

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 18 June 2009 2.00 p.m.
Marketing Suite, Municipal Building

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

Chief Executive

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

PART 1

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1. MINUTES	
2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST	
Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any personal or personal and prejudicial interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda no later than when that item is reached and, 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.	
3. CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE PORTFOLIO	
(A) CAPITAL SPENDING FOR THE AIMING HIGH FOR DISABLED CHILDREN PROGRAMME	1 - 5

*Please contact Caroline Halpin on 0151 471 7394 for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 16 July 2009*

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

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Aiming High for Disabled Children (AHDC) – Capital Expenditure

WARD(S) Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the Capital Funding Plan to support the delivery of Halton's short break programme to meet the requirements of the Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- i) The Executive Board note the contents of the report**
- ii) The Executive Board recommends to Council that the draft spending plan outlined in 3.7 be approved.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The Aiming High for Disabled Children Programme is a national initiative to enable more disabled young people to engage in social activities within their local community. The programme also aims to provide their parent/carers with a break from their caring responsibilities. In 2008/09 Halton made a successful bid for Pathfinder status, and were one of 20 nationally and 2 in the North West. During 2008/09 a number of measures were put in place to test out some new activities for children and to build partnerships with local and national providers of short break services.

3.2 There has been significant grant funding made available to local authorities by the Department of Children, Schools and Families to improve short break services for disabled children and their families. The funding stream includes revenue and capital grants. This report relates only to the capital element of the funding outlined in Section 3.7 of this report. Revenue funding is subject to a separate commissioning process.

- 3.3 Consultation with disabled children and young people and their families has been a major focus in the development of planning for short break services, including the capital spending plan. The views of disabled young people and their families were sought through the “Powerful Voices” Conference along with a consultation leaflet that was sent out to all families with a child with additional needs. The consultation established the types of activities and practical support families would want to use.
- 3.4 Families of disabled children have told us that they want more support after school, at weekends and in school holiday times, so that they can have a break when they are under the greatest amount of stress.
- 3.5 Disabled young people have told us that they want to do the same things that other young people do. They want to participate in sporting activities, primarily for pleasure but also to join in local and national competitions. For those with potential, they want to be able to compete in Paralympic events. The children also want to have somewhere where they can meet with friends that is a safe, adapted and ‘home-like’ space that is available during school holidays, evenings and weekends.
- 3.6 The Capital Funding attached to the programme has been made available to Local Authorities to support the delivery of the short break programme in recognition of the need for specialist provision over and above that required by the Disability Discrimination Act 1995. The Capital Funding spending plan has been developed following consultation with children and young people and their families and in accordance with the DCSF guidelines. The proposed spending plan for Halton’s allocation of Capital finding is outlined in 3.7.

3.7 **Halton AHDC Capital Allocation**

2008/09 £85,600
2009/10 £199,600

Draft Spending Plan	2008/09	2009/10
Inglefield Outreach Centre adaptations	£85,600	£5,000
Outreach Centre (Widnes to be identified)		£120,000
Sporting wheelchairs		£20,000
Enhanced Toileting Resources		£15,000
Play Builder Resources		£39,600
Total	£85,600	£199,600

- 3.8 The creation of two resource bases, one in Runcorn (Inglefield Short Break Unit at Castlefields) and one in Widnes (at a location to be identified) will provide bases with the specialist equipment required, particularly for those young people with very complex needs. The bases will be available for use by individuals and groups in the evenings, at weekends and during school holidays. It is envisaged that the resource could be used for overnight stays by some young people with their personal assistants. Whilst the base in Runcorn has been identified, the options for possible locations in Widnes are currently being scoped.
- 3.9 Funds will be used to purchase 10 specialist sports wheelchairs to enable young people to participate in sporting activities throughout the Borough. Some of the wheelchairs will be based in the Tennis Centre and Leisure Centres, with others available at Chesnut Lodge School to be transported to a range of venues locally and nationally to support young people who may be involved in competition events. This initiative is being developed together with Halton Sports Partnership
- 3.10 Funds will also be used to provide enhanced disabled toileting facilities and play equipment in the new play parks being developed as part of the Play Builder Programme. This will enable more disabled children to use the facilities in their local parks, together with their siblings and peers.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 These proposals will enhance compliance with the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 and enhance the Council's approach to the inclusion of Disabled Children.

5.0 **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 The Aiming High for Disabled Children Capital Fund is additional funding provided by the Government specifically to support the delivery of the short breaks programme. The funds allocated for 2008/09 have been carried forward to 2009/10 with agreement from DCSF. The funds for 2009/10 must be used in this financial year and cannot be used for other projects. Any remaining funds will be reclaimed by The Treasury.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

This programme will enable more disabled children to access social and leisure opportunities similar to those of their non-disabled peers. It will support them to achieve better outcomes particularly for their health and wellbeing, enjoyment and achievement, and their

participation in local communities.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Young disabled people experience significant barriers to accessing employment and further education as their confidence, self esteem and social skills may be affected by limited opportunities for socialisation with their peers. These measures will provide them with more opportunities to enhance these skills outside of the school environment.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The provision of more play, sports and social activities will have a positive impact upon both the physical and emotional health of young disabled people in Halton. The provision of regular breaks from their caring responsibilities will support the health of their main carers and siblings.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The proposed developments will provide environments and resources for young people to extend their personal experiences in a safe and supportive manner.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The additional adaptations to the Playbuilder Programme will further enhance the Urban Renewal of the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The proposals for the spending plan for the AHDC Capital funding will enable more disabled young people to access more social and leisure opportunities in Halton. This will enhance the quality of life for both them and their families.

7.2 The funding is time limited and cannot be used for other projects. The plans are in place to ensure that the projects can be delivered within the time and spending limits.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The measures outlined in this report will support the inclusion of disabled young people in community sports, play and leisure activities throughout Halton.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

To gain the formal approval of the Council for the Capital spend.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

This is a Government initiative, with Halton as a Pathfinder. It must be the programme's objectives.

11.0 **IMPLEMENTATION DATE**

Financial Year 2009/2010.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Aiming High for Disabled Children	Woodview CDC	Margaret Chaplin

13.0 **JUSTIFICATION FOR TAKING THE ITEM IN PART II**

13.1 **Which Paragraphs apply?**

N/A

13.2 **Public Interest Test**

N/A

13.3 **Conclusion**

N/A

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18th June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Children & Young People

SUBJECT: Play Builder Project

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To update members on progress with Playbuilder Year 1 2008-2009 and to agree proposals for Year 2 2009-2010 and outline proposals for Year 3 2010/2011.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 2.1 Progress made with Playbuilder Project 2008/2009 be noted
- 2.2 Council be recommended to approve the proposals for 2009/2010 Playbuilder projects.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Executive Board received a report on the 21st May 2008 informing them of the success of the Authority in achieving Playbuilder status and confirmation of the funding awarded.
- 3.2 Guidance received indicated that Halton must deliver a minimum of 6 new, transformed playgrounds in 2008/09, with a further 16 in 2009/10 and 2010/11, making a total of 22 over the 3 years.
- 3.3 Executive Board received a further report on the 25th September 2008 whereupon the Playbuilder project development process was approved, along with the six Year 1 sites.
- 3.4 Year 1 (2008/2009) - Progress to date

No.	Site/Project	Completion Date	Progress
1	Hale Park	March 2009	Operational
2	Crow Wood	1 st May 2009	Operational
3	Runcorn Town Hall	15 th May 2009	Operational
4	Spike Island	Deferred to Yr 2	(See yr 2 proposals)
5	Gorsewood, Murdishaw	Expected Completion June 2009	On site
6	Hillcrest Halton Brook	Expected Completion July 2009	On site

- 3.5 Projects 1 – 4 will be developed in house. Projects 5 – 6 are projects developed in partnership with Social Housing providers who are developing and managing the projects. They will also be responsible for the ongoing management and maintenance of the new playgrounds.
- 3.6 The Spike Island project has had to be deferred to 2009-2010, as it proved impossible to complete within the required timeframe.
- 3.7 Playbuilder investment in Playgrounds in Halton in 2008-2009 was £299,092. The total investment from all sources generated or pump primed by the Playbuilder input is however, nearer to £1 million (see Appendix 1).

3.8 Sites for Playbuilder Project 2009/2010 (Year 2):

- 3.8.1 The allocation for 2009-2010 is £388,469. The proposal is to allocate this money equally across 8 new target areas, resulting in funding of approximately £48,559 per area.
- 3.8.2 The proposals for Year 2 have been considered by both Halton Play Partnership and the Playbuilder Sub-Committee. Proposed projects take into account the following;
- A partnership approach in identifying areas. Partners being; Landscape Services; Culture & Leisure, Housing Associations; Aiming High for Disabled Children Project; Residents Groups and the Voluntary Sector
 - Consultation with Area Fora
 - A whole Borough approach to provision
 - The identification of major gaps in existing provision
 - Targeting resources in areas of need

3.8.3 Spike Island

Brought forward from Year 1

3.8.4 Victoria Park

The proposal is to enhance the existing facilities at this popular destination, with Playbuilder resources targeted at children with additional needs. This will be developed in partnership with the Aiming High for Disabled Children Project, which is currently investing in Parks facilities to enhance the accessibility. This investment and new equipment will complement the Park's existing provision and make Victoria Park a destination site for a range of families with children with additional needs. There is revenue in place for the existing provision.

3.8.5 Milton Avenue

The proposal is to develop a new play area to replace the existing provision. The current provision is poorly located, subject to regular vandalism and difficult to maintain. The revenue budget is in place.

3.8.6 Halton Lodge

The proposal is to develop a new play area on the “BMX area” adjacent to Woodside Primary School. The proposal has been developed in partnership with Cosmopolitan Housing Association and has included extensive consultation with local children and young people. There are currently no play facilities serving this community. The project would draw down additional capital from other funding sources and would be revenue funded by Cosmopolitan Housing.

3.8.7 Caesars Close

This proposal will be part of the regeneration of Castlefields transforming an existing area which has fallen into disuse. The project has been developed in partnership with the Neighbourhood Management Team and Dane Housing. Additional funding is currently being sought, with the playground being revenue funded by Dane Housing.

3.8.8 Hallwood Park (Rowhampton Row)

The proposal is to complement the existing youth provision, which consists of a small five a side kick about area and a multi use games area with provision for younger children. There are currently no play facilities serving this community.

The revenue Implication will be funded through Landscape Services and Halton & St Helens PCT.

3.8.9 Town Park

The proposal is to develop a new playground on a site adjacent to the Town Park Railway/Ski Slope off Stockham Lane. The new site would replace an old playground, which was poorly sited, regularly vandalised and extremely difficult to maintain.

The proposed new facility in addition to its inherent play value would also complement the existing provision and help to make Town Park a more popular visitor destination.

See Appendix 2

3.9 Possible sites 2010/2011

3.9.1 In addition to the above proposals, need was also identified through:

- An audit of existing provision
- Area forum feedback
- Consultation with local community groups

Arising from this, consideration was given to future provision in the following areas:

3.9.2 **Upton;**

This area has a relatively large population of young people, with limited existing provision. It is noted as a youth nuisance 'hot spot'. Playbuilder input into this area has the potential to act as a catalyst to develop a larger project looking at provision for children and young people with a range of partners. It is proposed that this is approved as a potential 2010/2011 Playbuilder project site to afford time for a wider project to be properly considered

3.9.3 The Glen, Palacefields;

The Area Forum has the ambition to develop a 'Locality Park' on the land bordered by 'Flood Brook Clough'/Hallwood Link Road/Halton Hospital site. The land was designated as open space but undeveloped. The Playbuilder Project could help pump prime this. However, other capital funding would be required, and there would be a significant revenue implication.

3.9.4 Beechwood, Farnworth, Halton Village and Windmill Hill

There is currently no play provision serving these communities. No specific sites have been identified as yet, with suitable open space for provision. This could be an issue, particularly in the Windmill Hill area.

The proposal is for Landscape Services/Playbuilder Project to identify sites and undertake design work for Beechwood, Farnworth and Halton Village, with a possibility to deliver one of these in 2009/2010, and an option to deliver the remaining sites in 2010/2011.

The Playbuilder Project will continue to explore opportunities to develop in the Windmill Hill area. Work will therefore be undertaken during 2009/2010 to identify potential development sites for 2010/2011. A further report to Executive Board will put forward options for 2010/2011.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The successful delivery of the Playbuilder project will make a significant contribution to the development of Play in the Borough.
- 4.2 "Fair Play": a consultation on the play strategy announced the Government's intention to introduce an indicator into the National Indicator Set which assess the satisfaction of children and young people with the parks and play areas where they live and go to school. This indicator is to be introduced in 2009 and every top tier local authority will have to report on their success in supporting children's enjoyment through play. (See appendix 3).
- 4.3 The successful implementation of the Playbuilder project will significantly enhance the authority's ability to achieve its targets.

5.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Playbuilder Project funding is a capital grant. The investment of £1.1 million in new play spaces will have a long-term revenue implication in ensuring

the necessary and appropriate maintenance and management regime for this investment is in place.

5.2 The proposed projects for Year 2 (2009/2010) have been drawn up in partnership with Landscape Services. These projects have revenue resources already in place

5.3 Capital

Year 1	2008/09	299,092
Year 2	2009/10	388,469
Year 3	2010/11	437,885
	Total	1,125,446

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People

Play is a fundamental part of a healthy and happy childhood and its enjoyment is recognised by Government as equally important to other outcomes for children. Because it is so fundamental, it contributes to each of the five outcomes for children specified in Every Child Matters.

The essence of play is enjoyment. When playing, children define their own goals and interests, decide what is success or failure and pursue those goals in their own way. Children's enjoyment through play is linked to the control and choice they are able to exercise. Giving children the chance for free, uninhibited play allows them a psychologically safe space in which to try out new roles and experiences and enhances their enjoyment of life.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The continuous quality improvement of play workers and opportunities for development of skills across play and youth qualifications will be explored fully through Halton's Workforce Development Plan.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Play is crucial to health and development throughout childhood, contributing to social, physical, intellectual, cultural, emotional and psychological development. The physical activity involved in energetic play provides children and young people with a significant amount of their regular exercise and is a key element in tackling obesity.

6.4 A Safer Halton

One of the main reasons children give for not playing outdoors more is that they and their parents are concerned for their safety. Fear of strangers, traffic and bullying by other children combine to keep children in their own homes. Good play provision protects children through reducing unacceptable levels of

danger, while allowing them the opportunity to challenge themselves and use their initiative. At the same time, play enables children to take risks, to think through decisions and gain increased self-confidence and greater resilience.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

Halton Play Builder proposals will be consistent with Halton's Policies for Urban Renewal and are designed to enhance current play provision.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Play Builder programme is a three-year capital build programme with single year capital allocations/spends targets. Individual project 'risk analysis' will be carried out by each project delivered.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 A major criteria of the Play Builder programme is the requirement to 'ensure' that access and Inclusivity are a key consideration at the design stage.

The Playbuilder Project is working in partnership with the Aiming High for Disabled Children Project to ensure sites are fully accessible. Some sites (Phoenix Park, Victoria Park, Runcorn Town Hall) will have capital input from Aiming High for Disabled Children to enhance existing accessible toilet facilities.

9.0 REASON (S) FOR DECISION

9.1 To agree (8) projects to be progressed in Playbuilder Project Year 2.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 A full consultation programme has taken place where all options were considered.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 3-year capital programme with annual capital allowance. Implementation of Year 2 projects to be completed by 31st March 2010.

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

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Play Pathfinder/Builder Application	Children & Young People Directorate	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager
Fair Play, DCFS/DCMS	Children & Young People Directorate	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager
Halton Play Plan 2007-2011	Children & Young People Directorate	S. M. Duncan Play Services Manager

Table Showing Value of Investment in Halton Playgrounds

Appendix 1

Playbuilder Year 1 2008/09

Site	BLF	BFL Integrated Play	Playbuilder	HBC	WREN	Other		Total
Halton Brook			50,000.00			120,000.00	*1	170,000.00
Gorsewood			40,000.00			35,000.00	*2	75,000.00
Spike Island	107,500.00	33,000.00	30,000.00	35,000.00		100,000.00	*3	305,500.00
Town Hall Park	73,400.00	33,000.00	50,000.00	33,000.00				189,400.00
Hale Park			50,000.00	15,000.00	50,000.00	30,000.00	*4	145,000.00
Crow Wood			79,092.00	25,000.00				104,092.00
Totals	180,900.00	66,000.00	299,092.00	108,000.00	50,000.00	285,000.00		988,992.00

Revenue					Total
Halton Brook	Site to be maintained for minimum of 10 yrs by Riverside Housing Trust				TBC
Gorsewood	Site to be maintained for minimum of 10 yrs by Liverpool Housing Trust				TBC
Halton /St.Helens PCT	£80K per annum for 5 yrs to support maintenance of new playgrounds				£400,000
Total					£400000 + TBC

*1 Capital Investment from Riverside Housing

*2 Capital Investment from Liverpool Housing Trust

*3 106 Planning Control input/HBC Landscape Playground Capital

*4 Heritage Lottery Fund

BLF Big Lottery Fund
 BLF Integrated Play Big Lottery Fund Integrated Play
 WREN Waste Recycling Environmental Ltd

Possible Play Builder Sites 2009/2010

		Site Ownership	Sustainable	Design Capacity	Needs Analysis	Consultation	Delivery Capacity	Match
Site	Delivery Agent							
Runcorn Town Park	HBC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Spike Island	HBC	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y
Hallwood Park	HBC	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Halton Lodge	Cosmopolitan	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Caesars Close	Dane	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Milton Avenue	HBC	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y
Victoria Park	HBC	Y	Y	Y		Y		Y
Beechwood	Tbc	Site to be agreed	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Halton Village	Tbc	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Upton	Tbc	Site to be agreed	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Farnworth	Tbc	Site to be agreed	Y	Y	Y		Y	
Windmill Hill	Tbc	Site to be agreed	Y	Y	Y		Y	

The Local Play Indicators

Appendix 3

The performance indicators for play provision are defined in the table below.

Local Play Indicators

Indicator 1	Participation	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of all children and young people aged birth to 16 (i.e. from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled), who play out for at least four hours each week	Household survey
Indicator 2	Access to a variety of facilities and spaces	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of children and young people aged birth to 16 that have access to at least three different types (type A, type B, type C) of space or facility, at least one of which is a dedicated place for play and informal recreation, which are all within easy walking or cycling distance as defined below	Open space and play strategy audits GIS mapping
Indicator 3	Quality of facilities and spaces	Method of generation
Description	The proportion of facilities and spaces that have been assessed using the Quality Assessment tool and where improvement plans are being implemented as a result of unsatisfactory assessments	Quality Assessment tool
Indicator 4	Satisfaction	Method of generation
Description	The percentage of all children and young people (i.e. from all social and ethnic groups, including those who are disabled), who think that the range and quality of play facilities and spaces they are able to access in their local neighbourhood is good/very good.	School Survey

In the near future detailed guidance will be available from Play England on data collection and analysis methods for these play indicators.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Health and Community

SUBJECT: Runcorn Linnets Football Club

WARDS: Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek Executive Board approval for proposals to re-locate Runcorn Linnets Football Club back into Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Halton Borough Council give a grant contribution to a maximum of £100k towards the cost of re-locating Runcorn Linnets Football Club back into the borough, at the Halton Sports site.
- (2) Delegated authority be given to the Strategic Director of Corporate Services in consultation with the Portfolio holders of Corporate Services and Leisure and Community to determine leasing arrangements and operational issues in respect of the Halton Sports site.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 There has been a senior non-league football team in Runcorn since 1918, and Runcorn F.C., over the years achieved considerable success.
- 3.2 In recent years, the club experienced difficulties, resulting in the sale of their ground (Canal Street in Runcorn) in 2001. The club played at Stobart Halton Stadium and Prescott Cables ground until 2006, when it went into liquidation.
- 3.3 From this situation, fans formed a Supporters Trust to launch a new club, Runcorn Linnets F.C., to continue the history of Runcorn non-league football. This was a not-for-profit organisation akin to AFC United and Wimbledon AFC, run entirely by its members. The F.A. were happy to endorse the proposals and establish the team in the North-West Counties League. In its first season the club achieved promotion to the North West Counties Premier League.
- 3.4 The new Clubs aspiration was to return to its roots in Runcorn. Previously, HBC had instigated a study by Liverpool University into football provision in the borough. The study found that it was essential to have a senior team in the borough to which local people could aspire to play for, providing community links with local youth teams, developing the female game and disability sport, and policies that respond to the local agenda of healthy life styles. Runcorn Linnets, in their development plans, offer these opportunities.

- 3.5 Options appraisals were carried out to identify a site that the Linnets could relocate to. Details proposals were worked up for a site at Riverside College. The Club attempted to raise external funding to support this proposal but the economic down turn mitigated against this. HBC staff have worked closely with the club in their aspirations, and when the Riverside Site was proved to be clearly unaffordable, other options were considered. Ultimately the development of a facility at the Council owned Halton Sports site was appraised to be the best and most effective option.
- 3.6 The requirements to play at their immediate and aspirational levels can be met by developing a facility at Halton Sports. This involves changing facilities, seating and standing for spectators, official's accommodation, dugouts, floodlights etc. All this can be achieved at no detriment to existing and future users of the site. Indeed it offers the exciting potential of developing a community centre of sporting excellence.
- 3.7 The Runcorn Linnets have played out of Witton Albion F.C.'s ground for the last two years. If the club is to survive and have long-term sustainability it does need to return to its fan base in Halton. Equally, if Halton wants to promote sport as a life-style option, it does need a senior club that is rooted in its community and involved in its community. The F.A. fully support the aspirations and the approach of the club.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 To re-locate Runcorn Linnets F.C. back into Halton would fully support the findings of the Council commissioned report into football in the Borough by Liverpool University.

5.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The total cost of the scheme is £200k. Efforts made by the Club to fund-raise and attract external funding from the Football Association have closed the current funding gap to £100k. It is hoped that this sum could be reduced by sponsorship and grant funding from Sport England. This report, however, requests the grant funding to a maximum of £100k from HBC to enable the scheme to progress to meet the timescales of the F.A. to re-locate the Club back into Halton. The grant funding can be found within existing resources from managed underspends across the Culture and Leisure budgets. There are no revenue costs to the Council. All running costs will be met by the Club.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Club have established partnership arrangements with local junior teams, and have programmes to coach into local schools.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.2 A Healthy Halton

Physical activity contributes to healthy life-styles and the preventative agenda. The Club has and will further develop plans for community participation in football.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The proposal to develop at Halton Sports will enhance the site and could bring economic benefits to the local community.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 For Runcorn Linnets not to be re-located back into Halton would almost certainly lose the Borough its opportunity to develop the senior non-league game.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Club has an equality and diversity policy, and needs to have to qualify for F.A. funding. As mentioned previously, the Club are developing a female side.

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

None under the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18th June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Environment

SUBJECT: Pilot Recycling Reward Scheme

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to make recommendations concerning a pilot Recycling Reward Scheme in Halton and to request that relevant procurement standing orders be waived for the delivery of the scheme.

2. RECOMMENDED: That:

- 2.1 Executive Board approve the delivery of a pilot Recycling Reward Scheme in Halton;**
- 2.2 A further report be presented to Executive Board in March 2010 following a review of the pilot Recycling Reward Scheme;**
- 2.3 Relevant procurement standing orders be waived and RecycleBank be appointed to deliver the Recycling Reward scheme (both in respect of the pilot scheme and in respect of a full scheme in the event that it is rolled out borough-wide);**
- 2.4 Relevant procurement standing orders be waived and AMCS be appointed to provide the necessary hardware and software to capture data for the pilot Recycling Reward scheme; and**
- 2.5 The Strategic Director for Environment be authorised, in consultation with the Executive Board Member for Environment, Leisure and Sport to take all steps necessary to develop and implement the Recycling Reward Scheme in Halton.**

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Borough of Halton has been developing a good recycling record and with the support of local residents it has currently reached a recycling rate of over 25%. The Council would like to support residents to do more and believes that reward incentives are a good way of encouraging residents to achieve higher levels of recycling, reduced levels of waste generation and the diversion of more waste from landfill.
- 3.2 In addition to the environmental benefits, the economic benefits of increased recycling have been highlighted in the Council's Waste Management Strategy and Waste Action Plan.
- 3.3 As has also been highlighted in the Council's Waste Action Plan, Halton has a predicted shortfall in Landfill Allowances from 2009/10. This shortfall, which will continue until 2014 when new waste treatment facilities are due to be in place, will necessitate either the purchasing of landfill permits or finding interim facilities that are available to divert more biodegradable waste from landfill during this period. Either of these two options would result in significant increases in costs. Furthermore, as set out in para 5.4, the cost of disposing of waste continues to rise. Increased levels of recycling and diversion of waste from landfill will therefore reduce the financial burden upon the authority.
- 3.4 The Council has invested significantly to deliver a programme of enhanced kerbside recycling services to meet future targets and keep down the costs of dealing with waste, however, to achieve this will require participation levels to be in excess of those currently being achieved. The Council has operated a monthly prize draw to residents participating in kerbside recycling, but this has had no significant effect to date in encouraging participation. It also previously provided free bags of compost to those participating in green waste collections and this is due to recommence as part of a new Waste Management and Recycling contract. The Council has also been investigating other potential incentive schemes that may help increase participation in recycling.
- 3.5 A communications campaign is currently being delivered throughout Halton, key elements of which include raising awareness of recycling and waste minimisation in Halton to encourage increased participation in the Council's recycling services. This report outlines an innovative approach to increase participation and recycling rates even further and recommends that a Recycling Reward scheme be introduced, where residents would earn reward points for recycling which they are then able to spend at participating national retailers based in Halton and local retailers and businesses. This in turn would bring benefits to local companies and retailers and represents an exciting opportunity to encourage and promote local economic development through the engagement of local businesses and support for charities.

- 3.6 Officers have been in discussion with RecycleBank, a US based company that delivers a recycling reward scheme to over 1 million households in the US. RecycleBank has a proven track record of success, increasing recycling rates in every one of over 100 areas where its recycling incentive and reward scheme has been implemented. RecycleBank is expanding to the United Kingdom and this report proposes that a Recycling Reward scheme be introduced in Halton.
- 3.7 RecycleBank is the only company in the UK known to offer this precise product, and as such the Executive Board are being requested to sanction, both in respect of a pilot scheme and a full borough-wide scheme, that an invitation be given directly to RecycleBank to deliver a Recycling Reward scheme in Halton.
- 3.8 The commitment to proceed arising out of this report is purely in relation to the pilot scheme. There will be no commitment to proceed beyond the pilot until the scheme has been evaluated and a further report will be presented to Members in March 2010. Subject to the completion of a successful pilot, and subsequent approval, it would be proposed that all households within Halton would be given the opportunity to participate in the RecycleBank 'rewards for recycling' scheme within 12 months from end of pilot period, with the aim being to start in the summer of 2010.
- 3.9 It is proposed that the recycling reward scheme would be introduced in 2 phases, commencing with an initial 6 months pilot scheme to approximately 10,000 properties by October 2009. The pilot scheme will be delivered in the following Wards;

Broadheath
Daresbury
Grange
Halton Castle
Halton View
Heath
Hough Green

Elected Members from these wards will be provided with details of the specific areas within their wards that will be included in the pilot scheme should Executive Board grant approval to proceed.

- 3.10 If the implementation of the pilot scheme is approved, Halton could become only the second local authority to introduce this program in the country, and the first in the north of England. This would also reassert Halton's ambition as an innovative authority. The only UK authority to pilot the RecycleBank reward scheme has been the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, which commenced on 1st June 2009.

4. SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 4.1 At the heart of the recycling reward scheme lies a bin identification device that would be fitted to the current blue wheeled bins only. The identification device is assigned to a specific household and, only when activated by the householder, it is dedicated to the weighing of recyclable materials collected from that household. Other than the property address and the weight of recyclable materials collected the identification device records no other information. A scheme to reward those residents who participate in the Council's kerbside recycling services, but do not have blue wheeled bins, will be developed during the pilot period.
- 4.2 This is a voluntary 'opt-in' scheme. Although identification devices would initially be fitted to all 10,000 blue bins in the pilot areas (and to all blue bins if rolled out borough-wide), only those residents who choose to participate would be included in the reward scheme. Only when a householder activates their account will RecycleBank begin to record the weight of recyclable materials associated to their household and give the resident points for recycling. If householders choose not to activate the account, the identification devices will not collect data from those properties. Householders can choose to 'opt-in' or 'opt-out' at any time during the scheme. The black wheeled bin and black sacks are not included in this scheme and weekly general waste collections will continue unchanged.
- 4.3 The blue bins would continue to be collected using the Council's current recycling collection vehicles that would be fitted with an automatic reader connected to on-board weighing equipment. On emptying, the device would be read and the blue bin would be weighed. Weight data of activated households is stored and a corresponding amount of points is calculated from the weight of recycled material collected. These points are then allocated to the specific address and each participating household is set up with a unique Rewards Account. The accumulated 'reward points' are redeemable through an array of local, regional and national outlets, termed 'Reward Partners' or they can be donated to participating charities. The scheme restricts each household to a maximum redeemable weight/points in order to deter abuse of the system, such as the generation of excess weight or contaminating materials entering the recycling stream.
- 4.4 RecycleBank has identified AMCS, a company it has worked with on a number of projects in the US, as their preferred partner to carry out the fitting of on-board weighing equipment and the retro fitting of identification devices for the pilot scheme in Halton. On this basis it is recommended that relevant procurement standing orders be waived and that AMCS be appointed to provide the necessary hardware and software to capture data for the pilot element of the Recycling Reward scheme only. Should the scheme be rolled out borough-wide, further demonstration of value for money will be established before any

recommendation will be made to proceed with AMCS beyond the pilot scheme.

- 4.5 RecycleBank will identify national retailers based in Halton, as well as local reward partners prior to the commencement of the scheme, and will continue to add more reward partners following the introduction of the scheme. It is estimated that residents could be able to earn up to £150 per household per year in rewards value.
- 4.6 The Council and RecycleBank will jointly produce publicity material that will be delivered to all households in the pilot areas. This will be to ensure that residents understand the benefits offered by the scheme, why the Council is introducing the initiative and also to make sure that that they are fully aware that the use of technology enables them to earn rewards for recycling, and that it will not be used at any time to penalise them. Officers from the Council's Communications and Marketing Division will assist with this initiative as they have done with the recent Recycling Communication Campaign.
- 4.7 Average participation with Halton's multi-material kerbside recycling service is 50%. It is expected that the reward scheme could increase participation with this service to above 70%. It is also an aim that levels of recyclable materials collected could be increased by an average of 50-55kg per household per year. If the scheme were to be rolled out to all properties, and with increased participation and materials collected per household, it is anticipated that this could yield in excess of a further 2,000 tonnes of recyclable materials per year, and the overall impact of the reward scheme could add 5% to the Council's recycling performance.
- 4.8 Other potential outcomes of this reward scheme, in summary, are;
- Diverting additional waste from landfill and extending the Borough's Landfill Allowance compliance.
 - Off-setting increases in landfill tax costs (currently costing £40 per tonne and rising annually at £8 per tonne)
 - Increasing recycling performance (+5%)
 - Complementing the Borough's wider objectives of encouraging sustainable behaviours.
 - Encouraging community-based environmental stewardship.
 - Stimulating the local economy and strengthening business partnerships.
 - Improving the environment.
- 4.9 Public acceptance of identification and weighing technology will be a critical factor to the success of the scheme. As has been highlighted in paras 4.1 and 4.2, the scheme is only being used for recycling waste so it is not a 'pay as you throw' scheme which the Government has proposed in the past.

4.10 Recognising potential concerns by residents about their privacy, and to reassure them of the purpose of this reward scheme, mitigation measures have been agreed with Recyclebank which include;

- An information agreement.
- Privacy statement policy.
- Data access and retention guarantees.

As has been highlighted earlier, households will ultimately control whether they participate or cease participating, in the scheme. This will be the ultimate safeguard for any privacy concerns.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Members are asked to note that the full implementation of the recycling reward scheme would represent an 'invest to save' as there are costs to the Council in 2009/10 and 2010/11, with the financial benefits being realised from 2011/12 and beyond. The financial implications of the pilot scheme, and indicative costs of the roll out beyond the pilot, are set out below.

5.2 The cost for the operation of the pilot scheme would be £63,700. This is made up of the costs for RecycleBank to manage and administer the reward scheme, the costs to install and maintain the onboard weighing equipment and software to two of the Council's waste collection vehicles and the costs of retro fitting identification devices to bins in the pilot areas.

5.3 Subject to a successful pilot and the subsequent approval to roll out the scheme borough-wide, costs in 2010/11 would be as follows;

5.3.1 The cost to install identification devices to the remaining blue wheeled bins is estimated to be £89,600 and the annual costs of maintaining the onboard weighing equipment is £11,400. (Savings as detailed in para 5.5 will offset a proportion of the Council's costs).

5.3.2 An annual payment would be made to RecycleBank that would be based upon an agreed percentage of the savings made by the Council through the avoidance of waste disposal costs. This payment mechanism has not yet been finalised but will be contained in the report to be presented to Executive Board in March 2010.

5.4 The current cost of processing recyclable materials is approximately £10 per tonne lower than the cost of disposal. Increases in Landfill tax will see this saving increase annually, rising by £8 per year to an estimated £18 in 2010/11 and reaching £42 by 2013/14. Furthermore, the financial expenditure required to meet landfill diversion targets, either through alternative treatment methods (that are more costly than

disposal) or the purchasing of landfill allowance permits, could increase the potential saving by a further £20 to £40 per tonne.

5.5 Based upon forecasted additional recycling and waste diversion levels as detailed in para 4.7, potential exists for savings of between;

- £62K - £88k in 2010/11
- £78k - £104k in 2011/12
- £94k - £120k in 2012/13
- £110k - £136k in 2013/14

5.6 The cost of delivering the pilot scheme will be met from within existing waste management budgets and the report presented to Executive Board Members in March 2010 will contain further information on the financial implications of delivering the scheme borough-wide.

6. POLICY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 This scheme accords with the objectives of the Council's Waste Management Strategy and Waste Action Plan, and as such, there are no policy implications as a result of this report.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no other implications arising from this report.

8. IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

8.1 Children and Young People in Halton

No direct impact

8.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

No direct impact

8.3 A Healthy Halton

No direct impact

8.4 A Safer Halton

No direct impact

8.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

This scheme will encourage and promote local economic development through the engagement of businesses within the reward scheme.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 9.1 A potential risk associated with this scheme is the privacy concerns of some residents. However, as set out in paras 4.2, 4.9 and 4.10, no personal information is held on the identification device and only those householders who choose to 'opt-in' to the scheme will have a personal reward account created. Agreements on privacy should also mitigate any such concerns.
- 9.2 There is a financial risk that should the pilot be unsuccessful, there will be a lack of return on the Council's investment. However, the long-term savings to the Council outweigh this risk. The most significant 'driver' for the Council is the need to increase levels of recycling and diversion of waste from landfill to reduce future costs of waste disposal and to avoid penalties for failing to meet landfill allowance targets.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 10.1 It is noted in paragraph 4.1 that during the pilot period detailed consideration will be given to providing a reward scheme to those areas that are not able to benefit from a blue wheeled bins to ensure that the advantages of the reward scheme will be shared equally across the borough. As it is intended to extend the scheme borough-wide, all communities will have the opportunity to benefit from the scheme.

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

- 11.1 There are no background papers within the meaning of the Act.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

TITLE: 2009/2010 Code of Connection
Compliance Programme

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 The purpose of the report is to advise Members of the requirements placed on the Authority by Government through a project called 'Government Connect', and its implications as to how the Council does its business.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That:

- (1) the requirements be noted;**
- (2) a series of workshops be held to inform Members of the detailed implications of the code; and**
- (3) that any additional costs to ensure compliance be met from the existing ICT Capital Programme.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

3.1 Government Connect is a national ICT infrastructure for all Local Government bodies that the Council is required to connect into before 30 June 2009. It is a secure private network which enables secure interactions between connected Local Authorities and organisations.

3.2 It has introduced a set of guidelines and processes that define how we will use share, access and store any and all data within the Council, particularly data that is shared with Government bodies. This is not just an ICT project this is the Government stipulating how the Authority as a whole uses and deals with any form of data – be it new, historic or electronic.

3.3 How will we develop this Programme?

- The Council needs to identify a corporate Security Compliance Officer, an Information Standards Manager and the support for these people.
- The technology platform has been developed in order to ensure compliance and is in place, however it will be the softer aspects of compliance that will impact upon individuals within the Authority, both in the short term and over the next few years as we have to adapt our expectation of what/how we use technology within the business environment.
- This is Authority wide change programme not just a technology solution; as the requirements become increasingly complex leading to the ISO27001 security standard.
- In order to comply with this standard both the Operational Director – ICT and Business Manager – ICT, will become the qualified security professionals for the Authority through the international BSI audit route.

3.4 How will it affect Members/Employees?

- Within the initial 94 Standards the Council is required to meet, many revolve around the use of corporate networks and personal computing devices, mobile phones, PDAs and the media used to both store and transmit data. Some of the requirements will change the way in which such equipment is currently accessed and used.
- In order to manage this process effectively, it is suggested that a series of workshops be held for Members, aimed at fully explaining the implications of the Code and how it will impact on the use of ICT equipment in the future.
- Further and more detailed information can be accessed from the Government Connect website at www.govconnect.gov.uk

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 There is a high cost to ensuring compliance with the Code but this is to be initially contained by varying the current ICT Capital Programme. This will have an impact on existing programmes and will involve some reprofiling of priorities.

4.2 The total cost is in the order of £650,000, however, a large proportion of that would have had to be incurred as part of the ongoing upgrade and renewal of the Council's systems. However, the Code has required a reprioritisation of that work.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

5.1 None.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

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

- 6.1 Inability to transfer data securely and efficiently between Government and the Council's partners will have an operational impact on the delivery of the Council's priorities.
- 6.2 The Council will be unable to make official returns back to Government and this will impact the effective ability to measure performance.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The consequence of non compliance with the internal and external community is considerable with non compliance impacting on the Authority as a whole.
- 7.2 The Authority will initially lose the ability to transact electronically with the Department for Work and Pensions for all Benefit related correspondence and data returns. Subsequently, this will impact upon the Authority's ability to then transact electronic information within Children's and Adult Services with Government and other partners by 2010.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 None.

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

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

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 18 June 2009

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Corporate and Policy

SUBJECT: Mid-term Review of the Sustainable Community Strategy

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

To provide the Board with an updated Sustainable Community Strategy for endorsement.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

That Executive Board considers the draft mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy and subject to any observations or comments, recommends it to Council for adoption.

3.0 BACKGROUND

Local Authorities are required to prepare and implement a Sustainable Community Strategy. We are expected to work with partners through the Local Strategic Partnership to agree priorities and to engage and involve local communities. The current Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted in 2006. It contains a long-term vision with clear objectives and targets for the period 2006-2011. Since it was prepared a number of changes have taken place making it necessary to conduct a mid-term review of the Sustainable Community Strategy. This is an update, not a complete revision. Recent perception surveys and the revised State of the Borough Report (2009) confirm that the underlying vision and priorities from 2006 remain relevant. Widespread engagement has therefore not been undertaken for this mid-term review. However, in 2010/11 work will commence on a full review and roll forward of the strategy with wide engagement, linking up with work being done on the Local Development Framework Core Strategy.

The main objectives of this mid-term review were:

- i. To explain what our existing vision statement means – what will Halton be like in 2025 if we are successful? The statutory guidance on the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 requires that a Sustainable Community Strategy should include a long-term vision for the area.

- ii. To review the indicators and targets for each priority. Since the current strategy was produced the National Indicator set and LAA targets have been introduced. The aim is to have a single coherent set of indicators and targets in the Sustainable Community Strategy which encompasses both LAA targets and key local targets.
- iii. Incorporate the Housing and Homelessness Strategy (a requirement of the Statutory Guidance referred to above)
- iv. To ensure that appropriate cross-cutting targets are agreed, covering social inclusion, cohesion, equalities and closing the gap.

4.0 WAY FORWARD

The attached draft of the mid-term review has been drawn up following consultation with partners and approved by the Halton Strategic Partnership Board. It has also been considered by the Policy and Performance Boards during the current cycle. Any recommendations from the Policy and Performance Boards will be reported orally. In accordance with the constitution and legislation, the revised Sustainable Community Strategy has to be adopted by full Council. Subject to the recommendation of Executive Board it is planned to take the revised Strategy to the full Council meeting on 22 July for adoption.

5.0 CONCLUSION

The opportunities and challenges facing Halton are well-known. The Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the steps we need to take to bring about real improvement and how we will measure progress. The Local Area Agreement is a set of targets agreed with Government which reflects the Community Strategy. The mid-term review is an opportunity to bring these together in a single coherent document.

6.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The Sustainable Community Strategy is the primary policy document for the Council and its partners who have a statutory duty to have regard to it.

7.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

The delivery of the Strategy will require the application of resources by all the partners in Halton, and consideration of impact on priorities is already part of the Council's budget setting process.

8.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

The Community Strategy sets out our priorities for Children and Young People, Employment Learning and Skills, Healthy Halton, Safer Halton and Urban Renewal in Halton.

9.0 RISK ANALYSIS

The key risk to the revision of the Strategy is lack of consensus. This is mitigated by consulting partners and Policy and Performance Boards.

The risks to delivery of the Strategy are set out in the Partnership Risk Register.

10.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Addressing inequality is a key theme in the Strategy.

11.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

None.

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MAKING IT HAPPEN IN HALTON – A SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY FOR A SUSTAINABLE HALTON

What is a Sustainable Community Strategy?

A key role for local authorities and their partners is to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy for their area. This should aim to enhance the quality of life of local communities through actions to improve the economic, social and environmental well being of the area and its inhabitants. They must also:

- allow local communities to express their aspirations, needs and priorities;
- co-ordinate the actions of the council and of the public, private, voluntary and community organisations that operate locally;
- focus and shape the existing and future activity of those organisations so that they effectively meet community needs; and
- contribute to the achievement of sustainable development both locally and more widely.

They must have four key components:

- a long-term vision for the area focusing on the outcomes that are to be achieved;
- an action plan identifying shorter-term priorities and activities that will contribute to the achievement of long-term outcomes;
- a shared commitment to implementing the action plan, and proposals for doing so;
- arrangements for monitoring the implementation of the action plan, for periodically reviewing the Sustainable Community Strategy, and for reporting progress to local communities.

Sustainable community strategies will reflect local circumstances and needs. They will:

- engage and involve local communities;
- involve active participation of councillors within and outside an Executive Steering Group;
- be prepared and implemented by a broad 'local strategic partnership', through which the local authority can work with other local bodies;
- be based on a proper assessment of needs and the availability of resources.

This Sustainable Community Strategy has been prepared in accordance with these principles. It lies as the centrepiece of a portfolio of documents which help define the task for partners in improving life in Halton. The portfolio includes:

- The State of Halton Audit
- Consulting the Communities of Halton
- Priority Baseline Reports
- A Local Development Framework
- A Community Engagement Strategy
- The joint strategic needs assessment for Health
- The joint strategic needs assessment for Community Safety
- The Halton Economic Review

The Sustainable Community Strategy provides an overarching framework through which the corporate, strategic and operational plans of all the partners can contribute. Of particular note is the newly emerging relationship between the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework. This is the replacement for the Unitary Development Plan, made up of a Core Strategy and individual planning documents for particular areas or issues. It gives a more flexible and responsive approach to planning in Halton.

Importantly, the Local Development Framework takes forward the land use elements of the Sustainable Community Strategy. It takes into account all of the plans and strategies which affect the quality of life in Halton (such as health, housing and education) and impact upon future development. The Sustainable Community Strategy is based on the socio-economic profile of the borough and listening to the views and aspirations of the local community. The Local Development Framework provides a vehicle through which the planning process can enable these to happen.

FOREWORD

The Halton Strategic Partnership brings together key representatives from all the major organisations that are vital to building a better future for Halton. Its role is to agree on a common purpose and a common sense of direction which is set out in this Sustainable Community Strategy. Having done so, it provides a framework through which organisations, groups and individuals can co-operate to achieve our common goals. The Partnership is committed to making life better for everyone who lives, works, invests or visits the borough.

This is a refresh of Halton's second Sustainable Community Strategy and whilst we can take pride in what has been achieved to date, there is still much more to do. This document sets out a vision of the Halton we would like to see emerge by 2025. It sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. Those steps concentrate on the things that matter most to most people. The Strategy is about focusing on the issues that will make the biggest difference in the long-term.

This Strategy is relatively short. However, it is based on a significant body of research and consultation. This document outlines some key goals, some headline actions, and a scorecard of key performance measures by which we will be judged. It aims to guide the development and implementation of more detailed plans and actions to be undertaken by the Council, the Police, Health Agencies and others. Everyone has a role to play in making it happen in Halton. Working together we can make a difference and build a better future for the borough.

INTRODUCTION

Halton has inherited more than its share of issues over the years, many rooted in the area's industrial past. Making the borough a better place to live and work presents some major challenges and opportunities for us all.

This Sustainable Community Strategy is for all the communities of Halton. It sets out the steps we need to take together to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. In particular, we need to achieve real progress on five strategic themes that are set out clearly in this plan:

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

These priorities have been derived from what local people feel is important, and from the facts and figures about conditions in Halton. However, the strategy also recognises that Halton is not insular or isolated. Halton is an important component in the development of a thriving and successful Liverpool City Region, and more widely in a dynamic and sustainable North West region. Halton can only succeed as part of a successful and thriving North West. This Sustainable Community Strategy builds upon the wider strategic developments which are taking place in the region. Partners from Halton play a key role in shaping sub-regional and regional plans and arrangements. This connectivity – both strategically and operationally – is an important part of the Halton approach.

Halton's local strategic partnership (LSP) – the Halton Strategic Partnership has developed the Strategy. As partners we have built on existing collaboration and are fully committed to working more effectively together and with the community to help improve the quality of life for people in our borough.

This Strategy outlines key goals for the borough, some of the headline actions to be taken, and measures by which progress can be judged. It guides the development of more detailed plans and actions – to be undertaken by the Council, Health Trusts, the Police, Fire Service, community and voluntary sector, and others – whose actions are the important step that makes a difference to people on the ground. We all have a part to play in making it happen.

ABOUT THE HALTON STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP BOARD

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board brings together representatives from all sectors in the borough. It is the strategic level Board and a key part of the broad-based Halton Partnership. It serves the function of a 'local strategic partnership' (LSP) for the area. Local Strategic Partnerships are promoted by the Government and designed to help ensure that action taken at local level by a whole range of groups and organisations is properly 'joined up' and meets the needs of local communities.

The Halton Strategic Partnership Board, and this Sustainable Community Strategy, provides a common sense of direction for the community and an overarching framework within which different partnerships, organisations and groups can co-operate together, committed to common goals and dedicated to improving life for people in the Borough.

Members of the Halton Strategic Partnership Board

Halton Borough Council
Cheshire Police
Cheshire Fire and Rescue Service
Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust
Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council
Halton Housing Partnership
Halton Sports Partnership
Riverside College Halton
Halton Voluntary Action/Community Empowerment Network
Jobcentre Plus
North West Development Agency
Faith Community
Greater Merseyside Connexions Service
Halton Association of Secondary Heads
Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
Government Office North West

PLANNING A BETTER FUTURE FOR HALTON

This Sustainable Community Strategy is about what is most important for Halton and about working together to improve the quality of life for all who live and work in the borough. It sets out key priorities and shows the direction we need to progress in together, and gives us challenging improvement targets to work towards. It provides an overall guide and framework for the activities of partners and other organisations in Halton. It will guide the development of more specific plans and projects working across Halton.

To make real progress we will need to pool ideas and resources, and work even more closely and effectively together. Working in partnership and concentrating on what matters most will make the difference in planning a better future for Halton. This includes:

- knowing where we are heading, focusing on the priorities and agreeing clear objectives
- working productively together, sharing understanding of the borough's problems and their root causes, and joining up and co-ordinating our efforts to tackle them
- championing Halton's cause in the wider world, lobbying at regional and national levels, and working with wider UK and European partners for mutual benefit
- learning from experience, finding out and putting into practice what works best
- checking on our achievements, monitoring progress and keeping on track

The process to develop this Strategy was important. It was vital that the process was inclusive. Many people and groups were involved so we could build a clear picture on what was important and how we should go forward. Some of the key steps included:

- A review of our achievements since the first Sustainable Community Strategy was launched in 2002, and an honest assessment of how well partnership arrangements have worked
- Commissioning new State of Halton reports to look objectively at statistical conditions and changes and trends in social, economic and environmental conditions
- A major telephone survey of residents was carried out to seek their views on what life is like in Halton
- A review of regional and national strategies, and those of partners, was carried out to assess the likely impact of this activity in Halton

- An inclusive process of debate and discussion on the way forward took place with members, officers, officials and volunteers of all the organisations involved with the partnership
- A thematic assessment of the challenges facing the borough, and a thorough review of outcomes, outputs and targets was carried out. These helped to demonstrate how the strategy and partnership working could make a difference in the future.

This process of engagement with people and partners was vital. It is only if there is a shared view of the challenges that Halton faces, and a broad sense of ownership of the resulting strategy, that there will be any chance of its ambitions being realised.

WHAT IS HALTON LIKE?

Halton is a largely urban area of 119,500 people. Its two biggest settlements are Widnes and Runcorn that face each other across the River Mersey, 10 miles upstream from Liverpool.

Since 2001 the population of Halton has increased steadily to its current estimate of 119,500 (2007) and is projected to continue to increase to 124,200 in 2016. Following national and regional trends, Halton has an ageing population, which is increasingly making up the majority of residents in the borough.

As a result of its industrial legacy, particularly from the chemical industries, Halton has inherited a number of physical, environmental and social problems. We have been working to resolve these issues ever since the borough was formed in 1974. Gaining unitary status in 1998 has helped to bring together more wide reaching activities and has increased the resources that the Council and its strategic partners, have been able to invest in Halton.

Halton shares many of the social and economic problems more associated with its urban neighbours on Merseyside. The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2007 is one of the most comprehensive sources of deprivation indicators, as some 37 different indicators are used. It shows for example that overall, Halton is ranked 30th nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), which is third highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 10th highest in the North West, although this is an improvement on being fifth highest in 2004). Other authorities, St Helens (47th), Wirral (60th) and Sefton (83rd), are all way down the table compared to Halton.

The Index of Multiple Deprivation for 2007 suggests that deprivation has improved in the borough, since ranking 21st in 2004 there has been a decrease in 2007 to the 30th most deprived Authority in England. The proportion of Halton's population in the top category (i.e. the top 20% of super output areas) has also decreased from 50% in 2004 to 47 % in 2007. However, there is still room for improvement. Halton's concentration of deprivation has improved from 20th worst in England in 2004 to 27th in 2007. Concentration is a key way of identifying hot spots of deprivation within an area. Of England's 975 'Super Output Areas', which form the top 3% most deprived areas within England, eight are situated in Halton. The most deprived neighbourhood in Halton is ranked 306th out of 32,482 and is situated in Central Runcorn. Much has been done but clearly there is still much to do. Highlights of the key successes and challenges to date are:

- Claimant unemployment in the borough had fallen from 5.0% in January 2000 to 3% in December 2007, but this was still the 3rd highest claimant count rate in the North West. Due to the current economic climate, recent trends in unemployment have shown a sharp rise over the past twelve months, up to 4.8% in December 2008 and 5.9% in March 2009. The claimant count rate only includes those

people who are eligible for Jobseekers allowance and therefore underestimates the true number of people who are unemployed. The Annual population Survey for July 2007-June 2008 estimates that the unemployment rate in Halton was 6.8% compared to an England average of 5.4%, at a time when claimant unemployment averaged 3.1%.

- The employment rate, i.e. the proportion of the potential workforce actually working at 70.4% in the 2007-2008 Annual Population Survey shows that Halton is in the bottom 12 of 43 Local Authority districts in the North West. The borough rate is also significantly lower than the England average of 74.5%.
- Life expectancy in the borough has improved in the past decade. Between 2001-2003 and 2004-2006 female life expectancy in the borough increased from 78.2 years to 78.4 years. Life expectancy at birth for men in Halton also increased over the same time period from 73.9 in 2001-2003 to 74.3 in 2004-2006. This increase in life expectancy in Halton has kept pace with other Authorities. Between 2001 and 2006 Halton has risen from a rank of 374 for females to 370 out of 376 authorities with 376 being the lowest rank. For men the ranking has risen from 371 to 356. Standardised Mortality Rates for all causes, all ages, ranks Halton 2nd highest (i.e. worse) out of 354 English Local Authorities for 2006. At 127 it is 27% above the national average.
- GCSE passes in the borough are improving, between 1997-2008 the percentage of pupils achieving 5+ A*- C increased by 38.3 percentage points to 71.1%. This is now greater than the national rate of 65.3%. Pupils gaining no GCSE passes (or equivalent) was 2% in 2008 compared to 1.4% nationally. Skills among the workforce remain low, with 20% of working age people lacking any qualifications in 2007.

OUR VISION FOR HALTON

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

How Halton will look in 2025 depends on a variety of factors, both local and national. True, the Halton Strategic Partnership will be able to influence the outcome through how successful its joint working on cross cutting issues has been, but the overriding influence will be the state of the national economy at the time and how quickly Halton will have been able to leave the effects of the current recession behind. Recessions traditionally last 12 –18 months on average, but their effects on the economy, employment levels and wealth can take 3 – 4 years to recover their pre-recession position.

Physically, the main change in this period will be the completion of the second Mersey crossing upstream from the existing road bridge. This will help relieve the Borough's road network of the regional traffic currently using and congesting the existing bridge at peak times. The new bridge will help open up sites in the south Widnes/north Runcorn corridor for employment development that could create many hundreds of new jobs taking advantage of the improved traffic flows. 3MG will also be able to capitalise on this extra capacity to establish itself as one of the most computerised transport interchanges in the UK.

However the Borough's success in 2025 will not just be dependent on new physical facilities (not understating their importance) but also on the social, community and environmental characteristics of the time. Halton Strategic Partnership enthusiastically embraces the Government's agenda on such issues as:

- Social inclusion and community cohesion
- Closing the gap between the most deprived parts of the Borough and the most affluent.
- Equality and diversity among the population
- Sustainability
- Climate change
- Improving the health of local residents
- Improving life skills and opportunities for Halton residents

Closing the gap between the poorer and richer parts of the Borough embraces many of these issues because the spatial pattern is repeated. The worst health, the lower employment levels and lower skill levels are concentrated in the more deprived areas. Initiatives such as Neighbourhood Management with the backing of the Halton Strategic Partnership are very important in tackling these issues.

Paradoxically the gap appears to widen in times of economic growth because at such times all areas improve but the more affluent areas tend to improve more, thereby widening the gap. However when times are harder, for example in the recession, then the gap is less pronounced. This emphasises the importance of intervention as market forces cannot be relied on to narrow the gap.

A Healthy Halton

Of the five priorities, poor health continues to be the one that affects most people, with 33% of Halton's population placed in the worst 4% for health deprivation in England. The cancer rates and life expectancy figures, particularly for women, are among the worst in the country.

To overcome this we envisage a focused effort by all the partners that will improve Halton's overall position by concentrating on the areas with the worst health outcomes. The target will be to reduce early deaths.

Halton's Urban Renewal

Modern day Halton has inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that undermines the development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is a key to greater prosperity and boosting the image of the borough.

To achieve our vision we will

- Work with partners and the local community to support The Mersey Gateway scheme to fully realise its benefits. This will be a major focus over the coming years
- Provide affordable housing for sale and rent for those who need it most.
- Upgrade and fully utilise the borough's rail, road, commercial waterways and power infrastructure in order to maximise the potential for economic development.

Children and Young People in Halton

For children and young people, three specific ambitions have been set, which better define what we are trying to achieve for children and young people.

These are that:

- Every Young Person is successful when they leave school
- Children and young people will do well whatever their needs and wherever they live
- Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy.

Work will continue on specific responsibilities or issues, which affect specific groups of children or young people. These chosen ambitions are relevant to all children and encapsulate some of the specific difficulties experienced by particular cohorts of children and young people. Each ambition is a condition of well being for all children and young people that no one single agency can

achieve on its own. Rather a coherent partnership approach is vital if we are to succeed in making the necessary difference to each of these outcomes.

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton - Our long-term vision

Historically, high economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion, have been endemic in the local economy. Progress has been made in recent years but the current economic downturn has meant rising levels of unemployment and inactivity with worklessness rates currently standing at 17.8% in Halton, with some wards experiencing levels as high as 30.6% against a national average of 11.7%.

Our vision is the creation of a strong economy able to compete in the challenging global market. This can only be achieved by targeted investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and creating a strong culture of entrepreneurship. Our target will be to ensure that no area of Halton has unemployment at more than 20% above the borough average and to reduce the number of adults of working age claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods.

A Safer Halton - Our long-term vision

We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Halton has seen a 16% reduction in total recorded crime from 2005 and 2008. In the same time period vehicle crime has reduced by 29% and criminal damage by 34%. The Safer Halton Partnership - with its focus on action at the neighbourhood level - has contributed to these welcome reductions. However, this remains a pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives.

Taking the successes to date and working to improve on them, the Safer Halton Partnership aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods through coordinated enforcement and communication. Safeguarding adults is a key issue for the partnership, therefore policy and performance is scrutinised by the Safer Halton Partnership Board at every meeting. And whilst further guidance on the National review of 'No Secrets' is still awaited, work on the views of service users and carers, training and protecting adults will continue. Improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved to help shape what happens in their local area is key to the partnership. With the continued provision of Area Forums, Police Community Action Meetings (CAMs), Community Watch Schemes and 'Face the People' Sessions, the Safer Halton Partnership offers opportunities for local people to have their say and help make a difference.

WHAT IS THE FOCUS?

Taking action is one thing, but unless it is focused on the right things it is unlikely to yield the right results. This is why the Partnership invested a good deal of time and resources sounding out public opinion and gathering the facts and figures needed to identify the overall priorities for the borough.

Between 2000 and 2009, five separate State of Halton reports have been researched and published, highlighting a range of challenges and opportunities facing Halton. Their findings have been checked and challenged by the Partnership and tested against public opinion. This led to the identification of a number of priorities for the borough over the medium term which, in combination, addresses the overall aim of making it a better place to live and work. These include:

- Improving Health
- Improving the skills base in the borough
- Improving educational attainment across the borough
- Creating employment opportunities for all
- Tackling worklessness
- Tackling the low wage economy
- Improving environmental assets and how the borough looks
- Creating prosperity and equality of opportunity
- Reducing crime and anti-social behaviour
- Improving amenities for all age groups
- Furthering economic and urban regeneration
- Tackling contaminated land
- Creating opportunities/facilities/amenities for children and young people
- Supporting an ageing population
- Minimising waste/increasing recycling/bringing efficiencies in waste disposal
- Increasing focus on community engagement
- Running services efficiently

The key challenge is how best to frame the response to these through the Sustainable Community Strategy. To do this challenges have been grouped into five key themes as set out in the vision, which are:

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

Each of these thematic areas has been examined more closely in a series of Baseline Reports, which identify in detail the issues where we need to concentrate our improvement efforts. The Partnership intends to focus heavily on these key issues and to focus its future investment into achieving the challenging targets in each chosen theme.

To help do this, five Specialist Strategic Partnerships (SSPs) have been established. Their task is to design and deliver strategies and action plans to address priorities. Their plans are based on the information from the Baseline Reports and on the expertise of the Partnership members. Each of the five major themes is addressed in turn in the next part of this Strategy.

The Partnership also works to improve the quality of life at a neighbourhood level. It does this by working through the seven geographical Area Forums established by the Council and supported by the partners. Each Area Forum has dedicated resources to draw on to help deliver improvements in their area and expenditure proposals are expected to support one or more of the five priorities.

Halton is enthusiastic about extending neighbourhood management as a means to engage and empower local communities. This will address problems in deprived neighbourhoods by managing and co-ordinating resources and services to achieve a greater combined impact. A sound neighbourhood approach will lay the foundations for delivery of improvements to liveability and public services, transforming neighbourhoods and empowering local people. Halton already has many front line services organised on a neighbourhood basis. Community Support Officers, policing, community development workers, housing management, street-scene teams and youth workers are organised on an area basis. Children's Centres will also co-ordinate service delivery at a local level. A neighbourhood focus will provide management and co-ordination mechanisms for joining these, and other services such as health and social care up on a local basis. This Sustainable Community Strategy provides a framework through which these arrangements can be brokered.

A Healthy Halton

Our overall aim: To create a healthier community and work to promote well being and a positive experience of life with good health, not simply an absence of disease, and offer opportunities for people to take responsibility for their health with the necessary support available.

Why Health?

Statistics show that health standards in Halton are amongst the worst in the country. Because of this health has been singled out as a priority in most urgent need of improvement across the borough. As previously discussed the population in Halton is ageing which could put even greater demands on health and social care services. At the same time lifestyle choices in the borough especially amongst the young, in terms of diet, smoking, alcohol, exercise and other factors continue to give cause for concern for the future.

Key Objectives

- A. To understand fully the causes of ill health in Halton and act together to improve the overall health and well-being of local people.
- B. To lay firm foundations for a healthy start in life and support those most in need in the community by increasing community engagement in health issues and promoting autonomy.
- C. To reduce the burden of disease and preventable causes of death in Halton by reducing smoking levels, alcohol consumption and by increasing physical activity, improving diet and the early detection and treatment of disease.
- D. To respond to the needs of an ageing population by addressing the needs of older people, improving their quality of life and thus enabling them to lead longer, active and more fulfilled lives.
- E. To remove the barriers that disable people and contribute to poor health by working across partnerships to address the wider determinants of health such as unemployment, education and skills, housing, crime and environment.

Background

The recent State of the Borough Report identifies Halton as one of the most deprived districts in England. In terms of health deprivation the borough currently ranks 371st out of 408 districts in the country. The Index of Multiple Deprivation identifies 53 'Super Output Areas' in Halton that fall within the top 20% of most health deprived wards nationally and that approximately 40,000 people (33% of the population) live in the top 4% most health deprived wards in England.

When compared with other areas in England, Halton is within the worst 10% of areas for life expectancy. In particular female life expectancy is the third

worst in England (78.4). Male life expectancy (74.3) is also 3 years less than the national average.

The two biggest killers in Halton are heart disease and cancer. Heart disease is still the single biggest cause of premature death in Halton, and more people have it in this borough than they do in other boroughs across the country. For those under 75, men are more likely to have heart disease than women.

In terms of cancer, Halton has the worst early death rate in the country (167.8 per 100,000 population). Lung cancer remains the leading cause of cancer death in Halton. There has also been a steady increase in the number of women developing breast cancer and death rates from the disease have increased recently. Breast cancer is the second largest cause of cancer death in Halton.

Some of the reasons why Halton residents suffer disproportionately high death rates from major causes of death include poor diet, high smoking rates and inadequate levels of physical activity.

In recent years, the burden of ill health caused by alcohol consumption has also increased significantly. Recent statistics show that approximately 24% of adult residents in Halton binge drink. Whilst twice as many men as 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 latest Alcohol Profiles for England show that Halton is amongst some of the worst districts in the country in terms of months of life lost due to alcohol, alcohol specific and attributable mortality and hospital admissions due to alcohol.

In 2003 the Halton Health Partnership appointed a team of consultants from Lancaster University to examine the reasons for Halton's poor health record. Whilst there was much speculation around the role of Halton's industrial legacy and existing levels of pollution, the study revealed that economic, social and lifestyle factors were largely responsible for the high rates of illness and death.

When taking these factors into consideration, it becomes easier to understand why some communities suffer disproportionately from poorer health than others. Therefore, we would expect to set specific neighbourhood targets where appropriate.

During 2008 Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust produced two key documents, 'Ambition for Health' and the 'Commissioning Strategic Plan'.

Ambition for Health is a key document for Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust in terms of improving the health of the local population. The document sets out key "ambitions" that are based on understanding of the needs of the local population. These are as follows:

- To support a healthy start in life
- To reduce poor health that results from preventable causes
- To ensure that when people do fall ill from some of the major diseases, they get the best care and support
- To provide services which meet the needs of vulnerable people
- To make sure people have excellent access to services and facilities
- To play our part in strengthening disadvantaged communities

Following on from this Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust then produced the Commissioning Strategic Plan. This document turns the Ambition for Health goals into action by delivering transformational change in a number of key areas that support the strategic priorities.

The six priority areas identified in the Commissioning Strategic Plan are:

- Alcohol
- Obesity
- Early detection: Diabetes, respiratory, heart disease, cancer
- Early Detection: Depression
- Prevention: Tobacco Control
- Safety, Equality and Efficiency: Planned and Urgent Care

In addition to this, addressing the wider determinants of ill health is a key issue for Halton if it is to effectively respond to national and local targets. This will mean working across partnerships to achieve our goals. The list below highlights some of the areas where further joint working is required:

- Taking steps to reduce unemployment in areas with poor health statistics
- Improving educational attainment and increasing access to training opportunities for those living in deprived areas
- Improving the quality and provision of social housing
- Improving access to services such as social and leisure facilities, supermarkets, health services and transport.
- Understanding how knowledge and perceptions of health related issues can affect the local population
- Reducing social isolation
- Reducing crime and improving community safety
- Maximising community resources and facilitating effective community engagement and participation

Individuals also have a role to play in improving their own health and well being. Lifestyle factors such as a poor diet, smoking, and lack of exercise can all have a negative impact on an individual's health. Actions and services aimed at increasing participation in sport and leisure activities and promoting a healthy diet and lifestyle can contribute towards improving the health of local people. However, whilst agencies can work together to improve access, affordability, and quality of services, it is also important to encourage local residents to play an active role in improving their own health.

Well being is about more than health. It is about the ability to enjoy a range of activities that actually make life worth living. This is about having access and the ability to enjoy culture in all its forms - sport, arts, libraries, leisure, entertainment, hobbies, friends and family, and shopping. We aim to enhance these opportunities for people. Happy people are more likely to be healthy people and vice versa.

We therefore also need to address all of the determinants of mental health and well-being for different population groups. Children and young peoples emotional and mental well-being is addressed within Children's Trust structures.

Linkages to other priorities

Halton's Urban Renewal

A high quality built environment is an important contributory factor in determining the health and well-being of local people. Good quality, accessible buildings, served by a good quality transport infrastructure create a more vibrant community where people are proud to live and work. In turn this contributes to the health and well-being of local residents.

Children and Young People in Halton

Improving the health and well-being of children and young people is a key priority. Being healthy as a child can have an influence on long term health outcomes. The Healthy Halton Specialist Strategic Partnership works closely with the Children and Young Peoples partnership to address issues such as childhood obesity and teenage pregnancy. In addition low educational attainment is one of the key determinants of poor health outcomes and leads to many health inequalities within neighbourhoods.

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Improving access to employment opportunities is a key determinant in improving the health of the local population. Being in employment increases choice and opportunity and enhances quality of life. Areas of high unemployment are shown to have higher levels of poor health therefore anything we can do to increase wealth creating factors within those communities will automatically improve health outcomes. Linked to this is the need to increase access to learning opportunities and offering people the chance to improve their skills thereby improving their chance of gaining employment.

A Safer Halton

Personal experience of crime and anti-social behaviour can have a significant impact on our health and well-being. Tackling crime is high on the public agenda and a key priority for neighbourhoods. One of the key areas for both the Health Partnership and the Safer Halton Partnership is the current issues surrounding alcohol harm. Both partnerships are working together to address these issues.

Improvement Targets

Halton Local Area Agreement Indicators relating to Health

By 2011 we aim to:

- Increase adult participation in sport from 20.13% (2006 baseline) to 24.02%: Sport: NI 8.
- Slow the rate of increase in alcohol-harm related hospital admissions from 2180 in 2007/08 to 2323 in 2009/10 and 2309 by 2010/11: Alcohol related hospital admissions: NI 39.
- Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment from 513 (2007/08 baseline) to 544: Drug Treatment: NI 40.
- Increase the prevalence of breastfeeding at 6-8 weeks from birth from 12.1% (Quarter 2 2008) to 23%: Breastfeeding: NI 53.
- Reduce obesity in primary school age children from 22.4% to 21.3%: Obesity NI: 56.
- Reduce the conception rate in girls under 18 by 55%, compared to 1998: Conception: NI 112.
- Reduce the number of young people misusing substances from 12.6% in 2008 to 9.8% in 2011: Substance Misuses: NI 115
- Reduce all age all cause mortality for Males from 906 per 100,000 population (2007/08 baseline) to 755: Life expectancy: NI 120.
- Reduce all age all cause mortality for females from 673 (2007/08 baseline) to 574 by 2010/2011: Life expectancy: NI 120.
- Increase the number of people age 16+ who have stopped smoking from 914 per 100,000 population (2007/08 baseline) to 1128: Lifestyle: NI 123.
- Improve the number of people over 65 who say that they receive the information, assistance and support needed to exercise choice and control to live independently from 30.4% (2008 base) to 32.8%: Independent living: NI 139
- Improve the number. of vulnerable people supported to maintain independent living from a Baseline in 2007/08 of 98.17%, to a target of 99.04% in 2011: NI 142
- No. of adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment – target to be set by March 2010.: Mental Health: NI150

Local targets

- Reduce the death rate in under 75s from circulatory disease by 57% from 1995-97 baseline in 2009-2011
- Reduce the death rate from Cancer (in under 75s) by 25% in 2009-11 from 1995-97 baseline
- Increase the number of people with a long term condition supported to be independent and in control of their condition from 43% (07/08 baseline) to 49% (2010/2011): Managing long term conditions: NI 124

Halton's Urban Renewal

Our Overall aim: To transform the urban fabric and infrastructure, to develop exciting places and spaces and to create a vibrant and accessible borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.

Why Urban Renewal?

Modern day Halton has inherited an exceptional legacy of obsolete and poor quality land, buildings and physical infrastructure that undermines the development potential and attractiveness of the area. Putting this right is a key to greater prosperity and boosting the image of the borough. This is why Urban Renewal is Halton Borough Council's second most important priority.

Key Objectives

- A. To create and sustain a twenty first century business environment with the required variety and quality of sites, premises and infrastructure that can support high levels of investment and economic growth and increase Halton's competitiveness;
- B. To promote regional employment sites at 3MG, Daresbury and the Widnes Waterfront;
- C. To secure the commencement of the construction of the Mersey Gateway bridge;
- D. To revitalise the town centres; to create dynamic, well-designed high quality commercial areas that can continue to meet the needs of local people, investors, businesses and visitors;
- E. To support and sustain thriving neighbourhoods and open spaces that meet people's expectations and add to their enjoyment of life;
- F. To ensure Halton designs in and maintains high levels of accessibility to places and spaces, so that opportunity and need are matched, and provide excellent connectivity to the wider world through transport and ICT links;
- G. To enhance, promote and celebrate the quality of the built and natural environment in Halton including tackling the legacy of contamination and dereliction, to further improve the borough's image.

Background

Halton helped maintain the momentum of the industrial revolution in the 19th Century and was a cradle to both invention and innovation. Reflecting this industrial and manufacturing history, Halton has a legacy of ageing infrastructure, obsolete and redundant buildings, a relatively poor built and

natural environment, an overly mature housing stock and an under-provision of modern amenities to support a far more discerning population.

Much has already been achieved to green the environment, both within the town centres and at our gateway approaches. Town centres have experienced new private sector investment, whilst small businesses have taken advantage of grant assistance to rejuvenate tired, rundown or unproductive premises. Award-winning leisure facilities have been provided around the borough and new housing and jobs are being provided because of the confidence in Halton's future.

The business environment is expanding thanks to developments on the Widnes Waterfront, 3MG, Daresbury, The Heath and the key infrastructure development of the Mersey Gateway river crossing:

- The Widnes Waterfront is located in South Widnes, fronting onto the River Mersey. The programme aims to regenerate 80 ha., of low quality industrial land, supported by a cocktail of funding opportunities. Work includes commercial, retail and leisure developments, together with environment, infrastructure and public realm enhancements - all of which will have been completed by 2015. This programme has been identified as a North West Strategic Site and supports the borough's Employment, Learning & Skills priority amongst others;
- 3MG (Mersey Multi-modal Gateway) in Ditton is quickly becoming a regionally and nationally significant intermodal freight park which anticipates an approximate total investment of £100m. This major scheme will create up to 5,000 new jobs and 3 million sq.ft of rail-related distribution facilities by 2015. In addition, the Stobart Group have acquired the Mersey Gateway Port at Weston in Runcorn, which will offer an integrated transport and logistics facility;
- The Mersey Gateway project will provide a landmark new bridge over the River Mersey between Runcorn and Widnes. It will transform the borough of Halton, improve the lives of local people and create new opportunities for business and investment in Halton, Cheshire, the Liverpool city-region, the north west and beyond. The new bridge will cross the river 1.5km east of the Silver Jubilee Bridge (SJB), be a tolled crossing, have three lanes in each direction and be linked to the major road systems in the area, keeping traffic moving and raising the profile of the borough. The Mersey Gateway bridge is due to open to the public in 2014 and will overcome one of the biggest congestion problems in the region. Modifications will be made to the existing SJB to improve facilities for local public transport, walking and cycling;
- The Mersey Gateway Regeneration Strategy will support and promote significant developments in both Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres, continuing regeneration programmes such as the Canal Quarter (Runcorn), Ashley Retail Park and Windmill Centre (Widnes), which are under way in both towns;

- The Daresbury Science & Innovation Centre is a state-of-the-art facility offering high quality office, workshop and laboratory space. The Innovation Centre aims to bring together science and technology-based businesses into an innovative scientific environment. The building provides facilities and specialist support critical to young businesses whether at the creation, growth or acceleration stages of their development.

Exciting new expansion developments are also anticipated at The Heath Business Park and the Halton Lea and Widnes retail areas.

Halton together with our partners in St.Helens and Warrington has been awarded Growth Point Status. This will help foster increasing partnership working across traditional boundaries, better integrating the provision of new housing and employment opportunities across the sub-region whilst promoting sustainable development and the timely provision of supporting infrastructure (including Green Infrastructure).

Two large sites for private sector-residential developments in the borough over the past decade have been at Upton Rocks, Widnes and Sandymoor, Runcorn. The focus of these developments has been a concentration on the executive end of the housing market, in order to encourage managerial and professional socio-economic groups to move to the borough. However, land remediation has cleared the way for housing development at Halebank and plans are being progressed to develop residential accommodation at the Canal Quarter in Runcorn, where leisure and retail facilities will also be delivered along the banks of the Bridgewater Canal. In addition, a £130 million major sustainable regeneration programme is taking place in Castlefields, where high quality mixed-tenure housing is replacing grim deck access flats. The existing local centre will be demolished and redeveloped to create a new community hub centred around a Village Square, offering shops, residential accommodation and health and community facilities – all amidst many and varied environmental and leisure enhancements, including the very successful Phoenix Park. Further housing renewal opportunities have been identified including areas of Runcorn New Town and West Bank, Widnes.

The creation and maintenance of high quality places and spaces that support a twenty- first century economy and lifestyles which are accessible and well connected, is a pre-requisite of Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy and its Urban Renewal Strategy. Much of this is dependent upon the borough's extensive expertise for land reclamation, which has been developed out of need to address and overcome the borough's legacy of contamination from the chemicals industry. This is detailed in the Borough's Contaminated Land Remediation Strategy.

Land is being reclaimed at the rate of approximately 10 hectares per annum. Much of this reclamation is located on the historical chemical sites adjacent to and part of the Widnes Waterfront. For example, Moss Bank Park and further additions to the Trans Pennine trail have been completed adding valuable

amenity space within a modern industrial environment. Development of new 'Alternative Technologies' by Halton, to make safe the severe contamination on these sites, will provide the economic solution to bring forward significant industrial and intermodal developments in the borough, e.g. as in the Widnes Waterfront and the 3MG Intermodal Logistics Park.

Environmental improvements and better quality open spaces, in addition to a better quality built environment and transport offer, are vital as steps to promote Halton's assets. A positive image is a key requirement if we are to boost the confidence and aspirations of local people and business.

Linkages to Other Priorities

A Healthy Halton

Providing a better, cleaner and greener built environment where employment and leisure opportunities are fostered and resident prosperity overcomes health issues associated with deprivation. Improved access to hospitals.

Children and Young People in Halton

Creating an environment that provides the basis in which our children are able to flourish

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Developing employment opportunities for all in a thriving business environment where skills meet business needs. Improved access to further education facilities

A Safer Halton

Instilling pride in our local community where residents feel safe and cherish their neighbourhoods, wishing to help eradicate violence and unsocial elements

Improvement Targets

Halton LAA Indicators relating to Urban Renewal

By 2011 we aim to:

- Assist in raising residents' overall satisfaction with the area from 70% in 2008 to 73.4% in 2010 (baseline and target provisional pending publication of final places survey data): Residents' Satisfaction: NI 5.
- Reduce per capita CO2 emissions within the local authority area, from 10.1 tonnes per capita in 2007/08, (based on Defra 2005 data) to 8.98 tonnes per capita, by 2010/11 (based on Defra 2008 data): Climate Change: NI 186.
- Ensure 34% of municipal waste is recycled or composted by the local authority by 2010/11 compared to 25.1% in 2007/08: Waste: NI 192.

- Build additional homes within Halton at an annual rate of 518 between 2008/2009 and 2010/2011: Housing: NI 154.
- Improve access to services and facilities by public transport, walking and cycling. Targets set for access to Whiston and Warrington Hospitals (100%) and Runcorn and Widnes comprises of Riverside College (89% and 93% respectively): Transport: NI 175.

Local Indicators

- Increase in the numbers of jobs in Halton by 1%
- To bring 10 hectares of derelict land back into beneficial use annually.
- Facilitate the relocation of businesses affected by the construction of the Mersey Gateway Bridge.

Children and Young People in Halton

Our Overall Aim: Halton's ambition is to build stronger, safer communities which are able to support the development and learning of children and young people so they grow up feeling safe, secure, happy and healthy, and are ready to be Halton's present and Halton's future

Why Children and Young People?

Children and young people are the future of Halton. In time they will become the adults that take responsibility for all aspects of life in the borough. Therefore, it is self-evident that we should invest in Halton's future by investing in them. This will make sure they have the best possible start in life, have places to go and things to do that are positive and life enhancing, and the opportunity to fulfil their potential and succeed.

Key Objectives

Halton's Children's Trust has identified three entrenched areas, where a strong partnership approach is needed to improve outcomes for children and young people. These will form the foundation for the new Children and Young People's Plan 2009-12. These areas under which the key outcomes can be clustered, are:

- A. Children and young people do well wherever they live and whatever their needs
- B. Children and young people are physically, emotionally and sexually healthy
- C. Young people are successful when they leave school

Background

Development in early childhood, success while at school through educational and other achievement, and the acquisition of important, employable skills, are key determinants of individuals' life and employment chances. They have a major effect on people's ability to access employment, the income they earn, their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life.

The Government policy, Every Child Matters: Change for Children, describes a vision of improving outcomes for all children and young people and narrowing the gap between those who do well and those who do not. In Halton, as elsewhere, this requires radical change in the whole system of children's services including:

- The improvement and integration of front line services - in early years settings, schools, the health service and play and recreation - and to raise standards of achievement for all learners

- More specialised help to promote opportunity, prevent problems and act early and effectively if and when problems arise
- The further development of services around children, young people and families through the delivery of better and more easily accessible services may involve co-location through, for example, extended schools, children's centres, and the bringing together of professionals in multi-disciplinary teams
- Dedicated and enterprising leadership striving for the highest standards at all levels of the system
- The development of a shared sense of responsibility across agencies for safeguarding children and protecting them from harm
- Listening to children, young people and their families when assessing and planning service provision, as well as in face-to-face delivery

To bring about improvement in the life chances and employment prospects for children and young people in Halton, we need to remove socio-economic barriers to early development, and deliver the Every Child Matters agenda through the Children's Trust, and through better joint commissioning and integrated delivery of services through the widely agreed Children's and Young People's Plan.

The key agencies that have an impact on children and young people need to build on existing cooperation. Firstly we need to develop policies based on evidence of what works most effectively that are focused on delivering the outcomes highlighted above. Then we must create a model of what measures and services to enhance life chances and employment need to be like to make the most positive impact in Halton. Finally, we should devise an action plan to make any changes needed to shift from the measures and services that exist now, to what they need to be in the future.

Linkages to other Priorities

A Healthy Halton

Children's health is a key priority mainly because being healthy is the best basis from which children can go on and develop throughout their lives. Education is a key influence on health and affects health-related behaviour such as smoking, drinking, drugs and exercise. To tackle the issues such as obesity and teenage pregnancy in Halton, Children and Young People work closely with the Health Partnership to ensure there is a joined up approach.

Halton's Urban Renewal

Investment in Halton's urban fabric and infrastructure will help to make Halton a place where our children and young people will want to live as adults. Also the provision of access to quality transportation links for education and leisure opportunities is a key priority.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Increasing the number of young people in education, employment and training will involve close working with partners from Employment, Learning & Skills. Employment opportunities and training offers a number of key options to our young people post-16 as they look for the best pathway going forward.

A Safer Halton

The provision of pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhoods will provide children and young people with a safe environment in which to play, grow and prosper. Providing positive activities for young people are delivered through the Safer Halton Partnership to discourage crime and anti social behaviour.

Improvement Targets

Halton Local Area Agreement Indicators relating to Children & Young People

By 2011 we aim to:

- Increase the stability of placements for looked after children from 69% in 2008 to 81.5% by 2011: Children in Care: NI 63.
- Reduce the proportion of children in poverty from 27% in 2008 to 24.2% by 2011: Children in Poverty: NI 116.
- Reduce obesity among primary school age children in Year 6 from 22.4% in 2008 to 21.3% by 2011: Child Obesity: NI 56.
- Reduce the under 18 conception rate by 55% by 2011 from the 1998 figure: Teenage Pregnancy: NI 112.
- Increase the proportion of young people achieving a Level 3 qualification by the age of 19 from 33.5% in 2008 to 42.2% by 2011: Level 3 Qualification: NI 80.
- Reduce the number of 16-18 year olds not in education, employment or training from 11.5% in 2008 to 7.7% by 2011: Not in education, employment or training: NI 117.
- Reduce the number of first time entrants aged 10-17 entering the Youth Justice System from 249 in 2007/08 to 234 by 2010/11: First time entrants: NI 111.
- Reduce the number of young people misusing substances from 12.6% in 2008 to 9.8% in 2011: Substance Misuses: NI 115

Local indicator

- Reduce the gap of attainment of 5 A*-C GCSEs (including English and Maths) by 25% between those living in the worst 10% Lower Super Output Areas nationally and the Halton average by 2011
- Reduce the number of children killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents: Road Traffic Fatality: NI 48

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Our overall aim: To create an economically prosperous borough that encourages investment, enterprise and business growth, and improves the opportunities for learning and development together with the skills and employment prospects of both residents and workforce so that they are able to feel included socially and financially.

Why Employment, Learning and Skills?

A robust economy lays the foundation for any prosperous and successful place and provides jobs, opportunities, wealth and aspirations for local people. Historically, in Halton there has been a sustained mismatch between the needs of local business and the skills of local people, low rates of entrepreneurship and high levels of welfare dependency, meaning that opportunity and need are out of balance and contributing to the widespread deprivation in Halton. Sustainable economic growth and prosperity requires a commitment to encourage and support a vibrant business sector together with a renewed commitment to creating sustainable employment, and high quality learning and skills opportunities to satisfy all stakeholders in Halton.

Key Objectives

- A. To foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship and make Halton an ideal place to start and grow economic activity
- B. To develop a culture where learning is valued and raise skill levels throughout the adult population and in the local workforce
- C. To promote and increase the employability of local people and remove any barriers to employment to get more people into work
- D. To develop a strong, diverse, competitive and sustainable knowledge-based local economy.
- E. To maximise an individual's potential to increase and manage their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services.

Background

Despite a range of local and national initiatives, Halton is still characterised by widespread deprivation. Attainment at school, in further education and the acquisition of employable skills are key determinants of individuals' life and employment chances. They have a major effect on people's ability to get a job, on the income they earn, on their aspirations, behaviour, health and longevity, and on the range of positive choices they are able to make in life. This means that the creation of a strong economy able to compete in today's challenging global market can only be achieved by continuing targeted investment in skills, a vibrant employment market and a strong culture of entrepreneurship.

Research shows that the skill base of the local area is relatively poor compared to Great Britain as a whole and to other surrounding local economies. Halton has a relatively low percentage of adults with further education qualifications and a high number of adults experiencing problems with numeracy and literacy. Looking to the future, estimates indicate that the majority of new jobs will require some form of recognised education qualification. Over 95% of new jobs will need qualifications of at least NVQ 2 level and over 70% at NVQ 3 and above. In addition, in an increasingly technologically developed society and in a borough where up to 30% of adults experience some form of difficulty with literacy there is a danger that a digital divide is created between those able to access and navigate jobs and services and those who cannot.

High economic inactivity rates across the borough, with particular pockets of high deprivation and social exclusion, are endemic in the local economy. Halton continues to display higher than average rates of benefit dependency, whilst at the same time many people are not claiming their full entitlements which would enable them to enjoy a minimum standard of living. Targeted information, advice and advocacy are crucial to allow people to access the support, whether related to work or to benefits, they need for the benefit of both themselves and local economy.

The Halton economy is heavily reliant upon a narrow range of industry sectors and, in common with the rest of the UK, is becoming susceptible to national and global pressures, which may have a negative effect upon the business sector, employment opportunities and could increase the numbers of individuals and families at risk of becoming financially and socially at risk.

Linkages to Other Priorities

A Healthy Halton

Being out of work or suffering financial exclusion have been shown to be significant contributors to health inequalities, whilst being in employment has been proven to have significant benefits for an individual's physical and mental health. By providing opportunities for skills, training and employment and enabling people to move from inactive benefits to employment, the Employment, Learning and Skills priority contributes towards improving the Health and mental wellbeing of Halton's residents.

Halton's Urban Renewal

Halton residents will need a high quality, responsive skills and training infrastructure to take full advantage of the new opportunities for employment and business development being afforded through Halton's programme of Urban Renewal.

Children and Young People in Halton

In addition to the importance of attainment at school, it is vital that Children and Young People are offered a wide range of good quality learning, skills and employment opportunities in order for them to fulfil their potential to

succeed and to ensure that they are not at risk of poverty or financial disadvantage.

A Safer Halton

By enabling people to become engaged in employment, learning and skills opportunities, they are encouraged to move away from becoming involved in anti-social behaviour or crime. The Employment, Learning and Skills priority aims to ensure that positive progression routes to training and employment are available to all Halton residents to enable them to improve their life chances.

Improvement Targets

Halton Local Area Agreement Indicators relating to Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

By 2011 we aim to:

- Reduce the proportion of working age people claiming out of work benefits in the worst performing neighbourhoods from 31.5% in 2007/2008 to 28.5% by 2010/2011: Benefits: NI 153.
- Increase the proportion of the working age population qualified to at least Level 2 from 60.1% in 2007/2008 to 67.5% by 2010/2011: Level 2 Qualification: NI 163.
- Maintain the VAT registration rate at 42.8% through to 2010/2011: VAT Registration: NI 171.

Local Indicators

- Reduce the proportion of adults with no qualifications by 15%.
- Increase the proportion of adults qualified to Level 3 by 25%.
- Increase average household income in Halton to more than 90% of the national average.
- Increase the rate of self-employment by 20%.
- Ensure unemployment in any Lower Super Output Area is less than 20% above the borough average.

A SAFER HALTON

Our overall aim: To ensure pleasant, safe and secure neighbourhood environments, with attractive, safe surroundings, good quality local amenities, and the ability of people to enjoy life where they live.

Why a Safer Halton?

Crime and the fear of crime affect everybody's lives. It is a major concern according to every survey of Halton residents. These surveys also show that cleaner, tidier neighbourhoods would make the biggest difference to improving life for people in their local area. We want Halton to be a clean, green, safe and attractive place to live. People should tolerate value and respect each other, their property and the places where they live.

Key Objectives

- A.** To investigate and tackle the underlying causes of crime and disorder and respond effectively to public concern by reducing crime levels
- B.** To improve the understanding of alcohol and drug/substance misuse problems, their impact in Halton, and reduce the harm they cause
- C.** To create and sustain better neighbourhoods that are well designed, well built, well maintained, safe and valued by the people who live in them, reflecting the priorities of residents
- D.** To understand and tackle the problem of domestic abuse in all its forms
- E.** To reduce the levels of crime that disproportionately affects some of the more deprived areas within the borough

Background

The Safer Halton Partnership has a wide-ranging remit focused on two major concerns of Halton people. Crime and the local environment have consistently been two areas the public have raised as high priorities in successive consultations over the last few years.

We want to make Halton a great place to live with an attractive quality of life and excellent local environment. However, this is very much dependent on reducing current levels of crime, tackling anti-social behaviour and improving the local environment in our neighbourhoods. Recent years have seen a 16% reduction in total recorded crime from 2005 and 2008. In the same time period vehicle crime has reduced by 29% and criminal damage by 34%. The Safer Halton Partnership - with its focus on action at the neighbourhood level - has contributed to these welcome reductions. However, this remains a pressing problem for most people in Halton, and fear of crime remains at unacceptable levels and impacts upon too many lives.

At the same time, whilst general satisfaction levels with Halton as a place to live have risen, it is the condition of their local environment which is of most concern to residents. Therefore, the Strategy aims to increase the confidence of communities in their neighbourhoods. This is about improving local conditions and encouraging people to get involved in helping to shape what happens in their local area. Area Forums, Police Community Action Meetings (CAMs), Community Watch Schemes and 'Face the People' Sessions, offer opportunities for local people to have their say and help make a difference. They also help make the police, council and others more accountable to residents, check that the priorities are right; that they respond to local concerns, and will take more effective action against the issues that most impact on their quality of life.

Tackling the causes as well as the symptoms of neighbourhood issues are a responsibility shared by all partners. Increasingly, they will look to better co-ordinate their activity through neighbourhood management arrangements to have a greater impact. This will increase the effectiveness of work that can prevent and intervene early in the conditions which lead to dissatisfaction.

Linkages to other priorities

A Healthy Halton

Personal experience of crime or anti social behaviour can have a significant impact on our health and mental wellbeing. Tackling crime is high on the public agenda and a key priority for neighbourhoods.

Halton's Urban Renewal

When designing and planning new buildings such as housing estates and shopping areas, it is important that we consider community safety issues and design out crime. This may be through better lighting, CCTV, removing inappropriate planting etc

Children and Young People in Halton

Providing positive activities for young people and raising their aspirations will make them less likely to commit crime or anti social behaviour. Working with young people and their families is vital if we are to change behaviour, where their behaviour has already become a problem.

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Creating employment opportunities and training for residents to access jobs is key to driving down crime. In particular those who have already committed crime, or have drug and alcohol problems are much less likely to re-offend if they can gain employment.

Improvement Targets

Halton Local Area Agreement Indicators relating to a Safer Halton

By 2011 we aim to:

- Increase residents overall satisfaction with their local area from 70% in 2008 to 73% in 2010 (baseline and target provisional pending publication of the final Places Survey data): Overall satisfaction: NI 5.
- Increase voluntary and community sector satisfaction from 22.2% (2007/8) to 29.7% (2010/11) by creating a strong environment in which it can thrive: Thriving third Sector: NI 7.
- Reduce acts of serious acquisitive crime from 16 per 1000 population in 2007/08 to 15 per 1000 population by 2010/11: Serious acquisitive crime: NI 16.
- Reduce the perceptions of anti social behaviour from 24% in 2008 to 21% by 2010/11: Perceptions of anti social behaviour: NI 17.
- Reduce the assault with injury crime rate by 7.5% compared to 2008/09: Assault with injury: NI 20.
- Reduce the re-offending rate of prolific and priority offenders by 19% each year until 2011: NI 30.
- Reduce the repeat incidents of domestic abuse from 127 in 2007/08 to 108 by 2010/11: Repeat incidents of domestic violence: NI 32.
- Reduce the number of arson incidents from 1277 in 2007/08 to 855 by 2010/11: Arson: NI 33.
- Slow the rate of increase in alcohol-harm related hospital admissions from 2180 in 2007/08 to 2323 in 2009/10 and 2309 by 2010/11: Alcohol related hospital admissions: NI 39.
- Increase the number of drug users in effective treatment from 513 in 07/08 to 544 by 10/11: Drug users in effective treatment: NI 40.

Local Target

- Reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured in road traffic accidents: People killed or seriously injured: NI 47.
- Reduce the number of incidents of anti-social behaviour in the worst 5 Lower Super Output Areas compared with the rest of the Borough from 97.88 per 1000 population in 2007/08 to 83.2 per 1000 population by 2010/11 (total of 11% reduction).

Cross Cutting Issues

Introduction

The Sustainable Community Strategy is concerned with addressing local needs in order to make the 2025 vision a reality. This strategy tries to take a positive view of the future. It will be better to shift our focus to prevention measures, to promote positive lifestyles and the many excellent aspects of life in Halton, including more timely interventions to help people at the times when they most need support. At the same time a number of issues that cut across the key priority areas contained within this Strategy must be kept in mind as we meet the challenges faced within each priority area.

The Halton Strategic Partnership wants to develop policies and programmes which leave a lasting and positive effect on future generations of people in Halton. We also want to look forward and help to achieve sustainable development both locally and more widely to promote regional, national and global aims. Our approach will be guided by the following principles:

- Anti-discrimination
- Equality of opportunity
- Independence not dependence
- Individual needs
- Accountability
- Integration
- Involvement in decision making

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

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

(a) Respect and Enjoyment

The communities of Halton have a strong sense of community identity and belonging. They also tolerate and respect differences, and believe in 'live and let live'. Co-operation, collaboration and helpfulness are vital. There needs to be plenty of things to do and places to go - culture, leisure, sport, community, shopping - for all members of the community, young and old alike. People

should feel their chances in life are good and crime, drugs or anti-social behaviour does not taint their lives.

(b) Thriving Places

The local economy has to flourish and provide a range of opportunities for all Halton people for both training and work. The economic infrastructure has to be top quality with a variety of land and premises (industrial, commercial and retail) available to support economic prosperity, growth and change. In addition, we want to see a strong business sector, which feels valued locally, and is well supported to create new enterprises and new jobs which can benefit local people.

(c) Well Planned

We need to retain a clear sense of place and retain features that make Halton distinctive. We want to see buildings and open spaces that are accessible, well designed and of the highest quality. Places and spaces that are safe, valued and promote a feeling of well-being. The housing market has to be dynamic and inclusive with a range of options available that are affordable for local people.

(d) Accessibility

People make places work, and all the communities and facilities of Halton (jobs, schools, town centres, health) need to be well connected and well served by the transport network. We need appropriate levels of car parking in the right places, a well managed and maintained road network, and a properly functioning public transport network to help people get about and reduce car dependency. We need to further develop opportunities for walking and cycling, and ensure our connection to the outside world through motorways, railways, ports and airports remain excellent. The further development of technology and digital opportunities will also enable Halton to be more accessible to the world.

(e) Well Served

People need to have good access to a range of services that are appropriate to their needs and that make their lives worthwhile. This includes good schools, further and higher education opportunities and lifelong learning, high quality health, leisure and social care facilities, including quality services for vulnerable adults, children and families. In addition a good range of information, advice and signposting is needed, and wherever possible services should be situated together to make access easier.

(f) Well Run

There has to be a sense of pride, responsibility and civic values which present themselves in a place that is well governed and managed. This includes democratic, representative and accountable governance through Halton Borough Council with community wellbeing at its heart. It also encompasses effective community engagement and enabling active participation by local people in the decisions that affect their lives. A strong and vibrant voluntary and community sector is a sign of success along with effective partnerships that lead by example.

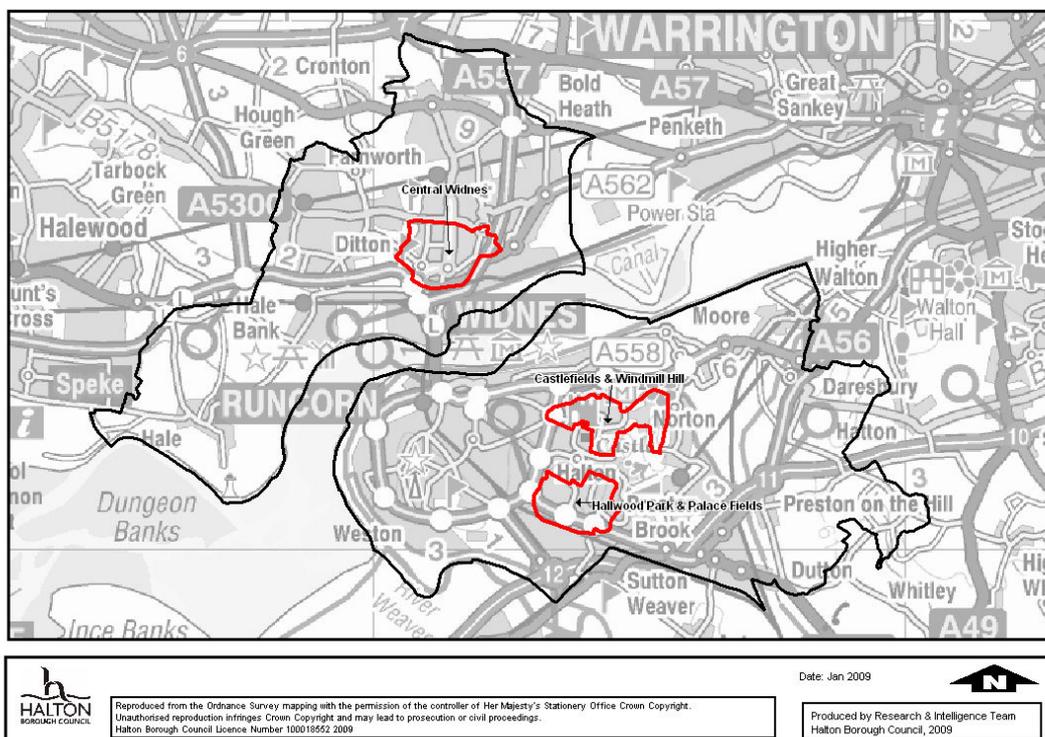
The objectives and targets outlined in this Strategy and all the improvements aspired to need to be adequately resourced in order to make happen. A key purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the Borough.

Issues

1. Social Exclusion

This is about what happens when people face a multitude of problems such as poor housing, high crime, poor health, worklessness, discrimination and poor relationships. These problems link and reinforce each other creating a vicious circle for people. Often they are clustered in specific neighbourhoods.

Since 2006 Halton has received ring-fenced funding from the 'neighbourhood element' part of the then Safer & Stronger Communities block of the Local Area Agreement. The money is to develop Neighbourhood Management in those areas of the Borough that fall within the 3% most deprived nationally under the Indices of Multiple Deprivation 2005. The funding runs until 2010. In Halton work is focused on three pilot neighbourhoods, each of which falls within the above category; Central Widnes, Hallwood Park & Palace Fields and Castlefields & Windmill Hill. The map below shows the boundaries for these 3 neighbourhoods.



Neighbourhood Management is designed to help close the gap between the most deprived parts of the Borough and the rest, with regards to health, education, employment and crime. The development of neighbourhood management in Halton is being directed by a strategic partnership board that

consists of many of the key local service providers and partners. This board reports directly to the Halton Strategic Partnership Board

One key example of this is the effort to reduce worklessness in the neighbourhood management areas. The gap between out of work benefit claimants within the neighbourhood management areas and Halton overall had reduced since 2006, but has increased slightly in the last months, probably as a result of the economic downturn.

According to the latest Index of Multiple Deprivation in 2007 Halton has again improved its overall deprivation score but it remains amongst the 30 most deprived areas of England. Halton has become less deprived overall on a national scale but the gap between the most affluent and deprived areas of the borough is growing. Serious progress must be made to increase wealth and to narrow the gap for those who are most disadvantaged if residents are to enjoy the quality of life that many others take for granted.

Overall poverty, unemployment and material deprivation have diminished in crude terms. However, Halton continues to display high rates of benefit dependency, which may increase in the current economic climate. At the same time many people are still not claiming their full entitlements which would allow them to enjoy a minimum standard of living. Therefore, information, advice, guidance and advocacy are crucial in allowing people to access the help they need to navigate an extraordinarily complicated benefits system. This is not only beneficial for the recipients themselves but also for the local economy as research shows that most transfer payments are spent locally. Halton is also characterised by high levels of personal debt, with up to 10% of households struggling to support debt levels. This in turn impacts on people's health and well being and the positive contribution they can make to the local economy. Therefore, debt advice and innovative community finance initiatives are a continuing need.

2. Economic Climate

The adverse economic climate now has major implications for us all. The Halton Strategic Partnership has a role to put in place measures to support residents and businesses and where possible provide intervention measures to try and prevent house repossessions, loss of jobs, etc. Where they do occur we need to ensure services are there to help pick up the pieces, whether this is access to training, benefits, debt advice, target hardening against burglary, alcohol abuse support or counselling.

On top of the implications of the current economic climate on the residents of Halton, there are implications for partners in terms of meeting its Local Area Agreement (LAA) targets by March 2011. Several of Halton's LAA indicators are likely to be severely affected by the current climate, with others indirectly impacted upon.

3. Climate Change

Halton has adopted a climate change indicator, per capita CO2 reduction, as part of its LAA. This cross cutting indicator includes CO2 emissions from

domestic housing, business and the public sector and road transport. Local, regional and national partners and organisations will work together to encourage and influence residents, businesses and other organisations to make CO2 reductions and also to put our own house in order.

There has already been much progress around tackling climate change. Halton is committed to the Carbon Strategy and Reduction Plan and a target of reducing CO2 by 20% by 2015. As part of the strategy, we have invested in a number of areas to reduce energy costs and consequently CO2 emission reductions.

4. Sustainability

The goal of sustainable development – integrating and improving environmental, economic and social outcomes both now and in the future – is at the heart of the strategy. This Strategy sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental well-being of Halton through to 2025 that will contribute to the overall sustainable development across the UK.

Part of Halton's success has been its ability to change and evolve, and its resilience in the face of adversity. It has had to cope with the loss of much of the manufacturing industry it formerly depended on. The effect of this was dramatic, leading to population loss and a legacy of deprivation across the communities of Halton. However, the position has stabilised and welcome signs of an improvement can now be seen. This resilience is the key to the future. The Halton Strategic Partnership sees this as one of the strengths on which a sustainable future can be built.

The vision for the future is of a Halton that has sustained itself. This is a place where people want to live and work. It is somewhere that provides a high quality living environment, sensitive to a range of needs, and recognises the diversity of its residents. This Strategy is all about giving people opportunities and choice. We want to build people's aspirations and abilities so they can exercise greater control and choice in their lives. Having done so we want to ensure we provide the quality of life and opportunities locally so that people choose to live and work here.

5. Equality & Diversity

Building stronger communities through community engagement must be a key outcome for the strategy. There has been much progress in this area of work since 2006. For example, an Equalities and Community Cohesion Group now meets regularly and reports to the Halton Strategic Partnership.

The Partnership is determined to deliver its vision of a better future for Halton's people. We are committed to equality for everyone regardless of age, sex, caring responsibilities, race, religion, sexuality, or disability. We are leaders of the community and will not accept discrimination, victimisation or harassment.

This commitment to equity and social justice is clearly stated in the adopted equal opportunities policy of the Partnership. This states that the Partnership:

- is committed to promoting equal opportunities in Halton
- values diversity and encourages fairness and justice
- wants equal chances for everyone in Halton to work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation
- will combat discrimination and will use its position of influence in the borough, wherever possible, to help overcome discriminatory barriers

As well as accepting our legal responsibilities, we are committed to broad principles of social justice. The Partnership is opposed to any form of discrimination and oppression and looks to enhance quality of life by supporting individuals and communities who experience marginalisation and exclusion. Our policies apply to all of those who come into contact with us. This includes current users of directly provided services, users of services provided on our behalf, potential users of services, other agencies and professionals, employees and job applicants, and the general public.

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

Halton is committed to equality of opportunity for disabled people and to ending discrimination. The passing of the Disability Discrimination Act in 1995 has given a new focus to our commitment to disabled people. Underlying this Strategy is a commitment to turn policy into practice. We want to identify and support all family carers and cared for people with disabilities in Halton by striving to improve their quality of life and life chances. We want disabled people living and working in Halton to be able to realise their full potential. We will make progress towards this by removing barriers and changing the attitudes which prevent disabled people from gaining access to employment and to the services provided by partners.

Partners will work collaboratively to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of unlawful discrimination and to share good practice. They will ensure that all services are provided fairly and without discrimination. Reasonable adjustments will be made so that services are accessible to everyone who needs them. People's cultural and language needs will be recognised and services will be provided which are appropriate to these needs. Partners will monitor the take up of services from different sections of the population. The information collected will be used to inform service planning and delivery. Equality Impact Assessments will also be carried out on Partnership policies and services to assess how policies and services impact on different sections of the community. The results of the

Equality Impact Assessments will highlight areas for improvement, which will be dealt with through the Partnership Improvement Plan.

6. Population

Following national and regional trends, Halton's population continues to age with older people making up an increasing proportion of the population:

Younger people (0-14 year olds):

projected to grow by 2% (2006-2021).

Working age (15-64 year olds):

projected to decline by 2% (2006-2021).

Older people (65+):

projected to grow by 43% from 16,400 in 2006 to 23,500 in 2021.

The growth in older people will increase the demands for both formal and informal support. While small decreases in the working age population mean there are fewer people to provide and pay for this additional support.

7. Housing

The priorities set out within the Halton Housing Strategy 2009-11 mirror the priorities contained within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

It is recognised that many housing objectives can make a contribution to more than one of the Sustainable Community Strategy's aims and objectives. This is a summary of some of the main areas that link to the Sustainable Community Strategy. A full breakdown of these areas is set out in the table attached to the Housing Strategy.

The Government and the regional housing board have identified the "big issues" for housing for the next decade. Halton does not necessarily exhibit these problems to the same degree as other areas, so the challenge for Halton is to develop solutions and secure resources for local problems that are not reflected in national or regional policy.

Partnership working will be key to this process and we will endeavour to work with partners across local authority boundaries to seek joint solutions to common issues and to help shape sub regional policy.

There is an emerging affordability issue in the Borough, caused by the relationship between house prices and local incomes. Consequently the demand for social rented housing has increased in recent years but the number of available social rented dwellings has declined. Equally the private rented sector cannot fully meet the demands of those unable to afford to buy or access social rented housing due to low supply and high rents.

Other housing demand issues include a mismatch between demand for private sector terraced housing and the number of terraces available (which could result in market decline in poorer areas) and the predicted demographic change in the elderly population which is likely to result in increased demand for supported housing and related services.

In terms of housing condition, the private sector is generally in good condition although there are concentrations of older terraced housing with the potential to fall into decline without investment by the owners. The condition of privately rented property is generally poorer.

Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) are on target to meet the 2010 target of making all homes decent, which in turn should improve energy efficiency. Although vacancy levels are generally comparable with national and regional figures the proportion of private sector dwellings vacant for more than six months is a growing cause for concern.

Overcrowding is higher in the social rented than owner occupied sectors, though there is potential to alleviate this through making better use of the housing stock.

In relation to local populations and communities, Halton has a very small Black and Minority ethnic population, although the demographics of that population are rapidly changing due to Eastern European migration.

Although homelessness remains an issue in Halton, the number of presentations has dropped considerably since the last Housing Strategy was produced. Recent prevention service developments for homeless people are proving successful and should have a positive impact on acceptances and the number of people in temporary accommodation.

Worklessness is an issue on many social housing estates across Halton and the Council is working with RSL partners to develop projects aimed at tackling worklessness on these estates.

The Council is improving provision for Gypsies and Travellers in accordance with the recommendations of the Cheshire Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Needs Assessment, with the development of a 14 pitch transit site.

Supply and demand analysis for particular client groups reveals a need for increased accommodation for the elderly, particularly extra care accommodation, making better use of the existing stock of adapted dwellings and a range of accommodation for people with mental health problems offering varying levels of support.

Government expenditure on housing is set to increase nationally; however, this will be specifically targeted at housing growth and affordable housing at the expense of private sector renewal. It will also be targeted at specific interventions developed at a sub regional level.

The Council is likely to receive a reduced capital allocation over the term of the Strategy and there is uncertainty over the levels of funding available for adaptations and new supported housing schemes.

8. Community empowerment and engagement

It is now recognised that both individuals and whole communities can and should take some responsibility for improving quality of life. This requires action especially through Local Government and other public and voluntary sector services, to empower local communities so that they develop skills and can access resources to play their part effectively.

9. Cross Cutting Targets

There are many key targets that we work towards achieving in partnership, all of which are included in the improvement targets in each of the five priority areas within this document. See pages 19, 24, 28, 32 and 35 for detailed target information.

HOW WILL WE MAKE IT HAPPEN IN HALTON?

All the objectives and targets outlined here are achievable. How well and how quickly this happens depends crucially on the availability of resources and how smartly they are used. That means money, people, physical resources, proper intelligence and information, allied with the strength of will to use them in the best way. A key purpose of this Strategy is to ensure that the resources available are targeted and used effectively to bring about improvements in the borough. This means:

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

Without the tools and the will to do the job, the improvements set out in this Strategy will not happen.

Money

The organisations that make up the Partnership already spend hundreds of millions of pounds of public money each year in Halton. Much of this goes to maintain essential services like health, policing, schools, transport and waste collection that we tend to take for granted. The way money is spent on these statutory services – ‘mainstream budgets’ – has to be steadily re-focused to achieve the specific objectives and improvement targets within this Strategy. The Sustainable Community Strategy provides a tool to help partners refocus their budgets.

The Strategy also provides a framework to help identify and secure additional funding for the borough from a variety of sources. It sets out shared policy objectives along with clear aims and targets across the five agreed key themes. This gives a framework in which partners can make budgetary decisions that reflect Halton's priorities.

Halton received Neighbourhood Renewal Funding, which provided tremendous support (more than £30million) to the aims of the Sustainable Community Strategy. In 2007 Halton was awarded a further £16million from the Working Neighbourhood Fund, to continue with the important projects already serving the communities needs, up until 2011.

Local Area Agreements provide a mechanism for the partners to genuinely work together to achieve the same goals and to spend the resources discussed above. They provide an opportunity to map resources and activity, streamline current processes, pool and align budgets, eliminate duplication, attract new funding and to target activity to where it is most needed to achieve the overall vision for Halton. In particular agreements will target funding at the most deprived neighbourhoods and towards specific at-risk groups.

People & Assets

Allied to cash, the efforts, skills and determination of people living and working in the borough are key to success. This applies to individuals interested or already active in helping their local community as well as to those who work in public, voluntary and other organisations serving Halton. We need to boost skills and knowledge and stimulate confidence and motivation that will strengthen the Borough's capacity to help itself. We must ensure that we are organised and co-operate in ways that are effective and deliver real benefits. Also, we need to provide better ways for people to work collaboratively and across organisational boundaries to increase their own job satisfaction and their impact on the challenges they deal with.

Most of the steps we need to take in moving Halton forward will involve some use of land, buildings, equipment and materials. Hundreds of millions of pounds are currently invested in publicly owned physical resources of various kinds within the borough. We need to make optimum use of these assets, cutting out any unnecessary duplication and ensuring they are well adapted to local requirements.

In particular we have to respond to the rise of consumerism and the desire of people to access a range of services through a single portal. The advent of Halton Direct Link, Health Care Resource Centres, extended schools and Children's Centres provide models of exemplary service delivery which are highly valued by local people. Increasingly, partners will need to look at much greater efforts towards co-location and joint use of facilities. Not only is this more cost efficient, but it gives partners a proper customer focus.

Intelligence

Without proper information, and making it easily accessible to people, we are working in the dark in trying to bring about improvement in Halton. This covers information about local needs and conditions, and what people think is most important for their communities. It is about the information we need to understand what is likely to work well in achieving our targets for Halton. It's about keeping people – local people and partner organisations – in the picture about the progress we are making together.

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

- a) A data 'Observatory' that holds key statistical information on all aspects of living conditions in Halton. The Observatory provides data at a variety of spatial levels – super output area, ward, neighbourhood and district level – and allow for comparison with our neighbours and regional and national averages. It will greatly help people to understand the geography and nature of disadvantage in Halton.
- b) The Partnership has a database of consultation and community engagement in Halton. This will enable people to access a rich source of attitudinal data on a range of issues. It will also help people to plan and execute better community engagement in the borough.
- c) The Partnership website provides an easy to access source of material on all aspects of the Halton Strategic Partnership's work throughout the borough. The site covers the full range of activities from events and award ceremonies to new policy changes. There are dedicated sections for each of the priority areas that outline the aims and objectives plus provide access for meeting minutes. There is also a newly added policy section, developed to keep partners up to date with any changes.

MANAGING RISKS

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

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

As part of implementing this Sustainable Community Strategy the Partnership will adopt a Risk Management Strategy and establish a Strategic Risk Register. The Strategy will set out the risk management objectives, the role and responsibilities for risk management of the Board and individual Specialist Strategic Partnerships, and will categorise risks and the approach to risk management action plans.

The risk management objectives include the;

- Adoption of Risk Management as a key part of the Sustainable Community Strategy
- Identification, evaluation and economic control of strategic and operational risks
- Promotion of ownership through increased levels of awareness and skills development

The Partnership's risks can be broadly categorised as either "strategic" or "operational". Strategic risks cover those threats or opportunities which could impact upon the achievement of medium and long-term goals.

A major review of strategic risks was carried out in 2006 when this Sustainable Community Strategy was adopted. That was followed up by an assessment of operational risks through each of the Specialist Strategic Partnerships as part of their action planning and Local Area Agreement process.

HOW WILL WE KNOW WHAT'S HAPPENING?

The targets in this plan are a first step towards aligning our vision for Halton in 2025. If we succeed in achieving our targets they will translate into real improvements for local people, building on the work done to date. This is why it is important to know how we are doing and what progress we are making in meeting the improvement targets we have set ourselves. By monitoring progress closely we can identify and build on successes, provide necessary assistance or support where progress has not met expectations, and adjust our efforts and resources to adapt to changing circumstances.

A range of high level outcomes have been set in the Strategy. These provide a benchmark and clarity in how our progress can be measured in the future. For all five themes there are several key objectives and a small number of key targets for each. In particular these reflect the government floor targets, local public service agreements and key desired outcomes. Together these form a 'score card' for the Sustainable Community Strategy.

We want to be judged by what we do and not by what we say. Every year the progress on the Sustainable Community Strategy will be reviewed and the scorecard published as part of our Annual Report. This will allow for scrutiny of the work of the Partnership. Local people are the best judges of how well we are doing. The Partnership works on their behalf and they are best placed to venture an opinion on how the quality of life in Halton rates. As well as the scorecard the Partnership will repeat its Quality of Life survey at regular intervals to track public perceptions of how well the Strategy is being implemented. This regular dialogue is a key part of our performance-monitoring framework. We genuinely want to know what people think of the things we do, how we go about tasks and what we should pay attention to in the future.

The forward programme of the Partnership in pursuit of the Strategy will be reviewed and updated to ensure it responds to changing circumstances. As well as the high level scorecard, each Specialist Strategic Partnership will have a more detailed action plan. This will contain a richer hierarchy of outcomes, outputs, targets and milestones. Each Partnership will be accountable for its own performance and the Board will seek qualitative monitoring reports on how work is progressing. One of the key features of the Strategy is the understanding of how each of the themes are linked and impact on each other. The Strategy establishes the importance of a number of key crosscutting themes that are common across all Partnership activity. A Performance and Standards Group reporting directly to the Board has been established. This group takes responsibility for all aspects of performance management and ensure proper oversight, scrutiny and accountability of all activities that take place under the auspices of the Partnership and this Sustainable Community Strategy.

ENGAGING THE PEOPLE OF HALTON

Wholesale improvement in the quality of life enjoyed by local people can only come about if a significant part of the community is involved in making it happen. This can take place informally, in many different ways within the community itself. However this has to be complemented by action taken with the support of a variety of public, voluntary and other bodies.

The views of the public were an important factor in deciding the overall themes and direction of this Sustainable Community Strategy. Channels of communication like the borough's Area Forums and the Police Community Action Meetings provide extra ways to share, discuss and resolve local issues. A whole range of services actively consult with and involve their customers, and staff from a range of organisations work closely with local people on a day-to-day basis.

The Halton Strategic Partnership sees itself, through this Strategy and the actions of partners, as providing leadership. This can only be achieved if they remain in touch with the people and communities they represent and serve. The Strategy aims to create an environment in which everyone can get involved in making things happen in Halton. We want to foster active participation by as many people and agencies as possible. The Partnership will look for ways to make itself more accountable to communities through events, panels, area forums and open and transparent decision-making processes. A number of steps define this:

Customer focus – Services and processes have to be designed around the needs of the people who actually use them. At the same time users need to have an appropriate role in specifying the services that are delivered.

Consultation & engagement – Partners will create specific and purposeful opportunities for people to give their views on what is needed and how it should be delivered. Wherever possible people should be actively involved in decision-making, service specification and design.

Communication – Letting people know what is happening, how they can get involved and encouraging dialogue between partners and local communities is vital. Various media and methods will be used in appropriate and sensitive ways to build and maintain the communication effort.

The Partnership has spent a considerable effort in developing an inclusive approach to engagement through its bespoke strategy and network arrangements. Full details are available on the Partnership website. Community empowerment is about members of a community feeling able to achieve their own goals, with some measure of control over the processes and strategies to attain these. It is a process whereby communities are encouraged to become increasingly self-reliant in improving their neighbourhoods and livelihoods. It is a cyclical, participatory process where local people co-operate in formal or informal groups to share their knowledge and experiences and to achieve common objectives. It is a process rather

than a blueprint, and one that underpins this Sustainable Community Strategy.

THE WAY FORWARD

This Sustainable Community Strategy highlights key objectives for each strategic theme and improvement targets by which success can be judged. These targets collectively form the Partnership Scorecard. We will report back to partners and the public each year on progress against this Scorecard.

If we succeed in achieving our targets, they will translate into real improvements for local people, including:

- longer, healthier lives
- a better urban environment and reasons to feel pride in Halton
- higher standards of education and skills and the greater employment and other life chances that go with them
- fewer people trapped by poverty, excluded or held back through some form of deprivation or disadvantage
- the freedom to feel safe and enjoy life in an attractive neighbourhood

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If you have any queries or comments you would like to make about this Sustainable Community Strategy, please contact:

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You can find out more detail on the work of the Partnership on our website:
www.haltonpartnership.net