HALTON
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

**Tuesday, 6 January 2009 6.30 p.m.
Civic Suite, Town Hall, Runcorn**

David W R

Chief Executive

BOARD MEMBERSHIP

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

Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 or e-mail caroline.halpin@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Board is on Tuesday, 24 February 2009

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

Part I

Item No.	**Page No.**
1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST (INCLUDING PARTY WHIP DECLARATIONS)	

Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached and, 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.

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:	6 January 2009
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 34(9).

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(9) states that Public Questions shall be dealt with as follows:-

(i) A total of 30 minutes will be allocated for dealing with questions from 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 given by 4.00 pm on the working day prior to the date of the meeting to the Committee Services Manager. At any one 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 your 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 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 Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	6 January 2009
REPORTING OFFICER:	Chief Executive
SUBJECT:	Executive Board Minutes
WARD(s):	Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Executive Board and Executive Board Sub are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

1.2 The Minutes are submitted to inform the Policy and Performance Board of decisions taken in their area.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

None

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

None

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

None

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

None

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 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.

APPENDIX 1

Extract of Executive Board and Executive Board Sub Committee Minutes Relevant to the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 16th OCTOBER 2008

EXB61 Equality and Diversity Progress Report

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Health and Community providing an update on the current position on the equality and diversity agenda in Halton

It was noted that equalities were a dynamic area of public policy and there had been major recent legislative changes in this area. The Equality Bill "A Framework for a Fairer Future" had been presented to Parliament in June 2008 and provisions of the Bill were outlined for Members' information. It was noted that the legislation had strengthened the requirement to not only tackle discrimination but to actively promote diversity.

In December 2006, the Council adopted a new Corporate Equalities Scheme. This encompassed all its then legal duties in terms of promoting the race, gender and disability equality schemes. The scheme was currently being revised to ensure that the Council fulfilled all its legal obligations.

In May 2008 the Council invited the I&DeA to undertake a Peer Challenge and had subsequently been judged to have progressed to Level 3 of the Equality Standard for Local Government. Following this, the Corporate Equality and Diversity Group had agreed, and was progressing, an Action Plan to move forward to Level 4 of the Standard, acknowledging at the same time that the system may be amended in 2009-10.

Progress had been made in a number of areas, which were outlined within section 4 of the report for Members' consideration, in respect of:

- the training of officers and Members;
- use of service plans;
- updates to the intranet and Website;
- involvement in an equalities forum with other Merseyside authorities; and
- a benchmarking exercise currently underway.

The Board noted that a conscious decision had been taken to carry forward equality and diversity work in the day-to-day task of service delivery and Halton's progress in respect of the equalities agenda would be proportionate to the effort and resource expended. Therefore, all services would need to continue to demonstrate how they would effectively and efficiently encourage their teams to positively incorporate equality and

diversity issues into their attitudes, behaviour, culture and all aspects of service delivery in order for this to have a beneficial impact on our communities.

In receiving the report, Members considered the proposal to provide a multi-faith prayer room, which would be available to all staff and members of the public. It was advised that this would be funded from within existing budgets and would be available for use by all faiths, filling a current gap in provision and helping to provide equality for all.

The Board was also advised that Riverside College had entered into a partnership with various companies in Libya to provide teaching opportunities in this country. This had resulted in a number of Lybian families moving into the area for a minimum of three months and it was hoped that this would offer opportunities for exchange learning around issues such as faith, business and commerce. The Strategic Director – Children and Young People reported that he had met with representatives of the College in order to consider implications for Halton as a result of this arrangement, for example learning needs of younger children within these families.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the actions outlined in section 4 of the report be endorsed in order for the Council to move forward to Level 4 of the Equality Standard for Local Government.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 20th NOVEMBER 2008

72. Medium Term Financial Strategy

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services setting out the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for 2009/10 to 2011/12. The Medium Term Financial Forecast set out a three-year projection of resources and spending based on information that was currently available. The Board was advised that there was information yet to be received and revisions would need to be made as this became available - confirmation of a number of grants was expected on 26th November 2008. As a result, the projections had to be treated with a considerable degree of caution; however, they did provide initial guidance to the Council on its financial position into the medium term.

Members noted that the global "credit crunch" and the consequent inflationary and economic pressures were beginning to have an impact on the budget. The Prime Minister had stated that additional borrowing would be used to stimulate demand within the economy, including a focus on public works projects; however, the consequences on local authorities were not yet clear.

Information was set out within the report outlining the objectives of the MTFS, which were in line with the Council's priorities; the proposed budget strategy; and the proposed capital strategy. It was noted that the MTFS

represented the "finance guidelines" that formed part of the medium term corporate planning process. These guidelines identified the financial constraints that the Council would face in delivering its key objectives and were an important influence on the development of the Corporate Plan and Service Plans and Strategies. It was anticipated that savings of £6 million would need to be made over each of the next four years.

The Executive Board noted that the Strategy would be considered at the Policy and Performance Board Chairs' Away Day, scheduled to be held on 12th and 13th December, where Chairs of the regulatory Committees and representatives of the two opposition parties would also be in attendance.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the Medium Term Financial Forecast be noted;

(2)   the base budget be prepared on the basis of the underlying assumptions set out in the Forecast;

(3)   the Medium Term Financial Strategy be approved;

(4)   the Reserves and Balances Strategy be approved; and

(5)   further reports be considered by the Executive Board on the areas for budget savings and spending pressures.

73. Protocol for Members' Access to Part 2 Items

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy proposing an amendment to the Constitution regarding Members' Access to Part 2 items.

It was noted that clarification had been sought in respect of Members' Rights of Access to meetings of a Committee/Sub-Committee/Board of which they were not members when exempt information was being discussed. Appropriate advice had been given by officers and it had been requested that consideration be given to an amendment being made to the Constitution in order that an agreed protocol could be adopted.

A slightly amended proposed change was tabled for Members' consideration including the proposal that discussion should take place with the relevant Chairman prior to the relevant meeting.

RESOLVED: That Council be asked to approve an amendment to the Constitution as set out below:

"For the avoidance of doubt, Councillors who are not Members of a particular committee/sub-committee/board have no automatic right to remain in a meeting of a committee/sub-committee/board once a resolution has been

passed under Section 100 (A) (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 excluding the press and public from the Meeting. A Councillor would only be entitled to remain in the Meeting if he or she had been able to establish a "need to know" as described above, to the satisfaction of the committee/sub-committee/board. In these circumstances, a Councillor who is not a Member of the committee/sub-committee/board wishing to remain in a meeting following a passing of the appropriate resolution shall demonstrate the "need to know" on a report by report basis to the Chief Executive no later than the day preceding the Meeting or as soon as possible. The Chief Executive will then consult the relevant Chair. This will enable due consideration to be given to the request, in order that appropriate advice may be given to the committee/sub-committee/board to assist them in making the decision."

74. Implementation of the Efficiency Programme

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy seeking approval to the development and implementation of an Efficiency Programme over the next four years on the lines of that outlined by KPMG at the recent presentation to Members. Agreement was also sought of outline arrangements to support the implementation of the programme. A revised recommendation was tabled for Members' consideration.

It was noted that the Council had commissioned KPMG to assist in developing an Efficiency Programme to help the Authority in meeting the significant financial challenges it faced over the coming years. The Medium Term Financial Strategy showed the level of cashable savings the Council would be required to make over the next four years which, if service levels were maintained, would be challenging. KPMG had been asked to work with the Council to develop a programme which both protected or enhanced front line services and made efficiency savings.

The KPMG work had identified a number of areas of the Council's business where it was felt that there was potential for making efficiency savings and these were outlined within the report for Members' information. An outline business case for each of the areas had been produced and, if the Board was content, these would be developed between now and the end of the calendar year into a detailed implementation plan. KPMG believed that these opportunities had the potential to achieve cumulative savings of £20.2m by the end of 2012. In order to achieve this level of saving in the time outlined, the programme needed to commence in January 2009.

In order to deliver the programme the Council would need to establish a Programme Office and identify a Programme Manager. The Programme Team would have the responsibility of co-ordinating the programme and would be Council led although it was suggested that, in accordance with best practice, KPMG be retained to work alongside the team to provide the additional capacity and enhanced skill base the Council needed to deliver the programme.

The Board was advised that, in order to achieve savings of £20.2m KPMG had identified investment in the region of £2.3m to make it happen. That figure had been included in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. This would be used to fund the development of a Programme Office and to fund any outside support the Council needed to deliver the programme.

The delivery of the programme would be challenging and would require close working between Members, staff and trade unions. In order to manage that process effectively, it was suggested that a Staffing Protocol be developed with the trade unions detailing the way in which staffing matters would be dealt with as the programme unfolded.

It was confirmed that the detailed programme would be brought back to the Board for approval and any proposals that flowed from pieces of work would also be submitted to the Board for consideration; for example, any proposals in relation to market testing. The Appointments Committee would also be involved where appropriate in accordance with the Council's Constitution. In addition, there had already been meetings with trade unions and briefing sessions. The Board noted that communication with staff, who continued to deliver excellent services despite the challenges they faced, would be an important part of the process.

The Chief Executive confirmed that this was not a crisis situation but rather a managed approach to improve the quality of the organisation and was necessary if the Council was to achieve the savings required over the forthcoming years. Although the proposals equated to a reduction in approximately 150 staff posts, this would largely be addressed by natural turnover within the organisation, which currently stood at 120 staff per year.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   approval be given to develop an efficiency programme based the elements outlined in paragraph 3.2 of the report;

(2)   the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, be authorised to extend the contract arrangements with KPMG, to support the Programme Office in delivering the programme with the final arrangements being reported back to this Board;

(3)   the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy, in consultation with the Corporate Services Portfolio Holder, be authorised to draw up a Staffing Protocol to outline the options available to staff throughout the process; and

(4)   the detailed delivery programme be brought to this Board for approval with regular progress reports being submitted to the Business Efficiency Board.

75. DCLG Consultation: Member/Officer Codes of Conduct

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director - Corporate and Policy seeking approval of the Council's response to the Government's Consultation Paper on an Officers' Code of Conduct.

It was noted that there were separate Codes of Conduct for Members and officers, both of which appeared in the Halton Constitution. The Members' Code included the Ten Principles of Public Life recommended in the Neil Report into Conduct in Public Life, which had been prescribed by law. Halton's version followed the national model. Members accepting office agreed to be guided by the Code and breach of the Code was dealt with under the Standards Committee process.

The Officers' Code of Conduct had never been prescribed by law although there had been a national model recommended at one time by the Local Government Management Board (LGMB), which was substantially the model approved by the Council and included in the Constitution. Breach of the Code could form the basis for engaging the Disciplinary Code. Officers were expected to comply with the Code and, in recent years, employees' Particulars of Employment had explicitly required them to comply with its terms. This Code of Conduct was in addition to various other codes that certain officers were subject to; for example employees who belonged to particular professional bodies.

Since the introduction of the Local Government Act 2000, there had been power to establish a national statutory code of conduct for officers. The Department of Communities and Local Government (DCLG) had published a new consultation paper in October 2008 inviting responses to 22 questions relating to "Codes of Conduct for Local Authority Members and Employees" with comments to be submitted to the Department by 24th December 2008.

The report outlined the areas that the consultation paper was inviting comments upon in terms of both Members and officers. Consultation on the Members' Code of Conduct fell within the remit of the Standards Committee and, as such, the Committee had been requested to consider this at its meeting of 19th December 2008. The Board was advised that the Committee had agreed the response to the Member Code outlined within Appendix A to the report subject to further consideration being given to including police cautions to the definition of "criminal offence" and to whether the conduct of Members in a private capacity that resulted in a tribunal finding of discrimination should be capable of amounting to a breach of the Code.

Although not in its remit, the Standards Committee had also considered the Officers' Code and had requested that the Executive Board consider removing the reference to politically restricted posts in the response to question 18 so that it read "Yes the Code should require employees to register their interests publicly". The Executive Board considered this proposal but agreed that the implications of this change would be unreasonable in terms of the impact on officers' civil liberties and in the administration of declarations

from thousands of officers.

RESOLVED: That

(1)　the consultation in respect of a revised Members' Code of Conduct considered by the Standards Committee, the proposed response to this consultation outlined in Appendix A to the report, and the Standards Committee's subsequent amendments, be noted; and

(2)　the Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy be authorised to draw up and submit a response to the Consultation Paper in respect of the Officers' Code of Conduct as outlined in Appendix B to the report.

EXECUTIVE BOARD MEETING HELD ON 4th DECEMBER 2008

80. Determination of Council Tax Base

The Board considered a report of the Operational Director – Financial Services regarding the "Tax Base" for the area and the tax base for each of the Parishes. It was noted that the Council was required to notify the figure to the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority and the Environment Agency by 31st January 2009. In addition, the Council was required to calculate and advise, if requested, the Parish Councils of their relevant tax bases.

The Tax Base was the measure used for calculating the council tax and was used by both the billing authority (the Council) and the major precepting authorities (the Cheshire Fire Authority and the Cheshire Police Authority) in the calculation of their council tax requirements. It was arrived at in accordance with a prescribed formula representing the estimated full year number of chargeable dwellings in the Borough expressed in terms of the equivalent of Band "D" dwellings. Taking account of all the relevant information and applying a 99% collection rate, the calculation for 2009/2010 gave a tax base figure of 38,200 for the Borough as a whole.

The Board noted that the collection rate of 99% was what was currently achieved and was amongst the best in the region. However, there was a risk that this would reduce given the current economic climate.

RESOLVED: That Council be recommended that

(1)　the 2009/10 Council Tax Base be set at 38,200 for the Borough, and that the Cheshire Fire Authority, the Cheshire Police Authority, and the Environment Agency be so notified; and

(2)　the Council Tax Base for each of the Parishes be set as follows:

Parish	Tax Base
Hale	729
Halebank	569
Daresbury	141
Moore	345
Preston Brook	347
Sandymoor	913

81. The 'Heart of Halton' Plaque Scheme

The Board considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment outlining the deliberations of the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board (PPB) relating to the development of a new tourism initiative entitled "The Heart of Halton".

The aim of the scheme was to seek to identify and celebrate Halton's achievers, people, important buildings and activities that took place with local historical societies, groups and the public invited to submit suggestions.

To complement plaques, online Web based maps would be developed highlighting the location of the plaques and what they signified. This would be supported from time to time with leaflets or other publications.

It was noted that the PPB had considered the costs and scale of the project at its meeting of 17th September 2008. The Board agreed that this was a worthy proposal subject to budget pressures although further information was required as to how the scheme would work in practice.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board be requested to examine this proposal in further detail, providing information in relation to the process and criteria; and

(2)   subject to the above and to the 2009/10 budget process, the development of a "Heart of Halton" plaque scheme be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 16th OCTOBER 2008

39. Invest to Save

The Sub-Committee considered a report of the Strategic Director – Environment providing an update on progress with the Invest to Save bids, reporting on savings achieved to date and seeking approval of further bids in relation Power Perfectors.

It was reported that, as part of the Invest to Save process, four projects had been approved in connection with the work the Council was undertaking through the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. Details of the projects and ongoing savings achieved to date were set out within the report covering:

- the networking of printers to multi-functional devices;
- the installation of Power Perfectors in Council Buildings;
- Halton Stadium; and
- a lighting upgrade.

It was advised that, given the savings that could accrue from installing Power Perfectors, further work had been done to assess the potential of installing the devices at Picow Farm, Widnes Direct Link, Halton Lea Direct Link, Runcorn Market and Oak Meadow. The total cost of installing Power Perfectors at these buildings was £52,000 but should result in annual revenue savings of £12,000 per annum. Approval was therefore sought to increase the Invest to Save bid to enable the schemes to proceed. The total cost of the Invest to Save bid including fees would be £248,150, which would give expected annual revenue savings of £75,000 per annum, a payback of approximately 3.3 years.

In receiving the report the Sub-Committee commended the proposals.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the report and savings to date be noted; and

(2)   the Invest to Save bids for Power Perfectors be approved.

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 6TH NOVEMBER 2008

46. Discretionary Non-Domestic Rate Relief

The Sub Committee received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy which asked Members to consider 3 applications for discretionary non-domestic rate relief, under the provisions of the Local Government Finance Act 1988.

It was noted that under the provisions of Section 47 of the Local Government Finance Act 1988, the Authority was allowed to grant discretionary rate relief to organisations that were either a charity or a non-profit making organisation. Relief could also be awarded to

Community Amateur Sports Club. A summary of the applications and a list of the associated figures were attached as an appendix to the report.

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 1st April 2008 or the commencement of liability, whichever is the later, to 31st March 2009:

Halton Access to Media	**100%**
Halton Haven Hospice	**20%**
Tenants and Residents Organisations of England	**20%**

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

Tenants and Residents Organisations of England	**20%**

47. Treasury Management 2008/09 2nd Quarter: July-Sept

The Sub Committee received a report of the Operational Director, Financial Services which updated Members on the activities undertaken on the money market as required by the Treasury Management Policy. It was noted that all the activities, including prudential indicators, complied with the policy guidelines.

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. To date there had been no problems with repayments, although it was becoming increasingly worrying that very large organisations, often household names were deemed to be at risk of failure. Quite often credit ratings were giving no indication as to the current situation an organisation may be in and what off balance sheet problems they may be facing. It was noted all the Council investments were in UK banks and building societies.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

48. 2008/09 Half Year Spending

The Sub Committee received a report of the Operational Director, Financial Services which gave details of the Council's overall revenue and capital spending position as at 30th September 2008.

Members were advised of the spending against revenue budget for each department, up to 30th September 2008 and it was noted that in overall terms, revenue expenditure was below the budget profile. Areas of concern were outlined in detail in the report.

Members were advised of the capital spending to 30th September 2008, which totalled £17.8m, and which was 77% of the planned spending of £23.2m at this stage. However, this represented only 36% the total capital programme of £49.5m.

It was noted that although historically capital expenditure was significantly higher in the latter part of the financial year, it was important that project managers maintain pressure to keep projects and spending on schedule and in particular to ensure that all external funding is maximised.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted

EXECUTIVE BOARD SUB COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 4TH DECEMBER 2008

54. 2008/09 ICT Capital Investment Programme

The Board received a report of the Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy, which set out progress against the proposed ICT Capital Programme for 2008/9.

Members were advised that inline with the Council's ICT Strategy the capital programme focussed on 4 key areas; local area networks, hardware replacement, infrastructure and updating user software and facilities.

The report set out progress to date against these 4 key areas and particularly noted the much stricter security measures that would need to be put in place before April 2009 along with work being undertaken on PC replacement, server virtualisation and renewing site licences.

Members welcomed the report and agreed that quarterly reports on progress be presented to the Sub Committee, along with the inclusion of financial information on the maintenance programme.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the ICT Capital Programme, as set out in the report be approved; and

(2)   Quarterly progress reports be submitted to the Sub Committee and include financial information on the maintenance programme.

Agenda Item 5

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 6 January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Chief Executive

SUBJECT: Halton Strategic Partnership Board minutes

WARD(s):   Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The Minutes relating to the Corporate Services Portfolio which have been considered by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board are attached at Appendix 1 for information.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Minutes be noted.

3.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

3.1 None.

4.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

None

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

None

5.3 **A Healthy Halton**

None

5.4 **A Safer Halton**

None

5.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None

6.0   RISK ANALYSIS

6.1   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.

HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

Minutes of a meeting held on Wednesday, 19 November 2008 at the Bridge Suite, Stobart Stadium

Present:

Board Members:	Councillor Rob Polhill	(Chairman)
	Dave Bertenshaw	Cheshire Police
	Debbie Dalby	Halton Voluntary Action
	Gary Finchett	Cheshire Police
	Mike Fry	Community Empowerment Centre
	Pat Grunwell	Riverside College
	Councillor Ron Hignett	HBC
	Fiona Johnstone	PCT
	Rev. Ray Jones	Faith Communities
	Jo Lappin	Government Office North West
	Neil McGrath	Halton Housing Trust
	Terry Parle	Halton Sports Partnership
	John Rowlands	Halton High School
	Councillor John Swain	HBC
	Mark Wilson	Jobcentre Plus
	John Redmond	Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service
	Ian Williamson	Halton & St Helens PCT

Advisors to the Boards

	Rob Mackenzie	HBC
	Gerald Meehan	Children and Young People
	Andrew Pannell	HBC
	David Parr	HBC
	Shelah Semoff	HBC

In Attendance::   Charlene Simpson and Kirsty Parr

Apologies for Absence: N Atkin, B. Edwards, D. Sproson and Councillor Wright

27   MINUTES OF THE LAST MEETING AND MATTERS ARISING

The Minutes of the meeting held on 10th September 2008 having been printed and circulated were agreed as a correct record subject to apologies being recorded for Ray Jones.

28   CHILDREN IN CARE

The Board received a presentation from Mr Gerald Meehan, Director or Children and Young People's Services which:-

- Outlined the role and responsibility of the Council in relation to Children in Care (CiC);

- Highlighted the areas in whichChildren in Care need in order to reach their full potential;

- outlined the key issues i.e that 34 out of 78 care leavers are Not in Education, Employment or Training (NEET), young people currently leaving care much earlier (17.5 years in Halton) as compared to mainstream (24 – 25 years) and stable accommodation;

- highlighted the need for job opportunities – currently 12 are required per year - and emphasised the importance of young people experiencing a working environment in the early years;

- explained how the C&YP Directorate supported the young people and the need for sustained interest and scrutiny of the Authority's performance;

- outlined the total number of care leavers and that the proportion in NEET had risen by 4% this year from 44% to 48%; and

- set out the total number of care leavers living in suitable accommodation which had increased by 6% since January.

Miss Charlene Simpson, who had previously been in care in the Authority and her mentor Kirsty Parr were in attendance at the meeting. Charlene gave a verbal presentation on her experiences of leaving care. She reported that she had been on an ILM course for three weeks, which had been enjoyable and enabled her to gain confidence. In addition, she highlighted how the Employment Team in Halton Council and various agencies had given her a kick-start which had enabled her to realise the potential she had and obtain a job within the Council.

The Director of Children and Young People reported how proud he was of Charlene and outlined the positive impact she has had in the workplace. He highlighted that young people had a lot to offer in the workplace and encouraged partners to give them a chance by offering apprenticeships.

The Chief Executive of Halton Council indicated that there were eleven organisations represented at the meeting and if each one committed to offering an apprenticeship to a young person leaving care that would alleviate the immediate problem. He encouraged the partners to make a commitment to taking at least one young person and offer them an apprenticeship.

Arising from the discussion, the following items were noted:-

- the importance of initial support to young people to make them feel safe, loved and give them confidence was noted;

- NHS Halton and St Helens PCT committed to taking on three apprenticeships; and

- it had been a powerful presentation and it is important that it remained high on everyone's agenda.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the report and presentation be noted;

(2) Miss Charlene Simpson be thanked for her informative presentation; and

(3) Partner organisations consider making a commitment to offering employment to at least one care leaver each year.

29 CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN PARTNERSHIP

The Board considered a report which explained the new structure for the Children's Trust agreed by the Children and Young People's Alliance Board on 3rd September 2008.

Appendix One to the report contained a diagram of the planned structure.

The key features of the Children's Trust included:-

- Front line staff providing integrated delivery to the child and family;

- Shared processes used to support their work;

- Joint assessments of need, plans and commissioning arrangements with pooled budgets – setting priorities and delivering the necessary resources; and

- The inter-agency governance arrangements needed to agree the overall vision and drive through change.

RESOLVED: That

(1) the contents of the report be noted; and

(2) the Children's Trust Board undertake the role of the Specialist Partnership for Children and Young People.

30 HALTON OBSERVATORY

The Board considered a report on the progress of the Halton Observatory.

The Observatory has been running for three years and the Borough Council is looking at how it can be improved. This is being done by consulting

users of the site and by analysing what other Local Authorities have adopted as best practice. An initial meeting has been arranged for 24th November 2008 with Local Futures to discuss the progress of the Observatory and a way forward. This, will establish the scope for improving the Observatory in partnership with Local Futures.

Arising from the discussions, the following points were noted:-

- Cheshire Police are compiling data on crime which would be available on the internet next month. The information would be available by category, with a detailed breakdown of the crime in each ward; and

- It was suggested that the Authority explore the possibility of the numerous data analysis teams employed by the partners being merged into one virtual system unit to become more efficient and effective. This was supported by the Members of the Board. It was acknowledged that there could be challenges sharing data arising from data protection and security considerations;

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the continuing support and contributions to the Halton Data Observatory be confirmed;

(2)   following discussions with Local Futures, the proposals for improving the Observatory be circulated for comment; and

(3)   the Borough Council should explore the option of having a virtual team to collect and share information to serve Halton.

31   IMPROVEMENT PLAN 09/10

The Board considered a report which set out the draft of the Improvement Plan for 2009-10 and the draft matrix of Board and Group meetings for 2008.

The Board was advised that they could contact the Partnership Team if they had any issues which may or may not be included in the Improvement Plan and were asked to consider the dates relevant to their participation and raise any major diary conflicts with the team.

RESOLVED: That the content of the report be noted.

32   RISK ASSESSMENT REVIEW

The Board considered a report which informed Members that they had previously established a Strategic Risk Register in November 2007 and it was time to review and refresh the register in conjunction with the Specialist Strategic Partnership.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the revised risk Register (Part 1) as attached to the report be approved;

(2)   the five Specialist Partnerships be asked to review and update the risk to the delivery of their partnership objectives, including the achievement of LAA targets by the end of January 2009, and a consolidated register be brought back to the Board at its February 2009 meeting; and

(3)   the SSP's continue to update their risk registers on a quarterly basis.

33   CORE STRATEGY

The Board considered a report which advised Members of the progress made to date on the Halton Core Strategy and explained its potential as a key policy document.

A diagram of the Core Strategy Stages was circulated at the meeting for information.

The Board was advised that Appendix A outlined the Hot Topics considered at the Officer Steering Group Meetings of June 08, Appendix B outlined the summary of issues and policy implications and Appendix C outlined items apportioned to Core Strategy Chapters.

It is appropriate to engage the Partnership fully in the emerging Core Strategy. The following actions were proposed:-

- Partnership members would receive the Issues and Policy Options papers relating to the individual Core Strategy chapters via email after they had been presented to the Borough Council's Local Development Framework Working Party. Comments would be invited on the papers;

- Upon completion of the programme of meetings outlined at Appendix D, a question and answer session could be arranged involving key officers and the LSP in order to address any additional matters regarding Issues and Options papers; and

- Following on from this, a series of stakeholder meetings would be arranged with the Special Strategic Partnerships to discuss potential preferred policy approaches for individual chapters. These were likely to take place after March 2009.

The following points arose from the discussion:-

- the extensive community involvement as set out in the Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) was noted; and

- in respect of the Core Strategy seeking to create more prosperous mixed communities, where crime, fear of crime and anti-social behaviour is reduced - it was noted that the next stage of the process would be to have a dialogue with Cheshire Police.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the report and comments made be noted; and

(2)   the proposed programme of action set out in paragraph 3.7 (1-3) in the report be approved.

34   PERFORMANCE MANAGEMENT OF LAA / COMMUNITY STRATEGY TARGETS

The Board considered a report which clarified the performance management arrangements for the LAA/Community Strategy targets, in order to ensure a consistent approach was taken by SSPs.

The Board noted that there had been 50% reduction in incidents this year as a result of partnership work, particularly with Cheshire Police. The Board also noted the increased number of incidents in the Widnes area on Mischief Night and the impact this had on the community.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the development of a more consistent approach to performance management across all SSPs be approved;

(2)   minimum standards for performance management arrangements for each SSP as set out in the report be approved;

(3)   the Board request that the performance management arrangements for the Urban Renewal SSP be established in line with other SSPs; and

(4)   the Board confirmed the responsibility of individual SSPs for named LAA indicators for the purposes of performance monitoring, including cross cutting indicators.

35   ECONOMIC ENVIRONMENT

The Board considered a report which advised Members of the possible implications of the current and emerging economic climate on the work of the Board and in particular on meeting its targets. It was requested that further reports be presented to the Board on performance and the impact of the economic climate on Halton, as data becomes available.

In respect of the economic climate and the possible resulting redundancies, a letter from Mr Mark Wilson, Jobcentre Plus was circulated at

the meeting. The letter asked the partnership to give consideration to the following:-

- Whether they felt existing organisational arrangements were still fit for purpose;

- Whether they needed to update information on available services;

- Whether there was a need to create a revised sharply focussed (and minimal) set of co-ordination groups (perhaps based on the existing and 'new' LAA Structures; and

- Whether they are in good shape and feel able to respond immediately as required to requests for help.

Members of the Board recognised that the Government had made a significant contribution to the banks. However, the partners would need to be in a position to support communities as well as achieving its targets within a reduced budget.

Partners were asked for ideas and to consider how they could address this problem to ensure the authority was in a position to respond to immediate need.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the contents of the report be noted; and

(2)   the Board receives further reports on performance and the impact of the economic climate on Halton, when data becomes available.

36   REVIEW AND REFRESH TIMETABLE

The Board considered a report which advised Members of the arrangements for refreshing and reviewing Halton's Local Area Agreement (LAA).

The importance of retaining funding streams to enable the delivery of the Local Area Agreements (LAA) was noted. It was highlighted, for example, that should a decision be made to withdraw or suspend the funding for the Police Community Support Officers in the future, this would not only have health and safety implications in the community but would affect the delivery of the LAA.

RESOLVED: That the contents of the report be noted.

37   CLIMATE CHANGE UPDATE

The Board considered a report on the requirements of National Indicator 186 C02 production in the area) for which there is a target in Halton's Local Area Agreement. The report briefly outlined the approach with Halton Borough

Council had followed to develop a Carbon Management Plan and highlighted some key actions that Halton had taken to date to reduce its carbon footprint.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the content of the report be noted;

(2)   Partner agencies look at the model which Halton Borough Council have used for carbon management and consider adopting a similar approach within their own organisation;

(3)   SSPs regularly include this on their own agendas.

38   NEIGHBOURHOOD MANAGEMENT UPDATE

The Board considered a report which informed Members of the progress in developing neighbourhood management in Halton.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

39   WORKING NEIGHBOURHOODS FUND: FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The Board considered a report which provided Members with a summary of spend for the second quarter or Working Neighbourhood Fund, July - October 2008.

The Board was advised it was likely that there would be a larger than anticipated under spend this year and it was proposed that any under spend be added to the Commissioning Pot. If agreed by the Board, the SSP Chairs would be consulted on this process.

RESOLVED: That

(1)   the financial summary stated in the report be noted as a true and accurate statement; and

(2)   any WNF underspend at year end be added to the Commissioning Pot for 2009-11, unless there were any exceptional reasons for doing otherwise.

Meeting ended at 12.05 p.m.

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board

DATE: 6th January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate & Policy

SUBJECT: Service Plans 2009-2012

WARDS: Boroughwide

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1. To enable Members to consider the Service Plan for the next three years.

2. RECOMMENDED: That Board Members pass any detailed comments that they may have on individual draft Service Plans at the Meeting or to the relevant Operational Director by 31 January 2009.

3. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1. The Departmental Service Plans are currently being reviewed and rolled forward. They will go to Executive Board for approval on 12 February 2009, at the same time as the draft budget. This will ensure that decisions on Service Planning are linked to resource allocation.

3.2 Attached are draft Service Plans for the following areas:

      i.   Financial Services
      ii.   IT Services
      iii.   Policy & Performance
      iv.   Property Services
      v.   Hospitality and Stadium Services
      vi.   Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources

3.3 Detailed comments should be made to the relevant Operational Director by the end of January 2009. Members indicated at the last meeting of the Board their wish to scrutinise in particular the targets contained within each Service Plan. The Board is now invited to indicate how it wishes to undertake that scrutiny.

4. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Service Plans will clearly indicate how objectives and targets relate to the areas of focus identified in the Council's Corporate Plan.

5. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1   None

6.   IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

6.1   The objectives in the Service Plans are intended to support the Council's priorities particularly that for effective and efficient service delivery.

7.   RISK ANALYSIS

7.1   Risk analysis of all key objectives within Service Plans is undertaken and summarised in the plan.

8.   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1   All Service Plans will be subject to an equality impact assessment and any high priority implications will be summarised within the plans.

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

9.1   None

ICT SERVICES

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

SR-MF Draft 18.12.08

Contents

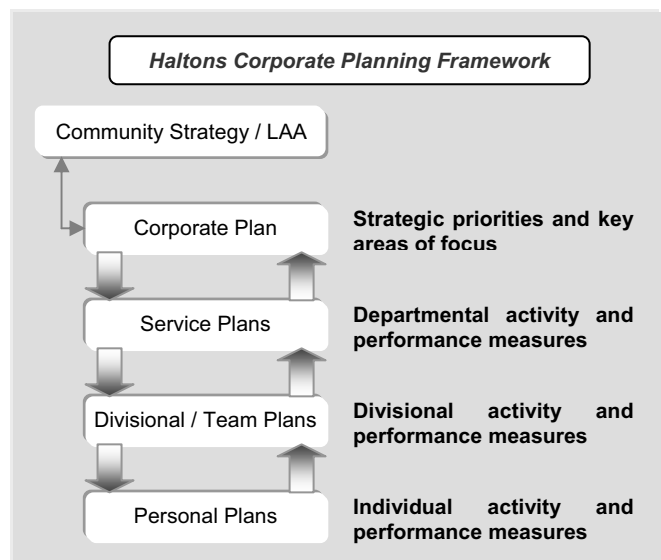|		*Page*

Appendices

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities***, and a number of associated key Areas of Focus,* which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**

- **Halton's Urban Renewal**

- **Halton's Children & Young People**

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

- **A Safer Halton**

- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.

- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.

- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.

- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are

Strategic Priority 6:

Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery

Key Area Of Focus: 38

Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council and ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.

2.0   SERVICE PROFILE

2.1   Purpose

The Department is responsible for all aspects of centralised ICT service delivery. Offering technical and analytical support together with dedicated requirement, process analysis, re-engineering and project/programme expertise, currently delivered through 3 divisions.

Application Development

Responsible for developing, implementing and supporting in-house software systems; packaged software solutions, Internet and Intranet facilities.

Business Management

Provision of: Security Strategy and Compliance, Business Process Re-engineering supporting the Council's transformational-Government, modernisation, and corporate agenda together with the rationalisation and re-engineering of its services. Development of the ICT related corporate Resource Planning, Business Continuity Management and Disaster Recovery strategy and implementation plan.

Infrastructure & Customer Services

Provision, maintenance and support for all infrastructure related hardware and software solutions encompassing desktop, network, server, helpdesk, ICT and Directorate business requirements analysis, technical programme and project management, new product development and security.

Key messages

The current ICT investment strategy within the borough is clearly focused upon two distinct areas. That of Infrastructure replacement through the use of smarter technology and the delivery of the large directorate based technology replacement programmes.

This includes the replacement of key departmental systems within the spend profile for example the main Social Care application Care First, a major draw upon the technology resource and the capital required to develop this fundamental service solution. The ICT teams have worked closely with both the Adult and Children's directorates prior to the delivery of this large hardware and software delivery to evaluate their need and the cross cutting use of a single service solution rather than the historic mix of service delivery options that we once operated within. This approach has proven itself time and time again releasing both a process reengineering resource as well as the technical resources required to deliver the change required in a more transformational and cost effective manner.

The objective of the new technology investment plan is not infrastructure growth; but the consolidation of hardware/software solutions in order to cope with the immense demands placed upon the supporting ICT service solution through the ever growing demand and expectation for the use of technology by the directorates and corporate body as a whole.

The investment profile is aimed at the replacement of key support solutions that will enable change and compliance within the budgets we hold.

The continuing strategy will always be to support the wider use of technology and the increasing needs of the authority to securely transact with partners and the public.

Staffing resources as always in this area are limited and need to be assessed in line with the growth in demand, risk and the available funding given the current demands upon the councils income.

NETWORKING:

The previous and current investment strategy was/is directed toward the replacement of the physical network itself and the dated hardware based solutions in place at the time.

With the completion of this programme of work it is now possible to expand what is to be a rolling programme and deliver a number of much needed network solutions such as wireless availability within meeting rooms and the introduction of council owned and operated fibre connections rather than the traditional leased connections from the major telecommunications companies such as BT reducing future revenue implications.

Networking, maintains, and fully secures the traffic related to the connectivity of literally thousands of users within the HBC local and external networks underpinning this is the "Active Directory Services" (AD) control solution which is itself a software solution that must be upgraded in line with the new security requirements levied upon the authority by the recent Codes of Connection, Caldecott and the need to implement a number of large directorate and corporate projects. The re-commissioning and redesign of this control solution will be a major undertaking by the authority's technology service as such the service will partner with Microsoft and will be using their consultants to support this 12 month upgrade.

Microsoft have been commissioned through the new MS Enterprise agreement and a 12 month support agreement to design and commission the AD services together with a re-focused and newly formed directory services team within the department.

This will be complimented by selected ICT staff undertaking role based training and formal qualification not only within the Microsoft product suite but within "ITIL" an international standard for a compliant technology service delivery with a primary focus upon change control and systems management; essential given the now complex and intricate nature of the growing mass of services managed and provided by the teams within the department.

By adopting these industry standards the authority will have the opportunity to sustain compliance within a number of the key areas required by the codes of connection and comply with the increasing complexity associated with data and operational security.

SERVER & HARDWARE REPLACEMENT:

Currently the directorates technology demand, application upgrade and growth out strips the physical space available to the department for securely housing and operating the server solutions required.

The current server room is almost at capacity along with the electricity supply to the building itself. Today's modern computing solutions are large power hungry systems that require bigger faster hardware to cope with the demands of such a need. This is related to not just the equipment and the location in which the equipment is stored but the basics that were once taken for granted for example the electricity supply to the room, the air-conditioning solutions available as well as the communications links required are all at capacity.

In order to combat such an issue again as with last years programme server consolidation was and still is a key project in this area, but also one that has proven to be extremely successful in its deployment and capabilities. Fortunately this also allowed for growth within this restricted environment, again with the current and future programme releasing much needed capacity.

It is intended this programme of consolidation continues over the next 2 – 3 years with an assessment of technology provision and new to market solutions evaluated during the 2010/2011 delivery period. This programme will reduce the number of physical servers and house them in a number of larger devices stabilising the power and actual footprint required for the data centre.

It must be noted that not all technology solutions are capable of sitting within such an environment but the strategy will be to restrict such solutions to a minimum over the coming years through strict purchasing requirements and a greater understanding of the requirement communicated to the directorates.

The authorities need to retain and retrieve electronic documentation is growing at a considerable rate and will continue to do so now that data and the resultant security of our data is under such external scrutiny. The need to share data and interact with a multitude of government agencies is becoming the expected standard; conversely the systems and platforms must be in place to support such expectation and requirement.

The plan is in place to replace the current ageing storage network with a new enterprise store that will allow a greater level of growth, in line with the pressures placed upon such a system by the constant and considerable data growth expected over the next 3 – 5 years as centralised data, document imaging, centralised printing and secure flexible working become the standard.

To support this growth the devices we all use on a daily basis have to be capable of dealing with not only today's need but also tomorrow's demands. In order to deliver a greater return on investment for the devices we operate the service has an objective to purchase equipment that will be warranted and capable of using the next generation software solutions for at least 5 years. As such a contract has been negotiated with, a tier 1 manufacturer through the OGC Catalyst framework, for the purchase of Laptop devices rather than PC devices, to compliment the need for flexibility and the expected changes to the working pattern and environment. The vast majority of which will be capable of dealing with the current 32bit standard most software adheres to as well as the emerging 64bit technologies ahead of us.

Telephony and the expected changes in mobile and desktop compatibility will also be part of the programme for 09/10 all be it under a small project at this stage but aimed at setting the base line for the required changes within the 10/11 strategy and programme as the corporate telephony requirement and contractual arrangement need to be upgraded and renewed.

SOFTWARE:

Finally Software as a solution must always be split into two distinct areas the aspect we see every day in terms of 3rd party applications and the Microsoft environment.

From an infrastructure perspective the authority operates hundreds of integrated control solutions that keep the basics we take for granted delivering business as usual; such as the e-mail, Internet, network and the servers themselves, again consolidation in this area has reduced the revenue impact upon the authority allowing reinvestment in growth areas.

Corporate Microsoft licence appraisal for both the desktop and server environment has been completed with the delivery of the MS Enterprise agreement standardising non education and corporate requirement over the next 3 years for desktop and support software.

Educational software is to be dealt with under separate arrangement due to an alternative discount structure in this arena.

The development of the new in-house CRM application has been a major move forward for the authority as this has allowed considerable developments to not only within the existing HDL services but improved Web and corporate use within all directorates as well as the deeper use of the HDL systems and process's within the back office functions.

By developing the CRM under the new .NET framework the authority has made considerable savings on ongoing licensing revenue but more importantly these saving will allow the deployment of the application to a wider audience including members through the newly developed web portal without the substantial revenue implication the previous application would have imposed upon the authority. The 09/10 programme for this area is focusing upon a number of key directorate service delivery solutions outside of the HDL environment again limiting the need to purchase external software systems and the resultant hardware and revenue impact.

All projects will deliver and maintain a platform for the authority to continue to deliver levels of service, each element within the mix is as important as the next. Without a strong and secure network the authority will not comply with the code of connection nor could we transact with the likes of the NHS, PCT, DWP and the hundreds of other partners we transact with on a daily basis.

The major investments within the server and software support infrastructures again are aimed at security and the provision of services within a technology dependant Three to five year rolling programme that will constantly evolve and grow together with the considerable demand for the use of new and faster technologies.

Technology is an expensive commodity and the continued investment will never go away given the increasing regulations placed upon the authority along with the considerable demands of our residents to provide the services they want when they want them and technology underpins this together with the constant review of process and deliverables. The objective of this service strategy as with the next will be to maintain a cost effective solution for the borough that constantly focuses on smarter delivery solutions that support the growing business need for ICT.

2.3 Organisation Structure

Structure Chart will be inserted by Corporate Performance Management Team.

3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1 External Factors

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comments
Political (Local)		
Further departmental Restructuring / business focus / partnerships	2009 - 12	Due to delays with JE/Union Ballot ICT re-organisation staffing profile, Ageing hardware infrastructure, Network replacement programme, Process Re-engineering programme, CRM development programme, Recruitment and retention.
Home-working	2009 – 12	Corporate requirement initiated and ongoing
Care First/ ICS/ CSD/Trent/SX3/Corporate Network and Schools Network/BSF	2009 – 12	Financial and human resource impact. Significant resource requirement to develop stand alone installations - SLA delivery
Economic		
Budget pressures / DCLG Efficiency Review/ Partnership / Shared service – process/ Strategic Outsourcing	2009 – 12	Expectation by Govt for all authorities to make efficiency savings. Regional initiatives. Government Connect Code of Connection, Caldecott, N3. Major impact upon resources required for corporate business analysis and programme delivery.
Social		
24 / 7 access to services	2009 – 12	Changing business and user expectation towards 24 / 7 access leading to increased demand for system development, hardware support and maintenance, Security Strategy – Standards.
Technological		
t-Govt agenda DCLG Priority outcomes DWP Code of Connection Gershon Efficiencies	2009 – 12	Resources needed to deliver targets by and related corporate requirement, AES efficiency agenda, BPR requirement, Front Office vs Back Office agenda, Code of Connection.

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comments
Technological cont'd		
Technology standards	2009 – 12	Resources required enabling government, security, disaster, and procedural standards to be revised/re-adopted and authenticated.
Development of HDL	2009 – 12	Ongoing Development and development of new/existing web based workflow and process management systems / interactive internet facility / Digital dashboard, integrated workflow and document imaging.
Legislative		
Children's Bill	2009 – 12	Continued Major re-engineering of information databases, systems and procedures will have significant impact upon technical, analytical and project resources with ICT services
Evolution of CRM through to a council wide process & workflow management solution	2009 – 12	Major continued analysis & re-engineering of information databases, systems and procedures will have significant impact upon resources of ICT services

Environmental
Protecting our environment Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department can make its own contribution. Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions. The Council joined the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business. As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

3.2   Service Developments

The ongoing re-organisation of staffing profiles to match directorate demand leading to a generic skills base within the service has started to provide the authority with the support facilities required to move both the technical and non-technical developments forward over the next 3 years.

Developments associated with the replacement of the existing hardware and software infrastructure with new industry standard platform solutions creating greater opportunity for innovation and the acceptance of new technologies leading to new and improved ways of working.

Focus upon new and innovative corporate and directorate maintenance and support solutions leading to changes in working practice and support solutions.

Constant evaluation of the growing revenue implication associated with the considerable capital investment from not only the capital programme but the grant and project ICT spend profile.

Development and delivery of shared process - procedure through joint service delivered through partnership opportunities with and for neighbouring authorities.

3.3   Efficiency Improvements

Opportunities for improving efficiency and reducing revenue growth within the department have been exploited through for example, the use of both targeted outsourced support contracts and the strategic management of maintenance contracts. Additionally contractual arrangements negotiated with Microsoft direct for corporate desktop licensing have consolidated and released considerable efficiencies limiting increases with the revenue stream as a result of new directorate and corporate services.

Outsourced contracts include:

- Network Management & Design
- Security testing and strategy
- HP Server Hardware Support
- Unix Hardware Support
- SX3 Hardware Support
- Anti Virus
- Spam Filtering
- RSA Support (24/7)
- Data Storage & backup analysis
- Design services (Citrix & Exchange)
- Citrix V4.5 maintenance

3.4 **National Regional and Sub-regional Focus**

As a service ICT has been instrumental in developing not only links with other agencies and partnerships but a key facilitator in the authorities drive for the development of its customer services division and partnering agencies.

Many partnerships have been formed over the last few years through the current e-Government programmes with Neighbouring Authorities within Merseyside and Cheshire through working groups such as the North West E-Government Group, The Cheshire, Halton & Warrington Information Consortium, and currently through the Greater Merseyside Digital Development Agency.

The ICT team is a key contributory member within each of these groups as well as formal involvement within National Organisations such as SOCITM and a number of DCLG & IDEA initiatives.

3.5 **Equality and Diversity**

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur.

Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

4.0 Resources

4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

Information to follow

4.2 Human Resource Requirements

Table of staffing figures to be inserted

As an authority we must be realistic with our anticipated investment associated with ICT growth; we cannot expect current technologies or resource to fit the requirement of our business within the next 3 - 5 years. As such staff related capital and revenue considerations must be part of the future ICT planning process and for all aspects of the resource planning process. As an authority we have to expect change as well as increased costs within the technology areas. Given that growth and an increased technology requirement is a constant, we have to expect constant changes in resource profiles to match such growth.

The structure amendments are aimed at addressing aspects of current and known growth requirement by substantially reducing the number of senior and managerial posts and redeploying the revenue within additional generic technical, analytical and project resource.

Future projects expecting a high usage and delivery requirement for ICT must include costs for both the implementation and subsequent ongoing support linked to any additional requirement.

4.3 ICT Requirements

	07/08	08/09	09/10	10/11	11/12
Revenue	765	870	890	940	1000
Capital	600	600	600	1100	1100

As detailed within the table above, the profile of the corporate ICT revenue requirement is changing in line with the constant authority wide demand for technology growth and innovation.

Again with all new services and support infrastructure purchases the authority attracts further revenue as services develop over and above the current core system base. For example many if not the majority of new software applications now need complex and extensive hardware environments to operate within, link this to the additional computing requirement for internet and network connectivity as well as the growing desktop demands for mobile as well as desk based services.

Such growth is not technology for technologies sake, this growth is a result of the corporate and directorate need for efficiency and change, but with this growth and additional complexity the often-outsourced 3rd party hardware and software maintenance agreements grow at a similar rate resulting in additional and increased revenue implications.

As the authority relies upon such technology solutions the revenue implication within these areas will inevitably grow. Considerable work is undertaken in this area to negotiate and limit any unnecessary spend related to both 3rd party support and the core server/network/software infrastructure platforms.

4.4   Accommodation and Property Requirements

Opportunities will be sought, during the lifetime of this plan, to locate all ICT service teams within a single location within the municipal building.

5.0   Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

Objectives and Key Milestones.

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

National Performance Indicators.

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

Local Performance Indicators.

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

Local Area Agreement Targets.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa   final   (march 2007).pdf

5.1   Service Objectives –

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at Quarter 2 (half-year) and Quarter 4 (year-end.)

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 38	*Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council and ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.*

Service Objective: ICT O1	Constantly evaluate and improve the usability, resilience, control and flexibility of the Council's Data Communications Network Infrastructure				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Remote Access VPN Phase 2 PC **March 2010** • VM Ware Phase 2 **March 2009** • VM Ware Phase 3 **March 2010** • Citrix V3 upgrade **March 2010** • Active Directory Phase 2 **July 2009** • Quality of Service Provision Phase 2 **March 2010** • End of life PC replacement programme **March 2010** • SAN and NAS replacement Phase 2 **March 2010** • Hand held mobile data devices **March 2010** • Consolidation of AV products **June 2009** • Implement remote lockdown and PC management **June 2009** • ITIL training review **July 2009**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Active Directory Phase 3 **March 2011** • End of Life PC Replacement Phase 3 **March 2011** • VM Ware Phase 4 **March 2011** • Wide area network review/upgrade **March 2011** • Local area network evaluation **March 2011** • Wide area wireless networking **March 2011**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• End of life PC replacement Phase 4 **March 2012** • VM Ware Phase 5 **March 2012** • ITIL Training Review **March 2012**				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Infrastructure Services	**Linked Indicators**	ICTLI 10, 11
	Residual	Low				

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 38	*Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council and ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.*

Service Objective: ICT O2	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust hardware infrastructure				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	313 PC & laptop replacements **March 2010** - Virtualisation of a further 40 servers **March 2010** - Initiate Desktop virtualisation programme Phase 2 **March 2010** - Data and e-mail archiving Phase 2 **March 2010** - All PC data transferred to NAS **December 2009**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	352 PC & Laptop replacements **March 2011** - Virtualisation of a further 40 servers **March 2011** - Desktop virtualisation programme Phase 3 **March 2011**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	- PC & Laptop deployment and Review **March 2012** - Virtualisation Technology Review **March 2012** - Microsoft Infrastructure Software Review and contract review **March 2012**				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Infrastructure Services	**Linked Indicators**	ICTLI 10, 11
	Residual	Low				

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 38	*Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council and ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.*

Service Objective: ICT O3	Satisfy the business needs of the Council's Corporate and Directorate requirement by providing a scaleable and robust software platform
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	• Evaluation and pilot testing of Microsoft Vista Desktop and Server operating systems **July 2009**. • Sharepoint evaluation and limited trial **March 2010** • CSD backoffice roll out programme **March 2010** • ICT Security Strategy review **March 2010** • Code of Connection compliance review **March 2010** • Evaluate, analyse, deploy corporate and directorate process review **March 2010** • Evaluation of Office 2007 compatibility **March 2010**
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Corporate wide share point portal Phase 2 **March 2011** • Phase 3 rollout CSD **March 2011** • ICT Security Strategy review **March 2011** • Code of Connection compliance review **March 2011** • Evaluate, analyse, deploy corporate and directorate process review **March 2011**
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• ICT Security Strategy review **March 2012** • Code of Connection compliance review **March 2012** • CSD evaluation and software review **March 2012** • Evaluate, analyse, deploy corporate and directorate process review **March 2012**

Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Analysis & Development	**Linked Indicators**	ICTLI 10, 11
	Residual	Low				

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Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 38	*Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council and ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.*

Service Objective: ICT O4	The implementation of a range of new corporate wide facilities including Web services, records & document management, business process workflow, corporate desktop portal.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Directorate specific document imaging trials for ESCR/Share Point/Contact Point Phase 1 – **March 2010** • Continuing improvements and enhancements to CSD system- ongoing **March 2010** • Wider workflow implementation projects as identified by BPR process **March 2010** • Web channel implementation of CSD- **September 2009**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Continuing improvements and enhancements to CSD system- **March 2011** • Continuing workflow implementation- **March 2011** • Improvement and enhancement of all customer interfaces **March 2011** • Continued development of document management and distribution services **March 2011**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Continuing improvements and enhancements to CSD system- **March 2012** • Continuing workflow implementation- **March 2012** • Improvement and enhancement of all customer interfaces **March 2012** • Continued development of document management and distribution services **March 2011**				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Heads of Analysis and Development / Infrastructure Services	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Low				

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Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 38	*Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council and ensuring that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.*

Service Objective: ICT O5	*Improve service efficiency and improvement through the use of Business Process Re-engineering*		
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• *Deliver business transformational projects identified by the corporate BPR programme* **March 2010**		
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• *Deliver business transformational projects identified by the corporate BPR programme* **March 2011**		
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• *Deliver business transformational projects identified by the corporate BPR programme* **March 20012**		
Responsible Officer	Programme Manager Infrastructure Services	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable

Service Objective: ICT O6	**Evolve, improve and redevelop customer contact and reactive fix services, access channels and availability.**		
Key Milestone(s) 09/10)	• *Continued devolvement of service desk solution into contact centre March* **2010**. • *Improved Self Help Web Services* **March 2010**. • *Satisfaction survey* **March 2010**		
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• *Satisfaction survey* **March 2011**.		
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• *Satisfaction survey* **March 2012**.		
Responsible Officer	Programme Manager Customer Services	**Linked Indicators**	ICTLI 1, 2

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6.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref[1]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2006/07 Quartiles[2] (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Corporate Health											
ITCLI 1	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	CP6 AOF 38	99.96				99	99.82	99	99	99
ITCLI 2	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	CP6 AOF 38	99.40				99	99.62	99	99	99
Service Delivery / Quality											
ITCLI 3	% Of all calls received that were resolved at the Help Desk.	CP6 AOF 38	58				60	88.9	65	65	65
ITCLI 4	% Of all responsive repairs completed within 2 working days.	CP6	80				80	84	80	80	80
ITCLI 5	School Support SLA: % of calls responded to within agreed target*.	CP6									
	Priority 1		100				85	100	85	85	85
	Priority 2		100				90	100	90	90	90
	Priority 3		97				95	100	95	95	95
	Priority 4		100				100	100	100	100	100

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[1] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[2] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

| Ref[3] | Description | Corp. Plan Priority | Halton 2007/8 Actual | 2007/08 Quartiles[4] (All England) | | | Halton 2008/9 Target | Halton 2008/9 Actual | Halton Targets | | |
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Service Delivery / Quality cont'd											
ITCLI 6	Member Support: % of calls responded to within 1 working day.	CP6	100				95	100	95	95	95
ITCL1 7	% E-mail accounts set-up within 3 working days of receipt.	CP6	100				79	100	80	80	80
ITCL1 8	Average working days from order to completion of a new PC	CP6	15.5				10	20.9	10	10	10
ITCL1 9	Average working days from delivery to completion of a new PC	CP6	4				6	13.6	5	5	5
ITCL1 10	Average working days from order to completion of a thin client device	CP6	1.5				9	13.4	7	5	5
ITCL1 11	Average working days from delivery to completion of a thin client device	CP6 AOF 38	0.5				3	9.2	2	2	2

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[3] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[4] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

5.3   Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review.

In so doing the depart[...]articular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- ***Accurate***   For its intended purpose;

- ***Valid***   By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;

- ***Reliable***   By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;

- ***Timely***   By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;

- ***Relevant***   For the purpose intended;

- ***Complete***   In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

Such systems include, for example

6.0   Performance Report

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**

- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansand strategies

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans

Information to follow

Appendix 1

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the re Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equali access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accu advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

Policy and Performance Department

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

DRAFT RM-MF 18TH December 2008

Contents

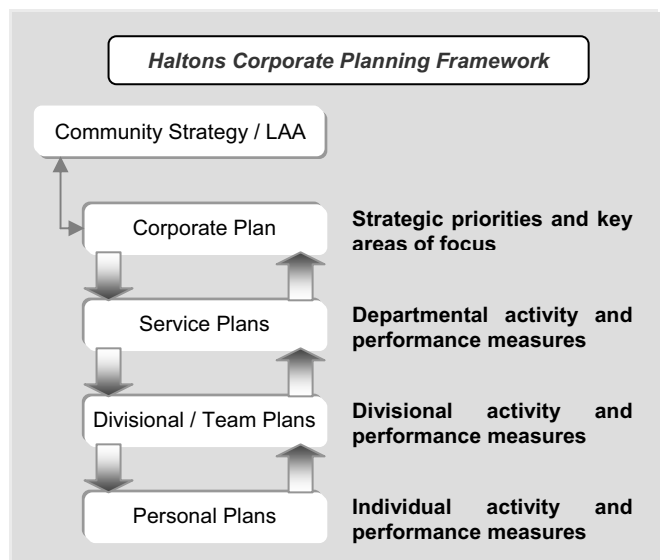|	*Page*

Appendices

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1.0   INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities**, **and a number of associated key Areas of Focus,** which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Halton's Urban Renewal**
- **Halton's Children & Young People**
- **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**
- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Haltons Corporate Planning Framework

Community Strategy / LAA	
Corporate Plan	Strategic priorities and key areas of focus
Service Plans	Departmental activity and performance measures
Divisional / Team Plans	Divisional activity and performance measures
Personal Plans	Individual activity and performance measures

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.

- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.

- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.

- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are

Strategic Priority 6:

Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery

Area of Focus 31

Working with partners and the community to ensure that our priorities, objectives and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.

Area of Focus 32

Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access to services.

Area of Focus 33

Ensuring that we are properly structured, organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information

Area of Focus 34

Attracting and managing financial resources effectively, maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence, and accountability, to our stakeholders.

2.0 SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

The Policy and Performance Department exists to provide effective support for Elected Members, Senior Officers and Management Team and all Directorates, providing community leadership and providing for the well being of those who live and work within the borough.

The service enables the formulation and review of joined-up policies by providing intelligence on current conditions and future trends and developments and by integrating policy and resource planning and performance review.

In supporting strategic leadership the service can build and support partnerships and provide a key link to central government, and its agencies, and other stakeholders that will support the Council's ambitions to make Halton a thriving and vibrant borough.

In undertaking these roles the Department

➢ Supports and enables the Council and its partners to develop and implement policies and actions, at neighbourhood, borough, sub-regional and regional levels, which focus on the current and future challenges that the borough faces and to help to achieve the long-term aspiration of Halton as a place which is vibrant and thriving.

➢ Supports and co-ordinates all aspects of service performance and improvement through corporate planning, performance monitoring and review processes to enable the Council to achieve continuous improvement in all its priority service areas.

➢ Through a mix of consultation, engagement and exchange promotes and facilitates a two-way flow of information between the Council and its stakeholders i.e. its staff, local residents, businesses voluntary organisations, and other agencies in Halton.

➢ Supports policy development and planning through the provision of statistical analysis, information and surveys and co-ordinates and develops town-twinning activities.

➢ Advises on the identification of risks to the delivery of the Council's strategies and other key objectives (Strategic Risk Management) and on all matters relating to Operational Risk Management, Business Continuity, Health and Safety, and Emergency Planning in partnership with central and regional government departments and emergency services, and provides a 24 hour emergency planning service.

➢ Promotes and co-ordinates external partnership working at sub-regional, national and European levels. It maximises external funding opportunities and manages funding programmes for which the Council is the administrative body (for example European Budget Programmes).

➢ Hosts the Halton Strategic Partnership Neighbourhood Management Team, and provides management support.

For completeness, this Service plan includes the Chief Executive's Personal Office functions and covers the support of overview and scrutiny provided by the Chief Scrutiny Officer. The Chief Executive is the principal advisor to members of the Council, and is the Head of Paid Service and the provider of overall direction and leadership for staff of the authority.

2.2   Key messages from 2008-09

The two primary areas that have impacted upon the work of the department and these relate to:

The introduction of a new National Performance Framework

During April 2008 the Audit Commission undertook an independent assessment of the Council[1] to establish how well it engages with and provides leadership to the community, delivers community priorities in partnership with others, and ensures continuous improvement across the range of Council activities.

This assessment concluded that the Council was improving well and that it demonstrated a maximum 4 star rating for overall performance. The report concluded that

'*Halton Borough Council is performing strongly in tackling the borough's significant local challenges. Visionary leadership, strong partnership working and a track record of delivering major projects has led to good outcomes for local people*'.

As a result of this, and other inspection activity during the year, there are a number of areas that have been identified which have particular significance for the department and where the opportunities to gain further improvement exist i.e.

- Further improving performance management arrangements to ensure the delivery of key objectives of the Halton Strategic Partnership.

- Improving the consistency of the Council's scrutiny arrangements.

- Developing a more consistent approach to community engagement.

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[1] The Audit Commission Corporate Assessment Report can be found at
http://www.audit-commission.gov.uk/cpa/authority.asp?CategoryID=ENGLISH^576^LOCAL-VIEW^AUTHORITIES^111063

These issues, which present an immediate priority for the department, will be taken forward through the development and implementation of Action Plans.

A number of changes have occurred during 2007 -08 that have a direct impact upon the work of the department and these largely relate to the introduction of a revised national performance framework, the principles of which were established within the 2006 Local Government white Paper ' Strong and Prosperous Communities[2]'.

This framework will see the existing Comprehensive Performance Assessment (CPA) arrangements, which largely focus upon the work of individual Councils, being replaced by a Comprehensive Area Assessment (CAA), which will focus more upon the outcomes being delivered to communities by a range of local agencies working collectively and in partnership,

The implementation of this framework began with the introduction of a new nationally prescribed National Indicator Set (NIS) from the 01st April 2008, and the negotiation, between local agencies and central government, of a new Local Area Agreement (LAA) from June 2008.

In light of these arrangements there is a need for existing performance arrangements to be reviewed to ensure that they remain fit for purpose and that the Council works effectively with all local agencies and organisations through the Halton Strategic Partnership.

The new national indicator set will involve the use of the same information within a number of different forums and to avoid the risk of duplication and overlap there is a need to review existing arrangements for the collection, sharing and presentation of information in order that it can be collected once and used numerous times. As a result the department will give priority to a review of existing processes and software applications to ensure that the Council and its partners can maximise the potential of available resources and ensure that it's performance management arrangements remain effective and efficient.

<u>Resilience</u>

Events both in the UK and abroad have emphasised the importance of being prepared to respond to both natural calamities and terrorist threats.

Flooding within the UK prompted a review of our emergency plans and the undertaking of a flood risk assessment. Such reviews, assessments and exercises to teat the robustness of arrangements will continue to be a priority for the department during the medium term.

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[2] White paper can be found at
http://www.communities.gov.uk/publications/localgovernment/strongprosperous

2.3   Organisational Structure

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                        ┌──────────────────┐
                        │  The Council and │
                        │  Chief Executive │
                        └──────────────────┘
        ┌───────────────────┬──────┴───────┬────────────────┐
┌───────────────┐  ┌───────────────┐ ┌─────────────┐ ┌──────────────┐
│ Children & Young│  │ Corporate &  │ │ Environment │ │   Health &   │
│     People      │  │    Policy    │ │             │ │  Community   │
└───────────────┘  └───────────────┘ └─────────────┘ └──────────────┘
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| Financial Services | Legal, Organisat'l Development & HR | Exchequer & Customer Services | Policy & Performance | ICT Services | Property Services |

| Best Value & Performance Management | Research & Intelligence | External Funding | Strategic Policy & Partnerships | Neighbourhood Management (externally funded) | Communication and Marketing | Risk Management & Emergency Planning |

3.0   FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1   External Factors

Political

The government is committed to providing local residents with greater opportunity to express their views on decisions affecting their area, and to be engaged in decisions about the design and delivery of local services. This means, for example, more information being available in an accessible form, more community engagement through mechanisms like participatory budgeting, and public involvement in scrutiny of public service provision.

The implications of this for the department are that we need to review our community engagement strategy, look at how we publish information about performance, and continue to develop area arrangements as a means of engaging with our more deprived communities.

Another strand of the government agenda signalled in the 2006 "Strong and Prosperous Communities" White paper is the devolution to regions and sub-regions.

This theme was developed in the Sub National Review of Economic Development and measures are included in the Local Democracy Bill etc. For Halton this means supporting the continuing development of governance arrangements for the Liverpool City Region, and engagement with the new regional processes.

Economic

The current economic recession will have a considerable impact on the Council. Income will be reduced in some areas, and demand for some services will increase. Whilst this will not directly affect Policy and Performance, there will be indirect consequences through pressure on the Council's budgets.

The recession will affect our ability to achieve our objectives and targets for Halton, and the department will be providing policy advice to the Council and the strategic partnership on reviewing local and sub-regional targets, renegotiating the Local Area Agreement (LAA) at the annual refresh, and on possible policy responses to mitigate the effects of the recession on local businesses and residents.

Continued pressure on Council budgets will require sustained and systematic efforts to identify more efficient ways of working. An Efficiency Review has commenced with partners KPMG, and the department will be supporting this work through the project office, and where appropriate through support for service reviews. The Efficiency Review will have direct implications for the future role and structure of the department since much of our work falls under the heading of non-transactional support services (e.g. communications, policy, performance management) and will be subject to review.

A number of services benefit from time limited external funding such as Neighbourhood Management (Neighbourhood Element funding expires 2010) and the Halton Strategic Partnership (Working Neighbourhoods Fund is only committed up to 2011). As government prioritises investment in the economy, it is likely that these funding streams will be affected to some extent, and planning of exit strategies is essential.

Social

One of Halton's major challenges is the gap that exists between the quality of life in different parts of the Borough. It is not yet clear how the economic recession will affect this pattern of inequality.

The department will continue to provide policy support to corporate and partnership work on reducing inequalities and improving community cohesion. Neighbourhood Management is a key tool in addressing these gaps.

Technological

As more residents have access to and make use of the internet, the Council's web-site becomes an ever more important tool, not only for communication, but for the transaction of business with our customers. The software that supports the web-site is dated and needs replacing. The upgrade will allow the site to be better managed, and make it easier to keep the information it contains up to date. The department will be implementing these changes in conjunction with a council wide network of content providers.

Not all residents benefit from easy access to, or the skills to make use of , the internet and this brings with it exclusion, not just from Council services, but from other activities. A pilot project is being established in one of the neighbourhood management areas to establish ways in which such barriers to access can be overcome.

Legislative

The government's commitment to increased participation is mentioned under "political factors" above. Recent and planned legislation include:

- Statutory guidance under the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007, including the "duty to involve".

- The Local Democracy, Economic Development and Construction Bill published December 2008

- The Community Engagement Bill, planned for 2009/10

These pieces of legislation will affect the way that Council operates, and in response the department will :

- Support the review and development of Council and partnership engagement strategy.

- Publish information about services and performance in an accessible and understandable format.

- Gather customer intelligence through for example the use of surveys and focus groups,

- Support the review of Customer Focus by the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

- Continue to develop Neighbourhood management arrangements (subject to continued funding).

The government review of the Civil Contingencies Act (2004) is likely to lead to revised legislation and guidance in 2011. The results of this in terms of the work of the department, and the monitoring arrangements that will be necessary will become clearer as we move forward.

Environmental

The Council joined the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of this Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any negative contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions. The Policy and Performance Department's main use of energy is through its occupation of office space and use of transport. It will contribute to the programme by:

- Providing policy support to developing and performance managing the delivery of the Council's strategy

- Promoting carbon management to partners through for example its engagement within Local Strategic Partnership

- Making sure that the Community strategy is based on sustainable principles

- Including a target for CO_2 reduction in Halton in the Local Area Agreement

- Through working to continue to reduce the use of paper and energy. For example an electronic version of the staff magazine "InTouch" is to be introduced for those staff who have access to IT, so reducing printing and energy consumption

- Working with colleagues in other Council departments and particularly with residents in the Neighbourhood Management Areas to identify ways of increasing recycling.

3.2 Service Developments

There have been a number of reviews and examinations of departmental activity during the preceding 12 months. Such examinations and considerations have included service reviews, consultation and benchmarking exercises as illustrated below.

a. The CPA Corporate Assessment which was undertaken by the Audit Commission in April 2008 that considered all aspects of the Councils work. The results of this review are referred to in more detail within section 2.2 of this plan.

b. As a result of this assessment and other factors new procedures have been put in place in readiness for legislative changes and to strengthen the management and outcomes of the overview and scrutiny process, for example the development of a rolling work programme and recommendation follow through.

c. The review of Performance Management arrangements by the Corporate Services Policy & Performance Board resulted in recommendations being approved by Executive Board in November 2008. The proposed changes will help to address some of the findings of the Corporate Assessment and will simplify arrangements between the Council, the LSP and our partners. Policy and Performance will be responsible for making this happen, and working arrangements will be changed to integrate partnership and Council arrangements, and introduce more flexible software.

d. A review by the Corporate Service Policy and Performance Board of the handling of customer and resident complaints was completed. Recommendations for changes to the Corporate Complaints system, which is administered by this department, about wider complaint handling and about customer care within the Council were approved by Executive Board in order to improve satisfaction with the way complaints are handled. A further piece of work is now underway to develop a customer service strategy and to use the government customer excellence standard as a benchmark against which to measure current practice.

e. The annual Audit Commission review of the Council's arrangements for securing data quality concluded that throughout the Council there was a commitment to maintaining and improving the quality of data and that all performance indicators selected for sampling were fairly stated and accurate. The Commission also made a number of recommendations as to how further improvement could be achieved and these have now been integrated into an existing work plan the delivery of which will ensure the Council has in place an organisational framework, and effective processes to further secure the quality of its data.

f. A review of Neighbourhood Management arrangements was conducted in 2008 by a Government funded Neighbourhood Renewal Advisor. The findings were considered by the Neighbourhood Management Board in July 2008 and an action plan was agreed, part of which is to develop a business case for the continuation of Neighbourhood Management arrangements after the current funding expires.

Consultation and engagement activities have included:

a. The Places Survey, which was conducted at the end of 2008. This is a perception survey conducted by all local authorities to a nationally prescribed format. It replaces the old Best Value Satisfaction Survey. There are many similarities, but the Places Survey covers other public services in Halton, and will feed into the National Indicator set.

b. A number of events took place in the Neighbourhood Management areas to engage residents in Neighbourhood Management activities, for example through clean up days. Over 200 residents have expressed interest in being involved in Neighbourhood Management Boards or acting in some other capacity.

c. A number of surveys of our Halton 2000 Residents Panel have been conducted.

During 2007/08 the regular benchmarking took place against national performance indicators, the national Best Value User Survey and Audit Commission profiles. In addition,

a. The Council joined the PWC benchmarking club for unitary and metropolitan authorities. Presentations on comparative performance were made to both Management Team and the Executive Board. Performance on the last year of Best Value Performance Indicators showed a good rate of improvement, and overall high performance compared to other unitary authorities, but a number of areas for improvement were identified. Club membership allows the Council to have a better understanding of its relative performance and to identify any specific areas where performance opportunities exist.

b. A customer service strategy has been developed following the benchmarking of best practice and a visit to a comparable authority.

c. The Halton Data Observatory has provided benchmarking nationally and locally against a variety of strategic and operational performance data. This allows the Council and other partner agencies to track present levels of progress and to map inequalities as a basis for future strategy and policy development

d. The department took part in the KPMG review which benchmarked the Council as a whole against other authorities on cost and staffing. This has provided important baseline information in preparation for the forthcoming Council wide efficiency review.

3.3 Efficiency Improvements

During 2008 - 09 the department made a number of efficiency savings primarily thorough its procurement arrangements, such as the review and renewal of the contract for the Council's staff newsletter, Inside Halton, and changes to advertising arrangements. Further evaluations of the way in which the Council procures its design and printing services, and the advertising of employment vacancies will be undertaken during the current financial year.

Savings have also been made through a review and revision of staffing arrangements within the department and such arrangements will be subject to further review as we progress through the year.

The work of the department will also be considered as part of the review of non-transactional support services as well as the organisational review of current management structures and administrative support arrangements.

3.4 National Regional and Sub-regional Focus

The changes in national policy affecting the service have been referred to elsewhere - the emphasis on localities through the LSP and LAA; the new performance framework; and the duty to involve have had direct implications for policy and partnership working. As mentioned above, a review of performance management has sought to reduce duplication across the Council and partnership systems and introduce more consistency.

The sub-national review of economic development has emphasised the importance of the city region, and the external funding division has co-ordinated the Council's response through the Halton in the Region members and officers groups. The development of the Liverpool City Region MAA (Multi Area Agreement) has required sub-regional co-ordination, and it is important that it is consistent with our own LAA. The implications for the Policy and Performance department are that we need to develop closer working between sub-regional and local policy development and performance management.

Whilst Halton is statutorily part of the Cheshire, Halton and Warrington Local Resilience Forum (LRF) for emergency planning purposes, greater involvement and co-operation took place with the Merseyside LRF in 2008 to build cross-border resilience. This included the Chief Executive and Leader attending a joint training event with their opposite numbers in Merseyside. This co-operation will continue through the service plan period.

A further change in the region has been the re-organisation of Local Government in Cheshire. An immediate consequence of this is that the Emergency Planning consortium which Halton B.C. manages on behalf of the 6 Cheshire Districts will cease 31st March 2009. Although this will free up some management time it will be more than offset by the loss of additional capacity the extra staff provided.

3.5 Equality and Diversity

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

The department has provided policy support to the development of corporate policies and procedures, and has supported the development of a partnership equalities group to ensure that a consistent approach is taken by our partners. This remit has now extended to community cohesion, and some specific work has taken place with Riverside College and Council services to assist the integration of Libyan students.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown.

The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur.

Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

4.0   Resources

4.1   Budget Summary and Service Costs

4.2   Human Resource Requirements

The following table details the departmental staffing levels for the period 2008 to 2012

Staffing levels	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
Operational Director	1	1	1	1
Chief Executives Personal Office	3	3	3	3
Best Value & Performance Management	7.6	7.6	7.6	7.6
Communications & Marketing	8.5	8.5	8.5	8.5
Research & Intelligence	6.5	6.5	6.5	6.5
Risk Management & Emergency Planning	10[3]	7	7	7
Strategic Policy & Partnerships	7.3	6.5	6.5	6.5
External Funding[4]	13	13	13	13
Neighbourhood Management[5]	5	5	5	5
Chief Scrutiny Advisor[6]	1	1	1	1
Total	62.9	59.1	59.1	59.1

At the time of writing there are no indications that the human resource requirements of the Department will be subject to any significant change during the plan period to 2012. This will of course be subject to the Efficiency Review.

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[3] Includes 3 posts that are hosted on behalf of Cheshire Consortium ending 31 March 2009

[4] Includes 2 vacant posts that will not be filled unless sustainable external funding can be generated to substitute for ERDF and SRB administration fees.

[5] The neighbourhood management team is externally funded by LAA Grant Neighbourhood Element up to March 2010, and are on fixed term contracts related to the duration of the grant. Continuation for 20010-12 is subject to identification of further funding.

[6] The Chief Scrutiny Advisor forms part of the Director of Corporate and Policy's office

4.3 ICT Requirements

A review of performance management arrangements in 2008 highlighted the need for improved software. Procurement of a suitable software solution will take place in 2008/09 for implementation in 2009/10

The software that manages the content of the Council's website is no longer supported by the supplier because of its age. An upgrade is to be implemented which will make it easier for content managers to keep the site up to date, and will provide a greater degree of management control over the process.

4.4 Accommodation and Property Requirements

It is not anticipated at the time of writing the plan that the accommodation needs of the department will change over the medium term.

5.0 Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

Objectives and Key Milestones.

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

National Performance Indicators.

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

Local Performance Indicators.

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

Local Area Agreement Targets.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa final (march 2007).pdf

5.1   Service Objectives –

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at Quarter 2 (half-year) and Quarter 4 (year-end.)

Corporate Priority 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area of Focus: 31	*Working with partners and the community to ensure that our priorities, objectives and targets are evidence base regularly monitored and reviewed and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halto and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.*

Service Objective: PPO1	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.
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans **June 2009[1].** • Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners and agree refres government office **March 2010[1]** • Review Halton Data Observatory and partnership data arrangements, and upgrade **March 2010[1]** • Complete mid-term review of Sustainable Community Strategy and adopt **June 2009[1]** • Complete mid-term review of Corporate Plan and adopt **December 2009[1]** • Complete design of and undertake survey of Consulting Halton Communities - **November 2009** • Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences - **March 2010**.
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans **June 2010[1]** • Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners and agree refresh w government office **March 2011[1]** • Following consultation and engagement, adopt new Sustainable Community strategy and new Corporate plan the period April 2011 on wards. **March 2011[1]** • Negotiate new Local Area Agreement 2011-2014 **March 2011[1]** • Agree local questions for Places Survey 2010 and commission it **September 2010[1]** • HSPB to agree exit strategy for end of WNF funding. **Sept 2010[1]** • Complete design of and undertake Place Surveys - **December 2010** • Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences - **March 2010**

Corporate Priority 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area of Focus: 31	*Working with partners and the community to ensure that our priorities, objectives and targets are evidence base regularly monitored and reviewed and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halto and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.*

Service Objective: PP01 cont'd	Improve the effectiveness of the support, intelligence and advice provided by the Council and its partners to revi policy, resource planning, service delivery and performance.
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	- Monitor performance against Community Strategy targets and review delivery plans **June 2011**[1] - Monitor and review progress in delivering Local Area Agreement targets with partners **March 2012**[1] - Complete design of and undertake survey of Consulting Halton Communities - **November 2011** - Analyse, evaluate and disseminate results to relevant audiences - **March 2012**.

Risk Assessment	Initial		Responsible Officer	Operational Director[1] / Head of Research & Intelligence	Linked Indicators	
	Residual					

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area of Focus: 32	*Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delive of services and ensuring equality of access.*

Service Objective: PPO2	Improve the quality and effectiveness of the Council's external communications				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Implement new website content management system and migrate content **May 2009** • Review key messages **April 2009** • Carry out internal communications survey **April 2009** • Update Communications Guide; Media Guide; Style Guidelines **October 2009** • Evaluate Advertising contract **September 2009** • Review arrangements for communicating in a crisis **June 2009**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Review new arrangements for design and print procurement **September 2010** • Update communications strategy and supporting action plans • Review InTouch contract with option to extend **December 2010** • Review Inside Halton contract **December 2010** • Issue new A-Z guide to services **August 2010**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Retender InTouch contract **December 2011**				
Risk Assessment	Initial		**Responsible Officer**	Communications Manager	**Linked Indicators**
	Residual				

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area of Focus: 32	*Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delive of services and ensuring equality of access.*

Service Objective: PPO3	Address inequalities and improve opportunities by narrowing the gap between the most deprived wards in the borou and the rest through the delivery of Neighbourhood Management Arrangements.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Produce NM update quarterly. • Complete residents Survey and undertake analysis – February 2010. • Complete and submit Business Case for NM funding beyond April 2010 – September 2009					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Not applicable[7]					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Not applicable					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Director of Neighbourhood Management	**Linked Indicators**	
	Residual	Low				

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[7] Future milestones beyond April 2010 can only be determined once future funding arrangements have been finalised.

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area of Focus: 33	*Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.*

Service Objective: PP04	To ensure that the organisation remains fit for purpose through the ongoing development of Business Continuity, Risk Management, and Health and Safety arrangements.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Implement existing Action Plan and further review arrangements for business continuity in Directorates - **December 2009**. • Review the embededness of strategic risk management arrangements - **December 2009** • Corporate Risk Group to Review Corporate & Directorate Risk Registers, provide appropriate performance monitoring reports and deliver manager and member training by **December 2009**. • Secure external accreditation for Health & Safety - **March 2010**. • Review the Council's preparedness for pandemic flu and have appropriate plans in place - **March 2010**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Continued reviews of the provision of these services against any proposed changes in Council structures an government guidance				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Not applicable				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Risk Management	**Linked Indicators**
	Residual	Medium			

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Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area of Focus: 33	*Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.*

Service Objective: PP05	Improve the effectiveness of the overview and scrutiny framework for the Council to deliver efficient, effective and high quality services through a programme of continuous improvement.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Develop a functioning overview and scrutiny gateway and web area - **July 2009**. • Integrate relevant legislation and guidance into Halton's overview and scrutiny framework - **October 2008**. • Agree 2009 – 10 Policy & Performance Board Work Programmes - **June 2009.**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Review overview and scrutiny arrangements and where appropriate make recommendations for improvement **October 2010.** • Agree 2010 – 11 Policy & Performance Board Work Programmes - **June 2010**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Carry out assessment of O & S impact on decision making processes - **November 2011.** • Agree 2011 – 12 Policy & Performance Board Work Programmes - **June 2011**				
Risk Assessment	Initial		**Responsible Officer**	Head of Overview and Scrutiny	**Linked Indicators**	
	Residual					

6.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref[8]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles[9] (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Corporate Health											
NI 1	% Of people who believe that people from different backgrounds get on well together	CP 6 AOF 32	77 BVUS[10]	84 BVUS	80 BVUS	76 BVUS		TBA (Places Survey)	N/A No survey	TBA	N/A No survey
NI 2	% Of people who feel that they belong to their neighbourhood.	CP 6 AOF 32	N/A					TBA (Places Survey)	" " "	" " "	" " "
NI 4	% Of people who feel that they can influence decisions in their locality.	CP 6 AOF 32	34 BVUS	29 BVUS	26 BVUS	23 BVUS		TBA (Places Survey)	" " "	" " "	" "
NI 5	Overall / general satisfaction with local area.	CP 6 AOF 32	66 BVUS	82 BVUS	76 BVUS	69 BVUS		TBA (Places Survey)	" " "	" " "	" "
NI 37	Awareness of civil protection arrangements in the local area	CP 6 AOF 33	New PI for 2008					TBA (Places Survey)	" " "	" " "	" " "
PPLI 1	% Of LAA WNF Spend (%)	CP6 AOF 34	100				100		100	100	100
PPLI 2	% Of neighbourhood element funding committed / spent	" " "	100				100	TBA	100	100	100
PPLI 3	% Of Departments with up to date Business Continuity Plans	CP 6 AOF 33	100				100	TBA	100	100	100

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[8] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[9] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators
[10] BVUS = 2006 Best Value user Survey

Ref	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12

Corporate Health cont'd

Ref	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual				Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	09/10	10/11	11/12
PPLI 4	% Of Departments with up to date Risk Registers	CP 6 AOF 33	100				100	TBA	100	100	
PPLI 5	Number of accidents resulting in injuries to staff	CP 6 AOF 40	38				50	TBA	45	41	35
PPLI 6	% Of employees attending emergency planning training exercises.	" " "	100				100	TBA	100	100	
PPLI 7	% Of invoices paid within 30 days	CP 6 AOF 33	93				94	TBA	95	96	97
PPLI 8	Number of Team Brief feedback forms returned – average per month		12				15	TBA	25	35	50

Cost and Efficiency

Ref	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual				Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	09/10	10/11	11/12
PPLI 9	% Of departmental working days lost due to sickness absence.	CP 6 AOF 40	4.5				4.0	TBA	4.0	3.8	3.5

Ref[11]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles[12] (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2007/8 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12

Fair Access

Ref[11]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	Top	Middle	Bottom	Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2007/8 Actual	09/10	10/11	11/12
PPLI 10	The duty to report Race Equality (Does the authority have a Race Equality scheme in place (%))	CP 6 AOF 32	84	84	79	63	84				
NI 140	Fair treatment by local services	" " "	N/A				N/A	TBA (Places Survey)	N/A No survey		N/A No survey

Quality

Ref[11]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	Top	Middle	Bottom	Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2007/8 Actual	09/10	10/11	11/12
PPLI 11	Overall satisfaction with the communications of the Council (%)	CP 6 AOF 32	48 (2006)				N/A	TBA	N/A No survey	55	N/A No sur
PPLI 12	Satisfaction with internal communications of the Council (%)	" " "	71.9				75	TBA	78	78	80
PPLI 13	% of people satisfied or more than satisfied with visit to Council website www.halton.gov.uk		82				85	TBA	90	93	95
PPLI 14	Satisfaction with InTouch magazine		81.6				85	TBA	87	90	90
PPLI 15	Satisfaction with Inside Halton magazine		New for 2009				N/A	TBA	80	85	85

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[11] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[12] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

| Ref[13] | Description | Corp. Plan Priority | Halton 2007/8 Actual | 2007/08 Quartiles[14] (All England) | | | Halton 2008/9 Target | Halton 2008/9 Actual | Halton Targets | | |
| | | | | Top | Middle | Bottom | | | 09/10 | 10/11 | |

Quality cont'd

Ref[13]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	Top	Middle	Bottom	Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	09/10	10/11	
PPLI 16	% of residents in Halton's NM pilot areas reporting an increase in satisfaction with their neighbourhoods.	" " "	47 Telephone survey				N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years		50	N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years	N/A
PPLI 17	% of NM pilot area residents who feel that they can influence decisions affecting their local area	" " "	32.9 Telephone Survey				N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years		40	N/A Survey undertaken every 2 years	
PPLI 18	% of residents in NM pilot areas engaged in Neighbourhood Partnership activity.	" " "	New for 07/ 08				Baseline established		Baseline +10%		N

Service Delivery

| PPLI 19 | Value of external funding bids supported (£000's) | CP 6 AOF 34 | 1722 | | | | 1000 | TBA | 1000 | 1000 | 1000 |
| PPLI 20 | % of milestones and objectives within annual Neighbourhood Management Action Plan achieved. | " " " | 76 | | | | 80 | | 85 | N/A | N/A |

[13] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[14] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

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5.3 Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review. In so doing the department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- *Accurate*   For its intended purpose;

- *Valid*   By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;

- *Reliable*   By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;

- *Timely*   By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;

- *Relevant*   For the purpose intended;

- *Complete*   In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

In supporting the delivery of the Council's data quality arrangements the department has taken a lead role in establishing the Council's Data Quality Lead Officer Group. This group, which has representation from each of the Council's Directorates, supports the Council's Data Quality Primary Officer (Strategic Director, Corporate & Policy) in the delivery and implementation of agreed actions to further secure and improve the Councils data quality management arrangements.

Additionally the department has established a system whereby responsibility for the calculation national performance indicators is attributable to named officers and can be validated. It has been necessary to refine these arrangements in light of the introduction of the new performance framework and further work will be undertaken during 2009 – 10 to extend this assurance beyond the nationally reported indicator set.

6.0 Performance Reporting

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**

- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansand strategies

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

Property Services Department

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

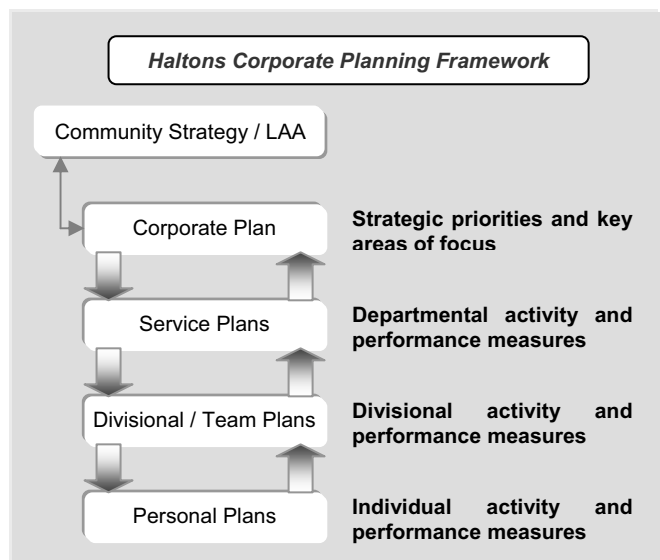**Draft JH-MF 18TH DEC 2008**

Contents

1.0   INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities**, **and a number of associated key Areas of Focus,** which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**

- **Halton's Urban Renewal**

- **Halton's Children & Young People**

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

- **A Safer Halton**

- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Haltons Corporate Planning Framework

Community Strategy / LAA

Corporate Plan — **Strategic priorities and key areas of focus**

Service Plans — **Departmental activity and performance measures**

Divisional / Team Plans — **Divisional activity and performance measures**

Personal Plans — **Individual activity and performance measures**

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.

- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.

- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.

- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are

Strategic Priority 6

Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery

Area of Focus 36

Ensuring that the Council's portfolio of land and property are managed effectively.

Area of Focus 37

Ensuring that the council's buildings are safe, accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation and comply with legislative requirements.

2.0 **SERVICE PROFILE**

2.1 **Purpose**

Property Services exists to provide corporate support to all areas of the Council in relation to the management, maintenance and development of the Council's property portfolio and regeneration schemes. The Department comprises the following teams: -

Operations.

Manages and implements capital projects, repairs and maintenance and facilities management.

Strategic Asset Management.

Forward planning for acquisitions and disposals, budgeting and financing property and property related services, estate management of all properties, including management of the Council's Investment portfolio and Retail Markets.

In exercising its functions Property Services acts as a Corporate Landlord by providing, maintaining and managing the Council's accommodation including: -

- Provision of a safe and efficient working environment for all employees.

- Provision of Depots for Neighbourhood Services

- Provision of Other Council buildings e.g. for Leisure, Culture and Social services.

- Provision of all property related services to schools that have 'opted in'.

- Policing standards for those schools that have 'opted out'.

- Managing Major work programmes on Corporate Property for both Capital and Maintenance Programmes

- Management of Widnes and Runcorn markets.

- Managing a sizeable investment portfolio.

In addition to these landlord functions the Property Services Department also plays a significant supporting role in: -

- Raising capital via property rationalisation and disposal to balance the Council's capital programme.

- Regeneration projects including the regeneration and redevelopment of the Widnes, Runcorn and Halton Lea town centres.

- Acting as a Building Consultancy for the delivery of the Council's Capital Works and Maintenance programmes.

- Carrying out the Landlord function to the Corporate, Educational and Non-Operational Estate.

- Acting as Property Consultant to all our users.

- Providing Professional support to other areas of the Council's operations including the Economic Development Zone, Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park, New Mersey Crossing, Castlefields and other regeneration working parties and projects.

The activities and functions of the Property Service Department underpin every aspect of the Council's work by ensuring that its land, buildings and property portfolio are managed effectively. This in turn facilitates the delivery of front-line services that benefit those who live, work, and visit the Borough.

2.2   Key Messages

Energy Use.

Rising energy prices will have a major impact on our budgets over the next few years. Our existing fixed priced contracts are coming to an end and the new contracts will see large price increases. We are predicting total expenditure on gas, electric and oil within our corporate stock of buildings to be in the region of £1.77m in 2009/10, up approximately £650k on the current anticipated spend in 2008/09, which itself is approximately £120k higher than anticipated at the outset of 2008/09.

The overall impact of the rise in energy prices will see the total spend on gas, electric and oil within all our buildings inclusive of schools increase to approximately £4.031m in 2009/10, with the total spend on energy inclusive of street lighting being in the order of £5.33m.

In order to mitigate the impact of such rises as far as possible the authority has developed and implemented an Energy Policy to introduce measures that will reduce energy consumption across the authority's estate. Energy efficiency is now an integral part of all capital and maintenance projects, as such energy consumption is being reduced wherever possible. There are many recent examples where energy efficiency measures have been incorporated into schemes, which will have the effect of reducing consumption, the newly refurbished Town Hall being a good example.

Property Services are also heavily involved in the authorities carbon management programme and in respect of this we are utilising the 'invest to save' fund in order to introduce further energy saving technology into our premises. The introduction of voltage optimisation equipment (powerperfectors) into a number of our premises being a good example of this, these should generate a 10% reduction in electric consumption within these buildings, the first unit having already been installed in Kingsway Learning Centre.

Building Schools for the Future

The authority is in wave 6 of the Building Schools for the Future initiative (BSF), and will be submitting the SFC2 and OBC prior to the start of 2009/10. The BSF programme is worth £100m+ and due to it's size is being managed through a programme board and core delivery team which sits outside of Property Services as such at present we have a limited involvement with the process other than having a presence on the technical work-stream and programme board.

Primary Capital Programme

Indicative funding for the primary capital programme (PCP) amounts to £3m for 2009/10 and £5.3m for 2010/11, this is subject to confirmation that the 'Strategy for Change' document submitted in April is approved however. It is proposed that a significant proportion of these monies will be added to the BSF pot to facilitate the primary element of the proposed Grange all through school. In addition to this however it is proposed to upgrade two other primary schools within the borough during this first phase of works, one community and one diocese school. Whilst the longer term method of procurement for the PCP has yet to be decided, Property Services are progressing with the works to the first community school In the programme.

The impact of the PCP cannot be fully assessed until the longer term procurement method has been determined. Property Services have the resources to manage the programme however and are ideally placed to carry out the work.

Procurement

Partnering is a form of procurement that the authority has approved in principle. This approach has been explored on a number of recent projects by bringing contractors on board at an early stage, and in a recent report from Internal Audit they commented that this approach was innovative and provided a number of benefits. These included how the contractor becomes part of the design team facilitating a partnering approach throughout, and how the cost is developed using an open book methodology which aims to provide greater cost certainty and helps to establish cost saving strategies for the project.

Whilst we would like to develop a partnering framework for delivery of projects within the borough the anticipated workload is such that this is not possible in isolation. We are exploring the possibility however of joining with other North West authorities through an NWIEP initiative which is looking at developing regional wide frameworks for the delivery of construction projects. This is in its early stages at present but could provide a good opportunity for the delivery of projects within Halton.
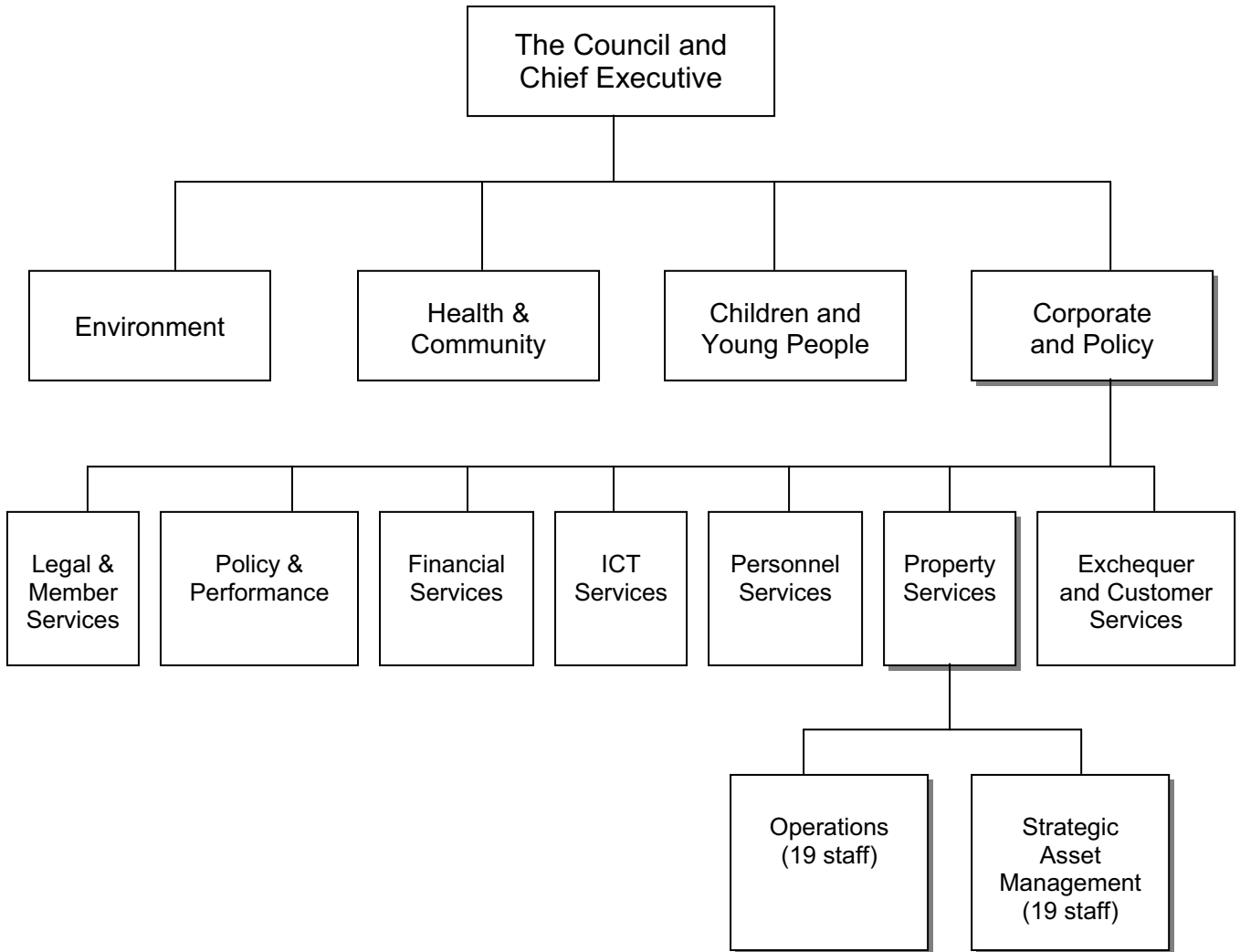
Repairs and Maintenance

The current level of required maintenance work on corporate buildings is circa £3.5m this has reduced from the previous year mainly as a result of the capital expenditure on Runcorn Town Hall. The actual current level of revenue budget available for repairs and maintenance will have little impact on reducing the figure further, and if the monies available are reduced due to financial consists there will be a detrimental affect on the estate whereby the level of required works will start to increase.

Disability Discrimination Act Works

The authority's buildings continue to be upgraded in line with Disability Discrimination Act requirements. However given the extent of the works that are required and the resources at the department's disposal this is a programme that will need to continue both throughout, and beyond the life of this plan.

2.3   Organisation Structure

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                    ┌──────────────────────┐
                    │   The Council and    │
                    │   Chief Executive    │
                    └──────────────────────┘
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Environment	Health & Community	Children and Young People	Corporate and Policy

Legal & Member Services	Policy & Performance	Financial Services	ICT Services	Personnel Services	Property Services	Exchequer and Customer Services

Operations (19 staff)	Strategic Asset Management (19 staff)

3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1 External Factors

The table below identifies those external factors that will, or are likely to, impact upon the service during the period of this plan.

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comments
Political (Local)		
1. Restructuring / business focus / partnerships	2009 – 12	Impact upon property requirements as yet unknown.
2. Home-working	2009 – 12	Impact upon property requirements as yet unknown.
3. New Mersey Crossing	2009 – 12	Resource implications for site assembly
4. Widnes Waterfront	2009 – 12	Resource implications for land acquisition and development site disposal.
5. Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Terminal	2009 - 12	Resource implications to deal with infrastructure delivery and development opportunities.
6. Castlefields Regeneration	2009 – 12	Resource implications of dealing with the various partnerships and land transactions
7. Building Schools for the Future	2009 -12	Procurement method will impact on workload and resources required
8. Schools Primary Capital Programme	2009-12	Procurement method will impact on workload and resources required
Economic		
9 Budget pressures / Efficiency Review	2009 – 12	Expectation by Govt for all authorities to make continued efficiency savings throughout 2008/11.
8. Move to whole of Government Accounts	2009 - 12	Depreciation of property values to be included in accounts as a cost to the Authority. This will have a significant effect on the need to deal with maintenance issues as they add to the depreciation.
9. Available land for disposal	2009 – 12	The quantum of available land and its value is diminishing
Social		
10. 24/7 access to services	2009 - 12	Impact upon accessibility and security of Council buildings outside of normal office hours
Technological		
11. Development of thin client	2009 –12	Staff training issues and the operational implications of a central information file on the server
12. Asset Management software	2009 - 12	Need to provide and implement software to meet needs of service and CPA

Protecting Our Environment

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A climate change strategy has now been produced outlining how the authority intends to address some of issues contributing to climate change.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to this strategy and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Authority joined The Carbon Trusts Carbon Management Programme. The programme aims to guide authorities through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan which aims to reduce energy consumption and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

3.2 **Service Review and Developments**

Over the past 12 months we have utilised the frameworks available through OGC Buying Solutions in order to procure consultant services, this has proved successful and the intention is to continue to procure services via this method.

The P2 web based Property Management System has been further developed over the past 12 months giving greater benefits to users in terms of both quantity and quality of information in the support of it's day to day running of the business and contribution to the effective management of assets. Further developments are taking place in respect of other aspects of the departments operations including document management and modules relating to Mapinfo and the management of legionella and asbestos arrangements.

Additionally work has also been undertaken with the Association of Chief Estate Surveyors in Local Government to provide comparable data that can be used for the purpose of local and national benchmarking. ???

A minor reorganisation has taken place within the past 12 months in Property Services which has seen the office support function integrated into both Operations and Strategic Asset Management. The integration has taken place in order that these support functions can be more closely aligned with the two individual teams.

3.3 Efficiency Improvements

Over the past few years we have reviewed the way some of our workload is managed and procured. We have now brought the management of a number of elements of work, particularly repair and maintenance based work back in-house, which continues to generate savings by reducing our expenditure on consultant's fees.

Last year we reorganised the way the caretaking service is delivered generating a saving in the order of £16,000, we intend to further rationalise the service this year which will generate an additional £15,000 worth of savings.

We are also going to be re-tendering a number of a term contracts over the next 12 months and it is envisaged that savings will be generated by this exercise the extent of these cannot be confirmed at this stage however.

Two members of the operational staff left us this year which gave us the opportunity to carry out a minor reorganisation within the operational team, the result of which was the downsizing of the team by one post which will generate ongoing revenue savings of £13,000 per annum.

We will be renewing our security contract within the next 12 months and it is anticipated that via some minor rationalisation of security at Rutland House/ Halton Lea we will be able to achieve revenue savings in the order of £10,000.

Two of the posts within the strategic asset management team that were filled with agency staff have now been filled with permanent staff members which will save in the order of £30,000 per year.

Strategy have also made a temporary appointment to address the backlog of work and increase potential income, this work had being going out to consultants and a saving of circa £40,000 per annum is envisaged due to this.

3.4 National, Regional & Sub-Regional Focus

The revised CPA's Financial Management requirements within the Use of Resources Key Line of Enquiry will have a very significant effect on the way Assets are managed in future. The main property issues emerging are as follows:

- Adequate provision will have to be made for repairs and maintenance.

- Investment and disposal decisions will have to be based on option appraisal and whole life costing.

- Depreciation to be included in the budgets.

- The need to show a strategy and funding for reducing the backlog of repairs and maintenance.

- The ability to show interest gained by investing the proceeds of capital disposals as an efficiency gain. Versus the loss of revenue if the asset was an investment property gaining revenue.

3.5 Equality and Diversity

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown.

The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4 5 – 10 11 – 16	LOW MEDIUM HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7   Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur.

Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

4.0 RESOURCES

4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

4.2 Future Staffing Requirements

During the course of 2008 / 09 there were a considerable number of changes within the strategic asset management division. Previously unfilled posts have been filled, only one part time member of staff now being agency based. This has helped impact of the backlog of work and potential income, both of which have improved and will continue to that we are better placed to give support to Major Projects on some of the larger projects such as Widnes Waterfront, 3MG and the Mersey Gateway.

As previously mentioned two members of staff have left the operational team over the past 12 months which gave us the opportunity to carry out a minor reorganisation the result of which being that one post was deleted. Recruiting for the one vacant post however has proved difficult and at present this remains vacant. This will soon start to impact of the delivery of the service and the use of agency staff may be required in the near future.

The staffing levels for this and the preceding year are detailed within the table below.

Year	Operations	Office Support	Strategic Asset Management	Total
2008/09	14	6	17	37
2009/10	**19**	**0**	**19**	**38**

4.3 Future ICT Requirements

Currently all work stations need, and have, PCs. Both the hardware and software is of varying age and capacity. Both elements need continuous upgrading in an efficient manner to meet changing circumstances and improvements in technology. Current levels of budgetary provision will deal with these issues through time; however it will inevitably add pressure to the already stretched resources of IT Services.

4.4 Future Accommodation/Property Requirements

The Council occupy 2 premises where the leases expire within the timescales of this service plan as such we will need to develop a strategy for dealing with the implications of this. The premises in question are Grosvenor House where we currently have circa 350 staff located and Midwood House where we have approximately 70 staff located. The leases expire in August 2012 and January 2013 respectively.

5.0   Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

Objectives and Key Milestones.

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

National Performance Indicators.

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

Local Performance Indicators.

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

Local Area Agreement Targets.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa_final_ (march 2007).pdf

5.1 Service Objectives

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 36	*Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed effectively*

Service Objective: PS O1	Review of Property Assets for potential disposal					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	• Annual review to produce disposal programme complete **March 2010**					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	• Annual review to produce disposal programme complete **March 2011**					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	▪ Annual review to produce disposal programme complete **March 2012**					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Strategic Asset Management	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Medium				

Service Objective: PS O2	Reduce backlog of maintenance on property portfolio (currently £3.5m)					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	▪ £3.4Million					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	▪ £3.3Million					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	▪ £3.2Million					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Operations	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Medium				

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 36	**Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed effectively**

Service Objective: PS O3	Review Value of Property Assets for Councils accounts (20%)		
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	▪ Annual Review of Value complete **March 2010**		
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	▪ Annual Review of Value complete **March 2011**		
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	▪ Annual Review of Value complete **March 2012**		
Responsible Officer	Head of Strategic Asset Management	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 37	*Ensuring that the council's buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements.*

Service Objective: PS O4	Fulfil requirements of Asbestos Audits and Management Regulations					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	▪ Confirm 100% compliance					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	▪ Confirm 100% compliance					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	▪ Confirm 100% compliance					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Strategic Asset Management	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Low				

Service Objective: PS O5	DDA Works Corporate (Non Schools) subject to funding (currently £200k per annum)					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	▪ Complete ?% of Priority 2 works by **March 2010**					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	▪ Complete ?% of Priority 2 works by **March 2011**					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	▪ Complete ?% of Priority 2 works by **March 2012**					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Head of Operations	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Medium				

5.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators)

Ref[1]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles[2] (All England)			Halton 2008/09 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Corporate											
PYSLI 1	% Of undisputed invoices paid within 30 days	CP 6 AOF 33	100				100	TBA	100	100	100
Cost and Efficiency											
PYSLI 2	% Cost Performance on projects over £50k (Contract Let to Practical Completion within 5% of the allotted cost – excluding Client changes)	CP 6 AOF 34	81				90	TBA	90	90	90
PYSLI 3	Occupancy of Industrial Units	N/A	83				80	TBA	80	85	90
PYSLI 4	% Of rent collected as % of rent due (Excluding bankruptcies and the like)	CP 6 AOF 34	92				95	TBA	95	95	95
PYSLI 5	Occupancy of Market (Widnes) %	" " " "	86				85	TBA	85	85	85
PYSLI 6	% Of rent collected as % of rent due	" " " "	98				95	TBA	95	95	95
PYSLI 7	Occupancy of Market (Runcorn) %	" " " "	50				55	TBA	60	65	70
PYSLI 8	% Of rent collected as % of rent due	" " " "	89				95	TBA	95	95	95

[1] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[2] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref[3]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles[4] (All England)			Halton 2008/09 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Fair Access											
PYSLI 9	The percentage of Authority buildings open to the public in which all public areas are suitable for and accessible to disabled people	CP 6 AOF 32	61				65	TBA	70	75	80
Service Delivery											
PYS LI 10	Time performance on projects over £ 50 K (Contract let to practical completion within a margin of 5% - excluding Client changes)	CP 6 AOF 34	63				90	TBA	90	90	90

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[3] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[4] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

5.3 Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review.

In so doing the department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- *Accurate*   For its intended purpose;

- *Valid*   By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;

- *Reliable*   By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;

- *Timely*   By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;

- *Relevant*   For the purpose intended;

- *Complete*   In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

Such systems include, for example

6.0 Performance Reporting

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**

- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansand strategies

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0   STATUTORY & NON-STATUTORY PLANS

The following plans and strategy documents are relevant to this service plan:

Community Strategy

Halton BVPP 2006/07

Accommodation Strategy

Asset Management Plan

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton	

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal	

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the re Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of acce
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advi and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

Stadium & Hospitality

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

Draft: November, 2008

Contents

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Appendices

1. Equality Impact Assessments – High priority actions

2. Corporate Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

1.0   INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities, and a number of associated key Areas of Focus,** which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**

- **Halton's Urban Renewal**

- **Halton's Children & Young People**

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

- **A Safer Halton**

- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated below.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.

- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.

- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.

- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and those Areas of Focus that have been most significant in the development of this plan are detailed below: -

Strategic Priority 1:

A Healthy Halton

Area of Focus (1)

Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.

Area of Focus (2)

Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.

Area of Focus (6)

Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.

Area of Focus (7)

Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Strategic Priority 6:

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

Area of Focus (34)

Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders

2.0 SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

The Stadium & Hospitality Division sits within the Environment Directorate and the Head of Service reports directly to the Executive Director for the Environment.

The Stadium & Hospitality Division has responsibility for managing the Halton Stadium and provides the Borough's schools with a flexible value for money service, together with a bespoke Civic Catering Service that is responsive to the needs of the Mayorality.

The Catering Service offers: -

- The provision of a comprehensive catering service to schools that ensure all Central Government guidelines on healthy eating are being adhered to

- A dedicated management support service that is responsive to the requirements of each school/building

- Professional and technical advice on all catering issues, including design and concept issues

- Full catering facilities at two staff restaurants and three coffee shops.

- On-site catering facilities for working lunches, buffets, committee teas etc.

The Halton Stadium

The Halton Stadium is Halton Borough Council's flagship sporting, health and fitness facility. It is a major cultural asset of the Borough, providing a first class venue for multiple sports and leisure provision, it also has successful and well-developed commercial activities and significant community links to various community and sporting groups.

Both service areas, Catering and the Stadium operate to a detailed Business Plan and for the Stadium a comprehensive three-year Marketing and Public Relations plan has also been developed.

2.2 Key Messages

SCHOOL CATERING

- *Nutritional Guidelines/Healthier Food for Schools and The School Food Trust* – continues to drive provision of food in schools, Although the latest guidelines came in to force in September 2008, Halton has for a number of years adopted similar guidelines and had seen a gradual decline in meal numbers, however, this year has seen a dramatic turnaround in meal uptake. Healthy eating contributes significantly to the being healthy

national outcome for children and provides the confidence, skills, knowledge and understanding to make healthy food choice.

- More active marketing and promotions to both pupils and parents is also having a positive effect on meal numbers, particularly the termly distribution of daily menus sent home to Parents/Guardians.

- A number of secondary schools have introduced a "split lunch" which has reduced queuing time, increased availability of seating, improved ambience and increased chance of peer group interaction. Three secondary schools now operate this system.

- The recent introduction (Jan 08) of a new system for registering for Free Meals, has increased the number of pupils registered by over 1,800, which has resulted in an additional 500+ meals being served each day. The challenge for the service is to now increase the actual uptake figure still further.

- The service is now operating with core staff only and until/unless a rationalisation of surplus pupil places is undertaken then this service will suffer from operating under capacity.
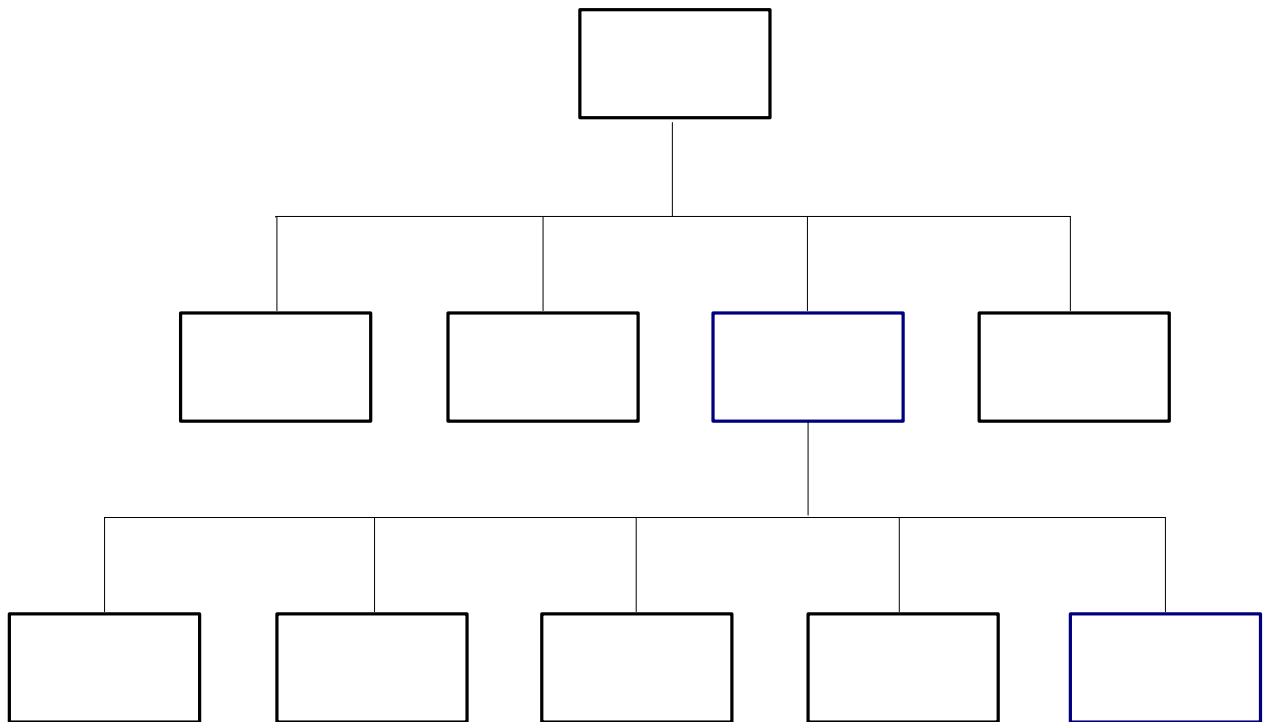
CIVIC CATERING

- The Civic Catering service is still regarded as the exemplar of good practice with surrounding Authorities and this is supported by a number of letters endorsing the quality of service from visiting Civic Dignitaries.

- Following the return of staff to Runcorn Town Hall, a trolley round has been introduced offering hot and cold food, delivered to the work place. This service has been well received and is a more cost-effective alternative than the previous staff restaurant. Further development of this service is planned following consultation with staff.

THE STADIUM

- Due to the failure of our main tenant, the Widnes Vikings, to regain Super League status, following the recent licence application, additional pressure continues to be put on the other commercial activities within the Stadium. It is unlikely that the Vikings will be able to gain entry into the top flight until 2012.

- Helping to balance match day revenue is the continued presence of Everton FC Reserves. Everton have exercised their right to extend the existing contract by a further two-years and are keen to start negotiations for a further deal.

- The capital investment in the new internal marquee has been a boost to the commercial activities of the Stadium. The Marquee allows the stadium to offer a room that can accommodate 500+ diners in a formal setting;

- The Stadium played host to a play off match between Wigan and Bradford, this has generated an interest from other Super League Clubs, who plan to develop their grounds in the near future.

- The commissioned energy report from the Carbon Trust has resulted in significant reductions in energy usage at the Stadium and the implemented staff awareness training and general good housekeeping, has now been cascaded to other areas of the Council.

2.3   Organisation Structure

3.0   FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1   External Factors

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comment(s)

Political		
National healthy eating agenda	**Ongoing**	A refined school meal service that meets all national requirements. If the present additional external funding for school meals were removed a deficit of over £300,000 would need to be addressed.
Licensing Laws	**Unknown at this time**	Any revision of drinking promotions (happy hour, etc.) could adversely affect the trading account.
Removal of non-statutory catering provision	**Unknown at this time**	Civic catering is a non-statutory service; any further rationalisation of some of the services could significantly reduce costs.

Economic		
Super League Franchise System	**Ongoing**	The failure to be included in the first round of franchising will have a negative knock-on effect to related activities within the Stadium. By only competing in National League 1 the profile of the Stadium is reduced and therefore consideration for inclusion by the RFL for representative games is weakened.
National Healthy Eating Agenda	**Ongoing**	If the present high profile push on healthy eating escalates the financial impact on the service could be considerable, particularly food cost and labour production costs. All efforts are being made to source external funding

		support.

Social		
Falling pupil numbers/surplus places	**Ongoing**	Continued falling pupil numbers are placing pressure on the school catering service. This increases the unit cost of meals.

Technological		
Floodlight provision	**Sept 2011**	If the Vikings are successful in their next Super League Franchise bid then the existing floodlights at the Stadium will need to be upgraded to meet the new LUX requirements for Sky and HD TV.
Smart Card System	**Ongoing**	The recently introduced smart card system at two secondary schools has resulted in an increase in school meals, if this system where to be introduced in other secondary schools the effect would be significant. An external bid is presently awaiting consideration with the local PCT.

Environmental

Protecting our environment

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department can make its own contribution.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Council has signed up to the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

The Councils waste management section is working to appoint volunteer 'Recycling Champions' across all services, to ensure that all employees, members and contractors are encouraged to use recycling facilities that exist within their working environment. The Council will continue to seek, and to take advantage of all opportunities to promote recycling and effective waste management within the community.

3.2 Service Developments

- A recent review has endorsed the Healthy Stadia Award won in 2007. A Healthy Stadium is understood to be,

  "…..one which promotes the health of visitors, fans, players, employees and the surrounding community. It is a place where people can go to have a positive, healthy experience playing or watching sport"

- The "Smoke Free Plus" award has also been maintained; this ward is to an organisation for going "above and beyond new legislation".

- The Stadium has also maintained the coveted Food Charter Award in recognition of an excellent healthy service.

- The Stadium, Stadium Coffee Shop, Runcorn Town Hall Civic Kitchen and Municipal Canteen all scored a maximum 3 stars for hygiene following Environmental Health inspections.

- The School Meals Service achieved Hospitality Assured accreditation – the benchmark that recognises high standards of customer service in the hospitality industry in November 2007. The recent annual inspection has resulted in a significant increase in the assessment score.

- A number of benchmarking exercises have been conducted concerning the food procurement for school meals and civic catering. This resulted in a full review of the food purchasing arrangements with Cheshire County Council and new arrangements are now in place. A number of new suppliers now service our catering outlets, increasing quality and reliability at the same time as reducing costs.

3.3 Efficiency Improvements

- The closure of the Runcorn Town Hall and Lowerhouse Lane staff canteens has resulted in a reduction in the actual service overspend of around £35K per year. Alternative provision is proving both popular and cost-effective.

- The recent Stadium sponsorship by The Stobart Group will realise the budget provision of £50K per year.

- Halton has previously had a food procurement partnership with Cheshire County Council, new arrangements are now in place with SNUPI, the University Purchasing Consortium, that is more advantageous to HBC.

- The Carbon Trust has conducted a no cost survey of energy usage at the Stadium. The scope covered electricity, gas and water usage and has helped establish base line consumption data. This report made a number of recommendations on how consumption could be reduced. Following a successful "invest to save" bid, a number of the recommendations have

been implemented and the twelve-month effect has seen a reduction of over 16% in energy usage at the Stadium.

3.4 National Regional and Sub-regional Focus

School Catering

With recent published statistics regarding obesity, this service is constantly under the public spotlight. Central Government is taking an active interest in the school meal service and guidelines have been implemented that examine and scrutinise in detail the nutritional content of a school meal. Criteria will be issued early December that will outline the requirements for taking part in a "Free School Meals" pilot scheme, Halton has already registered a serious interest in this pilot.

Our school meal service is being used as an example of good practice.

The Halton Stadium

It is vitally important for the Stadium to maintain its profile during whatever period that the Vikings remain in the National League rather than the Super League.

The Stadium has an excellent relationship with both the Rugby League and Football League supported by the decision to hold a number of representative matches here during 2008, the most recent being the selection match for the Under 18's English Football Team, it is hoped this will be the stepping stone to the Stadium hosting a full under 18's match within the next two-years.

3.5 Equality and Diversity

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Counci a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4 5 – 10 11 – 16	LOW MEDIUM HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen

developments occur. Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

4.0   RESOURCES

4.1   Budget Summary and Service Costs

To be inserted

4.2   Human Resource Requirements

Table yet to be inserted
No changes envisaged.

4.3   ICT Requirements

Smart cards have proved to be a benefit to increasing school meals. To introduce this system in to secondary schools, there will be a shared cost in the region of £35K per school. A bid is awaiting consideration with the local PCT.

4.4   Accommodation and Property Requirements

No changes envisaged.

5.0 SERVICE PERFORMANCE

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or it's statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

- Objectives and Key Milestones. These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2008–11, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

- National Performance Indicators. This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

- Local Performance Indicators. These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

- Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council, and its partners will contribute.

  The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

  Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa_final_(march 2007).pdf

  Progress against the achievement of LAA targets is reported to all stakeholders at regular intervals. Following the establishment of the LAA, plans are being formulated to ensure that in future years the LAA and the Council's service plans are completely aligned.

5.1 Service Objectives

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at Quarter 2 (half-year) and Quarter 4 (year-end.)

Corporate Priority:	A Healthy Halton
Key Area (s) Of Focus:	**AOF 2** Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles. **AOF 6** Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community. **AOF 7** Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Service Objective:	**SH 1 - Increase the community usage of the stadium and to maintain and improve the health of Halton residents.**

Key Milestones		Responsible Officer
2009 - 10	• Identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan.(this will drive the development of milestones for 2009/10). **Oct 2009.** (AOF2)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Visit Riverside College Halton and local Sixth Forms to advise and promote to students the leisure facilities available at The Stadium. **Sep 2009.** (AOF2)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Measure customer satisfaction with Stadium Community Services. **January 2010** AOF2)	HOS - Stadium & Hospitality Services
	• *Promote off peak opportunities at the start of each quarter to charitable and community organisations to utilise Stadium facilities at a reduced price. Quarterly.* (AOF6 & 7)	HOS - Stadium & Hospitality Services
	• Formulate proposals for event(s) linked to the London Olympics 2012. **Sep 2009.** (AOF2 & 7)	HOS - Stadium & Hospitality Services
2010 - 11	• Identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan (this will drive the development of milestones for 2010/11). **Oct 2010.** (AOF2)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
2011 -12	• Identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan.(this will drive the development of milestones for 2011/12). **Oct 2011.** (AOF2)	HOS Stadium & Hospitality Services

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Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	Linked Indicators	SH LI10 & 11
	Residual	Low		

Corporate Priority:	Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery
Key Area (s) Of Focus:	**AOF 34** Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders

Service Objective:	**SH 2 - Increase the Stadium turnover and improve efficiency to reduce the level of Council contribution.**

	Key Milestones	Responsible Officer
	• Review and identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan. **October 2009. (**AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Host a pitch based "Pop Concert" **Sep 2009.** (AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Host a wedding fayre in **February 2009 and October 2009** and a business fayre in **July 2009.** (AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Continue to develop promotional strategy to attract a minimum of 4 large corporate events annually to the Stadium (new Marquee Suite) **Ongoing.** (AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Introduce alcohol consumption on to the seated area of the Stadium for Rugby matches (it is not permitted for football matches) **April 09** (AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Extend concourse bar opening hours (on match days) by 30 minutes. **April 09** (AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
2010 - 11	• Review and identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan. **October 2009.** (AOF34)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
2011 - 12	• Review and identify areas for improvement in line with the Business Plan and Marketing Plan. **October 2011.** (AOF34)	Head of Stadium & Hospitality Services
Risk Assessment	Initial — Medium — Linked Indicators	SH LI10, 15 16 & 21
	Residual — Medium	

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Corporate Priority:	A Healthy Halton
Key Area (s) Of Focus:	**AOF 1** Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.

Service Objective:	**SH 3 - Increase the number of Pupils having a school lunch, to raise awareness, and increase levels, of healthy eating**

Key Milestones		**Responsible Officer**
2009 - 10	• Deliver an early academic school year promotion and educational campaign **Sep 2009.** (AOF1)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• *Extend the cashless payment Smart Card scheme to additional schools which reduces queing times and helps parental monitoring of actual spend and food consumption **Sep 2009.** (AOF1)*	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• *To conduct a benchmarking exercise which compares individual school performance. good performance to be investigated and shared with all schools and producing individual School Action Plans including independently run schools. **Dec 2009.** (AOF1)*	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• Conduct a questionnaire/satisfaction postal survey to all parents/guardians to learn of perceived barriers restricting uptake. Evaluate and produce Action Plan. **Dec 2009.** (AOF1)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
2010 - 11	• Deliver an early academic school year promotion and educational campaign **Sep 2010.** (AOF1)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• *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 2010** (AOF1)*	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
2011 -12	• Deliver an early academic school year promotion and educational campaign **Sep 2011.** (AOF1)	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
	• *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 2011.** (AOF1)*	HOS – Stadium & Hospitality
Risk Assessment	**Initial**	Medium	**Linked**	SH LI1, 2, 3, 4, 6, 7, 8a & b, 14, 18, NI 52

	Residual	Medium	Indicators	

5.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref[1]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2006/07 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Corporate Health											
There are presently no indicators of this type identified for the service											
Cost & Efficiency											
SH LI5	No. Of meals served versus hourly input of labour	CP6 AOF34	8.52	-	-	-	8	TBC	8.5	9.0	9.5
SH LI16	Increase in the turnover of the Stadium (£m's)	CP6 AOF34	2.221	-	-	-	2.65	TBC	2.70	2.85	3.25
SH LI21	Council contribution to Stadium operating costs (£100K's)	CP6 AOF34	7.27	-	-	-	9.15	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Fair Access											
There are presently no indicators of this type identified for the service											
Quality											
SH LI3	Number of catering staff achieving a formal qualification	CP1 AOF1	9	-	-	-	50	TBC	50	50	50
SH LI22a	Food cost per primary school meal (pence)	CP1 AOF1	62.4	-	-	-	70.0	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
SH LI22b	Food cost per secondary school meal (pence)	CP1 AOF1	88.9	-	-	-	90.0	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Service Delivery											
SH LI1	% Of schools complying with National Nutritional Guidelines (66 Schools)	CP1 AOF1	100	-	-	-	100	TBC	100	100	100
SH LI8a	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Primary Schools	CP1 AOF1	86	-	-	-	88	TBC	90	92	94
SH LI8b	% Take up of free school meals to those who are eligible - Secondary Schools	CP1 AOF1	68.8	-	-	-	60	TBC	65	70	75

[1] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**

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Ref[1]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/8 Actual	2006/07 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2008/9 Target	Halton 2008/9 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
SH LI10	No. of people accessing stadium facilities (1,000's)	CP1 AOF2	568	-	-	-	628	TBC	660	696	770
SH LI11	Uptake of the Halton Leisure card scheme	CP1 AOF2	208	-	-	-	200	TBC	225	250	300
NI 52a	Take up of school lunches (%) – primary schools	CP1 AOF1	46	-	-	-	50	TBC	55	57.5	60
NI 52b	Take up of school lunches (%) – secondary schools	CP1 AOF1	TBC	-	-	-	48	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
SH LI18	Average number of healthy food initiatives per school	CP1 AOF1	4	-	-	-	5	TBC	5.5	6.0	6.5

5.3 **Data Quality Arrangements**

Standard text will be developed by Corporate Performance Management Team that provides organisational context to data quality.

This should be supported by narrative that gives the reader an understanding of how the Corporate Data Quality Strategy is supported at a departmental level.

6.0 PERFORMANCE REPORTING

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering it's statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**

- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website
http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0 STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY PLANS

Halton Stadium Business Plan
Halton Stadium Marketing & Public Relations Strategy
School Meals Business Plan
School Meals School SLA
Community Strategy
Halton BVPP 2007/08

Appendix 1 – Equality Impact Assessments – High Priority Actions

To be completed.

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

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Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

Financial Services Department

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

Draft v1 BF/MF 19th Nov 09

Contents

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Appendices
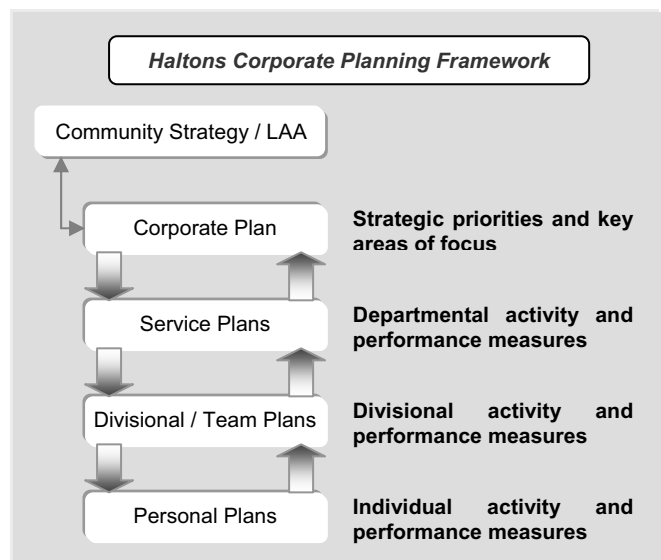
1.0   Corporate Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities, and a number of associated key Areas of Focus,** which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**
- **Halton's Urban Renewal**
- **Halton's Children & Young People**
- **Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton**
- **A Safer Halton**
- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Haltons Corporate Planning Framework

Community Strategy / LAA

Corporate Plan — **Strategic priorities and key areas of focus**

Service Plans — **Departmental activity and performance measures**

Divisional / Team Plans — **Divisional activity and performance measures**

Personal Plans — **Individual activity and performance measures**

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.

- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.

- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.

- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and associated Areas of Focus that have been most influential in the development of the service plan are

Strategic Corporate Priority 6:

Corporate effectiveness and efficient service delivery

Key Area of Focus 34

Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.

2.0 SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

The main purpose of the Department is to manage the financial affairs of the Council to bring maximum financial benefit wherever possible by ensuring the effective utilisation of existing resources and identifying opportunities to generate additional resources.

In addition, the Department provides the support to enable the Operational Director – Financial Services to carry out his statutory duty (under S151 Local Government Act 1972) of ensuring the proper administration of the Council's financial affairs. This duty exists to protect the Council, Councillors, all staff, and ultimately the Council taxpayer and general public.

The main activities undertaken by the Department are:

<u>Accountancy</u>

Providing a proper record of how the Council has spent its money and to provide a record of the Council's assets and liabilities.

Ensuring that resources are allocated over agreed operational areas and that appropriate cost centres exist to record their transactions.

Ensuring that the Council's capital expenditure is planned and that longer-term finance is raised to meet it.

Ensuring that the Council's revenue expenditure is properly planned over the medium term and that the Council's income is adequate to meet its planned revenue expenditure.

Ensuring that cash flows are monitored on a daily basis, surplus cash maximised and invested successfully with borrowings and interest payments minimised.

Monitoring the revenue budget, capital programme, and all externally funded expenditure.

Ensuring Councillors, Strategic Directors and their staff have sufficient financial information to make informed decisions of the financial consequences of policy issues.

Providing financial information, including management accounting and costing data, available to support Operational Directors in the control of their budgets and spending.

Ensuring schools receive budget management and financial administration under the terms of the service legal agreement.

Internal Audit

Internal Audit is an independent appraisal function within the Council. The Internal Audit Division is responsible for:

Providing assurance to management that:

- Internal control systems (including risk management and governance arrangements) are adequate and functioning efficiently and effectively;

- The policies and procedures established by management are complied with, are appropriate in current circumstances, and are not wasteful;

- The accounting records, and associated financial systems, form a reliable basis for the production of the financial statements.

Drawing the attention of management to, and recommending remedial action to address:

- Deficiencies in the systems of control; and

- Instances of duplicated functions, wastage and inefficiency.

Providing advice on audit related matters including suspected fraud or corruption.

Providing advice on risk and control issues in regard to systems development.

Providing assurance to the Council's S151 officer on the Council's system of internal control in support of the Council's Annual Governance Statement.

In ensuring the effective utilisation and attraction of the financial resources available to it the Financial Services Department underpins all aspects of the Council's work. Ultimately this results in benefits for all those who live, work or visit the borough.

2.2 Key Messages

The government has set out its response to the country's worsening economic situation in its Pre Budget Report published in November 2008. More to follow

The Council's finances are well managed, reflected by a record of spending within budget, with balances and reserves at a reasonable level and the Council well on target to hit its efficiency targets. This is confirmed by the Audit Commission who, in XXXX, assessed the Council's Use of Resources as "performing well – consistently above minimum standards (scoring 3 out of 4). Despite the bar being raised each year the overall score has remained unchanged for 7 years. Nevertheless an action plan has been developed to address the issues to continue to make improvements in all aspects of the Department's work.

The new Corporate Area Assessment (CAA) for 2009 will bring changes to the Use of Resources assessment and work is underway to ensure the score is maintained. From 2009 the Audit Commissions Key Lines of Enquiry (KLOE's) will, for the use of Resources (UoR) assessment, cover three themes, managing finances, governing and managing resources, which will lead to a single annual judgement on value for money in the use of resources.

The Government set out its plans within the Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR07) covering the period 2008/09 to 2010/11 which was published in October 2007. With priority given to education and health there was less for other services. Real growth for local government was limited to 1% over the period and when PFI was stripped out there will be no real growth in 2009/10 and 2010/11. Coupled with the uncertain economic outlook and the prospect of inflation it looks like difficult times ahead.

The grant settlement also covers the same 3-year period as CSR07, which should be an aid to financial planning. The grant is the major source of finance to the Council and the Government has reviewed the grant distribution methodology. Working closely with SIGOMA, the Merseyside authorities and other unitary authorities the Government were lobbied to change the methodology to make the distribution fairer.

An area of particular concern related to the so called "double damping" of social services spending which limited the amount of grant coming to many authorities, including Halton. The provisional financial settlement, announced in December 2007, removed this anomaly. As a result Halton's has received a grant increase slightly above average.

The Council also receives government funding through specific grants. The most important of which is Dedicated Schools Grant, which is ring-fenced for schools and related services. In addition the Council receives other grants, known as Specific Grants, which are made by Government to support specified services.

With ever increasing spending pressures from new legal duties and alongside increased costs from such things as the waste agenda, the children's agenda, the ageing population and the pay and grading review, as well as public expectations for new and improved services, means

difficult choices will have to be made to balance the budget given pressures from Government to keep down council tax rises.

Against this background maximising efficiency is going to be critical in generating additional resources. CSR07 has set a more challenging target of 3% cashable savings in each of the next three years. It will become progressively more and more difficult to achieve these gains without changing the way the Council does its business.

With this in mind the Council has brought in KPMG as its efficiency partner to undertake a review and identify suitable opportunities for efficiency improvements to enable the Council to do more for the same or less money. In addition the council has established an Invest to Save Fund and a number of energy efficiency schemes have already been approved.

An important part of the Use of Resources assessment looks at how the Council's financial management links to the strategic management of the Council, how it is integrated with strategy and corporate management, supports council priorities and delivers value for money. The Council's financial systems and processes are tested on an annual basis and they are found to be robust and provide reliable information for the Council's financial statements.

A Financial Management Standard & Toolkit has been developed by the DfES for schools. The Standard is intended to help schools in evaluating the quality of their financial management and to aid in training staff to become better financial managers. All the Borough's high schools achieved the standard by April 2007. Primary and special schools are to be assessed against the Standard over 2008/2009 and 2009/2010. Internal Audit has been accredited by the DfES to undertake external assessments and is working with schools to help them achieve the Standard.

Since 2008 the Council is required to produce its Annual Governance Statement. The work of Internal Audit in reviewing the Council's control environment will form part of the assurance framework that underpins the Annual Governance Statement.

The Council's financial management system "Agresso" is now able to provide financial information to budget holders within 10 days of the month end. This is a significant improvement on the previous system and work is ongoing to improve it even further. In addition summarised revenue and capital information is provided to Operational Directors quarterly to aid the monitoring of spending against budgets. This information is incorporated in the quarterly performance monitoring reports to Policy and Performance Boards and brought together to report the overall position to Management Team and the Executive Board Sub Committee.

The Council has a major capital programme, although it is expected that spending will slip into next year. As well as the major developments of Mersey Gateway, Widnes Waterfront, Castlefields and 3MG the Council is Wave 6 of the Building Schools for the Future programme, which would provide £100M of investment in the borough's secondary schools. Given its scale, the monitoring and management of capital expenditure will be given greater focus to ensure time limited external funding is maximised and spending is in line with the programme.

Over many years the Department has been very successful in managing the Council's cash resources. There has been continual reduction in the cost of borrowing and in addition the return on funds invested has out performed the benchmark. In this way treasury management has made additional resources available to services in Halton. The recent fluctuations in the money market, known as the "credit crunch", have made the investment of cash more volatile. Prudential borrowing has also been used, such as on the acquisition of the new refuse collection fleet, to make significant revenue savings.
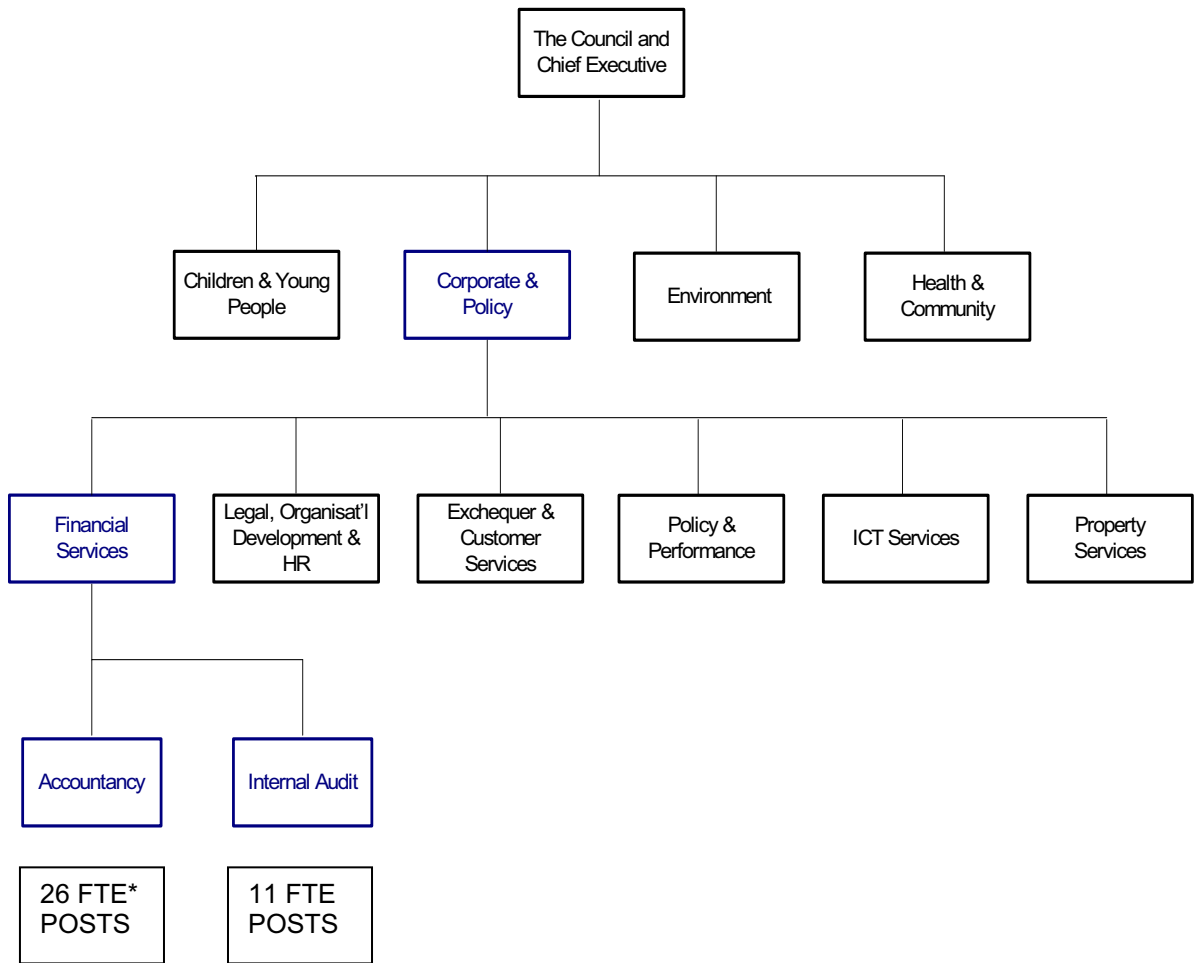
The Council's accounts continue to be published within the timescales set by Government. As the reporting requirements get ever more complex this continues to be a major challenge to the Department and is achieved with the co-operation of all Directorates across the Council. The accounts have been given a clean bill of health by the Audit Commission.

A major new statistical return was introduced by Government this year, known as the "Whole of Government Accounts"; its aim is to produce one set of accounts for the whole of the public sector. It was successfully introduced in the year and has been subject to external audit.

The Government recently announced that local authorities, along with the rest of the public sector, would prepare its accounts using the International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS). There will be a two year transitional period beginning in 2009 – 10. This will have a significant impact on the Council's accounting arrangements and reporting requirements, particularly in respect of leases and fixed asset valuations. Considerable planning will be necessary to address the implications particularly with colleagues from Property Services, as system changes may be required to accommodate IFRS.

The Halton Local Strategic Partnership has entered into a Local Area Agreement (LAA) with the Government. It is a three-year agreement that involves the pooling of a number of existing grant regimes by Government into a single LAA grant. The Council acts as the accountable body for the LAA and this involves distributing and accounting for the Area Based Grant Funding passed on to other partner organisations. As such, the LAA will have significant impact on the work of the Department in terms of establishing and maintaining robust governance, accounting, monitoring and auditing arrangements.

2.3   Organisation Structure

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                          │  Chief Executive │
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* FTE Indicates Full Time Equivalent posts

3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1 External Factors

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comment(s)
Political		
1. Regeneration Activity	**2009/12**	Manage funding and cash flows of major developments including Mersey Gateway, Castlefields, Widnes Waterfront and 3MG
2. CAA/ Use of Resources	**2009/12**	Use of Resources Assessments will cover 3 themes i.e. • Managing finances • Governance • Managing resources
3. Waste Agenda	**2009/12**	Continue to provide financial advice and information in support of the major procurement to be undertaken in partnership with MWDA.
4. Building Schools for the Future	**2009/12**	Arrangements for supporting the financial aspects and the financial implications of BSF need to be established, as Halton has been included in BSF Wave 6.

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comment(s)
Economic		
5. Efficiency Review	**2009/12**	Target increased to 3% cashable savings.
6. Budget Pressures	**2009/12**	Increasing public expectation across all services for improvements and new developments coupled with increasing costs yet at the same time the increase threat of capping from Government to minimise Council Tax increase.
7. Formula Grant (RSG)	**2009/12**	Continue to work with our partners to lobby for fairer distribution of grant.

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comment(s)
Social		
8. Existing / new Partnership arrangements	**2009/12**	These arrangements often result in more complex accounting and governance arrangements being required.
Technological		
9. Development of Agresso	**2009/12**	Developing the range and use of financial information available from the Agresso system, including a major upgrade of the software to bring about improved functionality.
10. E-Government	**2009/12**	Advice on new controls as business processes change. Particular developments include e-procurement, continued implementation of Trent, and developments in revenues and benefits to reflect Business Improvement Districts and the implementation of Local Housing Allowance.
Legislative		
11. Children's Act and Associated Guidance	**2009/12**	Introduction of Children's Trust and Pooled budgets.
12. Accounting Developments	**2009/12**	Statements of Recommended Accounting Practice are issued annually, which determine the extent and format of the Council's accounting statements and provide the basis against which they are audited. International Financial Reporting Standards (IFRS) will begin to be adopted through a two year transitional period from 2009-10

Environmental	*2008 on*

13. Protecting our environment

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department can make its own contribution.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Council joined the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

3.2 Service Developments

Under the 2008 CPA arrangements the Use of Resources assessment was more stringent and focused on financial management and how this links and supports the strategic management of the Council. The Council scored 3 out of 4 (performing well). There are a few areas for further development and an action plan has been developed to make further improvements in the financial management of the Council.

The department received high levels of satisfaction and positive feedback from a recent client survey. Internal Audit regularly receives high levels of satisfaction following audit reviews. Both the Accountancy and Internal Audit Divisions are members of CIPFA Benchmarking Clubs. The overall cost of Halton's accountancy function is below the average for unitary councils. In terms of Internal Audit, the last benchmarking exercise also showed staffing costs to be below average when compared to other unitary authorities.

Internal Audit has continued to work in partnership with the Audit Commission to ensure an efficient and effective use of the overall audit resource. During 2008 the Audit Commission undertook its triennial review of the Internal Audit function and concluded that

'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. We are able to rely on the work of internal audit that is relevant to our audit objectives'.

3.3 Efficiency Improvements

Over many years the Department has been successful in absorbing additional responsibilities without increasing staffing levels. The development of Agresso is a major example of improved efficiency and its continued development will help budget management across the Council. Other examples of improved efficiency include the introduction of pooled budgets such as Adults with Learning Difficulties, the Whole of Government Accounts initiative and the LAA. However, it has to be recognised that given their intangible dominant nature such efficiency gains can be extremely difficult to quantify in financial terms.

Internal Audit is to combine the Financial Management Standards in Schools assessments with its usual school audit reviews, which should generate additional income of £10,000 each year. In addition, Internal Audit has a wider role in terms of identifying opportunities to improve efficiency through the course of its normal audit work.

The implementation of a new audit management IT system has improved internal audit working practices which has led to a more efficient audit process.

3.4   National Regional and Sub-regional Focus

The Executive Board Member for Corporate Services is a member of the Executive Committee of SIGOMA – Special Interest Group of Municipal Authorities (outside London), which represents 48 Local Authorities in most of England's urban areas outside the capital. SIGOMA provides a forum for discussion at the highest political level on matters of common concern and provides a means of channelling views to Government and the Local Government Association.

The Department represents the Council on the Merseyside Directors of Finance Group and Cheshire Chief Finance Officers Group. These Groups are valuable ways of sharing information and developing solutions to the emerging financial issues faced by the authority.

The proposed development of the Liverpool City Region would result in new financial relationships and if implemented would require the examination of the Council's existing financial transactions with Cheshire based bodies.

3.5   Equality and Diversity

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur.

Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

4.0 Resources

4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

4.2 Human Resource Requirements

Year	Divisional Staffing Levels[1]		
	Accountancy	Audit	**Total**
2008 / 09	26	11	**37**
2009 / 10	**26**	**10**	**36**

It is not anticipated at the time of writing this plan that staffing levels within the department will be subject to change to the period to 2012.

4.3 ICT Requirements

There is a high degree of expertise in the use of personal computers in the Department and this will continue to be developed to maximise the use of computing facilities.

The Agresso system provides the Department with a state of the art financial management system that should meet the needs of the Council for the foreseeable future. The system is likely to undergo a major upgrade during 2008/09 as part of Agresso's approach to continuous development and in order to ensure the Council maximises the benefit from its investment in the system.

Internal Audit has replaced its audit management system. This has lead to the use of electronic working papers and the delivery of more efficient and flexible working arrangements.

Should any unforeseen ICT developments arise that necessitate additional requirements, these will be reported either by exception or through the normal quarterly reporting cycle.

4.4 Accommodation and Property Requirements

At the present time, there are no foreseeable additional property requirements for Financial Services during the lifetime of this plan.

Should any unforeseen developments arise that necessitate additional requirements, these will be reported either by exception or through the normal quarterly reporting cycle.

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[1] Full time equivalent

5.0   Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

Objectives and Key Milestones.

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2008–11, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

National Performance Indicators.

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

Local Performance Indicators.

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

Local Area Agreement Targets.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa_final_(march 2007).pdf

5.1   Service Objectives

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at Quarter 2 (half-year) and Quarter 4 (year-end.)

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 34	*Attracting and Managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.*

Service Objective: FS O1	Set the Revenue Budget, Capital Programme and recommend Council Tax				
Key Milestone(s) (09 - 10)	• Report Medium Term Financial Forecast to Executive Board **November 2009.** • Report to Council in March **2010**				
Key Milestone(s) (10 - 11)	• Report Medium Term Financial Forecast to Executive Board **November 2010.** • Report to Council in March **2011**				
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	• Report Medium Term Financial Forecast to Executive Board **November 2011.** • Report to Council in March **2012**				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Operational Director	**Linked Indicators**	FSLI
	Residual	Medium				

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 34	*Attracting and Managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.*

Service Objective: FS O2	**To effect financial prudence by assisting managers to control their budgets by monitoring spending and providing timely and accurate financial reports**
Key Milestone(s) (09 - 10)	• Provide **monthly** financial reports to budget holders within 8 days of month end (**CA** – Chief Accountant). • Provide quarterly financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports (**GA** – Group Accountant). • Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board Sub Committee. (**CA**)
Key Milestone(s) (10 - 11)	• Provide **monthly** financial reports to budget holders within 8 days of month end (**CA**). • Provide quarterly financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports (**GA**). • Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board Sub Committee. (**CA**)
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	• Provide **monthly** financial reports to budget holders within 8 days of month end (**CA**). • Provide quarterly financial monitoring reports to Operational Directors for inclusion in Performance Monitoring Reports (**GA**). • Provide quarterly monitoring reports on the overall budget to Executive Board Sub Committee. (**CA**)

Risk Assessment	Initial	Low	**Responsible Officer**	Chief Accountant	**Linked Indicators**	
	Residual	Low				

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 34	*Attracting and Managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.*

Service Objective: FS O3	***Provide for public accountability by reporting the Councils stewardship of public funds and its financial performance in the use of resources by preparing the final accounts as required by statute and in accordance with the latest accounting standards.***
Key Milestone(s) (09 - 10)	• *Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts and report to the Business Efficiency Board by* **30th June 2009.** • *Publish the Abstract of Accounts by* **30th September 2009.**
Key Milestone(s) (10 - 11)	• *Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts and report to the Business Efficiency Board by* **30th June 2010.** • *Publish the Abstract of Accounts by* **30th September 2010.**
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	• *Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts and report to the Business Efficiency Board by* **30th June 2011.** • *Publish the Abstract of Accounts by* **30th September 2011.**

Risk Assessment	Initial	N/A	**Responsible Officer**	Chief Accountant	**Linked Indicators**	
	Residual	N/A				

Service Objective: FS O4	***Make best use of cash resources available to the Council and meet its statutory responsibility by setting, implementing and monitoring the Treasury Management Policy***
Key Milestone(s) (09 - 10)	• *Establish treasury Management Policy and report to the Executive Board Sub-Committee by* **April 2009.** • *Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee* **on a quarterly basis.**
Key Milestone(s) (10 - 11)	• *Establish treasury Management Policy and report to the Executive Board Sub-Committee by* **April 2010.** • *Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee* **on a quarterly basis.**
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	• *Establish treasury Management Policy and report to the Executive Board Sub-Committee by* **April 2011.** • *Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee* **on a quarterly basis.**

Risk Assessment	Initial	N/A	**Responsible Officer**	Operational Director	**Linked Indicators**	
	Residual	N/A				

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 34	*Attracting and Managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.*

Service Objective: FS O5	*Ensure that the Capital Programme is affordable, prudent, and sustainable by setting and monitoring prudential borrowing indicators.*
Key Milestone(s) (09 - 10)	• *Report prudential indicators to Council in* **March 2009.** • *Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee* ***on a quarterly basis***
Key Milestone(s) (10 - 11)	• *Report prudential indicators to Council in* **March 2010.** • *Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee* ***on a quarterly basis***
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	• *Report prudential indicators to Council in* **March 2011.** • *Provide monitoring reports to the Executive Board Sub-Committee* ***on a quarterly basis***

Risk Assessment	Initial	N/A	Responsible Officer	Operational Director	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	N/A				

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Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness and Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 34	*Attracting and Managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders.*

Service Objective: FS O6	*Provide an independent and objective opinion of the Council's control environment by evaluating its effectiveness in achieving the Council's objectives.*
Key Milestone(s) (09 - 10)	• *Obtain approval from the Business Efficiency Board for the Internal Audit Plan for 2008/9 June 2009.* • *Carry out sufficient audit work across the whole of the organisation to ensure that a confident, evidence based audit opinion can be provided on the Council's control environment. A commentary on the audit work undertaken will be provided in quarterly progress reports to Business Efficiency Board.* • *Provide an overall opinion on the Council's system of internal control in the Internal Audit Annual Report (2007/8) to the Business Efficiency Board June 2009.*
Key Milestone(s) (10 - 11)	• *Obtain approval from the Business Efficiency Board for the Internal Audit Plan for 2009/10 June 2010.* • *Carry out sufficient audit work across the whole of the organisation to ensure that a confident, evidence based audit opinion can be provided on the Council's control environment. A commentary on the audit work undertaken will be provided in quarterly progress reports to Business Efficiency Board.* • *Provide an overall opinion on the Council's system of internal control in the Internal Audit Annual Report (2008/9) to the Business Efficiency Board June 2010.*
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	• *Obtain approval from the Business Efficiency Board for the Internal Audit Plan for 2010/11 June 2011.* • *Carry out sufficient audit work across the whole of the organisation to ensure that a confident, evidence based audit opinion can be provided on the Council's control environment. A commentary on the audit work undertaken will be provided in quarterly progress reports to Business Efficiency Board.* • *Provide an overall opinion on the Council's system of internal control in the Internal Audit Annual Report (2009/10) to the Business Efficiency Board June 2011.*

Risk Assessment	Initial	N/A	Responsible Officer	Chief Internal Auditor	Linked Indicators	FSLI6, FSLI 7
	Residual	N/A				

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5.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref[2]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2006/07 Quartiles[3] (All England)			Halton 2008/09 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Corporate											
FSLI 1	Receive an unqualified audit opinion on the accounts.	CP 6 AOF 34	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FSLI 2	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor relating to the financial standing of the Council and the systems of internal financial control.	CP 6 AOF 34	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
FSLI 3	Receive positive comment (annually) from the External Auditor concerning reliability of internal audit work.	CP 6 AOF 34	Yes				Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Ye:
FSLI 4	Maintain the Use of Resources scores achieved in CPA last year.	CP 6 AOF 34	3 out of 4				3 out of 4		Maintain 3 out of 4		

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[2] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[3] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref[4]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2006/07 Quartiles[5] (All England)			Halton 2008/09 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Cost & Efficiency											
NI 179	Value of (organisational) cashable efficiency gains	CP6 AOF 34	New PI from 2008				New PI from 2008	New PI from 2008	**TBA**	**TBA**	**TBA**
FSLI 5	Achieve investment returns for the year higher than benchmark	CP6 AOF 34	4.80%					**TBA**	**TBA**	**TBA**	**TBA**
Quality											
FSLI 6	Undertake the external assessment for 75% of the Council's schools undergoing the Financial Management Standard in Schools (FMSiS) accreditation process.	CP6 AOF 34	N/A				75 %		75 %	75 %	75
FSLI 7	Maintain the proportion of all eligible schools buying back financial services.	CP6 AOF 32	83%				83%		83%	83%	83%

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[4] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[5] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref[6]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007/08 Actual	2007/08 Quartiles[7] (All England)			Halton 2008/09 Target	Halton 2008/09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09/10	10/11	11/12
Service Delivery											
FSLI 8	Issue 75% of draft audit reports within 15 working days of completing the audit fieldwork.	CP6 AOF 34	77%				75 %		75%	75%	75%

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[6] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[7] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

5.3   Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review.

In so doing the department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- *Accurate*   For its intended purpose;

- *Valid*   By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;

- *Reliable*   By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;

- *Timely*   By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;

- *Relevant*   For the purpose intended;

- *Complete*   In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

Such systems include, for example

6.0 Performance Reporting

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering its statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**

- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansand strategies

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans

Medium term Financial and Investment Strategy
Treasury Management Strategy
Internal Audit Plan

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

A Safer Halton

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

Legal, Personnel and Organisational Development Department

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

Draft Nov 2008

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Appendices

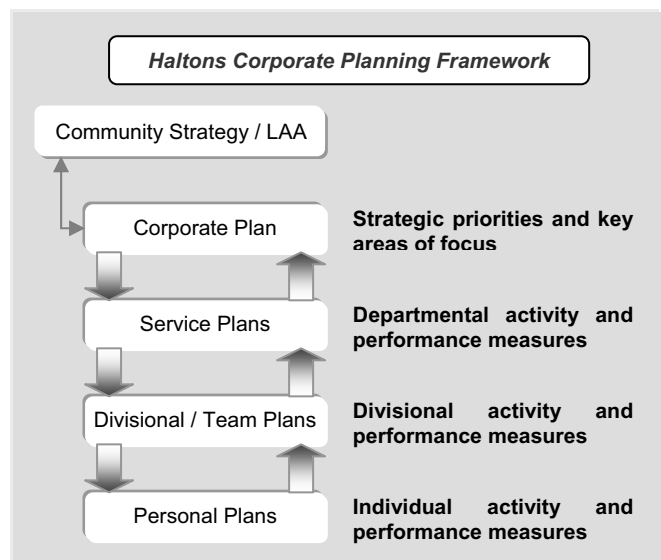## 1.0   INTRODUCTION

To meet Halton's most pressing needs, the Borough Council has identified **6 key priorities, and a number of associated key Areas of Focus,** which, as detailed within the Council's Corporate Plan, are: -

- **A Healthy Halton**

- **Halton's Urban Renewal**

- **Halton's Children & Young People**

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

- **A Safer Halton**

- **Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency**

Departmental Service Plans form an integral part of the authority's corporate planning framework, as illustrated within the diagram opposite.

This framework ensures that the Council's operational activities are complementary to the delivery of its community aspirations and legal and statutory responsibilities.

Haltons Corporate Planning Framework

Community Strategy / LAA	
Corporate Plan	Strategic priorities and key areas of focus
Service Plans	Departmental activity and performance measures
Divisional / Team Plans	Divisional activity and performance measures
Personal Plans	Individual activity and performance measures

Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.

- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.

- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.

- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

Such plans, and the Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring Reports that flow from them, are an essential tool in enabling the public, Elected Members, Senior Management, and staff how well Council departments are performing and what progress is being made in relation to improving the quality of life within the borough and service provision for local people, businesses and service users.

The Strategic Priority and those Areas of Focus that have been most significant in the development of this plan are detailed below: -

Strategic Priority 6:

Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery

Key Area of Focus: 33

Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.

Key Area Of Focus: 39

Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information.

Key Area Of Focus: 40

Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

2.0 SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

The Department is divided into Legal Services, Committee and Member Services, Human Resources and Organisational Development.

Legal Services

The purpose of the Legal Services Division is to provide a comprehensive legal service, which is relevant to the needs of the Council and its elected members and officers. As an internal support service, it is geared up to assist the other front-line Directorates to fulfil their statutory and service responsibilities efficiently and effectively.

The primary role of Legal Services is:

- To provide a comprehensive legal service
- Through the Operational Director (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources and Monitoring Officer) to fulfil the role of Monitoring Officer to the Council, and to ensure that the Council acts both lawfully and ethically.
- To ensure compliance with the law and standing orders to enable front-line services to achieve their own corporate objectives.
- To provide a Local Land Charges Service
- To process and determine applications for various statutory licences including Personal and Premises Licences under the Licensing Act 2003, Hackney Carriage and Private Hire Driver and Vehicle Licences, Lotteries and Street Collections, and those relating to the Gambling Act 2005.

The division mainly provides a support service to the Council and other directorates, although this is subject to our broader role in protecting the best interests of the Council as a whole.

Committee and Member Services

The principal aim of the Committee and Member Services Division is to support the democratic process by servicing the various Boards, Committees, Panels and Working Parties, and by providing support and training for elected members. In supporting the democratic process, the division is also responsible for maintaining the electoral register so that those entitled to vote are able to do so.

The role of Committee and Member Services is:

- To manage and effectively service meetings of the Council
- To respond to the individual and collective needs of elected members.

- To provide various civic services which are in keeping with the dignity and profile of the Council

- To provide a comprehensive word-processing support service and an efficient in-house reprographic support service.

- To provide a collection and distribution service for internal and external mail at the Municipal Building, and to provide a courier service linking the Council's various offices, elected members, and schools.

- To ensure that an accurate Register of Electors is compiled annually and to enable the Returning Officer to conduct all elections.

The division supports the work of the Council as a whole, but its key role is in its support for elected members and in enabling the public to have access to the democratic process. The department ultimately benefits the whole of the local community by providing both support to Elected Members of the Council and also by enabling access to the democratic process by members of the public.

Human Resources and Organisational Development

The Division is a central support service whose main function is to ensure corporate awareness of, and compliance with, the various personnel policies adopted by the Council and employment legislation. On occasions, the department will lead in negotiations with Trade Unions on matters of corporate consequence such as Pay and Grading Reviews. In addition, the department takes the central lead in providing training and development opportunities for elected members and employees.

The principal functions of the Division are

Personnel

- Advising Councillors and management on personnel policy, strategy and procedures.

- Recruitment of staff.

- Pre-employment checks of prospective employees.

- Advice on, and interpretation of, national and local conditions of service and employment related legislation.

- Industrial/Employee Relations.

- Employee Welfare.

- Equality of Opportunity in Employment.

Training

- Management of the Corporate Training Centre.

- Provision of in-house training.

- Commissioning of external training provision

Payroll

- Responsible for payment of salaries & expenses, and Members' allowances

In recruiting and retaining staff, providing the appropriate level of support and training to staff and directorates, and ensuring that employees are equipped with the skills needed to deliver the Council plans and strategies, the Personnel Services function ultimately benefits all members of the community.

2.2   Key messages

Over the last year, the combined Department has become more embedded as a single operation under the Operational Director (Legal, Organisational Development and Human Resources) and Monitoring Officer.

The structures in Legal and Committee and Members Services remain under review.

Considerable work has been carried out in support of the Building Schools for the Future and Mersey Gateway Projects, with the public inquiry for the latter expected to take place at the start of the plan period.

Preparations have been made and training has been delivered to enable members to deal effectively with the new Standards regime, in which complaints are now assessed and determined locally by and large.

In 2008, the Licensing Team again dealt with a significant licensing application for the Creamfields Event. On this occasion, it was a two day event and all involved feel that it was very successful, again giving the Borough a high and positive profile. A further application for a repeat of the Event in 2009 is expected.

Work continues on the programme of work projects arising out of the Government's Pay and Workforce Strategy for Local Government.   The five priority themes to be addressed by each Council to ensure continuous improvement in service delivery are:
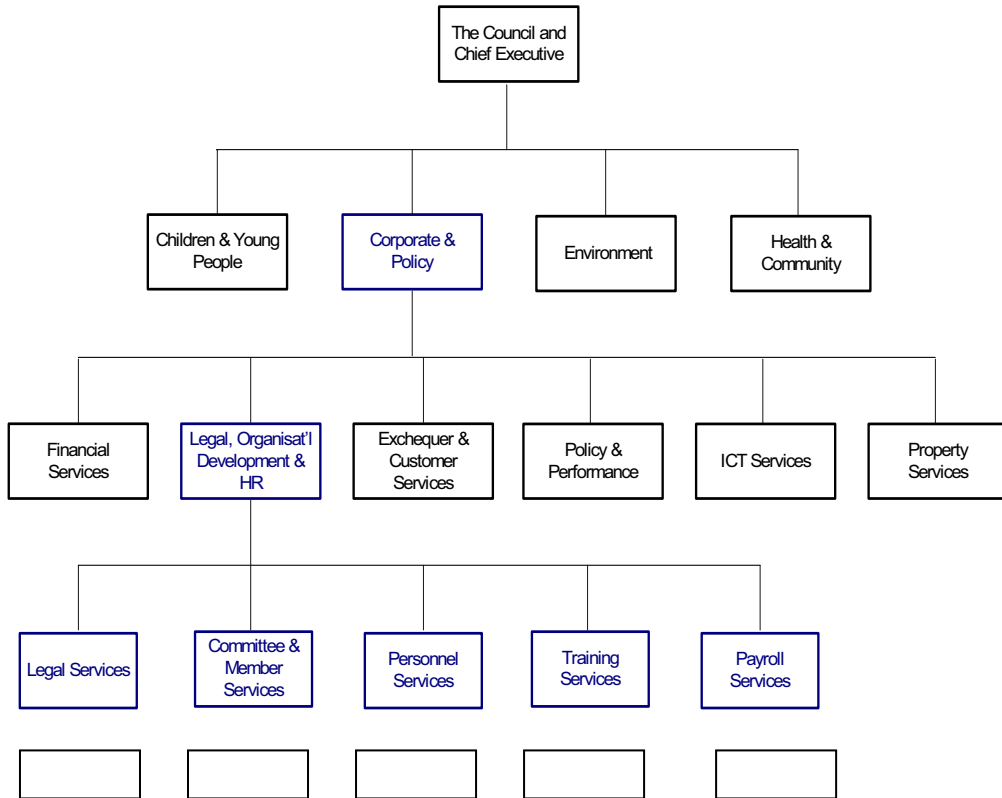
- Developing leadership capacity
- Developing the skills and capacity of the workforce
- Developing the organisation
- Resourcing, recruitment and retention
- Pay and rewards.

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The Department will be considerably occupied in carrying out these projects for the remainder of the plan period.

Job Evaluation Appeals are being determined at the time of writing, and will continue into the early part of the plan period.

Work continues on the implementation of the additional modules of the Council's integrated Human Resources and Payroll Software. Again, this will continue throughout the plan period.

2.3   Organisation Structure

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                    │   The Council and   │
                    │   Chief Executive   │
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3.0   FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1   External Factors

Key Developments	Timeframe	Comment(s)
Political		
Changes to the Governance arrangements of the Council	Legislation requires compliance by end of 2010	The Council must now consult upon and determine its governance arrangements, i.e. strong leader and Cabinet or elected Mayor and Cabinet. Legislation requires a resolution in 2010 but a decision is anticipated in 2009.
Pay and Grading Review	2006 - 09	Significant resource issue for department in completing this review. Following the implementation of the Job Evaluation outcomes, an appeals process will continue during 2009.

Economic		
Budget pressures/Efficiency gains	2009 - 12	The efficiency agenda will be developed throughout the plan period

Social		
Development of work/ life balance initiative	2009 - 12	Impacts of flexible working will be fully explored as the plan period progresses.

Legislative		
Local Government & Public Involvement in Health Act 2007	2007 onwards	The details of the latest legislative changes to local government have now been enacted.

Operating Environment		
Partnership Working	April 2009 onwards	It will be important to ensure that the Consortium arrangements with external legal partners and other local authorities are used to maximum advantage in terms of facilitating further joint working, producing more cost effective training for staff etc.
Recruitment and retention of quality staff	2009 - 12	Requirement to assess ability of Council to recruit and retain quality staff in a competitive "market". Constant review of staff benefits to ensure Council remains competitive.

Environmental	*2008 on*

13. Protecting our environment

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department can make its own contribution.

Consideration will be given throughout the life of the Service Plan to ways in which support can be given to the action plan and to identify and implement opportunities to reduce any contribution to Climate Change and to promote best practice in the reduction of carbon emissions.

The Council joined the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme in the early part of 2007/08. The programme will guide the Council through a systematic analysis of its carbon footprint, outline opportunities to help manage carbon emissions, develop Action Plans for realising carbon and financial savings; and embed carbon management into the authority's day-to-day business.

As part of the programme the Council has developed a Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan to reduce energy bills and carbon emissions over the next five years. Through the Strategy and Implementation Plan, Council services will need to encourage closer examination of their policies around procurement, transport and the use of renewable energy.

3.2   Service Developments

Training continues to be a key area of focus for the Department. Members of staff are currently on the Council's MSC programme and others are undergoing/have completed the Council's ILM programme at various levels. The Department has also continued with its initiative to develop the NVQ in Democratic Services as a key qualification for Committee and Member Services staff.

Building Schools for the Future will present considerable challenges for the Department. Additional resources may be needed if the Department is to be effective in providing support for the delivery of this project.

The public inquiry for the Mersey Gateway project is expected at the start of the plan period.

Legal Services

Legal Services has again been inspected against the Lexcel and ISO quality standards and has once again been successful in maintaining both Lexcel and ISO Accreditations. These standards are constantly evolving, and the processes ensure that the culture of continuous improvement is embedded in Legal Services.

Committee and Member Services

The success of the Council's Member Development initiative has been recognised at National level with the Council winning awards from both the MJ and APSE for its work in this area.

3.3   Efficiency Improvements

The Department is keen to explore joint working initiatives wherever possible to deliver efficiency improvements. In addition to its joint working with Wirral and Liverpool to provide 24-hour legal advice and assistance on Child Protection matters, Legal Services has established a consortium with Sefton, Knowsley and West Lancashire and the private sector Legal firms Cobbetts, DLA and Weightmans. This consortium should result in the more cost effective procurement of external legal services, provide access to additional services (e.g. training) at nil or reduced cost, and open the way to further joint working and efficiency savings between the partner authorities. Warrington and Wirral Councils have joined the consortium in November and December 2007, and the partner firms have delivered training.

Joint working is also an area that is being explored in relation to Committee and Member Services. We currently provide joint training in relation to schools appeals, and we are looking at the possibility of further joint working with neighbouring authorities to deliver efficiencies.

Joint training has been carried out with Warrington on Standards issues.

3.4   National Regional and Sub-regional Focus

Legal and Member Services work in partnership with other authorities, within variety of regional networks, and on a variety of initiatives. One of the key sub regional initiatives at the moment relates to Waste where there a are a variety of legal and constitution issues that need to be resolved in order for the Council to be able to work in partnership with the Merseyside Waste Disposal Authority on the procurement of future waste disposal arrangements.   The Department is also involved in advising on the constitutional implications of closer working with other Merseyside Authorities as part of the Liverpool City Region agenda.

Halton is a member of the National Joint Council for Local Authorities and also the North West Employers Organisation.

3.5 Equality and Diversity

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and framework documents that underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services that it delivers.

This commitment is encapsulated in the equal opportunities policy that the Council has adopted. The policy sets out the Council's approach to promoting equal opportunities; valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and justice; and providing equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation. The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the Borough, wherever possible, to help to identify and overcome discriminatory barriers that may exist.

The whole suite of equalities policies are had regard to throughout the recruitment process, and the Council positively encourages applications from all sectors of the Community. The legal section is committed to advising on effective compliance with all relevant legislation and policies.

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan.

As a result of such assessments any high priority actions that have been identified, that fall within the life of this plan, are detailed in section 5 -.

3.6 Risk Management

Risk Management, which forms a key element of the strategic management and performance management processes of the Council, is a business discipline that is used to effectively manage potential opportunities and threats to the organisation in achieving its objectives.

Risk assessments are the process by which departments identify those issues that are, or may be, likely to impede the delivery of service objectives. Such risks are categorised and rated in terms of both their probability, i.e. the extent to which they are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Against each key objective the overall initial and residual risk assessment (before and after the risk control measures have been identified) is shown. The risk mapping exercise scores the potential impact on the key objective (severity) and the likelihood (probability) of the risks happening to arrive at a number. Such numbers are then translated into a Low, Medium or High category.

Risk Score	Overall Level of Risk
1 – 4	LOW
5 – 10	MEDIUM
11 – 16	HIGH

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of the departmental objectives.

Mitigation measures for those risks that were initially assessed as high have been included as an Appendix within this plan. As such their implementation will be monitored through the Quarterly Departmental Service Plan Monitoring Report process.

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur. Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

All reports to the Policy and Performance Boards, with the exception of Part II items, are publicly available documents and can be accessed through the Council's website at http://www2.halton.gov.uk/

4.0   Resources

4.1   Budget Summary and Service Costs

INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

4.2   Human Resource Requirements

Staffing Structures are currently under review following a merger of the legal and member services and personnel and organisational development functions in 2007, but it is not anticipated that staff numbers will increase during the life of the plan. The structure may need to be further reviewed depending on the various initiatives undertaken by the Council during the life of the Plan e.g. Building Schools for the Future. The following table identifies the number of full-time equivalent posts within each of the Divisions that comprise the department.

Year	Divisional staffing levels[1]			
	Legal	Committee & Member Services	Personnel / OD / Payroll	Total
2008 / 09				
2009/10	**21.7**	**24.0**	**41.2**	**86.9**

The slight increase in Personnel follows the establishment of the Job Evaluation Appeals team.

4.3   ICT Requirements

As described within the previous section the recent merger of the payroll and personnel functions may have implications for future ICT requirements, although at this stage these are not possible to determine. However as we move into 2008 this situation will become clearer and the service will respond accordingly.

4.4   Accommodation and Property Requirements

It is not anticipated that the accommodation requirements of the Department will change significantly over the plan period.

As described previously the merger of the payroll and personnel functions may have implications for future property requirements, although at this stage these are not possible to determine.

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[1] Full Time Equivalent Posts

However it is anticipated that no significant additional accommodation space will be required and as we move into 2009 this situation will become clearer and the service will respond accordingly.

5.0 Service Performance

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and / or its statutory responsibilities. The service utilises a variety of measures and targets to enable performance against the service plan to be tracked, monitored, and reported. Details of these measures and targets are given below.

Objectives and Key Milestones.

These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2008–11, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.

National Performance Indicators.

This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

Local Performance Indicators.

These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.

Local Area Agreement Targets.

The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

The LAA contains 86 key targets addressing all of the priority issues identified in both the Community Strategy, and the Council's Corporate Plan. Of the 86 key targets, 34 are mandatory and also included are the 12 LPSA targets to which the Council signed up.

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories//laa   final   (march 2007).pdf

5.1   Service Objectives –

(NB Other than by exception those service objectives and/or Key Milestones shown in *italics* will only be reported at Quarter 2 (half-year) and Quarter 4 (year-end.)

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area of Focus: 33	*Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.*

Service Objective: 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.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	☺ Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation **January 2010**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	☺ Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation **January 2011**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	☺ Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation **January 2012**				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Operational Director & Monitoring Officer	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Low				

Service Objective: 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.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	☺ Review Constitution **May 2009**				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	☺ Review Constitution **May 2010**				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	☺ Review Constitution **May 2011**				
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	As above	**Linked Indicators**	LOD LI 9, 10
	Residual	Low				

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 40	*Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.*

Service Objective: 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.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	⏱ To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting ⏱ To induct all new members – **by October 2009**					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	⏱ To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting ⏱ To induct all new members – **by October 2010**					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	⏱ To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting ⏱ To induct all new members – **by October 2011**					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Operational Director & Monitoring Officer	**Linked Indicators**	LOD LI 9, 10
	Residual	Low				

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Service Objectives and Key Milestones - Personnel

Corporate Priority: 6	Corporate Effectiveness & Business Efficiency
Key Area Of Focus: 39	*Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information.*

Service Objective: 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.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	⏱ Implement Priority Actions identified within the new People Strategy – **March 2010**					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	⏱ Implement Priority Actions identified within the new People Strategy – **March 2011**					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	⏱ Implement Priority Actions identified within the new People Strategy – **March 2012**					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Principal Personnel Officer	**Linked Indicators**	Not applicable
	Residual	Low				

Service Objective: LOD O5	To ensure that the Council rewards staff in accordance with legislation through a modern pay and grading system.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	⏱ Implement the outcomes of the completed Pay and Grading Review and undertake any appeal hearings that may arise **December 2009**[2]					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	Not applicable					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	Not applicable					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	**Responsible Officer**	Principal Personnel Officer	**Linked Indicators**	
	Residual	Low				

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[2] Although originally anticipated for completion in 2007-08 this work required reprogramming due to the extension of union consultation.

5.2 Performance Indicators and Targets (Statutory & Local Indicators):

Ref[3]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007 / 8 Actual	2006 / 07 Quartiles[4] (All England)			Halton 2008 / 09 Target	Halton 2008 / 09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09 / 10	10/11	11 / 12
Corporate											
LOD 1	Proportion of departmental working days lost to sickness absence (%)	CP 6 AOF 40	5. 2				4. 5		4. 0	3. 5	
LOD 2	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (56 Total)	CP 6 AOF 40	51				52 (92%)		56 (100%)	56 (100%)	
LOD 3	% of Members attending at least one organised Training Event	CP 6 AOF 40	100				100		100	100	
LOD 4 (BVPI 11)	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are: -	CP 6 AOF 40									
	Women		46.86	43. 56	33. 33	24. 11	45.00		45.00	45.00	
	From black and ethnic minority communities		1.84	4. 53	1. 42	0. 00	2. 00		2. 50	2.75	
	With a disability		3.05	5. 49	2. 70	0. 00	3. 30		3. 40	3.50	
LOD 5 (BVPI 12)	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	CP 6 AOF 40	12.58	8. 09	9. 32	10. 73	11. 25		11. 00	10.50	

[3] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[4] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators. BVPI's will be replaced by the National Indicator Data Set (NIS) from April 2008

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Ref[5]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007 / 8 Actual	2006 / 07 Quartiles[6] (All England)			Halton 2008 / 09 Target	Halton 2008 / 09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09 / 10	10/11	11/12
Corporate cont'd											
LOD 6 (BVPI 14)	Early retirements (excluding ill-health) as a percentage of the total workforce.	CP 6 AOF 40	0.08	0.18	0. 53	0. 97	0. 14		0. 12	0.10	
LOD 7 (BVPI 15)	% Of employees retiring on grounds of ill-health as a percentage of total workforce	CP 6 AOF 40	0.15	0. 00	0. 18	0. 32	0. 12		0. 11	0.10	
LOD 8 (BVPI 16a)	No of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act as a % of the total workforce.	CP 6 AOF 40	1.41	4. 43	3. 03	1. 90	1. 50		1. 75	2.00	
LOD 09 (BVPI 16b)	% Of economically active disabled people in LA area.	N/A	TBA				N/A		N/A	N/A	
LOD 10 (BVPI 17a)	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	CP 6 AOF 40	0. 83	5. 20	2. 10	1. 00	1. 00		2. 00	3. 00	
LOD 11 (BVPI 17b)	Economically active BME population in LA area.	N/A	TBA				N/A		N/A	N/A	

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[5] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[6] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

Ref[7]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 200 7 / 8 Actual	2006 / 07 Quartiles[8] (All England)			Halton 2008 / 09 Target	Halton 2008 / 09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09 / 10	10 / 11	11 / 12
Fair Access											
LOD 12	Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	CP 6 AOF 31	686				600		600	600	
LOD 13	No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums)	CP 6 AOF 31	138				150		175	200	
N.B. there are also a number of cross cutting performance indicators of this type presently categorised as 'Corporate' indicators.											

Ref[7]	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 200 7 / 8 Actual	Top	Middle	Bottom	Halton 2008 / 09 Target	Halton 2008 / 09 Actual	09 / 10	10 / 11	11 / 12
Service Delivery											
LOD 14	Average Time taken to issue prosecutions from receipt of instructions (working days) [NB]	CP 6	7.3				10		10	10	
LOD 15	Average time taken to complete Conveyancing Transactions	CP 6	321				350		325	300	
LOD 16	Average time taken to complete Child Care Cases (calendar days)	CP 6	222				275		250	225	

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[7] Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type.**
[8] No quartile data is available for local performance indicators

5.3 Data Quality

Good quality data provides the foundation for managing and improving services, determining and acting upon shared priorities, and accounting for performance to inspecting bodies and the local community.

In recognising this, the Council has developed a Corporate Data Quality Strategy that will provide a mechanism by which the authority can be assured that the quality of its data remains robust and fit for purpose. This strategy, which will remain subject to periodic review, establishes the key dimensions of good quality data and identifies five Key Corporate Objectives namely;

Objective 1

To provide assurance to all stakeholders that the quality of data used in decision making and in accounting for and reporting the performance of the authority, either directly or through partnership arrangements, is wholly fit for purpose.

Objective 2

That, through a rigorous process of monitoring, review and refinement, the authority's arrangements for securing data quality remain relevant, reliable and robust and that exemplary arrangements for securing data quality are achieved within the medium term

Objective 3

That arrangements for securing data quality are widely shared, communicated and understood by all of those with data quality responsibility and that relevant staff are provided with timely and appropriate guidance and support.

Objective 4

That all departments, partners and agencies that deliver services on behalf of the Council use complete, accurate and verifiable data which is collected and communicated in an effective and timely manner.

Objective 5

That all data used in the calculation of nationally prescribed performance indicators is definition compliant and verifiable and that no such indicators will be amended or qualified as a result of work undertaken by inspecting bodies.

In supporting the delivery of the corporate strategy the department will ensure that appropriate systems and processes are in place to secure the quality of its data and that such systems are subject to periodic and risk based review. In so doing the department will pay particular attention to the six key dimensions of good quality data i.e. that data is

- *Accurate*   For its intended purpose;

- *Valid*   By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;

- *Reliable*   By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;

- *Timely*   By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;

- *Relevant*   For the purpose intended;

- *Complete*   In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided.

Such systems include, for example

6.0 Performance Reporting

As detailed in the introduction to this plan, the primary purpose of the Service Plan is to provide a clear statement on what individual services are planning to achieve and to show how this contributes towards achieving the corporate priorities of the Council and or delivering its statutory responsibilities.

It is imperative that the Council and interested members of the public can keep track of how the Council and its Departments are progressing against objectives and targets, and that mechanisms are in place to enable councillors and managers to see whether the service is performing as planned.

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**

- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**

- **The inclusion of Quarterly Service Plan Monitoring reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**

- **Publication of Quarterly Service Plan monitoring reports on the Councils intranet site.**

In demonstrating it's commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and it's associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at

http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies

Additionally information and assistance can be accessed through any of the Council's Halton Direct Link facilities (HDL) or the Council's libraries.

7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans

INFORMATION TO FOLLOW

Halton Corporate Plan (2006 – 2011) – Council Priorities and Key Areas of Focus.

A Healthy Halton

1	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents, particularly children, through the encouragement of an improved dietary intake and the availability of nutritionally balanced meals within schools and other Council establishments.
2	Improving the future health prospects of Halton residents through encouraging and providing the opportunities to access and participate in physically active lifestyles.
3	Delivering programmes of education to improve the health of Halton residents.
4	Helping people to manage the effects of ill health, disability and disadvantage.
5	Actively managing the environmental factors that are detrimental to good health.
6	Providing services and facilities to maintain the independence and well-being of vulnerable people within our community.
7	Providing services and facilities to maintain existing good health and well-being.

Halton's Urban Renewal

8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential business.
9	Maintaining and developing local transport networks that meet the needs of resident's, businesses and visitors to Halton.
10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors.
11	Maintaining levels of affordable housing provision within Halton that provides for quality and choice and meets the needs and aspirations of existing and potential residents.
12	Providing opportunities for recreation and fostering conservation by developing attractive and accessible parks and open spaces.

Children & Young People in Halton

13	Improving the educational attainment of pupils in Halton, by providing effective teaching and school support
14	To improve outcomes for looked after children by increasing educational attainment, health, stability and support during transition to adulthood.
15	To deliver effective services to children and families by making best use of available resources
16	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of children & young people in Halton accessing education and training.
17	Provide an effective transition for young people from school to employment, through opportunities for work related learning, and post 16 education, voluntary and community work.
18	To reduce the conception rate amongst women under 18 by providing awareness, education and relevant support
19	To ensure a safe environment for children where they are supported and protected from abuse and neglect

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

20	To increase self-confidence and social inclusion by providing opportunities to adults to engage in basic skills learning.
21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to enhance employability skills and knowledge
22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed.
23	To provide transport facilities that meets the needs of those people in Halton accessing employment and training.
24	To sustain current employment levels by providing practical and financial advice and assistance to those from disadvantaged groups
25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture

26	Actively encouraging socially responsible behaviour by engaging with Halton's young people and by providing opportunities for them to access and take part in affordable leisure time activities.
27	Reducing the physical effects of anti-social and criminal behaviour
28	Providing and maintaining a highways and footpath network that is safe, accessible, and meets the needs and expectations of those living, working or visiting in Halton.
29	Improving the quality of community life by enhancing the visual amenity of Halton's neighbourhoods.
30	Improving the social and physical well-being of those groups most at risk within the community

Corporate Effectiveness & Efficient Service Delivery

31	Working with partners and the community, to ensure that our priorities, objectives, and targets are evidence based, regularly monitored and reviewed, and that there are plausible delivery plans to improve the quality of life in Halton, and to narrow the gap between the most disadvantaged neighbourhoods and the rest of Halton.
32	Building on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access.
33	Ensuring that we are properly structured organised and fit for purpose and that decision makers are supported through the provision of timely and accurate advice and information.
34	Attracting and managing financial resources effectively and maintaining transparency, financial probity and prudence and accountability to our stakeholders
35	Implementing and further developing procurement arrangements that will reduce the cost to the Council of acquiring its goods and services.
36	Ensuring that the Council's land and property portfolio is managed efficiently
37	Ensuring that Council buildings are safe and accessible, meet the needs of service users and the organisation, and comply with legislative requirements
38	Exploiting the potential of ICT to meet the present and future business requirements of the Council, and ensure that customer access is improved by means of electronic service delivery.
39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.

REPOPRT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 6 January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Topic Group – Transfer of Assets

WARDS: Borough-Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To seek the Board's approval to a draft Asset Transfer Policy and to forward the draft onto Executive Board for consideration.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the draft Policy be endorsed and the Executive Board be requested to consider and adopt it as Council Policy.

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 As part of the 2008/9 Work Programme the Board included a piece of work aimed at developing a policy for recommendation to the Executive Board as to how the Council might approach the issue of transferring assets to the third sector. The Government had raised the profile of this issue following publication of a report by Barry Quirk – "Making Assets Work". The Council has already had to respond to a number of requests of this nature and the Board therefore felt it would be helpful to all concerned if the Council developed a policy and criteria to guide how such requests could be dealt with in the future.

3.2 The Topic Group has now met to consider the issue and comprised Councillors Bradshaw; Ellen Cargill; Gilligan and Alan Lowe. The Working Party reviewed model procedures from other Local Authorities and guidance produced by the Development Trusts Association. The Group agreed that the Council needed to develop a policy that had a clear set of criteria, against which any potential requests for asset transfer could be tested.

Attached at Appendix A is the draft Strategy and Policy Statement which is intended to provide both guidance and a process to follow if such transfers were deemed appropriate. It makes it clear for prospective applicants the type of business case the Council would like to see in place before any consideration is given to such requests. Any decision taken will always

have to balance the specific outcomes expected from the project against the overall aims of the Council and the ongoing need of the Council to maximise income and realise capital receipts through the disposal of assets.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Developing a policy approach to this issue will provide clarity to any organisation who wishes to propose a transfer as to the criteria the Council will apply.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The criteria deals with the overall financial implications to the Council which will be a key part of the assessment process.

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

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

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Sound use of the Council's assets makes a significant contribution to delivering the Council's Priorities.

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Sound use of the Council's assets makes a significant contribution to delivering the Council's Priorities.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

Sound use of the Council's assets makes a significant contribution to delivering the Council's Priorities.

7.4 A Safer Halton

Sound use of the Council's assets makes a significant contribution to delivering the Council's Priorities.

7.5   Halton's Urban Renewal

Sound use of the Council's assets makes a significant contribution to delivering the Council's Priorities.

8.0   RISK ANALYSIS

8.1   The risk of not having a policy in place is that insufficient information is provided to Members when making such decisions. If any transfer is not properly managed then projects run the risk of running into difficulty.

9.0   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1   The existence of a policy and criteria ensures that any requests are dealt with in a fair and transparent manner.

Asset transfer strategy and policy statement

Contents

1. **Introduction**

2. **Purpose of strategy**

3. **National policy context**

4. **Local policy context and links to other strategies**

5. **Aims of community asset transfer**

6. **Principles underpinning the Council's asset transfer policy**

7. **Assessing asset transfers**

8. **Asset transfer process**

Appendix 1 – Halton Community Assets Framework Stage 1

Appendix 2 – Halton Community Assets Framework Stage 2

Appendix 3 – Halton Community Assets Framework Stage 3

Appendix 4 – Flow Diagram and Relationships

September 2008

1. Introduction

1.1 This asset transfer strategy is intended to provide a framework for Halton Borough Council and their partners to address the transfer of assets to Third Sector Organisations (TSO).

2. Purpose of the strategy

2.1 The purpose of the strategy is to set a transparent, positive and proactive framework to set the context for which asset transfer from Halton to the third sector will be considered. To achieve this it is necessary to demonstrate how community asset transfer supports Council and its wider community objectives.

3. National policy context

3.1 The ownership and the management of land and assets by community organisations is currently the focus of Government attention. Community asset ownership is increasingly seen as a means to achieve a range of key objectives, from promoting civil renewal, active citizenship and improving local public services to tackling poverty and prompting economic regeneration - through developing social enterprise and supporting the growth of community anchor organisations.

3.2 The origins of this agenda go back to the ODPM's 2003 *Communities Plan (Sustainable Communities: Building for the future)*. This acknowledged that sustainability is only possible where local communities play a leading role in determining their own future development.

3.3 The 2003 *Social Enterprise Strategy* recognised that "physical assets, such as community centres, parks and redundant buildings, are of critical importance to the development of active communities and viable community-based enterprise" and committed the Government to exploring how to support asset transfer to social enterprises.

3.4 *Firm Foundations,* the Government's framework for community capacity building published in 2004 has as an aim the development of community anchor organisations.

3.5 The former ODPM's *Citizen Engagement and Public Services: Why Neighbourhoods Matter* (2005) sought to promote citizen involvement in public services and proposed a menu of options for action at the local level, from neighbourhood management to neighbourhood charters with cautious support given to 'Neighbourhood ownership' and specific mention of asset ownership by Development Trusts.

3.6 A Governmental Working Group was set up to look at the issue further, and its recommendations were published in Communities Taking Control: Final Report of the Cross-sector Work Group on Community Ownership and Management of Assets (2006).

3.7 The 2006 *Local Government White Paper* confirmed the Government's intention to increase opportunities for community asset ownership and management, and promoted asset transfer as part of a local authority's 'place-shaping' role. It indicated that a fund would be established to help with this, later announced as the £30 million Community Assets Fund managed by the Big Lottery Fund.

3.8 After the Working Group reported its findings, the then Secretary of State at DCLG Ruth Kelly MP established a review in September 2006 to look at the powers, policies and barriers relating to the transfer of public assets to community organisations, headed by Barry Quirk.

3.9 The Quirk Review's findings *Making Assets Work* were published in May 2007. All the Review's recommendations were accepted by the Government and published a week later as an implementation plan in *Opening the transfer window: the government's response to the Quirk Review*.

3.10 The Quirk Review found that a careful increase in the community's stake in an asset can bring a wide range of additional benefits for the community, the organisation receiving the asset and the local authority facilitating the transfer. The benefits of community ownership and management can outweigh risks and opportunity costs.

3.11 Quirk believes that there are already a sufficient range of powers and policies to enable and encourage community control of the public land and buildings. What is required is political will, managerial imagination and a more business-focussed approach by the public and voluntary sectors.

3.12 One of the central problems regarding the transfer of public assets has been the onus on public sector bodies to secure the best use of their assets to meet their objectives. This is usually taken to mean disposing of surplus assets on the market at best price - to meet the costs of local service provision and reduce pressure on council taxes.

3.13 However, local authorities have been given discretionary powers under the Local Government Act 1972 to dispose of land in any manner they wish and the government recognises that there may be circumstances where an authority considers it appropriate to dispose of land or property undervalue. The General Disposal Consent of 2003 grants local authorities the power to dispose of assets (freehold or leasehold) at less than best consideration within defined limits to secure the promotion or the improvement of the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of their area. Government advice indicates that any decision should be made by comparing the very tangible benefits of a market value disposal

with the less tangible benefits a transfer may bring to the wider community.

3.14   The Government's Empowerment Action Plan 2007 - includes actions relating to the transfer of assets and to a programme of support for community anchors, including the availability of further funding to support the development of anchors.

3.15   Guidance to local authorities on asset management has not covered the potential opportunities offered by community asset transfer. However, since the publication of the Quirk Review this has begun to change with an increasing number of local authorities setting individual transfers within strategic approach. The Framework for Local Authority Asset Management Planning published by CLG in February 2008 now includes reference to community asset transfer and indicates how Central Government guidance is now effectively bringing the community empowerment and asset management agendas together.

4. Local policy context and links to other strategies

4.1 For an asset transfer to take place the submission must demonstrate its contribution to the five aims of the Corporate Plan

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

In addition it will need to demonstrate its contribution to the relevant sponsoring department, service plan and the Council's Asset Management Plan.

5. Aims of Community Asset Transfer

5.1 The Council's physical assets include land, buildings and other structures used for a variety of different social, community and public purposes. For some of these assets community management and ownership could deliver:
   ➢ benefits to the local community
   ➢ benefits to the Council and other public sector service providers
   ➢ benefits for the organisation taking ownership

5.2 The Council's assets are rarely used by everyone: their 'value' being locked-in to a particular use or a particular group of people. Changing ownership or management offers opportunities to extend the use of a building or piece of land, increasing its value in relation to the numbers of people that benefit and the range of opportunities it offers. Community-led ownership offers additional opportunities to secure resources within a local area and to empower local citizens and communities.

5.3 Assets will be transferred to community groups by the Council in order to promote the widest public value that can be achieved in relation to, for example:
- Community empowerment
- Area-wide benefits
- Building the capacity of the third sector and encouraging a sustainable third-sector
- Economic development and social enterprise
- Improvements to local services
- Value for money

6. Principles of the asset transfer policy

6.1 The Council's policy on community asset transfer is underpinned by the following principles:

- Any proposed asset transfer must support the aims and priorities of the Council as set out in adopted policy.
- The Council views its policy on community asset disposal as part of a long-term programme of support to, and partnership with, the third sector.
- The Council will take a Strategic approach to Asset Transfer through regular reviews of the asset transfer potential of its assets, and the establishment of priorities linked for example, to priority neighbourhoods, the exit-strategies from regeneration programmes, or the potential of particular high-profile cases etc;
- The Council will have a transparent corporate process for asset transfer which includes a clear point of first contact and clear stages and timescales for each party;
- The Council will adopt an agreed method of assessing the benefits of the transfer (linked to corporate priorities) which allows a comparison with market disposal;
- Any disposal at less than best consideration will be accompanied by a service level agreement (SLA) identifying the benefits and how these will be monitored and measured, together with the remedies available to both parties if the SLA is not met.
- Once the policy framework has been established within the Council, opportunities to extend the approach to other public bodies through the Local Strategic Partnership will be sought.

7. Assessing asset transfers

7.1 The asset transfer decision is essentially a choice between:
> Doing nothing;
> Expenditure on other services made possible as a result of a 'commercial' disposal;
> The benefits generated by the transfer of the asset to one or other community group (if there are competing proposals).

7.2 In assessing proposals for asset transfer, the Council will attempt to measure the relative benefits and risks of these three options in order to justify its decision and the level or discount proposed. It will also relate these benefits to Council priorities such as objectives from the Community Strategy.

7.3 Critical to the success of any transfer is having a clear rationale backed by a robust business-case demonstrating the ability of the recipient to manage the asset effectively, including an assessment of the financial and organisational capacity of the organisation. A social benefit assessment framework will be applied by the Council.

7.4 The organisation wishing to take on an asset would also need to provide a 'business case' for transfer at the outset. The main elements of a business case are set out below:

Elements of the business case

> How need for proposed transfer and use of asset has been identified – what needs will the transfer meet?
> Benefits case as a result of transfer– what will be different and how it will be measured – agreed criteria to be set out
> Capacity of the TSO to acquire and manage the asset – reference to any accreditations achieved e.g. Community Matters 'visible' standards or DTA 'healthcheck'
> Business case for future uses for the asset e.g. cashflow forecasts
> Type of transfer sought and why
> Statement from sponsoring department supporting the proposal
> Terms of any Service Level Agreement
> Capacity building plan and how this will be delivered
> Details of how the proposed use of the asset will be monitored and details of 'fall back' arrangements should the transfer prove to be not sustainable

7.5 Appendices 1 and 2 show the information required in ordered for an informed decision to be taken around any potential transfer. Full information will be provided to the Executive Board Sub Committee prior to any decision being made.

8. The asset transfer process

8.1 In considering the potential for asset transfer the Council will follow the process as set out in the diagram attached as appendix 4. Key milestones in this process are set out in the table below with indicative timescales.

9. Post transfer action

9.1 The transfer will be subject to ongoing monitoring as described in Appendix 3 to measure the success of the project and provide valuable information in considering future transfers.

Applications for Asset Transfer from community groups will be progressed through the following stages

Asset transfer process – key stages

Stage	Who is responsible	Timescale for completion (to be added following further discussion)
Identify need in community for physical base	Council and local partners and community	
Assets for potential transfer identified	Community organisation or Council following asset review	
TSO identifies building for transfer. Complete business case for transfer & Halton Community Assets Framework Stage 1 (Appendix 1)	Community (with sponsoring department assistance)	
Complete initial assessment using Halton Community Assets Framework Stage 2 (Appendix 2) – establish level of discount (if applicable)	Sponsoring department	
Recommendation on transfer –yes refer to Members; no, provide full feedback. Identify alternative solution – e.g. allocation of % of capital receipt to group	Council cross-departmental group on assets	
Decision on transfer	Executive Board Sub Committee	
If yes, negotiate terms	Council legal and property departments and community organisation	
Agree SLA and monitoring arrangements - successfully transfer asset (Appendix 3)		
Total transfer process		

HALTON COMMUNITY ASSETS FRAMEWORK
(to be completed by the Applicant / Community Group)
STAGE 1

PRELIMINARY BUSINESS PLAN/APPLICATION STAGE: COMMUNITY ASSET CHECKLIST:

PROPERTY/LAND TRANSFER OPPORTUNITY:	(Enter building name/land & area location):
NAME OF APPLICANT/COMMUNITY GROUP:	Brief summary of current use:
NAME AND DIRECTORATE OF SPONSOR	Brief summary of proposed use:

PART 1 – THE ORGANISATION

TYPE OF ORGANISATION:	YES/NO
Is the applicant:	
- Project steering group with no constitution or Terms Of Reference?	
- Project steering group with a constitution or Terms Of Reference?	
- Development Trust?	
- Recognised legal vehicle .e.g. registered Company Ltd by Guarantee or Community Interest Company?	
- Registered Charity?	
- If no legal structure currently exists, has the applicant identified the appropriate legal model to be adopted & timescale to achieve status?	
- Comments if any	

MANAGEMENT SKILLS & EXPERIENCE:	
- Describe the management and governance arrangements you have in place	
- What expertise do the group have to deliver and sustain the proposal?	
- If refurbishment or building works are required has the group sought advice and what is that advice?	
- Explain what risk assessments have been conducted and what are the proposals to mitigate these risks?	

ORGANISATIONAL CAPACITY AND QUALITY ASSURANCE–	
(Assessment of group 's level of organisational robustness and quality of governance to deliver on the business case)	
Describe what experience the group has developed to enable it to deliver this proposal, include any quality assurance / quality management systems there are in place. Describe any external checks that have been carried out on the organisation (DTA or similar) and how long the organisation has been operating.	

FIRST STAGE, PART 2 – FINANCIAL ROBUSTNESS

FINANCIAL PLANNING:	
(Assessment of the stage that the organisation's business proposal has reached).	
At what stage is the applicant's business proposal?	
- Describe the current status of the business plan covering consultation and research completed to date currently being undertaken, and further work planned.	
- Describe how the business plan supports the deliverability and sustainability of the proposal.	
- The set up and revenue costs of the proposal.	
- The capital cost including all fees and associated costs has been resourced.	
- A business plan should be submitted as a separate document.	
FINANCIAL RESOURCES:	
Likelihood of Applicant to achieving required finance & sustainability – *(Assessment of group's progress against strategy for securing grant/loan/investment from partners/other sources to underpin business case i.e. investment achieved by investment needed)*	
Provide a list of value of the funding streams secured together with dates when that can be sourced. Include conditions / restrictions that might apply.	

| Also include non secured funding streams and anticipated dates and values. | |

BENEFITS TO BE DELIVERED

Describe the benefits to the people of Halton under the following headings:	
A Healthy Halton	
Halton's Urban Renewal	
Halton's Children & Young People	
Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton	
A Safer Halton	

COMMUNITY/ORGANISATION EMPOWERMENT:	
Value of asset being owned /managed by the community	
By transferring the asset to the group explain the benefits to the group of having and using the asset	
1. Increase the status of the group.	
2. Enable the group to have a greater influence in local decision making.	
3. Increase confidence in the group from the community.	
4. Enable increased access to further local services and / or increased usage of such services.	
5. Other benefits.	

SECOND (DETAILED BUSINESS PLAN) STAGE PART 2: PROPOSED ACTIVITIES & USES:

COMMUNITY PARTICIPATION:	
Describe the activities, numbers and age groups of the targeted groups you will be engaging with (Pre School, Young People 5-11 / Young People 11-16, Young Adults 17-25, Adult Groups up to 50, Adult Groups over 50, Particular Local Groups	

EMPLOYMENT & ENTERPRISE	
Describe any internal employment opportunities you will be creating to the delivery of the project.	

HALTON COMMUNITY ASSETS FRAMEWORK
ASSESSMENT TEMPLATE
(To be completed by HBC Sponsor in consultation with Property Services)
STAGE 2

SUMMARY PAGE

(i) Asset details

Name and address of asset (including ward)
UPRN

Current Status (as indicated on the asset register)	
Major Use (as indicated on the asset register)	
Scale and scope of the asset *Include a brief description of the physical asset*	

(ii) Recommendations

Based on current information, it is recommended that:	
The asset is not suitable for transfer.	*Drawing specifically on the information given in the form below, identify the reason for this assessment.*
The asset is potentially suitable for transfer. The detailed analysis and any remaining actions identified in this form should be taken forward as a priority, ahead of a formal Council decision.	*Drawing specifically on the information given in the form below, identify the additional information and any actions required in order to reach a decision.* *Identify the timing for this work.*
It is not possible to determine whether the asset is suitable and further work, identified below, is needed to reach an initial assessment.	*Drawing specifically on the information given in the form below, identify the additional information and any actions required in order to reach a decision.* *Identify the timing for this work.*

(iii) Record of agreement and next steps

Completed by	
Comments from	
Date completed	
Date discussed by Asset Management Working Group	
Note of next steps/ actions requested by Asset Management Working Group	
Date discussed by Management Team	
Date presented to Executive Board Sub Committee	

(iv) Financial implications

Based on current information	
What is the current value of the property and what is this assessment based on?	
What revenue for the Council is generated through the asset?	
What are the current levels of running costs, including utilities, planned preventative maintenance and responsive repairs?	
Are there any significant costs associated with the building in the foreseeable future?	
Are there any other financial implications that should be considered as part of an assessment to transfer the asset?	

Conclusion: Based on the information above what are the implications in relation to any potential transfer of this asset?	

(v) Current asset use and circumstances

Details of use and circumstances	Y	N	Specify relevant details.
Is there an existing lease in place?			*Add details including:* *name and relevant information about occupants;* *length of time of current occupancy; any lease arrangements;*
Is the asset currently used?			*Add details including* *Main and any subsidiary uses, any services offered; level of use; identity of user-groups; and whether of local, borough-wide or wider significance.*
What is the current condition of the asset?			*Add details, with estimated costs of any repairs/maintenance. Identify how recent this information is.*
Is the asset suitable and/or sufficient for its current use?			*Add details, including whether the asset complies with the Disability Discrimination Act. Are there particular features that might restrict use of the asset?*
Are there any other organisations affected by the ownership and use of the asset?			*Add details including in relation to existing freehold/leasehold arrangements, other contractual arrangements or any funding associated with the asset where conditions on its use or ownership may apply.*
Are there any other circumstances directly relevant to potential transfer?			*Add details, for example housing stock transfer, existing contractual or financial obligations on the asset, covenants on the asset, whether HRA funded.*

Conclusion: Based on the information above is there any reason to conclude that this asset should not be transferred? Are there any reasons to conclude this is a potentially suitable asset for transfer?	*Specify, citing the main justification for any conclusion.*

(vi) Potential future use

Details of use and circumstances	Y	N	Specify relevant details.
Has the Council identified plans for the asset?			*Add details.*
Have any organisations expressed an interest in the asset?			*Add details, including name and relevant information of the organisation,*
If there is an organisation that has expressed an interest - have they identified what they want the asset for?			*Add details.*
If there is an organisation that has expressed an interest - do they have a business case supporting their bid?			*Add details, including an assessment of the viability of the business plan.*
If there is an organisation that has expressed an interest - do they have the capacity to undertake ownership? If not, what support would they need to develop that capacity?			*Add details, including experience of facilities management and the financial viability of the organisation.*
Are there any other organisations that may be a suitable candidate for transfer?			*Add details, including name and relevant information of the organisation, what they want the asset for and any proposed terms of transfer. If more than one are these mutually exclusive?*

Conclusion: Based on any information above are there any viable proposals for community-based ownership and use? If not, should attempts be made to encourage one?	*Specify, citing the main justification for any conclusion, and any further work required.* *If there is more than one proposal for future use are these mutually exclusive, what needs to happen in order to progress these?*

(vii) Benefits: What are the expected benefits of transferring the asset

<u>Mandatory benefits:</u> All suitable candidates for transfer are expected to empower local communities and represent value for money and contribute to the Council's five priorities.

Based on current information, would transferring the asset:	Y	N	Specify relevant details.
Community empowerment			
Achieve one or more of the following: • create a more direct connection between the asset and local people • enable the local community to respond to local issues • strengthen local identity • provide a means for local citizens and groups to access additional resources			
Value for money			
Achieve one or more of the following: • Present an opportunity for a 'non-operational' asset to be used • Represent the best use of the asset, over the medium/longterm. • Create efficiency savings			*Identify any opportunity costs that would arise from using the asset in another way, including sale at market value.*
Council's Priorities			
• A Healthy Halton • Halton's Urban Renewal • Halton's Children & Young People • Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton • A Safer Halton			*Specific contribution.*

APPENDIX 2

Wider benefits: Successful projects will be assessed against expected benefits in one of the following four categories:

- Area-wide benefits
- A sustainable third-sector
- Economic development and social enterprise
- Improvements to local services

The Council will seek to achieve a balanced approach against these criteria, with an equal distribution of projects across the categories.

Based on current information, would transferring the asset:	Y	N	Specify relevant details.
Area wide benefits			
Achieve one or more of the following: • Complement existing services or activity in the locality or other potential asset transfers. Potential to establish a 'hub' of activity with benefits 'greater than the sum of parts'. • Fill a gap in provision locally			*Where there is a link to another potential asset transfer this should be identified and the assessment of each linked.*
Promote a sustainable third sector			
Achieve one or more of the following: • Improve capacity/sustainability of an organisation (e.g. by being able to borrow against the asset, or create a revenue stream from the asset) • Add value by creating opportunities for individual organisations to work together, for example using the asset as a 'hub'.			
Economic development and social enterprise			
• Bring additional investment into Halton • Improve existing economic activity within the local area • Encourage social enterprise			
Improvements to local services			
Achieve one or more of the following: • Improve or safeguard a service that would otherwise be lost • Present an opportunity to deliver specific council priorities			

Conclusion: Identify the main expected benefit of transferring the asset. To what extent can these benefits be quantified?	*Insert one of 'Area-wide benefits'; 'Promoting a sustainable 3rd sector'; 'Economic development and social enterprise and 'Improvements to local services'* *What are the benefits expected a) to the local community b) to communities of interest (including faith and ethnic groups)*

(viii) Risks

Based on current information, what are the key risks involved in transfer:	Y	N	Specify relevant details. What mitigation might address this risk? Include details of any third parties that could be involved
Potential to disadvantage particular individuals or impact negatively on the local community or communities of interest			*For example, what is the potential impact on current users of the asset?*
Potential for a negative impact on community cohesion			*What is the potential impact of transfer on the local community? Are there existing tensions affecting the community?*
Potential loss of existing community services			*What are the implications of the transfer of the asset in relation to current service provision and community facilities? Does the transfer create any risk to continued provision in the longer-term. Can appropriate safeguards be identified that would maintain the asset for community benefit (e.g. restricting use, modifications and/or sale of the asset)*
Capacity of recipient to manage asset			*What level of expertise in facilities management exists within the potential recipient? What is the capacity of the recipient to take on ownership and management effectively?*
Potential for the asset to become a financial liability for recipient			*Are the costs of running and maintaining the facility known, and are they understood by the potential recipient? Have they got a business plan that sets out how they plan to use the asset?*
Capacity of recipient to deliver promised services/outcomes			*Is there a robust business plan in place? Has the potential recipient got a track record in this area? Does the potential recipient have sufficient capacity to deliver what they propose?*
Capture of asset by unrepresentative/extremist minority			*Are there safeguards in place in the short, medium and long-term that will prevent the asset from being used to the detriment of the wider community?*
Transfer contravenes State Aid rules			*Is there any potential that the transfer could distort competition and affect trade between EU Member States?*
Conflict with other legal, regulatory constraints			*Is the asset a listed building? What are the implications of this? Are there any other regulatory or planning constraints that affect the asset or an area that includes the asset?*
Potential for ongoing Council liability			*What are the implications of the transfer in terms of maintenance and health and safety? Are responsibilities clear? What are the insurance arrangements?*
Lack of value for money			*Are the opportunity costs understood? Are the potential benefits clear and supported by a strong business case? Do the benefits exceed the costs?*
Conflict with other funders			*Is there any funding associated with the asset where conditions on its use or ownership may apply?*

Conclusion: Identify the key risk(s) involved and mitigation that might address this. Identify the residual risk that remains.	

Appendix 3

HALTON COMMUNITY ASSETS FRAMEWORK

STAGE 3

Transfer and subsequent Monitoring Arrangements

Upon completion of the transfer the following documents shall be in place to assist with the subsequent management and monitoring of the transfer.

SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENT

The TSO shall have a SLA in place in a format that has been agreed with the sponsoring department.
The SLA will describe the service(s) to be provided together with the milestones to be achieved with timescales and ongoing targets to maintain existing provision or growth (all of which will be summarised from Appendix1). It will describe the forecast cashflow in both short and medium term.

BUILDING LOG BOOK

Halton Borough Council will provide a building log book containing relevant information to the building being transferred and necessary actions required by the TSO. The TSO will be responsible for updating the log book for any works they undertake before occupation and any later alterations.
The TSO will maintain within the document evidence of all statutory requirements necessary in managing the building.

ONGOING MONITORING

The TSO will provide an annual report to the Sponsoring Department showing achievements against the SLA and proposed improvements for the forthcoming year.
Failure to meet the targets set out in the SLA could result in the transfer being terminated.
The TSO will provide a short report on the building maintenance works that have been carried out in the previous year, the TSO is reminded that should it wish to carry out any alterations to the building then Landlords permission is required in advance.
HBC will at a time agreed with the TSO visit and inspect the building including the Building Log Book. If Statutory works have not been carried out and recorded HBC will have no option but to close the building with immediate effect and it remain closed until such time as the statutory duties have been fulfilled

Model asset transfer process diagram	**Appendix 4**

Joint action

Community

Local authority

Community needs Identified

Sustainable Community Strategy

Community Plan

Community consulted

Request to take over building

Building capacity and building case

Community org identified to take asset on

Independent support for business case

Review of assets/internal challenge process

Flag up disposal intent

Business case for disposal; community impact assessment

Better services driver

Resources to develop

Business Case and SLA

If decision is **yes** Negotiation over terms

Evaluation of business case:
1. assessment of impact on community
2. assessment of capacity of TSO

Initial decision to recommend asset transfer proposal or not

Transfer

Monitor Impact and benefit

Ongoing Monitoring

Agenda Item 6c

REPORT: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 6 January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board Work Programme 2009/10

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0   PURPOSE AND CONTENT OF REPORT

1.1   This report is the first step in developing a work programme of Topics for the Board to examine in 2009/10. While the Board ultimately determines its own Topics, suggestions for Topics to be considered may also come from a variety of other sources in addition to Members of the Board themselves, including members of the Council's Executive, other non-Executive Members, officers, the public, partner and other organisations, performance data and inspections.

1.2   The key tasks for Board Members are:
   - to suggest and gather Topic ideas on issues relevant to the Board's remit:
   - to develop and prioritise a shortlist of possible Topics for examination in 2009/10, bearing in mind the Council's agreed selection criteria (Annex 1):
   - to decide on a work programme of 2 or 3 Topics to be undertaken in the next municipal year.

2.0   RECOMMENDED: that the Policy and Performance Board

(1) Put forward and debate its initial suggestions for Topics to be included in the Board's 2009/10 work programme

(2) Develop and informally consult on a shortlist of its own and others' 2009/10 Topic suggestions ahead of the Board's meeting on 24th February 2009, bearing in mind the Council's Topic selection criteria

(3) Decide at its 24th February meeting on a work programme of 2 or 3 Topics to be examined in 2009/10.

3.0   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Annex 1 – Topic selection checklist

4.0   POLICY IMPLICATIONS

It is envisaged that topics eventually selected will support and contribute to the development of the Council's priorities.

5.0   OTHER IMPLICATIONS

None at this stage

6.0   IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1   **Children and Young People in Halton**

None at this stage

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

None at this stage

6.3   **A Healthy Halton**

None at this stage

6.4   **A Safer Halton**

None at this stage

6.5   **Halton's Urban Renewal**

None at this stage

7.0   RISK ANALYSIS

The main risk is in terms of capacity to undertake the work. This may be managed in the eventual selection of topics to be considered

8.0   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

All topics finally selected will take into account equality and diversity implications.

Annex 1

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY WORK PROGRAMME

Topic <u>Selection</u> Checklist

This checklist leads the user through a reasoning process to identify a) why a topic should be explored and b) whether it makes sense to examine it through the overview and scrutiny process. More "yeses" indicate a stronger case for selecting the Topic.

#	CRITERION	Yes/No
	<u>Why</u>? Evidence for why a topic should be explored and included in the work programme	
1	Is the Topic **directly aligned with and have significant implications for at least 1 of Halton's 5 strategic priorities & related objectives/PIs, and/or a key central government priority?**	
2	Does the Topic **address an identified need** or issue?	
3	Is there a **high level of public interest or concern about the Topic** e.g. apparent from consultation, complaints or the local press	
4	Has the Topic been **identified through performance monitoring** e.g. PIs indicating an area of poor performance with scope for improvement?	
5	Has the Topic been **raised as an issue requiring further examination through a review, inspection or assessment, or by the auditor?**	
6	Is the Topic area likely to have a **major impact on resources or be significantly affected by financial or other resource problems** e.g. a pattern of major overspending or persisting staffing difficulties that could undermine performance?	
7	Has some **recent development or change** created a need to look at the Topic e.g. new government guidance/legislation, or new research findings?	
8	Would there be **significant risks** to the organisation and the community **as a result of <u>not</u> examining this topic**?	
	<u>Whether</u>? Reasons affecting whether it makes sense to examine an identified topic	
9	**Scope for impact** - Is the Topic something the Council can actually influence, directly or via its partners? Can we make a difference?	
10	**Outcomes –** Are there clear improvement outcomes (not specific answers) in mind from examining the Topic and are they likely to be achievable?	
11	**Cost: benefit** - are the benefits of working on the Topic likely to outweigh the costs, making investment of time & effort worthwhile?	
12	**Are PPBs the best way to add value** in this Topic area? Can they make a	

	distinctive contribution?	
13	Does the organisation have the **capacity** to progress this Topic? (e.g. is it related to other review or work peaks that would place an unacceptable load on a particular officer or team?)	
14	Can PPBs contribute meaningfully given the **time** available?	

REPORT TO:	Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	6th January 2009
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director, Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT:	The 0303 Telephone Number
WARDS:	Borough-Wide

1   PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1   To advise members of the rationale behind the introduction of the new public telephone number (0303 333 4300) for contacting the council.

2   RECOMMENDATION ; That the report be noted.

3   BACKGROUND

3.1   Driven by the Cabinet Office there has been a campaign to reduce the number of telephone numbers that the public have to ring in order to get a service from an organisation.

3.2   Introducing the new 0303 number enables the council to promote a single number for customers to call for all services.

3.3   With this in mind and like many other Public service providers it was decided to implement a 03 number for Halton in order to minimise confusion for our customers whilst provide customers with a 'single' contact number which they can use from any phone whether that be a land line or a mobile and be charged the same rate nation wide.

3.4   Members will have seen in the press the controversy recently over the use of 084 numbers in the NHS this in the main is because currently some numbers do not form part of customers telephone contract packages with their supplier and they can be charged significantly more for ringing them. There is also evidence that the public are generally sceptical about 08 numbers because of the view that their charges are high and therefore people are reluctant to use them. To alleviate this problem OFCOM introduced the 03 numbering series.

3.5   A recent OFCOM publication on this subject said "…allocating a new type of number – starting with '03' - for those businesses, public services and voluntary services who want a common national number, but who do not wish to charge consumers a premium for contacting them. Consumers will pay the same amount for these calls as they would for calling a geographic number:"

3.6 The new 0303 333 4300 number does not replace the original 0151 907 8300 number but is masked over it. Therefore, customers who call 0151 907 8300 will continue to be answered and dealt with by the Contact Centre advisors as at present. We are however trying to steer customers away from using the 0151 424 2061 number which is a BT analogue number and does present issues to inbound coming calls through the Contact Centre.

3.7 In order to promote a 'One number for your Council' officers have been asked to start using the 0303 number on all new stationery but only when they require to reorder/amend existing stationary. Other publicity material will be produced using existing budgets allowing the new number to be introduced at minimal cost.

3.8 Alongside this initiative officers are being encouraged to use their Direct Dial numbers to help reduce the large amount of 'switchboard' calls that are currently handled. Fully utilising this facility could save significant sums of money.

4 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There are no policy implications associated with this report.

5 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Ensuring that the cost of contacting the Council is kept to a minimum for the public helps ensure that people access the services they are entitled to.

6 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are no specific risks associated with this report.

7 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 By ensuring the cost of calls to the Council is kept to a minimum it will hopefully prevent the cost of a call being a barrier for people on low income contacting the Council.

8 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

8.1 None

Agenda Item 6e

REPORT TO:	Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board
DATE:	6 January 2009
REPORTING OFFICER:	Strategic Director Corporate and Policy
SUBJECT:	Scrutiny Review of Customer Services
WARDS:	Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present a progress report to Corporate Services PPB regarding the Scrutiny Review of Customer Services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

a) the Corporate Services PPB considers and comments upon the report of the Topic Group

b) the Corporate Services PPB endorses the plans for taking the review forward subject to any amendments arising from above

c) the report be sent to Executive Board for consideration

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 3rd June 2008 the Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board recommended that the Customer Complaints Review be followed up by a scrutiny review of Customer Focus, and it was agreed that this should be conducted by the same group of Members.

3.2 There are two strands to this Scrutiny topic:
- The first strand is to explore how best to implement the new Customer Excellence Standard, produced by Cabinet Office in February this year, to help drive improvement and consistency throughout the organisation.

- 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.

4.0 PROGRESS TO DATE

4.1 The Customer Services Topic Group of Board Members and officers held their initial meeting on 10th December 2008. The meeting discussed:

The Scope and Purpose of the Review
The scope and purpose of the group remain as originally agreed.

The new Customer Service Excellence Standard
The aim of Government is for "public services to be efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empower - with the citizen always and everywhere at the heart of public service provision".
Standards, therefore, have been prepared and Local Authorities are expected to achieve accreditation through a Nationally recognised process.

Progress of the Work of the Officer Group
The Strategic Director, Health and Community was asked to bring together an Officer group representing all Directorates to consider the standards and the development of a strategy. To date five officer group meetings have been held. As a result the following action has been undertaken.

- Research has been undertaken, including a visit to Rotherham Borough Council, who have received accreditation under the Cabinet Office Standards. In addition, representatives from the group agreed to "test" the toolkit standards against their own service areas and this has helped to shape the draft Customer Services Strategy. (Appendix 1).

- The group have considered working with one of the assessing organisations and meetings with CSE Assessment Services have taken place to better understand the process.

- Subject to Standing Orders, the group wish to procure CSE or a similar organisation to assess the Council's Customer Services. Initially this will involve a corporate assessment. This does not receive accreditation in its own right but provides a basis against which to assess other services which can than receive accreditation in their own right.

- It has been suggested that following a corporate assessment, HDL Revenue & Benefits should be the first service to be assessed against the standard because of the strong direct link with customers.

Next Steps
It is proposed that the:
- A brief/specification be prepared in order to obtain quotes from potential accreditation companies and that a company is appointed to prepare and assess the Council in relation to the Customer Service Excellence Standard.
- All current corporate strategies relevant to customer service

practices be reviewed to ensure documentation is relevant and up to date.
- A set of corporate guidelines be developed in relation to helping services to profile their customers and understand the best way to engage with them, through survey, focus groups etc., and the most relevant way to feedback information and document these undertakings.
- A method be established for sharing good practice in relation to customer service practices across the Council and its partners.
- A set of corporate customer service standards be developed in conjunction with staff and customers
- New technology be investigated to ensure the most recent forms of access are available to customers.
- Appropriate training be given to partners, Member and staff.

3.4 The topic group approved the actions of the Officer Group to date and agreed with the next steps subject to the Officer Group reporting periodically to the Topic Group and reporting information to the Corporate Services PPB and Executive Board

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Financial - There will be a cost for undertaking the assessments and these will be contained within existing budgets.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 The corporate customer service strategy will impact on all council directorates and priorities and its development should assist in more effective services and outcomes for customers.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS
Failure to adopt the standards may disadvantage the Council's approach to customer services and outcomes.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES
The strategy and achievement of the Standard will ensure equal and fair access to customer services by all customers and potential customers

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Notes of Topic Group	2nd Floor	Rob MacKenzie

| Meeting | Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes | |
| Notes of Officer Group meetings and draft Customer Services Strategy | 6th Floor Municipal Building Kingsway Widnes | Dwayne Johnson |

Customer Service Strategy
2008 – 2011

Making it Happen – Improving Customer Services in Halton

Supporting the Councils Corporate Plan 2006-11

FOREWORD

This strategy is about our vision for the future of Customer Services in Halton. It is a vision that puts our citizens at the heart of public service provision and will drive customer focused change that will help us achieve services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering.

Halton, as a Council, needs to meet the new challenges that the government have put forward in its Customer Service Excellence Standard, produced by the Cabinet Office in February this year, (2008).

This Strategy aims to lay down how this will be achieved. It will identify methods for continuous improvement by analysing the current capability of the Council and its partners and using these findings to improve on the efficiency, effectiveness, excellence, equitability and empowerment that already exists in relation to customer services within the Council.

It recognises the importance of gaining and understanding the opinion of customers in order to shape the future design of services. It also places value on the input from the staff that deliver these services, and will be looking to find ways to allow individuals and teams to acquire new skills around customer focus and engagement that will enable them to deliver improved services for customers.

Research indicates there are certain areas of particular importance to customers, these are: delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude.

This Strategy will help to develop new approaches to address these issues and will do so by basing itself on the governments Customer Service Excellence Standard, which addresses these issues through five main categories: Customer Insight, the Culture of the Organisation, Information and Access, Delivery, and Timeliness and Quality of Service.

The success of the strategy will depend on positive joint action between the various departments of the Council and with other public and private organisations and local voluntary and community sector groups. In particular, we must ensure that our citizens are at the very heart of the decision-making processes about the type and variety of services they want and need. This document is the first step towards that commitment.

CONTENTS

1.0 WHAT IS CUSTOMER SERVICE EXCELLENCE?

Customer Service Excellence is exactly as it says. It is about ensuring that as an organisation we can provide excellent services for customers. Customers are defined in this strategy as being both 'external' and 'internal'. That is, people to whom the Council and its partners outwardly deliver services and those whom the Council and its partners work with and who contribute to part of a process of delivering services. Also, when using the word 'customer', consideration should be given to 'potential' as well as 'existing' customers.

Excellence is linked to being efficient, effective, equitable and empowering. In other words, it means making the best use of resources to provide quality services that meet the needs of customers, in a fair, consistent and informative manner, and placing the customer at the heart of the decision making process with regard to the design and provision of services. To do this it is first and foremost important to be able to know who our customers are. Once we have this 'insight' we can then ask people whether or not they are satisfied with any service they may receive and what there future needs and preferences are.

Research indicates there are certain areas of particular importance to customers, these are: delivery, timeliness, information, professionalism and staff attitude.

By using the Cabinet Office's Customer Service Excellence Standard the Council will test its capabilities, in relation to customer insight, the culture of the organisation, information and access, delivery, and timeliness and quality of service. This will help determine the Councils strengths and weaknesses in relation to these and to look for ways to remove weaknesses and build on its strengths. It will help to explore the skills that are required in the area of customer focus and engagement, which can then drive continuous improvement by building the capacity for delivering improved services. Furthermore, it is a means by which to validate the achievement of excellent standards by openly demonstrating competence, identifying key areas for improvement and making and celebrating those improvements. The Strategy will be a 'living' document, updated to take account of the changing context and learning gained from experience.

2.0 THE PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

2.1 Vision
The purpose of the strategy is to set out a plan to ensure that Halton Council and its partners provide excellent customer service. The vision is to put our citizens at the heart of public service provision in order to drive customer focused change that will help us achieve services for all that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering.

2.2 Aims
Halton aims to provide excellent customer focused services through:

Gaining Customer Insight...
- Understanding our customers
- Consulting with customers and using the information we receive to improve services
- Measuring Customer Satisfaction

The Culture of our Organisation…
- Committing to putting customers at the heart of service delivery
- Demonstrating staff are polite and friendly to customers
- Valuing the contribution staff make to delivering customer focused services

Information and Access…
- Providing information about the full range of services we provide to customers and involving them in the design of this provision
- Making our services easily accessible to all customers
- Delivering co-ordinated services with our partners

Delivery…
- Agreeing with our customers a set of service standards at the outset so that they know what they can expect from the service we provide
- Demonstrating that we benchmark and share best practice
- Our commitment to deal effectively with complaints and learn from them

Timeliness and Quality of Service…
- Advising our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service
- Meeting our standards for timeliness and quality of customer service.

2.3 Objectives

The objectives of the strategy over the next 3 years are to:

- Demonstrate leadership and commitment from the top of the organisation downwards by involving Members and senior officers of the Council.

- Review current documentation such as the corporate plan and service plans and other policies and strategies and ensure they reflect good practice and are understood by staff and customers.

- Establish the current capabilities of the Council in relation to customer service excellence by carrying out a corporate self-assessment, using the Cabinet Office self-assessment tool.

- Investigate the possibility of seeking formal accreditation to the Customer Service Excellence Standard in order to demonstrate the Councils competence and acknowledge the achievement of staff by rolling out the assessment process to other services with a view to obtaining accreditation across the board.

- Benchmark with other authorities and public and private sector organisations in order to examine their customer service arrangements, in particular the involvement of customers and staff in the development of services and customer service practices, to determine if there is any good practice that could be used in Halton's arrangements.

- Consult with customers, staff, officers, Members and partners about how they would like to be engaged in the design of services and good customer practice.

- Develop a set of agreed customer service standards outlining our promise to them in particular to interact with them in a polite, professional, informative and timely manner.

- Determine the type and range of customer service information, currently in use and how it is presented to different audiences, in particular hard to reach groups, to ensure it is relevant and easily understood, with a view to improving access by these groups and ensuring they are appropriately engaged in the decision making processes with regard to local services.

- Consider the development of new technology in relation to customer service and the physical location of public service sites in order to make services accessible to as wide a range of customers as possible.

- Determine the need for customer care training and other skills development in order to ensure that staff and partners understand the idea of customer focus and engagement, thus building their capacity for delivering improved services.

- Draw conclusions and make recommendations based on the above in order to develop an action plan through which to deliver the strategy.

Desired Outcome

The further improvement of excellent customer service practices across the Council and with partners, through which customers, staff, officers, Members and partners can develop their role in shaping excellent customer service standards. This will enable them to be confident that it will comprehensively and positively help to drive continuous improvement and allow the Council to achieve customer services that are efficient, effective, excellent, equitable and empowering and of mutual benefit to the business and the individuals and communities the Council and its partners serve.

3.0 CONTEXT
3.1 Links with National Strategies, Policies and Plans
Central Government have been keen to develop customer service practices within local authorities for some time. The introduction of Best Value in 2000, increased this focus, with the emphasis on continuous improvement in all areas of Council business.

This was then superseded by the Comprehensive Performance Assessment in which it states in the Framework for Comprehensive Performance Assessment of District Councils from 2006 that:

> "….best value Authorities have a statutory duty to put in place arrangements to secure continuous improvement in their functions having regard to a combination of economy, efficiency and effectiveness"

Further changes outlined in the White paper "Strong and Prosperous Communities", by the Department for Communities and Local Government, (DCLG), October 2006, also brought about a revision in the duty of best value. Councils were required to revise the best value duty to secure the participation of citizens and communities in the delivery of local public services, with the DCLG believing that this would help drive up public standards.

There have been other more specific changes relating to customer services such as the introduction of the e-government agenda, (ODPM 2002). This required local councils to e-enable as many of their services and functions as possible. This brought about a radical increase in the use of e-mails and internet for engaging with customers as well as the development of centralised call centres.

Other national Acts and initiatives include those around Community Engagement, Community Cohesion and Equality and Diversity. With regard to the latter there have been fundamental strides to improve equality in recent years around the areas of Disability, Race, Religion, Gender and so forth. This year, 2008, saw the introduction of the Equality and Human Rights Act. These all have fundamental implications for the way in which Councils and all businesses and individuals engage with other people in a fair and equitable way. In terms of customer service and "access" it means that methods will have to be employed to enable disabled people to access services, either physically through the provision of ramps and lifts to allow access to public buildings or through other means for example, to enable blind and deaf people to liaise with the Council. Similarly information should be accessible in other languages for those whose first language is not English.

In February of this year (2008) the Cabinet Office introduced the Customer Service Excellence Standard, effectively replacing the Charter Mark Standard. Its purpose is to put citizens at the heart of public service provision and is a practical tool for driving customer focused change.

It emphasises the need to gain customer insight and the development of an organisational culture that is customer centric. If customers can be properly identified, understood and engaged then improvements in information, access, delivery, timeliness and quality of service should follow.

Even more recently the White Paper "Communities in Control: Real People, Real Power", (July 2008), announced a review to look across the public sector, private sector and internationally to consider the feasibility and practicality of introducing and extending the idea of redress for citizens where their council services fail to meet agreed standards. The review is also taking a wider look at how the customer can be put at the heart of local service delivery.

Clearly the role of the citizen at the heart of public service provision and customer focused services is of paramount importance to central government and therefore local government as a way of driving continuous improvement and is central to customer service excellence.

3.2 Links with Local Strategies Policies and Plans
The following corporate areas, strategies etc have varying degrees of impact on the elements within the Cabinets Customer Service Excellence Standard.

- Research & Intelligence Unit resource (e.g. demographic, geographic information etc)
  Research and Intelligence Unit are able to provide advice on consultation methods/survey design etc)
- State of the Borough Report 2006
- Halton Observatory
- National BVPI survey on satisfaction every 3 years. From October 2008 this will be replaced by the Audit Commission Place Survey.
- BV Satisfaction Survey (Libraries/Leisure developments ensued)
- Citizens Panel
- HDL/Corporate Contact Centre (Corporate Standards)
- Staff Survey/Employee Opinion Survey
- Staff suggestion scheme
- IIP (in key corporate areas?)
- In house Training Programme (customer care and management training etc)
- HR guidance on recruitment procedures
- JDs and Person Specifications
- Workforce Strategy
- Working Flexibly for You Strategy
- Core Briefings(feedback form)/Monthly staff briefing sessions
- EDRs
- Performance Management Framework: recent review revealed the need to work more closely with partners, (work with LSP team, SSPs now started). Performance management training provided. Annual Performance Plan. Performance Management benchmarking with a 4 star Authority. Performance Monitoring.

- Service planning: Service Planning Guidance provided. QA process enforces the need to utilise customer/community involvement in developing services. Quarterly monitoring reports. Quarterly and annual performance reporting against standards and targets. Monthly BVPI totals. The findings of satisfaction surveys have been fed into service plans and have informed developments.
- Divisional /Team Plans
- BVPIs/National indicators
- Local Indicators
- LAA Targets
- CPA/CAA
- Government standards on best practice
- Base Budget Reviews
- Asset Management Plan/Strategy
- Equalities and Diversity Group: external validation of the Equality Standard for Local Government at Level 3 achieved. There is also equality and diversity training for front line staff and managers.
- Most issues relating to fair treatment are covered by corporate policies including customer care, equal opportunities monitoring, racial incident reporting.
- Engagement Strategy

4.0 WHERE ARE WE NOW?
4.1 Customer Insight
Customer insight is about clearly identifying who our customers are and being able to gain an in-depth understanding of them from recently acquired information. The Council wants to make sure it is effectively identifying customers, consulting with them in a meaningful way and efficiently measuring the outcomes of this approach. This is vital to the Council in order to achieve continuous improvement.

To assist in this the Council has a central Research and Intelligence Unit which holds valuable and useful demographic, geographic and socio-economic information about the residents of the borough. This information can be broken down by various characteristics and segmentation, such as age, gender and so forth and by a variety of methods including, postcode, ward or super output areas. This information is gathered through a variety of sources including census and other central government data and has helped to shape the Councils priorities.   In particular a piece of work entitled the State of the Borough Report, (2006), was influential in this process.

The Halton Observatory is another valuable and unique source of information about residents. The Observatory is an interactive information service, accessible via the internet that allows partners in the Halton Strategic Partnership to pool and share information and knowledge on Halton and its local communities. It can be used to select from a number of live, fully interactive applications for analysing and presenting the data, for example, mapping, ranking, comparing, tabling and profiling.

The Research Unit also regularly carries out Citizens Panel surveys through Halton 2000, which is an ongoing panel of Halton residents organised by Halton Borough Council. The panel contains around 2,200 local people who are broadly representative of the local authority area.

The Research and Intelligence team provide a competent range of research services and can also provide advice and guidance on; Research Methodology, Questionnaire Design, Coding, Scanning and Verifying, Data Entry, Inferential Statistical Analysis and Report Production.

Some services also undertake their own research and built up their own detailed profiles and purchased profiling systems.

The annual review of service plans also requires services to identify their customer base. In particular, they are required to say how they deal with equality and diversity issues and ensure they have an understanding of hard to reach groups.

Additionally, individual reviews are undertaken where it is essential to identify the customer base as part of the review process, for example the recent Overview and Scrutiny review of Performance Management has resulted in an Action Plan which includes the introduction of new technology and reporting to allow for a wider range of information being made available to suit the varying range of stakeholders.

Regular consultation is also a fundamental aspects of the way in which the Council engages with its customers. Methods and approaches used include focus groups, surveys and observations and the Council has developed its own Engagement Strategy with partners.

The National Best Value Performance Information survey on satisfaction has been conducted every 3 years since 2000. From October 2008 this will be replaced by the Audit Commission Place Survey. The survey covers a wide range of themes ranging from local areas, local public services, local decision making, voluntary work, respect and consideration and community safety. It will provide some very valuable answers to customer service issues when the results are available in mid – late January 2009, which may save the need for further consultation by other Council departments or partner organisations.

Customer experiences are also analysed through focus groups, mystery shoppers, customer journey mapping and customer complaints. A recent review of the Corporate Complaints review saw the production of a clearer acknowledgement letter to help make customers more aware of what they can expect from the complaint process. This came about in response to customer comments.

4.2 The Culture of the Organisation

A transition is required across the Council and its partners from a service focused to a customer focused culture. Key to this is the ability of the Council and its partners to demonstrate that they value and understand their customers and can then develop operations and procedures to meet customer needs and expectations. It requires staff to have a professional and positive attitude towards customers, lead and supported from the top, with the goal of improving service delivery.

The Councils Corporate Plan clearly states, under the priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery, (Area of Focus number 32), that the Council with its partners aims to:

"Build on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access",

This goes a long way to demonstrating that there is leadership from the top, supporting the fundamental principals on which to build customer service excellence.

Other corporate policies within the Council also reflect this such as the:
- Corporate Consultation Strategy
- Engagement Strategy
- Corporate Performance Management Framework (including Service Planning)
- Corporate Complaints
- Equality and Diversity Scheme.

This strategy in itself is also a demonstration from the top of the commitment of the Council to achieve excellent customer service practices.

Furthermore, the existence of the central Research and Intelligence Unit indicates support for clear and accurate information, much of which relates to residents and other individuals and communities using the Councils services.

It is important to the Council that staff are given the opportunity to comment on their experiences of work and services and that they are able to do this in a variety of ways, for example, periodically, there is a staff survey. In addition, every member of staff has a six monthly Employee Development Review, (EDR), where they are free to express their opinions about the work or service they are involved in and to ask about training to obtain new skills that are pertinent to their job and can help them improve their level of service delivery. Monthly Core Briefings from senior management also provide the opportunity for staff to respond to key issues, including services delivery issues, via their manager and a feedback form. Opinions can also be voiced through the staff suggestions scheme, the staff forum and 'Chats with the Chief'.

It is important that that the Council can also demonstrate their commitment to developing customer focused services through recruitment, training and development policies. Job descriptions and person specifications for those dealing with customers will, as a rule, state the need for a potential employee to be able to demonstrate their ability to communicate well with others and to be polite and friendly to customers. In addition, there are a number of relevant in-house training programmes relating to customer care and management of customer care and staff issues to assist staff in understanding customer needs and being able to deal with them in a professional and personable way. It is particularly important for front line staff or those in direct contact with the public such as HDL and contact centre staff to have appropriate training, but all staff need a general understanding of what it means to provide excellent customer service.

4.3 Information and Access

Information is important to customers. It is particularly important that it is accurate and as detailed as possible. It should include information relating to the full range of services we provide and include how and when people can contact us, and how our services are run. The management of information is part of the Councils Communication strategy/plan.   It is not something that is a one-off exercise. It aims to ensure that information is accurate and regularly updated and that information can be easily understood by customers.

The Council has a comprehensive array of methods for making information available so that people have a choice about how they access it. The Council has for some time run a contact centre, where staff are available to take calls from members of the public relating to a range of services. Customers can also have face to face contact with Council staff, through the Halton Direct Link, 'one-stop-shop' facilities, of which there are two in Widnes and two in Runcorn. The Council provides the public with one number to ring to make enquiries about all Council services. This was previously an '08' number and as such was not recognised by mobile phone operators and therefore was disadvantaging those who could only call from a mobile as this is more expensive. The Council have now updated the number so that it is an 03 number, which means that members of the public calling the Council number will now only pay the same as a local 01 number, whether they are calling from a landline or a mobile. This is a good example of how the Council is continuously trying to improve access and reflects their approach to customer services in general.

Additionally, at a corporate level there is the Communications Unit which deals with media releases for example press and radio. They also produce information leaflets and magazines for general release to the public, such as, 'Inside Halton' and 'Know Your Councillor' and ' A List of Council Services', to help inform people about the range of services. These are free publications delivered to local residents. The Council also has internet facilities for staff and customers that hold the same if not more information.

Information can also be translated for those whose first language is not English, or into Braille for people who can access information in this way. Every effort is made to allow access to facilities and information by hard-to-reach groups. The Environmental Health Section of the Council that deals with food hygiene regulations is a particularly good example of this.

In this case, the 'customers' are the food outlet owners and employees whom they inspect. It is estimated that approximately 50% of these fast food outlets are owned and run by people whose first language is not English. To combat this and ensure that the shop owners understand the regulations leaflets are translated into a number of different languages.

However, it was noticed that a number of the ethnic minorities could not read their language, but understood the spoken language. A member of staff suggested that an interactive DVD be made and taken round with a portable DVD player, so that pictures and sound were available to help in translating and understanding the regulations. This has proved very successful with the customers.

Wherever, possible services work closely with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services such as the Children and Young People's Joint Commissioning Strategy Children's Trust. These arrangements have demonstrated benefits for our customers.

Similarly the Revenue and benefits division has co-located with the pension service and established joint visiting, which has led to proven improvements for customers.

The range of methods for delivering services is carefully considered to ensure that customers can access services conveniently and also to ensure the best use of resources. To achieve this, services must focus around the customer needs rather than the service structure.

Access channels (in person, by telephone, by e-mail) and the cost of providing those channels will largely depend on the complexity of the transactions as illustrated in the diagram below:

Diagram 1: *Delivery Methods – Analysis of Options*
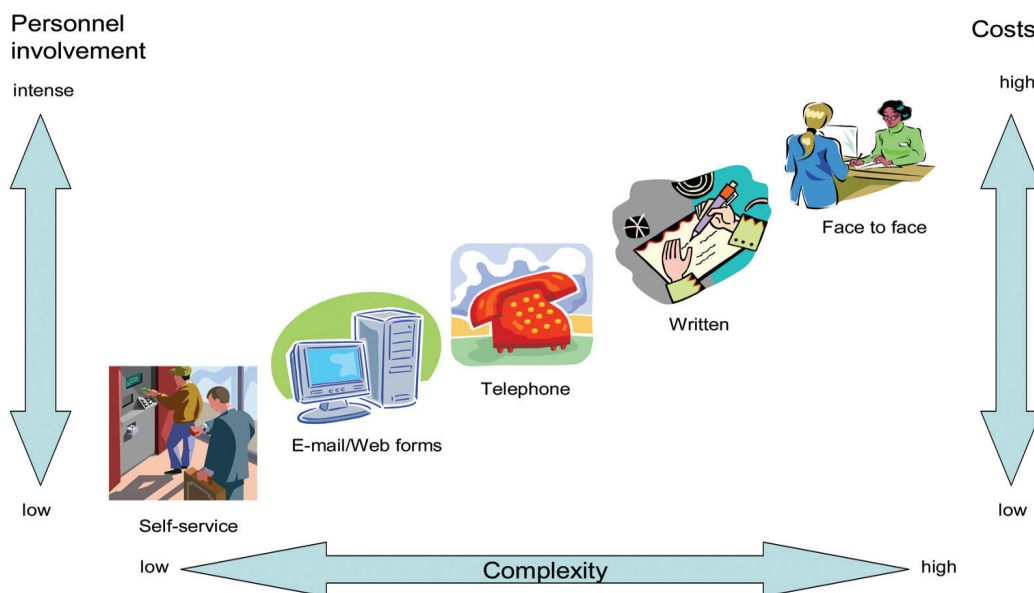
Corporate information is reviewed regularly. The Corporate Plan is comprehensively reviewed every 3 years following considerable customer engagement and consultation. Service Plans are also reviewed annually. In addition the HBC website pages are regularly updated by communication champions.

Internally, services use a number of methods to communicate with their staff, one of the most popular being newsletters. The Council have its own corporate staff newsletter called 'In Touch' and several services produce their own newsletters with information specific to their service. The Children and Young People s Directorate also conduct staff surveys and have awards for employees.

4.4 Delivery
The Council considers it extremely important to look at what is being delivered and to ask the question "Is what is being delivered in line with the Councils core business and priorities?"   These priorities are based on the national agenda and local need therefore the outcomes will be important to customers. Additionally, if outcomes are not being achieved or if there are problems there needs to be a clearly defined way to deal with these.

The Corporate Plan does this at a strategic level by involving customers in its creation through consultation. It is important therefore that corporate priorities are carried out to the highest possible standard in order to deliver against any promised standards, such as above (see p 12 last paragraph). Any dips or changes from the promised standards should be identified and explained to customers along with the action being taken to put things right and prevent further re-occurrence.

The Council has a number of challenging standards for its main services in the form of National and local performance indicators. There is a system of quarterly monitoring that takes place in relation to service planning, which would highlight customer service standards where appropriate.

In addition a number of services undertake their own monitoring, sometimes on a monthly basis. Benchmarking with other authorities is also a popular way for services to check their standards. However, involving customers in setting, reviewing and raising standards can prove problematic in some areas. Some standards are dictated by central government or other national bodies such as the Health and Safety Executive or the Environment agency, so there is little or no flexibility for customers to set these standards.   However, it is possible for more generalised standards, were the Council can agree from the outset what customers can expect from the services provided.

Research shows that on the whole people are satisfied with their dealings with the Council; however, this could be better. The level of satisfaction with Council Services was 55% in 2003/04 and has risen to 58% in 2006/07. It is important that if problems occur they are acknowledged and action taken to correct them. This links to the issue of culture, in that staff should be supported and empowered to deal with problems.

Research also shows that admitting to and learning from mistakes and putting them right is an important way for public services to gain trust from their customers. Listening to and asking for comments and using feedback such as complaints and making adjustments as a result is important.

4.5 Timeliness and Quality
Quality of information has already been addressed but in this instance it refers more readily to the overall standards of a Customer Service Strategy. The standards by which the Council and its partners as a whole promise to interact with their customers. This plays a major part in developing the customer-focused approach required. It is known from research that the speed of initial contact with the customer and keeping to agreed timescales is vital, but speed must not be at the expense of quality.

There are a number of corporate initiatives that have standards relating to timeliness and quality of service such as the corporate complaints procedure. And a number of services have obtained awards, which have required them to demonstrate good customer service such as ISO Awards, Investors in People, Charter Marks and others. In addition, the councils contact centre and Direct Link shops try to ensure that a customers needs are met at the first point of contact and that the customer is informed about the next steps and given an indication of the likely overall time to achieve the outcomes. This is an important area and an area that the Council needs to develop by setting a number of corporate standards.

5.0 WHERE DO WE WANT TO BE AND WHAT OUTCOMES DO WE WANT TO DELIVER?

The primary aim of this strategy is to improve our Customer services in line with the Customer Service Excellence Standard, produced by the Cabinet Office in February this year, (2008).

5.1 Customer insight − Customer Identification, Engagement and Consultation and Customer Satisfaction

The Council wants to ensure that it:

- has an in depth understanding of the characteristics of our current and potential customer groups based on recent and reliable information.
- has developed customer insight about our customer groups to better understand their needs and preferences
- makes particular efforts to identify hard to reach and disadvantaged groups and individuals and have developed our services in response to their specific needs.
- has a strategy for engaging and involving customers using a range of methods appropriate to the needs of identified customer groups.
- have made the consultation of customers integral to continually improving our service and we advice customers of the results and action taken
- regularly reviews strategies and opportunities for consulting and engaging with customers to ensure that the methods used are effective and provide reliable and representative results.
- uses reliable and accurate methods to measure customer satisfaction on a regular basis.
- analyses and publicise satisfaction levels for the full range of customers for all main areas of our service and we have improved services as a result.
- includes our measurement of satisfaction specific questions relating to key areas including those on delivery, timeliness, information, access and the quality of customer service as well as specific questions which are informed by customer insight.
- sets challenging and stretching targets for customer satisfaction and our levels are improving.
- has made positive changes to services as a result of analysing customer experience, including improved customer journeys.

5.2 The Culture of the Organisation - Leadership, Policy and Culture and Staff Professionalism and Attitude

The Council want to ensure that it:

- demonstrates that there is corporate commitment to putting the customer at the heart of service delivery and leaders in our organisation actively support this and advocate for customers
- uses customer insight to inform policy and strategy and to prioritise service improvement activity
- has policies and procedures which support the right of all customers to expect excellent levels of service

- ensures that all customers and customer groups are treated fairly and this is confirmed by feedback and the measurement of customer experience
- protects customers privacy both in face to face discussions and in the transfer and storage of customer information
- empowers and encourage all employees to actively promote and participate in the customer focused culture of our organisation
- can demonstrate our commitment to developing and delivering customer focused services through our recruitment, training and development policies for staff.
- staff are polite and friendly to customers and have an understanding of customer needs.
- prioritise customer focus at all levels of our organisation and evaluate individual and team commitment through the performance management system.
- can demonstrate how customer facing staff's insight and experience is incorporated into internal processes, policy development and service planning.
- values the contribution our staff make to delivering customer focused services, and leaders, managers and staff demonstrate these behaviours

5.3 Information and Access – Range of Information, Quality of Information, Access, Co-operative working with other providers, partners and communities

The Council wants to ensure it:

- makes information about the full range of services we provide available to our customers and potential customers, including how and when people can contact us, how our services are run and who is in charge
- tells our customers how much they have to pay
- provides our customers with the information they need in ways which meet their needs and preferences, using a variety of appropriate channels
- takes reasonable steps to make sure our customers have received and understood the information
- provides an improved range, content and quality of verbal, published and web based information to ensure it is relevant and meets the needs of customers
- can demonstrate that information we provide to our customers is accurate and complete, and that when this is not the case we advise customers when they will receive the information they requested
- makes our services easily accessible to all customer through provision of a range of alternative channels
- evaluates how customers interact with the organisation through access channels and we use this information to identify possible service improvements and offer better choices
- ensures that where customers can visit our premises in person facilities are as clean and comfortable as possible

- has made arrangements with other providers and partners to offer and supply co-ordinated services, and these arrangements have demonstrable benefits for our customers
- has developed co-ordinated working arrangements with our partners that ensure customers have clear lines of accountability for quality of service
- interacts within wider communities and we can demonstrate the ways in which we support those communities

5.4 Delivery Standards - Delivery Standards, Achieved Delivery and Outcomes, Dealing Effectively with Problems

The Council wants to ensure it:
- has challenging standards for our main services, which take account of our responsibility for delivering national and statutory standards and targets
- monitors and meets our standards, key departmental and performance targets and we tell our customer about our performance
- consults and involves customers, citizens, partners and staff on setting, reviewing and raising of our local standards
- agrees with our customers at the outset what they can expect from the service we provide
- can demonstrate that we deliver the service we promised to individual customers and that outcomes are positive for the majority of our customers
- can demonstrate that we benchmark our performance against complementary organisations and have used that information to improve our service
- has developed and learned from best practice identified within and outside our organisation and we publish our examples externally where appropriate
- has identified any dips in performance against our standards and explain these to customers together with action we are taking to put things right and prevent further recurrence
- has an easy to use complaints procedure which includes a commitment to deal with problems and fully solve them wherever possible within a reasonable time limit
- it gives staff training and guidance to handle complaints and to investigate them objectively and we can demonstrate that we empower staff to put things right
- learns from any mistakes we make by identifying patterns in informal and information complaints and comments from customers and use this information to improve services and publicise action taken
- regularly reviews and improves our complaints procedure taking account of the views of customers, complainants and staff
- ensures that the outcome of the complaint process for customers is satisfactory for them

5.5,Timeliness and Quality of Service – Standards for Timeliness and Quality, Timely Outcomes, Achieved Timely Outcomes

The Council wants to ensure it:

- sets appropriate and measurable standards for the timeliness of response for all forms of customer contact including phone calls, letters, e communications and personal callers

- sets comprehensive standards for all aspects of the quality of customer service to be expected in all dealings with our organisation

- advises our customers and potential customers about our promises on timeliness and quality of customer service

- identifies individual customer needs at the first point of contact with us and ensure that an appropriate person can address the reason for contact deals with the customer

- promptly shares customer information with colleagues and partners within our organisation whenever appropriate and can demonstrate how this has reduced unnecessary contact for customers

- discusses with the customer the next steps and indicates the likely overall time to achieve the outcomes, where service is not completed at the first point of contact

- responds to initial enquiries promptly, If there is a delay advise the customer and take action to rectify the problem

- monitors performance against standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we take action if problems are identified

- is meeting our current standards for timeliness and quality of customer service and we publicise our performance against these standards

- performance in relation to timeliness and quality of service compares well with that of similar organisations

6.0 MOVING FORWARD

A great deal of positive work has already been done by the Council to try and understand who our customers are, and who our potential customers might be, and to provide the sort of high level standards of service excellence that customers expect; through polite, friendly and well informed staff.

Care is being taken to provide quality information across a range of services and to make sure services are as accessible as possible to the local community. Such access is not just physical, in terms of location or wheelchair access, but also includes various other access channels, from letters and face to face transactions through to access via the telephone and internet. There is also the provision to translate leaflets into languages other than English, or into Braille. This helps to reach a wider range of people, including those classed as 'hard-to reach groups'.

A number of services also demonstrate how good their services are through production of performance information, inspections and the achievement of regionally or nationally recognised awards.

However, whilst a great deal of positive work is taking place to try and consult with and engage customers or potential customers there are still things to be done to continue to improve customer services.

There is a need to further investigate share good practice throughout the Council, especially in relation to the corporate approach. There is a risk that services may be acting in silos and not benefiting from a more corporate approach to customers service excellence through the sharing of good practice, and the possibility that if a service is doing something independently there may be inconsistencies in relation to a corporate approach where one exists.

It is important to consider customer characteristics, needs and preferences and to have a consistent approach to consultation and engagement from which to shape service design and delivery. Corporate elements of customer service excellence need to be clarified to form a consistent basis to ensure that there is greater understanding and knowledge of what does exist in terms of strategies, policies, plans and other documentation that could provide the guidance necessary to form a consistent approach to customer service. Currently, not everyone is clear about corporate approaches or strategies that relate to, or have some impact on, customer focus and customer service excellence. This may be partly due to the fact that whilst a great deal of information does exist corporately in written format, it may be out of date, moreover, some policies and plans appear to be intrinsic ways of working rather than specific written documents. Again this can lead to inconsistency and confusion about the corporate approach. Furthermore, services may missing out on the opportunity to work with another service or partner over a similar issue, which could potentially lead to a waste of resources.

More importantly, acting independently can result in over consultation or duplication of engagement of the same set of customers. Where consultation and engagement does take place it is not clear that there is a consistent approach, especially to feedback.

It is also necessary to ensure customers are satisfied with what is produced and that information is timely, accessible and of good quality. The standard should also be clearly supported from the top and be backed up by policies and procedures that treat all customers fairly.

It may be that there are pockets of customer service excellence in individual services and directorates that operate at a standard higher than that of the corporate approach. There is a need to develop awareness of existing information and customer service excellence standards and share them both up and down the organisation although the Corporate Plan does state, under the priority of Corporate Effectiveness and Efficient Service Delivery, Area of Focus number 32, that the Council with its partners aims to: "Build on our customer focus by improving communication, involving more service users in the design and delivery of services, and ensuring equality of access", which goes a long way to supporting the fundamental principals on which to build customer service excellence.

High levels of staff professionalism will also be required, which can only be built from a good knowledge base and training. It will be necessary to ensure that all staff are clear about the new standards. This will require good promotion and a number of training initiatives, for all staff, and Members. How we measure the success of all this will also be important.

Last but not least it will be important that full advantage is taken of new technology, especially in the area of access. It would be useful to ensure that where possible software can be joined up to get the most economic and efficient benefit.

The Action Plan below is designed to compound existing good practice and develop new ways to ensure continuous improve on current levels of customer service.

7.0 ACTION PLAN

Action No.	Action	Key Tasks	Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resource
1.	Demonstrate leadership support for the development of a customer focused approach to customer service	Development of a Corporate Customer Services Strategy Approval of (final) draft of Customer Services Strategy by Corporate Services PPB/Executive Board	Members/COMT with support of Members Scrutiny Topic Group and Officer Review Group	September 2008 – March 2009 March 2009	From existing Resources
		Briefing sessions for Divisional Managers to explain the process by which the Council is seeking accreditation and why.	Strategic Directors	December 2008- March 2009	From existing Resources
		Development of customer service 'champions' in each directorate/division to promote the process	Strategic Directors/Divisional Managers	April 2009	From existing Resources
		Information on customer Services approach to become a regular part of Core and Team Briefings	COMT/Divisional/ Team Managers	April 2009	From existing Resources
2.	Establish the current capabilities of the Council in relation to customer service excellence through a corporate assessment. (This will provide a baseline against which to measure and gain accreditation for other services)	Carry out an initial assessment of several divisions against the Customer Service Excellence Standard to establish corporate and divisional elements of CSE. Two service areas (HDL and Benefits) to assess themselves against the corporate baseline	Officer Review Group HDL /Benefits Manager with Officers Group	September 2008 – November 2008 December 2008 - March 2009	From existing Resources From existing resources.

7.0 ACTION PLAN

Action No.	Action	Key Tasks	Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resource
		Undertake a benchmarking exercise with another similar authority that has obtained or is working towards a corporate approach to the Standard	Officers Group	January – March 2009	From existing resources.
3.	Prepare a brief/ specification for a CSE accreditation company	Seek approval from Corporate Services PPB/Executive Board Obtain quotes and appoint a company	Officer Group/Members Topic Group	January – March 2009	From existing resources.
4.	Prepare for corporate Assessment	Seek corporate assessment and evaluate outcome and report to Corporate Services PPB/Exec Board	Officer Group with support of senior managers/ divisional managers and CSE champions	April - June 2009 July – August 2009	From existing resources. From existing resources.
5.	Prepare for service accreditations.	Seek accreditation for HDL/Benefits Services Assess the outcome of accreditation of the first two service areas and develop a roll out plan for the Council to achieve accreditation across other service areas. Organise self assessments within their relevant directorate.	HDL/Benefits Managers with support of senior managers/ divisional managers and CSE champions CSE champions	September 2009 October 2009 November 2009 onwards	From existing resources. From existing resources. From existing resources.

7.0 ACTION PLAN

Action No.	Action	Key Tasks	Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resource
5.	Review current corporate strategies, policies, plans and other documents that have relevance to customer service	Ensure strategies and other documentation is relevant and up to date and that any action plans are being progressed and monitored	Officer Review Group	December 2008 – Feb 2009	From existing resources
6.	Develop a set of corporate guidelines in relation to defining customer characteristics and engaging conducting surveys, engaging with customers and feeding back to customers	Promote the use of corporate Research and Intelligence Unit information in order to develop consistent corporate customer profiles. Create an internet site with CSE information e.g. guidelines, documentation etc.	CSE champions with support from Research and Development Unit	January 2009 onwards	From existing resources
		Develop and promote the use of the Halton Observatory as a repository for information particularly from partners to ensure consistency with partners	CSE champions with support from research and development unit	January 2009 onwards	From existing resources
7.	Establish a methods for sharing good practice across the Council	Establish a CSE network	CSE champions with support from senior managers	April 2009 onwards	From existing resources
8.	Develop a set of corporate Customer Service Standards	Research existing standards used by other authorities or recommended as good practice by professional bodies and create a set of standards.	Officer Group	December 2008 – January 2009	From existing resources

7.0 ACTION PLAN

Action No.	Action	Key Tasks	Lead Officer or Group	Timescale	Resource
		Consult with staff and customers regarding the standards and come to an agreed set.	Officer Group and Research and Intelligence Unit	January – March 2009	From existing resources
9.	Take advantage of new technology	Investigate the potential for improving information management and access	Officer Group with HDL, IT and Communications	April 20098 onwards	From existing resources
10.	Investigate the need for training in Customer Service Excellence	Establish the need for and type of customer service training required by partners, Members, officers and other staff (front line and back office) in order to ensure a consistent approach to customer service.	CSE Champions and Corporate Training Section	April 2009 onward	From existing resources

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance
                         Board

DATE: 6 January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Health & Community

SUBJECT: Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) -
                         Health

1.0   PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1   To present Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board with the
       summary of the findings of the first JSNA Health (Attached at Appendix
       1).

2.0   RECOMMENDATION: That Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board comment on and note the content of the report.

3.0   SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1   The Directors of Adult Social Services, Public Health and Children and
       Young People's (CYP) Services in every Local Authority and Primary
       Care Trust (PCT) had a statutory duty from April 2008 to work together
       to develop a JSNA for their area.

3.2   For the production of the first JSNA we have focused on refining,
       improving and bringing together the information we have already
       available that highlights overall population needs. This information is
       from national and local sources and includes a wealth of information we
       have collected directly from services across Halton. This information
       has been used to take a longer-term view of population trends and the
       likely impact on demand over the next years and decades.

3.3   In order to deliver this first stage of our JSNA, a number of different
       information sources have been used. The quality of sources varies and
       some population, condition and trends information are more robust and
       well research than others. Needs assessment and in particular trend
       forecasting is not an exact science – predications tend to be more
       accurate at a general, larger population level and because of this the
       aim has been to keep messages very strategic at this stage.

3.4   The JSNA is intended to identify 'the big picture' in terms of the health
       and wellbeing needs and inequalities within the local population. **It is
       not intended to describe how we will address the needs,
       demonstrate outcomes or showcase our services.** The aim is that
       the information contained in the JSNA will encourage partner agencies
       to use the findings to inform a number of local authority and PCT
       strategies, Client Group Commissioning Plans, Local Area Agreements

etc. It has already been used within Halton, to feed into Ambition for Health and the Commissioning Strategic Plan.

3.5 The development of the JSNA is not a single, one off exercise but is an ongoing piece of work, which will add to our commissioning 'intelligence'. As we continue to develop our JSNA we will: -

- Build upon service user and care views
- Include information about service usage
- Ensure we have information at a locality level as well as overall trends.

Approval process within the PCT

3.6 The approval process for the JSNA within the PCT is currently being reviewed. It is anticipated that it will be go to the PCTs Management Team and then the Trust Board, once the St Helens JSNA is ready. NB. The St Helens summary of findings document is finished, however the full data documents is still to be completed. St Helens Council are not intending to submit the needs assessment to their Board.

Consultation Process

3.7 A key element of the consultation process is the production of an accessible public document on the local priorities detailing how the JSNA will feed into commissioning plans for the future and the evidence based investment decisions taken. This has been achieved through the development of the summary of findings document (Appendix 1)

It is proposed that the consultation process be in 4 stages, as follows:

1) Professionals
2) Members via **all** Policy & Performance Boards (January 2009)
3) Key stakeholders
4) General public

At each stage, the document will be revised and updated accordingly.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The JSNA pulls together information about the current and future health and well being needs of the local population. It provides an opportunity to look into the future so that we can plan now for likely changes in needs, so it is therefore one of the major influences in directing commissioning priorities and planning service development.

4.2 One of the key functions of the JSNA is to inform future "commissioning priorities that will improve health and wellbeing outcomes and reduce inequalities." As such it will therefore inform the future development of the Community Strategy and the Local Area Agreement. The above reference to inequalities highlights the relationship between the content

of the JSNA and resultant neighbourhood management activities. Given the holistic approach adopted, the findings will also benefit the implementation of the Equality and Diversity Plan.

5.0 FINANCIAL/RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The production of the draft JSNA has been borne within existing resources, however there will be some financial costs to cover public consultation and these are currently being determined.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

6.1.1 The JSNA will inform all future commissioning decisions targeted at improving the health and well-being of Children and Young People and in particular the interventions commissioned for children with the poorest health outcomes.

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

6.2.1 Improving the education, skills and employment prospects of Halton's residents and workforce is a key driver for reducing health inequalities and hence the relevant data comprises a significant part of the JSNA.

6.3 **A Healthy Halton**

6.3.1 The JSNA will inform all future commissioning decisions targeted at improving health and well-being across Halton and in particular the interventions commissioned for areas with the poorest health outcomes.
.
6.4 **A Safer Halton**

6.4.1 There is evidence to support the relationship between people's perceptions of their local area and how safe they feel with their health and well-being. As a result, improvements to health and well-being are dependent on the successful implementation of this corporate priority.

6.5 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

6.5.1 Regeneration initiatives have a significant beneficial impact on health inequalities. As a consequence, a key aspect of the ongoing development of the JSNA will be to ensure the process informs and is informed by interventions to reverse physical, economic and social decline in a given locality/neighbourhood.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The duty placed on LA's, in conjunction with partners in Health, is ongoing. There is an expectation that the summary of findings document will be refreshed on an annual basis and that the full

document will be reviewed in line with the 3yr LAA cycle. At this stage no additional resources have been identified to carry out this work and agreement needs to be reached between the Council and Health regarding respective responsibilities to resource work on the JSNA.

8.0   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1   An Equalities Impact assessment will be carried out on the JSNA.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Draft JSNA (Full document)	Runcorn Town Hall	Angela McNamara

Health and Wellbeing in Halton
2008

Halton's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA)

Summary of Findings

HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

NHS Halton and St Helens
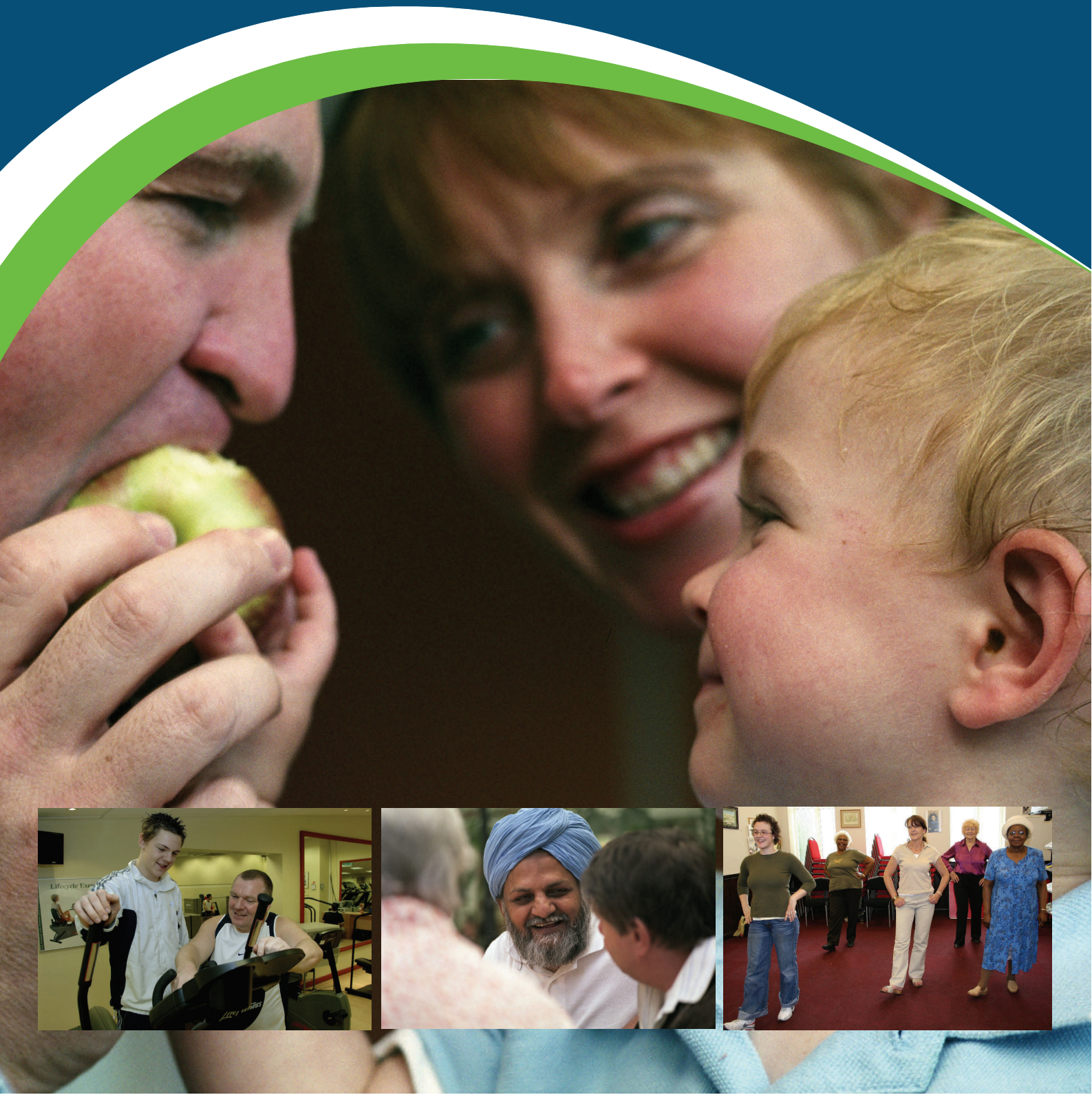
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Introduction and Background: Why and how we undertook the JSNA

Summary of Findings

This document summarises the outcomes from the first phase of our JSNA work here in Halton and highlights the key messages and some of the implications for future commissioning and planning.

Why we undertook a JSNA

The Directors of Adult Social Services, Public Health and Children and Young People's Services in every local authority and Primary Care Trust (PCT) have a statutory duty from April 2008 to work together to develop a Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) for their district.

The JSNA must pull together a wide range of information about the current and future health and well-being needs of the local population. It provides an opportunity to look to the future - over the next 5, 10, 15 and 20 years - so that we can plan now for likely changes in needs. So it is one of the major influences in directing our commissioning priorities and planning service development.

How we undertook a JSNA

For this first stage of the JSNA we have focused on refining, improving and bringing together the information we have available that highlights overall population needs. This information is from national and local sources and includes a wealth of information we have collected directly from services across Halton. We have used this initial work to take a longer term view of population trends and the likely impact on demand for support over the next years and decades.

In order to deliver this first stage of our JSNA we have used a number of different information sources. The quality of sources varies and some population, condition and trends information are more robust and well researched than others. Needs assessment, and in particular trend forecasting, is not an exact science - predictions tend to be more accurate at a general, larger population level and because of this we have aimed to keep key messages very strategic at this stage.

This is a summary of the full report – see back page for details of how to obtain copies of the full report.

Personalisation, including a shift towards early intervention and prevention, will become the cornerstone of public services, including the commissioning and development of services within health and social care. This means that every person who receives support, whether provided by statutory or funded by themselves, will have choice and control over the shape of that support in all care settings.

Copies of the Commissioning Strategies/Intentions in place to address the identified needs within this document can be found on Halton Borough Council's website www.halton.gov.uk and the PCT's website www.haltonandsthelenspct.nhs.uk

Overall messages about the needs of our changing populations

Halton's resident population is 119,500 (ONS mid year estimate 2006) Overall, the population has decreased by 2% since 1996, but has been rising since 2001.

At present, Halton has a younger population than the national and regional averages. However, Halton mirrors the national picture of an ageing population, with projections indicating that the population of the borough will age at a faster rate than the national average. In 1996 12.9% of the total population were aged 65 and over, by 2006 this had increased to nearly 14% and by 2015 this is projected to have increased to 17%, which could have a significant impact on the need for health and social care.

The population is predominantly white (98.8%) with relatively little variation between wards. However, in recent years, it has seen a small influx of Eastern European (Polish & Slovakian) migrants.

In recent years Halton has seen increases in life expectancy for both men and women and declining all cause mortality, predominantly due to drops in deaths from coronary heart disease and cancer. Whilst this is good news, the England figures have decreased at a greater rate so the gap between Halton and England has widened for all cause mortality and for both genders. Halton now has the 3rd worst life expectancy in England for women and the 6th worst life expectancy for men. Within Halton there are also geographical variations in life expectancy. Men in the most deprived areas of Halton live 7.7 years less than men in the least deprived areas. For women in Halton the average life expectancy at birth is 5.8 years less in the most deprived areas than in the least deprived areas.

Deprivation is a major determinant of health. Lower income levels often lead to poor levels of nutrition, poor housing conditions, and inequitable access to healthcare and other services. Deprivation, measured using the English Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) 2007, ranks Halton as the 30th most deprived authority in England (compared to 21st in 2004). The 2007 IMD shows that deprivation in Halton is widespread with 57,958 people

(48% of the population) in Halton living in 'Super Output Areas' (SOA's) that are ranked within the most deprived 20% of areas in England.

In terms of Health and Disability, the IMD identifies 53 SOA's that fall within the top 20% most health deprived nationally and that approximately 40,000 people (33% of the population) live in the top 4% most health deprived areas in England. At ward level, Windmill Hill is the most deprived area in terms of health. However, health deprivation is highest in an SOA within Castlefields, ranked 32nd most deprived nationally.

Key Issues and Findings

Specific Populations

Older people

Projections indicate a significant and substantial increase in the numbers of older people between 2006 and 2015, at a rate that is higher than the national and regional trends. Currently 14% of the population is over 65. This is set to rise to 17% by 2015. One of the largest growths (up by 19%) will be seen in potentially the most frail and dependent group of over-85s, bringing key implications for planning future service provision for this group. In 2000/01 the NHS spent 41% of its budget (£12.4 billion) on people over 65. On average older people are more likely than younger people to report lifestyle-limiting illness, to live alone, live in poverty and to rely on public services and informal cares. Advancing age also carries some increased risk of dementia and depressive illness and in Halton levels of people with dementia are rising.

Just under half of Halton's 65+ population live with limiting long-term illness and the rate of fractured neck of femur (hip fracture) is the 5th worst in the country. In 2006/07 there were 123 hip fractures in the over 65s in Halton.

The wards with the highest proportions of the population that are older people are seen in Castlefields, Halton and Ditton.

People with disabilities or a limiting long term illness (LLTI)

Nationally, 18% of people (over 16 years) have at least one dimension of a limiting long-term illness i.e. about 20,300 people in Halton. In Halton the number of adults living with a long term limiting illness is higher than the national average at 22% (2001 census).

Whilst there is no evidence to suggest dramatic increases in the number of adults aged 16-64 with physical/sensory impairments, as the proportion of the population over 45 increases, later onset conditions such as Parkinson's Disease, sensory impairment, arthritis, etc, will rise. In addition, significant increases in the levels of obesity in Halton are predicted to lead to an increase in the prevalence of diabetes and incidence of heart disease.

People with learning disabilities

It is predicted that the population of people with learning disabilities will grow by 6% by 2011. Of further significance is that people with learning disabilities are living longer. Adults with learning disabilities have poorer general health than the wider population and can struggle to access mainstream health services.

The wards showing the highest prevalence of learning difficulty are Castlefields, Hough Green, Grange and Halton Lea respectively. The overall pattern shows a strong relationship between levels of learning difficulty with areas of deprivation, in that these 4 wards also have a high percentage of the population living in the top 10% most deprived areas nationally.

Numbers of people (known to social services) in Halton with a learning disability have remained fairly constant in recent years (between 430-450). However, since 2002 there has been a significant shift in the way in which services are delivered to people with a learning disability. Halton now performs well in respect to helping people with learning disabilities to live in the community with approximately 82% of people now receiving services in their own home. However, access to general needs social housing remains limited and levels of owner occupation remain extremely low.

Few adults with learning disabilities in Halton are in paid employment (less than 1% compared to 10% nationally), even though employment is key to sustaining well-being and enabling people to maximize independence.

Key Issues and Findings

Specific Populations continued

Children

Population estimates indicate that Halton has a younger population than the regional and national average. However, overall the 0-19 population is decreasing.

Windmill Hill is ranked the most deprived ward in the borough across all domains and is ranked the most deprived ward in terms of health.

Over 50% of Halton's children live in the 20% most deprived areas nationally and a further 15.5% live in the 40% most deprived areas nationally, with only 8% of children living in the 20% least deprived areas nationally.

A number of major health issues relevant to children and young people in Halton have been identified through the JSNA and the Children and Young Peoples Plan. Key issues include, higher rates of infant mortality and low birth weight, high rates of teenage pregnancy, high rates of obesity for both reception and year 6 children. In Halton, 24% of reception age children are overweight and 11.6% are obese, and 36.3% of Year 6 children are overweight and 22.3% are obese. All of these levels are above the England average.

Pregnant Women & Newborns

The health of the child starts with the health of their mothers before and during pregnancy. Locally, 1 in 4 were still smoking at the birth of their child, and just 4 in 10 are breastfeeding on delivery (half the national average and 4th worst in the country). Therefore programmes around stopping smoking (particularly before and during pregnancy), increasing levels of physical activity, developing healthier eating habits and dramatically increasing the number of women who breastfeed are a priority.

Incidence of teenage pregnancy remains an issue in Halton, despite falling for several years; rates are now above the 1998 baseline level. There is also a correlation between deprivation and incidence of teenage pregnancy with the most deprived areas in Halton experiencing the highest levels of teenage conception rates.

Carers

Carers provide a significant proportion of community care as services target provision on those with highest need. There are as many as 13,531 carers in Halton and 3,696 provide over 50 hours unpaid care a week. Research by the equal opportunities Commission suggests that caring can have a detrimental impact on health and employment. Approximately 14% of carers in Halton state that they are in poor health. As the ageing population in Halton increases there is also predicted to be a steady increase in the number of carers, including those carers aged over 85 and an increase in older carers with poor health. All factors indicate an increased demand for services to support carers in Halton.

Conditions

Mental health and emotional well-being

About 1 in 6 adults in Halton suffer from depression (or chronic anxiety, which effects 1 in 3 families). This rises to 1 in 4 older people having symptoms of depression that are severe enough to warrant intervention. Of other mental health problems, anxiety and phobias are the most common.

People with mental health problems are less likely to be in paid employment and carers are twice as likely to have mental health problems. 40% of people on incapacity benefit are claiming for mental health problems (nationally more than the total number of people claiming benefits for unemployment). In Halton's Housing Needs Survey 2005, 96% of people with a mental health problem (who reported their household income) had an income below the national average and 65% of people with a mental health problem indicated that the problem was serious enough for them to need care and support. In addition, the range and number of supported housing available for people with mental health problems in Halton remains low compared to national and regional averages.

Emotional well-being is a concern for all members of the community and we should be focusing on preserving it. Improving people's relationships, self-image, self-esteem and levels of worry, which all impact on emotional well-being will give people the ability to cope with life. Supporting adults to remain in or return to employment will pay dividends in terms of mental health and we need to improve our performance in this area.

We also need to support people with mental health problems to improve their well-being by increasing access to services such as housing support, creative arts and leisure, physical activities and talking therapies.

It is estimated that 2000 children and young people in Halton have moderately severe problems requiring attention from professionals trained in mental health, and approximately 500 children and young people with severe and complex health problems requiring a multi-disciplinary approach. The establishment of a continuum of emotional health and mental well being services that can intervene early where appropriate, is critical to meeting the needs of the these vulnerable children, who will soon face the challenge of adulthood. The transition to adult services is a critical point for this group of young people. Promoting the emotional well being and mental health of children and young people is everyone's business in Halton and will have a major impact on a number of other health and socio-economic factors.

Dementia

Dementia is most common in older people, with prevalence rising sharply amongst people over 65 years. It is also one of the main causes of disability in later life. Locally 5% of the population has dementia. This translates to 1,061 people over 65 with dementia living in the community with dementia and is predicted to rise to an estimated 1,613 by 2025.

Early diagnosis of, and intervention for, dementia are the keys to delaying admission to long-term care and to help people remain independent for longer. Promoting healthy ageing, for example by keeping people active and tackling social isolation, is important in delaying the onset of dementia. Accommodation choices including extra care housing, residential and nursing care for older people with dementia must also be balanced to meet future aspirations in respect to choice of service and be sufficient in numbers to meet future needs.

Conditions Continued

Obesity in Adults

Obesity is one of the most

significant threats to the long-term health of our population as it leads to an increased risk of a wide range of health problems including type 2 diabetes, heart disease and some cancers. Nationally the levels of overweight and obesity are increasing and this pattern is reflected in Halton. Between 20% to 25% of adults in Halton are obese and these figures have increased in recent years. Considered alongside the increased levels of obesity in children this is a key priority, which can only be addressed by a wide range of strategies to be delivered through partnership working across all sectors.

Cancer

Cancer is the second biggest cause of premature death in Halton but its rate makes Halton the worst area in the country for cancer deaths. Incidence (the number of new cancers per year) of 'all cancers' in men has decreased over the past decade but remains above the national rate. The incidence rate for women has risen over the same period both nationally and locally although in Halton the rates are now falling. Levels of mortality vary across Halton, with the highest rates being in

Norton South, for both all ages and under 75s. Other areas with high rates are Farnworth, Castlefields and Grange.

There has been a steady increase in the number of women developing breast cancer in Halton and death rates for the disease have increased recently. Nationally the rate has improved but this remains the second largest cause of cancer death in Halton.

The Incidence of colorectal (bowel) cancer in Halton has slowed since 2002-2004. However, the rate remains significantly above the North West and the national average. Mortality rates, which had been falling since their peak in 1998-2000, have begun to rise in 2004-06, widening the gap between Halton and England.

A fall in the Incidence of lung cancer in Halton was mirroring the falling rates nationally. However, from 2000-02 the rate began rising. Similarly, the rate of mortality from lung cancer has improved both nationally and locally, but an increase between 2001 and 2003 in Halton, even though it has fallen since, widened the gap between the Halton and England rates. Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in Halton for both men and women.

Prostate cancer has the highest observed incidence rates of any cancer for men in Halton and is in the top 3 causes of cancer mortality.

An increase in preventative services which support lifestyle change will reduce incidence

levels whilst increased emphasis on early detection and treatment will improve health outcomes and mortality rates.

Heart disease and stroke

Heart disease is the single biggest cause of premature death in Halton. Locally more people have heart disease than nationally and, for those under 75, men are more likely to have it than women. However, there has been a reduction in the number of deaths from heart disease over recent years.

Stroke is a significant cause of UK morbidity and mortality, the most important cause of adult disability, and the third leading cause of death. Halton has lower rates of death from stroke than the North West but slightly higher rates than England as a whole. When looking at admissions to hospital for stroke Kingsway and Halton View have significantly higher rates compared to Halton as a whole.

It is estimated that just under 1 in 4 (23.9%) people locally have high blood pressure (hypertension) which can lead to stroke and heart disease and numbers are set to increase. However, the number of patients identified as having hypertension at GP practices is much lower than the estimated levels, suggesting many people are going unidentified and therefore untreated.

Conditions Continued

Promoting and enabling people to adopt healthy personal behaviors, such as not smoking, being physically active and eating healthily can help to reduce high blood pressure, reduce the risk of stroke and prevent the development or worsening of heart disease.

Diabetes

Diabetes is a very disabling and potentially fatal condition if not well managed.

Diabetes increases the risk of other conditions such as heart disease and stroke, and magnifies the ill effects of other risk factors such as smoking, high cholesterol levels and obesity. The severity of impact of the disease is linked to how soon it is identified and how well managed it is. Type 2 Diabetes is the most common form, with obesity the primary modifiable risk factor for it. The risk of developing Type 2 Diabetes increases with age.

As the older population in Halton is increasing, as are levels of obesity, more and more people in Halton will be affected by diabetes. If the current rates of obesity continue, by 2010 4.4% of the adult population will have type 2 diabetes which will rise to an estimated 6.16%, or 6,700, GP registered patients by 2020.

Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

This is an umbrella term for chronic bronchitis, emphysema or both. The PCT has the 10th highest level in England, whilst levels in Halton are lower than experienced in St Helens, the rate remains higher than the North West and the national rate.

As the main risk factor for these diseases is smoking, promoting healthy personal lifestyle choices will be key to reducing incidence levels.

Personal behaviours

Substance Misuse

Illegal drugs cause damage and ruin to individuals, families and communities. And the most vulnerable and deprived among us are often the hardest hit. For individuals, drug misuse means wasted potential, broken relationships and, for some, a life of crime to feed their drug habit. For the wider community, our efforts to lift children out of poverty, promote equality of opportunity and reduce crime are held back when families and communities are in the grip of drug use.

Over the past few years, increasing numbers of adults have entered and successfully left drug treatment. waiting times have consistently been within national targets and service users have expressed high satisfaction with the treatment they have received. however, attracting those in their 20s into drug treatment, and improving the uptake of services around blood borne viruses continues to present a

challenge. these issues, together with seeking to support service users into employment, addressing the causes of some individuals offending, and improving the help available to those families affected by drug misuse, will continue to be the focus of future work.

Alcohol

Drinking alcohol to excess is a major cause of disease and injury, increasing the risks of heart disease, liver disease and cancer. Heavy drinking has a severe risk of cardiovascular disease as well as addiction. Binge drinking is linked to significantly increased blood pressure. Consuming alcohol in pregnancy increases the risk of foetal abnormality.

People have low levels of awareness of the amount of alcohol they drink and the harmful effects it can have. Halton has the 8th highest hospital admissions for alcohol-related conditions in England for 2006/07, showing that alcohol consumption is an issue of major concern locally. Alcohol admissions appear linked to deprivation, gender and age, with men in their 40s, and those from deprived wards, more likely to be admitted. Furthermore, estimates suggest that approximately 24% of adult residents binge drink.

Personal behaviours continued

Whilst twice as many men than women drink above safe limits the number of women doing so has increased significantly from 6.9% in 2001 to 12.4% in 2006. The rate has decreased slightly for men during the same period (24.8% in 2001 to 22.5% in 2006).

Smoking

Smoking causes more avoidable and early deaths than any other personal lifestyle factor, killing more than 106,000 people in the UK annually; 17% of all deaths. Most die from lung cancer, chronic obstructive lung disease (bronchitis and emphysema) and coronary heart disease. It is a cause of a wide range of diseases, not just those resulting in death. Second-hand smoke is a major risk to the health of non-smokers.

Locally smoking rates remain high with over 1 in 4 adults still smoking. Overall, prevalence is highest in males aged 40-64 but in the younger age groups, a higher percentage of women smoke than men. The results of a Halton survey of 15-16 year olds highlighted that the smoking rates of 15-16 year olds match that of adults, although there is a significant difference in smoking take up rates -18% male and 29% female.

Food and nutrition

Nutrition with physical activity is second only to smoking tobacco in its influence on a wide range of health issues, not just obesity. Locally we estimate that only 20% of adults eat 5 portions of fruit and vegetables a day although this has improved since the 2001 lifestyle survey when only 12% did so. Males in the 18-34 age group have the poorest diet, with lower intake of fruit and vegetables, and more poor diet habits. Decaying teeth is another sign of poor nutrition and the rate in Halton for 5-year-olds is higher than the
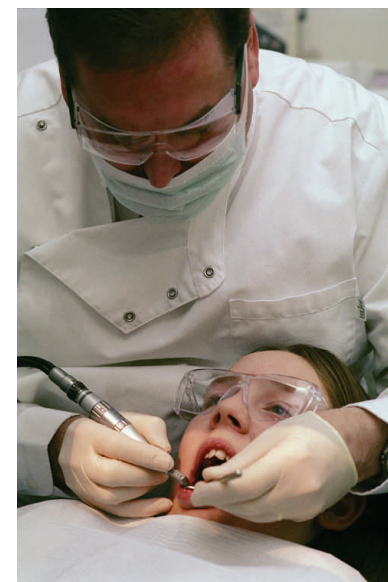
national average.

Within Halton the areas with the highest prevalence of decayed teeth are Kingsway, Riverside and Halton Lea.

Sexually Transmitted Infections

Over the period 1996-2006, there has been a general rise in the numbers of Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) recorded in Halton, rising from 150 in 1996 to 518 in 2006. Whilst some increase may be due to greater awareness and willingness to seek treatment this alone cannot account for this level of rise.

Chlamydia Screening in Halton identified that 10.6% of cases were positive, which is higher than the national rate.

In addition, the number of young people diagnosed with sexually transmitted infections is increasing.

Wider Factors

Employment

Worklessness remains a key challenge in Halton, particularly in certain deprived areas and in respect to residents with physical and learning disabilities and mental health problems.

Work provides status, purpose, social support, structure to life and income, so it is important not just for the working person but also their family. Being out of work has a huge negative impact on the health and well-being of the person and their family and is often a consequence of ill-health or disability. 25 of Halton's super output areas have over a third of their working age population (approximately 7,000 people) claiming out-of-work benefits. Nearly 68% of Halton's residents are in employment that makes it the 9th worst in the North West and 34th worst nationally.

Levels of unemployment impacts on the levels of household income and in Halton average household incomes vary from a high of £54,060 in Birchfield (the least deprived ward in respect of health) to a low of £23,260 in Windmill Hill (the most deprived ward in respect to health). Halton's latest 'State of the Borough' report was produced at the beginning of 2008. In terms of employment, it found the low skills base to be a causal effect of unemployment that needs to be addressed in order to reduce levels of unemployment in Halton.

Housing condition and options

Decent housing is a pre-requisite for health and has a significant influence on people with many health conditions such as asthma and depression. Birchfield, where 99% of households are owner-occupiers and 0% of properties are socially rented scores well in terms of health deprivation, whilst in Windmill Hill where owner occupation is 22% and 62% of properties are socially rented has the highest level of health deprivation, at ward level, in the borough.

When housing tenure is compared to health deprivation, it becomes clear that there is a strong correlation. The eight most deprived wards in terms of health have the lowest proportion of owner occupation in Halton, whereas the eight wards with the lowest health deprivation have the highest levels of owner occupancy.

Educational attainment

Educational attainment is an important indicator of the future life chances for children and young people. There is also a direct correlation between levels of educational attainment and deprivation and health inequalities. Halton has made significant progress in improving GCSE results of young people in the borough, and for the last two years the percentage of young people achieving 5 A*-C has increased from 52.6% to 71.3%, taking us well above the national average. Over the same period the percentage of young people achieving 5 A*-C including English & Maths, a key indicator of future employability, has risen by 15.9% to 49.2%.

The main priority for Children's Services now is to focus on narrowing the gap and reducing educational inequalities for vulnerable groups based on locality and other factors. Over half of Halton's children live in the 20% most deprived areas nationally and this has an effect on their attainment. Performance at ward level ranges from 93.3% in Beechwood to 40% in Windmill Hill and this impacts on levels of NEET (not in Employment, Education or Training) and future worklessness. Young women with poor educational attainment are more likely to be teenage parents. Therefore narrowing the gap in education attainment will be a major factor in improving the health and well-being of our communities.

Wider Factors continued

Isolation and social networks

Isolation has a significant effect on general well-being and increases the risk of a range of health issues such as depression. Strong social networks are particularly important for vulnerable people. In Halton, almost 6,000 adults over 65 live alone. As the older population grows, the numbers living alone will increase and by 2025 it is projected that over 8,500 pensioners will be living alone. Social isolation needs to be tackled by all partners to ensure that there are adequate activities and support networks available within local communities. The voluntary and community sector can play n increasing role in developing community-based services that alleviate the effects of social isolation.

Using the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

As we have illustrated below the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment is a major influence in establishing local commissioning priorities. We have already used this JSNA to direct our commissioning.

For example, the PCT strategic commissioning priorities outlined in its *Ambition for Health* have been underpinned by the needs identified in the JSNA.

Information has already been fed into the Health Partnership. This process will continue. It is important that it informs the next round of the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and is used to inform service planning.

The following diagram summarises the inputs and potential outputs from the JSNA work.
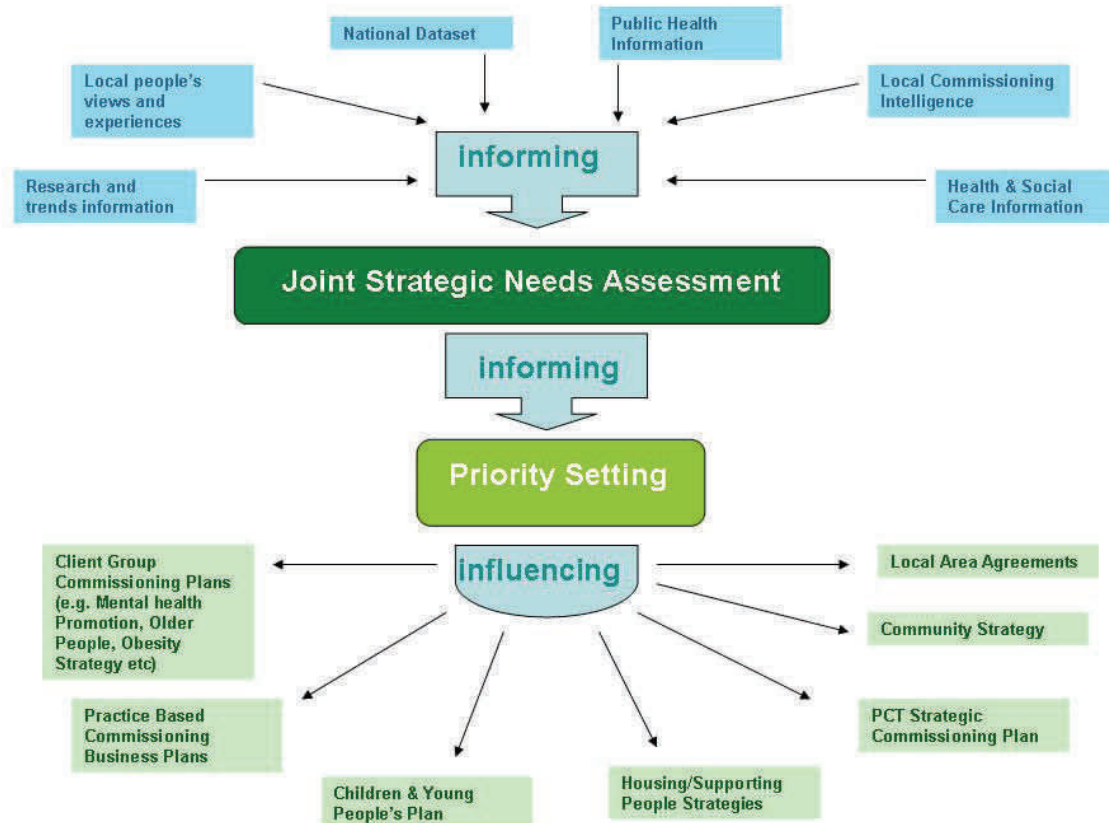
Inequalities

This first JSNA has been about describing the health and well-being needs of Halton. However, in collating and analysing the data which underpins this assessment, it is clear that for some issues certain groups or specific neighbourhoods are more likely to be affected. Some of these differences have been highlighted in this summary and described more fully in the main data document. This is available on the PCT and borough council websites.

It is crucial that planning based on this JSNA ensures the most important issues for specific populations are tackled and those most in need are targeted by any interventions.

The next steps in developing the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

The JSNA is not a single, one-off exercise, but is an ongoing piece of work which will add to our commissioning "intelligence".

As we develop our JSNA, we will:

- build upon service user and carer views
- include service usage information
- ensure we have information at a locality level as well as overall trends

We will continue to:
- further develop coherent, consistent and appropriate data sets
- develop the capacity across all partners to generate, analyse and present this information
- ensure that relevant planning systems make use of the information that the JSNA is producing
- further develop the capacity and ability to evaluate initiatives so they can demonstrate their effectiveness

This information will be fed into subsequent JSNAs.

For Further Information or to obtain copies of the full document

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REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 6th January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Carbon Strategy Implementation Plan – Progress Report

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To report on progress on the implementation of activities contained in the Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

(1) the progress on implementing activities in the Carbon Strategy be noted; and

(2) the Strategy be reviewed in early 2009

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 During 2007/08 the Council participated in the Carbon Trust's Local Authority Carbon Management Programme. The aim of the programme was to establish a baseline from which future emissions could be measured and set the Council on a path of changing our current practices over the short to medium/long term ensuring that carbon emissions are considered in decision making processes. As part of the overall Strategy the Council committed to implement a range of measures that would lead to cost and emission reductions. Current projects aimed to implement measures by 20% over the 5 year life time resulting in savings in excess of £400,000 and 4891 tonnes of carbon by 2012/13

3.2 Carbon Baseline

The baseline for 2006/07 included carbon emissions from Council buildings, schools, street lighting, fleet transport, business travel and waste.

The table below is a summary of the emissions for 2006/07

Halton Borough Council	2006/07
Total Tonnes of CO_2 emissions	24,190
Total Energy and Fuel Costs	4,259,000

The table below provides a breakdown of the total CO_2 emissions and costs.

Emissions Area	Cost £	% Overall	CO_2	% Overall
Buildings	£1.1m	26%	6,486	26.6%
Schools	£1.2m	27%	10,960	44.8%
Fleet Transport	£0.3m	7%	1,256	5.1%
Business Miles	£0.8m	19%	645	2.6%
Street Lighting	£0.8m	19%	4,835	19.8%
Waste			279	1.1%
	£4.20m		24,461	100.00%

Similar data has been collected this year and the position for 2007/08 is as follows

Halton Borough Council	2007/08
Total Tonnes of CO_2 emissions	21,485
Total Energy and Fuel Costs	4,205,902

Emissions Area	Cost £	% Overall	CO_2	% Overall
Buildings	1.0m		6715	31
Schools	1.4m		7544	35
Fleet Transport	0.3m		1223	6
Business Miles	0.7m		537	3
Street Lighting	0.8m		5179	24
Waste			279	1

* The reduction in carbon from 06/07 is not as high as there was an initial error in the baseline for oil.

3.3 Progress with implementation

(a) Installation of powerperfectors

The Power Perfector's main feature is its ability to optimise and improve the source of voltage for a whole site and therefore cut energy consumption and costs.

A Power Perfector unit has now been installed at Kingsway Learning Centre and further units will shortly be introduced at The Brindley, Corporate Training Centre and Municipal Building. The total cost of installing Power Perfectors in these buildings is £60,000 and this will result in annual revenue savings of £26,500.

There are plans to roll out Power Perfectors to Halton Stadium, Widnes Market, Waterloo Business Centre, Rutland House, Runcorn Town Hall, Picow Farm, Widnes and Halton Lea Direct Links and Oak Meadow. The cost of installation in these buildings will be £153,000, which will result in annual revenue savings of £40,000.

(b) Energy Efficient measures at the Stobart Stadium Halton

Funding of £49,000 was allocated to Halton Stadium to undertake a programme of works to improve lighting, heating and water controls. The works have now been completed.

In 2006/07 the Stadium used 1,310,899 kwh of electricity at a cost of £94,307. In 2007/08 the number of kwh reduced by 174,381 kwh to 1,136,518 kwh. The reduction was due to a combination of the technical works and a pro-active energy campaign undertaken by staff. Electricity costs at the Stadium in 2006/2007 were £94,307. Costs for 2007/08 were £87,994.48, a saving of £6,313. The saving has to be seen in the context of rising energy prices and would have been greater if costs had not increased substantially. Reduction in consumption amounts to 13.3%.

(c) Energy Efficient measures in Runcorn Town Hall

A range of energy saving measures were incorporated into the refurbishment of Runcorn Town Hall. These included increased insulation at the roof level, double glazed window units and cladding panels are being used, alongside solar shading, photovoltaic panels and movement-sensitive lights inside.

(d) Energy Awareness Campaign

An Energy Campaign has been designed and a network of officers across the Municipal Building, Rutland House, Halton Lea Library, Warrington Road Children's Centre, Halton Stadium and four primary schools has been established. The Carbon Trust trained the network in early October 2008 and the campaign was launch the week commencing 20th October to coincide with the Energy Saving Trust's National Campaign on Energy Awareness. The Carbon Trust estimate that energy consumption can be reduced by between 5% and 15% through good housekeeping. If the Council

can target a 10% reduction in energy due to staff awareness, this could achieve a saving of in excess of £20,000 per annum based on current prices.

(e) Multi Functional Devices

An audit of the Council's fleet of photocopiers and printers identified that the Council had in excess of over 400 devices in its main buildings. Predominantly these printers were stand-alone and the aim of the project was to develop a print solution that took advantage of networked multi-functional devices (MFDs) and reduce the number of printers within the Council. The project will see a networked solution for MFDs across the following buildings: –

Runcorn Town Hall
Municipal Building
Catalyst House
Midwood House
John Briggs House
Rutland House
Grosvenor House

Phase 1 of the project (Runcorn Town Hall) is now complete in terms of installation but further work is required to install the Equitrac Print solution. A project plan is in place to roll out the MFDs to the other buildings over the coming months. The project will see the fleet printers and photocopiers in those buildings reduce from in excess of 400 to 103.

Funding of £60,000 was allocated from the Invest to Save budget. This was primarily to fund additional server capacity to run print software. To date, £8,486 has been committed for the work at Runcorn Town Hall. There still needs to be an IT solution to allow the Equitrac Print system to operate on the Citrix system and this will require some additional software. Further servers will be required as the programme is rolled out to other buildings.

At Runcorn Town Hall, the Council is currently saving approximately £900 a month on monthly lease and service costs compared with the previous solution. Once the contract is fully rolled out, it is anticipated that a saving in the region of £2,000 - £2,500 per month (£25,000-£30,000 per annum) will be achieved on lease and service costs.

Consumables are included under the current contract. To date, savings of £10,300 have been achieved at Runcorn Town Hall from reduced cartridge orders. As the contract rolls out this is expected to increase to approximately £90,000 per annum.

The Equitrac system which enables the Council to monitor printing patterns could lower costs by a further 10 -15% within Runcorn Town

Hall and will be replicated throughout the majority of the Council's estate. This will be created mainly by improved control of colour usage and investigation of users' outputs with a view to redirecting large jobs to the Print Room, which has lower print costs.

The new devices have default settings to mono and duplex printing. Over time this should reduce the volume of paper used. In addition, the new devices are more energy efficient and in addition to using less devices this will result in an electricity consumption saving. A saving will also result now that the Council does not need to replace stand-alone printers. At this stage it is difficult to quantify exact figures for those savings.

(f) Vehicles

A 5% mix in bio fules has been introduced into the vehicle fleet and the car leasing scheme now contains a limit of vehicles of 200g CO_2/khm

(g) IT Initiatives

Virtualising the 37 servers to 4 has saved approx 99 tons of carbon and 244,521 KW of energy.

Switching from a CRT monitor to a TFT could save around £13 a year in energy running costs as a TFT uses around 50% less energy. We are only purchasing TFT monitors and as CRT's are replaced further carbon savings will be realised. This table shows the numbers of monitor types from July 2007 and now.

Display	Number (July 2007)	Number (December 2008)
CRT	708	325
TFT	1282	1813
TOTAL	**1990**	**2138**

Buying Dell laptops use the latest Intel Core 2 Duo processors offer 30% better performance while using 40% less power compared with previous Intel chips.

(h) Programme of energy improvements in buildings

A programme of works to replace oil boilers with gas, roof insulation and double glazing in schools and Council buildings has been completed.

(i) Building Schools for the future

Initial discussions have taken place with the BSF team to ensure that energy efficient measures are included in the redesign proposals for

schools. Initial suggestions that will be included in the Council's business case will be a building management system to maximise the efficiency of heating and ventilation, zoning to allow the partial building usage, sensory lighting, real time readouts of energy, water consumption and carbon output with indicators of targets to be reached, waste reduction and green computing.

(j) Electricity Contracts

As part of the new electricity contracts the Council has built in the purchase of electricity from combined heat and power sources.

3.4 Next Steps

It is intended to review the Strategy early in 2009 to seek progress against those actions not yet underway and to examine further opportunities for inclusion in the Plan

4.0   POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The above actions are in line with the Council's Carbon Management Strategy and Implementation Plan, which was drawn up as part of the Council's involvement in the Local Authority Carbon Management Programme.

5.0   OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The Council spends in excess of £1m per annum on energy costs in buildings. In the past 12 months prices have been extremely volatile and substantial increases are anticipated when the new gas and electricity contracts are negotiated. The current gas contract expires on 31st March 2009 and current predictions are the Council can expect a 75% increase in costs over the next two-year period. In terms of electricity the Council has two supply contracts. The first a half hourly contract which covers larger buildings. This is a one-year contract and expires on 30th September 2008. The current prediction is that there will be an increase of 101% on current costs. The Electric Sub 100kw contract expires on 31st March 2009 and current predictions are that prices will increase by 75% over the next two years. These increases would add substantially to the Council's existing costs and across all contracts could add approximately £800,000 to the existing contracts.

Any action the Council can take to reduce energy consumption will help to reduce pressure on these budgets.

6.0   IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

There are no direct implications for the Council's priorities although reducing spend on energy can help direct resources to frontline services.

6.1 **Children and Young People in Halton**

Leadership shown by the Council can promote an awareness of climate change and energy efficiency issues amongst young people.

6.2 **Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton**
Following the example of the Council business will effect savings in energy making them more competitive and potentially enabling additional resources which can be directed for business investment and training.

6.2 **A Healthy Halton**

Reducing vehicle journeys will have a small beneficial effect in the overall air quality by encouraging healthy lifestyles through walking, cycling and using more public transport.

6.3 **A Safer Halton**

A reduction in the dependency in car travel can help reduce road traffic accidents.

6.4 **Halton's Urban Renewal**

An opportunity can be taken through the planning process to encourage greater sustainability across the built environment.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The long term failure to actively manage carbon emissions could lead to financial penalties if the Government proceeds with its proposals for a mandatory capping scheme.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

None

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

9.1 None

Action 2008 - 2013							
Project	Responsibility/Lead Officer	Timescale	Cost (s)	Cost Saving	Funding	Potential carbon savings	Pay Back (years)
BUILDINGS							
Install Powerperfectors in various Council Buildings	John Hughes Head of Property Services	Commencement 2008/09	£137,000	£36,000 pa	Invest to Save budget	206	3
Programme of works to improve lighting, heating and water controls at Stobart Stadium, Halton	Chris Patino Stadium Manager	Ongoing	£49,000	£49,000 over 4 years	Invest to Save budget	30-40	4
Programme of Works to improve heating, water and lighting controls and for photovoltaic tiles at Runcorn Town Hall	John Hughes Head of Property Services	Commencement June 2007 - Completion June 2008	Included in total refurbishment costs	£13,750	Property capital programme	55	
Replacement of old light fittings and tubes, together with incorporation of lighting controls	John Hughes	Subject to funding	£44,020	£10,613	Subject to Invest to Save bid	76.7	4
Replacement boiler and insulation of Picow Farm depot, Glendale and Inglefield	John Hughes	2008/09	£125,000	TBD	Maintenance programme	55	
Explore the feasibility of creating a pilot payback fund for carbon reduction initiatives in Council buildings	John Hughes/Jim Yates	2008/09	TBD	TBD	Submit bid to Invest to Save budget. Match funded by Salix.	TBD	TBD
Cultural change programme (staff awareness campaign, energy champions etc, training for managers)	Michelle Baker/Jim Yates/ Debbie Houghton	March 2008	£10,000	£100,000	Invest to Save budget	650	3/ 4
Engage schools in carbon management programme	TBC	2008/09	TBD	£130,000		1960	
Increase procurement electricity from CHP Services	John Hughes	April 2008	Nil	NIl	Purchase is part of existing energy contract	1430 tonnes	
Integrate carbon management into Building Schools for the Future Programme	Ann McIntyre	2009/10	To be assessed	TBD	To be considered as part of BSF Scheme	To be assessed	TBD
Programme of Energy efficiency measures in schools (replacement of boilers, roof insulation, double glazing)	Phil Dove/John Hughes	Ongoing	£783,800	TBD	Capital repairs budget	132	

Action 2008 - 2013							
Project	**Responsibility/Lead Officer**	**Timescale**	**Cost (s)**	**Cost Saving**	**Funding**	**Potential carbon savings**	**Pay Back (years)**
Networking of printers to multi functional devices	Pauline Lowe	October 2008	£60,000 for additional server capacity	£150,000 over 3 years	Invest to save budget	50-60	3-4
Review of feasibility of introducing renewable technologies	Strategic Director Environment	2008 - 2013	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	
TRANSPORT							
Introduce 5% biofuels in the Council fleet	Geoff Hazlehurst	April 2008	Nil	Nil	N/A	36	1
Link car lease scheme to CO_2 emissions	Personnel	April 2008	Nil	Nil	N/A	TBD	TBD
Review current mileage scheme and link to CO_2 emissions	Personnel	2009/2010	Nil	Nil	N/A	TBD	TBD
Improve analysis of fleet fuel consumption data	Service Managers	April 2009	Nil	Nil	N/A	125	1-2
Staff Commuter Initiatives to reduce the carbon emitted by employees and Members of Halton Borough Council as part of their normal 'home to work' commuting or business related travel							
OTHER							
Street lighting pilot scheme to change switching levels on lights	Steve Rimmer	2009/10	£20,000 - £30,000	2,000 pa	Subject to Invest to Save budget	15	10
Virtualisation of IT Servers	Julie Birchall	Aug 2008			To be met from IT Capital Programme	40-50	
Development of a sustainable procurement policy	Jean Morris	2009/10	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD	TBD
TOTAL(S)			£1,238,820	£455,363		4891 (20.2%)	
CORPORATE MANAGEMENT							
To ensure that carbon management becomes integral to the way in which the authority delivers its services, it is	Rob Mackenzie	2008/9	Nil		To ensure carbon management is	N/A	

Action 2008 - 2013							
Project	**Responsibility/Lead Officer**	**Timescale**	**Cost (s)**	**Cost Saving**	**Funding**	**Potential carbon savings**	**Pay Back (years)**
important that it becomes part of the performance management systems of the Council.					integrated into the 2008/09 Service Plans		
DATA COLLECTION & MONITORING							
To ensure that the Carbon Management Action Plan is effectively monitored there will be a need to set up systems for the collection and management of carbon emissions data	Jim Yates	2007/08	Nil		Establish systems to collect carbon emissions data on an ongoing basis	N/A	
Maintain central database of carbon emissions for the authority	Jim Yates	2007/08	Nil		N/A	N/A	

REPORT TO: Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board

DATE: 6 January 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Local Area Agreement Performance Report

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.   **PURPOSE OF REPORT**

      To report on progress towards meeting Local Area Agreement targets at the
      end of the first six months of the Agreement.

2.   **RECOMMENDATION: That**

      (1)   the report is noted; and

      **(2)   the Board considers whether it requires any further information on
             the actions being taken to deliver the LAA targets.**

3.   **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

      The Secretary of State signed off the revised Local Area Agreement (LAA) in
      June 2008. The purpose of the LAA is to agree a set of targets for Halton with
      government and local partners. Named partners have a duty to co-operate in
      striving to achieve these targets. There are 34 indicators in the LAA, plus a
      further 16 statutory education and early years targets. The agreement covers
      the period April 2008 to March 2011.

      A report on progress over the first 6 months of the Agreement is attached at
      Appendix 1, covering those indicators which fall within the responsibilities of
      Corporate Services Policy and Performance Board.

      Given that the Agreement was only signed in June, this first progress report
      reflects a very early stage in the Agreement's life.   In reading the report
      members should bear in mind that:

      1. As all the national indicators are built into service plan monitoring, the
         information in the appendix has already been before the Board. The
         intention of this report is pick out the LAA indicators from the different
         service plans so that it is possible to see a clearer picture of progress
         overall.

2. It was not possible to set targets for all of the chosen indicators in June for lack of baseline information. For example, the first Places Survey is only just taking place so there was no background against which to set targets for indicators that are reliant on that survey.

4. LAA REVIEW AND REFRESH

A process has just begun to "Review and refresh" the LAA with government office. The main purpose is:

1. To fill in the gaps – by February 2009 information should be available to fill in the missing baselines and targets.
2. To update baselines and targets for a small number of indicators following changes to definitions.
3. To consider if there are significant changes in context which make it necessary to amend targets even at this early stage (for example, the impact of the recession).

5. CONCLUSION

This is an early stage in the progress of the Local Area Agreement, but it is an opportunity to take stock of current progress and to check that appropriate delivery plans are in place.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Local Area Agreement acts as a delivery plan for the sustainable community strategy and as such is central to our policy framework.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Achievement of our Local Area Agreement targets has direct implications for our comprehensive area assessment. Further consideration of any areas of under-performance may give rise to other implications for the Council and its partners.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

This report deals directly with progress and delivering one of our five priorities.

9. RISK ANALYSIS

The key risk is failure to improve the quality of life for residents of Halton in accordance with the objectives of our community strategy. This risk can be mitigated by regular reporting of performance, and reviewing the action being taken where under-performance occurs.

10.   EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

One of the guiding principles of the LAA is to reduce inequalities in Halton.

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

Document:

Local Area Agreement 2008. Place of inspection 2nd floor Municipal Building. Contact officer – Rob McKenzie (0151 471 7416)

LAA PERFORMANCE REPORT CORPORATE SERVICES PPB (APRIL 08 - SEPTEMBER 2008)

Target Ref	Indicator Description	Baseline (2007/08 unless specified otherwise)	Current Performance (30.09.08)	Target 2008/09	Traffic Light	Commentary
NI 186	Per capita CO2 emissions in LA area	10.1 tonnes per capita (2005) (DEFRA revised in Oct 08 to 10.0)	9.8 tonnes per capita (2006)	3.76% 9.72 tonnes		The 2008/09 target relates to the 2006 CO2 emission figure which DEFRA have returned at 9.8 tonnes per capita. (http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/statistics/globatmos/download/regionalrpt/local-regionalco2-ni186indicator.xls) The target of 9.72 tonnes per capita was only marginally missed, and a reduction has been achieved. Activities are ongoing to deliver further reductions across future years and these include; - Partnership working with ESTAC to deliver energy saving advice to residents, both fuel rich and fuel poor. This includes access to grants. - Partnership working with Groundwork to deliver best practice advices to business - CT working with larger businesses to develop Carbon reduction Plans. - Several transport related reduction initiatives being delivered through the LTP - Delivery of a Carbon Reduction Plan within Halton Borough Council.
NI 5	Overall satisfaction with the area C4	Baseline to be collected through the Place Survey autumn 2008, target setting deferred until 2009. Future targets to show a statistically significant positive change .				Place Survey Indicator – data not yet available.