

Public Document Pack



Executive Board

Thursday, 27 June 2013 2.00 p.m.
The Boardroom, 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

| Item | Page No |
|--|---------|
| 1. MINUTES | |
| 2. DECLARATION OF INTEREST | |
| Members are reminded of their responsibility to declare any Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Other Disclosable Interest which they have in any item of business on the agenda, no later than when that item is reached or as soon as the interest becomes apparent and, with Disclosable Pecuniary interests, to leave the meeting during any discussion or voting on the item. | |
| 3. LEADER'S PORTFOLIO | |
| (A) SPRINKLERS - NEW RESIDENTIAL PROPERTIES | 1 - 25 |
| 4. CHILDREN YOUNG PEOPLE AND FAMILIES PORTFOLIO | |

*Please contact Angela Scott on 0151 511 8670 or
Angela.scott@halton.gov.uk for further information.
The next meeting of the Committee is on Thursday, 11 July 2013*

| Item | Page No |
|--|------------------|
| (A) PRIORITY SCHOOL BUILDING PROGRAMME | 26 - 30 |
| (B) AMALGAMATION OF PUPIL REFERRAL UNITS - CONSULTATION FEEDBACK - KEY DECISION | 31 - 38 |
| (C) WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS - MUSIC SERVICES IN SCHOOLS | 39 - 43 |
| (D) CAPITAL - BASIC NEED - KEY DECISION | 44 - 50 |
| (E) OUTCOME OF THE CONSULTATION ON EXTENDING THE AGE RANGE OF FAIRFIELD JUNIOR SCHOOL AND CLOSURE OF FAIRFIELD INFANT SCHOOL - KEY DECISION | 51 - 64 |
| (F) INFORMATION, ADVICE AND GUIDANCE - KEY DECISION | 65 - 72 |
| (G) WAIVER OF PROCUREMENT STANDING ORDERS IN RESPECT OF INVESTIGATION SERVICES | 73 - 75 |
| 5. HEALTH AND ADULTS PORTFOLIO | |
| (A) URGENT CARE – OPTIONS APPRAISAL | 76 - 83 |
| 6. NEIGHBOURHOOD LEISURE AND SPORT PORTFOLIO | |
| (A) HALTON HOUSING STRATEGY 2013-18 - KEY DECISION | 84 - 152 |
| (B) LIBRARY STRATEGY 2013-16 - KEY DECISION | 153 - 176 |
| 7. TRANSPORTATION PORTFOLIO | |
| (A) HIGHWAY IMPROVEMENTS AT A 558 DARESBU EXPRESSWAY UNDER THE DEPARTMENT FOR TRANSPORT'S LOCAL PINCH POINT PROGRAMME | 177 - 182 |
| 8. RESOURCES PORTFOLIO | |
| (A) 2012/13 FINANCIAL OUTTURN | 183 - 206 |
| (B) 2013/14 TO 2015/16 CAPITAL PROGRAMME | 207 - 212 |

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: | 27th June 2013 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Chief Executive |
| PORTFOLIO: | Leader |
| SUBJECT: | Sprinklers – New Residential Properties |
| WARDS: | Borough-wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To seek support to lobby for the introduction of sprinklers in all new residential properties and specifically high-rise blocks.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

Executive Board support action to lobby for the introduction of sprinklers in all new residential properties and specifically high-rise blocks.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 Attached is a report of Cheshire Fire Authority (CFA) addressing the benefits of installing sprinklers in all new residential properties and specifically high-rise blocks.
- 3.2 The Council is asked to support a campaign to lobby for the introduction of sprinklers as outlined in the CFA report.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

The introduction of residential sprinklers will improve health & safety in the Borough and save lives.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As set out in the CFA report.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 To improve the health and wellbeing of the Borough for children, young people and adults.
- 6.2 To improve building design and quality in the Borough.
- 6.3 To reduce the risk and consequences of fire and improve associated public safety across the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 There is evidence to support that investment in residential sprinklers reduces the cost of damage should a fire occur.
- 7.2 Investment in sprinklers can reduce insurance costs and premiums where they are fitted.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

N/A

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

Cheshire Fire Authority Report, 12th June, 2013 – Item 2
(copy attached)

CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY

MEETING OF: CHESHIRE FIRE AUTHORITY **ITEM: 2**
DATE: 12th JUNE 2013
REPORT OF: DCFO CASHIN
AUTHOR: HEAD OF COMMUNITY FIRE PROTECTION

**SUBJECT: SPRINKLERS – MOTIONS TO CONSTITUENT AUTHORITIES
AND PART-FUNDING OF INSTALLATIONS IN HIGH-RISE
BLOCKS**

Summary

- 1.1 Lead Members from each constituent authority (Cheshire East – Councillor Flude (on behalf of Councillor Topping), Cheshire West and Chester – Councillor Johnson, Halton – Councillor Nelson and Warrington – Councillor Joyce) met with Cllr. Sara Bolton of Derby City Council in November 2012 to discuss the council's approach to supporting Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Services nationally acclaimed 'Think Sprinkler' campaign.
- 1.2 Members were then invited to attend a presentation on the benefits of retro-fitting sprinklers in high-rise residential blocks. Following the presentation, Members asked to receive this paper discussing the viability of part-funding sprinklers in high-rise blocks and taking a motion to their constituent authorities similar to that of Derby City Council.
- 1.3 This paper also details the current position with regard to the requirements for the installation of sprinklers under building regulations and the government's position on changing those regulations.

Recommended That Members:

- [1] Note the current position with respect to compulsory sprinkler requirements within building regulations, both in the UK and Europe;
- [2] Consider moving a motion within their unitary authorities which will lead to an approach to the Department for Communities & Local Government, encouraging it to require the installation of sprinklers in all new homes by amending the Building Regulations;
- [3] Consider and approve the project business case (Appendix 3) which covers the part-funding of the retro-fitting of sprinklers in high-rise blocks by social housing landlords in each unitary area;

- [4] Agree that up to £160,000 be made available for the initiative to secure the retro-fit of sprinklers in high-rise blocks as outlined in the project business case; and
- [5] Authorise the Head of Community Fire Protection to attempt to secure the retro-fit of sprinklers in a high-rise block in each unitary area (provided that suitable funding arrangements can be agreed with the owners, including a provision to the effect that no liability attaches to the Authority in respect of the works to fit the sprinklers and their ongoing 'use').

2. Background

- 2.1 The Authority's Policy Committee previously endorsed sprinklers and approved a 'sprinkler policy' statement in September 2011. It states that:

"Cheshire Fire Authority has a vision of 'a Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires or other emergencies'. Sprinkler systems are proven to save lives and property; they improve fire-fighter safety, minimise environmental damage and reduce economic loss. In support of these aims Cheshire Fire & Rescue Service (CFRS) proactively endorses the installation of sprinkler systems in domestic, industrial, educational, commercial and residential premises".

- 2.2 CFRS has a long record of advocating sprinklers, with officers working to increase the number of systems installed as and when legislation requires it, or more often where Community Fire Protection officers can persuade developers of the benefits. Officers recommend sprinklers when responding to Building Regulation consultations and when consulted on planning applications.
- 2.3 In the absence of legislation, persuasion alone has proven an ineffective route to securing sprinkler adoption and despite campaigning by Fire & Rescue Services nationally, change to legislation continues to be ruled out by decision makers who see this as an added burden on business. That conclusion was drawn from a 2004 DCLG commissioned report, conducted by the Building Research Establishment (BRE) which concluded that in general 'residential sprinklers are not cost effective'.
- 2.4 That conclusion was felt by the Chief Fire Officers Association (CFOA) and other bodies such as the Fire Sprinkler Association, to have been based on flawed facts and methodologies; despite this the result is consistently quoted as the reason for not changing legislation. These and other organisations now believe that the way government has selectively used the reports findings, has 'positively undermined' the value of

sprinklers not just in residential premises but within commercial and industrial applications too.

2.5 A more recent 2012 report, again conducted by the BRE but commissioned by CFOA, found that sprinklers are now cost effective for:

- All residential care homes for the elderly, children and disabled people (including those with single bedrooms)
- Most blocks of purpose built flats and larger blocks of converted flats where costs are shared
- Traditional bedsit type Houses in Multiple Occupation (HMO's) where there are at least six bedsit units per building and the costs are shared.

3. Current position

3.1 Despite the supposed weight of evidence against sprinkler cost effectiveness and opposition to sprinkler legislation from large developers and construction companies, Fire and Rescue Services have maintained their belief in them and have remained committed to their promotion. Over recent years England has fallen behind the rest of the UK with Scotland and Wales approving new legislation to require sprinklers in certain buildings.

3.2 The following list details the circumstances where sprinklers are currently required by Building Regulations; of particular note are the differences, not only now within the UK, but also across Europe:

England

- Warehouse premises in England and Wales of 20,000m² or above have to be fitted with sprinklers, as do:
- Buildings over 30m high
- Single and multi-storey shops over 2000m²
- Schools that are not classed as low risk by virtue of the risk assessment toolkit 'should', (not must), be fitted with sprinklers

Wales

As England except:

- The Welsh Assembly has approved a Legislative Competence Order which will require the installation of sprinklers in a wide range of residential dwellings. This will take effect in respect of new and refurbished dwellings and residential occupancies from October 2013.

Scotland

- From May 2005 all new care homes, sheltered housing and high rise residential accommodation over 18m high, have had to be fitted with sprinklers.

- In addition, sprinklers are required in all covered shopping centres.

Europe

In the majority of the largest EU countries, sprinklers must be installed in commercial and industrial properties with an average floor space one-tenth of that required in the UK (20,000m²). For example, the following European countries have regulations requiring sprinklers in much smaller warehouses i.e.

- Austria: 1,800m²
- Belgium: 5,000m²
- Denmark: 2,000-5,000m² (dependent upon fire load);
- France: 3,000m²
- Germany: 1,800m²
- Netherlands: 1,000m²
- Norway: 800m²
- Spain 2,000m²

3.3 The benefits of sprinklers are generally agreed to include:

- Fast response to controlling a fire
- Reduced damage
- More efficient water usage
- Improved business continuity
- Greatly reduced environmental damage
- Potential for more flexible and efficient buildings
- Reduced likelihood of occupant deaths or injuries
- Reduced likelihood of Fire-fighter deaths or injuries

3.4 On the basis of these benefits, CFOA, the Local Government Association and Fire and Rescue Services have continued to advocate their adoption. Successes, whilst small, have been achieved. This usually follows cases where developers have stretched the regulations to the limits by exploiting technical 'loopholes' (trying to avoid installing sprinklers) often in public buildings such as schools or mixed use high-rise blocks.

3.5 More recently, two separate Coroners have issued Rule 43 notices relating to fires in high-rise blocks, (in one of these fires, two fire-fighters were killed). In both instances sprinklers were endorsed for consideration in that type of premises.

4. Proposals for encouraging increased sprinkler adoption

Sprinkler motion

- 4.1 To achieve ongoing success, sprinkler proponents need to find ever more innovative and persuasive ways with which to convince people of the benefits of sprinkler systems. One such approach, adopted by Derby City Council, involved Fire Authority Members submitting a motion (Appendix 1) before their Council in support of sprinklers.
- 4.2 The motion received unanimous support and has led to much closer working between City planners and the Fire and Rescue Service. This is of real value, as prior to this motion planning officers (for reasons of confidentiality), felt unable to approach Fire Officers and thereby failed to advise developers about the benefits of sprinklers; this usually meant that budgets and designs had been fixed before fire officers were even aware of the proposals.
- 4.3 Following the motion, the Council also wrote to the Secretary of State to press for changes to Building Regulations (Appendix 2). Whilst the response was negative, as a demonstration of Civic leadership it was effective in that the voice of community leaders was heard calling for changes to sprinkler laws instead of fire officers. The publicity surrounding the Councils stance on sprinklers also raised their own and the Fire and Rescue Service's profile, providing a springboard for wider action.
- 4.5 Expanding this approach into Cheshire would therefore help continue a growing momentum and assist officers both within unitary areas and the wider Fire and Rescue Service to further this Authority's sprinkler policy.
- 4.6 It is suggested therefore, that with Members support, a similar motion could be put to each Unitary Council in support of the Fire Authority's sprinkler policy. Then, to further that objective, Unitary Councils might consider writing to the Secretary of State asking for a change to building regulations to require sprinklers in new domestic properties (as in Wales).

Sprinkler funding

- 4.7 The Community Fire Protection department, in conjunction with Staffordshire Fire and Rescue Service, organised a seminar in 2012 which focused on a sprinkler retro-fit project in a high-rise tower block in South Yorkshire. The project resulted in 47 flats in the 13 storey 'Callow Mount' block in Sheffield, being fitted with a sprinkler system whilst residents remained in occupation. The project cost £55,000 or £1150 per flat.

- 4.8 Members may now wish to consider part-funding a similar initiative. This would help to reduce the hazards faced by both firefighters and residents in high-rise social housing. The project would seek to inspire housing providers, allowing them to see and experience the simplicity and benefits of sprinkler systems, thereby creating a momentum for wider adoption within their housing portfolios.
- 4.9 The intention would be to seek to secure the retro-fit of sprinklers in a high-rise block in each of the constituent authority areas. However, given the uneven spread of high-rise blocks in the area covered by the Fire Authority and with no guarantees about delivery at this stage (as this depends upon the attitude of respective owners and the reaching of agreement with them) this may be difficult to achieve.
- 4.10 The recent Rule 43 letters have increased awareness and interest in retrofitting of sprinklers so this is a good opportunity and owners may be more receptive to an approach from the Authority.
- 4.11 With pro-active promotion and publicity around these initiatives, it is hoped that it will generate the required impetus to encourage landlords and developers to increase the use of sprinklers in their buildings.

5. Financial Implications

- 5.1 The cost of part funding sprinkler systems would depend on the level of contribution Members were prepared to make. Funding options include making a new growth bid or the use of the IRMP reserve or other suitable earmarked reserves.
- 5.2 Paragraph 4.7 refers to the Callow Mount project costing £55,000, or £1,150 per flat. Recent discussions with local landlords indicate that quotes are ranging from £800 to £1,700 per flat. The blocks in Cheshire comprise units of 44 to 95 flats. As the number of flats is a major determining factor in respect of the overall costs, it is difficult to determine a budget. However, officers have used certain assumptions to arrive at a figure. Firstly, if it is possible to tackle four high-rise blocks, the average number of flats per block could be in the region of (say) 60. If we assume a realistic budget to be in the region of £1,200 per flat, that would provide a figure of £72,000 per high-rise block. Further, if we assume that the Authority would only fund up to 50% of the cost, it would make the Authority's contribution limit £36,000 per high-rise block. Accordingly, the Authority's total budget could be set at £144,000. However, given the extent of the assumptions being made it would seem sensible to include a tolerance of at least 10%, bringing the total budget available (when rounded up) to £160,000. A full project business case is attached as appendix 3.

- 5.3 The business case forms the basis of this request to Members to spend capital; (the document also incorporates aspects of the wider sprinkler promotion project i.e. Chester Rows, which are outside the discussion within this paper). When Members consider the business case, it may be sensible to consider using earmarked reserves to fund this spend. Two appropriate reserves would be the IRMP reserve, or the Community Safety Reserve, which has in the past been used primarily to support the cost of Home Safety Assessments.

6. Legal Implications

6. The part-funding of the fitting of sprinklers involves the Authority in committing a significant amount on something that is discretionary. Members need to be satisfied on two main issues: firstly, that there is a power available to the Authority to do this and secondly, that it is a good use of resources in light of their fiduciary duty.

6.2 Legal Power

Section 9 of the Localism Act 2011 introduced a general power for the Authority which is inserted into the Fire and Rescue Services Act 2004 as Section 5A. It contains a list of descriptors that aim to explain the extent of the powers that are available to the Authority. Section 5A(1)(b), is relevant here, it states:

‘A relevant fire and rescue authority may do ‘(b) anything it consider appropriate for purposes incidental to its functional purposes.’

- 6.3 The term ‘functional purposes’ is not defined in the Localism Act, or the Fire and Rescue Services Act. However, ‘core functions’ of fire and rescue authorities are listed in Part 2 of the Fire and Rescue Services Act. Section 6 which is relevant here states;

(1) A fire and rescue authority must make provision for the purpose of promoting fire safety in its area.

(2) In making provision under subsection (1), a fire and rescue authority must in particular, to the extent that it considers it reasonable to do so, make arrangements for (a) the provision of information, publicity and encouragement in respect of the steps to be taken to prevent fires and death or injury by fire’.

Therefore, provided that Members are satisfied that part-funding the fitting of sprinklers is ‘reasonable’ in the context of the delivery of this core function, there should be no doubt that there is power to do so.

6.4 Fiduciary Duty

Whilst Members must always be mindful of their general fiduciary duty when making decisions, this is a more significant issue if the sums involved are large and relate to a discretionary matter. Members may also wish to weigh up the extent to which any benefit can be measured (cost/benefit analysis). In addition, the context within which the decision is being made will also have a bearing, e.g. current funding and budgetary pressures.

6.5 Arrangements

The fitting of the sprinklers should be the responsibility of the relevant social landlord, which takes on all responsibility/liability. There would need to be a form of funding agreement, which commits the Authority to the expenditure, but it need not be directly involved in the procurement and engagement of contractors. The funding agreement could require Service input to the procurement and practical elements of the project to help ensure that the social landlords secure the best outcome. It is important that the project is a success as negative publicity will damage both the campaign and the Service's reputation.

7 Equality & Diversity Implications

- 7.1 Sprinkler systems provide additional escape time for individuals with a disability affecting their mobility. The installation of sprinkler systems on a risk based approach will ensure that those most vulnerable to fire are more likely to be protected.

8. Environmental Implications

- 8.1 Sprinklers are known to use less water than fire hoses to extinguish the same sized fire. More significantly, restoration post fire requires considerable carbon intensive manufacturing and transport inputs; these are minimised if not eliminated where fires are extinguished with sprinkler systems.

**CONTACT: JOANNE SMITH, FIRE SERVICE HQ, WINSFORD
TEL [01606] 868804**

**BACKGROUND PAPERS:
Policy Committee, Sprinkler Policy, September 2011**

Appendix 1: Example motion

MOTION

FULL COUNCIL

Wednesday 18 July 2012

.....

Council notes with sadness the recent tragic events in this city relating to fires in the home. Council applauds the efforts of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service in encouraging homeowners/landlords to install fire prevention measures, and Council supports the installation of sprinkler systems in all new homes.

However, Council recognises the necessity for legislative change to enable this. It is noted that changes in Building Regulations introduced by the Welsh Assembly could see sprinklers required in all new homes in Wales by April 2013.

Council therefore calls on the Secretary of State to introduce similar changes to the Building Regulations in England as a matter of urgency, to prevent similar tragedies occurring in the future.

Furthermore, Council instructs officers to look into whether such requirements could be imposed on all new build properties on the granting of planning permission in Derby.

Mover Councillor Sara Bolton

Seconder Councillor Hardyal Dhindsa

Appendix 2: DCC letter to Minister following motion approval


Derby City Council

Councillor Hardyal Dhindsa
Labour - Normanton Ward
Cabinet Member for Planning, Environment & Public Protection

Andrew Stunell OBE MP
Department for Communities and Local
Government
Eland House
Bressenden Place
London
SW13 5DU



Your ref
Our ref HD/PC/mas
Contact Councillor Hardyal Dhindsa
Email hardyal.dhindsa@derby.gov.
Mobile 07931 211113
Office 01332 643635
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Minicom 01332 256666
Date 8 August 2012

Dear Mr Stunell

Building Regulations: Sprinkler Systems

I write in respect of the above matter which is of life saving importance to Derby City Council and its residents.

The Council notes, with sadness, the recent tragic events in this city, relating to fires in the home. The Council applauds the efforts of Derbyshire Fire and Rescue Service, in encouraging homeowners/landlords to install fire prevention measures, and the City Council supports the installation of sprinkler systems in all new homes. It is in this respect that I am writing to you.

The City Council recognises the necessity for legislative change to enable this to take place. It is noted that changes in Building Regulations, introduced by the Welsh Assembly, could see sprinklers required in all new homes in Wales by April 2013.

Derby City Council therefore calls on the Secretary of State, to introduce similar changes to the Building Regulations in England, as a matter of urgency, to prevent similar tragedies occurring in the future.

I should look forward to your considered response to this motion in anticipation of suitable changes to the Building Regulations.

Yours sincerely



Councillor Hardyal Dhindsa
Cabinet Member for Planning, Environment & Public Protection

c.c. Rt Hon Margaret Beckett MP
Chris Williamson MP
Pauline Latham MP
Cllr Sara Bolton – Derby City Council

Appendix 3 BUSINESS CASE

BUSINESS CASE


**Sprinkler Promotion Projects
(Including Retro-fitting in High-Rise
residential blocks and Chester Rows)**

Appendix 3: Project planning toolkit – business case.**Sprinkler Project Business Case**

Document Version

| | |
|-----------------|--|
| Project Title | Sprinkler Promotion Projects (including Retro-fitting in High-Rise residential blocks and Chester Rows) |
| Project Sponsor | DCFO Cashin |
| Project Manager | AM Brooks |
| Version Number | V1.1 |
| Version Date | 8/5/2013 |

Document Approval Signatures

| Role | Name | Signature | Date |
|-----------------|--------------|--|---------|
| Project Manager | Keith Brooks |  | 24/4/13 |
| Project Sponsor | Mark Cashin | | |

1. Issue to be addressed

Fire Sprinklers save lives, protect property, the environment and help protect local jobs and the economy. The wider adoption of sprinklers in Cheshire will help CFRS achieve its vision of a Cheshire where there are no deaths, injuries or damage from fires or other emergencies.

The Community Fire Protection Department (CFP) has been tasked by the Fire Authority (CFA) with promoting the use of sprinklers in domestic, industrial, educational, commercial and residential premises.

This document details a project business case to promote the installation of automatic water sprinkler systems within the historic Chester Rows and part fund the retro-fitting of sprinklers in four high rise residential blocks across Cheshire.

The objective of this project is to increase the installation of sprinkler systems within these premises through their proactive endorsement and by increasing stakeholders understanding of their benefits. It is intended that this project will focus on changing the local picture through local projects and the national picture by working with other sprinkler advocates such as CFOA, the NFSN, BAFSA and the NFPA.

There is an aging high rise social housing stock within Cheshire, in addition the Mosaic Household Group data shows 'Elderly people reliant on state support' and 'Young people renting flats in high density social housing' together make up nearly 86% of all residents; these being the two groups most at risk from fire.

In addition two Rule 43 letters issued by Coroners after the Lakanal fire in London and Shirley Towers in Southampton have both recommended the retro-fitting of sprinklers in high-rise residential blocks.

Members have previously given their endorsement to the benefits and promotion of sprinklers and already have in place a Sprinkler Policy which this project is designed to progress.

2. Recommendation

The Project manager requests that PAG approves the following actions, that:

The validity of this business case is agreed,

The project approach is approved, and

That PMG monitors progress during the course of the project

3. Background

Despite global acceptance of the advantages that sprinklers bring, fire and rescue services (FRS's) have yet to convince decision makers that they should be compulsory or even that they are cost effective.

FRS's continue to promote sprinklers through seminars, social media and after fires etc. but despite this have consistently failed to secure changes to legislation in England. Recent updates to fire tests have demonstrated that sprinklers are in fact cost effective in a number of applications and legislative amendments in Wales (requiring all new residential properties to be fitted with sprinklers and in Scotland covering Care Homes) have also helped to increase the potential for change. In addition, Scotland requires the installation of sprinklers in buildings above 18 meters, in England it's 30 meters.

The retro-fitting of high-rise residential blocks would apply the same principles that were used in the successful installation of a sprinkler system at Callow Mount, Sheffield. This project involved the retrofitting of a fully comprehensive sprinkler system in a 1960's high-rise block of flats, whilst the residents remained in their properties and with the installation being completed in 4 weeks.

Following the 1992 Windsor Castle fire, it was concluded that automatic fire suppression systems can play an important role in the protection of heritage buildings especially where it was difficult to introduce other fire protection measures such as improved compartmentation.

Sprinklers can also significantly reduce the risk to firefighters when tackling historic building fires. Ongoing work by CFP in Chester on the protection of the Rows has increased the possibility that the Council (CWAC) and others may be willing to install sprinklers in their own properties within the Rows as a means of protecting Chester's famous heritage.

These factors have all combined to make this the best opportunity for real change there has ever been and is therefore a major consideration in the timing of this project.

A 2004 BRE Report suggested that the frequency of fire per accommodation unit increased with building height, but that the risk of death per fire was not significantly affected by height. UK fire statistics suggest that, in multi-storey buildings, the number of fires per floor was not evenly distributed and that there were more fires at ground floor level. Recent fires appear to call this conclusion into doubt or at least suggest that while the numbers proposed by the statistics may be correct, the more severe incidents which require significant fire service intervention and hence result in media coverage may receive greater attention. The LGID's document Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats discusses the relative risk in flats and quotes official sources which say that around 10% of the

population live in purpose-built flats. In 2009-10 some 25% of recorded dwelling fires occurred in such properties, and 23% of fire deaths were in this category of dwelling. Such statistics are clearly indicative of the real fire and life safety risks that are involved in un-sprinklered premises.

While noting that the number of deaths appears disproportionate to the number of people living in purpose-built blocks of flats, the LGID report dismisses this as 'simply the result of the number of fires occurring in such dwellings most of which occur accidentally.' This somewhat surprising conclusion has received little publicity and is, in the opinions of a number of fire safety professionals, not fully explained nor are the implications developed.

In 2008, revised guidance was issued by the Communities and Local Government Department and Scottish Government, Generic Risk Assessment 3.2 – High Risk Fire-fighting Version 2, to help ensure that fire and rescue services plan and prepare for such incidents more effectively. Updating previously published guidance from 2006, this emphasised that, by their very nature, fires in high-rise blocks pose potentially more significant and serious risks. It also recognised that high-rise fires can be more physically demanding and resource intensive for operational personnel compared to incidents in low-rise premises.

When compared to the dates when these blocks were constructed, the weight of fire service resources demanded by each incident has increased over time. This is due to the years of experience gained at such incidents, the loss of fire-fighters over the years and the more safety critical approaches being employed by the fire and rescue service. The guidance quoted acknowledges that fire service ladders, and high-reach access equipment, can only, with rare exception, access the lower levels of a high-rise block, thereby putting residences above this at greater risk. Operational tactics are therefore based on establishing a 'bridgehead' two floors below where the fire is, and requires all equipment and personnel to be transported there. Where fire-fighting lifts are available they can be used, but if lifts are unavailable the alternative use of stairs adds to the logistical difficulties. Should the bridgehead be at a high level it may be necessary to establish one or more staging areas between it and the ground floor. Establishing a bridgehead significantly increases the time before fire-fighting operations begin. This delay means that the fire can develop and spread much farther than an equivalent incident in low-rise premises. This delay can also increase the potential for a flashover or back draught that can, in turn, be exacerbated by high-level wind and weather conditions, and internal ventilation systems.

However, the installation of an effective sprinkler system can go a long way to ameliorating such challenges.

The CLG 2008 guidance also highlights the need to consider the following:

- While modern high-rise premises are generally constructed of fire-resisting materials, the possibility of internal and external fire spread to other parts of the building must be taken into account. Stairways, enclosures and other flats may have been affected due to damaged smoke stop-doors, door-closers, fire-resisting glazing, or breaches to fire compartmentation.

These last concerns played a significant factor in the fatal fire at Lakanal House in London and arise partly due to the changes imposed on buildings since their construction e.g. installation of cable TV, telephone systems, more modern plumbing etc. all of which passed through and often compromised fire resisting compartments.

4. Options Considered

| No | Option | Summary Explanation | Pro's | Con's |
|----|--|--|---|--|
| 1 | Do nothing | This option would not see any reduction in current risk levels across Cheshire or an improvement in the awareness or acceptance of sprinklers by stakeholders. | No cost, CFP resources can be deployed elsewhere | Local landlords continue to fail to recognise the benefit of sprinklers leading to stagnant levels of adoption Continued risk to fire fighters, no improvement to higher risk environments. |
| 2 | Business as usual. (Continued sprinkler promotion without specific funding). | This option would simply involve the continued promotion of sprinklers using social media, campaigns, seminars etc | Relatively cheap option. | Usually involves 'preaching to the converted'; has been tried, but with limited long term or sustained effectiveness to date |
| 3 | Funded & targeted sprinkler project | Option 3 involves the part funding of sprinkler systems in targeted premises, with the aim of making tangible the benefit of sprinklers in-situ thereby making their use the norm. | Has the most potential to show the true benefits to users; potential for significant publicity; clear demonstration of civic leadership; enhances fire- | Most expensive option; will require buy-in from partners; dependent on landlords schedules of maintenance, agreement and timetable of ongoing works. |

| | | | | |
|--|--|--|---|--|
| | | | fighter safety in higher risk environments within Cheshire; protects vulnerable residents and improves the community feeling of well being. | |
|--|--|--|---|--|

5. Timescales

| No | Milestones | Target Delivery Date |
|----|--|---------------------------------|
| 1 | Project Initiation Stage | 30/5/2013 |
| 2 | Project Implementation Stage | 1/6/2013 |
| 3 | Budget approved by CFA | 12/6/2013 |
| 4 | Engagement with RSL's begins | 13/6/2013 |
| 5 | Four blocks identified and agreement reached with RSL's to part-fund | 31/12/2013 |
| 6 | Four blocks retro-fitted | TBC dependent on their schedule |
| 7 | Paper presented to CWAC Council by Cllr E. Johnson for retro-fitting of council properties in the Rows with sprinklers | TBC (within next 4 – 6 months) |
| 8 | Sprinkler motion to write to CLG approved by four unitary councils | 31/12/2013 |
| 9 | Project Closedown and Evaluation Stage | TBC |
| 10 | Project Handover to Business As Usual | TBC |

6. Financial Implications

| | | £000 |
|--|-----------|------|
| Capital Expenditure | | |
| Land | A | |
| Buildings | B | |
| Other | C | 160* |
| Total Capital Expenditure | $D=A+B+C$ | 160 |
| Capital grant/contributions | E | 0 |
| Net capital expenditure | $D-E$ | 160 |
| | | |
| Revenue Expenditure | | |
| Employee costs | F | |
| Other revenue costs | G | |
| Total revenue expenditure | $H=F+G$ | |
| Fees , charges or other income | I | |
| Employee savings | J | |
| Other savings | K | |
| Total income/savings | $L=I+J+K$ | |
| Net revenue expenditure/savings | $H-L$ | |

*Actual, CFA approved figures to be entered after 12/6/13

There are 21 tower blocks in Cheshire, all of which should have been designed and constructed in accordance with the building regulations of the day and therefore were not fitted with sprinklers. This situation inevitably poses a significant degree of on-going risk which, based on the findings and outcomes of the Sheffield pilot project, could be readily eliminated by a commitment to retrofit sprinklers into such properties at an affordable cost per flat. If this work were undertaken as part of the standing commitment on local authorities to upgrade the tower blocks, the associated costs could be even lower, unfortunately however, this is not an imposed requirement, just a recommendation.

The frequency of fire incidents in high-rise social housing buildings has been acknowledged in both the BRE Research project and the LGID's Fire safety in purpose-built blocks of flats guidance document. Both documents note that the frequency of fires in this type of property is higher than that in single residential dwellings.

In recent years a number of serious incidents in high-rise premises have resulted in fatalities and injury of residents and fire-fighters. In the 12 months before the commencement of the Sheffield pilot project installation, that project team recorded 13 fires in comparable properties in the UK. These resulted in 9 fatalities and 12 people, including 5 fire-fighters, requiring treatment for injuries or smoke inhalation. Many other such fires will also have occurred. In addition to

this loss of life, such fires have impacted upon the daily lives of others and resulted in damage to adjacent dwellings, with all the associated disruption which that entails. Such impacts result in significant unnecessary trauma and stress for the affected occupants, while the local authority suffers the inevitable re-housing and refurbishment costs. Particular problems for the owners and tenants invariably result from water damage (from fire-fighting activities) caused to accommodation on floors below a fire.

The high population levels of many high-rise blocks of flats requires the Fire & Rescue Service to prepare more complex plans that mobilise a larger number of personnel and equipment than for low-rise domestic premises. Inevitably, this significantly increases the operational costs per incident.

In recent years there have been a number of incidents in high-rise blocks that have resulted in fatalities and serious injury of fire-fighters, with all the knock-on operational financial implications that this entails, in addition to family trauma.

The potential for numbers of residents requiring medical attention, and/or police assistance, means that an incident in a high-rise block will have much more impact and create a greater demand for resources on the other 'blue light' services than an equivalent low-rise incident. The possibility of fire and rescue service personnel also requiring medical assistance is increased, together with the need for enhanced security, crowd control, investigation and sadly, coroners' support, all of which entail additional operational costs associated with any incident.

Local authorities are required to have predetermined, tested plans in place to support the emergency services in the event of incidents such as a major fire in a high-rise block. These include the provision of technical support from maintenance engineers, health and safety advisors, and tenant liaison staff, with their associated costs. But it is highly likely that a significant number of residents could still require evacuation from a tower block during an incident. Depending upon the fire severity, and duration of fire-fighting operations, short-term temporary shelter is likely to be required in local premises such as community halls and schools. Attendance by social service staff, and voluntary groups, would also be required to ensure the welfare of evacuees, a problem which can add significantly to the financial consequences of an incident.

In the event that parts of the premises, or the whole block, cannot be occupied following a fire, the local authority will have to provide short-to-medium-term temporary accommodation for residents in local hostels, hotels or other commercial premises. In larger tower block incidents this could conceivably be for over 100 people. Consequently, there can be significant additional costs involved in doing so.

Where extensive refurbishment or repair is required a more permanent and expensive approach to re-housing might also be required. In the case of Lakanal

House, the block has remained empty and in its fire-damaged state since July 2009 and it is possible that it will never be re-occupied. While in some cases the effects of a fire may be localised and only necessitate repairs to individual flats, in many incidents fires affect other dwellings and communal areas. This will have had a significant additional impact on rebuilding costs and the time taken to restore premises, while also prolonging the need for (and costs of) temporary accommodation.

A fire has a serious impact on any occupant, particularly so when it occurs in a domestic property. Apart from the obvious risk of personal injury or death it seriously disrupts individual and family life thereafter. It can also create damage to, or the complete loss of, personal property and possessions, some of which are likely to be irreplaceable family memories and treasures. The psychological consequence of this degree of loss is often significantly underestimated. Such trauma can render an individual unable to function normally and may, for example, make it impossible for someone to live above the ground floor or use elevators. A serious fire in a high-rise community can also be detrimental to the well-being of all those in the immediate area, and raise wider concerns amongst residents, and those who live in other tower blocks in the neighborhood.

Although the cost of a fire incident in a high-rise will vary considerably; case studies show that one flat fire cost Glasgow Housing Association £2.6 million and another in Norwich cost the city council over £230,000, a third example in Sheffield caused £10,000 worth of damage but lost rental of £3,200 per month.

The tables below show the number of incidents occurring in high-rise premises in Cheshire over a three year period; this suggests that the potential for a serious accidental or deliberate fire is a distinct possibility and that a relatively small financial incentive, could provide a real return on investment.

Table to show Total & % of Incident data & deliberate fire data period 1/4/09 to 31/3/12

| All High Rise | DEL | AFA | ADF | FAM | SSC | SEC | FAGI | Total 3 year Incidents |
|----------------|------|-------|------|------|-------|------|------|------------------------|
| Overall Totals | 3 | 52 | 12 | 9 | 50 | 2 | 14 | 142 |
| Percentage | 2.1% | 36.6% | 8.5% | 6.3% | 35.2% | 1.4% | 9.9% | 100% |

DEL = Deliberate

AFA = Automatic Fire Alarm

ADF = Accidental Dwelling Fire

FAM = False Alarm Malicious

SSC = Special Service Call

SEC = Secondary

FAGI = False Alarm Good Intent

The table below is set out in descending order by total number of 3 year incidents.

Table to show Incident data & deliberate fire data period 1/4/09 to 31/3/12 for each High Rise

| Name | Storeys | DEL | AFA | ADF | FAM | SSC | SEC | FAGI | Total 3 year Incidents | Deliberate Fires within 250m |
|------------------------------------|---------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|-----|------|------------------------|------------------------------|
| Plas Dinas Flats, Blacon, Chester | 13 | | 14 | 2 | 2 | 7 | | | 25 | 7 |
| Waverley Court, Crewe | 12 | | 8 | 2 | | 6 | | 1 | 17 | 15 |
| Pennine Court, Macclesfield | 16 | | 4 | 2 | 2 | 7 | 1 | | 16 | 6 |
| Churchill Mansions, Runcorn | 11 | | 5 | | 3 | 4 | | 4 | 16 | 3 |
| Range Court, Macclesfield | 16 | 2 | 5 | | | 6 | | | 13 | 6 |
| Peninsula House, Warrington | 12 | 1 | | | | 4 | | 2 | 7 | 29 |
| Joseph Groome Towers B3, E. Port | 13 | | 6 | | | | | | 6 | 47 |
| Joseph Groome Towers B1, E. Port | 13 | | 1 | 2 | 1 | 1 | | | 5 | 42 |
| St Oswald's Flats, Newton, Chester | 13 | | | | | 3 | | 1 | 4 | 18 |
| Nant Peris Flats, Blacon, Chester | 13 | | | | | 3 | 1 | | 4 | 9 |
| Haygarth Heights, Newton, Chester | 11 | | 2 | | | 1 | | 1 | 4 | 8 |
| Thackeray Towers, Newton, Chester | 11 | | | 2 | | | | 2 | 4 | 7 |
| Stanley Park Grange, Wilmslow | 13 | | 2 | 1 | | 1 | | | 4 | 2 |
| Joseph Groome Towers B2, E. Port | 13 | | 1 | | | 2 | | | 3 | 48 |
| St George's Flats, Newton, Chester | 11 | | | | | 2 | | 1 | 3 | 19 |
| St Anne's Flats, Newton, Chester | 11 | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | | | 3 | 12 |
| Kingsway House, Warrington | 9 | | | | 1 | 1 | | 1 | 3 | 10 |
| Rowlands Heights, Newton, Chester | 11 | | | | | 1 | | 1 | 2 | 10 |
| Jubilee Court, Wilmslow | 13 | | 2 | | | | | | 2 | 1 |
| Woodstock Court, Wilmslow | 13 | | 1 | | | | | | 1 | 2 |
| Glyn Garth Flats, Blacon, Chester | 13 | | | | | | | | 0 | 11 |

7. Resource Forecast

| Resource (Person or Role) | Number days | Frequency | Duration | Estimated Total Days (Based on 12 month work programme) |
|--|-------------|-----------|-----------|--|
| DCFO | 0.5 | month | 12 months | 6 |
| Area Manager | 1 | month | 12 months | 12 |
| Partnerships & Policy Manager | 2 | month | 12 months | 24 |
| CFP Group Manager | 3 | month | 12 months | 36 |

| | | | | |
|---------------------------------------|---|--------|-----------|----|
| <i>CFP Station Managers</i> | 3 | month | 12 months | 36 |
| <i>Business Safety Manager</i> | 2 | months | 12 months | 24 |
| <i>Media Officers</i> | 1 | month | 12 months | 12 |

8. Benefits to be realised

- Increased awareness of sprinklers amongst the business community in Cheshire, specifically residential social landlords and heritage premises owners.
- Considerably reduced risk to CFRS fire-fighters attending incidents in sprinklered high-rise blocks
- Considerably reduced risk to life of the often vulnerable residents in sprinklered high-rise blocks
- Opportunity for the exploitation of community safety messages through local and national media which result especially from more high-profile funding or heritage projects
- Improved protection of Cheshire's heritage, the loss of which impacts on the wider tourism agenda and the economy of the county and region.
- CFRS will continue to be recognised as a key influencer and proponent of the sprinkler agenda and will be seen to be behind the LGA and CFOA campaigns.
- Sprinklers are known to use less water than fire hoses to extinguish the same sized fire. More significantly restorations post fire requires considerable carbon intensive manufacturing and transport inputs; these are minimised if not eliminated where fires are extinguished with sprinklers systems.
- Increased community well being and reduced perception of the risk of fire.

9. High Level Risks and Assumptions

Risks:

- The CFA could be accused of helping to finance other organisations to deliver their own priorities during a time of austerity. This is likely to be an accusation from both staff and the public.
- Without an adequate legal agreement in place, the organisation may be held at least partly liable, in the event of a failure to install a system to the

approved standard, a failure to activate in the event of a fire or from other consequential damage arising.

- CFP managers may not be able to persuade social landlords to divert pre-approved funding to the retro-fitting of sprinkler systems, even with the incentive of part funding.
- Publicity arising from the retro-fitting of systems may not be as positive as the Callow Mount project experience.
- Owners/landlords of high-rise residential blocks may only sprinkle the part funded blocks and not in time and afterwards, expand the systems to the rest of their portfolios.
- Legislation or other events could be implemented during the course of the life of the project making it a legal requirement on RSL's to install sprinklers in tower blocks anyway (although this is currently considered highly-unlikely).
- Heritage premises within Chester Rows may be subject to unforeseen technical, legislative or other constraints which prevent the installation of sprinkler systems within council and other landlords' premises.

Assumptions:

The Project Manager has assumed that:

- The CFP structure will continue to contain sufficient resources to deliver the project and that this will be delivered through partnership working.
- Those partners will be open to discussions and persuasion to become involved in these projects
- The CFA will authorise a sufficient budget to persuade RSL's to participate.
- The choice of blocks to be retro-fitted will be determined primarily by Members on the advice of the landlords and Head of CFP using a risk/benefits based approach.

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Priority School Building Programme

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 This report provides a progress report for the Priority School Building Programme.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) Executive Board note the current position of the Priority School Building Programme in respect of Halebank CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School and the progression of the scheme as part of the Programme;**
- 2) the Strategic Director (Children and Enterprise) in consultation with the appropriate portfolio holder, enter into the Memorandum of Understanding agreement, all documentation is to be to the satisfaction of the Operational Director (Legal and Democratic Services); and**
- 3) the Strategic Director (Children and Enterprise) in consultation with the appropriate portfolio holder, finalise the Landowner Agreement, all documentation to be to the satisfaction of the Operational Director (Legal and Democratic Services).**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In July 2011 the Department for Education (DfE) announced it was commencing the Priority School Building Programme - a privately financed programme to address those schools in the worst building condition.
- 3.2 To be considered for inclusion in the programme, local authorities and maintained schools must accept being part of a long term (approximately twenty seven years) private finance arrangement where the building maintenance (apart from catering and security) will be provided by a third party. The contract will be procured by a central body (The Education Funding Agency) and for procurement purposes each school will be batched together with a number of other schools in the same geographic area. The

procurement will be based on standard designs and schools will be required to make a contribution to the annual revenue payments of the private finance contract.

- 3.3 In May 2012 the DfE announced the names of schools to be taken forward in the Programme. Halebank CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School was included in the list and has since been included in a North West group of nine local authorities (Manchester, Wigan, Cheshire West and Chester for example) covering fourteen schools which will be taken forward as a single development package.
- 3.4 A report to Executive Board (13 December 2012) outlined the Priority School Building Programme and it agreed to the sharing of asset management data with the DfE in order to determine if there is a deliverable and affordable solution to rebuilding the Halebank CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School on the existing site.

Memorandum of Understanding.

- 3.5 The timescales for the Priority School Building Programme require the DfE to submit an Outline Business Case to the Treasury over the summer. Each local authority is required to enter into a Memorandum of Understanding, prior to the submission of the Outline Business Case, which authorises the Secretary of State to manage the school's progression through the procurement of the project.

The Memorandum of Understanding aims to establish the parties' respective obligations and commitments to each other during the procurement phase and during the term of the Project Agreement. The Project Agreement will form the contract to build and maintain the new school. The Council, the Diocese of Liverpool and the School are required to sign the Memorandum of Understanding.

Landowner Agreement.

- 3.6 The Council as land owner of the playing field site will need to grant rights of access to the Secretary of State and the appointed contractor for the period of the Project Agreement to construct the new school on land in the ownership of the Council. The form of the agreement has not yet been finalised by the Secretary of State. The Council and the Diocese will need to enter into the Landowner Agreement.
- 3.7 Following the submission of the Outline Business Case the DfE will then enter into a procurement period later this year when developers will be invited to bid for the north-west package of fourteen schools. The Secretary of State will select a preferred bidder to deliver all fourteen schools. It is anticipated that construction of the first school from the north-west package will commence on site early 2015.

Land Swap

- 3.8 The playing field at Halebank CE Voluntary Controlled Primary School is owned by Halton Borough Council and the land of the school building is owned by the Diocese of Liverpool. Early indications from the DfE are that a new school can be built on the current site of the school playing fields and the existing school building would be demolished and the land re-designated as playing field. The land comprising the new playing fields will be transferred to the ownership of the Council and the site of the new building will be transferred to the Diocese. In order to facilitate this exchange of land a “land swap” will be required on completion of the new build. Approval is required for Halton to enter into negotiations for and agree the “land swap” with the Diocese. There is no financial consideration for this transaction.
- 3.9 The School and the Diocese of Liverpool are fully supportive of the proposal to re-build the school as the new build will address a number of suitability and modernisation issues with the existing school accommodation that the Authority does not have the funding to address.
- 3.10 The school will be required to make a contribution to the annual revenue payments of the private finance contract during the operational phase of the project for the provision of hard facilities management. The DfE has indicated this will be in the region of £12,000 per annum – the exact figure will be determined following the appointment of the preferred bidder for the project.
- 3.11 A voluntary pre-school group operates from one of the mobile classrooms currently on the site providing free early years entitlement for 2, 3 and 4 year olds. The demand for free entitlement places for 2 year olds will increase from the current level of 160 to over 800 in September 2014 as part of the DfE’s programme for 2 year olds from low income families. The local authority has a statutory duty to provide these places.

The setting is an important part of Halton’s early years provision and there is no other alternative provision in the Halebank community. Discussions have been held with the DfE on the need to retain the pre-school on the school site as part of the development. The current “control option” for the development is to retain the pre-school in it’s existing location in the double mobile classroom. There will be financial implications for the LA associated with this control option as it will be necessary to retain gas, electric and water services to the mobile which otherwise would be disconnected when the existing school is demolished.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Priority School Building Programme will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the learning environment through capital projects.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Priority School Building Programme will contribute to Halton's Carbon Management Programme by producing more energy efficient buildings.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 6.1 Children and Young People in Halton. The Priority School Building Programme will address condition and suitability issues within school buildings and will improve the learning environment for children and young people.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 a) The contract for the provision of hard facilities management in the new school is to be signed by the Secretary of State and not the local authority. If there is a case of school pupil numbers falling and the school being unable to meet their annual contribution to revenue payments there would be no risk to the local authority.
- b) Options to ensure the retention of the pre-school setting on the site have been considered and the current control option is to retain the pre-school in the existing double mobile classroom.
- c) If funding for the Programme is withdrawn the project to provide the new school building will not proceed as the Council does not have other capital resources to fund.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects.

9.0 REASON FOR DECISION

- 9.1 To enable the re-build of the school to progress as part of the DfE's Priority School Building Programme.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

- 10.1 The Authority does not have other capital funding to enable the re-build of the school.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

- 11.1 It is estimated building works are likely to commence in 2015.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|----------------------------------|------------------------|
| Priority School Building Programme Announcements – DfE 19/07/2011 & 24/05/2012 | Children & Enterprise | Phil Dove |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 27 June 2013 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children, Young People and Families |
| SUBJECT: | Amalgamation of Pupil Referral Units – Consultation feedback |
| WARD(S) | Borough-wide |

1.0 **PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

1.1 This report provides a summary of the responses received during the consultation on the amalgamation of The Bridge School Pupil Referral Unit and the KS4 Gateway Pupil Referral Unit in Halton and seeks approval for amalgamation.

2.0 **RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board gives approval for the amalgamation of The Bridge School and KS4 Gateway by :**

- 1) **Extending the age range of The Bridge School from accepting 11-14 year olds to accepting 11-16 year olds from 1st September 2013;**
- 2) **Bringing existing KS4 Gateway staff, pupils and provision under the leadership of The Bridge School with effect from 1st September 2013; and**
- 3) **Ceasing the KS4 Gateway Pupil Referral Unit as a distinct unit from 31st August 2013.**

3.0 **SUPPORTING INFORMATION**

3.1 At the Executive Board meeting on the 28th March 2013 it was agreed that consultation could be undertaken to amalgamate The Bridge School Pupil Referral Unit and KS4 Gateway Pupil Referral Unit by bringing existing Key Stage 4 staff and provision under the leadership of The Bridge School with effect from 1st September 2013.

3.2 This amalgamation is considered to have many benefits including:

- Ability to achieve a smoother transition and consistency for pupils from KS3 to KS4 under one Leadership and Management Team
- One Leadership and Management Team for parents and pupils who attend the PRU to work and communicate with

- A clearly defined management structure governed by the Management Committee to ensure high quality provision across both key stages
- Allowing a rationalisation of current responsibility roles, such as SENCO and Heads of Curriculum areas
- A formal recognition of the sharing of rooms, resources and staff that is already happening across both PRUs
- Developing a more sustainable structure by securing efficiencies in terms of administrative work and Service Level Agreements for other PRU support e.g. Human Resources, Payroll, Legal, SIMS, IT support, School Meals, Financial Management
- Achieving better value for money
- Greater career progression opportunities for staff

3.3 The consultation began on the 15th April 2013. Letters were sent to pupils, parents, staff, trade unions, Management Committee members, Halton Secondary School/Academy Head teachers, contracted providers for the KS4 Gateway, Local Authority Education Welfare Officers, Local Authority Youth Offending Team officer, Local Authority Children in Care officer, and information appeared in the Weekly News and The World newspapers with the opportunity to provide written feedback by 13th May 2013.

3.4 At the close of the consultation 34 responses had been received. A total of 23 respondents agreed with the proposal and 10 respondents did not agree with the proposal. One respondent felt they did not have enough information to agree or disagree with the proposal. A breakdown of respondents is shown below:

3.5

| TOTAL responses per group | YES | NO | Comment only | Total respondents |
|-----------------------------|-----|----|--------------|------------------------------|
| KS3 Pupil | 4 | 4 | | 8 (of a total 22 pupils) |
| KS4 Pupil | 8 | 6 | | 14 (of a total 68 pupils) |
| Staff | 4 | | 1 | 5 (of a total 17 staff) |
| Management Committee member | 3 | | | 3 (of a total 4 members) |
| Halton Head Teachers | 3 | | | 3 (of a total 8 schools) |
| Other | 1 | | | 1 |
| TOTAL | 23 | 10 | 1 | 34 |

3.6 The issues raised by those who did not support the proposal were:

3.7 **Extending the age range** – A small proportion (3) of the KS4 pupils raised concerns about mixing with younger pupils who they perceived to be childish and immature and 1 KS4 pupil commented on the potential for

bullying.

- 3.8 Whilst the perceptions raised are very small The Pupil Referral Unit Management Committee will ensure that robust mechanisms are in place to support the proposed amalgamation, including the review and endorsement of agreed strategies to support Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils. Pupils opinions and views will be taken into account in developing these strategies and pupils will be involved in the preparation for amalgamation by giving them an active role in the planning process.
- 3.9 The school bullying policy will be updated to reflect the amalgamation, including updating staff awareness and training.
- 3.10 The amalgamation of both Pupil Referral Units will be representative of what pupils have already experienced in secondary school with Key Stage 3 and Key Stage 4 pupils together within one school. There is already a mixing of existing KS3 and KS4 PRU pupils who make use of the shared building for some lessons and activities. An example of this is the successful celebration and careers events held for KS4 pupils that KS3 pupils help to organise and prepare lunch.
- 3.11 **Uniform** – 2 respondents commented that they did not want to wear a uniform. These comments were made by Key Stage 3 pupils, who already wear a uniform.
- 3.12 The Pupil Referral Unit Management Committee will consult fully with pupils and parents before making any decisions about the introduction of uniforms to Key Stage 4 pupils, Key Stage 3 pupils already wear a uniform.
- 3.13 The comments made by those who did support the proposal were:
- 3.14 **Sustainability** – 2 respondents commented that the amalgamation would allow economy of scale, supporting the sustainability of the service.
- 3.15 **Improved outcomes** – 4 respondents commented that the amalgamation would allow for improved partnership working, increasing effectiveness of the service and outcomes for pupils.
- 3.16 **Full use of building** – 2 respondents commented that the amalgamation would allow opportunities to make use of the building resources across both key stages.
- 3.17 A full record of the comments received is attached in Appendix A.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 4.1 The Local Authority has a statutory duty to arrange education for pupils who, because of exclusion or other reasons, would not otherwise receive suitable education.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The amalgamation of the Pupil Referral Units (PRUs) as one school allows for cost efficiencies to be secured in terms of Leadership and Management roles, administrative work and Service Level Agreements for other PRU support e.g. Human Resources, Payroll, Legal, SIMS, IT support, School Meals, Financial Management. This will allow the PRU Management Committee to achieve better value for money.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The amalgamation of both PRUs will allow the PRU Management Committee to work within a clearly defined management structure to ensure high quality provision across both key stages, increasing their ability to provide a positive experience for pupils and their parents.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Progression to further education or training post 16 years old is a key priority for work with pupils attending the PRUs. The amalgamation of both PRUs allows the PRU Management Committee to provide consistent Information, Advice and Guidance across each year group to support pupils' plans for progression.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The amalgamation of both PRUs allows for smoother integration of multi-agency working throughout all year groups.

6.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The funding of PRUs through the Place-plus funding model from April 2013 does bring uncertainty to the future funding amount PRUs will receive according to pupil number. Failure to achieve cost efficiencies and best value could result in individual PRUs becoming unsustainable.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The amalgamation of both PRUs ensures an inclusive and coherent approach to managing the behaviour of pupils who have been excluded from mainstream schools.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

The implications of the School Funding Reform on PRUs and the current vacancies at the Key Stage 4 Gateway provide an opportunity to achieve greater consistency and better value for money by amalgamating both PRUs.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Maintaining two PRUs but putting in place one leadership structure across both PRUs – this option was rejected as whilst remaining as two PRUs there is limited cost efficiencies that can be achieved, e.g. each PRU would have to purchase their own Service Level Agreements.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

1st September 2013.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|--|----------------------------|------------------------|
| School Funding Reform – Arrangements for 2013-14 | Rutland House | Simon Clough |

APPENDIX A

| Group | YES | NO | COMMENTS |
|---------------------|-----|----|--|
| Halton Head Teacher | YES | | |
| Halton Head Teacher | YES | | I agree that the amalgamation of KS3 and KS4 provision would lead to economies of scale which should improve the offer and outcomes for vulnerable Halton students. |
| Halton Head Teacher | YES | | |
| Other | YES | | <p>It makes sense to make full use of the building, where opportunities exist to deliver a broader curriculum on one site (similar to the old technical colleges). This then would ensure that quality assurance issues were addressed through regular observation by the management team.</p> <p>I believe that this model would also result in improved attendance, as the pupils would see this as them attending school. Monitoring and intervening in attendance matters would become more efficient as matters that arise at The Bridge could be addressed immediately rather than waiting for the issues to be brought to the school's attention by external providers.</p> <p>I agree with making the best of the staffing and administrative structure, with support and training to help develop skills. Key Workers, who do a good job in sometimes difficult circumstances, could be trained up to High Level Teaching Assistant and would be in a position to deliver curriculum or cover staff absence. I would be concerned however, that we may end up with more chiefs, whose salaries would command a large chunk of any restricted budget in the current climate (Heads of Curriculum areas??)</p> <p>What is wrong with a good old fashioned Teacher in Charge and Deputy?</p> |
| KS3 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS3 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS3 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS3 Pupil | YES | | Comment not readable |
| KS3 Pupil | | NO | |
| KS3 Pupil | | NO | No uniform |
| KS3 Pupil | | NO | No uniform |
| KS3 Pupil | | NO | |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------------|-----------|-----------|---|
| KS4 Pupil | | NO | |
| KS4 Pupil | | NO | Other pupils can be childish and show offs |
| KS4 Pupil | | NO | I am concerned about how I would mix with people |
| KS4 Pupil | | NO | Bullying |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | Concerned on how to mix with younger people, they act childish |
| KS4 Pupil | | NO | Year 7s stink |
| KS4 Pupil | | NO | Because they are a lot more immature and childish |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | |
| KS4 Pupil | YES | | Access to more rooms |
| Management Committee member | YES | | |
| Management Committee member | YES | | |
| Management Committee member | YES | | I believe that the amalgamation of the two PRU's into one is essential for the school's continued sustainability. It will create one school with one management structure, which in turn will lead to greater clarity and responsibility within the school that is greatly needed to move it to be a better school. |
| Staff | YES | | The amalgamation will provide an opportunity to further develop an early intervention approach to improve the outcomes for some of the vulnerable pupils in Halton. |
| Staff | YES | | |
| Staff | YES | | |
| Staff | YES | | |
| Staff | | | I think there are both advantages and disadvantages to an amalgamation. However, I do not have enough information to say whether or not I agree. |
| | 23 | 10 | |

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People & Families

SUBJECT Waiver of Procurement Standing Orders in respect of Provision of Music Services to Schools

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

To request a waiver of procurement standing orders 4.1 Competition Requirements, for contracts up to but not exceeding £173,934 in value, via procurement standing order 1.8.4 (f) where compliance with Standing Orders would be inconsistent with joint and Partnership working or special external funding arrangements. To award the incumbent supplier a one year contract based on the current terms and conditions, currently agreed.

EU Public Procurement Regulations 2006 do not apply as the value for a one year contract is below the current threshold.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That Executive Board

- 1) grant approval to waiver Procurement Standing Orders 4.1; and**
- 2) note that this waiver will be for the period from 1st September 2013 to 31st July 2014.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1** The creation of music hubs was central to the national plan for music education. A hub is a partnership between councils and various music organisations that would plan and deliver a variety of opportunities including instrumental and vocal tuition and extra-curricular activities to all 5-19 year olds in their area.

Halton partnered with Warrington to form a Music Hub in September 2012 following the successful bid for Music Hub funding. The Hub receives a grant from the Arts Council, ring-fenced for the development of music provision for schools.

As a condition of the grant funding, we are required to deliver against 4 key areas to:

1. Ensure that every child aged 5 -18 has the opportunity to learn a musical instrument (other than the voice) through whole class ensemble teaching programmes for ideally a year (but for a minimum of a term) of weekly tuition on the same instrument
2. Provide opportunities to play in ensembles and to perform from an early stage.
3. Ensure clear progression routes are available and affordable.
4. Develop a Singing Strategy to ensure that every child sings regularly

The provision of music services in Halton schools is currently provided through Halton and Warrington District Music Service (HWDMS). They are currently contracted to provide Whole Class Tuition projects for schools and also the Halton Schools' Concert and Training Band. The contracts end on the 31st July 2013.

HWDMS are currently providing a service in 46 Halton Primary Schools delivering 54 Whole Class Music projects in:

- African Drumming
- Samba Drumming
- Strings
- Guitar
- Soundstart (mixed brass / woodwind and percussion)
- Brass
- Recorders
- Vocal

Provision includes:

- Specialist tutors who are quality assured.
- Weekly lesson plans with clear learning objectives related to National Curriculum Strategy
- A tracking and monitoring system that follows the pupils and can provide schools with data to support Ofsted inspections
- Large scale end of year Whole Class Concert
- 4 Playdays for Brass / Woodwind / Percussion students

Halton owns a range of instruments that are loaned to schools to support children's participation in the tuition projects and the Concert and Training Band.

The success of the singing strategy is evident through the hugely successful Children of Halton Sing (COHS) events. At the Summer event over 1500 school children, from over 40 schools, come together at the Stadium to take

part in a mass singing performance. This is in addition to the Spring term COHS events at The Brindley Theatre. The Infant Music Festival events provide performance opportunities for 1600 children.

3.2 Value for money and Competition

Feedback from schools regarding the services they receive from our current provider is very positive and they have indicated their commitment to engage in music projects for the next academic year. Requests from schools for 2013 – 2014 projects are, to date, showing an increase on last year's figures and in some cases identify specific staff they wish to retain as deliverers. There is an intention to go to market in the Spring of 2014.

3.3 Transparency

The Procurement Division will provide full support with the new tender opportunity, which will be published via the chest ensuring fair, transparent, and proportionate principals are embedded into the process, which will be open to the supply market for competition. Compliance with both Procurement Standing Orders and EU Public Procurement Regulations 2006, where applicable.

3.4 Funding

The projects for schools are subsidised through grants paid to the Halton and Warrington Music Hub by the Arts Council. The funding includes very specific criteria regarding delivery of services to schools and targets for levels of engagement of pupils.

There is no cost to the Council for the contracts which have a collective value for 2013 / 14 of a maximum of £83,000.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

None

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

As with any grant there is a risk of clawback in the event the outputs outlined in the condition of grant are not delivered.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

The Council is committed to raising standards for its children and young people. It is recognised that standards and engagement in core subjects can be enhanced through recognising and developing a range of talents across other curricular areas including music and the arts. Continued access to high quality music provision in schools is very important to achieving this ambition.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

See 6.1

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Increased confidence, value and self-worth improves the emotional health and well-being of children and young people.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 A procurement process could be completed and contract awarded prior to September 2013. However, should the outcome be a change of provider, the risks associated with mobilisation were considered too great:

- Provider unable to offer full range of services for schools from September
- Impact upon children and young people's achievement and possible disengagement
- Insufficient time to transfer data around children's current achievement with regard to national curriculum levels and as appropriate grades, to inform future planning – potential impact upon continuity and progression
- Level of risk for schools if provision around music is affected and they are unable to deliver full range of curriculum entitlement – Ofsted
- Potential impact upon standards

7.2 Consideration was also given to awarding a one term contract to the current provider with a view to procuring a new provider for January 2014. However there were a number of risks identified with this, including:

- Schools are signing up for a one year commitment and a change of staff / systems part way through would be detrimental to students and impact upon continuity and monitoring systems
- Schools may not engage with a 1 term music offer with a risk of change mid-year
- The current provider may not be willing to commit to a 1 term offer as it would potentially impact upon tutor recruitment and retention

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Provision of opportunities to engage in music projects in schools, and through the Halton band, are particularly important for our most vulnerable children who would not otherwise have this opportunity due to the financial implications of private music tuition.

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: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Basic Needs Capital Funding

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report outlines the methodology used to prioritise the schools for Basic Need funding for 2013/14 & 2014/15. It seeks approval of Executive Board to the prioritisation process for the allocation of Basic Need Capital for 2013/14 & 2014/15.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That Executive Board

- 1) **agree the prioritisation process outlined within the report;**
- 2) **agree that a capital project can be developed to address a Basic Need issue at Beechwood Primary School; and**
- 3) **agree that a further report be submitted to Executive Board detailing how the balance of the Basic Need funding for 2013/14 & 2014/15 will be allocated.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Basic Need funding is allocated to local authorities in recognition of the significant pressures local authorities are facing to provide additional school places. In March 2013 the Department for Education announced the two year Basic Need funding for Halton 2013/15 would be £1,203,445.

4.0 Identification of Basic Need Issues

4.1 The model Halton used to allocate the 2011/12 and 2012/13 Basic Need funding, has been applied again for 2013/14 & 2014/15. This model has been developed in order to objectively prioritise schools identifying those with the strongest case for Basic Need support. The four key elements of this model are detailed below:

- The total net capacity for each school has been considered in relation to the current total pupil numbers for each school;
- The future capacity has been projected to identify the number of places likely to be required for each school; and

- Popular schools indicated by parental preference during the admissions process.
- Priority has been given to schools with temporary mobile classrooms – the highest score has been given to schools with long term use of temporary classrooms.

4.2 The list below shows the schools with the highest priority sorted into geographical area (See Appendix 1 for geographical areas).

| | |
|--|--------------|
| St John Fisher Catholic Primary School | Widnes East |
| Ashley School | Widnes West |
| Beechwood Primary School | Runcorn East |
| St Clement's Catholic Primary School | Runcorn West |
| Castle View Primary School | Runcorn West |

4.3 **Widnes East**

In Widnes East, one school appears in the priority list, this school is:

- St John Fisher Catholic Primary School

4.3.1 **St John Fisher Catholic Primary School**

This school is currently operating over capacity, and the lower 3 year groups are operating over the Planned Admission Number (PAN).

4.3.2 **Recommendation for Widnes East**

The data indicates that there is not a Basic Need issue in Widnes East. St Bede's Infant and Junior schools have been expanded for 2013 as has Lunts Heath Primary School, it is envisaged that the Basic Need issue in this area of Halton will be alleviated from Sept 2013.

Although the voluntary aided schools are close to capacity there is still surplus capacity overall.

4.4 **Widnes West**

In Widnes West, one school appears in the priority list, this school is:

- Ashley School

4.4.1 **Ashley School**

From September 2013 Ashley school will be re-designated as a school for pupils with complex social communication needs and autism, with a intake for 11-16 year olds of 70, and new post 16 provision of 42. As the capacity of the building is 120 pupils there is no need to increase the size of the building other than to provide the specialist facilities for post sixteen. Currently building work to provide the post 16 facilities is at design stage with a start on site anticipated in the autumn. Monitoring of pupil numbers will continue as the re-designated school becomes established. £500,000 Basic Need capital funding has already been allocated to this project (as

approved by Executive Board 18 October 2012 and 28th March 2013) from the 12/13 allocation.

4.4.2 Recommendations for Widnes West

That with the exception of Ashley School, which has a programme of works on going, the data indicates that there is not a Basic Need issue in Widnes West and therefore no further school require expansion.

4.5 Runcorn East

In Runcorn East, one school appears in the priority list, this is:

- Beechwood Primary School

4.5.1 Beechwood Primary School

The school is currently operating above capacity overall with four year groups oversubscribed.

The accommodation was rationalised in 2000 to reduce the admission number from 41 to 15, as the school was suffering from surplus capacity. A successful pre-school now accommodates part of the school which was declared surplus and a link club accommodates a double mobile classroom that was previously used. A single mobile classroom, previously declared surplus, was brought back into use for a temporary period whilst the school was over capacity to help address the shortage of classroom space. It is a priority for Halton to replace unsuitable temporary mobile classrooms so that pupils and staff are not disadvantaged by being separate from the main school and having inadequate learning environments which suffer from extreme weather conditions.

The school has expressed an interest in increasing their Planned Admission Number from 15 to 20 pupils and overall capacity from 105 pupils to 140 pupils due to the level of parental preference.

4.5.2 Recommendation for Runcorn East

It is recommended that £100,000 is allocated for the expansion of Beechwood Primary School. A feasibility study will be required to investigate the building options available to accommodate an increased Planned Admission Number from 15 to 20.

4.6 Runcorn West

In Runcorn West, two schools appeared in the priority list, they are:

- St Clement's Catholic Primary School
- Castleview School

4.6.1 St. Clement's Catholic Primary School

This school is operating at capacity for 5 year groups, but is not above capacity overall. There are also available places in surrounding Catholic Schools.

4.6.2 Castleview Primary School

This school is operating at capacity for 5 year groups, but is not above capacity overall.

4.6.3 Recommendation for Runcorn West

Basic Need 11/12 capital funding is currently being used to expand Weston Primary School to address pupil place issues in this area, once complete the Basic Need pressure should be alleviated.

4.7 Birth Data analysis

4.7.1 Birth data for Runcorn and Widnes has also been analysed for 2014 and 2015 and compared against the Pupil Number Capacity. The table below shows that the forecast data indicates that there is sufficient capacity for pupils entering the schools in Runcorn and Widnes at Reception age.

| Area | Capacity | Birth Data 2014 | Birth Data 2015 |
|--------------|-----------------|------------------------|------------------------|
| Runcorn | 864 | 779 | 691 |
| Widnes | 761 | 706 | 625 |
| Total | 1625 | 1485 | 1316 |

4.8 This is further evidence that Halton will not have a Basic Need issue going forward for the next 2 years.

4.9 The school admissions team have been fully consulted during this process and agree with the findings.

4.10 Each Local Authority has the responsibility for ensuring sufficient school places in its area and is required to consider all sectors of schools in prioritising this funding with all taxpayer funded schools being eligible for consideration including voluntary aided schools, academies and Free Schools. All Responsible Bodies of these groups, members of the Local Education Investment Group, were consulted during May 2013 with respect to their agreement that, with the exception of Beechwood Primary, in Halton Borough Council there are no Basic Need issues to be addressed in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

4.11 The School Forum was also consulted with on the 18th June, to gain their approval to proceed with the works to expand Beechwood Primary and that no other Basic Need issues to be addressed in 2013/14 and 2014/15.

4.12 **Balance of Basic Need Funding 2013-15**

It is proposed to use the balance of Basic Need funding to address modernisation and suitability issues. A further report will be submitted to Executive Board later in the year detailing proposed use of this funding.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The proposed project at Beechwood Primary School will allow the Council to continue to meet its requirement to enhance the learning environment in schools and provide sufficient accommodation for pupil numbers.

5.2 The proposal to spend the balance of Basic Need funding to address suitability issues, will have a positive impact on the teaching and learning. It will enhance the environment for both pupils and staff and as a result should have a positive impact of attainment.

6.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The costs of any capital works to address basic need issues in the borough in 2013-15 cannot exceed the grant funding of £1,203,445 plus any school contribution. Although schools prioritised for capital development will be asked to make a contribution towards the project, the sum each school can contribute is likely to be very limited as their devolved capital allocation has been reduced by the DfE over recent years.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children and Young People in Halton.

The proposed project at Beechwood Primary School will address pupil place and suitability issues within the school building and will improve the learning environment for children and young people.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

The proposed project at Beechwood Primary School will improve the learning environment for children and young people.

7.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

7.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The capital programme will ensure that there are sufficient pupil places across the authority.

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 There are no risks associated with the recommendations put forward by this paper.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 Consideration to access issues is given in all building projects. The capacity of schools to meet the needs of children with more complex needs and disabilities will be developed further through building works at schools.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

10.1 To deliver and implement the Basic Need Capital programme.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 Not applicable.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

12.1 Works at Beechwood Primary to commence as soon as possible, in order for the school to increase their planned admission number.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|---|------------------------|
| Schools Capital Announcement – DfE 01/03/2013 | Transforming Children’s Environments – 2 nd Floor – Rutland House, Runcorn | Phil Dove |
| Prioritisation Model based on January 13 Census and 2013/14 admission figures | Transforming Children’s Environments – 2 nd Floor – Rutland House, Runcorn | Catriona Gallimore |

Widnes

Location of Schools

Widnes East

| School Name | Resp Body | Type |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|
| Birchfield Nursery | Community | Nursery |
| Brookfields School | Community | Special |
| Fairfield Infant School | Community | Primary |
| Fairfield Junior School | Community | Primary |
| Farnworth C of E Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Lunts Heath Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Moorfield Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Saints Peter and Paul Catholic High School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Secondary |
| Simms Cross Primary School | Community | Primary |
| St Bede's Catholic Infant School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| St Bede's Catholic Junior School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| St Gerard's Catholic Primary and Nursery School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| St John Fisher Catholic Primary School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| Wade Deacon High School | Academy | Secondary |
| Warrington Road Nursery | Community | Nursery |
| West Bank Primary School | Community | Primary |

Widnes West

| School Name | Resp Body | Type |
|---|-----------------------|-----------|
| Halebank C of E Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Chesnut Lodge School | Community | Special |
| Our Lady of Perpetual Succour Catholic Primary School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| Spinney Avenue CE Primary School | Community | Primary |
| The Bankfield School | Community | Secondary |
| Ashley School | Community | Special |
| St Michael's Catholic Primary School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| Oakfield Community Primary School | Community | Primary |
| All Saints Upton C of E Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Ditton Nursery School | Community | Nursery |
| St Basil's Catholic Primary School | Liverpool Archdiocese | Primary |
| Ditton Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Hale C of E Primary School | Community | Primary |

Runcorn

Runcorn East

| School Name | Resp Body | Type |
|--|--------------------|-----------|
| Astmoor Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Beechwood Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Brookvale Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Daresbury Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Gorsewood Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Hallwood Park Primary and Nursery School | Community | Primary |
| Hillview Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Moore Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Murdishaw West Community Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Ormiston Academy | Academy | Secondary |
| Our Lady Mother of the Saviour Catholic Primary School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Primary |
| Palace Fields Primary School | Academy | Primary |
| St Augustine's Catholic Primary School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Primary |
| St Bertelina's C of E Primary School | Chester Diocese | Primary |
| St Martin's Catholic Primary School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Primary |
| St Mary's C of E Primary School | Chester Diocese | Primary |
| The Brow Community Primary School | Community | Primary |
| The Park Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Windmill Hill Primary School | Community | Primary |

Runcorn West

| School Name | Resp Body | Type |
|--|--------------------|-------------|
| Castle View Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Cavendish School | Community | Special |
| Halton Lodge Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Pewithall Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Runcorn All Saints C of E Primary School | Chester Diocese | Primary |
| St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Secondary |
| St Clement's Catholic Primary School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Primary |
| St Edward's Catholic Primary School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Primary |
| The Grange School | Community | All through |
| The Heath Specialist Technology College | Academy | Secondary |
| The Holy Spirit Catholic Primary School | Shrewsbury Diocese | Primary |
| Victoria Road Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Westfield Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Weston Point Community Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Weston Primary School | Community | Primary |
| Woodside Primary School | Community | Primary |

| | |
|---------------------------|---|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 27 June 2013 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Strategic Director – Children & Enterprise |
| PORTFOLIO: | Children, Young People and Families |
| SUBJECT: | Outcome of the Consultation on extending the age range of Fairfield Junior School and closure of Fairfield Infant School. |
| WARD(S) | Borough-wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 This report provides a summary of the outcome of the first phase of consultation on the re-organisation of Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior School. It identifies the key issues raised and seeks approval to commence statutory consultation.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That Executive Board:

- 1) **considers the response to the first phase of consultation; and**
- 2) **gives approval to proceed to statutory consultation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Following approval from Executive Board on 28th March 2013 consultation commenced on 17th April on the proposal to expand Fairfield Junior school from 1st January 2014 to include Fairfield Infant School, with staff and pupils becoming part of the expanded school. The Infant school would close as a separate school on 31st December 2013 with all Fairfield Infant school children becoming part of the roll of the amalgamated primary school.

3.2 Creating a primary school by amalgamating the Infant and Junior schools will have the following advantages:-

- It will allow a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 (Infants) to Key Stage 2 (Juniors);
- It will provide greater opportunities for curriculum continuity and development;
- There will be greater opportunities for staff development;
- It will allow greater flexibility with a combined budget to deploy staff and the curriculum resources effectively;
- Allows a whole school approach to assessment, record keeping and target setting;

- Allows a whole school approach to behaviour management;
- Provides continuity for pupils with Special Educational needs; and
- Will provide greater opportunities for staff recruitment.

4.0 CONSULTATION

4.1 The first phase of the consultation included: School Staff, Governors, schools, parents and carers, pupils, trade unions, neighbouring authorities, Diocesan authorities and the Children's Trust.

4.2 Consultation meetings were held with staff and governors from both schools. The views of both School Councils were sought and are attached as Appendix A and B. A public meeting was held at the school on 24th April 2013. Details of the consultation proposal along with the feedback form were also placed on the website.

4.3 The first phase of the consultation closed on 29th May 2013. . Both governing bodies supported the proposal. However, to ensure the involvement of both governing bodies in the key decisions related to the amalgamation a further governing body of each school was held and a joint committee has been set up.

4.4 74 responses were received. 52 of the responses were in favour of the proposal. 2 respondents provided comments but did not indicate their position. Two anonymous responses were received. The remaining 18 respondents did not support the proposal. A summary of the responses received is attached in Appendix C.

4.5 Appendix D details the main issues raised in the consultation a summary of the key issues is included:

- Transition between Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2;
- Concern about infant children mixing with older junior children;
- Different sets of procedures in place at both schools and opportunities for training;
- Concern about split site;
- Accessibility of the Headteacher;
- Size of the school;
- Staffing; and

- Finance

4.6 The timetable for consultation on the proposal is summarised below:

| 17th April 2013 | 29th May 2013 | 27th June 2012 |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|
| Phase 1 of the informal consultation commenced for a 6 week period | Consultation closed | Executive Board Meeting |
| 4th September 2013 | 16th October 2013 | 7th November 2013 |
| Phase 2 – statutory consultation commences for a 6 week period | Consultation Closes | Executive Board Meeting |

5.0 STATUTORY PROPOSAL

5.1 Executive Board is asked to consider the responses received to the consultation and give approval to the commencement of statutory consultation on 4th September 2013.

5.2 The statutory proposal will seek views on the following:

- Change the age range of Fairfield Junior School from its current age range of 7 to 11 to an age range of 4 through to 11 to become an “all through” primary school from 1st January 2014;
- The Published admission number remains at 80 per year group;
- Fairfield Infant School is discontinued from 31st December 2013; and
- All the pupils in the Junior and Infant school become part of the “all through” primary school.

5.3 A full copy of the statutory notice is attached in Appendix E.

6.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

6.1 A new budget will need to be calculated for the new “all through” primary school. Currently both schools receive a lump sum of £125,570. This would be reduced to one lump sum from January 2014. In addition, both schools receive minimum funding guarantee to cushion changes from 2012/2013 to 2013/2014. However, as the school will be a developing school as a result of an authority re-organisation, a case can be submitted to School Forum for contingency support to meet any additional costs. In addition, as the school

will be operating on two sites an additional lump sum can be paid to the school provided the School Forum agree to the definition and the funds requested.

7.0 Implications for the Council's Priorities

7.1 Children and young people

Combining the two schools will allow for a seamless transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

7.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

N/A

7.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

7.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

8.1 Extending the age range of Fairfield Junior school will ensure an inclusive, coherent and consistent approach for the pupils. The needs of pupils with Special Educational Needs can be identified, tracked and supported pupils through Key Stage 1 to Year 6.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 The Headteacher of the Junior school has acted as Executive Headteacher of the infants and junior school since September 2013. During this time the Infant school has been graded as Good by OFSTED. Combining both schools to an "all through" primary will allow a more coherent and consistent approach to provision at Fairfield Infants and Juniors and ensure that there is a smooth transition from Key Stage 1 to Key Stage 2.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 No change to the current provision was considered. However this was rejected as it did not provide the same opportunities for curriculum continuity and development, flexibility for staffing and resources and allow seamless transition across the key stages.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 The next phase of the consultation is scheduled to commence on 4th September 2013 for 6 weeks.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|--|---------------------------------------|---|
| Executive Board report on Fairfield Infant and Juniors – 28th March 2013 | Halton Borough Council Website | Ann McIntyre – Operational Director – Rutland House, Runcorn |
| Phase 1 Consultation documents | HBC website | As above |



School Council View on the Proposed Amalgamation

May 8th 2013

The School Council consists of six Year 2 children.

The children were asked what they thought might be good or not so good about the Infant School and the Junior School becoming one School.

The things the children considered a good idea:

Sharing Events:

- The children at the Junior School get milkshakes and juice at play time and it would be good if the Infant children had the same
- It would be good for the Infant School to have residential trips the same as the Junior School
- It would be good if the Junior School did drama the same as the Infant School
- It would be good if the Junior School and Infant School went to the theatre like the Infant School

Sharing teachers:

- The teachers would know our names before we get to the Junior School
- We would know the teachers at the Junior School before we go there

Sharing friends:

- We would be able to have a Junior and Infant School Council
- We could have buddies from the Junior School
- We could see our sisters and brothers more often
- We would like to see the Junior children more often

Sharing resources:

- We could share our conservatory with the Juniors
- We could share the field with the Juniors and our Frog Pond
- We could share events as we did when it was the Royal Wedding
- There is hard maths at the Junior School and it would be good to have the same books

Share learning:

- Some of the Juniors could come and help with our reading
- We could share assemblies with each other

Sharing identity:

- We could have the same uniform, badges and bags.

Some of the problems to solve:

- We would need a new path between the Schools
- We would need a big bridge to get to the other School
- We would need a new hall to bring the two Schools together.



Learning for Life

Fairfield Junior School

Aspire, Believe, Succeed

April 30th 2013

Child Consultation at Fairfield Junior School

Fifteen members of the School Council were consulted about the proposed amalgamation of the Infant and Junior Schools. The ages ranged from 7 to 11 years.

The term ‘amalgamation’ was explained to the children and they were asked if they could think of any positive or negative items regarding the amalgamation.

The replies were as follows:

I think it is a good idea because:

- Older children will set a good example with behaviour to younger children
- The younger children would be welcomed more easily to the junior building
- We would be able to see our younger sisters more often
- Peer mentors could work with the infants to help them learn
- Peer mediators could work with the infants
- We could take it in turns to play on the grass
- We could share more of our learning
- We enjoyed sharing our Floor Books with the infant children
- I enjoyed being a football coach with the infant children
- We could set up a games leader to work with the infant children
- We could have a ‘share a teacher day’ for the teachers and children
- We could have assemblies for Year 2 and 3 more often

I think it is a bad idea because:

- If we have the same playground the little children could be knocked over by the older children
- If we had a combined assembly we would not all fit in the hall

We had a vote:

Amalgamation would be a good idea: 14 votes out of 15

Amalgamation would be a bad idea: 1 vote out of 15

When asked why the child gave the above negative answer, he said it was because he did not like change and, “things are good as they are”.

FAIRFIELD SCHOOL RE-DESIGNATION FEEDBACK RESPONSES 2013 APPENDIX C

| Respondent | School/Other | Yes | No |
|-----------------|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| Cllr & Governor | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Head | Victoria Road School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent/Governor | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | | Yes | |
| Staff | | Yes | |
| Head & Governor | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Guardian | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Unknown | | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Headteacher | St Bede's Catholic Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|----------------------------------|-----|----|
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Parent/Governor | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Headteacher | St Bede's Catholic Infant School | | No |
| Unknown | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff/Resident | | | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant /junior School | | No |
| Governor | | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Infant School | | |
| Staff | | | No |
| Staff | Fairfield Infants School | | No |
| Parent | Fairfield Infants School | | No |
| Staff | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | | Yes | |
| Staff/Governor | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |

| | | | |
|-----------------------|--------------------------|-----|----|
| Staff | | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Parent | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Staff | | | No |
| Partner School Head | Wade Deacon | Yes | |
| Deputy Head | Wade Deacon | Yes | |
| Staff | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Parent | | | No |
| Staff | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Staff | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Liverpool Archdiocese | | Yes | |
| Staff | | | No |
| Unknown | | | |
| Staff | | | No |
| Unknown | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Staff | | | No |
| Staff/Resident | | | No |
| Parent | | | No |
| Parent | Fairfield Infants School | Yes | |
| Governor | Fairfield Junior School | Yes | |
| Anonymous | | | |
| Parent/Governor ? | Fairfield Infant School | | No |
| Staff ? | | | No |

Appendix D

Summary of Consultation Key Issues

Transition

Views ranged from support where respondents felt that the proposal to create an “all through” primary would “make the transition from infants and juniors a smoother journey”. Others commented that it would also remove the necessity for some parents to appeal for admission to the infant school where they had a pupil in the junior school. The pupils from the Infant School council considered it a good idea about becoming one school as they would know the teachers before they went to junior school. 14 of the 15 pupils in the Junior School Council considered the proposal a good idea.

However, a number of respondents who did not support the proposal commented that transition links were already good.

Key Stage 1 and Key Stage 2 Pupils

Concern was expressed by some parents about infant children mixing with older junior children.

As is the case in all primary schools pupils would primarily continue within their respective Key Stages.

The view of the Infant School Council was that “they would like to see the junior children more often” and that they thought that some of the juniors could come and help with their reading and share assemblies with each other.

Different Procedures

Concern was expressed that there were different systems and procedures in place at the two schools.

The governing body, along with the Headteacher and senior leadership team would have the opportunity to consider best practice. Support, advice and guidance would be offered by the Finance team, Sims team, Capital team and Learning and Achievement. Training will also be provided.

Split Sites

Concern was expressed that if the proposal was approved the primary school would continue to operate on split sites and that “anyone knows who works on a split site this is impossible”.

Many of the infant and junior schools which have amalgamated across the country remain on different sites. Both Wade Deacon High School and The Grange All

Through have operated on split sites over a number of years until April this year. Both have managed not just to maintain standards but to improve their performance.

Effective organisation, leadership and management will ensure that operating on two sites does not affect standards.

School Hall

Concern has also been expressed that the school hall will not be large enough to accommodate all pupils.

If the sale of building and playing fields at the former Fairfield High School is agreed Executive Board have agreed that part of the proceeds can be used to develop the Fairfield infant/Junior provision.

School Size

The size of the amalgamated primary school was raised as a concern by some of the respondents.

The Published Admission number of the school will not change from 80. Although the amalgamated primary school will have 7 year groups instead of 3 in the infants and 4 in the juniors pupils will continue to be taught in their respective Key Stages.

Staffing

An number of infant school staff who completed the feedback form expressed concern about the impact the proposed amalgamation will have on staff jobs.

If the proposal to combine the two schools is agreed, the Headteacher along with the governors will need to consider the staffing required for an “all through” primary school to ensure it can operate effectively and efficiently. Staff and trade unions will be consulted on any proposed changes to the staffing arrangements at the school.

Finance

A number of respondents were concerned that the key rationale for the amalgamation was to save money.

Under the current funding formula both schools receive a lump sum of £125,570 as one school only one lump sum would be allocated. In addition, both schools receive minimum funding guarantee. The new school could only receive one minimum funding guarantee. However, as the school will be classified as a developing school as a result of a Local Authority re-organisation application can be made to the School Forum for support from the contingency to meet the additional costs it incurs. Application can also be made for funding as a split site school. A paper will be taken to School Forum for consideration in October 2013.



Reorganisation of Fairfield Infant School and Fairfield Junior School

Part 1

Notice is given in accordance with section 19(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Halton Borough Council intends to make a prescribed alteration to Fairfield Junior School, Peel House Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 6TH from 01st January 2014.

It is proposed to change the age range of Fairfield Junior School, from its current age range of 7 to 11 to an age range of 4 through to 11 to become an 'all-through' primary school.

The current number of pupils registered at the school is 286. The current admission number for the school is 80 into year 3 and the proposed admission number will remain at 80 with a total capacity of 560.

All pupils on roll of the Junior School on 31st December 2013 will transfer to the roll of the new 'all-through' primary school.

Part 2

Notice is given in accordance with section 15(1) of the Education and Inspections Act 2006 that Halton Borough Council intends to discontinue Fairfield Infant School, Peel House Lane, Widnes, Cheshire, WA8 6TH with effect from 31st December 2013. The proposal is 'related' to those in Part 1 above.

All pupils attending the Infant School in Year Reception to Year 2 at the time of its closure will transfer on to the roll of the 'all-through' primary school (see Part 1).

Statutory consultation requirements relating to this proposal have been complied with.

This Notice is an extract from the complete proposal. Copies of the complete proposal can be obtained from: Ann McIntyre, Operational Director - Children Organisation and Provision, Halton Borough Council, Rutland House, Halton Lea, Runcorn, Cheshire. WA7 2GW or <http://www3.halton.gov.uk/news/newsroom/314572/>

Within six weeks from the date of publication of this proposal, any person may object to or make comments on the proposal by sending them to Mr M Reaney, Operational Director Legal and Democratic Services, Halton Borough Council, Municipal Building, Kingsway, Widnes WA8 7QF.

Signed:

04th September 2013

| | |
|---------------------------|--|
| REPORT TO: | Executive Board |
| DATE: | 27 June 2013 |
| REPORTING OFFICER: | Strategic Director – Children and Enterprise |
| SUBJECT: | Information, Advice and Guidance |
| WARD(S): | Borough-wide |

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update to the Board on the current provision of careers information, advice and guidance to young people in Halton; outline the local authorities duty to Raise the Participation Age and seeks permission for the proposed approach to meet this duty by re-shaping the current provision from April 2014.

2.0 RECOMMENDATIONS: That approval is given

- 1) to a revised approach to delivering face-to-face services that encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training, as outlined in section 3.4.1;**
- 2) to a Council based Raising Participation Age monitoring service – to meet the statutory requirement to track 16-18 year olds in the Borough and provide a report monthly to the Department for Education, as outlined in section 3.5;**
- 3) for Halton Borough Council to be the lead authority in a partnership approach to co-ordinating a Raising Participation Age monitoring service in a cluster of authorities, as outlined in section 3.6; and**
- 4) to further develop and implement the approaches above.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Policy background

- 3.1.1 Local Authorities have a statutory duty to encourage, enable and assist young people to participate in education and training, with a particular focus on young people not in education, employment or training (NEET) and vulnerable young people. To understand and demonstrate the impact of funding and resources, there must be strong mechanisms in place for recording and reporting post-16 learning destinations of young people aged 16-19.

- 3.1.2 Under the Education Act 2011 Local Authorities have a statutory responsibility to record and report the education, training and employment status of their 16-18 year old residents (national curriculum academic years 12,13 and 14) to the Department for Education on a monthly basis. They also need to undertake further surveys to record the intended destinations of those in Year 11 and a follow-up survey with these young people in the autumn term.

The same Act determined that from September 2012 schools/colleges/providers have a responsibility to deliver careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) to their learners, and local authorities have had no duty to deliver a universal IAG service from that date.

- 3.1.3 Local authorities Raising Participation Age plans will now be inspected by OFSTED, as part of reviewing their arrangements for supporting school improvements.

3.2 Current contract

- 3.2.1 Careers information, advice and guidance services, and tracking services in Liverpool City Region (LCR) have been delivered through a contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd first established in 2010 and which will end on the 31st March 2014. Halton Borough Council lead on the contract management for the LCR.

- 3.2.2 In order to fulfil their statutory duties LCR authorities also allocated a small budget to develop a web portal that can be used by any young person in Merseyside to enable them to access links to a range of key careers and labour market and skills information websites.

3.3 Planning for services from April 2014

- 3.3.1 Halton's 14-19 Division has undertaken a comprehensive review of services because of the:

- changing Government policy on careers information, advice and guidance (IAG) provision;
- Raising Participation Age agenda;
- impact of the Youth Contract and other Government programmes;
- opportunity to align with other services to young people;
- budget pressures.

- 3.3.2 The 14-19 Division has therefore explored options for the future scope of careers IAG services and tracking services, so that it can take an informed view as to how they might better align to other Council services.

In doing this it has considered:

- the cohort of young people that needs support;
- what services could support them;

- how these would need to align to other authority services and Government programmes supporting those cohorts;
- the need for greater control over services to young people to support the implementation of the Raising Participation Age plan; and
- service impact and value for money.

3.3.3 To develop its strategic view the 14-19 Division has made contact with a number of local authorities where provision has been either brought in-house or out-sourced. Considering these models has provided an understanding of the resources involved together with the identification of any benefits or weaknesses.

3.3.4 Best practice has been considered and the potential for joint working with other Authorities. For example, discussions have taken place with Cheshire West and Chester Council and Warrington Borough Council who have undertaken the specified Department for Education statutory duties as an in-house service since April 2012.

3.4 Planned young people support services from April 2014

3.4.1 The services proposed from April 2014 will alter the mix of support offered to young people. They are proposed to be delivered through a mixture of in-house and externally procured services, using some current Council services together with the purchase of targeted additional activity.

Proposed services include:

- **Careers information, advice and guidance support**, this will be a peripatetic, community based, service using qualified staff in Advice and Guidance, using tools such as a web portal (with links to a range of skills and careers websites) and U-explore (an interactive online careers information tool), and will record interventions on an authority owned database;
- **Engagement service**, this will be a peripatetic, community based service encouraging young people into positive activities, recording interventions on authority owned database;
- **Mentoring; coaching and work experience services** will provide be-spoke support to particular groups of young people.

These services will be supported and coordinated through the 14-19 Division.

3.4.2 Web portal

The web portal is a single access point that brings together all the skills and careers information for the area. Called 'MerseyInteractive' it provides in one place links to a range of national and local websites that will help young people discover information on future careers and job options.

The 14-19 Division will work with other local authorities to continue to support and

develop MerseyInteractive in 2014-15.

3.5 Raising Participation Age Monitoring service

3.5.1 This proposed service will be delivered in-house within the 14-19 team; the service will be based on the pilot work undertaken in 2012/13.

3.5.2 At the core of this service the authority will purchase a fully hosted Client Caseload Information Service (CCIS) compatible software system that will be able to record the learning and employment status of all young people aged 16-18 in the Borough (and aged up to age 25 if they have a learning difficulty or disability). The authority is required to use a CCIS system by the Department for Education (DfE) as part of their monthly reporting process.

3.5.3 This database will be populated by information obtained from the interventions of the services outlined in 3.4 above. It will also decrease duplication by taking information from existing data systems within the Council and information supplied to the Council by schools, colleges and training providers under their Raising Participation Age duties. New data will be gathered from other youth services delivered by the Council. It could use social media and telephone call centres to contact those most dis-engaged.
To do this, the service will build on the existing data relationships internally within the Council and externally with schools, colleges, training providers, other agencies such as registered social landlords and JobCentre Plus, and other neighbouring local authorities.

3.5.4 This service will deliver the Councils statutory duty to provide a monthly return to the DfE on the learning and employment status of young people resident in the Borough. It will also deliver reports and 'real-time' information on young people that would support the Councils' business need.
It will enable data to be gathered for better quality monitoring of the support services outlined in 3.4 above together with the capacity to better assess the impact of these services to young people.

3.6 Raising Participation Age Monitoring service – co-ordination function

3.6.1 Young people travel across local authority boundaries to undertake learning and gain employment. Schools, colleges and providers recruit young people from authorities outside of the one in which they are based. Travel to learn/work patterns are varied and extend over wider areas for older teenagers.

3.6.2 With this in mind local authorities in Merseyside are keen not to lose an advantage of the current tracking service which is delivered centrally across the 6 Merseyside authorities.

3.6.3 It is therefore important to ensure that the delivery of the new Raising Participation Age Monitoring service can be co-ordinated across the region with a cluster of authorities that wish to work in that way.

The relationship could work in a way that is already operating in south Yorkshire between Barnsley, Doncaster and Rotherham councils.

3.6.4 The proposal is for Halton to lead on the procurement of a Client Caseload Information Service (CCIS) software system across a cluster of authorities that wish to work together. This would give considerable cost savings on the implementation of the database. Halton would lead on the relationship with the appointed software supplier, and would be the 'centre of expertise' in ensuring that all authorities in the cluster were making their returns to the Department for Education (DfE).

Agreement would be made on a minimum common timetable for data collection and sharing between the participating authorities.

3.6.5 Each authority in the cluster would be responsible for:

- ensuring that the data on young people resident in their area was uploaded correctly and regularly onto the database, in line with the DfE Management Information Requirement for the CCIS system.
- gathering the data from schools, colleges and providers based in their area – and would agree to share that with neighbouring authorities and others within the cluster.

3.6.6 Halton will have a Service Level Agreement with each authority in the 'cluster' that would detail the level of support to be provided, for some areas this might include data analysis and report writing, subject to agreement on price.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The budget for this area of work reflects the changes in responsibility over the last few years. Originally a £1.5 million contract with Greater Merseyside Connexions Partnership Ltd in 2010 has decreased to reflect the changed responsibilities. The new service will be fit for purpose and cost effective.

4.2 The cost of the proposed package of new services outlined in sections 3.4 and 3.5 from April 2014 will be within the budget for all services in 2013/14.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

5.1 Council Corporate plan, Children and Young People's Plan and Employment Learning and Skills Strategies have key priorities to raise aspirations of young people and increase local employment opportunities for local young people and

adults.

5.2 Adopting this new approach will support the Halton Borough Council role in delivering the Raising Participation Age agenda.

6.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There is the potential that in the medium/long term the in-house monitoring service will allow better informed commissioning of other youth services within the authority.

6.2 Working in partnership with other authorities will help to reduce the cost of procuring and delivering these new services.

7.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

7.1 Children & Young People in Halton

Supports key priorities to ensure that Children and Young people do well wherever they live and provides opportunities for young people to be successful when they leave school by raising aspirations of young people and increase local employment opportunities.

7.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

Ensuring timely reporting arrangements are in place linked to Halton's key priorities to:

- Reduce the number of young people Not in Education, Employment and Training (NEET)
- Increase the number of Halton young people achieving Level 2 and 3 qualifications

7.3 A Healthy Halton

Potential to create opportunities to reduce NEET, young people in NEET are at a higher risk of ill health.

7.4 A Safer Halton

Young people who are NEET are more likely to be involved in criminal activity.

7.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

n/a

8.0 RISK ANALYSIS

8.1 The following risks have currently been identified with the proposed changes:

- i) The new services are different to those currently being delivered; as the current contract ends whichever approach is adopted TUPE implications need to be considered.
- ii) The new services may take time to embed, there may be a temporary rise in the reporting of NEET and Not Known young people while new processes are embedded. The 14-19 division have mitigated this by running a pilot project in

2013-14 to trial collection methods and timescales.

- iii) The Liverpool City Region authorities will need to inform the supplier of the current Tracking Service of the pilot project as soon as possible to ensure a smooth transition to any new arrangements.

9.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

9.1 Halton Borough Council has a statutory duty to secure that enough suitable education and training is provided to meet the reasonable needs of:

- (a) persons in their area who are over compulsory school age but under 19, and
- (b) persons in their area who are aged 19 or over but under 25 and are subject to Learning Difficulty Assessment.

9.2 As the services outlined in 3.4.1 are developed a key focus will be to ensure that they are able to support the Boroughs most vulnerable young people. The most vulnerable may include, but are not limited to, those who are homeless, care leavers, travellers, teenage parents and young offenders and those who have learning difficulties and/or disabilities.

10.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

Current contract for Information Advice and Guidance services ends 31 March 2014 and cannot be extended.

11.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

11.1 The option of all 6 Merseyside local authorities jointly commissioning all information, advice and guidance services was considered and rejected due to the different approach each authority has implementing Raising Participation Age, links to other services and the efficiency agenda.

12.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

1st April 2014

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|---------------------|-----------------|
| OFSTED requirements | See website below: | |
| http://www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/handbook-for-inspection-of-local-authority-arrangements-for-supporting-school-improvement | | |
| RPA Guidance | See website below: | |
| http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/p/participation%20of%20young%20people%20-%20statutory%20guidancev3.pdf | | |

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children and Enterprise

SUBJECT Waiver of Procurement Standing Orders in respect of Investigation Services

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

WARDS: Borough Wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the use of emergency powers 1.8.2 to commission Stobarts Business Services to undertake an independent investigation on behalf of the Council and to seek retrospective approval to the waiver of standing order 4.1.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) approval is granted to waiver Procurement Standing Orders 4.1 – Competition Requirements via the Chest through use of 1.8.2 Emergency Procedures; and**
- 2) this waiver will be for one commission until the completion of the second investigation undertaken by Stobarts Business Services at The Bridge and The Gateway Pupil Referral Units.**

3.0 BACKGROUND

- 3.1 An independent investigation was required at The Bridge and The Gateway Pupil Referral Units in 2012. Stobarts Business Services agreed to undertake the investigation as a pilot on behalf of the Authority. As a result of the findings from the first investigation a second investigation was needed and due to the sensitive nature of the investigation, the urgency and the number of Council employees involved HR advised that Stobarts be commissioned to undertake this work.
- 3.2 Advice was given that a request be made for a waiver of Procurement Standing Orders under 4.1 Competition Requirements, for contract not exceeding £20,000 in value, via the Chest by using 1.8.2 Emergency

Procedures. The period of the waiver shall be effective for the course of the investigation on The Bridge and The Gateway. This work will be funded from budget code 8188 (14-19 budget).

- 3.3 Value for money, transparency, propriety and accountability have been achieved as Stobarts Business Services were asked to undertake this investigation as they had already undertaken a pilot at the request of HR. The second investigation needed to be commenced urgently and there was a risk and costs to the continuation of the investigation if a different provider was needed to be commissioned. All actions have been undertaken in consultation with the Head of Procurement.

4.0 FUNDING

- 4.1 The investigation is being funded from budget code 8188 (14-19 budget). The daily costs for the investigator is £350 and £150 for the note taker.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

5.1 Children and Young People in Halton

To minimise disruption to the children and young people attending The Bridge and Gateway Pupil Referral Units.

5.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

N/A

5.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

5.4 A Safer Halton

N/A

5.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

N/A

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 Stobarts Business Services were commissioned to undertake the second investigation to ensure the continuity and urgency of the process and reduce the risk and costs of commissioning a different provider.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 An independent investigation was commissioned from Stobarts Business Services to ensure that a fair and transparent investigation was undertaken.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|-------------------------------|--|--|
| Requisition for Investigation | 2 nd Floor Rutland House Runcorn | Ann McIntyre Operational Director Children's Organisation and Provision |

REPORT TO: Executive Board
DATE: 27 June 2013
REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director - Communities
PORTFOLIO: Health and Adults
SUBJECT: Urgent Care – Options Appraisal
WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present Members of the Board with details of the options being considered to develop a local response to Urgent Care.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board:

- 1) note the contents of the report and associated appendices; and**
- 2) support Option One as outlined in this report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Background

3.1 Initially a Business Case was prepared for the development of an Urgent Care Centre on the Halton Hospital site, and was submitted to Halton & St. Helens Primary Care Trust and the Clinical Commissioning Committee in September 2010. It was anticipated that the development of an Urgent Care Centre at Halton would provide the following benefits:

- Equity of access across Runcorn and Widnes;
- More clinically appropriate services available within the community; and
- Reduce the overall admission rates through the development of alternative local provision.

3.2 The original business case proposed a new centre, operating between 8am and 10pm, 365 days per year. The service would work in partnership between Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, Halton Health (out of hours GP provider), Warrington and Halton Hospital Foundation Trust, North West Ambulance Service (NWAS), Halton Borough Council (HBC) and community providers to provide a seamless urgent care experience for the local population.

3.3 As part of NHS Halton Clinical Commissioning Group's (HCCG) commissioning intentions for 2012/13, a review of the original business case along with a current winter pressures Accident and Emergency Department (AED) audit was completed to inform an options appraisal and to reflect the health care system changes within urgent care that have taken place during the last 2 years, which includes increased demand/pressures on capacity and innovation within partner organisations such as NWAS-community plans, kite marks for

Urgent Care Centres/Walk in Centres and Paramedic pathfinders.

3.4 There is a raft of national evidence that exists in terms of how to reduce admissions and re-admissions. In addition to this, details are also available of the urgent care services currently available to the residents of Halton along with information about how they are currently used. All this information, along with the outcome of the AED audit (headline messages outlined below) were considered as part of the work to develop options for the delivery of an urgent care model at a local level :-

- Total number of questionnaires completed: 212 (96%), with 9 (4%) being partially completed
- 52% were self-referral
- 20% of patients felt their condition could have been managed elsewhere
- 29% of patients attempted to go elsewhere (GP/WIC etc.)
- 29% attended AED following advice from a healthcare professional
- 25% of patients felt AED was most appropriate for their condition
- 15% felt it was the only option available
- 19% of patients had attended other services within a 7 day period
- 19% of patients needed an X ray
- 8% of patients had a soft tissue injury
- 26% of patients were admitted with 66% of patients being discharged
- Excluding those admitted, 56% of patients could have been managed elsewhere within current service provision
- 41 patients received X rays - of which 76% (31) could have been managed elsewhere
- With a change in local facilities, 15% could have been managed within the community

3.5 In 2008, the Department of Health published guidance "High Quality Care for All" (2008) which described the importance of Acute services in the development of Community care pathways. The guidance stressed the importance of working in partnership across the whole system.

3.5.1 Taking this and other considerations into account, pathways that could be developed locally include:-

- X ray facility
- Ultra sound/Doppler scan provision
- Bloods/redressings/sutures
- Paediatric specialist nursing provision- including cold room
- Deep Venous Thrombosis pathway
- Direct referral in outpatient facilities i.e. ophthalmology
- Direct referral into mental health AED liaison
- Acute warfarin initiation
- ECG
- Atrial Fibrillation clinic

3.5.2 The key benefits of service redesign include the :-

- Provision of a service that meets with patient needs, either through immediate treatment

- or by arranging future appointments with the appropriate service;
- Provision of an urgent care service that is accessible for the local population;
- Provision of a service that caters for both minor injury and illness;
- Improvement of performance by streaming patients into the appropriate service (e.g. reduction in A&E attendances);
- Ensuring that where people require urgent care this is received in an effective and timely manner;
- Provision of a service that is safe and of high quality; and
- Provision of access to harder to reach groups of people (e.g.: working men aged 18 -49, teenagers requiring sexual health advice)

Proposed Options for Reconfiguration

3.6 Three options have been considered for the delivery of an urgent care model within Halton, these are summarised below, with details in terms of each option's associated pathways being outlined in **Appendix 1** :-

- **Option 1**- Creation of an additional Walk in Centre plus a Clinical Decision Unit at Halton Hospital Site; Maintain and expand current services within Widnes Walk in Centre.
- **Option 2** - Creation of an additional Walk in Centre at Halton Hospital Site
- **Option 3** - Development of a Clinical Decision Unit at Halton Hospital Site – plus extended primary care hours to provide Walk in provision within primary care localities

3.7 These options have been presented to the Council's Health Policy & Performance Board, Halton's Urgent Care Partnership Board and HCCG's Governing Body and the preferred option supported by both Groups for further consideration was **Option 1**.

It is therefore proposed that business cases are developed for Option 1 to ensure its financial viability. These business cases along with the results of public consultation will be presented to the following forums for further consideration :-

- Urgent Care Partnership Board
- HCCG Senior Management Team (SMT)
- HCCG Governing Body
- HBC's Executive Board
- Relevant Trust Executive Directors: Bridgewater, St Helens & Knowsley Teaching Hospital and Warrington Halton Hospital Foundation Trust.

Current Activities

3.8 A number of activities are planned over the next few months to support developments, these include :-

- Business cases to be developed for Option 1 prior to public consultation;
- Development of St Helens & Knowsley, Warrington Halton Hospital Foundation Trust and Bridgewater NHS Community Trust implementation plans directed at Option 1, including procurement timetable if appropriate and interim arrangements for implementation of a Clinical Decisions Unit within Halton Hospital Site; and
- Development of a Service Specification and Mobilisation Plan for Option 1.

3.9 In addition to the activities outlined above, extensive work is taking place on the development of processes to support the formal consultation process which needs to take place. It is anticipated that formal consultation will run until 31st August 2013. The activities being undertaken include the development of a Communications and Engagement Strategy with a supporting Action Plan, which will address issues such as how to identify those that are 'hard to reach' or 'less likely to engage' and outline the tools and methodologies which will be used to target these individuals. Other activities include the development/adoption of a range of tools and methodologies to support the patient and public engagement process e.g. use of an electronic, web based consultation tool.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 None identified at this stage.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The current minor injuries unit and Widnes Walk-in Centre cost approximately £2.2m.

5.2 It should be noted that 'back room' costs are not included in this report, but will significantly increase the overall cost of the programme these include, XRays/ Doppler/ Ultrasound, including agreed pathways that may be redirected into the Clinical Decisions Unit, all of which will be developed and included in the business case that is being developed for Option 1.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

These will be explored as part of the consultation process.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None identified.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

These will be explored as part of the consultation process.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None identified.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 These will be examined as part of the Business Plan.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

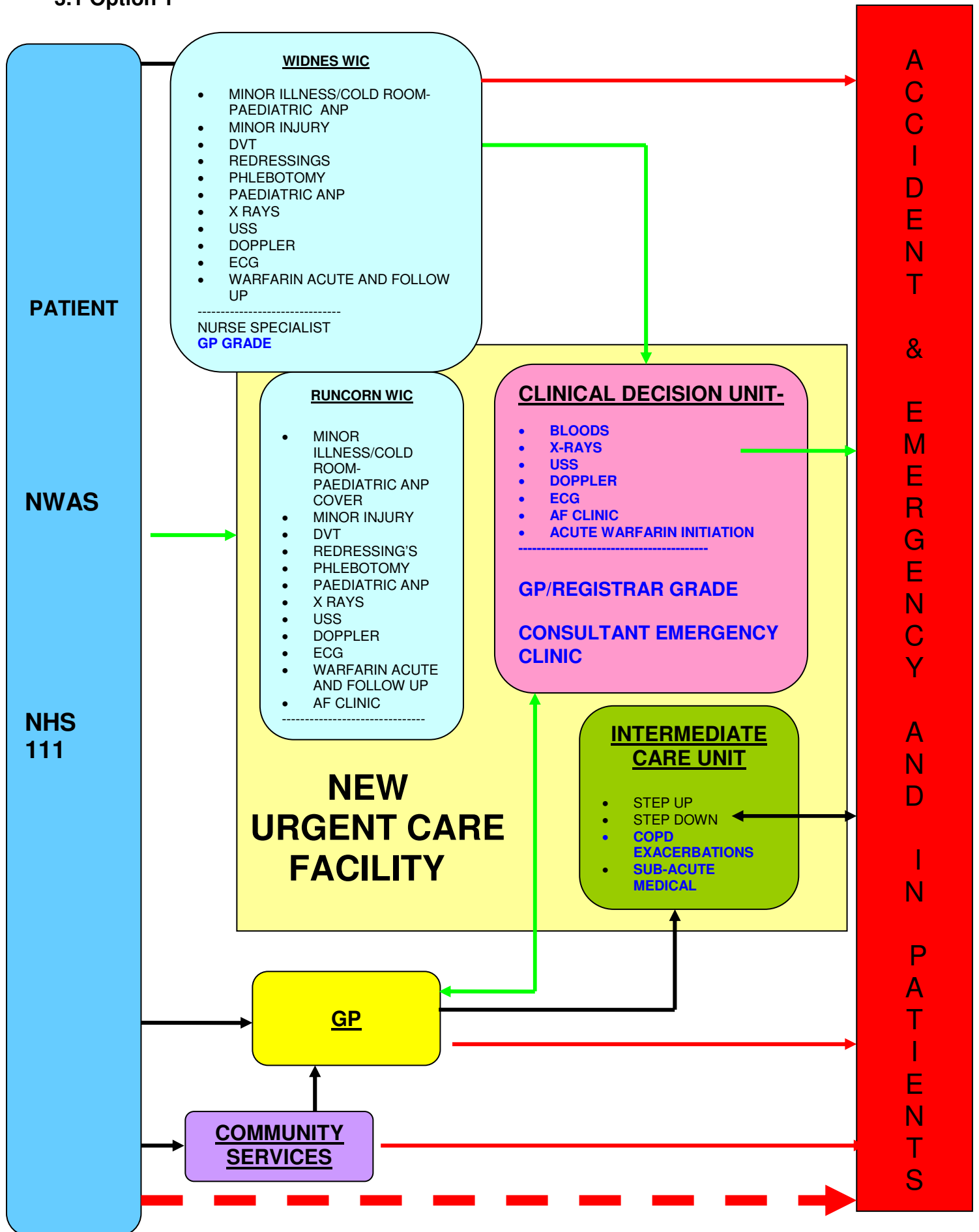
8.1 These will be examined as part of the Business Plan.

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

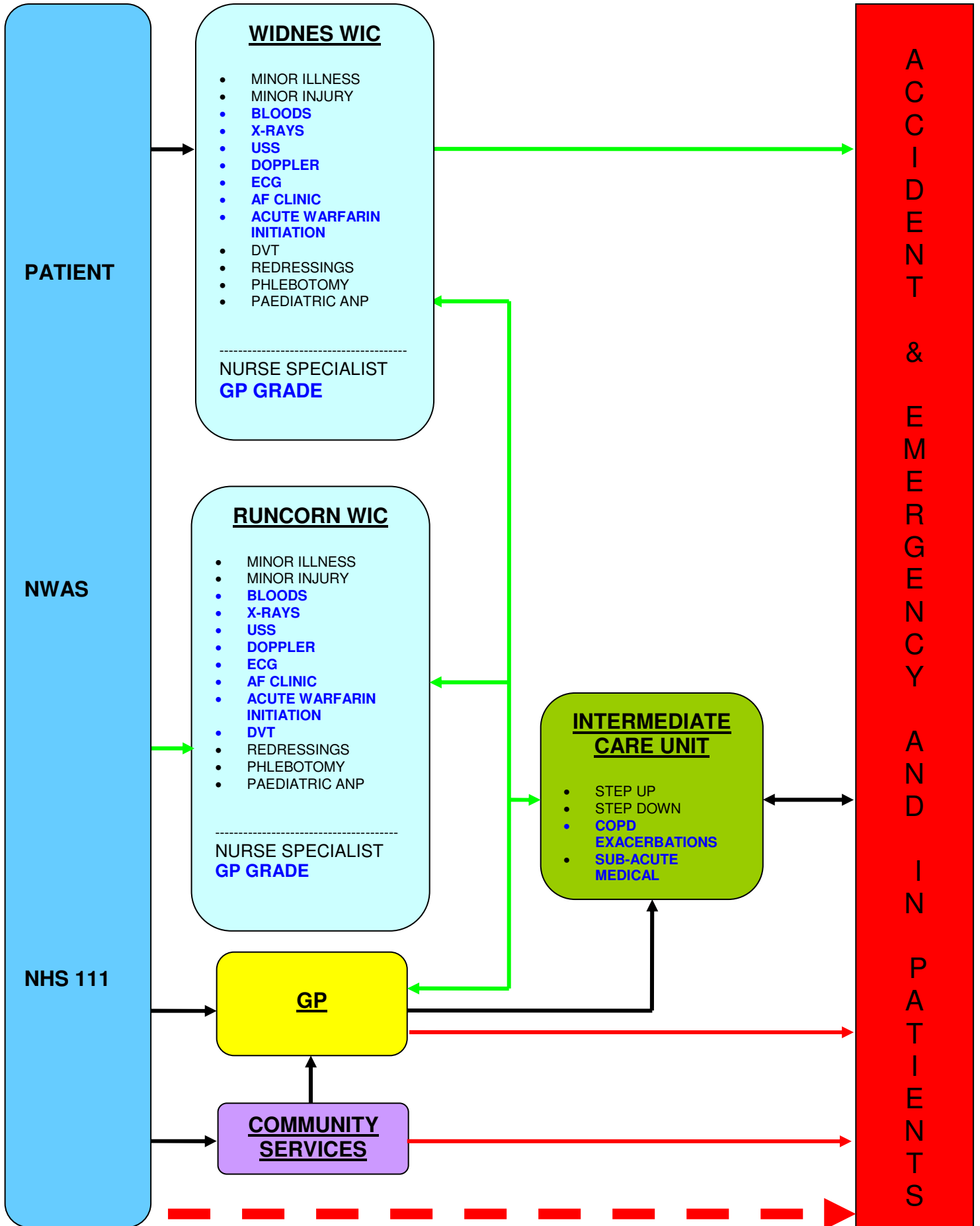
9.1 None under the meaning of the Act.

Urgent Care Model - Pathways

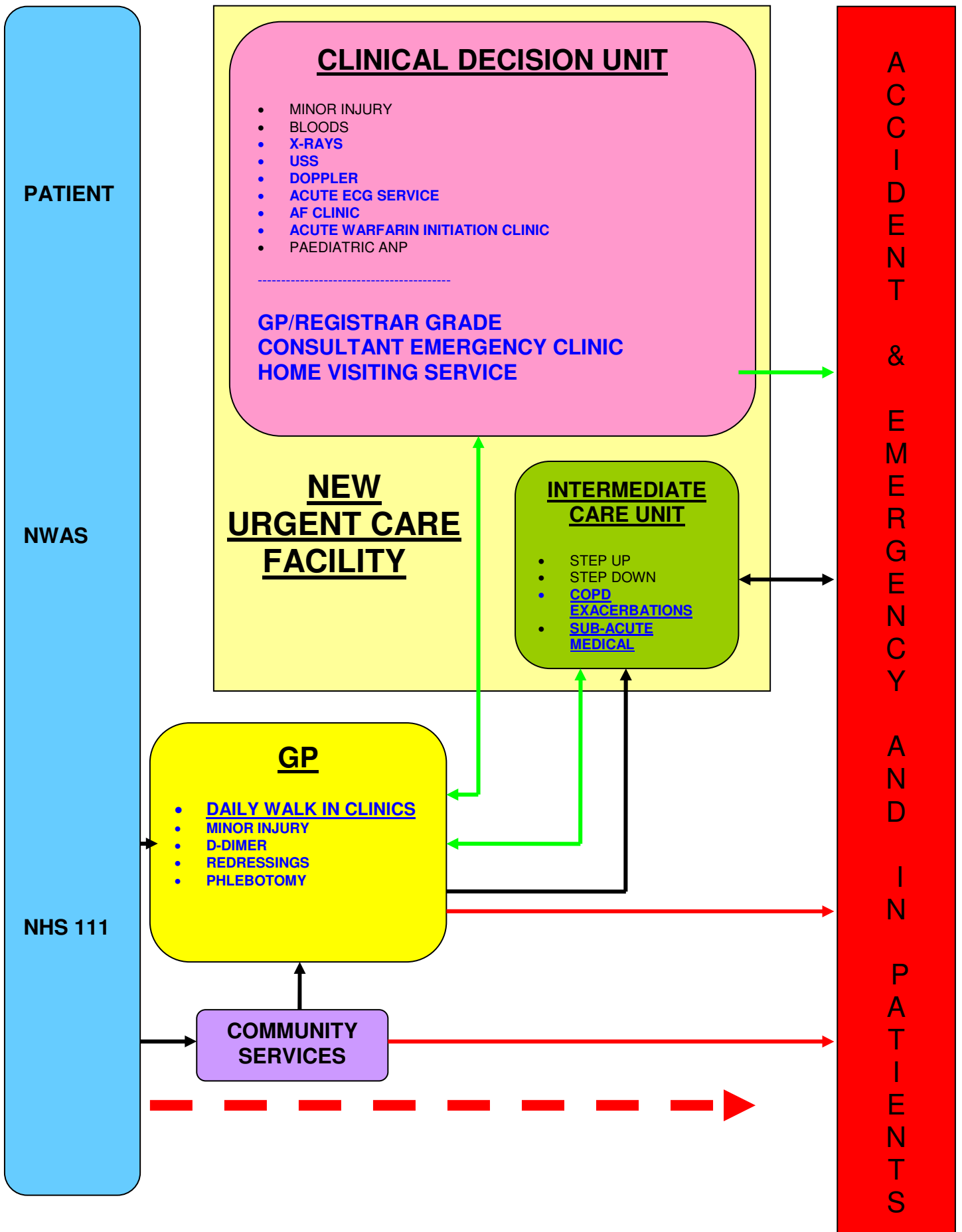
3.1 Option 1



3.2 Option 2



3.3 Option 3



REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Communities

PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport

SUBJECT: Halton Housing Strategy 2013/18

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 The purpose of this report is to present a finalised version of Halton's Housing Strategy 2013/18 for adoption.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- 1) the Board approves the revised Housing Strategy (Appendix A) and supporting evidence document (Appendix B); and**
- 2) the Council be recommended to approve the revised Housing Strategy.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 At its meeting on the 24th January 2013 the Board received a report setting out the principal elements of the draft Housing Strategy 2013/18 and its supporting evidence paper. The Board approved the documents for consultation purposes.

3.2 A formal consultation exercise was undertaken between the 4th February and 22nd March to seek the views of partners, stakeholders and residents. This included the following awareness raising measures –

- Presentation to the Environment and Urban Renewal, Health and Safer PPBs
- A questionnaire on the Council's website
- Copies placed in Halton Direct Links and Council libraries
- Articles in the Civic magazine and local press
- Copies sent to Housing Associations, and raised at the Halton Housing Partnership and Housing Visioning Group

3.3 In addition to comments received from internal Directorate Management Teams and the PPBs, the consultation received comments from Riverside, Halton Housing Trust and Liverpool Housing Trust, and 39 responses to the on-line survey (4 of which were from Members and 1 from a Council employee).

3.4 In the main the comments received did not raise new issues, but sought to expand and add emphasis to existing information already in the evidence paper, particularly around the Welfare Reforms. Where possible the text has been amended to accommodate these comments, but the Strategy itself is largely unchanged.

3.5 It must be said that the Strategy is being introduced at a time of rapidly declining resources for public services generally, and for housing in particular, and consequently the Strategy seeks to portray a realistic assessment of what can be achieved within existing and likely future resources. However the information gathered in developing the Strategy means we can provide an evidence base to support funding bids should additional resources become available in the future.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 The Housing Strategy will set the context for future policy development relating to housing and will have a significant influence on related policies and strategies such as the Homelessness Strategy and Tenancy Strategy, linking also to the Core Strategy and Affordable Housing SPD.

5.0 OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial implications of delivering the Strategy are outlined in the Action Plan contained in the draft Strategy. In particular the delivery of affordable housing is dependent on future levels of resources from the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA). Further clarity about this is expected to emerge through the Comprehensive Spending Review announcement on the 26th June.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children & Young People in Halton

The Housing Strategy aims to increase the supply of affordable housing and improve housing conditions which will have a beneficial impact on families with children and other household groups.

6.2 Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

None directly, although programmes to increase the supply and energy efficiency of housing could result in additional jobs and skills for the Borough. Construction and other investment offers the opportunities for increased jobs and apprenticeships locally.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

A number of priorities contained within the Strategy e.g. around fuel poverty, provision of supported housing and improving conditions in the private sector will have positive health benefits for some of Halton's most

vulnerable residents.

6.4 A Safer Halton

A number of priorities contained in the Strategy e.g. prevention of homelessness and regeneration of Castlefields will contribute to the creation of safer and stronger communities.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The draft Strategy aims to promote housing growth and support economic growth in the Borough which will have a positive impact on the built environment.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 Delivery of some elements of the Strategy is dependent on the continued availability of resources from external funding streams e.g. from the HCA. Future reductions in funding levels could impact upon the ability to deliver some of the targets contained in the Action Plan.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 The Strategy specifically aims to meet the housing needs of vulnerable people due to age or disability and will therefore have positive impacts for these groups.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

9.1 Under Part 7 of the Local Government Act 2003 local authorities are expected to produce a Housing Strategy which gives an overview of housing in their district and sets out priorities for action.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

10.1 Not applicable.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

11.1 2013/14 to 2017/18.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Housing Strategy | Runcorn Town Hall (second floor) | Joanne Sutton |
| Housing Strategy evidence paper | Runcorn Town Hall (second floor) | Joanne Sutton |



A Housing Strategy for Halton

2013 to 2018

Contents

| | |
|--|---------------|
| Foreword | 3 |
| Previous Strategy's achievements | 4 |
| Context | 5 - 6 |
| Housing issues | 7 |
| Our vision, objectives and priorities | 8 - 15 |
| Action plan | 16-21 |

Foreword

Halton's Draft Housing Strategy 2013-18 has been prepared following a time of rapid change for all forms of housing.

The draft strategy seeks to take account of the changed economic climate, reduced public investment and legislative challenges such as Welfare Reform, the Localism Bill and changes to planning law.

Some of the housing issues in Halton include:

- Securing investment to build new homes or improve existing ones.
- Rebalancing the housing market to meet people's needs and aspirations.
- An ageing population.

To address the issues we face, we will need to continue to prioritise and innovate. The new strategy has to encourage growth if we are to realise the vision for housing in Halton.

We would welcome your comments on the strategy outlined in this document and the supporting evidence paper.

Yours sincerely,

Cllr Phil Harris

Executive Board Member for Housing Strategy.



Previous Strategy's achievements

Halton's previous Housing Strategy (2008-2011) pre-dated the economic downturn and subsequent housing market decline. It achieved and exceeded many of the targets set for it, including:

- Successful delivery of phase 2 of the Castlefields regeneration programme, this has so far resulted in £30 million of new development replacing the last deck access dwellings remaining in the Northwest;
- Development of an additional 256 new affordable homes bringing approximately £30 million of external investment into the Borough. This includes the development of an additional extra care scheme in Halton. The outcome of further pending investment bids to the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) are due to be reported by February, 2013;
- Since the Bond Guarantee System was introduced in 2009, 67% are ongoing, 15% ended without a claim and 18% ended with the bond being claimed;
- Crisis intervention support in the form of emergency support over the last three years has helped prevent homelessness for over 600 families;
- Clearance of all backlogs in adaptations in 200 socially rented homes;
- Development and implementation of a new Homelessness Strategy with increased emphasis on prevention which has drastically reduced levels of statutory homelessness to an all-time low;
- Since January 2010, the Housing Solutions dedicated Mortgage Rescue Adviser has provided advice to 187 households and as a result 94 cases were prevented from repossession;
- Halton Housing Trust delivered on its commitment to bring all former council housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard 12 months ahead of the Government's 2010 target date. Since that time the Trust has developed a comprehensive neighbourhood investment programme which will see £262 million investment in the former Council stock between 2009 and 2015 and has built its first new affordable homes in the Borough.

Context

Halton's Housing Strategy has been developed in the context of a wide range of national, regional and local policies, strategies and plans as summarised in the diagram below. Further details of how these influence the Strategy can be found in the Housing Strategy evidence paper.



In particular, it is expected that the following could have a major impact upon the deliverability of the Strategy:

- Welfare Reform Act 2012 - it is estimated that 1 in 5 social housing tenants will be affected by the underoccupancy penalty. Taken together with other reforms such as direct payments, the benefits cap and localisation of Council Tax benefits it is highly probable that rent arrears will increase. This will have a knock on effect on the ability of Registered Providers to attract finance for new housebuilding at competitive rates as well as impacting upon levels of homelessness.
- Affordable Housing Programme - The programme will subsidise social housing development until 2015 when the current programme comes to an end. It is unclear at this stage whether grant subsidy will be available to help fund affordable housing schemes post 2015. If, as suspected, direct grant subsidy comes to an end delivery of affordable housing post 2015 is likely to pose a considerable challenge for Registered Providers, particularly in light of welfare reforms and direct benefits payments which, as highlighted above, are likely to adversely impact on Providers revenue streams and consequently their ability to attract affordable private finance.

For this reason it is vital that the Strategy is closely monitored and reviewed as necessary. Regular monitoring will be undertaken via a report to the Halton Housing Partnership and Environment Policy and Performance Board every twelve months. Should a need for major changes to the Strategy be identified this will be the subject of public and stakeholder consultation.

Housing services play a cross cutting role in meeting Halton's priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy, as demonstrated in the table below.

A Healthy Halton

- Improving housing conditions and energy efficiency
- Maintaining independence through adapting property

Employment, learning and skills in Halton

- Introducing new technologies in energy efficiency projects
- Apprenticeships and local labour in housing contracts

A Safer Halton

- Removing category 1 hazards within the home
- Tackling neighbourhood level anti social behaviour

Children and Young People in Halton

- Reducing overcrowding
- Preventing homelessness

Environment and Regeneration in Halton

- Promoting sustainable and mixed tenure neighbourhoods
- Acting as a driver for investment within Regeneration areas

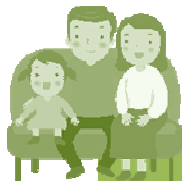
Housing issues

The key housing issues which influence this Strategy are examined in detail in the Housing Strategy evidence paper. They can be summarised under three main themes as illustrated below. These themes have influenced the development of our three overarching strategic objectives and the priorities within each of these, as described in more detail in the next section.



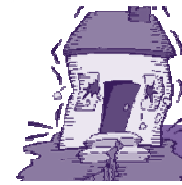
Housing market

- Growing affordability problems
- Reduced access to mortgage availability
- Growing private rented sector



People

- Ageing population
- Predicted growth in population
- Smaller household size
- Increasing levels of homelessness



Housing stock

- Poorest conditions in private rented sector
- Fuel poverty increasing
- Sizeable proportion of underoccupation in social rented stock

Our vision, objectives and priorities

Our vision for housing in Halton

Halton offers a broad range of good quality housing which meets the needs of existing communities, helps attract new residents to the Borough and contributes to the creation of sustainable communities.

To help achieve the vision, we have adopted three strategic objectives each containing a set of priorities as detailed below. The Strategy goes on to explain why each of the priorities has been selected, what we hope to achieve and how we plan to achieve it.

Strategic objective 1:

To plan for and facilitate housing growth and support economic growth

- Priority 1A: To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers
- Priority 1B: To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan

Strategic objective 2:

To meet the housing and support needs of Halton's communities and promote choice

- Priority 2A: To increase the supply of housing for older people and vulnerable people
- Priority 2B: To review future Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision
- Priority 2C: To prevent homelessness
- Priority 2D: To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice
- Priority 2E: To target access to supported housing to those who need it most

Strategic objective 3:

To improve housing conditions and make the best use of the housing stock

- Priority 3A: To complete the regeneration of Castlefields estate
- Priority 3B: To explore the implications of private rented sector growth with a view to improving standards in the sector
- Priority 3C: To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty
- Priority 3D: To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock
- Priority 3E: To work with the Director of Public Health to achieve joint health and housing ambitions

| Priority 1A: To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers | | |
|---|---|--|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anticipated population and household growth • Need to encourage immigration to support economic development projects • Core Strategy target of an average of 552 additional homes per annum • Level of need identified in Strategic Housing Market Assessment and as set out in evidence paper • Need for smaller sized affordable dwellings in light of underoccupancy penalty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average of 552 additional homes built per annum • A realistic target of 100 additional net affordable homes per annum • Rebalance social housing stock in terms of bedroom size in light of welfare reforms and as suggested by Strategic Housing Market Assessment | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of the Core Strategy • Identification of development sites through the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment • Update Site Allocations Supplementary Planning Document • Implementation of Affordable Housing Policy • Partnership working and support in securing funding • Interventions and use of local authority powers where necessary to help bring forward sites for new housing • Encourage developers to provide affordable housing of a size suggested by the SHMAA |

| Priority 1B: To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan | | |
|---|---|--|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Opportunity to achieve economies of scale and consistency of approach • Effective targeting to | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Meet targets in Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Active participation in LCR structure and programmes |

| | | |
|--------------------|--|--|
| areas most in need | | |
|--------------------|--|--|

Priority 2A: To increase the supply of housing for older people and vulnerable people

| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
|---|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 43% projected population growth in people aged 65 and over between 2008 and 2023 • Need for older people to maintain independence • Need for more adapted and adaptable housing • Shortage of suitable housing for other groups needing specialist provision e.g. Adults with Learning Difficulties, people with Physical and Sensory Disabilities • Need to rebalance temporary accommodation for young, single people so that there is provision on both sides of the Borough | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise number of extra care units over the Strategy period (minimum of 100 by 2015) • Increase in the number of wheelchair accessible dwellings and homes built to Lifetime Homes Standard • Provide supported housing in Widnes for the single homeless in Widnes. • Provide additional accommodation for adults with learning difficulties and physical disabilities | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identify suitable sites for older persons housing and provide support for funding bids • Implement aspiration in Design of New Residential SPD for new developments of 10 dwellings or more to provide 10% wheelchair standard dwellings • Encourage development of homes that meet Lifetime Homes standard in line with the Core Strategy • Commission supported housing for single homeless people in Widnes • Commission 10 bungalows for adults with physical and learning difficulties • Partnership working and support to developers in securing funding |

| Priority 2B: To review future Gypsy and Traveller pitch provision | | |
|---|---|---|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> National Planning Policy Framework places a duty on local authorities to identify sites for five years worth of Gypsy and Traveller provision Under the Housing Act 2004 local authorities are expected to periodically assess the need for Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation in their area Last assessment was completed in 2007 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Up to date assessment of need Identify sufficient site provision to meet assessed need for next five years | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in Cheshire wide Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment Incorporate Gypsy and Traveller provision in development of Site Allocations Development Plan Document |

| Priority 2C: To prevent homelessness | | |
|--|---|--|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to minimise impacts of Welfare Reform Act 2012 To avoid social impacts of homelessness To reduce the cost and impact of placing families in temporary accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To at least reduce levels of statutory homelessness to 2010/11 levels (78 presentations, 37 of which owed the full statutory duty) over the Strategy period | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake strategic review of homelessness Update Homelessness Strategy Engage with stakeholders and partners via the Homelessness Forum to minimise the impact of Welfare Reform Act 2012 |

Priority 2D: To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice

| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
|--|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To improve transparency of the allocations system To improve neighbourhood sustainability Due to difficulties getting a foot on the housing ladder | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> A fair and transparent allocations system that promotes choice Increase the range and awareness of intermediate housing products to assist more first time buyers access the market | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Monitor and develop sub regional Choice Based Lettings system Implement the Affordable Housing Policy which includes a proportion of intermediate housing Develop a Marketing Strategy to promote the various forms of home ownership available Promote Home Hub through the Council's website |

Priority 2E: To target access to supported housing to those who need it most

| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
|---|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to ensure value for money in housing support services Scrutiny of supported accommodation suggests that some residents may not need support services offered Need to ensure fair access to accommodation based support | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improve the quality and fitness for purpose of temporary accommodation for single, homeless people Supported housing is offered to those in greatest need | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Reconfigure existing provision of housing for single homeless people Improve accommodation for people fleeing Domestic Violence Introduce a Housing Support Gateway system and undertake effective monitoring of the system |

| Priority 3A: To complete the regeneration of the Castlefields estate | | |
|--|---|---|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Need to build on success of 10 year Masterplan • Continue the momentum of delivery of new mixed tenure homes • Some deck access flats remain | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Delivery of at least 350 new (predominantly private) homes by 2023 • Provision of a further 150 new affordable homes by 2015/16 (included within targets above) • Physical enhancement and energy efficiency improvements to 500 retained two storey system built homes by 2016 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Development and implementation of action plan for next 10 years • Neighbourhood extension of Lakeside and Canalside • Continue to take strategic leadership role within the Castlefields Regeneration Partnership |

| Priority 3B: To explore the implications of private rented sector growth with a view to improving standards in the sector | | |
|---|---|--|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reduced mortgage availability • Reduced availability of social housing • Conditions in private rented sector generally worse • New power to discharge statutory homelessness duty through an offer of private rented accommodation | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of accredited landlords from 39 to 50 by end of Strategy period • Increase the number of accredited properties from 141 to 200 by end of Strategy period • Policy position on use of PRS to discharge statutory homelessness duty agreed | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implementation of Private Rented Sector project plan • Consider implementing new flexibilities to discharge statutory homelessness duty through private rented sector (including carrying out suitability assessment) |

| Priority 3C: To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty | | |
|--|--|--|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact on health • Fuel poverty increasing • Positive impact on climate change • Need to maximise household incomes | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve SAP ratings in private sector stock • Minimise levels of fuel poverty | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Continued development of Healthy Homes Network • Develop new Affordable Warmth Strategy • Promoting a neighbourhood approach to implementation of Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation • Develop and implement HECA further report and progress reports |

| Priority 3D: To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock | | |
|--|--|--|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Impact of welfare reform • Impact of empty homes • Potential to maximise New Homes Bonus | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maximise the opportunities for underoccupying social tenants to find accommodation best suited to their needs • Bring 25 long term empty homes back into use over the Strategy period | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Support RPs in their implementation of the National Homeswap schemes • Review the Halton Tenancy Strategy • Work with RPs to identify empty properties suitable for lease/acquisition using HCA empty homes funding • Undertake survey of owners of empty homes to establish what support can be provided |

| | | |
|--|--|---|
| | | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Develop a more proactive approach to bringing empty homes back into use |
|--|--|---|

| Priority 3E: To work with the Director of Public Health to achieve joint health and housing ambitions | | |
|---|--|---|
| Why is this a priority? | What do we want to achieve? | How do we plan to achieve it? |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Significant health inequalities in social housing and private rented stock • Good quality housing is a wider determinant in four of the five health priorities (cancer, mental health, falls prevention and child development) • Opportunity to maximise integrated working presented by Public Health becoming responsibility of Local Authority • Potential to reduce impact of welfare reform through promotion of healthy lifestyles | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explore opportunities for joint working tackling issues such as: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Fuel poverty (see Priority 3C); ➤ Falls prevention; ➤ Prompt hospital discharge; ➤ Promoting healthy lifestyles; • | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Establish sub group of Housing Partnership to explore opportunities • Develop an action plan for joint working and adopting principles of Making Every Contact Count |

Housing Strategy for Halton 2013 to 2018: Action Plan

| Objective 1: To plan for and facilitate housing growth and support economic growth | | | | | |
|--|---|------------------------------|---|-----------------------------|--|
| Priority | Action | Timescale | Responsibility | Resources | Success measures and outcomes |
| To increase the supply of market and affordable housing through partnership working and support to developers and Registered Providers | Implement Core Strategy | From 2013 | HBC Planning Department | Staff time | Average of 552 additional homes built per annum |
| | Update Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment annually | Annual assessment | HBC Planning Department | Staff time | |
| | Update Site Allocations Supplementary Planning Document | 2014/15 | HBC Planning Department | Staff time | |
| | Implement Affordable Housing Policy | 2013 onwards | HBC Planning and Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | Average of 100 additional affordable homes built per annum |
| | Support Registered Providers in securing funding for the delivery of the Affordable Housing Programme | As and when support required | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time HCA resources | 25% of new developed built as affordable housing subject to site viability assessments |
| | Encourage developers to provide affordable housing of a size recommended by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment | As and when required | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | Reduction in the number of people affected by the Underoccupancy Penalty |
| To support the implementation of the Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan | Participate in and support sub regional projects originating from LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Group | As and when required | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | Meet targets in Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan |

Objective 2: To meet the housing and support needs of Halton's communities and promote choice

| Priority | Action | Timescale | Responsibility | Resources | Success measures and outcomes |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--|---|
| To increase the supply of housing for older people and vulnerable people | Increase the supply of housing for older people through identification of sites, supporting Registered Provider funding bids and procure support and care services | Throughout period of the Strategy | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | HCA funding (capital) Revenue implications for housing support and care services (amount dependent on bids) | At least 100 units of additional older persons housing over the Strategy period |
| | Implement aspiration in Design for New Residential SPD for new developments of 10 dwellings or more to provide 10% wheelchair standard dwellings | As and when planning applications received | HBC Planning | Staff time | Aspirational target of 30 wheelchair accessible dwellings built per year (subject to site viability) |
| | Encourage development of homes that meet Lifetime Homes standard in line with Halton's Core Strategy | As and when planning applications received | HBC Planning | Staff time | Aspirational target of 25% increase in the number of homes built to Lifetime Homes standard (subject to site viability) |
| | Commission supported housing scheme for single homeless in Widnes | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time Revenue implications for housing support service | Development completed by 2014 |
| | Commission 10 bungalows for rent for adults with physical disabilities and learning difficulties | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time Council or HCA grant | Development completed by 2014 |
| To review future Gypsy and Traveller | Participate in Cheshire wide Gypsy and Traveller | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Planning and | Staff time Approx £8,000 | Identify sufficient site provision to meet assessed need for next five |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|-------------------------------|--|--|---|
| pitch provision | Accommodation Assessment | | Development Services) | contribution to be identified | years New 12 pitch site completed |
| | Incorporate Gypsy and Traveller provision in Site Allocations Development Plan | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Planning and Development Services) | Staff time | |
| | Deliver an additional 12 permanent pitches adjacent to existing transit site | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Planning and Development Services) | Staff time HCA funding (£800k) | |
| To prevent homelessness | Undertake strategic review of homelessness | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | To maintain the number of statutory homeless acceptances to no more than a 10% increase per year of 2011/12 levels (64 acceptances) |
| | Update Homelessness Strategy | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | |
| | Engage with stakeholders and partners via the Homelessness Forum to minimise the impact of the Welfare Reform Act 2012 | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | |
| To improve access to social housing and home ownership and promote choice | Monitor and develop sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme | Throughout period of Strategy | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time Running costs (£125k pa) | Provision of a cost effective, fair and transparent allocations system that promotes choice Percentage of bids within each banding Number of private homes let through system |
| | Implement the Affordable Housing Policy which includes a proportion of intermediate housing | 2013 | HBC Planning Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | 50% of units delivered through affordable housing policy to be intermediate housing (subject to demand and viability) |
| | Develop a Marketing Strategy to promote the various types of low cost home ownership products and support Government initiatives such as New Buy | 2013 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | Marketing Strategy developed and implemented |
| | Promote Homes Hub via the | 2013 | Divisional Manager | Staff time | Link to Homes Hub on the Council's |

| | | | | | |
|---|---|---------|--|---|---|
| | Council's website | | (Commissioning) | | website |
| To target housing access to supported housing to those who need it most | Reconfigure existing provision of housing for single homeless people | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | Improve the quality and fitness for purpose of temporary accommodation for single, homeless people. |
| | Review existing provision of supported accommodation for households fleeing domestic violence | 2013/14 | Operational Director (Prevention and Assessment) | Staff time Possible capital and/or revenue funding | Dependent on outcome of review |
| | Introduce Housing Gateway Support system and undertake effective monitoring of the new system | 2013/14 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time Staff costs Annual IT costs | Supported housing services are provided to those in greatest need |

Objective 3: To improve housing conditions and make the best use of the housing stock

| Priority | Action | Timescale | Responsibility | Resources | Success measures and outcomes |
|--|--|--|------------------------------------|--|---|
| To complete the regeneration of the Castlefields estate | Implement 10 year action plan | Throughout period of Strategy | HBC Regeneration Team | Staff time | Delivery of at least 350 new (predominantly private) homes by 2023 Provision of a further 150 new affordable homes by 2015/16 Physical enhancement and energy efficiency improvements to 500 retained two storey system built homes by 2016 |
| | Neighbourhood extension of Lakeside and Canalside | 2015/16 | HBC Regeneration Team | Staff time Other (?) | |
| | Continue to take strategic leadership role within the Castlefields Regeneration Partnership | Ongoing | HBC Regeneration Team | Staff time | |
| To explore the implications of private rented sector growth with a view to improving standards in the sector | Implement Private Rented Sector project plan | 2013/14 | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time Promotional budget (£5k from Homelessness Prevention fund) | Increase in the number of accredited landlords from 39 to 50 by end of Strategy period Increase the number of accredited properties from 141 to 200 by end of Strategy period Policy position on use of PRS to discharge statutory homelessness duty agreed |
| | Consider implementing new flexibilities to discharge statutory homelessness duty through private rented sector | 2013 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | |
| To improve the energy efficiency of housing and tackle fuel poverty | Continued development of Halton Healthy Homes Network | Ongoing | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time | Improved SAP ratings in private sector stock from 56 to 60 by time of next Private Sector Stock Condition survey |
| | Develop new Affordable Warmth Strategy | Ongoing | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time | |
| | Promote Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation | October 2013 – ongoing thereafter | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time | |
| | Develop and implement HECA further report and progress reports | March 2013 – progress reports every two years thereafter | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time | |

| | | | | | |
|---|--|---------------------|------------------------------------|--|---|
| To make the best possible use of the existing housing stock | Support Registered Providers in their implementation of the National Homeswap schemes through promotion on HBC website and CBL systems | 2012/13 and ongoing | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | Maximise opportunities for underoccupying social tenants to find accommodation more suited to their needs |
| | Review the Halton Tenancy Strategy | September 2013 | Divisional Manager (Commissioning) | Staff time | |
| | Work with RPs to identify empty properties suitable for lease/acquisition using HCA empty homes funding | 2012/13/14 | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time | Bring 25 long term empty properties back into use through direct intervention over the Strategy period |
| | Undertake survey of empty homes to establish what support can be provided by the Council | 2013/14 | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time Postage costs (contribution from Homelessness Prevention Fund) | |
| | Develop a more pro-active approach to bringing empty homes back into use | 2013/14 | HBC Environmental Protection | Staff time Budget to carry out works in default (?) | |
| | Establish sub group of Housing Partnership to explore opportunities | June 2013 | Director of Public Health | Staff time | Sub group established |
| | Develop an action plan for joint working and adopting principles of Making Every Contact Count | September 2013 | Director of Public Health | Staff time | Action Plan developed |
| | | | | | |



Contents

| | Page |
|--|-------------|
| Glossary | 3 |
| Foreword | 7 |
| Part One – Resources | |
| Introduction | 8 |
| Funding for Council Strategic Housing services | 8 |
| Other Housing funding | 10 |
| Part Two - Context | |
| National Policy | 11 |
| Sub regional context | 14 |
| Local context | 15 |
| Part Three – Halton’s Housing | |
| Overview | 18 |
| The Housing Market | 22 |
| Housing Conditions | 29 |
| Social Housing | 33 |
| The Private Rented Sector | 35 |
| Part Four – Halton’s People | |
| Overview | 38 |
| Economic analysis | 41 |
| Health and Housing | 44 |
| Space issues | 47 |
| Homelessness | 51 |
| The Housing Needs of specific groups | 56 |
| Part Five – Halton’s Services | |
| Homelessness Services | 60 |
| Choice Based Lettings | 63 |
| Private Sector Housing | 63 |
| Energy Efficiency | 64 |
| Adaptations | 67 |
| Anti Social Behaviour | 68 |
| Development and Investment | 68 |
| Supported Housing | 68 |
| Partnership working | 69 |
| Appendix One – related documents | 70 |

Glossary

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| Affordable Housing | Housing at a price below private market prices, which includes social rented, affordable rented and intermediate housing. |
| Affordable Rented | Housing let by Registered Providers of social housing at a rent of no more than 80% of the local market rent. |
| Assured Tenancy | Introduced by the Housing Act 1988, assured tenancies are a form of residential tenancy that give a degree of security so that the tenant cannot be evicted without a reason. At the time of writing, they are the main form of tenancy used by Registered Providers of social housing. |
| Assured Shorthold Tenancy | Assured Shorthold Tenancies are the most common form of tenancy offered by private landlords. The tenancy is granted for a fixed period of time (usually 6 months) following which the tenancy usually converts to a Periodic tenancy which is automatically renewed every 2 months. The landlord can terminate the tenancy at any point by issuing a section 21 notice, which effectively gives the tenant two months notice to leave, however a court will not enforce the notice unless at least six months have elapsed from when the initial tenancy was granted. |
| The Bedroom Standard | The Bedroom Standard is the most commonly used measure of overcrowding and underoccupation. A standard number of bedrooms is allocated to each household in accordance with its age/sex/marital status composition and the relationship of the members to one another. A separate bedroom is allocated to each married or cohabiting couple, any other person aged 21 or over, each pair of adolescents aged 10 - 20 of the same sex, and each pair of children under 10. Any unpaired person aged 10 - 20 is paired, if possible with a child under 10 of the same sex, or, if that is not possible, he or she is given a separate bedroom, as is any unpaired child under 10. |
| Choice Based Lettings | Choice Based Lettings is a method of allocating social housing which involves available properties being advertised locally and interested applicants expressing an interest or “bidding” on advertised properties. The property is then offered to the bidder with the highest level of assessed need. |
| CORE | The Continuous Recording of Lettings and Sales in Social Housing in England (known as CORE) is a national data collection system which records a wide range of information on social housing lettings and sales and the households they are let or sold to. The system provides valuable information for the development of national and local housing policies. |
| Concealed household | The Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment defines concealed households as those that need or are likely to form within the next two years. Typically they are currently housed with family or friends and are an important element in considering future need for affordable housing. |
| Decent Homes Standard | The previous Government set a target that all social housing must meet the Decent Homes Standard by 2010. To meet the standard homes must meet the statutory minimum standard for housing (i.e. free from category 1 hazards under the HHSRS – see below), must be warm and weatherproof and have reasonable modern facilities. |
| Extra care housing | Extra care housing is a form of specialised housing scheme, usually for older people, which provides a range of care and support services on site. It differs from sheltered housing in that it provides a higher level of on site support and includes care services. |
| Homebuy | Homebuy is the term used by the Government to describe the various different types of shared ownership and shared equity products available to help people buy their own home. |
| Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) | The Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) is the national housing and regeneration agency for England. It provides investment for new and improved affordable homes and regeneration projects. It is also the main regulatory body for Registered Providers of social housing. |
| Household reference person | The Strategic Housing Market Assessment uses the term Household Reference Person to describe the person completing the SHMA survey form on behalf of the household. |
| Housing, Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS) | The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System replaced the fitness standard as the Principal means of assessing housing conditions in 2004. It uses a risk based scoring approach to assess hazards within the home. The presence of “category 1” hazards indicates that the home is below the statutory minimum standard. |
| Housing Market Area | A geographical area which is relatively self contained in terms of reflecting peoples choice of location for a new home. |
| Indices of Multiple | The English Indices of Deprivation measures relative levels of deprivation in small areas of |

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| Deprivation | England called Lower Layer Super Output Areas. It combines a number of indicators, chosen to cover a range of economic, social and housing issues, into a single deprivation score for each small area in England. This allows each area to be ranked relative to one another according to their level of deprivation. The data is produced at Lower Super Output Area level, of which there are 32,482 in the country. |
| Intermediate housing | Intermediate housing is housing provided at prices and rents above those of social rent but below market rents and prices. Examples include shared ownership, affordable rents and shared equity products. |
| Landlord Accreditation | Landlord Accreditation schemes are voluntary schemes, often run by local authorities, which encourage good standards in the private rented sector by allowing owners to apply for accredited status to demonstrate that they are a responsible landlord. |
| Local Development Framework (LDF) | The Local Development Framework (LDF) is the collective name for the local authority's Core Strategy and related planning policies. The National Planning Policy Framework published in 2012 replaces Local Development Frameworks with local plans. |
| Local Housing Allowance (LHA) | The Local Housing Allowance (LHA) arrangements are a way of working out Housing Benefit for people who rent from a private landlord. LHA rates are based on the size of household and the area in which a person lives to work out the amount of rent which can be met with HB. HB paid under the LHA arrangements is normally paid to the tenant, who will then pay the landlord. |
| Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) | A Partnership that brings together representatives from local statutory, voluntary, community and private sectors to address local problems, allocate funding and discuss local strategies and initiatives. In Halton the LSP is often referred to as the Halton Strategic Partnership. |
| New Town Estates | Runcorn's New Town estates sprang up in the late 1960s following the designation of Runcorn as a New Town area in 1964. They were developed as overspill estates to tackle a housing shortage in Liverpool. Initially managed by the Runcorn Development Corporation, the housing was transferred to a variety of housing associations in 1974, following the disbanding of the Corporation. |
| Older People | In general for the purposes of this document the term "older people" refers to any person aged 65 or over unless otherwise stated. However some housing schemes for older people will accept people over the age of 55. |
| Private Sector Stock Condition Survey | Local authorities have a statutory duty to keep housing conditions in the area under review. Stock Condition Surveys are the principle means of assessing those conditions. They provide vital evidence to support the development of housing strategies and housing assistance policies. Government guidance recommends that local authorities undertake stock condition surveys every 3 to 5 years. |
| Regional Spatial Strategy | Regional Spatial Strategies were introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 as a means of providing a spatial vision and strategy specific to each region in the country. They set housebuilding targets for each local authority area which were expected to be reflected in local planning policies. Regional Spatial Strategies were abolished by the Coalition Government in July 2010 so that top down targets for house building no longer exist. |
| Registered Provider | Registered Provider is the new term for providers of social or affordable housing who are registered with the Homes and Communities Agency. They were previously referred to as Registered Social Landlords. They are almost always non profit making Housing Associations or Trusts, although in recent years some private developers have started to build and manage affordable housing and so have also registered with the HCA. |
| Shared Ownership | Shared Ownership schemes are used to help people to get a foot on the housing ladder by allowing them to buy a proportion of a home with a mortgage while the other proportion is rented, usually from a Registered Provider. |
| Sheltered housing | Sheltered housing refers to specialist housing schemes, usually for older people, that either have a warden living on site or have access to 24 hour emergency assistance through an alarm system. |
| Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment (SHLAA) | Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessments (SHLAA) are a key component of the evidence base to support the delivery of sufficient land for housing to meet the community's need for more homes. The aim of a SHLAA is to identify enough developable land in the area on which to deliver new housing for at least the next five years. |
| Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) | Strategic Housing Market Assessments (SHMA) is a study of the operation of a Housing Market Area (HMA) and of housing need within the area. Since HMAs cover more than one local authority area SHMAs are usually carried out in conjunction with other local authority areas. Government recommends that all local authorities undertake SHMAs on a periodic |

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| | basis to inform development of their planning and housing policies and has produced guidance for their use. |
| Supported accommodation/housing | Supported accommodation is a catch all phrase that refers to any type of accommodation that offers on site support to enable occupants to live independently. Examples include young persons hostels, extra care housing and sheltered housing. |
| Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) | The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is prepared by local strategic partnerships (LSPs) as a set of goals and actions which they, in representing the residential, business, statutory and voluntary interests of an area, wish to promote. The SCS should inform the Local Development Framework (LDF) and act as an umbrella for all other strategies devised for the area. |
| Vulnerable people | <p>There is no one definition of vulnerable people which covers all contexts. For safeguarding purposes a vulnerable adult is described as a person:</p> <p>“ Who is or may be in need of community care services by reason of mental or other disability, age or illness; and who is or may be unable to take care of him or herself, or unable to protect him or herself against significant harm or exploitation.”</p> <p>However a broader definition is sometimes used by Government for the purposes of allocating resources which can include anyone aged 65 or over, disabled people, claiming benefits and/or families with children under 5.</p> |

Foreword

This document sets out a comprehensive overview of housing in Halton in 2012/13. It is intended to provide the evidence base to Halton's Housing Strategy 2013 to 2018 which describes the Council's housing priorities for the coming five years. The findings from the evidence paper have been used as a basis on which to consult with stakeholders and the wider public with a view to developing these future priorities.

The evidence paper sets housing in its policy context and takes account of the wide range of housing reforms introduced by the Coalition Government since 2010 including the Government's Housing Strategy for England; the Localism Act 2011 and Welfare Reform Act 2012.

It uses a range of information sources to build a comprehensive picture of housing including Halton's Strategic Housing Market Assessment, Private Sector Stock Condition Survey and local statistical returns as well as national datasets such as the Indices of Multiple Deprivation and the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings.

I have pleasure in commending the document to you.

Councillor Phil Harris
Executive Board Member for Housing Strategy

Further information on this paper and the separate Housing Strategy 2013-18 can be obtained by contacting Joanne Sutton, Halton Borough Council on 0151 511 8750 or emailing: joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk. This evidence paper is available in different formats upon request.

Part One – Resources

Introduction

In common with many public service areas, Housing budgets have seen substantial reductions over the last 12 to 18 months as a result of the Government policy of deficit reduction. This will, inevitably, impact on our ability to deliver the same level of service that residents have come to expect. The current position with regard to financing the Housing service is set out in this part of the document.

Funding for Council Strategic Housing services

Regional Housing Pot

Until April 2011 the Regional Housing Pot was the main source of funding for the Housing Capital Programme, for the most part, funding assistance for housing renewal (grants and loans) and energy efficiency. The Regional Housing Pot funding stream came to an end in April 2011 along with the disestablishment of regional governing bodies. Consequently, the Council's ability to deliver a housing capital programme which adequately meets the needs identified in this evidence paper has been severely compromised. This will be reflected in the Council's Housing Strategy Delivery Plan which will set out our priorities and ambitions for housing in the context of a realistic level of future resources.

New Homes Bonus (NHB)

The New Homes Bonus replaced the Housing and Planning Delivery Grant in April 2011. The intention of NHB is to act as an incentive for local authorities to deliver housing growth by match funding six years worth of Council Tax for each new home built. An additional £350 is paid annually for each affordable home that is built and the grant applies to empty properties that have been brought back into use.

For 2012/13, the authority was awarded £856,871 in New Homes Bonus. While this funding is of course welcome, it is top sliced from the Local Authority Grant Settlement so in effect is not really new money. The funding is not ring fenced for housing use.

Supported housing funding

There have been changes to the way that supported housing is funded. In 2011 the ring fence was removed for Supporting People services nationally and the funding was subsumed into Council's Area Based Grant allocation. In Halton, this has resulted in a 7.6% decrease in the funding available for supported housing services on 2010/11 levels. The allocation for 2012/13 is shown in the figure 1.1 below.

Housing funding 2012/13

Delivery of the housing service in 2012/13 will be supported through a variety of different funding pots as illustrated in figure 1.1 below which shows monetary allocations for housing where these are known. The nature of the funding sources available illustrates an emphasis on services designed to support vulnerable people while there is little funding available for other elements of the strategic housing service e.g. improving housing conditions, bringing empty homes back into use and commissioning research for future strategic development.

Figure 1.1 – Funding sources for strategic housing delivery 2012/13

The table below shows the allocation of capital resources for housing related activity for 2012/13.

| | 2012/13 Capital Programme |
|---|---------------------------|
| Disabled Facilities Grants (incl. capitalised salaries) | 735,000 |
| Energy Promotion | 6,000 |
| Stair lifts | 250,000 |
| Registered Providers Adaptations (Joint Funding) | 550,000 |
| Choice Based Lettings | 28,946 |
| Extra Care Naughton Fields | 463,186 |
| Bungalows at Halton Lodge | 464,000 |
| Sensory Hub | 15,000 |

| | |
|--------------|------------------|
| TOTAL | 2,512,132 |
|--------------|------------------|

The Council will also seek to maximise resources from ad hoc grant opportunities as and when they arise. For example, the Department of Health's Warm Homes, Healthy People funding stream provided funding for emergency heating and advice schemes to support vulnerable people to keep their homes warm during the winter months of 2012/13.

Other Housing funding

Affordable Housing Programme

Registered Providers have agreed four year programmes with the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) to deliver 320 affordable homes in Halton over the 2011/15 period.

It is unclear at this stage whether post 2015 grant subsidy will continue to be available to support affordable housing schemes. If, as suspected, grant subsidy is significantly reduced or ends altogether, then Registered Providers will face a considerable challenge to continue building, particularly in light of welfare reforms and the direct benefits payments which are likely to adversely impact on Providers revenue streams and consequently their ability to attract affordable private finance.

Get Britain Building

The Get Britain Building scheme was announced in the Government's Housing Strategy as a £400 million investment fund designed to kickstart pipeline developments which have stalled but are otherwise ready to start or progress. The fund which provides commercial loans is mostly aimed at small and medium sized builders whose developments have come to a halt due to the uncertain market conditions. A prospectus providing further details was published in December 2011. Two schemes in Halton were originally shortlisted but now look unlikely to proceed.

Homelessness Grant

An annual grant from the Department for Communities and Local Government (DCLG) (which for 2011/12 was £50,000) supports Halton's homelessness services. Specific funding of £65,000 has also been allocated in the form of a one off grant for the Mortgage Rescue Scheme to provide support for households in danger of losing their home due to mortgage arrears. In addition, the Cheshire wide Partnership Group has been successful in securing £30,000 from DCLG to assist with the development of prevention initiatives. Halton is also involved with the Merseyside sub regional group which was awarded £470,000 by CLG to develop prevention initiatives such as the No Second Night Out scheme.

Future resources

It is anticipated that future capital investment in housing by the Council will be limited to Disabled Facilities Grants and support for other vulnerable groups, and that the local authority role in housing will increasingly be more about facilitating and co-ordinating rather than direct investment of resources.

Part Two - Context

National Policy

Laying the Foundations: The Housing Strategy for England

The Housing Strategy for England was launched on 21st November 2011. It sets out, in one overarching document, the Government's plans to address problems in the country's housing market through increasing the supply of homes, reforming social housing, supporting growth in the private rented sector, encouraging local authorities to bring empty homes back into use and improving choice and housing support. Much of the Strategy restated policies that had already been announced, however, there were some new initiatives designed to breathe life into the country's stagnant housing market. Among the most significant announcements were:

- A new £400 million "Get Britain Building" fund for small and medium sized developers whose developments have come to a halt due to uncertain market conditions;
- Introduction of a mortgage indemnity scheme to provide 95% mortgages on new build homes for first time buyers struggling to secure mortgage finance through conventional means;
- A competitive bidding process to encourage large scale, locally planned and community driven development;
- Plans to release enough public sector land to build 100,000 new houses through a "buy now, pay later" deal with developers;
- Consultation on reducing the length of time that must elapse before developers can seek to renegotiate section 106 agreements with local planning authorities;
- £100 million match funding to help bring empty homes back into use, with a further £50 million for those areas worst affected by empty properties;
- Consultation on increasing Right to Buy discounts with plans for every home sold to be replaced by a new home;
- Proposals to reform stamp duty to support large scale investment in the buy to let market;
- An allocation of £400 million for homelessness prevention and the launch of a ministerial working group to address the causes of homelessness;
- A new deal for older peoples housing and encouraging local authorities to make provision for a wide range of housing types including specialised housing for older people.

Localism Act 2011

The Localism Act received Royal Assent on 16th November 2011. The Act sets out plans to give communities and local authorities greater powers and freedoms and introduces new Community Rights such as the Community Right to Challenge the delivery of local authority run services; the Community Right to Bid for assets of community value and the Community Right to Build small developments in their area without the need for planning permission. The Act also introduces a General Power of Competence for local authorities to do anything not specifically forbidden by law and paves the way for neighbourhood planning and directly elected mayors.

The Act also contains a number of Housing reforms which will impact directly on the Council's local authority strategic housing role, including:

- Giving local authorities greater freedom to decide who is eligible to apply for social housing. More recently, the Government has issued new guidance for allocation schemes which, amongst other provisions, gives greater priority for housing to ex servicemen and women. The Property Pool Plus allocations policy is in the process of being reviewed in light of the new guidance.
- Introduction of new fixed term tenancies for social housing tenants and requirement for the local authority to produce a Tenancy Strategy to guide Registered Providers in their use. This is considered in more detail later in this evidence paper.

- The power for local authorities to discharge their statutory homelessness duty through an offer of accommodation in the private rented sector without the applicant's consent.

The Act also changes the regulatory framework for Registered Providers by abolishing the Tenant Services Authority and placing greater emphasis on tenant involvement in regulation with remaining regulatory functions transferring to the Homes and Communities Agency.

Welfare Reform Act 2012

The Welfare Reform Act received Royal Assent on 8th March 2012. The Act has been described as the biggest shake up of the benefits system in 60 years. It aims to simplify the system and create the right incentives to get people into work by ensuring that no individual is better off by not working.

Key features of the Act that will have the most significant impact on Halton's residents are:

- Introduction of Universal Credit. The level of Universal Credit is to be capped at £26,000. While it is estimated that only a small number of Halton residents will see their income reduce as a result of the cap, some will be very significantly affected (up to £500 per week). In addition, Housing Benefit is to be included in Universal Credit and will consequently be paid directly to tenants of social housing. There are fears that this will lead to an increase in rent arrears which, in turn, could lead to a rise in homelessness and could impact upon the ability of Registered Providers to secure private investment at competitive rates to maximise their capacity to deliver additional affordable housing.
- Replacement of Disability Living Allowance with a Personal Independent Payment (PIP) for those of working age. Halton, which has been selected as a pilot area for the scheme, has a disproportionate amount of disabled residents and the change to PIP will involve a reduction in the numbers of those receiving financial assistance.
- Changes to Housing Benefit including the introduction of an under occupancy penalty for households whose homes are deemed to be too large for their needs. Described as the "Bedroom Tax", this change will have a very significant impact in Halton, where it is estimated that as many as 3,000 social housing tenants could lose benefits. The situation is compounded by a shortage of smaller properties in the Borough to facilitate downsizing. Changes to Local Housing Allowance (LHA), most significantly the extension of the age threshold for the shared accommodation rate from 25 to 35. This will affect around 234 claimants in Halton, whose benefit entitlement will reduce from £91.15 to £53.54 per week. Private tenants will also be affected by plans to uprate LHA by the Consumer Price Index rather than the Retail Price Index currently used.

It is too early to assess the impact of other reforms such as the ongoing reassessment of Incapacity Benefit claimants against the stricter criteria of the Employment Support Allowance, changes to Community Care Grants and Crisis Loans and forthcoming reforms to Council Tax benefit which will include a 10% cut in scheme funding and "localised" benefit schemes.

The potential impacts of welfare reform and the activities being undertaken to mitigate the impacts are described in more detail later in this document. However, it is important to note that if, as suspected, the reforms lead to increased rent arrears and increased turnover of social housing, Registered Providers may have difficulty in meeting some of the objectives of this strategy, particularly in relation to the delivery of new affordable housing.

National Planning Policy Framework

The new National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published on 27th March 2012. It sets out, in a more condensed version of previous guidance, the Government's planning policies and how it expects these to be applied and aims to simplify the country's planning system to achieve sustainable development.

The NPPF replaces the need for Local Development Frameworks with Local Plans which local authorities must develop to meet objectively assessed needs and which must have sufficient flexibility to adapt to rapid change. For housing development, it reaffirms the requirement to assess need through a Strategic Housing Market Assessment (preferably developed in conjunction with other authorities in the Housing Market Area) and to identify opportunities to meet that need through the development of a Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment.

The framework has a clear emphasis on growth and on accelerating the planning process. A key challenge for the development and delivery of Local Plans will be how to balance the need for rapid housing and economic growth with the need to protect Green Belt and to promote the highest possible standards of sustainable development.

Affordable Rents

Affordable rent is the new rent model which the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA) expect that Registered Providers will adopt for new build housing and for an agreed proportion of existing stock as it becomes vacant. Affordable rents are set at up to 80% of market rents in the area. The additional income raised through affordable rents is to be invested in new housing development and it is anticipated will help fund the shortfall as a result of significant cuts to the HCA National Affordable Housing Programme. While this could lead to an increase in rent levels for some tenants and could result in a two tier system whereby tenants in similar properties are paying different rents, it is likely that the impact in Halton will not be as great as in higher value areas due to relatively low private rents in the Borough.

Health and Social Care Act 2012

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 represents that biggest reorganisation of the National Health Service in 60 years. With effect from 1st April 2013, Primary Care Trusts were abolished, Clinical Commissioning Groups led by General Practitioners took responsibility for commissioning clinical health care services, and responsibility for Public Health transferred to local authorities. In terms of housing services, the latter change presents opportunities for much greater integrated working on health related housing issues such as fuel poverty, falls prevention and child development.

Sub Regional context

Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Forum

Halton Borough Council is represented on the Liverpool City Region Housing and Spatial Planning Forum, which acts as an advisory group to the Liverpool City Region Cabinet on housing and planning issues. The Forum provides the mechanism for the co-ordination of activity between the participating local authority areas and is a key delivery agent in developing and implementing the priorities contained within the Local Investment Plan described below.

Examples of sub regional projects overseen by the Forum include:

- Development and implementation of the sub regional Choice Based Letting Scheme Property Pool Plus (described in more detail later in this evidence paper);
- A co-ordinated approach to delivery of the successful bids to HCA to bring empty homes back into use, including development of a standardised lease agreement and inspection report;
- Co-ordination of affordable housing delivery and stalled/pipeline sites with a view to maximising funding opportunities to kickstart development.

The Group provides an opportunity to pool knowledge, experience, skills and resources from participating local authority areas with a view to maximising housing investment, choice and provision for the city region area and support the economic potential of the sub region.

Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan 2

The Liverpool City Region Local Investment Plan (LIP) 2011-15 builds on the success of the interim plan for 2010/11 which has helped to secure over £80m of housing and regeneration investment in the City Region. The LIP has three primary roles:

- As a prospectus for housing and regeneration investment in the Liverpool City Region;
- To clarify the City Region's priorities to support economic growth whilst maintaining the momentum of regeneration;
- Inform HCA's business plan by setting clear priorities for future investment in the City Region.

The Plan identifies the challenges facing the City Region and the priorities for action, including:

- Raising the quality of and diversification of the housing offer as a means to harness economic potential;
- Bringing long term empty properties back into use as a means of increasing the supply of affordable housing;
- Addressing housing market failure in the core conurbations of Liverpool, Wirral and Sefton and also prioritise investment in the areas with greatest economic potential and market strength;
- Working with Registered Providers to ensure an appropriate mix of development based on evidence from Strategic Housing Market Assessments;
- Making best use of the existing stock, including developing measures to address under occupation;
- Developing opportunities for institutional investment in the private rented sector;
- Meeting the needs of an ageing population and supporting vulnerable people;
- Maximising the development opportunities presented by public landholdings in the City Region.

Local Context

Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026

Halton's Sustainable Community Strategy sets out the vision for the Halton that the Council and its partners, under the umbrella of the Halton Strategic Partnership, would like to see emerge by 2026.

The Strategy's five priority themes are:

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

Housing has a significant contribution to make to each of the five priority themes as illustrated in figure 2.1

Figure 2.1 – Housing's contribution to Halton's priorities

Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan presents the Council's response to how it will help implement the Community Strategy. This is achieved through a framework consisting of a hierarchy of Directorate, Divisional and Team Service Plans known as "the Golden Thread" that are directly aligned to ensure that the strategic priorities are cascaded down through the organisation through outcome focused targets.

The five strategic priorities are also mirrored in the make up of the Council's Policy and Performance Boards which, together with the Executive Board, provide political leadership of the Council.

Progress in achieving the objectives contained in the Service Plans is reviewed regularly as part of the Council's performance management culture, and further scrutiny is exercised by Members through the Policy and Performance Boards.

Halton's Core Strategy

Halton's Core Strategy was adopted in November 2012 having been through Examination in Public and having been subject to examination by the Planning Inspectorate. The Strategy sets a minimum housing requirement of 9,930 net additional homes between 2010 and 2028, equating to 552 dwellings per annum. It is anticipated that almost 60% of the dwellings over the Strategy period are to be built in Runcorn. An average of at least 40% of new residential development should be developed on previously developed (brownfield) land over the period.

New homes will be delivered from a variety of sources including from sites currently available for housing development where work is either underway, planning permission has been granted or the site has been allocated for residential development and from sites which have the potential to contribute to housing land supply e.g. identified housing opportunities within Key Areas of Change (i.e. 3MG site at Ditton, South Widnes, East Runcorn and West Runcorn), new housing or mixed use allocations in

subsequent Development Plans and appropriate windfall development. In accordance with Government guidance the Council will seek to maintain a 5 year supply of deliverable housing land. The Strategy identifies opportunities to develop 1,400 homes in Daresbury and 1,400 homes in Sandymoor in Runcorn East and 1,500 homes in Runcorn West, mainly on the Runcorn Waterfront site.

The Core Strategy contains an affordable housing requirement of 25% of the total residential units proposed on schemes comprising 10 or more dwellings (net gain) or 0.33 hectares or greater for residential purposes. The Council will seek to secure an equal split between social/affordable rent tenures and intermediate housing tenures across the Borough. Provision of affordable housing must meet the identified housing needs as set out in the most up to date Strategic Housing Market Assessment and is to be provided in perpetuity. The affordable housing contribution may only be reduced where robust and credible evidence is provided to demonstrate that the affordable housing target would make the scheme unviable.

An Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document has been adopted to support the policy which provides additional guidance for all parties involved in the delivery of affordable housing through the planning system.

Tenancy Strategy

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, Halton has developed a Tenancy Strategy which sets out what types of tenancies the Council recommends that Registered Providers should offer locally, the length of those tenancies and the circumstances in which they should be offered and renewed. The Strategy, which was formally adopted by the Council in September 2012, recommends that Providers continue to offer Lifetime tenancies but recognises that Providers may wish to make use of the new fixed term tenancies introduced by the Localism Act to make the best use of their housing stock. Where this is the case, the Strategy advises that fixed term tenancies should be for a minimum of five years and are not suitable for:

- Existing social housing tenants who became assured tenants prior to 1st April 2012 and who are transferring to another property;
- Where the property is part of a supported housing development that provides specialist accommodation for particular client groups, including sheltered housing.
- Where the tenant is someone over the prevailing state retirement age.
- Where the property is located in an area of very low demand and/or high multiple deprivation where the local authority has serious concerns about the long term sustainability of the area. In these circumstances, the local authority will initiate discussions with the relevant Provider(s) to request that they temporarily suspend the use of fixed term tenancies in that area.
- Where a tenant with a secure or assured tenancy is required by a Provider to move due to redevelopment e.g. they are being required to move, not seeking to do so.

The Strategy also recommends that in most cases fixed term tenancies are renewed upon review, particularly where the household contains children or has been offered in response to particular set of vulnerabilities and the household is still assessed as being vulnerable or the property has been adapted to meet the needs of a disabled person and that person still resides in the property and needs the adaptations. The circumstances in which it is recognised that Providers may not wish to renew the tenancy are where:

- There has been a substantial improvement in the household's financial circumstances to the extent that continued occupation of the property by the household would present a conflict with the charitable objectives or primary purpose of Providers to provide housing for those in necessitous circumstances.
- There has been a change in the composition of the household which has resulted in the household under occupying the accommodation.
- An adapted property is no longer suitable for the tenant's needs e.g. where adaptations have been provided for a disabled person who is no longer resident in the property, the adaptations are no longer required, and there are other families needing this type of adapted accommodation.

In the latter two circumstances the Strategy advises that Providers should seek to offer suitable alternative accommodation in their own or another Provider's stock. The Council does not expect fixed term tenancies to be used as a means of enforcing tenancy conditions but recognises that there may be cases where enforcement action is so far advanced that it may not be appropriate to renew the tenancy.

Part Three – Halton’s Housing

Overview

Tenure

Halton’s housing stock can be characterised by a relatively high proportion of social rented properties (around 25%), resulting from the development and subsequent transfer of housing in Runcorn’s New Town estates, and a private sector skewed towards lower value, semi detached and terraced homes. Figure 3.1 illustrates the growth in the private sector (20% in the 12 years from 1999 to 2011) and the steady decline in the total social housing stock of around 15%. As illustrated in the chart, the Council transferred its housing stock to a newly created Housing Association, Halton Housing Trust, in December 2005.

Figure 3.1 – Halton’s housing stock from 1999 (from HSSA returns)

More recently the Borough has witnessed a dramatic growth in the private rented sector, from only 4% of the total housing stock at the time of the 2001 Census to 10%. It is thought that this is due to limited mortgage availability and long waiting lists for social housing fuelling demand for the sector, and the availability of Buy to Let mortgages and concept of housing as a long term investment fuelling supply. This growth has included the Council examining its approach to the sector as part of a Member led scrutiny review, which is described later in this document.

Census data from 2011 allows us to compare Halton’s stock profile with that of national and regional housing profiles and with neighbouring local authorities as shown in figure 3.2 below. As illustrated, Halton has a larger than average social rented sector and a relatively small private rented sector.

Figure 3.2 - Sub regional tenure comparison (Census 2011)

Property values

The stock profile in Halton is skewed towards lower value properties, with 68% of dwellings in Council Tax Bands A or B, as illustrated in figure 3.3 below.

Figure 3.3 – Breakdown of Council Tax Bands in Halton

Analysis of Council Tax Band by ward, as illustrated below, reveals that the lowest value stock is concentrated unsurprisingly in the wards containing the highest proportions of social housing. Higher value properties are concentrated in Birchfield, Daresbury and Hale wards.

Figure 3.4 – Council Tax bands by wards

Empty Homes

The proportion of long term empty private homes in Halton at around 1.5% to 2.2% is consistent with Regional figures and those of neighbouring local authorities. Figure 3.5 below shows the number of vacancies over 6 months in both the private and social rented sectors.

Figure 3.5 – Vacancies over 6 months

Analysis of the geographical spread of all empty homes reveals no neighbourhood or street level “hotspots”, however, the three wards with the highest proportions: Mersey (6.61%), Riverside (5.63%) and Appleton (4.49%) are those containing more properties in Council Tax Bands A and Band private rented properties suggesting a connection between these factors. The Council takes

action to remedy empty homes where a complaint is received and is supportive of initiatives to reduce the number of empty homes as and when funding is available. For example the Council has recently worked with Halton Housing Trust to secure HCA funding to bring 8 empty homes back into use through acquisition. Additional resources would be needed to take a more pro active approach.

A survey of owners of long term empty private sector homes undertaken in 2009 revealed that around 41% required investment to bring them back into use, although in the majority of cases improvement or modernisation work was already underway. The majority of respondents indicated that they anticipated that the property would be occupied within a 12 month period, only 10% thought it would still be empty due to either the level of work required or current market conditions.

The number of long term vacant properties in the social housing stock varies greatly from year to year as illustrated above. However, the numbers are heavily influenced by the current state of play with regard to regeneration programmes. For example, the increase in 2011 is due largely to the number of properties awaiting demolition in Castlefields as part of the ten year Masterplan. Consequently, the number of social housing properties empty for more than 6 months, which under normal circumstances represents less than 1% of the total social housing stock, is not a cause for concern.

New housing

Figure 3.6 illustrates the number of newly built properties in the Borough as reported in Housing Flows Reconciliation returns. The chart demonstrates the impact of the recent economic downturn on new build completions, which have fallen by over 500% on peak levels in 2005/06 and fall way below the former target of 500 per annum set out in the now defunct North West Regional Spatial Strategy.

Figure 3.6 – New build completions 2000 onwards

Source: DCLG Housing Flows Reconciliation returns

The chart also demonstrates growth in social housing developments over recent years, part funded by the Homes and Communities Agency's (HCA) National Affordable Development Programme. Registered Providers in Halton have agreed their development programmes with the HCA for the four year period 2011 to 2015, resulting in the following planned new developments.

| | 1 Bed Flat | 2 Bed Flat | 2 Bed Bungalow | 2 Bed House | 3 Bed House | Total |
|--------------|-------------------|-------------------|-----------------------|--------------------|--------------------|--------------|
| Runcorn | 0 | 38 | 7 | 26 | 48 | 119 |
| Widnes | 39 | 116 | 5 | 11 | 30 | 201 |
| Total | 39 | 154 | 12 | 37 | 78 | 320 |

In addition to the above, a new 47 unit extra care scheme at Naughton Fields, Liverpool Road, Widnes funded from 2008/11 National Affordable Housing Programme has recently been developed.

Halton's Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment allows us to forecast the number of total expected completions for Runcorn and Widnes for the four years to 2016/17. Note that at this stage tenure is unknown so these figures include both market and affordable anticipated housing development.

| | Approx Completed Units 2013/14 | Approx Completed Units 2014/15 | Approx Completed Units 2015/16 | Approx Completed Units 2016/17 |
|---------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Runcorn | 232 | 502 | 688 | 560 |
| Widnes | 338 | 328 | 441 | 165 |

The Council is keen to fulfil its role in facilitating new housing development through the Local Development Framework and has prepared a comprehensive list of potential housing development sites that are likely to come forward over the next 15 years. These are contained in a document called the Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment, which is updated annually. This can be viewed at <http://www3.halton.gov.uk/environmentandplanning/planning/294413/>.

The Housing Market

House prices

Average house prices in Halton are lower than regional averages and significantly lower than national averages as illustrated in figure 3.7. Based on provisional estimates at quarter 3 2012 the average house price in Halton was £133,550 which was £23,693 lower than the North West average.

Figure 3.7 – Average house prices

Source: Land Registry

Historically house prices in Halton along with those in Knowsley have tended to be the lowest in the Liverpool City Region. However latest figures (quarter 3 2012) suggest that local average house prices have overtaken Knowsley and St Helens and are more on a par with Liverpool as shown in Figure 3.8.

Figure 3.8 – Sub regional comparison of average house prices (Quarter 3 2012)

In common with the regional and national position, the economic downturn and consequential housing market conditions has led to a dramatic decrease in the number of sales as demonstrated by figure 3.9, declining by almost 60% between the peak at quarter 3 2007 and the corresponding quarter in 2011.

Figure 3.9 – Average sales

Source: Land Registry

Analysis at ward level at figure 3.10 reveals the disparity in house prices across the Borough. Average house prices in Daresbury and Birchfield which have a high proportion of new build, executive style homes are almost four times as much as those in the area with the lowest average house price in quarter 3 2011 (Halton Lea). Average house prices in wards containing New Town estates and those with a high proportion of smaller terraces and private rented stock (e.g. Appleton and Mersey) are unsurprisingly lower.

Figure 3.10 – Average House Prices Quarter 3 2011

Source: Land Registry

Rent levels

The Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment (SHMA) used CORE data on new social lettings and Valuation Office Data to compare the relative rent levels in the social and private rented stock. Figure 3.11 illustrates this differential.

Figure 3.11 – Average monthly private and social rent levels 2009/10

As shown, social rents were found to equate to around 58% of prevailing market rents, indicating the potential impact of the new affordable rent regime which, if rents are raised to the full 80% threshold, would see the average monthly rent for a 3 bedroom social rented property rise to around £460 per month. The SHMA also found that rent levels in the social housing sector were increasing at a much faster rate (up by around 27% on 2004/05 levels) than private rents, which had remained relatively static over the same period.

Affordability

The Halton Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011 collected a range of information regarding household financial circumstances relevant to their ability to afford market housing in order to assess the level of annual affordable housing need. In summary, the findings were that:

- Average gross household income was £25,662 with a much lower median income level of £18,954.

- Average household savings were £3,756 (taking into account non mortgage debts) but again the median was much lower at £290.
- Around a third of households were in debt and a further quarter had no savings.
- Average equity was £95,138 and 1,588 households were in negative equity.
- An estimated 4,307 new households were likely to form in the next two years.
- Around 40% of these had an income of less than £10,000 and 81% less than £20,000.

Using the affordability criteria below, the survey found that around 32% of households were unable to afford home ownership. When taking into account the need for a 20% deposit requirement this figure increased to 46.5%.

“Assessing whether a household can afford home ownership - A household is considered able to afford to buy a home if the residual cost is no more than 3.5 times the gross household income. The residual cost is calculated by deducting any capital that is available for use towards home ownership (e.g. savings or equity) from the overall cost of the home.”

Using the Government recommended model which takes into account backlog and newly arising need and likely future supply, the survey assessed a need for 891 affordable homes per annum for the next five years, 65% for social/affordable rent and the remaining 35% split between intermediate rent, shared ownership and low cost home ownership. This figure represents a significant increase on the 2006 Housing Needs Survey which estimated a need at that time for 176 affordable homes per annum, clearly demonstrating the impact that the economic downturn has had on the housing market. However, given an overall average target of 552 new homes within Halton’s Core Strategy delivery of 891 affordable homes per annum appears unrealistic.

Analysis of median house prices compared to average incomes reveals that Halton has an affordability ratio of 4.8, lower than the regional ratio of 5.2 and significantly lower than the national affordability ratio of 7.0. Figure 3.12 below illustrates how the affordability ratio has increased since the house price boom at the turn of the century.

Figure 3.12 – House price to income affordability ratio

The SHMA also estimated the income levels required to access two bedroomed accommodation in the owner occupied, private rented and social rented sectors without subsidy in Runcorn and Widnes, with the results shown in figure 3.13.

Figure 3.13 – Indicative income required to purchase/rent without subsidy

Supply and Demand for housing

Information on the supply and demand for social housing can be obtained from the annual English Local Authority Statistics on Housing (formerly Housing Strategy Statistical Appendix) which collects data on the number of people on the Council’s waiting list and the number of homes available for letting during the year. Figure 3.14 below illustrates the widening gap between the number of people registered for social housing and the total available lettings during the year, indicating the impact of recent housing market conditions on mobility within the sector.

Figure 3.14 – Supply and demand for social housing

Further analysis of the waiting list reveals the need for smaller one and two bedroom accommodation, as illustrated in figure 3.15 below. This is reflective of smaller household sizes and the number of single and couple households on the waiting list. The drop in the number of applications in 2012 as shown in the graph below reflects the fact that at the time the data was collected Halton Housing Trust was midway through a re-registration exercise in preparation for the move to Choice Based Lettings.

Figure 3.15 – Housing waiting list – number of bedrooms required Source: ELASH/HSSA returns - NB
Prior to 2005 data for 1 and 2 beds was combined.

The Strategic Housing Market Assessment collected information on tenure aspirations and expectations of existing and concealed households who indicated that they needed or were likely to move within the next two years.

Figure 3.16 – Aspirations and expectations of households looking to move

The results, illustrated in figure 3.16, reveal the strength of demand for home ownership but the much lower expectation that this would be attained, particularly from concealed households. Social housing was also in demand but households felt that this was more attainable. There was relatively low demand for private rented housing although the responses to the question of expectation reveal the extent to which the private rented sector is seen as attainable and is to some extent “plugging the gap” in meeting housing need. The survey revealed little demand for shared ownership, however, the relative scarcity of intermediate housing in Halton could have had a bearing on this.

Perhaps unsurprisingly there was a high level of demand for three or four bedroomed detached or semi detached housing amongst existing households. Three quarters of existing households expected to move within Halton with the Birchfield/Farnworth/Halton View area reported as the most popular location.

Only 55% of concealed households expected to move within Halton and while demand was also high for a detached or semi detached house, 56% expected that they would move to a flat or maisonette with similar proportions willing to accept one bedroom accommodation.

Housing Conditions

Decent Homes

The Decent Homes Standard uses four broad criteria to assess housing conditions, that is that housing should:

- A - be above the legal minimum standard for housing (measured by the presence of category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System), and
- B - be in a reasonable state of repair, and
- C - have reasonably modern facilities (such as kitchens and bathrooms) and services, and
- D - provide a reasonable degree of thermal comfort (effective insulation and efficient heating).

Just over a quarter (26.2%) of private sector dwellings in Halton failed the Decency Standard at the time of the latest Private Sector Stock Condition Survey, equating to 10,500 dwellings. This was significantly lower than the national rate of 36.3% (English House Condition Survey 2006) and the North West rate of 37% (“Establishing a Decency Baseline for the Private Sector in the North West”). The most common reason for failing the Standard was due to a poor degree of thermal comfort affecting over half of non decent properties followed by the need for repair and the presence of a Category 1 hazard. Only 300 properties failed due to a lack of modern facilities. This is illustrated in figure 3.17 which gives a comparison of the proportions failing the standard for each reason in the owner occupied and private rented stock and with national figures from the English House Condition Survey 2006.

Figure 3.17 – Proportion of homes failing the decent homes standard by reason for failure

The total cost to remedy each criteria is as follows:

- Category 1 hazards - £21 million
- In need of repair - £18 million
- Lacking modern facilities - £3 million
- Thermal comfort - £9 million

Higher rates of non decency are found in Runcorn than Widnes (27.8% compared to 24.5%) with pre 1919 terraced stock more likely to be affected.

Around 29% of vulnerable households living in the private rented sector were found to live in non decent homes, equating to 4,420 households, with vulnerable households living in Runcorn more likely to be living in non decent homes than those in Widnes. Other households that were more likely to live in non decent homes include households with an income of under £10,000 (35%) and those where the head of household is under 25 (41%).

Halton Borough Council collects annual data from Registered Providers related to the condition of their stock. Data for 2011 reveals that all social housing stock in Halton met the Decent Homes Standard and none contained category 1 hazards under the Housing, Health and Safety Rating System. It can, therefore, be concluded that the social housing stock in Halton is in good condition.

Category 1 hazards

The Housing, Health and Safety Rating System replaced the Fitness Standard in 2004, as the principal method of assessing housing standards for local authorities. It adopts a risk based scoring approach which measures the likelihood and severity of certain hazards occurring within the home, with those properties scoring above a certain threshold deemed to contain Category 1 hazards.

The Halton Stock Condition Survey found that 4,400 dwellings contained Category 1 hazards with 3,900 being houses and an estimated 500 flats. This represents 11% of the private sector stock which is significantly lower than the national and regional figure (23.5% and 44% respectively).

Almost two thirds of all category 1 hazards identified by the survey were attributable to excess cold with falls on the level and falls on stairs being the second and third most common hazard. Figure 3.18 shows the results of the survey in relation to all Category 1 hazards.

Figure 3.18 – Reason for category 1 hazards in private properties

The survey found that Category 1 hazards are more prevalent in terraced houses (47% of terraced stock) and flats (32% of flats) and that the proportion of properties containing Category 1 hazards increases according to the age band of the dwelling, with 26% of pre 1919 dwellings containing Category 1 hazards compared to 3% of dwellings built post 1990.

A higher rate of Category 1 hazards was found in Runcorn than Widnes (12% compared to 10%). Higher rates were also found in dwellings occupied by households with an income under £10,000 (15%), on benefit (14%), where the head of household is under 25 (23.5%) or over 65 (12%) and for households containing someone with a disability (13%).

Figure 3.19 illustrates the cost of remedying Category 1 hazards, ranging from a total cost of £20 million, averaging £4,800 per dwelling, just to remedy the hazards to £80 million for comprehensive repair to all dwellings containing Category 1 hazards, at an average of £17,900 per dwelling. Although total costs to remedy hazards in the private rented sector are lower, the average cost per dwelling just to remedy category 1 hazards at £6,200 is higher than for owner occupied properties at £4,400 per dwelling.

Figure 3.19 – Cost to remedy category 1 hazards

Energy efficiency

The Standard Assessment Procedure (SAP) uses a scale of 1 to 100 to assess the relative energy efficiency of dwellings with higher ratings indicating higher levels of energy efficiency. The Private Sector Stock Condition Survey undertaken in 2009 found that on average energy efficiency levels in the private stock (owner occupied and rented) were higher than the national and regional averages (Average SAP rating of 56 in Halton compared to 49 and 51 respectively). It found that there had been a significant improvement on the average SAP rating of 48 recorded by the previous Stock Condition Survey undertaken in 2003, indicating substantial improvements in the energy efficiency of the stock in the intervening period.

Figure 3.20 shows the distribution of SAP ratings for each tenure and compares these with the national distribution using data from the English House Condition Survey 2009.

Figure 3.20 – Distribution of SAP ratings in the private sector

The least energy efficient dwellings are, unsurprisingly, pre 1919 terraces and the most energy efficient dwellings are post 1990 purpose built flats. There was no difference between SAP ratings for Runcorn than those for Widnes.

National Indicator 187 measured the proportion of households on an income related benefit living in dwellings with SAP ratings below 35 and 65 and above. The last survey completed found that 6.8% of households in receipt of an income related benefit live in a dwelling with a SAP rating below 35 and that 24.2% live in a dwelling with a SAP rating of 65 and over.

Figure 3.21 illustrates the improvements that would be necessary to bring all private sector homes up to standard. As shown, virtually all 40,100 properties in the sector would benefit from some type of improvement with loft insulation (whether full or top up) required to around 97% of dwellings to bring up to current recommended levels of 270mm. Obviously, not all of these dwellings would need or qualify for financial support to carry out these improvements but, as an indication, the total cost of installing all these measures is £54.3 million, equating to an average of £1,350 per dwelling.

Figure 3.21 – Energy efficiency measures needed (owner occupiers and private rented)

Social Housing

All social rented housing in Halton met the Decent Homes Standard by the target date of 2010. Following this Registered Providers have continued to invest significant sums in the condition of their housing stock and the communities they serve. This includes:

Halton Housing Trust delivered on its commitment to bring all former council housing stock up to the Decent Homes Standard 12 months ahead of the Government's 2010 target date. Since that time the Trust has developed a comprehensive neighbourhood investment programme which will see £262 million investment in the former Council stock between 2009 and 2015 and has built its first new affordable homes in the Borough.

Other Registered Providers have also invested heavily in their stock in Halton on a range of improvement and cyclical works. Riverside, for example, has invested around £1.7 million each year on its stock. This level of investment, which is informed by stock condition data plus local intelligence and consultation with local residents, is set to continue and is in addition to new affordable housing provision at Murdishaw and Halton Brook.

As well as investing in the physical condition of the stock, Registered Providers are also major players in community investment, awarding funding for projects developed and delivered by and for local communities.

Investment to improve the energy efficiency of housing stock – including provision of external wall insulation on hard to treat properties in Halton Brook and Castlefields and air and ground source heat pumps in Runcorn. These schemes have been made possible through the Government's Carbon Emissions Savings Project and Community Energy Reduction Target. The Council is working with Registered Providers to maximise the opportunities provided by the Energy Company Obligation which has replaced these schemes.

Provision of financial support services for tenants – even before the advent of welfare reform Registered Providers offered support to their tenants to help them manage their household budgets and reduce debt. In most cases these services have been enhanced in the light of welfare reform. This is explored later in this document.

Registered Providers in Halton have actively engaged with the development and ongoing implementation of the Choice Based Lettings service, including contributing to the cost of running the local service which is managed by Halton Housing Trust.

Castlefields Regeneration

The Castlefields Regeneration Partnership was established in 2002 to tackle serious decline and deprivation on the Castlefields New Town estate in Runcorn. Founding partners include local residents, Halton Borough Council, the Homes and Communities Agency (HCA), Liverpool Housing Trust (LHT) and Plus Dane Group. As it has embraced new opportunities the partnership has grown to include NHS Halton & St Helens, partner contractors Cruden Construction and Seddon, John McCall architects, Sutcliffe engineers, Bradley Demolition, developer Keepmoat, local artists and the business community.

Over its ten year lifespan, 1,203 deck access units have been demolished, with a further 80 units programmed for demolition in 2012. These have been replaced by 747 new build homes, with 80 new homes currently under construction and a further 400 homes planned over coming years. In December 2011 the 1st phase of the Village Square opened with completion of new shops and flats, this was followed in March 2012 with the opening of a new Community Centre and extensive public realm. A new health centre was opened in May 2012, with a formal grand opening in the summer 2012. Other environmental improvements continue to be delivered within the neighbourhood. A first phase of intervention covering a proportion of the 500 two-storey system built houses was announced in March 2012, this will include external wall and roof cladding to improve the energy efficiency of the properties and the visual amenity of the neighbourhood.

This year, residents will determine priorities for the next ten years and create a continuing action plan. The partnership is committed to the long-term future of Castlefields and in 2012 will deliver a significant public art commission, develop the first private housing for outright sale and introduce innovative energy efficiency technologies to existing homes.

The Partnership is naturally proud of its achievements in transforming the once low demand area of Castlefields to an area of choice for homeseekers and its efforts have been rewarded with a Housing Excellence Award for Best Partnership of 2012. In addition, Castlefields was shortlisted for the Royal Institute of Chartered Surveyors North West Award for the Village Square development and the UK Housing Award for Partnership of the Year.

The Private Rented Sector

As mentioned earlier in this document, the private rented sector is the fastest growing housing sector in Halton and in the current economic climate is to an extent filling the gap in meeting housing needs as a result of limited mortgage availability and reduced mobility in the social housing sector. This is borne out by the Strategic Housing Market Assessment, which found that a much higher proportion of households expected that their next move would be to privately rented accommodation than expressed the sector as their tenure of choice.

Despite this growth it must be remembered that private rented housing still forms only a small proportion of the housing stock when compared to other areas as demonstrated in figure 3.2 earlier in this document with an estimated 5,000 properties in Halton owned by private landlords.

The vast majority of landlords are responsible and the Council will continue to develop pro active working relationships with those landlords who wish to improve the standard of their properties and management approaches through voluntary accreditation (described below).

However, other than for certain categories of Houses in Multiple Occupation (of which there are very few in Halton) the sector is largely unregulated. Evidence from the Private Sector Stock Condition Survey reveals that private tenants are more likely to live in a property containing a Category 1 hazard than owner occupiers (17% of private rented compared to 10% of owner occupied housing) and that a third of private tenants live in homes which do not meet the Decency Standard compared to a quarter of owner occupiers.

Levels of energy efficiency are also lower in the sector with average SAP ratings of 53 compared to 57 for owner occupied housing. The Energy Act 2011 states that by April 2016 private landlords cannot unreasonably refuse requests from their tenants for consent to have energy efficiency

improvements carried out where financial support is available for example through the Green Deal or Energy Company Obligation. The Act further requires that by April 2018 all privately rented properties should be brought up to minimum standards of energy efficiency (likely to be set at Energy Performance Certificate rating E).

In addition, the termination of an Assured Shorthold Tenancy was the second highest reason for homelessness in the Borough in 2011/12, the numbers having trebled on the previous year, which is in part likely to be as a result of changes to the Local Housing Allowance introduced as part of the current agenda of welfare reform.

The Localism Act 2011 gave local authorities the power to discharge their statutory homelessness duty through an offer of private rented accommodation. At the time of writing the Council has yet to consider its position on this, however, if this policy is adopted locally the accommodation offered will, in accordance with Government Guidance, at least meet suitability standards.

In common with many other local authorities, the Council takes a dual approach to the private rented sector with, on the one hand, the accreditation scheme rewarding “responsible” landlords while on the other the Council uses its enforcement powers to take action against less scrupulous landlords whose properties do not meet a satisfactory standard. These two approaches are described in more detail below.

Landlord Accreditation Scheme

Halton’s Landlord Accreditation Scheme has been running for approximately seven years. It is a free and voluntary scheme which offers a range of benefits to qualifying landlords including fast tracking of benefit applications, insurance discounts, seminar invitations and general guidance and support. Landlords must meet required minimum standards to be eligible for accreditation covering the condition of their properties and management standards.

56 landlords have applied for accreditation covering 308 properties out of a total of around 5,000 in the sector. Out of these 34 landlords have reached the required standards to be accredited. A database of known private landlords with properties in Halton has been compiled and these are written to periodically to encourage them to seek accreditation. The scheme is also publicised in newsletters and the Council’s website.

All known landlords are invited to a quarterly Landlords’ Forum which provides opportunity for formal discussion on a wide range of relevant issues and for landlords to network and informally discuss issues of common interest. Forum meetings are generally well attended and provoke lively discussion and interesting debate.

Enforcement

Local authorities have a range of powers at their disposal to deal with poor conditions and nuisance in the private rented sector. Halton’s Environmental Services team deal with a wide range of enforcement issues, not just housing, including noise nuisance and air and environmental quality. On receiving a complaint from a private tenant, the team will carry out an inspection of the property and if it is found to be below the minimum standard will contact the landlord to request that the remedial works are carried out. In most cases this informal approach works as the landlord quickly responds to the request. However, in some isolated cases, enforcement action, usually involving issuing statutory compliance notices under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, is necessary.

Scrutiny Review into the Private Rented Sector

In 2011 elected members from the Safer Halton Policy and Performance Board undertook a scrutiny review into the Private Rented Sector. The review was prompted by a number of complaints of anti social behaviour from private sector tenants and what was felt to be an inadequate response from absentee private landlords.

Members made a number of recommendations including piloting a more pro active approach to the sector, promoting Council services to tenants and landlords in those areas, encouraging landlords to register contact details and apply to join the accreditation scheme and tenants to report any issues with their property to the Council so that they can be taken up with the landlord and, where necessary, enforcement action taken.

An officer working group has been set up to take forward the recommendations. The Council has noted with interest the development of neighbourhood and borough wide mandatory licensing schemes in various parts of the country. The Council will monitor how these schemes proceed to inform any future policy development.

Part Four – Halton’s People

Overview

Population

The latest ONS mid year population estimates (2010) indicate that there are 119,300 people resident in the Borough. Halton has experienced population growth since 2006 as a result of a combination of higher levels of natural change (more births than deaths) which have outweighed lower (albeit sustained) levels of net out migration. Another factor in this may have been the delivery of larger, more aspirational housing at Upton Rocks in Widnes and Sandymoor in Runcorn which has helped to enhance the housing offer at the upper end of the scale and attracted new residents who may not otherwise have moved to the area.

The overall population is projected to grow to 121,400 by 2018 and 122,900 by 2023 (4% on the latest estimates from 2008) although this growth is lower than the regional and national growth projections of 5% and 11% respectively.

Age

Comparison of the age profile of Halton residents with regional and national figures shows a population skewed towards younger people as illustrated in figure 4.1. For example, an estimated 19% of Halton’s residents are under the age of 15 compared to 17.5% regionally and nationally and there are lower proportions of people aged 75 and over. This relatively young population structure is partly as a consequence of the movement of young families to the Runcorn New Town estates. However, these first generation New Town residents are getting older and are expected to reach retirement age in the period to 2026.

Figure 4.1 – Age profile of the population

Data from the Office of National Statistics shows the projected change in the population by age band to 2023, as below:

- Younger people (0 - 14 year olds) - population projected to grow by 7% (2008 - 2023)
- Working age (16 - 64 year olds) - population projected to decline by 6% (2008 - 2023)
- Older people (65+) - population projected to grow by 43% from 16,900 in 2008 to 24,200 in 2023

Of particular significance to housing provision is the projected growth in the older population. The housing needs of older people will be explored in more detail later in this evidence paper.

Ethnicity

The 2010 Strategic Housing Market Assessment confirmed that Halton has a very small black and minority ethnic (BME) population with 97.6% of households describing themselves as White British. Although the number of respondents was too small to produce wholly reliable results the survey does suggest a small growth in the White Other population, which might be expected as a result of the accession of new member states into the European Union over recent years and also of Mixed Race populations. The survey also found that as a whole BME households are:

- typically larger than households headed by a White British/Irish person (an average of 2.74 people compared to 2.37 within the White population);
- less likely to rent accommodation (both social and private) and are far more likely than average to be owner occupiers with a mortgage (59% compared to 39% for White households);
- notably less likely than White households to contain a household member with a support need;

- record an average household income of £33,480 which is higher than the comparative figure for White households of £25,512. However, it should be noted that there are a greater proportion of working age BME households in Halton than there are White working age households.

It is important to note that the response to the survey from BME households was small (46 responses) and so the above findings should be treated with a degree of caution, however, the last Housing Needs Survey in 2006 also recorded similar findings.

Households

At 2011 there were 53,300 households living in Halton, representing a 11% increase since the 2001 Census and an 16% increase since the 1991 Census. Figure 4.2 below illustrates the dramatic increase. While recent population growth will be a factor in this increase, the main reason is a fall in household size.

Figure 4.2 – Number of households in Halton

The SHMA found that the overall average household size in the Borough was 2.4 persons but that there were differences according to tenure as illustrated in figure 4.3 below.

Figure 4.3 – Average number of people in household by tenure

Analysis of household composition as illustrated in figure 4.4 emphasises the differences between each tenure. Of particular interest is the fact that 45% of households living in social housing are non pensioner single or couple households who, if living in accommodation with two or more bedrooms and claiming Housing Benefit, are likely to be affected by the underoccupation penalty as part of the forthcoming welfare reforms. It is also interesting to note the disproportionate amount of families with children, particularly lone parent households, living in the private rented sector where, as we have already seen, housing conditions tend to be the poorest.

Figure 4.4 – Household composition by tenure

Economic analysis

Deprivation

Halton is ranked 27th most deprived area out of 326 local authority areas according to the 2010 Indices of Multiple Deprivation. This has worsened slightly from a rank of 29th from the IMD 2007 although there has been little change in the deprivation score.

The most deprived ward in Halton is Windmill Hill, while the least deprived ward in Halton is Birchfield. 26% of Halton's population live in areas that fall in the top 10% most deprived nationally, this is more than the national figure (10%) but lower than the Liverpool City Region figure (31%).

The ward with the most improved average IMD score between 2007 and 2010 in Halton (therefore the largest decrease in deprivation) is Halton Lea. Halton Castle, Windmill Hill and Halton Lea have seen the largest improvements in the Barriers to Housing and Income domain. The wards with the highest ranking for Barriers to Housing domain are Beechwood, Daresbury and Heath which is presumably indicative of a lack of affordable housing, particularly in the first two areas.

Unemployment

Halton continues to have high levels of unemployment compared to regional and national rates. Latest figures show that 18.7% of the resident working age population claim out of work benefits, compared to 15% for the North West and 11.9% nationally (Feb 2012). Employment Support Allowance and Incapacity Benefit make up the largest proportion of these (10.3% of the working age population) followed by Job Seekers Allowance (5.8%).

12.2% of 18-24 year olds claim Job Seekers Allowance, a third of whom have been claiming for over 6 months.

Figure 4.5 below uses data from the SHMA to illustrate the economic status of the household reference person living within each tenure. As might be expected, the majority of housing owned without a mortgage is occupied by retired people and a third of social housing tenants are retired. The chart also shows the high proportions of unemployed people living in rented accommodation.

Figure 4.5 – Economic status of household reference person by tenure

Income

The SHMA used data from the Annual Survey of Hours and Earnings for 2004 and 2009 to assess the median income of residents in full time employment. The results, illustrated in figure 4.6 below, show the gap between annual earnings of Halton residents and those living in the North West and Great Britain.

Figure 4.6 – Annual gross income of full time employed residents 2004 and 2009 – median income (SHMA)

More recent data from the Office for National Statistics allows us to compare the median weekly gross pay for full time workers in 2012 with neighbouring local authorities. The results, illustrated in figure 4.7 reveals the extent to which the Borough lags behind surrounding areas.

Figure 4.7 – Median weekly gross income 2012 (full time workers) (ONS)

Health and Housing

The links between health and housing are wide ranging and well documented. Improving housing conditions and the energy efficiency of housing can bring numerous health benefits as highlighted in the 2010 Marmot Review of Health Inequalities “Fair Society, Healthy Lives”. This study found that countries with more energy efficient housing have fewer excess winter deaths and that there is a strong relationship between cold housing and cardio vascular and respiratory disease. For example, it found that children living in cold homes are more than twice as likely to suffer from a variety of respiratory problems than children living in warm homes and that cold housing negatively affects children’s educational attainment, emotional well being and resilience to illnesses.

The relationship between health and housing is not just confined to the energy efficiency of housing. The removal of hazards in a property can help to reduce the number of accidents in the home, in turn removing the need for unnecessary hospital admissions and surgery and maintaining the independence of the occupier.

There are also links between housing and mental health. For example, fuel poverty, poor quality housing and overcrowding are associated with stress, anxiety, depression and poor mental health and studies have shown a relationship between insecurity of tenure and poor mental health.

Need for adaptations

The SHMA found that an estimated 15,104 households in Halton contained someone with a support need, representing 29% of all households in the Borough. People with a walking difficulty were the most predominant group, affecting 7,902 households (15% of all households) as shown in figure 4.8.

Figure 4.8 – Households containing someone with a support need

Respondents were asked to indicate whether there was a need for adaptations to their existing accommodation or a need for additional support services, with the results illustrated in figure 4.9 below. The results show requirements for a wide range of adaptations or support with help maintaining the home, provision of a level access shower and other bathroom/toilet alterations being

the most common. In the social rented sector the Council, working in partnership with Registered Providers, has been successful in clearing the backlog of requests for adaptations that had built up over a number of years. However there remains a level of need in the owner occupied and private rented stock although the figures shown in 4.8 below need to be treated with a degree of caution since they are based on survey respondents' assessment of need rather than an assessment by a qualified Occupational Therapist.

Figure 4.9 – Adaptations/support services needed

Demand for supported housing

The SHMA collected information about the moving intentions of households and, in particular, asked respondents who were seeking a move whether they would be seeking supported housing. The vast majority (over 90%) indicated that they would not, however, those that did anticipate moving to supported housing expressed a preference for sheltered housing with a warden, as indicated in figure 4.10.

Figure 4.10 – Demand for supported housing

These figures must be viewed with some caution as whilst the postal survey did provide definitions of the different types of housing, the subtle differences may not have been fully understood. It is interesting to note, however, that demand for extra care accommodation evidenced through the SHMA, at 154, is significantly higher than that found by the last Housing Needs Survey undertaken in 2006, perhaps reflecting a growing awareness of this type of supported housing. This is not dissimilar to the estimate produced in 2008 by Tribal Consulting which looked at the potential demand for extra care based on care homes admissions and those in receipt of significant community care packages.

The Tribal study estimated an immediate demand for 137 additional units of extra care, rising to 196 in 2017. The study was based on 2008 based population projections which have turned out to underestimate the numbers of older people in Halton compared to the 2011 based population forecasts.

Updating the population assumptions in the Tribal study produces a revised demand estimate of 199 units in 2011, rising to 272 in 2021, which reduce to 112 and 185 when existing extra care provision is netted off.

Fuel Poverty

The current definition of fuel poverty deems that a household is in fuel poverty if it must spend more than 10% of its income on maintaining a satisfactory heating regime. Whether a household is in fuel poverty or not is determined by the interaction of a number of factors, notably:

- The energy efficiency of the property;
- The cost of energy;
- Household income;
- The size of the property relative to the number of adults in the household.

Latest figures from the Department of Energy and Climate Change (2010) suggest that approximately 18.1% of households in Halton are in fuel poverty, equating to 9,420 households. This proportion is lower than the regional figure but higher than national levels, as illustrated in figure 4.11, which also shows the steep rise in the proportions of households in fuel poverty from 2008 to 2009, equating to over 1,800 households. This is likely to be due to the impact of rising fuel costs at a time when income levels have remained static, or in some cases fallen. Current levels are likely to be higher still due to significant increases in fuel costs since 2009.

Figure 4.11 – Proportion of households in fuel poverty (DECC)

The geographical distribution of fuel poverty reveals that low value areas containing high proportions of private sector housing (e.g. Appleton, Ditton and parts of Heath, Kingsway and Mersey wards) have higher levels of fuel poverty (between 25% and 35% of households). It is interesting to note that despite relatively lower income levels, levels of fuel poverty in the Runcorn New Town estates are not as high as might be expected. This is likely to be due to the relative age of the housing stock and the impact of improvement programmes to bring homes up to the Decent Homes Standard.

Space issues

Overcrowding

Findings from the Halton SHMA indicate that around 915 households (1.7% of all households) are classed as overcrowded using the bedroom standard (the most commonly accepted method of assessing overcrowding). Data from the Survey of English Housing (SEH) suggests that nationally levels of overcrowding stand at 3.0%.

There are a disproportionate number of households classed as overcrowded living in rented accommodation as shown in figure 4.12 below, where proportions exceed 3% of households in both social rented and private rented sectors compared to less than 1% of owner occupied accommodation.

Figure 4.12 – Number of households living in overcrowded accommodation

Underoccupation

Figure 4.13 illustrates the number of people underoccupying their accommodation by at least one bedroom (using the bedroom standard) by tenure and by type of household. Underoccupancy levels are around 54% for owner occupied and social rented stock but are higher (62%) for households living in the private rented sector.

Figure 4.13 – Underoccupancy levels (by 1 or more bedrooms)

As might be expected, single person and couple households are more likely to underoccupy their accommodation, however, it is interesting to note that 5,679 non pensioner households underoccupy social rented accommodation. It is likely that a sizeable proportion of these households claim Housing Benefit and will, therefore, lose some of this benefit as a result of the underoccupancy penalty to be introduced in April 2013 as part of the Welfare Reform Act.

Impact of welfare reform

Part two of this evidence paper described the changes to Housing Benefit and Local Housing Allowance as a result of the Welfare Reform Act. Using information from the Council's Housing Benefit department and the SHMA it is possible to estimate the number of households who will be affected by the changes, as follows:

| Change | Estimated number of households affected | Extent of impact |
|---|--|--|
| Introduction of Universal Credit | 104 cases identified by HB as to be potentially "capped" | Total payments capped at £26,000 – loss of income for some households very significant (as much as £500 per week) Housing Benefit is first to be capped Payments made direct to claimant – possible increase in rent arrears and homelessness. Monthly payments could cause budgeting issues for households |
| Replacement of Disability Living Allowance with | It is estimated that 10,600 Halton residents claim DLA | The change to PIP will involve a reduction in the numbers of those receiving financial assistance. Claimants could be put off by face to face interview. Those receiving low rate care |

| | | |
|---|--|---|
| Personal Independence Payment (PIP) | | element unlikely to qualify. Losing DLA will result in loss of disability premiums awarded as part of other benefits. |
| Replacement of Incapacity Benefit with Employment Support Allowance | Exact numbers are unknown but Halton has a disproportionate amount of people claiming Incapacity Benefit | ESA is designed to reduce the number of people who are classified as unable to work. A large proportion of appeals to date have been successful, however, there is a very long wait for appeals (up to 12 months) |
| Extension of the Single Room Rent Allowance to 35 | 234 | £37.61 reduction in weekly LHA entitlement |
| Underoccupancy penalty | Underoccupying by 1 bed = 1 bed Underoccupying by 2+ beds = 561 Total households affected = 2,457 | Those under-occupying their social housing property by one-bedroom to lose 14% of their HB and those under-occupying by two or more bedrooms to lose 25%. |

The figures above show the extent to which Halton's households are likely to be impacted by welfare reforms. The implications of these changes for some of Halton's households and for the organisations who support them are likely to be significant. The expected impacts include an increase in rent arrears as households struggle to balance household budgets which could, in turn, put pressure on landlords to take action in order to minimise a build up of arrears. Registered Providers in Halton have been pro active in engaging with tenants who are likely to be affected and in many cases have expanded their in house financial support services available to ensure that their tenants are fully prepared for the changes.

There are also potential impacts for Council services resulting from a potential increase in homelessness applications and need for temporary accommodation including Bed and Breakfast (the costs of which are considered on the next page) and in demand for welfare benefits advice.

The impacts are likely to be further compounded by the localisation of Council Tax from April 2013 which will require some households who previously received 100% Council Tax benefit to make a contribution to accommodate a 10% reduction in Government funding and the transfer of the Social Fund from Department for Work and Pensions to local Councils which will also reduce the amount of funding available for Crisis Loans and Community Care Grants. The scheme will also replace cash payments to claimants with alternative forms of payment e.g. vouchers.

Much work has been undertaken locally by Registered Providers to ensure that their tenants are prepared for welfare reform and to minimise the potential impacts. Examples of the measures being undertaken by Providers is given below.

- Targeted engagement with affected households including written correspondence and home visits;
- Universal information campaigns in local offices, newsletters and on websites;
- Strengthening financial inclusion teams and providing training for other housing staff in basic welfare advice;
- Providing incentives for affected tenants to downsize e.g. to cover moving costs;
- Incentivising sustainable payment methods such as direct debit and maintenance of clear rent accounts;
- Provide support, assistance and guidance to tenants who wish to move to the private rented sector or take in a lodger;
- Redesignation of existing stock where this is appropriate;
- Changes to allocation and local lettings policies – including changing the bedroom criteria to mirror HB regulations and waiving the policy to restrict transfers for tenants in rent arrears where these have built up as a result of welfare reform;
- Implementing income and expenditure assessments for new tenants to ensure they can afford rental payments on offered property;
- Providing pre tenancy workshops for new tenants and other money management courses;
- Referrals for intensive debt advice for high risk tenants.

While each Provider has implemented a slightly different package of measures there has been local co-ordination and consideration of the different approaches through the Halton Housing Partnership (welfare reform is a standing item on the agenda) the Strategic Housing Visioning Group (welfare reform is one of the the 3 key priorities for this group) and a dedicated welfare reform practitioner group chaired by Riverside. This has enabled partners to share best practice, ensure consistent messages are relayed to Halton residents and identify opportunities for efficient and effective joint working.

The impacts of welfare reform will continue to be monitored through these groups and will be used to inform reviews of this Strategy going forward.

Homelessness

Levels of homelessness

In common with other local authority areas, homelessness in Halton is on the increase. In 2011/12, 154 households applied to the authority as homeless compared to 78 for the whole of 2010/11. Of these 154 households, 64 were found to be unintentionally homeless and in priority need compared to 37 in 2010/11. Almost half of those accepted as statutorily homeless in 2011/12 were single women with at least one child and 35% in this period were between the ages of 16 and 24. Generally only a small number of ethnic minority households apply as homeless (4 in 2011/12), however, this is in keeping with the low proportions of ethnic minorities living in Halton.

Trends

Figure 4.14 illustrates changes in levels of homelessness over the last 5 years. It shows how homelessness has increased in 2011/12 compared with the previous year but also how 2010/11 had seen a very significant decrease on the three years before that. Total applications in 2007/08 were over three times as high as the number of applications in 2010/11. This is almost entirely due to the success of the authority's preventative approach to homelessness which is described in more detail below.

Figure 4.14 – Homelessness trends

Reasons

Figure 4.15 below illustrates the reasons behind homelessness and how these have changed over time, largely as a result of the preventative work referred to above. In particular, the number of households made homeless as a result of parents or others no longer willing or able to accommodate has reduced by 87%. While there have also been decreases in homelessness for other reasons, it is worrying to note that the main reason for statutory homelessness is domestic violence affecting 15 households so far in 2011/12, however this could reflect the increased need for crisis intervention and less opportunity for preventative work.

The termination of assured shorthold tenancies is the second biggest reason for homelessness in 2011/12, the numbers having trebled on the previous year. These trends are perhaps indicative of the current economic climate and, possibly, the impact of impending welfare reform which could encourage private landlords to evict tenants who are claiming Housing Benefit in favour of those who are working.

Figure 4.15 – Reasons for homelessness

Repossession

Much work has been done over recent years to stem the rise in repossessions and the number of orders granted has decreased by 55% from a peak in 2008, as illustrated by figure 4.16. The number of repossession claims and orders in 2011 was lower than they were in the years leading up to economic downturn.

Figure 4.16 – Annual mortgage possession claims and orders made

The number of landlord possessions has also been in decline, as illustrated in figure 4.17 below. However, figures for 2011, reveal that the number of claims submitted and orders made has started to creep back up, which is consistent with the increase in homelessness caused by termination of Assured Shorthold Tenancies for the same period.

*Figure 4.17 – Annual landlord possession claims and orders made***Costs of homelessness**

According to figures released by the Department for Communities and Local Government the average cost to the local authority of statutory homelessness is £5,500 per household. This compares to an estimated cost of preventing homelessness of £500 per household as illustrated in the table below.

| | What's involved | Approximate costs |
|------------------------|---|-------------------|
| Statutory homelessness | Single person presenting as homeless on the day would warrant a full homeless assessment consisting of; Housing Solutions Adviser time Temporary Accommodation Provision Homeless investigation – contacting relevant agencies etc. to clarify information submitted Homeless Decision If accepted, securing suitable accommodation to discharge homeless duty | £5,500 |
| Prevention | Single person threatened with homelessness (ordered to leave within period of time) Prevention assessment Prevention options offered to client – BGS, Prevention fund, Negotiation with parents / landlord to sustain tenancy. | £500 |

The Council started to develop its preventative approach (examined in more detail below) in 2007/8. At that time the Council regularly temporarily placed homeless households in bed and breakfast accommodation to fulfil its interim duty to accommodate households while investigations were taking place. This practice has virtually ceased due to the wide range of prevention measures the authority now uses. As an example in April 2008 to August 2008 bed and breakfast costs to the authority were £133,252. Costs for the same period in 2012 were nil.

The costs associated with the various prevention options available are as follows:

| Prevention option | Average cost |
|---|--|
| Bond Guarantee Fund | £500 |
| Prevention fund (assists with deposits, minor repairs, rent arrears etc) | Up to £500 |
| G.I.F.T (Furniture incentive scheme for 18-25 year olds) | £100 |
| Discretionary Housing Benefit – HB payment to assist clients experiencing financial difficulties etc. | £10 to £25 per week for an agreed period of time |
| Mortgage Rescue Scheme – Assist tenants and homeowners to remain within their homes | Up to £3,000 |
| No second night Out – Halton is one of the six sub regional authorities to sign up to the service to tackle rough sleeping. | Externally funded |

Prevention

Figure 4.18 illustrates the authority's success at preventing homelessness and enabling potentially homeless people to remain in their current home as reported to the CLG as part of the local authority's PIE return. As shown the main measure used is crisis intervention in the form of emergency support which over the last three years has helped prevent homelessness for over 600 families.

Figure 4.18 - Homelessness prevention measures – household able to remain in current home

Figure 4.19 details the prevention measures that have necessitated a move to alternative accommodation. It illustrates the success of the Bond Guarantee Scheme and the relationship the authority has developed with accredited private landlords in providing alternative accommodation for potentially homeless people. It also demonstrates the role that providers of supported housing schemes play in alleviating homelessness.

Figure 4.19 – Homelessness prevention measures – household assisted to obtain alternative accommodation

Rough sleeping

Halton participates in the annual Cheshire rough sleepers count. Despite rigorous searches of likely sleeping places, to date, no actual rough sleepers have been encountered on the night of the counts. This is not to say that rough sleeping does not occur in the Borough, merely that the annual snapshot has not uncovered a problem to date.

The Housing Needs of specific groups

Introduction

A model to assess the housing needs of specific client groups was developed by the now disestablished regional assembly (known latterly as 4NW). The specific accommodation based needs for each client group are illustrated in figure 4.20 below. The model points clearly to a substantial need for specialist accommodation for older people, particularly the frail elderly. However, the model should be treated as indicative only and not as a definitive statement of need. For example the Council's Accessible Homes Register provides detailed information on the number of disabled awaiting suitably adapted housing and the type of housing they need. This is shown at figure 4.21 below. The Council has responded to this identified need and at the time of writing plans to develop a 100 units of extra care housing in Halton are well advanced.

Other vulnerable groups identified as having unmet accommodation needs are single homeless people, people with mental health issues and those with drug and alcohol problems. There is also a need to review accommodation provision for adults with learning disabilities in terms of the suitability and accessibility of current provision and a need to develop a planned approach to moving to independent, supported accommodation for those living with ageing parents or in unsuitable housing.

Figure 4.20 – Accommodation based support needs

Figure 4.21 – Halton BC Accessible Homes Register (number of clients awaiting suitably adapted housing)

Gypsies and Travellers

Halton has two Council owned Gypsy and Traveller sites. The well-established Riverview site at Widnes has 23 permanent pitches, including a pitch for the resident warden. The site underwent substantial refurbishment in 2008. In 2009, the authority's first transit site was opened in Runcorn

offering 14 pitches. There are also two authorised privately run sites, and a third site operating under a temporary planning permission. This gives a current total of approximately 56 pitches in Halton.

Under the Housing Act 2004 all Councils have a statutory duty to undertake periodic assessments of the accommodation needs of Gypsies and Travellers and Travelling Show People in their area. The last assessment, which was undertaken by University of Salford's Housing and Urban Studies Unit (SHUSU) in 2007, was a sub regional assessment involving all Cheshire authorities and St Helens. It found a need for between 28 and 32 additional pitches in Halton, which equates to a third of the total need identified for the Cheshire Partnership area. The authority has gone some way to meet this need through the subsequent development of a transit site.

As well as the statutory duty to undertake periodic needs assessments, new Government Guidance in "Planning Policy for Traveller Sites" (DCLG: March 2012) requires local authorities to maintain a five year deliverable supply of residential pitches for Gypsies and Travellers sufficient to meet the identified need within their development plan documents. In preparation for this, the Cheshire Partnership plans to update its need assessment in 2013. The assessment will include travelling showperson sites.

The Homes and Communities Agency had recently awarded £850k to the Council to develop a further 12 pitch site which will make a significant contribution to meeting existing identified needs.

Older People

The SHMA provides further details on people over the state retirement age prevailing at the time the survey was completed. In particular, the study used demographic modelling to predict changes in the population of older people. It estimated an increase of 6,000 households made up solely of people of pensionable age between 2010 and 2026, increasing the proportion of older person households from 23% to 30% as illustrated in figure 4.22.

Figure 4.22 – Growth in older person households 2010 - 2026

Clearly, this increase will have significant implications for housing provision and related care and support services. The SHMA recommends that the local authority ensure that housing strategies and policies meet the needs of older people by:

- Ensuring that an appropriate percentage of new housing supply will meet the needs of older people and their carers in terms of size, location and design;
- Improving the condition of existing properties so that older people have homes which are warm and secure;
- Working with others to ensure flexible and tailored support for those who need it.

These issues will be addressed through the development of an Older Persons Commissioning Strategy planned for 2013. This will include services to older persons in Halton – including an older persons housing strategy.

Part Five – Halton’s Services

Homelessness Services

Homelessness Prevention

The Council’s Housing Solutions Team deals with cases of statutory homelessness but the focus of its work is on preventing homelessness from occurring. A wide range of preventative services are offered, including:

Mediation

As already described family breakdown is a primary cause of homelessness, often arising from problems between parents and adult children. Therefore, Housing Solutions work closely with families to re-establish relationships and enable the young person to continue living in the family home where this is appropriate. In April 2011, Housing Solutions received Government funding to recruit a dedicated Young Persons Officer to deal specifically with 16 and 17 year olds and enable a more focussed effort on this kind of work. In 2010/11 the Officer dealt with 97 advice cases, preventing homelessness in 58 cases and in 2011/12 the Officer prevented 55 young people from becoming homeless from a total caseload of 75.

Supported Lodgings (Nightstop)

The Nightstop service has developed a supported lodgings scheme providing very short-term accommodation for young people together with a mediation service which aims to resolve issues which have led to the breakdown in family relationships. The accommodation is provided by a volunteer host family – a network of volunteer hosts have been recruited to ensure appropriate placements are available for young people, whilst more suitable short-term housing is found or until mediation leads to the young person returning to the family home.

Domestic Abuse Sanctuary Scheme

This scheme enables victims of domestic abuse to remain in their home by fitting enhanced security measures where it is safe to do so, is the victim’s choice and the perpetrator does not live in the accommodation. The sanctuary measures required are based on individual needs and include repaired, reinforced or replacement doors, hinges and windows, door and window lock and alarms and security lighting. The Council is currently working with partner agencies to develop a Halton Sanctuary Scheme with Registered Providers taking responsibility for the installation of sanctuary measures within their properties and the Council funding sanctuary measures within private sector properties. Halton also has a refuge for women fleeing domestic violence managed by Women’s Aid.

Bond Guarantee Scheme

In an effort to increase prevention of homelessness, a Rent Deposit Scheme was launched in 2007. The scheme was developed to assist homeless individuals and families to access private rented sector (PRS) accommodation by providing the deposit required by landlords. The scheme was very successful but costly so was changed in 2009 to become a Bond Guarantee Scheme (BGS). The scheme now provides the written promise of the deposit amount should it be required at the end of the tenancy. BGS allows the Council to assist more households into the PRS as no funds are released unless the landlord has reason to claim on the bond for rent arrears or property damage.

For each bond that is provided, there is a written agreement in place, which the tenant, landlord and Council all sign up to. It sets out what the bond can/cannot be used for and makes clients aware that they are responsible for the bond and will be invoiced for any reasonable claim, which ensures they are accountable for their own conduct during the tenancy. The agreement also details the importance of the client saving for their own deposit to eventually replace the need for the bond guarantee.

Of the 328 tenancies created since the introduction of the BGS in 2009, 67% are ongoing, 15% ended without a claim and 18% ended with the bond being claimed (either in part or in full). In the early days of the BGS the criteria was very loosely applied and nearly 100% of those who applied for a bond were granted one. Since this time the criteria has been tightened and therefore, the number of bonds granted has decreased. The decrease in Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rates has also affected the scheme as it is now more difficult for households to find affordable accommodation in the private rented sector.

In 2010/11, 75% of claims on bonds were either partly or wholly due to rent arrears. In an effort to reduce this, changes to the scheme's processes were made. Applications for direct payment of housing benefit to the landlord were increased (since April 2011 72% of all BGS tenancies had direct payments secured) and greater restrictions were placed on the amount of shortfall clients were permitted.

Mortgage support

The current economic climate has led to an increased number of people finding themselves in mortgage difficulty. In response to this, Halton established a Repossessions Action Plan and Working Group to bring together the work of various agencies in the borough in preventing repossessions. Housing Solutions also has a dedicated Mortgage Rescue Adviser who since January 2010, has provided tailored advice to 187 households and as a result 94 cases were prevented from repossession.

Home Essentials Fund

The lack of furniture and essential equipment can make people reluctant to move from temporary accommodation and can contribute to abandonment of new tenancies. In Halton, this is particularly the case for younger people. In an effort to help towards the cost of setting up a new home, the Council has established a Home Essentials Fund, which those aged 16-25 can access if they have become unintentionally homeless and have been provided temporary accommodation in one of the borough's hostels. The Council will purchase items (up to a total value of £300) from a set list on behalf of the customer to help towards the costs of fully furnishing their new home when they move on.

Since June 2011, 10 young people moving on from hostel accommodation have been provided with essential home items, including microwaves, toasters, bedding and cookery items up to a total value of £300.

Tenancy sustainment

Housing Solutions advise or refer customers to other organisations for advice on a range of tenancy sustainment issues to ensure early intervention in the homelessness risk process. In the midst of the current economic climate, one of the key services is that of advice and assistance on debt, welfare rights and money management issues (which are provided in the most part by the Council's own Welfare Rights Service and the Citizens' Advice Bureau. In addition, individual Housing Associations offer services to their own tenants).

The Council's Welfare Rights Service acts as a buffer to homelessness presentations by providing both a preventive and reactive service. The team provides both welfare benefits and debt advice to a specialist level. In terms of debt provision, advice is given from basic debt negotiation through to attending court possession hearings. With regard to income maximisation, the team will carry out simple benefit checks, some form completion and, if people are wrongly refused benefits, assistance with reconsiderations and appeals is offered. Particularly with regard to disability benefits, benefit decisions are often incorrect and in the last financial year, 187 appeals were attended with an 84% success rate. The team also provides a specialist service, funded through MacMillan Cancer Support, to people suffering from Cancers and their immediate families and carers.

Guardian Scheme

In March 2012 the Council's Executive Board approved a pilot Guardian scheme in two of its empty buildings (one a former library in Runcorn and the other the Transporter Bridge House in Widnes). While the aim of the pilots is to provide cost effective security for the buildings (the cost of securing the buildings and carrying out repairs following break ins and vandalism prior to the scheme far

outweigh the upfront cost of converting the buildings for domestic use and ongoing utility costs) a by-product has been that it is an innovative way of utilising existing buildings to provide homes.

Service developments

Following an internal review of the Housing Solutions service undertaken late in 2011, the authority is currently changing the way it delivers homelessness services so that customers can now receive appropriate advice and assistance at the point of initial contact rather than having to wait for an appointment with a Housing Solutions Advisor.

No Second Night Out

Halton is participating in the Liverpool City Region No Second Night Out project. Utilising funding from the Department for Communities and Local Government, the project aims to ensure that by the end of 2012 no one will live on the streets of Liverpool City Region and no individual arriving on the streets for the first time will sleep out for more than one night. It plans to do this by providing a single contact point for reporting rough sleepers and developing a comprehensive menu of services for each local authority area so that tailored support can be offered to rough sleepers to assist them to come indoors. The service works directly with the Housing Solutions Service and external agencies to tackle and address rough sleeping.

Scrutiny review

Elected Members undertook a scrutiny review of Homelessness services in early 2012. The purpose of the review was to examine the provision of temporary accommodation in the Borough and review the extent to which it met housing need and provided value for money. There were a number of conclusions and recommendations arising from the review, the most significant of which was the need to rebalance provision of temporary accommodation for young, single homeless people across both sides of the Borough. This has resulted in the closure of the Runcorn based scheme Halton Goals. Plans to develop a 37 bedroom hostel on the Widnes side of the Borough by 2014 are underway.

Choice Based Lettings (CBL)

Choice Based Lettings is a relatively new approach to allocating property, which gives homeseekers greater control over the property they are offered as it requires them to express an interest in homes which are advertised locally.

Halton is a partner in Liverpool City Region's sub regional Choice Based Lettings Scheme, Property Pool Plus. The scheme, which went live in Summer 2012, includes five local authority areas and 22 Registered Providers across the City Region. A common allocations policy has been agreed which uses a banding system to prioritise applications for rehousing. Each local authority partner has selected a delivery agent who will manage allocations and maintain the CBL waiting list on their behalf. Halton Housing Trust has been selected as the delivery agent locally and transitional arrangements to move applicants for rehousing from the waiting lists of local Providers to the new IT system are well underway.

It is hoped that Choice Based Lettings will offer a more transparent and streamlined service to households seeking social housing. Support arrangements are in place for households who may experience difficulty in adapting to the new system and "bids" and allocations will be closely monitored to ensure that no one group of people is unfairly disadvantaged.

All local authorities involved in the scheme have signed the HM Armed Forces Covenant to ensure that service men and women receive priority for social housing.

Private Sector Housing

Housing Renewal

Historically the Council has allocated significant resources to housing renewal in the form of grants and loans for vulnerable homeowners. Since the last Strategy was published in 2008 784 households have received financial assistance from the Council to help improve their homes at a total investment of £2.441 million. However in the current financial climate regrettably there are no longer funds available to finance this work although funding for Disabled Facilities Grants continues to be available.

Energy Efficiency

Introduction

For a number of years the Council has worked in partnership with Energy Projects Plus, a local environmental charity, to deliver energy advice and assistance to Halton residents. Until recently, this has included the management of two locally developed initiatives: the Energy Zone scheme, which provided discounts for insulation works and HEARTH, which provided emergency heating for people with heart and respiratory conditions and which complemented the Health through Warmth Scheme described below. Unfortunately, due to the loss of the Regional Housing Pot which funded these schemes, they were discontinued in April 2011. However, the authority continues to work with Energy Projects Plus to maximise the benefits of national and regional schemes for Halton residents and to capitalize on funding opportunities, as described below.

Warm Front

The Government's Warm Front scheme provides heating and insulation measures for vulnerable households living in energy inefficient dwellings. The scheme comes to an end later this year and will be replaced with the Green Deal described below. Through the Halton Healthy Homes Network, the Council is promoting the scheme to residents to ensure that those who are eligible benefit from the scheme before it comes to an end.

Green Deal

The Green Deal is essentially a framework which allows private companies to offer households energy efficiency improvements with no upfront costs, with the cost of the work recouped through savings in energy bills. The scheme, which is expected to be introduced in October 2012, could see firms such as B and Q or Marks and Spencer becoming Green Deal providers. Their role would be to offer a finance plan to the householder to pay the initial costs of the work which would be recommended by an accredited adviser and carried out by an accredited installer. The householder's contractual relationship, however, would be with the Green Deal Provider.

An essential element to Green Deal is that the expected financial savings are equal to or greater than the cost of the plan (this is known as The Golden Thread). It is, therefore, not suitable for all types of work or properties and, since, the plan is interest bearing, it may not be suitable for those on very low incomes.

However, the Council recognises the potential benefits of Green Deal for households who may not have qualified for means tested assistance and will work with Green Deal Providers and other organisations involved to promote the scheme. As an example, Halton has recently been awarded funding through the Government's City Deal programme to undertake energy efficiency improvements to two properties to act as Green Deal demonstrator projects through regular monitoring of energy savings resulting from the work.

Energy Company Obligation

The Energy Company Obligation (ECO) will replace the existing Community Energy Savings Programme (CESP) and Carbon Emission Reduction Target (CERT) managed by energy companies in 2013.

Unlike the Green Deal, which requires households to pay for the measures over time, ECO places an obligation on gas and electricity suppliers to achieve energy savings through a smaller range of measures and expects them to subsidise or fully meet the cost of these measures. There are three elements to ECO which have different eligibility criteria as outlined below.

ECO Carbon Saving

This element of ECO is a grant available to any household requiring solid wall insulation or cavity wall insulation that requires additional work to allow the insulation to be installed (“hard to treat cavity wall insulation”). The grant amount will vary across different suppliers but is expected to be mixed together with Green Deal finance to meet the total cost of the work. Other measures such as glazing, draughtproofing or replacement external doors can be added to the improvement package and may attract additional grant from the supplier.

ECO Affordable Warmth

This element of ECO is a grant available to private sector households in receipt of qualifying benefits. Measures eligible for the grant include loft and cavity wall insulation, insulation for solid walls and rooms in the roof, replacement glazing, new and replacement heating systems and renewable energy heating measures. The government plans to extend the current data sharing agreement between benefits agencies and utilities to enable eligible households to be targeted directly to encourage take up.

ECO Carbon Saving Communities (CSCO)

This element of ECO is a grant, aimed at reducing fuel poverty, that is available to any household within designated low income areas (those lower layer super output areas, LSOAs, identified as the lowest ranked 15% within the Indices of Multiple Deprivation). Halton has 33 such areas within its boundaries. To tackle rural fuel poverty CSCO can also be offered to households in receipt of qualifying benefits who live in rural communities with fewer than 10,000 inhabitants. Measures included in CSCO include loft and cavity wall insulation, insulation for solid walls and rooms in the roof, replacement glazing, new and replacement heating systems and draughtproofing.

Health through Warmth

The Health Through Warmth (HTW) scheme was set up by npower in 2000 in partnership with the NHS and National Energy Action (NEA). HTW operates through a locally based referral partnership which seeks to help vulnerable people whose health is adversely affected by cold, damp living conditions. This is achieved by facilitating the installation of appropriate energy efficiency and heating measures, along with the provision of related advice and information.

Clients are referred by health and other key community workers who have attended locally based awareness sessions offered by HTW. HTW Merseyside (including Halton), delivered by Energy Projects Plus, commenced in late 2003 and to date has received over 4,800 referrals and secured over £4m in third party funding in addition to over £0.5m from npower’s crisis fund. Key partners are the health sector, local authorities, and community support frontline staff who attend an awareness session and refer into the HTW scheme. Over 1,000 frontline staff have attended awareness sessions, though not all have made referrals into the referral system.

Warm Homes, Healthy People

Halton Borough Council was awarded funding under the Department of Health’s Warmer Homes, Healthy People programme to support vulnerable residents through the winter of 2011/12. The funding enabled two energy efficiency programmes to be offered to residents. The Emergency Heat Scheme provided emergency heating systems and repairs for residents and the Heat Aware scheme enabled tailored advice on reading meters and understanding heating controls and energy bills to be delivered within resident’s homes. The funding was also used to establish and launch the Halton Healthy Homes Network described below.

Halton Healthy Homes Network

The Halton Healthy Homes Network was officially launched at an event held on Wednesday 22nd February 2012 at Stobart Stadium, Widnes. The event was a great success and the Network now boasts 80 members from a number of different organisations including the council and many of its partners in the statutory and voluntary sectors and community groups. The aim of the Network is to increase awareness of the health implications of poor housing and fuel poverty so that front line staff from the council and partner organisations and community advocates are able to identify those at risk and signpost them to organisations who can offer appropriate assistance.

Membership is open to anyone with an interest in tackling poor housing conditions and reducing levels of fuel poverty in Halton – frontline staff, managers, elected members and community representatives are all encouraged to join. The network is virtual and communication is mostly sustained via email. It is intended that the Network will continue to develop and in time become the main communication source and delivery vehicle for partnership working relating to housing conditions and fuel poverty. Initially it will have a key role to play in ensuring that relevant front line staff and community advocates are fully aware of the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.

Affordable Warmth Strategy

Halton's Affordable Warmth Strategy was developed in 2010 with the assistance of National Energy Action and Energy Projects Plus. A wide range of statutory and voluntary organisations were also involved in the development of the Strategy. The Strategy has five main aims:

- To raise awareness and understanding of fuel poverty;
- Establish effective referral systems amongst agencies in Halton;
- Improve the housing stock so that it is affordably warm;
- Maximise incomes and improve access to affordable fuel;
- Ensure co-ordination and monitoring of the Strategy.

Steady progress has been made in implementing the Strategy's Action Plan including providing fuel poverty training to front line staff, developing an e-learning training programme and introduction of web based information for householders. The development of the Halton Healthy Homes Network will, it is hoped, enable further progress to be made, particularly in relation to establishing referral systems, however, other aims e.g. improving the housing stock remain more of a challenge due to funding constraints.

Merseyside REECH scheme

Halton has been allocated European Regional Development Funding as part of the Merseyside REECH (Renewables and Energy Efficiency in Community Housing). This will enable external insulation/cladding to be installed at over 60 socially rented properties on the Castlefields estate in Runcorn. A key focus of the scheme is to develop the skills of local people to undertake such retrofit work.

In addition to the REECH scheme Registered Providers have accessed funding under the Community Energy Savings Project to deliver energy efficiency improvements to housing stock in Halton Brook, Grangeway and Ditton and Halton Housing Trust has developed renewable heating schemes in some of their properties in Runcorn. The Council is working with Providers to explore and maximise opportunities presented by the Green Deal and Energy Company Obligation.

Adaptations

Home Improvement Agency

The Halton Home Improvement Agency assists households whose homes are being adapted with the help of a Disabled Facilities Grant with a wide range of services, including:

- Providing a list of reputable local builders;
- Giving advice about housing options and conditions;
- Drawing up plans for the adaptation work;

- Liaising with contractors and others involved in carrying out and inspecting the work;
- Help to obtain other support services.

Registered Provider protocol

Historically tenants of social housing have had to wait longer for major housing adaptations from their landlord due to funding constraints. Recognising this inequality, the Council and Registered Providers reached an agreement in 2008 whereby the Council would provide additional financial help Providers to increase the number of tenants benefitting, and to reduce waiting times. A match funding approach was agreed with the Council paying 50% of the cost of the eligible adaptation work.

To encourage ease of participation by Providers the scheme has some flexibility and in particular the agreement offers two routes of organising and delivering the adaptations, either through the Provider or through the Council's Home Improvement Service. In the first two years the scheme has been running, over 200 properties have been adapted, and the Council plans to maintain this progress for the foreseeable future, albeit with reduced funding levels. In 2011/12, the fourth year of operation, twelve Providers had signed up to the joint funding agreement and those that have declined to date hold very little housing stock within the Borough meaning that the majority of social housing tenants in Halton requiring major adaptations should benefit from this funding. The agreements with Providers are due for renewal in April 2012 and it is the intention of the Council to renew these agreements, subject to the availability of resources.

Accessible Housing Service

The Accessible Housing Service aims to provide a link between the Council's Home Improvement & Independent Living Services and housing providers. It works in partnership with all Providers with stock in Halton to enable a better match for disabled applicants to accessible and adapted homes when they become available in the borough. This means that individuals do not have the disruption of adaptations being completed and at a time of increasing financial pressures nationally it is a better use of Council and Registered Provider resources. Disabled applicants of any age from all property tenures are assessed when they have applied for housing to any of the providers, and available void adapted properties are also assessed to try and match applicants to the accommodation best suited to their needs. It is intended that the service will eventually be integrated with the IT system for the sub regional Choice Based Lettings scheme.

Anti Social Behaviour

Halton's Community Safety Team responds to complaints of anti social behaviour and takes action against perpetrators where appropriate. They also work closely with Registered Providers of social housing to take an estate based approach to the issue. This approach as well as the introduction of a number of support services for young people has led to significant reductions in the number of incidents in recent years, particularly those perpetrated by young people. For example, in 2011/12 the total number of incidents fell by 12.43% on the previous year's figure while youth anti social behaviour fell by 19.6% in the same period. There has been a corresponding reduction in residents' perceptions that anti social behaviour is a problem as evidenced by a residents survey undertaken in October 2011. Whilst partnership working with Registered Providers and agencies like the Police have reduced anti social behaviour, the Council is not complacent and continues to work to reduce anti social behaviour across Halton.

Development and Investment

The Development and Investment Division takes the lead on delivery of neighbourhood regeneration projects and interventions to bring forward new housing and encourage economic growth. The division has a focus on delivery of physical regeneration as well as securing employment and training opportunities, particularly on Council owned land and within Key Areas of Change as highlighted in Halton's Core Strategy.

Supported Housing

In recent years the Council has undergone a process of rationalising services to create efficiencies. This has involved ongoing reviews of service provision in line with the available budget to ensure that resources are focused on those most in need. Current priorities within Halton are the provision of appropriate supported housing for older people, people with physical disabilities and learning difficulties.

Partnership working

The Council has a strong track record of partnership working, both at a multi disciplinary level (through the Halton Strategic Partnership Board) and at a single issue, multi agency level. Examples of successful partnership working on housing issues include the following.

Halton Housing Partnership

Halton's Housing Partnership meets on a bi monthly basis and discusses a wide range of housing and related issues. The meetings are regularly attended by representatives of Providers with the largest stockholdings in Halton as well as a range of Council Officers with an interest in housing and the relevant Executive Board Members. The group is represented on the Halton Strategic Partnership Board to ensure a two way flow of information between the two groups. Recent and current issues being taken forward by the group include financial inclusion, the impact of welfare reform, particularly as a result of the underoccupation penalty and development of the Tenancy Strategy.

Strategic Housing Visioning Group

A review of the Halton Housing Partnership in Summer 2012 resulted in the formation of a new partnership between Halton Borough Council and Registered Providers to focus on high level, strategic issues, known as the Strategic Housing Visioning Group. The group has initially adopted three key themes to focus on:

- Housing and Economic Development
- Welfare Reform and Employment
- Health and Well Being

It is intended that the group will have a long term focus on contemporary and forthcoming developments affecting housing and will oversee the work of the more operationally focused Halton Housing Partnership.

Liverpool City Region (LCR) Housing and Spatial Planning Forum

As previously mentioned the LCR Housing and Spatial Planning Forum is a sub group of the Liverpool City Region Cabinet and advises the Cabinet on housing and spatial planning issues. The Forum, which is attended by the Portfolio Holder for Housing Strategy, meets on a bi monthly basis and was instrumental in the development of the Local Implementation Plan which will guide housing investment in the sub region and has also successfully delivered on joint projects related to empty homes, kickstarting stalled housing developments, energy efficiency for hard to treat properties and Choice Based Lettings.

Appendix One – related documents

| Document | Contact |
|---|---|
| Affordable Housing SPD | Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657 |
| Affordable Warmth Strategy 2011-2015 | Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750 |
| Choice Based Lettings (Property Pool Plus) Allocation Policy | Steve Williams steve.williams@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8859 |
| Core Strategy | Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657 |
| Corporate Plan 2011-2016 | Lisa Driscoll Lisa.driscoll@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8012 |
| Design of Residential Development SPD | Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657 |
| Housing and Support Strategy for Adults with Learning Difficulties | Liz Gladwyn liz.gladwyn@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8120 |
| Homelessness Strategy 2009-2013 and Strategic Review of Homelessness in Halton 2008 | Patricia Preston patricia.preston@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8581 |

| | |
|---|---|
| Laying the Foundations: A Housing Strategy for England 2011 | Available from www.gov.uk |
| Mid-Mersey Strategic Housing Market Assessment 2011 Local Authority Report for Halton Borough Council | Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750 |
| Private Sector House Condition Survey 2009 Report | Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750 |
| Scrutiny Review of Homelessness Services 2011/12 Report | Patricia Preston patricia.preston@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8581 |
| Scrutiny Review of the Private Rented Sector 2012 | Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750 |
| Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment | Alasdair Cross alasdair.cross@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 7657 |
| Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2026 | Lisa Driscoll Lisa.driscoll@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8012 |
| Tenancy Strategy | Joanne Sutton joanne.sutton@halton.gov.uk 0151 511 8750 |

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Communities

PORTFOLIO: Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport

SUBJECT: Library Strategy 2013-16

WARD(S) Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To present the library strategy for Halton.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That:

- 1) Executive Board approves the Library Strategy 2013-16;**
- 2) any further editorial changes/corrections required following the close of consultation be delegated to the Strategic Director, Communities in conjunction with the Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood, Leisure and Sport;**
- 3) the Council be recommended to approve the Library Strategy 2013-16.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 The library service has a statutory responsibility to provide “a comprehensive and efficient library service” as set out in the Public Libraries and Museums Act 1964. There has never been a clear definition of what constitutes “a comprehensive and efficient service” although the national library standards did provide a framework for a time these have now been abolished and local authorities are able to determine the level and priorities of their own library services.
- 3.2 Several authorities have determined the level and priorities of their library services and a number have found themselves subject to legal challenge with their proposals for change being overturned in the courts.
- 3.3 The Library Strategy defines the priorities for the service in Halton over the next 3 years to ensure we fulfil our statutory responsibilities whilst contributing to the strategic priorities of the Council and delivering the service within available resources. It provides a strong set of priorities so that our financial resources are targeted where

they are most needed and will be most effective.

- 3.4 Since 2009 there have been numerous reports and studies commissioned by government departments and other organisations about what libraries should offer to their communities. This strategy takes into account all previous published reports but focuses on the two current documents which will influence the development of the service in the future. These are:

Universal Offers - The Society of Chief Librarians has recently announced four universal offers which constitute the service areas that modern users regard as integral to public libraries. These are Health, Reading, Information and Digital

Envisioning the Library of the Future – The final report of the Arts Council's research and consultation programme has just been published and provides a strategic framework outlining the vision and role for public libraries.

- 3.5 The strategy has been developed taking these documents into account along with other national and local drivers for change, and the needs and priorities of the local community including information from a number of public and staff consultations. Consultation on the key elements of the strategy is currently taking place and closes on 30th June 2013

- 3.6 The Libraries Vision is supported by five overarching strategic objectives each with specific commitments and goals. The priorities under each of the objectives will be identified in our annual action plan.

3.6.1 **Libraries Vision**

We aim to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Halton and to ensure that the libraries are focal points for the community providing access to free information and resources tailored to local needs, within available resources. We will promote reading, learning and support people to develop their skills and fulfil their potential and encourage participation in the cultural and community life of the borough.

3.6.2 **Strategic objectives**

- **Inspiring a community of readers and learners**

We will engage people with books, reading and learning by providing them with inspiring collections and high quality information resources. We will create opportunities to share the enjoyment of reading and learn together, in libraries, in a relaxed and informal environment.

- **Employment, enterprise and developing online skills**

We will ensure all residents of Halton can learn to access the Internet for free in libraries with appropriate support.

- **Extending access through innovation and new technology**
We will grasp the opportunities offered by new technology to widen access to the library service and attract new audiences. We will put more information resources online and create digital content so that more people are able to discover, access, share, download and re-use our collections and services
- **Providing a relevant and responsive library service**
We will deliver a library service that is highly valued and highly rated by customers for its effectiveness and efficiency
- **Workforce development**
We will develop and maintain an enthusiastic and dedicated workforce with customer service excellence at the heart of our delivery. The library workforce will be welcoming and highly skilled so that using libraries is an enjoyable and enriching experience for everyone.

3.7 **Next Steps**

Feedback from the consultation will be analysed and any editorial changes/corrections will be made as appropriate. Detailed action plans will be developed for each of the five priorities and progress will be reported through the normal monitoring framework.

4.0 **POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

4.1 The Library Strategy will set the priorities for the service for the next 3 years to ensure that we fulfil our statutory responsibilities.

5.0 **OTHER/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Library Strategy will set the priorities for the service so that financial resources are targeted where they are most needed and will be most effective. It provides the context for reviewing the service and an opportunity to consider service delivery within resources available.

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

6.1 **Children & Young People in Halton**

The Library Strategy supports the development of reading as a key skill and through subsequent action plans will ensure close working relationships with partners to support the Council's priorities.

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

The Library Strategy identifies the key areas of work to support literacy, learning, access to information and digital inclusion and will ensure a close working relationship with partners to support the Council's priorities.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The Library Strategy will raise the profile of the service to ensure that the library offer complements and supports the work of partners and becomes an integral part of the work to improve the health and wellbeing of the community.

6.4 A Safer Halton

None identified.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The Library Strategy supports the development of facilities for public use and will ensure that services are accessible both physically and virtually are open to all and become focal points of the community within available resources.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

7.1 The Library Services Strategy does not present any obvious risk however there may be risks associated with the resultant action plans. These will be assessed as appropriate.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

8.1 This is in line with all equality and diversity issues in Halton.

9.0 REASON(S) FOR DECISION

To outline the priorities for the library service in Halton over the next 3 years to ensure we fulfil our statutory responsibilities whilst contributing to the strategic priorities of the Council and delivering the service within available resources.

10.0 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND REJECTED

Not applicable.

11.0 IMPLEMENTATION DATE

June 2013

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

None under the meaning of the Act.



LIBRARY STRATEGY

2013-2016

April 2013

Foreword

Our library service is successful because it has constantly adapted to meet need. In these times of financial constraint, we will need to be even more innovative if we are to continue to evolve the service with fewer resources in the foreseeable future.

This strategy sets clear ambitions for our library service, which seeks to continue to provide a high quality service with safe and accessible environments, well-equipped to meet the needs of our citizens.

Over recent years we have maintained our commitment to modernise our libraries despite the changed economic climate. Since 2010 almost 15% of all UK libraries have been lost. At a time when other areas have closed libraries we opened a new one in a more accessible location.

Our commitment to introduce Wi-Fi provision in all our libraries and self-service points have been delivered as promised, as was our commitment to 24/7 online access.

In the coming years our aim to further enhance services includes:

- Improving the home delivery service to our more vulnerable citizens who cannot easily visit our buildings, particularly our older citizens
- The introduction of e-book provision. This will form part of our on-going commitment to technological innovation for new and existing users.
- Our commitment to expand library membership and partnership working.
- The development of homework clubs and services to job seekers.
- The digitisation of local history records.

I am confident that the priorities and commitments set out in this, our first library strategy for Halton is responsive to local needs and will ensure that our libraries continue to innovate and develop to enrich the lives of our citizens.

Cllr Phil Harris.
Executive Board Member for Libraries.

Contents

- 1. Introduction**
- 2. Local context**
- 3. Purpose of the strategy**
- 4. National context**
- 5. National and local drivers for change**
- 6. Key findings from consultation**
- 7. Vision**
- 8. Overview of the strategic priorities**
- 9. Strategic priorities**
 - Inspiring a community of readers and learners**
 - Employment, enterprise and developing online skills**
 - Extending access through innovation and new technology**
 - Providing a relevant and responsive library service**
 - Workforce development**
- 10. Delivering the strategy - priorities for action**
- 11. Appendix 1 - Action Plan 2013-14**
- 12. Appendix 2 – Statistical information**
- 13. Appendix 3 - References**

1. Library Services Strategy

The Library Strategy defines the priorities for Halton Libraries over the next 3 years to ensure that we fulfil our statutory responsibilities whilst contributing to the corporate and strategic priorities of the Borough as set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The key challenge is to continuously improve and modernise the way we deliver the service, keeping pace with changes to customer needs and with technological innovations. In order to maintain an efficient and effective service we need to be flexible and responsive to ensure that the challenges facing us over the next few years can be met.

2. Halton Libraries

Halton has a vibrant and innovative library service delivered through 4 public libraries, a mobile library, a satellite facility in Castlefields Community Centre, an outreach service for the housebound and through digital access. The libraries are key resources in their local communities providing books, information and technology which promotes lifelong learning, digital inclusion and celebrates reading. They are important community spaces which offer a welcoming, neutral environment and host a range of cultural activities, events and opportunities for all sectors of the community.

On a national level there were approximately 6 static libraries per 100,000 population in April 2012, the proportion in Halton is significantly lower than this with the 4 library buildings providing our core offer to a population of 125,700. 65% of the population lives within 1 mile of a static library, 94.3 % live within 2 miles.

Access to the Internet and quality assured online resources are available in all libraries through more than 100 public computers/laptops. All the buildings are Wi-Fi enabled providing additional flexibility for customers and also offer self service facilities for borrowing and returning materials. 24/7 access to services is available through a virtual library presence offering an enquiry service and the ability to search for, reserve and renew items remotely via the online catalogue.

The Library Service has a track record of innovation, we were the first public library service in the country to implement a non-commercial library management system which is more cost effective and provides greater flexibility for us to develop and enhance the system to improve the customer experience without significant additional costs. The system will enable us to continue to streamline the process of buying new materials.

Halton Libraries work collaboratively with many partners – we benefit from being members of the NW book purchasing consortium and NW reader development Time to Read Partnership by achieving significant discounts for new materials and a collaborative approach to book promotions, author visits and events. We also have partnership

agreements with Children's Centres, Cheshire Archives Service, Job Centre Plus and we work closely with other council services and health providers and are proactive in developing new partnership opportunities.

We have been successful in attracting external funding through lottery and other grants to refurbish buildings and to work with specific group's i.e. older people, young people and the unemployed.

The service is valued by customers the Public Library Users Survey revealed that 94% of users rated the service as good or very good.

In 2011-2012 a total of 492,003 items were borrowed, there were 141,721 computer sessions and the libraries received 555,703 visits. The number of items borrowed in 2012-2013 has followed the national trend and declined by 12.8% but visits have risen by 11.6% and computer sessions have also risen by 3.6%.

The library service has 61,147 registered members with 16,468 having borrowed items from the libraries in the last 12 months. This equates to 51% of the population who are registered as members, 26.9% who are registered have actively borrowed in the last 12 months however against the total population this reflects a low number, 14% of people borrowing in the last 12 months.

The library services net budget for 2013-14 is £2,423,000. Over the last 3-4 years the service has realised budget savings of approximately £375,000 which have been achieved through reductions in staffing, opening hours and, buildings and procurement efficiencies.

3. Purpose of strategy

Despite recent successes we recognise that the way people are using libraries has changed over the last few years. New technology has brought in a range of different users with demand for new services, whilst book borrowing has been declining. The strategy will provide a focus for the service over the next 3 years. We want to ensure that we have a strong set of priorities so that our financial resources are targeted where they are most needed and will be most effective.

4. Context

Although there has never been a clear definition of what constitutes the statutory requirement of "a comprehensive and efficient library service" as set out in the 1964 Public Libraries and Museums Act there is detailed research and evidence. As background and context to the current position these documents are detailed in Appendix 1 but the main documents which we have been referenced in the strategy are:-

- **Universal Offers** - The Society of Chief Librarians has recently announced four universal offers which have been developed with partners (Arts Council and The Reading Agency) which constitute the service areas that modern users regard as integral to public libraries. These are Health, Reading, Information and Digital.

The implementation of the Universal Offers is the first integrated national approach to library services defining what public libraries should provide and what users should expect. They also identify where libraries can provide real value to local people and where they will be working collectively to deliver impact in difficult times.

- **Envisioning the Library of the Future** - The Arts Council's research and consultation programme has developed a strategic framework outlining the vision and role for public libraries. "Our libraries are at the heart of our civic society connecting individuals and communities to a rich mix of arts and cultural resources contributing to community"

The final report "Envisioning the Library of the Future" will be published shortly. From the work so far the following themes have emerged as important for libraries in the 21st Century:

- Importance of the physical and virtual library space.
 - The value of libraries to children and young people as space where they learn and gain skills and behaviour in life. Equally important libraries are viewed as places of enjoyment for children.
 - Libraries are trusted gateways to knowledge, culture and information which is curated, trusted and free from commercial interest.
 - The vital role that libraries play in supporting social opportunity and equality.
 - Tension between the desire of some for traditional library services and those wanting to be adopters of new technologies.
- **Future Libraries Programme** - a partnership between the Museum Libraries & Archives Council and the Local Government Group which involved 32 local authorities across the country piloting ten projects to develop and share good practice in delivering innovation in library services. The programme identified four models of reform for library services to help deliver improved efficiency and effectiveness.
 1. Reviewing service location and distribution
 2. New provider models
 3. Shared services across council boundaries
 4. Empowering communities to do things in their own way.

We are committed to providing a comprehensive library service and will explore the feasibility of alternative ways of doing so in the most efficient way possible. We believe there are other ways of delivering services that can improve the quality of the service offer and provide better value for money. Halton already uses shared services and other good practice, however we will continue to explore best practice and learning from

other authorities to inform how we reshape local services in the changed economic climate. This will include continuing to explore opportunities for partnership working to improve quality, efficiency and value for money.

Alongside these documents there are a number of national and local drivers for change.

5. National and local drivers for change

- **Digital revolution** – Technology is transforming the way people interact with each other and the world around them, and libraries can offer access to technology, information and resources to help people develop confidence and skills to be able to interact online.

The provision of computers and access to the Internet is an integral part of the library service and we need to ensure we continuously improve and develop our digital offer, and the skills of staff, to keep pace with technological developments as well as the changing needs of the local community.

Changes to the way Government services are accessed will have a huge impact on how people apply for services and benefits. The majority of transactions will be undertaken online and libraries through free Internet access and skilled support will play an important role in helping people that are digitally excluded get online and to develop digital and information skills.

Demand for resources which can be accessed via wireless networks through handheld and mobile devices is increasing and we need to ensure that the community can benefit from this more flexible approach by offering access to high quality online resources and information. The demand for e-books has increased alongside the ownership of tablet devices and we need to establish the best way to progress the development of this area of the service.

- **Population** – The population of Halton has increased steadily from 118,200 (2001) to its current estimate of 125,700 (2011), this rise was mainly in the working age range (16-64) whilst older people (65+) displayed the largest relative increase of 15%. In the long term (to 2021) Halton's population is projected to grow by 3%, with a 10% increase in children/young people (0-15yr olds), a decline of 5% in working age (16-64) with older people projected to grow a further 33%.

| Year | Total | 0-15 | 16-64 | 65+ |
|------|---------|--------|--------|--------|
| 2001 | 118,200 | 25,600 | 76,600 | 16,000 |
| 2011 | 125,700 | 24,900 | 82,300 | 18,500 |
| 2021 | 129,300 | 27,100 | 77,600 | 24,600 |

Over the next ten years there will be increases in the number of school aged children and older people. The ageing population means more people are at risk of becoming

socially isolated as the proportion of people over the age of 80 increases. The project work we have undertaken with older people in 2012-13 has highlighted the demand for our services with this age group.

The key priority will be to attract new users to the service whilst ensuring we continue to meet the needs of existing users, including changes to family dynamics and working patterns and to prepare for the increase in both children's and older people's use of the service.

- **Skills gap** – the unemployment rate in Halton (% of residents aged 16-64 claiming job seekers allowance) is currently 5.2% (February 2013). This is higher than the North West (4.4%) and the England rate (3.8%).

Libraries support learning and have a clear role in helping develop the skills required for the future workforce. Libraries support mainstream education and provide an informal learning environment that encourages people to participate in activities that contribute to their learning and skills development.

Information about careers and job opportunities, and support for employment through digital job hubs, work clubs, 1 to 1 support, online resources, skills for life and adult literacy resources are part of the libraries offer.

- **Global financial climate** - it is important to have a strong sense of priorities so that our financial resources are targeted where they are most needed and will be most effective. The Council, as a result of the Government led drive to cut public spending and reduce the national deficit, needs to make further reductions to its budget in future years. The Library Service has already made significant cost reductions and through the strategic objectives set out in the strategy will ensure resources are targeted at priority areas as well as exploring collaborative and partnership opportunities to secure cost benefits.

The needs and priorities of the people of Halton are articulated in the Sustainable Community Strategy and libraries have an important role to play in contributing to these priorities.

The Library Strategy has been developed based on these needs and priorities and through public and staff consultation. In 2012 consultation was undertaken to garner opinion on what this strategy should focus on. A number of priorities were highlighted and are discussed in the following section. A comprehensive Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy (CIPFA) Public Library User Survey on the current use of the service was also undertaken to ensure we could evaluate existing provision. Information has also been included from Halton 2000 and customer comments forms.

6. Key findings from consultation:

- Satisfaction with library services is high, 62% rated the library *very good* overall, 32% rated the library *good* overall – 94% in total (CIPFA Public Library Users Survey)
- Access to books is the most important service we provide, 329 out of a total of 385 respondents used the service primarily to borrow books.
- 22% of respondents stated the provision of tables and seating is average.
- 35% of respondents said they would borrow e-books but 11% of respondents did not know what e-books were.
- 38% of respondents had heard of the Home Delivery Service with 13% of these having used it.
- 57% of respondents said the Home Delivery Service should be promoted more to customers and volunteers
- Customer service expectations are very high and staff support was rated as the second most important service provided, it will therefore be an important element and a core requirement of any future library provision.
- Access to computer facilities is a fundamental part of the library offer and valued by customers, it was rated as the third most important service provided.
- Library services are viewed as valuable, particularly in providing community meeting and quiet spaces for study, but the extent of the resources and provision available through libraries is not widely understood.

The data gathered from Halton residents about libraries inform us on one level what the needs and expectations are for the service.

- *The current level of satisfaction is high and this needs to be maintained through targeted services.*
- *We need to maintain the core service providing access to books and reading to our existing customers and increase these numbers through outreach. We need to develop new services to encourage readers and improve access to electronic books and online resources.*
- *Workforce development is essential, having the right staff with the right skills, delivering the right services in all libraries.*
- *There is a requirement to maintain library access to the Internet and to offer support for customers new to technology or developing new skills.*
- *Traditional services are the most highlighted in responses but key partnerships and project work needs to be better advocated and the profile of the service as a whole needs to be raised*

The core purpose of the library service is to provide a comprehensive and efficient service that meets the needs of the people who live work and study in Halton, this statutory responsibility together with national and local priorities and influences has led to our vision for the service which is supported by the five strategic objectives which have emerged for the development of the service.

7. Our Vision:

We aim to achieve the best outcomes for the people of Halton and to ensure that the libraries are focal points for the community providing access to free information and resources tailored to local needs, within available resources. We will promote reading, learning and support people to develop their skills and fulfil their potential, and encourage participation in the cultural and community life of the borough.

The vision is underpinned by five strategic priorities

- Inspiring a community of readers and learners
- Employment, enterprise and developing online skills
- Extending access through innovation and new technology
- Providing a relevant and responsive library service
- Workforce development

8. Overview of the strategic priorities:

Inspiring a community of readers and learners – Libraries core purpose is to provide and promote access to books, reading, information and online resources to people of all ages. This strategic priority will ensure that we develop and support reading as a key life skill and provide access to quality resources and a learning support programme to meet the needs of those engaged in developing new skills.

We will increase tailored provision to meet the needs of those groups identified for significant population growth. We will provide access to collections for those who may have special requirements such as materials in alternative formats, in different languages, those struggling with reading or where English is not their first language and those who may be socially isolated.

We will identify sections of the community with low membership or who are hard to reach and will through outreach and targeted provision encourage and develop take up of the service. We will continue to work closely with schools and early years settings to ensure children and young people can benefit from accessing early intervention services, resource materials and develop library and information skills.

We will enhance the health and well-being of the local community by promoting and providing access to self-help resources, health information, outreach collections, signposting

and opportunities for social and recreational reading. We will explore all relevant external funding opportunities. We will work in partnership where appropriate to deliver this strategic priority.

Employment, enterprise and developing online skills – This strategic priority will help people to gain information and communications technology (ICT) skills that will enable them to access government services, new or better jobs, social networking and information to help support study or shop online. We will provide an informal learning environment that encourages people to participate and improve their digital and information literacy skills and gain confidence in using the Internet for everyday transactions and thereby reduce digital inequality. This work will be delivered in partnership where appropriate.

Extending access through innovation and new technology - Technological change is happening at a tremendous pace, this strategic priority will ensure that we keep abreast of developments in order to attract new customers and also to remain relevant to our current customer base. Subject to resources we will introduce new and innovative solutions to enhance the customer experience and help to drive down costs.

Providing a relevant and responsive library service - This strategic priority will help provide appropriate engagement and feedback to ensure we continuously improve the service we deliver. We will identify the hard to reach and vulnerable groups/individuals which we will focus on. To ensure we reach our target audiences we need to increase membership through partnership work, outreach and alternative methods of engagement. We will meet the reading and information needs of those who are unable to visit their local library through an improved and extended Home Delivery Service. We will develop libraries as cultural and community spaces and provide a broad range of creative events including reading groups, author events, local history talks and exhibitions.

Robust methods of seeking and listening to the views of customers will ensure we focus on local needs and requirements. We will continue to develop opportunities for volunteers to engage with the service.

Workforce development – To deliver the Library Strategy we require a workforce that is able to deliver all the digital elements of provision and provide excellent customer service. This strategic priority will ensure we provide a welcoming and highly skilled workforce so that libraries are enriching experiences and provide access to resources and information that the community wants and requires. We will review the current staffing roles and structure and implement change to ensure that we can deliver the priorities of the service.

9. Strategic priorities:

Inspiring a community of readers and learners

We will engage people with books, reading and learning by providing them with inspiring collections and high quality information resources. We will create opportunities to share the enjoyment of reading and learn together, in libraries, in a relaxed and informal environment.

- Through our adoption of the Public Libraries' Universal Reading Offer we will provide a full programme of creative reading promotions and events which will offer opportunities for people to come together to share and extend their reading experiences.
- Residents of Halton will have access to an excellent range and choice of books and other materials, in and through their local library, which meet their reading and information needs.
- Information will be made available in printed and digital formats; the library workforce will act as information navigators to ensure that customers are able to make well-informed judgements about information quality and accuracy.
- Widening participation in learning through strong partnerships.
- Through our adoption of the Public Library Universal Health and Wellbeing Offer we will provide access to mood boosting collections in all our libraries.
- Libraries will be the repository of local history and will act as the collective memory of the borough by conserving, interpreting and making accessible historical documents and other published resources relating to the Halton area.

By 2016 we aim to have:

- Delivered a full programme of activities to commemorate the centenary of WWI.
- Established homework clubs in a two of our libraries.
- Delivered class visits in all of our libraries.
- Established a programme of creative reading opportunities for children and adults based on the Public Libraries' Universal Reading Offer.
- Implemented the new Books on Prescription scheme including the Mood Boosting Books Programme.
- Grown library membership by promoting the service and its core offer to all those who live, work and study in Halton.

Supporting Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2011-2016 – Areas of Focus 1, 4, 5, 6, 7 & 13

Employment, enterprise and developing online skills

We will ensure all residents of Halton can learn to access the Internet for free in libraries with appropriate support.

- We will commit to the provision of the Public Library Universal Digital Offer.
- Library members will have free access to the Internet in libraries.
- Libraries will provide support for customers, partnership agencies and their clients to develop and enhance their online skills.
- Libraries will provide access to information online, safely, through trusted sources.
- Libraries will play a key role in enhancing digital skills and digital citizenship so that Halton residents are able to access essential public services online.

By 2016 we aim to have:

- Helped Halton residents become ICT literate in line with Government policy and the Public Library Universal Digital Offer, through a programme of targeted activities including the promotion of www.gov.uk
- All library staff will be able to provide basic online support for job seekers
- Strengthened the relationship between libraries and job centre plus to promote and extend job clubs to all libraries.

Supporting Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2011-2016 – Areas of Focus 1, 5, 6, 7, 9 & 13

Extending access through innovation and new technology

We will grasp the opportunities offered by new technology to widen access to the library service and attract new audiences. We will put more information resources online and create digital content so that more people are able to discover, access, share, download and re-use our collections and services.

- Libraries will provide public computers and access to the Internet.
- Technology solutions will be employed to improve the access to the library service. Library members will have 24/7 access to downloadable resources, online subscriptions and digitised collections through the virtual library portal.
- Libraries will keep pace with technological developments in publishing, information provision, social networking and mobile communications to ensure that services are responsive to the evolving needs and expectations of members.

By 2016 we aim to have:

- Developed a strategy to replace and upgrade our public access IT infrastructure subject to resources.
- Moved to a roving customer service model by identifying and securing funding to provide staff with tablets to answer customer enquiries anywhere in the library.
- Streamlined back room procedures by exploiting new technologies to provide greater value for money through direct delivery, e-invoicing and supplier selection.
- Extended the range of e-books and online subscription services available in libraries and explored the options of becoming the hub for all HBC subscriptions.
- Created a virtual library portal bringing together all electronic resources into one online location, including implementing a smart phone app for the library service.
- Enhanced the library catalogue by introducing interactive and personalised features including book reviews, ratings, discussion threads and social tagging.
- Exploited social media to engage new audiences for reading and to keep customers informed of service developments and events.
- Digitised unique resources from the local history collection to increase their availability to historians and researchers.

Supporting Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2011-2016 – Areas of Focus 1, 5, 6, 7, 22, & 26

Providing a relevant and responsive library service

We will deliver a library service that is valued and highly rated by customers for its effectiveness and efficiency.

- The library service will seek out and listen to the views of our customers to ensure that services are developed and improved in line with local needs and requirements.
- The library service will work with partners to access hard to reach and vulnerable groups and ensure they are engaged in using our resources.
- The library service will meet the reading and information needs of people unable to visit their local library through the Home Delivery Service.
- Libraries in Halton will be vibrant public spaces that connect people and communities, providing opportunities for people to meet together and participate in the social and cultural life of their local communities.
- The library service will deliver the aims of the strategy within available resources
- Library services will be focused on continually improving provision to customers by collecting and using key performance data to inform service developments. Data will also be used to communicate the value and impact made by the library service.
- Volunteering in the library service will be encouraged and supported. There will be a clear volunteer programme that encourages and supports residents to participate in the library service by sharing their enthusiasm, skills and interests.

By 2016 we aim to have:

- Reviewed information services and resources including re-balancing print and digital resources.
- Completed a review of our Home Delivery Service / mobile library service and implemented the recommendations of the review.
- Developed action plans and service targets in line with strategy outcomes.
- Developed a comprehensive volunteer programme.
- Completed a focus group review of the service against the standards.
- Completed CIPFA (Chartered Institute of Public Finance and Accountancy) and CIPFA Public Library User Surveys (PLUS) in all libraries and shared the results with customers and staff.
- Targeted library outreach services to those people not currently accessing library services, including hard to reach and vulnerable groups, by developing improved partnerships.

Supporting Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2011-2016 – Areas of Focus 22, 24, & 26

Workforce Development

We will develop and maintain an enthusiastic and dedicated workforce with customer service excellence at the heart of our delivery. The library workforce will be welcoming and highly skilled so that using libraries is an enjoyable and enriching experience for everyone.

- The experience of using libraries will be excellent with high levels of customer satisfaction. The workforce will be highly skilled and will respond to changing patterns of library use by delivering more personalised services for customers.
- We will provide access to learning and development opportunities, and offer career progression within a revised staff structure.
- We will deliver a library workforce with the skills and abilities to advocate for the service, and ensure libraries are positioned within the community and able deliver Halton Borough Council priorities.

By 2016 we aim to have:

- Achieved a recognised customer service standard through Customer Service Excellence.
- Created and launched a formal induction training programme for all staff
- Developed an in-house mentoring programme to support staff in achieving professional qualifications from CILIP (The Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals).
- Revised our staff structure to facilitate improved service delivery to our customers.

Supporting Halton Borough Council Corporate Plan 2011-2016 – Areas of Focus 21, 22 & 26

10. Delivering the strategy - priorities for action

Action plans for each of the strategic themes will set out the work programme on an annual basis and will contain performance measures and targets. The action plans will be reviewed and progress will be reported in the normal monitoring cycle. Draft action plans for 2013-14 are contained in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1**Draft action plans 2013-14**

| Inspiring a community of readers and learners | |
|---|------------|
| Identify Universal Reading Offer spikes for 2013/14 & allocate officers | April 2013 |
| Launch & market Books on Prescription / Mood Boosting Books | July 2013 |
| Set targets for new members and review on a quarterly basis | April 2013 |

| Employment, enterprise and developing online skills. | |
|---|-----------------|
| Plan work club schedule 2013/14 | May 2013 |
| Identify target groups for IT skills development | April 2013 |
| Schedule a programme of IT events / activities in partnership where appropriate | Review annually |

| Extending access through innovation and new technology. | |
|---|-------------|
| Devise project and implementation plan for transition to roving customer service model | Jan 2014 |
| Conduct ICT hardware/software needs analysis for library service | Jan 2014 |
| Implement back room efficiencies | April 2014 |
| Produce social media strategy for library service & integrate with operational activities | April 2014 |
| Develop schedule of digitisation – identifying & prioritising WWI material | April 2014 |
| Investigate HBC subscriptions | Jan 2015 |
| Create consolidated pages on library catalogue website for access to E-books & online subscriptions | July 2013 |
| Develop smartphone application | Dec 2013 |
| Launch interactive library catalogue features | May 2013 |
| Make digitised material available through library website | July 2014 |
| Implement changes to DVD provision | August 2013 |

| Providing a relevant and responsive library service | |
|---|-----------------|
| Identify potential non-user customer groups & partners for access | April 2014 |
| Implement print / digital proposal & review annually in line with needs & financial resources | Sept 2014 |
| Identify volunteer roles / responsibilities & market offer in line with projects | Oct 2014 |
| Undertake Children's CIPFA Survey | Autumn 2013 |
| Review of current home delivery service/ mobile library & implementation of revised service | June – Dec 2013 |

| Workforce Development | |
|---|--------------------|
| Identify customer service standard & produce customer service action plan | April 2014 |
| Analyse outcomes of strategy consultation & identify priorities of delivery | June 2013 |
| Devise staff structure options & undertake required processes | Sept 13 - April 14 |

APPENDIX 2

Statistical information

| | Total number of members | |
|--------------|-----------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Active members – March 2013 | Registered members - March 2013 |
| Halton Lea | 7,765 | 27,813 |
| Widnes | 5,623 | 22,963 |
| Ditton | 1,068 | 4,132 |
| Runcorn | 1,541 | 3,973 |
| Mobile | 471 | 2,286 |
| TOTAL | 16,468 | 61,147 |

| Ages | Population | Members age profile | |
|--------|------------|---------------------|------------|
| | | Active | Registered |
| 0-4 | 8400 | 1136 | 2426 |
| 5--9 | 7400 | 2565 | 6673 |
| 10--14 | 7600 | 1635 | 6992 |
| 15-19 | 8100 | 661 | 4944 |
| 20-24 | 8000 | 768 | 5452 |
| 25-29 | 8100 | 788 | 5120 |
| 30-34 | 7700 | 873 | 4484 |
| 35-39 | 8300 | 793 | 3796 |
| 40-44 | 9000 | 838 | 3717 |
| 45-49 | 9300 | 784 | 3252 |
| 50-54 | 8800 | 734 | 2815 |
| 55-59 | 8100 | 805 | 2601 |
| 60-64 | 8500 | 1000 | 2584 |
| 65-69 | 5800 | 1084 | 2449 |
| 70-74 | 4600 | 755 | 1616 |
| 75-79 | 3600 | 502 | 1146 |
| 80-84 | 2500 | 330 | 754 |
| 85-89 | 1300 | 141 | 343 |
| 90+ | 600 | 58 | 186 |

| | Hours open per week | Issues | | Visits | | Computer sessions | |
|--------------|---------------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|----------------|-------------------|----------------|
| | | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 | 2011-12 | 2012-13 |
| Halton Lea | 49.5 | 219,387 | 174,140 | 217,837 | 203,727 | 71,795 | 70,125 |
| Widnes | 52.5 | 191,450 | 165,058 | 201,880 | 256,009 | 52,875 | 52,689 |
| Ditton | 43.5 | 34,863 | 29,771 | 61,578 | 61,778 | 8,072 | 9,511 |
| Runcorn | 36 | 31,037 | 45,760 | 63,480 | 89,726 | 8,979 | 14,530 |
| Mobile | 22.75 | 15,266 | 14,034 | 10,928 | 9,702 | | |
| TOTAL | 204.25 | 492,003 | 428,763 | 555,703 | 620,942 | 141,721 | 146,855 |

APPENDIX 3

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REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director Policy and Resources

PORTFOLIO Transportation

SUBJECT: Highway Improvements at A558
Daresbury Expressway under the
Department for Transport's Local Pinch
Point Programme

WARDS: Boroughwide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

The purpose of the report is to inform Members of the award of grant funding through the Department for Transport's (DfT) Local Pinch Point Programme (LPPP) for road junction improvements on the Daresbury Expressway, to seek approval to the inclusion of the scheme into the Council's Capital Programme and to seek a waiver of standing orders in respect of the procurement of scheme design services.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- (1) Executive Board welcomes the award of £1.675M grant funding for the Daresbury Enterprise Zone / East Runcorn Housing Access Improvement Scheme under the DfT's Local Pinch Point Programme;**
- (2) Executive Board recommends the Council to approve the inclusion of the LPPP scheme into the Council's Capital Programme at a total estimated cost of £2.394M to be phased over 2013/14 and 2014/15; and**
- (3) in accordance with Procurement Standing Order (PSO) 1.8.4, PSO 4.1 (Competition Requirements) be waived and design and scheme preparation services be procured from Mott MacDonald Ltd. for reasons of urgency as set out in this report.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1** On 21st February 2013, the Council submitted a bid for funding from a total fund of £170M made available by the DfT for local highway schemes under their Local Pinch Point Programme (LPPP). The Programme is aimed at removing bottlenecks on local highway networks and improving access to development sites to support growth and create additional jobs and housing.

3.2 Halton's bid comprised a package of schemes designed to increase traffic capacity at three existing junctions on the A533 Daresbury Expressway, aimed at increasing traffic capacity at key highway access points to the Daresbury (SciTech) Enterprise Zone and east Runcorn strategic housing development sites as follows:

- Junction with A56 Chester Road – extension of turning lanes at traffic signals;
- Junction with Innovation Way – conversion of existing roundabout junction to traffic signal layout;
- Junction with Pitts Heath Lane – carriageway widening on roundabout approaches and provision of segregated turning lanes.

3.3 The estimated cost of the schemes is £2.394M and in accordance with the funding bid rules, a 30% local contribution toward the total cost of schemes would be required. The bid sought funding of £1.675M from the DfT's LPP Programme to be matched by the following local contributions:

- £0.6M Of funding from the Homes and Communities Agency as advance S106 Planning Agreement payments in relation to their new housing developments at Sandymoor; and
- £119,000 of Council funding, primarily staff costs, which will contribute to the scheme design, procurement and works supervision.

3.4 On 22nd March as part of the Budget proposals, the DfT announced that ten LPPP schemes across the country, would be 'fast-tracked' under a first tranche of the programme, including the Council's proposals for the Daresbury Expressway access improvements. The anticipated funding profile, included within the bid was as follows. Schemes must be delivered by March 2015:

| | 2013/14 | 2014/15 | Total |
|---------------------|-------------------|-----------------|-------------------|
| DfT LPPP Grant | £1,145,000 | £530,000 | £1,675,000 |
| HCA S106 Funding | £600,000 | £0 | £600,000 |
| HBC Capital Funding | £60,000 | £59,000 | £119,000 |
| Total | £1,805,000 | £589,000 | £2,394,000 |

3.5 Full approval for the Council's application to the LPPP fund was confirmed in a letter from DfT on 20th May. The maximum capped funding contribution of £1.675M will be available in 2013/14 as a one-off payment and is subject to the Council agreeing to the following conditions:

- Complete & return quarterly monitoring reports detailing progress and expenditure;

- Share any scheme savings with DfT on the basis of the approved funding split;
 - Notify DfT of changes in the scope of the project, In the case of significant changes to the project, DfT reserve the right to reconsider their decision on funding;
 - Undertake an evaluation of the scheme, proportionate to its size and scale;
 - Display the DfT corporate logo on scheme publicity and promotional material.
- 3.6 The basis of the bid was that all works can be undertaken within the existing Highway boundaries and that is still the case, however, recent discussions through the SciTech Daresbury Joint Venture Partnership have indicated that development land adjacent to Innovation Way *may* be made available for one of the junction improvements that could be beneficial to both the design and cost of this particular scheme. Discussions with partners are underway to progress this option which, if productive, will necessitate a planning application. This in turn would also require a notification to DfT as a change of scope of the project, however, as the changes are considered largely beneficial, and the scheme delivery date would not extend past the DfT's stated deadline.
- 3.7 The Council's framework consultants, Mott MacDonald Ltd worked closely with officers on the preparation of the LPP Bid as they have previously been involved in the production of supporting transportation documentation for the East Runcorn and the Daresbury Enterprise Zone. It was intended at bid stage that Mott Macdonald Ltd. would continue to provide the highway design and project management support through the implementation stages of the programme to utilise their invested knowledge in the project, and thereby minimise scheme preparation costs and programme. However, the Engineering Consultancy Framework Contract, under which services had previously been procured, expired at the end of April, unfortunately prior to confirmation of the DfT's scheme approval.
- 3.8 In accordance with PSO 1.8.1, and in order to minimise delays to the implementation of the project that may have consequences in relation to meeting the DfT's funding conditions, it is proposed that PSO 4.1 (Competition Requirements) be waived for reasons of urgency, to enable preparatory surveys, scheme design and project management services to proceed for this LPPP Scheme.
- 3.9 This waiver would be in respect of this scheme only, covering the period of scheme design and implementation, and in accordance with the LPPP fund bid and the approval letter from DfT. Mott MacDonald Ltd. have provided a detailed scope of services and an estimate of the cost of services to be provided, which is based on reduced charge-out rates from those previously applied under the Framework Contract. The rates compare favourably with those charged by other civil engineering consultants on similar current projects and, we understand, are

commensurate with rates that will be applied under other regional procurement contracts that are being prepared but have yet to be formally enacted. The estimated cost of services is £130,925, (which includes a sum of £23,750 for third-party costs of surveys and investigations). This estimated sum is below the EU Procurement threshold for Services and therefore does not fall within the requirements of the Public Contracts Regulations.

3.10 The costs of scheme design and preparation were included in the overall scheme costs outlined in the LPPP funding bid and will be borne from the 30% match funding contributions, principally from the HCA S106 contributions outlined in paragraph 3.3. Subject to Council's approval, the scheme and its funding streams will be managed through the Capital Programme.

3.11 As described in paragraph 3.9, Mott MacDonald has reduced the charge-out rates for staff engaged on this project by an additional 5% compared with previous Framework rates. These rates compare favourably with those charged under other current consultant commissions and Mott MacDonald have provided corroboration that they are commensurate with rates recently submitted under competitive conditions.

3.12 The conditions of the former Mott MacDonald Consultancy Framework would apply, with detailed monthly invoices submitted for works undertaken and completed on this commission. These financial payments would be reported in the usual manner on the Council's website.

3.13 Preparatory work in advance of scheme design has commenced with a view to commencing construction under a phased approach in the autumn of 2013. In order to meet the timescales for delivery, the bid was prepared on the basis that construction of the schemes would be procured via the Council's new Highway Improvement and Maintenance Term Contract. This approach provides significant programming benefits and enables construction risks and costs to be managed through early contractor involvement in the delivery of the schemes.

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

There are no policy implications in relation to this report. The proposals to improve access to employment and housing in the Daresbury Enterprise Zone area are in accordance with the Council's Corporate Strategy and are listed within Halton's Core Strategy, evidenced by the Infrastructure Plan and the East Runcorn Transport Study.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

Resource Implications – Paragraph 3.4 and 3.5 of this report sets out details of the grant allocations and local contributions and outlines an

anticipated funding profile across the two financial years, for inclusion in the Council's Capital Programme. Government funding for the scheme is capped at £1.675M and the Council is responsible for managing and controlling all project costs.

Scheme delivery will be managed through a combination of existing staff resources and the Council's framework consultants Mott MacDonald. Construction will be carried out utilising the Highways Improvement and Maintenance Term Contract which has been procured specifically for this type of work and services.

As described in paragraph 3.5, these junction improvements can be delivered within existing Highway boundaries, however, if land is made available for dedication as Highway by the SciTech Daresbury Joint Venture, there may be design, programme and cost benefits to the Innovation Way scheme to be realised.

Social Inclusion and Sustainability Implications – These schemes will provide additional traffic capacity at existing junctions at the gateway to the Daresbury Enterprise Zone and east Runcorn housing area, effectively future-proofing the transport network and encouraging sustainable growth in jobs and housing in this key development area of the Borough.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

N/A

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

The highway improvement schemes will increase highway network capacity at the gateway to the Daresbury Enterprise Zone, removing obstacles to future growth and 'high-value' job creation.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

N/A

6.4 A Safer Halton

Increased traffic capacity at these junctions will reduce the potential for congestion, delays and consequent driver frustration, as the Enterprise Zone develops and journey numbers increase, resulting in a safer highway network.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

The highway improvement schemes will increase highway network capacity and improve access to the Daresbury Enterprise Zone, encouraging development and growth in this key employment and housing development area of the Borough.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 The key risks associated with the delivery of these schemes are in relation to meeting the DfT's funding conditions as regards project programme and cost overruns. These are mitigated to a large extent by procuring design and construction services through the use of existing framework and term contracts which enables work to proceed quickly, under agreed terms and conditions and without delay to the programme.
- 7.2 The design consultants have a history of involvement in the formulation of the required network improvements in the east Runcorn area and have prepared the preliminary design layouts for the bid submission. They are therefore well placed to progress the detailed design work. The new Highway Term Contract enables early contractor involvement in the design process, which will assist in the management of project risks in respect of both programme and cost.
- 7.3 It is planned to implement the schemes within a phased approach which provides for flexibility in programming and controlling the cost of construction of each junction improvement. It is currently envisaged that construction work will be complete by April 2014, well in advance of the timescales set for scheme delivery under the DfT's grant conditions.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

Accessibility and connectivity are essential issues for equality and diversity. The design of these schemes will include measures to facilitate barrier-free movement around this area of the Borough for all modes of transport and highway users.

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

| Document | Place of Inspection | Contact Officer |
|---|--------------------------------------|-----------------|
| Local Pinch Point Fund Application Pack. DfT 3 Jan 2013. | Rutland House Halton Lea, Runcorn | Dave Cunliffe |
| Local Pinch Point Fund Application Form. Halton: Daresbury Enterprise Zone/ East Runcorn housing-A558 access improvements | HBC Website | Dave Cunliffe |
| Local Pinch Point Fund – Full Approval Letter. DfT 20 May 2013 | Rutland House Halton Lea, Runcorn | Dave Cunliffe |

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Finance

SUBJECT: 2012/13 Financial Outturn

PORTFOLIO: Resources

WARD(S): Borough-wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To report the final revenue and capital spending position for 2012/13.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the report be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

Revenue Spending

- 3.1 The final accounts for 2012/13 are nearing completion and the revenue spending position for each Department, subject to external audit, is shown in Appendix 1.
- 3.2 Budget savings for 2013/14 were implemented over two tranches, the first of which consisted of savings of £6.04m which were approved by Council in December 2012. As a result of some of these savings being implemented early it has provided part-year budget savings in 2012/13.
- 3.3 Staffing expenditure is below budget across the majority of Council Departments, as posts have been held vacant in order to restrict spending. Some of these posts have now had to be filled but the majority have been used as savings for the 2013/14 budget, therefore it is not likely the position will be repeated in the new financial year.
- 3.4 Rental income and fees and charges generate significant sums for the Council to fund gross expenditure. There are though a number of areas which have been highlighted during the year, where income has not met the target for the year given the current economic climate. These areas will be closely monitored during the year and corrective action will have to be taken if this continues to be a pressure.
- 3.5 A number of underspends against the 2012/13 budget have been approved as one-off budget savings for 2013/14. These have been carried forward into 2013/14 when closing the accounts at year-end.

3.6 Within the overall net underspend the key budget variances in addition to the above are as follows;

(i) **Children and Families Department (£272,000 underspend):-** staffing expenditure is below budget as a result of vacant posts within the Child Care teams and the Localities Divisions (the latter has been restructured). Spending on supplies and services is below budget due to a reduction in demand following reduced staffing levels and streamlined workflows. Both out-of-Borough and in-house fostering costs are below budget for the year, although the numbers of children requiring foster care is always volatile and difficult to predict.

(ii) **Economy, Enterprise and Property Department (£216,000 overspend):-** there has been very little staff turnover within the Department, which has meant the turnover saving target has not been achieved. These targets were reduced as part of budget setting for 2012/13 but still remain an issue for this Department. Dilapidation costs for vacating Midwood House, Turnstone Park, Corporate Training Centre and Grosvenor House have resulted in an overspend of the repairs & maintenance budget. As these are one-off costs they will not have an impact on the budget for 2013/14.

Rental income for both industrial & commercial units is below the income target for the year by £161,000. Whilst these units are being continually promoted they will continue to be a budget pressure in the new financial year. Spend on business rates is under budget due to property revaluations, these budgets will be closely monitored in the new year to establish whether permanent budget savings are achievable.

(iii) **Finance Department (£153,000 underspend):-** Staff vacancies during the year have been the main contributing factor to the underspend for the Department, mainly within the Financial Management Division (which has been re-structured) and the Revenues, Benefits and Customer Services Division. Some of these vacancies have now been filled whilst others were approved as budget savings for 2013/14.

(iv) **Human Resources (£146,000 underspend):-** Staffing is underspent due to a number of vacant posts primarily within the Learning & Development section. Income generated from schools and academies is greater than expected for the year, which mainly originated from one-off work and is unlikely to continue in the new financial year.

(v) **Prevention and Assessment Department (£55,000 overspend):-** there remains great pressure on the community

care budget, however, the net overspend of £250,000 represents less than 2% of the net budget. This is a significant improvement on the 2011/12 reported outturn position of £1.2m over budget and the £400,000 overspend for 2012/13 forecast at mid-year. A higher PCT contribution of £140,000 towards various services has also helped to reduce the Department's net overspend.

- (vi) **Commissioning and Complex Care Department (£69,000 underspend):-** a number of posts in the Department have been held vacant during the year, which has provided an underspend against the employee budget and they have been approved as budget savings for 2013/14. Reduced spend on the community care element of mental health services has contributed towards the net position, although fluctuations in demand for these services makes it difficult to identify if this will continue in 2013/14.
- (vii) **Community and Environment Department (£91,000 overspend):-** there has been very little staff turnover within the Department, which has meant the turnover budget saving target of £330,000 has not been achieved. In addition, the Department has a premium pay saving target of £240,000 which has not yet been achieved via negotiations with the Trades Unions.

Income for both sales and fees and charges are in total £410,000 (9%) below the budgeted target. Falls in trade and bulky waste income, general catering, bars and functions were responsible for this and these areas will continue to be an on-going budget pressure. These pressures have partly been offset by reductions in spend on waste management contracts (due to low tonnage throughput), higher than expected income from school meals (due to higher than expected take-up) and close management of premises related and supplies and services budgets.

- (viii) **Corporate and Democracy (£8,000 underspend):-** the Council has waived its annual dividend of £100,000 from Halton Borough Transport Limited resulting in a shortfall in income. External audit fees have been reduced by £100,000 following the abolition of the Audit Commission and this has been approved as a budget saving item for 2013/14.

Expenditure on capital financing was significantly below budget due to having obtained advantageous rates in respect of financing required for the Mersey Gateway advance land acquisitions. Investment income was also higher than anticipated due to having greater funds available for investment than expected. The transfers to reserves detailed in paragraphs 3.7 to 3.13 below have been made from Corporate and Democracy.

Reserves and Balances

- 3.7 The Council's Reserves and Balances have been reviewed in accordance with the Reserves and Balances Strategy and are considered reasonable given the scale of the financial challenges facing the Council.
- 3.8 Total revenue spending for the year was £502,000 below budget (compared to £198,000 in the previous year). As a result the Council's general reserve now stands at £8,067,000. In setting the budget for 2013/14 a transfer of £1m from the general reserve was approved by Council to balance the budget, which will reduce the general reserve. Given the current economic climate and the financial challenges facing the Council, it is considered that the balance of the general reserve is held at a reasonable level.
- 3.9 The Council established a transformation fund at 31st March 2011, to meet the costs associated with restructuring the delivery of Council services in the light of the financial challenges ahead. The Government has confirmed during the year that cuts to public spending will continue through to 2017/18 at least. Redundancy costs totalling £0.65m have been met from the transformation fund during 2012/13 and therefore a contribution has been made to the fund at year-end.
- 3.10 The Council has received approximately 950 equal pay claims for which settlement offers have been made to a significant number of claimants. New claims have continued to be received during the year. The future liability for the remaining and future claims is difficult to estimate, however, the equal pay reserve is considered sufficient to meet the remaining and future claims.
- 3.11 The capital reserve helps to fund the capital programme, particularly the development costs for the Mersey Gateway. A contribution of £1.0m has been made to the capital reserve, utilising the capital financing underspend arising in respect of Mersey Gateway early land acquisitions. A capital reserve has also been established to assist with funding the on-going replacement of the Council's vehicle fleet.
- 3.12 The insurance reserve has met significant costs during the year, in particular due to increased numbers of personal injury claims and fire damage. Therefore a contribution of £0.4m has been made to the reserve at year-end.
- 3.13 The invest to save reserve was created to fund the initial outlay for projects which over the medium to long term would create savings for the Council's revenue budget. An example of its use has been the installation of solar panels at Halton Stadium and other buildings. A contribution to the reserve has been made given the need for the Council to identify significant budget savings over the next 4-5 years.

School Balances

- 3.14 School balances as at 31st March 2013 total £7.6m. This is made up of £7.2m on Individual School Budgets and £0.4m of General School grants (previously Standards Fund grants) which will carry forward into 2013/14. There is also £5.2m of unspent Schools related funding held centrally which will carry forward into 2013/14.
- 3.15 The breakdown of spending for 2012/13 against Individual School Budgets is given in the table below.

| Individual School Budgets (ISB) 2012/13 | | | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------|
| | Nursery Schools £'000 | Primary Schools £'000 | Secondary Schools £'000 | Special Schools £'000 | Total £'000 |
| Balance b/f from 11/12 | 65 | 3,260 | 3,221 | 470 | 7,016 |
| ISB for 2012/13 | 930 | 42,159 | 34,445 | 6,022 | 83,556 |
| Total Budget | 995 | 45,419 | 37,666 | 6,492 | 90,572 |
| Actual Expenditure | 928 | 42,157 | 34,502 | 5,816 | 83,403 |
| Balance c/f to 13/14 | 67 | 3,262 | 3,164 | 676 | 7,169 |

Capital Spending

- 3.16 Appendix 2 presents details of spending against the 2012/13 Capital Programme. Capital spending totalled £50.3m, which is £7.1m below the revised capital programme of £57.8m.
- 3.17 This represents 87% delivery of the revised capital programme, for which 20% slippage had been anticipated throughout the year, and so represents a positive outcome. The main areas of significant slippage were in respect of Castlefields Regeneration, The Grange (PFI) Project, Widnes Crematorium (Cremators) and Bungalows at Halton Lodge.

4.0 POLICY AND OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 There are none.

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 5.1 There are no direct implications, however, the revenue budget and capital programme support the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

6.1 There are a number of financial risks within the budget. However, the Council has internal controls and processes in place to ensure that spending remains in line with budget.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 There are none.

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

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

APPENDIX 1

2012-13 REVENUE EXPENDITURE

Summary

| Department/Directorate | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|--|------------------------|-----------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Childrens Organisation & Provision | 16,959 | 16,902 | 57 |
| Learning & Achievement | 3,365 | 3,295 | 70 |
| Children & Families | 8,971 | 8,699 | 272 |
| Economy, Enterprise & Property | 3,434 | 3,650 | (216) |
| Children & Enterprise Directorate | 32,729 | 32,546 | 183 |
| Prevention & Assessment | 22,928 | 22,983 | (55) |
| Commissioning & Complex Care | 17,050 | 16,981 | 69 |
| Community & Environment | 23,787 | 23,878 | (91) |
| Communities Directorate | 63,765 | 63,842 | (77) |
| Legal & Democratic | 1,131 | 1,102 | 29 |
| Policy, Planning & Transportation | 17,837 | 17,800 | 37 |
| Human Resources | -28 | -174 | 146 |
| Finance | 5,858 | 5,705 | 153 |
| ICT & Support Services | -2 | -25 | 23 |
| Policy & Resources Directorate | 24,796 | 24,408 | 388 |
| Corporate & Democracy | -14,985 | -14,993 | 8 |
| Total Revenue Expenditure | 106,305 | 105,803 | 502 |

CHILDREN AND ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE**CHILDREN'S ORGANISATION AND PROVISION DEPARTMENT****2012-13 Revenue Expenditure**

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 3,917 | 3,860 | 57 |
| Premises | 25 | 21 | 4 |
| Supplies & Services | 1,424 | 1,419 | 5 |
| Transport | 5 | 6 | (1) |
| Agency Related Expenditure | 328 | 336 | (8) |
| Commissioned Services - Youth Serv. | 900 | 900 | 0 |
| Commissioned Services | 1,759 | 1,767 | (8) |
| Connexions | 1,073 | 1,070 | 3 |
| Nursery Education Payments | 2,434 | 2,426 | 8 |
| Schools Transport | 967 | 1,036 | (69) |
| Total Expenditure | 12,832 | 12,841 | (9) |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Fees & Charges | -515 | -532 | 17 |
| Government Grant Income | -3,238 | -3,238 | 0 |
| Dedicated Schools Grant | -205 | -205 | 0 |
| Reimbursements & Other Income | -607 | -639 | 32 |
| Schools SLA Income | -516 | -533 | 17 |
| Transfer from Reserves | -154 | -154 | 0 |
| Total Income | -5,235 | -5,301 | 66 |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 7,597 | 7,540 | 57 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises Support | 147 | 147 | 0 |
| Transport Support | 276 | 276 | 0 |
| Central Support | 2,033 | 2,033 | 0 |
| Asset Charges | 6,906 | 6,906 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | 9,362 | 9,362 | 0 |
| Net Department Total | 16,959 | 16,902 | 57 |

LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 3,587 | 3,546 | 41 |
| Premises | 27 | 24 | 3 |
| Supplies & Services | 1,128 | 1,109 | 19 |
| Transport | 13 | 11 | 2 |
| Agency Related Expenditure | 90 | 88 | 2 |
| Commissioned Services | 14 | 14 | 0 |
| Independent School Fees | 1,295 | 1,295 | 0 |
| Inter Authority Special Needs | 349 | 347 | 2 |
| Speech Therapy | 120 | 120 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 6,623 | 6,554 | 69 |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Fees & Charges | -160 | -161 | 1 |
| Transfer to / from Reserves | -59 | -59 | 0 |
| DSG | -3,344 | -3,344 | 0 |
| Reimbursements & Other Income | -112 | -112 | 0 |
| Inter Authority Income | -578 | -578 | 0 |
| Schools SLA Income | -38 | -38 | 0 |
| Total Income | -4,291 | -4,292 | 1 |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 2,332 | 2,262 | 70 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises | 90 | 90 | 0 |
| Transport | 19 | 19 | 0 |
| Central Support Services | 918 | 918 | 0 |
| Asset Rental Support Costs | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | 1,033 | 1,033 | 0 |
| Net Department Total | 3,365 | 3,295 | 70 |

CHILDREN AND FAMILIES DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|----------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 8,031 | 7,947 | 84 |
| Premises | 415 | 420 | (5) |
| Supplies & Services | 1,396 | 1,335 | 61 |
| Transport | 36 | 28 | 8 |
| Commissioned Services | 534 | 506 | 28 |
| Agency Related Expenditure | 389 | 396 | (7) |
| Residential Placements | 1,666 | 1,663 | 3 |
| Out of Borough Adoption | 414 | 375 | 39 |
| Out of Borough Fostering | 80 | 69 | 11 |
| In House Foster Carer Placements | 1,669 | 1,649 | 20 |
| In house Adoption | 387 | 405 | (18) |
| Care Leavers | 316 | 309 | 7 |
| Other | 129 | 100 | 29 |
| Transfer to reserves | 0 | | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 15,462 | 15,202 | 260 |
| Fees & Charges | -123 | -124 | 1 |
| Adoption Placements | -41 | -41 | 0 |
| Transfer to / from Reserves | -500 | -500 | 0 |
| Early Intervention Grant | -9,189 | -9,189 | 0 |
| Dedicated Schools Grant | -31 | -31 | 0 |
| Reimbursements & Other Income | -222 | -233 | 11 |
| Total Income | -10,106 | -10,118 | 12 |
| | | | |
| NET OPERATIONAL BUDGET | 5,356 | 5,084 | 272 |
| Premises Support Costs | 330 | 330 | 0 |
| Transport Support Costs | 88 | 88 | 0 |
| Central Support Service Costs | 3,145 | 3,145 | 0 |
| Asset Rental Support Costs | 52 | 52 | 0 |
| Total Recharges | 3,615 | 3,615 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Net Expenditure | 8,971 | 8,699 | 272 |

ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (Overspend) £'000 |
|---------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 4,682 | 4,812 | (130) |
| Repairs & Maintenance | 2,827 | 2,954 | (127) |
| Energy & Water Costs | 694 | 687 | 7 |
| NNDR | 871 | 689 | 182 |
| Rents | 693 | 700 | (7) |
| Marketing Programme | 40 | 40 | 0 |
| Promotions | 37 | 25 | 12 |
| Development Projects | 0 | 0 | 0 |
| Supplies & Services | 1,470 | 1,416 | 54 |
| Agency Related Payments | 90 | 90 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 11,404 | 11,413 | (9) |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Rent - Markets | -806 | -817 | 11 |
| Rent - Industrial | -662 | -597 | (65) |
| Rent - Commercial | -1,107 | -1,011 | (96) |
| Fees & Charges | -323 | -323 | 0 |
| Reimbursements | -662 | -662 | 0 |
| Government Grant Income | -1,033 | -1,033 | 0 |
| Recharges to Capital | -732 | -706 | (26) |
| Schools SLA Income | -684 | -653 | (31) |
| Transfer from Reserves | -80 | -80 | 0 |
| Total Income | -6,089 | -5,882 | (207) |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 5,315 | 5,531 | (216) |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises Support | 1,518 | 1,518 | 0 |
| Transport Support Costs | 47 | 47 | 0 |
| Central Support Service Costs | 2,102 | 2,102 | 0 |
| Asset Rental Support Costs | 2,035 | 2,035 | 0 |
| Repairs & Maintenance Recharge Income | -2,393 | -2,393 | 0 |
| Accommodation Recharge Income | -3,344 | -3,344 | 0 |
| Central Supp. Service Rech Income | -1,846 | -1,846 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | -1,881 | -1,881 | 0 |
| Net Department Total | 3,434 | 3,650 | (216) |

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE**PREVENTION & ASSESSMENT DEPARTMENT****2012-13 Revenue Expenditure**

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|--|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 8,111 | 8,108 | 3 |
| Other Premises | 72 | 62 | 10 |
| Supplies & Services | 909 | 911 | (2) |
| Consumer Protection | 386 | 406 | (20) |
| Transport | 119 | 100 | 19 |
| Food Provision | 43 | 32 | 11 |
| Aids & Adaptations | 125 | 89 | 36 |
| Contribution to JES | 219 | 219 | 0 |
| Community Care: | | | |
| Residential & Nursing Care | 10,766 | 10,785 | (19) |
| Domiciliary & Supported Living | 7,604 | 7,914 | (310) |
| Direct Payments | 2,319 | 2,324 | (5) |
| Day Care | 236 | 318 | (82) |
| Other Agency | 94 | 106 | (12) |
| Transfer to Reserves | 820 | 820 | 0 |
| Contribution to Intermediate Care Pool | 2,232 | 2,232 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 34,055 | 34,426 | (371) |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Residential & Nursing Income | -3,789 | -3,837 | 48 |
| Community Care Income | -1,551 | -1,607 | 56 |
| Direct Payments Income | -124 | -176 | 52 |
| PCT Contribution to Care | -1,002 | -1,013 | 11 |
| Other Fees and Charges | -93 | -81 | (12) |
| Sales Income | -25 | -41 | 16 |
| Reimbursements and Other Grant Income | -590 | -589 | (1) |
| Transfer from Reserves | -382 | -382 | 0 |
| LD & Health Reform Allocation | -4,489 | -4,489 | 0 |
| Capital Salaries | -84 | -85 | 1 |
| PCT Contribution to Service | -2,279 | -2,423 | 144 |
| Other Government Grants | -366 | -381 | 15 |
| Total Income | -14,774 | -15,104 | 330 |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 19,281 | 19,322 | (41) |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises Support | 429 | 429 | 0 |
| Asset Charges | 254 | 268 | (14) |
| Central Support Services | 3,383 | 3,384 | 1 |
| Internal Recharge Income | -419 | -420 | 1 |
| Total Recharges | 3,647 | 3,661 | (14) |
| Net Departmental Total | 22,928 | 22,983 | (55) |

COMMISSIONING & COMPLEX CARE DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (Overspend) £'000 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 7,514 | 7,464 | 50 |
| Other Premises | 410 | 405 | 5 |
| Supplies & Services | 2,651 | 2,675 | (24) |
| Contracts & SLAs | 217 | 117 | 100 |
| Transport | 170 | 205 | (35) |
| Emergency Duty Team | 103 | 108 | (5) |
| Community Care: | | | |
| Residential & Nursing Care | 697 | 673 | 24 |
| Domiciliary Care | 339 | 471 | (132) |
| Direct Payments | 131 | 80 | 51 |
| Block Contracts | 178 | 118 | 60 |
| Day Care | 15 | 17 | (2) |
| Carers Breaks | 203 | 128 | 75 |
| Other Agency Costs | 1,626 | 1,741 | (115) |
| Payments To Providers | 3,896 | 3,896 | 0 |
| Grants To Voluntary Organisations | 258 | 261 | (3) |
| Transfer To Reserves | 1,120 | 1,120 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 19,528 | 19,479 | 49 |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Residential & Nursing Fees | -77 | -58 | (19) |
| Community Care Income | -23 | -5 | (18) |
| Direct Payments Income | -1 | -2 | 1 |
| PCT Contribution To Care | -257 | -332 | 75 |
| Sales & Rents Income | -209 | -213 | 4 |
| Fees & Charges | -532 | -527 | (5) |
| PCT Contribution To Service | -2,881 | -2,895 | 14 |
| Reimbursements | -547 | -552 | 5 |
| Government Grant Income | -255 | -256 | 1 |
| Transfer From Reserves | -1,282 | -1,279 | (3) |
| Total Income | -6,064 | -6,119 | 55 |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 13,464 | 13,360 | 104 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises Support | 439 | 439 | 0 |
| Transport Recharges | 489 | 506 | -17 |
| Central Support Services | 2,402 | 2,405 | -3 |
| Asset Charges | 344 | 359 | -15 |
| Internal Recharge Income | -88 | -88 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | 3,586 | 3,621 | (35) |
| Net Departmental Total | 17,050 | 16,981 | 69 |

**COMMUNITY AND ENVIRONMENT DEPARTMENT
2012-13 Revenue Expenditure**

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 11,715 | 11,892 | (177) |
| Premium Pay Savings Target | (240) | 0 | (240) |
| Other Premises | 1,205 | 1,068 | 137 |
| Supplies & Services | 1,577 | 1,425 | 152 |
| Book Fund | 245 | 235 | 10 |
| Promotional | 330 | 329 | 1 |
| Other Hired Services | 912 | 912 | 0 |
| Food Provisions | 861 | 794 | 67 |
| School Meals Food | 1,656 | 1,569 | 87 |
| Transport & Other Agency Costs | 196 | 196 | 0 |
| Waste Disposal Contracts | 5,113 | 4,890 | 223 |
| Leisure Management Contract | 1,517 | 1,513 | 4 |
| Grants To Voluntary Organisations | 78 | 74 | 4 |
| Grant To Norton Priory | 222 | 224 | (2) |
| Rolling Projects | 283 | 296 | (13) |
| Transfers To Reserves | 121 | 141 | (20) |
| Capital Financing | 39 | 45 | (6) |
| Total Spending | 25,830 | 25,603 | 227 |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Sales Income | -2,210 | -1,935 | (275) |
| School Meals Sales | -2,173 | -2,296 | 123 |
| Fees & Charges Income | -2,363 | -2,168 | (195) |
| Rents Income | -178 | -161 | (17) |
| Government Grant Income | -31 | -54 | 23 |
| Reimbursements & Other Grant Income | -397 | -472 | 75 |
| Schools SLA Income | -2,037 | -2,161 | 124 |
| Internal Fees Income | -123 | -106 | (17) |
| School Meals Other Income | -369 | -447 | 78 |
| Meals On Wheels | -193 | -218 | 25 |
| Catering Fees | -226 | -115 | (111) |
| Capital Salaries | -101 | -86 | (15) |
| Transfers From Reserves | -574 | -594 | 20 |
| Total Income | -10,975 | -10,813 | (162) |
| Net Controllable Expenditure | 14,855 | 14,790 | 65 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises Support | 1,320 | 1,320 | 0 |
| Transport Recharges | 2,343 | 2,502 | (159) |
| Departmental Support Services | 9 | 9 | 0 |
| Central Support Services | 2,762 | 2,759 | 3 |
| Asset Charges | 2,850 | 2,850 | 0 |
| HBC Support Costs Income | -352 | -352 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | 8,932 | 9,088 | (156) |
| Net Departmental Total | 23,787 | 23,878 | (91) |

POLICY AND RESOURCES DIRECTORATE**LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES DEPARTMENT****2012-13 Revenue Expenditure**

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (Overspend) £'000 |
|------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Expenditure | | | |
| Employees | 2,037 | 1,991 | 46 |
| Supplies & Services | 413 | 395 | 18 |
| Civic Catering & Functions | 29 | 7 | 22 |
| Legal Expenses | 224 | 270 | (46) |
| Capital Financing | 31 | 38 | (7) |
| Transfers to Reserves | 40 | 40 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 2,774 | 2,741 | 33 |
| Income | | | |
| Land Charges | -95 | -101 | 6 |
| School SLA's | -47 | -66 | 19 |
| License Income | -268 | -258 | (10) |
| Print Unit Fee Income | -173 | -162 | (11) |
| Other Income | -22 | -17 | (5) |
| Transfers from Reserves | -137 | -137 | 0 |
| Total Income | -742 | -741 | (1) |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 2,032 | 2,000 | 32 |
| Recharges | | | |
| Premises Support | 382 | 382 | 0 |
| Transport Recharges | 35 | 38 | (3) |
| Asset Charges | 28 | 28 | 0 |
| Central Support Recharges | 1,015 | 1,015 | 0 |
| Support Recharges Income | -2,361 | -2,361 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | -901 | -898 | (3) |
| Net Departmental Total | 1,131 | 1,102 | 29 |

POLICY, PLANNING AND TRANSPORTATION DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|--------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| Expenditure | | | |
| Employees | 6,116 | 6,064 | 52 |
| Other Premises | 171 | 154 | 17 |
| Hired & Contracted Services | 1,537 | 1,552 | (15) |
| Supplies & Services | 400 | 351 | 49 |
| Street Lighting | 1,561 | 1,485 | 76 |
| Highways Maintenance | 2,209 | 2,269 | (60) |
| Bridges | 92 | 92 | 0 |
| Fleet Transport | 1,204 | 1,204 | 0 |
| Lease Car Contracts | 661 | 661 | 0 |
| Bus Support – Halton Hopper Tickets | 170 | 170 | 0 |
| Bus Support | 589 | 589 | 0 |
| Out of Borough Transport | 51 | 50 | 1 |
| Finance Charges | 378 | 380 | (2) |
| Grants to Voluntary Organisations | 75 | 75 | 0 |
| NRA Levy | 62 | 60 | 2 |
| Mersey Gateway | 5,357 | 6,090 | (733) |
| Direct Revenue Financing | 75 | 75 | 0 |
| Contribution to Reserve | 306 | 306 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 21,014 | 21,627 | (613) |
| Income | | | |
| Sales | -247 | -260 | 13 |
| Planning Fees | -495 | -395 | (100) |
| Building Control Fees | -182 | -164 | (18) |
| Other Fees & Charges | -483 | -547 | 64 |
| Rents | -8 | -4 | (4) |
| Grants & Reimbursements | -3,690 | -3,700 | 10 |
| School SLAs | -38 | -38 | 0 |
| Recharge to Capital | -666 | -575 | (91) |
| Contribution from Reserves | -3,419 | -4,174 | 755 |
| Total Income | -9,228 | -9,857 | 629 |
| Net Controllable Expenditure | 11,786 | 11,770 | 16 |
| Recharges | | | |
| Premises Support | 817 | 817 | 0 |
| Transport Recharges | 553 | 553 | 0 |
| Asset Charges | 9,376 | 9,374 | 2 |
| Central Support Recharges | 3,006 | 3,006 | 0 |
| Departmental Support Recharges | 497 | 497 | 0 |
| Support Rchgs Income – Transport | -4,029 | -4,048 | 19 |
| Support Rchgs Income – Non Transport | -4,169 | -4,169 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | 6,051 | 6,030 | 21 |
| Net Departmental Total | 17,837 | 17,800 | 37 |

HUMAN RESOURCES

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget | Actual Expenditure | Variance (Overspend) |
|------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 1,758 | 1,700 | 58 |
| Employee Training | 198 | 178 | 20 |
| Supplies & Services | 262 | 255 | 7 |
| Capital Financing | 0 | 1 | (1) |
| Transfers to Reserves | 322 | 322 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 2,540 | 2,456 | 84 |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Fees & Charges | -83 | -120 | 37 |
| Reimbursements & Other Grants | -65 | -67 | 2 |
| SLA to Schools | -382 | -405 | 23 |
| Transfers from Reserves | -352 | -352 | 0 |
| Total Income | -882 | -944 | 62 |
| Net Operational Expenditure | 1,658 | 1,512 | 146 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises Support | 442 | 442 | 0 |
| Transport Recharges | 16 | 16 | 0 |
| Asset Charges | 1 | 1 | 0 |
| Central Support Recharges | 776 | 776 | 0 |
| Support Recharges Income | -2,921 | -2,921 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | -1,686 | -1,686 | 0 |
| Net Departmental Total | -28 | -174 | 146 |

FINANCE DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget | Actual Expenditure | Variance (Overspend) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 6,859 | 6,720 | 139 |
| Supplies & Services | 596 | 556 | 40 |
| Other Premises | 105 | 97 | 8 |
| Agency Related | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Insurances | 1,900 | 1,899 | 1 |
| Charitable Relief | 120 | 108 | 12 |
| Concessionary Travel | 2,187 | 2,165 | 22 |
| Capital Financing | 0 | 10 | (10) |
| Council Tax Benefits | 11,307 | 11,307 | 0 |
| Rent Allowances | 54,820 | 54,820 | 0 |
| Non HRA Rebates | 62 | 62 | 0 |
| Transfers to Reserves | 890 | 890 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 78,847 | 78,634 | 213 |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Fees & Charges | -94 | -108 | 14 |
| SLA to Schools | -844 | -813 | (31) |
| NNDR Administration Grant | -169 | -167 | (2) |
| Hsg Ben Administration Grant | -1,283 | -1,283 | 0 |
| Rent Allowances | -54,070 | -54,078 | 8 |
| Council Tax Benefits Grant | -11,160 | -11,183 | 23 |
| Reimbursements & Other Grants | -1,167 | -1,218 | 51 |
| Liability Orders | -373 | -314 | (59) |
| Non HRA Rent Rebates | -62 | -65 | 3 |
| Transfer from Reserves | -276 | -208 | (68) |
| Total Income | -69,498 | -69,437 | (61) |
| Net Controllable Expenditure | 9,349 | 9,197 | 152 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises | 500 | 500 | 0 |
| Transport | 68 | 67 | 1 |
| Asset Charges | 39 | 39 | 0 |
| Central Support Service | 3,710 | 3,710 | 0 |
| Support Service Income | -7,808 | -7,808 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | -3,491 | -3,492 | 1 |
| Net Department Total | 5,858 | 5,705 | 153 |

ICT AND SUPPORT SERVICES DEPARTMENT

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget | Actual Expenditure | Variance (Overspend) |
|-------------------------------------|------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------|
| | £'000 | £'000 | £'000 |
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 5,613 | 5,595 | 18 |
| Supplies & Services | 481 | 456 | 25 |
| Computer Repairs & Software | 437 | 397 | 40 |
| Communications Costs | 396 | 395 | 1 |
| Other Premises | 15 | 38 | (23) |
| Other Transport | 3 | 0 | 3 |
| Capital Financing | 98 | 157 | (59) |
| Transfers to Reserves | 500 | 500 | 0 |
| Total Expenditure | 7,543 | 7,538 | 5 |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| Fees & Charges | -277 | -234 | (43) |
| Reimbursements & Other Grants | 0 | -26 | 26 |
| Internal Billing | -97 | -146 | 49 |
| SLA to Schools | -205 | -187 | (18) |
| Transfers from Reserves | -148 | -148 | 0 |
| Total Income | -727 | -741 | 14 |
| Net Controllable Expenditure | 6,816 | 6,797 | 19 |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises | 349 | 345 | 4 |
| Transport | 32 | 28 | 4 |
| Asset Charges | 1,579 | 1,579 | 0 |
| Central Support Services | 1,072 | 1,072 | 0 |
| Support Service Income | -9,850 | -9,846 | (4) |
| Net Total Recharges | -6,818 | -6,822 | 4 |
| Net Department Total | -2 | -25 | 23 |

CORPORATE AND DEMOCRACY

2012-13 Revenue Expenditure

| | Annual Budget £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (Overspend) £'000 |
|-------------------------------------|---------------------------|--------------------------------|----------------------------------|
| <u>Expenditure</u> | | | |
| Employees | 622 | 353 | 269 |
| Interest Payments | 2,894 | 1,844 | 1,050 |
| Members Allowances | 753 | 742 | 11 |
| Supplies & Services | 354 | 324 | 30 |
| Contingency | 912 | 0 | 912 |
| Precepts & Levies | 169 | 153 | 16 |
| Capital Financing | 2,441 | 2,338 | 102 |
| Contribution to Reserves | 1,800 | 4,828 | (3,028) |
| Bank Charges | 76 | 62 | 14 |
| Audit Fees | 303 | 164 | 139 |
| Total Expenditure | 10,324 | 10,808 | (484) |
| <u>Income</u> | | | |
| External Interest | -860 | -1,302 | 442 |
| Grants | -2,019 | -2,019 | 0 |
| Fees & Charges | -18 | -43 | 25 |
| Reimbursements & Other Grants | -192 | -285 | 93 |
| Dividends Receivable | -100 | 0 | (100) |
| Total Income | -3,189 | -3,649 | 460 |
| Net Controllable Expenditure | 7,135 | 7,159 | (24) |
| <u>Recharges</u> | | | |
| Premises | 81 | 49 | 32 |
| Transport | 4 | 4 | 0 |
| Asset Charges | 171 | 171 | 0 |
| Support Services | 1,653 | 1,653 | 0 |
| Support Service Recharges | -24,029 | -24,029 | 0 |
| Net Total Recharges | -22,120 | -22,152 | 32 |
| Net Department Total | -14,985 | -14,993 | 8 |

APPENDIX 2

2012-13 CAPITAL EXPENDITURE

Summary

| Departments/Directorates | Capital Allocation £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|--|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Children and Enterprise Directorate | | | |
| Schools Related | 23,409 | 20,745 | 2,664 |
| Economy, Enterprise and Property | 8,547 | 5,606 | 2,941 |
| | 31,956 | 26,351 | 5,605 |
| Communities Directorate | | | |
| Commissioning and Complex Care | 2,685 | 1,661 | 1,024 |
| Community and Environment | 1,450 | 576 | 874 |
| | 4,135 | 2,237 | 1,898 |
| Policy and Resources Directorate | | | |
| Policy, Planning and Transportation | 20,554 | 20,542 | 12 |
| ICT and Support Services | 1,172 | 1,172 | 0 |
| | 21,726 | 21,714 | 12 |
| | | | |
| Total Capital Expenditure | 57,817 | 50,302 | 7,515 |

CHILDREN AND ENTERPRISE DIRECTORATE**2012-13 Capital Expenditure**

| Schemes | Capital Allocation £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|--|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---|
| Schools Related | | | |
| Asset Management Data | 20 | 2 | 18 |
| Fire Compartmentation | 20 | 20 | 0 |
| Capital Repairs | 1,771 | 1,513 | 258 |
| Asbestos Management | 10 | 7 | 3 |
| Schools Access Initiative | 100 | 99 | 1 |
| Education Programme (General) | 58 | 0 | 58 |
| Short Breaks for Disabled Children | 189 | 186 | 3 |
| School Modernisation Projects | 500 | 442 | 58 |
| Windmill Hill Primary School | 352 | 329 | 23 |
| Early Years Capital | 355 | 0 | 355 |
| Weston Primary School | 18 | 0 | 18 |
| Lunts Heath Primary School | 773 | 647 | 126 |
| St Bedes Infant School | 534 | 419 | 115 |
| St Bedes Junior School | 450 | 100 | 350 |
| Weston Point Basic Need | 83 | 5 | 78 |
| Wade Deacon (BSF) | 16,976 | 16,976 | 0 |
| The Grange (BSF) PFI Project | 1,200 | 0 | 1,200 |
| | | | |
| Economy, Enterprise & Property | | | |
| Castlefields Regeneration | 2,269 | 242 | 2,027 |
| 3MG | 4,500 | 4,206 | 294 |
| Widnes Waterfront (Including Bayer) | 40 | 14 | 26 |
| The Hive | 284 | 70 | 214 |
| Decontamination of Land | 703 | 548 | 155 |
| Property Purchases | 29 | 29 | 0 |
| Municipal Building Refurbishment of Podium Level | 38 | 38 | 0 |
| Runcorn Library Replacement | 224 | 204 | 20 |
| Queens Arms | 160 | 91 | 69 |
| Disability Discrimination Act/Disabled Access | 300 | 147 | 153 |
| Queens Hall | 0 | 17 | (17) |
| | | | |
| Total Children & Enterprise | 31,956 | 26,351 | 5,605 |

COMMUNITIES DIRECTORATE**2012-13 Capital Expenditure**

| Schemes | Capital Allocation £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|---|-------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|
| Community & Environment | | | |
| Stadium Minor Works | 30 | 30 | 0 |
| Stadium Disability Works | 25 | 25 | 0 |
| Children's Playground Equipment | 96 | 80 | 16 |
| Landfill Tax Credit Schemes | 340 | 34 | 306 |
| Arley Drive Play Area | 72 | 6 | 66 |
| The Glen Play Area | 5 | 2 | 3 |
| Runcorn Hill Park | 48 | 43 | 5 |
| Crow Wood Park Play Area | 13 | 0 | 13 |
| Open Spaces Scheme | 150 | 107 | 43 |
| Runcorn Cemetery Extension | 71 | 61 | 10 |
| Cremators at Widnes Crematorium | 350 | 0 | 350 |
| Installation of 5 Multi Use Game Area | 29 | 19 | 10 |
| Development of Facilities at Runcorn Town Hall Park | 73 | 75 | (2) |
| Runcorn Busway Works for Gas Powered Buses | 90 | 60 | 30 |
| Litter Bins | 28 | 34 | (6) |
| Castlefields Recycling Scheme | 30 | 0 | 30 |
| | | | |
| Commissioning & Complex Care | | | |
| Grants – Disabled Facilities | 735 | 525 | 210 |
| Energy Promotion | 6 | 6 | 0 |
| Joint Funding RSL Adaptations | 550 | 340 | 210 |
| Stair Lifts | 253 | 253 | 0 |
| Extra Care Housing | 463 | 463 | 0 |
| Choice Based Lettings | 29 | 22 | 7 |
| Re-design Oakmeadow Communal Spaces | 50 | 50 | 0 |
| Bungalows at Halton Lodge | 464 | 2 | 462 |
| Bredon Respite Unit | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Section 256 Grant | 125 | 0 | 125 |
| | | | |
| Total Communities | 4,135 | 2,237 | 1,898 |

POLICY & RESOURCES DIRECTORATE

2012-13 Capital Expenditure

| Schemes | Capital Allocation £'000 | Actual Expenditure £'000 | Variance (overspend) £'000 |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------------------------|-------------------------------|
| Local Transport Plan | | | |
| Bridge Assessment, Strengthening & Maintenance | 5,245 | 5,245 | 0 |
| Road Maintenance | 1,635 | 1,635 | 0 |
| Integrated Transport | 850 | 850 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Total Local Transport Plan | 7,730 | 7,730 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Halton Borough Council | | | |
| Early Land Acquisition Mersey Gateway | 10,906 | 10,906 | 0 |
| Street Lighting – Structural Maintenance | 295 | 295 | 0 |
| Risk Management | 170 | 170 | 0 |
| IT Rolling Programme | 1,172 | 1,172 | 0 |
| Fleet Vehicles | 140 | 140 | 0 |
| Solar Panels | 152 | 151 | 1 |
| Total Halton Borough Council | 12,835 | 12,834 | 0 |
| | | | |
| Grant Funded | | | |
| Contaminated Land – Heath Road Allotments | 63 | 63 | 0 |
| Growth Points | 380 | 380 | 0 |
| Development Costs Mersey Gateway | 300 | 300 | 0 |
| Mid-Mersey Local Sustainable Transport – Transportation | 10 | 3 | 7 |
| Mid-Mersey Local Sustainable Transport – Infrastructure | 10 | 0 | 10 |
| Total Grant Funded | 763 | 746 | 17 |
| | | | |
| Section 106 Funded | | | |
| Asda Runcorn | 165 | 162 | 3 |
| Hough Green Station | 197 | 196 | 1 |
| Everite – Derby/Peelhouse | 15 | 15 | 0 |
| Norlands Lane | 31 | 31 | 0 |
| Total Section 106 Funded | 408 | 404 | 4 |
| | | | |
| Total Policy & Resources | 21,726 | 21,714 | 12 |

REPORT TO: Executive Board

DATE: 27 June 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director - Finance

SUBJECT: 2013/14 to 2015/16 Capital Programme

WARD(S): Borough-wide

PORTFOLIO: Resources

1.0 PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 Various reports were brought to the Board around the start of the financial year seeking approval for planned expenditure on specific capital schemes, in relation to the overall capital programme approved by Council on 6th March 2013. The purpose of this report is to bring all the separate elements together and report on the Council's total forecast capital programme expenditure and associated funding over the next three years.

2.0 RECOMMENDED: That the Council's capital programme for 2013-16 including forecast spend and funding, be noted.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 The capital strategy covering the period 2013/14 to 2015/16 was approved by the Board on 29th November 2012, as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy. It summarised the expected capital spend over the medium term and the sources of funding available.

3.2 The overall capital programme for 2013/14 to 2015/16 was approved by Council on 6th March 2013. Estimates of capital allocations at that time were known to be still subject to variations. This report updates the latest position, which includes confirmed and indicative capital grant allocations for 2013/14 and future years.

3.3 The capital programme is subject to regular review and monitoring reports are presented to the Board on a quarterly basis. Information is presented to show the actual spend incurred to date and how this compares to the capital allocation for the year. A forecast is provided to indicate if the capital programme will be utilised in full during the year or if there is any expected slippage to capital schemes.

Planned Capital Programme Expenditure

- 3.4 Table 1 below gives an indicative Capital Programme for 2013/14 onwards based on current information for approved schemes, funding and slippage of schemes from 2012/13. The capital programme is subject to continuous change as new resources and projects are identified, and will be updated throughout the year as revisions are approved by Council.

Table 1 Planned Capital Programme Expenditure 2013/14- 2015/16

| | 2013/14 £'000 | 2014/15 £'000 | 2015/16 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Children & Enterprise Directorate | | | | |
| Asset Management Data | 5 | 0 | 0 | 5 |
| Fire Compartmentation | 20 | 0 | 0 | 20 |
| Capital Repairs | 1,135 | 0 | 0 | 1,135 |
| Asbestos Management | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Schools Access Initiative | 100 | 0 | 0 | 100 |
| Education Programme (General) | 78 | 0 | 0 | 78 |
| Short Breaks for Disabled Children | 242 | 0 | 0 | 242 |
| Basic Need Projects | 2,802 | 0 | 0 | 2,802 |
| School Modernisation Projects | 893 | 0 | 0 | 893 |
| Early Education for 2 Year Olds | 356 | 0 | 0 | 356 |
| Wade Deacon (BSF) | 792 | 0 | 0 | 792 |
| Wade Deacon ICT (BSF) | 1,132 | 0 | 0 | 1,132 |
| The Grange ICT (BSF) | 1,132 | 0 | 0 | 1,132 |
| The Grange (BSF) | 1,350 | 0 | 0 | 1,350 |
| Castlefields Regeneration | 826 | 0 | 0 | 826 |
| 3MG | 5,695 | 0 | 0 | 5,695 |
| Widnes Waterfront | 488 | 0 | 0 | 488 |
| The Hive | 214 | 0 | 0 | 214 |
| Decontamination of Land | 155 | 0 | 0 | 155 |
| Queens Arms Demolition | 69 | 0 | 0 | 69 |
| Halton Bus Transport – Bus Park | 71 | 0 | 0 | 71 |
| Former Fairfield High Site – Demolition | 450 | 0 | 0 | 450 |
| Disability Discrimination Act/Disabled Access | 150 | 300 | 300 | 750 |
| Directorate Total | 18,165 | 300 | 300 | 18,765 |
| | | | | |
| Policy & Resources Directorate | | | | |
| ICT Rolling Programme | 1,100 | 1,100 | 1,100 | 3,300 |
| Fleet Renewals Programme | 950 | 300 | 300 | 1,550 |
| LTP – Bridge Maintenance | 500 | 500 | 0 | 1,000 |
| LTP – Highways Maintenance | 1,815 | 1,316 | 0 | 3,131 |
| LTP – Integrated Transport | 560 | 855 | 0 | 1,415 |
| | | | | |

| | 2013/14 £'000 | 2014/15 £'000 | 2015/16 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| LTP – Network Management & Street Lighting | 165 | 165 | 0 | 330 |
| Silver Jubilee Bridge | 2,460 | 2,029 | 4,990 | 9,479 |
| Street Lighting – Structural Maintenance | 105 | 200 | 200 | 505 |
| Surface Water Management | 214 | 0 | 0 | 214 |
| Risk Management | 117 | 120 | 120 | 357 |
| Mid-Mersey Local Sustainable Transport – Infrastructure | 150 | 270 | 0 | 420 |
| Early Land Acquisition – Mersey Gateway | 23,046 | 5,505 | 1,469 | 30,020 |
| Mersey Gateway Development Costs | 3,500 | 0 | 0 | 3,500 |
| Directorate Total | 34,682 | 12,360 | 8,179 | 55,221 |
| | | | | |
| Communities Directorate | | | | |
| Stadium Minor Works | 30 | 30 | 30 | 90 |
| Children's Playground Equipment | 81 | 65 | 65 | 211 |
| Arley Drive Play Area | 66 | 0 | 0 | 66 |
| Crow Wood Play Area | 13 | 0 | 0 | 13 |
| Open Spaces Scheme | 51 | 0 | 0 | 51 |
| Runcorn Cemetery Extension | 9 | 0 | 0 | 9 |
| Cremators Widnes Crematorium | 350 | 0 | 0 | 350 |
| Gas Powered Bus Works | 30 | 0 | 0 | 30 |
| Landfill Tax Credit Schemes | 340 | 340 | 340 | 1,020 |
| Litter Bins | 20 | 20 | 20 | 60 |
| Disabled Facilities Grant | 858 | 0 | 0 | 858 |
| RSL Adaptations | 210 | 0 | 0 | 210 |
| Choice Based Lettings | 7 | 0 | 0 | 7 |
| Bungalows at Halton Lodge | 462 | 0 | 0 | 462 |
| Bredon Respite Unit | 10 | 0 | 0 | 10 |
| Section 256 Grant | 126 | 0 | 0 | 126 |
| Community Capacity Grant | 343 | 351 | 0 | 694 |
| Directorate Total | 3,006 | 806 | 455 | 4,267 |
| | | | | |
| Total Capital Programme | 55,853 | 13,466 | 8,934 | 78,253 |
| | | | | |

Funding the Programme

3.5 Table 2 below summarises how the capital programme will be funded.

Table 2 Capital Programme Funding 2013/14 to 2015/16

| | 2013/14 £'000 | 2014/15 £'000 | 2015/16 £'000 | Total £'000 |
|---------------------------|------------------|------------------|------------------|----------------|
| Specific & General Grants | 16,095 | 5,216 | 4,990 | 26,301 |
| External Contributions | 461 | 576 | 306 | 1,343 |
| Borrowing | 32,532 | 5,505 | 1,469 | 39,506 |
| Revenue Contributions | 1,462 | 300 | 300 | 2,062 |
| Capital Receipts | 5,303 | 1,869 | 1,869 | 9,041 |
| | | | | |
| Total Funding | 55,853 | 13,466 | 8,934 | 78,253 |

3.6 The Council will continue to seek and secure further additional external resources to reduce on-going revenue implications and enhance the capital programme. For example, through Section 106 agreements.

3.7 There are a number of capital grants where funding details have not yet been provided by Government Departments for 2014/15 and 2015/16, these will be updated in the programme when indication of funding allocations are received.

3.8 Revenue contributions have been set aside to fund capital repairs for schools and to assist with funding the rolling fleet replacement programme.

3.9 Borrowings undertaken to support the capital programme are undertaken in line with the Prudential Code and Council's Treasury Management Strategy. This ensures that external borrowings are affordable and within prudent and sustainable levels. Borrowings to fund the capital programme over the three years will be repayable in future years from either Government grant, forecast capital receipts or funded from future revenue streams.

3.10 Prudential borrowing remains an option to fund future capital schemes, but the financing costs as a result of the borrowing will need to be found from savings within the revenue budget.

Capital Receipts

3.11 Available capital receipts are used to fund the capital programme. Sales from the disposal of surplus land and buildings may only be used to fund capital expenditure. These funds cannot be used to fund revenue expenditure, with the exception of up to 4% of the proceeds of the sale of capital assets being allowable to fund the revenue cost of disposing of an asset.

- 3.12 Estimates of capital receipts over the medium term are based on forecast land and building sales. Given the current subdued state of the property market and with no expected sign of recovery over the term of the capital programme, a cautious approach needs to be followed and as such there are no funds available for new capital starts unless external funding is generated to finance the cost.
- 3.13 Table 3 below shows the expected balance of capital receipts over the next three years. The Council attempts to maintain a minimum value of £3m of retained receipts towards funding the capital programme. However, the table shows that the balance of capital receipts for each of the next three years is forecast to fall below this level. This emphasises the need for a prudent approach with future proposed capital schemes having to be fully funded.

Table 3 Capital Receipts

| | 2013/14 £'000 | 2014/15 £'000 | 2015/16 £'000 |
|------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|
| Balance B/F | 1,351 | 1,173 | 2,904 |
| In-Year Anticipated Receipts | 5,125 | 3,600 | 1,000 |
| Receipts Utilised | -5,303 | -1,869 | -1,869 |
| Balance C/F | 1,173 | 2,904 | 2,035 |

4.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 None

5.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

- 5.1 The capital programme supports the delivery and achievement of all the Council's priorities.

6.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 6.1 There is a risk that slippage to the capital programme, could result in increases to the cost of delivering schemes. Additional revenue costs could be incurred if the schemes are not delivered in time.
- 6.2 The capital programme is heavily funded from grants, many of which come with conditions to how funding can be used and outcome targets for when the asset is brought into use. Deviation against these conditions may result in requests for clawback to the funding from approving bodies. Risks exist in schemes funded from prudential borrowing. It is important to recognise on undertaking borrowing that a clear plan exists which identifies how the principal and interest will be re-paid on the borrowing end date.
- 6.3 The current economic climate poses a risk to the availability of capital receipts from forecast land and building sales.

6.4 Regular monitoring and reporting of spending against the capital programme will seek to mitigate the above risks.

7.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

7.1 There are no equality and diversity issues.

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

8.1 None under the meaning of the Act.