



Executive Board

**Thursday, 1 November 2007 2.00 p.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'David W R', is centered on the page.

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

Item	Page No
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
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.	
3. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO	
(A) APPLICATION FOR TWINNING GRANT	1 - 3
4. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO	
(A) SECONDARY SCHOOL RE-ORGANISATION	4 - 19

*Please contact Lynn Cairns on 0151 471 7529 or e-mail lynn.cairns@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 15 November 2007*

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(B) SCHOOLS CAUSING CONCERN	20 - 23
5. CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO	
(A) POLLING DISTRICTS/POLLING STATION REVIEW - APPOINTMENT OF WORKING PARTY	24 - 26
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In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 1 November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Application for Twinning Grant

WARD(S): Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to give details of 1 application being made to the Twinning Grant Fund.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the following grant be awarded to:

(a) £2500 to the Halton Swimming Club

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In April 1996, Halton Borough Council set up a Grant Fund to assist in enabling all members of the community to access and gain benefit from the Council's International Links.

3.2 Since 1996, a number of groups have accessed the fund to undertake exchange visits to Marzahn-Hellersdorf in Germany; Leiria in Portugal; Usti-nad-Labem in the Czech Republic; and Tongling City in China, including the Halton Youth Service; St. Chad's School, Halton Junior Football Team and Fairfield High School who have hosted teachers and pupils from Tongling previously. These links have resulted in a number of reciprocal visits from each town.

3.3 Participants in previous exchanges have found that the benefits of learning about another culture and language are immense. A wide range of activity in the Borough has been facilitated by the provision of grant aid and has given an opportunity to those who would not otherwise be able to participate.

3.4 The application received from Halton Swimming Team, requests support for 25 members to visit Usti nad Labem between the 10th – 13th November 2007.

3.5 During the visit the members will compete in a swimming competition in the Ing. Vilem Protschke swimming pool in Usti nad Labem. A return visit from the swim team in Usti nad Labem is being planned for August/September 2008. The applicant has identified total costs of £6825. This is broken down into travel costs of £3875; accommodation

costs of £2250; insurance costs of £300 and other cost of £400. The applicant has requested £3000 from the town-twinning budget. This is the maximum allowable. However, a grant of £2,500 would be in line with previous grant awards.

3.6 This year's application has been received late and supporting documentation is missing. However, the club has a proven track record of representing the borough well and has provided good evaluation reports from previous visits. If Members were to approve the project the grant will be offered subject to the following conditions:

- that the Halton Swimming Team host a reciprocal event in Halton.
- that the Halton Swimming Team ensure each of the members involved in the visit had adequate travel insurance.
- that the Halton Swimming Team complete a risk assessment for the visit.
- that the Halton Swimming Team supply copies of the most recent financial statements or accounts.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The application is in line with the borough's European Strategy, in particular, the promotion of international links, which seeks to offer the opportunity to participate to the whole population of Halton.

4.2 The application will also make a major contribution to the Healthy Halton Local Strategic Partnership key priority.

5.0 RISK ANALYSIS

5.1 Measures are in place to minimise risks to the delivery of the project. For example, the as part of the terms and conditions of grant applicants are required to complete a risk assessment proforma.

6.0 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY ISSUES

6.1 The project focuses on promoting transnational relations with 2 of Halton's Twin Towns.

7.0 REASONS FOR DECISION

7.1 The club has a proven track record of representing the borough well and has provided good evaluation reports from previous visits.

8.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

8.1 The option to reduce the grant has been considered. Given pressures on the town-twinning budget it is proposed that the grant awarded is in line with previous requests. If this request were to be approved, £5,390

would remain in the budget. This would represent a grant of £100 per participant.

9.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

9.1 10 – 13 November 2007

10.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

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

REPORT:	Executive Board
DATE:	1 November 2007
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director – Children and Young People
SUBJECT:	Secondary School Re-organisation
WARDS:	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide a summary of the detailed consultation process undertaken on the initial proposals for the re-organisation of secondary and secondary special provision. It provides a summary of the outcome of the first phase of consultation, identifies the key issues raised and how the local authority, through the next phase of school organisation proposals, is addressing these.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Executive Board

- (1) Approves the revised set of school organisation proposals contained at paragraph 3 as the basis for the next stage of consultation on secondary and special school reorganisation;**
- (2) Approves a further stage of pre-statutory consultation on the revised school organisation proposals; and**
- (3) Requests the outcome of the second phase of the consultation process be reported to the Executive Board for consideration; and after due consideration put recommendations for approval before Council on the 12th December 2007**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In June and July 2007 Halton Borough Council along with the Diocesan Authorities, carried out a detailed consultation exercise on proposals for the re-organisation of secondary and secondary special provision within the borough. (See Appendix A - for details of the initial proposals the Council consulted on)
- 3.2 The consultation included: Elected Members, School Staff, Governors, parents of senior and primary aged pupils, some young people through the Youth Forum, Trade Unions, Alliance Board, neighbouring authorities, Riverside College, NHS representatives, the Learning and Skills Council, MPs and Council staff.

- 3.3 As part of the consultation process 52 separate meetings were held. These meetings shared the Council vision for Building Schools for the Future (BSF); outlined the objectives of the proposals; the Government's requirements; and provided the opportunity for questions and concerns to be raised. Notes from each meeting were published on the Halton Borough Council website in the BSF area.
- 3.4 In total 18,881 consultation fact sheets were distributed which outlined the proposals. 37,762 letters were sent to parents of pupils at secondary, special and primary schools. Letters were also sent to each school inviting all staff to attend the consultation meetings along with school governors.
- 3.5 Press briefings on the proposals were held. A dedicated area on the Halton Borough Council website and telephone line was established. Feedback forms on the proposals were provided at each meeting, and an online version provided on the website.
- 3.6 The response to the consultation is summarised below:
- 1618 people attended the consultation meetings;
 - 187 feedback forms were completed
 - 17 objecting to the proposals
 - 37 supporting the proposals
 - 133 asking questions or making comments;
 - 28 letters of objection were received and 7 letters of support;
 - 483 objections were completed on a pre-printed pro-forma and 192 letters of support were received on a pre-printed pro-forma;
 - 2 petitions objecting to the proposals were received and 1 petition supporting the proposals;
 - 163 e-mails were received; and
- 3.7 Seven alternative proposals were received. (Please see Appendix B for further details). The main themes emerging from the consultation were:
- Transport;
 - Admission arrangements and zoning;
 - Pupil numbers;
 - Federation arrangements;
 - Transitional arrangements;
 - Workforce issues;
 - School size;
 - Co-located schools;
 - Private Finance Initiative (PFI);
 - Academy Provision;

- Trust arrangements; and
- Closure of Fairfield High and The Grange Comprehensive.

3.8 A Cross Party Members Advisory Working Group was established and

- a) considered the key themes that emerged from the consultation and how these could be addressed; and
- b) evaluated the initial proposals and the alternative proposals

3.9 In determining their recommendations for the next stage of the consultation process the Group was informed by:

- The Government requirements;
- Secondary Headteacher and Secondary Special Headteachers' views;
- The views of the Department of Children School and Families;
- The views of the Office of the School Commissioner; and
- A range of factual information, for example demographic change
- Information gathered from respondents to the consultation process

3.10 The Cross Party Member Advisory Working Group has recommended:-

- **revised proposals be considered; and**
- **a further pre-statutory stage of consultation be undertaken.**

This will commence on the 2 November and run to the 7 December 2007.

The full list of consultation events can be seen at Appendix C.

3.11 The recommendations of the Cross Party Members Advisory Working Group held on the 9 October 2007 can be summarised below. All proposals are for 11 – 16 provision:-

- **Increase the size of The Bankfield School to 1050 pupils.**
- **Co-locate and rebuild Chesnut Lodge on The Bankfield site.**
- **Re-model and expand Wade Deacon to 1500 pupils**
- **Relocate Ashley School to Wade Deacon site.**
- **Cease provision at Fairfield High School and close at a time to be determined**
- **Move to a zonal approach for admissions for Widnes community schools. (see Appendix D)**
- **As a transitional arrangement, encourage Wade Deacon and Fairfield High school to enter into a hard federation (for further details on a hard federation please see appendix E)**

- **Develop Halton High as new specialist Academy for 900 pupils (size to be confirmed by sponsor).**
- **Rebuild/remodel and expand The Heath A Specialist Technology College to 1200 pupils.**
- **Establish G4 – The Grange Comprehensive, Junior, Infant and Nursery Schools – as an all-through school 0 to 16, provide 750 secondary places. G4 to seek Trust status, remain within the G4 site, providing extended services, a link to City Learning Centre and to be aligned with the Primary Capital strategy.**
- **Maintaining Cavendish School with its current designation.**

(Please note that the size of Secondary voluntary aided schools are determined by the relevant Diocese Authorities).

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The re-organisation of secondary provision will change the balance of the numbers, knowledge, skills and experience of the staff required in Halton Schools. A Workforce Strategy is therefore being developed in collaboration with the Trade Unions.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The re-organisation of secondary provision requires a comprehensive review of the transport and access across the borough to ensure there is safe, accessible and sustainable provision to all schools.
- 5.2 Building School for the Future will provide in the region of £100 million of capital investment in Halton Schools. Funding for the programme will be delivered as conventional capital grant and/or private finance initiative (PFI) credits. There will be revenue costs for establishing a team and ongoing revenue consequences of PFI. Exact costs cannot be identified at this stage, however, there is provision within the programme to produce a detailed business case which demonstrates affordability.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

By undertaking a secondary school re-organisation and entering into the BSF Programme the authority aim to transform secondary provision for all children and young people and improve the facilities for the secondary workforce.

6.2 Employment Learning and Skills in Halton

Through access to an excellent secondary school for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

In developing its secondary schools for the future the authority will demonstrate how it will enable schools to meet the school sport Public Service Agreement through its capital investment and achieve high nutritional standards and encourage healthy eating.

6.4 A Safer Halton

Schools for the future will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

6.5 Halton's Urban

Through the BSF Halton schools will become a major resource for communities they serve and will be designed to offer shared community facilities, linking to other wider regeneration projects as well as being the focus for the local delivery of children's services.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Secondary school re-organisation must be completed in order that the authority can enter Building Schools for the Future Programme. A full risk register is available for the BSF Programme.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The proposals for the re-organisation of Halton's secondary and secondary special provision seek to provide choice and diversity, promote inclusion and access.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Secondary provision must be re-organised prior to entry in to the BSF programme.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

The initial options along with the alternative options were all assessed considered and assessed against the government criteria.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

The next phase of consultation will commence on 2nd November 2007 and end on 7th December 2007.

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

Documents	Place of Inspection	Contact
<u>Consultation Summary – Halton Building Schools for the Future – Inspiring Children</u>	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Consultation Meeting dates (Phase 1)	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Consultation Presentations	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Pupil Numbers	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Notes of Public Meetings	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Alternative Proposals	3 rd Floor Chester Building – Grosvenor House, Runcorn and website www.halton.gov.uk/bsf	Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Business Planning and Resources
Children and Young People Policy and Performance Board minutes of 17 th July 2007	Committee Services, Municipal Building, Widnes and website www.halton.gov.uk	L. Derbyshire, Committee Services

'Original Proposals'

Appendix A

Secondary and Secondary Special Proposals

Widnes

The Bankfield

- Redesign and rebuild
- Increase to 1050 places 11-16

Chesnut Lodge

- Relocate Chesnut Lodge to The Bankfield site
- Rebuild Chesnut Lodge
- Provide 50 places
- Provision for pupils with complex physical/medical needs
- Age range 2 –16

Wade Deacon High and Fairfield High

- Remodel Wade Deacon High
- Increase places to 1350 11-16
- Federate Wade Deacon and Fairfield High
- Cease provision on Fairfield High after transitional period

Ashley

- Relocate Ashley to the Wade Deacon site
- Rebuild Ashley
- Provide 120 places
- Provision for pupils with cognition and learning combined with emotional and social difficulties
- Age range 11 – 16

St Peter and Paul Catholic College

Proposal by Archdiocese of Liverpool

- Enhance buildings and facilities
- Reduce 11 –16 places to 1350
- Provide 200 sixth form places

Runcorn

The Heath A Specialist Technology College and The Grange Comprehensive

- Redesign and rebuild

- Increase places to 1500 11-16
- Federate The Heath A Specialist Technology College and The Grange Comprehensive
- Cease provision on The Grange Comprehensive site after a transitional period

Halton High

- Develop new specialist academy
- Provide 1050 places 11-16
- Provide 100 places post 16

Cavendish School

- Increase investment
- Offer 90 places
- Provision for pupils with profound and severe cognition and learning needs and pupils with communication and interaction needs including autistic spectrum disorder
- Age range 11-19

The Bridge (Key Stage 3) Pupil Referral Unit

- Increase investment
- Provide 30 places
- Offer broad and balanced curriculum

St Chad's Catholic High

Proposal by the Dioceses of Shrewsbury and Chester

- Explore shared faith Anglican/Roman Catholic school
- On site of St Chad's Catholic High
- Offer 1200 places 11-16
- Offer 120 6th Form places

Summary of Alternative Responses submitted during the Consultation

Widnes

The Bankfield and Chesnut Lodge

Support for current proposals from both schools

Fairfield High School

Opposed to proposals to expand Wade Deacon and cease provision on the Fairfield site

3 Alternative Proposals submitted

Option 1

- Federation of 3 schools – Wade Deacon, The Bankfield and Fairfield High – Wade Deacon hub of federation
- KS3 delivered at Fairfield High and The Bankfield
- Schools retain specialism
- KS4 delivered by Wade Deacon
- Development of KS5 provision
- No ringfenced staff posts
- Ashley co-located on Fairfield site – Chesnut Lodge co-located on The Bankfield site

Option 2

- 11-16 provision at Wade Deacon and Fairfield High
- Ashley co-located on Fairfield High site
- Closure of The Bankfield - relocation of Chesnut Lodge and Oakfield Primary plus community facilities on The Bankfield site
- 14-19 provided through Wade Deacon, Fairfield High, Saints Peter and Paul and Riverside College

Option 3

- No ringfencing of Wade Deacon staff

Wade Deacon High School

Support for proposals to create a single 11-16 school for central and east Widnes

Proposals to:

- deliver specialist areas up to 19 working collaboratively with all Widnes schools
- explore Foundation/Trust status
- increase size to 1500
- co-locate Ashley alongside Chesnut Lodge on The Bankfield site
- federate model – Executive Headteacher, Associate Headteacher and one governing body

Saint Peter and Paul

Request to increase Sixth Form Provision to 300

Parent

Proposal to zone Widnes

Runcorn

The Heath Specialist Technology College

Support the principle of expanding The Heath. Proposals to:

- Increase school size to 1350
- Offer post-16 provision
- Federation model – The Heath as Lead, federation broadened to include other schools e.g. Halton High, no joint governance or budgets, ring-fencing of posts across authority

Halton High School

Support for the current proposals

The Grange Comprehensive, Junior, Infant and Nursery

1 Alternative option submitted

- Establish 0-19 through school
- Offer 750 secondary places
- Seek trust status
- Remain on same site
- Provide extended services
- Reduce Academy numbers to 900, the Heath 1050 and 1050 St Chad's Joint Faith based on 3750
- Based on estimates of 4200 – 1050 Academy places, 1050 St Chad's Joint Faith places and 1200 places at The Heath

Consultation Dates**Secondary School Staff and Governors Meetings**

SCHOOL	DATE	TIME
Halton High	Monday 05 th November 2007	3:15 pm
The Bankfield	Tuesday 06 th November 2007	3:00 pm
Ashley	Tuesday 06 th November 2007	3:30 pm
The Heath	Wednesday 07 th November 2007	3:15 pm
Fairfield High School	Thursday 08 th November 2007	3:30 pm
Chesnut Lodge	Monday 12 th November 2007	4:00 pm
St Chad's Catholic High	Tuesday 13 th November 2007	3:00 pm
Wade Deacon High	Tuesday 13 th November 2007	3:15 pm
Ss Peter and Paul Catholic College	Wednesday 14 th November 2007	3:30 pm
The Grange	Thursday 15 th November 2007	3:00 pm

Widnes Public Consultation

DAY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Tuesday	6-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Foundry 63-65 Lugsdale Road Widnes WA8 6DA
Monday	12-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Stadium Lowerhouse Lane Widnes WA8 7DZ
Tuesday	13-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Foundry 63-65 Lugsdale Road Widnes WA8 6DA
Wednesday*	14-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Foundry 63-65 Lugsdale Road Widnes WA8 6DA

*A representative from Liverpool Archdiocese will be present at this session to answer questions related to the Liverpool Archdiocese proposal for Saints Peter and Paul Catholic College.

Runcorn Public Consultation

DAY	DATE	TIME	VENUE
Monday	5-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Holiday Inn Wood Lane Runcorn WA7 3HA
Wednesday	7-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Holiday Inn Wood Lane Runcorn WA7 3HA
Tuesday**	13-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Brindley High Street Runcorn WA7 1BG
Tuesday	20-Nov-07	19.00-20.30	The Holiday Inn Wood Lane Runcorn WA7 3HA

**A representative will be present at this session to answer specific questions relating to the joint faith proposal.

Surgery Dates**Widnes**

DATE	TIME	VENUE
21-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Direct Link (Market) 7 Brook Street Widnes WA8 6NB
22-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Warrington Road Children Centre Naylor Road Widnes WA8 0BS
27-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Warrington Road Children Centre Naylor Road Widnes WA8 0BS
28-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Kingsway Learning Centre Victoria Square Widnes WA8 7QJ
29-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Ditton Community & Children Centre Dundalk Road Widnes WA8 8DF

Runcorn

DATE	TIME	VENUE			
23-Nov-07	3.30 - 5.30	Halton Brook Children Centre	The Ferns, Fernhurst	Halton Brook	Runcorn WA7 2NJ
26-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Direct Link	Halton Lea Shopping Centre		Runcorn WA7 2ES
28-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Halton Lodge Children Centre	Grangeway		Runcorn WA7 5LU
29-Nov-07	3.30 - 6.00	Brookvale Children Centre	Northwich Road	Brookvale	Runcorn WA7 6PE
3-Dec-07	3.30 - 5.30	Direct Link	Church Street		Runcorn WA7 1LX

Primary Staff Dates**Widnes**

DAY	DATE	TIME	VENUE		
Monday	19-Nov-07	16.30 – 18.00	The Stadium	Lowerhouse Lane	Widnes WA8 7DZ

Runcorn

DAY	DATE	TIME	VENUE			
Wednesday	21-Nov-07	16.30 – 18.00	The Holiday Inn	Wood Lane	Runcorn	WA7 3HA

Primary Governor Dates**Widnes**

DAY	DATE	TIME	VENUE		
Monday	19-Nov-07	19.00 – 20.30	The Stadium	Lowerhouse Lane	Widnes WA8 7DZ

Runcorn

DAY	DATE	TIME	VENUE			
Wednesday	21-Nov-07	19.00 – 20.30	The Holiday Inn	Wood Lane	Runcorn	WA7 3HA

Appendix D

Zoning

Background

Under the original Widnes proposals retaining the current admission arrangements would mean that a significant number of pupils from the East of Widnes would have to travel from the East to the West of Widnes to access secondary provision. Zoning Widnes would address this issue. Zoning is commonly used in other authorities.

A defined admission zone (catchment area) would need to be created for Widnes based on postal address around a school. Parents would then understand that if they lived at a particular address the catchment area they fell within.

In establishing the zone it would be a requirement that admission arrangements did not disadvantage a child from a particular social or racial group or a child with a disability or special educational needs.

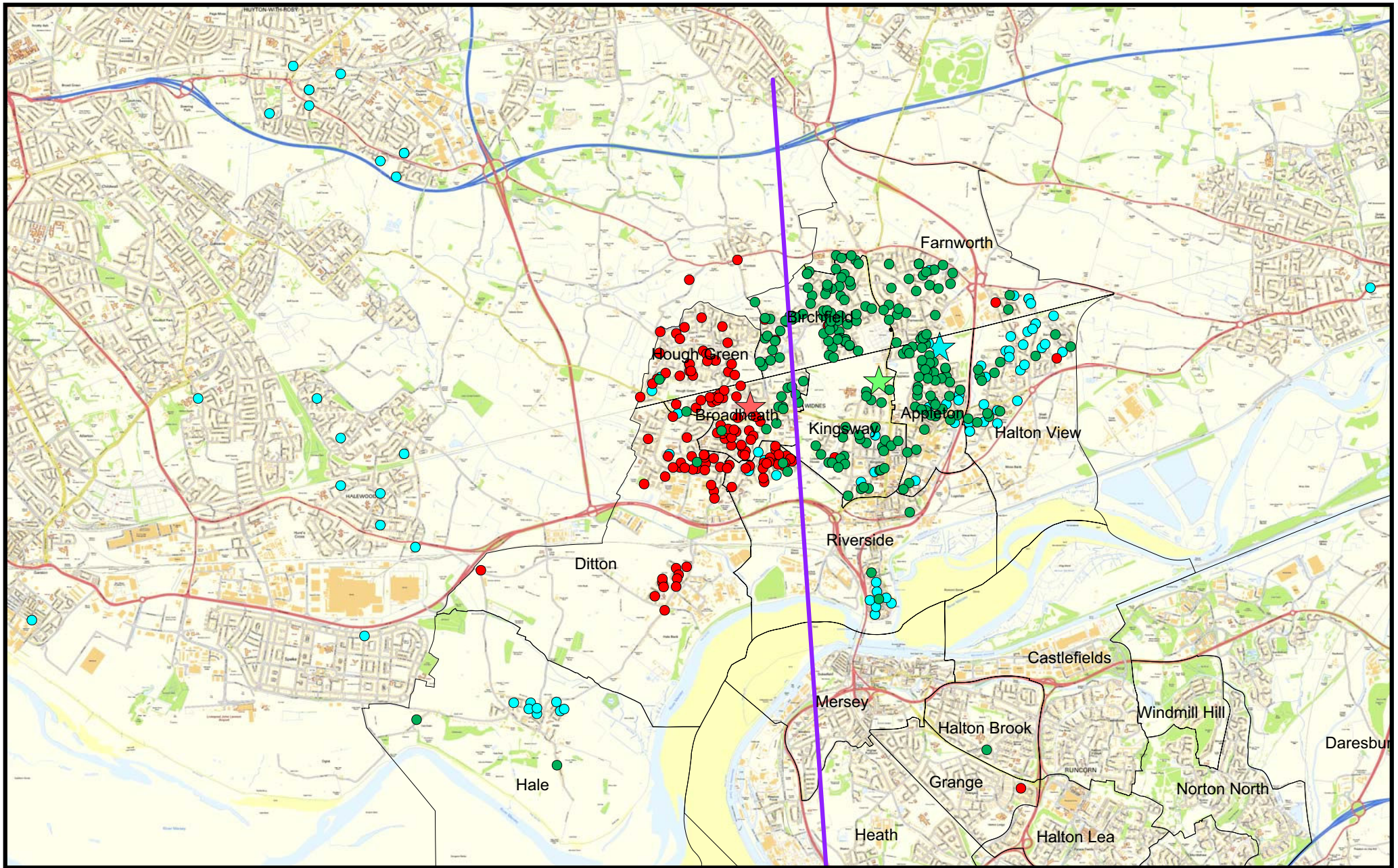
The attached map shows the proposed zone for Widnes.

Map Key

Blue Star =	Fairfield High School
Green Star =	Wade Deacon
Red Star =	The Bankfield

Corresponding coloured dots indicate the postcode location of where pupils currently live. For Example, a green dot indicates a child attending Wade Deacon.

Please note that although the line on this map extends into Runcorn, the zoning is only proposed for the Widnes area. Therefore, please ignore the line when it crosses the river.



Widnes Split


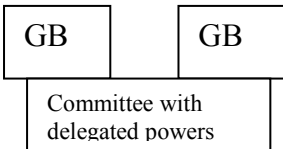
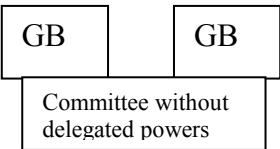
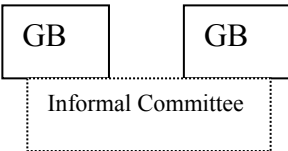
Date : October 07
Scale : Non Standard Scale



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Suggested Federations Continuum For Wade Deacon and Fairfield High

Appendix E

	<u>Hard Governance Federation</u>	<u>Soft Governance Federation</u>	<u>Soft Federation</u>	<u>Informal, Loose Collaboration</u>
Regardless of the form of federation adopted, <u>all</u> schools 1) Retain their separate identity; 2) Continue to receive individual school budgets; 3) Have separate Ofsted inspections; and 4) Report on performance individually.				
	STATUTORY		NON-STATUTORY	
Diagram				
Governing Body?	Single governing body shared by all schools.	Each school has its own governing body, but the federation has joint governance / strategic committee <u>with</u> delegated power	Each school has its own governing body; the federation, however, has joint governance / strategic committee <u>without</u> delegated powers	Each school has its own governing body and the group of schools meet informally on ad-hoc basis
Statutory?	Yes. Hard governance federations are established using Federations Regulations made under Section 24 Education Act 2002	Yes. Soft governance federations established using Collaboration Regulations , made under Section 26 Education Act 2002	No. Schools can set up soft federations without having to follow regulations.	No. Schools can form informal collaborations without having to follow regulations.
Common goals?	All schools share common goals through a Service Level Agreement (SLA) and protocol; having single governing body allows for efficient, streamlined decision making in all areas.	All schools share common goals through SLA and protocol; joint committee can make joint decisions in some areas, but not all.	All schools share common goals through protocol; joint committee can make joint recommendations , but it is up to individual governing body to authorise plans.	All schools share common goals and can work together on ad-hoc issues and informal agreements.
Common Budget?	No, but having a single governing body allows for prompt budgetary decisions on behalf of the group of schools.	No, but if the joint strategic committee has budgetary powers delegated to it, they can make prompt budgetary decisions for the group of schools.	No, but it could make budgetary recommendations for the group, which in turn would have to be approved by individual governing body.	No. If a group of schools wish to commit budget, they would need to go back to their individual governing bodies to approve.
Shared staff?	Potential for common management and appointments which would be agreed in a simple, effective manner. Could choose to have single headteacher across group of schools.	Potential for common management positions and appointments, but need to have protocol / contract to underpin commitment to shared posts.	Potential for common management positions and appointments, but need to have protocol / contract to underpin commitment to shared posts.	Unlikely to have common management positions, but if they exist, they have to be agreed in a protocol / contract.

For further information about federations please go to: www.standards.dcsf.gov.uk/federations

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 1st November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director
Children and Young People

SUBJECT: Schools Causing Concern

WARDS: All

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 Pending a full report to Executive Board, this is seeking agreement to a revised policy for Schools Causing Concern.
- 1.2 To approve delegated powers to the Strategic Director, Children and Young People's Directorate, to exercise the statutory functions of the Council in identifying and intervening in schools causing concern where this is appropriate.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) The Strategic Director for Children and Young People be authorised to take all such actions as shall be necessary to give effect to the Council's powers and duties in relation to the education of children at Simms Cross Primary School;**
- (2) Steps are taken to consult on the replacement of the Governing Body of Simms Cross School with an Interim Executive Board, for a time period yet to be specified; and**
- (3) The Strategic Director for Children and Young People be authorised generally to exercise the powers and duties provided to the Council under Part 4 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*, and that the Constitution be amended accordingly.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The Education and Inspections Act 2006 outlines in Part 4 new powers for a Local Authority to intervene, take action and provide support to schools causing concern. This builds on existing statutory powers and good practice to ensure that every pupil is provided with the education and opportunities that they need.
- 3.2 On 4th January 2007, the DFES launched formal consultation on the revised statutory guidance on schools causing concern. This guidance supports local authorities, schools, governors and others with an interest

in school improvement to use the powers and duties provided by Part 4 of the *Education and Inspections Act 2006*.

- 3.3 To support this Act, new statutory guidance has been issued.
- 3.4 The Act gives local authorities new powers to enable earlier intervention in schools with more decisive action and more support to bear to address school underperformance and outright failure. The powers include:
 - Authorities will have a new power to force a weak school to federate or take another partner for school improvement;
 - The ability of authorities to warn under performing schools and to intervene in them when necessary is strengthened; and
 - Authorities will have a duty to consider taking action immediately whenever a maintained school fails an inspection, and must reconsider action if progress is deemed unnecessary.
- 3.5 The Local Authority is currently consulting with schools on revisions to the Local Authority procedures for identifying and intervening in schools causing concern, this with a view to a revised policy being submitted to Executive Board later this calendar year.
- 3.6 During the intervening period it is important that the Strategic Director has delegated powers to act where schools may already be presenting concerns.
- 3.7 Executive Board is asked to approve the delegation of these powers with immediate effect.
- 3.8 A small number of primary schools present concerns to the Local Authority. One school, Simms Cross, is currently in Special Measures. Due to concerns regarding the progress the school is making against milestones contained in its "Raising Achievement Plan", and having considered the guidance, and specific facts of the situation, the Strategic Director of Children and Young People is satisfied that steps need to be taken to consult the Governing Body with a view to replacing it with an Interim Executive Board (IEB). Permission is sought from the Executive Board to enable the Strategic Director to take the appropriate steps, which in this case, if approved will result in a submission being made to the Secretary of State for permission to form an IEB.
- 3.9 The school appointed a new Headteacher this year. The IEB will allow this new Head to focus on improving teaching and learning in the school.
- 3.10 An IEB is considered to be the Governing Body of the school for the period of time it is in office. It will take on all the responsibilities of the school, including the management of the budget, the curriculum,

staffing, pay and performance management, and the appointment (where appropriate) of the Headteacher and Deputy Headteacher.

- 3.11 The IEB's main functions are to secure a sound basis for future improvement in the school and promote high standards of educational achievement.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

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

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 None

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

This report has clear implications for improving the life chances of young people in the Borough. Challenging underperformance of schools is key to ensuring that all children and young people in the Borough have access to high quality teaching and learning experiences regardless of where they live.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

6.3 A Healthy Halton

6.4 A Safer Halton

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Failure to take this decision will mean that the Local Authority, in the short term, will be unable to exercise its statutory powers in relation to schools causing concern. The Local Authority's ability to secure improvement in specific schools will therefore be limited.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 All pupils are entitled to have access to high quality teaching and learning experiences. School failure and underperformance impacts negatively on pupils life chances.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

- 9.1 Strengthened powers of intervention to prevent school failure and underperformance is a key component of the *Education and Inspections*

Act 2006. Local Authorities are expected to demonstrate deployment of these powers where appropriate.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 None

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

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

There are no background documents under the meaning of this Act.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 1 November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Polling Districts/Polling Stations Review –
Appointment of Working Party

WARDS: All Wards

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires all local authorities to review their polling districts, polling places and polling stations by the end of 2007. These are defined as follows:

Polling district: The area created by the division of a constituency, ward or division into smaller parts, within which a polling place can be determined which is convenient to electors.

Polling place: The building or area in which polling stations will be selected by the Returning Officer.

Polling station: The room or building chosen by the Returning Officer where the poll takes place for each Election.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That a Working Party of elected representatives be nominated to undertake the review of polling districts and polling places, following consultation, as required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

The last major review of polling districts/polling stations took place in 2003 with the last Periodic Electoral Review. The polling districts and stations agreed at that time worked on a five year projection basis and were deemed suitable over that period of time, despite projected significant increase in properties for some wards.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006 requires the Council to carry out a review of all its polling stations by 31 December 2007 and every four years after that. The main purpose of the review is to ensure that all residents have reasonable facilities for voting.

As part of the review process we have to consult electors, councillors and other interested parties. Details of all polling districts and polling

stations are on the Council's website and notices have been placed in the Direct Link offices and any comments are required by 12 November.

On completion of the consultation exercise a report will be prepared for submission to a Member Working Party. The Working Party will make recommendations to Council who will make the final decision on the recommendations.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no specific policy implications although it is important to ensure that all electors have equal access to polling stations and places in line with the Council's priority on accessibility of services.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

Subject to the decisions on the location of polling stations there may or may not be financial implications.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton – If polling stations are situated in the right places it could encourage voter turnout for electors in this age group.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton – There are no implications arising from this report.

6.3 A Healthy Halton – The provision of polling stations in suitable locations could encourage engagement with the democratic process and in turn promote a healthy living environment.

6.4 A Safer Halton – The location of polling stations in a safe environment for all electors could encourage voter turnout.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal - There are no implications arising from this report.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

If the Working Party is not appointed the review required by the Electoral Administration Act 2006 will not be completed.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

It is important to ensure that all electors have equal access to polling stations and places in line with the Council's priority on accessibility of services.

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

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

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 1 November 2007
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community
SUBJECT: Advancing Well Strategy
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present an Advancing Well strategy along with an action plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION:

That the Executive Board:

i) Agree the strategy and the action plan

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The need for the Advancing Well strategy was identified by Older People, initially at the 'Making a Difference' Conference in 2005. In excess of 120 older people were consulted during the early stages of the development of the strategy and it was their views and opinions that guided the seven priority areas. Since then, the White Paper "Our Health, Our Care, Our Say" stipulates that all Councils should have a strategy which focuses upon the wider needs of older people.

3.2 People in the UK in general and Halton in particular are getting older. By the year 2020 the number of those over 85 is likely to double and by 2021 just over 40% of the population of England will be described as older people. This Strategy covers people aged 50 years and over.

3.3 Both the strategy and action plan have been developed in consultation with a wide range of people and other key partners to support healthy ageing within the Borough.

3.4 The action plan identifies a number of areas for development, responsibilities, consultation arrangements and resource implications, this makes it clearer about how we can develop and fund the proposals.

3.5 Subject to agreement of the Executive Board, the strategy will be launched at the future Alive and Kicking event planned for February

2008.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Department of Health White Paper Our health, our care, our say (published January 2006) outlines the importance of commissioning within a preventative framework including:

- Better prevention services with earlier intervention
- More on tackling inequalities and improving access to community services,
- Shifting resources into prevention,
- More joint commissioning between PCTs and local authorities

4.2 By linking the action plan to Key Lines Of Enquiry we can ensure that future outcomes support agreed targets that are outlined through the Comprehensive Performance Agreement.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Ensuring that there is no duplication in services and improving efficiency is a key driver and the action plan identifies key priorities and how they will be financially supported.

5.2 It is believed that prevention is the more cost effective option and supports a more sustainable future and improved outcomes. More importantly older people and their carers want services which enhance their quality of life with services being provided directly in their neighbourhoods and within their own homes.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

No implications

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The main implication relates to age discrimination legislation and ensuring that this is adhered to in the borough, allowing older people to enjoy the same opportunities as younger people within the workplace.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The Advancing Well Strategy has a clear link to Health and healthy Halton improvement targets, there will be implications on a number of targets relating to life expectancy, heart disease, cancer, equity, culture and housing.

6.4 A Safer Halton

There are clear messages in the strategy linked to safety, crime, volunteering opportunities and overall satisfaction. There are clear implications in the fact that some of the services that are helping to address the issues within A Safer Halton are only receiving short term funding.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The Advancing Well Strategy will contribute to specific targets including Housing and particularly transport, one of the key parts of the strategy is to consider the role of consultation and communication within the older population, this will have implications on shaping future services.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 By not making this change toward prevention, the financial burden on acute services will very shortly reach a critical level. Demand will outweigh supply; therefore fewer people who require services will be able to access them.

7.2 There are a number of key areas that are currently short-term grant funded. This could be a substantial risk to the future development of the strategy.

7.3 Whilst the action plan identifies how the priorities will be funded the uncertainty over the Comprehensive Spending review cannot guarantee that these can be funded in the medium and longer term. The Council will therefore need to regularly review the plan to ensure it meets the outcomes but also maximises available Council and partner resources.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Older people are often excluded from services or services are not developed in a way that ensures they can be accessed by older people. The basis of this approach is to ensure a range of services and information is in place that enables older peoples needs to be effectively met.

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

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

Advancing Well



Improving The Quality Of Life For Older People In Halton

(2008 – 2011)

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FOREWORD

This strategy is about our vision for the future of Older People in Halton. It is a vision of a better quality of life for people in their advancing years.

The good news is that people are living longer and more independently, but this means that Halton, as a Council, needs to meet the new challenges associated with an ageing population. This Strategy aims to lay down how this will be achieved.

With age comes knowledge, experience, skills and abilities and it is important that we continue to nurture these attributes and recognise the value of older people in their local community in order to build a thriving older population in Halton.

This 'Advancing Well' Strategy aims to promote more independent living and reduce the social isolation often experienced by older people by working closely with all providers of services for older people.

Older people are just as varied in their personalities and interests as other citizens and therefore the issues that concern them are varied, ranging from: transport and access to services, education and employment, good health, safe and independent living, advocacy and financial services through to the need for good communication and

information from us as a Council and from our partners about the services we provide.

The Strategy will help to develop radical new approaches to address the issues raised by older people.

The success of the strategy will depend on positive joint action between the various departments of the Council and with other public and private organisations and with local voluntary and community sector groups.

We must also ensure that older people are at the very heart of the decision-making processes about the type and variety of services they want and need.

The Council and its partners are committed to ensuring that its older people can look forward to a positive future where they can live full and independent lives and this document is the first step towards that commitment.

David Parr
Chief Executive

Councillor Tony McDermott MBE
Leader, Halton Borough Council

1.0 INTRODUCTION

People in the UK population in general and Halton in particular are getting older. Already in 2007 there are more people over the age of 65 than under the age of 18 and by 2020 the number of those over 85 is likely to double. At the same time an overall decline in mortality from acute diseases, that would typically require a prolonged stint in hospital, has been matched by an increase in people with long-term conditions that are treatable at home. Over 15 million people in England now have a long-term conditions treatable at home. This is good news, in that it means that people are living longer and more independently, but it also requires Halton, as a Council, to react to these changes in order to meet the new challenges associated with an ageing population. This Strategy aims to lay down how this will be achieved.

This 'Advancing Well' Strategy aims to promote more independent living and reduce the social isolation often experienced by older people by working closely with all providers of services for older people. The success of the strategy will depend on positive joint action internally, between the various departments of the Council, and externally with other public and private organisations and with local voluntary and community sector groups. To do this, Halton is committed to providing strong community representation for its older people and a network of services through local partnerships. This involves close links with various organisations, such as, transport, job centres, colleges, health facilities, sport and other leisure facilities, housing and other organisations involved in the delivery of services for older people.

The Strategy will help to develop radical new approaches to the way in which we deliver services for older people. These involve promoting health, well-being, quality of life, equality and independence. Such diversity of approach lies at the very heart of all the Councils strategies.

The Advancing Well Strategy concentrates specifically on those who are 50 or older and views an 'older person' as an individual who is doing more or less what they have always done. A key part of growing older is about maintaining independence. Otherwise social and, all too often, medical images of older people suggest that they are vulnerable, dependent and largely inactive.

Halton wants to ensure that its older people are able to lead independent lives that limit social isolation by providing accesses to suitable travel, work, leisure, health and social and financial care. In this way, *Advancing Well* aims to be a local response to the national identified problem of social isolation, so common among older people. Key to this is the ensuring older people have a say in the development of their local services.

2.0 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

By having an Advancing Well Strategy in place the Council recognises that getting older is a natural part of human development, and older people are just as varied in their personalities and interests as other citizens. They have the same rights of: choice, respect, equal-access to services and dignified treatment as every other member of society. Consequently, the underlying emphasis of this strategy within the borough is to provide support to older individuals, so they can maximise their own abilities and independence and reduce the potential for social isolation in later life.



Vision

Halton will become a thriving and vibrant borough where all of its residents, including its older people, can learn new skills, develop their potential and enjoy a good quality of life within a modern urban environment. All will have the opportunity to fulfil their potential, sustained by a thriving business and voluntary community, within a safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhood.

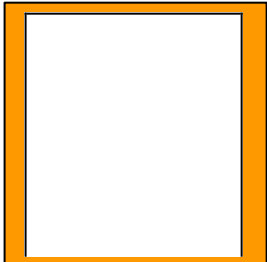
Aims

The overarching aim of Halton’s ‘*Advancing Well Strategy*’ is to reduce social isolation amongst Older People. Increasing the quality of life of our older people, especially those most excluded, will mean that Halton must develop approaches and systems that ensure Older People:

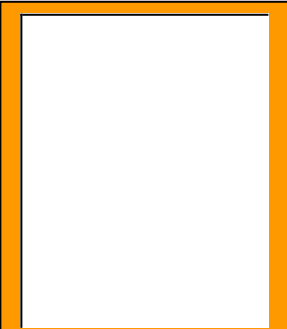
1. Are helped to get around through better **transport** links
2. Are given opportunities for **employment** whether paid or volunteer work
3. Remain in **good health** longer
4. Feel **safe** and secure and are given support to **live independently** both inside and outside their home
5. Have easy access to **advocacy services and financial advice**
6. Receive effective **communication** and **information**

There are already a number of initiatives that address issues of transport, employment, health, independence and finance and central to this is good two-way communication and sharing of information, ensuring that older people’s views on these services are taken seriously and that they are empowered to take an active role in council decision making about their local services. In this way Halton intend to ensure that Older People are valued in families, the workplace and communities throughout the borough.

“This is a strategy that enables older people to maintain fulfilled lives.”



Cllr **Ann Gerrard**
Executive Board Member
Health & Social Care



Cllr **Ellen Cargill**
PPB Chair
Healthy Halton

“This is a new way of working, and gives our older people plenty of scope to use their talents and wealth of experience. They will hopefully feel encouraged to mix and make friends in the community, while at the same time improving their health and well-being.”

Objectives

This strategy is for all older people in Halton. Older people, in common with any other group in Halton, are complex and varied. Hence, Halton's approach must be equally varied. One of the main objectives of the strategy is to produce a set of clear-targeted actions that older people have helped to inform to contribute to a reduction in social isolation and improved ageing in Halton.



To do this, over the next 3 years, Halton will reduce social isolation amongst older people by:

Objective a): Transport

Ensuring older people can travel safely around the borough and access services by providing more effective information about existing transport schemes using contacts such as the Older Peoples Empowerment Network. In addition it will improve local media releases and involve older people in future decisions about their transport requirements through the media and relevant older people's forums.

Objective b): Employment & Education

Enabling older people to find paid and voluntary work by improving access to educational activities for older people, such as IT skills, and working more closely with job centres and businesses to encourage increased employment opportunities for older people in both paid and voluntary jobs.

Objective c): Good Health

Ensuring that older people remain in good health longer by developing commissioning plans through consultation with older people to ensure they have access to a wide range of suitable arts, culture, leisure and sports activities.

Objective d): Safe and Independent Living

Ensuring older people feel safe and can live at home longer and in comfort by developing multi-agency support services and a single assessment process to determine the most effective support for individuals, and allowing freedom of choice through direct payments.

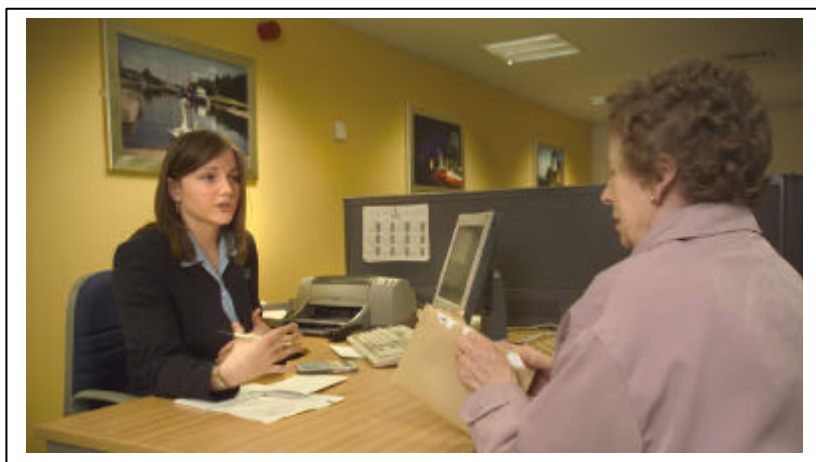
Objective e): Advocacy and Financial Services

Developing and supporting the newly formed advocacy service and providing information on financial matters, so that older people can manage their income and maximise its use, and also to maximise their income in relation to accessing direct payments and benefits in general.

Objective f): Communication and Information

Provide information on a range of activities and initiatives including: transport, employment, health and lifelong learning, financial services and so forth through the local media and Halton Direct Link and involve older people in the decision making process about services relevant to them.

Halton Borough Council intends to ensure that appropriate emphasis, planning and commitment are broadly directed across all services delivered either solely by the Council or in partnership with other organisations. In addition, it will ensure that services commissioned and provided in Halton recognise and make use of the diverse needs of older people.



3.0 CONTEXT - Where are we now?

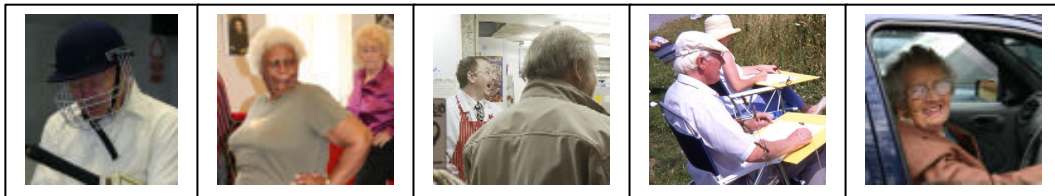
3.1 Defining Older People

Government statistics on older people will frequently use cut-off points at a variety of ages from 55 to 75 depending upon the issue under scrutiny, whereas Age Concern regards anyone over 49 as an Older Person. For the purpose of this Advancing Well strategy older people are defined as 50 and over.

The fact is that for many people significant lifestyle changes occur roughly between the ages of 50 to 75. These can involve a financial, social and psychological shift from full-time employment to having to rely upon a retirement income and frequently much less social contact. Especially so, as children will generally have departed and formed families of their own. It can also involve bereavement of friends, partners and relatives and the experience of serious personal ill health.

At this time of their life, many older people are required to take on the role of carer for a partner or parent, which can mean less leisure time rather than more. Some will continue to enjoy good health and will remain active and independent, whereas others may be less so.

Clearly, there is some considerable variation. What is not in doubt is that older people of whatever age are, currently, healthier and living longer than in any previous time and future generations are expected to continue this trend.



3.2 National Approaches Impacting on Ageing

This strategy is preventive in scope and aims to enable older people to be: valued, informed, active, healthy, secure, comfortable, and independent in order to play an important role within Halton's community. This is in keeping with a number of national and local initiatives and policies. Nationally, the Green Paper 'Independence Well-being and Choice' and the White Paper 'Choosing Health' both promote prevention.

The Innovative Forum Project (2003) stresses that good housing and facilities such as transport, leisure, entertainment, family and friends all contribute to good health among older people. In addition, it promotes what can continue to be **ACHIEVED** by older people, enabling them to be widely recognised as an important part of the local community by encouraging and facilitating older people to be:

A ctive	through improved transport links and activity programmes
C omfortable	at home and safer within their surroundings
H ealthy	physically, mentally and spiritually
I nformed	have easy access to any information of interest to them
E mpowered	to make decisions, give advice, be employed or volunteer
V alued	through consultation
E nhanced	by having a much stronger profile throughout Halton
D etermined	to be taken seriously as an important political and social force

Age Concern locally through their Halton Information Service and nationally in their document 'Dignity, Security, Opportunity' (2006) have highlighted a complexity of needs, by stressing that an individual older person may require

“financial support, a care package from the NHS and at the same time access to some life-enhancing activities such as physical activity, volunteering or education.”

Hence, services need to reflect this individuality, by supporting independence and not falling into the common trap of fostering dependency, by assuming that all old people require the same type of help and support.

This **'preventive'** approach aims not only to support those who are most at risk of losing their independence, but also those who are currently healthy, by providing a network of services and activities to enhance their quality of life.

The crucial idea is to enable individuals to engage with their own community as a means of reducing the **social isolation** that can be so prevalent in older people's lives. Viewed in this way, prevention is the principal strategy for reducing future dependency by greatly delaying the drift from low or moderate to substantial need, potentially resulting in hospital admission.

In February 2006 the Democratic Health Network issued a policy briefing entitled **A Sure Start To Later Life: Ending Inequalities For Older People**. This proposed a model placing a strong emphasis on community involvement as a means of addressing the problems of social exclusion in old age.

A common observation among older people, often referred to as the *'inverse care law,'* is that those with greatest need often receive the fewest services. Further, those who face social exclusion in mid-life are less likely to improve their situation, as they get older. Evidence also suggests that life experiences such as illness, bereavement and poverty can also create exclusion among people who previously led full independent lives. Intervention in later life can significantly reduce or prevent inequalities in advanced age.

Consequently, intervening at the earliest opportunity to promote social inclusion represents best practice. A way of achieving this is to link together all of the different services required by older people (not just those such as health and social care, normally associated with older people), through a single, easily accessible point of access.

Halton's long-term plan (subject to funding) is to have an active ageing service called A Sure Start to Later Life operating across Widnes and Runcorn. This service will provide access for all low-level preventative services and a focus for all referrals into and out of the system. Offering a self-assessment and designed to give a consistent approach to service access. In addition, the service will cater for people with different needs and abilities ranging from complex care packages to opportunities for full and part-time employment or volunteering.

The overarching idea is that all care and support packages will be holistic, offering access to: housing, social care, transport, advocacy, specialist financial advice, volunteering, lifelong learning, information about benefits, safety and the environment, all of which contribute to the overall quality of life.

Having such variety of service at a single access point, promoted through 'Local Area Agreements' with a variety of providers, would offer Halton residents, especially older people, an ideal way to become more involved in their community.

Halton Direct Link will operate as the single access point and hence first point of contact, for any older person with a query about services and events relevant to their interests and needs. This service will be linked and there will also be a directory of services that is constantly updated and supported by information officers for a speedy response.

In addition, Sure Start to Later Life will not just be a referral service. For example, it might be necessary to direct an individual to the Benefits Agency and to do this effectively transport would also have to be organised. Hence, having links between services means offering the older person a faster more efficient and supportive approach, which attempts to match all of their needs.

3.3 Local Area Agreements

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

Halton's LAA has been prepared in accordance with these principles. The five "blocks" of the LAA reflect our Community Strategy objectives and are set out below:

- Healthier Communities and Older People
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Employment Learning and skills
- Children and Young People; and
- Safer and Stronger Communities

The theme of older people is picked up in the first of these blocks, although many of the issues that affect older people are also reflected in the other blocks due to its cross-cutting nature. This strategy sets out the key priorities for older people in Halton, however, in order to achieve these priorities for older people it is essential that they form part of a wider strategy for improving life in Halton as a whole.

3.4 Local Trends and Older People

The population of older people within Halton is extremely varied. It includes a wide range of age and socio-economic backgrounds resulting in very different individual experiences of life within wards. Trends within Halton show that:

- The number of individuals over 50 is increasing from 37,044 in 2001 (last census) to a projected 60,000 by 2021.
- From birth, men can expect to live 74.1 years in Halton and women 78.1 years, both of which are less than their respective national averages for 2006 (men 77.3 years, women 81.7 years). Life expectancy also varies across the borough, to the extent that there is a gap of 6.4 years between the poorest and the most affluent areas – the largest gap nationally being 10.1 years and the smallest 2.7 years.
- A larger number of older people are helped by social services to live at home than the regional and national average. Current estimates from the 2001 census data suggest there are 16,000+ carers in Halton. Of these 3,083 are unpaid carers aged 60 and over. In Halton carers provide approximately 340,000 hours of unpaid work each week. This represents a weekly value of services equivalent to £1.8m (£93.6m annually)!
- There are 12,085 individuals in employment who are aged 50 and above. Nationally, the employment rate for men aged 50 – 64 and women aged 50 – 59 has increased. Nonetheless, the local picture in Halton is still one of high unemployment among these groups. Research has indicated that older people who were unemployed and seeking work had a significantly poorer quality of life (ESRC, Growing Older Research Programme, 1999 - 2004). A recent TUC document (One Million over-fifties 'dumped on the scrap heap,' Trades Union Congress, 11 August, 2006) highlighted the fact that over one million 50 – 60 year olds who want to work can't get jobs because employers either wont recruit older workers or are unwilling to retrain those they already have. However, since government Employment Equality Regulations came into force in October 2006, it is illegal to discriminate against individuals on the basis of age in employment and vocational training.

3.5 Local Consultation with Older People

A consultation in Halton (September 2006) revealed that older people preferred to remain independent at home for as long as possible. Older people through focus groups, workshops and meetings, produced a list of ideas they felt would either support or hinder independent living. A selection of these are shown below:

Helping people remain independent	Interfering with or preventing independence
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Better and integrated transport • Better housing advice • Locating trustworthy and reliable workmen • Adaptations and equipment • More flexible carers • Better communication • Better assessment process • Strong support network • Shopping online • Benefits and direct payments • Activities in community centres • Easily accessible local facilities 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Poor transport • Social isolation • Lack of information and choice • Few nearby facilities • Poor financial literacy • Assessment and sheltered housing delays • Family or carers overprotective • Poor coordination between health care and social care • Lack of confidence • Crime, vandalism and behavioural problems with neighbours • Routes difficult for wheelchairs

In particular the following key comments were made:

“Healthy Ageing means being able to act normal and get out and about.”

“Healthy ageing is enjoying good physical and mental health.”

“Eating the correct foods and being able to do my own shopping would help me to maintain my current health.”

“Staying healthy can be summed up in one word -TRANSPORT!!”

“We need more help in getting around.”

“I think that having access to a local doctor or dentist would help enormously.”

“I would like far more help and assistance with transport.”

The following information is taken from a local survey that was carried out in Halton during August 2006. The survey was carried out on a one-to-one basis and focused on people's perception of their own ageing, in particular their current and future health. It was deemed important to include this, as it is the thoughts and comments of the target group that we are considering with this strategy. The questionnaire was in two sections and looked at *personal profiles* and *personal views on health and service provision*.

Personal Profiles

- 94% of respondents were aged over 55.
- 74% lived alone.
- The majority of respondents were female (63%), only 8% were male while 28% didn't respond to this question.
- 78% of people classed themselves as White British, 20% Irish and 2% other.
- 76% of all people questioned classed themselves as having a limiting long-term illness.
- We received responses from 17 of the 21 wards in the borough. The majority of responses were from: Windmill Hill (13%), Grange (13%), Castlefields (10%), Ditton (9%), Hale (9%), Norton North (9%).

Personal Views on Health and Service Provision

This section of the questionnaire sought to examine through specific questions how 'Healthy Ageing' was interpreted locally:

"What does being healthy mean to you?"

Responses were varied, but the overall view was to stress the importance of remaining independent. For example 60% felt that **getting out, driving** or simply **maintaining their own independence** were the most important aspects to continued health in old age. A further 17% related the question to their own particular mental or physical health. 8% stressed **activity and exercise** and other factors such as **diet, cooking** and **meeting people** were also highlighted. One individual placed emphasis on the **environment** (locally and nationally) as crucial in maintaining health well into old age.

"What would help you to maintain or improve your current health?"

Responses were again varied and seemed dependent upon individual circumstances. 38% viewed **exercise** or **remaining active** as important in maintaining or improving health, with specific activities such as: **Tai Chi, walking, indoor** and **outdoor bowling** considered important. A further 16% of people stressed **transport** and **access to health professionals** and discussed problems getting about in the area and how they were restricted in the times they could access activities. One particular respondent said they would want *"entertainment which one can get to, as there is no bus service at night."*

When talking about access to health, local people were very concerned about travelling to GP's or health clinics and said that they would like to be able to contact GP's more easily. **Socialising, diet, getting out and about and help for carers** were the other main themes that were mentioned. Less common, but nonetheless important additional areas highlighted were: a **cleaner environment, better policing, a gardening service and volunteering opportunities**.

“Do you know the types of services that are available to you to support healthy ageing?”

71% of people answered “no” to this question, demonstrating the difficulty in successfully communicating information about services to older people. Those who answered “yes” were further asked which services they knew about - responses are shown below:

Service Provider	No. of Respondents with Knowledge of Service
Age Concern	8
Services Through Health	6
Healthy Living Programme	5
Transport	3
Halton Voluntary Action	1
Vision Support	1

“How would you find out about services or access them?”

People generally found out about services by adopting different approaches: phoning up appropriate service providers themselves, via GP surgeries, through attendance at meetings and clubs, from the local newspaper, through friends, through existing services they attend. Not surprisingly, **the vast majority (70%) wanted to be informed about future services by post**, with a further 24% favouring the telephone or being told in person. Only 3% wanted to be told by email with a further 3% preferring a text message.

“What services and support would you want /need/like to see in the future?”

Responses to this question fell into two categories – people either wanted more of what they already had or preferred access to new services. Examples of the former are: better information, social events, leisure activities, nighttime support, police and gardening. Preferred new services are: improving the environment, computer courses, supported holidays, access to luncheon groups. Irrespective of whether the spotlight was on an existing or a new service, people overwhelmingly stressed the importance of having assisted good quality and reliable transport. Indeed 45% considered public transport a future service they would want/need/like in the future.

3.5 Local programmes and initiatives

A combination of approaches is central to encouraging the lifestyle changes that are so important in countering depression and social isolation, so common in older people. Halton currently does this in the following ways:

a) Transport

Halton provides return transport from a person's home to Day Services and also facilitates service users to access other community activities throughout the day. This service is provided for those who are unable to walk or use public transport.

There is also another scheme based on the *'Travelsafe'* strategy. This highlights the importance of targeting the safety and security of those using public transport, particularly older people. It includes the use of CCTV at bus stops to make them safer, in addition to faster bus shelter repairs.

b) Employment

Halton firmly believes in fully supporting those Older People who would like to continue in employment or become involved in voluntary work. Local Jobcentre Plus network and Halton Direct can provide information on government services such as: New Deal 50 plus and New Deal for Disabled People. These schemes tackle employment barriers such as: ageism, long-term unemployment, benefit dependency, health and disability and other key issues like caring responsibilities, confidence, motivation and transport.



c) Health

Halton's "Healthy Living Programme" has a number of basic components. These stress the importance of: healthy eating, continuing physical activity through sport, maintaining creativity to keep the mind active and engaging in social, emotional, psychological and spiritual relaxation bundled together as complimentary therapies. In addition, regular health checks are strongly promoted.



d) Safe & Independent Living

A recent survey found that 87% of individuals spoken to felt that law and order was a significant factor affecting their way of life. Halton is addressing this issue with its **Blue Lamp** scheme, which involves enhancing the visible police presence throughout the borough. Its overall aim is to increase feelings of public safety in retail, residential and parks areas by reducing youth nuisance, vandalism, anti-social behaviour and graffiti.

Blue Lamp relies heavily on local people and actively welcomes community engagement in decisions about policing priorities and practice. Meetings where people can participate to inform policies and initiatives are held monthly in each of seven different sectors of the borough. It is a partnership approach that includes: voluntary and community groups, public sector agencies, local elected members, community representatives and individuals.

Halton is also fully committed to helping older people lead independent lives in their own homes for as long as possible. Key components are timely intervention and 'joined up care.' The idea is to identify potential problems and respond accordingly. Preventing the onset of a crisis frequently avoids the need for hospitalisation. Even in situations where a crisis occurs, a rapid response can quickly restore independence and well-being. Thus timely intervention not only improves outcomes for older people, but also reduces the high costs of depending upon longer-term care services.

Independent care systems in Halton are being developed and strengthened to improve prevention, treatment, rehabilitation and care. Halton's Rapid Access and Rehabilitation Service (RARS) provides assessment, treatment and care in order to help those who have been unwell, back into health and independence. Central to this, is an assessment process that enables the health and social care needs of older people to be tracked as they move through the system. This Single Assessment Process (SAP) is crucial in delivering Halton's personalised care programme.

Many of Halton's older people can currently access the following services to help them keep their independence by living at home longer:

- Home Care
- Direct payments – following an assessment of need, money from Social Services enabling people to choose who provides the support they need
- Nursing care
- Respite care
- Meals service
- Intermediate care
- Day care
- Keysafe – a secure way of letting known people have access to a person's home
- Outreach support for people with physical and sensory disabilities
- Equipment and adaptations to a person's home
- Tracking movement through sensors – Telecare
- Supported housing and housing related support services
- Supported employment for older people and adults with physical, learning or mental health problems
- Financial and benefits advice

Telecare is a particularly useful addition to Halton's routine care services. It's a set of electronic sensors designed to learn an individual's pattern of activity at home. Telecare can automatically summon help when it detects that something untoward has happened, like a serious fall or a person unable to get out of bed. After piloting limited versions of Telecare to the end of March 2006, Halton is now extending the service to the whole borough.



e) Advocacy and Financial Services

Halton has created a state-of-the-art mobile benefits and financial information system that reaches customers directly in their own homes and an advocacy service that is supportive and experienced at problem solving.

The **Benefits Express Bus** is linked electronically back to Halton's benefit system, enabling people to visit the bus and have their claims dealt with immediately. Staff from the **Benefits Express** team can also visit individuals at home in areas where the bus



is located and copy documents electronically onto their laptops, sending revised data to the benefits office. The claimant is then advised of their new entitlement. This facility has proved enormously successful with older people, especially those who are housebound or who have mobility problems. As a result of the **Benefits Express** turnaround times are typically hours or days rather than weeks.

Some comments from users:

“I couldn't believe it, I'm housebound and frequently it takes weeks to get changes in my benefit sorted, but now thanks to the 'Benefits Bus' it's all been done in a couple of hours and in my own house!”

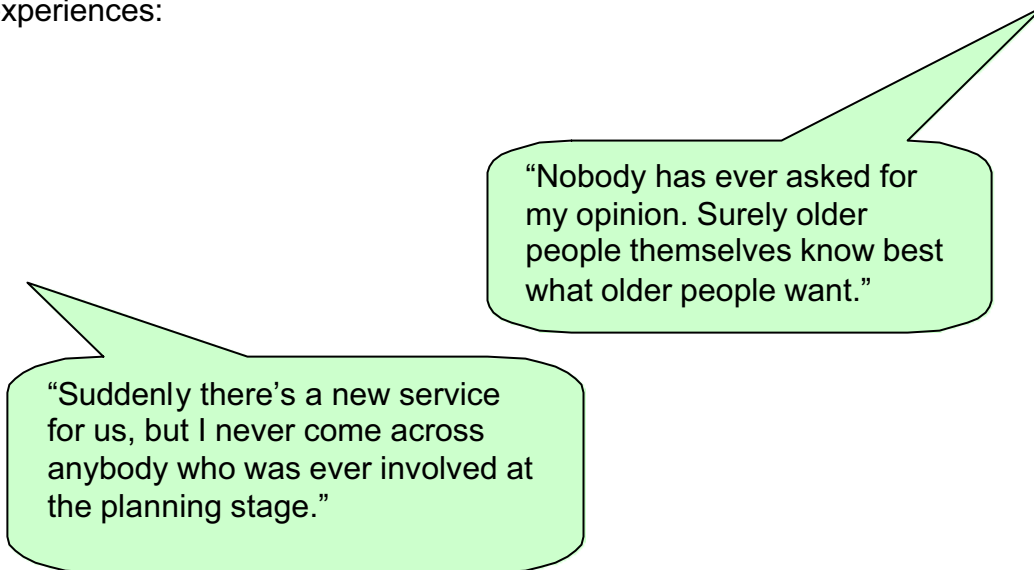
“It's really good, they photographed my benefits book, sent all my details by computer and radio to the benefits office and here I am, in no time at all, bang up to date.”

Halton PCT has supported a **Citizen and Crisis Advocacy** service for its most vulnerable and socially isolated people for the past 11 years. Under a new partnership agreement Shap Ltd will take over this role for Adults, Older People and Carers who are receiving social care and/or health services in the borough.

f) Communication & Information

This is at the very heart of ensuring that older people feel valued. It is integral to understanding an individuals needs as well as helping to support developments within the community.

At Halton Borough Council this is achieved through Halton Older Peoples Empowerment Network (OPEN) Forum and Halton's Older Peoples Champion. The Forum is under the umbrella of Age Concern Halton and consists of a committee of people aged 50 plus and their carers who act as key contacts for local older people's groups throughout Halton. In addition, it operates a database of people interested in having a 'say' on how services can be improved In this way we strive to avoid the following common experiences:

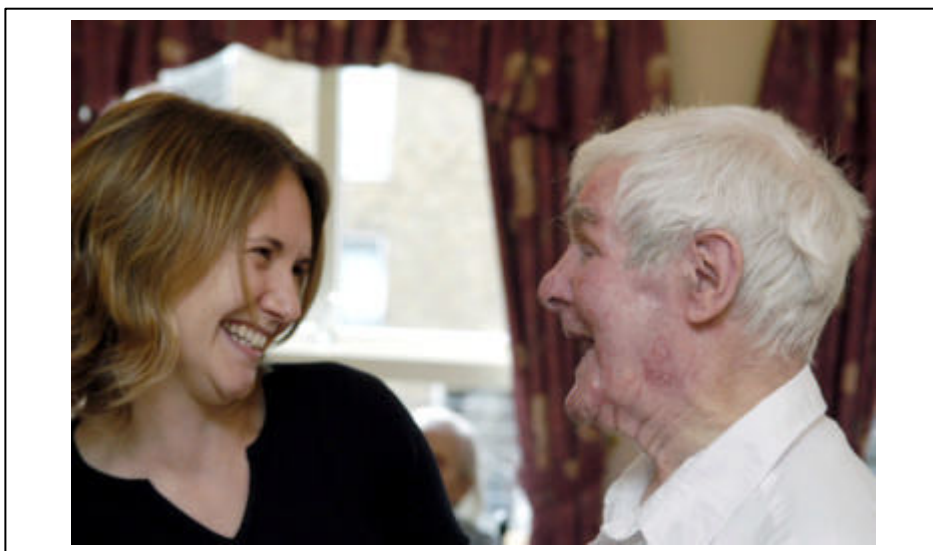


4.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The principal thrust of Halton's *'Advancing Well Strategy'* is to reduce social isolation amongst Older People. Halton will continue to emphasise the importance of: excellent transport and accessibility to services; continuing employment, volunteering, or changing employment according to circumstances and will endeavour to use its resources to assist older people to keep their independence, while maintaining a full and active role in society, even if health problems complicate matters in later life. Central to this approach is the fundamental belief that older people are entitled to dignity and respect at all stages of their lives. This means protecting the vulnerable and at all times, setting high standards for services accessible to all based on individual need, with the requirements of the individual at the centre.

In other words, the *Advancing Well Strategy* is a preventive strategy that aims to tackle social isolation in Halton on a number of different fronts in order to maintain the following:

- Personal dignity
- The ability to exercise choice and control
- The ability to make a positive contribution
- Protection from discrimination and harassment
- An improved quality of life
- Better health
- Economic well-being



In addition to those programmes and initiatives it already operates, either on its own or in conjunction with other organisations it will also look to do the following:

a) Transport

Getting around in Halton is not just about public transport, but also involves any individual feeling safe and secure within their local neighbourhood.

Halton will strive to ensure that:

- It will continue to support **Halton Community Transport** in order to provide a number of specialised transport services for residents unable to use conventional public transport. These services include: Halton Dial-A-Ride a door to door service for people with disability or mobility problems; Women's Safe Transport in Halton – an evening door to door service enabling women and girls to travel safely, free from harassment; Accessible Links To Work – enabling disabled residents to access work or training and all residents to access local hospitals, colleges and shops.
- It will provide free transport surgeries to community groups, workplaces, job agencies or any organisation that identifies lack of transport as a problem.
- Promote social inclusion by providing a wide range of community and accessible transport services and a half-fare concessionary scheme for elderly and disabled residents of the borough.
- Will consult widely through Halton OPEN, Halton Older People's Champion, voluntary agencies, and partners to improve transport policies and services.
- It will develop targeted transport information for all age groups, increase the use of the travel information team and monitor the use of community transport to cultural or sporting venues by all user groups.

Outcome

Halton is determined to ensure that older people and their representatives will be consulted in all future plans involving the street environment, crime and local transport. Halton's overall aim is to ensure that older people can travel as safely and easily throughout the borough as anyone else in order to explore or take advantage of employment, social and educational and other opportunities.

b) Employment

The trend towards early retirement, which has been prevalent over the past 50 years, has lately begun to reverse. For many, finding or remaining in employment is important, because pensions are no longer adequate, while others simply miss the social connections associated with work.

Halton will:

- Continue to work tirelessly to improve the IT, educational and physical skills of older people.
- Seek to improve the employment prospects of those older people who wish to work through its employment, learning and skills agenda.
- Strive to raise the overall employment rate by tackling pockets of unemployed such as the over 50's and those in receipt of incapacity benefit, especially in deprived wards.
- Address ageism in: Council business, employment opportunities and service delivery throughout the borough.
- Provide equality of access to services for all residents and service users, through the use of technology, imagination and hard work
- Continue to provide information on volunteering opportunities through 'Halton Direct Link' (Runcorn and Widnes).

Outcome

Halton is fully committed to tackling issues of discrimination of older people by employers and service providers and will continue to provide opportunities for older people to access a wide variety of services and activities to obtain new skills or update old ones with a view to keeping them socially and economically active enabling them to have a more financially secure and active sociable future.

c) Good Health

Incapacity in later life is not an inevitable consequence of growing older. Maintaining some form of regular exercise such as walking or swimming, in combination with a healthy diet, can strengthen muscles, reduce the risk of heart disease, stroke, osteoporosis and back pain, all of which are traditionally associated with advanced years. Improving lifestyle through a change in diet and exercise, not only makes people healthier, but also enhances their psychological well-being, making them feel and look better.

Halton will:

- Increase the profile and availability of a wide variety of Complementary Therapy workshops and awareness raising events to community groups, health professionals, carers and local people living and working in Halton.
- Through its **Arts For Health** programme, encourage creativity and self-expression, enabling people of all ages to improve their health and share experiences with others in a supportive environment.
- Support ways in which people can improve their health through a variety of physical activities. These will aim to address specific health issues such as cancer, depression, respiratory problems and coronary heart disease and stress.
- Through its **Food For Health** programme facilitate healthy living by increasing opportunities for the community to access good quality affordable food.
- Through its **Recipe For Health Referral Scheme**, GP's Practice or Community Nurses, refer people who need to be more physically active, to a 10-week activity and exercise course to improve their health.
- Through its **Carers Sanctuary Clinics** and **Recharge** programmes, offer free support to carers and those experiencing or recovering from health problems.

Outcome

By continuing to support a varied series of physical, creative and intellectual programmes and initiatives it will help older people maintain their confidence and health and encourage them to develop socially, psychologically, emotionally, spiritually and physically in a positive way in older age maintaining their independence into later life.

d) Safe & Independent Living

Among the older population, it is often the perception of crime, and the importance placed upon it, rather than the actual local picture, that makes people fearful of going out, particularly at night. Actual recorded levels of crime within Halton are low in comparison with the national average and inner city areas. Halton will continue to operate the Blue Lamp scheme and Travel safe programme in response to this. In addition people want to feel safe in their own homes and able to live comfortably with the appropriate support.

Overall, Halton’s principal aim is to maintain people’s independence by offering them greater choice and freedom over the way in which their needs are met. We aim to give older people the major voice in any decisions that are taken and responsibility for how they choose to live their lives. Halton will help them to achieve this while providing practical help, advice and support enabling them to live independently, for as long as possible in their own homes.

Halton will continue to:

- Expand its use of direct payments
- Review its falls prevention programme and extend the use of Telecare to summon appropriate help quickly in the event of falls and other problems at home.
- Ensure that vulnerable older people will continue to have access to a set of flexible housing options, through its partnership links with registered social landlords
- Provide a flexible mobile library service to those who cannot or find it difficult to visit local libraries.
- Develop extra care supported housing so that vulnerable older people will have an alternative to residential care.
- Raise awareness with front line staff in health and social care settings to identify hidden carers.
- Assist carers to meet their own, training, health, leisure, education and employment needs.
- Develop Intermediate care services to reduce the need for older people being hospitalised.
- Develop and implement the Single Assessment Process (SAP) for all professionals as a crucial component of personalised care.
- Ensure that Day care facilities such as the meals service, advocacy support and respite care services are sensitive to different cultural groups and their needs.

Outcome

Halton promises to provide high quality coordinated services for health, social care, housing and the voluntary sector that reflect the needs and cultural diversity of local people. Our future aim is to enable all older people to fulfil their personal goals, while as far as possible, maintaining a high quality of life.

Advocacy and Financial Services

Frequently, older people have difficulty keeping track of their weekly or monthly income and expenditure. As a consequence, levels of debt among those over fifty, is becoming more of a problem. Halton has plans to target this particular group and is developing financial information leaflets, which through simple examples will help individuals to keep track of their weekly/monthly income and expenditure. Many older people shy away from this kind of information or appoint others to do it on their behalf. These leaflets will help individuals to take control of their own finances and where necessary will act as a starting point for managing debt.

Halton will:

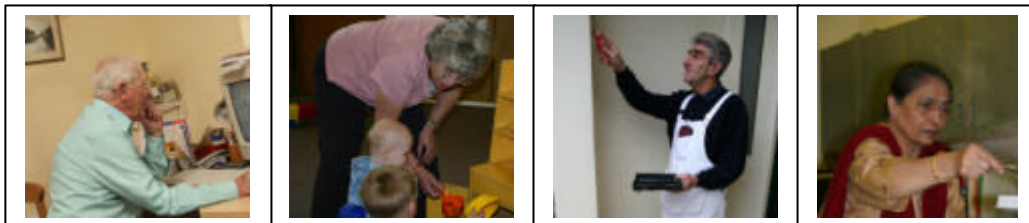
- Continue to develop its mobile benefits and pensions service to meet the needs of locally isolated people.
- Strive to maximise the take up of benefits within the borough.
- Continue to develop and target its advocacy service to meet local need.
- Strive to improve financial literacy among Adults over 50.

Outcome

Halton will continue to develop advocacy and financial services for older people to ensure they maximise their income and optimise their economic well-being.

e) Communication and Information

Halton fully recognises the importance that older people play in society and will strive to make use of their skills and experience through consultation, communication and information sharing.



Halton will strive to ensure that:

- We provide frequent information and advice on a range of areas including: social care services, health, housing, transport and lifelong learning through local media and Halton Direct Link.
- We will increase opportunities for the involvement and representation of older people in decision-making across all of our services through our Older People's Champion and Halton Open Forum. This will ensure a cross section of different voices informs our policies.
- Our Community Strategy will facilitate the involvement of different cultural groups through interpreters, regular events, targeted transport and 'own language' information.
- All information will be available in a variety of formats such as: large print, audiotape, CD or Braille on request.
- Older people can easily contact the council: in person, by letter, by e-mail, telephone or through the Internet.

Outcome

Throughout the borough, any older person or individual acting on their behalf, will have easy access from their home or local area, to information about the full range of council services. They will find all council employees engaging and helpful and they will be able to obtain efficient advice on a range of services through a single access point.

In summary, the purpose of this strategy is to move away from fostering dependency amongst older people to developing a more preventative approach by providing a network of services and activities that give older people choice and independence, the same as any other citizen.

Older people should feel they are a part of Halton's community. They need to be able to travel safely, easily and affordably throughout the borough in order to follow their interests and needs. This is an important way of reducing social isolation and is supported nationally in the Green Paper 'Independence Well-Being and Choice' and the White Paper 'Choosing Health', and by national organisations such as Age Concern. It is also supported by the 2006 Democratic Health Network 'A Sure Start to Later Life': Ending Inequalities for Older People, which places a strong emphasis on community involvement as a means of addressing social exclusion in old age. One of the main ways of achieving this is to link together all of the different services older people may wish or need to use. Halton Direct Link will act as a 'Single Access Point' to assist this process.

Excellent transportation, remaining healthy and being able to live at home as long as possible, are key issues the Council will need to consider as revealed by the responses to recent consultations. The first consultation with older people revealed the importance they place on transportation. Being able to get around to the shops, to the doctors or dentist and to see family and friends or take part in leisure activities, which they viewed as vitally important to sustaining their health and independence, enabling them to enjoy an active life that keeps them healthy.

The consultations also demonstrated another of the major obstacles facing any council – people are largely unaware of the services available to them or how to access such services. This indicates that another way of Halton assisting healthy, active ageing and prevent social isolation is to solve communication problems, not just keeping older people informed but empowering them to become involved in the decision making processes relating to the provision of services for them.

The population statistics also show that the population of older people in Halton is varied and therefore there needs to be a wide range of services to accommodate this. There are important consequences for Halton as the number of people over the age of 50 is expected to almost double by 2021. The following action plan aims to address these issues.

5.0 ACTION PLAN

Objective a): TRANSPORT– Ensuring Older People can travel safely around the borough accessing the services they require						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
1.	Provide more effective information about existing transport schemes by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ engaging with transport providers to understand current service and future plans ▪ promoting existing services ▪ identify gaps to accessing key services by consulting with older peoples groups e.g. the Older Peoples Empowerment Network (OPEN) Forum and consult with them on the progress of Local Transport Plan and feed any relevant information back to the Consultation Review Panel 	Transport Department	As per main communications strategy Ongoing	Within existing budget	As defined in the Local Transport Plan

Objective b): EMPLOYMENT- Enabling Older People to find Paid and Voluntary Work						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
2.	Improve Access to Educational Facilities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify and promote Lifelong Learning opportunities to older people and their carers, in particular IT and physical skills 	Adult Learning	Ongoing	Within existing budget	Establish baseline data for numbers of Older People accessing skills training
3.	Liaise with Job Centre colleagues to establish current processes and future plans, both National and local, relating to Older People to:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify existing baseline for numbers of over 50s employed in the Borough 	Employment Services	Ongoing	Within existing budget	Increase number of over 50s who want to be employed in the Borough.
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encourage all service providers to consider their existing equality and diversity policy and ensure all employers adhere to the new employment legislation relating to Age Discrimination 	All Services	Ongoing	Within existing budget	This is a legal requirement and must be adhered to

Objective c): GOOD HEALTH - Ensuring that older people remain in good health longer.						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
4.	Evaluate existing service provision and feedback to relevant organisations for future commissioning e.g. PCT, Education, Leisure, Social Care etc by:	Consulting with service users regarding existing programmes e.g. Complementary Therapies, Art for Health Programme, Food for Health, Recipe for Health, the Leisure Card, the Carers Sanctuary, the shopping service etc in order to plan and develop services that Older People want and can access in the future.	Healthy Living Programme	December 2007	Some services at risk due to temporary funding, however alternative funding arrangements are being explored and these will be prioritised against other outcomes and contained within existing budgets.	Consultation completed/future potential programme established by...
		Ensure engagement between Public Health, Healthy Halton Partnership, Healthy Living Programme, Older People's LIT, Culture and Leisure Directorate, Social Services and relevant voluntary sector providers such as the Food Partnership	Healthy Living Programme	Ongoing	Within existing budget	Improve communication, service provision, monitoring and value for money

Objective c): GOOD HEALTH - Ensuring that older people remain in good health longer.						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
5.	Develop commissioning plans that support low-level access to Arts, culture, leisure, sport etc.		Contracts Department	Plan developed by Jan 08	Within existing budget	Identify and respond to gaps in service and activities for over 50s in particular ensure culture, leisure, art and sport are clearly identified in commissioning plans Monitor effectiveness of cross sector working

Objective d): SAFETY AND INDEPENDENT LIVING - Ensuring older people can live independently at home in comfort						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
6.	Provide a wide range of single and multi-agency services for access by older people to assist them in feeling safe and remaining independent whilst living at home e.g.:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Create a multi-agency falls group to develop a falls strategy for the borough to include falls training to professionals in Halton and continuing support to falls clinic 	Falls (sub) Group	Ongoing	Service due to be mainstream funded through the PCT from April 2008	<p>Reduce the number of emergency admissions to Hospital relating to falls</p> <p>Reduce the number of falls recorded in a Residential or Nursing setting</p>
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Secure funding for chair-based exercise service. 	Culture & Leisure/HLP	Ongoing	Temporary funding until March 2008. Thereafter these will be prioritised against other outcomes and contained within existing budgets.	Funding agreed by April 2008
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Continue to develop links to the Housing Strategy 	Housing	Ongoing		Refer to Housing Strategy

Objective d): SAFETY AND INDEPENDENT LIVING - Ensuring older people can live independently at home in comfort						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop services based on need as outlined in the Intermediate Care evaluation and continue to support the Intermediate Care Partnership ▪ Evaluate and roll out the second phase of the Single Assessment Process across key stakeholders 	<p>Intermediate Care Executive Board</p> <p>Single Assessment Process Co-ordinator</p>	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>July 2007</p>	<p>Currently funded through Social Services</p> <p>Review roll out costs and fund from within existing budgets and via the PCT.</p>	<p>See Intermediate Care evaluation report August 2006</p> <p>Improve efficiency and consistency of service delivery for service users across the whole system.</p>

Objective e): ADVOCACY AND FINANCIAL SERVICES - Ensure Older People have easy access to advocacy and financial advice						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target
7.	Develop and support the newly formed Advocate service in particular.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monitor and evaluate the Advocate service and identify unmet need to feed into the future commissioning process 	Contract Monitoring Officer	Quarterly Basis	Review effectiveness and prioritise against other outcomes.	<p>Increase capacity for existing Advocacy service</p> <p>Identify gaps and report into commissioning process</p>
8.	Ensure financial support services are fully available to Older People and their carers in particular:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ensure information is available on benefit entitlement through all parts of the system. ▪ Ensure joined-up approach to maximising income, particularly in relation to number of Older People accessing Direct Payments ▪ Ensure increase in take-up of benefits by Older People through Age Concern Halton, Citizens Advice Bureau, the Law centre 	Social Services	<p>Ongoing</p> <p>Ongoing</p>	Within existing Budgets	Increase number of Older People accessing benefit entitlements, direct benefits and other financial support

Objective f): COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION – Ensuring Older People are valued, treated with respect and kept informed by involving them in Decision Making processes relating to local services

Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target/Outcome
9.	Establish more effective marketing and communications in relation to older people's services by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Conducting a mapping exercise of all services, initiatives and activities available to Older People in the borough especially in relation to transport, employment, health, safe and independent living, advocacy and financial services and promote a directory of services ▪ Establish a user/client satisfaction baseline ▪ Set up monitoring systems to agree and evaluate the effectiveness of information provision/marketing plan/communications strategy 	<p>Older People's Local Implementation Team and Sure Start to Later Life</p> <p>Research & Intelligence Unit</p> <p>Healthy Ageing Sub-Group</p> <p>Marketing Sub-Group</p>	<p>Dec 07</p> <p>Sept 2007</p>	<p>Within Existing Sure Start to Later Life budget</p> <p>Within existing budget</p> <p>Within existing budget</p>	<p>Ensure clear and up-to-date information is available</p> <p>Support enhanced access to services, activities and information for older people</p> <p>Borough wide home survey with a possibility to use Citizens Panel conducted and assessed by end of September 2007</p> <p>Report to Older People's LIT/Health SSP on a quarterly basis and take corrective action if evaluation determines that information provision is ineffective</p>

Objective f): COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION – Ensuring Older People are valued, treated with respect and kept informed by involving them in Decision Making processes relating to local services						
Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target/Outcome
10.	Establish a joined-up approach to information sharing	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Identify a panel to consist of representation across all Directorates and key stakeholders to form a communications group 	Communication Department	October 2007	Time related resource and capacity issues to be addressed And to be re-prioritised against other outcomes and contained within existing budgets.	Improve communication links between key stakeholders and Directorates
		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish a dignity Champion role across partner organisations. 	Older People's LIT	April 2007	Within existing budget	5% increase in service user satisfaction
11.	Involve Older People in the planning of future services and identify any unmet need by:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> continuing to develop Halton Older People's Empowerment Network, Older People's Local Implementation Team and Healthy Halton Partnership Holding Older Peoples Fairs, conferences and workshops 	Age Concern and Halton Older People's Empowerment Network (OPEN) and Older People's LIT Sure Start to Later Life	May 07 – March 08	Alternative funding arrangements are being explored and these will be prioritised against other outcomes and contained within existing budgets.	<p>Improve diversity within the Older People's Empowerment Network</p> <p>All identified gaps fed into the commissioning process or other relevant area e.g. transport, employment etc</p>

Objective f): COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATION – Ensuring Older People are valued, treated with respect and kept informed by involving them in Decision Making processes relating to local services

Action No.	Action		Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resources Required	Output/Target/Outcome
12.	Ensure information about services is accessible to Older People in as many different formats as possible	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Carrying out an audit of Existing information provision to look for style, language, format etc and develop a protocol for information provision across all services and partners 	Individual Lead Officer for all services Communication	By April 2008	As part of individual service plans	<p>Increase use of all services by 5% within one year from establishment of marketing plan</p> <p>All new information to be in the newly agreed format</p>

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 1 November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director(s) - Environment and Health and Community.

SUBJECT: Travellers- Provision of Transit Site.

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To bring Members up to date on the provision of a transit site and also to provide feedback following consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:- The Executive Board agree to the strategy and process outlined in paragraph 4.1 to 4.4 of this report

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Executive Board first considered this matter at their 19 July, 2007 meeting.

The Board in considering the report noted that, since December 2006, the approach to Travellers had been to utilise a length of unused busway as a tolerated/accepted unauthorised encampment for travellers, working with them and managing the situation as opposed to chasing them from site to site. It was considered that this approach had been largely successful, with savings for the Authority in the region of £200,000, and had led to increased co-operation between the Council and the Police in respect of the small number of other unlawful encampments that had occurred.

Members were advised that the site currently being used did not offer a permanent solution and there was a need to identify an alternative "transit" site location if the current success was to be built upon.

Following research, a preferred site had been identified in accordance with the Needs Study set out in the report, next to an established permanent private caravan site between Warrington Road and the Manchester Ship Canal. This was land that was in Council ownership presently forming an area of informal greenspace not generally accessed or used by the public.

The financial implications were outlined for the Board's consideration and an estimate of the ongoing revenue implications were attached to the report.

The Board identified that the following issues needed to be progressed:

- There was a need for a written protocol between Halton Borough Council and the police formally setting out the agreement and responsibilities of each organisation.
- The rents needed to be reassessed in order that the site could be cost neutral in revenue terms.
- Further detail was to be sought regarding the costs involved.

The Board RESOLVED:

That

- (1) a detailed scheme be worked up to tender to confirm delivery within the set budget;
- (2) a further report on funding be presented to the Executive Board once tenders have been received;
- (3) subject to this being confirmed, formal permissions/consents be applied for; and
- (4) the Urban Renewal PPB be invited to review the approach proposed by the Executive Board and report back to the Executive Board on its findings.

- 3.2 Subsequent to the Boards consideration of the matter, a report was taken to the UR PPB to seek their views on the process and approach taken in locating a potential site.

The Policy Board after much debate resolved that:-

- before the provision of a site in Halton is progressed consideration should be given to the prospect of provision in neighbouring and nearby Boroughs where better alternatives may be available and;
- that assurance from Police should be sought , in respect of the use of their powers to ensure that unauthorised encampments are rigorously enforced against, should they occur.

- 3.3 Although it would be unreasonable for this Authority to express a view on the suitability of sites in other Districts, Members may wish to be appraised of the current position with adjacent and nearby Councils. Each Authority's existing provision is set out in the Needs

Study previously reported, however, following on from discussion with officers from the individual Authorities, it would appear that:-

St Helens are progressing with the provision of a 17 pitch transit site. The funding and permissions are already in place and work is expected to commence early in 2008.

Chester City Council are looking at a partnership to provide a transit site.

Congleton Borough Council, have no current plans to expand provision beyond their current site.

Ellesmere Port & Neston, Vale Royal and Crewe and Nantwich Councils as part of delivering their future Development Plan say they will have to assess need. It is understood that Vale Royal will be appointing consultants shortly to commence this work.

Both Warrington & Macclesfield are in the process of identifying land/sites.

The Merseyside Authorities are in the process of commissioning a "needs study".

- 3.4 Work on establishing the capital and revenue costs for the transit site have been progressed and detailed plans produced. The plans, which include for 14 pitches, each with its own water and electricity supply, and toilet and shower facilities have been shown to the Travellers presently located on the tolerated site. (Plans will be displayed at the meeting) The capital costs breaks down into two parts, Ground Works (Civil Engineering) and Buildings. The first element of costs, which involves site levelling, formation of internal roads, drains and pitches as well as, boundary treatment has been provisionally priced at £330,000.

The provision of buildings will follow on from the ground works and prices for this element of work are still awaited. The final costing of the "building" work will depend on the final specification agreed. Early indications are that the buildings should be deliverable within the original budget ceiling of £500,000

Notwithstanding the capital costs, the site will have to be maintained and managed.

On going work as suggested that the management and operational costs of the transit site may result in a pitch charge of above the £44.87 currently being levied of at the Riverside permanent site, if revenue costs are to break even.

There may be other management options available, including exploring the possibility of the site being managed through a

Housing Association, which could introduce efficiencies and reduce running costs. Again these are being explored.

- 3.5 A draft protocol has now been developed and shared with the Police which articulates and re-affirms the working arrangements between the two organisations and the commitment of the Police to utilise their powers to move on unauthorised incursions.

4.0 NEXT STEPS

- 4.1 In order to achieve the timetable for relocating the existing tolerated site it will be necessary to seek formal planning permission within the next 6 weeks. It is suggested that to avoid consultation periods clashing with the Christmas holiday period this application should be submitted in early November.

- 4.2 Running in parallel with this process discussions need to be commenced with organisations who could potentially manage the site. Once these avenues have been explored a further report can be brought to the Board giving surety on the revenue implications. Finalised capital costs will also be known at this stage.

- 4.3 The draft protocol with the Police should be implemented across the Borough.

- 4.4 Formal tenders will be sought for the development of the site shown on the plans to
Displayed.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton Borough Council

The provision of a well managed and monitored site will assist with ensuring appropriate welfare for the children within the Traveller community.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton Borough Council

There are no specific implications for this priority

5.3 A Healthy Halton

The provision of a regulated facility will reduce the number of unauthorised incursions and help reduce the potential for tipping/untidy sites and the implications which go with such nuisance.

5.4 A Safer Halton

The provision of a transit site will enable the Council in conjunction with the Police to react positive and quickly in removing unauthorised incursions elsewhere in the Borough.

5.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal

The provision of an authorised site will enable the current tolerated site to be relocated and development sites within Castlefields to be brought forward.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 Evidence suggested that the provision of a site has reduced the number of incursions elsewhere and enables the situation to be better managed. It cannot, however, be totally discounted that once the facility is at capacity that other incursions and costs for dealing with them, will occur.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 Local consultation will be carried out as part of the planning process before the proposal is formally considered. Provision of a transit site in addition to the existing permanent site would make a significant contribution to the Council’s efforts to support equality and diversity.

8.0 BACKGROUND PAPERS

Document	Place of Inspection	Officer
Traveller Site Needs Study	Rutland House Halton Lea	Phil Watts
Site Assessment	Rutland House Halton Lea	Phil Watts

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 1 November 2007

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Culture & Leisure Services – External Assessments

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To receive and comment on the Halton Regional Cultural Stakeholder Commentary and the IDeA'S validation of the self assessment framework 'Towards an Excellent Service' (TAES) of the Culture and Leisure Services Department.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 1) The reports be received;
- 2) The action plan included in the TAES report be endorsed;
and
- 3) Implementation of the Action Plan is monitored by the Employment, Learning and Skills PPB.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Department for Culture, Media and Sport (DCMS) tasked Government Offices and regional cultural agencies to complete Regional Commentaries with all upper tier Local Authorities as part of the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA).

3.2 The agencies involved were: -

- Arts Council England – North West
- Culture Northwest
- Government Office North West
- Museums Libraries and Archives North West
- Sport England North West.

3.3 The process is carried out against a standard benchmark and is intended to:

- a) Promote closer alignment of national, regional and local cultural objectives.

- b) Strengthen and extend relationships between cultural agencies and local authorities.
 - c) Achieve better, more effective cultural provision from a more unified approach to strategic and improvement planning.
- 3.4 The Regional Commentary is attached as Appendix 1. It was produced after desktop research, consideration of relevant strategies, plans, and reports and in depth meetings with relevant staff within Culture and Leisure Services and the Corporate Policy Unit.
- 3.5 In general it is a very positive Commentary. It concludes that there is a positive relationship with the regional cultural agencies and that the Council has worked in partnership with them to address local ambitions and priorities. The agencies recognised models of regional and national good practice and felt that Halton's many cultural successes should be given a higher profile both regionally and nationally. It believes that there is strong leadership, strong commitment to community consultation, effective partnership working, a strong commitment to performance management and that Halton has been successful in creating new facilities and improving existing facilities. The Commentary identifies key strengths and areas for development.
- 3.6 The Towards an Excellent Service (TAES) framework provides Culture and Leisure Services with an approach to assessing the quality of its services and is beginning to be used widely by local authorities across the country. It is likely to take the place of the CPA in 2009 when the CAA is introduced. The assessment is based on the eight themes of leadership, policy and strategy, community engagement, partnership working, use of resources, people management, standards of service and performance measurement and learning.
- 3.7 The self-assessment was carried out in January 2007, and has then been validated by the Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA). The validation involved extensive desk research and interviews with members, staff, partners and stakeholders. From this an objective report and an Action Plan for Improvement is produced. These are attached as Appendix 2.
- 3.8 Again the report is very positive. It concludes that the Service is good, very self-aware, well led, has a committed, loyal and talented workforce and has embedded performance management well across the organisation. It was the view of the IDeA that the self-assessment process had been carried out in a well-managed, rigorous and worthwhile manner which identified a number of key opportunities and challenges to drive the service to further improvement. The action plan does identify issues that are relevant to the whole of the authority, particularly in the area of equality and

diversity.

- 3.9 Both pieces of work identified areas of good practice and improvement that they felt worthy of being shared with a wider audience. To that end the IDeA/DCMS have commissioned a case study of Halton's Culture and Leisure Services, and have asked the Operational Director, Culture and Leisure Services to sit on the DCMS's Cultural Services Improvement Project – Sounding Board.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 No issues were identified that would require a fundamental change in policy.

5.0 **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 No actions were identified that required additional funding. All areas of improvement can be achieved using existing budgets.

6.0 **IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.2 **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.4 **A Safer Halton**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

Both reports recognised the contributions to the Council's priorities as itemised in the Service Plan and Community Strategy. There were no proposals for change.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Failure to maintain and improve services would impact on the Council's overall performance assessment.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 Recommendations for improvement are made in the Action Plan of the IDeA's report.

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

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

Appendix 1




GOVERNMENT OFFICE
FOR THE NORTH WEST

HALTON REGIONAL CULTURAL STAKEHOLDER COMMENTARY

Date of Commentary Meeting: 2 March 2007

Date Completed: 30 March 2007



Regional Director
For the Government Office North West

For Halton Borough Council

**REGIONAL CULTURAL STAKEHOLDER COMMENTARY:
HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**

DCMS has tasked Government Offices and regional cultural agencies to complete Regional Commentaries with all upper tier Local Authorities.

The Regional Commentaries process, carried out against a standard benchmark, is intended to: promote closer alignment of national, regional and local cultural objectives; strengthen and extend relationships between cultural agencies and local authorities; and achieve better, more effective cultural provision from a more unified approach to strategic and improvement planning. Regional Commentaries are not an inspection and are not scored for Audit Commission CPA purposes.

This commentary is the result of work between a team from Arts Council England NW, Culture Northwest, Government Office NW, Museums, Libraries and Archives NW, Sport England NW and Halton Borough Council.

We are very grateful to Halton for the all the work and support they gave in the production of this Commentary.

Regional Agencies Commentary Team:

Chris Chadwick – Museums Libraries and Archives North West
Clare Connor Museums Libraries and Archives North West
Kevin Cooke - Government Office North West
Jane Dawson - Culture Northwest (not at meeting)
Chris Dodd - Sport England
David Gaffney - Arts Council England (not at commentary meeting)
Janet Matthewman - Government Office North West
Anthony Preston - Arts Council England
Paul Ward – Sport England

Halton BC Commentary Team

Howard Cockcroft - Culture and Leisure Operational Director
Sue Davies – Cultural Manager
Janet Guy - Team Support Manager
John Hatton – Leisure and Community Services Manager
Sue Lowrie – Sports and Recreation Manager
Rob MacKenzie – Policy and Performance Operational Director
Paula Reilly-Cooper – Library Services Manager
Richard Rout – Performance Management Officer (Policy and Performance)

1. ACHIEVEMENT OF OBJECTIVES AND IMPROVEMENT

1.1 Work with the regional agencies

1.1.1 Halton has a positive relationship with all three regional cultural agencies and has worked in partnership with them to address local ambitions and priorities.

1.2 Arts Council England: (ACE)

1.2.1 The main contact between ACE and Halton is through the annual partnership meeting. The principle relationships are with Halton's Cultural Director, the Cultural Manager and the Arts Education Development Manager in the Children and Young People's Directorate. The strategic funding agreement with ACE has a focus on:

- arts and creative learning with the education sector and links with the Brindley Arts Centre
- arts and health partnerships with the PCT.

1.3 Museum, Libraries, Archives North West (MLA)

1.3.1 Halton BC has had limited individual contact with MLA North West over the last year during the reorganisation. The Council would welcome stronger links in the future.

1.3.2 Good relationships have been maintained with Halton BC through the Regional Society of Chief Librarians meeting. There is also good partnership working with the Arts Development Manager within Children's Services.

1.4 Sport England (SE)

1.4.1 Halton BC welcomes the ongoing strong support and partnership from Sport England and Merseyside Sport. The Sport and Physical Activity Alliance (SPAA) is now operational. It was noted that the Alliance could have been launched sooner, but for Sport England's delay in establishing the grant aid rules for SPAAs.

1.5 Culture within key strategies

1.5.1 The Culture and Leisure Service Plan shows how the services contribute to the priorities of Halton's corporate and community plans. The plan is structured around contribution to the delivery of 6 corporate priorities:

- A Healthy Halton
- Halton's Urban Renewal
- Halton's Children and Young People
- Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

- A Safer Halton
- Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency

1.5.2 The plan is well positioned in the context of regional and national strategies and priorities including Liverpool Capital of Culture and the Olympics 2012.

1.5.3 Work is ongoing on the development of individual service strategies. Processes have been put in place to develop an arts strategy for Halton and the Halton Sports Strategy has recently been produced.

1.5.4 Cultural services partnership with other internal services is strong. Cross service working is supported by a strategic group of senior managers from across the Council.

1.5.5 Halton is recognised by the agencies as a model of regional and national good practice in its work with schools. Culture features strongly in the authority's Every Child Matters Agenda

1.6 Local Area Agreement (LAA)

1.6.1 Halton were in Round 3 of Local Area Agreements. The outcomes and priorities of the cultural and leisure service strategy informed the LAA negotiations. Although there are only a limited number of specific cultural targets, the cultural sectors will contribute to the delivery of LAA outcomes.

1.6.2 Cultural targets include increased physical activity; the increased number of green flag parks; and residents' satisfaction with local parks and open spaces. There is a focus on enhancing the health and well being of vulnerable and seldom heard groups including older people, children and young people and carers.

1.6.3 The LAA includes as a reward target the percentage of adults in Halton participating in at least 30 minutes moderate exercise 3 times a week as measured by the Active People's survey.

1.7 Achievements and outcomes for the community

1.7.1 Cultural and Leisure Services in Halton can demonstrate significant outcomes and achievements for the benefit its communities. Examples include

- The new Brindley Arts Centre. Winner of 4 national awards and visitor figures exceeding targets.
- The increase in library use supported by the new Widnes Library, a refurbished Ditton library and the new mobile service.
- The library service has recorded the highest ever user satisfaction rates in the country
- Very successful reader development strategy and literature festival

- The continuing success of Norton Priory which opened a new conference centre last year and which extended public access to Halton Castle.
- The new youth activity and play facilities in Phoenix Park which include a skate park, boulder park, multi use games area, and children's play area and a new visitor centre.
- The upgrading of Leisure facilities through the contract with DC leisure which included improvements at Brookvale Leisure Centre, Kingsway Leisure Centre and Runcorn Pool.

1.7.2 It was agreed that Halton's many cultural successes should be given a higher profile both locally and within the council; and regionally and nationally. The agencies agreed to support Halton BC with this ambition and record and disseminate case studies through the North West Cultural Observatory.

1.8 Service Improvement

1.8.1 In the recently published 2006 CPA results Halton BC retained its top 4 star category with the direction of travel rated as "improving well". The Council was only one of two in the country which improved its score in the culture block from 2 to the maximum 4. This performance was all the more impressive as it bucked the national trend for a reduction in culture block scores. DCMS want to record and disseminate how Halton BC achieved this success.

1.8.2 Halton BC is committed to using service standards and benchmarking where they exist. However as recognised in the TAES self assessment the Council does not yet have a comprehensive set of service standard for culture and leisure

1.8.3 Norton Priory is a registered museum and is currently applying for accreditation.

1.8.4 Halton BC is using the Sports National Benchmarking Service to evaluate use of its leisure facilities. The survey is helping the Council to understand where progress is being made and where improvements are needed: the main area below par is the service for older adults at one leisure centre. Halton BC currently has 3 Quest awards for its facilities

2. POLITICAL AND MANAGERIAL LEADERSHIP

2.1 The agencies agree that the senior officers in Halton BC demonstrate strong leadership and partnership across the authority and are well linked into and influential within regional and sub regional networks. The Culture and Leisure Operational Director currently chairs the Merseyside Chief Leisure Officers Group and Halton BC also manages and chairs the Merseyside Cultural Forum which brings cultural portfolio holders and cultural directors together.

- 2.2 TAES reported that relationships between members and officers are very positive and supportive. Responsibility for culture and leisure services is shared between the Quality and Performance portfolio holder and the Environment Leisure and Sport Portfolio holder with community and cultural interests also being represented by the Community, Neighbourhood Management portfolio holder and the Deputy Leader. Halton BC see the fact that portfolio holders do not directly align with services as a real strength, as it means more of the Board have a direct understanding of cultural issues. Culture is high on the agenda in Halton BC.
- 2.3 The cultural agencies have little direct engagement with members and portfolio holders.
- 2.4 It was recommended that the north west cultural agencies should attend the Merseyside Cultural Forum on an annual basis to familiarise members with their policies and programmes and to ensure that the work is better informed by local authority concerns and priorities.
- 2.5 The Arts Council suggested that the induction lunch that they organise quarterly for new officers could also be developed to meet the needs of new portfolio holders.
- 2.6 The planned conference to increase cultural agency support and engagement with members was welcomed. This will be organised by Culture NW in the autumn.
- 2.7 Halton BC was also keen to see more regular involvement of the cultural agencies in the Merseyside Chief Leisure Officers Group. Sport England regularly attend; the Arts Council, MLA and other agencies less so. It was agreed that attendance and representation would be better co-ordinated. Scheduling issues would be resolved and agencies would represent each others interests where capacity issues restricted attendance.

3. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

- 3.1 Halton BC Culture and Leisure has a strong commitment to community consultation and uses a range of tools and methods to engage and consult with the community. These include surveys, comments and feedback forms – some of which are targeted on the needs of priority groups including carers. Children and young people have been consulted on the improvement of services through panels and for example book bars in the library service.
- 3.2 There is a high commitment to diversity and equality issues and to promoting strong and cohesive communities. The service is responding to the needs of migrant workers from Poland and from the other new communities through the use of focus groups

- 3.3 Halton BC has a very low BME population and has at times struggled to reach and consult with groups locally; sub regional consultation has proved more effective.
- 3.4 There is no Arts Council revenue funded arts organisation in Halton and the voluntary and community arts infrastructure is relatively underdeveloped. Halton has established and supports a number of groups including the RAW singers, the youth theatres, a range of writing groups for different ages including the 12 – 16 Pen and Inkers creative writing group.
- 3.5 Markmakers, Halton's contemporary arts collective has grown strongly over the last 5 years with council support and has exhibited at the Brindley and in Preston and St Helens. There is strong support for local creative professionals through artist mentoring, surgeries, training and small grants.
- 3.6 Norton Priory explicitly calls itself a community museum and has good relationships with a range of local groups and agencies. It targets disadvantaged groups and offers a free pass to residents in deprived neighbouring areas.
- 3.7 Cultural and Leisure Service staff regularly attend area panel meetings where local people can ask questions and make demands of the service.
- 3.8 The design of Phoenix Park is an excellent example of community involvement. The skate park was designed by users and the play equipment was chosen by local play groups.
- 3.9 The Halton Sports Partnership is proactive and has the active support of the Leisure Service. It will be important to harness its energies to those of the SPAA. The Halton Schools Sports Partnership is also active in ensuring that the School Sports Partnership links effectively to other services.
- 3.10 A schools competition manager is based in the Leisure Department to animate local sports competition. This is working well.
- 3.11 The Rugby League Student Games are to be held in Halton at the end of April 2007. Widnes "Vikings in the Community" does good work in schools.
- 3.12 Areas for improvement identified through the TAES self assessment and external validation include
 - More consistent capturing of effective informal community engagement to inform service improvement
 - More detailed profiling of people using the services and non users

- 3.13 The Service has identified the need to continue to improve its community marketing and communication. The public do not always know that the service, event or facility which they enjoy is provided by the Council. A marketing and media review of cultural services is included in the service plan

4. PARTNERSHIP WORKING

- 4.1 Halton shows a commitment to improving cultural services and opportunities for local people through effective partnership working.
- 4.2 The arts development programme at the Brindley has contributed to borough priorities and attracted substantial additional funding for arts activity through partnership with Surestart, Connexions, SPLASH, Halton's Early Years Team, Halton's Healthy Living programme and the PCT.
- 4.3 Halton BC works in partnership with Arcane Dance, which is in residence at the Brindley. The company is helping the arts centre achieve its targets for bringing dance to more young people.
- 4.4 Halton is strengthening the mechanisms by which sport and culture informs and supports the delivery of the Local Area Agreement. The new sports strategy places particular emphasis on links to the Halton Strategic Partnership and its sub groups. The Sports and Physical Activity Alliance is represented on the LSP. A cultural partnership is also being established by the Council, which in time will be managed and run by local people and which it is hoped will have a place on the LSP.
- 4.5 Halton BC has not formed a Trust for the operation of its leisure facilities but has a contract for the management of three facilities with DC Leisure. It has one dual use site – Brookvale High School. Senior councillors believe that the most efficient working arrangements can be made through internal partnership and that it would be harder to achieve the council's social objectives if the service is permanently outsourced to a Trust.
- 4.6 Halton BC has developed an innovative partnership with Newham BC the host borough of the London Olympics. The partnership will develop a youth exchange programme and use the Olympics as a catalyst to address worklessness.
- 4.7 Halton BC is recognised as outstanding in terms of its arts and education work. The authority has the highest performance in relation to arts mark in the country (57%) and the council has developed an "Arts Mark training model". Schools have a 100% reaccreditation rate and are encouraged to become part of the Arts Learning Consortium at regional level. The authority and its schools are very active in regional

arts education initiatives including the Arts Learning Consortium and the Creative Action Research Awards.

- 4.8 Both Norton Priory and the Catalyst Museums are members of the Cheshire Museums Forum. Both are involved in hosting teachers as part of the MLA Strategic Commissioning (Learning Links) programmes
- 4.9 Norton has a strong partnership with the Halton Conservation Project, a group of adults with learning difficulties who have day care facilities based at Norton and who do a range of voluntary work
- 4.10 Libraries are involved in a joint purchasing consortium with Cheshire and participated in the development of Merseyside Libraries joint web site.
- 4.11 Halton BC is committed to supporting the successful delivery of Capital of Culture and maximising the benefits for its residents. The Halton commentary team felt that the opportunities to present a Merseyside offer through Capital of Culture had not been fully exploited e.g. the opportunities offered by the World Student Games in Halton April 07. It was felt that community sport had a low profile in the Creative Communities programme and the focus of the community sports post was primarily on Liverpool. The cultural agencies agreed that they would work to secure a greater engagement of the Merseyside local authorities in the Capital of Culture programme and to ensure that the sports post is supporting work across Merseyside.

5. RESOURCE GENERATION AND INWARD INVESTMENT

- 5.1 Halton has been successful in creating new facilities and improving facilities through lottery funding.
- 5.2 Over the last year Victoria Park has been redeveloped through a Heritage lottery grant. Norton Priory opened an eco friendly conference centre and opened up more of Halton Castle to the Public with a grant from HLF. Catalyst received a grant of £650,000 from the Millennium Commission to create a new sub-regional science centre. Big Lottery Funding was used to open 2 artificial turf pitches and other sports facilities linked with schools.
- 5.3 In the service plan Halton identifies the impact of lottery funding being “rapidly non existent as a source of capital funding” as a major issue which will curtail sport and cultural development.
- 5.4 The Brindley Arts Centre received arts lottery capital investment. ACE gave revenue support to The Brindley during its first year of operation. Halton is disappointed that revenue support is not available on a long term basis.

- 5.5 Halton receives a very small number of grants for the arts compared with other authorities. Only 2 applications were received from Halton groups last year. Support for capacity building to local organisations and assistance with grant applications would be worthwhile.
- 5.6 There are a large number of culture and leisure posts dependent on external funding. The future of the posts will be dependent on the outcomes of the Comprehensive Spending Review and the future of Neighbourhood Renewal Funding. 20 posts in the Kingsway Learning Centre and Widnes Library will be affected. 75% of sports development posts are externally funded. The authority is commissioning impact evaluation to inform its strategy on the basis of a 25% reduction in NRF. Budgeting will have to make provision for redundancy payments post NRF
- 5.7 Halton BC has made savings through efficiency saving and through increasing charges above inflation, however to increase access charges have been scrapped or reduced in some areas including libraries charges for young people and sports pitches hire. The Halton Show was not staged in 2006 to save funds
- 5.8 Halton is drawing investment into sports and culture through partnership with the private sector. The leisure centres are operated through private contractors and have brought in around £500,000 investment. This is expected to increase this year.
- 5.9 Urban Splash will be redeveloping the whole of the canal corridor and it is intended that a new library will be built as a planning gain from the development.

6. PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT

- 6.1 Halton has a strong commitment to performance management, the impact of which is demonstrated in the service achievements and demonstrable improvements.
- 6.2 The service plans identifies objectives and key milestones, and uses local and national performance indicators. There is quarterly monitoring against the key objectives and milestones, key performance indicators, and LPSA. A red, amber, green traffic light assessment is used and reporting is by exception. Budgets, income generation and sales targets are also effectively monitored.
- 6.3 Halton has undertaken a TAES culture self assessment and external validation. The assessment was "good". A lack of recorded evidence prevented a number of the scores being excellent. Halton will now develop an improvement plan
- 6.4 Halton will be developing a physical activity action plan following the results of the active people survey. The council was 29th out of 43 in

the NW. The figure adjusted for deprivation was 24.76% , 8th out of 19 upper tier authorities. The volunteer score of 5.7% was well above the regional average when adjusted for deprivation.

Key strengths and areas for development

Theme	Strengths	Areas for development
Achievement of objectives and improvement	<p>Strong partnership across council services</p> <p>Exemplary work with schools</p> <p>Very significant cultural achievements</p> <p>Halton BC only one of two councils in country to increase culture block score from 2 to a maximum for in 2006.</p> <p>Use of service standards and benchmarking to drive improvement</p>	<p>Halton BC looking for stronger future links with MLA</p> <p>Develop an arts strategy</p> <p>Develop and record the contribution of culture to the delivery of LAA outcomes</p> <p>Give higher profile to cultural achievements locally regionally and nationally with support from the NDPBs through dissemination of case studies.</p> <p>At request of DCMS record and disseminate nationally the ways that Halton BC achieved this improvement.</p>
Political and managerial leadership	<p>Strong leadership by senior officers</p> <p>Positive and supportive relationships between members and senior officers</p> <p>Culture high on the agenda in Halton BC</p>	<p>Greater engagement and support to portfolio holders and members by the cultural agencies</p> <p>NW Conference for Members to be organised by Culture NW in the Autumn</p> <p>Better coordination of attendance by agencies at Merseyside Chief Leisure Officers Group</p>
Community Engagement	<p>Strong commitment to community consultation</p> <p>Strong community engagement by the Brindley and Norton Priory</p>	<p>Continue to improve community marketing and communication</p> <p>More consistent capturing of informal community engagement impacts (TAES recommendation</p>

Theme	Strengths	Areas for development
	Proactive Sports Partnership	
Partnership working	<p>Sport and Physical activity alliance represented on the LSP</p> <p>Innovative partnership with Newham BC and London Olympics 2012</p> <p>Outstanding arts and education work. Highest number of arts marks in the country</p> <p>Working with Liverpool and the other Merseyside authorities to deliver and maximise benefits from Liverpool Capital of Culture</p>	<p>Develop cultural partnership and its contribution to the LSP and LAA</p> <p>Development of a joint strategic commissioning pot with the other Merseyside authorities.</p>
Resource generation and inward investment	<p>Successful in creating new facilities and improving facilities through lottery funding</p> <p>Operation of leisure centres through DC leisure</p> <p>Maximising planning gain from the Urban Splash canal corridor development</p>	Support capacity building to increase number of applications to Grants for the Arts in Halton.
Performance Management	Strong commitment to performance management	<p>Develop improvement plan following TAES</p> <p>Develop physical activity action plan</p>

Areas of good practice

Work with schools

Brindley Arts Centre

Reader development strategy and literature festival

Community consultation

Phoenix Park and community consultation

CPA culture score improvement

Arcane dance education programme in schools

Improvement priorities

Develop and record the contribution of culture to the delivery of LAA outcomes

Give higher profile to cultural achievements locally regionally and nationally with support from the NDPBs through dissemination of case studies.

Appendix 2

1. Policy and Performance
Key Aim: To deliver improvements to the way in which Cultural and Leisure Services plans and evaluates the services it delivers

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
1.1 Establish and implement a communications and marketing plan for Cultural and Leisure Services by December 2007	Increase awareness of Cultural and Leisure services and activities in Halton and within the Council. To celebrate success in performance.	C&L Operational Director In association with: - HBC communication and marketing Manager	Existing staff resources. Creation of joint marketing budget by top slicing individual service budgets.	Establish a project brief 7 th Sept 2007 Assemble team from Culture & Leisure and Communications & Marketing 21 st Sept 2007
1.2 Produce an Arts Strategy for Halton by March 2008	Medium term strategic plan of the arts across the public, private and voluntary sectors. To deliver an improved service relevant to local needs and to maximise the use of resources.	Cultural Services Manager In partnership with: - Community stakeholder groups Professional artists	HBC staff time commitment. £15,000 budget for research, consultation, publication and consultancy fees.	Consult Arts Council England. 31 st July 2007 Draw up draft consultancy specification 1 st September 2007 Establish steering group

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
				30 th Sept 2007 PPB report 10 th March 2008 Adoption by Executive Board 10 th April 2008
1.3 Produce a Parks Strategy for Halton by December 2007	Medium term strategic plan for the operation and management of open space in Halton. To deliver an improved service relevant to local needs and to maximise the use of resources.	Parks and Countryside Manager. In partnership with: - Community stakeholder groups. Environmental organisations. HBC Parks and Landscape sections.	HBC staff time. £2,500 consultation and publication costs	Assemble project team including stakeholders 30 th Sept 2007 Research existing consultation and local/national guidance 31 st Oct 2007 PPB report 10 th March 2008 Adoption by Executive Board 10 th April 2008
1.4 Identify existing user/customer profile by	Establish a clear picture of who uses Cultural and Leisure services.	HBC Research and Intelligence Unit.	HBC staff time. HBC research and	Analyse and collate existing data on service user profiles.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
April 2008	Information gained to help shape services to be more inclusive.	In conjunction with Service Managers from:- Libraries Cultural Services Leisure and Community.	intelligence unit. Merseyside information service. Existing data and surveys in Cultural and Leisure Services	31 st October 2007 Identify deficiencies in current data and identify Service specific data collection requirements and methods. 30 th Nov 2007 Undertake data collection/research 28 th Feb 2008
1.5 Improve comparison and benchmarking data by April 2008	Improved performance data. Inform future planning priorities.	C&L service managers in: - Libraries, Cultural Services and Leisure and Community. HBC Performance Management. APSE. NBS. Local PI,s established through local/regional networks.	Subscription to benchmarking organisations. HBC staff time.	Identify potential networks/comparator organisations. 1 st Sept 2007 APSE/other relevant data to be used in service planning 30 th Nov 2007 Annual performance monitoring by PPB 10 th March 2008

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or Partners	Resources	Key milestones
1.6 Evaluate the effectiveness and benefits of established Partnerships by December 2007	Determine the relevance and need for established partnerships. Develop an improved performance management framework for partnerships.	Operational Director, Cultural and Leisure Services in conjunction with the Chairs of identified Partnerships and in consultation with:- Community stakeholder groups. Other statutory agencies. HBC Policy and Partnerships dept.	Staff time	Establish project team 7 th Sept 2007 Identify Partnerships subject to evaluation 14 th Sept 2007 Assess current information and data 26 th Oct 2007 Report to Directorate senior management team 14 th Nov 2007
1.7 Integrate Outcome measures, determined locally and by The Community Strategy into Annual Service Plans.	Develop an improved performance management framework.	Operational Director, Cultural and Leisure Services.	Staff time	Identify outcome measures to be used 1 st Feb 2008 Production of draft service plan 7 th March 2008

2. Equality and Diversity

Key Aim : To address equality and diversity issues and to ensure that these issues are central to the planning and practices of Cultural and Leisure Services.

To contribute to the Equality Standards for Local Government to achieve level 3.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>2.1 Identify under represented groups (through analysis of data in 1.4 above). Develop new methods for supporting hard to reach groups to participate in consultation and engagement by April 2008</p>	<p>Reduce number of people and groups suffering exclusion. Modify services to be more inclusive.</p>	<p>HBC policy and partnership dept. jointly with Community involvement dept. And in association with: - Policy and performance dept. Research and Intelligence dept. Directorate Equalities Group</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Consult with Hard to Reach groups in collaboration with Cheshire Racial Equality Council who have established contacts and Halton networks on the take up and barriers to cultural services Feb 28th 2008 PPB community cohesion monitoring 10th March 2008</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>2.2 Establish an equal opportunities policy for C&L by December 2007</p>	<p>a. Effective equality impact assessments are conducted</p> <p>b. Staff are trained in diversity and equality</p> <p>c. Services take into account cultural differences.</p> <p>d. Physical environment meets the needs of the disabled.</p> <p>e. Information produced is appropriate and accessible.</p> <p>f. Disabled and BME groups are involved in service planning.</p> <p>g. Monitor the use of services by disabled and BME users.</p>	<p>Operational Director, C & L In conjunction with: -</p> <p>HBC policy and Partnerships dept.</p> <p>Health and Community Directorate, Commissioning and Planning Division.</p> <p>Key stakeholder disability and BME groups.</p> <p>Cheshire Race Equality Council.</p> <p>Health and Community Directorate Senior Management Team</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Establish project team 30th Sept 2007</p> <p>Cohesion indicators from Audit Commission to be included in equality impact assessments 1st April 2008</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>2.3 Incorporate equality targets/ objectives & cohesion indicators into C&L service and Divisional plans by February 2008</p>	<p>Targets and objectives will provide data and indicators from which progress can be monitored.</p>	<p>Operational Director Cultural and Leisure Services.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Revise plan format and include Equality targets as standard 28th Feb 2008</p> <p>Adoption of plans by the council and monitoring by PPB's. 10th March 2008</p>

3. Staff Management
Key Aim : To improve staff communication, training and consultation.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>3.1 Improve staff communication and ongoing consultation by September 2007.</p>	<p>Staff are aware of customer feedback, performance against targets, are aware of the role of partnerships etc.</p> <p>Staff are heard have a voice in the organisation and are consulted on service development.</p>	<p>HBC marketing manager In collaboration with: - C&L service managers</p>	<p>HBC staff time. Directorate and corporate newsletters. Information bulletins.</p> <p>Staff feedback resources.</p>	<p>C&L Directorate wide briefing sessions to fit in with service planning timetable 30 Nov 2007</p> <p>Agenda item for team meetings on service development opportunities 31st July 2007</p> <p>Monitoring by periodic staff survey (and further self assessment). Sept 2007 and Sept 09</p>
<p>3.2 Improve link between training identification and training delivery.</p>	<p>Staff receive training promptly and remain up to date.</p>	<p>C&L Service Managers. Health and Community training division. Corporate training.</p>	<p>Existing training budgets.</p>	<p>Review Personal Action through the employee development review process in line with IIP 31ST Oct 2007</p>

4. Service Standards

Key Aim : To establish a set of service standards for Cultural and Leisure Services which improve the delivery of services to the public.

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>4.1 Involve staff, stakeholders and customers in setting service standards by December 2007</p>	<p>Standards are focused on primary areas and standards which will improve customer service</p>	<p>Op Director C & L in consultation with: - Stakeholders. Performance management Staff Customers</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Set up staff team to draft service standards 30th Sept 2007 Consult staff, stakeholders and customers on draft standards 30th November 2007 Monitoring by PPB 16th Jan 2008</p>
<p>4.2 Account fully for equality and diversity in setting service standards</p>	<p>Standards set are inclusive and appropriate and help promote the use of services.</p>	<p>Op Director C & L in consultation with: - Disability and BME stakeholders. HBC Policy and Partnerships dept.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Consult stakeholder groups and representative organisations on draft standards 30th November 2007</p>

Action	Outcomes	Lead and/or partners	Resources	Key milestones
<p>4.3 Establish a customer feedback process by December 2007</p>	<p>Customer feedback on the service will help shape the service and drive up standards</p>	<p>Op Director C & L in collaboration with: - C&L service managers.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Audit existing systems which monitor/facilitate feedback 31st October 2007</p> <p>Standardise and augment systems across C&L as required 30th November 2007</p> <p>Document outlining process to be published – December 2007</p>
<p>4.4 Publish service standards and customer feedback by January 2008</p>	<p>Customer awareness and feedback will increase customer understanding and involvement.</p>	<p>HBC Communications and marketing dept.</p>	<p>HBC staff time</p>	<p>Promote public knowledge of the standards and feed back systems. December 2007</p> <p>Document outlining process to be published – December 2007</p> <p>Monitoring by PPB Ongoing annually</p>