

# Public Document Pack



## Executive Board

Thursday, 5 June 2008 2.00 p.m.  
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

**Chief Executive**

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

#### **PART 1**

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<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
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Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, with personal and prejudicial interests (subject to certain exceptions in the Code of Conduct for Members), to leave the meeting prior to discussion and voting on the item.	
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*Please contact Lynn Cairns on 0151 471 7529 or e-mail  
lynn.cairns@halton.gov.uk for further information.  
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 19 June 2008*

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In this case the Board has a discretion to exclude the press and public but, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, it is RECOMMENDED that under Section 100(A)(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, having been satisfied that in all the circumstances of the case the public interest in maintaining the exemption outweighs the public interest in disclosing the information, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in paragraphs 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A to the Act.	
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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:** 5 June 2008

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

**SUBJECT:** Annual Audit and Inspection Letter

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

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

1.1 To receive a presentation from the Council's Auditors on the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter be received.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Annual Audit and Inspection Letter provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit inspections and performance assessment work. A copy of the Annual letter is attached as Appendix 1.

### **4.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

4.1 None

### **5.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

5.1 None

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

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

# **Annual Audit and Inspection Letter**

**Halton Borough Council**

External audit is an essential element in the process of accountability for public money and makes an important contribution to the stewardship of public resources and the corporate governance of public services.

Audit in the public sector is underpinned by three fundamental principles.

- Auditors are appointed independently from the bodies being audited.
- The scope of auditors' work is extended to cover not only the audit of financial statements but also value for money and the conduct of public business.
- Auditors may report aspects of their work widely to the public and other key stakeholders.

The duties and powers of auditors appointed by the Audit Commission are set out in the Audit Commission Act 1998, the Local Government Act 1999 and the Commission's statutory Code of Audit Practice. Under the Code of Audit Practice, appointed auditors are also required to comply with the current professional standards issued by the independent Auditing Practices Board.

Appointed auditors act quite separately from the Commission and in meeting their statutory responsibilities are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of both the Commission and the audited body.

## **Status of our reports**

This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on audit, inspection and performance assessment work and is prepared by your Relationship Manager.

In this report, the Commission summarises findings and conclusions from the statutory audit, which have previously been reported to you by your appointed auditor. Appointed auditors act separately from the Commission and, in meeting their statutory responsibilities, are required to exercise their professional judgement independently of the Commission (and the audited body). The findings and conclusions therefore remain those of the appointed auditor and should be considered within the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission.

Reports prepared by appointed auditors are:

- prepared in the context of the Statement of Responsibilities of Auditors and Audited Bodies issued by the Audit Commission; and
- addressed to members or officers and prepared for the sole use of the audited body; no responsibility is taken by auditors to any member or officer in their individual capacity, or to any third party.

## **Copies of this report**

If you require further copies of this report, or a copy in large print, in Braille, on tape, or in a language other than English, please call 0844 798 7070.

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For further information on the work of the Commission please contact:

Audit Commission, 1st Floor, Millbank Tower, Millbank, London SW1P 4HQ

Tel: 020 7828 1212 Fax: 020 7976 6187 Textphone (minicom): 020 7630 0421

[www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk)

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## Key messages

- 1 This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of Halton Borough Council. The main messages for the Council included within this report are as follows.
- 2 The Council has continued to maintain its strong performance and has once again been assessed as a four star Council under the Audit Commission's CPA process. The Council's direction of travel also continues to be positive and we have assessed it as improving well during 2007. Key achievements in 2007 include significant increases in education attainment at GCSE level, improvements in crime rates and reductions in unemployment across the borough. Access to services has also improved following enhancements to the mobile library service, the benefits bus and the investment in children's centres borough wide.
- 3 There are some areas where further work is needed to bring the Council's performance up to the standard of the best performing councils. These include improving the condition of footpaths and principal roads and improving waste management arrangements. Other areas where the Council's achievements are less consistent include road safety, where road injuries and deaths have increased rather than reduced, and health where female life expectancy continues to be an issue. The Council's progress against the equality standards has also been slower than expected.
- 4 We issued an unqualified audit opinion on the Council's 2006/07 accounts on 20 September 2007. We also issued an unqualified value for money conclusion.
- 5 The Council continues to manage its use of resources effectively and we have assessed the Council as a level 3 organisation - performing well. We did however note scope to further strengthen arrangements in several areas, particularly financial management, asset management and value for money.

## Action needed by the Council

- 6 Key areas for action for members in particular to note are to:
  - respond to the key messages arising from the repeat Corporate Assessment report when this is published in July 2008;
  - focus on improving performance in those areas where the Council's performance is relatively low;
  - make more progress on the internal equality and diversity agenda;
  - enhance financial management processes to include more detail and context within the financial forecast, develop a strategy on balances and reserves and monitor performance against it;

- strengthen and better evidence the strategic management and reporting of the Council's asset base; and
- progress the Council's procurement agenda to help ensure that identified savings and efficiencies are delivered.

## Purpose, responsibilities and scope

- 7 This report provides an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council. It draws on the most recent Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA), the findings and conclusions from the audit of the Council for 2006/07 and from any inspections undertaken since the last Annual Audit and Inspection Letter.
- 8 We have addressed this letter to members as it is the responsibility of the Council to ensure that proper arrangements are in place for the conduct of its business and that it safeguards and properly accounts for public money. We have made recommendations to assist the Council in meeting its responsibilities.
- 9 This letter also communicates the significant issues to key external stakeholders, including members of the public. We will publish this letter on the Audit Commission website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk). In addition the Council is planning to publish it on its website.
- 10 As your appointed auditor I am responsible for planning and carrying out an audit that meets the requirements of the Audit Commission's Code of Audit Practice (the Code). Under the Code, I review and report on:
  - the Council's accounts;
  - whether the Council has made proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources (value for money conclusion); and
  - whether the Council's best value performance plan has been prepared and published in line with legislation and statutory guidance.
- 11 This letter includes the latest assessment on the Council's performance under the CPA framework, including our Direction of Travel report and the results of any inspections carried out by the Audit Commission under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999. It summarises the key issues arising from the CPA and any such inspections. Inspection reports are issued in accordance with the Audit Commission's duty under section 13 of the 1999 Act.
- 12 We have listed the reports issued to the Council relating to the 2006/07 audit and inspection work at the end of this letter.

## How is the Council performing?

- 13 The Audit Commission's overall judgement is that Halton Borough Council is improving well and we have classified the Council as four star in its current level of performance under the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA). This assessment which took place in 2005 will be updated in July 2008, following the Council's repeat corporate assessment which is currently in progress.
- 14 Comprehensive performance assessments have been completed in all single tier and county councils with the following results.

**Figure 1**



Source: Audit Commission

- 15 The detailed assessment for Halton Borough Council is as follows.

### Our overall assessment - the CPA scorecard 2007

**Table 1 CPA scorecard 2007**

Element	Assessment
Direction of Travel judgement	Improving well
Overall	4 stars
Corporate assessment/capacity to improve	4 out of 4
Current performance (using 2007 assessment) Children and young people*	3 out of 4

## 8 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter - How is the Council performing?

Social care (adults)*	3 out of 4
Use of resources*	3 out of 4
Housing	3 out of 4
Environment	3 out of 4
Culture	4 out of 4
Benefits	4 out of 4

(Note: \* these aspects have a greater influence on the overall CPA score. 1 = lowest, 4 = highest)

## The improvement since last year - our Direction of Travel report

- 16** The Council is improving well and it continues to contribute to improving wider community outcomes. There is good evidence of improvements in many service priority areas and the Council has a relatively high proportion of top performing performance indicators (PIs). However its rate of improvement, measured by published PIs, is below the average for similar authorities. The Council is aware of the areas where its performance needs to improve and is taking action to address them.
- 17** With partners, the Council has contributed to improving outcomes and quality of life for residents across the borough. National statistics on deprivation levels show that in 2007 Halton became a less deprived area, moving from the 21st to the 30th most deprived area in the country. Achievements during 2007 include:
- initiatives such as Widnes Waterfront Enterprise Development Zone and Halton People into Jobs which helped 700 people in 2006/07 and thus contributed to a continuing fall in unemployment levels:
  - reductions in crime levels: and
  - continued reductions in adult smoking rates.
- 18** In some areas, however, planned improvements in outcomes have not been achieved for example on road safety. The recent trend of a reduction in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Halton's roads has not been sustained over the past twelve months. Reducing health inequalities is also still a key challenge for the Council. Despite increases in male life expectancy in Halton, female life expectancy has not improved. Teenage conceptions have also increased.
- 19** There have been good achievements in the following service priority areas.
- Significantly increasing the number of young people gaining A-C\* passes at GCSE. The Council had the best rate of improvement in the country in 2007;
  - Achieving one of the strongest rates of performance improvement in social services for adult and older people;
  - Maintaining the excellent service assessment score for housing benefits.

- Bringing more houses up to the decent homes standards.
- 20** There are, however, services where performance is still relatively low or has not improved. There is a good awareness of the areas requiring improvement and the Council is seeking to address these. These include improving:
- the condition of footpaths and principal roads; and
  - waste management arrangements.
- Performance on major planning applications has improved but further work is needed to increase the number of minor planning applications that are completed within required timescales.
- 21** User satisfaction is strong. Halton has the fourth highest satisfaction rating of all unitary councils and has continued to increase user satisfaction in contrast to the national trend of falling levels of satisfaction. The majority of users think the way the Council runs things has got better and that the Council is making Halton a better place to live. Satisfaction with the majority of Council services is also positive with examples including:
- Libraries – the refurbishment of Ditton and Kingsway libraries has contributed to Halton having the joint highest satisfaction rating for libraries in the country; and
  - Parks and open spaces – a significant increase in resident satisfaction.
- 22** There has been good progress on improving access to services. The mobile library service and the benefits bus deliver services directly into the community where demand is high, or where access to fixed facilities is not convenient. Up to date locally accessible services for children and families are also being provided within communities, following investment in children's centres across the borough. The establishment of five Children & Young Peoples Area Networks has enabled a move towards the provision of targeted and coordinated services at a community level. This demonstrates a commitment to improving services for hard to reach groups. However, improvements to equality and diversity internally have been slower. Level three of the equality standard has not yet been achieved, it was originally planned for March 2007 but is now not expected until 2009. In addition, the composition of the Council's workforce shows some minor reductions in the per cent of top earners who are from a black and minority ethnic community, are women or have a disability.
- 23** Overall, the Council can demonstrate that there is a balance between costs and performance showing that value for money (VFM) is provided. Areas of high spending have been identified, which are usually as a result of investment in priorities, and the Council has a good understanding of costs in relation to local circumstances. The use of information on performance and costs and how this compares to others is being used more systematically than in 2006 and is informing the Council's overall approach to becoming more efficient.

**10 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter – How is the Council performing?**

- 24** We have also assessed the progress the Council has made in delivering plans to sustain future improvement. The Council has used the community strategy and its corporate plan to address the needs of Halton in terms of health, crime, jobs and skills, urban renewal and children and young people. As a result of this, a range of activities and plans have been developed by the Council directly and in partnership with other organisations.
- 25** Overall there is good progress being made against priorities. The development of the '3MG' site will create an estimated 1,500 jobs initially with a further 5,000 later on. In addition, the Council continues to develop its proposal for the Mersey Gateway Bridge. A range of other plans and strategies are also developing well. These include consultation as part of 'Building Schools for the Future', work on a new contract for waste management and disposal, proposals to improve carbon management and a strategy to meet the service needs of all older people. Improvements in services to tackle domestic abuse are also being implemented, neighbourhood management is being rolled out following pilot initiatives and a site for the traveller community is being identified.
- 26** The Council has also developed its approach to community cohesion. In conjunction with key officers from the Council and LSP partners, the Audit Commission undertook a community cohesion baseline assessment for Halton. The findings from the work have been used to strengthen the community cohesion strategy being agreed with partners and identify appropriate local indicators. This will help the Council to better meet the needs of its diverse community more and be more proactive in identifying potential areas of tension.
- 27** The Council has invested in a number of areas to improve its capacity and sustain future improvements. In its service areas this is reflected in external assessments of 'good capacity' to improve services for children and young people and the capacity to improve in adult services being judged as 'excellent'. The Council faces significant financial pressures in the next three or four years. Following the establishment of the Business Efficiency Board, it has adopted an efficiency strategy and agreed a number of areas for future efficiencies. These include accommodation, agency staff, workforce planning and procurement with a potential £1 million of annual savings identified. In addition the Council has appointed an efficiency partner to identify further savings and efficiencies in the way the Council is organised. It is important that the Council makes its efficiencies as this will impact upon the prospects for sustaining future improvement.
- 28** The Council is currently undergoing a repeat corporate assessment. The on site work takes place in April with the final report expected to be published in July 2008. The corporate assessment is a detailed and rigorous inspection of how the Council engages with and leads its communities, delivers community priorities in partnership with others and ensures continuous improvement across the range of council activities. The Council will need to action any issues arising from this assessment.

## Service inspections

- 29 An important aspect of the role of the Relationship Manager is to work with other inspectorates and regulators who also review and report on the Council's performance. Relationship Managers share information and seek to provide 'joined up' regulation to the Council. During the last year the Council has received the following assessments from other inspectorates.

### BFI (Benefits Fraud Inspectorate)

- 30 The BFI has gathered information from an evidenced self assessment submitted by the Council and from Best Value performance indicators and performance measures, and used these to assess the performance of the Council's benefits service. The Council's benefits service has once again been rated as excellent. The results of the BFI assessment are summarised in Table 2 below.

**Table 2 Benefits Service: performance standards scores**

Theme	2007
Claims administration	4
Security	4
User Focus	4
Resource Management	4
<b>Overall Score</b>	<b>4 (Excellent)</b>

*Source BFI Analysis 2007*

- 31 The overall score of 4 from the BFI is used to determine the CPA score for 'Benefits' as shown in the CPA scorecard at Table 1 of this letter.

### CSCI (Commission for Social Care Inspection)

- 32 CSCI's annual assessment of the Council's services for adults for 2007 is highlighted in Table 3 below.

**Table 3 CSCI ratings 2007**

Star Rating	Outcomes	Capacity to Improve
3 star	Good	Excellent

*Source CSCI*

## 12 Annual Audit and Inspection Letter – How is the Council performing?

- 33 CSCI's rating for the Council's adult services is used to help determine the CPA score for 'Social care (adults)' as shown in the CPA scorecard at Table 1 of this letter.

### OFSTED (Office for Standards in Education)

- 34 OFSTED has worked jointly with CSCI in carrying out the annual assessment of the Council's children's services and have graded the Council as follows.

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**Table 4 OFSTED assessment 2007**

<b>Aspect of assessment</b>	<b>Grade awarded</b>
Overall effectiveness of children's services	3
Being healthy	3
Staying safe	4
Enjoying and achieving	3
Making a positive contribution	4
Achieving economic well-being	2
Capacity to improve, including the management of services for children and young people	3

*Source: OFSTED 2007*

- 35 OFSTED's ratings for the Council's children's services are used to help determine the CPA score for 'Children and young people' as shown in the CPA scorecard at Table 1 of this letter.

## The audit of the accounts and value for money

- 36 As your appointed auditor, I have reported separately to the Executive Board on the issues arising from my 2006/07 audit and have issued:
- my annual governance report, providing an unqualified opinion on your accounts and a conclusion on your VFM arrangements to say that these arrangements are adequate; and
  - my report on the Best Value Performance Plan confirming that the Plan has been audited.

### Use of Resources

- 37 The findings of the auditor are an important component of the CPA framework described earlier in this letter. In particular the Use of Resources score is derived from the assessments made by the auditor in the following areas.
- Financial reporting (including the preparation of the accounts of the Council and the way these are presented to the public).
  - Financial management (including how the financial management is integrated with strategy to support council priorities).
  - Financial standing (including the strength of the Council's financial position).
  - Internal control (including how effectively the Council maintains proper stewardship and control of its finances).
  - Value for money (including an assessment of how well the Council balances the costs and quality of its services).
- 38 For the purposes of the CPA we have assessed the Council's arrangements for use of resources in these five areas as follows.

**Table 5**

Element	Assessment
Financial reporting	3 out of 4
Financial management	3 out of 4
Financial standing	3 out of 4
Internal control	3 out of 4
Value for money	3 out of 4
Overall assessment of the Audit Commission	3 out of 4

(Note: 1 = lowest, 4 = highest)

**14** Annual Audit and Inspection Letter 14 The audit of the accounts and value for money

### **The key issues arising from the audit**

- 39** The Council has performed well and maintained its overall good performance from last year.
- 40** The Council's 2006/07 final accounts process was well managed. The accounts were produced by the required deadline and to a good standard. They were supported by good quality working papers and audit queries and requests for additional information were dealt with promptly. The accounts were free of material misstatement and error although we did identify some minor compliance issues with the Statement of Recommended Practice (SORP).
- 41** External accountability continues to be promoted. Council minutes and reports are available promptly and in a variety of formats, and once again this year the Council has produced an annual report. There is however scope to further improve and act upon the results of stakeholder feedback to inform the annual report process.
- 42** Financial management arrangements are well established. The Council's medium term financial forecast links to its corporate priorities and forms an integral part of the corporate planning process. Although the forecast is updated annually we have identified scope to further strengthen its content and impact.
- 43** The Council has a proven track record of strong budgetary control. Performance reports include both financial and performance indicator information. Financial reporting on significant partnerships is in place and action plans are developed and monitored when overspends occur. Financial awareness training has been carried out during the year but there is a need now for this to be extended to other staff within the Council. Last year we recommended that the executive should review its effectiveness and the leadership it provides on financial management. This process has started but was not in place during 2006/07.
- 44** In 2006/07 the Council has once again maintained its spending within available resources and indications are that it is on track to deliver its overall budget in 2007/08. Various reports are available which provide members with an understanding of the Council's approach to reserves and balances but there is scope to better formalise and integrate these arrangements by producing a balances and reserves strategy. In addition, monitoring and reporting of the Council's financial position could be further enhanced by more specific monitoring of performance against reserves and balances.
- 45** The Council has a significant asset base and asset management is the one area where the Council's performance has slipped since last year. There is clear evidence that the Council manages its assets at a service and operational level but corporate management of the asset base was less clearly demonstrated. The Council now needs to update its asset management plan, evidence better the strategic management and reporting of its asset base and more consistently use thorough option appraisal and whole life costing in making investment and disposal decisions.

- 46 During the year the Council has continued to develop its risk management processes to ensure that consideration of risk and its management forms part of the corporate and service planning framework. There is an approved risk management policy and toolkit in place and corporate and directorate risk registers are well established. Significant partnerships have been identified and governance arrangements for partnerships continue to develop and strengthen.
- 47 The Council's framework for ensuring probity and propriety in business conduct is robust. Codes of conduct exist for both members and staff and arrangements are in place for raising awareness and monitoring compliance. Registers of gifts and hospitality exist but there is scope to better evidence their review. The Council has worked effectively with the Audit Commission in supplying data for the National Fraud Initiative (NFI) and in monitoring and managing its output. It has also been proactive in raising awareness of standards of ethical behaviour through training, and further training on business ethics and partnerships is planned for 2007/08. Worthy of particular note are the twice yearly reports presented to the Standards Committee on declarations of interest. This positive reporting could be further extended to other areas.
- 48 In terms of value for money, the Council has demonstrated a more solid base for achieving value for money in 2006/07 and is making progress in managing value for money. Areas of high spending have been identified, and the Council has a good understanding of costs in relation to local circumstances. The Council continues to challenge costs through approaches like the base budget review, and areas of unintended spending have been identified and addressed. The Council is actively pursuing a robust strategy to achieve efficiency targets and regularly monitoring progress against these. The efficiency strategy has identified key work-streams and priorities to improve value for money.
- 49 A more strategic approach to procurement has been developed. The Council is aware of where greatest savings can be achieved by improving procurement practice, and is acting upon these. However, the impact of these is limited and the pace at which the Council is moving forward in delivering saving and efficiencies through its procurement practices is slower than similar authorities. If the Council is to improve its score for value for money it needs to make greater progress on its procurement arrangements and the delivery of savings and efficiencies.

## Looking ahead

- 50 The public service inspectorates are currently developing a new performance assessment framework, the Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA). CAA will provide the first holistic independent assessment of the prospects for local areas and the quality of life for people living there. It will put the experience of citizens, people who use services and local tax payers at the centre of the new local assessment framework, with a particular focus on the needs of those whose circumstances make them vulnerable. It will recognise the importance of effective local partnership working, the enhanced role of Sustainable Communities Strategies and Local Area Agreements and the importance of councils in leading and shaping the communities they serve.
- 51 CAA will result in reduced levels of inspection and better coordination of inspection activity. The key components of CAA will be a joint inspectorate annual area risk assessment and reporting performance on the new national indicator set, together with a joint inspectorate annual direction of travel assessment and an annual use of resources assessment. The auditors' use of resources judgements will therefore continue, but their scope will be widened to cover issues such as commissioning and the sustainable use of resources.
- 52 The first results of our work on CAA will be published in the autumn of 2009. This will include the performance data from 2008/09, the first year of the new Local Area Agreements.

## Closing remarks

- 53 This letter has been discussed and agreed with the Chief Executive and Strategic Director Corporate and Policy. A copy of the letter will be presented at the Executive Board in April 2008. Copies of this letter need to be provided to all Council members.
- 54 Further detailed findings, conclusions and recommendations on the areas covered by audit and inspection work are included in the reports issued to the Council during the year. These are listed in the following table.

**Table 6      Reports issued**

Report	Date of issue
Audit and inspection plan 2006/07	March 2006
Audit and inspection plan 2007/08	March 2007
Annual Governance Report	September 2007
Opinion on financial statements	September 2007
Value for money conclusion	September 2007
Whole of government account return: auditor's report	October 2007
Opinion report	October 2007
Use of resources report	November 2007
Data quality management arrangements report	November 2007
Best value performance plan: auditor's statutory report	December 2007
Direction of travel	January 2008
Grant claim certification report	February 2008
Annual audit and inspection letter	March 2008

- 55 The Council has taken a positive and constructive approach to our audit and inspection work, and I wish to thank the Council's staff for their support and cooperation during the audit.

## Availability of this letter

- 56 This letter will be published on the Audit Commission's website at [www.audit-commission.gov.uk](http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk), and also on the Council's website.

**Julian Farmer**  
**District Auditor and Relationship Manager**

March 2008

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup>. June 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

**SUBJECT:** Queens Hall Studio Lacey Street Widnes

**WARDS:** Riverside

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

- 1.1 To approve the entering into legal commitments on the Queen's Hall Studio including disposal of the freehold at nil consideration to Loose Music

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) **The Council supports the project to bring The Queen's Hall Studio, Widnes, into public and community use as a Community Centre for Cultural Activities including Live Music within Use Class D2 and will commit resources towards that project in line with the terms of a joint working agreement and agreement for lease.**
- (2) **Under the power granted to the Chief Executive by Article 17.01(c) of the Constitution, and having consulted the Leader and Deputy Leader, his amendment to the articles of the constitution in relation only to the proposal by Loose Music or any entity emerging from Loose Music to refurbish the Queen's Hall Studio as a music studio ('the Proposal') be endorsed. This amendment is to add to 'Article 14 - Decision Making' a delegated power (as Article 14.09) which empowers him to authorise any Council officer to enter into legal commitments on behalf of the Council in relation to Loose Music's proposal to refurbish the Queen's Hall Studio as a music studio.**
- (3) **Approval be delegated to the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy in consultation with the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, to enter into legal commitments including the disposal of the freehold interest in the Queens Hall Studio to the Loose Music Collective at nil consideration.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 The Executive Board Sub Committee at its meeting of 22 June 2006 granted an exclusivity agreement to Loose Music to enable them to put

together a package to develop a music and arts education and entertainment project at the Queens Hall Studio (ES9).

- 3.2 It should be noted that the Studio is quite distinct from the Queen's Hall. Originally two separate buildings they were latterly joined by a link extension. This report refers solely to the Studio and does not include either the link or the Queen's Hall itself. The Studio is considered here as a stand alone facility.
- 3.3 Loose Music has brought forward a development proposals culminating in them being granted a Community Asset Fund (CAF) Grant of £602,055 to develop a community music and performance facility.
- 3.4 The parties, acting on a partnering basis, wish to bring The Queen's Hall Studio into public and community use as a music studio namely as a Community Centre for Cultural Activities including Live Music within Class D2 and to provide more opportunities to the community "to achieve and enjoy" and to make provision for facilities and opportunities for Young People against the background of the Government's document 'Every Child Matters' and of the Council's policy on provision for Young People in Halton.
- 3.5 In July 2007 the District Valuer was asked to consider the Capital Value of a long lease on the property. The District Valuer's opinion was that, had the building been in good order, its value would have been £238,000 but in view of the capital investment required to put the building in good order of in excess of £600,000 it clearly has a negative value. The DV therefore recommended that the Council could consider disposing of the property for a nominal amount.
- 3.6 Loose Music's proposal will need statutory consents and permissions for various elements. The lease will therefore be conditional on Loose securing all of the permissions necessary to allow them to deliver the project as set out in their development plan.
- 3.7 It should also be noted that there is a restrictive covenant on the property stating it 'shall be used as a school, dwelling house, or shop', but this was breached for over 40 years when the building was used as a factory prior to its association with the Queen's Hall. Loose were made aware of this prior to the submission of their CAF bid and Halton Borough Council will require them to take out indemnity insurance against the unlikely event of the covenant being enforced.
- 3.8 In order to progress and secure the offer of Community Asset Grant funding, it was necessary to enter into an agreement with Loose Music by 25<sup>th</sup>. April 2008 regarding the acquisition of the building. It was not possible to report this to a meeting of the Executive Board within the time available. The Chief Executive therefore, under the power granted to him under Article 17.01(c) of the Constitution, and having consulted the Leader and Deputy Leader, amended the Articles of the

Constitution on this occasion and in relation only to the proposal by Loose Music or any entity emerging from Loose Music to refurbish the Queen's Hall Studio as a music studio. This amendment was to add to 'Article 14 - Decision Making' a delegated power (as Article 14.10) which empowered him on behalf of the Council to authorise any Council officer to enter into legal commitments including disposal of freehold at nil consideration to Loose Music or any entity emerging from Loose Music in relation to Loose Music's proposal to refurbish the Queen's Hall Studio as a music studio. He thereby authorised the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy and the Strategic Director Environment and their subordinate officers to enter into legal commitments including disposal of the freehold of the Queen's Hall Studio at nil consideration to Loose Music or any entity emerging from Loose Music in relation to Loose Music's proposal to refurbish the Queen's Hall Studio as a music studio ('the Proposal'). Such disposal is to be subject to claw-back provisions in the event that the land is used for purposes other than as a music studio.

3.9 The amendment to the Constitution (new 14.10) was made and this additional delegated power exercised by the Chief Executive having regard to:-

- 3.9.1 the urgency of the situation namely the pressing need for a decision on the Council's legal commitment to the Proposal.
- 3.9.2 the social, environmental and economic benefits for Halton of the Proposal.
- 3.9.3 the extent to which the Proposal furthers the Aims and Objectives and Vision of the Council.
- 3.9.4 the extent to which the Proposal furthers the Council's key priority areas.
- 3.9.5. the need for an early decision if critical external funding from the Big Lottery Fund is not to be jeopardised.
- 3.9.6 an assessment of the benefits, risks and the management of those risks in relation to the Council's legal duties and the Council's and the community's interests in the Proposal.
- 3.9.7 the Council's legal duties in respect of its assets.
- 3.9.8 the existing partnering agreement between the Council and Loose Music in relation to the Proposal.

3.10 The Executive Board is therefore notified of this decision and is requested to endorse it.

3.11 In considering whether a lease or freehold disposal would best suit the Council, it should be considered that :

- a) a freehold disposal eliminates the Council's future responsibilities as landlord;
- b) The Council is already being required to make a small match funding contribution to support Loose's project and if it remains a Council building further calls on the Council could be made;
- c) A lease would make no difference in income to the Council;

- d) A sale would enable us to ensure the main building has no connection in any way with the Studio in a physical or legal sense;
- e) A freehold transfer can still have claw-back when it is sold if Loose can make a profit;
- f) Should Loose want to carry out any alterations with a lease they would need landlord's permission which will involve time and cost with no recovery;
- g) Following a freehold disposal, should Loose go into administration and the Lottery decline to take building on, Halton Borough Council would have no liability;
- h) As landlord to leased premises complaints could end up coming back to Halton Borough Council with requests to terminate the lease which would be extremely difficult with external funding in place.

3.12 With there being no added benefits to the Council in retaining the freehold of the Studio, it is therefore recommended that it be disposed of to Loose Music at nil consideration.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The development impedes but does not prevent the full development of the Queen's Hall and surrounding area. However, the size of any future development site around the Studio will as a consequence be smaller and, as a result, diminished in value.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 The proposal provides a use for a building which otherwise has no viable future while at the same time saving the Council the cost of demolition.

5.2 The site is likely to attract additional foot and vehicle traffic to the area but to a lesser extent than when the Queen's Hall was in full use. Any other potential impacts on the surrounding environment will be managed through statutory processes, e.g. planning, building control and licensing.

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

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

It will provides a venue for community activities for younger people

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Users of the venue will be learning new musical skills

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

No implications

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

No implications

**6.3 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The proposal brings into use a vacant building

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Should Loose Music be unable to secure all the necessary permissions and approvals then the project will not succeed. The provisions of the lease/sale would ensure that the building revert to the authority. This is a Medium risk.

7.2 Should Loose Music not comply fully with the terms of the Community Asset Funding once construction has started nor complete the project to the CAF's satisfaction, the building will revert to the CAF. This risk is seen as Medium to High.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Nil

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

**Document**

**Place of Inspection**

**Contact Officer**

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board  
**DATE:** 19 June 2008  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Changing the name of a Ward  
**WARDS:** Castlefields

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

To inform Members of a request to change the name of Castlefields Ward to Castle Ward.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

- 2.1 That Council be recommended to consult electors in the Castlefields Ward on the proposed change of name.
- 2.2 A Working Party of elected representatives be nominated to consider any representations received following consultation.

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

A request has been received from the Leader and Labour Ward Councillors for the Castlefields Ward, to change the name of the Ward to 'Castle Ward'.

Under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 there is a provision for a Local Authority to change the name of an electoral area.

The Council will need to pass a resolution following consultation with such persons as it considers appropriate on the proposed name.

It is suggested that leaflets be sent to households in the Ward on the proposed name change and information on the issue be posted on the Council's website.

On completion of the consultation exercise a report will be prepared for submission to a Member Working Party. The Working Party will make a recommendation to Council in October 2008 who will make the final decision on the recommendation.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

There are no specific policy implications.

## **5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The cost of consultation can be met within existing resources.

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

- 6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.3 **A Healthy Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.4 **A Safer Halton** – There are no implications arising from this report.
- 6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal** - There are no implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

There are no risk assessment implications.

## **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

There are no equality and diversity implications.

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

None

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director, Children and Young People

**SUBJECT:** Adoption Inspection

**WARDS:** All

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

1.1 To inform the Executive Board of the outcome of the recent Ofsted inspection of Adoption Services.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- (2) the Ofsted Inspection report be endorsed.

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 In August 2006, CSCI carried out an inspection of Halton's Adoption Service. Prior to this it had been acknowledged that there were issues for the service to address and progress had already commenced on recruiting a suitable staff team, adding management capacity and developing practice.
- 3.2 Whilst this progress and the plans for the future were accepted as appropriate by the Inspectors, the outcome of the inspection was that the service provided **Poor** outcomes.
- 3.3 As a result, the inspectors imposed 11 statutory requirements and made 31 recommendations.
- 3.4 All statutory requirements were achieved within the timescales that were given and all the recommendations were worked on over the following months.
- 3.5 On the 3<sup>rd</sup> March 2008, prior to the Joint Area Review, Inspectors returned to Halton for a Random Inspection of the Adoption Service.
- 3.6 The outcome of the inspection was that the overall quality rating of the service was **Good**. The inspection report noted that the agency had made considerable efforts to address previous issues and "the work undertaken by the agency has resulted in an improved service being provided to adopters, children, their birth parents and family".

3.7 As a result of the inspection, there was 1 statutory requirement and 6 recommendations. The statutory requirement related to information held on the adoption service's personnel and this is now being addressed. The recommendations will be addressed over coming months.

3.8 The inspection report can be accessed via the Ofsted website.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 internal policies and procedures will be amended to reflect the Ofsted recommendations.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 There are no financial implications arising from the inspection.

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

##### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The Adoption Service ensures that children are safeguarded, healthy and happy, and receive their entitlement of high quality services that are sensitive to need.

##### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

Improved life chances and greater stability will positively impact on the lives of those children placed for adoption.

##### **6.3 A Healthy Halton**

Promotion of the physical and emotional wellbeing of children in care is an essential component in securing positive outcomes for them.

##### **6.4 A Safer Halton**

Achieving positive outcomes for children in care will contribute to the role that they play in their local communities.

##### **6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Increasing the ability of children in care to live permanently within a family will be of benefit to the individual and to the community in which they live.

#### **7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

7.1 Implementation of the requirement and the recommendations of the report will ensure that the Adoption service continues to improve.

#### **8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 Children in care are recognised as a vulnerable group whose life chances and outcomes are poor. Adoption can be a very positive option

for some children, enabling them to enjoy the same opportunities as their peers.

## **9.0 REASON FOR DECISION**

9.1 Endorsement of the Ofsted Inspection report is sought so that progress on developing adoption services in Halton can continue.

## **10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 There is no alternative option to addressing the statutory requirement contained within the Inspection report.

## **11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 The statutory requirement in respect of information relating to the Adoption service's personnel had to be complied with by the 31<sup>st</sup> May 2008 and is currently nearing completion.

11.2 The recommendations within the report will be implemented over the coming months.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Ofsted Inspection	Grosvenor House	Christine Taylor
Halton Adoption Service	Ofsted Website ( <a href="http://www.ofsted.gov.uk">www.ofsted.gov.uk</a> )	

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 5 June 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director - Children and Young People

**SUBJECT** Primary Capital Programme

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

- 1.1 To provide an outline of the draft Primary Strategy for Change that has been developed as part of the Primary Capital Programme. To seek approval by the Board of the Strategy prior to its submission to the DCSF by 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008.
- 1.2 The capital investment programme requires approval by Council, however as the DCSF deadline requires schools projects which will be undertaken within the first two years to be named by 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008 the Board is asked to approve the schools programme for the purposes of the DCSF submission. Full Council will then be asked to ratify the projects at their July meeting.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- 2.1 **The Primary Strategy for Change be approved; and**
- 2.2 **The building projects prioritised for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 be approved for the purpose of the submission to the DCSF and that Full Council be requested to ratify the projects at its next meeting in July 2008.**

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

### **3.1 Background**

- 3.2 At the Executive Board meeting on 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008 the requirement to develop a Primary Capital Programme was outlined. It was explained that as part of the Programme all Local Authorities must produce a Primary Strategy for Change which must be formally endorsed by the Council, the Diocesan Authorities and a majority of primary schools.
- 3.3 The aim of the Primary Capital Programme is to ensure primary schools play a lead role in the heart of their communities, through offering local services, providing a 21<sup>st</sup> learning environment particularly in ICT, development world class standards and promoting personalisation, flexibility, diversity and choice. As part of the Programme consideration needs to be given to local demography, pupil numbers and school standards.

- 3.4 The Primary Strategy for Change for Halton has been developed following consultation with primary schools, Diocesan colleagues and a range of other partners. Three dedicated sessions on have been held with Primary Headteachers and an Extended Services Working Group has met to consider opportunities for local and extended services to be offered through primary schools. Chairs of Governors and Halton Association of Governors have been consulted along with colleagues from other Departments across the Council such as Environment and Health and Community.
- 3.5 A draft of the Primary Strategy for Change has been circulated (Appendix A) to the headteachers of all nursery, infant, junior and primary schools including the primary special school. It has also been sent out to all secondary headteachers and secondary special headteachers. Chairs of Primary Governors have been sent copies and the draft has also been placed on the pages of the Governors Website. Copies have also been sent to the Diocese of Shrewsbury, Diocese of Chester, Liverpool Diocese and Liverpool Archdiocese for final comments. The document has been placed on both the intranet and internet and sent to Departments across the Council for their information and comment. In addition, each member of the Alliance Board has been sent a draft copy. The final date for responses to the consultation is Tuesday, 27<sup>th</sup> May 2008. Any amendments arising from the consultation will be tabled at the meeting.

#### 4.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Authority must develop a strategic approach to capital investment for primary schools over 14 years. For 2009/2010 and 2010/11 the indicative primary capital funding is £8.4 million. Funding from 2011/12 will be subject to public spending review.
- 4.2 The submission to the DCSF on 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008 must name and provide costings for the schools or projects that will be undertaken within the first two years of the funding i.e. 2009/2010 and 2010/2011. In Halton a re-organisation of primary provision has yet to be undertaken. For the first two years of funding, therefore, projects have been proposed which will not prejudice this process.
- 4.3 The proposed projects for 2009/2010 and 2010/2011 are:
- The Grange Nursery, Infant and Junior School. This proposals is supported by the DCSF as it promotes diversity and a change of governance, it represents value for money as it joins funding with BSF and allows the completion of the All-Through School. Many of the pupils from the school come from deprived backgrounds and the school is located in the top 40% most deprived wards within the borough. There are significant condition and suitability issues on all three sites with some pupils still taught in mobile classrooms. Wrap around early years will be provided and extended services offered through the new All-Through School. Primary places will be rationalised once the two form of entry primary element has been

approved.

- Our Lady Mother of the Saviour. This is a voluntary aided Catholic school in Runcorn. It is located in the ward ranked third highest in terms of deprivation within the borough. The school is a one form of entry primary with healthy pupil numbers. There are significant suitability issues and the school requires a complete remodelling. Some investment has been undertaken by the Diocese of Shrewsbury however to complete and compliment the initial investment primary capital funding is required.
- All Saints Upton. This is a voluntary controlled Church of England Primary School. 71.6% of pupils who currently attend this school come from the top two IMD areas. There are significant suitability issues at the school as it currently operates on split sites. Extended Services are offered through the school and within the last twelve months a Children's Centre has been developed and completed on the school site.
- Following an in depth audit of IT provision investment opportunities which will supported full integrated learning systems will be explored across the borough.
- Opportunities will be explored to link funding and utilise surplus capacity in and around schools to support the promotion of the Every Child Matters Agenda and increasing the range of extended services offered through primary schools.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 To trigger funding for Phase 2 developments the Authority must identify how it intends to address demographic change, falling rolls, the Standards Agenda as well as increase the diversity, choice and access to popular schools. It needs to consider a range of provision such as Trusts, Federations, amalgamations and all-age provision.

5.2 Proposals will need to be developed on the future primary school organisation. School and public consultation will then need to be undertaken.

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

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

The Primary Capital Programme contributes directly to priority SM5: Transforming Learning Opportunities for all Children.

Increase choice, diversity, inclusion and high standards and reduce the surplus capacity within Halton schools.

Transform the learning environment: workforce, buildings, learning resources and technology.

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

By providing 21<sup>st</sup> Century primary provision for all pupils, standards will improve providing greater employment prospects for Halton's Children and Young People.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

In developing primary provision the authority will seek to improve the sports and dining facilities and work collaboratively with other agencies to encourage healthy eating, promote high nutritional standards and provide access to a wider range of extended services.

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

New primary provision will be designed to ensure that children, staff and other community users feel safe and secure on schools sites.

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

The Primary Capital Programme seeks to ensure that schools become a major resource for the 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 A risk analysis has been undertaken which has identified a number of key risks. The key risks include the timeline for delivery, school organisation and approval of the Strategy.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

8.1 The Primary Capital Strategy must be inclusive and consider the needs of all primary schools. The Programme aims to increase diversity access and choice, address under performance, provide more integrated local services for every child and family.

**9.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION**

9.1 All authorities are required to produce and submit a Strategy for Change identifying their Strategic approach to Primary Capital Development.

**10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

10.1 This is a DCSF requirement.

**11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

11.1 The Primary Capital Strategy must be submitted to the DCSF by 16<sup>th</sup> June 2008

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Every Child Matters: Primary Capital Programme – Primary Strategy for Change. Department for Children, Schools and Families (6.12.2007)	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Grosvenor House	Lorraine Cox
Draft Primary Capital Strategy	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Grosvenor House Intranet/internet	Lorraine Cox
Presentations and Notes Primary Headteachers Meeting, Diocesan Meetings and Extended Services Meetings	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Grosvenor House	Lorraine Cox
Executive Board Report – Primary Capital Programme – 20 <sup>th</sup> March 2008	3 <sup>rd</sup> Floor Grosvenor House Internet	Lorraine Cox

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 5 June 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Strategic Director – Health & Community

**SUBJECT:** Partnership Agreement with Registered Social Landlords – Housing Adaptations for Disabled People

**WARD(S)** Borough-wide

**1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 To seek approval to a joint funding agreement between Halton Borough Council and the Registered Social Landlords operating within Halton for the provision of housing adaptations in the homes of disabled people.

**2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

**In respect of the provision of housing adaptations in the homes of disabled people in Halton the Executive Board approve the :**

- i) proposed joint agreement.**
- ii) system for the allocation of funding to the Registered Social Landlords.**
- iii) Approve the authorisation of the Strategic Director, Health & Community in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to enter into the first joint agreement for the period from the first day of April 2008 until thirty first of March 2009 and that in light of the exceptional circumstances, mainly the unique match funding arrangements applying to RSLs and in accordance with Procurement Standing Order 8.6 the tendering requirements of those Standing Orders the waive on this occasion in view of the fact that match funding is only available where the Council enters into joint agreements with RSLs.**
- iv) Authorisation of the Strategic Director, Health & Community in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder to enter into further joint agreements with the RSLs after the expiry of the first joint agreement and to take such other action as may be necessary to give effect to the above recommendations.**

### 3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 In February 2008 the Board agreed in principle to the development of a joint funding agreement between Halton Borough Council and the Registered Social Landlords for the provision of housing adaptations. This was in recognition of :

- The inequitable access to Disabled Facilities Grants (DFG) funding by Registered Social Landlord tenants due to the inadequate level of funding for this area of work, leading the Council for many years, to focus its resources on private sector applicants.
- The backlog of adaptation work in Registered Social Landlord properties currently estimated at a value of £1.5 million.
- A reduction in the funding available to RSLs for adaptation work. The recent Government review of the DFG framework acknowledged the inconsistent approach to adaptation work amongst local authorities and RSLs and as a consequence rolled the small Housing Corporation fund, previous available to RSLs for adaptations, into the national DFG budget that is distributed annually to local authorities.
- The work underway to improve the adaptation service to owner-occupiers and private rented sector tenants.
- The recommendation in the recent DFG review that local authorities and RSLs establish partnership agreements and pool funding for adaptations.

3.2 The Board also agreed that up to £295,000 unspent Disabled Facilities Grant resources for 2007/2008 be used to support Registered Social Landlords to deal with the backlog of housing adaptations.

3.3 In the Capital allocations for 2008 a further £200,000 was agreed by the Council for partnership working with the Registered Social Landlords. The actual underspend on Disabled Facilities Grants in 2007/2008 was £ 267,000 providing a total of £ 467,000 to fund partnership working with the Registered Social Landlords.

3.4 Currently the outstanding adaptation work for the Registered Social Landlord's properties is valued at an estimated £1.5m. The Council's investment, when matched equally under this agreement by the Registered Social Landlords, will represent a total investment of £934,000 and should make a significant impact on the backlog of outstanding work. In the interim RSLs will continue to invest in adaptations work and Halton Housing Trust are committed to investing the same amount of funding as agreed in the transfer document.

- 3.5 An alternative to the development of a partnership agreement would have been to expand the housing adaptation service provided by HBC to manage the backlog of outstanding RSL adaptation work. This option would not, however, have the advantage of the RSLs providing match funding for the work to be undertaken.
- 3.6 Work carried out will improve the value of RSL housing stock and therefore improve housing provision for RSL tenants.
- 3.7 There are a number of options for the allocation of this partnership funding between the Registered Social Landlords :

**Option 1** – allocate funding in proportion of outstanding adaptations recorded for the Registered Social Landlord. This option would be seen to penalise the Registered Social Landlords who have invested generously in adaptation work in the past.

**Option 2** - allocate funding in proportion to the vulnerability of tenants and the number of recommendations for adaptations made by the Council to the individual Registered Social Landlord in recent years. This type of information would be difficult to collate and past experience may not necessarily be a predictor of future demand. Also high levels of previous recommendations would suggest high levels of already adapted properties.

**Option 3** - allocate funding in proportion to the level of stock of the individual Registered Social Landlords.

- 3.8 Option 3 is the preferred option. On the basis of this option funding would be allocated as follows :

RSL	STOCK NOs	% OF TOTAL STOCK	ALLOCATION OF FUNDING
Arena	712	5.2	24,308
CDS	728	5.3	24,775
Cosmopolitan	419	3.0	14,024
HHT	6189	44.7	208,956
LHT	2392	17.3	89,871
Riverside	2344	17.0	79,469
William Sutton	444	3.2	14,959
Others	592	4.3	20,100
<b>TOTALS</b>	<b>13820</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>467,462</b>

- 3.9 Since February 2008 work has been undertaken to develop an Agreement in partnership with a small number of the Registered Social Landlords who own the majority of the RSL housing stock in Halton. A separate agreement will be established with each individual RSL. A draft copy of the Agreement is at Appendix 1.
- 3.10 Once Partnership funding has been allocated to the Registered Social Landlords the Agreement requires the RSL's to matchfund all adaptation work on a 50/50 basis. Furthermore, the Agreement includes :
- Underlying principles for adaptation work;
  - Criteria for adaptations;
  - A process for the use of the Partnership funding including details of roles and responsibilities, monitoring and decision making arrangements;
  - Expenditure monitoring arrangements that will be subject to HBC auditing processes;
  - A statement of expectation once the allocation of funding has been committed that RSLs continue to invest in adaptations;
  - Service user feedback requirements;
  - A complaints/arbitration process;
  - An expectation that Registered Social Landlords encourage their tenants to use the Partnership route for the completion of adaptation work.
- 3.11 The Partnership Agreement has been prepared in compliance with the Council's partnership toolkit. Most aspects of the toolkit have been incorporated and the remainder will be incorporated as the Partnership is implemented. The final document will be concluded in consultation with the Council's Solicitor.
- 3.12 Once the partnership agreement has been concluded it will be formally launched by HBC and the RSLs and HBC residents will be informed of this development.

#### **4.0 BUSINESS CASE – WAIVER TENDERING STANDING ORDER**

- 4.1 The justification for waiver of Standing Orders in terms of Value for Money and competition rests on the unique match funding arrangements with the RSLs. The Council and the community will not be able to draw down match funding from the RSLs unless it enters into the proposed joint arrangement. Transparency will be achieved through this report and through the monitoring arrangements set out in the Flow Chart. Transparent, propriety and security will be delivered through each joint agreement and through the independent audit arrangements of the Council and the RSLs. Accountability will rest with the Council as the "front end" of the Housing Adaptation process and with the RSL through the billing system. The Public Contracts Regulations 2006 will not apply to these arrangements.

## 5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Demand for adaptations will continue due to demographic changes and Government and Council policy to encourage people to continue to live independently at home. Once a partnership agreement and process have been established there will therefore be a need to consider the level of investment required in subsequent years. However, once the purpose of the partnership agreement has been fulfilled and the backlog cleared, the agreement will discontinue.

5.2 A number of other initiatives will also contribute to the efficient use of resources to adapt properties including :

- The Adapted Housing Register – this project began in September in 2007 and 5 number of matches have been made between users and properties. It is estimated that so far the Register has secured savings of £110,000 in additional adaptation work. This initiative will be reviewed in September and future funding by the Registered Social Landlords will be negotiated.
- Stairlift Contract – a contract for the provision of stairlifts has been in place since April 2008. This has removed stairlifts from the Disabled Facilities Grant process for owner occupiers and private rented tenants and Registered Social Landlord tenants where there are palliative care needs. The contract will be reviewed in September and some RSLs may wish to participate in this arrangement in the future.
- Central Government Strategy – A recent Strategy “Lifetime Homes, Lifetime Neighbourhoods : A National Strategy for Housing in an Ageing Society” sets out plans to promote and regulate Lifetime Home Standards for all new build properties. This development will improve accessibility and the potential for adaptation of all new build properties. A Government review of the take up of this Standard has been brought forward to 2010.

## 6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 These are contained within the body of the report.

## 7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

### 7.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Disabled children in Registered Social Landlord properties are amongst those who would potentially benefit from the Partnership Agreement, through quicker delivery of housing adaptations.

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

None identified.

**7.3 A Healthy Halton**

More timely provision of housing adaptations will help to maintain disabled people in their own home and minimise the risk of unnecessary admission to hospital or residential care.

**7.4 A Safer Halton**

The provision of housing adaptations may reduce the incidence of falls experienced by disabled people.

**7.5 Halton’s Urban Renewal**

None identified.

**8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

8.1 A Risk Assessment has been undertaken and the following risks identified :

- Failure to establish a Partnership Agreement could lead to increasing number of RSLs tenants applying for DFG funding. In the absence of any cost sharing agreement the Council would bear the full cost.
- Some RSLs may choose not to participate in the Partnership Agreement and may continue or start to encourage their tenants to apply for DFGs.
- Once a Partnership Agreement has been established with the Registered Social Landlords there will be a need to consider the levels of future funding required in subsequent years.

**9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

9.1 The recommended approach will be more equitable for disabled Registered Social Landlord tenants who have been disadvantaged by lack of resources in the past.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
Executive Board Report 21/02/08 “Housing	Municipal Building	Dwayne Johnson, Strategic Director,

Adaptations – Joint Working With Registered Social Landlords”		Health & Community
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Halton Borough Council  
Health & Community Directorate

## DRAFT PARTNERSHIP AGREEMENT

Halton Borough Council have identified £467k funding for 2008/9 to be used for adaptation work in the properties of Registered Social Landlord (RSL) tenants and has designated this as Partnership funding. Funding will be allocated to the RSLs for one year from the first day of April 2008 until thirty-first of March 2009, in proportion to the housing stock of the individual RSL. It is the expectation of Halton Borough Council that the RSL will continue to invest in adaptation work as in previous years and that the Partnership funding will be in addition to at least the previous level of investment.

This agreement between Halton Borough Council and ..... RSL sets out the funding allocation, criteria and process for the use of this funding.

.....RSL is allocated £x for the year 08/09 in accordance with this agreement.

Partnership funding will be used for adaptations to properties following an assessment of the service user by Halton Borough Council's Home Improvement and Independent Living Service and a recommendation to the RSL for work that is deemed to be necessary and appropriate to meet needs of disabled people and reasonable and practical within the specified property.

In accordance with the adaptations policy a stepped approach to adaptations will be followed:

1. Adaptations will be completed within the foot print of the property; or
2. Tenants will be encouraged to relocate to more suitable properties; or
3. The use of modular buildings will be promoted; or
4. Extensions to properties will be undertaken.

The partnership fund will be used by the RSL to manage the backlog of outstanding adaptations and thereafter adaptations will be dealt with in date order.

The funding may also be used to help service users to move to more suitable properties.

The RSL will agree, for one year, to follow one of two specific processes for the use of partnership funding (process flow charts attached at Appendix 1 and Appendix 2)

- a) The RSL delivery route (Appendix 1) – the RSL will carry out the adaptation work and invoice HBC for half of the value of the work
- b) HBC delivery route (Appendix 2) – The tenant will apply for a DFG and HBC will manage the process and invoice the RSL for a sum equivalent to half the value of the work on completion of the adaptation. This funding would then be allocated by the Council to the DFG budget.

Expenditure by the RSL and progress in addressing the backlog of adaptations will be monitored by HBC on a bi-monthly basis. Adaptation work commenced under the Partnership Agreement will be completed under the terms of the agreement even if the completion time extends beyond the period of the agreement or in the event of either party terminating the agreement. Any allocation that is unlikely to be used by the RSL by the end of the financial year will be reallocated to other RSLs able to fully spend the allocation within the year. A pro forma for the monitoring of adaptation work completed and the expenditure will be provided for the RSLs to update on a bi-monthly basis.

The RSL will provide feedback from tenants following completion of adaptation work.

Any dissatisfaction by tenants with the adaptation work will be resolved in accordance with specific delivery route followed.

Disagreements between HBC and the RSL, about criteria for the use of partnership funding, will be resolved through an Adaptations Partnership Panel.

This agreement between Halton Borough Council and the RSL can be terminated by either party by the issue of three months notice to that effect.

Whilst recognising the legal right to apply for a DFG any person eligible for major adaptations will be encouraged by both parties to receive the necessary and appropriate adaptations by means of funding through this partnership agreement.

The Council and the RSL agree that this Partnership Agreement shall not constitute a Partnership for the purposes of the Partnership Acts 1890 – 1907 and the Limited Liability Partnership Act 2000.

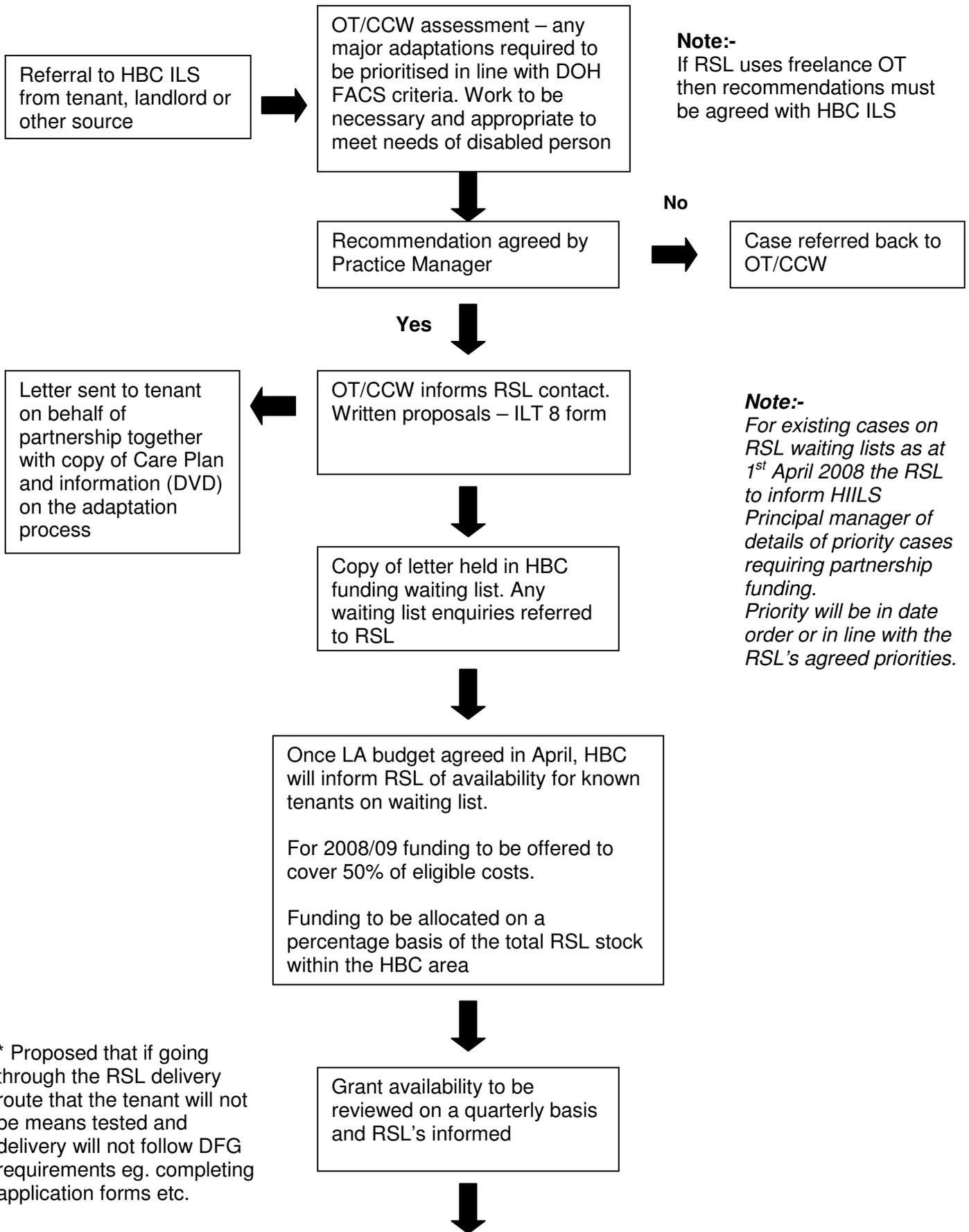
Signed..... Dwayne Johnson  
Halton Borough Council

Signed.....

RSL

**HBC Process for Major Adaptations – RSL Properties** (Appendix 1)

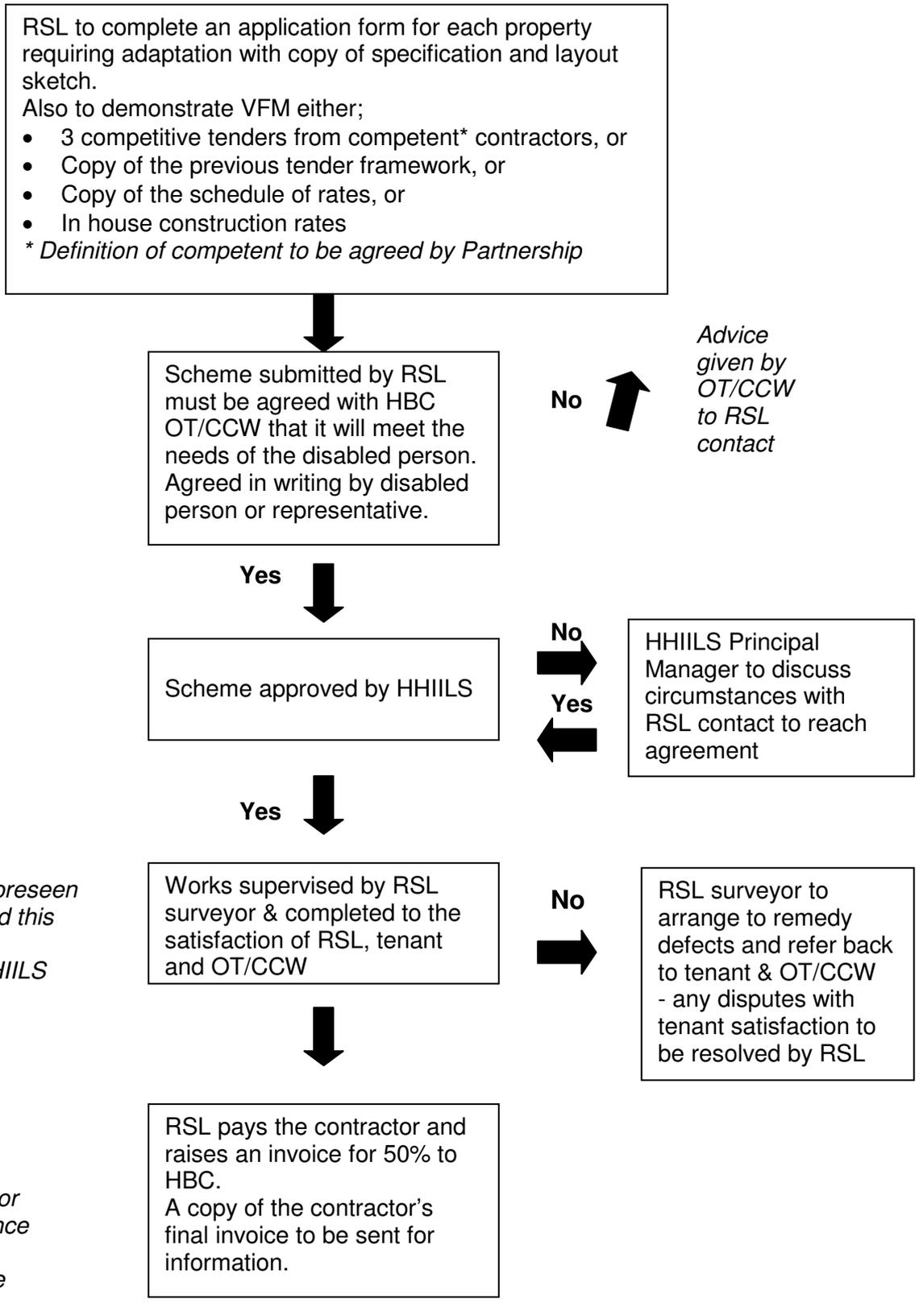
**(RSL Delivery Route)**



**Note:-**  
If RSL uses freelance OT then recommendations must be agreed with HBC ILS

**Note:-**  
*For existing cases on RSL waiting lists as at 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 the RSL to inform HILLS Principal manager of details of priority cases requiring partnership funding. Priority will be in date order or in line with the RSL's agreed priorities.*

\* Proposed that if going through the RSL delivery route that the tenant will not be means tested and delivery will not follow DFG requirements eg. completing application forms etc.



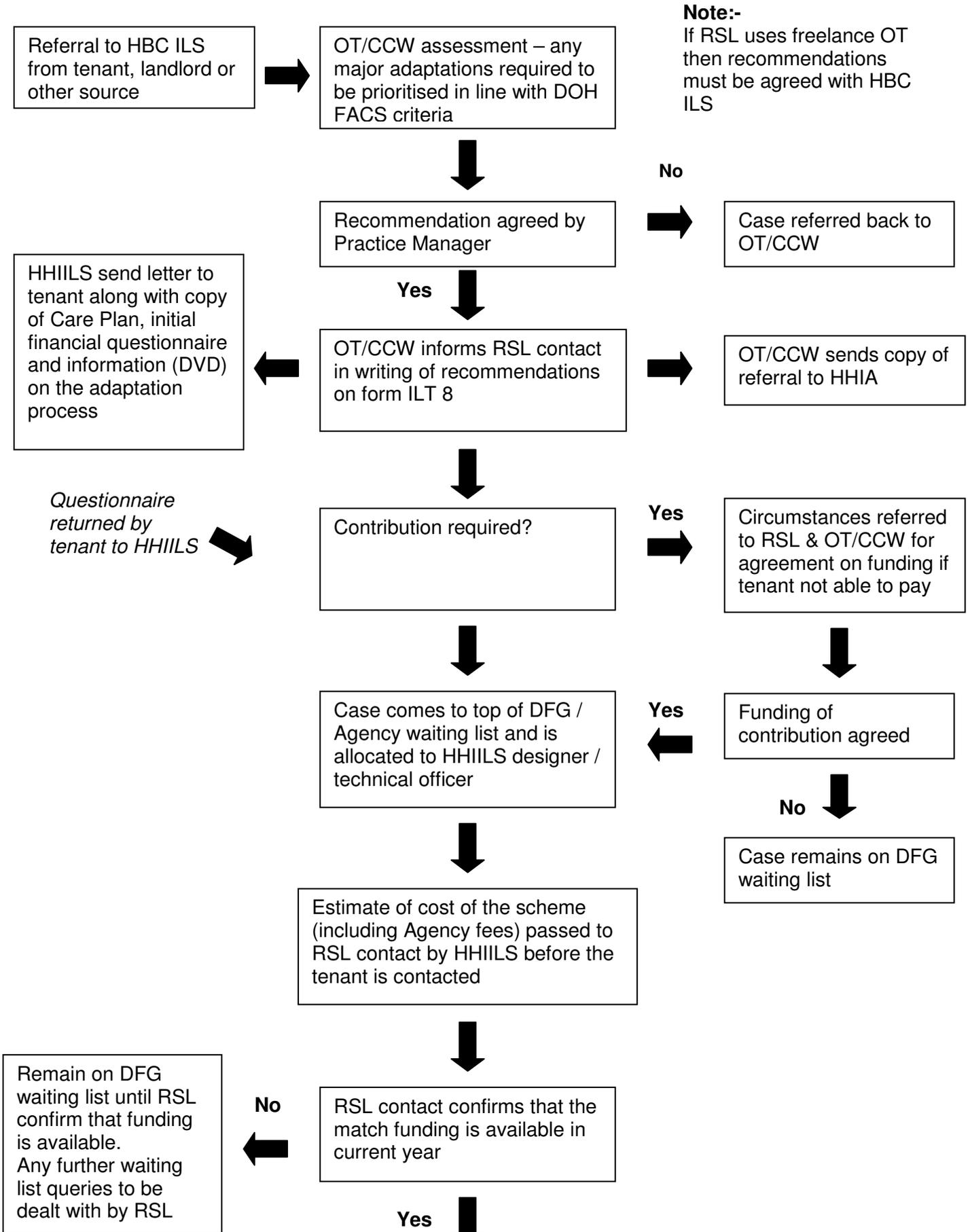
**Note: Minor adaptations, stairlifts & equipment services are not included in this process.**

Key – OT Occupational Therapist      CCW Community Care Worker  
 ILS Independent Living Service  
 HHILS Halton Home Improvement & Independent Living Service  
 DOH Department of Health      FACS Fair Access to Care Services

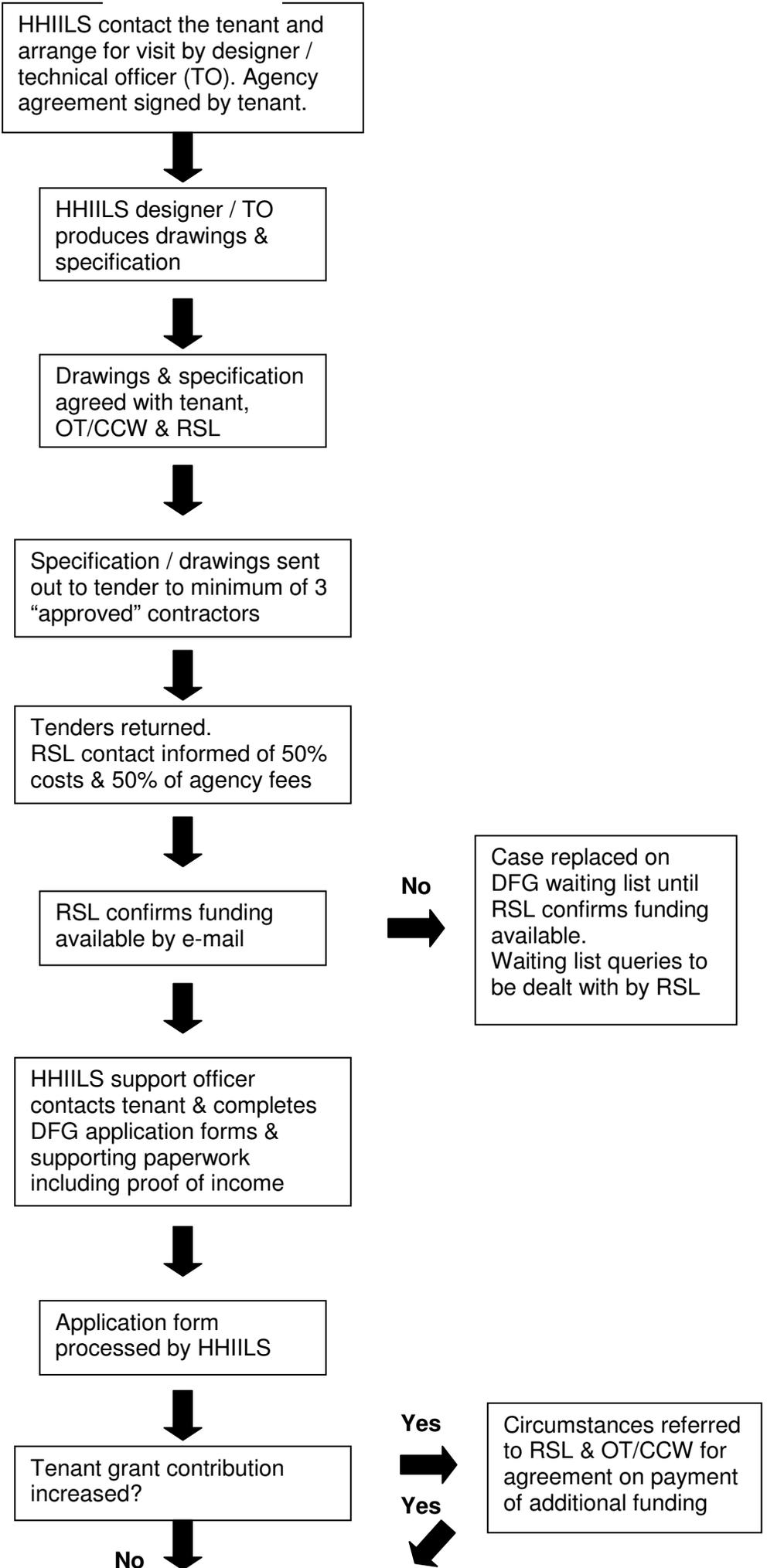
**(DFG delivery route using HHILS technical support)**

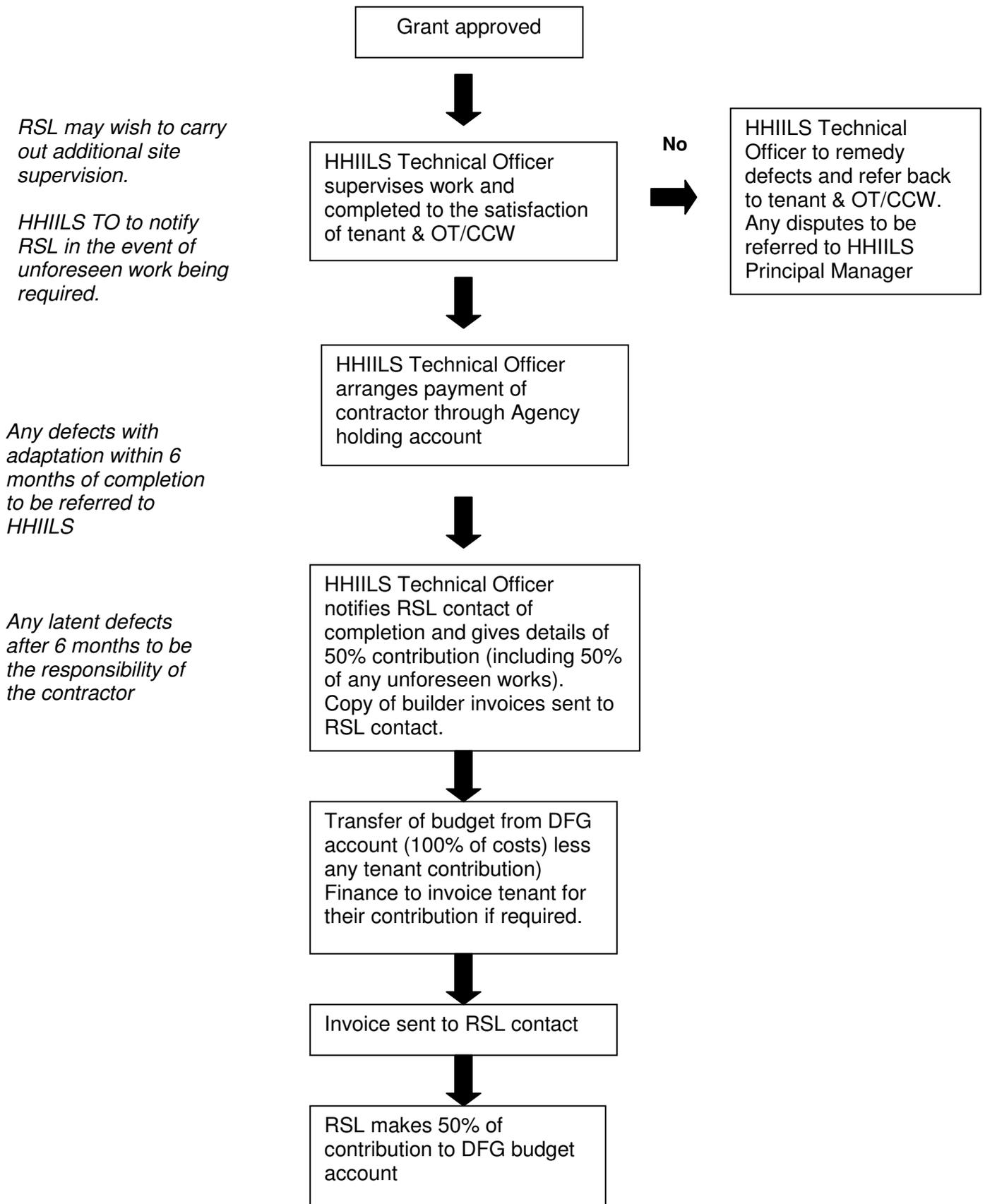
**Note:-**

If RSL uses freelance OT then recommendations must be agreed with HBC ILS



Continued overleaf





**Note: Minor adaptations, stairlifts & equipment services are not included in this process.**

**Key: OT Occupational Therapist CCW Community Care Worker TO Technical Officer  
ILS Independent Living Service HHIA Halton Home Improvement Agency  
HHILS Halton Home Improvement & Independent Living Service**

**REPORT TO:** Executive Board

**DATE:** 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008

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

**SUBJECT:** Local Area Agreements

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

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

- 1.1 A Local Area Agreement is a 3-year protocol that sets out the priorities for a local area. This must be agreed between central government and the area itself, as represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnership. Halton has had in place an Agreement since April 2007. However, part of the new Local Government Act, Communities and Local Government (CLG) announced that the current framework of Local Area Agreements would be replaced with new Local Area Agreements from 2008. The timetable dictates that Ministers must sign off the final version by June 2008.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to provide Executive Board with the latest draft of Halton's new Local Area Agreement for endorsement and sign off on behalf of Halton Borough Council.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board:**

- 2.1 endorse the LAA on behalf of Halton Borough Council (Annex A) and approve it for sign off by Ministers.**
- 2.2 Delegate authority to the Strategic Director Corporate and Policy, to make any final amendments following continuing dialogue with GONW.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 At the Executive Board meeting on 10<sup>th</sup> April 2008, members were provided with a report on the LAA, outlining the structure and process for development. Partners in Halton have been working in recent months to produce a new LAA document in line with Government requirements. The "Story of place" and initial draft outcomes framework

was agreed by Executive Board in April. Since then, a series of negotiation meetings have been held with Government.

- 3.2 At the core of the LAA is the outcomes framework. This has been the focus of the negotiation process with GONW. At annex A is the current draft. The Board will see that the list of designated indicators stands at 32 in total, plus the 16 mandatory children and young people indicators. This is the final list which has been agreed with government. The Board will also see that baselines and trajectories for all of the indicators are now in place.
- 3.3 The other issue for note concerns local indicators. In theory these can be of great interest because they demonstrate the wider focus of the partnership and provide a vehicle for partners within Halton to hold each other to account. However, our view is that we already have a number of significant strategic documents that fulfil this purpose. In particular the Sustainable Community Strategy and SSP Action Plans already have embedded within them aims, objectives and indicators that provide the full picture of what the partnerships ambitions are for Halton. We already have in place through our Performance Management Framework mechanisms to report regularly on these and hold each other to account.
- 3.4 Therefore, our position is that we are not including local indicators in the LAA. To do so we would merely be repeating indicators that we have elsewhere. Government Office has agreed with this approach.
- 3.5 The only other outstanding issue of note concerns reward grant. As reported to the Board last time the LAA regime does make provision for this. However, the amount involved for Halton is likely to be much smaller scale than in previous incarnations – perhaps up to £1M. The methodology is still being developed by government but is likely to be based on performance across all LAA targets, and not just a select handful. There is also the possibility of a separate reward grant opportunity for areas in receipt of Working Neighbourhoods Fund. This would have an obvious focus on the achievement of outcomes on worklessness and skills. Further guidance on this from Government is expected later in the year. At that point a further report will be brought forward to Executive Board setting out the financial implications.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 4.1 Our emerging LAA is founded on our current Community Strategy, and clearly follows the reasoning and rationale adopted in our current LAA. At its core is the need to agree an outcomes framework that describes local aspirations and will act as a framework for future action. The Board will see that this is now at an advanced stage and is offered for adoption by the Board. The Board should also agree that the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy be given delegated approval to make

any final amendments of the outcome framework, which may be requested by Government before the final Ministerial sign off in June.

- 4.2 It should also be remembered that the LAA lasts only for three years. Our overall ambitions for Halton are set out in the Community Strategy/Corporate Plan and recognize that consistent effort behind our priorities will be needed for 15-25 years for them to be realised. The LAA forms just one part of the delivery chain for our overall priorities. It is informed by the new State of Halton report, which concludes that four vital issues demand attention in the medium term – health inequalities, crime, worklessness and skills, and the narrowing of the gap between areas within Halton.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 A Local Area Agreement is a 3 year agreement that sets out the priorities for a local area, agreed between central government and a local area, represented by the lead local authority and other key partners through Local Strategic Partnerships. The Local Area Agreement provides a service improvement tool for helping to implement Halton's adopted Community Strategy.

## **6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

## **7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

- 7.1 There are significant implications for all Council priorities. The Agreement can be seen as a three-year operational plan for the Community Strategy. As such it provides a focus for everything the Council and its partners will be doing to address all of the Council's strategic priorities.

## **8.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 8.1 The Agreement includes proposals for a robust risk management process. This focuses attention and resources on critical areas, to provide more robust action plans and better-informed decision-making. There is already in place a Risk Register covering the strategic and operational risks around the current Local Area Agreement. This register will be fundamentally revised once the new Agreement is in place.

## **9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 9.1 The Local Area Agreement is based on the same values that underpin the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan. These make explicit a

commitment to equality and diversity. The new Agreement reinforces this value-driven system of corporate and partnership working.

#### **10.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION**

- 10.1 Under the new Local Government Act (2007) there is a statutory duty on all local authorities to produce a Local Area Agreement to the format and timetable set down by Government.

#### **11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED**

- 11.1 No other options were pursued. The Agreement process is a prescriptive one and Halton has followed Government guidance.

#### **12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

- 12.1 The Local Area Agreement will come into force when the Agreement in its final form is agreed and signed by the Minister for Local Government. This is expected to take place in June 2008.

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

Halton Local Area Agreement – 2008-11 is available from:  
Debbie Houghton/Shelah Semoff *2nd floor Municipal Building*  
*Contact number 0151 471 7528 or ext 1154.*

## Halton Local Area Agreement – Improvement Targets (Designated)

### Statutory Education & Early Years Targets

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10</i>	<i>Targets 2010/11</i>	<i>Lead partner</i>
NI 72	Early Years Foundation Stage Attainment	43.9%	44.8%	48%	49%	CYPD PVI Early Years Providers
NI 73	Proportion achieving L4+ at KS2 in both English and Maths	71.7%	N/A	77%	77%	CYPD Schools

NI 74	Proportion achieving L5+ at KS3 in both English and Maths	62%	N/A	71%	74%	CYPD Schools
NI 75	Proportion achieving 5 A*-C GCSE including English and Maths	41.1%	44%	49%	49%	CYPD Schools
NI 83	Proportion achieving L5+ at KS3 in Science	68%	74%	76%	80%	CYPD Schools
NI 87	Secondary School persistent absence rate	7.2% 2006/07 school year.	9% (half days missed)	6.5%		CYPD Schools

NI 92	Achievement Gap at Early Years Foundation Stage	33.8% (LA % gap between median and bottom 20%)	31.7%	30.65%	30.25%	CYPD Schools
NI 93	Proportion progressing by two levels at KS2 in English	63.1% Calculated from matched data in CYP Database.  This data may not be 100% accurate.	N/A	89%	89%	CYPD Schools
NI 94	Proportion progressing by two levels at KS2 in Maths	61,4% Calculated from matched data in CYP Database.  This data may not be 100% accurate.	N/A	87%	87%	CYPD Schools
NI 95	Proportion progressing by two levels at KS3 in English	18% (267 out of 1479)	N/A	30%	33%	CYPD Schools

NI 96	Proportion progressing by two levels at KS3 in Maths	51% (755 out of 1491)	N/A	60%	66%	CYPD Schools
NI 97	Proportion progressing by two levels at KS4 in English	59% (KS3 to KS4 – 885 out of 1505)	N/A	64%	73%	CYPD Schools
NI 98	Proportion progressing by two levels at KS4 in Maths	26% (395 out of 1525)	N/A	30%	32%	CYPD Schools
NI 99	Proportion of CiC achieving Level 4 at KS2 in English	100% (6 out of 6)	50%	33.3%	37.5%	CYPD Schools Corporate Parents

NI 100	Proportion of CiC achieving Level 4 at KS2 in Maths	83% (5 out of 6)	50%	33.3%	37.5%	CYPD Schools Corporate Parents
NI 101	Proportion of CiC achieving 5 A*-C GCSE	12.5% (1 out of 8)	18.75%	21.4% (inc E&M)	25%	CYPD Schools Corporate Parents

## Halton Local Area Agreement – Improvement Targets (Designated)

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10</i>	<i>Targets 2010/11</i>	<i>Lead partner (in bold) &amp; supporting partners</i>
NI 5	Overall satisfaction with the area C4	Places survey will be included as part of the local case for target setting in summer 2008.				<b>HBC</b> HVA PCT Police RSLs
NI 7	Environment for a thriving third sector C4	Local survey to be undertaken in summer 2008 which will help to inform target setting for 2009.				<b>HVA</b> HBC PCT Police
NI 8	Adult participation in sport	20.2% (2006)	22.02%	23.02%	24.02%	<b>LA</b> PCT Vol Sector
NI 16	Serious acquisitive crime rate	16.47% (per 1000 population)	16.06%  1918	15.65%  1870	15.23%  1820	<b>Cheshire Constabulary &amp; CDRP Partner agencies.</b>

		1968				
Priority	Indicators	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Targets 2008/09	Targets 2009/10	Targets 2010/11	Lead partner (in bold) & supporting partners
NI 17	Perceptions of anti-social behaviour review @refresh C3	Baseline 35% Target 27%	32%	27%	23%	<b>CDRP Partners / (Community Safety Team)</b>
		Local data has been used to set baseline and proxy targets for 08-09. To be refreshed at review.				
NI 20	Assault with Injury crime rate	10.62% (per 1000 population) 1269	10.35%  1237	10.09%  1206	9.82%  1174	<b>Cheshire Constabulary &amp; CDRP Partner agencies.</b>
NI 30	Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders.	16%	19%	TBC	TBC	<b>Cheshire Constabulary / Probation &amp; CDRP Partner Agencies / (Community Safety Team)</b>
NI 32	Repeat incidents of domestic violence C3	Established local target 127 (07/08 actual)	121	115	109	Cheshire Constabulary & CDRP Partner Agencies
		Local data has been used to set baseline and proxy targets for 08-09. To be refreshed at review.				
NI 33	Arson incidents	1277	1024 -20%	937 -27%	855 -33%	<b>Fire &amp; Rescue Service, Police + PCSOs, Youth Services, HBC, Schools, Businesses</b>

Priority	Indicators	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Targets 2008/09	Targets 2009/10	Targets 2010/11	<b>Lead partner (in bold) &amp; supporting partners</b>
NI 39	Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates – Rate per 100 000 admissions	2225.2	2192.3	2137.9	2063.4	<b>PCT</b> Hospital Trusts Mental Health Trusts LA DAAT Police Schools Vol sector
	% increase in rate of alc related admission on previous year	-0.48%	-1.48%	-2.48%	-3.48%	
	Actual number of alc related admissions (rounded to nearest whole number of attributable admissions)	2652	2613	2548	2459	
	Actual numbers of alcohol related admissions on previous year (rounded to nearest whole number of attributable admissions)	-205	-39	-65	-89	

<i>Priority</i>	<i>Indicators</i>	<i>Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)</i>	<i>Targets 2008/09</i>	<i>Targets 2009/10</i>	<i>Targets 2010/11</i>	<i>Lead partner (in bold) &amp; supporting partners</i>
NI 40	Drug users in effective treatment	527	532	543	548	DAAT CDRP
NI 53	Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth (* <b>Indicative figures- this data will be refreshed in 2009/10- Quarter 4 2008/9 will form baseline for 2009/10</b> )	15.5%	18%*	21%*	23%*	<b>PCT</b> Public Health CYPD
	<b>Completeness of data capture 6-8 weeks</b>	0%	85%	90%	95%	

Priority	Indicators	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Targets 2008/09	Targets 2009/10	Targets 2010/11	<b>Lead partner (in bold) &amp; supporting partners</b>
NI 56	Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6	22.4%	21.3%	21.3%	21.3%	<b>PCT</b> Public Health Schools CYPD
Line 6	Total number of primary school age children in Year 6 recorded as obese for their age in the past school year. *	269	260	256	251	
Line 7	Total number of primary school age children in Year 6 with height and weight recorded in the past school year.	1200	1220	1200	1180	
Line 8	Total number of primary school age children in Year 6.	1410	1430	1410	1380	
Line 9	Percentage of children in Year 6 with height and weight recorded who are obese. *	22.4	21.3	21.3	21.3	
Line 10	Percentage of children in Year 6 with height and weight recorded.	85	85	85	86	

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)</b>	<b>Targets 2008/09</b>	<b>Targets 2009/10</b>	<b>Targets 2010/11</b>	<b>Lead partner (in bold) &amp; supporting partners</b>
NI 63	Stability of placements of looked after children	69%	73%	77%	81.5%	<b>CYPD</b> Carers & Residential Providers Corporate Parents
NI 80	Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19	34% (2006/07)	38.9%	40.5%	42.22% (PSA) 54%	<b>14-19 Partnership</b> LSC Connexions CYPD Post-16 Providers Schools
NI 111	First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17 C3	722 (2005/06)	710	698	686	<b>YOT</b> CYPD Schools Connexions Youth Service
		Local data has been used to set baseline and proxy targets for 08-09. To be refreshed at review.				
NI 112	Under 18 conception rate	48%	-27%	-41%	-55%	<b>Preventative Service Board</b> CYPD PCT Public Health Schools Commissioned Services
NI 115	Substance misuse by young people C4	Indicator Deferred – Halton wishes to keep as a placeholder.				<b>Preventative Service Board</b> CYPD PCT Public Health Schools Commissioned Services

Priority	Indicators	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Targets 2008/09	Targets 2009/10	Targets 2010/11	Lead partner (in bold) & supporting partners
NI 116	Proportion of children in poverty –	27%	26%	25.2%	24.2%	<b>HBC</b> JCP/DWP College
NI 117	16-18 year old not in education, training or employment	11.5%	9.9%	8.8%	7.7%	<b>14-19 Partnership</b> LSC Connexions CYPD Post-16 Providers Schools
NI 120	All-age all cause mortality	Males 906 Females 673	Males 805 Females 607	Males 780 Females 590	Males 755 Females 574	<b>PCT</b> LA Acute Trusts
NI 123	16+ current smoking rate prevalence	914	1038	1082	1128	<b>PCT</b> LA Acute Trusts Schools/colleges
NI 124.	People with a long- term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition. C3	43%	45%	47%	49%	<b>PCT/LA</b> Acute trusts Vol sector
Local data has been used to set baseline and proxy targets for 08-09. To be refreshed at review.						

Priority	Indicators	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Targets 2008/09	Targets 2009/10	Targets 2010/11	Lead partner (in bold) & supporting partners
NI 139	People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently.C4	Indicator Deferred – Halton wishes to keep as a placeholder.				LA PCT Vol sector
NI 142	Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living (Brenda to agree)	98.17%	98.51%	98.69%	99.04%	LA PCT RSLs Cheshire Probation DAAT Commissioned Providers
NI 150	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment C4	Indicator Deferred – Halton wishes to keep as a placeholder.				<b>Indicators</b>
NI 153	Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods	31.6%	30.6%	29.6%	28.6%	Job Centre Plus HBC

<b>Priority</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)</b>	<b>Targets 2008/09</b>	<b>Targets 2009/10</b>	<b>Targets 2010/11</b>	<b>Lead partner (in bold) &amp; supporting partners</b>
NI 154	Net additional homes provided	522	518	518	518	RSLs Housing Industry HBC
NI 163	Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher	60.2 (2006)	65.4	67.6	69.5	LSC HBC
NI 171	VAT registration rate C4	Indicator Deferred – Halton wishes to keep as a placeholder.				HBC Enterprise Board
NI 173	People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits. C4	Indicator Deferred – Halton wishes to keep as a placeholder.				<b>Job Centre Plus</b> HBC
NI 175	Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling					
NI 175	LTP1A – Access to Whiston Hospital	29%	100%	100%	100%	<b>HBC</b> Transport Operators Transport partnership

Priority	Indicators	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Targets 2008/09	Targets 2009/10	Targets 2010/11	Lead partner (in bold) & supporting partners
NI 175	LTP1B – Access to Warrington Hospital	0%	100%	100%	100%	<b>HBC</b> Transport Operators Transport partnership
NI 175	LTP1C – Access to Runcorn College Campus	84%	87%	88%	89%	<b>HBC</b> Transport Operators Transport partnership
NI 175	LTP1D – Access to Widnes College Campus	89%	91%	92%	93%	<b>HBC</b> Transport Operators Transport partnership
NI 186	Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area	10.1 tonnes per capita (2005)	3.76% 9.72 tonnes	7.52% 9.35 tonnes	11.1% 8.98 tonnes (Reduction of 3.6% tonnes LA initiative + 7.5% tonnes from Government initiatives)	Defra
NI 192	Household waste recycled and composted	25.1% (2007/08)	30%	32%	34%	HBC

(27<sup>th</sup> May 2008)

## HALTON LAA 2008 – OUTLINE STORY OF PLACE

### Introduction

People want to live in pleasant and thriving places. They want good quality services, a safe and attractive physical environment, accessible transport links, access to good schools and responsive health services, a strong sense of community and for there to be opportunities for all. Whilst that is the ideal, Halton is not alone in facing the challenge of meeting these aspirations. The long standing, intractable nature of many social, economic and environmental issues does not make long lasting remedies easy to achieve in the short term. Public services have improved markedly in recent years. However, despite this increasing efficiency significant and lasting improvements are only possible if underlying issues are addressed.

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

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

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

### Halton's Story

Halton is a largely urban area of 119,500 people. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool. The population of Halton was in decline for over a decade, but has recently started to increase. Between 1991 and 2002 the estimated Borough population decreased by 6,500 people from 124,800 to 118,300. However, in 2003 there was a small increase in the population and between 2003 and 2006 the estimated population increased by 1,100 people. This in part is due to a concerted effort to build new houses, particularly larger executive homes in Sandymoor (SE Runcorn) and Upton Rocks (NE Widnes) to try to stem population decline, to provide a more balanced housing stock, and retain wealth in the community. It is also in part due to increased inward migration.

Runcorn and Widnes have a common heritage in the chemical industry. Widnes is regarded as the birthplace of the chemical industry, and its development soon spread to Runcorn in the 19<sup>th</sup> century. Quick, and sometimes environmentally damaging development took place up to the mid 20<sup>th</sup> century. More recently, there has been a rapid contraction as the industry became more globalised. This has left a positive legacy in that high value-added specialist chemical manufacturing and scientific and research-based employers are based in the borough. This is one of the key strands of

a vibrant knowledge based economy in the borough. However, contraction brought with it a massive rise in worklessness for those with little or no skills, which lingers to this day. Investment in new Creative and Science based businesses (at Daresbury, Manor Park & The Heath) and Logistics (at 3MG ) as well as the development of the Widnes Waterfront are now bringing new employment opportunities to Halton but require new skills and the upskilling of the community.

On the back of the still booming industry of the 1950s and 1960s, Runcorn was designated as a new town. Roads and a unique busway system were constructed together with a new shopping centre (Halton Lea) to serve an influx of residents from Liverpool, many of whom were accommodated in new social housing. There was less employment provision in the New Town than might have otherwise have been expected because of the projected growth in employment in the chemical sector. In the event employment growth did not materialise, in fact, the opposite happened and so the New Town legacy is of a very well landscaped environment concealing residential areas in which the housing is becoming life expired and there are successive generations of unemployed.

The number of jobs in the Borough's largely the same as it was 10 years ago but the proportion employed in manufacturing has fallen and the reliance on a small number of large employers is beginning to be reduced. The wealth of the Borough has improved overall during the last 10 years as illustrated by rising numbers of detached houses, rising car ownership, increases in professional and managerial households in parts of the borough.

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

As this picture indicates, Halton faces many similar challenges to the Merseyside conurbation and since 1998 has worked closely with its Merseyside neighbours as part of "Greater Merseyside". The Council is now firmly embedded in Merseyside both politically (through the Merseyside Leaders and Co-ordinating Committee) administratively (within the same sub-region for NW Development Agency (NWDA), LSC, Connexions, GONW Liaison etc). The Merseyside authorities have submitted a City Region Business Case to Ministers supporting the case for Halton's integration into Merseyside. The Council and its partners recognise that their ambition for Halton can only be achieved through engagement in the wider sub-region and region and so Halton plays a very active role.

The latest Index of Multiple of Deprivation (IMD) for 2007, not only contains some of the latest data available, but also is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 30<sup>th</sup> nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), but this is 3<sup>rd</sup> highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10<sup>th</sup> highest in the North West. St Helens (47<sup>th</sup>), Wirral (60<sup>th</sup>) and Sefton (83<sup>rd</sup>) are way down the table compared to Halton.

The new IMD suggests that levels of deprivation have decreased in the borough. Now the IMD ranks Halton as 30<sup>th</sup> most deprived Authority in England for rank of average score compared to a rank of 21<sup>st</sup> in the 2004 Index. The proportion of Halton's population in the top category (i.e. the top 20% of super output areas) has also decreased from 50% in 2004 to 48.5% in 2007. Halton's concentration of deprivation has gone down from 20<sup>th</sup> position in 2004 to 27<sup>th</sup> worst in England in 2007. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. However, there is still room for improvement. Within Halton there are 8 super output areas in the top 975 Super Output Areas in England, i.e. within England's top 3% most deprived, this is up from 6 in 2004. The most deprived neighbourhood is ranked 306<sup>th</sup> out of 32,482 and is situated in the Windmill Hill area of Runcorn.

Bespoke research to get a better picture of life in Halton was commissioned through the Halton Data Observatory. This is based on the Local Futures Group data platform and has generated a 'State of the Borough' Audit of economic, social and environmental conditions (January 2008). This is a timely and necessary assessment of the challenges and issues that face Halton. Performance is assessed according to how well the borough scores on a range of carefully selected benchmark indicators of economic, social and environmental well being. It provides a perspective on the state of Halton by looking at how it compares with other districts, how it rates within the North West Region, and also how it performs compared to the country as a whole.

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

This evidence shows that the gap in prosperity between the richest and poorest neighbourhoods is widening. The policy implications of this audit are that a broad based approach to regeneration is still needed to deal with the depth and breadth of challenges in Halton. However, "poverty of place" issues need to be urgently addressed in terms of narrowing the gap between areas within the borough. Also, a focus on worklessness and the low skills base as a key causal issue is more likely to generate sustainable improvements in social, economic and environmental well being than palliative investments in tackling the symptoms of distress. These are the key challenges the LAA must address.

### **The Forward Vision**

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

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

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from facts and figures about conditions in Halton. The Local Area Agreement sets out a clear vision of making changes across many issues that will make a big difference to life in Halton. It aims to give people opportunities and choices. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here. This approach mirrors that set out in Halton's adopted Community Strategy.

In order to refresh this the Partnership undertook a broadly based development process to produce a "Vision Story" for Halton. A series of focus groups took place with community representatives, council members and key stakeholders in the summer of 2007. The aim of this was to explore what made life in Halton special and how would local people describe an idealised Halton in 2015. From this work arose a "story" which is far more explicit and aspirational than a pat vision statement. This is as follows:

### The Halton Vision Story

The long-term vision for Halton seeks to imagine an idealised Halton in 2015. It is based around building communities that are more prosperous, healthier, cohesive and diverse. Communities that draw strength from their distinctive identity and contribution to life in Halton. Places that have a common sense of ownership and pride. Places where people feel connected to Halton because of its distinctive history and heritage and because it is a place whose future they are helping to shape.

Halton will have a thriving local economy, good transport links, access to culture and sport, an attractive and sustainable local environment, free from crime and fear of crime, where people benefit from education for all ages and enjoy healthy fulfilling lives. A place where people respect and care for each other and share a sense of responsibility and pride. Statistics are not the only measure of success. What is important is that local people experience their lives and neighbourhoods as better than they are now.

Good public services are the bedrock of life in the borough. Every year they improve in quality and responsiveness, are tailored more closely to users' needs and provide choice where appropriate. They are more joined up and easier for people to access. Users are involved in the design and delivery of services, and better communication mean people are well informed about what is going on.

The established vision statement for Halton is:

**Halton will be a thriving and vibrant borough where people can learn and develop their skills, enjoy a good quality of life with good health; a high quality, modern urban environment; the opportunity for all to fulfil their potential; greater wealth and equality; sustained by a thriving business community; and within safer, stronger and more attractive neighbourhood.**

This is a pledge to secure a better future for the people of Halton. It is about everyone having the opportunity to fulfil their potential and pursue the sort of life that suits them. It is about equal access to opportunities and facilities, and helping ensure that no one is left behind but can access the opportunities and progress being made in Halton. This means positively targeting activity at the most deprived neighbourhoods or particular groups of people in greatest need.

Part of Halton's success has been its ability to change and evolve, and its resilience in the face of adversity. This resilience is the key to the future. The vision for the future is of a Halton that has sustained itself. A place where people want to live and work. It is somewhere that provides a high quality living environment, sensitive to a range of needs, and recognises the diversity of its residents. A place where people have opportunities and choice. People have high aspirations and increasing abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Halton is a place that provides the quality of life and opportunities that people choose to live and work here.

In short, Halton is a place that meets current expectations, prepares for future needs' and respects the diversity of the place and people. A place that is at ease with itself and the outside world. There is the confidence and capability of taking on future challenges and opportunities. A place that is inclusive, and where we make sure that no one gets left behind. *In working towards this, we believe that*

- Everyone should feel they have a sense of belonging and pride in Halton
- Every person feels valued equally, and can play their own part in shaping Halton;

- Everyone understands that there are standards and expectations of behaviour, and will work together to enforce these collectively.
- Everyone has a right to enjoy a good quality of life;
- Everyone can play an active part in the community; it is safe and its sound, and their actions do not inconvenience others.
- Everyone should be able to participate fully in the social, economic and cultural life of the Borough, and be able to contribute their views as part of democratic decision-making processes;
- All agencies recognise they have a collective duty of care for the area
- Making the Borough a safe and pleasant place to live is vitally important, and this environment also needs to be protected and preserved for future generations;
- We should work towards a just society, in which there is understanding and tolerance between and within communities, so that people feel they have a voice and a stake in their community;
- The Borough can be a multi-faith, multi-cultural and multi-racial society, where this diversity is an asset not a problem;
- We will oppose prejudice and discrimination.
- There should be a sense of identity based on acceptance, not stereotypes; and, shaped less by how people see themselves as individuals with rights and expectations, but rather as part of groups and as part of communities.
- Everyone has a right to do things for themselves, to maximise their independence, while agencies ensure they have the necessary levels of support.
- Everyone has fair and easy access to services they need and barriers to participation are removed; and,
- No one is stigmatised because of who they are, or perceived to be, or because of their circumstances or poor choices in their lives.

### **The Strategic Framework**

The Halton Strategic Partnership and the Council's Executive Board have now formally adopted the Vision Story. The strategic framework of the LAA is largely drawn from the Community Strategy and seeks to help make the vision story a reality. The agreed Partnership priorities are as follows:

- ***A Healthy Halton*** - *To create a healthier community and work to promote well being - a positive experience of life with good health.*
- ***Halton's Urban Renewal*** - *To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough.*
- ***Halton's Children and Young People*** - *To ensure that in Halton children and young people are safeguarded, healthy and happy.*
- ***Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton*** - *To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, entrepreneurship, enterprise and business growth.*
- ***A Safer Halton*** - *To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments where people can enjoy life.*

Our overall approach is based on:

- ***Closing the gap*** between the most deprived communities in the borough and in Halton overall.
- ***Tackling inequality*** and promoting community cohesion, so that no community is disadvantaged.
- ***Making what we do sustainable*** so that our quality of life is protected and enhanced for the benefit of current and future generations.

- **Investing in preventative activity** that stops problems occurring rather than paying for actions to fix things that are going wrong. We need to invest more in success, rather than in failure.

In doing this we will follow certain key principles:

- **Leadership** – *the Partnership's role is to give clear strategic leadership to the borough and enable people to make the necessary contributions to make a difference.*
- **Fair and inclusive** – *promoting equal access to opportunities and facilities. This includes the need to positively target activity at the most deprived geographical areas or particular groups of people.*
- **Good value** – *being economical, efficient and effective in delivering 'Best Value' for the public.*
- **Collaborative** – *this is about collective responsibility for making things better and embedding partnership approaches in everything that we do.*
- **Evidence-based** – *ensuring we learn from best practice elsewhere and make good use of research about what works in addressing the borough's priorities.*

## **Structure**

The LAA has to be read alongside Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy. It forms the operational plan of that strategy. The structure of the LAA – its framework and delivery – is based clearly on the strategy. It is worth just summarising the current standpoint on our five priorities:

**Health** - is a key strategic priority with two fundamental challenges to be addressed, firstly life expectancy in Halton is considerable less than most of England, and secondly forecasts suggest that Halton's population is ageing at a faster rate than England as a whole, which reflects a long-term demographic trend of an ageing population. On average, older people are more likely than younger people to report lifestyle-limiting illness, to live alone, live in poverty and to rely on public services and informal Carers. People are also living longer with chronic long-term conditions (respiratory, heart, and diabetic etc). Advancing age carries some increased risk of dementia and depressive illness, often linked to bereavement. This shift to an older population will have a large effect on demand for social care, health and other public services, unless outcomes are improved through effective, adequate prevention and health promotion. However ageing reflects the positive advances society has made and we also recognise that older people are also an under utilised asset to our local communities, whose contribution as carers, people with skills and knowledge and sometimes spare time needs to be recognised and further developed.

Analysis locally demonstrates that the health problems of Halton will only be addressed by a more discriminating approach in how services are delivered. We need to reflect changes in societal expectations of speedier, higher quality and flexible services, but also that these will not need to be simply more intensive, but also closer to peoples homes and more timely. There is a historical legacy of investment in acute and reactive services, and nowhere is that more so than in services for people in mental distress. So services need to be focussed on preventing people who are becoming unwell or in need getting to the point they need more intensive intervention. It is clearly better to prevent than treat. We need to better concentrate on the wider determinants of health, such as quality of housing, having employment, sufficient income and feeling safe, as well as looking to influence the choices people make about their lives. In particular issues around sexual health, teenage pregnancy, smoking, alcohol, exercise and poor diet will all be targeted as part of the LAA in order to radically improve long-term health outcomes. As part of this we also need to target specific initiatives both geographically and demographically, especially recognising the needs of an increasingly ageing population. The future lies in working collaboratively to support access to the right level of health, social care, support and more universal services (such as benefits, housing advice and so) at the right time.

Our approach to health and well being includes developing a much more shared approach to performance management so we can demonstrate we are having the impact we plan. So the LAA and Delivery Plan for Health (PID) has shared outcomes, performance measures, inspection regimes, aligned budget cycles, increased joint and lead commissioning, and integrated workforce planning. Our Commissioning Strategy has identified changing patterns of need and expectations and, an overall aging population in Halton. The health outcomes in the LAA will include a range of targets shared across the system. Targets will be specifically focused on those people most at risk of using higher-level services - or at risk of exclusion from mainstream services. Initially, key indicators suggested are:

### Designated Indicators

NI 8 - Adult participation in sport

NI 120 - All-age all cause mortality

NI 123 - 16+ current smoking rate prevalence

NI 124 - People with a long-term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition

NI 139 - People over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently

NI 142 - Number of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living

NI 150 - Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment

### Non-Designated targets

**Children & Young People** - The multi-agency Children and Young People's Alliance Board functions as the Children's Trust Board. It holds responsibility for developing joint measures and local performance indicators for improving outcomes for children and young people, delivering against the Children and Young People's Plan, driving the development of children's mini-trusts and the joint commissioning of services from pooled and aligned budgets. Four task groups, plus the Safeguarding Children Board and, the Children and Young People's Commissioning Partnership support the Alliance Board.

All children's services priorities agreed with Government inspectors will be included in the LAA. Those targets identified in the Community Strategy and Children and Young People's Plan, which are not included in the LAA, will continue to be addressed by the Children and Young People's Alliance Board using the "Halton Ziggurat" performance management framework. This has been established to bring together national and local outcomes, outputs, targets and funding streams. The system is used for performance self-assessment and review, both within the Alliance Board structure and commissioned services. In addition, they are managed via robust action plans. Performance against the priorities will be reported via priorities conversations and the Annual Performance Assessment. Initially, key indicators suggested (over and above those in the mandatory DCSF set) are:

### Designated Indicators

#### Statutory Indicators

NI 72 - Early Years Foundation Stage Attainment

NI 76 - Proportion achieving L4+ at KS2 in both English and Maths

NI 77 - Proportion achieving L5+ at KS3 in both English and Maths

NI 78 - Proportion achieving 5 A\*-C GCSE including English and Maths

NI 83 - Proportion achieving L5+ at KS3 in Science

NI 87 - Secondary School persistent absence rate

NI 92 - Achievement Gap at Early Years Foundation Stage

NI 93 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS2 in English  
NI 94 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS2 in Maths  
NI 95 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS3 in English  
NI 96 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS3 in Maths  
NI 97 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS4 in English  
NI 98 - Proportion progressing by two levels at KS4 in Maths  
NI 99 - Proportion of CiC achieving Level 4 at KS2 in English  
NI 100 - Proportion of CiC achieving Level 4 at KS2 in Maths  
NI 101 - Proportion of CiC achieving 5 A\*-C GCSE

## Other Designated

NI 53 - Prevalence of breastfeeding at 6 – 8 weeks from birth  
NI 56 - Obesity among primary school age children in Year 6  
NI 63 - Stability of placements of looked after children  
NI 80 - Achievement of a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19  
NI 111 - First time entrants to the Youth Justice System aged 10-17  
NI 112 - Under 18 conception rate  
NI 115 - Substance misuse by young people  
NI 116 - Proportion of children in poverty  
NI 117 - 16-18 year old not in education, training or employment

## Non-Designated targets

**Safer Halton** - The Safer Halton Partnership has a wide-ranging remit focused on two major concerns of Halton people. Crime and the local environment have consistently been two areas the public have raised as high priorities in successive consultations over the last few years. We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Recent years have seen reductions in total recorded crime and for key crimes such as burglary and car crime. However, this remains the most pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives. At the same time, whilst general satisfaction levels are rising with Halton as a place to live, it is the condition of the local environment, which is of most concern to residents.

Therefore, the LAA aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods. This is about improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved in helping to shape what happens in their local area. We want to encourage active citizenship, volunteering and community activism. Tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of neighbourhood distress is a responsibility shared by all partners. Increasingly, we will look to better co-ordinate activity through neighbourhood management arrangements for greater impact. This will increase the effectiveness of work that can prevent and intervene early in the conditions that lead to dissatisfaction.

A strategic needs assessment is currently being prepared which will inform the new community safety strategy. However, initially the key indicators suggested for the LAA are:

## Designated Targets

NI 15 - Serious violent crime rate  
NI 17 - Perceptions of anti-social behaviour  
NI 30 - Re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders  
NI 32 - Repeat incidents of domestic violence  
NI 33 - Arson incidents  
NI 39 - Alcohol-harm related hospital admission rates

NI 40 -Drug users in effective treatment

## Non-Designated targets

**Employment & Skills** - Despite a range of Government and Halton's own initiatives, the borough is still characterised by widespread deprivation. Skills and employment are key factors. Educational attainment at school and the acquisition of important, employable skills are key determinants of individuals' lives and employment chances. They have a major effect on the ability of people to get a job, on the income they earn, on their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life. The creation of a strong, knowledge-based economy able to compete in the increasingly global market can only be achieved by investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and a robust culture of entrepreneurship.

High economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion are endemic in the local economy. In response to this, the Halton Employment Charter has been developed to engage local businesses through interview preference schemes in order to give disadvantaged groups the best opportunity to find employment. The Charter, together with the Economic Forum and other business engagement groups, gives employers a real voice in developing the employability programmes and wider economic programmes. Halton is also working with Merseyside colleagues to deliver a City Employment Strategy. The Halton economy is heavily reliant on a narrow range of industry sectors and is susceptible to global pressures, which could have a negative effect. There is a lack of an enterprise culture in Halton, with generally low levels of business start-up, survival and growth. However, Halton has the basis of a thriving knowledge economy and key sectoral opportunities especially around its science and environmental technologies offer. These form the basis of the issues which the LAA seeks to address, which are captured in the following suggested indicators:

## Designated Indicators

- NI 153 - Working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods
- NI 163 - Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher
- NI 171 - VAT registration rate
- NI 173 - People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits
- NI 175 Access to services and facilities by public transport walking and cycling

## Non-Designated targets

**Urban Renewal** – Whilst much has been done in recent years to improve the quality of the urban fabric and quality of life, the job is far from complete. The creation and maintenance of high quality places and spaces that support a twenty-first century economy and lifestyles, and are accessible and well connected is a pre-requisite of the Community Strategy. Failure to address the challenges that Halton faces, which are often concentrated in particular locations, will seriously damage the economic regeneration effort. A thriving and prosperous economy supporting dynamic urban living is the foundation of the Halton approach. Integral to that is the attraction of new jobs in order to increase the supply of employment opportunities, particularly for those in disadvantaged priority areas, which can be helped to secure employment through targeted job brokerage services. This is one of the underlying root causes of the more obvious signs of social distress, which define the continuing deprivation of Halton, such as poverty, crime or poor health outcomes.

The new Mersey Gateway Bridge will offer new employment opportunities and improve accessibility across Halton and beyond.

Negative perceptions about Halton still prevail. Environmental improvements and better quality open spaces, in addition to a better quality built environment, are vital as steps to promote Halton's

assets. An important step forward is the emphasis placed on sustainable construction methods and design codes in bringing forward physical development. A positive image is a key requirement if we are to boost the confidence and aspirations of local people and business. Initially, key indicators suggested are:

## Designated Indicators

NI154 Net additional homes provided

## Non Designated Indicators

**General Issues** - The people of Halton, and a focus on responding to their full range of needs, is the key cross cutting theme that underpins the LAA. The needs analysis allows us to anticipate likely changes and plan accordingly. We want to sustain progress and increasingly provide a much greater range of opportunities, and the ability to take advantage of them. We want to sharpen up service delivery and focus on the things that will make the most difference. The key measure of whether service delivery is transformed is how far and how fast we can narrow the gap in outcomes for the most disadvantaged in Halton, as measured by comparison with both Halton and national averages.

As set out earlier, the overall vision is for a Halton as a place that meets current expectations, prepares for future needs' and respects the diversity of the place and people. A place that is at ease with itself and the outside world. It is important that the LAA tries to capture measures, which demonstrate progress on building a more cohesive and sustainable community. Hence, the following indicators are suggested in the first instance:

## Designated Indicators

NI 5 - Overall satisfaction with the area

NI 7 - Environment for a thriving third sector

## Non Designated Indicators

## **Strategic & Geographic Focus**

The Halton Strategic partnership is concerned with addressing social exclusion. This is about what happens when people face a multitude of problems such as poor housing, high crime, poor health, worklessness, discrimination and poor relationships. Our ways of working will focus on:

- Poverty and material deprivation.
- Choice and quality in neighbourhoods and housing.
- Equality of opportunity for everyone and ending discrimination.
- Responding to the needs of older people as the population ages.
- Policies and programmes that look forward and help to achieve sustainable development.

The LAA has developed out of the established partnership structure and strategic planning process. It is important that it adds value to the established landscape of partnership plans and activity. It can do this by helping to refocus current activity and drive concerted actions on key challenges, neighbourhoods and target beneficiaries. Using evidence and intelligence we intend to close the gap between the most deprived people and places and national norms.

The Halton Strategic Partnership exists to meet the needs of all of Halton. However, we recognise that a successful Halton depends on the vibrancy of both Greater Merseyside and the North West Region overall. Many of the partners involved in Halton, and many of the issues we deal with, have a remit beyond the borough. Part of the task is to narrow the gap between Halton and its neighbours, and indeed with national averages. Therefore, the Halton Strategic Partnership works adeptly to contribute to sub-regional and regional arrangements, and ensure the commitment of others to helping to address Halton issues. However, the LAA will act as a mechanism to focus on two key transformational issues – place and worklessness.

### Poverty Of Place

In addition a key focus is to narrow disparities in outcomes between neighbourhoods in Halton. In order to focus on “closing the gaps” we needed to identify a coherent set of priority geographic areas. In the past, available analysis has largely been at ward level. We now have excellent information available at the ward level of around 25,000 people and are developing information at the “Super Output Area” level of around 3,000 people.

The Community Strategy sets a framework to allow Halton to address two overriding issues. Firstly it is to raise the quality of life in the borough, as demonstrated by narrowing the gap between Halton and national averages on a range of measures. Secondly, it is make sure that disadvantaged people and neighbourhoods do not get left behind. So it is important that we can demonstrate that we are closing the gap in prosperity between neighbourhoods within Halton. As the most recent IMD has shown these two aims are not necessarily co-terminus. Whilst Halton overall has moved up the overall deprivation ranking in a positive way (from 21<sup>st</sup> most deprived nationally to 30<sup>th</sup>), inequality within Halton – measured by the difference in ranking places between the most and least deprived SOAs – is higher than 3 years ago. It is also higher than in England as a whole (109 against the national benchmark of 100).

This suggests that whilst the Partnership can celebrate partial success, despite best effort in recent years relative poverty within certain geographic areas has worsened. There is a poverty of place in certain areas that must be addressed. The following wards have already been identified as those for which “closing the gap” targets across the LAA need to be set and monitored. The wards were identified on the basis of census and IMD data and are:

- Castlefields
- Windmill Hill
- Halton Lea
- Grange
- Riverside
- Kingsway
- Appleton

Progress in outcomes will be monitored to evidence “closing the gap” between these wards and Halton average outcomes. These wards have amongst the highest Multiple Deprivation Index scores in Halton and in England. All seven wards have unemployment rates above the Halton average of 3.0%. All priority wards have instances of long term limiting illnesses above the national rates.

Detailed maps of the key target outcomes across Halton, down to “Super Output Area” level, have been developed as part of the Halton Data Observatory. They enable very targeted approaches to achieving improvements in these outcomes. Some of our neighbourhoods face particularly widespread and deep difficulties.

### Worklessness

As set out above, the key challenge is how best to frame the response to the major issues that Halton faces through the LAA. To do this we intend to focus heavily on key challenges around worklessness in its widest context. Changes in the nature, organisation and allocation of work have led to increased uncertainty, fluidity and insecurity in labour markets. These are characterised by a greater degree of segmentation and inequality, both socially and spatially. High levels of unemployment and inactivity have become entrenched amongst certain groups and in certain areas. There is an increasing focus on the mismatch between high levels of worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods and employment growth. There is a significant degree of variation between deprived neighbourhoods in terms of the incidence of unemployment and inactivity, poor qualifications and skills, ill-health and disability, the composition of groups vulnerable to worklessness, the local context, and wider labour market context.

Since the mid 1990's the number of people employed in the United Kingdom has risen. However, for some areas of the country such as Halton, this masks the stubbornness of the rates of economic inactivity that have largely stayed the same. Despite a concentration on residents who are unemployed, there is a much larger group of working age people that are economically inactive, many of whom want to work. In October 31% of the Halton population were economically inactive.

The analysis of the spatial concentration of economically inactive people in Halton shows that 6 wards have inactivity rates at or in excess of 25% - Castlefields, Windmill Hill, Halton Lea, Kingsway, Riverside and Grange. If Appleton ward is added, there are seven wards with rates significantly above the Halton average. As set out above, these seven wards, which also cover Halton's neighbourhood management areas, will form the priority areas for geographical targeting of initiatives.

The structure of Government funding often prevents pooling as national organisations lack freedom due to the existence of nationally delivered schemes. This is an area for further consideration within the context of this Local Area Agreement. However, it is fair to say that much local progress has already been made in alignment of activity and this will be further enhanced through the City Employment Strategy. It is evident that there is a need to achieve a step change in employment-related work if the level of worklessness in Halton is to be significantly reduced. The key elements in achieving this should include:

- A formal recognition that worklessness and not just JSA claimants should be the focus.
- Targeting will be necessary to achieve step change – both in terms of groupings and geography.
- To be effective, interventions will need to be holistic and personalised to individual people's needs – this must involve a full range of partners all working together.
- Enterprise must be put at the heart of addressing worklessness.
- Connectivity with jobs must be improved.
- More work needs to be done to address the basic skills gaps.
- There is substantial scope for the voluntary sector to be developed in employment-related activity, particularly social enterprises.
- Stronger links need to be made between urban renewal lead job creation investments and local labour markets through more effective use of outreach job brokerage working with developers and investing companies.
- Stronger links need to be made between investment opportunities and local labour markets.

Existing labour market policies and programmes, while broadly successful in overall terms in reducing worklessness, have been less effective in helping the most disadvantaged groups and in reducing worklessness in deprived neighbourhoods. There is a need to improve the targeting of effective help on these groups and areas. Whilst Halton has made great strides in the creation of new jobs and the general reduction in unemployment the gap between individuals and the labour market in some instances has not improved as much for certain groups. It is our intention to specifically target certain key groups and tailor interventions to their needs:

- Over 50's
- Economically inactive women
- Lone parents with dependent children
- Young long-term unemployed
- Sick and Disabled

There is clear evidence that the more general borough-wide approach towards unemployment has produced real progress. However, there is now a need to focus on those areas where unemployment and worklessness remain stubbornly high and where levels of worklessness are way above the borough average. We have a broad-based strategic approach that looks to tackle employability, workforce development and the creation of enterprise. At the same time we want to ensure equity in the economy i.e. that the wealth that is created in the borough is better shared around Halton.

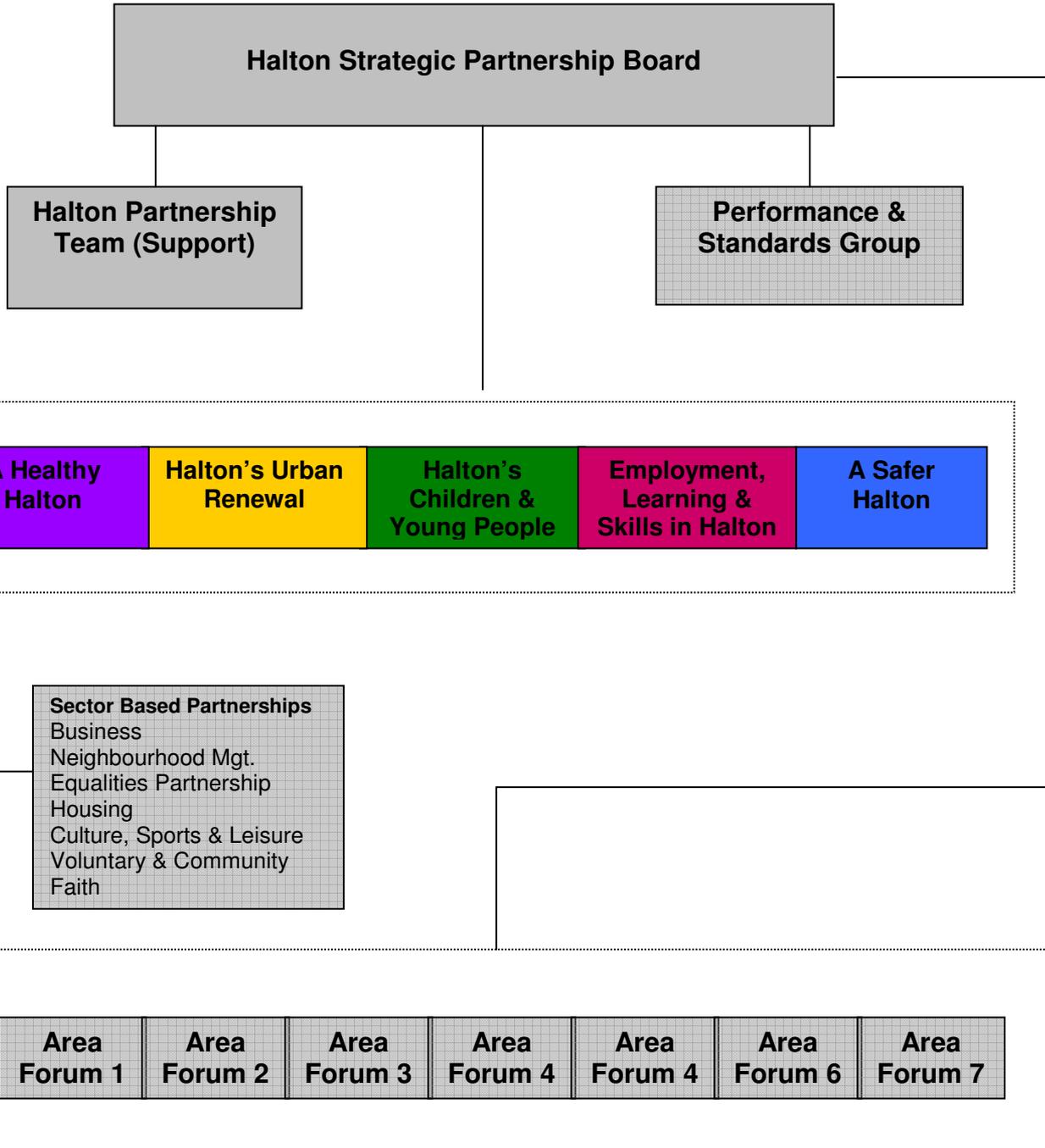
### **Governance**

Halton already has in place well established and robust partnership arrangements. These are based on a Strategic Board supported by five thematic partnerships, a performance management group and a number of specialist subsidiary partnerships. This includes representation at all levels by all stakeholders including significant representation from the voluntary and community sectors.



# Halton Strategic **PARTNERSHIP**

## The Virtual Organisation



All the priorities, indicators (designated and non-designated) and local targets are set out in the Framework, attached at Appendix 1. How well and how quickly progress happens depends crucially on the availability of resources and how smartly they are used. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information, allied with the strength of will to use them in the best

way. A key purpose of the LAA is to ensure that all resources available are pooled or aligned, targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the borough. This means:

- Being clear and agreeing about what we need to achieve so we are all pulling in the same direction.
- Maximising the funding we can generate or draw in to benefit Halton and developing our own resources and the capacity to help ourselves.
- Co-operating to be more effective, cutting out duplication and waste, and pooling budgets, knowledge and efforts of different organisations and groups where this makes sense.
- Listening and responding to what matters most to people locally.
- Targeting what we do to where it can make most difference.
- Doing the kind of things that experience has shown will really work and be successful.
- Checking on progress, letting people know how we are doing, and adjusting where necessary to keep on track.

To underpin this, the Partnership has made a big commitment to improving the way information is gathered, used and shared. Of particular note are:

- A data observatory has been set up to hold key statistical information on all aspects of living conditions in Halton. This will keep data at a variety of spatial levels – super output area, ward, neighbourhood and district level – and allow for comparison with our neighbours and regional and national averages. It will greatly help people to understand the geography and nature of disadvantage in Halton. It will be especially useful in informing the spatial targeting of activity under this LAA.
- The Partnership is setting up a database of consultation and community engagement in Halton. This will enable people to access a rich source of attitudinal data on a range of issues. It will also help people to plan and execute better community engagement in the borough - a key underpinning of this LAA.

### **Sustainability**

The focus in Halton is to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. Sustainability is about linking cohesion into the mainstream of service delivery and ensuring that our vision can be delivered over time and in the face of conflicting demands and diminishing resources. It involves more than changing plans and policies as it involves changing hearts and minds. What is important is that foundations are properly and securely laid at the outset for enabling any project or initiative to make an impact into the future. The LAA has been developed by adopting this approach.

In short, we want to build a sustainable community that balances and integrates social, economic and environmental progress; that meets current expectations and prepares for future needs; and that respects the diversity of the place and people. The Partnership has identified the following components as being crucial to success.

- (a) *Respect and Enjoyment*
- (b) *Thriving Places*
- (c) *Well Planned*
- (d) *Accessibility*
- (e) *Well Served*
- (f) *Well Run*

Halton already has a number of key strategies that commit to sustainability. However, the Partnership believes that this is not enough. It recognises that there is growing scientific consensus

about the environmental reality of climate change. Therefore, it has produced a bespoke climate change strategy. This looks to encompass the sustainability implications of everything the Partnership does. This will include the actions to take forward the LAA and the operational management of Partner organisations themselves.

### **Managing Risk**

The Partnership recognises the scale of its ambition and is realistic in its expectations of what can be achieved given the scale of resources being deployed. It also recognises that risk management must be an integral part of the performance management framework and business planning process. This will increase the probability of success (and reduce the likelihood of failure) by identifying, evaluating and controlling the risks associated with the achievement of its objectives.

The risk management process focuses attention and resources on critical areas, provides more robust action plans and better informed decision-making. It also fosters a culture where uncertainty does not slow progress or stifle innovation and ensures the commitment and resources of the Partnership to produce positive outcomes.

The Partnership has already established a Strategic Risk Register looking at all aspects of delivery of LAA objectives. This sets out the risk management objectives, the role and responsibilities for risk management of the Board and individual SSPs, and categorises the risks and the approach to risk management action plans. The Halton Strategic Partnership Board adopted this in November 2007.

The Partnership's risks can be broadly categorised as either "strategic" or "operational". Strategic risks cover those threats or opportunities which could impact upon the achievement of medium and long-term goals. A further review of strategic risks will be carried out when the LAA has been adopted. This will be followed up by another assessment of operational risks through each of the SSPs as part of their Action Planning of the LAA implementation process.

### **Equality & Diversity**

The Partnership is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not accept discrimination, victimisation or harassment. This commitment to equity and social justice is clearly stated in the adopted equal opportunities policy of the Partnership, and covers this LAA.

The Partnership aims to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. Discrimination on the grounds of race, nationality, ethnic or national origin, religion or belief, gender, marital status, sexuality, disability, age or any other unjustifiable reason will not be tolerated. As a Partnership we are committed to a programme of action to make this policy fully effective.

Partners are working collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. Reasonable adjustments are being made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs are recognised and services provided which are appropriate to these needs. Partners monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population, and use the information collected to inform service planning and delivery. Equality Impact Assessments are carried out on Partnership policies and services to assess how policies and services impact on different sections of the community. The results of the Equality Impact Assessments highlight areas for improvement to be dealt with through the Partnership Improvement Plan.

As an example of good practice the Council and its partners have invested a considerable amount of effort and resources into the gypsy and traveller community. There is already a long standing Council run caravan site in Widnes supporting over 100 people and a temporary transit site was established in 2006 and following the success of this scheme the Council and its partners intend investing approximately £1M in a new permanent transit site.

In order to stress the importance of this area a Halton Equalities Partnership has been created reporting directly to the Board. A key focus of its work is to ensure mainstream service delivery is adequately meeting the needs of the diverse communities of Halton. Equity and accessibility are the two key drivers of how we do things. Work is complete on examining the full range of community cohesion issues in Halton. As part of this a dataset of cohesion indicators has been developed, based on the Home Office model. They have been baselined and form part of the datasets held by the Halton Data Observatory. This gives us a mechanism to track changes over the life of this LAA and beyond.

### **Performance Management Arrangements**

The LAA is about what is most important for Halton and about working together to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the Borough. It sets out key priorities and shows the direction we need to progress in together. It sets challenging improvement targets. It provides the framework for the activities of all partners in Halton. An annual delivery plan and a whole range of more specific plans and initiatives will underpin the LAA. These will translate the broad aims and objectives of the LAA into action on the ground.

We recognise that to make real progress we need to pool ideas and resources and work even more closely and effectively together. All the objectives and targets outlined in the LAA are achievable. A key purpose of the LAA is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the Borough. This means:

- Being clear and agreed about what we need to achieve so we are all pulling in the same direction.
- Maximising the funding we can generate or draw in to benefit Halton and developing our own resources and the capacity to help ourselves
- Co-operating to be more effective, cutting out duplication and waste, and pooling the budgets, knowledge and efforts of different organisations and groups where this makes sense
- Listening and responding to what matters most to people locally
- Targeting what we do to where it can make most difference
- Doing the kind of things that experience has shown will really work and be successful
- Checking on progress, letting people know how we are doing, and adjusting where necessary to keep on track

The LAA sets out clear targets for focusing partner efforts and resources towards meeting the most pressing local needs. Our thematic partnerships – the SSPs - will be responsible for the delivery of the LAA. Responsibility for individual targets will be clearly designated in their action plans, with designated lead partners and named lead officers.

**REPORT TO:** EXECUTIVE BOARD

**DATE:** 19<sup>th</sup> June 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** STRATEGIC DIRECTOR - ENVIRONMENT

**SUBJECT:** LIVERPOOL CITY COUNCIL CORE  
STRATEGY PREFERRED OPTIONS  
REPORT

**WARDS:** BOROUGH WIDE

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

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to present the responses submitted by Halton to the publication of Liverpool City Council's Core Strategy Preferred Options (CSPO) Report.
- 1.2 A proportion of the policy content of the CSPO Report has a direct bearing on Halton, while other sections have indirect implications. Some of this policy content required a detailed response from Halton.
- 1.3 This report includes a copy of the responses submitted by Halton BC to Liverpool City Council on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That**

- (1) **The content of this report is noted**
- (2) **The officers' responses already submitted to Liverpool City Council be endorsed by Executive Board as appropriate**
- (3) **The Strategic Director for Environment be authorised to send any further amendments and/or comments made by Executive Board, to Liverpool City Council.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

- 3.1 On 28<sup>th</sup> March 2008, Liverpool City Council published their CSPO Report for public consultation. The publication of this document followed informal consultation on the Issues and Options stage of Core Strategy production. Halton BC did not participate in that stage of consultation.
- 3.2 The Preferred Options stage of the Core Strategy sets out Liverpool City Council's preferred planning options for its overarching spatial strategy, and represents the first formal stage of consultation on the content of the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The period for consultation

on Liverpool's CSPO ran for six weeks, starting on 28<sup>th</sup> March and ending on 9<sup>th</sup> May 2008.

- 3.3 Appendix A gives the detailed representations submitted by officers to LCC before the end of the consultation period on CSPO. As there was no opportunity to present the representations to members at Executive Board for formal endorsement before the end of the consultation period, they can be confirmed, amended or withdrawn as deemed appropriate after the date of their submission to LCC.
- 3.4 Appendix A takes the form of a table, with reference to specific Preferred Options within the CSPO, and with clear representations made, accompanied by background information explaining why the issues raised are important, and how they relate to Halton. While representations were made on several policy areas throughout the document, concerns were voiced broadly in relation to three areas:

a) Employment Land Figures

The Preferred Option relating to Employment Land is unclear in a number of ways, which is problematic in assessing the content of the Preferred Option. Crucially, the evidence base document, on which the requirement for employment land has been calculated, has not been made available during the consultation period. In addition, the amount of employment land apparently required by Liverpool represents a very large proportion of the sub-regional allocation, with potential impacts on Halton.

b) Liverpool John Lennon Airport (LJLA)

The CSPO contains policies concerning the expansion of LJLA. This includes reference to the eastern access transport corridor between LJLA and the A561 through Halton and the runway extension, also into Halton. For the avoidance of doubt, Liverpool CC is not the relevant planning authority for proposals that lie within Halton.

c) Joint Working

The CSPO contains a good deal of policy content which would have benefited from joint working with other Local Authorities, particularly where cross boundary issues prevail, or where regional/sub-regional allocations are relevant. Liverpool City Council has not been forthcoming with offers for joint working, and suggestions for future collaboration are scarce within the CSPO report.

- 3.5 Within Appendix A, mention is made of the 'tests of soundness', as laid out in Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks. These tests of soundness are criteria that apply individually and collectively to policies in a development plan document, and must be met if the document is to be found to be sound. The tests of soundness which are directly referred to in Appendix A are:
- iv) It is a spatial plan which is consistent with national planning policy and in general conformity with the regional spatial

strategy for the region or, in London, the spatial development strategy and it has properly had regard to any other relevant plans, policies and strategies relating to the area or to adjoining areas;

- vi) The strategies/policies/allocations in the plan are coherent and consistent within and between development plan documents prepared by the authority and by neighbouring authorities, where cross boundary issues are relevant;
- vii) The strategies/policies/allocations represent the most appropriate in all the circumstances, having considered the relevant alternatives, and they are founded on a robust and credible evidence base;

Where concerns have been raised in Appendix A that are related to these tests of soundness, it has been assessed by officers that the content of the Liverpool CSPO is deficient in relation to these.

3.6 Within Appendix A, mention is made of the emerging Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) for the North West. On 20<sup>th</sup> March 2008, the Secretary of State (SoS) published Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy “The North West Plan”, which is the latest version of the emerging RSS, and sets out the responses of the Secretary of State to the Report of the Panel (March 2007). The Report of the Panel was produced as a summary of the Examination in Public of the Submitted Draft RSS, published in January 2006. In the representations provided in Appendix A, these three documents are referred to as:

- SoS Changes to RSS (March 2008)
- Panel Report on Draft RSS (March 2007)
- Submitted Draft RSS (January 2006)

Although it is confusing to comment on Liverpool CSPO in the light of three different versions of the RSS, the CSPO was prepared with reference to the Submitted Draft RSS and the Panel Report on Draft RSS, and since the SoS Changes to RSS has now been published, it becomes appropriate for Halton to comment in the light of this document too. It is also worth noting that the emerging RSS is not yet adopted, but can be given significant weight as its preparation is nearing completion.

3.7 Halton has previously made representations on St Helens Council’s CSPO, in December 2007. It would be helpful to develop a consistent approach in responding to neighbouring authorities’ CSPOs, particularly where issues requiring a response are similar between documents. Hence, during the preparation Halton’s representations to Liverpool’s CSPO, a view has been taken of the responses to St. Helens’ CSPO report.

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 As explained above and in Appendix A, the issue of employment land has policy implications for Halton. The outcome of the consultation on Liverpool’s CSPO and ultimately the amount of employment land

Liverpool require in their adopted Core Strategy, could impact on the quantity of employment land available to be claimed by Halton in the Halton Core Strategy. This is due to the fact that employment land is allocated on a sub-regional basis by the RSS, rather than sub-divided by local authority: hence, Halton, Liverpool, and four other Merseyside authorities need to sub-divide the RSS allocation between themselves. Halton are tackling this problem by undertaking a Joint Employment Land and Premises Study with Sefton, Knowsley and West Lancashire Councils. Liverpool City Council has declined offers of joint working, despite the process being heavily recommended by the RSS. Halton's joint Study will try to address this issue of a lack of joint working, and suggest ways to overcome the problem of individual local authority's claims on the sub-regional employment land allocation. In the meantime however, it is legitimate for Halton to voice concerns over Liverpool's approach.

- 4.2 LJLA is a major cross-boundary policy issue for Liverpool and Halton. The way in which the operation and expansion of the Airport is dealt with in the respective Councils' Local Development Frameworks is important for the successful implementation of the Airport Master Plan.

## **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

No other implications are envisaged.

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

### **6.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

N/A

### **6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**

If Liverpool City Council are successful in their apparent aim to incorporate a large amount of additional employment land into their adopted Core Strategy, it would have implications for Halton's take of the RSS allocated sub-regional employment land. This is particularly important when St. Helens have already stated in their CSPO that they require a large quantity of additional employment land. Despite the confusion around these proposed allocations, as explained in Appendix B, a serious concern exists that if both Liverpool and St. Helens take a large proportion of the sub-regional allocation of employment land, Halton will be left with a very small amount. The consultants conducting the Halton's Joint Employment Land and Premises Study are dealing with this issue.

**6.3 A Healthy Halton**

N/A

**6.4 A Safer Halton**

N/A

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

See implications given in section 6.2 in relation to Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton.

**7.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

No legal or financial risks to the Council can be identified.

**8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

There are no Equality and Diversity implications arising from this report.

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

<b>Document</b>	<b>Place of Inspection</b>	<b>Contact Officer</b>
<b>Liverpool City Council Core Strategy Preferred Options Report</b>	<b>Rutland House</b>	<b>Neil MacFarlane</b>
<b>Secretary of State's Proposed Changes to the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy "The North West Plan"</b>	<b>Rutland House</b>	<b>Neil MacFarlane</b>
<b>Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks</b>	<b>Rutland House</b>	<b>Neil MacFarlane</b>
<b>Liverpool John Lennon Airport Master Plan</b>	<b>Rutland House</b>	<b>Neil MacFarlane</b>

## Appendix A: Halton’s Representations to Liverpool City Council’s Core Strategy Preferred Options Report

Page / Preferred Option	<b>Representation / Issues Raised</b>
35 / PO2: Employment Land Supply	<p data-bbox="539 352 1935 384"><b>Halton BC has concerns about the content of Preferred Option 2, as the policy wording lacks clarity.</b></p> <p data-bbox="539 421 1962 485">Having regard to paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of PPS12 and the emerging North West Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS), it is questioned whether the Preferred Option accords with the tests of soundness vi) and vii).</p> <p data-bbox="539 521 1995 620">It is not clear in the Preferred Option 2 text box, that the proposed take of 330 hectares for Liverpool is additional employment land required, or includes land which is allocated in the LCC UDP, or land which has existing planning permission for employment land use.</p> <p data-bbox="539 657 2000 858">It is not currently apparent on which version of the Draft RSS that the calculation for employment land required in Liverpool is based. The submitted Draft RSS (January 2006) makes calculations based on an exclusion of Regionally Significant sites, whereas the Panel Report on Draft RSS (May 2007) does include them. These two approaches vary dramatically. However, in the light of the publication of the Secretary of States Proposed Changes to Draft RSS (March 2008), we can assume that Regionally Significant sites are included in the calculation of employment land required by Local Authorities.</p> <p data-bbox="539 895 2007 1096">It is not clearly indicated whether some of the Strategic Investment Areas listed are recognised as Regionally Significant. The Preferred Option does not make it clear what proportion of the 330 hectares of employment land will be allocated in these Regional Sites: this information would be helpful in aiding comparison with the RSS in terms of approach of dealing with employment land issues. It is assumed that this allocation is for the plan period, from 2006 until 2024. This provides additional confusion for any attempted comparison with the employment land allocations in the Draft RSS, which is for the period 2005-21.</p> <p data-bbox="539 1133 2018 1232">Another issue requiring clarification is whether the RSS employment land allocations are to be treated as maxima or minima at the Local Authority Level. This is not clarified either way within the content of Preferred Option 2 or its supporting context, and is ultimately a matter for confirmation with the North West Regional Assembly.</p> <p data-bbox="539 1268 1912 1332">In addition, the statement in paragraph 5.20 that “the total figure for the city is 333 hectares, which broadly represents the current supply allocated in the Unitary Development Plan together with sites with planning</p>

permission” is confusing, as it is inconsistent with the 330 hectares stated in Preferred Option 2. It could be that the figure of 330 hectares in Preferred Option 2 relates to wholly additional employment land required, while the figure of 333 hectares in paragraph 5.20 relates to existing employment land (UDP allocations and planning permissions), but this is not explained at any time.

For this Preferred Option to meet the respective tests of soundness at submission, all of the points highlighted above must be subject to clarification.

**Halton BC has concerns about Preferred Option 2, as the evidence base report on which it relies, the Land for Employment and Economic Growth Study, has not been made available during the consultation period.**

Having regard to paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of PPS12 and the emerging North West RSS, it is questioned whether the Preferred Option accords with the test of soundness vii).

It is possible that some of the issues identified as requiring clarification from Liverpool CC may be resolved with consideration of the Land for Employment and Economic Growth Study, which is a key piece of evidence for this Preferred Option. However, this document has not been made available to Halton BC during the consultation period.

For this Preferred Option to meet the respective test of soundness at submission, all evidence base documents must be made available.

**Halton BC has concerns about Preferred Option 2, as Liverpool’s review of the supply of employment land was not conducted jointly with other local authorities, as stated is necessary in the emerging RSS.**

Having regard to paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of PPS12 and the emerging North West RSS, it is questioned whether the Preferred Option accords with the tests of soundness iv) and vi).

The lack of joint working on employment land issues presents problems, which are identified in Paragraph 8.12 of the submitted Draft RSS: “The provision of figures by sub-region will require Local Authorities and other partners to work together to agree distribution of land within each sub-region”. Paragraph 5.22 of the Draft RSS Panel

	<p>Report builds on this, stating, “We are particularly concerned that the allocation of appropriate sites for employment development (and the reduction of existing commitments where there is currently a surplus of employment land at the sub-regional level) will depend upon a considerable degree of joint working and cooperation between local planning authorities... If this fails to transpire, there could be serious over- or under-provision, particularly if LDDs covering different parts of a sub-region come forward in isolation from each other.” The SoS Changes to RSS are also in accordance with this sentiment. The fact that Liverpool have not followed this advice will have consequences for the approach to the allocation of employment land required for Liverpool themselves, and for the other authorities within the sub-region. It is currently unclear whether the 330 hectares of employment land referred to in Preferred Option 2 represents a very large proportion of the additional 476 hectares allocated by the SoS Changes to RSS for the Merseyside and Halton sub-region (2005-21).</p> <p>For this Preferred Option to meet the respective tests of soundness at submission, collaboration with neighbouring authorities and the Regional Assembly on the issue of employment land is required.</p>
<p>39 / Preferred Option 4: Liverpool John Lennon Airport</p>	<p><b>Halton BC has concerns about content of Preferred Option 4, as it confirms development associated with LJLA outside the local authority area of Liverpool City Council.</b></p> <p>Having regard to paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of PPS12 and the emerging North West RSS, it is questioned whether the Preferred Option accords with the test of soundness vi).</p> <p>Preferred Option 4 confirms the expansion of LJLA in line with its Master Plan. It should be noted that Halton BC are broadly supportive of the expansion of the Airport in this way.</p> <p>The new access road from the east of the Airport is partially located within the boundary of Halton BC, and on land currently designated as Green Belt. According to the LJLA Master Plan, the preferred route for the road will be from the existing Hale Road adjacent to the Airport (in Liverpool) and join Speke Boulevard/A561 (on the boundary between Knowsley and Halton). The proposed runway extension to the east of the existing Airport also encroaches on the Halton BC boundary.</p> <p>Liverpool CC, as a local planning authority, should not put a Core Strategy policy in place concerning development in an adjoining authority, even though both local planning authorities may agree in principle to the development (in this case, in conjunction with the LJLA Master Plan). Halton BC therefore has concerns about the</p>

	<p>expression of the policy content of Preferred Option 4.</p> <p>In addition to the concerns outlined above, access to development proposed in Liverpool’s Green Belt to the south of the existing Airport will require access routes through Halton BC. According to the LJLA Master Plan, expansion to the south of the Airport follows earlier expansion, including runway extension and the new access road, whose proposals directly affect Halton. To confirm that the Liverpool Green Belt boundary will change to accommodate these later expansions is taking for granted that the earlier expansions were permitted. Again, this is presuming that land in Halton will have been developed for Airport expansion, which is not within the scope of Liverpool CC as an adjoining local planning authority.</p> <p>For this Preferred Option to meet the respective test of soundness at submission, collaboration with neighbouring authorities on these issues is required. This joint working should include discussions concerning the content of Core Strategies, or other DPDs as relevant, in relation to Airport expansion.</p> <p><b>Halton BC suggests that joint working on issues associated with Airport expansion, between Liverpool CC, Halton BC, Knowsley MBC (and other authorities as appropriate) would be beneficial.</b></p> <p>Halton BC would welcome the opportunity to work jointly with Liverpool CC and other partners on the development of LJLA expansion. It is felt that joint working will ensure that maximum benefits are secured for each local authority, and for the wider environment. Development that is permitted in Liverpool’s section of the Mersey Estuary Protection Area (and Ramsar site), associated with the Airport, is likely to affect other parts of the estuary. Joint working or partnership working would definitely be desirable in this matter, but there is no reference to this in the justification of the Preferred Option 4. There is also an issue relating to the concept of the “wider” transport network associated with LJLA. This affects routes not within the boundary of Liverpool City Council, particularly within Halton and Knowsley and would again benefit from joint working.</p>
<p>42 / Preferred Option 5: The Location and Phasing of New Housing</p>	<p><b>Halton BC has concerns that the content of Preferred Option 5, as the time periods given for housing growth do not conform to those in emerging RSS.</b></p> <p>Having regard to paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of PPS12 and the emerging North West RSS, it is questioned whether the Preferred Option accords with the test of soundness vi).</p>

	<p>The time period given for the phasing of new housing development in Liverpool runs from 2006-2024. The time period given for phasing of new housing development in the emerging RSS runs from 2003-2021. This lack of accordance makes comparison with regional housing allocations difficult. Halton BC question the basis for starting the period for housing figures in 2006, when 2003 could be used, assuming that information is available on completions (from to 2003-2006) to facilitate this.</p> <p>For this Preferred Option to fully meet the respective test of soundness at submission, phasing periods given should accord with those given at the Regional level, and those used by neighbouring authorities.</p>
<p>45 / Preferred Option 6: The Mix of New Housing Provision</p>	<p><b>Halton BC questions the inclusion of a comment on affordability within the content of Preferred Option 6.</b></p> <p>Emerging RSS (policy L6) states that plans and strategies should set out requirements for affordable housing, and the location, size and types of development to which these requirements apply. The comment towards the end of Preferred Option 6 that “the final policies that emerge from this preferred approach will also take into account the ongoing review of the City Council’s Housing Strategy including matters of housing type, size mix and affordability”, does not make it clear whether the LCC Core Strategy will in fact include an affordable housing policy, and what content this may have. This has implications for Halton BC and Liverpool’s other neighbouring authorities, particularly where housing markets have the potential to overlap.</p>
<p>53 / Preferred Option 11: Enhancing Open Space and Biodiversity Provision</p>	<p><b>Halton BC suggests that joint working on some of the areas mention in Preferred Option 11 would be beneficial.</b></p> <p>Efforts to protect the Mersey Estuary SPA, Mersey Waterfront Regional Park and Merseyside BAP are welcomed, but there is no recognition that these are cross-boundary issues and would benefit from joint working between local planning authorities, organisations and private sector partners. This is particularly relevant where development may affect the Mersey Estuary SPA / Ramsar Site.</p>
<p>60 / Preferred Option 14: Improving Accessibility, Managing Demand for Travel and Delivering Key Projects</p>	<p><b>Halton BC has concerns about the content of Preferred Option 14 on the basis that joint working has not yet occurred.</b></p> <p>The confirmation of the provision of a new airport link road would require joint working between the relevant local planning authorities (including Liverpool, Halton and Knowsley Councils) on the content of respective Core</p>

	<p>Strategies and other relevant DPDs. This has not yet occurred. This concern is expanded on in the comment on Preferred Option 4, above.</p> <p>However, efforts in increase the proportion of passengers arriving and departing the Airport by public transport is supported.</p>
<p>71 / Preferred Option 17: Strategy for the Outer Areas of Liverpool.</p>	<p><b>Halton BC supports the recognition of the important role of the Mersey Gateway Bridge in addressing strategic transportation issues in the sub-region.</b></p> <p><b>Halton BC suggests that joint working would be beneficial to achieve effective mitigation of the impacts of the expansion of LJLA.</b></p> <p>The principle of joint working is important to achieve appropriate mitigation of the impact of LJLA's expansion on residents and its environmentally sensitive location, both in Liverpool and in Halton. It will also be important to work collaboratively on any appropriate assessment associated with the Airport's expansion, as it will necessarily affect areas in both Liverpool and Halton. Of particular importance is the impact of Airport expansion on the Mersey Estuary Ramsar, which lies adjacent to LJLA and extends into Halton.</p>

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A  
of the Local Government Act 1972.

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