DfT and GONW to review the allocation for road maintenance within Halton. Resources need to be secured to ensure that roads are suitably maintained to take modern loads and vehicle usage.

### 17.2 Key Achievements

**17.2.1** As part of the CPA assessment, the environment, which includes transportation issues, was given full marks.

**17.2.2** The annual programme reports submitted to show progress against the LTP have all been 'above average' with the last one 'well above average.' This currently places Halton 8th in the country.

**17.2.3** Halton is a 'Centre of Excellence' for local transport services.

**17.2.4** Halton is a 'Beacon Council' for better local public transport.

## 18.0 CONTAMINATED LAND

**18.1** The Environmental Protection Act, 1990 addresses some of the issues surrounding contaminated land: in particular, the retention and treatment of contaminated land on site rather than removal to tip, and a 'source-pathway-target' approach for dealing with risks to health.

**18.2** The 'source-pathway-target' approach involves local authorities using historical records of land use and other information to identify contaminated or potentially contaminated sites within their area. Site investigation works then need to be carried out at these sites, to establish the types and location of the contamination. The Council is able to prioritise key sites depending on location, current land use and the likely contaminant present. This then establishes that a contamination or a 'source' is present. Contamination on its own will not always present an immediate health risk and the next step is to identify if there is a pathway, such as a watercourse or drainage system, which would give the contamination the means to move or 'leach' from the site. Once contamination is no longer locked



into the ground, it is able to cause harm to the health of humans and wildlife. When contamination can be shown to be causing or have the potential to cause harm, the Council is required to act. If contaminated land is in private ownership, we can serve notice requiring remediation to be implemented. If the Council own the site then we need to remediate it. Sites meeting these criteria are categorised as 'Special Sites' under the Environmental Protection Act.

**18.3** The National Land Use Database (NLUD), produced in 2004, shows that 27.69% of Halton's previously developed land remains derelict - a significant decrease from 36% in 2003. This represents 3% of the entire land in the Borough: 217 sites covering 248 ha., with 173 sites and 75 ha., in Widnes and Runcorn respectively. Unsurprisingly, these sites tend to be concentrated on land either side of the River Mersey, as for many years this was dominated by the chemical industry. Bringing these sites back into productive use is a key aim of the Council and of the Council's Unitary Development Plan. However, this legacy presents a major disincentive for development and makes it impossible to meet Government Policy objectives i.e., for most new development to take place on previously used land. Up to 75% of this land is economically and environmentally beyond reclamation for a hard end use. Despite this, since 1974 the Council has brought back into use 190 ha., of derelict and contaminated land, 71% of which was so badly contaminated it is suitable only for green end use.

## 19.0 REMEDIATION FUNDING

### 19.1 DEFRA

#### 19.1.1 Derelict Land Grants

**19.1.2** Between 1974 and 1990, over 397 acres of derelict land within Halton was reclaimed through funding from the Government's Derelict Land programme. It represented a public investment figure of over £20m. Derelict Land Grant aid and our success in attracting such funding has made an immense difference to the image of Halton. However with our industrial heritage there still remains much to do. In fact, some of the sites which

had already been reclaimed fell below the environmental standards that were subsequently expected. The Municipal Golf Course is a good example of this. Following a reclamation operation, leachate continued to enter Steward's Brook, but because we were not allowed to attract two lots of grant for different contamination problems in the same piece of land remediation, this remains unresolved.

**19.1.3** The Council continues to access Derelict Land Grant each year. This has gone towards the reclamation of sites such as Percival Lane, Barrows Green Lane, Southern Widnes, the ICI Coal Stock Yard, TAC Derby Road and Factory Lane. Derelict Land Grants are issued from the governments Derelict Land Programme, controlled by English Partnerships (EP). The NWDA act as administrator and our contact. There are various different funds that deal with contaminated ground when linked into hard end use, all under EP's control.

**19.1.4** Under part IIA of the Environmental Protection Act, funding is now disbursed by Defra. This is provided for three specific areas:

- 1) Site investigation;
- 2) Risk assessments/consultants reports;
- 3) Costs for remediation work.

**19.1.5** Funding for Parts 1) and 2) is available for all potential contamination sites identified, but money for Part 3) is only available for sites that are designated as 'Special Sites'. Halton currently has only one designated special site: St Michael's Golf Course, which was reclaimed many years ago using Derelict Land Grant. However, this site no longer meets today's more stringent environmental standards and obtaining designation is proving a lengthy process, which the Council originally embarked upon back in 2003.

**19.1.6** The process has involved putting a case together for designation to the Environment Agency (who need to formally support the proposal), as well as carrying out site investigation works and developing a design scheme. Although funding was available for the site investigation works, the design scheme had to be funded by the Council at a cost of £270,000. As Defra has agreed

to designate the golf course as a Special Site, these costs will be refunded as part of the overall reclamation costs. Closure of the golf course while this process continues is incurring additional costs for security - currently running at in excess of £150,000 per annum, which will not be eligible for refund from Defra.

**19.1.7** Such a lengthy and costly process presents some real issues for Halton. As an area with more 'blackfield' than 'brownfield' sites, we potentially have some way to go to prove our need to Defra. We are, however, continuing with a programme of testing to identify sites and categorise any possible risks. This work is funded through Defra.

**19.1.8** Key sites in Halton which may possibly require future designation as special sites are Weston Quarries, Johnson's Lane Tip, Weston lagoons and parts of the Widnes Waterfront EDZ. Although some of these are currently in private ownership, they may eventually become the responsibility of the Council.

**19.1.9** In Halton, site contamination is often severe and the consequent cost for remediation is therefore very high. St. Michael's Golf Course will, for example, cost in the region of £4.5m to remediate.

## **19.2 Landfill Tax Credits**

This is a further source of funding that can be used for smaller scale projects involving site contamination. As its name suggests, it is funded from Landfill Tax, which is a tax levied on all waste that currently goes to landfill. The ICI Coal Stock Yard received £300,000 from Landfill tax credits towards the costs of site remediation.

**19.3** North West Development Agency (NWDA) Funding NWDA single pot funds can also be used for land reclamation, but this has become increasingly difficult for Halton to access due to the NWDA's changing priorities.

## **20.0 CONTAMINATED LAND REMEDIATION TECHNOLOGIES**

**20.1** The variety of technologies for treating contamination and remediating sites is advancing all the time.

Halton Borough Council has carried out pioneering works using 'Cement Stabilisation Technology' at a number of sites in the Borough. This process is particularly suitable for a commonly occurring contaminant in Halton called 'Galligu.' This semi-liquid substance causes major land stability problems and poses a risk to watercourses, etc. The cement stabilisation technique locks up the contamination and changes its consistency to a hard solid, thus preventing further risk and improving the quality of the site for potential further development. This technique was used on the Coal Stock Yard site in Widnes which is now a demonstration project being monitored by the Environment Agency and the University of Liverpool. To date, tests have proven the technology to be successful. This method also has the advantage of being relatively cheap and is thus more cost effective when compared to landfill. The cement stabilisation technology is also likely to be used on parts of St. Michael's Golf Course and the Widnes Waterfront EDZ.

**20.2** Other technologies include:

- bio-remediation and vacuum extraction, which remove oils and solvents; and
- permeable reactive barriers, which treat collected leachate from sites with suitable chemicals in order to make them safe.

## **20.3 Land Reclamation Schemes**

**20.3.1** Halton Borough Council is currently reclaiming approximately 10 hectares of contaminated land each year. These sites, e.g. Wigg Island, are mainly being reclaimed for green, soft end uses: generally most appropriate given the site conditions. However the cement stabilisation technique has been so successful that it may be viable to build on sites in the future. Sites treated in this way, e.g., the old Crosville Bus Depot, Runcorn, could be viable for a number of uses, including housing, as the ground conditions are much more suitable.

**20.3.2** One site which has recently been reclaimed:-

**20.3.3** The Brindley Arts Centre is the former site of an old tannery and soap works in Runcorn Town Centre, where various contaminants were left in the ground.

**20.3.3.1** The first phase of this development involved dealing with the contamination which, due to environmental regulations, had to be retained on site. Temporarily encapsulated as 'the mound' adjacent to the Brindley, it was prevented from causing further harm. However, as part of the nearby new development for the Runcorn Canal Quarter, the mound is being removed.

**20.3.3.2** In addition, the foundations for the Brindley were piled in order to accommodate the ground conditions.

**20.3.4** Reclamation schemes proposed in the future:

#### **20.3.4.1 St Michael's Golf Course**

It is hoped that work will begin on the golf course in the near future, but it is estimated that it will be four years before the site will again be open to the public. As the site was a 1970s design, consideration is being given as to how it can be improved and updated, for example through the inclusion of a golf driving range.

#### **20.3.4.2 HEDCO or Hutchinsons Tip, West Bank**

Currently in private ownership, this heavily contaminated site, adjacent to Stewards Brook and the Mersey estuary, will require some remediation in the near future to prevent leachate from entering these watercourses. Work is currently underway to look at the possibility of collecting the leachate and burning it.

#### **20.3.4.3 3MG**

This site has two watercourses, Ditton Brook and Stewards Brook, into which leachate could potentially escape. The site adjacent to Stewards Brook has been sheet-piled, which will prevent further contamination from entering the brook. However, other parts of the site may require additional treatment.

## **21.0 KEY URBAN RENEWAL ACHIEVEMENTS**

**21.1** The Highways and Transportation Department won Beacon Council status in 2004, under the theme 'Better Local Public Transport'.

**21.2** In November 2003, the Planning

Department achieved runner up status in the Local Government Award category of the AGI Awards (Association of Geographic Information) for its on-line planning application system and were short-listed in the 2004 Local Government Chronicle Awards category of 'Improving Services with E-Technology'.

**21.3** Landscape Services won Beacon Council status in 2002, under the theme 'Improving Urban Green Spaces'.

**21.4** In the Best Value Audit Inspection carried out in 2003 for urban renewal, the service was awarded a Good 2\* Service with 'Promising Prospects for Improvement.' Halton was praised for having a strong track record over many years of reclaiming contaminated and derelict land and of completing re-development projects on the land released. Inspectors felt that Halton had been successful in creating employment opportunities by attracting private sector investment into the Borough. In addition, they found that Halton had good working relationships with locally based businesses and that progress had been made in demonstrating leadership in partnership-working and devolving influence over the use of resources to local communities. Relative data showed Halton compared well with others on refurbishing derelict housing.

#### **21.5 Awards Won for Halton Regeneration Schemes in 2004/5/6:**

**21.5.1** Green Apple Awards for:

**21.5.1.1** Halton Business Forum, Victoria Square, Widnes (2004);

**21.5.1.2** Transporter House, Widnes (2004);

**21.5.1.3** The regeneration of the Kingsway Learning Centre, Widnes (2005);

**21.5.2** Royal Institute of British Architects (RIBA) Award for The Brindley Arts Centre, Runcorn (2005);

**21.5.3** Royal Town Planning Institute (RTPI) for the Wigg Island reclamation project in Runcorn (2004);

**21.5.4** 2005 Regeneration Award: Best Design-led

Regeneration Project awarded for The Brindley Arts Centre, Runcorn (2005);

**21.5.5** Civic Trust 2005: Centre Vision Special Award for The Brindley Arts Centre, Runcorn;

**21.5.6** 'Green Flag' for Parks & Open Spaces for Wigg Island, Runcorn (2006);

**21.5.7** Local Government Chronicle (LGC) Environment Award 2006 for the development of the former Coal Stockyard (now Ted Gleave Fields) into playing fields.

**21.5.8** Chartered Institute of Housing: Excellence in Delivering Regeneration Award for Castlefields area (2006).

**21.5.9** Regional Property Awards: Best Partnership Project (with Plus Housing Group) for the Waterbridge Mews Development (2006) in Castlefields.

**21.6** In addition, a number of projects have been shortlisted for awards for this year, but results have, to date, not been announced.

## **22.0 URBAN RENEWAL WORKING STRUCTURES AND PARTNERSHIPS**

**22.1** The process of urban renewal is a highly complex, cross-cutting issue. As the Government's White Paper makes clear, the requirements for success go well beyond the relatively tight definition of urban renewal used in this paper, which emphasises the physical environment.

**22.2.1** Halton Borough Council recognised the importance of bringing responsibility for the delivery of physical regeneration programmes under one roof, by creating the Major Projects Department in 2002. This department, together with other directorates within Halton Borough Council, various partners, agencies and organisations having an input into urban renewal, are brought together in several ways:

**22.2.2** The Urban Renewal Specialist Strategic Partnership (UR SSP), reporting to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board, manages Halton's Urban Renewal Strategy. It approves, disburses,

monitors and co-ordinates Halton's NRF allocation for Urban Renewal projects and acts as Management Board for the NWDA funding for the Widnes Waterfront EDZ.

**22.2.3** The Castlefields Regeneration Partnership agreed the Castlefields Regeneration Masterplan and Action Plan and oversees its implementation. The Castlefields Implementation Group monitors progress on the Council's behalf.

**22.2.4** The 3MG Steering Group has brought together land-owners and public sector partners in the formulation of the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park Masterplan and monitors progress against the agreed Action Plan. Halton Borough Council's Executive (Transmodal Implementation) Sub Board manages the implementation of the programme.

**22.2.5** The Widnes Waterfront EDZ Steering Group consists of officers with an interest in delivering the Widnes Waterfront EDZ Masterplan and Action Plan.

**22.2.6** The Council's Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board monitors and reviews progress on all Urban Renewal matters.

**22.3** In addition there are other informal and formal partnerships with private sector developers driving forward Urban Renewal. These are:

**22.3.1** Widnes Regeneration Ltd., established in February 1999 as a joint venture development company between Halton Borough Council and St. Modwen Properties plc., to tackle the regeneration issues facing Widnes Town Centre and other named sites in Widnes. This partnership has delivered:

- Widnes Road redevelopment with a new ASDA store, Albert Court 20-unit residential scheme, Gerrard Street shops, the Lacey Street housing development and the Liebig Court mixed residential and retail developments.
- The North Albert Road redevelopment with the JJB leisure/retail development and Streetscape Improvement scheme;
- Two Streetscape Improvement schemes, one in Widnes Road and one in Broseley Square;

- Halebank Local Centre;
- The Simms Cross Redevelopment, incorporating retail and commercial floorspace;
- Following the purchase of the former Lafarge and Clariant sites, the Heron Business Park development on the Widnes Waterfront EDZ;
- The sale to Barratt's of a housing development site with planning permission for 204 houses on the former ASDA site at Halebank;
- the commercial leisure development at Widnes Waterfront.

**22.3.2** Halton Development Partnership Ltd., which is a joint venture company with Peel Holdings Ltd., to promote development/regeneration initiatives targeted solely to Council-owned land. The joint venture company has delivered the Runcorn Old Town Central Area Redevelopment Scheme and is currently progressing the proposed District Centre at Upton Rocks, Widnes.

**22.3.3** The Council has entered into an exclusivity agreement with Urban Splash to bring forward development proposals for the 'Canal Quarter', a collection of sites alongside the Bridgewater canal in Runcorn. The development will include residential, commercial, retail and civic elements.

**22.3.4** The Council is in discussion with private sector developers wishing to procure the Halton Business Forum for redevelopment.

**22.3.5** Pochins plc - A joint venture company that has built and is now managing industrial units at Dock Road, Runcorn.

**22.3.6** An informal private sector regeneration partnership was also established with Maryland Securities in developing a proposal for one of the key buildings (the former Co-op store) in Victoria Square, Widnes.

**22.3.7** There are also partnerships within both Runcorn Town Centre and Widnes Town Centre, which are aimed at increasing the vitality and viability of these two town centres.

- In Widnes, the Widnes Traders Group has 70 members concerned with retail and

commercial interests in the Town Centre.

- In Runcorn Town Centre the business community there has established the Runcorn Traders Group with 7 member representatives for 100 commercial interests in the town.

These groups meet bi-annually.

**22.3.8** Halton Borough Council is a member of two regional partnerships which include developments in Halton within their programmes:

- The 'New Approaches' programme aims to reclaim under-used land on strategic corridors and gateways to and from Merseyside;
- The 'River of Light' scheme aims to create light beacons to form 'lighting routes' throughout the Merseyside coastline.

## **22.4 Comments on partnership working**

**22.4.1** Substantial progress is being demonstrated in achieving the desired outcomes, as measured through the Floor Targets and action plans in place to address areas where challenges remain and to focus on continuing needs.

**22.4.2** Successful expenditure of all external resources committed to the borough in line with strategic plans. Partners have demonstrated their commitment through dedicating their own resources to Partnership activity and in examining mainstreaming.

**22.4.3** An exemplary strategic planning process is in place, which allows partners to address the needs and aspirations of our communities. This is reflected in a very favourable Audit Commission report on the Partnership's Performance Management Framework, which is deemed to meet all necessary criteria. In addition, the Government Office assessment of the Partnership and its work places it in one of the upper ("green/amber") bands for the annual review for the Neighbourhood Renewal Unit.

## **23.0 EMERGING POLICY ISSUES**

The Local Government Bill, currently before Parliament, will have profound implications for areas like Halton. It reinforces the need for councils to pursue the well-being of residents in an holistic way;

strengthens the role of Partnerships by placing a duty on many organisations to co-operate; and places engagement with residents and businesses as a cornerstone of the approach to be taken. Key to this is a radical reworking of Local Area Agreements as a means to promote and facilitate partnership working across cross-cutting themes.

### **23.1 Local Area Agreements**

From April 2007, there is a requirement for every area to produce a Local Area Agreement (LAA). It is important that we work together to deliver key outcomes for the Borough as part of this process. Halton has developed a robust LAA, which mirrors the focus on five strategic themes, including Urban Renewal, set out in the local Sustainable Community Strategy.

### **23.2 Funding**

**23.2.1** As has been explained previously, external funding changes are likely to result in Halton receiving far less resource than we have had in the past, as a number of funding sources upon which urban renewal has relied in recent years are now coming to an end. The task will be to work in a smarter way to make best use of what resources are available.

**23.2.2** In addition we are not identified as a Pathfinder area and are therefore likely to miss out on many of the resources allocated for housing.

**23.2.3** Halton is now allocated NWDA resources via The Merseyside Partnership (TMP) and is therefore having to compete for funding with the Merseyside area generally. As mentioned earlier, this is likely to be a key challenge for Halton.

**23.2.4** It is important that Halton continues to develop links with the NWDA as RDAs in the English Regions are likely to be key players in the management and allocation of European and non-European resources earmarked for regional development in the immediate future.

**23.2.5** There are, therefore, major challenges for Halton in delivering Urban Renewal. It is likely that we will increasingly have to focus on private sector funding and partnership.

However, we must acknowledge that much of the private sector intervention to date has relied upon public sector funding to attract it to the Borough, or to provide improvements which have acted as a catalyst to private sector development. With diminishing public funding support, opportunities may be fewer or on a smaller scale.

### **23.3 Best Value Review**

**23.3.1** The Audit Commission Inspectors for the 2003 Best Value Review of Urban Renewal felt that Halton did not have sufficiently well defined service delivery outcomes and that the focus had been on managing existing projects as well as securing funding for future projects, rather than on identifying how projects would meet the needs of local people and their environment.

As a consequence, they felt that this had led to a 'piecemeal' approach to physical renewal and regeneration in the past. Comparative data showed that performance was poor in respect of some indicators associated with housing, economic development and the environment.

**23.3.2** Although much has since changed and improvements have been made following that review, more still needs to be done to address this challenging agenda.

## **24.0 SKILLS AND EMPLOYMENT**

**24.1** Although considered as part of 'Employment, Learning & Skills', skills and employment issues also cut across part of the urban renewal agenda. Halton generally performs poorly in terms of skills and qualification levels, ranking 342nd out of 408 districts. The 19+ age group has a particular lack of employment skills and qualifications, leading to new Halton businesses recruiting from outside the Borough. Halton is, therefore, not fully benefiting from the inward investment to areas such as Daresbury Park. This issue needs to be addressed by both the Urban Renewal and the Skills and Employment priorities, with better links made between the two. Intelligence needs to be provided to schools and colleges, to support curriculum development and provide more informed careers advice to students.

There is also a question as to whether colleges are catering for local businesses in offering students what businesses need in terms of flexibility and vocational training opportunities.

**24.2** Education in Halton, and the UK generally, is currently very focussed on academic qualifications. This option may not suit some students, who could learn valuable vocational skills and gain greater employment opportunities through a more structured approach to learning.

**24.3** While we need to focus on the knowledge economy, the current skills mismatch is unlikely to be able to support a growth in this sector. This is further impacted upon by a loss in our youth population, predicted at 20% decline over the next ten years in the 10-19 yrs., age group and 6% in the 20-30 yrs., age group. It is likely that these losses will be due to families moving out of Halton, to Cheshire and surrounding areas, and students moving to university. This presents us with the challenge to:

- o make Halton a more attractive and viable place to live and
- o meet the needs and quality of life issues

and in order to keep families here and attract new graduates back to the area, businesses should also be encouraged to employ local graduates. These issues will need to be addressed if we are to have a young, local, skilled workforce in place that will underpin Halton's economic growth.

## 25.0 HOUSING

**25.1** Housing may present the key to reversing Halton's population decline amongst young people. As mentioned above, current predictions suggest that by 2015, the number of young people aged 10-19 and 20-39 will decline by 20% and 6% respectively (based on a 2003 baseline). If we are to attract graduates and young families into the area, we need to meet the demand for high quality residential property. Otherwise, people will continue to 'vote with their feet' and leave the borough. However, regional restrictions placed upon the Authority with regard to new-build housing, together with diminishing land reserves (particularly in Widnes)

present key challenges for the borough.

**25.2** For a variety of reasons, the problems facing the borough do not correlate with the priorities of the Regional Housing Strategy, which may result in Halton not securing funding for the housing investment we require.

**25.3** As the Regional Housing Board has, in principle, agreed significant funding for Castlefields, the amount of additional funding which we are allocated for other priority areas may be restricted, leading to a major challenge for Halton.

**25.4** Within Halton there are a few housing areas where properties may require attention in the near to mid-term. These include West Bank in Widnes, which has some of the oldest properties in the borough. Consultants are currently carrying out a condition survey in the area, which will inform the future housing strategy.

**25.5** Current demographic predictions for Halton show a growing elderly population, with projected rises in the over 60's and the over 75's by 27.5% and 19% respectively by the year 2015 (based on a 2003 baseline). This dramatic rise will put increasing demands on a variety of housing types, including bungalows, supported housing and residential care. With existing waiting lists for such provision, this will present another key challenge for Halton, as its elderly population increases.

**25.6** The 2001, census figures showed a trend towards a smaller household size within Halton, which is expected to reach an average size of about 2.2 within the next decade. This may lead to an increase in demand for apartments or smaller properties, rather than large houses. The trend towards smaller households is currently sustaining the demand for increased housing provision and it is likely that this will continue into the future.

**25.7** The Housing Needs Survey has identified an emerging affordability issue in the Borough and recommends that 25% of new units should be the target for subsidised affordable housing, subject to site viability. Officers from the Housing and Planning Departments of the Council plan to work together, with a view to developing an affordable housing

policy for the borough to address this. The current market situation has implications for the social rented sector, which is beginning to experience an upturn in demand.

**25.8** The housing stock transfer took place in December 2005 and the Council has committed to work closely with Halton Housing Trust, in order to ensure the delivery of the significant investment required to the stock.

**25.9** Halton Borough Council is strengthening its links with private sector landlords in order to bring about improvements in the condition and management standards required in the private rented sector, with the introduction of the Landlord Accreditation Scheme.

## 26.0 TOWN CENTRES

**26.1** Halton's town centres are currently being developed to support a night-time economy. However, restaurants and bars may suffer from sparse trade during the day, due to the low number of other businesses and commercial offices available to be serviced. This detracts from the vibrancy of the town centres during the day and affects the mix and viability of gustatory premises in the borough. If we are to attract quality night-time investment and have vibrant town centres, then we also need to develop office space which will provide the trade to ensure that restaurants and bars remain viable and thrive. Linking the Widnes Waterfront EDZ area to the town centre should help enhance the economic development of Widnes, particularly during the day, but possibly with employees also going for a drink or meal after work.

**26.2** Within Halton, retail and office floorspace is relatively under-represented commercially, at 10.5% and 11.9% respectively - substantially lower than the national average of 19.2% for retail and 16.8% for office floor space. This presents a further important challenge for our town centre development.

**26.3** There are a number of private sector investment projects proposed within our town centres, including those of Urban Splash in Runcorn and Marmalade in Widnes. Halton needs to work with these investors and attract further private

sector investment to the town centres in order to ensure their continued regeneration.

As mentioned earlier, this will become increasingly difficult as public sector funding diminishes. The remarkable regeneration of both Widnes and Runcorn is far from complete and new developments, such as the Canal Quarter in Runcorn and Liebig Court in Widnes, need to be supported by continuing the physical improvements of the established areas. Over the last three years, schemes such as the Streetscapes Enhancement and Shopfront Improvements schemes have used NRF funding to supplement private sector investment with other funding such as Local Transport Plan and Section 106 monies. It is vital that the improvement of these town centres remains a high priority for future funding, whilst available.

## 27.0 REGIONAL ISSUES

### 27.1 NWDA Funding

**27.1.1** The North West Development Agency has now produced a Strategic Investment Plan, setting out their priorities for funding. Castlefields no longer features as a priority in this plan. As this programme's employment and skills initiatives were reliant upon NWDA funding, a major review of spend for these projects has been necessitated. This is a real issue for Halton, both in the short and longer term. As NWDA funding priorities change, support is increasingly diverted to areas outside of Halton.

**27.1.2** Halton has recently been placed within the remit of the NWDA's Merseyside Office. This means that we are now competing with areas where land values are higher, land more sought after and match funding more easily accessed through European Objective 1. **28.2** City Region Development Plan.

### 27.2 City Region Development Plan

**27.2.1** The City Region Development Plan builds on a detailed mapping of key actions and initiatives across Merseyside, which together form an Action Plan for the years 2006-2009. This Action Plan and the Development Plan itself are designed to show how the Merseyside Region can make a significant



contribution to initiatives such as the Northern Way Growth Strategy and the Regional Economic Strategy.

**27.2.2** The Liverpool City Region does not feature significantly in the Northern Way Growth Strategy, which seems to be Leeds-Manchester focused, and Halton's major strategic initiative, the Mersey Gateway, is barely mentioned in the document.

**27.2.3** The New Mersey Gateway is, however, named and given prominence in the North West's Regional Economic Strategy, a document that will give a significant steer to projects and programmes to be supported by NWDA and key regional partners both in the short and the long term.

### **27.3 The North West Regional Assembly**

The 'no' vote on elected regional assemblies, has forced the North West Regional Assembly to review its core business and activities.

There is now uncertainty over future membership of the Assembly and, whilst Halton needs to continue to form allegiances with the NWRA, it is also prudent to strengthen links with Government departments and the Government Office.

### **27.4 Planning**

The draft Spatial Development Framework for the Regional Spatial Strategy recognises both Liverpool and Manchester as regional centres (Policy RDF1).

Halton and sub-regional partners will need to push to ensure that the Liverpool City region is identified as being of equal significance as a regional centre, placing emphasis on joint working between the two areas.

### **27.5 Transport**

#### **27.5.1 Mersey Gateway**

**27.5.1.1** The Mersey Gateway means much more to Halton and the region than just a means to get across the Mersey Estuary.

For far too long the Borough and the North West region have been constrained by the current inadequate capacity of the Silver Jubilee Bridge.

Over time, this has cost the North West economy a significant amount of money through delayed orders, late arrival of employees at work and companies taking business outside of the region to avoid such potential problems and delays.

**27.5.1.2** The new Mersey crossing will deliver a real boost to the regeneration of the North West. It will make transport and access across the region much faster, more reliable and more efficient, thus increasing confidence in the area. It will also open up new areas of land in Widnes and Runcorn - in particular the Widnes Waterfront EDZ - bringing much needed investment.

#### **27.5.2 The Silver Jubilee Bridge**

The Silver Jubilee Bridge presents a daily problem at peak times, with the slightest incident causing major traffic tailbacks across the region. The infrastructure of the bridge is also struggling to cope with traffic flows, as it now takes well in excess of its designed capacity of traffic, on narrow and substandard width carriageways.

Essential works are difficult and costly to programme, due to the heavy and constant traffic demand. This presents a major challenge for Halton Council, responsible for the maintenance of the structure, and it is currently struggling to keep abreast of the necessary work. Ideally, the bridge needs to be closed for significant blocks of time and over a long period, which is simply not feasible.

Unless a new crossing can be put in place, it remains only a matter of time before this work will become essential, regardless of the resultant traffic chaos. It is also key that necessary funding for maintenance is made available through the LTP process, to try and bring the bridge to a steady state of maintenance.

#### **27.5.3 Road Accidents**

Halton has made significant progress in reducing accident casualty rates and is on track to meet associated government targets. However, accident rates are still above the national average and more needs to be done to bring levels down further.

In particular, the number of children killed or seriously injured on Halton's roads is 2.3 times the national average.

#### **27.5.4 Public Transport**

**27.5.4.1** Supported bus networks are necessary for accessibility but are not commercially viable. Some networks are available, although there is currently a lack of funding for these services. These will be extended to include late night and weekend services to support the night-time economy, as well as those serving industrial areas and hospitals. The costs for providing the same services each year are rising. This will lead to cuts in provision unless budgets are increased.

**27.5.4.2** Bus operators do not currently operate busway routes after 9:30pm due to the number of anti-social behaviour incidents and attacks on bus drivers. With the promotion of the night-time economy, this presents a difficult challenge. Halton has developed the 'Travelsafe' scheme, which puts police and community support officers on buses during the day. This scheme has been successful in tackling these issues, but more needs to be done.

#### **27.6 Street Lighting**

The funding available for street lighting over recent years has not been sufficient to remove older and potentially dangerous units and their removal therefore needs to be prioritised.

## **28.0 MAJOR PROJECTS**

### **28.1 Castlefields**

**28.1.1** There are two key issues with regard to this programme of works:

**28.1.2** Castlefields has now been downgraded by the NWDA and is no longer viewed as a priority area, despite an initial agreement to invest £1.9m. An ongoing debate is continuing in an attempt to move this forward and secure funding.

**28.1.3** The current and approved programmes of works will leave the renewal of two residential blocks unfunded, together with several other regeneration projects. Support needs to be sought

for the completion of this scheme.

### **28.2 Widnes Waterfront EDZ**

The EDZ area includes some of the previously reclaimed area known as 'Venture Fields.' As this site was reclaimed using Derelict Land Grant, there will be an issue of 'claw back', whereby any profits from the sale would need to go back to the Treasury. In the short term we have agreement to utilise this money for the reclamation of adjoining sites in the EDZ. However, in the longer term, this may present an issue of up to £2.5m being repaid.

### **28.3 3MG**

**28.3.1** A key issue for Halton Borough Council concerns the disposal and development of 'HBC Fields'.

**28.3.2** The establishment of a Management Company to administer common facilities will involve both the Borough Council and the private sector.

### **28.4 Contaminated Land**

**28.4.1** Although significant achievements have been made in reclaiming contaminated sites within Halton, much remains to be done. As an area with such significant contamination this presents a challenging agenda. As the birthplace of the chemical industry, many of the contamination problems within the Borough are much worse and more difficult to deal with than other areas of the country. This makes it both difficult and expensive to develop these sites.

**28.4.2** Halton has long been leading the way in utilising new technology and has made great progress in remediation techniques, which will assist with future site development. However there are a number of key challenges still facing Halton. These include the uncertainty of public funding, generally, in the medium term and the lengthy and costly process involved in accessing government funding. Other key issues include the severity of the contamination and the ongoing liability of these sites for the foreseeable future.

## **28.5 Economic Development**

**28.5.1** The knowledge economy needs to be placed at the heart of the economic development agenda. Although Halton has a high proportion of

employment in the knowledge driven sectors, this is declining. The proportion of businesses operating in the knowledge economy is also low. Growth in this sector would need to be supported by an increase in the skills and qualifications of Halton's workforce. A current occupational breakdown for the Borough, reveals that 'higher end' occupations are under-represented.

**28.5.2** The likely reduction, if not removal, of grant aid from areas such as Halton will prevent us from offering financial grant incentives to potential investors. This will leave us in open competition with other areas which are perhaps much easier to develop and will be a key issue for the area.

**28.5.3** We are currently losing young people from the Borough and, as already stated, predictions suggest that by 2015 the number of young people aged 10-19 and 20-39 will decline by 20% and 6% respectively. If we are to attract graduates and young families to the area, we need to meet the demand for high quality jobs and investment in Halton. Without this, the young people of the Borough will have no choice but to seek better job opportunities elsewhere.

**28.5.4** Retail and office space is under-represented at 10.5% and 11.9% respectively, which is substantially lower than the national average of 19.2% and 16.8%. Establishing more office accommodation and attracting suitable private sector business is important for the borough, particularly in the town centre areas, to help support their trade throughout the day and evening.

## **29.0 CONCLUSION**

Much has been done; there is still much to do. With diminishing public funds available to us over the period covered by this report, that will not be easy.

**REPORT TO:** Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 20<sup>TH</sup> June 2007

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Environment

**SUBJECT:** Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel and  
Transport / Accessibility Best Value Improvement  
Plan Update

**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

### 1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To inform Members of the Urban Renewal PPB, of the agreed membership arrangements for the forthcoming municipal year of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel, and provide an update on progress being made to implement recommendations as set out in the recently completed Transport and Accessibility Best Value Improvement Plan.

### 2.0 RECOMMENDED: - That Members note:-

- **During the municipal year 2007/8, the Halton Public Transport Liaison Panel will comprise of the following Members: Cllrs Hignett (Chair), Morley, Polhill and Sly.**
- **Progress being made to implement the recommendations as set out in the Transport and Accessibility Improvement Plan.**

### 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

#### **Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel**

- 3.1 Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board resolved when they met on the 21<sup>st</sup> June 2006 (Minute URB12), that the Chair of Urban Renewal PPB, in consultation with the Executive Board Holder should nominate at the start of each municipal year the Chair and three Members to attend the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel.
- 3.2 The nominations for the forthcoming municipal year are as follows: -
  - Chair – Cllr Hignett
  - Other Members: - Cllr's Morley, Polhill and Sly.
- 3.3 The purpose of the Halton Public Transport Advisory Panel is to: -

- Monitor the performance of the public transport network within the Borough to ensure it meets the mobility needs of local people and the principles of Best Value;
- To make recommendations to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board for amendments and improvements to the public transport network; and
- To review and comment on the effectiveness of the Council's public transport policies.

### **Transport and Accessibility Best Value Improvement Plan.**

3.4 Urban Renewal PPB also considered a report when they met on the 15<sup>th</sup> November 2006, detailing the outcome of the recently completed Transport and Accessibility Best Value Review and requested (through Minute URB33) regular updates on progress with the various initiatives outlined in the accompanying Best Value Improvement Plan.

3.5 The Best Value Improvement Plan included a number of recommendations based on the following themes: -

- Improving the quality and accessibility of public transport services within Halton, by the introduction of a single integrated booking system;
- Developing the local bus network within the Borough;
- Improving the quality of passenger information, including the further development of real time passenger information;
- Improving further the provision of good quality and accessible transport for post sixteen learners;
- Reducing the environmental impact of passenger transport within Halton;
- Internal service improvements

3.6 Progress being made against a number of these improvement themes is detailed in Appendix One.

## **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 As can be seen in Appendix One a number of key improvements are being made to improve public transport services and accessibility within the Borough in support of the Halton Local Transport Plan 2006/7 – 2010/11.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 Progress is being made to improve access to Warrington General Hospital following the reorganisation of health care facilities between Halton and Warrington General Hospital sites during 2006.

## **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 Many of the transport improvements set out in the Best Value Improvement Plan, are subject to the Authority securing external funding or the delivery of effective partnership agreements with key partners.

## **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 The service improvements will ensure that all sections of the community benefit from good quality public transport choices, with a special emphasis to ensure that access to key facilities is improved especially for socially excluded people.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Final Report of the Best Value Review of Transportation and Access	Best Value and Performance Management Division, Municipal Buildings, Widnes.	Les Unsworth Best Value Advisor Ext. 1162

## Appendix One –

**Transport and Accessibility Best Value Improvement Plan – Update  
(June 2007)**

Improvement Theme	Initiative	Progress/Timescale	Cost (£) / Funding Source
<p><b>Improving the quality and accessibility of public transport services within Halton, by the introduction of a single integrated booking system</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New integrated passenger booking / scheduling system.</li> <li>• Launch of new “Door to Door” bookable transport service for residents.</li> <li>• Purchase of additional fully accessible buses for Halton Community Transport.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Software purchased – March 07 Installation and testing (June / July 2007)</li> <li>• Anticipated launch of new service - October 2007. All bookings to be routed through Halton Direct Link contact centre (open 24 hrs per day)</li> <li>• Delivered in January 2007</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £125,535 (Local Transport Plan)</li> <li>• Existing Resources</li> <li>• £85,000 (Local Transport Plan)</li> </ul>
<p><b>Developing the local bus network within the Borough</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Launch of new pre –paid multi operator travel tickets (including “Halton Hopper”);</li> <li>• New service 700 linking Widnes to Liverpool John Lennon Airport and Manchester</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced May 2006</li> <li>• Introduced 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2007.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing resources in partnership with bus operators</li> <li>• £87,000 over 3 years. Halton BC “pump priming” service through a 3 year funding agreement with Arriva (North</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New service linking the Borough to Warrington General Hospital</li> <li>• Improvements to Halton lea North Bus Station</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planned for September 2007</li> <li>• To be completed mid August 2007.</li> </ul>	<p>West and Wales)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Jointly funded by Halton BC and North Cheshire NHS Hospitals Trust.</li> <li>• £350,000 (Local Transport Plan)</li> </ul>
<b>Improving the quality of passenger information, including the further development of real time passenger information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• New computerised bus timetable information system for use at bus stops.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Introduced in December 2006</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• £12,000 (Local Transport Plan)</li> </ul>
<b>Reducing the environmental impact of passenger transport within Halton</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Use of biofuels in the Council Fleet Vehicles.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• September 2007.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Existing Resources</li> </ul>



**REPORT TO:** Urban Renewal PPB  
**DATE:** 20 June 2007  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Performance Management Reports for 2006/07  
**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the 4th quarter year-end performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for:

- Economic Regeneration
- Highways & Transportation
- Environment & Regulatory Services
- Culture & Leisure
- Major Projects
- Health & Partnerships

## **2. RECOMMENDED: That the Policy and Performance Board**

- 1) Receive the 4<sup>th</sup> quarter year-end performance management reports;**
- 2) Consider the progress and performance information and raise any questions or points for clarification; and**
- 3) Highlight any areas of interest and/or concern where further information is to be reported at a future meeting of the Policy and Performance Board.**

## **3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The departmental service plans provide a clear statement on what the services are planning to achieve and to show 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.

3.2 The quarterly reports are on the Information Bulletin to reduce the amount of paperwork sent out with the agendas and to allow Members access to the reports as soon as they have become available.

It also provides Members with an opportunity to give advance notice of any questions, points or requests for further information that will be raised to ensure the appropriate Officers are available at the PPB meeting.

**4. POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

**5. RISK ANALYSIS**

5.1 Not applicable.

**6. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

6.1 Not applicable.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
-----------------	----------------------------	------------------------

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Health & Community  
**SERVICE:** Culture and Leisure Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 2006/07

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Culture & Leisure Department for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2007. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 6

***It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.***

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The revised timetable for the Mobile Library was introduced in March with 60 new stops. The response has been very positive so far with 150 new members in the first month. As well as introducing new stops, the hours have been extended so the service is available after 5pm and on Saturdays.

An application to redevelop the library at Halton Lea was submitted to the Big Lottery Community Libraries fund at the end of March. The £1.4 million bid aims to improve the layout and facilities of the library and create appropriate learning and community spaces for the whole community.

A new Anti-Social Behaviour Strategy for Halton has been finalised following extensive consultation. The Strategy – Promoting Positive Behaviour will be launched at Victoria Park on 10<sup>th</sup> May 2007.

External funding has been achieved to carry out a feasibility study on establishing a one-stop-shop for the voluntary sector in Halton.

Connexions are to establish a Youth Academy at Grangeway Community Centre.

A consultant has been commissioned to produce a Public Art Strategy for Halton.

The Brindley has become a nationally accredited Arts Award Centre for young people aspiring to be artists and arts leaders.

Parks and Countryside's new Brochure has been produced for 2007/08. There will be 168 free events available to the Halton public.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

Executive Board have agreed the establishment of an Olympic 2012 fund, within existing resources to encourage young people to aspire to participation in sport at the highest level.

Executive Board have agreed in principle the hosting of a two day youth cultural festival in July 2008 as part of the Capital of Culture celebrations. Other Merseyside authorities and their twin towns will be invited to participate.

A Member/Officer group have finalised processes to manage Alleygates. The procedure will go to Executive Board on 16<sup>th</sup> May 2007 to seek approval.

### 4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



(Appendix 1)

### 4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



(Appendix 2)

## 5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

The Draft report from the IDeA has been received following their assessment visit of Culture and Leisure Services under the Towards an Excellent Service regime. The report judged the service to be good.

The report is awaited from Government Office North West regarding the Regional Agencies assessment of Culture and Leisure Services following their visit in March.

Under the CPA assessment, Culture and Leisure Services scored a maximum of 4, and were only one of two authorities nationally to show significant improvement.

## 6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



(Appendix 3)

## 6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



(Appendix 4) Traffic lights not assigned for BVPI 226 & 170 (awaiting data) and C16, 17, 18 & 19 for which no targets were set.

## 7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

For details of progress against LPSA targets, please refer to Appendix 5

## 8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2006-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

At the end of year, all relevant risk treatment measures have been implemented for key service objectives that were initially assessed as

high risk in the Directorate Risk Register.







## **9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS**




During 2005/06 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report.

There are no High priority equality actions for this service, there is no progress to report.

## **10.0 APPENDICES**


Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2- Progress against Other Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 3- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 4- Progress against Other Performance Indicators  
Appendix 5- Progress against LPSA Targets  
Appendix 6- Explanation of traffic light symbols

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
01	Ensure Halton has maximum benefits as possible from Liverpool's Capital of Culture 2008 status	Local working group established. Links with CoC established. Develop programmes for year of performance, April 2006.		Sport England due to launch Vision document May 07.
02	Develop programmes to enable Halton people to benefit from 2012 London Olympics	Establish policy with Sport England Sept 2006. Liase with local clubs (March 2006) Roll out programme		Paper to Executive Board – fund established. Programme to be developed to include grants, coaching clinics, special events, 2012 legacy.
03	Implement review of Sports Strategy	Launch Strategy April 2006		Review complete.
04	Develop Arts Strategy	Strategy developed with Cultural Partners. March 07		Nearing completion but overtaken by need to produce a public arts strategy.
05	Implement BLF proposals to enhance community sports facilities	2 ATP's operative April 2006		BLF monitoring visit completed 12.03.07 all satisfactory
06	Develop and enhance Sports Resource Centre's	Review book stock. Purchase standard texts. September 2006.		Book stock reviewed. 15 multi skill equipment resource bags purchased and on long term loan to community sport clubs.

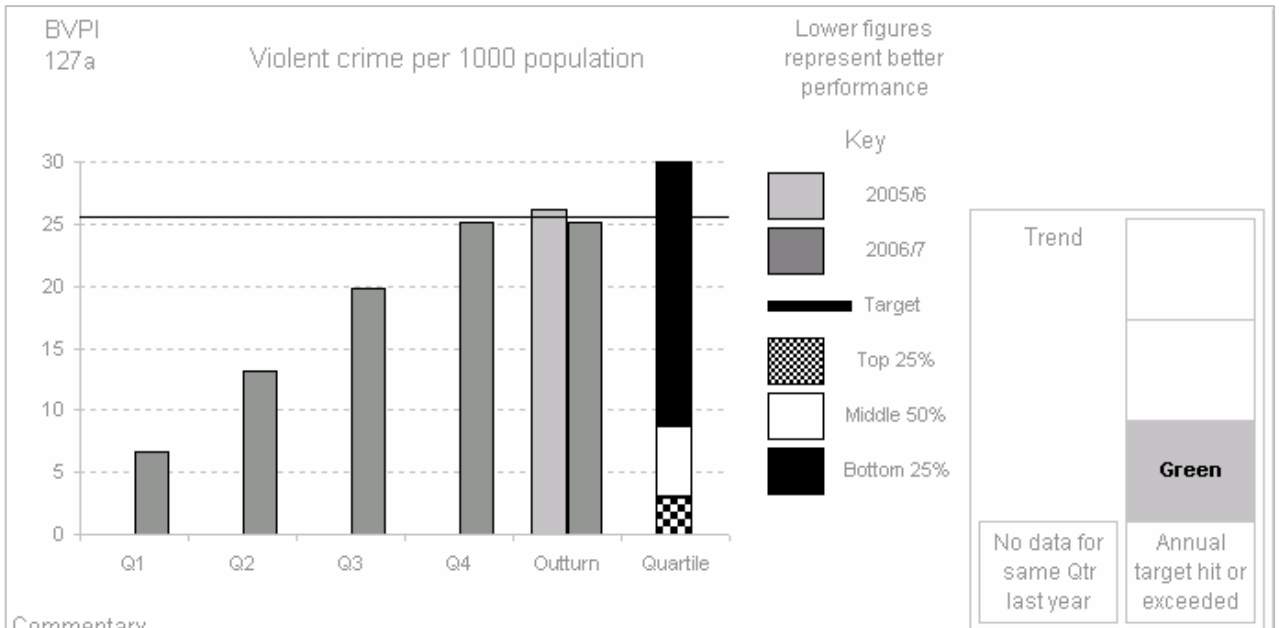
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
07	Contribute to Halton's Health. Improvement by increasing participation in sport and related cultural activities	Develop adherence levels April 2006.		Active people data provides full demographic breakdown of current participation rates. Results being analysed at NW; Merseyside and Halton to assist planning future interventions. Intervention examples Q4 Active aging programme, sheltered accommodation, 43 older people involved, loan on sports equipment to facility for regular participation. Increased awareness via Stay Active events and Healthy Halton week promotions. Workplace health walks. Focus for 2007/08 girls and women's 16+ and older adults.
08	Develop and implement community and leisure opportunities as part of Castlefields Regeneration	Scheme operative May 2006.		Phoenix Park open and exceeding all expectations, over 100,000 visits in first year. 25 volunteers registered, regular health walks, coached activity. Scheme developed for Community Centre.
09	Enable Community Centres to deliver programmes for vulnerable adults.	Proposals for April 2006. Roll out programme.		Service operative.

**APPENDIX TWO – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Culture and Leisure Services**



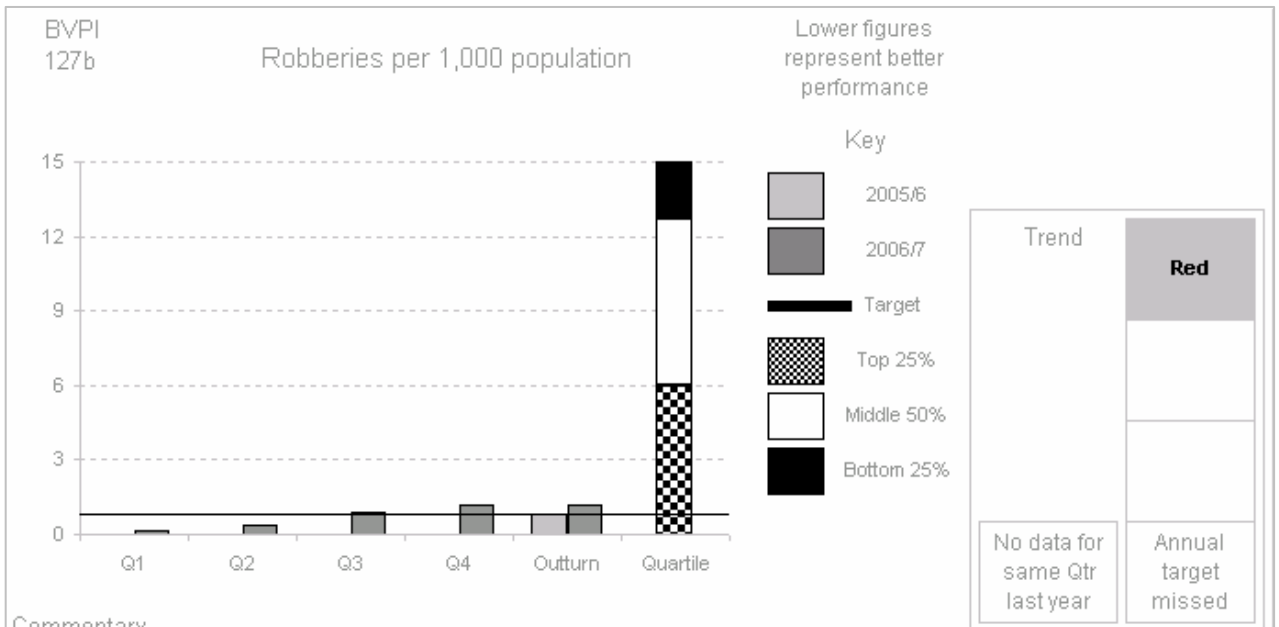
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
10	Establish a single service point for drug users and those in recovery.	Operative July 2006.		Complete.

**APPENDIX TWO – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Culture and Leisure Services**



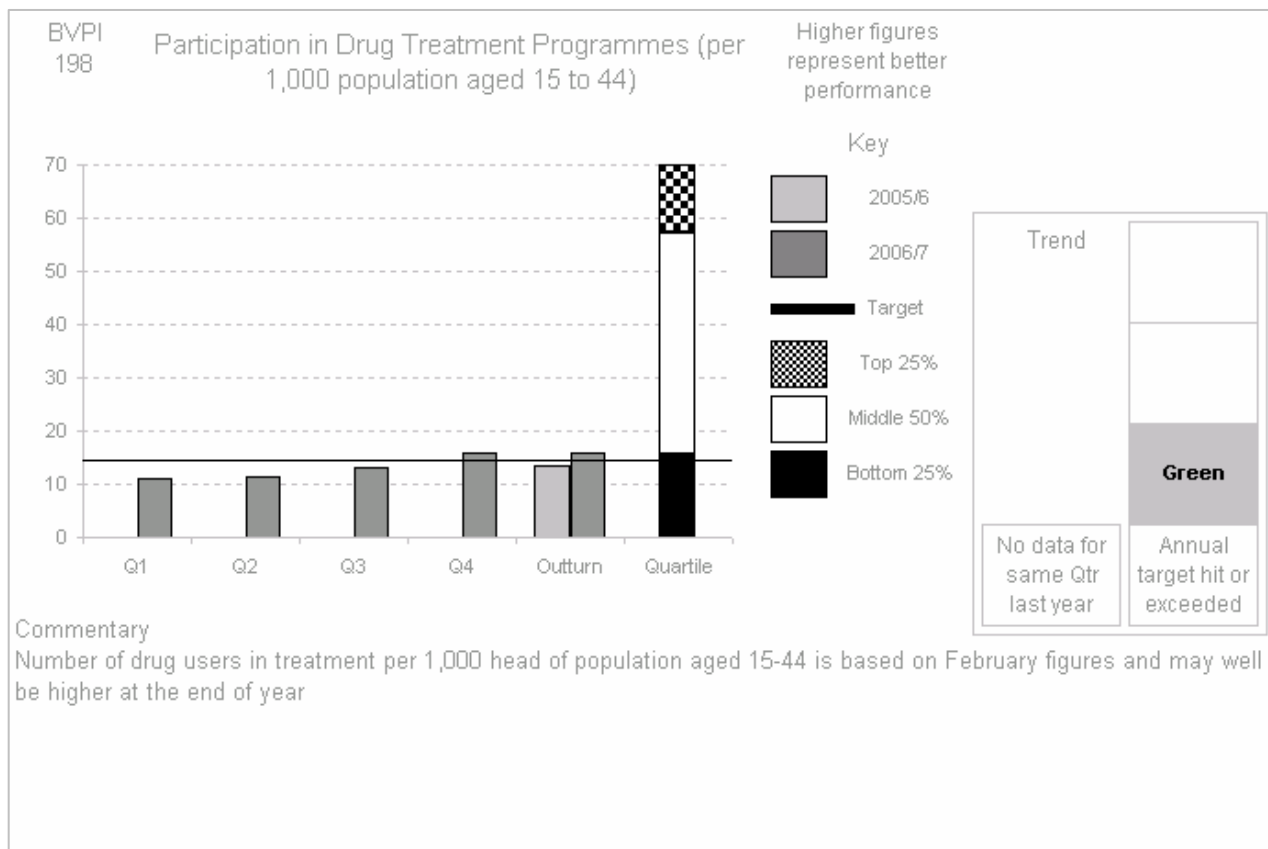
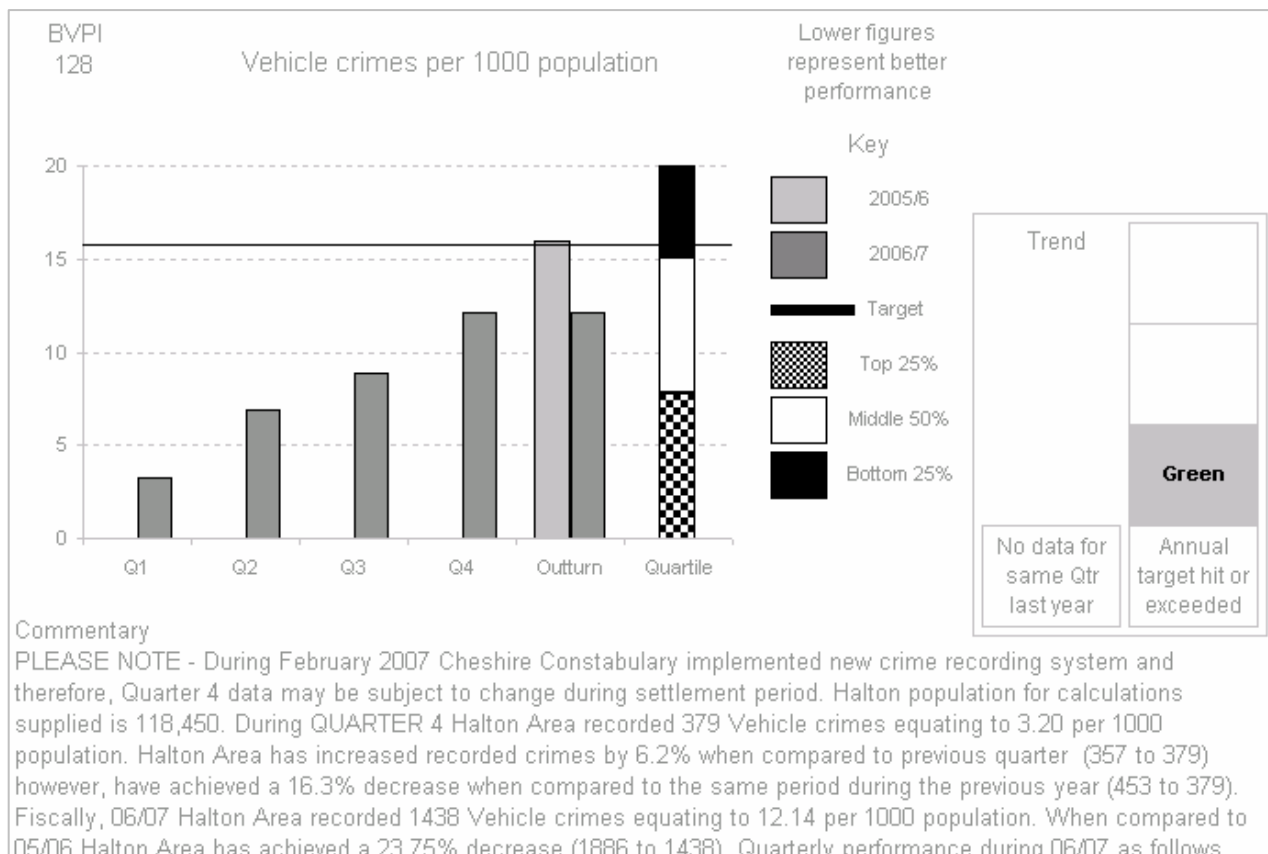
Commentary

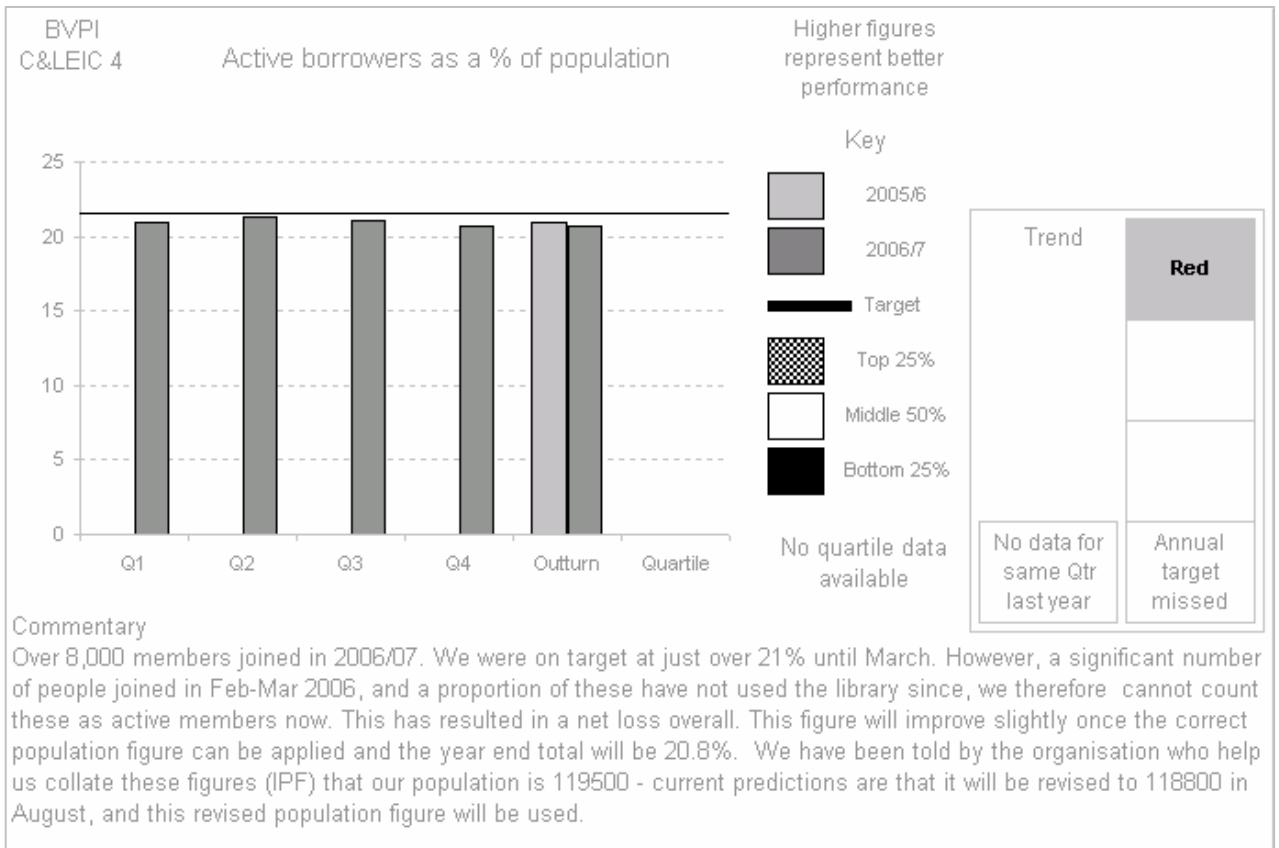
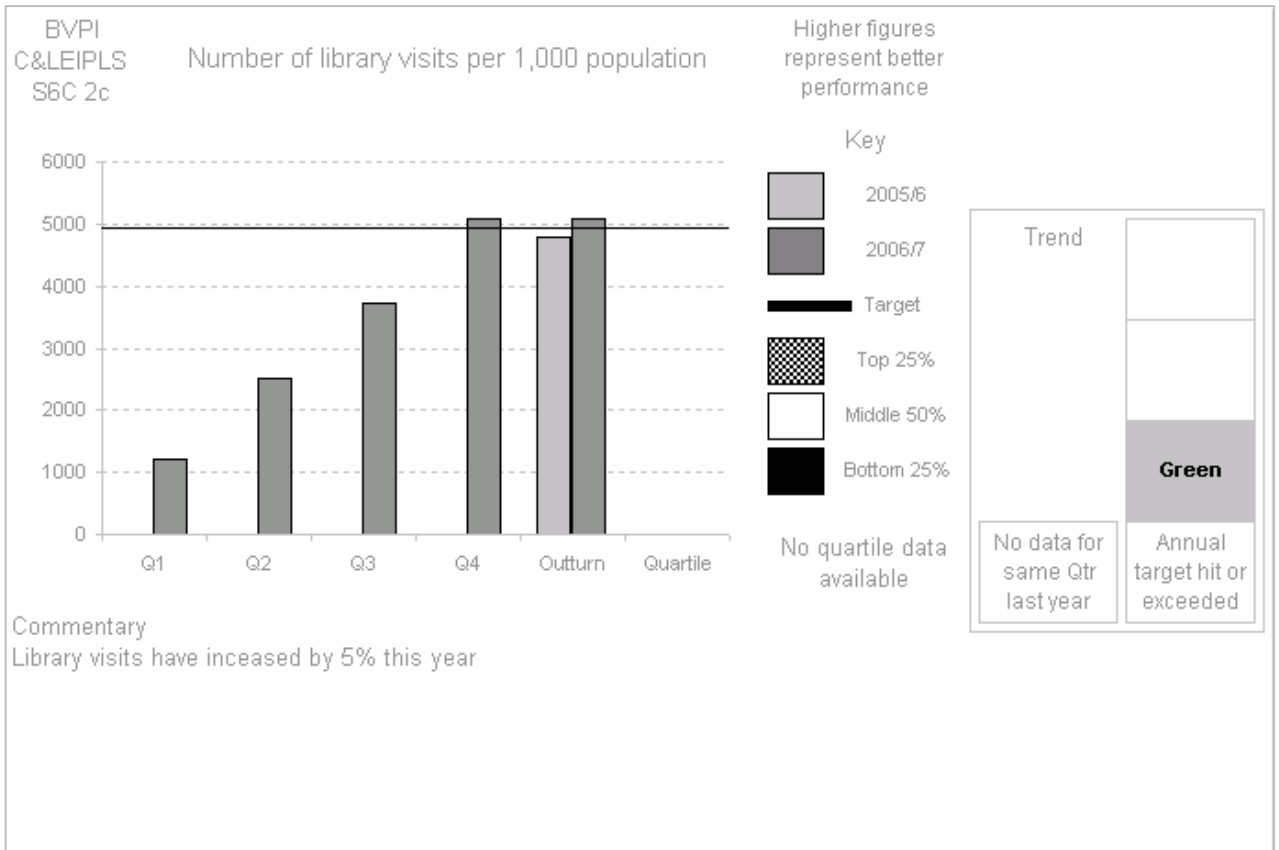
PLEASE NOTE - During February 2007 Cheshire Constabulary implemented new crime recording systems and therefore, Quarter 4 data may be subject to change during settlement period. Halton population for calculations supplied is 118,450. During QUARTER 4 Halton Area recorded 646 Violent crimes equating to 5.45 per 1000 population. Halton Area has achieved a 14.6% decrease when compared to previous quarter (756 to 646) and a 8.2% decrease when compared to the same period during the previous year (704 to 646). Fiscally, 06/07 Halton Area recorded 2978 Violent crimes equating to 25.14 per 1000 population. When compared to 05/06 Halton Area has achieved a 3.56% decrease (3088 to 2978). Quarterly performance during 06/07 as follows (Apr-Jun 06 = 799 crimes or








Commentary


PLEASE NOTE - During February 2007 Cheshire Constabulary implemented new crime recording systems and therefore, Quarter 4 data may be subject to change during settlement period. Halton population for calculations supplied is 118,450. During QUARTER 4 Halton Area recorded 35 Robbery crimes equating to 0.30 per 1000 population. Halton Area has achieved a 2.8% reduction when compared to previous quarter (36 to 35) and a 32.7% reduction when compared to same period during the previous year (52 to 35). Fiscally, 06/07 Halton Area recorded 137 Robbery crimes equating to 1.16 per 1000 population. However, when compared to 05/06 Halton Area has increased Robbery by 3.79% (132 to 137). Quarterly performance during 06/07 as follows (Apr-Jun 06 = 29 crimes or 0.24 per







Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
BVPI 226	Advise and guidance services,  (a) Total spend by authority (£k)  (b) % Of spend where service provision was by organisations holding the CLS Quality Mark  (c) Direct provision (£k)	403	403			Final out-turn figure not yet available.
		81.4	81.4			
		5790	5884			
<b>Cost Efficiency</b>						
BVPI 220	Compliance against the Public Library Service Standards (PLSS)	3	3	3		Target met.
C13	Cost per visit (libraries)	£3.13	£3.26	£3.25		Target met.
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
BVPI 118	(a) % Of library users who found the book they wanted	N/a	65%	88%		All targets exceeded. Adult satisfaction rates were the highest in the country.
	(b) % Of library users who found the information they wanted	N/a	70%	80%		
	(c) % Overall satisfaction of Library Users	N/a	94%	97%		

**APPENDIX FOUR – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
Culture and Leisure Services**

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BVPI 170	(a) Number of visits to/usages of museums per 1,000 population  (b) Number of those visits that were in person per 1,000 population  (c) Number of pupils visiting museums in organised groups	2202  246  21187	2220  273  21200			Awaiting figures from Catalyst Museum for final quarter.
BVPI 126	Domestic burglaries per 1,000 households	14.43	13.3	13.72		<u>PLEASE NOTE - During February 2007 Cheshire Constabulary implemented new crime recording systems and therefore, Quarter 4 data may be subject to change during settlement period.</u> (Quarter 4 calculations are based on 48,550 households). During QUARTER 4 Halton Area recorded 180 Domestic Burglaries equating to 3.71 per 1000 households. When compared to the same quarter during the previous year Halton Area had a 2.9% increase (175 to 180). Fiscally Halton Area recorded 665 Domestic Burglaries equating to 13.70 per 1000 households and achieving a 4.5% decrease when compared to 2005/06 (696 to 665)

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BVPI 174	Number of racial incidents recorded by the Authority per 100,000 population	21.03	21	24		January showed a sharp increase in the number of recorded incidents, but February and March have seen a decrease just as sharp. There is no apparent pattern or reason for this, although recent rise in ethnic population may be a contributing factor, alongside media attention.
BVPI 175	% Of racial incidents that resulted in further action	100%	100%	100%		All racial incidents had further action taken.
BVPI 225	Actions against domestic violence (the % of a set of 11 questions to which the Authority can answer "yes")	91%	100%	100%		11 out of 11 questions satisfied.
PLSS 5 /C11a	Requests supply time,  (a) % Within 7 days  (b) % Within 15 days  (c) % Within 30 days	52%  70%  85%	52%  70%  85%	50%  70%  85%	  	Although the 7 day target has not been met we have still achieved the Public Library Standard for all 3 elements of this Indicator and the CPA threshold targets. Number of reserves taken on pre-publication titles has affected performance.
PLSS 9/ C11b	Annual items added through purchase per 1,000 population	272	226	230		Target exceeded, helped by stock selection policy and discounts achieved through consortium buying.
PLSS 10/ C11c	Time taken to replenish the lending stock on access or available on loan	4.54	6.2	5.24		Target exceeded. As above.




**APPENDIX FOUR – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
Culture and Leisure Services**


Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
C12	Stock level and stock turn  (a) Stock turn – issues per 1,000 population/books per 1,000 population  (b) Stock level per 1,000 population	6.99  1189	7  1135	7.02  1107	 	C12 has now been deleted from the CPA range of indicators, although target met due to active stock management policy.  Need to increase items borrowed, or create extra service points to create capacity to house extra stock.
C16	% Of 5-16 year olds in school sports partnerships engaged in 2 hours a week minimum on high quality PE and school sport within and beyond the curriculum	79.9%	85%	Not yet available	N/a	Performance management of this indicator within Advisory service. 06/07 figure is based on national PESCAL survey; the results are not available until September.
C17	% Of adults participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation on 3 or more days a week	N/a	N/a	19.62%	N/a	Active people data provides full demographic breakdown of current participation rates. Results being analysed at NW; Merseyside and Halton to assist planning future interventions above inside average.
C18	% Of population volunteering in sport and active recreation for at least 1 hour per week	N/a	N/a	5.67%	N/a	Good level of volunteering above Merseyside average. Active volunteers policy managed through Sports Partnership.









Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Quality</b>						
BVPI 119/ C5, 6, 7, 8, 9	% Of residents satisfied with					Results follow tri-annual survey of 2006/07. All targets met with encouraging upward trends. Need to continue marketing and communications strategy. Investment in Kingsway Learning Centre, the Brindley, Victoria Park and Leisure Centres have contributed to success.
	(a) sport and leisure	N/a	54%	57%		
	(b) libraries	N/a	70%	80%		
	(c) museums	N/a	31%	32%		
	(d) arts activities/venues	N/a	36%	42%		
	(e) parks and open spaces	N/a	73%	77%		
PLSS 7/ C14a	Assessment of users 16 and over of their library service	N/a	94%	97%		Target exceeded. A number of nationally recognised initiatives undertaken.
C15	Museums accreditation	2	2	2		Target met.
<b>Fair Access</b>						
PLSS 1/ C2a	Proportion of households living within a specified distance of a library,					Cannot meet (a) without a new library. Had anticipated increase in (a) by virtue of increase to mobile stops, but this was subsequently deemed ineligible.
	(a) within 1 mile	62%	71%	62%		
	(b) within 2 miles	98%	98%	98%		



**APPENDIX FOUR – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
Culture and Leisure Services**

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
PLSS 2/ C2b	Aggregate scheduled opening hours per 1,000 population for all libraries	88.6	92	91		Significant improvements have been made with the introduction of the revised Mobile timetable, but the 06/07 target has not been achieved.
PLSS 3/ C3a	% Of static libraries providing access to electronic information resources connected to the internet	100%	100%	100%		Target met.
PLSS 4/ C3b	Total number of electronic workstations available to users per 1,000 population	7.6	7.6	7.6		Target met – service well used.
C19	% Of population that are within 20 minutes travel time (urban areas – by walk; rural areas – by car) of a range of 3 different sports facility types, of which one has a achieved a specified quality assured standard	N/a	N/a	35.62%	N/a	Within CPA thresholds. Work with partners to identify facilities to work toward quality assured standards for 2008/09 accreditation.




LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
1	<p><b>Reduce the level of violent crime:</b></p> <p>The number of recorded incidents of violent crime within Halton (serious woundings and common assault).</p>	1913 (Mar 08)	N/a		<p><u>PLEASE NOTE - During February 2007 Cheshire Constabulary implemented new crime recording systems and therefore, Quarter 4 data may be subject to change during settlement period.</u> (Quarter 4 calculations are based on 118,450 population). During QUARTER 4 Halton Area recorded 430 Common Assaults &amp; Other Woundings equating to 3.63 per 1000 population, also achieving a 8.3% reduction when compared to the same period during the previous year (469 to 430).</p> <p>Fiscally Halton Area recorded 2005 Common Assaults &amp; Other Wounding equating to 16.93 per 1000 population, also achieving a 7.8% reduction when compared to 2005/06 (2174 to 2005).</p>

LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
2	<b>Reduction in vehicle crime in Halton:</b> i) The number of thefts of vehicles in Halton	558 (Mar 08)	N/a		<p><u>PLEASE NOTE - During February 2007 Cheshire Constabulary implemented new crime recording systems and therefore, Quarter 4 data may be subject to change during settlement period.</u> (Quarter 4 calculations are based on 118,450 population). During QUARTER 4 Halton Area recorded 132 Theft OF Vehicles equating to 1.11 per 1000 population, also achieving a 17.0% reduction when compared to the same period during the previous year (159 to 132). Fiscally Halton Area recorded 529 Theft OF Vehicles equating to 4.47 per 1000 population, also achieving a 28.1% reduction when compared to 2005/06 (736 to 529).</p>
	ii) The number of thefts from vehicles in Halton	749 (Mar 08)	N/a		<p><u>PLEASE NOTE - During February 2007 Cheshire Constabulary implemented new crime recording systems and therefore, Quarter 4 data may be subject to change during settlement period.</u> (Quarter 4 calculations are based on 118,450 population). During QUARTER 4 Halton Area recorded 247 Theft FROM Vehicles equating to 2.09 per 1000 population, also achieving a 16.3% reduction when compared to the same period during the previous year (295 to 247). Fiscally Halton Area recorded 908 Theft FROM Vehicles equating to 7.67 per 1000 population, also achieving a 21.1% reduction when compared to 2005/06 (1151 to 908).</p>

LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
3	<p><b>Improving the health and well-being of residents:</b></p> <p>The percentage of adults in Halton participating in at least 30 minutes moderate intensity sport and active recreation (including recreational walking) on 3 or more days a week, as measured by Sport England's Active People survey.</p>	Increase by 5% between Nov 06 and Nov 09	19.62 baseline result		Now have baseline data by age/gender; distributed to partners; targeted work around girls 14-19 and older adults 50+. Introducing performance management linked to LAA reporting. Annual Active People survey to be introduced 2008 to measure progress. Key actions around communication, walking, community activity.
4	<p><b>Tackling the problems of domestic violence:</b></p> <p>1. The number of incidents of domestic violence reported to the police (directly or through a third party) in Halton.</p>	1774 (Mar 08)	1020		Number of incidents by year end stood at 2132 – against a target of 1774.
	<p>2. The proportion of incidents of domestic violence which result in a sanction detection.</p>	An increase of 5% between Mar 06 and Mar 08	126		This target is 282 – 20% of all incidents. However, by year end 06/07, there had been 242 sanction detections. This amounts to 11% of all incidents. It currently seems unlikely that the target will be met by the end of 07/08. Cheshire Police has an action plan and the partnership hopes to tackle the issue.
	<p>3. The proportion of the total number of incidents of domestic violence reported annually to the police (directly or through a third party) in the same period, who are repeat victims.</p>	18%	13.4%		The target set for the reduction in repeat incidents was 18% of all incidents. By year end 06/07 the figure was 20% of all incidents from repeat victims.

LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
5	<b>Reducing the harm caused by drug misuse:</b> 1. The number of individuals in Halton who are in contact with structured drug treatment services.	790	720		879 at end of year. This is a provisional figure provided by John Moores University using NDTMS. The DAT is awaiting official confirmation of this figure.
	2. The percentage of individuals in Halton starting treatment who are retained in treatment for over 12 weeks.	88%	83%		87% at Feb 07. Official end of year figures will be received at the beginning of May. Previous data indicates the interim target will be met.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicators (Excl. LPSA)</u>	<u>LPSA Indicators Only</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved.</u></p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target</u> will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Environment  
**SERVICE:** Economic Regeneration  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 to year-end 31 March 2007

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Economic Regeneration Department for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2007. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 5

***It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.***

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The proposal, developed by TMP, to create a Liverpool City Region Single Investment Agency (SIA) has been endorsed by the six Merseyside Local Authorities (LA). The work of the new agency will begin in April 2007 with the recruitment of a team of experienced sales people and market analysts to identify and actively target mobile investment projects who's locational requirements can be satisfied in the sub-region.

The ICT Investment for Growth project (support to new businesses in the transitional area) commenced January 1st 2007. From April 2007, this will be extended across the borough using NRF funding.

The first of a series of town centre surgeries have taken place at the Borough's Direct Links. As expected at this early stage and despite publicity before hand, attendance was poor. The initiative will be kept under review.

The Lewis Carroll Study was discussed at a meeting with a representative from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF) at the end of January, ready for final submission in March. Funding issues regarding revenue expenditure and the sustainability for future years were raised at the meeting. As a result of these concerns, Daresbury Parish Church Council have elected to move forward with a much scaled down plan which will house a smaller Lewis Carroll exhibition in



an annex to the Church. This will be presented to HLF end of July

Vintage Fair Organ and Steam Rally - In the past the concession has provided the marquees in lieu of a site fee. HBC Stadium catering has expressed a desire to operate the concession and this is being worked through.

An online calendar that can be accessed via the Council's Website, has been set up to enable smaller organisation to benefit from listing small scale events in Halton. The resource is free and open to everyone allowing individuals and groups to input events into the system. It will be moderated to ensure the integrity of the site is maintained.

Feedback on the new 'Tourism Talk' newsletter is proving positive. The next edition is due in April.

The Annual Planning meeting with the Learning and Skills Council has taken place and targets for the academic year 2007/8 have been established. Additionally, the One Year Development Plan for adult learning has been completed.

Meetings are taking place with local employers involved in 3MG to identify future employment opportunities and skill requirements. NRF has been secured to map out the skills requirements of the logistics and distribution sector across Halton.

A Big Lottery expression of interest has been submitted that would fund the delivery of a Family Science programme totalling £209K. Partners include schools, the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre and Daresbury Labs.

As part of the ongoing skills development work, local businesses identified a lack of cost effective IT courses. As a result, the adult learning service has recently commenced delivering short course to fill this gap on a full cost recovery basis. The service has already delivered 6 courses.

The new Enterprise Development Officer took up post on 1/1/2007 and has had an immediate impact on raising enterprise awareness and promoting effective working relationships with enterprise partner organisations. The NRF secured for Train 2000 has enabled a Women's Enterprise Training Programme to commence and Silver Entrepreneurs have delivered enterprise awareness sessions for people aged 50 years and over. Four experienced business start-up advisers have been commissioned to deliver Enterprise Outreach Broker sessions at various venues across the borough. HPiJ have commissioned the development of an Enterprise Charter Training Programme to raise awareness of self-employment opportunities for priority customers.

The new Neighbourhood Employment Outreach project has begun to operate in the seven priority wards and has already achieved 32 confirmed job outcomes.

A number of small value employment related contracts have been secured that will contribute to operating expenditure during the coming financial year. -

1. Connexions Partnership/LSC *Next Steps* contract for Advice & Guidance delivered to priority customers aged 20 years and over

2. Jobcentre Plus Pathways to Work In Work Support Service for Incapacity Benefit customers moving into employment across the JCP Grater Mersey District (Halton, Knowsley, Sefton & St Helens)
3. LSC Discretionary Fund to support salary costs of an Apprentice Co-ordinator.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

Following on from the PPB topic review of the Business Park Improvement Programme on four industrial areas in the Borough, two areas have been identified as potential Business Improvement Districts (BIDs). A report will be submitted to the next Executive Board requesting approval to proceed to formal ballot.

The Promotions and Tourism Events Officer left the Authority on March 30 to take up a new post. With the passing of the Halton Show the post will be reviewed with the proposed Capital of Culture 2008 very much in mind.

A private sector chair, Andrew Littlewood from INEOS, has been appointed to chair Halton Science Forum. A meeting schedule will now be put in place for the forthcoming year.

With the creation of a Liverpool City Region Single Investment Agency (SIA) there will be a profound effect upon the way investment enquiries are managed locally. Over the coming months it will be necessary to integrate new 'sub-regional' ways of working into existing, local, service delivery to ensure that the Borough isn't disadvantaged with respect to the generation of investment projects. HBC has identified the £50,000 contribution required for year one but is yet to identify funding for future years.

Plans to appoint a China/UK Business Development Support Officer, which were on hold, are to be progressed later this year following the signing of an offer of financial support from the North West Development Agency.

Agreement has been reached between the Council and The Mersey Partnership (TMP) with respect to the delivery of Business Aftercare in Halton. The current post holder will continue to be employed by TMP until 30 September 2007 servicing existing clients. The post holder will work up to 50 days in the period. TMP will also engage a full time replacement as soon as possible. After October 1 2007 the position of the existing post holder will be reviewed by TMP and HBC. At that point there is an option to retain the services of the current post holder on a consultancy basis to deliver specific investment projects.

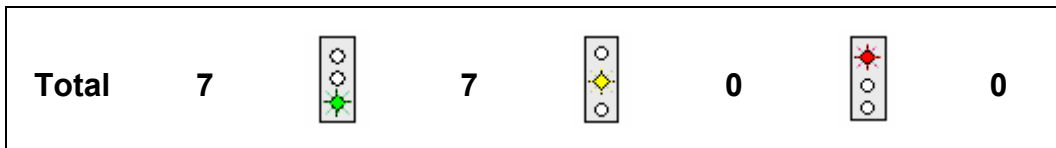
During 2007-08, part of the town centre management budget will be overseen by traders forums. The forums will be able to identify ways that the money should be spent but all ideas must be aimed at improving the town centres. It is hoped this will engage more traders in the forums and encourage traders to contribute themselves as they see the council putting in money. The money for core activities such as Christmas lights, gum cleaning, hanging baskets etc will continue to be held separately.

The LSC's Planning and Modelling System (PAMS), which is used for commissioning of adult learning, is still not operational in Halton – technical difficulties between HBC and LSC are still to be resolved. This means that the Team is unable to access the many reports and databases stored on PAMS. It is understood that Halton is the only council on Merseyside not to have the system operational.

The merging of the Adult Learning Inspectorate with OFSTED (April 2008) will mean that any future inspections of LSC-funded provision within a local council will be joint inspections i.e. if any other department receives LSC funding, the Adult Learning Team and that other department would be jointly inspected, with a joint inspection report completed. This has implications in terms of inspection nominee, etc.

Liverpool City Employment Strategy (CES). It now seems likely that Halton will receive its share of the Deprived Area Funding directly through its LAA processes (though how this works in detail is yet to be clarified). This is good news as it means each Borough will have much more control that it would have had if some of the other options had been pursued.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**



(Appendix 1)

**4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

There are no 'Other' objectives for this service

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

The Urban Renewal PPB has completed its review of the Business Parks Improvement Programme and recommends that a report be sent to Executive Board regarding the creation of two Business Improvement Districts.




The Employment Learning and Skills SSP will complete two reviews in 2007-08

- Halton People into Jobs
- Adult Learning Post Inspection Plan

The Department has reviewed its web based content and has commissioned the development of a rationalised but enhanced web presence.




The review of the skills enquiry service has concluded that this service is no longer required as the LSC Train to Gain programme now exists.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>2</b>
--------------	-----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 2)

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 3)

**7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS**

For details of progress against LPSA targets, please refer to Appendix 4

**8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES**

During the production of the 2006-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Of all the Key Service Objectives, four were assessed as having associated High risk – Key Objectives reference ER 03, 04, 05 and 07. Progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

For details of progress against the risk treatment measures applied to this objective, please refer to Appendix 5.




**9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS**

During 2005/06 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report.



There are no High priority equality actions for this service, there is no progress to report.


**10.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators
Appendix 4- Progress against LPSA targets
Appendix 5- Progress against Risk Control Measures
Appendix 6- Financial Statement
Appendix 7- Explanation of traffic light symbols

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2005/06 Key Milestone	Progress to date*	Commentary
ER 01	Promote diversity and competitiveness, in order to develop a modernised and more competitive business base to provide greater employment security for the Halton community.	Implement Phase 1 marketing action plan by 31-3-07  Halebank CCTV live by 30-6-06  Secure next phase eHalton by 30-6-07  Revise all CRM and web sites by 31-3-07		Phase 1 Implemented  Halebank CCTV live  Funding secured, project on-going  Review has been completed. The next stage is already progressing ahead of schedule and is an upgrade of <a href="http://www.widnes-runcorn.com">www.widnes-runcorn.com</a> site.
ER 02	Develop sectors and clusters with a view to developing stronger business inter-linkages and stronger overall business performance in Halton	Implement phase 1 sector plans for tourism, science and chemicals by 31-3-07  Hold Science and technology showcase by 30-9-06		Tourism Sector Plan now in place. Key personnel have been identified for reporting and delivery purposes. The Tourism Forum has reformed and meets quarterly, chaired by John Wells from Claymoore Navigation. The Forum provides business with a voice and influence with HBC and TMP. November Economic Forum took place at Daresbury Labs and showcased what is available there
ER 03	Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to develop an enterprise culture that encourages people to consider starting a business and give new ventures every chance of success.	Establish the Halton Enterprise Partnership by 30-6-06  Identify an Enterprise		Agreement has been reached with the SSP for the LEGI private sector steering group to be established as the Partnerships Enterprise Board.  Three business leaders identified


**APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Economic Regeneration**

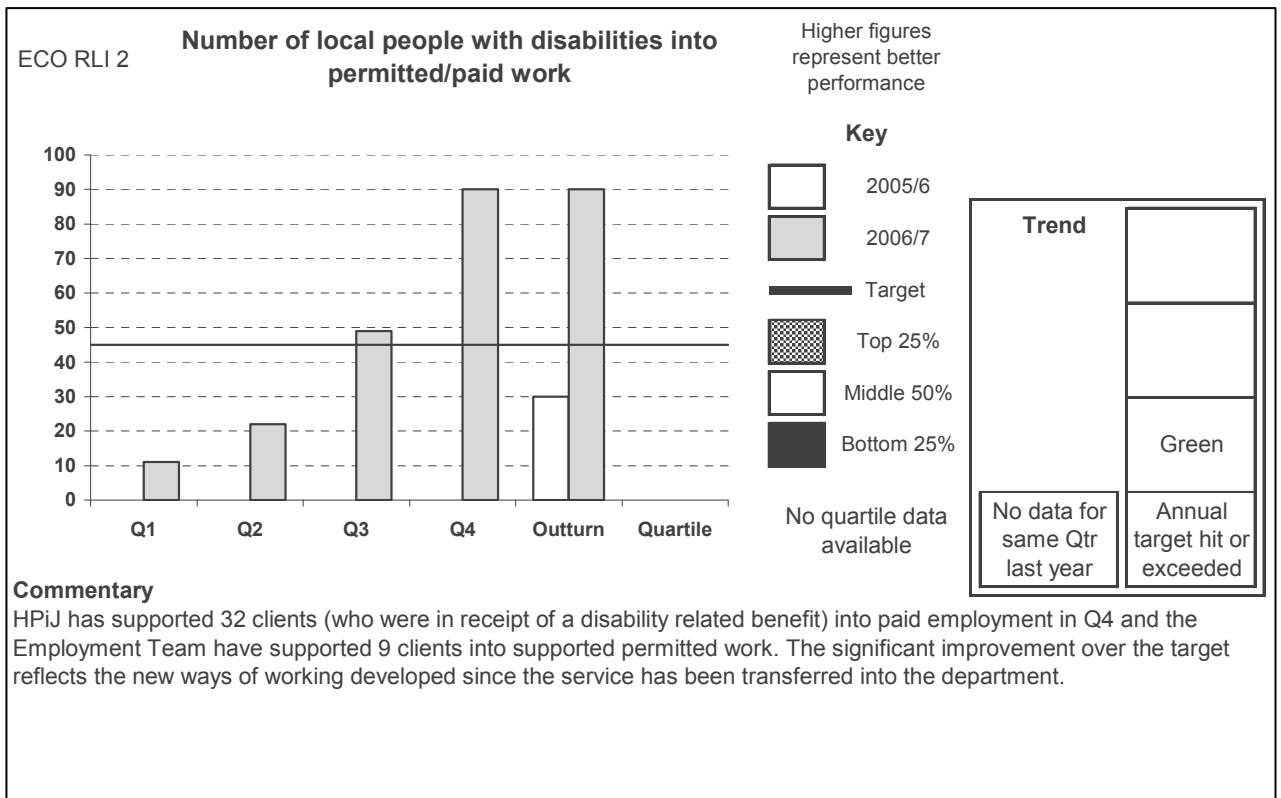
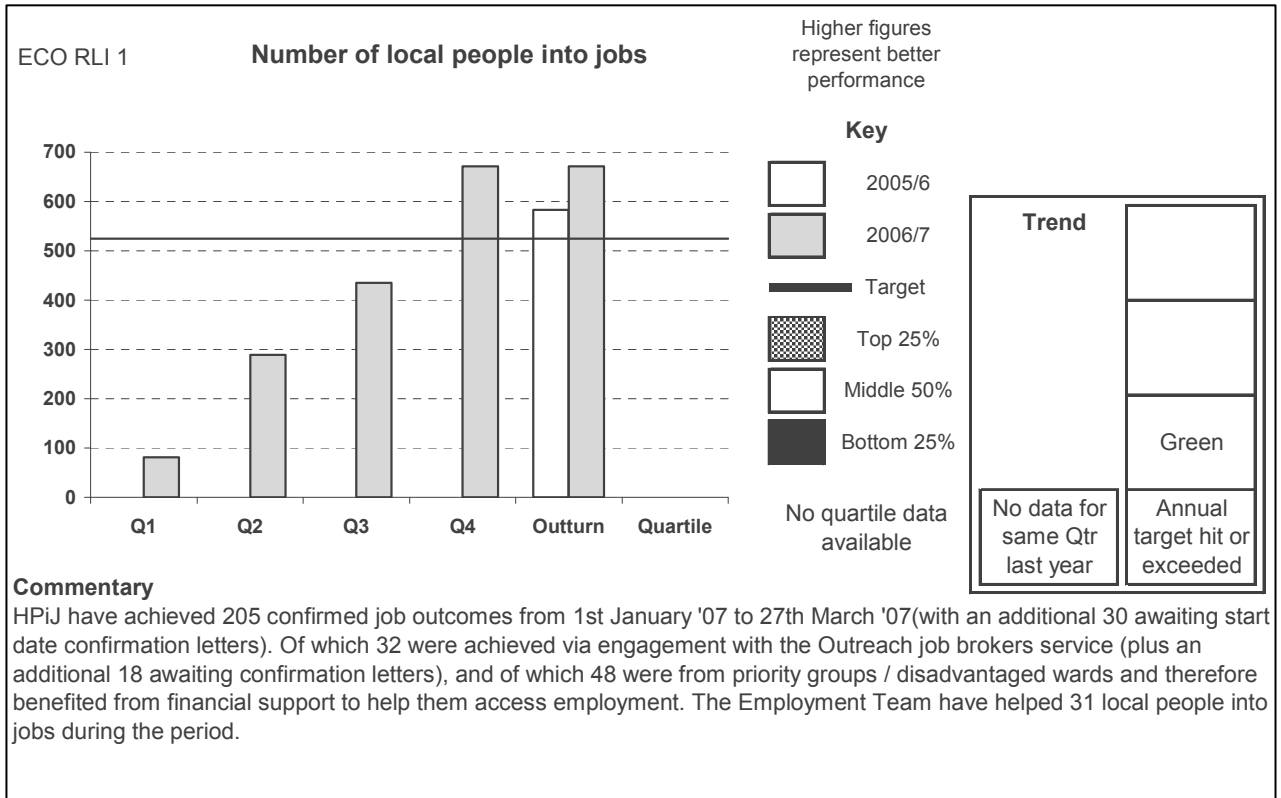
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2005/06 Key Milestone	Progress to date*	Commentary
		<p>Champion by 31-7-06</p> <p>Launch Enterprise Game by 31-3-07</p>		Enterprise Game Launched 16/11/06.
ER 04	Reduce unemployment and increase employment by equipping people with the basic skills and assisting them to secure employment.	<p>Secure future of HPIJ &amp; Emp team by 01-4-06</p> <p>Develop employment action plans for 4 key by 30-9-06</p> <p>Establish 1 new social enterprise by 31-3-07</p> <p>Implement ALT post inspection action plan Phase 1 by 31-3-07</p>		<p>HPIJ funding secured until 31/3/2008.</p> <p>SSP approved Employment Strategy and Action Plan.</p> <p>Two new social enterprises have been established.</p> <p>The Phase 1 Post-Inspection Action Plan is completed whilst phase 2 continues to be implemented and sits alongside the Self-Assessment Report 2005/6. It is a scrutiny topic for the ELS PPB. The LSC has approved the Team's Adult Learning Plan for 2007/8 provision and we await final financial allocations.</p>
ER 05	Raise workforce skill levels by reviewing and addressing the skills deficit in Halton.	Assist in establishing new SSP by 30-6-06		SSP was established in April 2006. The Skills Sub-Group of the SSP has now also been established and during Q4 has met on 2 occasions. Its focus will be from non-accredited provision right through to supporting access to HE provision.

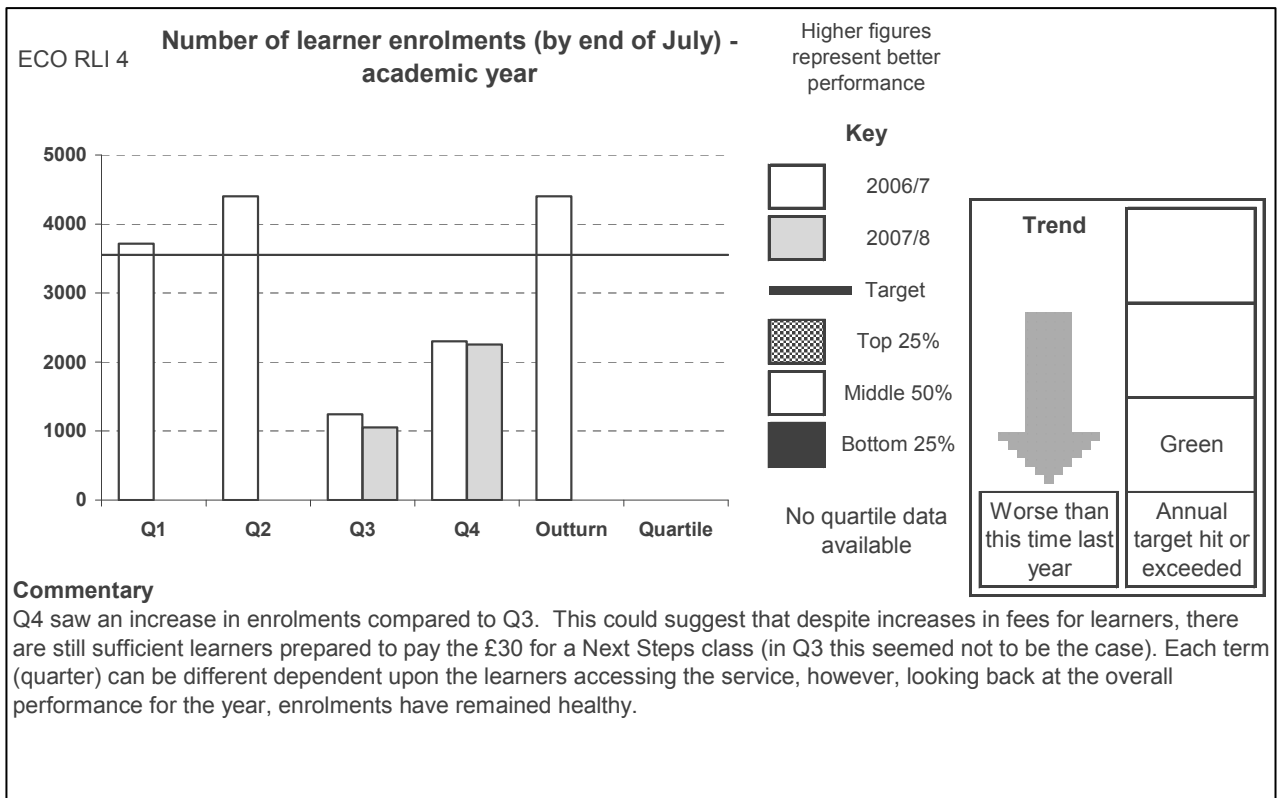
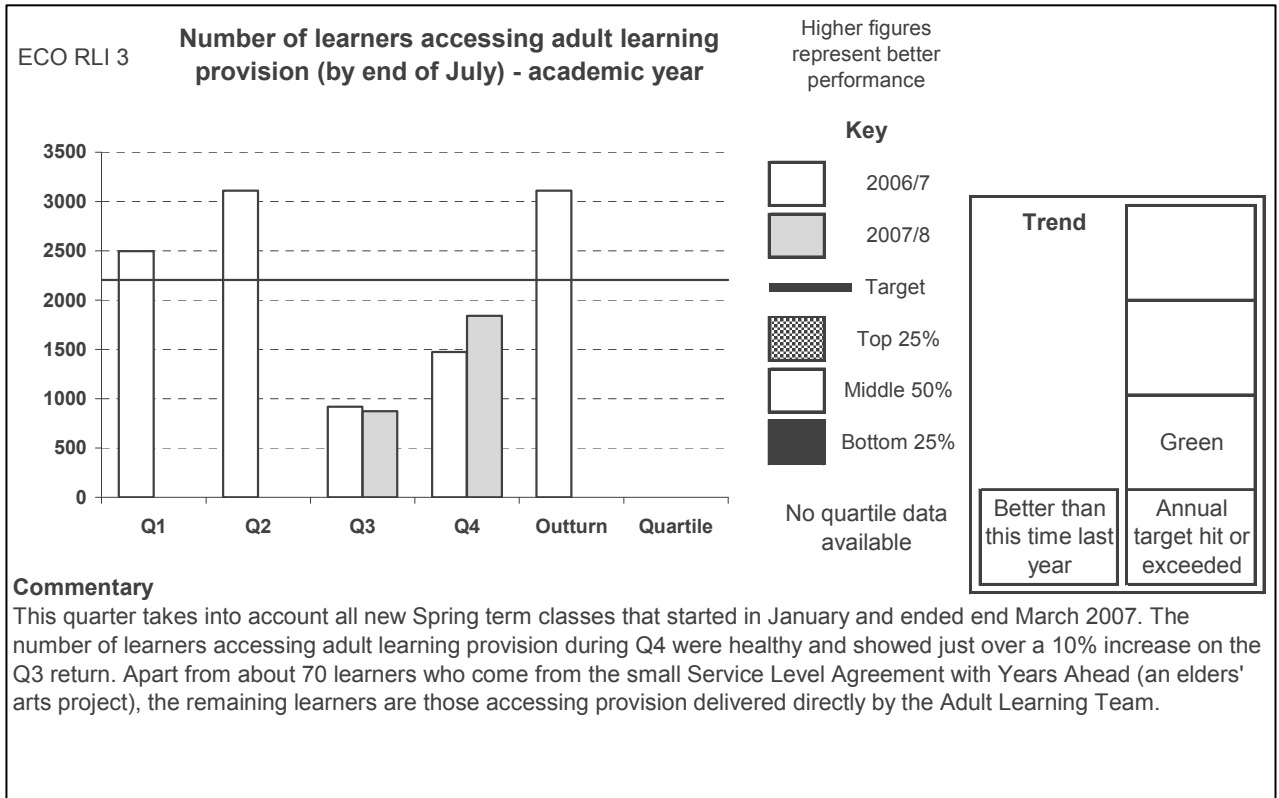
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2005/06 Key Milestone	Progress to date*	Commentary
		<p>Review Skills Enquiry Service post LSC brokerage by 31-3-07</p> <p>Fill LSC TNA gap by 30-9-06</p> <p>Re-launch workforce development rooms by 30-6-06</p>		<p>Review Skills Enquiry Service completed. No need for this in the future due to LSC skills brokerage service.</p> <p>HBC's Workforce Development Project Officer has worked with local businesses in identifying and sourcing business training solutions. 93 local employees from 11 different companies have received training during Q4.</p> <p>The Kingsway Learning Centre WFD room is used for Skills for Life and ICT provision offered within the community. However, it is increasingly used to deliver WFD training, delivered both by the Adult Learning Team and by other training providers.</p>
ER 06	Encouraging investment in land and property to develop assets that meet business needs and help to produce an attractive and prosperous Borough.	<p>Commercial property review by 31-12-06</p> <p>Delivery of Ph 3 BIA scheme for EDZ by 31-3-07</p> <p>DISTP venture capitalist event by 31-12-06</p>		<p>Halton Commercial Property Study completed and reported to PPB on March 21 2007</p> <p>BIA Ph 3 completed. Project exceeding all output targets. The project has been financially re-profiled to enable delivery until 31.12.07.</p> <p>Daresbury Incubator is nearing capacity and links established with Venture Capital community</p>

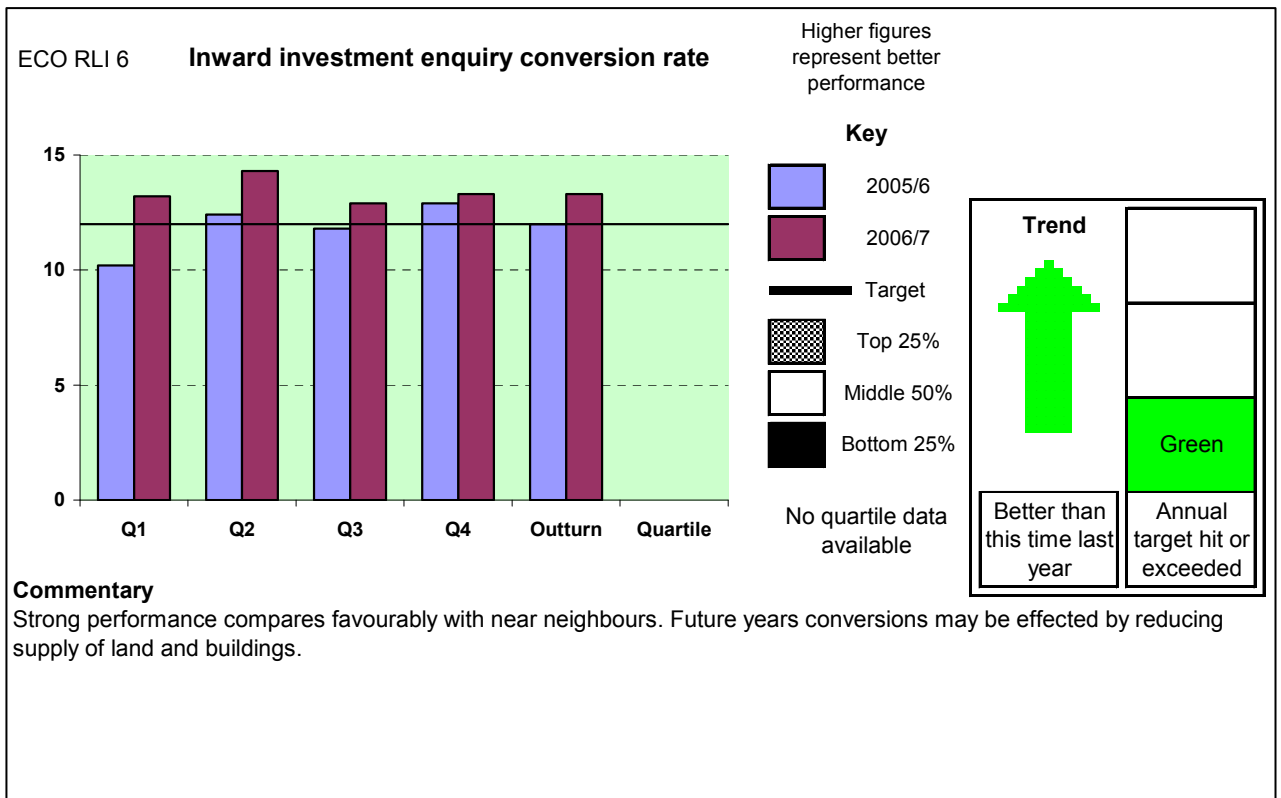
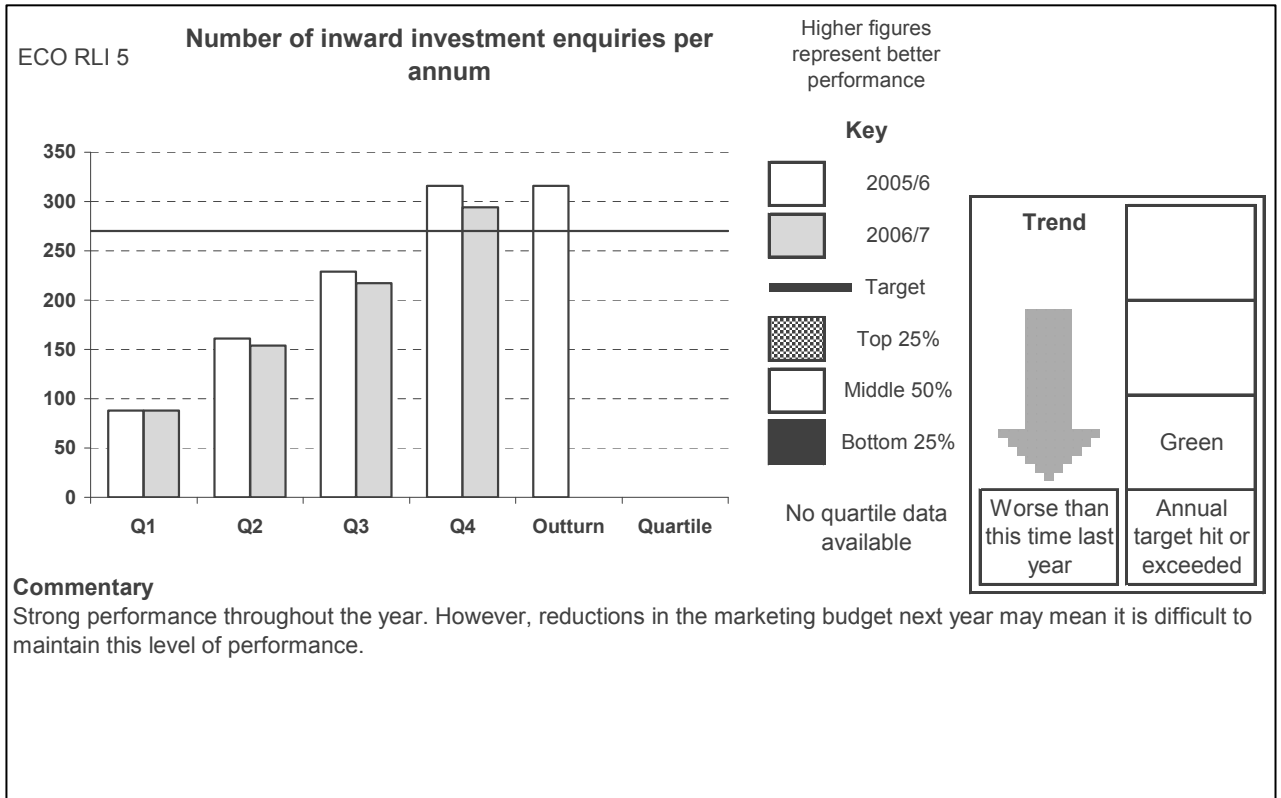
**APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Economic Regeneration**

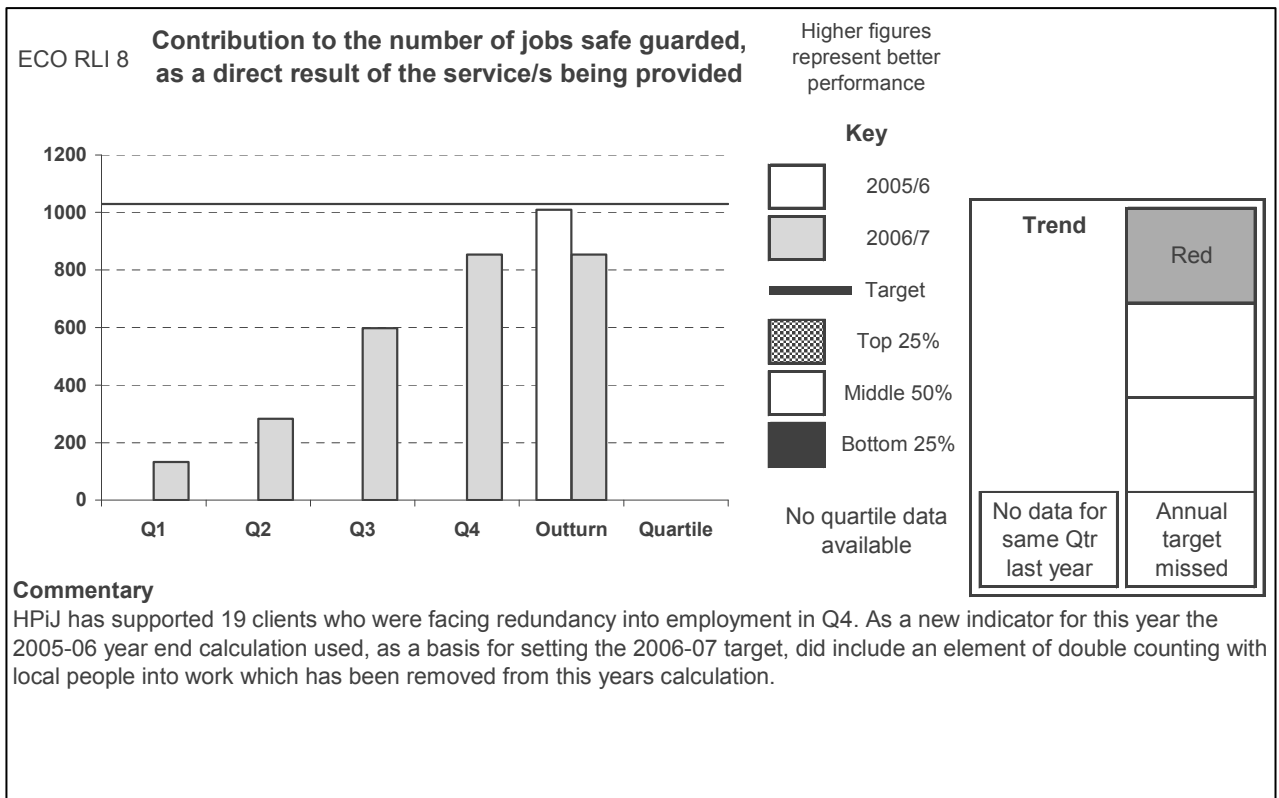
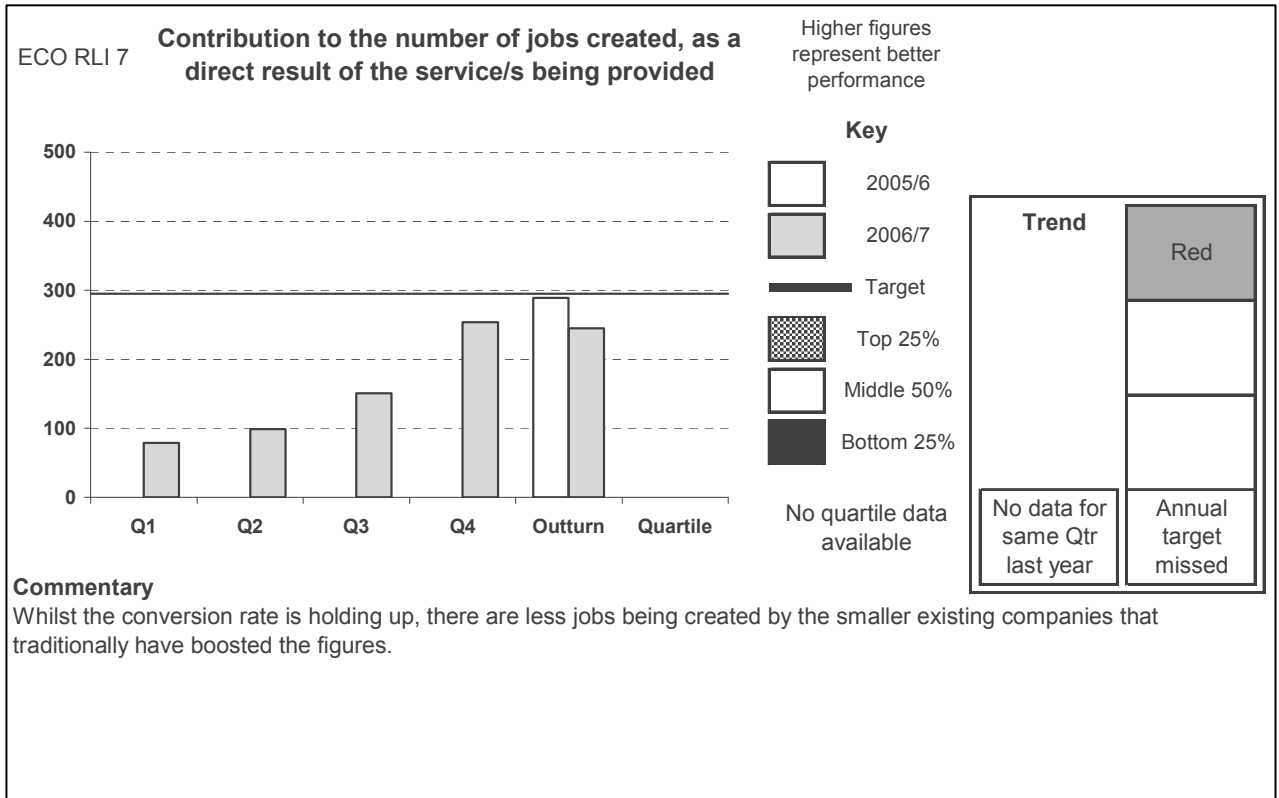


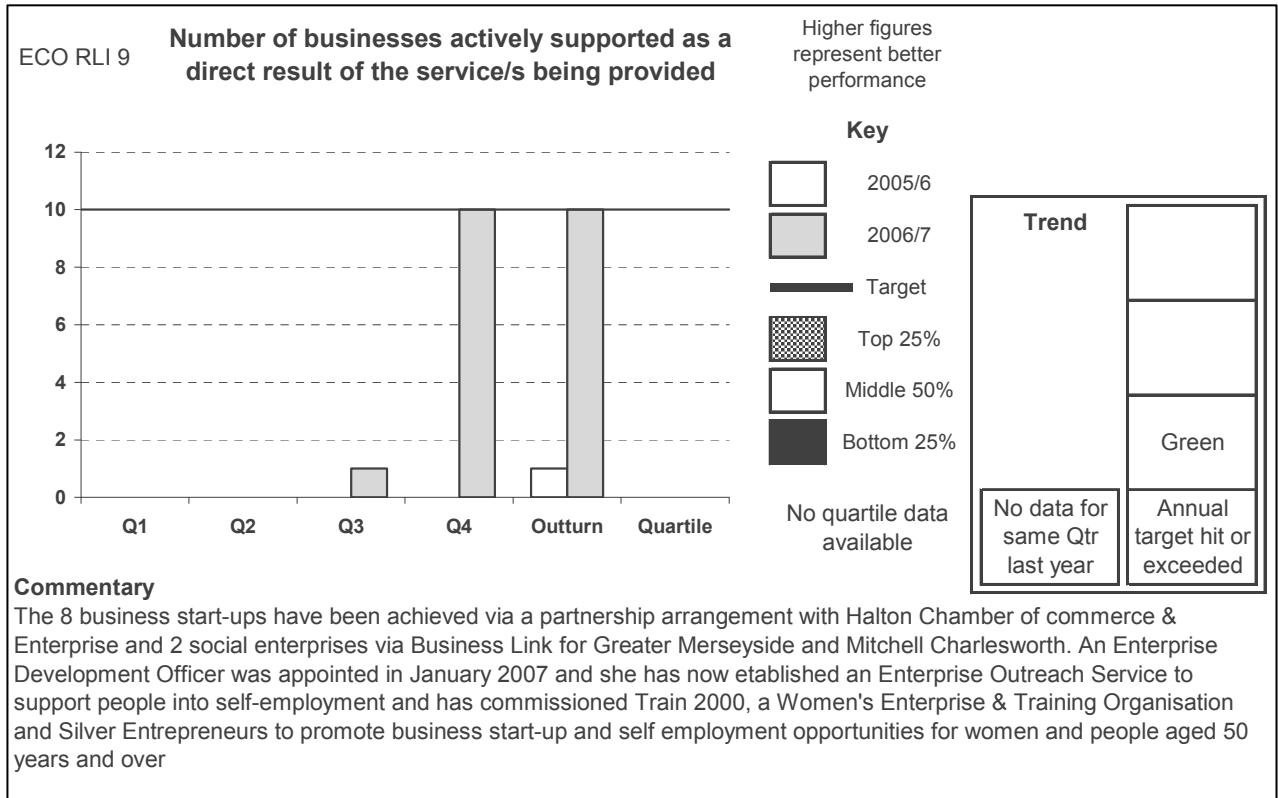
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2005/06 Key Milestone	Progress to date*	Commentary
ER 07	Improving the environment and image of the borough including town centres, to appeal to residents, encourage visitors, businesses and investors.	<p>Annual footfall statement by 30-9-06</p> <p>Complete Victoria Square night time plan by 30-6-06</p> <p>Establish Viability of BIDs by 30-9-06</p>		<p>All footfall counters installed and operational.</p> <p>Victoria Square report approved by Exec Board</p> <p>BID's study completed. Concept rejected by traders in both Widnes and Runcorn, but supported on two industrial estates.</p>











There are 2 indicators that are reported on an annual basis:

**ER PI 10 – Number of day visitors to the borough**

Data for 2004 = 4,013,380 visitors.  
 Data for 2005 = 4,154,400 (3.4% increase)  
 Data for 2006 will be out much later in 2007 (Target = year 2005 + 2%)

Commentary – these figures are based on the national STEM model. The initial figures for any one year are early estimates and subject to review as the model is finalised later.







**ER PI 11 – Footfall in Town Centres (millions)**

Data for 2005-06 = 8.9 million.  
 Target for 2006/7 = year 2005/6 + 2% = 9.08 million.  
 Data for 2006-07 = 9.2 million (March 2007 figure to be added to this when available)

Commentary – Not directly comparable to previous years as all data points are now active. Additionally, the contracted company has been experiencing data retrieval problems which are presently being resolved so figures for first 11 months of the year need to be treated with caution.






Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress*	Commentary
<b>Quality</b>						
ER PI 12/	Percentage of business customers using the inward investment services (including aftercare) expressing satisfaction with the services & support provided (Audit Commission ECR18e)	New for 06/07	Baseline to be set	100%		Each individual or company requesting commercial property information is invited to comment on the Service. Approximately 20% of clients respond. Of these respondents, 100% expressed satisfaction with the Service.
<b>Cost Efficiency</b>						
ER PI 13/	Cost per job created and/or safeguarded to which the authorities inward investment promotional activity has made a significant contribution. (Audit Commission ECR18d)	New for 06/07	£150.00	£126.00		Baseline established using partial data available from 2005/06. 2006/07 Q4 represents accurate assessment with quality verified data.

LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
10	<p><b>Helping people improve their literacy, numeracy and spoken English</b></p> <p>The number of adults who gain a Skills for Life Level 1 or Level 2 qualification in Adult Literacy (and or Numeracy) or an ESOL Skills for Life national qualification at Entry Level 1, Entry Level 2, Entry Level 3, Level 1 or Level 2. (Measured in an academic year)</p>	<p><b>116</b> Aug 08</p>	<p>30 in first year</p>		<p>On target to achieve PSA. 30 individuals achieved Adult Literacy/Adult Numeracy qualifications at Level 1/Level 2.</p>
12	<p><b>To increase the number of local residents currently on incapacity benefits moving in to work or self-employment.</b></p> <p>The number of people who have been claiming an incapacity benefit helped by Halton Borough Council into sustained employment of at least 16 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks or more. (Cumulative over a 3 year period)</p>	<p><b>179</b> (Mar 09)</p>	<p>40 year one</p>		<p>38 confirmed sustainable job outcomes as at 30/3/07. There are a further 25 IB customers that have been supported into jobs but they have not yet reached the 13th week of remaining in work at which time they can be claimed as an output.</p>



The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicators</u> <u>(Excl. LPSA)</u>	<u>LPSA Indicators</u> <u>Only</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved.</u></p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target</u> will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Environment  
**SERVICE:** Environmental & Regulatory Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 2006/07

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Environment & Regulatory Services Department for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2007. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 5.

***It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.***

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

#### **Environmental Health, Enforcement and Building Control Division**

In Building Control, since the last report there are 3 items of interest: we have dealt with the Introduction of New Fire Safety Regulations and the Fire Safety Regulatory Reform; Local Authority Registers of Building Control Information Consultation and The Energy Performance of Buildings Regulations 2007.

To further enhance our actions to address emerging and long standing environmental issues throughout the borough, a principal officer is now in post with the task co-ordinating the Environment Directorates enforcement activities. The role will primarily be responsible for pulling together the Directorates enforcers, and key partners to deal with singular and multi-functional environmental problems throughout the Borough and to further the safer, greener, cleaner agenda.

Environmental Health's Food Safety and Standards team have

achieved 100% of high-risk safety inspections and 100% of high-risk food standards inspections. The food team has launched the first phase of it's "scores on the doors" scheme to publicise the hygiene rating of food premises in the borough on the Halton BC web pages. The site has so far received 8000 hits. The team successfully bid for funding from the FSA for it's " Safer Food Better Business Project" and 136 businesses have been recruited to the scheme. The food team launched its alternative strategy for enforcement in low risk food premises. Low risk premises will no longer routinely receive an inspection unless intelligence from various sources, including questionnaires, reveals a change in risk. This will enable resources to be focussed on higher risk premises and providing information to businesses and the public.

Environmental Health's health and safety team have achieved one hundred percent on in medium and lower risk premises targeted for specific interventions. This has been achieved by introducing a system using a self assessment questionnaire for low risk premises. A number of campaigns and projects were run including young worker safety. The trailer was also used to promote the work at height message on the back of the HSE national campaign and the asbestos awareness message. An extremely successful dermatitis campaign was carried out in partnership with the HSE where all 90 hair and beauty salons in the borough were sent a mail shot.

During the run up to Smoke Free legislation Halton Borough Councils Environmental Health Team are hosting a number of free event across the borough which are aimed at assisting businesses to ensure compliance with the Smoke Free Legislation which comes into force on the 1st July in England. Over 100 local businesses attended the seminars.

Environmental Health are now participating in a newly formed Tobacco Harm Reduction Group. This is a multidisciplinary group with participants from Halton, St Helens Councils and the Halton & St Helens PCT and various partners such as Heart of Mersey.

#### **Planning and Policy Division**

The Waste Development Plan Document is progressing well and public consultation on Issues and Options is underway until 30 April 2007.

The Local Development Scheme (LDS) has been revised to take account of the results of the Annual Monitoring Report. The current document is the Halton LDS 2007 and is effective from 12 March 2007. The Executive Board and Government Office North West (GONW) have approved this document.

The e-Planning surveys undertaken by DCLG will occur at the end of March. These surveys will impact upon the e-Planning award

component of Planning Delivery Grant. We are hoping to achieve top performance and obtain 100% of the component available for e-Planning.

An Expert System is being implemented to help the public find out if a planning or building regulation application will be required for their proposal. This system is live and will be formally launched at the end of April.

### **Landscape Division**

There has been a key personnel change within the Division following the resignation of the Head of Service in March 2007.

The Landscape Services Depot at Victoria Park closed for redevelopment in February 2007. The redevelopment and modernisation of the facilities at Victoria Park is being funded through the sale of surplus land at the site to a developer who has bought the former factory site that bordered the depot in Appleton Village. It is anticipated that the new facilities will be ready for occupation in late May 2007.

The Division was informed in March 2007 that the Parks for People Bid for Hale Park has succeeded in getting through the first stage. The project worth £850,000 will now be drawn in detail and submitted as a stage two application. It is anticipated that this will be completed by September 2007. The bid will substantially upgrade Hale Park to create a local facility of a standard that will be equal to other recently refurbished parks in the Borough.

### **Waste Management Division**

Halton Council's Executive Board, at its meeting of the 29th March 2006, approved the Contract Procurement Strategy with the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority, and noted the progress towards the adoption of Halton's Waste Action Plan.

## **3.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

### **Environmental Health, Enforcement and Building Control Division**

As part of our ongoing review and assessment of air quality in Halton the Environmental Health section continually monitor the air quality within the borough. Results of Nitrogen dioxide monitoring using diffusion tubes in areas, close to busy roads indicate at this stage still remain higher than desired.

Further monitoring needs to be done in these areas using real time analysers. If the results continue to remain at the existing indicated

levels then an action plan will be developed in consultation with the Transport Division, to improve the air quality. A further bid for funding from Defra has been submitted for the purchase of equipment in order to undertake a detailed assessment in these areas.

The Contaminated Land Team are nearing completion of the first phase of identification of sites of potential concern and subsequent prioritisation. There are now 1393 sites identified that may warrant some form of detailed inspection. A new target of completing 20 Phase 1 assessments has been set for 07/08.

**Planning and Policy Division**

Preparations are being made to ensure that the Mersey Gateway planning application is adequately resourced. This major application is expected at the end of 2007.

The Core Strategy Preferred Options stage is expected to go on public consultation in the Summer 2007. This is the equivalent of Part 1 of the UDP, the strategic policy context for the Borough. The Core Strategy explains how we expect the Borough to develop to 2021.

**Landscape Division**

There are no emerging issues to report this quarter.

**Waste Management Division**

A key emerging issue for the Division is the revision of the national waste strategy, which is due to be published by in May 2007. At the time of writing this report no date for the publication had been confirmed. However, indications are that the following outcomes are likely:

- A proposed 40% recycling target by 2010 (Beyond that higher targets may be proposed but subject to further consultation)
- Greater working on linking commercial/business waste and local authorities
- The annual landfill tax escalator will be increased (This was confirmed by budget announcements on 21<sup>st</sup> March)
- There will be a new target for the amount of residual waste per household.

Local Authority powers for direct charging for household waste and subsequent consultation is to be considered by the current “Lyons” review.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>13</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>2</b>
--------------	-----------	---	-----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 1)

#### 4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

<b>Total</b>	<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

There are no "Other" objectives for this Service.

#### 5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

##### **Environmental Health, Enforcement and Building Control Division**

Merseyside Public Health and Pest Control Group are progressing with staff development. A process of assessment is being carried out by each of the 5 Authorities to assess operatives from other Authorities, concentrating on knowledge, customer care and presentation. All feedback has been positive and awards have been presented to successful candidates. This is a two-year rolling programme of rodent assessment and insect assessment.

##### **Planning and Policy Division**

The results of the triennial customer satisfaction survey for Development Control (BVPI111) have been received. The overall result is 83, which should place Halton within the top quartile. 81% of respondents indicated they were either very or fairly satisfied with the service received. Many agents indicated in the comments box that Halton was one of the best authorities that they dealt with.

Comments have been received on the LDF Annual Monitoring Report from Government Office (GO NW). This document has been well received and sections are being promoted as best practice by GONW.

##### **Landscape Division**

The service has completed its winter works and in Mid March commenced with its summer work schedule, which includes the summer mowing season.

Over the past couple of months the service has taken delivery of four new vehicles, which have had the new corporate livery applied along with Streetscene branding. The vehicles present a much better corporate look than their predecessors. Over the next two years the services fleet will gradually be replaced with new vehicles in the

corporate livery.

The service has signed up to the Greenspace facilitated GreenStadt system. This web based database will enable the service to obtain data directly from members of the public in relation to how it is performing in managing its parks and open spaces.

In order to facilitate an enhanced regime of maintenance and in order to cater better for the needs of visitors a restructure of the staffing arrangements at Victoria Park has been carried out. From the 31<sup>st</sup> March 2007 one of the existing members of staff will retire. The office planter service will discontinue and a vehicle will go off lease. Two new posts will be created to work at Victoria Park four days per week including the busy weekend periods. As a result of this new arrangement the Victoria Park Glasshouses will be able to open for longer hours.

#### **Waste Management Division**

Direct consultancy support funding has recently been approved by Defra in order to carry out updates of both the Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) and Halton's current, Waste Management Services - Aspirations and Guidelines document.

To successfully develop the Partnership with Merseyside and move forward with strategic plans, both the JMWMS and Halton waste management Guidelines need to be updated and restructured. Initial meetings and preparatory work has already commenced.

The process will allow the content of each strategy to be updated, tested and aligned to ensure policies, options and actions are deliverable, challenging and sustainable and give regard to the ever-changing and evolving local, regional, national and European waste and resource management agenda.

The work will be based on three work streams:

- Strategy Updates
- Sustainability Appraisals, both for the strategy updates and of district council Action Plans in Merseyside
- A Waste Prevention Plan

This work is due for completion by December 2007.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>27</b>		<b>12</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>12</b>
--------------	-----------	---	-----------	---	----------	---	-----------

(Appendix 2) There are 3 indicators which as yet there are no final outturns. These are BV 86 & 87, cost of house hold collection and disposal, and BV 106, new homes built on previously developed land.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>6</b>
--------------	-----------	---	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 3)

**7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS**

For details of progress against LPSA targets, please refer to Appendix 4

**8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES**

During the production of the 2006-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

At the end of year, all relevant risk treatment measures have been implemented for key service objectives that were initially assessed as high risk in the Directorate Risk Register

**9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS**





During 2005/06 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report.








There are no High priority equality actions for this service, there is no progress to report.





## 10.0 APPENDICES



Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators  
Appendix 4- Progress against LPSA targets  
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols

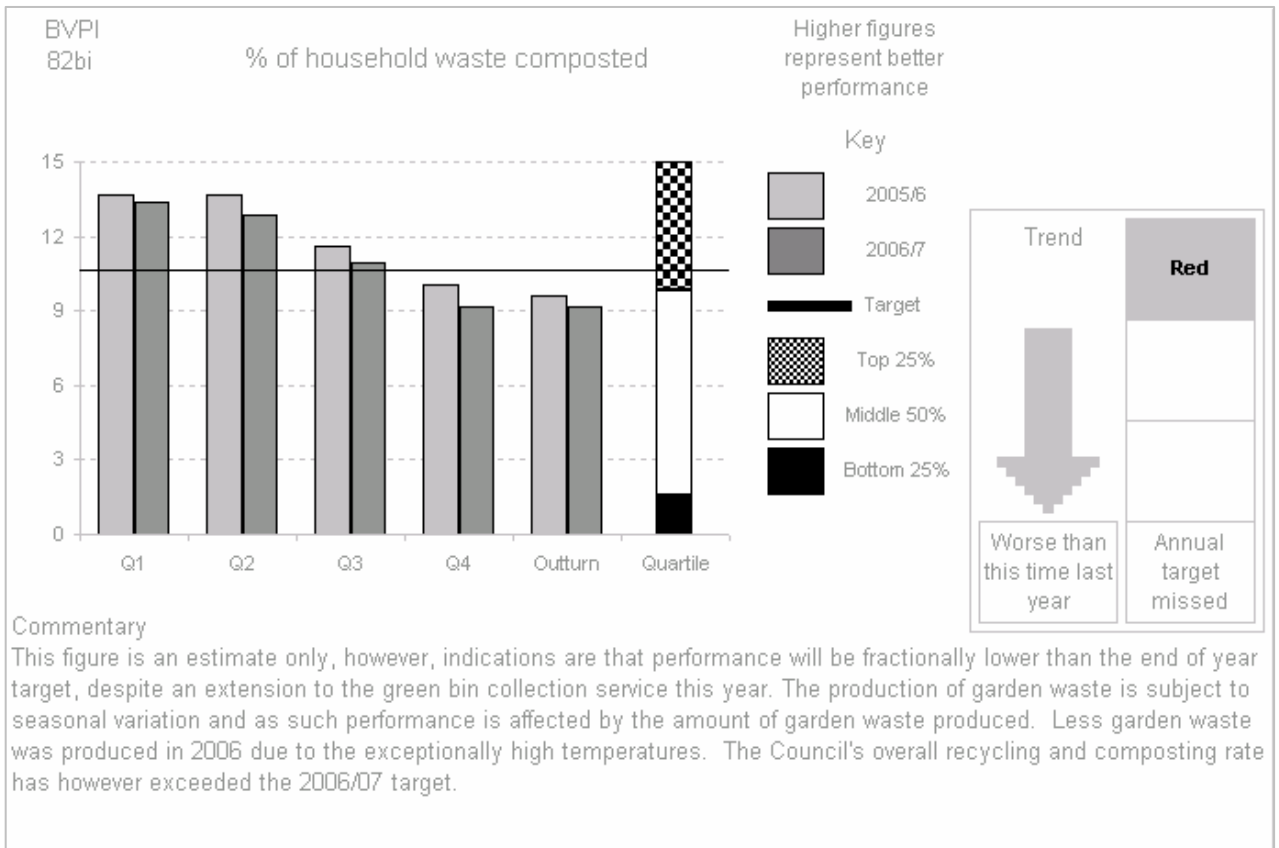
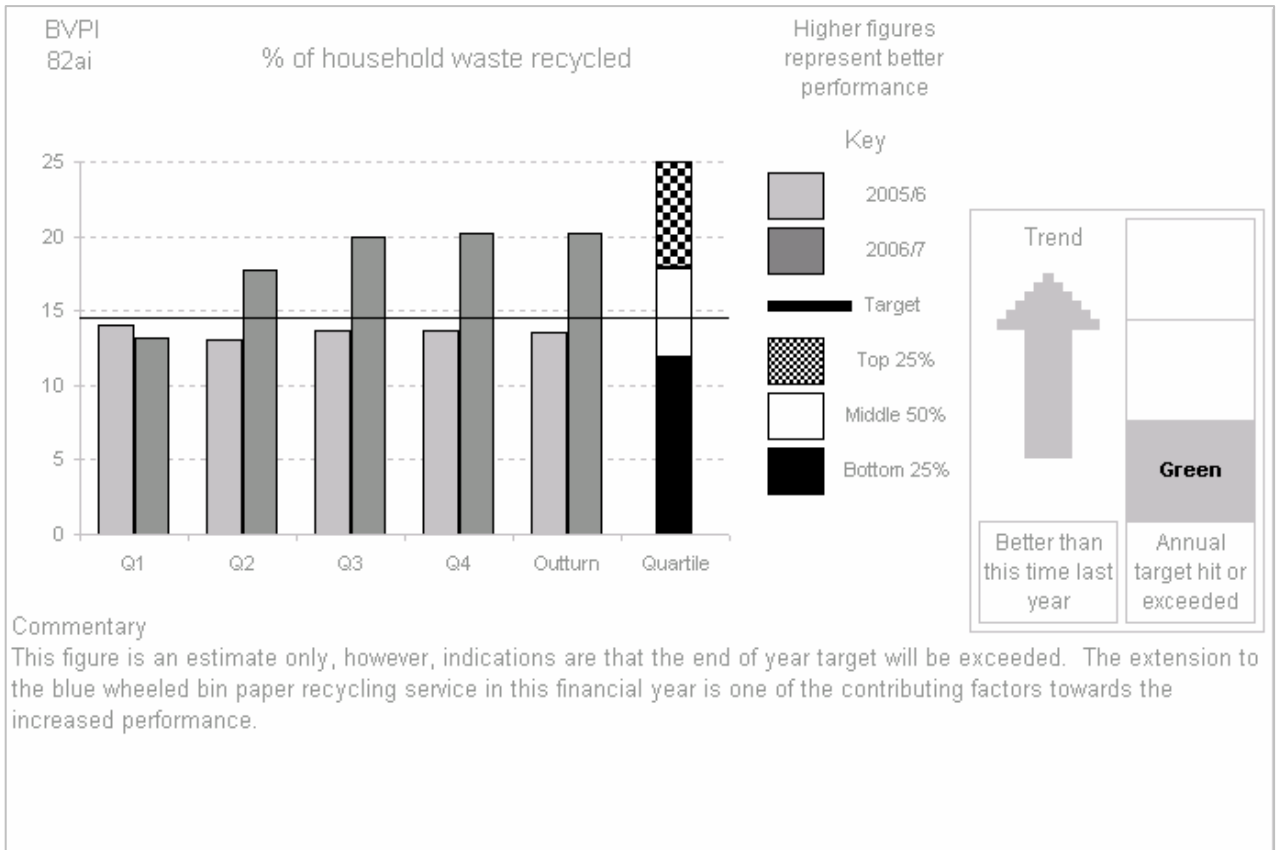
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
<b>Environmental Health, Enforcement and Building Control Division</b>				
01	To ensure that there is a co-ordinated and robust regulatory/enforcement regime operable and that authorised development is implemented in accordance with approved documents and that inappropriate unauthorised activity is quickly addressed.	To produce and adopt a cross cutting enforcement policy. To increase the number of actions taken against unauthorised activity. By March 2007		A Principal Officer is now in post co-ordinating the Environment Directorates enforcement activities. The role will primarily be responsible for pulling together the Directorates enforcers, to deal with singular and multi-functional enforcement problems throughout the Borough. This new, and cross cutting approach to the Directorates enforcement activities, will consolidate the efforts already being made to improve the Borough's Environment and will support the Council's pro-active approach to problems faced by the Borough.
02	Ensure that there is a robust auditable regulatory regime for food by completing the mandatory annual Food Service inspection plan	2006/7 Plan completed and shared with Members by June 2006		Completed
03	Ensure that there is a robust auditable regulatory regime for health and safety completing the mandatory annual review of the Health & Safety Service Plan	Annual review 2005/6 update shared with Members by end of June 2006		Completed
04	Undertake mandatory annual review and assessment of air quality in line with the requirements laid out in national guidance and report findings to DEFRA	Annual review complete and returns made to DEFRA by 31-05-06		The annual review for 2006 was submitted on time and a further annual air quality Progress Report. Is due to be submitted May 2007. The Progress Report, will be expected to report any provisional monitoring data over the previous calendar year.

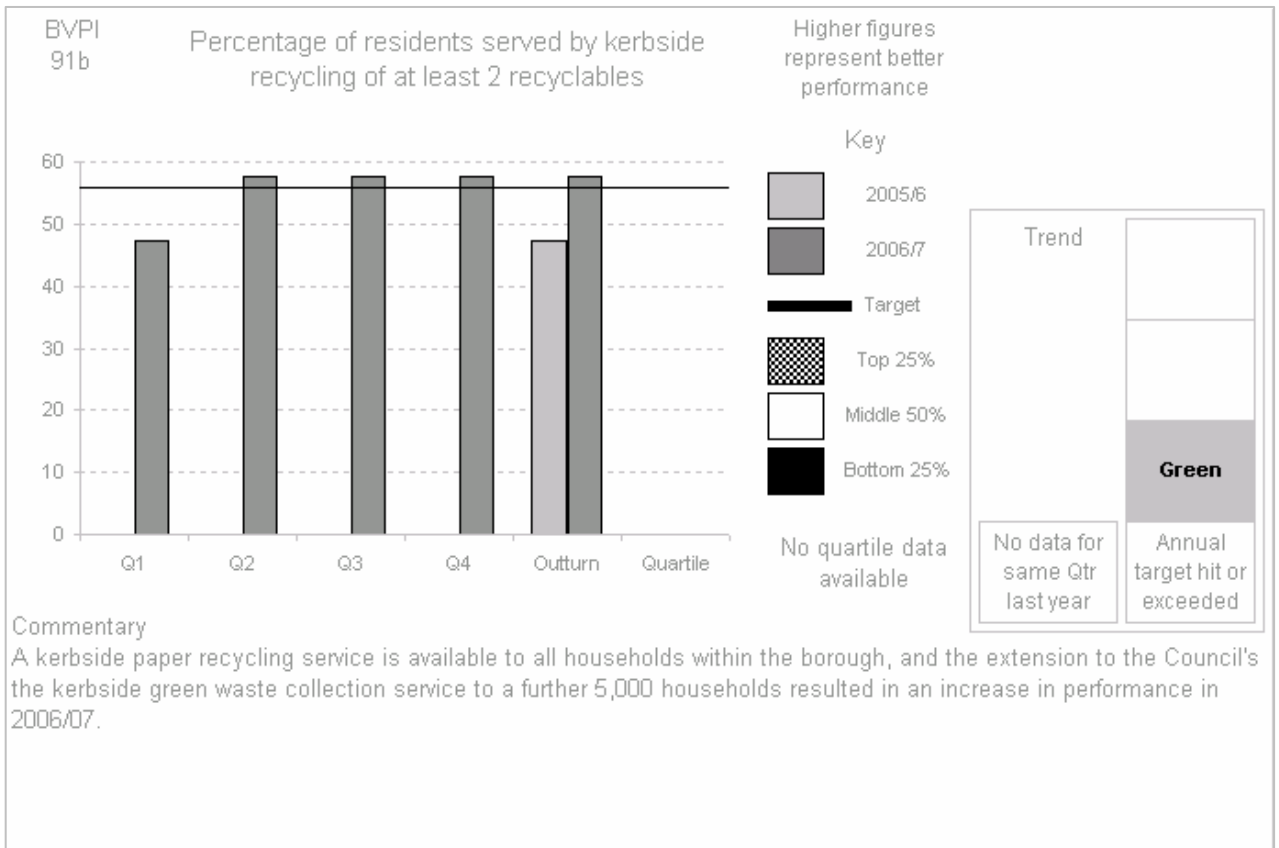
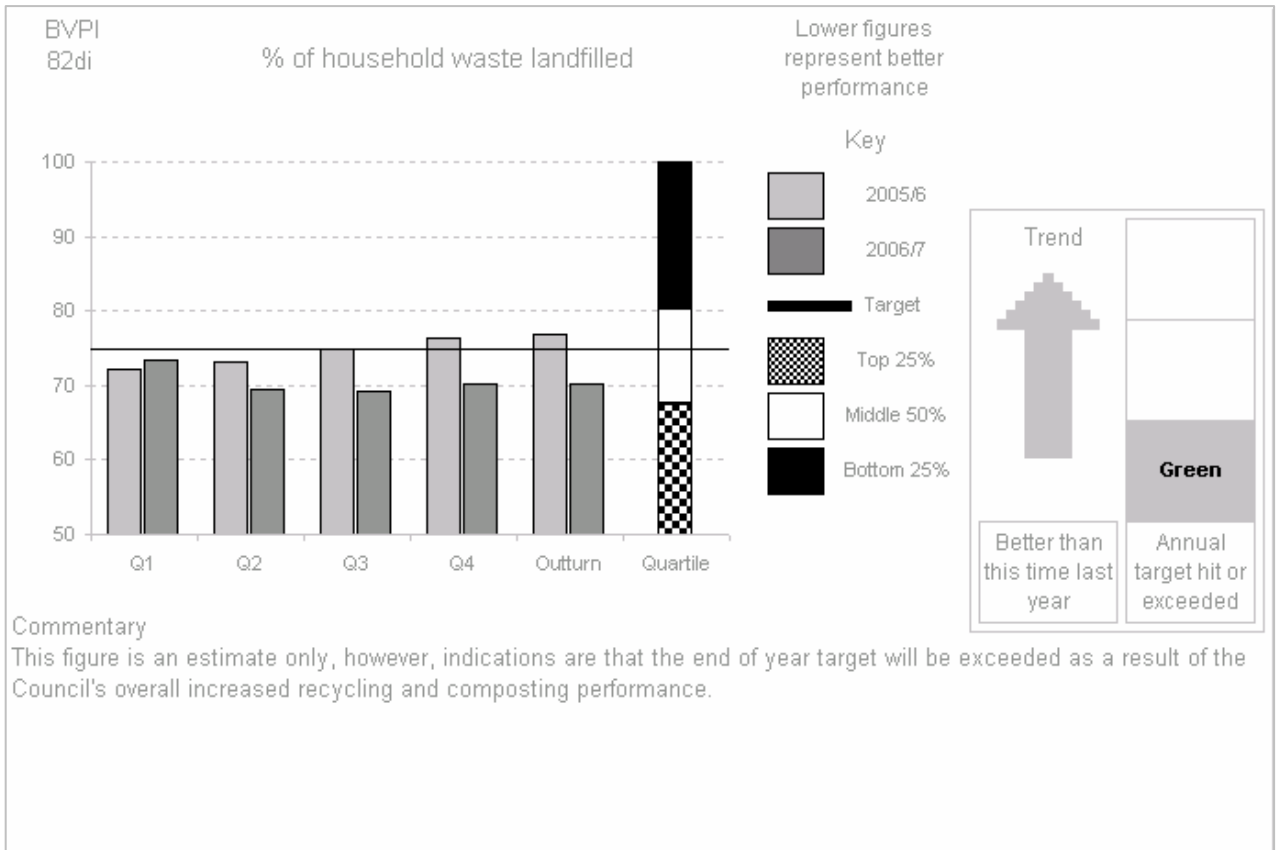
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
<b>Landscape Services Division</b>				
05	Continue Borough-wide Playground Refurbishment Project.	<p>Identify and improve 3 further playgrounds (31/3/07)</p> <p>Submit three further bids for landfill tax credit funding to enhance projects. (31/3/07)</p> <p>Where appropriate submit bids to other funding bodies to enhance projects e.g. Lottery funds, Living Landscapes (31/3/07)</p>		<p>Site works have begun at Hale View, Six Acre Lane, Moore and contractors will be going onto site at Cavendish Street in April.</p> <p>All milestones for this objective have been met.</p>
06	<u>Natural Assets Strategy.</u> Publish the reviewed and revised Strategy and commence implementation of the relevant aspects of the new 5-year Action Plan.	Complete the review and publish the new Strategy and commence implementation of the relevant aspects of the new 5-year Action Plan. (31/3/07)		The draft revised Natural assets Strategy was reported to the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board in January 2007 and to Executive Board in March. The Document is now ready to be printed in its agreed form. Implementation has commenced and policies are being implemented.
07	Implement the Halton Biodiversity Action Plan	Implement improvements on two habitats and seven species (31/3/07)		Progress is satisfactory towards this target. 2 habitats that have been improved are reed beds and saltmarsh. There has been an additional reed bed planted. Saltmarsh improvements have been made by way of biological recording and a draft management plan. For the

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
				7 species: 20,000 bluebells planted; purple hairstreak butterfly improvements in recording; Great crested newt increase in survey work and technical training seminar; Redshank specific survey completed with over 400 records; Skylark 230 records of skylark; Song Thrush specific survey in 06 via In Touch magazine; Reed Bunting the survey is continuing and this specie will benefit from the improvements in reed bed habitat.
<b>Planning Services Division</b>				
08	To prepare and adopt a local development framework (LDF) and to review the LDF on a regular basis to ensure it continues to be up to date and relevant.	Produce Annual Monitoring Report- December 2006		Annual Monitoring Report produced and submitted in December 2006. Work is progressing well on LDF. The Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy is being prepared. A revised LDS document has been produced. This was agreed by the Executive Board and GONW on 12 March.
09	To develop and implement a strategy for the three town centres in order to maximise the social, economic and cultural well-being of the local population	Produce Annual Monitoring Report- December 2006		Annual Monitoring Report produced and submitted in December 2006. Three Town Centre Strategies are currently being produced (Halton Lea, Widnes and Runcorn Old Town). Runcorn Old Town and Halton Lea have been on consultation over the period 1/2/07 to 15/3/07. There is also to be a future Widnes Town Centre Area Action Plan DPD to reflect additional work required in Widnes. It

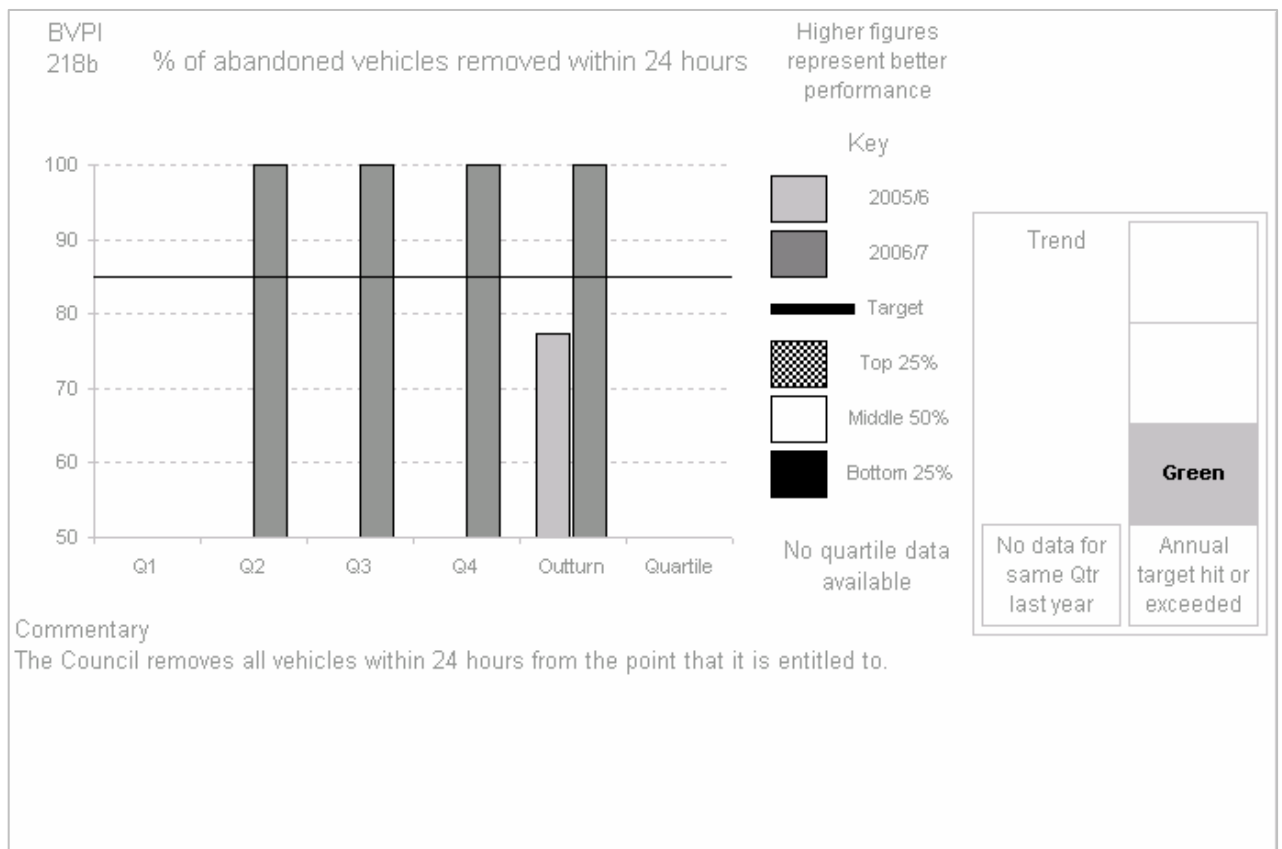
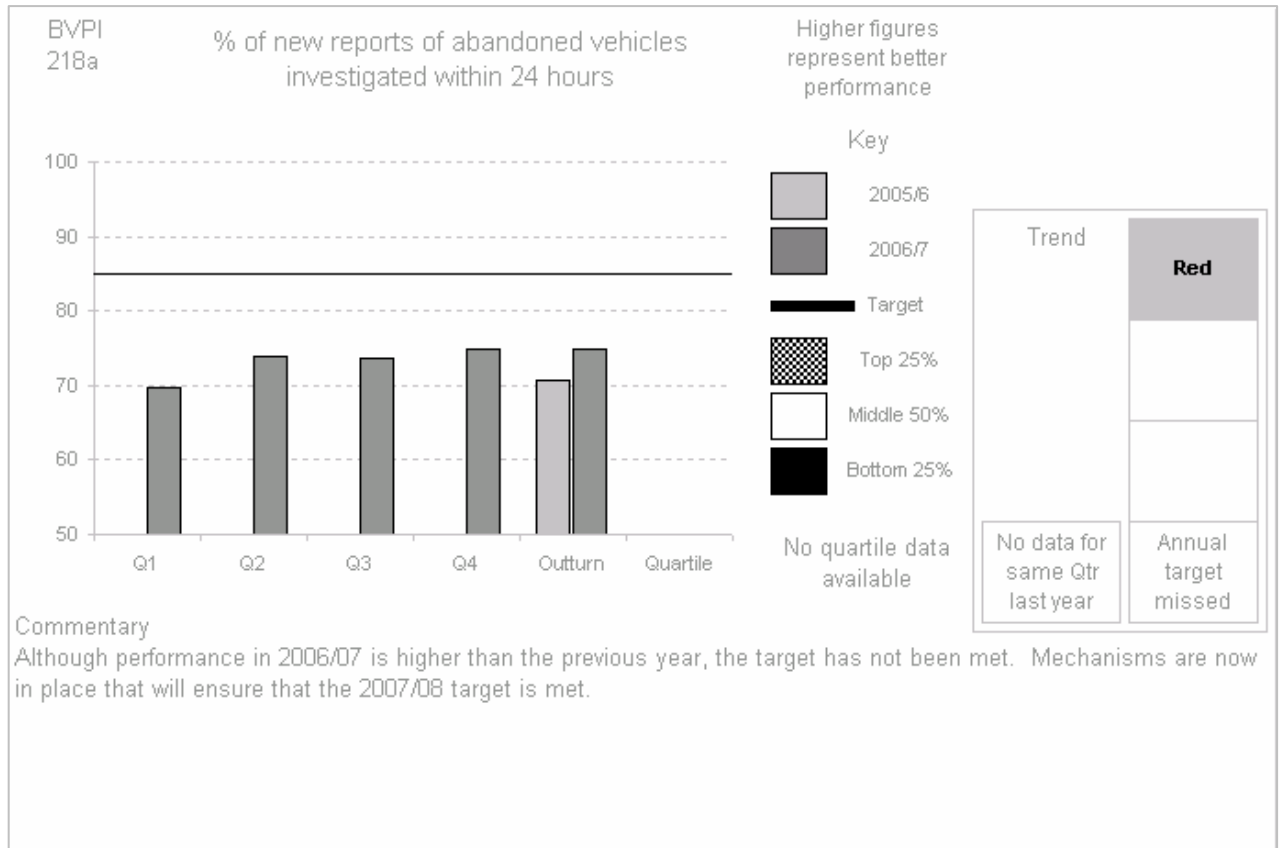
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
				will commence at the end of 2007.
10	To review matters expected to affect development through the maintenance of a robust and credible information base shared corporately.	Produce reports annually-December 2006		Survey and data collection process has commenced for 2007. Baseline reports will be published in June 07 and Annual Monitoring Report in Dec 07.
11	To ensure that Halton interests are represented and reflected within emerging Regional and Strategic planning documents.	Representations made to draft RSS (Regional Spatial Strategy) –Spring 2006. Represent Authority at any examination in public/enquiry.		The Inspectors Report on RSS following the Jan 07 Inquiry is awaited (due April / May 07). Once received GONW will decide what changes need to be made to RSS and these decisions will be on consultation for consideration by Halton in the autumn of 2007.
<b>Waste Management Division</b>				
12	Review and publish a revised Municipal Waste Management Strategy and commence implementation of the relevant objectives contained within the strategy	Carry out Consultation commencing in September 2006, publish revised strategy in Spring 2007 and implement relevant objectives as detailed within the revised document.		Direct consultancy support funding has recently been approved by Defra in order to carry out updates of both the Merseyside Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy (JMWMS) and Halton's current, Waste Management Services - Aspirations and Guidelines document.
13	To formalise joint working arrangements with other Local Authorities and the Private Sector where beneficial to the Council.	Formal Partnerships established (31/3/07)		Formal partnerships established. To successfully develop the Partnership with Merseyside and move forward with strategic plans, both the JMWMS and Halton waste management Guidelines need to be updated and restructured. Initial meetings and preparatory work has already

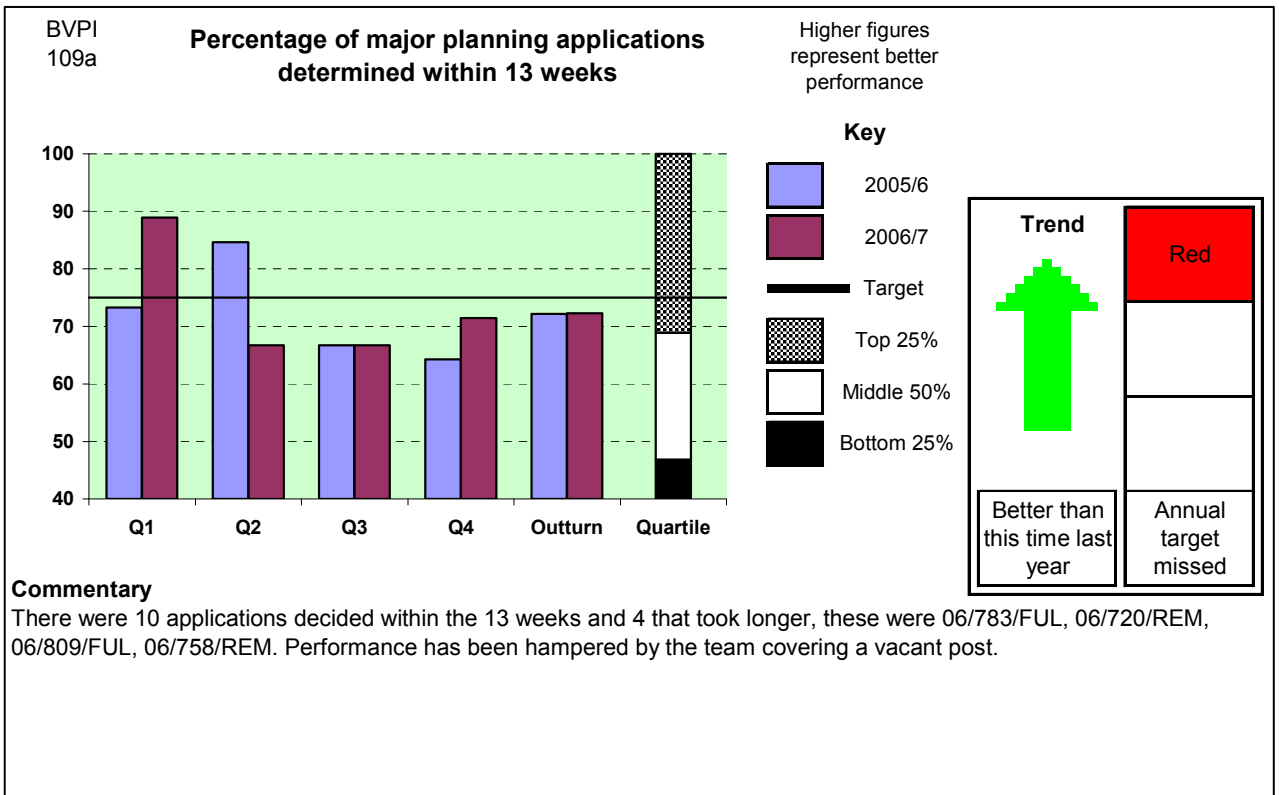
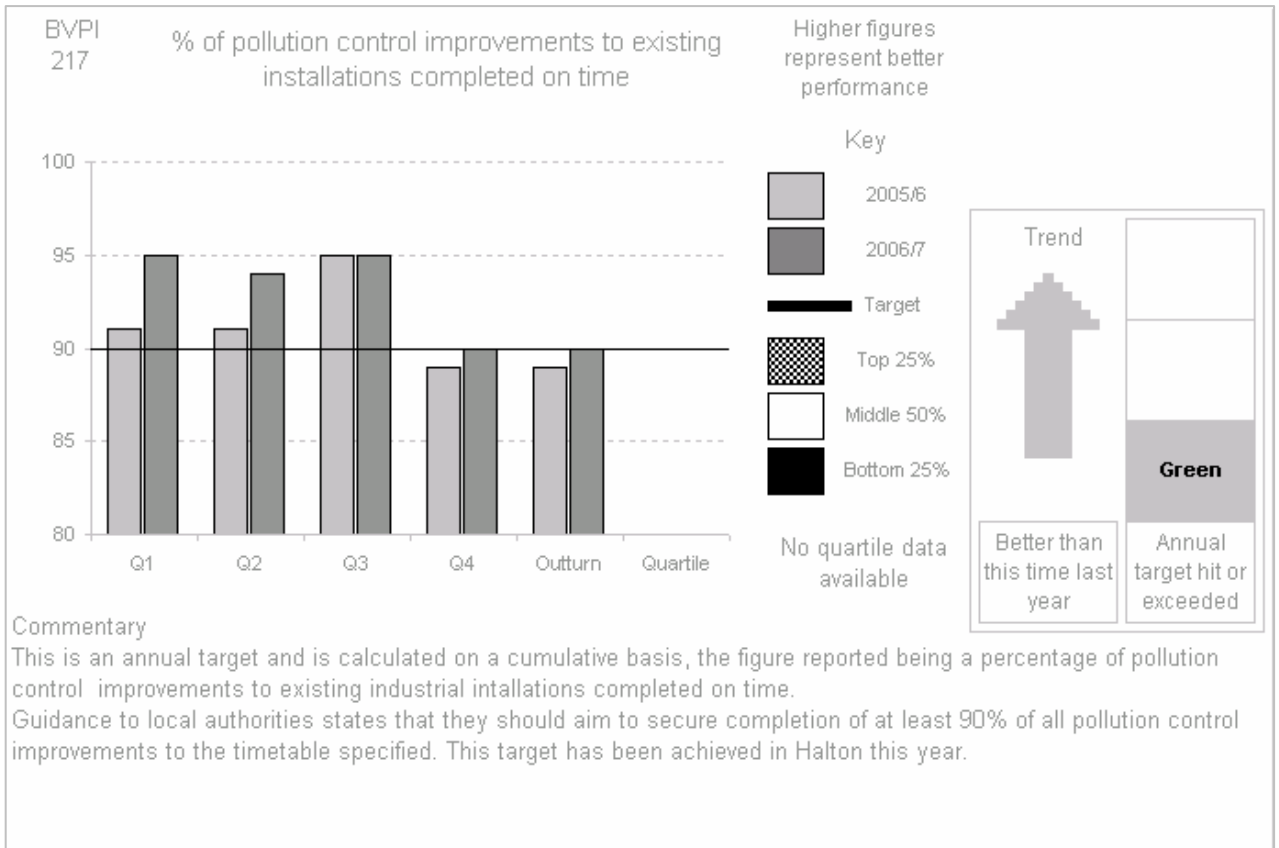
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
				commenced.
14	To procure an integrated waste management infrastructure to meet the requirements of the Municipal Waste Management Strategy	Negotiate and implement contractual arrangements as necessary (31/3/07)		Contractual arrangements now in place.
15	To develop and publish an integrated environmental nuisance prevention and enforcement strategy	Develop strategy in consultation with relevant internal and external officers (31/3/07)		Although this work remains in progress, the target date for completion was not met as a result of resource capacity issues. However, it is anticipated that the strategy will be completed in mid to late 2007.

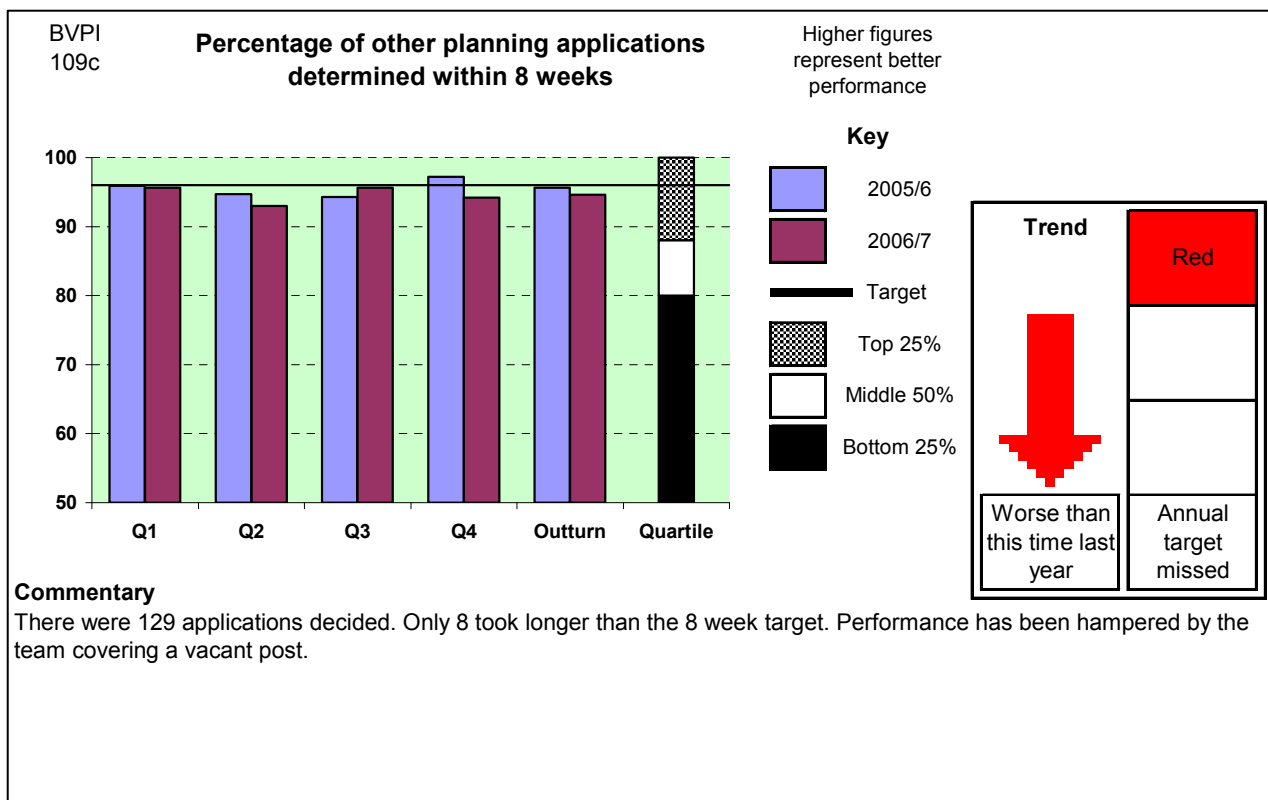
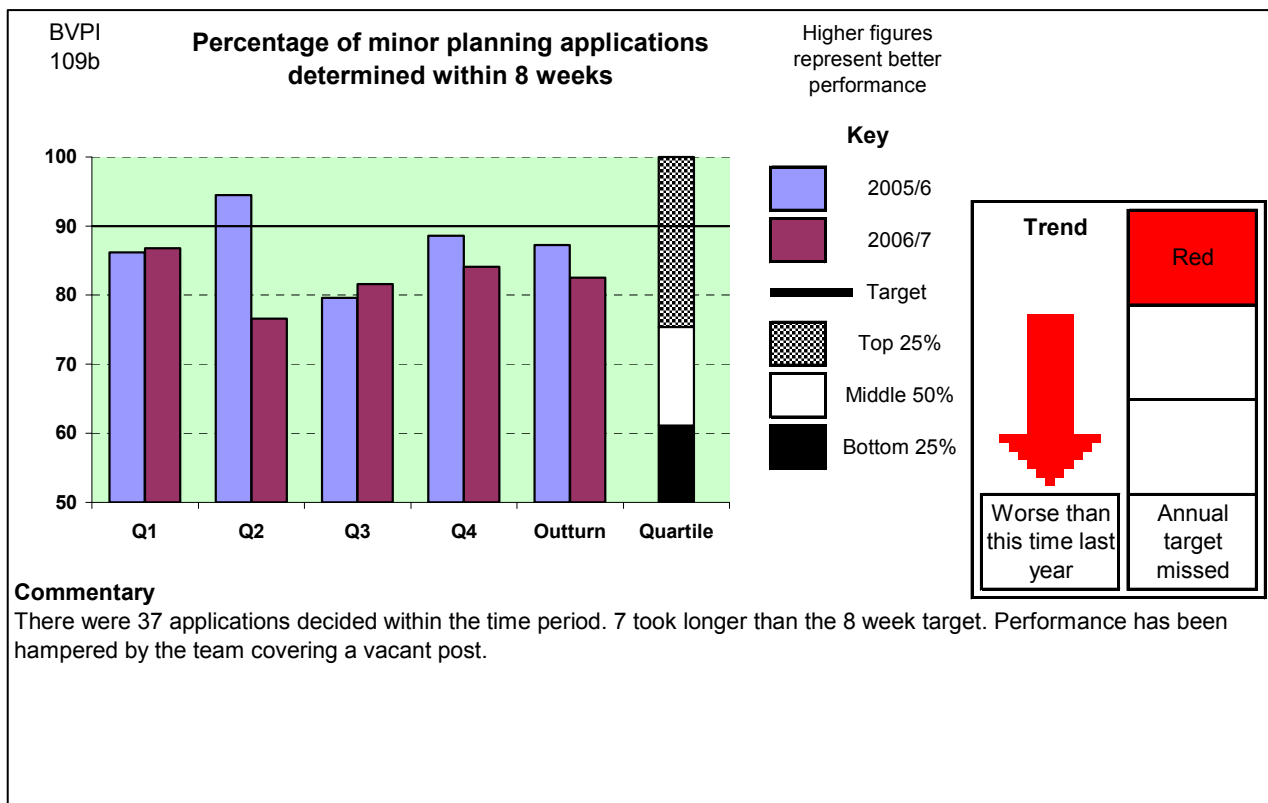


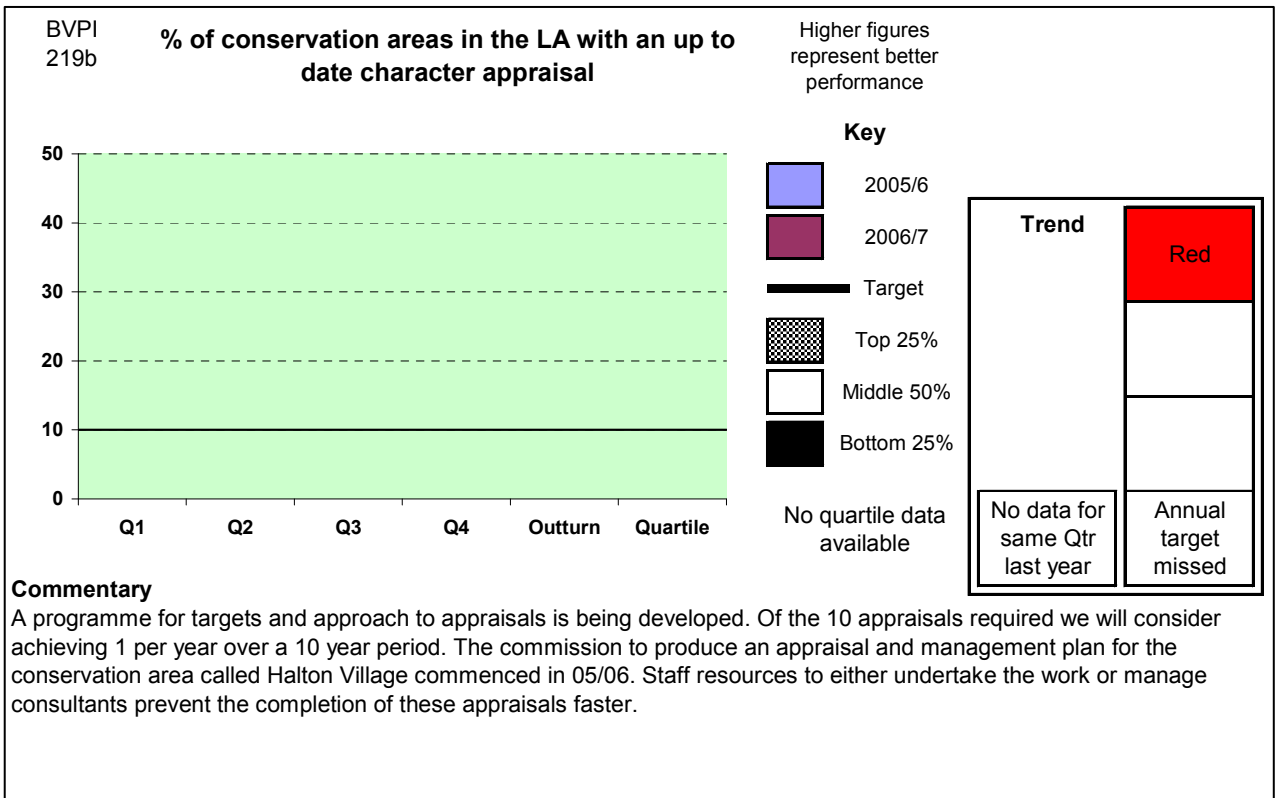
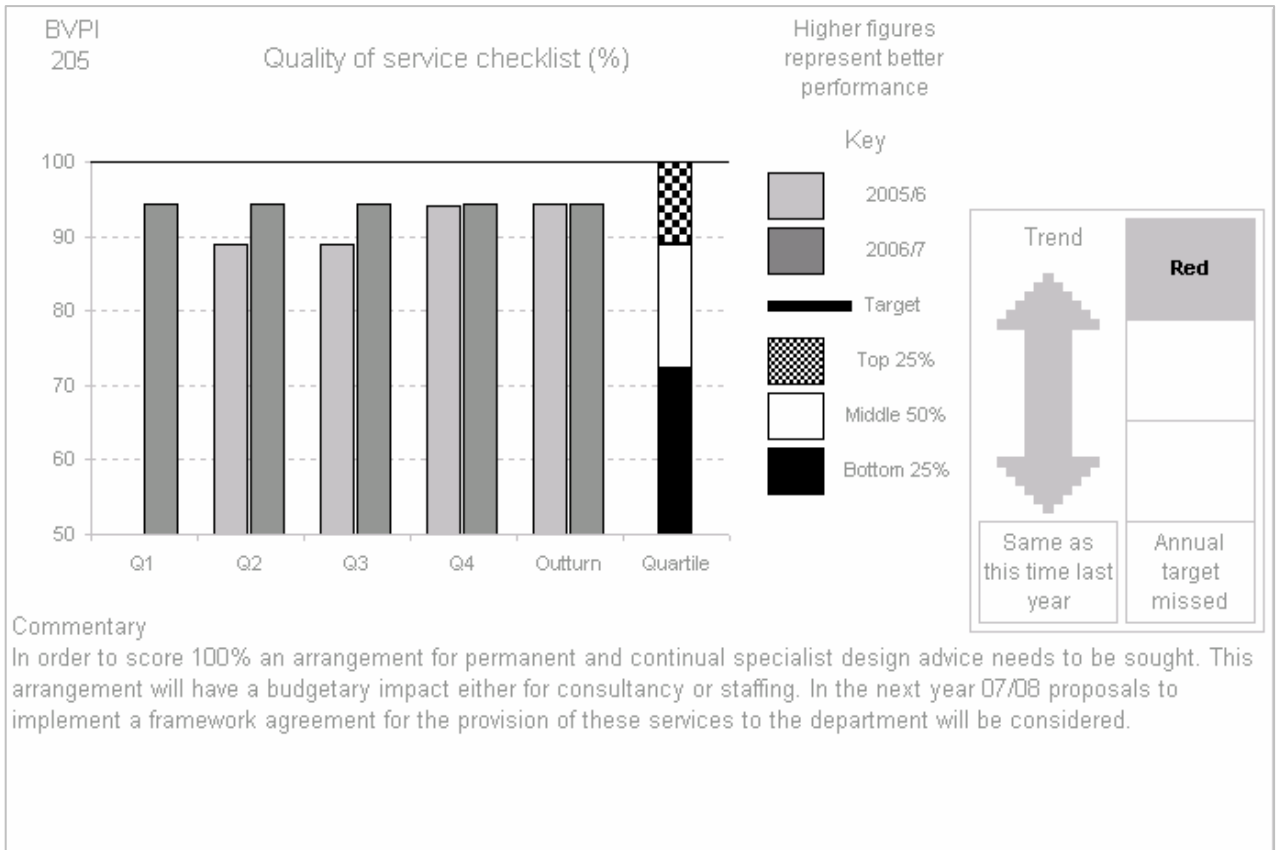


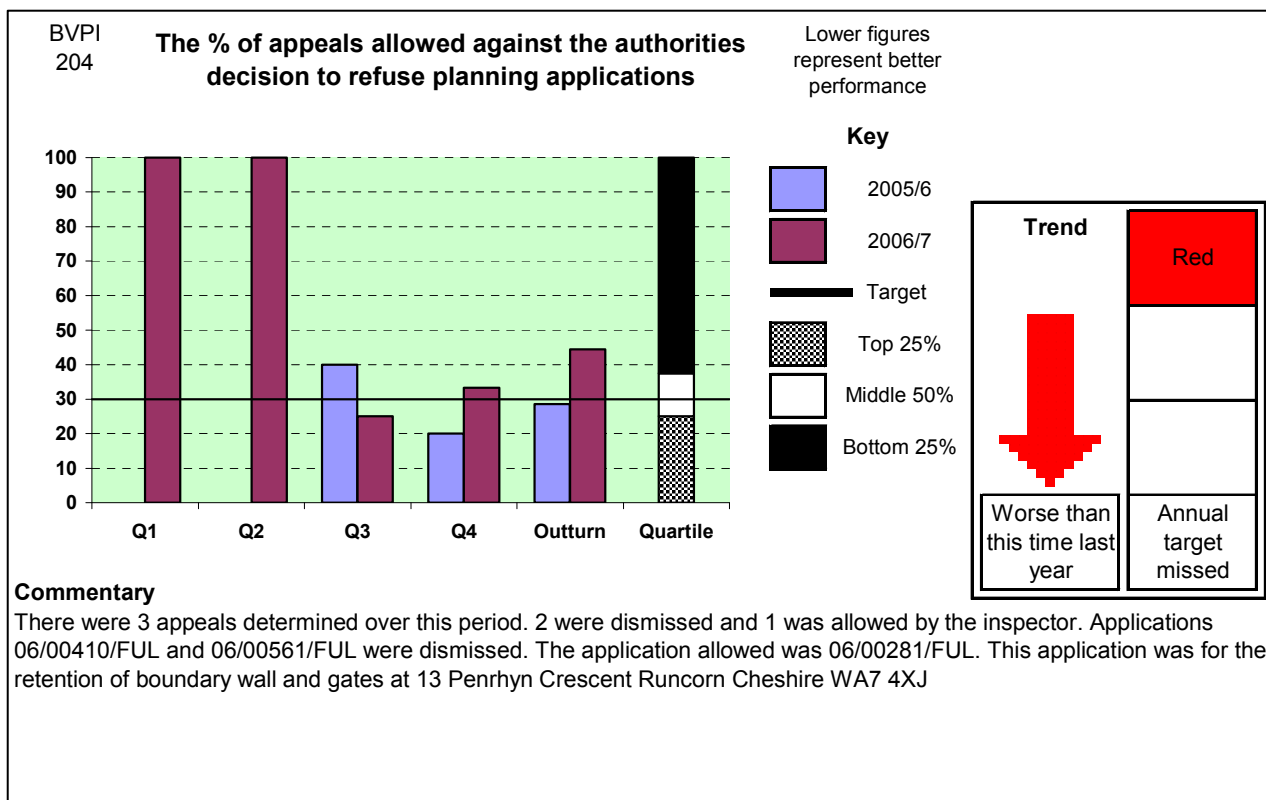
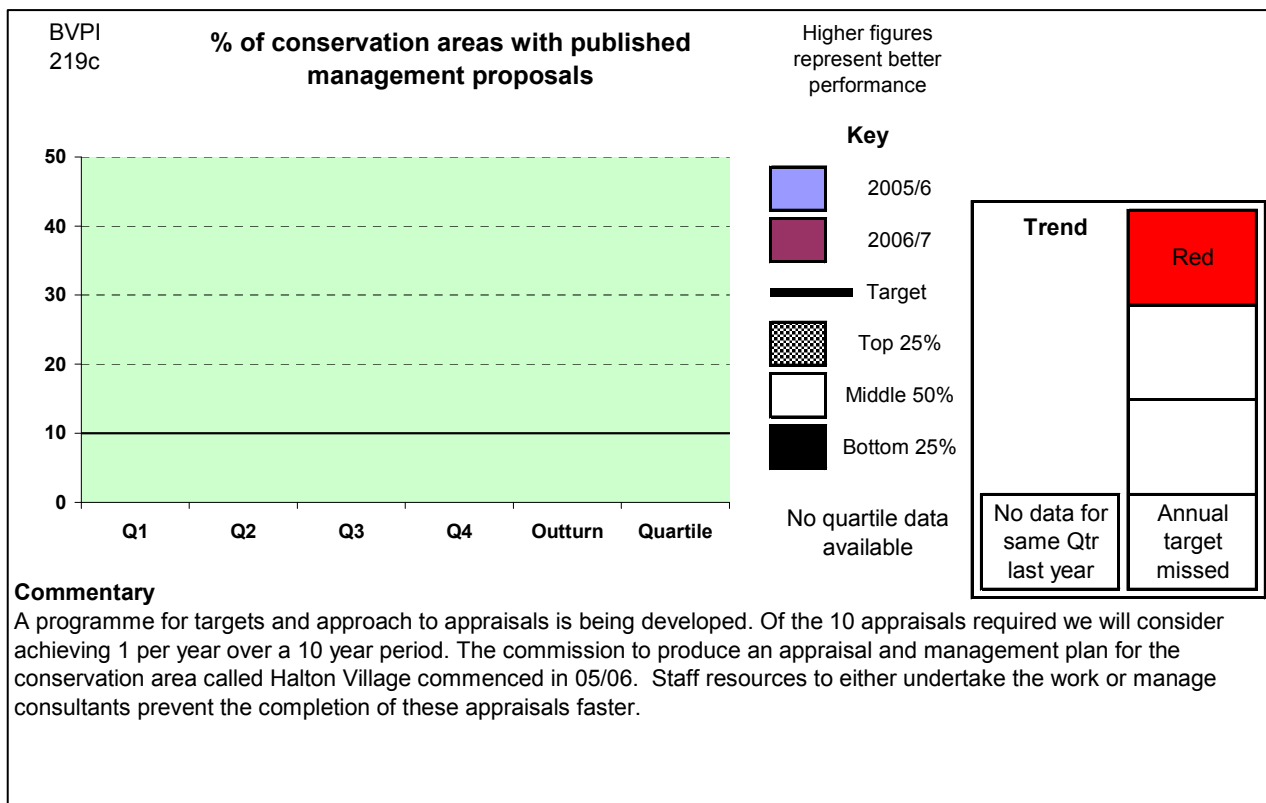

















The following Key Performance Indicators are reported on an annual basis,



Ref	Indicator	Actual 05/06	Target 06/07	Actual 06/07		Commentary
BV 119e	Resident satisfaction with open spaces (%)	N/a	75	77		The 2006 BV Survey has shown an increase of 6% satisfaction since the last BV survey in 2003.
BV 106	% of new homes built on previously developed land	45.97	45	Not Yet Available		This indicator is not available until the end of May when the housing survey work on completed dwellings is finished.
BV 111	Satisfaction with the planning service (%)	91	83	83		This survey was undertaken in Autumn 2006. Results need to be examined in the light of the national results to assess performance. On past experience 83 should place Halton in the upper quartile of performing authorities.
BV 199a	Prop relevant land/highways with combined deposits of litter/detritus below acceptable levels	8	17.75	22		This indicator measures litter and detritus levels in randomly selected areas across the borough. The 2005/06 outturn is reflective of the areas randomly selected for inspection, and the 2006/07 target reflected the variances in standards that can be expected in different areas of the borough. The 2006/07 figure does not necessarily reflect a reduction in service standard, but is as a result of carrying out inspections in different areas to those inspected in 2005/06. This variance in annual performance is consistent with the results experienced in other local authorities. One of the intentions of producing this indicator is to identify those areas of the borough that are in need of greater treatment, and resources are then directed accordingly.
BV 199b	Proportion of relevant land/highways from which unacceptable levels of graffiti visible	0	2	2		The National benchmark for levels of graffiti is 4%. The Council does not have the ability to control graffiti but has mechanisms in place to provide a response for its removal. Given that graffiti is likely to be encountered in some areas when inspected, the authority

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05/06	Target 06/07	Actual 06/07		Commentary
						has set a target to maintain levels of graffiti within the national standard, and has met this target.
BV 199c	Proportion of relevant land/highways from which unacceptable levels of fly posting visible	1	1	1		The National benchmark for levels of fly-posting is 1%. Recognising that the Council does not have the ability to control fly-posting, but has mechanisms in place to provide a rapid response for its removal, the authority has set a target to maintain levels of fly-posting within the national standard, which was met.
BV 199d	Reduction in incidents & increase in enforcement actions, taken to deal with fly tipping	1	1	1		In 2005/06 there were 1920 incidents of fly-tipping and in 2006/07 there was an estimate of 1711. In 2005/06 the Council recorded 15 enforcement actions and in 2006/07 recorded 187. As the total number of fly-tipping incidents dealt with in 2006/07 has decreased from the previous year and the total number of enforcement actions has increased, the Council's grading has remained as 'Very Effective' or '1'
BV 89	% of people satisfied with the cleanliness standard in their area	N/a	63.7	67		In the recent Best Value Satisfaction Survey, 67% of respondents were satisfied that the Council keeps public land clear of litter and refuse. The last survey was undertaken in 2003 when satisfaction was 58%. The Council had set itself a target of increasing satisfaction by 10% on the 2003.
BV 90a	Satisfaction with waste collection (%)	N/a	90	87		Survey result was slightly below target. Although results are broadly considered to be of an acceptable standard, future levels of satisfaction will depend both on investment in quality services, and the delivery of a public communications strategy, currently being developed for waste management.
BV 90b	Satisfaction with waste recycling (%)	N/a	70	73		Survey result was satisfactory. Although results are broadly considered to be of an





Ref	Indicator	Actual 05/06	Target 06/07	Actual 06/07		Commentary
						acceptable standard, future levels of satisfaction will depend both on investment in quality services, and the delivery of a public communications strategy, currently being developed for waste management.
BV 90c	Satisfaction with waste disposal (%)	N/a	90	86		Survey result was slightly below target. Although results are broadly considered to be of an acceptable standard, future levels of satisfaction will depend both on investment in quality services, and the delivery of a public communications strategy, currently being developed for waste management.
BV 86	Cost of household collection per household (£)	26.29	29.00			Figure not yet available. Expected to be in line with the predicted 06/07 target.
BV 87	Cost of waste disposal per tonne for municipal waste (£)	42.04	51.00			Figure not yet available. Expected to be in line with the predicted 06/07 target.





Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
BV 216a	Identifying contaminated land, the number of sites of potential concern	283	258	258		Annual target which is expected to increase for year 07-08. The 258 sites are those sites where it is highly likely problems will be experienced. The list of 'sites of potential concern' is quite extensive at 13
BV 216b	Identifying contaminated land, the % of sites of potential concern with information available	9%	8%	9%		Our consistent progress has resulted in the annual target being exceeded.
BV 166a	Score (%) against a checklist of enforcement best practice for environmental health	100%	100%	80%		Local authorities providing Environmental Health services need to report a percentage figure against their provision of environmental health services. Environmental Health Services component functions in Halton include: Food Safety, Health and Safety, , Pollution Control, Pest Control,. The maximum score for this BVPI is 10 points (100%). Due to staff absence in the quarter certain targeted and educational programmes in pest control and pollution control were not completed resulting in a score of 8 out of a maximum of 10
LI 01	% of playgrounds that conform to national standards for locally equipped areas	66.6% (24 sites)	72.2% (26 sites)	66%		Works will have commenced on site at two playgrounds in April 2007 which will bring both sites up to the national standards. The target of 72.2% will be met in Q1 of 2007/8. A further three playgrounds will also be refurbished in that year.

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BV 91a	% of households served by a kerbside collection of one recyclable	100%	100%	100%		All properties within the borough are served with a kerbside paper recycling service.
BV 82 ci	Percentage of household waste arisings used to recover heat, power and other energy sources	0%	0%	0%		Currently, the emphasis is on increased recycling of household waste in line with the national strategy and waste hierarchy. Longer-term treatment of residual waste, and technologies used, will depend on future procurement to achieve the aims of the EU directives in diverting waste from landfill.
LI 04	% of incidents of offensive graffiti responded to within 24 hours of notification	72.22%	85%	82.35%		Although performance is significantly up against last year, the Division has fell fractionally short of target.
LI 05	% of incidents of fly-tipping responded to within 48 hours of notification	93.55%	95%	96.41%		Efforts to improve response times to fly tipping incidents are continuing.
<b>Quality</b>						
LI 02	PI based on annual survey question: "How satisfied are you in general with the level of cleanliness in parks."	80.6%	82%	77%		It is worth noting that the 2006 Best Value Survey results, which have just become available show a 77% satisfaction rating. This is an improvement of 6% from the 2003 survey.
LI 03	Number of Green Flag Awards achieved for Halton	5	8	6		There has been no change since Q3 as Green Flag Awards are made in August of each year. Eight submissions for the year 2007/8 were completed in January 2007.
LI 06	% of residents satisfaction with the cleansing standards in Halton (Annual PI).	N/a	2006/7 to establish a baseline	67%		The 2006 Best Value Survey results show a 9% improvement when compared to the 2003 results. (2003 = 58%, 2006 = 67%)




**APPENDIX THREE – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**  
Environment & Regulatory

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BV 200a	Plan making – current development plan?	Yes	Yes	Yes		UDP adopted April 05. LDF in preparation. New Local Development Scheme (project plan for LDF production) produced and agreed 12 March 07.
BV 200b	Plan making – proposals on deposit?	Yes	Yes	Yes		Preferred Options stage of Core Strategy being prepared. Likely to be on public consultation during summer 2007.
BV 200c	Plan making – annual monitoring report?	Yes	Yes	Yes		Submitted to Government Office in December 2006
BV 84b	Percentage change on previous year in Kg of household waste collected per head.	-0.04%	+1%	+8.06%		Although nationally waste growth has slowed down in general, local growth has proven difficult to predict. Currently local policies do not have a direct effect on this indicator. A future waste prevention strategy is under discussion.

LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
6	<p><b>Reducing vehicle arson:</b></p> <p>The number of incidents of arson occurring to non derelict vehicles (during the year 1 April to 31 March)</p>	140 (Mar 08)	160 (Mar 07)		The estimated number of car fires for 2006/07 is 143. The Council is therefore on track to meet the LPSA target.

LPSA Ref	Definition	LPSA Target (Stretch)	Interim Target (Annual)	Progress (Traffic lights)	Commentary
7	<p><b>Improving health and well-being:</b></p> <p>The number of people reporting to the NHS stop smoking services who had set a quit date and who are still not smoking at the four weeks review (during the year 1 April to 31 March)</p>	2000 (Mar 09)	N/a		<p>For 06/07 the target for people who are not smoking after four weeks is 1036.</p> <p>This target is broken down into:  Q1 – 15% - Reported in August  Q2 – 20% - Reported in December  Q3 – 30% - Reported in February  Q4 – 35% - Reported in June</p> <p>The target is not split into an average 25% per quarter, as quitting smoking is seasonal. In the winter months there are more colds and chest problems and so people examine their health more. In the last quarter there are new years resolutions, valentines day and heart promotion and quit smoking day in March. This explains the targets for each quarter.</p> <p>Results:</p> <p>Q1 – 335 people set a quit date &amp; 161 were not smoking at the 4 week review.  Q2 – 491 people set a quit date and 228 were not smoking at the 4 week review.  Q3 – 651 People set quit date, 326 still stopped at week 4 review  Q4 – 652 people set quit date, 334 still stopped at week 4 review.</p> <p>Totals Year 06 / 07 – 2129 people set quit date, 1049 still quit at week 4 review</p>

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicators (Excl. LPSA)</u>	<u>LPSA Indicators Only</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved or exceeded</u></p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved.</u></p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>N/A</p>	<p>N/A</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target</u> will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Health & Community  
**SERVICE:** Health & Partnerships  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 to year-end 31 March 2007

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Health & Partnerships Department fourth quarter period up to 31 March 2007.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 6

***It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.***

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

#### **Direct Payments**

The number of service users in receipt of Direct Payments continues to rise. Currently there are 357 service users and 126 carers receiving their services via a Direct Payment.

#### **Appointee & Receivership**

The Appointee & Receivership service continues to be considerably oversubscribed. Measures are in hand to reduce the numbers of service users receiving this service, so that a better quality service can be delivered. Discussions are at an initial stage to pilot the transfer of some appointeeships to a local 'not-for-profit' company, with checks being made into the background of the company and reasonableness of future charges to service users.

#### **Human Resources**

Protection of Vulnerable Adults Policy, Procedure and Practice updated and distributed to all relevant managers.

National Minimum Dataset for Social Care – organisation questionnaires completed for all regulated services.

### **Consumer Protection**

Warrington Borough Council will be initiating a project and pulling together a project team to move forward the proposals to deliver the Consumer Protection Service for both Halton and Warrington. Staff and Trade Unions from both authorities will be involved in the project from the outset. There are key risks to be managed: the partnership may prove too costly or fail to generate the required efficiencies and we will therefore need to focus on reducing internal management and administration costs.

As part of his recent Budget statement the Chancellor announced the publication of the findings of Peter Rogers, Chief Executive of Westminster City Council, recent review on regulatory policy prioritisation. Five priority areas have been highlighted for Environmental Health and Trading Standards Services. The two priorities that will impact on the work of the Consumer Protection Service are “Alcohol, entertainment and late-night refreshment licensing and its enforcement” and “Fair Trading (trade description, trade marking, mis-description and doorstep selling)”.

The national launch of the web-based system for the registration of births and deaths took place on 26 March 2007. Significant problems have been experienced both with the national Registration On Line database and with the Council’s IT infrastructure.

### **Housing**

The revised Private Sector Housing Renewal Strategy was approved by Executive Board in March 07.

### **Contracts/Supporting People**

Supporting People (SP) and the contracts team have been merged to improve the effectiveness of the service. In conjunction with ALD services, the contracts team successfully procured care services for the new respite service at Bredon, Palacefields.

A project team has been established to reconfigure/procure domiciliary care services. An outline project plan was presented to provider agencies in March.

The Supporting People Commissioning Body approved the development of the following short-term pilot services:

- Homelessness intervention/prevention welfare service
- Expanded LD floating support service

### **Carers’ Centres**

Discussions relating to the transfer of the Carers’ Centres to the voluntary sector have identified two main options. Option one involves



establishing an independent Princess Royal Trust for Carers' Centre for Halton. The second option would involve merging Halton's local authority run Carers' Centre with St Helens Carers Centre. Discussions will be ongoing. They would then be aware of the outcome of the Government's comprehensive spending review and the Council's ability to enter into associated financial commitments.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

#### **Direct Payments**

A Pilot Scheme delivering Individualised Budgets will be in place by the end of 07/08. Staffing resources within the Client Finance Team are currently being considered to deliver this pilot.

#### **Human Resources**

The completion of the individuals' questionnaire for the National Minimum Dataset for social care will be required during 2007/08 and will impact upon resources. A working group will be set up April 2007 to progress this requirement.

#### **Performance Management**

A new Performance Assessment Framework for Adults and Older People that will focus on outcomes has been developed by CSCI. The Directorate continues to review how outcomes are measured by all services, and is working with the NW Leads Performance organisation to provide information to CSCI.

#### **Consumer Protection**




The Executive Board has agreed to the pursuance of new governance arrangements for the delivery of the Registration Service. All the necessary information has been given to the General Register Office in order for them to draft a new Scheme.

#### **Housing**

Work is advanced sub regionally in developing a Liverpool City Region Housing Strategy as part of the sustainable communities workstream under the City Region Development Programme. It will seek to ensure the "housing offer" supports the planned economic growth within the City Region. Cross authority endorsement is likely to be sought early in 2007/08.




A number of workstreams are being developed in an effort to reduce homeless presentations and the use of temporary accommodation. Examples include a rent deposit scheme, a new SP funded welfare/prevention service, and increased use of HDL to filter applications/signpost clients to appropriate support services.

#### 4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

<b>Total</b>	<b>11</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>N/A</b>		<b>3</b>
--------------	-----------	---	----------	---	------------	---	----------

Of the eleven key objectives for the service, eight have made satisfactory progress and have been achieved by the year end point. Three have not been completely achieved. For further details, please refer to Appendix 1.

#### 4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

<b>Total</b>	<b>12</b>		<b>8</b>		<b>N/A</b>		<b>4</b>
--------------	-----------	---	----------	---	------------	---	----------

Of the twelve other objectives for the service, eight have made satisfactory progress and have been achieved by the year end point. Four have not been completely achieved. For further details, please refer to Appendix 2.

#### 5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

##### **Direct Payments**

Promotions to increase the uptake of Direct Payments continue through events for professionals, carers and voluntary organisations.

##### **Appointee & Receivership**

Work continues to reduce the numbers accessing the service in order to provide a more responsive and qualitative service. Refer to item in section 1.0, Key Developments.

##### **Housing**

A project group has been established to reconfigure homelessness services. Some of the early outcomes are described in section 3 above.

##### **Contracts/Supporting People**




The Supporting People Commissioning Board has now approved all service review reports.

##### **Commissioning (Mental Health)**

Following the CSCI visit, Halton received the Improvement Review Report in March 07. It identified the areas that require improvement – leadership, partnership and integration, service user and carer




experience and involvement, assessment and care planning, interface and transition between services.  
An action plan will be developed to address the areas requiring improvement and will be monitored by CSCI and the Healthcare Commission.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>6</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>N/A</b>		<b>1</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	------------	---	----------

Of the six key performance indicators for the service, five have made satisfactory progress and the target has been achieved by the year end point. One target has not been achieved. For further details, please refer to Appendix 3.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>N/A</b>		<b>7</b>
--------------	-----------	--	-----------	--	------------	--	----------

Of the twenty-four key performance indicators for the service, seventeen have made satisfactory progress and the target has been achieved by the year end point. Seven indicators have not achieved target. For further details, please refer to Appendix 4.

**7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS**

There are no current LPSA targets for this service.

**8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES**

During the production of the 2006-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

At the half-year stage, all relevant risk treatment measures have been implemented for key service objectives that were initially assessed as high risk in the Directorate Risk Register.




## 9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS



During 2005/06 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report.


There are no High priority equality actions for this service.





## 10.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2- Progress against Other Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 3- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 4- Progress against Other Performance Indicators  
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols


Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP1	Review the Fairer Charging Policy	<p>The revised Fairer Charging Policy will be implemented</p> <p>Income generation using the revised Fairer Charging policy will be monitored</p>		Community Care Charges for services have been consulted on and new charges were agreed by Exec Sub on 29/3/07. A new charging Policy Group will convene in May 2007.
HP2	Maximise the number and range of people using Direct Payments.	<p>Promote and continue to develop DP and ensure that support, advice, and information is offered.</p> <p>Explore the delivery of Individualised Budgets</p>		<p>Numbers in this quarter continue to rise, again with a great emphasis on carers receiving funding for support.</p> <p>A steering group has been formed to oversee the implementation of the Individualised Budgets pilot scheme, which will be in place by the end of 07/08.</p>
HP3	Develop IT solutions which enable delivery of services electronically in support of the e-Government agenda	<p>A pilot of remote working systems will be implemented and evaluated.</p> <p>The first phase of the electronic social care record system will be implemented in 2006 to meet e-government requirements by 2008.</p>		<p>The Mobile working project was delayed because of problems with supply of 14 Tablet PC's which have now been replaced by laptops and care currently being set up.</p> <p>CareStore has been purchased and C&amp;YP are using the HDL Contact centre to scan documents which H&amp;C will review as part of the project.</p>



Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP5	Develop a three year financial strategy, matching funding to changing service requirements	Develop three year financial strategy for each service area, in conjunction with the commissioning strategies		Completed – needs linking to Government Comprehensive Spending Assessment and alignment of the information into future commissioning strategies
HP6	Develop and implement Halton's 5yr Supporting People Strategy to meet the needs of vulnerable people locally.	<p>Delivery of strategic objectives identified for action 2006/7</p> <p>Commence renegotiation of high cost contracts.</p> <p>Develop financial plan for 2007/8</p>		<p>Good progress has been made against targets in strategy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop 6 bed unit-young single homeless-achieved - Orchard House opened in 2006</li> <li>• Develop 2 bed unit for MH-achieved –Pickering close Opened in 2005.</li> <li>• Develop 42 units of extra care housing for OP-achieved- Dorset gardens opened in 2006.</li> <li>• Increase provision for drug and Alcohol by 4units- target achieved-increase in SHAP contract from 7 to 11units at no additional cost.</li> <li>• Target to encourage development of 2 private developments of sheltered housing for sale- achieved –2 private developers withdrew-1 opened by McCarthy Stone in Widnes.</li> <li>• Develop 6 units of support for</li> </ul>




Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP6 continued				<p>ex-offenders-target exceeded-new pilot service for drug using ex-offenders-30units. In addition HHT have approved an additional 6 units of supported accommodation for ex-offenders in 2007/8.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Teenage parents-target exceeded-new service for young homeless and teenage parents-20units carr-gomm.</li> </ul> <p>Reconfiguration of generic floating support-target achieved-over 50% now client specific at no extra cost.</p> <p>Good progress with reconfiguration of Adults with Learning Disabilities services- SP savings to date over £300,000 pa.</p> <p>Gross savings through contract negotiations approx £700,000pa</p> <p>Target to develop financial planning strategy linked to govt announcement on long-term funding-on target to be developed in response to announcement.</p>
HP11	Review and consult on local housing strategy, in partnership with stakeholders, and report on progress and new developments annually	Produce annual progress statement by Summer 2006		An annual progress statement was submitted to the Housing Partnership in September 2006.




Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP12	Develop and consult on strategic homelessness service and ensure that homelessness services are delivered in accordance with Agency Agreement	Implement service changes where necessary		A formal review of the current Homelessness Strategy has been deferred whilst efforts are focussed on developing the homelessness prevention approach to reduce presentations and reliance on the use of B&B. The strategy review will probably now commence in the Autumn.
HP13	Ensure that sufficient longer-term cemetery provision exists to meet the future needs of the Halton community.	Present options to members for decision and formulate project plan to deliver preferred option		The options appraisal work requested by members has commenced but will roll forward into 2007/2008. This will delay member decision but will ensure that all appropriate options will have been considered.
HP15	Reduce the access that children and young people have to certain age restricted products by developing and implementing an under-age-sales strategy, informed by the results of previous research and activity, and having regard to the joint national enforcement statement issued in November 2005.	Strategy developed and implementation commenced		The strategy has been developed and is constantly evolving based on the additional information the Service receives throughout the year. Implementation has commenced.
HP16	Improve Access to the service for the socially excluded (Consumer Protection)	Resources permitting, implement 20% of actions in the action plan (developed from the consultation in 2005) by the end of 2007 or research possible opportunities for external funding of actions by end Dec 06		Some 20% of the actions have now been completed. A number of actions have been taken to raise the profile of the Service in the 5 most deprived wards via contact with all primary schools in those wards and by attendance at 'coffee mornings' at two of the schools plus 3 sessions on current "scams" at the Brow Primary School in Castlefields.







Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
				Relationships with community groups that are likely to come into contact with the most disadvantaged consumers have been enhanced and a system of alerting such groups to current scams has been developed. A beer-mat campaign advertising the service has been launched.
HP20	Ensure the smooth transfer of statutory Registration officers to local authority employment once legislation permits	Career development & training needs identified as legislative changes are implemented during 2007/08.		Officers have been consulted on the new registration scheme and are awaiting the results of job evaluation. New letters of appointment will be produced by Personnel in time for the proposed scheme change on 4 July 2007.

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP4	Ensure effective information management systems are in place	<p>To ensure security of information in line with Caldicott principles</p> <p>Develop information governance</p> <p>Implement requirements of Freedom of Information Act and Data Protection Act</p> <p>Full financial mapping with each service area</p>		<p>Caldicott principles are being followed.</p> <p>Information Governance in Social Care is still to be introduced although a new Toolkit is available no deadlines have been set. FOI procedures are well established.</p> <p>Full financial mapping is now well under way across H&amp;C</p>
HP7	<p>Work with Operational Managers to produce a performance management framework that meets their needs.</p> <p>Provide high quality performance monitoring and management information to improve the quality of information and report service delivery to assist services to continuously improve</p>	<p>Implement Performance Monitoring Framework for each service area</p> <p>Manage data quality issues through the use of reporting mechanisms as part of overall performance management</p> <p>Consult and implement Performance Monitoring Framework for each service area</p>		<p>A Performance Management Framework has been implemented which directs the flow of performance information throughout the year.</p> <p>Data quality reports are circulated to all teams and subsequent actions are progress chased.</p> <p>All operational teams have established Performance Management Groups and frameworks. The teams are advised and supported by an allocated performance specialist on what actions they need to take</p>

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
				throughout the year to demonstrate and improve performance.  The performance dashboard is being launched w/b 14 <sup>th</sup> May 2007 so that performance information is accessible from the desktop.
HP8	Develop workforce plans to ensure that there are appropriate resources to deliver services	Review and update the Directorate Workforce plan		The Workforce Development Plan for 2006/07 has been reviewed. The WDP for 2007/08 has been drafted ready to be approved at SMT during April 2007.
HP9	Deliver and improve a range of services and support for carers, according to the Halton Carers Strategy	Develop and implement an effective carer and service user involvement strategy		The Directorate developed a Service User and Carer Payments Policy during 2006/7. It was not approved at Corporate level and therefore could not be implemented during 2006/7. It has now received full approval and a pilot project will commence from 30 <sup>th</sup> April 2007
HP10	Develop and implement joint commissioning strategies in each service area, in partnership with key stakeholders, service users and carers, that fully reflect national and local priorities and the social inclusion agenda  Develop robust contract management and monitoring arrangements across all service areas.	Review and revise all strategies in the light of changing national and local priorities. Ensure consolidation of strategy format takes place.  Evidence is available for all contracts or SLAs, which demonstrates quality and VFM and can		Strategies in place for ALD, OP, MH. PSD strategy and action plan drafted and on target for July 07.  Work to merge Supporting People and Contracts teams will ensure robust contracts management is priority in monitoring Framework &

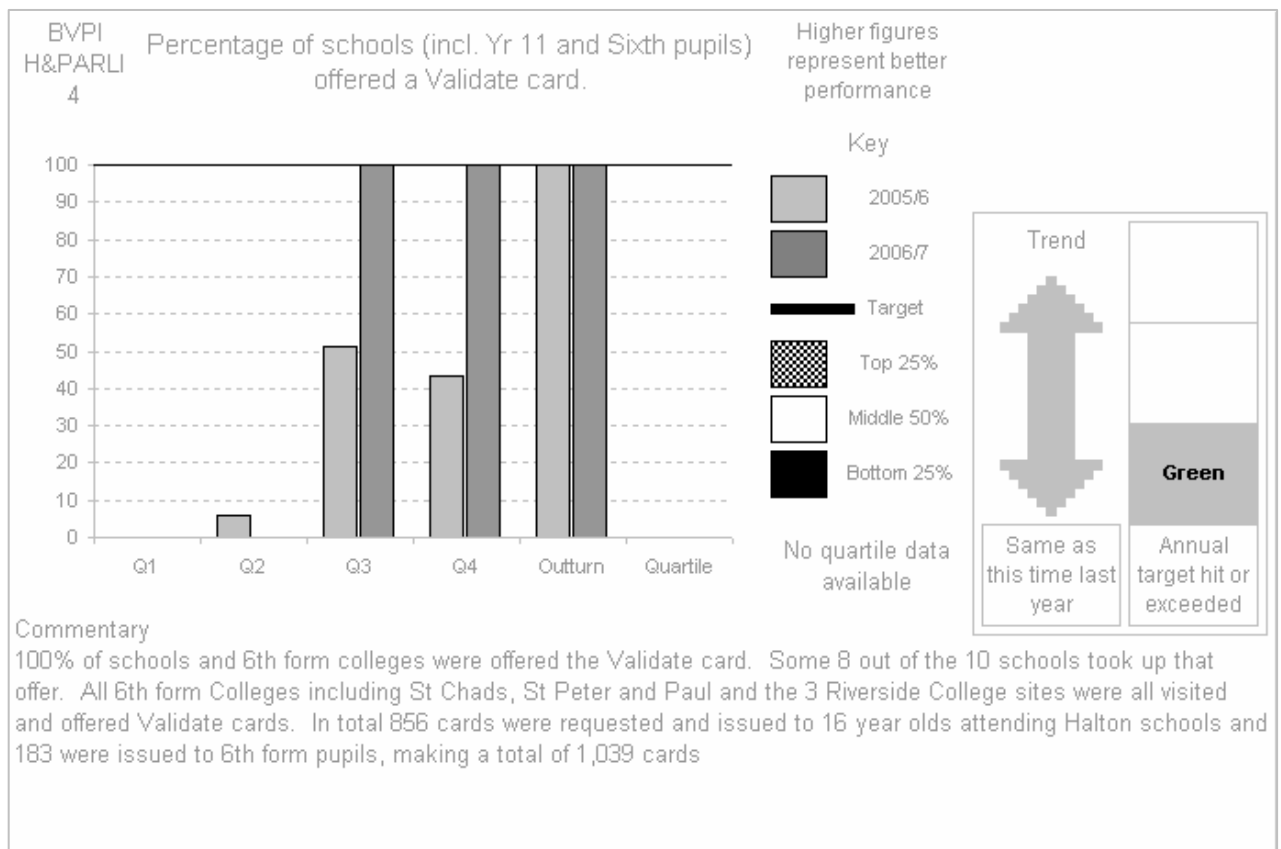
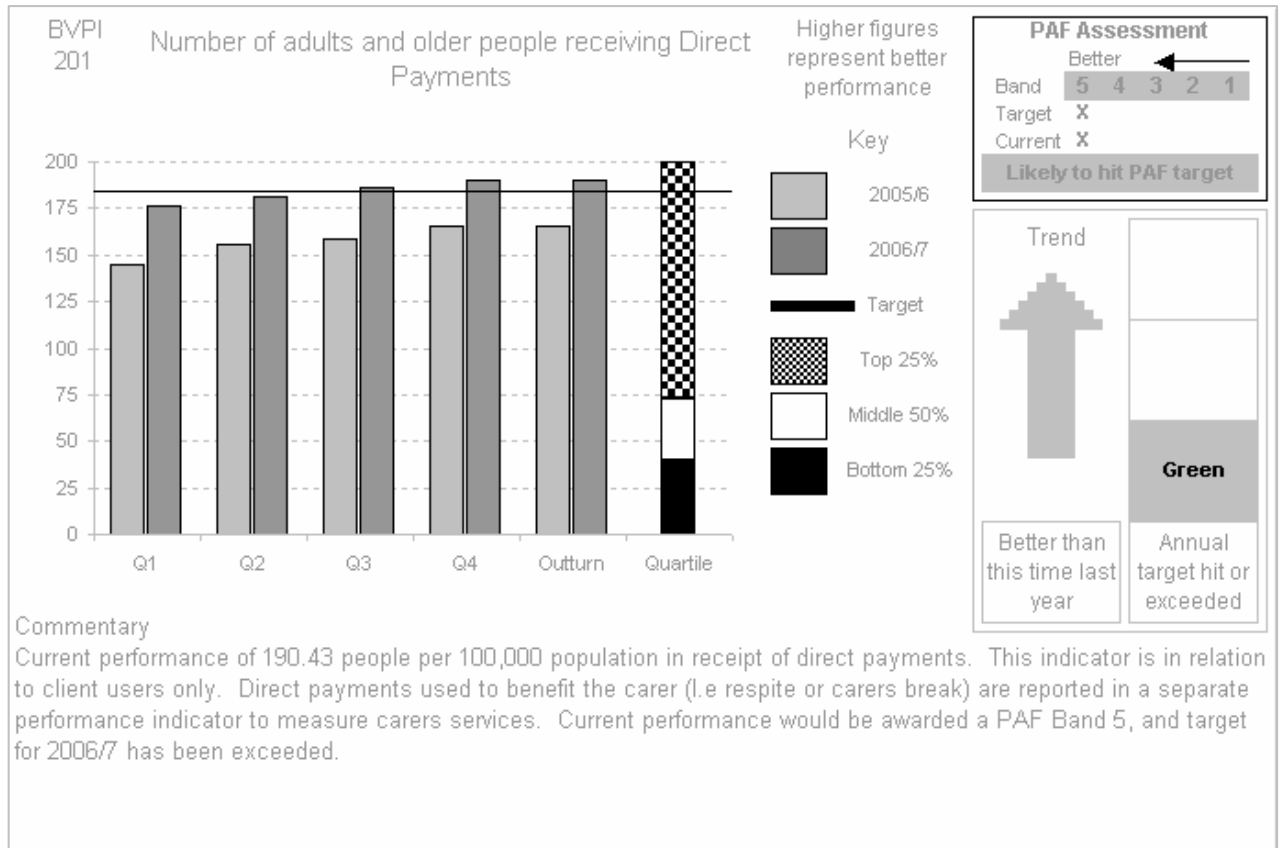
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP10 continued		be used to plan and commission / decommission future services.		Minimum Data Set agreed re: Voluntary Sector Contracts
HP14	Enable members to make informed decisions about crematorium facilities in the Borough, with particular regard to the issue of mercury abatement.	Present options to members for development of longer-term policy		Options presented to members via Executive Board Sub Committee meetings in May and June 2006. Policy agreed.
HP17	Introduce prevention measures to protect vulnerable adults from falling pray to doorstep crime	Research the possibility of funding in order to implement a Voice Connect system for vulnerable adults for the purpose of Doorstep crime alerts.  Seek funding for a pilot 'No Cold-callers Zone' in one street.		Funding has been identified for 2007/2008 and work on the Voice Connect ICAN system will commence in April 2007.  Once funding was identified, a two-street No-Cold-Calling-Zone was set-up in Widnes.
HP18	Identify and implement improvements to the Registration Service from intelligence gleaned from surveys of customers each year, to ascertain their views on the quality and scope of services provided	Survey all customers visiting the office during a particular week in the first quarter of 07  Survey all couples marrying during one of the peak summer months of 2006		Service improvements that flowed from 2005/2006 surveys included supplying maps covering the register office to all couples and the simplification of information pages for marriages and civil partnerships  The marriage survey in September had a 33% response rate. Of these 100% said they were extremely

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Analyse results by 31.12.2006  Implement any service improvements from previous year's survey by end 2006		satisfied with the service, both when organising the event and on the day of the marriage. 100% said it represented good value for money and that the facilities offered and service given could not be improved upon.
HP19	Ensure that the Council meets its statutory responsibilities with regard to the provision of Civil Partnership registrations	Procedures agreed and structure in place for provision of ceremonies in 2006		A total of 17 civil partnership registrations have been conducted since 1 April 2006.
HP21	All supervisors to discuss and record within EDR and monitored in supervision, work life balance issues with staff ensuring that staff are fully aware of Council policy	Work life balance policies distributed and communicated to staff and monitored via staff supervision audit process		Due to a reprioritisation of activity around the development of a Work Life Balance Strategy, it has not been possible to undertake the audit process this year.  A Corporate Work-life Balance Strategy has been drafted to strengthen work-life balance initiatives across the Council.
HP22	Identification of staff with caring responsibilities	Identify staff as carers. Provide staff with information to enable them to be supported with flexible working		Eight HBC employees responded to the messages inserted on the salary document. Four of these were Halton residents and have been referred to receive carer support. The Carer Development Team now have a presence at Corporate Induction courses to help identify Carers.

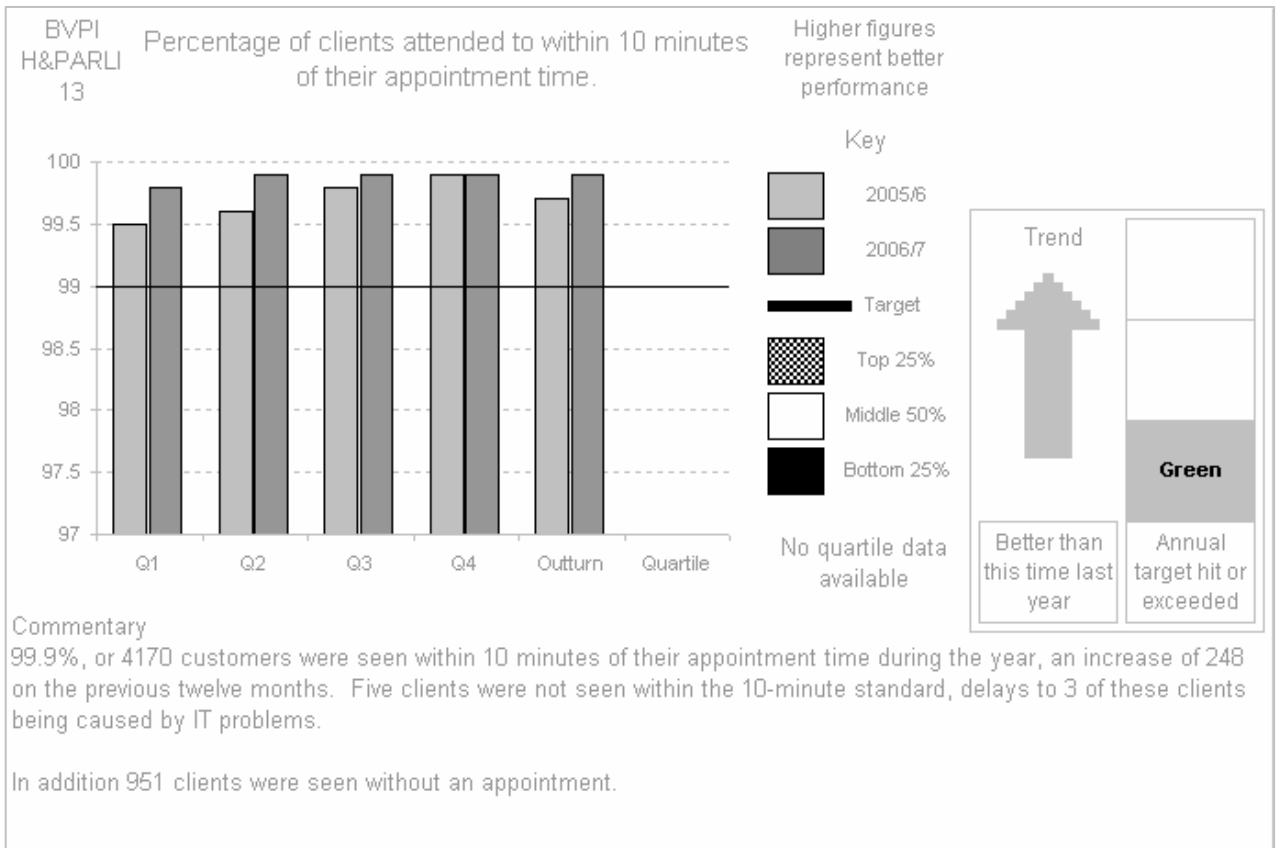
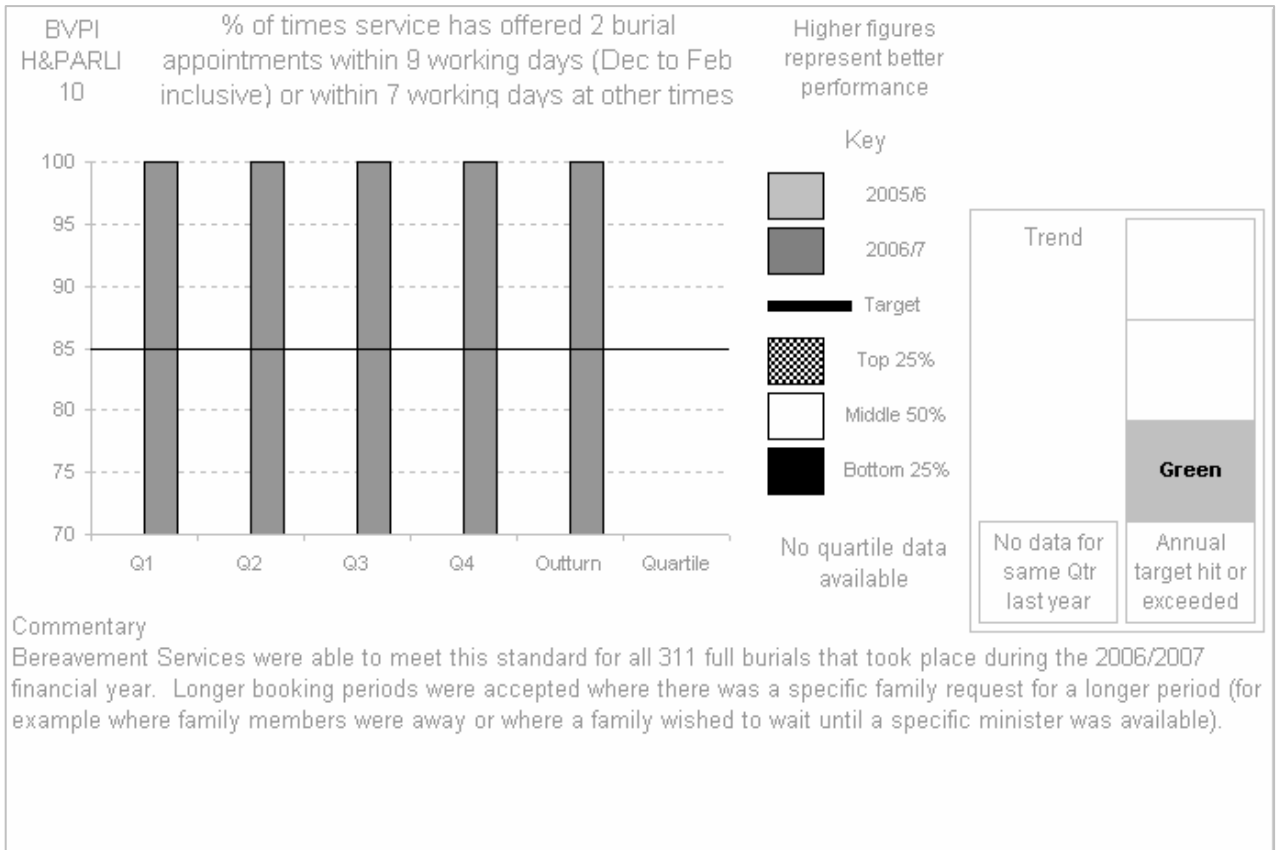
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
				<p>A message aimed at identifying carers employed within HBC has been inserted in the monthly salary document three times during 2006/2007. It is planned to repeat this three times in the forthcoming year.</p> <p>A section on working carers has been inserted into the HBC Work life Balance Strategy.</p> <p>One event planned for Carers Week 2007 will be targeted at HBC employee's who are carers</p>
HP23	To develop a comprehensive Health Improvement Strategy	<p>Implementation of Health Improvement Strategy</p> <p>Mapping exercise conducted of all local health or associated partnerships.</p> <p>Self-assessment performance tool adopted.</p>		<p>We already have a Baseline Report and Health Equity Audit, which are in the process of being brought together to form a Health Improvement Strategy.</p> <p>This has been done and shared with the PCT.</p> <p>The Joint Halton &amp; Warrington Youth Offending Service use the OPDM Partnership Audit Tool and as a result have their partnership agreement. Use has also been</p>

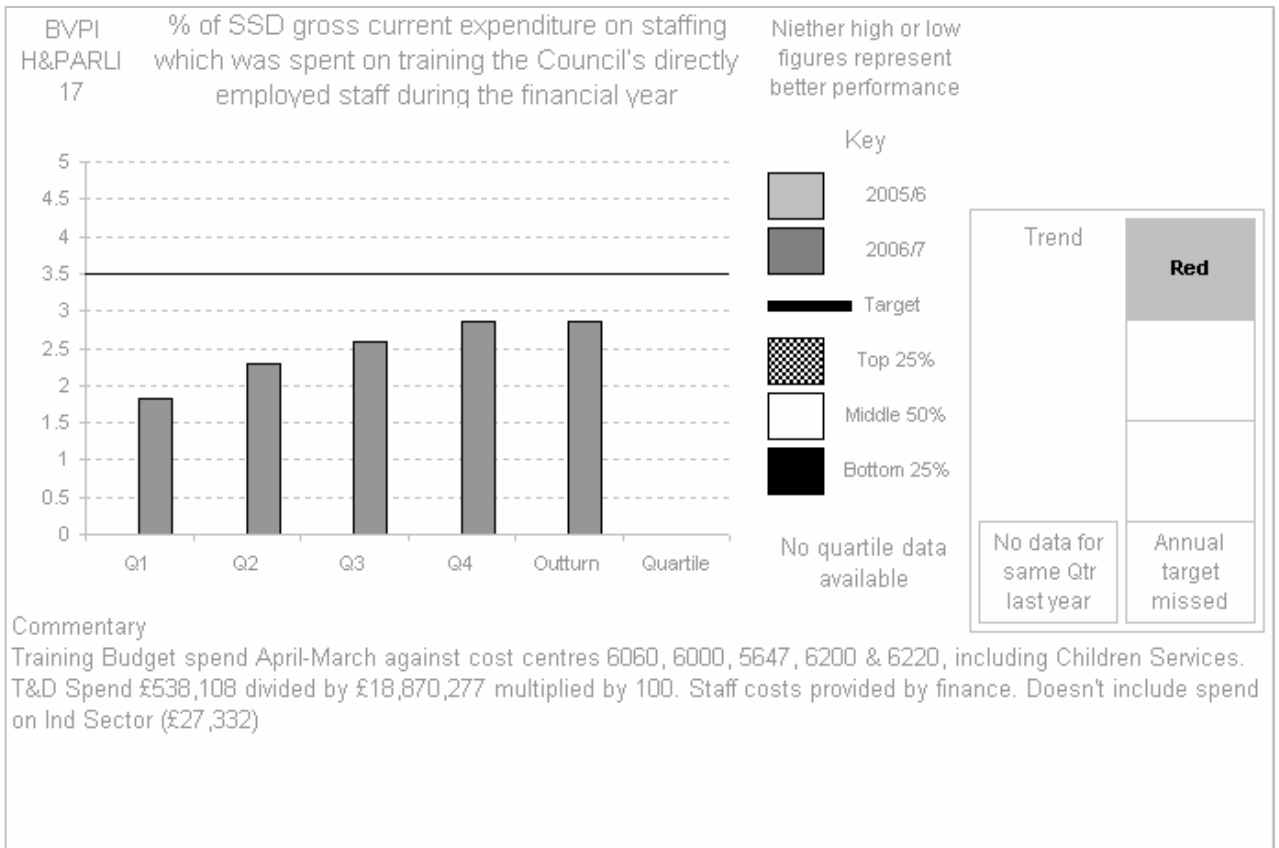
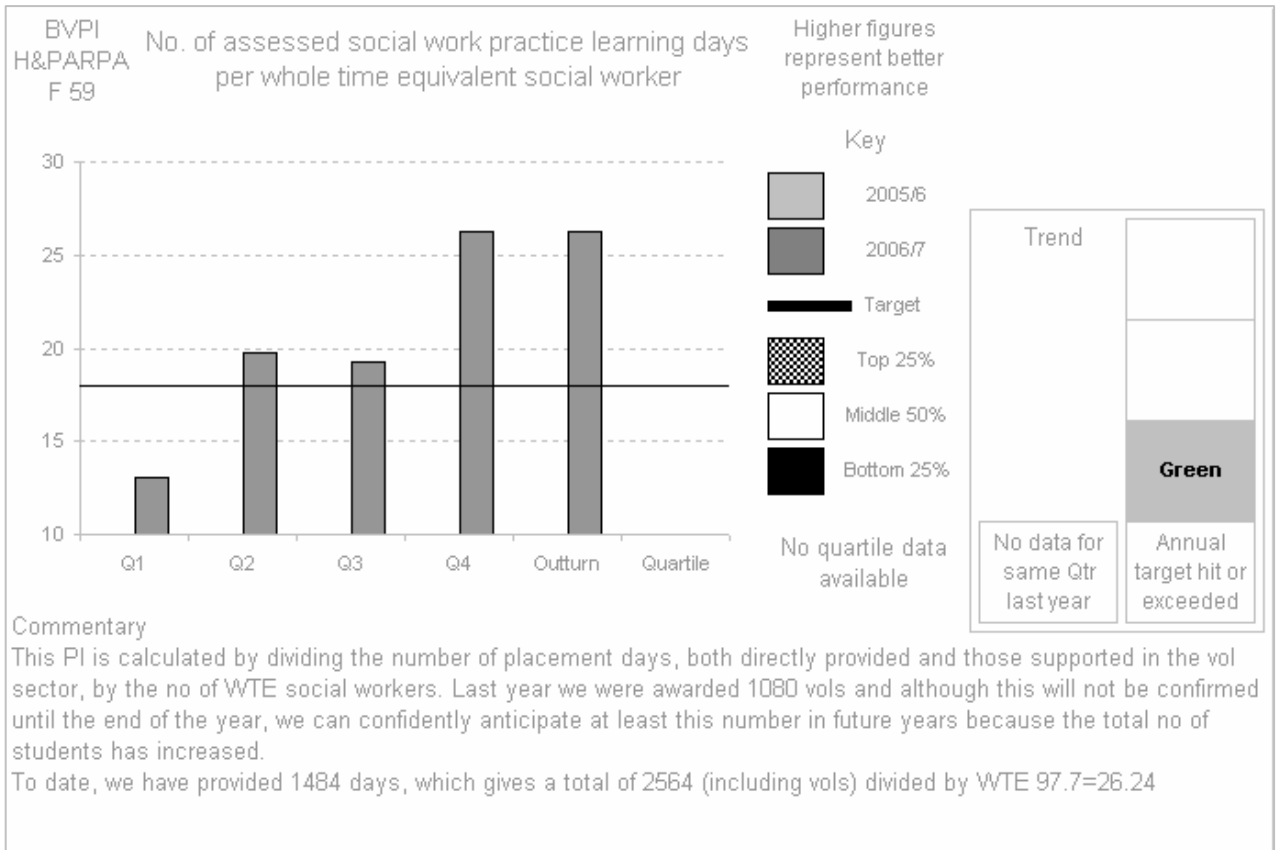
**APPENDIX TWO – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Health & Partnerships**




Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HP23 continued		<p>Analysis conducted of authorities similar to HBC.</p> <p>Production of Health Impact Assessments bundle.</p>		<p>made of this model for a new partnership emergency duty tram service which is across St. Helens and Halton.</p> <p>A benchmarking exercise has been conducted.</p> <p>An example of the utilisation of HIA is with respect to proposals for all-day drinking. Joint training has recently been delivered to council and PCT staff on health needs assessment and health impact assessments.</p>

















Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Service Delivery Indicators.</b>						
PAF C62	The number of carers receiving a specific carers service as a percentage of clients receiving community based services	7.04	9%	8.45%		Figure provided is as at end February 2007, target may still be achieved. Final year end figure not yet known as admin staff are still back loading data onto Carefirst.
BVPI 166b	Score against a checklist of enforcement best practice for Trading Standards	100%	100%	100%		This 'year end' best value performance indicator provides an indication of the performance of Halton's Consumer Protection Service when measured against a checklist of enforcement best practice. The checklist has regard to written enforcement policies, risk based inspection programmes and sampling and surveillance regimes, educational and information programmes, customer complaint/enquiry processes, benchmarking and consultation arrangements and performance reporting mechanisms.
BVPI 64	Number of private sector dwellings returned into occupation or demolished as a direct result of action by the local authority.	0	2 <sup>1</sup>	2		The target has been achieved.

1 Target for BVPI 64 – due to the low number of empty properties in Halton, along with the absence of grants to encourage landlords to take on and improve any empty properties, the target is set below bottom quartile figure.





Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BVPI 183a	The average length of stay in B&B accommodation of homeless households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need (weeks)	1.86	1.8	4.92		Estimated figure. Increased homeless presentations, coupled with a reduction in the supply of relets, has resulted in a fall in performance. A Project Group has been established to redesign homelessness services to address this problem.
BVPI 183b	The average length of stay in hostel accommodation of homeless households that are unintentionally homeless and in priority need <sup>2</sup>	0	0	0		Halton does not have any accommodation that that falls into the criteria of a hostel.
BVPI 202	Number of Rough Sleepers	N/A	0	0 est		This is an estimate as there has not been a formal rough sleepers count since March 2004. One is planned for Autumn 2007.
BVPI 203	The % change in the average number of families placed in temporary accommodation	10.85%	13.0%	16.66%		Estimated figure. See comments for BV 183a above.
BVPI 213	The number of households who considered themselves as homeless, who approached the LA housing advice service, and for whom housing advice casework intervention resolved their situation (expressed as the number divided by the number of thousand households in the Borough)	0	1.06	0.3		Estimated figure. Whilst this is an improvement over 2005/06, it is below the target for 2006/07. Improved performance should result in 2007/08 from the initiatives being developed under the homelessness service redesign.



<sup>2</sup> Halton does not have any accommodation that falls within the definition of a hostel as stated in the guidance for this indicator.

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BVPI 214	The proportion of households accepted as statutorily homeless who were accepted as statutorily homeless by the same LA within the last 2 years	4.89	9.5%	1.26%		Estimated figure. Performance was significantly better than the target, evidence of the success of the support services developed under the Supporting People programme.
BVPI 225 Part 8	<i>Has there been a reduction in the percentage of cases accepted as homeless due to domestic violence that had previously been re-housed in the last 2 years by that LA as a result of domestic violence</i>	-	-7.5%	YES		The wording of this PI has changed from the % reduction in cases to whether or not there has been a reduction. The provisional outcome is that there were no repeat cases during 2006/07.
HP/ LPI 1	Percentage of SSD directly employed staff that left during the year.	7.4%	13.5%	7.69%		We monitor and analyse all exit interview questionnaires every six months to continually improve our systems and processes to further aid retention, as well as regularly reviewing policies and procedures in relation to retention, such as Exit Interview Policy, Procedure and Practice, Recruitment and Retention Strategy, etc.
HP/ LPI 2	Percentage of Social Services working days/shifts lost to sickness absence during the financial year.	7.94%	7.5%	7.98%		% figure subject to validation as part of the SAS process



Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
HP/ LPI 3	% of Halton pupils completing a survey on the supply of age restricted products	60% of appropri ate School year	45% of appropri ate School year	70%		<p>A cigarettes survey was carried out in relation to Year 9 pupils. The 70% response rate far exceeded the 45% target we aimed for. This increases the validity of the results.</p> <p>We have received the individual school reports, which Officers are working through in order to provide information to tackle future problems. We are awaiting the full Halton report so we can produce a list of relevant intelligence based actions for the coming year.</p>
HP/ LPI9	Carry out all cremations within 24 hours of receipt of written instructions.	100%	100%	100%		A total of 587 cremations took place during the 2006/2007 financial year.
HP/ LPI 12	Applications for current certificates processed on the day of receipt.	98.3%	99%	99.7%		1035 applications for current certificates were received during the year. Of these 1032 were issued on the day of receipt.
HP/ LPI 18 (Based on BVPI 8)	The percentage of undisputed invoices which were paid in 30 days (BVPI 8)	89%	95%	96%		Target achieved due to improved monitoring and weekly chasing of invoice authorisers by the Financial Services team to ensure prompt payment.

**APPENDIX FOUR – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**  
**Health & Partnerships**



Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Quality of Service Indicators.</b>						
HP/ LPI 7	Percentage of consumer service users satisfied with the Trading Standards Service, when last surveyed	New for 06/07	88%	80%		It should be noted that the above relates to the return of only 1 consumer feedback form plus 4 returned questionnaires. The low return rate, which included a single expression of dissatisfaction, has resulted in a failure to meet the locally set target.  Consultation methods are to be reviewed in light of the poor return rate.
HP/ LPI 8	Percentage of Business service users satisfied with the Trading Standards Service, when last surveyed	New for 06/07	88%	100%		Target exceeded, but note that the above relates to only 7 trader feedback forms plus 18 returned questionnaires.
HP/ LPI 11	Percentage of Bereavement Service users who rated the staff courteousness / helpfulness as reasonable / good / excellent when last surveyed	New for 06/07	70%	100%		The above is based on 76 feedback forms from clients who had made contact with Bereavement staff.
HP/ LPI 14	Percentage of couples who felt that they received an excellent or good service from staff on the day of their marriage / partnership, when last surveyed.	New for 06/07	88%	100%		The response rate for the marriages survey of 33% was poor. However, everyone said that they had received a very good or good service on the day of their ceremony.

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
HP/ LPI 15	Percentage of other Registration Service users who rated the staff's helpfulness / efficiency as excellent or good, when last surveyed.	New for 06/07	88%	100%		The general survey of clients had an 81% response rate. Of these everyone said the helpfulness and efficiency of the staff had been very good or good. One comment made: "Every Borough should provide this excellent service."
<b>Fair Access Indicators.</b>						
HP/ LPI 5	No. of initiatives undertaken to raise the profile of the Service in the 5 most deprived wards	9	3	13		Some 20% of the actions have now been completed. A number of actions have been taken to raise the profile of the Service in the 5 most deprived wards via contact with all primary schools in those wards and by attendance at 'coffee mornings' at two of the schools plus 3 sessions on current "scams" at the Brow Primary School in Castlefields. Relationships with community groups that are likely to come into contact with the most disadvantaged consumers have been enhanced and a system of alerting such groups to current scams has been developed. A Service beer-mat advertising campaign has been launched.



Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
HP/ LPI 6	% of Improving Access Action Plan implemented (resources permitting)	N/A	20%	20%		Some 20% of the actions have now been completed. A number of actions have been taken to raise the profile of the Service in the 5 most deprived wards via contact with all primary schools in those wards and by attendance at 'coffee mornings' at two of the schools plus 3 sessions on current "scams" at the Brow Primary School in Castlefields. Relationships with community groups that are likely to come into contact with the most disadvantaged consumers have been enhanced and a system of alerting such groups to current scams has been developed. A Service beer-mat advertising campaign has been launched.
<b>Cost &amp; Efficiency Indicators.</b>						
HP/ LPI 16	% of SSD directly employed posts vacant on 30 September	9.77%	8%	11.78		We continue to raise the profile of a career within social care through various means, for example the northwest authorities Thinkcare website ( <a href="http://www.thinkcare.gov.uk">www.thinkcare.gov.uk</a> ). Representatives attended the SOCNOW recruitment fair in May 2006, which is also planned for May 2007, as well as regularly reviewing our policies and procedures in relation to recruitment.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 Indicates that the <u>objective</u> <u>has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved or exceeded</u> .
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 Indicates that the <u>objective</u> <u>has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.	Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved</u> .

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Environment  
**SERVICE:** Highways, Transportation & Logistics  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 2006/07

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Highways & Transportation Department for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2007. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 4

***It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.***

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Quarter 4 has seen starts to two long awaited schemes. The final section of Queensbury Way, Upton Rocks, that links to a new junction with Cronton Lane has started on site. The scheme had been delayed by complex and lengthy negotiations over the acquisition of a vital piece of land needed for the road scheme. The road should be open by October 2007 and will provide much improved access to this rapidly expanding residential area.

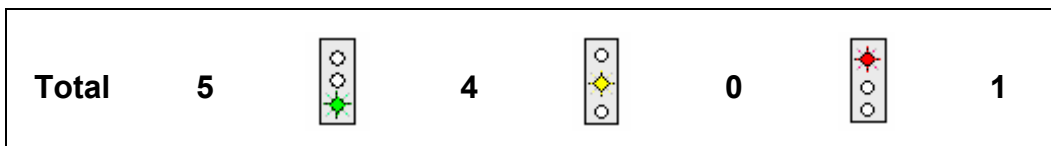
The refurbishment of the Halton Lea North bus station has also started. The bus station is part of the Rutland House/Direct Link/Library group of buildings and has been sadly neglected over the years. The make over is being funded through the LTP and will provide modern high quality facilities for bus passengers to match the new high quality buses operated by Arriva and Halton Transport. This scheme should be completed by July 2007.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

Last year the Regional Assembly jointly with the Development Agency undertook an assessment of all the region's major transport schemes (excluding rail) in order to provide advice to the Secretary of State on the North West's transport priorities. The work resulted in the Regional Funding Allocation advice in the form of a fully costed and prioritised 10-year programme for the North West.

Recent large increase in costs estimates e.g the Highways Agency Mottram – Tintwistle scheme and Cheshire's Alderley Edge By-pass have brought a need to review the allocation advice. There is some concern that a review could disadvantage Halton's major schemes i.e. Mersey Gateway and Silver Jubilee Bridge Major Maintenance. The Regional Assembly has set up a working group to advise on the review and Halton and Merseyside are both represented on it. This work will be closely monitored through the coming months.

### 4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES



(Appendix 1) HT 04 Silver Jubilee Bridge Maintenance Major Scheme – to secure funding, complete procurement and deliver works: the major scheme bid has been with DfT since March 2006 but DfT have only in February 2007 responded. Consultants have now been commissioned to review the Council's submission. Their further response is now expected in 2007/08.

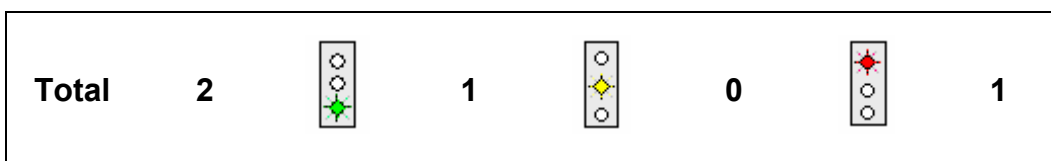
### 4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

There are no 'Other' objectives for this service.

### 5.0 SERVICE REVIEW




There have been no service reviews this quarter.

### 6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



(Appendix 2)

## 6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

<b>Total</b>	<b>23</b>		<b>14</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>9</b>
--------------	-----------	---	-----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 3) Performance against all three road safety indicators has been exceptional and all are already below the Government's target figure for 2010. Statistical returns can fluctuate and whilst some upward movement could be expected from one year to the next the overall trend is very encouraging.

Performance against the road and footway condition BVPIs is again inconclusive. The parameters applied have changed since last year and different survey methods are applied. Overall performance is good but how this compares with previous years remains impossible to measure with any accuracy.

## 7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

There are no current LPSA targets for this service.

## 8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2006-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

At the half-year stage, all relevant risk treatment measures have been implemented for key service objectives that were initially assessed as high risk in the Directorate Risk Register






## 9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

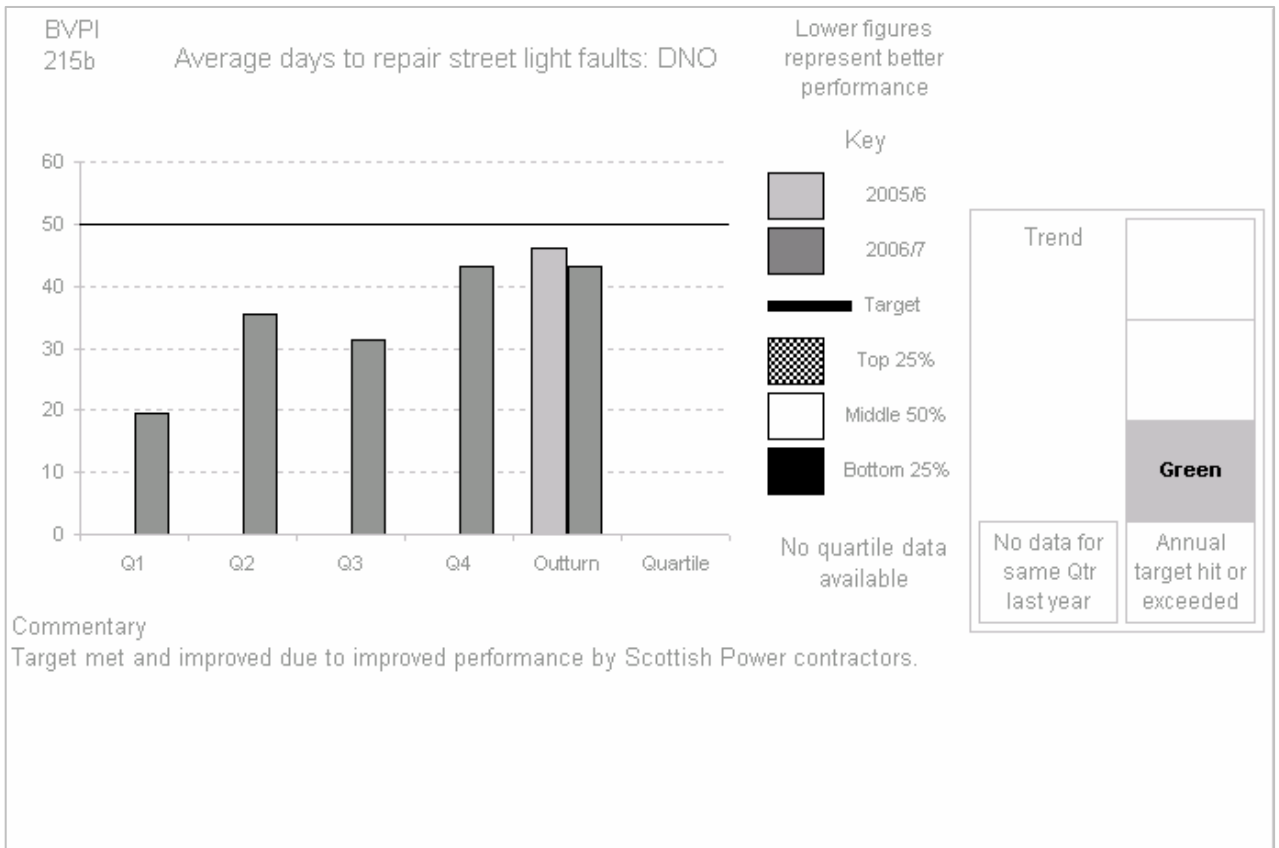
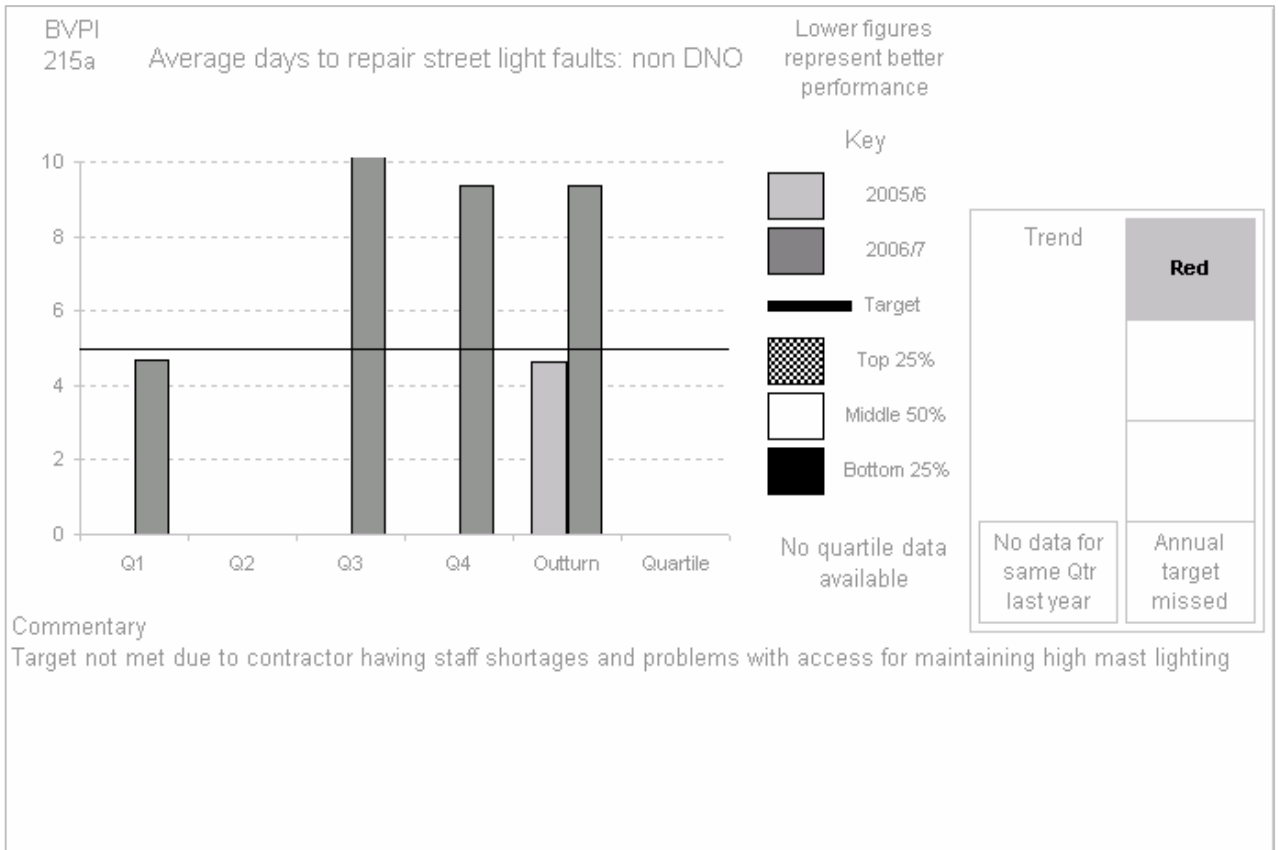
During 2005/06 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report.

There are no High priority equality actions for this service, there is no progress to report.

## **10.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators  
Appendix 4- Explanation of traffic light symbols

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/07 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
HT 01/ SA1	New Mersey Crossing – to deliver a new crossing of the Mersey in Halton.	Achieve Programme Entry – May 2006		Achieved in March 2006.
HT 02/ SA1	Capital Programme - to deliver the Highways capital programme as supported by LTP funding.	Completed by 31.03.07 – est. cost £4.385m		The capital programme works have been completed by 31 March 2007.
HT 03/ SA1/ SA2/ SA3	Local Transport Plan 2. - To develop and submit Annual Progress Reports on LTP2, delivery meeting the requirements of DfT and monitoring progress against the Council's transport objectives.	Final LTP submitted by 31.03.06.  APR 2001/02-05/06 submitted by 31.07.06  Progress report for 2006/07 in preparation.		Final LTP submitted by target date.  Delivery Report (APR) submitted by target date.  Reporting requirements for 06/07 are confined to performance relating to targets, finance and scheme outputs. Data collection is underway.
HT 04/ SA1	Silver Jubilee Bridge Maintenance Major Scheme – to secure funding, complete procurement and deliver works.	Funding secured, delivery procured. (£38m) by 31.03.07		DfT have announced that they are engaging consultants to review the bid. An early response is not expected.
HT 05 / SA4	Vehicle Fleet Replacement Program – Implement and complete tendering process.	Draft Tenders completed by 31.03.07		The procurement was funded from capital and undertaken successfully through an external Framework by the target date.









Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
BVPI 99a (i)	No. of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions.	74	72	50		Performances against all three key safety indicators has been exceptional and are already below the Government's target figure for 2010. However, it should be noted that these figures may be subject to minor variation, due to errors in recording.
BVPI 99b (i)	No. of children (<16) killed or seriously injured (KSI) in road traffic collisions.	14	13	5		
BVPI 99c (i)	No. of people slightly injured in road traffic collisions.	555	548	491		
BVPI 223	Percentage of principal road network where structural maintenance should be considered	1.44%	1.44%	1.7%		SCANNER surveys are used to measure this BVPI. 100% of the network is surveyed each year but only in one direction. The direction surveyed is changed each year. Direct year on year comparisons are therefore not possible. In 2004/05 a completely different method was used. Although at 1.7% of the road network needing repair, condition can comfortably be assumed to be very good.
BVPI 224a	Condition of Non-Principal classified Roads (% non-principal classified road network where structural maintenance should be considered)	2.2%	2.2%	6.4%		SCANNER surveys are used to measure this BVPI. 100% of the network is surveyed each year but only in one direction. The direction surveyed is changed each year. Direct year on year comparisons are therefore not possible. In 2004/05 a completely different method was used.



Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BVPI 224b	Condition of Unclassified Roads (% unclassified road network where structural maintenance should be considered)	12.9%	12%	4.0%		CVI (Coarse Visual Inspection) surveys are used to measure this BVPI. 100% of the network has been surveyed this year but in previous years only part of the network has been surveyed. Direct year on year comparisons are therefore not possible.
BVPI 187	% of footways not in good condition (across categories 1 & 2)	22.4%	22%	23.2%		DVI (Detailed Visual Inspection) surveys are used to measure this BVPI. A different 50% of the network is surveyed each year. Direct year on year comparisons are therefore not possible.
HT LI 01	Damage to roads and pavements (% dangerous damage repaired within 24 hours)	98%	98%	99.71%		The figure for the full year 2006/07 is 99.71% which exceeds the target.
BVPI 102	Local bus service (passenger journeys per year)	5.51m	6.14m	6.07m		Although the target for 2006/7 has not been achieved. Local bus patronage has actually risen by 10% over the 12 month period 2006/7, which is mostly attributable to the introduction of free concessionary travel after 09.30am (Monday to Fridays) – all day weekends from April 2006.
HT LI 02	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>No of sites with new bus shelters.</li> <li>No of sites with replacement bus shelters.</li> </ul>	16 44	20 39	35 40	 	Performance for both indicators has been exceeded. This is due to additional shelter investment through the Local Transport Plan Quality Corridor Programme.
HT LI 03	Percentage of schools with School Travel Plans in place.	39%	52%	53%		Note target s in LTP for 2006/7-2010/11 have been restructured to reflect availability of resources. Target for 2010/11 remains at 100%.

**APPENDIX THREE – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
Highways & Transportation**



Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
HT LI 04	Percentage of employers (> 100 employees) with Green Travel Plans in place	27%	18%	36%		Target for 06/07 has been exceeded by 100%. This higher growth in adopted Green Travel Plans by businesses relates to an increased emphasis on the adoption of Travel Plan requirements on local businesses through the local planning process (Section 106 agreements etc.)
HT LI 05	Proportion of LGV's that pass the annual MOT test first time	88%	90%	84%		Due to the increased number of LGV's tested, as necessitated by the requirement to prepare the current RCV Fleet for resale this target has not been met. However, the figure is above the national target average of 80%.
HT LI 06	Proportion of workshop jobs attributed to non-scheduled maintenance	27.54%	25%	17%		As a result of an enhanced inspection regime, to provide a reliable operational service, performance has significantly exceeded target.
<b>Quality</b>						
BVPI 103	% of people satisfied with local public transport information.	N/a – triennial survey	56.8%	All: 55%		The triennial residents survey (which is used to measure progress against this indicator) has been adjusted to separately identify bus service user satisfaction from all residents' satisfaction for 2006/7. This has revealed that bus user satisfaction with public transport information is <b>75%</b> , which considerably exceeds the targets set for all residents. However, overall, general satisfaction (non users and users) has remained at the 2003 level and has therefore not met the target.

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
BVPI 104	% of people satisfied with local bus services.	N/a – triennial survey	63%	All: 63%		The survey this year has been required to separately identify both bus and non service user satisfaction. Bus user satisfaction has been shown to be 71%, which is considerably higher than the general satisfaction level for users and non users combined, which actually met the 06/07 target set.
<b>Fair Access</b>						
BVPI 165	% of pedestrian crossings with facilities for disabled people.	80.9%	100%	87.8%		Resurfacing works at some locations reinstated kerb heights that did not meet the PI Specification. Remedial action is underway to achieve 100% in the next financial year.
BVPI 178	% of footpaths and ROWs that are easy to use.	96%	96%	94%		Whilst the 06/07 target has been narrowly missed, the samples used to derive the figures are taken at random and can result in variances in the results obtained. However, efforts will be made increase performance on this indicator.
HT LI 07	No. of passengers on community based accessible transport.	112,600	113,800	121,465		During 2006/7 – 121,465 passenger journeys were made on community accessible transport, which exceeded the target for 2006/7 by 6.7%. All of the services funded by Halton Borough Council such as “Dial a Ride”, “Women’s Safe” transport have risen, however there has been a fall in the number of affiliated community group vehicle hires with HCT.
HT LI 08	% of bus stops with Quality Corridor accessibility features. (No. of stops – 603)	28.4%	26% (156)	31.7% (191)		Target exceeded

**APPENDIX THREE – PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS  
Highways & Transportation**

Ref	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Cost &amp; Efficiency</b>						
HT LI 09	Number of third party compensation claims received due to alleged highway / footway defects	113	110	121		Initial analysis of the claims received in 2006 / 2007 indicates a rise to 39% in claims for damage to vehicles from carriageway incidents particularly tyres. In 2005/2006 carriageway incidents formed only 18% of total claims. Footway claims have largely fallen in line with predictions. The potential reasons for this increase in 'carriageway' claims and the success of these claims is being investigated.
HT LI 10	Increase MOT test facility turnover by 5% per annum	£131213	£137774	£144624		Target exceeded

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Environment  
**SERVICE:** Major Projects Department  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 4 2006/07

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Major Projects Department for the period 1 January 2007 to 31 March 2007. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic lights symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained within Appendix 5. While these (and the indicator figures) reflect performance over the whole year, the commentaries refer only to developments in Quarter 4.

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

- The Castlefields Regeneration Programme has been awarded Exemplar status for 2007 by Renew, the North West centre of excellence for regeneration.
- £72k has been secured from WREN towards Halebank Recreation Ground. These upgrading works started in March.
- The North West Development Association has allocated £4.5m within the SIP towards the 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) Programme.
- 'Determination' of the St. Michael's Golf Course has been completed and agreed with the EA, allowing an application to EA/DEFRA for further funding to design the remediation scheme.
- Brindley mound removal contract commenced
- Three key developments have started on site on Venture Fields, with Outline Planning Permission having been received for a fourth, i.e. the commercial leisure development being brought forward by Widnes Regeneration Ltd. (WRL).

**3.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

3MG - Board Approval will be sought in the summer 2007 for programming changes to the 3MG area boundary, finance and timetabling

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>7</b>		<b>0</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 1)

**4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>2</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 2)

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

There have been no reviews in the Service in Q4.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>5</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>0</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 3)

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>
--------------	----------	---	----------	---	----------

(Appendix 4)



## **7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS**

There are no current LPSA targets for this service.

## **8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES**

During the production of the 2006-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

At the end of year, all relevant risk treatment measures have been implemented for key service objectives that were initially assessed as high risk in the Directorate Risk Register



## **9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS**

During 2005/06 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report.




Since there are no High priority equality actions for this service, there is no progress to report.

## **10.0 APPENDICES**



Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2- Progress against Other Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 3- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 4- Progress against Other Performance Indicators  
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols






Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/7 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary On Q4 Progress
<b>Area Regeneration</b>				
AR01	To implement a regeneration plan for the Widnes Waterfront EDZ in accordance with the EDZ Team Plan and Regeneration Masterplan (See Team Plan)	Implementation proceeding according to Masterplan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Outline planning permission secured by WRL for a leisure development on Venture Fields.</li> <li>• Priority Sites start on site with construction of Phase 1</li> <li>• Saffil moved into their new office development</li> <li>• NWDA funding secured to undertake SI on proposed linear park site.</li> <li>• Construction of new access road started on site.</li> <li>• Performance Plan for 2007-8 North West Development Association Funding approved by Urban Renewal PPB and SSP</li> </ul>
AR02	To implement a regeneration plan for Castlefields according to the Castlefields Team Plan and Regeneration Masterplan (See Team Plan)	Implementation proceeding according to Masterplan		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Local centre CPO served April 5<sup>th</sup> April 2007;</li> <li>• Phase 2 RSL developments commenced. including the redevelopment of LHT blocks at Hedge Hey and Meadow Row.</li> <li>• A planning application for the demolition and redevelopment of the deck assess flats at Caesars Close has been</li> </ul>



**APPENDIXONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Major Projects**






Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/7 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary On Q4 Progress
				<p>approved.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Planning application submitted for HBC's Lakeside and Canalside development sites.</li> </ul>
AR03	To implement a regeneration plan for the 3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) (See Team Plan)	Implementation is proceeding in line with the Masterplan.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Works begun on the improvements to Halebank Recreation Ground</li> </ul>
AR04	Monitor investment levels in the 3 town centres in order to comply with Community Plan objectives (See Team Plan)	Ensure continued investment in town centres of at least £1 million per annum		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Liebig Court development in Widnes completed;</li> <li>• Canal Quarter development in Runcorn commenced with property acquisitions and site preparation;</li> <li>• Shopfront improvement grant scheme progressed according to targets;</li> <li>• Planning permission secured by Stadium Developments for renewal of the Windmill Centre;</li> <li>• Start on site by St. Modwen Properties for the Homebase development on the Expressway Development site.</li> </ul>
<b>Land Reclamation</b>				
LR01	Carry out Site Investigations on the EDZ	Completion of project: 10 ha. surveyed		Completed





**APPENDIXONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES  
Major Projects**

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/7 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary On Q4 Progress
LR02	Remediation of the 3 ha. Norton site for the Castlefields Youth Activity Park	Completion of reclamation project: 3 ha. remediated		Project completed
LR03	Development of the Canal Quarter, Runcorn	Design of scheme completed and agreed. Phase 1 construction initiated.		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A further £300,000 has been secured from English Partnerships for surveys and additional work which will inform the final design.</li> <li>• Development in Runcorn commenced with property acquisitions and site preparation contract let for the removal of the Brindley Mound.</li> </ul>

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/7 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
<b>Area Regeneration</b>				
AR05	To regenerate Broseley Square and its streetscape: WRL to build 28,600 sq ft of retail, residential and office accommodation	Completion of 2 8.600 sq. ft. Liebig Court development		Development completed
AR06	To manage the development of 200 houses for sale in Halebank	40 homes built and sold		22 actually completed and sold. Although this is below the stated target a further 24 units are under construction, taking the figure to above target. It should be noted, however, that since this Indicator was set the development site has been acquired by Barrett's Developments, and so the delivery of the scheme is entirely outwith the Council's control or influence.
AR07	To implement a shop-front improvement scheme for Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres to achieve visual and physical improvements to the commercial fabric	20 premises' improvements effected		21 premises improved
AR08	To devise and implement a regeneration plan for Halebank	Implementation proceeding according to Masterplan		SPD approved in September 2006
<b>Urban Renewal</b>				
UR01	To implement the Urban Renewal Strategy and Action Plan	Three meetings of Urban Renewal SSP held. NRF and CPF programmes delivered as programmed according to funding allocations		All achieved



Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2006/7 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
<b>Land Reclamation</b>				
LR04	Remediation of contamination on the 48 ha. of St Michael's Golf Course	Phase 1 & 2 reclamation of 30 ha. of the Golf Course started		Site 'determined'; remediation options analysis completed and submitted to the EA.
LR05	Phoenix Park, Castlefields, site reclamation	Completion of works		Completed

Reference	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Cost &amp; Efficiency</b>						
LPI 7	Grant secured from the ERDF	£200,000	£2m	£2.83		Target exceeded in previous quarters as reported in Q3 Report.
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
LPI 6	Land reclamation (acres)	12	10	11		Contract let for the removal of the Brindley Mound. Annual target exceeded.
LPI 9	Castlefields regeneration. Outputs as set out in Masterplan (% achieved)	100%	100%	100% See AR02		See comments re Key Objective AR02
LPI 10	Urban Renewal. Outputs as set out in Urban Renewal Strategy & Action Plan (%)	100%	100%	100%		All projects being funded through the Urban Renewal Strategy/NRF were completed on target.
LPI 14	3MG (Mersey Multimodal Gateway) Outputs as set out in Masterplan (%)	100%	100%	100% See AR03		See comments re Key Objective AR03

Reference	Indicator	Actual 05 / 06	Target 06 / 07	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
LPI 1	New retail floor space (sq ft)	10,593	8,500	8,500		Liebig Court completed
LPI 3	New private housing	20	40	60		38 units @Liebig Court and 22 @ Barrett's Halebank completed
LPI 4	Local business premises improved	31	20	21		See AR07 above.
LPI 8	EDZ Programme Outputs as set out in ERDF offer letter (% achieved)	100%	100%	100%		Match funding secured for the Heron Phase 2 development.



The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>