

# Public Document Pack



## Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

Tuesday, 9 September 2008 6.30 p.m.  
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn

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

**Chief Executive**

### **BOARD MEMBERSHIP**

<b>Councillor Robert Gilligan (Chairman)</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Alan Lowe (Vice- Chairman)</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor John Bradshaw</b>	<b>Conservative</b>
<b>Councillor Peter Browne</b>	<b>Conservative</b>
<b>Councillor Ellen Cargill</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Mark Dennett</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Susan Edge</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Diane Inch</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
<b>Councillor Paul Nolan</b>	<b>Labour</b>
<b>Councillor Ulfar Norddahl</b>	<b>Liberal Democrat</b>
<b>Councillor Kevan Wainwright</b>	<b>Labour</b>

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The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 4 November 2008*

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

**Part I**

<b>Item No.</b>	<b>Page No.</b>
<b>1. MINUTES</b>	
<b>2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)</b>	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, 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.	
<b>3. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME</b>	<b>1 - 3</b>
<b>4. EXECUTIVE BOARD MINUTES</b>	<b>4 - 16</b>
<b>5. DEVELOPMENT OF POLICY ISSUES</b>	
<b>(A) THE EMPOWERMENT WHITE PAPER – "COMMUNITIES IN CONTROL"</b>	<b>17 - 27</b>
<b>6. PERFORMANCE MONITORING</b>	
<b>(A) NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UPDATE</b>	<b>28 - 32</b>
<b>(B) MARKETS</b>	<b>33</b>
<b>(C) REVIEW OF CUSTOMER CARE</b>	<b>34 - 37</b>
<b>(D) PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT REPORTS TO 30 JUNE 2008</b>	<b>38 - 117</b>

***In accordance with the Health and Safety at Work Act the Council is required to notify those attending meetings of the fire evacuation procedures. A copy has previously been circulated to Members and instructions are located in all rooms within the Civic block.***

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board

**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008

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

**SUBJECT:** Public Question Time

**WARD(s):** Borough-wide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider any questions submitted by the Public in accordance with Standing Order 33(5).

1.2 Details of any questions received will be circulated at the meeting.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That any questions received be dealt with.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 Standing Order 34(11) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

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

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

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

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

#### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

#### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

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

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

**None**

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

**None**

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

**None**

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

**None**

**6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

**None**

**7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

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

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

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Policy and Performance Board  
**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008  
**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive  
**SUBJECT:** Executive Board and Executive Sub Minutes  
**WARD(s):** Boroughwide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

- 1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Sub since the last meeting of this Board are attached at Appendix 1 (link) for information.
- 1.2 The Minutes are submitted to update the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Minutes be noted.**

### **3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

None.

### **4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None.

### **5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

None.

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

None.

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

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

**Executive Board – 14<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**EXB134 ANNUAL REVIEW OF CONSTITUTION - MAYORAL COMMITTEE**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy outlining a further proposal, to be incorporated into the annual review of the Council's Constitution, to establish a Mayoral Committee with the powers and duties as set out in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended to approve the further changes outlined in the appendix to the report as part of the annual review of the Council's Constitution.

Strategic Director  
- Corporate and  
Policy

**Executive Board – 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

**EXB7 ANNUAL AUDIT AND INSPECTION LETTER**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy regarding the Annual Audit and Inspection letter prepared by the Council's Audit Commission Relationship Manager and the District Auditor, Julian Farmer.

The letter provided an overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, drawing on the findings and conclusions from the Audit of the Council and inspections that had been undertaken in the last year. It also drew from wider analysis of the Council's performance and its improvement over the last year as measured through the Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) Framework.

Mr. Farmer attended the meeting and addressed the Board on the overall summary of the Audit Commission's assessment of the Council, focusing on the key messages set out in the letter, as detailed below:

- the Council had continued to maintain its strong performance and had maintained its 4 star rating under the Audit Commissions CPA process with the Direction of Travel assessed as improving well during 2007;

- the assessment identified some areas where further work was needed to bring the Council's performance up to the standard of the best performing councils;
- on the Council's accounts for 2006/7 an unqualified audit opinion was issued along with an unqualified value for money conclusion; and
- the Council continued to manage its use of resources effectively and as such was assessed as a level 3 organisation – performing well. Further scope to strengthen arrangements in several areas, particularly financial management, asset management and value for money had been noted.

Members commented on the excellent report stating that this was a credit to everyone at the Council.

The Board thanked Mr Farmer for his co-operation and hard work in his role of District auditor and wished him well in the future.

Mr Farmer extended his thanks to the Board and officers of the Council for their support.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) the annual audit and inspection letter be received; and
- (2) the annual audit and inspection letter be distributed to all Members of the Council.

EXB8 QUEENS HALL STUDIO, LACEY STREET, WIDNES

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which sought approval for the entering into legal commitments on the Queen's Hall Studio including disposal of the freehold at nil consideration to Loose Music.

At its meeting of 22 June 2006 the Executive Board Sub Committee 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 Queen's Hall Studio (Minute ES9/2006 refers).

It was noted that the studio was quite distinct from the Queen's Hall. Originally two separate buildings were latterly joined by a link extension. The report related solely to the Studio and did not include either the link or the Queen's Hall



itself. The Studio was considered as a stand alone facility.

In July 2007 the District Valuer (DV) was asked to consider the Capital Value of a long lease on the property. The DV'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 £600, 000 it clearly had a negative value. The DV therefore recommended that the Council could consider disposing of the property for a nominal amount.

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 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 power delegated 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 was to be subject to claw-back provisions in the event that the land was used for purposes other than as a music studio.

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

- the urgency of the situation namely the pressing need for a decision on the Council's legal commitment to the Proposal;
- the social, environmental and economic benefits

- for Halton of the Proposal;
- the extent to which the Proposal furthers the Aims and Objectives and Vision of the Council;
- the extent to which the Proposal furthers the Council's key priority areas;
- the need for an early decision if critical external funding from the Big Lottery Fund was not to be jeopardised;
- 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;
- the Council's legal duties in respect of its assets; and
- the existing partnering agreement between the Council and Loose Music in relation to the Proposal.

RESOLVED: That the actions of the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader and Deputy Leader be noted.

#### EXB9 CHANGING THE NAME OF A WARD

The Board received a report of the Chief Executive which informed Members of a request to change the name of Castlefields Ward to Castle Ward.

A request had 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 the Health Act 2007 there was a provision for a Local Authority to change the name of an electoral area.

The Council would need to pass a resolution following consultation with such persons as it considers appropriate on the proposed name. It was 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 exercise a report would be prepared for submission to a Member Working Party, which would make a recommendation to Full Council in October 2008 who would make the final decision.

RESOLVED: That

- (1) That Council be recommended to consult electors in

the Castlefields Ward on the proposed change of name; and

- (2) A Working Party of Elected representatives be nominated to consider any representations received following the consultation.

### **Executive Board – 24<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

##### **EXB29 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY - IDEA DIVERSITY PEER CHALLENGE**

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community outlining the Council's achievement of Level 3 of the Equality Standard, and the findings of the IDeA report following Diversity Peer Challenge.

It was noted that the Equality Standard for Local Government was the recognised national framework that assessed performance on equality across a local authority. There were five levels, Levels 4 and 5 of which were exemplars and rarely achieved. Halton Borough Council had achieved Level 1 in 2003/04, progressed to Level 2 in 2005/06 and had since worked to achieve Level 3. Two groups had been established to help drive forward the agenda, which worked together with partners and stakeholders, to eliminate discrimination and promote equality.

On 6<sup>th</sup> and 7<sup>th</sup> May 2008, the Council had undergone an IDeA Diversity Peer Challenge Assessment, which concluded that the Council achieved Level 3 of the Equality and Diversity Standard. The Council had had to demonstrate that it fulfilled a number of requirements in order to achieve this level and these were outlined within the report for Members' consideration.

The IDeA Assessment Team had now issued a report summarising the findings of the peer challenge, which had highlighted strengths and areas for improvement. A draft action plan based on the outcomes of the IDeA report had been drawn up and was attached as Appendix 2 to the report. The areas shaded in the action plan had been identified as a priority. The actions required in order to achieve Level 4 of the standard were outlined for the Board, which the Council intended to achieve by the end of 2009. However, it was noted that the IDeA had commenced

consultation on the proposed new Equality Framework for Local Governments. Within the Framework it was proposed that the existing standard be replaced by three broad new bandings. Further information was awaited in respect of how this transition would take place.

In receiving the report, the Board commended the work of the Strategic Director – Health and Community.

RESOLVED: That:

- 1) the contents of the report be noted; and
- 2) the Action Plan at Appendix 2 of the report be agreed.

### **Executive Board Sub Committee 8<sup>th</sup> May 2008**

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

##### **ES112 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2007/08 - 4TH QUARTER: JANUARY-MARCH**

The Sub-Committee considered a report which reviewed activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management policy for the 4<sup>th</sup> Quarter 2007/08.

It was noted that all policy guidelines, including the prudential indicators had been complied with.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

### **Executive Board Sub Committee 5<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

#### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

##### **ES1 NNDR DISCRETIONARY RATE RELIEF**

Under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act, 1988, the authority is allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations who were either a charity or a non-profit-making organisation. The Sub-Committee considered a report which set out details of four applications for discretionary non domestic rate relief from:-

- i) Focus Institute of Gymnastics;
- ii) Halton Autistic Family Support Group Limited;
- iii) Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service; and

iv) SHAP Limited.

RESOLVED: That

(1) under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, discretionary rate relief be granted to the following organisations at the percentage indicated, for the period from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2008 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later, to 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009:

Focus Institute of Gymnastics – 20%

Halton Autistic Family Support Group Limited – 20%

Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service – 20%

(2) in respect of the following organisations, it was also recommended that they should be granted discretionary rate relief for the backdated element of the charge:

Halton Autistic Family Support Group Limited – 20%

Halton District Citizen Advice Bureaux Service – 20%

(3) Under the provisions of Section 47, Local Government Finance Act 1988, the following application for discretionary rate relief be refused:

SHAP Limited – 20%

ES2 PROCUREMENT OF DNA FORENSIC PROPERTY MARKING EQUIPMENT FOR ASTMOOR AND HALEBANK INDUSTRIAL ESTATES

The Board was advised on three quotations received to supply DNA Forensic property marking equipment for the benefit of all businesses located on Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates. The quotations were appraised on the basis of purchasing:

- 120 business kits and 20 signs for Astmoor; and
- 40 business kits and 10 signs for Halebank.

The purchase of DNA Forensic property marking equipment could not be made on the basis of price alone. The following factors were relevant in the decision-making process:

- i) Contents of each DNA forensic property marking kit;
- ii) number of items the kit could property mark;
- iii) level of Police support for each system;

- iv) previous uses of DNA Forensic property marking kit;
- v) track record and publicity of each system.

Following assessment it was proposed that the SmartWater Technologies Limited system should be purchased as this system provided property marking stickers, window stickers and a UV lamp in each kit, provided estate signage, was high profile in the media and had support from Cheshire Constabulary. The two quotations in the sum of £5,998.80 and £1,999.60 had been awarded to SmartWater Technologies Limited for DNA Forensic property marking equipment.

RESOLVED: That the appointment of SmartWater Technologies Limited be approved.

## **Executive Board Sub Committee 25<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

### **CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

#### **ES8 2007/08 FINANCIAL OUTTURN**

The Sub-Committee considered a report summarising the final revenue and capital spending position for 2007/08. The revenue budget had been closely monitored and controlled throughout the year. As anticipated, investment returns were better than expected and the review of the balance sheet amended the capital financing requirement resulting in a reduction in minimum revenue provision.

As agreed as part of the budget strategy, reserves had been made relating to the development of costs of the Building Schools for the Future project and time limited revenue spending on the Mersey Gateway Project.

Within the overall revenue underspend of £224,000 there had been a number of variances and these were outlined in the report. The underspend had resulted in a reduction in the planned contribution from balances (from £350,000 to £126,000) meaning that balances now stood at £6.984m.

In respect of school balances, these had increased by £0.4m to £4.6m. In addition, Standards Fund grant of £14.3m was available to schools. The money could be spent up to the end of the academic year and £4.5m remained to be spent.

With regard to Capital spending this totalled £29.1m,

which was £2.5m below the revised capital programme of £31.6m and represented over 92% delivery of the revised capital programme. The only areas of significant slippage were on projects relating to Cavendish and Brookfields Special Schools, The Bridge Pupil Referral Unit, All Saints Children's Centre, Contaminated Land, Sports Pitch improvements, Widnes Waterfront and ICT Infrastructure.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

ES11 SALE OF LAND AT ASTON FIELDS ROAD, RUNCORN

The Sub-Committee considered a report which sought approval for the sale of a landscaped area situated above the Shell Oil Pipeline in Aston Fields Road, Runcorn.

RESOLVED: That approval be given for the sale of a landscaped area of land above the Shell Oil Pipeline in Aston Fields Road, Runcorn on the terms outlined in the report.

ES12 WATERLOO CENTRE, RUNCORN

The Sub-Committee was advised of an interest expressed in the Waterloo Centre, Runcorn, a building owned by the Council but which had not been used since the Community Centre was closed down some years ago. The report also sought guidance on the future disposal strategy for this building and the neighbouring Library and Rathbone Building.

RESOLVED: That the existing policy of dealing with the three buildings on the corner of Egerton Street and Waterloo Road, Runcorn (the Library, the Waterloo Centre and the Rathbone Building) once the future of the Library was determined, be supported. Essentially looking at one development site. The organisation New Hope Kids First who had expressed an interest in utilising the Waterloo Centre, be advised on the Council's current policy.

**Executive Board Sub Committee 25<sup>th</sup> July 2008**

**CORPORATE SERVICES PORTFOLIO**

ES19 TREASURY MANAGEMENT 2008/09 1ST QUARTER: APRIL-  
JUNE

The Sub Committee received a report of the Operational Director, Financial Services which updated the Sub Committee about the activities undertaken on the money market, as required by the Treasury Management Policy.

The Sub Committee was advised that the base rate fell from 5.25% to 5.00% on 10th April 2008 and that this was the fourth consecutive cut in the base rate. This meant that the Monetary Policy Committee was facing a testing period. With inflation rising and the economy slowing, there was little room to manoeuvre with interest rates.

The Sub Committee was also advised that longer rates firmed up during the period and were never attractive enough for the authority to consider new borrowing and the PWLB rates were for "lower quota" entitlements.

Furthermore the turnover during period, as shown in the table below:

	No. Of Deals Struck	Turnover £m
Short Term Borrowing	5	10.40
Short Term Investments	42	58.75

It was noted that the turnover on investments was relatively low, reflecting the fixture of the bulk of the Council's investments into fixed rate, fixed term deals before Christmas in anticipation of rates falling.

The Sub Committee was informed of the position at Month End, as detailed below;

	April £m	May £m	June £m
Short Term Borrowing	1.00	NIL	2.50
Short Term Investments	41.20	48.25	45.20

It was noted that the authority's cash flow through the period was positive, which was normal for the early part of the financial year as grant and council tax income was received.

The Sub Committee was informed of the forecast income and outturn for the quarter was as follows:

	Cumulative Budget	Cumulative Actual	Cumulative Target Rat	Cumulative Actual Rat



	£'000	£'000	% <sup>e</sup>	% <sup>e</sup>
Quarter 1	458	674	5.08	5.87
Quarter 2	936	0	0.00	0.00
Quarter 3	1,331	0	0.00	0.00
Quarter 4	1,700	0	0.00	0.00

It was noted that the target income was exceeded due to the excellent rate of interest currently being earned on investments. By locking investments in for slightly longer periods last year, the investment rate was secure well into the current year.

It was noted that the authority did not borrow any new long term money. Three longer investment deals (greater than 12 months) had been undertaken during the period all for £2.5m. They were placed at 6.20%, 6.52% and 6.56%.

The Sub Committee was advised of the actions taken in relation to policy guidelines

- Interest Rate Exposure was complied with;
- Approved Counterparty List – following various reports from the credit rating agencies, the authority had been particularly careful in placing money into investments, especially for those deals of longer duration. During the quarter a one year investment was made with Derbyshire Building Society which meant that the limit for funds lent (limit £2.5m actual £5m) for more than three months with that organisation was exceeded for 14 days. It was felt that the Derbyshire was the best counterparty on the day offering the particular rate which was being sought. This decision reflects the difficulty in finding a secure place for money being placed into the market for longer periods. The period of exposure had now lapsed and the current lending to this organisation was back within the set limits;
- Borrowing Instruments was complied with; and
- Prudential Indicators were complied with:
  - Operational Boundary for external debt;
  - Upper limit on interest rate exposure on fixed rate debt;
  - Upper limit on interest rate exposure on variable rate debt;
  - Maturity structure of borrowing as a percentage of fixed rate borrowing;
  - Total principal sums invested for periods longer than 364 days;
  - Maturity Structure of New Fixed rate Borrowing during

2005/06.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.



**REPORT TO:-** Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:-** 9 September 2008

**SUBJECT:-** The Empowerment White Paper – "Communities in Control"

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

**WARD(s):** Borough-wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to update Members on the Government's Empowerment White Paper.

Over recent months the Government have issued various documents (White Papers, Bills, Acts of Parliament etc) which are aimed at giving local people more influence on the design and delivery of the services provided by statutory bodies. This paper provides a summary of those initiatives and their current status.

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED that:-**

- (1) the contents of the report and the implications for the council be noted;**
- (2) Executive Board be asked to develop an action plan with partners to take this agenda forward; and**
- (3) future reports on community empowerment be made as new guidance and legislation is published.**

## **3.0 Background**

3.1 The Empowerment White Paper – 'Communities in Control' was published in July this year. This is the latest in a series of Government papers that puts community empowerment at its heart. In 2006 the White Paper, Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities, set out a radical agenda for change with reforms to empower citizens and communities.

3.2 This was followed by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, which introduced a range of measures to ensure that local government gives local people more influence over the services and decisions that affect their communities, including:-

- devolving power to regions and local areas
- Better co-ordination of services locally (through the LSP)

- Lead role for local councils in setting local priorities with partners (Community Strategy, LAA)
- Greater involvement of local communities
- More choice for service users

3.3 In addition there have been a number of papers, research and guidance, which has built up a clearer picture of the ways in which Government expect local authorities to deliver this challenging agenda. Appendix 1 sets out in more detail the wide range of Government documents that relate to community empowerment and engagement. These include the Equality Bill, Participatory Budgeting – A Draft National Strategy, Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime, Sustainable Communities Act 2007, Community Empowerment, Housing and Regeneration Bill, Local Petitions and Calls for Action – A consultation and Working together, Listening to the voices of children and young people, Policing Green Paper and Creating Strong and Prosperous Communities.

#### 3.4 Main Issues

- Duty to Involve
- Duty to Promote Democracy
- Parish Councils
- Participatory Budgeting
- Duty to respond to Petitions
- Councillor Call For Action
- Overview and Scrutiny
- Empowering the frontline taskforce
- Ownership and asset transfer
- Role of Councillors
- Policing and community empowerment
- Sustainable Communities
- Local Neighbourhood Charters
- Single Equality Duty
- Comprehensive Area Assessment

#### 3.5 **Duty to Involve**

3.5.1 The Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires all local authorities to consider, as a matter of course, the possible information provision, consultation and involvement

opportunities they need to provide people across all authority functions. This will include involving people in developing and commissioning local services including through the use of direct payments for service users and transfer of ownership. There will also be a requirement for authorities to consider how organisations delivering services on their behalf can comply with the duty. The new duty is in addition to existing requirements to consult and comes into force on 1 April 2009. The Empowerment White Paper proposes the extension of this duty to certain other public bodies including for example regional development agencies and Job Centre Plus

### **3.6 Duty to promote democracy**

3.6.1 The Empowerment White Paper proposes that drawing on existing best practice examples, local authorities will be encouraged to take a range of actions to promote democracy. This will mean councils should run campaigns to register voters, to explain voting to local people, work with schools to explain the local councillors' roles, train staff to be able to say which group controls the council, explain how to register to vote, and when the next elections are. It will also include better practical support for councillors, including allowing councillors to hold surgeries on council premises, and allowing all political parties to hire council premises for meetings and events. It also encourages local authorities to do more to encourage voting through positive campaigns to promote voter registration and voting.

### **3.7 Parish Councils**

3.7.1 The Government wants to encourage more parish and town councils, including new village, neighbourhood and community councils, particularly in urban areas. There are plans to introduce a right for local people to appeal to the Secretary of State if their local authority denies them the opportunity to establish a community council. Revisions to the regulations governing parish polls are planned which will more clearly define their scope.

### **3.8 Participatory Budgeting**

3.8.1 Participatory budgeting (PB) is already operating in 22 local authorities and the Government wants all councils to use such schemes by 2012. PB allows local people to have direct influence over how some public budgets are spent locally (so-called "community kitties"). A National Strategy on Participatory Budgeting is expected shortly which will set out how this will be achieved. Participatory budgeting has been described by government as engaging residents and community groups to discuss spending priorities, make spending proposals and vote on them. Most examples to date have involved relatively small budgets similar to this Council's Area forum budgets, but the government aspires to extend the scope. Other Government departments are also working on measures to implement PB such as

the Home Office who will support piloting of the use of PB for local community safety budgets.

### **3.9 Duty to respond to Petitions**

3.9.1 There will be a duty on councils to respond to all petitions, including electronic petitions, relating to local authority functions or other public services where the council shares delivery responsibilities. If the petition has the support of over 5% of the population, there must be a debate in full council. Councils will also have to act as community advocate on petitions related to NHS Primary Care Trusts.

### **3.10 Councillor Call For Action**

3.10.1 The councillor call for action introduced by the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 will be brought into force by the end of 2008. Guidance is expected by the end of the year, detailing how councillors can use the power and how the authority should deal with calls for action. The councillor call for action will allow Councillors to require committees to consider issues of local concern in certain circumstances.

### **3.11 Overview and Scrutiny**

3.11.1 To raise the profile of overview and scrutiny, the Empowerment White Paper proposes that local authorities be encouraged to consider large scale public event meetings; holding overview and scrutiny committee meetings in the community; and greater public involvement in the selection of topics for consideration by overview and scrutiny.

3.11.2 The White Paper refers to local public officers - chairs or chief executives of local public bodies will need to appear before regular public hearings so that they are open to public scrutiny and questioning and there will be a new right to petition to hold local officers to account at public meetings. Unitary and county councils will be expected to have some dedicated scrutiny resource.

### **3.12 Empowering the frontline taskforce**

3.12.1 The taskforce which will be launched this Autumn, (and likely to run until autumn 2010) is expected to look at the role of the public service workforce in empowering users and residents. It will consider work with the most vulnerable groups.

### **3.13 Ownership and asset transfer**

3.13.1 The Empowerment White Paper indicates the government's desire that more assets, , such as community centres, swimming pools, parks, and

land be transferred to local community ownership especially if they are underused. This builds on the findings of the Quirk review. The Government also want to see more local co-ops and mutually-owned groups running local services. A new Asset Transfer Unit will be established to speed this up.

### **3.14 Role of Councillors**

3.14.1 A number of measures are proposed in the Empowerment White Paper to remove some of the barriers to becoming councillors, including removing restrictions of council officers from political activity, extending the right to time off for public duties and a formal accreditation for councillors. Ward Councillors and Community Leadership - A future perspective identified areas of change which members need to adopt, including being more actively engaged with all parts of the community, exercising community development skills, educating people about local participation and to have the knowledge and skills to engage people in a variety of ways (not just meetings).

### **3.15 Policing and community empowerment**

3.15.1 More local funding should be made available for community groups tackling crime, potentially through local authorities giving funding to neighbourhoods for participatory budgeting. The Councillor Call to Action on crime has been put into place with immediate effect, to enable local redress when problems are not tackled effectively.

3.15.2 The Policing Green Paper makes a range of recommendations about police reform including a new Crime and Policing Representative - a new publicly elected politician to sit on the police authority and chair the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP). There is also a commitment to neighbourhood policing and a national pledge to guarantee the public key service standards for policing.

### **3.16 Sustainable Communities**

3.16.1 Local authorities are invited to make proposals to Government through the Secretary of State and a selector (likely to be the LGA), which would promote the sustainability of their local community. Proposals may include the transfer of functions from one public body to another, or a transfer from a national body to a local body. Before making such a proposal the local authority would need to establish a community panel to consult and try to reach agreement with local people.

### **3.17 Local Neighbourhood Charters**

3.17.1 Local charters are voluntary partnership agreements between the community, the local authority, and other service providers and can operate at neighbourhood, area or parish level. They are designed to

strengthen local democracy and enable more people to have their say in the decisions that affect their quality of life. The guidance entitled "How to develop a local charter - A guide for local authorities" has been drafted to encourage councils to get more people involved in local decision-making. Local authorities will need to review how local charters could fit with other neighbourhood or area arrangements that involve and empower residents and the local community in service planning and delivery.

### **3.18 Single Equality Duty**

3.18.1 A Framework for a Fairer Future - The Equality Bill, sets out its plans for a Bill to be introduced later this year. This legislation will ultimately replace all existing equality laws. The Bill will provide for a new single public sector equality duty applying to race, disability and gender, age, gender reassignment, sexual orientation and religion or belief. Local authorities may also be expected to use procurement contracts to secure similar transparency from private sector suppliers. The Equality Bill will be introduced in the next parliamentary session, in December or early in the new year. The implementation of the new duty will be delayed until 2010 - 2011 at the earliest.

### **3.19 Comprehensive Area Assessment**

3.19.1 The Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which replaces the CPA will come into force from April 2009. Key proposed changes (currently out to consultation till October 2008) include the requirement for an area assessment, which will assess the impact that local services are having on outcomes for local people. This will also look at the impact that partners have on the local area, including how well we understand and engage with communities, especially the hard to reach, and the new duty to involve. An assessment will be made of progress against the Sustainable Community Strategy and the LAA priorities.

## **4.0 Implications for Halton**

4.1 The Government's community empowerment agenda will clearly have implications as to how we operate and deliver services as a council. There are many existing examples of good practice from the youth parliament and youth forum to community engagement with service user groups for example carers and neighbourhood management. We already have a procedure for considering petitions for example, although this may need to be refined. However we will need to examine all our current practices against these new or emerging requirements from Government.

4.2 Legislation and additional guidance is still awaited around the community empowerment agenda, but the Government's intentions are clear and consistent. The Council needs to prepare for this agenda so that it is well placed to respond. As stated earlier there are many



examples of good practice in community empowerment upon which the Council can build. It is suggested that the Executive Board be asked to develop an action plan with the Council's partners as to how this new agenda should be developed in Halton.

## **5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 Community empowerment will affect policy development and how the Council delivers services and makes decisions. The Council will need to measure its current practices and procedures against these new requirements making adjustments where necessary.

## **6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 There are likely to be both cost and resources in terms of staff time to ensure that the council are able to effectively deliver the community empowerment agenda. Although it would be hoped that these will be met from within existing council budgets and using existing staff resources.

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

- 7.1 All of the council priorities will be affected by the community empowerment government agenda, and this will extend to the work of partner organisations. The new Comprehensive Area Assessment will hold both the council and its partners to account over outcomes delivered for local people.

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

- 8.1 The new Children's Trust arrangements for Halton should include and build upon the processes already in place for involving children and young people, through the borough wide youth forum and working with parents and carers in formal and informal settings. In particular, this agenda could impact on volunteering and community projects, especially through developing participatory budgeting.

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

To meet the needs of the White Paper, resources will have to be focused on providing the necessary skills for communities to participate in the key areas of the Paper, such as participatory budgeting, volunteering and becoming more involved in the democratic process. Some of the skills developed in these areas will be transferable and be able to be utilised in tackling worklessness in Halton.

## **10.0 A Healthy Halton**

- 10.1 There is a new requirement to produce a joint strategic needs assessment between the council and health. This is currently in the

process of being produced. The Government's community empowerment agenda will extend to health services with patients expected to have more control over what services they receive and more reforms on health.

### **11.0 A Safer Halton**

11.1 Implications for Safer Halton may include the need to publicly elect a representative to sit on the police authority. A devolved community safety budget allocated to neighbourhoods to spend on community safety issues and a Government commitment to neighbourhood policing.

### **12.0 Halton's Urban Renewal**

12.1 The expected Community Empowerment, Housing and Regeneration Bill will encompass the outcomes from the Empowerment White Paper. It will also legislate the key recommendations from the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration including making Regional Development Agencies statutory planning bodies, creating a duty for local authorities to assess local economic conditions, and supporting cross-boundary working among local authorities, possibly through statutory partnerships at sub-regional level.

### **13.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

13.1 The empowerment agenda and particularly the Equality Bill will have implications for the council. The Equality Bill will replace existing legislation and bring it together into one place. We will need to consider the diverse needs and requirements of the community and workforce when developing policies and services.

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

14.1 The Empowerment White Paper - Communities in Control, Real Power, Real People

14.2 Creating strong and prosperous communities

14.3 Comprehensive Area Assessment – consultation summer 2008

14.4 Improving local accountability : a communities in control consultation

14.5 Policing Green Paper – From the Neighbourhood to the national

14.6 Framework for a fairer future – The Equality Bill

(see also papers listed in Appendix 1)

## Appendix 1

**Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007** introduced a range of measures to ensure that local government gives local people more influence over the services and decisions that affect their communities. Draft statutory guidance on this Act was produced in December 2007, which included a duty to involve – embedding a culture of community engagement and empowerment in local government. The new duty is in addition to existing requirements to consult and comes into force on 1 April 2009.

**Local Petitions and calls for Action: A Consultation** was produced in January 2008. It proposed a statutory duty on local authorities to respond to local petitions. The Government response was published in August 2008, It is expected that the duty to respond to local petitions will be included in the forthcoming Community Empowerment, Housing and Economic Regeneration Bill. The councillor call for action will be brought into force by the end of 2008;

**Local Charter Guidance** produced in February 08 provides guidance on how to develop a local charter. They are designed to strengthen local democracy and enable more people to have their say in the decisions that affect their quality of life.

**The Sustainable Communities Act 2007** The regulations and guidance in the Sustainable Communities Act 2007 published in February 2008, has a broad remit to improve local sustainability. This could include identifying proposals in consultation with the community to the Secretary of State, for example transferring duties from one public body or national body to another.

**Community Empowerment, Housing and Regeneration Bill** - The bill will encompass the outcomes from the Empowerment White Paper, including individuals having a right of response to petitions. It will also legislate the key recommendations from the review of sub-national economic development and regeneration including making RDAs statutory planning bodies, creating a duty for local authorities to assess local economic conditions, and supporting cross-boundary working among local authorities, possibly through statutory partnerships at sub-regional level.

**Citizenship Review – Lord Goldsmith’s Report** - Lord Goldsmith's report on citizenship sets out the legal rights and responsibilities of citizenship and makes recommendations to enhance its meaning and significance. It looks at the role of education and the role of local government in promoting citizenship and civic participation.

**User involvement in public services** – May 2008 –This report of the House of Commons Public Administration Select Committee investigates how far public services could be improved by involving the people that use them in their design and delivery. The report draws out a number of conclusions and recommendations including, people should have a choice as to whether they

want to be involved in designing the services and should not suffer a poorer quality of service if they do not wish to do so, and that sometimes involving service users is not always appropriate and in some situations could create inequalities of service, as well as being risky and expensive.

**Path to citizenship Green Paper** – May 2008 - The Home Secretary plans to review the immigration system to introduce the notion of “earned citizenship” and include suggestions that new migrants will be required to demonstrate their contribution to the UK at every stage of the process towards full citizenship; access to benefits would be delayed until after a probationary period had passed; migrants would be expected to contribute to a new fund for managing the transitional impacts of migration, providing extra financial help to communities experiencing change from migration.

**Participatory Budgeting: A Draft National Strategy** - This consultation document from the Department of Communities and Local Government seeks views on a draft participatory budgeting strategy for local authorities to use participatory budgeting (or ‘community kitties’) as a tool to give local people a greater say on how public money is spent.

**Working together: Listening to the voices of children and young people** - This statutory guidance outlines best practice in promoting the participation of children and young people in decision-making in school, local authority and related settings. It relates in particular to schools’ duty to promote children’s well-being under Section 38 of the Education and Inspections Act 2006, and local authorities’ requirement to give due consideration to the views of children and young people before determining services that will affect them, under Section 53 of the Children Act 2004.

**Guidance on community cohesion contingency planning and tension monitoring** - Communities and Local Government has published guidance for local authorities on contingency planning and tension monitoring as part of its programme of setting objectives for cohesion. The aim of the guidance is to encourage councils to track and monitor local trends and be alert to potential tension, with an emphasis on prevention and early intervention.

**Engaging Communities in Fighting Crime** -The Cabinet Office report from Louise Casey makes 30 recommendations, including:

- There should be more local funding available for community groups tackling crime, potentially through local authorities giving funding to neighbourhoods for participatory budgeting
- Introducing the Councillor Call to Action on crime immediately to enable local redress when problems are not tackled effectively.

**The Empowerment White Paper**, Communities in control: real people, real power (July 2008) - The White Paper looks at ways to pass power to local communities and citizens, giving them real control over local decisions. Key points include: a new duty on councils to promote democracy, an expansion of the duty to involve and a duty to respond to petitions, including where these

relate to Primary Care Trusts. For citizens, promised measures include a review of redress, extending participatory budgeting, community engagement in planning, a toolkit on empowering people in decisions about housing growth, and empowerment of tenants.

**Creating Strong, Safe and Prosperous Communities** - the statutory guidance (July 2008) This is the final statutory guidance that covers a number of aspects of the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act and revises earlier guidance on community strategies and best value. It covers Local Strategic Partnerships, Duty to involve local people, Sustainable Community Strategies, Joint Strategic Needs Assessments, Local Area Agreements, Best Value and commissioning

**Policing Green Paper** 'From the Neighbourhood to the National: policing our communities together'. (July 2008) The Government plans to legislate on the proposals in the green paper, following a 12 week consultation period. The green paper makes a range of recommendations about police reform.

**Equality Bill** - The Government Equalities Office has published *A Framework for a Fairer Future: The Equality Bill*, setting out its plans for a Bill to be introduced later this year. This legislation will ultimately replace all existing equality laws. It is intended that the Equality Bill, supported by secondary legislation and additional non-statutory measures, will "strengthen protection, advance equality and 'declutter' the law". The Equality Bill will be introduced in the next parliamentary session, in December or early in the new year. The implementation of the new duty will be delayed until 2010 - 2011 at the earliest.

**Comprehensive Performance Assessment** - The Comprehensive Area Assessment framework will come into effect from April 2009, and replaces the current Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) regime which has been in place since 2002. The consultation period runs until Monday 20 October 2008. Key elements of the new system is an area assessment which will assess the impact that local services are having on improving outcomes for citizens. This assessment will look beyond councils and include the work of other partners locally.

**Improving Local Accountability:** a Communities in Control Consultation - This is the first in a series of consultations relating to the policy commitments set out in the Communities in Control White Paper as well as work from the earlier White Paper and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. This document considers three key areas: developing and strengthening overview and scrutiny; increasing the visibility and accountability of local public officers; and facilitating the work of councillors. The consultation period ends 30 October 2008.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

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

**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008

**SUBJECT:** Neighbourhood Management Update

**WARDS** Appleton, Castlefields, Halton Lea, Kingsway, Riverside, Windmill Hill

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

To inform the Board on progress in developing neighbourhood management in Halton.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Board notes the report.**

**3. BACKGROUND**

Since 2006 Halton has received to develop neighbourhood management in those areas of the Borough that fell within the 3% most deprived under the 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation. Since April 2008 this has been part of Halton's Area Based Grant allocation, and continues until March 2010.

Work is being focused in three pilot neighbourhoods, each of which fell within the above category; Central Widnes, Hallwood Park & Palace Fields and Castlefields & Windmill Hill.

Neighbourhood management is designed to help close the gap between our most deprived neighbourhoods and the rest of the Borough, with regards to health, education, employment and crime. A strategic partnership board made-up of key local service providers, elected members, resident representatives and the voluntary sector, currently oversees the development of neighbourhood management in Halton. The board reports directly to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board.

In addition to the 'strategic board', there are well-established neighbourhood boards working in each of the three neighbourhoods. The three neighbourhood boards include local residents, key local service providers, local stakeholders and ward councillors.

**4. SUMMARY OF KEY DEVELOPMENTS OVER THE PAST QUARTER**

The Halton Neighbourhood Management Board has met twice since your last meeting; on 3<sup>rd</sup> June and on 15<sup>th</sup> July 2008. The board also had an 'awayday' at Norton Priory on 8<sup>th</sup> July 2008 (See section 5)

(a) Key issues at the June meeting were;

- Councillor John Swain was re-elected chair and Windmill Hill resident Clare Nelson, vice-chair for the 2008/9 municipal year.
- A presentation and review of the partnership's service agreement with the Borough Council's Community Development service was received. The agreement is currently scheduled to end in March 2009.
- The board also received a report outlining the partnership's delivery of its 2007/8 Action Plan. Overall, progress in the delivery of the partnership's first action plan was satisfactory, with 10 (77%) out of the 13 key objectives being assessed as 'green' by the year end. An analysis of each of the those objectives and milestones that attracted a 'red' light highlighted shared key factor across all of them as to why progress has been slower than planned or had stalled. Briefly, pressure on staff resources both within the neighbourhood management team and in key partners was the major contributory factor. Therefore, it could be said that we were a little too ambitious last year when the Action Plan was agreed as to what could be delivered with the resources and the time available
- In 2007/8 32 Quick Response Fund & Community Action Fund grants were made by the neighbourhood boards, for a total of £35,997.48. Reports from the partnership's appraisal panel on mid-point reviews of two major neighbourhood management supported interventions (Kooldown Plus and Neighbourhood Pride) were also considered.

(b) Key issues at the July Halton Neighbourhood Management Board

- A presentation on the innovative Men's Health service developed by Halton & St. Helens Primary care Trust ('PCT') was received.
- A draft Development Plan for the partnership covering the period up to the end of external funding for the development of neighbourhood management in Halton, March 2010 was discussed. The plan was drafted to take into account ongoing work from last year's action plan, David Winchurch's report, and the key issues identified at the Awayday the previous week. After a discussion and with some amendments to objectives and performance indicators it was approved and adopted.
- The board also agreed to set-up a small working group to review the partnership's Risk Register.

(c) Neighbourhood Management Boards.

The three neighbourhood management boards are continuing to develop, with all three now having evolving Neighbourhood Action Plans and growing programmes of events and interventions.

(d) Other relevant issues;

- Training sessions on the subjects of project appraisal (to provide partnership members with the skills and knowledge to examine applications for funding from the partnership's Intervention Budget) and an 'Introduction to Neighbourhood Management' were offered in Spring.

Attendance was good, and participant feedback was very positive. Further training opportunities are in the process of being set-up for the Autumn.

- Neighbourhood management was singled out for particular praise in the Audit Commission's recently published Comprehensive Performance Assessment ('CPA') of the Borough Council – paragraph 8 on page 6.
- The latest update on the statistical baselines for each of the three neighbourhood management areas should be available by the date of your meeting.

### **5. THE DEVELOPMENT OF NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT IN HALTON.**

The Halton Neighbourhood Management Board had a well attended and productive board awayday at Norton Priory on 8<sup>th</sup> July. The event was externally facilitated by Dr Helen Kara.

The main focus of the awayday was to scrutinise in detail the recommendations contained in the Winchurch report relating to the future development of the partnership, to discuss partnership development priorities between now and the end of external funding in 2010, and how to best maintain the ongoing development of neighbourhood management in Halton after 2010.

The strong view of participants was that whilst much has been achieved to date, there remains much work to be done to secure the future of neighbourhood working here in Halton.

The consensus was that the partnership needs to 'kick-on' over the remaining period of external funding up to 2010 to embed neighbourhood working and resident engagement within the broader evolving empowerment, inclusion and cohesion agenda currently being set at national level for local authorities and wider public services.

Pursuant to this, the Awayday set the following key areas of work for the partnership over the coming months;

- A restatement of the partnership's neighbourhood management 'vision'.
- To track the 'closing the gap' with regard to key indicators between the neighbourhood management areas and Halton.
- To investigate the value for money/business case for the sustaining neighbourhood management beyond 2010.
- To reach a consensus about if, when and how to roll out' neighbourhood management after 2010 beyond the current pilot areas.

### **6. INTERVENTION ACTIVITY & EXPENDITURE**

The neighbourhood boards' grant awarding panels continue to consider applications from local community and voluntary groups seeking small and medium sized grants from their respective allocated budgets for a wide range of events, projects and activities.

The three neighbourhood boards are working, via thematic groups, on the best



use of their delegated Intervention Budget to deliver the key priorities contained in their respective Neighbourhood Action Plans.

The partnership's overall level of expenditure is in line with its budget for 2008/9.

## **7. EMERGING ISSUES**

- Negotiations with SSP's regarding the agreement of local targets for the neighbourhood management areas within Halton's 2008 LAA.
- Working with the relevant lead organisations regarding the key priorities set out in the HSP's commissioning pot.
- To start the planning process to sustain and develop neighbourhood management in Halton post-2010.

## **8. POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

Neighbourhood Management is intended to help the Council and its partners to deliver the objectives in the Community Strategy and Corporate Plan in relation to closing the gap between the quality of life in the most disadvantaged areas and that in the rest of Halton.

## **9. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None

## **10. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES**

**10.1 Children and Young People in Halton**

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

**10.3 A Healthy Halton**

**10.4 A Safer Halton**

**10.5 Halton's Urban Renewal**

Neighbourhood Management aims to support the delivery of objectives under all of the Council's key priority areas.

## **11. RISK ANALYSIS**

N/A

## **12. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

Neighbourhood Management aims to reduce geographical inequalities with the Borough.

**13. 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>
National Strategy for Neighbourhood Renewal	Runcorn Town Hall	Nick Mannion Neighbourhood Management Director 0151 471 7470 <a href="mailto:Nicholas.mannion@halton.gov.uk">Nicholas.mannion@halton.gov.uk</a>
Halton LAA		
Neighbourhood Management Delivery Plan		
Minutes of Neighbourhood Management Board meetings		

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

**DATE:** 9 September 2008

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

**SUBJECT:** Markets

**WARDS:** Boroughwide

### **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 At a previous meeting, Members of the Board asked for details on the current performance of the Council's two markets. The Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy will give a presentation to Members on the most up-to-date position.

**2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Board note the findings and comment accordingly.**

### **3.0 BACKGROUND**

3.1 In considering the quarterly performance monitoring reports on Property Services, the Board asked for further information on the current performance of both of the Council's markets.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 None.

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

5.1 None.

### **6.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

6.1 None.

### **7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

7.1 None.

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services PPB

**DATE:** 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008

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

**SUBJECT:** Review of Customer Care

**WARDS:** Borough-wide

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

1.1 To consider the draft topic brief for the review of Customer Care.

### **2.0 RECOMMENDATION:**

**2.1 That the draft topic brief for the review of Customer Care be endorsed.**

### **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The Board has agreed a number of topics for review this year. A main recommendation of the review of compliments and complaints from last year was for the Council to use the Customer Excellence Model to develop a Customer Care Strategy across the organisation. A draft topic brief is attached at Appendix 1 for consideration and endorsement.

### **4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 There are no policy implications arising directly from this report at this stage. However customer care impacts on the service provision of all council directorates and therefore the review should have a positive effect on the way the Council interacts with its customers.

### **5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **6.0 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>
Review of Compliments and Complaints Report	Municipal Building	Rob Ross

## **TOPIC BRIEF TEMPLATE (Part I)**

### **TOPIC TITLE          Customer Care**

PPB(s) responsible: Corporate Services.    Officer Lead: R.Mackenzie Tel: 1016

Planned start/end dates Sept 08– Mar 09. Target PPB meeting 2/6/09

### **Topic description and scope**

There are two strands to this Scrutiny topic. The first strand is to explore how best to implement the Customer Excellence Model to help drive improvement and consistency throughout the organisation. It is expected that this will lead to increased customer satisfaction with how the Council operates and responds to its customers.

The second strand is to develop an overarching Customer Care Strategy which sets out the key areas the Council needs to focus on in order to secure improved outcomes for its customers. The strategy will describe the Council's current approach to customer care and the opportunities that exist that will enable the Council to continuously improve service delivery as a result of responding to our customers. This will involve reviewing the current systems in place throughout the organisation and researching examples of best practice through the IDEA and other local authorities.

### **Why this topic was chosen**

Last year's Scrutiny Programme included the review of Compliments and Complaints with the final report being reported to this Board on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2008. The review was undertaken following on from the results of the 2006 Best Value User Satisfaction Survey. The survey found that 22% of respondents had made a complaint to the Council in the last 12 months, of which only 31% were satisfied or very satisfied with the way that the Council had handled their complaints. This satisfaction level was below the average for all local authorities and was lower than Halton's satisfaction level in the previous survey in 2003.

Whilst the scrutiny review recommended a number of improvements to improve customer satisfaction, particularly with regard to compliments and complaints, it found that those local authorities that had secured the greatest improvements in customer satisfaction had an overarching Customer Care Strategy in place. Therefore the review's main recommendation was for the Council to develop a Customer Care Strategy and as part of the process use the Customer Excellence Model which has received support from Management Team.

**Key outputs and outcomes sought**

An overarching Customer Care Strategy which sets out the key areas the Council needs to focus on in order to secure improved outcomes for its customers.

An implementation plan setting out the most beneficial way to roll out the Customer Excellence Model throughout the organisation to help drive improvement and consistency in relation to customer care.

It is anticipated that this will lead to improved customer satisfaction which will be assessed by the new Place Survey which replaces the Best Value User Satisfaction Survey.

**Which of Halton's 6 strategic priorities this topic addresses and the key objectives and improvement targets it will help to achieve**

The scrutiny topic relates to the strategic priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery. In particular:

- B To deliver services in a fair, equal, accessible way to all residents.
- E To improve continuously the quality and efficiency of services.

Therefore by developing a Customer Care Strategy and implementing the Customer Excellence Model this should have a positive impact on Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery.

**Nature of expected / desired PPB input**

The desired PPB input is to:

- comment on and agree the scope
- in particular, indicate how they would like to receive information on the implementation of the Customer Excellence Model and drafting of a Customer Care Strategy
- receive and comment on progress reports
- monitor progress against the final action plan

**Preferred mode of operation**

The approach taken should be to:

- audit the current position across the Council and consider the most appropriate way of implementing the Customer Excellence Model
- look at good practice elsewhere for example the IDEA and benchmark against other local authorities with regard to Customer Care Strategies
- consult
- put together proposals for change
- finalise recommendations

**Media/communication implications**

Improvements in customer care should result in an increase of positive media communications and a reduction of negative media communications.

**Agreed and signed by:**

**PPB Chair .....**

**Officer .....**

**Date:.....**

**Date:.....**

**REPORT TO:** Corporate Services PPB

**DATE:** 9 September 2008

**REPORTING OFFICER:** Chief Executive

**SUBJECT:** Performance Management  
Reports to 30 June 2008

**WARDS:** Borough wide

## **1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT**

1.1 To consider and raise any questions or points of clarification in respect of the 1st quarter performance management reports on progress against service plan objectives and performance targets, performance trends/comparisons, factors affecting the services etc. for:

1. Exchequer & Customer Services
2. Financial Services
3. ICT Services
4. Legal & Member Services
5. Personnel Services
6. Policy & Performance
7. Halton Stadium
8. Property Services

## **2.0 RECOMMENDED:**

### **2.1 That the Policy and Performance Board**

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

## **3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 The departmental service plans provide a clear statement on what the services are planning to achieve and to show how they contribute to the Council's strategic priorities. The service plans are central to the Council's performance management arrangements and the Policy and Performance Board has a key role in monitoring performance and strengthening accountability.



- 3.2 The quarterly reports are on the Information Bulletin to reduce the amount of paperwork sent out with the agendas and to allow Members access to the reports as soon as they have become available. It also provides Members with an opportunity to give advance notice of any questions, points or requests for further information that will be raised to ensure the appropriate Officers are available at the PPB meeting.

**4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

**5.0 RISK ANALYSIS**

- 5.1 Not applicable.

**6.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES**

- 6.1 Not applicable.

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

Document Place of Inspection Contact Officer.

**CORPORATE AND POLICY DIRECTORATE**

**QUARTER 1 2008/09 – MONITORING REPORT**

**OVERALL SUMMARY**

**Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to highlight any performance issues that have arisen during the first quarter of 2008/09.

**Legal and Member Services and Human Resources**

There are no significant areas of concern at this stage in the year, however, there is significant pressure on the HR team in dealing with issues relating to Job Evaluation (JE). These include dealing with the JE Appeals and Equal Pay Claims. This will continue for some time to come.

Income from searches needs to be carefully monitored, particularly in view of the downturn in the property market and increased competition.

**Policy and Performance**

There is only one area of particular concern and that relates to the achievement of outputs relating to ERDF grants. Following recent audits, some grants have had to be repaid due to ineligibility of spend. This will impact on overall performance.

Two issues will increase the workload in this area in particular. They are in:

- Responding to the requirements of the Local Government and Public Health Act and the White Paper “Communities in Control”.
- Introduction/implementation of the Comprehensive Area Assessment – replacing the Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

**Financial Services**

There are no significant areas of concern arising from the 1<sup>st</sup> Quarter of 2008/09.

It is pleasing to note that following the Audit Commission’s triennial review of the Council’s Audit Service, they concluded that “Internal Audit provides an effective review of major elements of internal control and the quality of work is good”.

The Annual Efficiency Statement was submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government which showed the Council had achieved £2.2m of efficiency gains in 2007/08. Overall, during the period 2005/06 – 2007/08 the Council achieved efficiency gains totalling £7.6m, of which £5.1m were cashable savings.

### **Exchequer and Customer Services**

There are no particular areas for concern at present, although it is worth highlighting the potential impact the introduction of “Empty Property Rates” could have on the overall collection rate of business rates, based on the first quarter’s experience. The Council collected 99.9% of business rates in 2007/08. This will be closely monitored.

The introduction of the new national performance indicator which seeks to measure “Avoidable Contact” with the Council will require new systems to be introduced throughout the authority to ensure compliance. The HDL system has already been updated to measure this indicator.

### **ICT Services**

A small number of service delivery performance indicators have not met their quarterly performance targets, due to high demand. These will be carefully monitored over the next quarter.

Pressures continue to fall on this service due to the ever increasing demands and expectations from IT as a key tool in the Council’s overall drive to improve services and achieve efficiencies.

### **Property Services**

Pressure continues to be felt in this service, given the number of major land and property related projects the Council is running with. Capacity to deal with these issues continues to be a major challenge. Alternative delivery approaches to this service are currently being examined.

There are concerns about the level of income from industrial and commercial premises. This will be carefully monitored, particularly in view of the impact of the “credit crunch”.

The property team have successfully implemented the 1<sup>st</sup> phase of the Accommodation Strategy, with the Runcorn Town Hall project being delivered on time and on budget. The Strategy has led to significant revenue savings.

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Corporate and Policy Directorate  
**SERVICE:** Exchequer and Customer Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008.

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Exchequer and Customer Services first quarter period up to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 4.

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

#### **Revenues & Benefits**

##### **Direct Debit Uptake**

Work continues to increase the percentage of people paying by Direct Debit, the work to date has seen an increase from 53.76% in April 2007 to 62.51% at 31.07.08

##### **Macmillan Cancer Support bid**

A successful bid was made by Halton to Macmillan for funding for two Welfare Rights Officers posts specialising in helping those affected by cancer in Halton. This is a group who significantly under-claim benefits. The PCT have agreed to fund the posts at the conclusion of the 3 year funding period. The post holders will work cross agency and have strong links to appropriate health services and other agencies (e.g. Delamere Suite at Halton Hospital, Halton Haven, Runcorn & Widnes Cancer Support Group

##### **Empty Property Rates.**

Empty Property Rates were introduced nationally in April. The effect of this change in legislation has seen a reduction in the collection rate for Business Rates. The collection rate at the 31.07.08 was 40.81% (42.10% if EPR was excluded). The situation is monitored monthly.

### **Customer Services**

#### **Business Link North West**

From the 2<sup>nd</sup> August 2008 the Contact Centre is now handling the out of hours calls on behalf of Business Link North West using the computer systems developed by the Council's ITC Division.

#### **Mobile Phone Bills**

Staff are now able to view and submit their Council mobile phone bills on line dramatically cutting back on the amount of paper and time in the printing individual bills. Once an officer has identified a number as either 'Private' or 'Work' then all future bills will automatically default to their preference. Work is also continuing on this project with the objective to a fully integrated system with Trent thereby eliminating all double keying.

### **3.0 EMERGING ISSUES**

#### **Revenues and Benefits**

The Division is investigating the merits of introducing an number of technologically advanced systems that should lead to efficiency savings

- **IDCS (Intelligent Data Capture System)**. This system automatically recognises written information on benefit claim forms pre-populate the IT system for checking. This would improve speed and accuracy and result in improved efficiency
- **VRA (Voice Recognition Analysis)**. The Division is exploring the advantages of introducing VRA during telephone claims with customers. This system is being trialled in other authorities and aims to highlight potentially fraudulent claims for Benefit.
- **Telephone Claims** The Division is exploring opportunities to introduce telephone claiming. If this was to be introduced it could be part of the VRA project.
- **LoCTA** tracing software for Council Tax Recovery. The Division is to trial LoCTA in a twelve month pilot. The system allows Council's to trace HB/CTB overpayments, council tax debtors and so aid recovery of debt that otherwise may have had to be written off.
- **BECS** The Division is exploring the opportunities to allow electronic claiming via the web. If introduced it will offer more choice to claimants and may also result in efficiency savings.

- **Telly Talk** The Division is exploring the advantages of introducing Telly talk to Job Centre Plus and RSL offices as a means of giving face to face (Via TV) access to customers at remote sites.
- **Workflow streams.** The Division is exploring the advantages of automated workflow streams for the recovery of council tax. The main advantage is such streams could potentially reduce some of the manual trawling of cases prior to court action.
- **Employment Support Allowance (ESA).** A major change to the Benefit system takes place in October with the introduction of the ESA which replaces Incapacity Benefit.
- **Debt Advice.** In the current economic climate the workload of the Welfare Rights Section as a whole is expected to increase substantially. Energy prices are set to rise quite dramatically and fuel poverty is expected to become a priority area. This is currently linked in to debt advice, and although a "marginal" team activity at the moment, it is set to increase in profile.
- **Key Lines of Enquiry.** The Division is carrying out extensive work on preparing for the new inspection regime, which is based on the for Benefits. These inspections will be carried out by the Audit Commission and not the Benefit Fraud Inspectorate (BFI), and is a much more rigorous inspection regime.




### **Customer Services**

- **Planning.** The development of HDL's system is now in an advanced stage for the Contact Centre to commence scanning of plans on behalf of the Planning Section.
- **National Indicator 14 (NI14).** Whilst this indicator, which comes in to force from the 1<sup>st</sup> October 2008, has a major impact on HDL Customer Services it is a corporate issue and indeed effects many Divisions across the Council including Revenues & Benefit, Waste Management, Planning, Environmental Health etc. The indicator measures the 'Avoidable Contact' to the Council across all channels. The HDL system has already been amended to record Avoidable Contact but other areas of the Council will also have a responsibility to measure their Avoidable Contacts. Plans are being drawn up to ensure full compliance.

### **Telecommunications.**

- The current telephone infrastructure is now some 15+ years old and a program of work is being put together with the objective of ensuring the system is fit for purpose and to examine other new and emerging technologies to see if we can make better use of our telephone and data networks and improve efficiencies whilst delivering cost savings.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**




Total	9		9		0		0
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Progress against all of the objectives for the service has proceeded as planned and additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**




There are no issues relating to service review to be reported for the first quarter period.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Total	4		4		0		0
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All of the key performance indicators for the service are on track to achieve annual target and additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**




Total	5		5		0		0
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Of the five remaining indicators for the service none require reporting by exception at this time.




**7.0 APPENDICES**




Appendix 1 - Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones  
 Appendix 2 - Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
 Appendix 3 – Financial Statement  
 Appendix 4 - Use of traffic light symbols

## Progress against objectives/ milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone (s)	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ECS O1	Home working	Have staff signed up for scheme by 31 <sup>st</sup> March 2008		Home working continues to be rolled out across the Division. Staff are still joining the scheme. The pilot has now finished and there are now 23 staff successfully working from home
ECS O2	Business Improvement Districts	Set up project team Staff training on legislation Purchase and install new BIDS software Staff training on software Bill properties in BID area		Implemented on time.  Business Improvement Districts were introduced in April at Halebank and Astmoor. Although payments were due in full at the end of April the collection rate at the 31.07.08 was 67% for Halebank and 56% in Astmoor. Recovery action is due to commence shortly
ECS O3	Implementation of Local Housing Allowance	Purchase new system software, install and test  Staff training on both system and legislation  General awareness for all key stakeholders (RSLs, local landlords, claimants etc.)		Project completed on time.



Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone (s)	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ECS O4	Implementation of Empty Property Rating	<p>Install new software</p> <p>Test and train staff on system and legislation</p> <p>Publicity for scheme to local businesses</p> <p>Bill businesses</p>		This project was successfully implemented on time for billing in April.
ECS O5	Move all staff to new Revenues & Benefits software (Version 6)	<p>Plan of action for transfer</p> <p>Train all new staff on new version of system</p> <p>Assess and monitor impact of new system</p>		Phase 1 completed although further work is necessary when another module of V6 is released in October.
ECS O6	Rollout NVQ to Cheshire LAs	<p>Carry out presentations to interested Las</p> <p>Assess current Halton staff on scheme</p>		Completed. The Division is an accredited NVQ assessment Centre for the Institute of Revenues Rating and Valuation. The course of study has been offered to staff within the Division. 2008 also saw this being offered to staff from other LAs in Cheshire. The Division is to take another cohort of students in September

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone (s)	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ECS O7	To continue to promote and introduce more effective procurement	Further develop ongoing spend analysis identifying for potential saving		<p>A number of quick wins highlighted and reviewed from the Spend Analysis Report in 06/07 have resulted in a number of Corporate Contracts being implemented. Savings to date are shown below and are continually being monitored:</p> <p>Agency Workers – Savings £25k Apr 08 to June 08</p> <p>Rail Travel On-line bookings - Savings £7k Jun to Jul 08</p> <p>Further potential savings in Hotel Accommodation were identified which has led to the introduction of an on-line booking system being implemented at end of Qtr1.</p>
ECS O8	Continue to develop appropriate e-solutions in conjunction with ICT / Directorates to further enhance service delivery through HDL	<p>Review available service options</p> <p>Continue BPR</p>		<p>This is an ongoing project as the team are continuing to examine service delivery options to free back office resources through business process re-engineering.</p>
ECS O9	Examine implications/implementation of “Government Gateway”	Feb 08 - Undertake risk analysis		<p>Government Connect is a centrally driven common national infrastructure for government that HBC will be connecting into. It will allowing the authority to securely share, transfer and receive both corporate &amp; personal data related to our employees and</p>

**APPENDIX ONE– PROGRESS AGAINST SERVICE OBJECTIVES (Exchequer & Customer Services)**

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone (s)	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
				<p>clients, (eg Benefits data between the Council and the DWP).  It mandates a set of guidelines and processes that define how we will use, access and store any and all data within HBC. "If" we wish to interact with any Government bodies into the future. A risk analysis has been undertaken and a working party led by IT heading the project .</p>

## Progress against 'Key' Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
ECSLI 02 (BVPI 9)	Proportion of Council Tax collected	96.41	96.85	29.08		Qtr 1 shows an increase of 0.3% on the corresponding period last year
ECSLI 03 (BVPI 10)	The percentage of Business Rates which should have been received during the year that were received	99.93	98.85	31.34		Qtr 1 collection is slightly lower than the corresponding period last year following the introduction of the empty rate charge
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
ECSLI 05 (BVPI 78a)	Average time for processing new claims (Housing & Council Tax Benefit)	17.77 days	23 days	14.47 days		Performance is ahead of target
ECSLI 06 (BVPI 78b)	Average time for processing notifications of changes in circumstances	3.99 days	6 days	4.85 days		Performance is ahead of target

## EXCHEQUER AND CUSTOMER SERVICES

Revenue Budget as at 30th June 2008

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees	5,685	1,411	1,368	43	1,368
Premises	550	48	39	9	39
Supplies & Services	1,001	242	226	16	226
Telephone System Costs	76	18	44	(26)	44
Insurance	1,954	1,673	1,709	(36)	1,709
Transport	103	26	22	4	22
Charitable Relief	103	0	0	0	0
Concessionary Travel	1,975	165	139	26	139
Asset Charges	258	0	0	0	0
Council Tax Benefits	9,430	9,430	9,443	(13)	9,443
Support Services	3,424	0	0	0	0
Non HRA Rent Rebates	166	42	16	26	16
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>24,727</b>	<b>13,055</b>	<b>13,006</b>	<b>49</b>	<b>13,006</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
<b><u>Sales</u></b>	-13	-4	-2	(2)	-4
Halton Housing Trust	-19	-4	-17	13	-4
Fees & Charges	-2	-1	-5	4	-5
Support Service Recharges	-4,981	0	0	0	0
SLA to Schools	-46	-12	-15	3	-15
Telephone Recharges	-338	0	0	0	0
Insurance Recharges	-2,309	-39	-33	(6)	-33
NNDR Administration Grant	-169	0	0	0	0
Hsg Ben Administration Grant	-1,479	-370	-317	(53)	-317
Concessionary Travel Grant	-300	-75	-130	55	-130
Council Tax Benefits Grant	-9,248	-2,312	-2,303	(9)	-2,303
Liability Orders	-574	0	0	0	0
Non HRA Rent Rebates	169	-42	-20	(22)	-20
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-19,647</b>	<b>-2,859</b>	<b>-2,842</b>	<b>(17)</b>	<b>-2,842</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>5,080</b>	<b>10,196</b>	<b>10,164</b>	<b>32</b>	<b>10,164</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**




In overall terms spending is currently below the budget to the end of the first quarter. With regards to expenditure, employee costs are lower than budget due to vacancies within the Housing Benefits section, and it is expected that spending will be within budget at the year end.

**EXCHEQUER AND CUSTOMER SERVICES****Local Strategic Partnership expenditure to 30th June 2008**

	Annual Budget	Budget to Date	Actual to Date	Variance to Date
	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>	<b>£000</b>
<b>Local Strategic Partnership</b>				
Benefits Bus	150	37	14	23
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>150</b>	<b>37</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>23</b>

Regular monitoring reports are sent to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in respect of all LSP projects and any areas of concern are dealt with throughout the year by the LSP support team and individual project managers. Some variances against the budget to date are expected, as the LSP have deliberately over-programmed in order to ensure that the full allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund grant is spent during the year.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u>.</p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain that the objective will not be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Corporate and Policy  
**SERVICE:** Financial Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 30 June 2008

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Financial Services first quarter period up to period end 30 June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix 4.

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Audit Commission has recently completed its triennial review of Internal Audit. This involved determining the extent to which Internal Audit complies with CIPFA's Code of Practice for Internal Audit in Local Government. The Audit Commission review concluded:

*'Internal Audit is an important element of the control environment within the Council. It is proactive and the work covers a range of the Council's activities. Internal Audit provides an effective review of major elements of internal control and the quality of its work is good'.*

The Government has announced its decision on 2008/09 budget capping. As a result there will be no change in the council tax precept set by Cheshire Police Authority; however, its increase will be limited to 3% in each of the next two years.

The Council's 2007/08 final accounts have been completed and the draft Statement of Accounts was approved by the Business Efficiency Board on 26 June 2008, in line with the statutory deadline. The Audit Commission is currently undertaking the year-end audit of accounts and will report their findings to the Business Efficiency Board on 25 September 2008, following which the Statement of Accounts will be published.

The Annual Efficiency Statement has been submitted to the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG), setting out that £2.2M of efficiency gains were achieved in 2007/08. Over the three year period 2005/6 – 2007/8, the Council achieved efficiency gains totalling £7.6M, of which £5.1 M were cashable savings.



A self-assessment has been prepared as part of the 2008 CPA Use of Resources assessment and submitted for review by the Audit Commission. The results of their assessment will be announced in the Autumn.

The Audit Commission's Annual Audit and Inspection Letter presented to Executive Board on 5 June 2008 concluded that the Council continues to manage its use of resources well, financial management arrangements and internal controls are well established, and the Council has a proven track record of strong budgetary management.

Work continues to support the financial aspects of the partnership with Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority for the procurement of waste treatment and disposal facilities, and with the development of the Mersey Gateway.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

Reviews of the grant distribution formulas for both Revenue Support Grant (Formula Grant) and Dedicated Schools Grant have begun. These reviews are the first steps in developing the new formulas to operate from 2012 and work will be undertaken with SIGOMA with the aim of maximising the Council's share of these grants.

The format of the Statement of Accounts is heavily prescribed by regulations and not easily understood. The Chartered Institute of Public Finance (CIPFA) is consulting its members about the format and how it can be made more user-friendly and relevant to all stakeholders.

### 4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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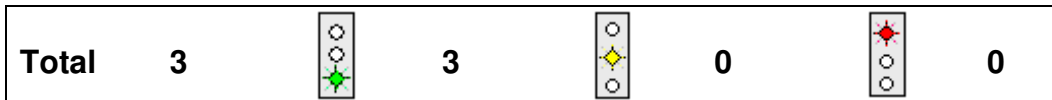
Progress against the two key objectives for the service has progressed as planned and additional details are included within Appendix 1.

All 'other' objectives / milestones are also progressing as planned and are therefore not being reported by exception during this quarter.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

Following the CPA Use of Resources assessment, an action plan was developed and is being used as the basis for continued improvement across the Department. This will be updated in preparation for the changes to the assessment from 2009, when it becomes a Comprehensive Area Assessment and is focussed more upon community outcomes rather than organisational processes.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**



All three of the key performance indicators for the Department are on track to be achieved and details are provided within Appendix 2

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**





All of the remaining performance indicators for the Department are on track to be achieved and therefore do not require reporting by exception at this stage.



**7.0 APPENDICES**

- Appendix 1 - Progress against Objectives/ Milestones
- Appendix 2 - Progress against Key Performance Indicators
- Appendix 3 - Financial Statement
- Appendix 4 – Application of traffic light symbols

## Progress against objectives / milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 4	Commentary
FS O1	Set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and recommend Council Tax	Report Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board <b>November 2008</b> .  Report to Council in March <b>2009</b>		On track to report Strategy to Executive Board in November 2008.
FS O2	To effect financial prudence by assisting managers to control their budgets by monitoring spending and providing timely and accurate financial reports	Provide <b>monthly</b> financial reports to budget holders within 8 days of month end.  Provide quarterly financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports.  Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board Sub Committee.		All reports to date have been issued as planned and within specified timeframes.  Quarter 1 reports provided on schedule to Operational Directors.  The 2007/08 outturn was reported to Executive Board Sub Committee on 25 June 2008, showing an overall underspend against the revenue budget.

## Progress against key performance indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
FSLI 1	Receive an unqualified audit opinion on the accounts.	Yes	Yes	Yes		The external audit of the 2007/08 final accounts is currently underway and an unqualified audit opinion is anticipated by 30 September 2008.
<b>Cost &amp; Efficiency</b>						
NI 179	Value of (organisational) cashable efficiency gains.	New PI from 2008	<b>TBA</b>	Refer Comment	-	Information not yet available.
<b>Quality</b>						
FSLI 6	Undertake the external assessment for 75% of the Council's schools undergoing the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) accreditation process.	N/A	75 %	81%		18 of the 22 schools undergoing the assessment this year have already confirmed that they will be using the services of the Internal Audit Division in the accreditation process.




**FINANCIAL SERVICES****Revenue Budget as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b>Expenditure</b>					
Employees	1,486	371	361	10	361
Premises	99	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	102	20	13	7	13
Transport	48	12	12	0	12
Support Services	244	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>1,979</b>	<b>403</b>	<b>386</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>386</b>
<b>Income</b>					
Schools SLA	-143	-72	-65	(7)	-65
Support Service Recharges	-1,836	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,979</b>	<b>-72</b>	<b>-65</b>	<b>(7)</b>	<b>-65</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>331</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>321</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**

In overall terms spending is below the budget profile at the end of the first quarter. This is mainly due to staff vacancies within the Internal Audit and Accountancy Divisions. Net expenditure is however expected to be in line with the overall Departmental budget at the end of the year.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u>.</p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain that the objective</u> will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target</u> will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Corporate and Policy  
**SERVICE:** I.C.T. Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the I.C.T. Services first quarter period up to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

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

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The 2008/09 work programme for the service will be focused upon the replacement and renewal of Citrix and PC based hardware along with the necessary infrastructure developments. Newly negotiated commercial arrangements with Microsoft, through the Enterprise Agreement for software licensing, were put in place at the end of the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter.

Support services such as Active directory will be redesigned in line with new group policies to support the government led security requirements surrounding the new code of connection. This will also coincide with a full review in quarter two using Microsoft support services focusing on how the authority will use technology over the next 3 – 5 years. The objective of this will be primarily to ensure the convergence of the technology requirement, the ICT strategy and the development plans for the directorates.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

A full review of Citrix was started in the 1<sup>st</sup> quarter with an objective of analysing its long term sustainability as an enterprise computing solution, a number of pilots have been identified along with potential changes and solutions which over the next 6 months will be tested and assessed for suitability.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>26</b>		<b>24</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>
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


Service performance within this period has been in the main on track with the exceptions being projects that have purposely been put on hold due to the potential changes with the desktop strategy, the code of connection and the new opportunities the new Microsoft agreement brings with it. Further details of progress against all 'key' objectives for the service are provided within Appendix 1.

Additionally of the remaining objectives for the service two milestones may not be achieved as planned and additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

The department intends to finally initiate the restructure in Q2/3 now that the Job Evaluation process is complete.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>3</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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All key performance indicators are presently at, or near, their ceiling of 100% and additional details are provided within Appendix 3.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>8</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>4</b>
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




A number of the remaining performance indicators for the service have failed to achieve their target due to the level of demand for ICT services across the authority. Additional details concerning progress are included within Appendix 4.





















**7.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Progress against Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2 - Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 3 – Progress against 'other' performance indicators  
Appendix 4 – Financial Statement  
Appendix 5 - Use of traffic light symbols



Progress against 'key' objectives / milestones

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ICT O1	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network Infrastructure	PC Replacement 95,98,NT. <b>June 2008</b>		Complete
		Implement Clientless VPN PC <b>June 2008</b>		Trial complete
		VM Ware Phase 2 <b>March 2009</b>		Equipment now purchased.
		New Citrix Farm <b>March 2009</b>		Phase 1 complete, evaluation underway
		Schools Internet <b>May 2008</b>		Complete
		Active Directory Phase 1 <b>June 2008</b>		Phase 2 now in the planning stage
		3 Node Corporate Internet <b>July 2008</b>		Complete
		Quality of Service Provision <b>June 2008</b>		On hold due to Citrix assessment




Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ICT O1 cont'd	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network Infrastructure	End of life PC replacement programme <b>March 2009</b>  SAN and NAS replacement <b>Sept 2008</b>	  	Started and on track  Equipment now purchased
ICT O2	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust hardware infrastructure	Complete exchange server upgrades (e-mail facility) <b>June 2008</b> .  Introduce data encryption to all laptop and tablet devices <b>June 2008</b>  Complete annual technology replacement programme (Elected Members) <b>May 2008</b> .  Complete annual PC / laptop replacement programme (377 devices) <b>March 2009</b>  Complete planned upgrades to CITRIX software systems <b>March 2009</b>	        	Complete  On hold due to CoCo security regulations.  Phase 1 complete with VPN trial to be tested.  Catalyst tender now completed and orders to be placed Q2  Full review underway with user group to be set up
ICT O3	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust software platform	Implement Corporate web reporting tools <b>September 2008</b>  Complete provision of intranet services to all secondary and primary schools <b>June 2008</b>	  	On track  Completed and full segregation of services now in place.

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ICT O3 cont'd	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust software platform	<p>Implementation of corporate spyware for servers and PC's <b>September 2008</b></p> <p>Complete planned operating system upgrades Phase 2 <b>March 2009</b></p> <p>Share point evaluation and trial <b>December 2008</b></p> <p>CSD back office rollout Phase 1 <b>December 2008</b></p> <p>Planning services links to CSD <b>June 2008</b></p> <p>CMS rebuild <b>September 2008</b></p>	     	<p>On hold again due to CoCo security requirement assessment.</p> <p>Review of Vista underway for full corporate use.</p> <p>Software purchased and evaluation to start upon completion of active directory assessment.</p> <p>Tests in place and rollout started</p> <p>Complete</p> <p>Under evaluation</p>
ICT O4	The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal.	<p>Implementation of document imaging supporting adoption records Phase 1 <b>December 2008</b></p> <p>Planning and Building Control document imaging <b>October 2008</b></p> <p>Pilot workflow, internal ICT processes <b>November 2008</b></p>	  	<p>Phase 1 completed with additional requirement now being assessed</p> <p>On target</p> <p>Started and on track</p>





**Progress against 'other' objectives / milestones**

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
ICT O4	The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal.	Mayrise Highways and Streetworks integration into HDL <b>September 2008</b>		On hold due to supplier not the service.
ICT O5	Improve service efficiency and improvement through the use of Business Process Re-engineering	<i>Complete phases 2 and 3 of Trent software application</i> <b>December 2008</b>		

## Progress against 'Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
ITCLI 1	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	99.82	99	99.26		High level of performance achieved during quarter one in spite of negative impact of power outages.
ITCLI 2	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	99.62	99	99.67		Again the only downtime was planned switch-overs
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
ITCLI 6	Member Support: % of calls responded to within 1 working day.	100	95	100		Excellent performance being maintained despite some issues with Citrix and printing.

## Progress against 'other' Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
ITCL1 8	Average working days from order to completion of a new PC	20.9	10	19.2		Performance during quarter 1 has been adversely affected by demand exceeding available resources.
ITCL1 9	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC	13.6	5	10		The situation is being kept under constant review to ensure that resources are used to optimum affect
ITCL1 10	Average working days from order to completion of a thin client device	13.4	7	11		As above
ITCL1 11	Average working days from delivery to completion of a thin client device	9.2	2	8.1		Although below targeted level performance at quarter 1 is slightly ahead of that for last year. However the use of thin client will be subject to review during the course of the year.

## ICT SERVICES

**Revenue Budget as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees	2,452	597	614	(17)	614
Premises	192	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	158	53	41	12	41
Computer Repairs & Software	362	77	90	(13)	90
Communications Costs	121	30	25	5	25
Transport	49	12	12	0	12
Asset Charges	1,090	0	0	0	0
Support Services	149	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,573</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>782</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
Support Service Recharges	-4,384	0	0	0	0
Internal Billing	-97	0	0	0	0
SLA to Schools	-92	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,573</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>769</b>	<b>782</b>	<b>(13)</b>	<b>782</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

In overall terms spending is currently above the budget to the end of the first quarter. With regards to expenditure, employees costs are higher than budget due to the use of agency staff because of difficulties in recruiting and retaining staff .It is expected that the overall total net spending will be in line with the Department budget by the year end.

**Capital Projects as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

Capital Expenditure	2008/09 Capital Allocation	Allocation To Date	Actual Spend To Date	Total Allocation Remaining
	£000	£000	£000	£000
IT Rolling Programme	2,323	800	709	91
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>2,323</b>	<b>800</b>	<b>709</b>	<b>91</b>




**Comments on the above figures.**

It is expected that the full allocation will be spent by the financial year end.



**Explanation of the use of Traffic Light Symbols**

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Performance Indicator</u></b>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state <u>whether the target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly unlikely or certain that the objective will not be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Corporate and Policy  
**SERVICE:** Policy & Performance  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Policy & Performance Department first quarter period up to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress is explained within Appendix .

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

On 30th June 2008, ministers formally signed off the Halton Local Area Agreement (LAA). It includes 32 targets for 2011 for Halton that are drawn from the new National Indicator Set, plus an additional 16 statutory education and early years targets. The LAA will form the basis for performance management by government, and progress with the delivery of LAA targets will be a key element of the Comprehensive Area Assessment that replaces CPA in 2009.

The Corporate Assessment of the Council by the Audit Commission as part of the CPA process took place in April, and the report was published in July 2008. The Council was awarded the highest possible score of 4.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

The government has recently published a number of important policy documents, including statutory guidance under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act, and a white paper "Communities in Control". The Audit Commission has just published for consultation proposals for Comprehensive Area Assessment. These publications have a consistent thread, with changes to the national performance framework (the new national indicator set, LAAs; increased emphasis on partnership working to deliver improved quality of life through the LSP; and greater engagement with communities in the design and delivery of all services). These changes will clearly have implications for the way the Council operates, and the allocation of resources.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>18</b>		<b>17</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>
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With one exception, relating to the publication of a quarterly neighbourhood management newsletter, all key objectives / milestones are progressing as planned. Additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

An external assessment of the Council's Business Continuity arrangements was undertaken, and a Crisis Management exercise was conducted. An action plan has been produced as a result, and departmental arrangements are being reviewed in the light of the learning and advice that emerged.

The findings of an external review of Halton Neighbourhood Management Partnership's first year of development have been considered, and where accepted, included in the Partnership's Development Plan for its remaining duration of external funding to March 2010

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>2</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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Only two of the four key performance indicators for the service can be reported at this stage and additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**








<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>0</b>
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Of the ten remaining indicators for the service that can be reported at this stage only one, relating to ERDF outputs achieved, is showing some slight cause for concern and additional details are provided within Appendix 3.








**7.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Progress against Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2 - Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
Appendix 3 – Progress against 'other' performance indicators  
Appendix 4 – Financial Statement  
Appendix 5 - Use of traffic light symbols




## Progress against 'key' objectives

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
PP O1	Improve the effectiveness of the support intelligence and advice provided by the Council and its partners to review policy, resource planning service delivery and performance.	Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans <b>June 2008</b> .		Progress report completed, will be reported to Sept HSPB. Delivery plans reviewed March 2008
		Agree new Local area Agreement with government and secure ministerial sign-off <b>June 2008</b> .		LAA signed 30 June 2008
		Review Community Engagement Strategy and agree annual Action Plan <b>March 2009</b> .		On track. Significance increased following publication of Communities in Control White Paper
		Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners <b>March 2009</b>		On track.
		Complete design of and Undertake Place Surveys <b>September 2008</b>		National guidance now received, quotes for survey obtained, contract about to be awarded.
		Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences <b>February 2009</b>		On track.
PP O2	Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's external communications	Undertake customer survey <b>November 2008</b> .		On track.

### APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (Policy & Performance))

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
PP O2	Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's external communications	Complete analysis of data and produce report and recommendations by <b>March 2009</b> .		Progress presently on track.
		Implement revised Communications Strategy <b>March 2009</b>		As above
PP O3	Address inequalities and improve opportunities by narrowing the gap between the most deprived wards in the borough and the rest through the delivery of neighbourhood management arrangements.	Evaluate impact of Neighbourhood Management Teams and review delivery plans <b>March 2009</b> .		As above
		Complete resident satisfaction surveys <b>October 2008</b> .		Looking to have additional coverage in the 'Places' survey this Autumn so NMAs can be tracked against rest of borough.
		Produce and publish NM Update <b>Quarterly</b> .		No Update in Q1 due to shortage of professional support. New appointee now in place to facilitate future quarterly publication.
PP O4	To ensure that the organisation remains fit for purpose through the ongoing development of business continuity, risk management and health and safety arrangements.	Implement current action plan and further review arrangements for business continuity in Directorates by <b>December 2008</b> .		Business Continuity Crisis Management team exercise held in May 2008, action plan being developed.
		Review the embeddedness of strategic risk management arrangements <b>December 2008</b>		As above


**APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (Policy & Performance))**

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
PP O4	To ensure that the organisation remains fit for purpose through the ongoing development of business continuity, risk management and health and safety arrangements.	<p>Corporate &amp; Directorate Risk Registers reviewed by Corporate Risk Group, performance monitoring reports delivered and manager / member training provided by <b>December 2008</b></p> <p>Secure external accreditation for Health and Safety <b>March 2009</b>.</p> <p>Review the Council's preparedness for pandemic flu and have appropriate plans in place <b>March 2009</b>.</p>	    	<p>Corporate Risk Group reviewed Corporate Risk register 3 July 2008</p> <p>Both Legal Services and Landscape Services have agreed to undergo accreditation as pilots before rolling out to the rest of the Council. They will begin in September 2008 with a view to completion by December 2008.</p> <p>Progress presently on track with further government guidance recently being received.</p>


## Progress against Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
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### Corporate Health

PPLI 1	% Of LAA / WNF Spend (%)	100	100	N/A	Refer comment	Spend is claimed quarterly in arrears by some organisations. Therefore information will only become available at quarter 2.
PPLI 2	% Of LAA Outputs achieved	95	95	As above	As above	Please refer comment above.
PPLI 5	% Of Departments with up to date Risk Registers	100	100	100		Progress against this measure is presently on track.

### Cost & Efficiency


PPLI 11	% of departmental working days lost due to sickness absence.	4.5	4.0	3.4		On track, but a number of absences due to planned surgery may affect performance as we move throughout the remainder of the year.
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**Progress against 'other' performance indicators**

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
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**Corporate Health cont'd**

PPLI 9	% of Objective 2 Action Plan ERDF outputs achieved.	57	80	68		Previously have reported (qtr4 07/08) upon constraints which had delayed or hindered spend. Where audit visits have identified ineligible items of expenditure recovery of grant has been introduced hence only a small increase in the figure for this period
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## Financial Statement - Policy and Performance

**Revenue Budget as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Item
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees	2,329	594	566	28	566
Premises	147	0	0	0	0
Supplies & Services	474	150	128	22	128
Corporate Subscriptions	132	33	26	7	26
Agency & Contracted	213	11	7	4	7
Transport	59	15	14	1	14
Support Services	2,779	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,133</b>	<b>803</b>	<b>741</b>	<b>62</b>	<b>741</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
Support Service Recharges	-2,001	0	0	0	0
Emergency Planning Grant	-151	-151	-160	9	-160
Grants	-527	-217	-236	19	-236
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-22	-5	-5	0	-5
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-2,701</b>	<b>-373</b>	<b>-401</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>-401</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>3,432</b>	<b>430</b>	<b>340</b>	<b>90</b>	<b>340</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**

In overall terms spending is currently below the budget to the end of the first quarter. This is mainly due to a number of staff vacancies within the section and a number of small underspends in Supplies and Services. It is expected that the overall total net spending will be in line with the Department budget by year-end.

**POLICY AND PERFORMANCE****Capital Projects as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2008/09 Capital Allocation £000</b>	<b>Allocation To Date £000</b>	<b>Actual Spend To Date £000</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining £000</b>
Risk Management	120	0	0	120
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>120</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>120</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

It is expected that the full allocation will be spent by the financial year-end.




**Local Strategic Partnership expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

	<b>Annual Budget £000</b>	<b>Budget to Date £000</b>	<b>Actual to Date £000</b>	<b>Variance to Date £000</b>
<b>Local Strategic Partnership</b>				
LSP Team	256	64	12	52
Commissioning Pot	367	136	0	136
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>623</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>188</b>

Regular monitoring reports are sent to the Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) in respect of all LSP projects and any areas of concern are dealt with throughout the year by the LSP support team and individual project managers. Some variances against the budget to date are expected, as the LSP have deliberately over-programmed in order to ensure that the full allocation of Neighbourhood Renewal Fund is spent during the year.

## Explanation of the use of Traffic Light Symbols

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Performance Indicator</u></b>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state <u>whether the target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly unlikely or certain that the objective will not be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Corporate & Policy

**SERVICE:** Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resource Services

**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resource Services first quarter period up to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

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

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

The Local Government Election in May was carried out smoothly. Officers supported the first meetings of the 2 new Parish Councils. Necessary changes to the Standards Committee flowing from new legislation have been implemented and training has been carried out. New Councillors have all been inducted. ISO half –yearly inspection passed in June. The revised Constitution was approved by Council in May.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

Work continues a supporting the BSF initiative including the appointment of external legal advisers.

The section also continues to be heavily involved in the Mersey Gateway project as its various elements are considered by Members.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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All four of the key objectives for the service are progressing as planned and additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

None of the remaining objectives for the service are showing cause for concern at this stage and are therefore not being reported by exception.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**

There are no issues to be reported at Quarter 1 concerning service review.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>9</b>		<b>9</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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All of the key performance indicators are presently on track and additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**






<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>5</b>		<b>2</b>		<b>0</b>
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Of the remaining performance indicators for the service 2, relating to sickness absence and time taken to complete conveyancing transactions are slightly below annual target level. Additional details regarding these two measures are provided within Appendix 3.

**7.0 APPENDICES**






- Appendix 1 - Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones
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## Progress against 'key' objectives





Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
LOD O1	To provide a high quality legal service to the Council and its departments to ensure that the Council is able to deliver its services effectively.	Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation <b>January 2009</b>		Renewal of accreditation on track to be achieved with half-yearly inspection being passed in June.
LOD O2	To ensure that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information and are kept informed of changing legislation and responsibilities.	Review Constitution <b>May 2008</b>		Constitution has been reviewed as planned
LOD O3	To provide efficient and effective Democratic Support Services that provides Elected Members, as key decision makers, with the necessary information, support and training opportunities to fulfil their individual potential and management and governance role effectively.	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting		Programme of MAP interviews is being delivered as planned.
		To induct all new members – <b>October 2008</b>		All new members to the authority have successfully been inducted.
LOD O4	To ensure the Council's strategic approach to the management of Human Resources is reviewed and is consistent with best practice and reflects a modern, excellent authority.	Implement Priority Actions identified within the new HR Strategy – <b>March 2009</b>		As previously reported, as a result of emerging issues and to ensure synergy and consistency with best practice, the HR Strategy will now become an integral part of the People Strategy currently being developed.

### APPENDIX ONE – PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES/ MILESTONES (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resource Services)



**Progress against 'Key' Performance Indicators**

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
LOD 2	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total)	51	52 (92%)	50		Performance at quarter 1 is showing no cause for concern.
LOD 4 (BVPI 11)	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: -					
	Women	46.86	45.00	41.22		Refer comment above
	From black and ethnic minority communities	1.84	2.00	1.65		Refer comment above
	With a disability	3.05	3.30	3.61		Current figure slightly ahead of annual target.
LOD 5 (BVPI 12)	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	12.58	11.25	3.74		Performance at quarter 1 falls within expected level.



Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health Cont'd</b>						
LOD 6 (BVPI 14)	Early retirements (excluding ill-health) as a percentage of the total workforce.	0.08	0.14	0.03		Retirements at quarter 1 are showing no cause for concern.
LOD 7 (BVPI 15)	% Of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of total workforce	0.15	0.12	0.03		Refer comment above.
LOD 8 (BVPI 16a)	No of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act as a % of the total workforce.	1.41	1.50	1.39		Although figure slightly below annual target this should still be attainable by year-end.
LOD 10 (BVPI 17a)	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.83	1.00	0.75		Refer comment above.

### Progress against 'other' Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
LOD 1	Proportion of departmental working days lost to sickness absence (%)	5.2	4.5	5.2		Slightly above target. A number of instances of long-term sickness have impacted on the figure.
<b>Service Delivery</b>						
LOD 15	Average time taken to complete Conveyancing Transactions	321	350	432.5		Below target but efforts to improve continue. The figure has been distorted by the recent completion of very complex, long-standing matters.

## LEGAL, ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT AND HUMAN RESOURCE SERVICES

**Revenue Budget as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**




	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees	3,036	771	762	9	762
Members Expenses	747	202	197	5	197
Premises	583	85	102	(17)	102
Supplies & Services	794	168	189	(21)	189
Training Costs	236	59	0	59	0
Civic Catering & Functions	82	20	1	19	1
Legal Expenses	92	23	62	(39)	62
Transport	55	14	14	0	14
Asset Charges	10	0	0	0	0
Support Services	1,304	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>6,940</b>	<b>1,342</b>	<b>1,327</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>1,327</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
Land Charges	-437	-109	-17	(92)	-17
Printing Recharges	-303	-50	-44	(6)	-44
SLA to Schools	-221	-55	-76	21	-76
Licence Income	-210	-52	-101	49	-101
Other Income	-34	-34	-50	16	-50
Support Service Recharges	-3,794	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-4,999</b>	<b>-300</b>	<b>-288</b>	<b>(12)</b>	<b>-288</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>1,941</b>	<b>1,042</b>	<b>1,039</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>1,039</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**

In overall terms spending appears to be slightly below budget, however, within this overall position income from Land Charges will show a significant shortfall against budget by year end, due to increased competition from Personal Search agents. This is partly offset by additional income from Licencing and other income.

## Application of Traffic Light Symbols

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Performance Indicator</u></b>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state <u>whether the target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly unlikely or certain that the objective will not be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target will not be achieved</u> unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Environment  
**SERVICE:** Stadium & Hospitality  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Stadium & Hospitality Department first quarter period up to 30 June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against 'key' milestones and performance indicators for the service.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 4.

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

#### **The Stobart Stadium Halton**

##### **Super League Licence**

On the 22<sup>nd</sup> July the RFL announced the 14 teams that are to be granted a three-year licence to play in Super League. It was widely expected that Widnes Vikings would be successful with their Licence Application. The decision of the RFL NOT to award Widnes Vikings a licence was greeted with major condemnation from supporters, pundits and professionals within the game. The decision means that Widnes will now play in National League 1 for the next three-years, unless one of the 14 teams awarded a licence fail to meet the requirements in their bid.

The owner and Chairman of the Vikings was, not surprisingly, very disappointed at the decision, he has however pledged to continue with his financial support and is planning to maintain a full-time operation next year. Plans are already in progress that will result in the Stadium Management working closer with the Marketing Manager of the Vikings to ensure both parties benefit from a number of joint marketing initiatives that are aimed at both increasing match day spectators and general users of the Stadium.

## **H2O8**

The H2O8 Youth Festival took place during the weekend of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of July. The event was well supported and an estimated 10,000 people attended the events at both the Brindley and the Stadium. A number of interactive activities were available including: - Dance, Art Workshops, Live Stage Events, Extreme Sports Exhibitions, Archaeological Dig and much more.

A de-brief session is planned in early August to allow the organisers to seek views from participants and the steering group to enable better planning for any similar future events.

## **Christmas Party Nights**

A full range of options has been advertised and a number of nights are already fully booked. Two nights have been planned in the new Marquee Suite, which will have a 70's theme; these nights are already at 70% occupancy. The full range of options for Christmas Party Nights can be viewed at the Stadiums web site.

## **School Meals**

### **Free Range Eggs**

All Halton Borough Council Catering outlets started using free-range eggs from the 1<sup>st</sup> April. Halton Borough Council was one of 5 local authorities in the UK to receive a Good Egg Award. Private sector winners include Waitrose, Sainsbury's, Subway, and Hellman's & Cadbury Crème Egg. The pioneering move will ensure 537 hens will live their lives free from cages. Posters are available for schools to display in their dining rooms.

### **Wire Fm Advert**

During week commencing 14<sup>th</sup> April, the school meals service worked with Wire FM in the production of 3 radio adverts promoting the importance of a healthy school meal.

The 3 adverts were on air for 5 consecutive days at peak times, 5 times a day. The adverts were incorporated into various health messages, which the radio station was trying to promote.

The uptake of meals for May/June this year has increased by 2.94% compared to a similar period last year. This is equivalent to 7868 meals over a 28-day period, which is an increase of 281 meals per day throughout the Borough. It is difficult to analyse whether the radio adverts have contributed to the uptake, but they have certainly raised public awareness to the improved quality of school meals in Halton.

**Free School Meals (FSM's)**

The process for registering for free school prior to Jan 08 was: -

Claimants would request an initial Free School Meal Application Form, once completed they would take the completed form and proof of eligibility to Halton Direct Link. Once eligibility was recorded their children could receive a Free School Meal. The entitlement for FSM's was reviewed on a four-monthly cycle and the process for re-registering was the same as above. This process was fairly time consuming and required a visit to HDL to register/re-register, it also required a member of C&YPD to issue the reminder notices 3 times per year.

If the claimant failed to re-register before the existing entitlement ceased, then the issue of supplying children a meal without payment fell on the Environment Directorate, an issue highlighted in the latest Internal Audit Report.

The budget for FSM's is based on the ACTUAL number taking a FSM at a particular time in the year, usually mid-January, the total budget is delegated to schools and the Environment Directorate charge schools this amount to provide the FSM's for the year. Any under-spend on this budget line therefore remains with the Authority and is used to enhance the service provision. The Revenues and Benefits section initiated a change to this registration process.

The new system, which was partially implemented in January 2008, now means that any body claiming either Housing Benefit or Council Tax Benefit with eligible children is AUTOMATICALLY registered for FSM's. Whilst the claimant is in receipt of either/both of these benefits the entitlement to receive FSM's is continuous.

The effect of this change has resulted in the following: -

	<b>Sept. 2007</b>	<b>April 2008</b>
<b>Registered/Claimants</b>	2863	4419
<b>Actual Uptake (meals per day)</b>	2535	2889
<b>% Uptake</b>	88.54%	65.38%

This increase in FSM's has already "bucked" the annual trend, in that, from April onwards generally sees a gradual decrease in the number of pupil's actual taking up their entitlement.

A meeting has taken place that should result in a budget increase to the

School Meal Service.

**Headteacher & Governor Newsletter**

A newsletter was produced for all Head Teachers and Governors to inform them of the recent initiatives in school meals. (Copy available from Head of Services on request).

**High School Menus - New Ideas**

Encouraging Pupils to have meals in high schools is a constant challenge; the pupils want to spend the minimum amount of money on their school lunch. Traditional hot meals are not very popular. Pasta bars, Pizza bars, Jacket Potato bars and various hot sandwiches are more popular. In order to try and encourage the pupils to eat another type of complete balanced meal, Chicken Joes Hot tortilla Wraps have been introduced which includes a Tortilla wrap, chopped salad, various choices of marinated chicken and a dressing for £1.60. These are currently proving to be very popular in all high schools.

**3.0 EMERGING ISSUES**




**Food Purchasing Contracts**

In order to look at improved efficiencies in food purchasing, a review of the all food purchased has been carried out with a view to maximising any available bulk discounts. Halton have joined SNUPI, which is a catering purchasing consortium for Universities, Colleges & Public Sector organisations: A not for profit organisation.

We have presently switched two suppliers who are offering better prices with guaranteed quality and delivery of service, further work is on-going to look for further savings.

A recent survey has indicated that some food products have risen by as much as 46% in the past twelve months. If this price rise trend continues there will be an adverse impact on end of year budget.

**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>16</b>		<b>11</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
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Generally good progress towards objectives/milestones. 2 “non-key” milestones have been reported by exception, the Capital of Culture youth event that was successfully held in July and the school meals



Smart Card Scheme that has encountered delays. For further details, please refer to Appendix 1.

## 5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

### Customer Satisfaction

The complete school catering service is monitored each term, and as part of this process, Headteachers are asked to comment on the performance of the service.

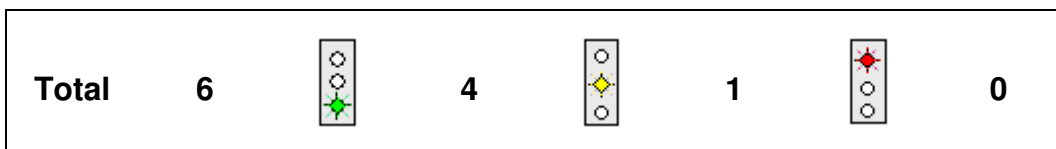
A customer satisfaction target of 86.66% was set following an external inspection in November 07. Actual satisfaction levels surpassed this target and were,

Autumn - 92%  
 Spring - 90%  
 Summer - 94%  
 Average for the year - 92%

As part of the quality audit Headteachers were encouraged to make a comment about the service. Two examples of comments made recently are, (one from a primary and one from a high):-




- “Food is always of a high standard and served with a smile”
- “The service provided by Michelle and her team is first class. They are well organised, flexible and positive with the pupils. They continue to develop new dishes and support the drive towards healthier eating”

## 6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Generally good progress towards targets for the “Key” Indicators. One indicator, SH LI21 – Council contribution to Stadium operating costs, has not been reported as information is not available at this time. For further details please refer to Appendix 2.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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No "Other" Indicators have been reported by exception this quarter.

**7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS**

There are no LPSA targets for this service

**8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES**

During the production of the 2008-09 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.





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


**9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS**







During 2007/08 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.



**10.0 APPENDICES**

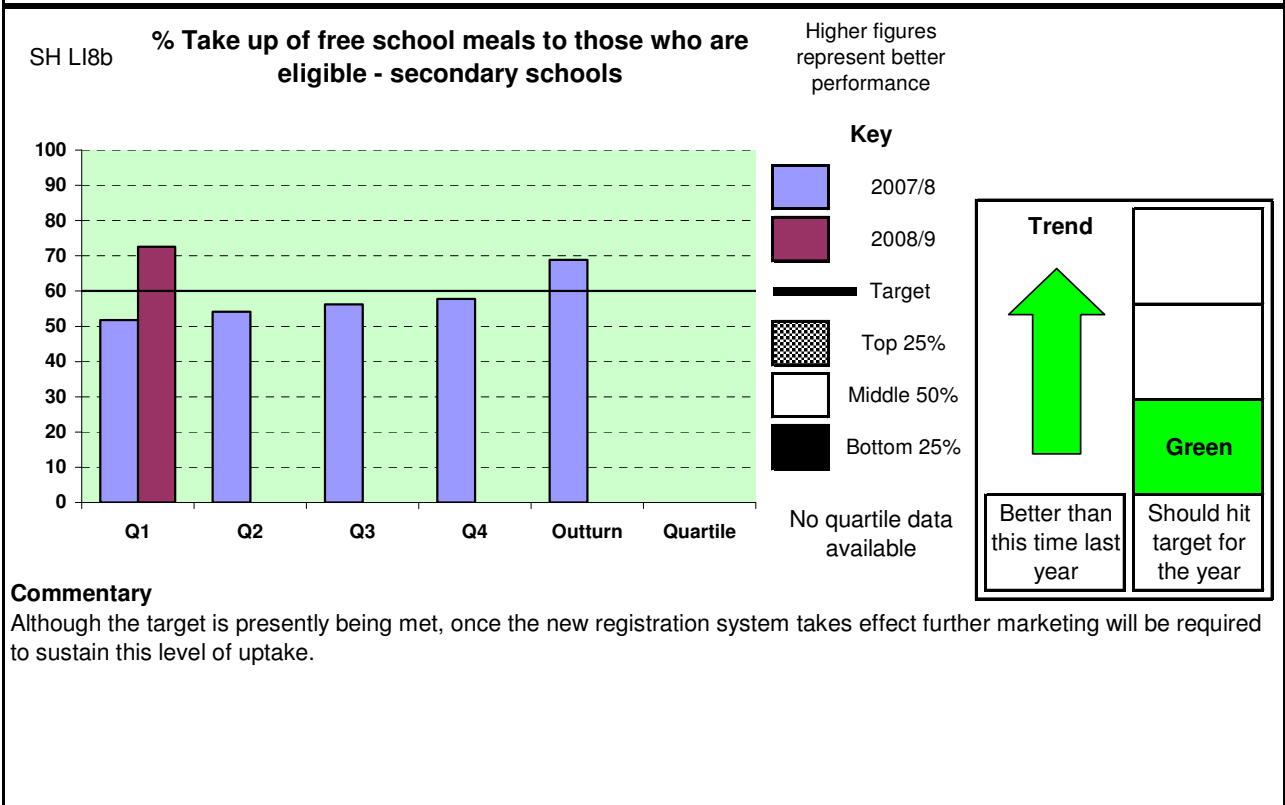
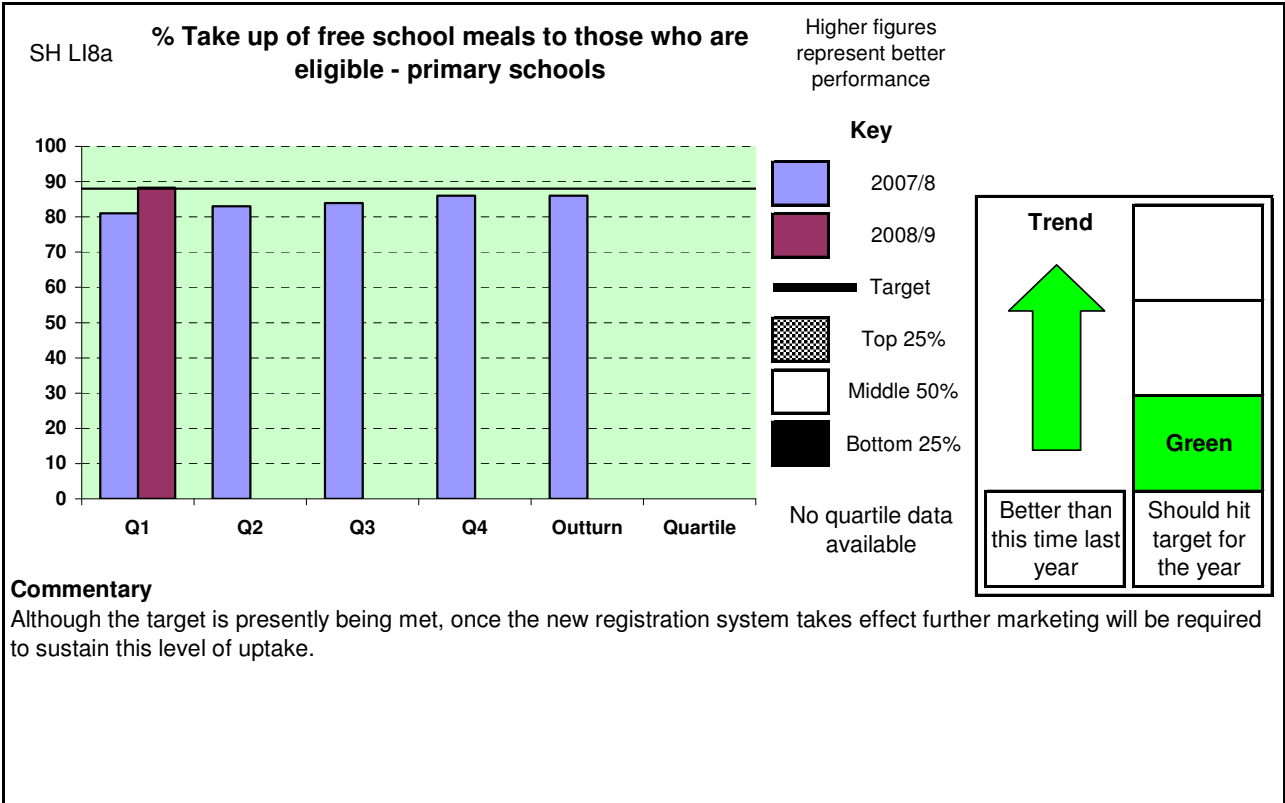
Appendix 1- Progress against Objectives/ Milestones  
 Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators  
 Appendix 3- Financial Statement  
 Appendix 4- Explanation of traffic light symbols

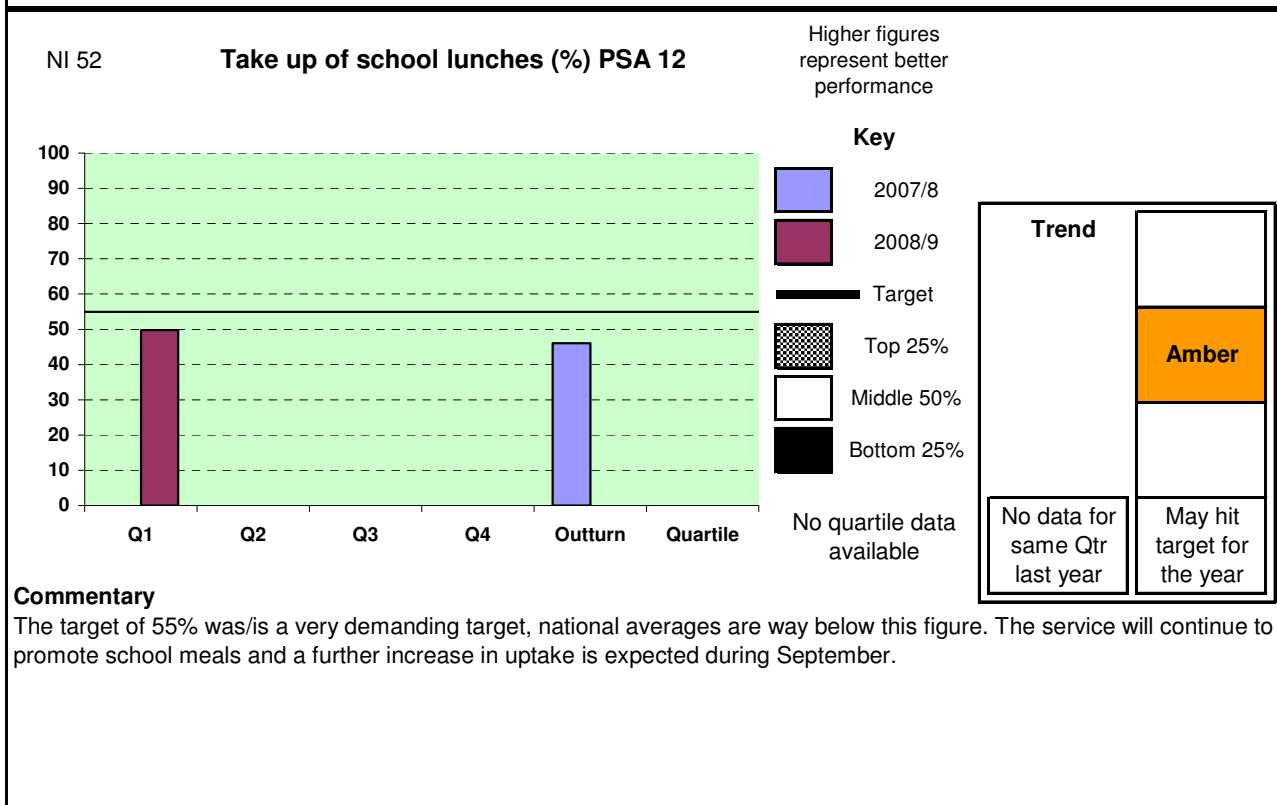
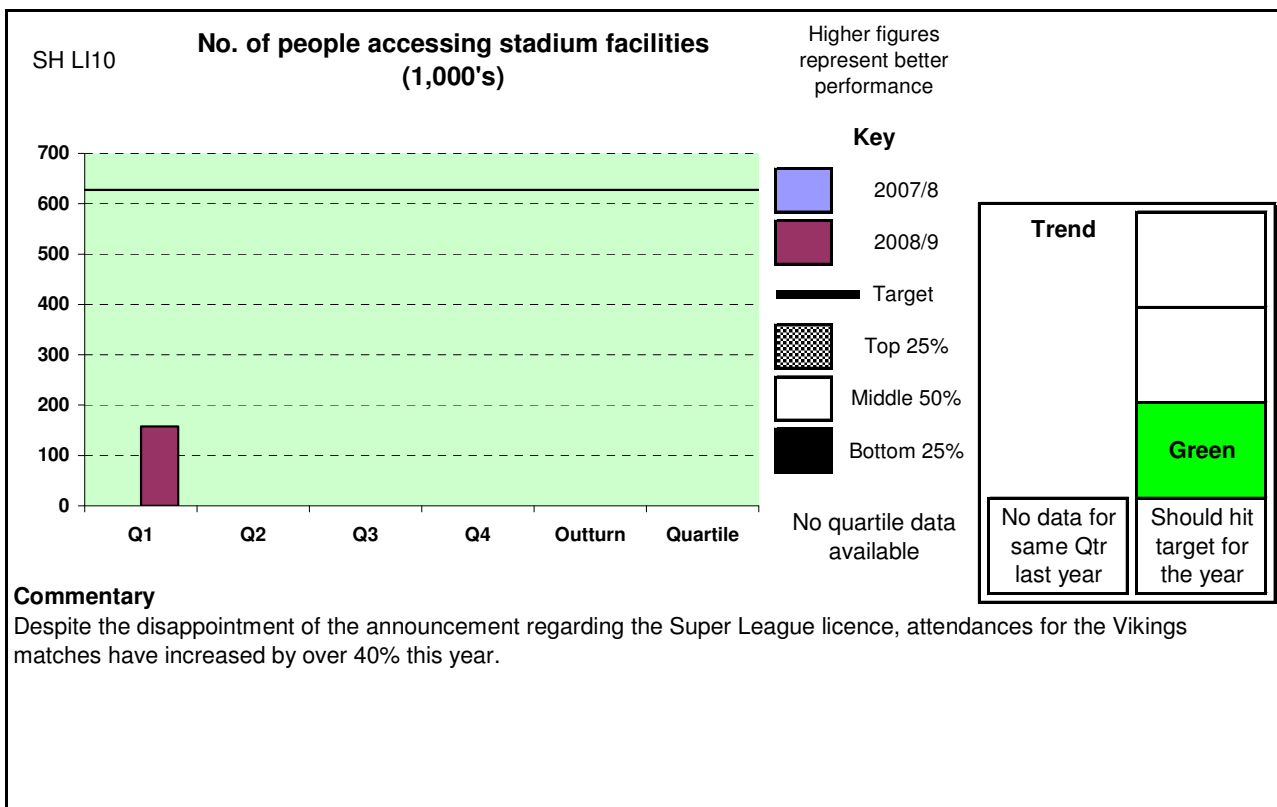
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SH 1	Increase the community usage of the stadium and to maintain and improve the health of Halton residents.	Identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan.(this will drive the development of milestones for 2009/10). Nov 2008		On-going
		Visit Riverside College Halton and local Sixth Forms to advise and promote to students the leisure facilities available at The Stadium. Sep 2008		Visits are planned for mid-September to all sites.
		Establish a regular forum to engage with all established community user groups to pursue development of activities and to encourage cross-activity cooperation May 2008		Individual meetings have been held on a regular basis, joint meetings are planned for later in 2008.
		Establish a formal process for measuring customer satisfaction with Stadium Community Services. Dec 2008		A questionnaire is to be distributed to community users to seek views on future developments. Stadium

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		<i>Host Capital Of Culture Youth event. July 2008</i>		<p>The H2O8 Youth Festival took place during the weekend of 12<sup>th</sup> and 13<sup>th</sup> of July. The event was well supported and an estimated 10,000 people attended the events at both the Brindley and the Stadium.</p> <p>A number of interactive activities were available including: - Dance, Art Workshops, Live Stage Events, Extreme Sports Exhibitions, Archaeological Dig and much more.</p> <p>A de-brief session is planned in early August to allow the organisers to seek views from participants and the steering group on the successes and failures enabling better planning for any similar future events.</p>

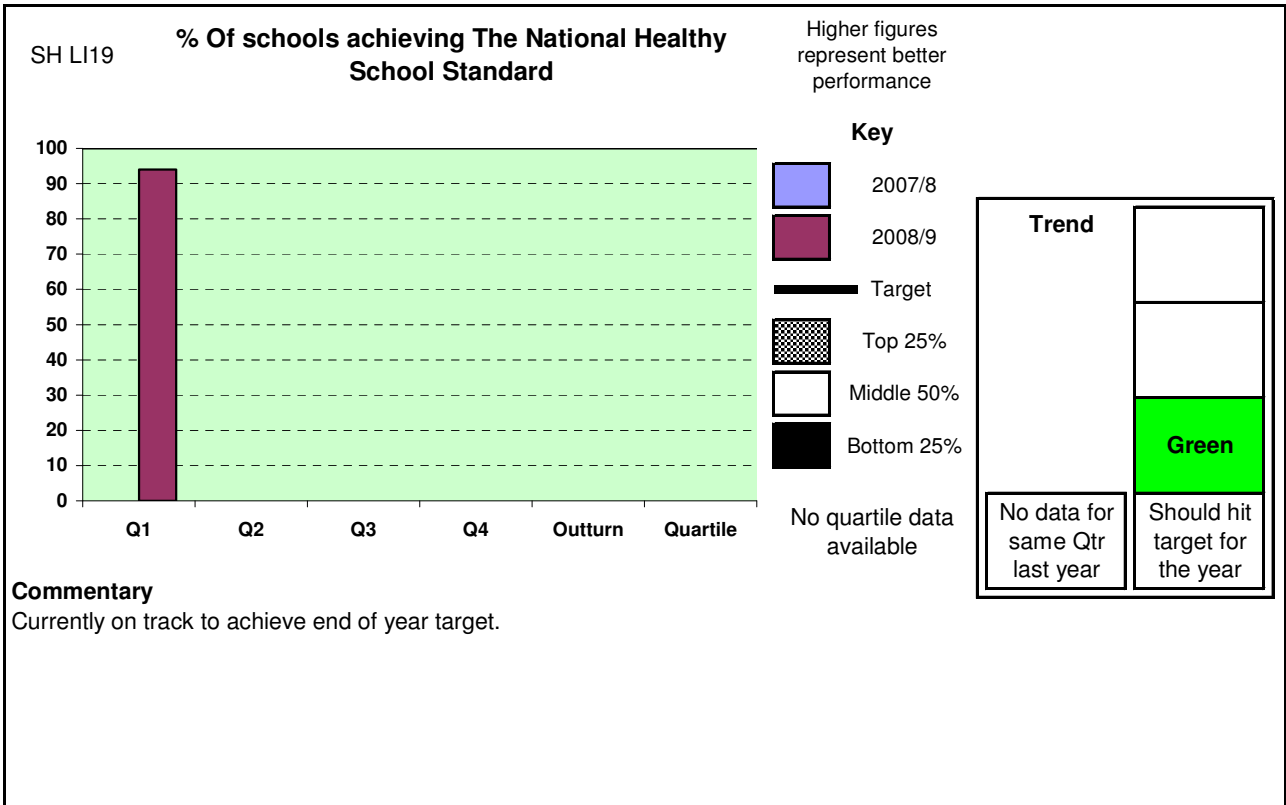
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
SH 2	Increase the Stadium turnover and improve efficiency to reduce the level of Council contribution.	Implement promotional programme aimed at the Borough's school children to increase attendance at Widnes Vikings and Everton Reserve fixtures developed in conjunction with both clubs. Apr 2008		A recent joint initiative with Widnes Vikings resulted in over 2,000 school children taking part in a pre-match "sing-a-long", it was very well received and helped generate the largest crowd ever at a National League 1 match. Further initiatives are planned with both Widnes and Everton FC.
		Review and identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan. Nov 2008		On-going
		Host a pitch based "Pop Concert". Sep 2008		Contact has been made with other Stadia venues with a view to visiting them to seek advice and guidance.
		Host a wedding and business fayre. Oct 2008		A Business Fayre took place in April this year and a Wedding Fayre is booked for the 29 <sup>th</sup> September.
		Develop promotional strategy to attract large corporate events to the Stadium (new Marquee Suite). Dec 2008		Working closely with Blackstripe Marketing and Widnes Vikings Commercial Manager to develop strategy.
SH 3	Increase the number of Pupils having a school lunch, to raise awareness, and increase levels, of	Introduce an early academic school year promotion and educational campaign. Sep 2008		Preparation is well underway in anticipation of the promotion in early September.

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2008/09 Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
	healthy eating	<i>Extend the cashless payment Smart Card scheme to additional schools which reduces queuing times and helps parental monitoring of actual spend and food consumption. Sep 2008</i>		<i>Ongoing. This initiative has to be funded by the school, although schools are showing an interest in the scheme the initial capital outlay is proving to be a stumbling block.</i>
		Conduct a questionnaire/satisfaction postal survey to all parents/guardians of pupils eligible to a free school meal, to learn of perceived barriers restricting uptake. Evaluate and produce Action Plan. Dec 2008		Ongoing.









NB Key Indicator SH LI21, Council contribution to Stadium operating costs, has not been reported this quarter, the required information is not yet available. Q1 figure will be reported in the Q2 report.

**The Stobart Stadium Halton  
Revenue Budget 2008/09**

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Budget Profile £'000</b>	<b>Actual 30/06/08 £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Operational Employee Costs	111	28	31	-4
Admin/Clerical Employee Costs	266	67	76	-10
Premises Employee Costs	64	16	23	-7
Support Employee Costs	28	7	8	-1
Creche Employee Costs	7	2	1	0
Coaching Employee Costs	8	2	4	-2
Catering Employee Costs	172	43	63	-20
Bar Employee Costs	216	54	58	-4
Matchday Employee Costs	62	24	24	0
Other Salary Costs	3	1	0	1
Premises	531	136	125	11
Supplies & Services	349	94	85	9
Food Provisions	192	48	42	6
Bar Provisions	258	64	61	4
Vehicle Maintenance Unit - Fees	9	2	2	0
Central Support Costs	194	48	48	0
Departmental Recharges	90	23	23	0
Capital Financing Costs	25	6	1	5
Asset Rental Support Costs	570	143	143	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>3,155</b>	<b>808</b>	<b>819</b>	<b>-11</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Sales Income	-1,050	-260	-257	-3
Fees & Charges	-496	-112	-101	-10
HBC Support Costs Income	-39	-10	-10	0
Internal Income	-70	-18	-30	13
Rents Income	-50	-8	-8	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-1,706</b>	<b>-406</b>	<b>-405</b>	<b>-1</b>
<b>Net Departmental Revenue Budget</b>	<b>1,450</b>	<b>402</b>	<b>413</b>	<b>-12</b>

**Commentary**

Long-term sickness on matches current cost for 08/09 is approx 5k for safety officer.

Long-term sickness on stadium fitness current cost for 08/09 is approx 9k for centre manager.

**Note: Possible year-end concerns.**

Social Club income after 13 weeks of 08/09 is down on 07/08 by approx 9k. If this trend continues the anticipated shortfall in income will be 35k. The management team at the stadium believe this is due to the smoking ban and lack of smoking facilities we can offer. Weeks 14-26 will provide a more accurate comparison and therefore a more accurate year-end figure as the smoking ban was only introduced in July 07.

Anticipated shortfall in income on gym memberships of approximately 26k. This is due to vat changes in 06/07. The budget has never been amended to compensate gym memberships changing from exempt to standard rated.

Please note also that the budget profiles have been increased to incorporate job evaluation, which has not been allocated to the budget for 08/09.

**Café Bars**  
**Revenue Budget 2008/09**

	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Budget Profile £'000</b>	<b>Actual 30/06/08 £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
<b>Expenditure</b>				
Employee Costs	204	51	47	4
Supplies & Services	9	2	5	-3
Food Provisions	108	27	40	-13
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>321</b>	<b>80</b>	<b>92</b>	<b>-12</b>
<b>Income</b>				
Café Bar Sales Income	-265	-66	-65	-1
External Sales Income	-43	-11	-14	3
Internal Sales Income	-14	-4	-7	3
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-321</b>	<b>-80</b>	<b>-85</b>	<b>5</b>
<b>Net Departmental Revenue Budget</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>0</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>-7</b>

**Commentary**

Brindley – Long term sickens approximate costs £3,300, employee due back into work within the next month.

Currently anticipating a deficit variance on café bars at year-end of approx 18k. 07/08 overspend was 71k. This shows a vast improvement.

The café bars are currently under an internal audit review and any recommendations will be implemented immediately which could potentially help reduce the deficit.

**Capital Programme 2008/2009**

<b>Scheme</b>	<b>Annual Budget £'000</b>	<b>Budget Profile £'000</b>	<b>Actual 30/06/08 £'000</b>	<b>Variance £'000</b>
Stadium Minor Works	58	0	0	0

**Domestic Services Division 2008/2009.****Revenue Budget as at 30th June 2008.**




	Annual Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees	2,612	657	684	(27)	684
Operational Buildings	18	0	0	0	0
Other Premises Costs	34	7	9	(2)	9
Supplies & Services	189	50	47	3	47
Hired & Contracted Services	28	7	10	(3)	10
Food Provisions	1,156	289	346	(57)	346
Transport	9	2	2	0	2
Internal Support Costs	54	0	0	0	0
Central Support Costs	176	0	0	0	0
Asset Charges	8	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>4,284</b>	<b>1,012</b>	<b>1,098</b>	<b>(86)</b>	<b>1,098</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
-					
Sales - School Meals	-2,049	-512	-559	47	-559
Sales - Civic Catering	-172	-43	-22	(21)	-22
Support Service Income	-99	0	0	0	0
Government Grants	-122	0	0	0	0
Reimbursements & Other Grants	-95	-25	-7	(18)	-7
School Meals - Free Children's Meals	-943	-314	-321	7	-321
School Meals - Catering Recharges	-293	-73	-68	(5)	-68
Civic Catering Recharges	-138	-35	-34	(1)	-34
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-3,911</b>	<b>-1,002</b>	<b>-1,011</b>	<b>9</b>	<b>-1,011</b>
-					
<b><u>Net Expenditure</u></b>	<b>373</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>(77)</b>	<b>87</b>
-					

**Comments**

The overspend on labour is a result of higher than anticipated levels of sickness, an increase in food preparation time resulting from the new nutritional guidelines and the job evaluation process.

The increase in food costs is in part offset by an increase in school meals cash income. Sales at Municipal Canteens continue to be a concern. There has been a reduction in level of school meals subsidy that will be addressed during the financial year.

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective</u> is <u>on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u>.</p>
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved.</p>
<b><u>Red</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>highly likely or certain that the objective</u> will not be achieved within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the <u>target</u> will not be achieved unless there is an intervention or remedial action taken.</p>

## QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

**DIRECTORATE:** Corporate and Policy  
**SERVICE:** Property Services  
**PERIOD:** Quarter 1 to period end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

This Monitoring Report covers the Property Services first quarter period up to period-end 31<sup>st</sup> June 2008. It describes key developments and progress against key objectives and performance indicators for the service.

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

### 2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Asset Management Plan approved by PPB and new Asset Management Working Group now set up.

Staff are presently relocating to the refurbished accommodation at Runcorn Town Hall with feedback being extremely positive.

### 3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

The implementation of a number of major projects, including the Mersey Gateway, will result in a significantly increased workload within the department and consideration will need to be given as to how such demands can be met.

The St Helens Canal has developed a serious leak, with the cost of repair being in excess of £100, 000. At his stage it is uncertain as to the extent of the authority's liability in meeting such costs and further information will be provided as this becomes available.

Following the return of staff to Runcorn Town Hall office accommodation at Grovesnor House will be subject to upgrade and refurbishment.



**4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES**

<b>Total</b>	<b>4</b>		<b>4</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>0</b>
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All four of the key objectives for the service are presently on track and additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

However as a result of issues highlighted earlier in this report the additional demands upon the department may mean that priorities may need to be reconsidered as we move throughout the remainder of the year.

**5.0 SERVICE REVIEW**




There are no issues concerning service review to be reported at this stage.

**6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

<b>Total</b>	<b>3</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>		<b>1</b>
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The occupancy level of Runcorn Market is presently showing some cause for concern and is being kept under review. Additional details of progress against the three key performance indicators for the service are provided within Appendix 2.

**6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**





<b>Total</b>	<b>7</b>		<b>6</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>1</b>
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The majority of performance indicators for the service are presently on track. However at quarter 1 rent collection for Runcorn market is falling below annual targeted level. Additional details are provided within Appendix 3

**7.0 APPENDICES**

Appendix 1 - Progress against Objectives/ Milestones  
Appendix 2 - Progress against Performance Indicators  
Appendix 3 - Financial Statement  
Appendix 4 - Use of traffic light symbols

## Progress against objectives

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	Key Milestone	Progress Quarter 1	Commentary
PS O1	Review of Property Assets for potential disposal	Annual review to produce disposal programme complete <b>March 2009</b>		The review to produce a disposal programme is progressing as planned.
PS O2	Reduce backlog of maintenance on property portfolio (currently £3.5m)	£3.4Million		Works progress as planned to reduce maintenance backlog.
PS O5	Fulfil requirements of Asbestos Audits and Management Regulations	Confirm 100% compliance		Objective progressing as planned.
PS O6	DDA Works Corporate (Non Schools) subject to funding (currently £200k per annum)	Complete 60% of Priority 2 works by <b>March 2008</b>		DDA Works are progressing with some funding being used to Provide Evac Chairs in multi-storey buildings

## Progress against 'Key' Performance Indicators

Ref	Description	Actual 2007/8	Target 08/09	Quarter 1	Progress	Commentary
<b>Corporate Health</b>						
PYSLI 3	Occupancy of Industrial Units	83	80	84		Occupancy levels at quarter 1 are slightly ahead of annual target.
PYSLI 5	Occupancy of Market (Widnes) %	86.5	90	80		Occupancy levels slightly below target levels primarily due to relatively low occupancy of outside market (48%).
PYSLI 7	Occupancy of Market (Runcorn) %	50	90	40		Occupancy levels of Runcorn Market continue to be problematic despite a number of initiatives. Although one new trader will be occupying a stall in the near future this situation is one which will be continually monitored as we move throughout the year.

## Progress against 'other' performance indicators

<b>Cost &amp; Efficiency</b>						
PYSLI 8	% Of rent collected as % of rent due (Runcorn)	95	95	86		Traders struggling to pay even reduced rents given the present economic climate.

**Revenue Budget as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<b><u>Expenditure</u></b>					
Employees	1,407	352	357	(5)	357
Repairs & Maintenance	3,214	803	650	153	650
Energy & Water Costs	489	122	294	(172)	294
NNDR	660	660	779	(119)	779
Rents	980	450	471	(21)	471
Property Recharges	1,771	0	0	0	0
Other Premises Costs	365	73	51	22	51
Supplies & Services	201	47	35	12	35
Hired & Contracted Services	888	222	173	49	173
Transport	36	9	10	(1)	10
Asset Charges	2,119	0	0	0	0
Support Services	872	0	0	0	0
<b>Total Expenditure</b>	<b>13,002</b>	<b>2,738</b>	<b>2,820</b>	<b>(82)</b>	<b>2,820</b>
<b><u>Income</u></b>					
Rent – Markets	-1,139	-290	-247	(43)	-247
Rent – Industrial Estates	-1,269	-316	-274	(42)	-274
Rent – Commercial	-767	-188	-100	(88)	-100
Recharges to Capital	-1,611	0	0	0	0
Accommodation Recharges	-3,220	-23	-23	0	-23
Repair & Maintenance Rchgs	-3,535	-59	-6	(53)	-6
Support Service Recharges	-1,152	0	0	0	0
Other Income	-3	-1	0	(1)	0
<b>Total Income</b>	<b>-12,931</b>	<b>-877</b>	<b>-650</b>	<b>(227)</b>	<b>-650</b>
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1,861</b>	<b>2,170</b>	<b>(309)</b>	<b>2,170</b>

**Comments on the above figures:**

In overall terms spending in the first quarter is above the budget profile, which is due to a number of factors.

A revaluation of business rates for Catalyst House and Rutland House has resulted in an increase in NNDR costs. In addition, Rutland House has incurred a back-dated electricity charge covering the last three years and Grosvenor House has incurred a back-dated charge for Water usage.

Runcorn Market is still not fully occupied and therefore income from stallholder rents is lower than budgeted. There are a number of large vacant units on Seymour Court and

St.Michaels Industrial Estates which are proving difficult to re-let and therefore income is expected to be below the budget target. There are also vacancies at both Picow Farm Depot and other Commercial units which will lead to shortfalls in rental income.

**Capital expenditure as at 30<sup>th</sup> June 2008**




<b>Capital Expenditure</b>	<b>2008/09 Capital Allocation £000</b>	<b>Allocation To Date £000</b>	<b>Actual Spend To Date £000</b>	<b>Total Allocation Remaining £000</b>
Runcorn Town Hall Refurbishment	1,232	551	614	618
Queens Hall Refurbishment	50	0	0	50
Disabled Access	300	0	0	300
<b>Net Expenditure</b>	<b>1,582</b>	<b>551</b>	<b>614</b>	<b>968</b>

**Comments on the above figures**

It is expected that each of the capital allocations will be fully utilised by the financial year-end.

**Explanation of the use of Traffic Light Symbols**

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<b><u>Objective</u></b>	<b><u>Performance Indicator</u></b>
<b><u>Green</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective is on course to be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that the <u>target is on course to be achieved</u> .
<b><u>Amber</u></b>	 <p>Indicates that it is <u>unclear</u> at this stage, due to a lack of information or a key milestone date being missed, <u>whether the objective will be achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	Indicates that it is either <u>unclear</u> at this stage or too early to state <u>whether the target is on course to be achieved</u> .
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