



# Children & Enterprise Directorate

## **DIRECTORATE BUSINESS PLAN**

**April 2014 to March 2017**

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## 1.0 Foreword from Strategic Director

The Children & Enterprise Directorate (CED) Service Plan for 2014 to 2017 comes at a time of continuing change for both the Council and Halton's Children's Trust.

The Directorate is at the heart of the Trust; having a dual responsibility to both the Council and the contribution it makes to the strategic priorities of the Children's Trust. The scope of the Directorate was broadened in 2011 with the addition of the Economy, Enterprise and Property Department. This has meant that the Directorate has an even greater role to play in the element of the Trust's work that focuses on young people aged 16 plus. Similarly, the changes have increased the presence of the Directorate within the Employment, Learning & Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership.

All partners remain committed to Halton Children's Trust and are working together to meet the aims and objectives of the new Children & Young People's Plan that has been agreed to direct the work of Halton Children's Trust from 2014-17. This commitment to working in partnership is crucial as we look to work through tough economic times, with reducing resources, while maintaining the same high quality level of service for our children and young people and their families in Halton. We have been successful in achieving this so far but we must continually look to improve to achieve the highest levels of performance in the years ahead, particularly as the bar has been raised again in the new Ofsted Inspection Frameworks for both our School Improvement service and also the full continuum of Children's Social Care services from early help through to child protection for unannounced inspections. Details on these new unannounced inspection frameworks are contained within this Plan.

We are now attracting large-scale investment from a range of sectors and many employment opportunities for Halton residents have resulted or will develop over the years ahead from these but more work needs to be done increase the number of employment opportunities in Halton and to break the cycle of worklessness in some parts of the Borough.

Despite facing many challenges, I believe that the Directorate is well placed to meet each challenge and continue to work to improve outcomes for our children and young people, as well as their families and businesses in Halton. This is captured within the new Directorate vision that has been developed and explained in detail in Section 4.2. We will be ensuring that all in the Directorate fully understand this vision and the objectives that we are working together towards achieving during the lifespan of this document.



Gerald Meehan

Strategic Director  
Children & Enterprise Directorate



## 2.0 Introduction

The Children and Enterprise Directorate (CED) plays a key role within the Council structures and in ensuring the Council achieves its objectives. Whilst CED works to the key priorities that appear within Halton's Children & Young People's Plan of Halton Children's Trust and economic development programme, it is a business unit within its own right, requiring leadership and direction provided by this Plan.

Business planning encourages the development of a blueprint for the ongoing performance management of the Directorate and, without it; the preparation needed to manage performance is missing. Without ongoing performance management, the strategies and plans developed through business planning will not be implemented and will fail to impact upon the activities of the Directorate, or on outcomes for service users.

This document is a key business planning document and should be used alongside performance information when developing service and team plans. It aims to:-

- identify the key objectives for the Directorate over the next 12 months;
- improve the quality of the services provided; and
- deliver better outcomes for service users.

The plan is underpinned by the principles and strategic objectives Halton Borough Council has adopted in its Corporate Plan 2011 - 2016. It aims to be a key reference document for elected members, staff in the Directorate and our partner agencies. It provides the rationale and framework for the major areas of the Directorate's activity. It does this by taking account of the national, inter-agency and Council planning and budget priorities and inter-weaves these with what we know - or what our service users and carers tell us - about how services should be developed in order to meet needs and expectations more effectively. The plan needs to be understood in the context of a wide range of other documents. The main strategic documents are:-

- Sustainable Community Strategy for Halton: 2011 – 2026;
- Halton Local Development Framework;
- The Borough Council's Corporate Plan 2011 - 2016;
- Halton Children & Young People's Plan 2014 – 17
- Halton Regeneration Strategy 2013 - 28

These commit the Borough Council and its partners to achieving explicit and realistic priorities over the coming year. This Business Plan highlights the Children and Enterprise Directorate's elements of those commitments within the context of the Government's overall agenda for local government. The achievement of these continues to depend on partnerships with many other agencies, and members are committed to testing these achievements.

This document does not attempt to describe all the day-to-day activities that make up most of the Directorate's work, but only to set out the overall framework within which that work takes place. It needs to be remembered, however, that it is the everyday assessment of needs and arrangement of services to meet those needs that is the fundamental task of the Directorate. Undertaking this effectively requires the continuing dedication and enthusiasm of staff, together with the Directorate's commitment to recruit, retain and train the staff able to meet the challenges of the future.

### **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

<b>Outcome-Focussed Priorities</b>	<b>Integrated Commissioning of services to meet the needs of children, young people and families in Halton</b>	<b>Effectively supporting the child's journey through the Halton Levels of Need Framework when additional needs arise</b>	<b>Improving achievement and opportunities for all through closing the gap for our most vulnerable children and young people</b>
<b>Key Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Ensure Early Years Provision for children is sufficient, sustainable and of appropriate quality</li> <li>• Ensure school and post-16 provision is sufficient, sustainable and of appropriate quality</li> <li>• Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning, with emphasis on our most vulnerable children and young people</li> <li>• Improve outcomes for children and young people through integrated and targeted youth support</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Improve outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers</li> <li>• Improve outcomes for children and families through embedding integrated processes to deliver Early Help &amp; Support</li> <li>• Ensure that the changes required by the Munro Review of Child Protection to practice improves outcomes for children and families</li> <li>• Recruit and retain Children's Social Care Managers to deliver the necessary level of scrutiny and management oversight to ensure effective care planning</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase the percentage of schools and Early Years settings where Ofsted judge overall effectiveness to be good or better.</li> <li>• Increase the GCSE attainment for 5 or more A*-C including English and Maths</li> <li>• Close the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers through early identification of need and effective use of Pupil Premium.</li> </ul>
<b>Major Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding integrated commissioning</li> <li>• Partnership working to reduce NEET and increase participation post 16.</li> <li>• Partnership work to implement the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) agenda.</li> <li>• Commissioning provision for young people with High Needs</li> <li>• New contracts and quality assurance of alternative provision improving outcomes for young people accessing The Bridge School.</li> <li>• More integrated and targeted youth provision</li> <li>• Review of commissioning arrangements at CWAC.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Contact, Assessment and Referral Team (CART)</li> <li>• Embedding new Halton Children's Trust Levels of Need Framework in practice.</li> <li>• Developing further Early Help &amp; Support resource through the development of the next stage of an integrated model</li> <li>• Developing a Recruitment and Retention Strategy.</li> <li>• Investment in Children in Need administration to reorganise workloads for greater frontline capacity.</li> <li>• Embedding improved coordination and oversight of services around Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing from Home.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Learning &amp; Achievement Strategy</li> <li>• Development of new Anti-Bullying Policy and school accreditation</li> <li>• Appointment of a project Lead to manage and co-ordinate the proposed recommendations of the Children and Families Bill.</li> <li>• Evaluation of educational standards, categorisation of schools and settings and targeting of support</li> <li>• Narrowing the Gap, Peer Challenge and Virtual School for Vulnerable Pupils</li> <li>• Supporting schools to meet requirements of new Ofsted School Inspection Framework</li> <li>• Advice and guidance for governing bodies, including head teacher recruitment</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Raising the Participation Age</li> <li>• Information, Advice &amp; Guidance</li> <li>• Early Intervention Grant</li> <li>• Capital</li> <li>• Early Years</li> <li>• Provision</li> <li>• Workforce Development</li> <li>• Sustainability</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changing social care landscape</li> <li>• Ensuring intervention and children supported at the earliest stage.</li> <li>• Adapting and implementing new ways of working</li> <li>• Ensuring we support children in residential care</li> <li>• Safeguarding</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Academies and free schools</li> <li>• Meeting requirements of Children &amp; Families Bill by planned implementation dates.</li> <li>• Understanding all factors that need tackling to close the gap</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	Ann McIntyre	Tracey Coffey	Steve Nyakatawa

<b>Outcome-Focused Priorities</b>	<b>Driving Economic prosperity of Halton to the benefit of residents and the workforce</b>
<b>Key Objectives</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategically manage and maintain the Council's assets in order to provide a sustainable flow of income and capital receipts as well as ensure that they are safe and fit for purpose</li> <li>• Deliver a comprehensive development and investment service</li> <li>• Deliver a comprehensive employment, learning and skills service</li> </ul>
<b>Major Activities</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supporting the development of combined authority in areas of Economic Development and Employment Learning and Skills</li> <li>• HBC are leading on the development of the Assisted area map for the LCR</li> <li>• Develop and assist with delivery of actions to be funded through Halton's European Structural Funding allocation of £16,927,600 from 2014 – 2020</li> <li>• Secure external funding for key strategic priorities in Halton</li> <li>• Working with MerseyLink to deliver agreed job, training, supply chain and school engagement outcomes for local people, schools and businesses</li> <li>• Support local people into jobs through HPIJ. The Work Programme contract for Halton was awarded to Prime Contractors Ingeus and A4E; Ingeus have subcontracted their share of the contract to the council's Halton People into Jobs team, whilst A4E have subcontracted half of their share. This means HPIJ are delivering 75 per cent of the Work Programme in Halton. To improve accessibility for Widnes clients, HPIJ has now relocated to a more central location within the Halton Direct Link.</li> <li>• Support new business start ups in Halton</li> <li>• Service inward investment enquiries from both inward investors and local companies wishing to expand and grow</li> <li>• Improve engagement with the key companies in the Borough</li> <li>• Deliver the Business Improvement Districts Programme 2013 – 2017</li> <li>• Deliver the REECH programme in the BID areas</li> <li>• Expand the BID Programme to Widnes Waterfront and an additional industrial area in Runcorn</li> <li>• Deliver the ERDF 4.2 Programme</li> <li>• Deliver the RGF 3 &amp; 4 Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme for grant between grant between £10,000.00 and £1 million</li> <li>• Deliver LEP 'New Markets Programme'</li> <li>• Facilitate International Festival of Business 2014</li> <li>• Facilitate Halton Business and Tourism Awards 2014</li> <li>• Deliver Mersey Gateway Visitor Economy Strategy</li> <li>• Develop project proposals, and potentially deliver, the 'Business' portfolio for the EU Programme 2014-20</li> <li>• Manage the commercial property database and service enquiries for commercial property</li> <li>• Manage and improve the company database and develop a user friendly CRM system</li> <li>• Work with others to maximise the external resources accessed by the Borough Council</li> <li>• Encourage new apprenticeships and traineeships across the borough</li> <li>• The council is continuing with the delivery of its 3 to 5 year Asset Disposals Programme. £2.3m has been received over the last 2 years, and solicitors have been instructed on disposals to yield £6.4m over the next 3 years. Works continuing in order to bring additional sites to the market in due course</li> <li>• Energy Management – meeting the reduced emissions target of between 5% and 10% from 2010/11 levels over a 5 year period. The total GHG emissions figure for 2012/13 was 24,451 tonnes CO2 which equates to a 5.28 % reduction since the baseline year of 2006/7.</li> <li>• Support the new adult learning and skills tutor contracts that have been renewed</li> <li>• The council's homeworking Policy will be revised to take account of major road works which will take place as part of the Mersey gateway Development (Jan start)</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Where funding is available, the council will look to improve and manage its' assets for the benefit of the community to improve service delivery. Examples being the proposed visitors centre at Runcorn Hill, the proposed new sports changing facilities at the former Widnes Rec club site and the proposed New Travellers site in Runcorn.</li> <li>• We will maximise rental income from our Operational estate by actively seeking other public sector partners to share accommodation where feasible in order to reduce expenditure.</li> <li>• Mersey Gateway acquisitions/disposals/ demolitions</li> <li>• Support business in the town centres through the Town Team and town centre grants</li> <li>• Development agreement Bayer</li> <li>• Venture Fields Barwood</li> <li>• Sci Tech Daresbury</li> </ul>
<b>Challenges</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Changes in shopping habits impacting on the vibrancy of town centres</li> <li>• Combined Authority will result in how funding is allocated for regeneration in Halton</li> <li>• Delivery of outcomes required for Mersey Gateway</li> <li>• Low land values affects investment on key strategic sites</li> <li>• Funding regimes out of sequence, leading to delays in completion of projects</li> <li>• Difficult sites to remediate in Halton require greater remediation</li> <li>• National transfer of assets</li> <li>• Mersey Gateway – in short-term project could cause delay to adjacent sites</li> <li>• Impacts of the Welfare Reforms, for example more people on the Work Programme with mental health problems</li> <li>• Payment by results and more challenging targets in Work Programme</li> <li>• The Government's approach to funding skills development has changed, especially over the last 12 months, and will continue to do so, placing employers much more in the driving seat of skills and qualifications funding and development.</li> </ul>
<b>Lead</b>	Wesley Rourke

## 3.0 Key Messages

### 3.1 OVERALL DIRECTORATE STRATEGIC DIRECTION

The structure for the Directorate is set out in detail in Section 6 but in summary is split into four departments as follows:

- Children & Family Services
- Children's Organisation & Provision
- Learning & Achievement Services
- Economy, Enterprise and Property

In addition the Children's Safeguarding Unit reports directly to the Strategic Director.

The key messages in terms of outcomes achieved within each objective during the last 12 months are outlined below. Although these have been split by Department, this is to ensure clear accountability is in place for each objective. In order to achieve our objectives as a Directorate, all Departments need to work collectively towards meeting each objective and so responsibility is shared. By working towards each objective, we will be working towards our Directorate vision, which is described in more detail in Section 4.2 but is outlined below:

*We believe that to drive economic prosperity we need to increase opportunities for all, including our most vulnerable young people, providing appropriate support if needed from Early Help through to Safeguarding, with integrated commissioning of services to deliver improved outcomes through the effective use of available resources.*

Lead Department	Objective	Outcome 2013-14
Children & Family Services	Improve outcomes for Children in Care and Care Leavers	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The attainment gap for Children in Care is closing with more children making the appropriate levels of progress at both Key Stage 2 and GCSE levels.</li> <li>• The number of Care Leavers who are not in education, employment or training has decreased and the focus remains on continuing to reduce the number of young people leaving care who are not in employment, education or training.</li> <li>• During the course of the year six apprenticeship opportunities have been developed for care leavers to access.</li> <li>• Support continues for Members in their role as corporate parents.</li> </ul>
	Improve outcomes for children and families through embedding integrated processes to deliver Early Help & Support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The framework, structure and service for Team Around the Family are now delivering positive results across Halton – there is positive correlation between an increase in IWST consultations and a reduction in Children's Social Care referrals.</li> <li>• The model has also ensured full integration for Disabled Children with 391 children in receipt of short breaks commissioned by the Local Authority.</li> <li>• To ensure that the workforce have the appropriate competencies to work with families with multiple problems a multi-agency programme of training has been developed in line with the seven strands of the Children's Trust Integrated Workforce Strategy.</li> <li>• The new Halton Level of Needs Framework has been developed through integrated working from all agencies within Halton Children's</li> </ul>



		<p>Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board to ensure the new Framework is fit for purpose for all agencies to ensure the right support for children, young people and families in Halton.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A robust response to safeguarding issues is evident in Early Help through both Integrated Working Support Teams and within Children's Centres.</li> </ul>
	Ensure that the changes required by the Munro Review of Child Protection to practice improves outcomes for children and families	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strong processes remain a powerful method of protecting children and Halton have developed a new model for a single front door into Children in Need services and a single assessment process led by the new Contact, Referral and Assessment Team (CART).</li> <li>• Evidence in S47 enquiries – good relationship with Police, strong processes remain a powerful way to protect children,</li> <li>• Through the Halton Safeguarding Children Board a comprehensive programme of multi-agency safeguarding training is delivered through the Safeguarding Children Induction Booklet, inclusion of a Safeguarding slot on Halton Borough Councils Corporate Induction and joint alerter training with the Safeguarding Adult Board. This ensures that safeguarding children is everyone's business.</li> </ul>
	Recruit and retain Children's Social Care Managers to deliver the necessary level of scrutiny and management oversight to ensure effective care planning	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recruiting and retaining frontline social workers remains a priority, retention is good and vacancies are as a result of promotions and growth, this ensure we are able to meet needs of children, young people and families in Halton.</li> <li>• The multi-agency Children's Trust Induction programme has been piloted and rolled out which supports further workforce development to ensure that Halton's Children and Young People are appropriately supported across the Continuum of Need.</li> <li>• Implementation of Social Work Reform Programme. Halton has developed a social charter which clearly outlines the expectations of social workers and what they can expect from Halton as an employer. This ensures that we engage our social workers are clear about responsibilities, ensures retention is good and we can therefore respond appropriately to safeguarding concerns.</li> </ul>
<b>Children's Organisation &amp; Provision</b>	Ensure Early Years Provision for children is sufficient, sustainable and of appropriate quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halton has extended and delivered flexibly the free early years entitlement to 2, 3 and 4 year olds and continues to identify new provision in which to deliver the vulnerable two year old entitlement</li> <li>• The Childcare Sufficiency Audit has been completed and the resulting action plan sets out areas for development to ensure that provision continues to meet the needs of Halton's children and families</li> <li>• There have been continued improvements in Childminder provision across Halton through targeted training and support resulting in an increase in the proportion being graded good or better.</li> <li>• A capital investment continues to be delivered to Early Years settings through the 2 year old Capital Grant, enhancing capacity and improving the learning environments.</li> </ul>
	Ensure school and post-16 provision is sufficient, sustainable and of appropriate quality	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Despite the reduction of capital resource school major capital works have been undertaken at Lunts Heath Primary and St Bede's Infant and Junior schools.</li> <li>• There has been an increase in the proportion of families receiving their first preferences for schools from 95% in September 2012 to 98% in September 2013.</li> <li>• A capital investment of over £560k has been allocated to 22 Primary, 1 Secondary and 1 Special school to improve the learning</li> </ul>

	<p>environments and enhance the provision.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Repairs and maintenance programme of over £1.1m has been undertaken to ensure that the quality of the Halton school provision is maintained.</li> <li>• An enhanced Governor Support and Development programme continues to develop through a shared service agreement with neighbouring local authorities led by Cheshire East, helping to improve leadership, management and governance in schools</li> <li>• There continues to be high levels of Service Level Agreement buy back for Technical Support, Caretaker Support, Caretaker Cleaner Support, Governor Support (Administration &amp; Clerking) and Governor Support &amp; Development</li> <li>• There continues to be sufficient provision at all levels, from Play, Early Years, primary, secondary and post-16 education, although the Raising Participation Age will present challenges regarding the number of young people who enter jobs without training in the borough.</li> <li>• The number of young people not engaged in education and training (NEET) has decreased from 11.6% to 9.5%.</li> <li>• The number of Halton residents accessing Higher Level Apprenticeships is continuing to grow with 42 participating in 2012/13, compared to 27 in 2011/12</li> <li>• Following a 10% increase in the previous year, the percentage of young people with Learning Difficulties and/or Disabilities participating in Education, Employment or Training has increased again from 74 % to 77%</li> </ul>
<p>Improve outcomes for children and young people through effective joint commissioning, with emphasis on our most vulnerable children and young people</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There are a common set of commissioning priorities for Children and Young People across Halton, led by the Children’s Trust</li> <li>• The integrated approach to commissioning has been further developed with the Clinical Commissioning Group and Public Health through dedicated specialist commissioning staff</li> <li>• Implications of SEND Reforms within Children &amp; Families Bill being implemented through joint commissioning of placements with SEN department and contracting procedures.</li> <li>• Development of new multi-agency CAMHS Plan involving a review of current service provision and redesign and commission according to need across the Tiers.</li> <li>• Continued ongoing involvement within regional contracting activity to meet specific identified needs of children in care in the care of Halton</li> <li>• Information, Advice and Guidance statutory duties have changed and the LA has provided clarity on the new responsibilities to all partners In-year reductions in the Early Intervention Grant have been identified and implemented.</li> <li>• A detailed review has been undertaken on all commissioned services.</li> <li>• Through the Inspiring Families Project local partners are now working more closely together to provide co-ordinated effective support to the relevant families.</li> </ul>
<p>Improve outcomes for children and young people through integrated and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Delivered world-class facilities from CRMZ with five agencies permanently based at CRMZ.</li> <li>• Commissioned an extensive Summer Blitz programme across Halton and recorded a decrease in the number of anti-social behaviours incidents across Halton</li> </ul>

	targeted youth support	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Reduction in alcohol admissions for under 18s by 20.2%</li> <li>• Procedures for Children in the Care of other Local Authorities (CICOLA) have been reviewed</li> <li>• Reduced the number of teenage conceptions and increased the number of young people registered on the C-Card condom scheme</li> <li>• Increased the number of young people focused holistic health drop-ins provided in Community settings and Secondary Schools</li> <li>• Increased the number of young people accessing targeted youth session in hotspot areas through the VRMZ outreach bus and street based teams</li> </ul>
<b>Learning &amp; Achievement</b>	Increase the percentage of schools and Early Years settings where Ofsted judge overall effectiveness to be good or better	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The new inspection framework was introduced from September 2012 and was further amended for September 2013. Halton's overall percentage of schools judged as good or better by Ofsted continues to be in line with the national average.</li> <li>• All support is aligned through categorising schools and targeting support for those schools that require support to improve.</li> <li>• Early Years Foundation settings are also categorised to target the support and training to improve settings.</li> <li>• The school improvement model has continued to evolve to meet the needs of all schools</li> </ul>
	Increase the GCSE attainment for 5 or more A*-C including English and Maths	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Attainment of 5 or more A*-C including English and Maths has again improved on previous years, is above national and is Halton's best ever result.</li> <li>• Performance at earlier Key Stages showed improvement but Early Years Foundation Stage continues to be a priority.</li> </ul>
	Narrow the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers through early identification of need	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The attainment gap for Children in Care is closing with more children making the appropriate levels of progress at both Key Stages 1 and 2. The gap between Free School Meals pupils and their peers has narrowed for both Key Stage 2 in writing and maths and has narrowed significantly at GCSE levels</li> <li>• Ashley School is now fully accredited by the National Autistic Society. This is a prestigious award and the school is now working with the Local Authority to fully develop the 16 to 19 offer, in preparation for opening the 6<sup>th</sup> form in September 2014.</li> <li>• All remaining ASC bases within the Borough have registered with the NAS (National Autistic Society) to achieve this accreditation.</li> </ul>
<b>Economy, Enterprise and Property</b>	Strategically manage and maintain the Council's assets in order to provide a sustainable flow of income and capital receipts as well as ensure that they are safe and fit for purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Carbon emissions in total have now been reduced by 5.28% since the baseline year of 2006/7, emissions associated with corporate sites have been reduced by 18.2%</li> <li>• The phase 2 works to upgrade facilities at Lowerhouse Lane Depot are progressing, works on site will be commencing in October with completion by Spring 2014.</li> <li>• Both the schools being rebuilt under the Building Schools for the Future (BSF) programme, The Grange and Wade Deacon have now reached Practical Completion</li> <li>• The offices to the new archive storage unit at Picow Farm Depot have been completed, the building has also had a new roof and improvements are being undertaken to enhance the security of the building by removing the old, sliding, folding doors.</li> <li>• The partial refurbishment of the Municipal Building has now been completed to enhance welfare facilities and improve agile working</li> </ul>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>arrangements to floors 2 to 7.</li> <li>• Homeworking Policy (Jan start) being revised to take account of major roadworks which will take place as part of the Mersey gateway Development</li> <li>• Design works are progressing with the proposed visitors centre at Runcorn Hill which forms part of the lottery bid, it is anticipated that these works will be completed in 2014.</li> <li>• Design works are also progressing with the proposed new sports changing facilities at the former Widnes Rec club site.</li> <li>• Design works in respect of the proposed New Travellers site in Runcorn is progressing, works on site will commence in the new year with completion due in late 2014.</li> <li>• Additional Parking provision has been secured for the Municipal Building with 50 spaces now being available behind the Masonic Lodge across the road.</li> <li>• Falkirk Avenue</li> <li>• Castlefields The Barge</li> <li>• Runcorn Town Centre 3MG</li> <li>• Town Team – number of businesses supported</li> <li>• Town centre grants</li> <li>• Development agreement Bayer</li> <li>• Venture Fields Barwood</li> </ul>
<p>Deliver a comprehensive development and investment service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Halton’s key strategic priorities have been supported through key bids which the department supported</li> <li>• Sci-Tech Daresbury has now secured £7.36m from Regional Growth Fund, £1.81m from Growing Places Fund and £3.58m from the Enterprise Zone Capital Fund. We are awaiting an imminent decision on £1.128m from the current ERDF Programme</li> <li>• £5.661m of external funding has been secured for Halton to date this financial year (13/14)</li> <li>• Launched euro funded business support programme – 131 enquiries, 77 businesses (first 6 months) receiving support</li> <li>• The number of investment enquiries for the 2013 calendar year (280 to date) has surpassed the average, pre-recession, level. The number of inward investment enquiries is likely to be a nine year high by end of the calendar year.</li> <li>• A major consultation exercise with the Astmoor and Halebank business community between August 2012 and December 2012 found that 85% of businesses reported that the BID has had a beneficial impact on their business while 80% of businesses reported that Astmoor Industrial Estate has improved as a place to trade/operate since the establishment of the BID in 2008.</li> <li>• In January 2013 a mandate was secured from the business community to continue the BID Programme at Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates for a further five years. 75% of Astmoor businesses and 82% of Halebank businesses voted in favour of continuing the BID Programme</li> </ul>
<p>Development of a comprehensive employment, learning and</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A very successful Ofsted Inspection took place 23<sup>rd</sup> – 26<sup>th</sup> April 2013 which resulted in an overall Grade 2 with Grade 1 for Outcomes for Learners, Employability curriculum area and the effectiveness of Leadership and Management. Grade 2 was awarded for Community Learning and Teaching, Learning and Assessment.</li> </ul>

skills service in particular sector specific skills pathways that meet the needs of Halton's growth employment sectors e.g. the Knowledge Economy; Logistics; Construction

- Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) has already undertaken a range of projects associated with supporting specific growth sectors. This included the Tesco chilled distribution centre.
- HEP also worked closely with Tesco Extra in designing a range of (bespoke to) Tesco pre-employment training programmes to support employment in the retail sector. Rather than achievement of an additional qualification, these programmes incorporated an element of actual work experience in the retail sector, which provides valuable insight into the world of work.
- Development of a range of skills pathways for the new Mersey Gateway contract.
- Mersey Gateway KPIs agreed with procurement team
- A submission of Halton's European Priorities for Employment, Learning & Skills was produced by the ELS SSP and HEP members and submitted to the Liverpool City Region. Further work is ongoing to develop Halton projects.
- DWP release of Work Programme data This does not go down to individual provider level so HPIJ's performance isn't identified in the public domain. However, performance has been very positive.
- New Adult Learning and Skills Tutor contracts – Adult Learning and Skills Tutor contracts have been renewed.
- Relocation of HPIJ to central HDL location
- Traineeships 16-18 year olds
- Apprenticeships – bus tour most registrations in LCR were from Halton
- Lpl Apprenticeship Awards link to tall ships – world skills (submission for funding gone in)
- Apprenticeship graduation ceremony for completed apprenticeships Anglican cathedral
- Global entrepreneurship in November 13
- Council work experience opportunities
- Volunteer programme – going onto new cohort – readers

## 3.2 MAJOR ACTIVITIES

Over the past twelve months, the Directorate has contributed to a wide range of major activities that directly impact on the Directorate itself. The main examples are outlined below. More details on each can be found within [Appendix B](#).

<p><b>Children &amp; Family Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Implementation of the findings of the Munro Review of Child Protection</li> <li>• Development of Contact, Assessment and Referral Team (CART)</li> <li>• Embedding new Halton Children’s Trust Levels of Need Framework within practice.</li> <li>• Developing further Early Help &amp; Support resource across Halton Children’s Trust through the development of the next stage of an integrated model</li> <li>• Developing a Recruitment and Retention Strategy for the service.</li> <li>• Investment in Children in Need administration to reorganise workloads to ensure greater capacity for frontline</li> <li>• Embedding improved coordination and oversight of services around Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing from Home &amp; Care.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Economy, Enterprise &amp; Property</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of assisted area map for Liverpool City Region</li> <li>• Supported the development of combined authority in areas of Economic Development and Employment Learning and Skills</li> <li>• Halton Employment Partnership played an integral role in agreeing the preferred bidder for the Mersey Gateway</li> <li>• Worked with Catalyst Discovery Centre to develop a sustainable business plan</li> <li>• Considered and evaluated applications for assets of community value/community right to buy</li> <li>• Business Improvement Districts (BIDS) – Businesses voted to continue for the next 5 years</li> <li>• Mersey Gateway acquisitions/disposals/demolitions.</li> <li>• Energy Management – meeting reduced emissions targets.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Children’s Organisation &amp; Provision</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Embedding integrated commissioning</li> <li>• Partnership working to reduce NEET and increase participation in Further Education and Training post 16 (September Guarantee)</li> <li>• Partnership work with schools, academies, post-16 providers and both in-house and contracted services to implement the Raising the Participation Age (RPA) agenda.</li> <li>• Local Authority Commissioning provision for young people with High Needs</li> <li>• New contracts and quality assurance of alternative provision improving outcomes for young people accessing The Bridge School.</li> <li>• Safeguarding Audits undertaken at all pre-school, Out of School and Full Day Care settings</li> <li>• Safeguarding Training has been, and continues to be, provided to early years settings</li> <li>• A Capital Investment &amp; Maintenance Programme that has resulted in over half of the school estate benefiting from improved facilities.</li> <li>• Strategic partnership working has led to more apprenticeship opportunities</li> <li>• More integrated and targeted youth provision</li> <li>• Review of commissioning arrangements at CWAC has been undertaken</li> </ul>	<p><b>Learning &amp; Achievement Services</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Development of Learning &amp; Achievement Strategy</li> <li>• Development of new Anti-Bullying Policy and school accreditation</li> <li>• Development of further Transition activities for children &amp; young people 0-25</li> <li>• Appointment of a project Lead to manage and co-ordinate the proposed recommendations of the Children and Families Bill, in preparation for full implementation in Autumn 2014.</li> <li>• Evaluation of educational standards, categorisation of schools and settings and targeting of support</li> <li>• Contribution to Early help through a number of services including Portage and Early Years Consultant Teachers</li> <li>• Narrowing the Gap, Peer Challenge and Virtual School for Vulnerable Pupils</li> <li>• Supporting schools to meet requirements of new Ofsted School Inspection Framework</li> <li>• Implementing appropriate targeted support to ensure that the proportion of schools or settings judged good or better is improved</li> <li>• Advice and guidance for governing bodies, including head teacher recruitment</li> </ul>

## 4.0 Factors affecting the Directorate

### 4.1 CHALLENGES

Below is a summary of the challenges that the Directorate as a whole will face and consider within its work during 2014-15.

#### Regeneration

- Keeping to timescale on major initiatives – e.g. Mersey Gateway, Widnes Waterfront, town centres, 3MG
- Changes in shopping habits impacting on the vibrancy of town centres
- Combined Authority will result in how funding is allocated for regeneration in Halton
- Delivery of outcomes required for Mersey Gateway
- Low land values affects investment on key strategic sites
- Funding regimes out of sequence, leading to delays in completion of projects
- Difficult sites to remediate in Halton require greater remediation
- National transfer of assets
- Mersey Gateway – in short-term project could cause delay to adjacent sites
- Localism Act – potential to delay regeneration projects

#### Local Enterprise Partnership

The Government's response to Lord Heseltine's report on increasing growth has been to develop 'Growth Deals' with every Local Enterprise Partnership (LEPs). Currently known as 'Single Local Growth Plans' (SLGPs), LEPs are being tasked with identifying growth priorities, which will feed into investment plans to take effect from 15/16. The Economy, Enterprise and Property Department has been working with the Liverpool City Region LEP to prepare the Plan. Alongside the SLGP each LEP has been given the responsibility for drawing up plans for how the European Structural Funds will be allocated in the 2014-20 programme period. It is expected that this work will continue into the first half of the financial year 2014/15.

#### Regional

- Involvement in linking of the region's strategic regeneration economic priorities with the EU Commission's aim to align European funding for the period 2014-20
- The Combined Authority will deal with strategic economic development, transport, housing and employment and skills.
- A Combined Authority is regarded as the best model to support economic growth and secure more jobs, in Halton and across the Liverpool City Region. This will help us signal to businesses and Government that we are serious about working together.
- Looking to attract devolved powers and funding from Government

#### Employment

- Sourcing of sufficient jobs, including apprenticeships
- Pockets of worklessness
- Growing the number of business start-ups
- Growing competition in labour market
- Reductions in Public Sector presents problems to Halton as an area with high public sector employment
- Impacts of the Welfare Reforms, for example more people on the Work Programme with mental health problems
- Efficiency review ongoing
- Payment by results and more challenging targets in Work Programme

#### Adult Learning

- Changes to Skills Funding Agency funding streams
- Revise training provision to meet payments by results requirements
- Central funding does not reflect local needs
- Oversupply in wrong areas of provision
- Payment by results on NCS

### Skills

- Reducing proportions with no qualifications
- Equipping people with the right skills needed by employers

### Early Intervention Grant

- Reduction in funding
- Funding the vulnerable 2 year olds

### Information, Advice & Guidance for young people

- Reduced and revised provision

### Schools & Academies

- Development of school sixth forms, academies and free schools
- Staff funded through school buy back.
- Attainment gap (e.g. FSM) for young people attending The Bridge School
- School funding formula
- Revise special school provision within the Borough for higher functioning pupils with ASC and social communication difficulties
- Provision of SEN expert to support parents of children with SEN around exclusions appeals
- Children & Families Bill reforms and associated timescales
- New national curriculum
- Inspection of school improvement services and increasing levels of expectation

### Capital

- Future levels of capital strategy funds
- Combined funding for all representatives
- Shortfalls in investment and capital
- Post-16 funding

### Early Years

- Integrated strategy and provision
- Changes to Early Intervention Grant
- Sufficiency (growth of provision for 2 year olds)

### Sustainability

- Contracting resource base
- Services to young people, including CRMZ, HRMZ, VRMZ

### Safeguarding

- Ensuring all fully aware & understand
- Meeting needs at the appropriate level
- Changing landscape.

### Implementing national programmes

- DWP - Families with multiple problems
- Inspiring Families
- New national curriculum

### Provision

- 2, 3 and 4 year olds
- After school for older age range

### Workforce Development

- Recruitment and retention
- Core competencies
- Social Work Reform agenda
- Single Work Programme
- Meeting People Plan objectives
- Workforce profile
- Capacity

### Specialist Assessments

- Managing capacity and timely support within Autism Pathway
- Seamless continuum

### Health

- Improving Child Health
- Integration with Clinical Commissioning Groups, Public Health and liaison with Community Providers

### Commissioning

- To improve health outcomes for Children
- Commissioning efficiencies with CWAC
- Delivery of commissioning priorities
- Integration of children's, CCG and Public Health commissioners

### Early Help

- Right support at the earliest stage.

### Participation

- Raising the Participation Age for all young people



## 4.2 DIRECTORATE PRIORITIES 2013

The Directorate has continued to successfully improve the services it provides. This has been evidenced by externally validated inspections of services, and in a range of performance indicators. To maintain this and continually improve, a set of overarching priorities to be driven by the Directorate's Senior Management Team (SMT) have been agreed to provide direction for this Plan. These take into consideration the national agenda, the internal and external factors that affect the Directorate and also the main activities and achievements of the Directorate. These are set within the resource constraints that the Directorate currently faces.

Four priorities have been agreed that link together the work of the Directorate and the Children's Trust. These are:

- *Integrated Commissioning of services to meet the needs of children, young people and families in Halton*
- *Effectively supporting the child's journey through the Halton Levels of Need Framework when additional needs arise*
- *Improving achievement and opportunities for all through closing the gap for our most vulnerable children and young people*
- *Driving the economic prosperity of Halton to the benefit of residents and the workforce*

These have been combined into this overall vision for the Directorate:































*We believe that to drive economic prosperity we need to increase opportunities for all, including our most vulnerable young people, providing appropriate support when needed from Early Help through to Safeguarding, with integrated commissioning of services to deliver improved outcomes through the effective use of available resources.*

To achieve our objectives, four lead officers have been designated, one for each priority, and there will be a strong emphasis on cross-collaboration from across all Departments within the Directorate.

Each work stream will utilise the existing meeting groups within the Directorate and wider partnerships, such as the Children's Trust and Employment, Learning and Skills Partnership. The focus on these priorities and how we align our services with those of our partners will be particularly important within the current difficult economic climate that we are facing.

The matrix overleaf depicts the structure of the priorities for the Directorate from 2014/15, with a colour coding system used to show examples of where Business Critical Issues will cut across the four priorities and this cross-collaboration will be utilised in work going forward. These Business Critical Issues closely relate to the service objectives set out in the appendices of this document.

These are the key priorities that we will focus upon as a Directorate in 2014/15 in order to ensure improved outcomes for children, young people and families in Halton.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Workforce</li> <li>• Asset Management – finance, physical capacity, low carbon economy</li> <li>• Child &amp; Family Poverty</li> </ul>				
<b>Directorate Priorities</b>	<b>Integrated Commissioning of services to meet the needs of children, young people and families in Halton</b> 	<b>Effectively supporting the child's journey through the Halton Levels of Need Framework when additional needs arise</b> 	<b>Improving achievement and opportunities for all through closing the gap for our most vulnerable children and young people</b> 	<b>Driving the economic prosperity of Halton to the benefit of residents and the workforce</b> 	
<b>Directorate Business Critical Issues</b>	 Agree common understanding of commissioning across Directorate, Council and with partners	 Use the Munro Review of Child Protection to ensure excellent standards of practice to improve outcomes for CYP.	 Closing the attainment gap between vulnerable groups and their peers by early identification of need through joint EHC Plans	Maintain HBC assets in order to provide a sustainable flow of income and capital	
	 Support the long-term sustainability & development of key service providers	 Continue to embed common understanding of Early Help through the Strategy and local offer.	 Implement and embed Halton Integrated Early Help Strategy through next stage of model	 Implications of Welfare Reform and the Single Programme	
	 Ensure Early Years, school and post-16 provision is sufficient, sustainable and high quality	 Improving outcomes for all children and young people through safeguarding.	 Support School Improvement for all schools in Halton through monitoring and evaluating progression of pupils and school effectiveness by targeting appropriate support	 Develop apprenticeship opportunities and support apprentices	
	 Ensure sufficient integrated and targeted support for young people in the borough	 Safeguarding – review capacity and caseloads for social workers.		 Delivering a comprehensive employment, learning and skills service	
	 Develop role as broker or commissioner of services as well as provider	 Prepare our Children in Care and Care Leavers for successful and healthy adulthood.	 Implementing the implications of Raising the Participation Age	 Mersey Gateway investment	
	 Work with other partners to ensure we improve outcomes for all, focusing on our most vulnerable.	 Recruit and retain Children's Social Care managers to ensure management oversight and ensure effective care planning	 Contribute to tackling inequalities, such as within Health and Child & Family Poverty	 Developing European Social Fund bid	
	 Improving Child Health in partnership with Health & Wellbeing Board.			 Delivering a comprehensive development and investment service	
	 Continue to embed Inspiring Families approach across continuum of need and services.			 Interface with the Private Sector and employer facing services	
	<b>Priority Lead</b>	<b>Ann McIntyre</b>	<b>Tracey Coffey</b>	<b>Steve Nyakatawa</b>	<b>Wes Rourke</b>

### 4.3 EXTERNAL FACTORS

In order to meet the Business Critical Issues and priorities for the Directorate, external factors need to be considered that are outside of the Directorate's control but inform and help to set the context for much of the Directorate's work. Detail on each of these can be found in [Appendix C](#) of this document.

<b>POLITICAL</b>	<b>ECONOMIC CLIMATE</b>
Marmot Review of Health Inequalities	Deprivation
Family Justice Review	National Careers Service
Inspiring Families (Troubled Families Initiative)	Apprenticeships
The DWP Work Programme	'Building Engagement, Building Futures'
Better Regulation – Red Tape Challenge	Youth Contract
Taylor Review of Alternative Provision	Talent Match
School Capital and Funding	Holt Review
<b>SOCIAL FACTORS</b>	<b>TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS</b>
Child & Family Poverty	Digital Accessibility
Demographic Changes	Universal Jobmatch
	Job seekers allowance online
<b>LEGISLATIVE FACTORS</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS</b>
Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012	Mersey Gateway
Health & Social Care Act 2012	Low Carbon Economy
Children & Families Bill	Minimising waste production, increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill
Education Act 2011	Tackling Environmental Crime and promoting positive behaviours
Academies Act 2010	Flood Risk Management
Legal Aid, Sentencing & Punishing of Offenders Act 2012	Road Safety and Street Lighting
Revisions to Adoption & Fostering Legislation	Liverpool City Region Transport agenda/ Local Transport Plan Block Funding
Welfare Reforms <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Single Programme</li> <li>• Universal Credit</li> </ul>	
Ofsted Framework for School Improvement	
Ofsted Framework for Early Years Providers	
Ofsted Framework for the Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers.	
Ofsted Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)	
Ofsted Framework for Inspection of Children's Centres 2013	
School Governance (Constitution) Regulations 2012	
Roles, Procedures and Allowances Regulations 2013	

## 5.0 Organisational Initiatives

There are a number of initiatives that have been developed at an organisational level in order to ensure consistency and synergy between individual business units of the Council. As such these initiatives are relevant to the work of all Directorates of the Council and have implications for, and are supported by, the work of the individual departments that sit beneath them. Such initiatives include:-

### 5.1 Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service delivery, policy development and as an employer. This commitment is reflected in a range of policy, strategies and framework documents, which underpin the work of the Council in its day-to-day operation and in the services it delivers. In particular this is encapsulated in the Councils Single Equality Scheme which contains the following **policy statement**.

*The Council seeks to create a culture where people of all backgrounds and experience feel appreciated and valued. It is committed to achieving equality of opportunity in both its service delivery mechanisms and employment practices. Service users, job seekers and employees will be treated fairly and without discrimination. Discrimination on the grounds of, ethnicity, religion or belief, gender, transgender, marital status, sexuality, disability, pregnancy / maternity, age or any other unjustifiable reason will not be tolerated.*

*The Council is opposed to unlawful and unfair discrimination (including harassment of any kind). The Council will take appropriate action wherever instances of discrimination and harassment occur, in the delivery of services and in the course of employment. It will work with its partners to develop effective procedures and policies to combat all forms of discrimination and to share good practice.*

Should you require any additional information concerning the Scheme please contact Les Unsworth within the Corporate Policy team.

In addition, the council is committed to building and sustaining community cohesion within Halton. For us, a cohesive community is one that has:

- A defined and widely shared sense of the contribution of different individuals and groups to a future local or national vision
- A strong sense of an individual's local rights and responsibilities and that people with different backgrounds should experience similar life opportunities and access to services and treatment
- A strong sense of trust in institutions locally, and trust that they will act fairly when arbitrating between different interests and be subject to public scrutiny.
- A strong recognition of the contribution of the newly arrived, and of those who have deep attachments to a particular place – focusing on what people have in common.
- Positive relationships between people from different backgrounds in the workplace, schools and other institutions.

The Council has developed a systematic approach to examine and address the equality implications of its existing and future policies, procedures and practices through the use of a Community Impact Review and Assessment process.

These are an important part of our commitment to promote equality of opportunity for all Halton's residents. They have been developed as a tool for ensuring that equality, social inclusion and community cohesion issues can be considered when drawing up policies or proposals which affect the delivery of services, the delivery of the Council's functions and the employment practices of the authority. They are also a tool for ensuring and demonstrating that the Council continues to meet its obligations under the Public Sector Equality Duty in carrying out all of its policies, services and functions.

The Community Impact Review & Assessment process should always be undertaken as part of

- New or revised policy developments
- Budget reviews
- As part of the Council's Efficiency Programme which may lead to changes to services and / or staffing arrangements.
- Whole service functional reviews to demonstrate that the Council remains compliant with Public Sector Equality Duties.

More detailed guidance can be accessed via the Council's website.

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires the authority to publish equality information annually. As a result the progression of quality related issues will be monitored annually through the performance reporting process.

As a result of such assessments any actions considered to be of high priority will be monitored and reported through the Council's Quarterly Performance Reporting process.

The Directorate Equality & Diversity Group has been expanded to become a multi agency group for the Children's Trust. The group has updated and broadened the Equality Scheme already in place for CED to take into account the additional duties and implications of the Equality Act 2010 and to allow the Scheme to be a useful multi agency document

## **5.2 Environmental Sustainability**

The Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling climate change. The Council has developed a Carbon Management Plan that will support the Council in managing its carbon emissions and developing actions for realising carbon and financial savings and embedding carbon management into the authority's day to day business.

The Plan was reviewed and updated during 2011/12, with a revised energy emissions reduction target and it is now set at a reduction of between 5% and 10% over 2010/11 figures over a 5 year period. The main measure included in the revised Plan is the Green House Gas emissions indicator, which differs from the previous carbon emissions indicator. The total GHG emissions figure for 2012/13 was 24,451 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> which equates to a 5.28 % reduction since the baseline year of 2006/7. This total figure breaks down as follows:-

Corporate buildings                      - 9148 tonnes CO<sub>2</sub> (estimated)

Schools	- 7677 tonnes CO2 (estimated)
Street lighting	- 5891 tonnes CO2 (estimated)
Vehicle fleet	- 1341 tonnes CO2 (estimated)
Business Miles	- 394 tonnes CO2 (estimated)

To improve the focus on achieving its targets the Directorate, through the Carbon Group, will develop specific plans and, where appropriate, specific reduction targets around buildings and vehicle fleet and business miles.

The qualification designation in respect of phase two of the Carbon Reduction Commitment (CRC) is changing which will mean that the council will no longer be captured by the scheme from 2014/15 onwards.

Positive work being undertaken in Halton includes:

- carbon management plan
- work with schools on the Eco schools programme
- energy efficiency works implemented to date
- awareness raising with officers/managers
- Sustainable Projects office focusing initially on working with managers re energy management,
- the installation of a number of solar/PV panel systems to take advantage for the feed in tariffs.

Eco-friendly solar/PV panels which have been installed at the Stadium have generated 43,437 kw/h of energy in the first full year, which is in excess of predictions. The result of this is that over £14,000 of income has been generated through the feed in tariff, this together with the saving in energy costs of circa £4000 means that the system has generated a total saving to the Council of over £18,000.

The Council has also worked with the Energy Saving Trust to develop opportunities for reducing emissions in the wider community. The opportunities will form the basis of a Corporate Climate Change Strategy. The Directorate will contribute to and support specific actions within the overall Strategy.

The Council is committed to improving a good quality of life for the people of Halton and one of the ways this can be achieved is through allotment gardening. Being part of the allotment gardening community brings an opportunity to meet and share experiences with people from all walks of life. There are also health and social benefits which can give plot-holders a sense of well-being. Our aim is to continue to build on the good practices and positive improvements, but the biggest obstacle is the shortage of growing space.

### **5.3 Risk Management**

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

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

are likely to happen, and their severity i.e. the potential extent of their impact should they occur.

Following such assessments a series of risk treatment measures are identified that will mitigate against such risks having an adverse impact upon the delivery of departmental / organisational activities. All high risks and the implementation of their associated mitigation measures will be monitored and reported through the Council's quarterly performance monitoring arrangements.

#### **5.4 Arrangements for managing Data Quality**

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

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

<b><i>Accurate:</i></b>	For its intended purpose;
<b><i>Valid</i></b>	By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;
<b><i>Reliable</i></b>	By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;
<b><i>Timely</i></b>	By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;
<b><i>Relevant</i></b>	For the purpose intended;
<b><i>Complete</i></b>	In that the monitoring of incomplete, missing or invalid data is avoided as far as is possible.

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

Given the transfer of Public Health to Local Authorities from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013, Halton Borough Council are part of the 5 Borough's partnership with Health and other partners and are currently applying to connect to health systems. In order to connect the Council is required to complete an Information Governance Toolkit assessment up to level 2 (there are 3 levels in total). The Information Governance Toolkit is a performance tool produced by the Department of Health (DH). It draws together the legal rules and central guidance set out above and presents them in one place as a set of information governance requirements

The purpose of the assessment is to enable organisations to measure their compliance against the law and central guidance and to see whether information is handled correctly and protected from unauthorised access, loss, damage and destruction.

Where partial or non-compliance is revealed, organisations must take appropriate measures, (e.g. assign responsibility, put in place policies, procedures, processes and guidance for staff), with the aim of making cultural changes and raising information governance standards through year on year improvements.

The ultimate aim is to demonstrate that the organisation can be trusted to maintain the confidentiality and security of personal information. This in-turn increases public confidence that 'the NHS' and its partners can be trusted with personal data.



## 6.0 Organisational & Directorate Structure

The Council is committed to consistently managing the delivery of its services in the most cost efficient way that maximises the effectiveness of its available resources.

As a result of this continuing drive for efficiency as of April 2011 the Council has reduced the number of Directorates from four to three with an overall reduction in the number of departments to eleven.

The Council recognises the value of corporate working and that effective communication channels, both internally between Directorates and externally with partners, are a pre-requisite to success. It therefore has in place complementary arrangements at different organisational levels to ensure that the organisation works as an integrated and unified entity.

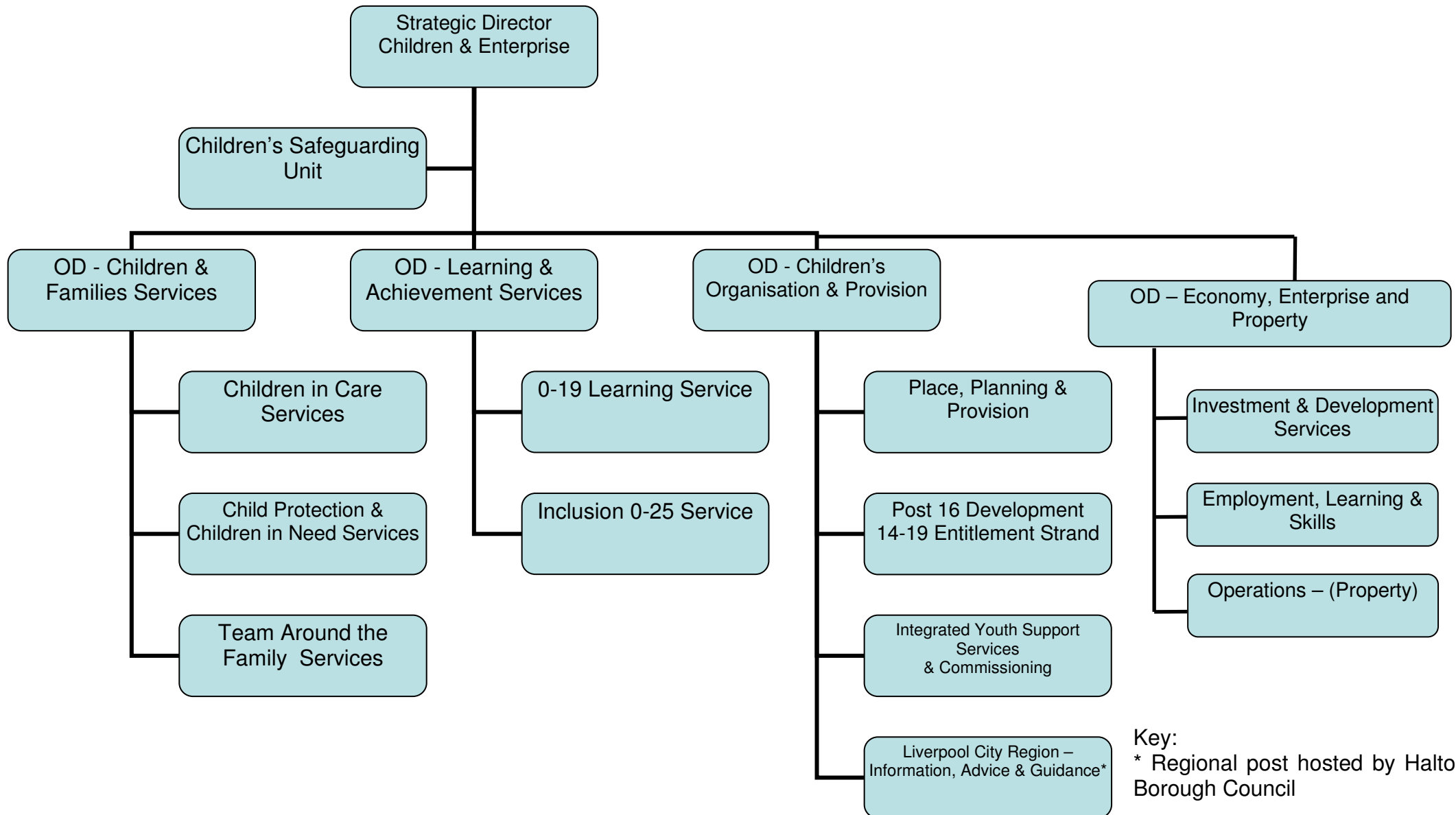
In support of this approach results-based matrix management practices, through for example project implementation groups, are used to bring together expertise and knowledge from across the organisation in order to optimise the response to community needs and aspirations.

Lead Officers are identified to drive and direct corporate initiatives to bring together elements of the Councils activities which, for the purposes of day to day management, may sit within all or any of the different Directorates.

Each of the Directorate Plans is aligned to and supports the delivery of one or more of the Councils six organisational and five partnership strategic priorities as detailed within the Corporate Plan and Sustainable Community Strategy respectively.

The chart overleaf provides an overview of those functions that fall within the new Children & Enterprise Directorate.

The Directorate structure is subject to change in preparation for the new financial year from April 2012. The latest draft structure is as follows:



Key:  
 \* Regional post hosted by Halton Borough Council

## **6.1 CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES**

This Department provides services to children and families from Universal to Complex Needs, as set out in Halton's Level of Need Framework. The services aim to support and protect children, ensuring that they are safe and have the opportunity to reach their potential. We aim, together with partners, to narrow the gap in outcomes for these most vulnerable children. For the majority of children this will be with their families, and we will provide services and support to families to achieve this. When this is not possible we provide services to ensure that children live somewhere that is safe, caring and appropriate to their needs.

The Department's main responsibilities are summarised in the work of the 3 divisions detailed below.

### **Team around the Family – Early Help**

- Children's Centres - provision of the full core offer and extended services
- Integrated Working Support Teams
- Co-ordinated early targeted intervention based on holistic family assessment
- Parenting Programmes
- Family support across the levels of need continuum
- Provision a range of accessible short breaks for disabled children
- Integrated services for Young Carers
- Intensive family support, including Inspiring Families programme.

### **Children in Need & Child Protection**

- Assessing promptly the needs of children and families in need
- Planning and delivering integrated services for vulnerable children and families across the levels of need
- Crisis and emergency intervention in families
- Child Protection services,
- Targeted interventions with the most vulnerable children in need and their families
- Provision of short breaks for disabled children

### **Children in Care & Care Leavers**

- Care Leavers services
- Recruitment, assessment and support for adoptive parents and foster carers
- Provision of Residential Care for Children
- Support to Children in Care to improve outcomes
- Inter-agency Working
- Assessing the needs of older Children in Need and vulnerable young people.

## **6.2 LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES**

The Department works in partnership with schools and settings to raise standards of attainment and achievement. This work is undertaken by a team of specialists who focus on for example the curriculum, attendance, inclusion and behaviour within the different phases of education. School Improvement Partners (SIPs) are also a key part of this Department. We work together with the other departments to achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people and to narrow the gap in outcomes for the most vulnerable young people.

The Department's main responsibilities are summarised in the detail below:

### **0-19 Learning**

- EYFS and Key Stages 1 – 4 and School Sixth Form standards of achievement and attainment
- Monitoring of all schools and settings - categorisation
- Support and intervention for satisfactory / requiring improvement and inadequate schools and settings
- Statutory assessment and moderation – EYFS, KS1 & K2
- NQT registration, monitoring, quality assurance and induction programme
- SACRE
- Support for Head Teacher recruitment
- Head Teacher induction, leadership and succession planning
- Virtual HT for CiC and Vulnerable Pupils
- Education Safeguarding in schools
- Portage service
- Provision of additional resources and support for higher needs band of children in pre-school settings including Action Plus Enhanced Provision
- Support for development of Music, school games and disability sports in schools

### **0-25 Inclusion**

- Statutory assessments for pupils with Special Educational Needs (SEN)
- Statutory duties covering all areas of SEN for young people to the age of 0-19
- Provision of Additional resources and support for higher needs band of pupils including Action Plus Enhanced Provision
- Presentation of the LA case at SENDIST Appeals
- Statutory provision of Parent Partnership support to parents of children & young people with Special Education Needs
- Behaviour and attendance and Exclusions with the statutory duty to provide SEN Expert support for pupils at Exclusion Appeals
- Transition 0-19
- SEN service delivery for schools covering areas such as cognition and learning, visually impaired and hearing impaired Autism Speech Language and Communication
- Monitoring of provision and outcomes of provision for children and young people in the higher needs band of provision. This is including Special School provision, resource bases in borough, including those with academy status.
- Monitoring of provision and outcomes for pupils placed out of borough in all provision.

## **6.3 CHILDREN'S ORGANISATION AND PROVISION**

The Department will be responsible for the management, co-ordination and delivery of all capital programmes aimed at transforming Children's Environment including the Buildings Schools for the Future and Primary Capital. It leads and facilitates the strategic arrangements for joint commissioning of services to children, young people and their parents and carers within the Directorate, Statutory Partners, the Independent Sector, Voluntary and Community organisations. It ensures there is sufficient good quality early years provision, sufficient school places, provides a range of advice and guidance on Governor issues, and ensures schools meet their statutory requirements with regard to Learning Outside the Classroom. Critical incident support is also provided to schools and educational establishments. In addition it co-ordinates the effective delivery of youth support, community justice and

sexual health service and manage the Liverpool City Region Information, Advice & Guidance contract.

The main responsibilities of each team are detailed below:

### **Place Planning and Provision**

- Early Years Sufficiency.
- Child and pupil place planning (schools and other settings).
- School Transport.
- Services to schools and settings (SLAs).
- Information, support and guidance for schools and Children's Services settings.
- Learning Outside The Classroom
- Technical Support
- Critical Incident Support.
- Governor Support.
- Building Schools for the Future
- Local Education Partnership (LEP)
- Capital – development of educational property and maintenance of educational estate
- Children's Centres Capital
- Childcare
- Sufficiency & Suitability Childcare
- Condition
- Accessibility
- Broader Projects
- Families Information Service

### **Post 16 development and 14-19 entitlement strand**

- Pupil Referral Unit
- Raising the Participation Age (RPA) agenda
- Local Authority Commissioning for young people with High Needs
- Key Stage 4 Engagement Service
- Education Business Partnership
- Duty to secure sufficient suitable education and training opportunities to meet the reasonable needs of all young people in Halton.
- Delivery against the six key priorities identified within the 14-19 Strategic Commissioning Statement 2013-2014
- 14-19 Apprenticeship Strategy
- 14-19 NEET Strategy
- Ensure there is sufficient and suitable provision for, and Improve participation and achievement of vulnerable groups
- Access to Independent, Advice and Guidance
- Plan to meet the requirements of the raising of the participation age

### **Integrated Youth Support Services and Commissioning**

- Inspiring Families
- Integrated planning and commissioning
- Joint Commissioning
- Effective delivery of Integrated Youth Support
- Deployment of youth support services
- Deployment of sexual health services including Teenage Pregnancy
- Substance Misuse.

- Alcohol Services.
- Anti-Social Behaviour.
- Community Safety.
- Information, Advice and Guidance Services.
- Promoting Positive Activities.

### **Liverpool City Region**

- Ensure the effective management of the Liverpool City Region Information, Advice & Guidance contract.

## **6.4 CHILDREN'S SAFEGUARDING UNIT**

The Safeguarding Unit consists of lead officers for Safeguarding in Halton including Children's Services, Halton Clinical Commissioning Group, Education, and Police. This co located and virtual team strengthens multi agency working, making efficient use of knowledge and expertise across the Directorate and Halton Children's Trust.

Members of the Safeguarding Unit are responsible for identifying the themes and issues, which impact on the delivery of front line practice. Through scrutiny, challenge and support, the Unit will continuously enhance standards and good practice through quality assurance and professional development.

The Unit informs and is informed by national and local guidance as well as research, to positively enhance the delivery of front line services to vulnerable children and young people in Halton.

### **Core Business of the Unit**

- Developing sector-led improvement through formalised partnership arrangements with Cheshire West & Chester
- Providing an Independent chairing service within the Child Protection and Children in Care systems and for those children in need.
- Independent review of Foster carers
- Responsibility for the management of allegations against adults who work with children, including the statutory role of Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO)
- Via the Halton Safeguarding Children Board manager, providing all the business support requirements for HSCB.
- Lead responsibility for the rigorous auditing of practice within Children & Families and Early Help multi-agency services.
- Lead role in multi-agency practice reviews.
- Supporting safeguarding practice in educational settings.
- To support engagement of the community in safeguarding.
- Multi agency support, challenge and scrutiny.
- Lead role in awareness raising, training and service delivery on Child Sexual Exploitation

## **6.5 ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE AND PROPERTY**

A key aim of the Department is to use the borough's regeneration projects and programmes to create an environment that is attractive to business, which leads to the creation of jobs and, in turn, will help to improve the quality of life of people living and working in Halton. This is set out in the Council's Strategic Regeneration Framework 2013-28 that recognises that improving the Borough's economy is the

key to making Halton a better place to live and/or work. This Strategy focuses on six drivers of economic prosperity which are:

- Enhancing quality of life
- Improving business performance
- Supporting growth and investment
- Growing the Low Carbon Economy
- Raising skills and reducing unemployment
- Place-shaping and connectivity

This Regeneration Framework has been used to inform the Liverpool City Region's Strategic Local Investment Plan (2014-2017). The Plan is designed to develop a shared understanding of where the significant economic site opportunities are spatially located, and further, to identify which of those sites are capable of attracting short-term investment and jobs. The ultimate objective is to build towards having a shared list of priority schemes at a city-region level.

Similarly, it will support the development of the LCR European Union Investment Strategy (2014-2020) and draft Liverpool City Region Single Growth Plan (2015-2016)

The three key drivers that relate to this Department complement the Liverpool City Region context by focusing on business performance, supporting growth and investment and raising skills and reducing unemployment.

The Department comprises the following divisions: -

### **Investment and Development Services**

The work of the Division includes bringing forward and implementing the borough's major physical development sites (including town centres, housing regeneration, watersides and brownfield land reclamation); managing the Council's property and strategic assets (property services), including Widnes Market Hall, coordinating and acting upon the borough's inward investment and business enquiries, encouraging and supporting businesses to expand; for example, providing advice and guidance on grant support, development and planning issues, transportation; improving the image of the borough's industrial areas; and helping businesses to become more competitive. The division also provides advice on funding opportunities as well as supporting the Council's representatives in European, Regional and sub-regional forums and committees.

### **Employment Learning and Skills**

This Division focuses on developing and delivering initiatives which create secure and safeguard jobs in the Borough. It hosts the Halton People Into Jobs (HPIJ) initiative, who manage the Work Programme contracts on behalf of Halton, as well as the National Careers Service contract. The Halton Employment Partnership Team now focuses on employer engagement and now manages the job brokering service. The Division also supports a wide range of self-employment and business start-up initiatives.

The Work Programme provides an advice and employability service to long term unemployed people. Those eligible for the Work Programme are mandated to the provision offered through HPIJ for a period of 52 weeks, which is a change to the

traditional HPIJ service which was available to any adult living in the borough and, in the main, individuals voluntarily referred themselves to the provision.

The Work Programme contract for Halton was awarded to Prime Contractors Ingeus and A4E; Ingeus have subcontracted their share of the contract to the council's Halton People into Jobs team, whilst A4E have subcontracted half of their share. This means HPIJ are delivering 75 per cent of the Work Programme in Halton. DWP Work Programme data does not go down to individual provider level so HPIJ's performance isn't identified in the public domain. However, performance has been generally positive. To improve accessibility for Widnes clients, HPIJ has now relocated to a more central location within the Halton Direct Link.

This Division also delivers a wide range of adult and family learning courses across the borough. It also leads the borough's Halton Employment Partnership which acts as a one stop shop for employer local job seeker recruitment needs, as well as sector led employment initiatives such as Construction Halton and Science Halton. Key areas of activity in the Division are: - Adults and Community Learning – providing opportunities for adults to access a wide range of learning experiences within their local area; Skills For Life – improving literacy and numeracy skills amongst adults; Family Learning – which gives all family members an opportunity to learn with their children or learn about how they can further support their children.

The Government's approach to funding skills development has changed, especially over the last 12 months, and will continue to do so, placing employers much more in the driving seat of skills and qualifications funding and development. As the pressures on public funding for skills development continue to grow, the way these funds are deployed becomes all the more critical and requires careful planning and joined up thinking. The Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) model that is now embedded in the council's work with employers is an example of where skills pathways have been developed to meet the growth employment sectors.

HEP has already undertaken a range of projects associated with supporting specific growth sectors. This included the Tesco chilled distribution centre, which focused on basic logistics pre-employment training, including Fork Lift Truck licence acquisition and Health & Safety training. In addition, additional skills development for staff who were employed was supported through mainstream FE contracts. Most recent is the development of a range of skills pathways for the new Mersey Gateway contract. HEP has been working in partnership with Merseylink both prior to the announcement of preferred bidder and afterwards to map out the employment and skills requirements of the project. The plan that has been developed is perhaps the most refined of all the skills pathway plans that HEP has developed with employers; this is possibly because of the plan cutting across a number of sectors, not just construction.

### **Operations – (Property)**

The Division exists to provide corporate support to all areas of the Council in relation to the management, maintenance and development of the Council's property portfolio and regeneration schemes.

The Division is responsible for a number of areas of work, the primary function however is to ensure that the Authority's accommodation is fit for purpose, and meets the needs and expectations of members, officers and the public alike.



The Facilities Management section manages the maintenance, security, caretaking and cleaning to all corporate sites and provides a repairs and maintenance and cleaning buy back service to schools. In addition they play a significant role in carbon management and helping to reduce carbon emissions, they provide a building surveying service, and carry out a significant amount of construction related procurement.

The Capital Works section project manages all capital works from inception to completion on corporate building together with numerous projects on Education premises.

Recently along with colleagues in Asset Management, the Division has supported the Mersey Gateway team in respect of the necessary site assembly and demolitions needed to deliver the Mersey Gateway project.

The above roles reflect Halton's successful spatial strategy and Master planning approach to supporting the economic regeneration of Halton. Over the next 12 months, the Council's newly established Regeneration Board will be developing a long-term vision for the borough, which will set out our 'next generation' regeneration priorities.

## 7.0 Resources

The Directorate faces a number of challenges in ensuring that it has the resources available to support the delivery of its service objectives during a period of reducing financial resources.

### 7.1 BUDGET SUMMARY AND SERVICE COSTS

To be added once confirmed

### 7.2 HUMAN RESOURCE REQUIREMENTS

The Directorate employs approximately 700 staff, and together with school staff, are considered to be the Directorate's most valuable asset. The Directorate (and the Council as a whole) is committed to training and developing its staff and has a system of Employee Development Reviews twice a year to produce Personal Action Plans for each employee setting out future learning and development plans, and setting individual work based performance targets. These are complemented by more regular supervision which review progress with personal development and are one of the key processes by which performance and service outcomes are monitored.

Supervision is not just about getting the job done; it is also about investing time and energy in developing and motivating staff for the benefit of the individual and the organisation as a whole and ultimately the local community. Good supervision will result in well-trained and motivated staff who are clear about their role within the organisation and the tasks they need to achieve.

A major requirement for the Directorate will be the continuing implementation of the new Integrated Children's Workforce Strategy for Halton's Children's Trust. The key aim of the strategy is a workforce that is reformed, integrated and making the best contribution possible to Halton's Children & Young People's Plan.

### 7.3 ACCOMMODATION AND PROPERTY REQUIREMENTS

The accommodation requirements of the Directorate have been impacted upon by the efficiency programme. The continued development and embedding of Team Around the Family services will further influence the Directorate's needs as the ambition is to establish community based accommodation providing front line access for all services through effectively utilising Children's Centres, GP practices and the secondary provision developed through the Building Schools for the Future programme.

### 7.4 ICT REQUIREMENTS

The Directorate has an ICT Development Plan mapping out its ICT requirements and areas for development. There are number of major ICT projects that will be central to the development of the Directorate and act as enablers for service delivery.

### **Carefirst 6/Electronic Social Care Record (ESCR)/Integrated Children's System (ICS)**

Implementation of Carefirst 6 collaboratively with ICT Services and the Adults and Community Directorate is critical in providing an effective ICT solution for Children's Social Care. There are statutory requirements relating to ICS and ESCR as well as the benefits the system will provide in terms of operational efficiency. The process will require new ICT infrastructure, scanning and new working arrangements. Implementation of Carefirst 6 continues and will be completed over the next 12 months. The delivery of IT enhances support and frontline practice.

### **Synergy CYP Database**

This database allows web based access to core pupil information and will be developed to replace existing modules allowing wider and more flexible access opportunities. Wider access to Duty Desk, School Health and PCT Teams will help to better inform practitioners. .

### **Synergy Connect - Children Centre Management of Information System**

Synergy Connect is a flexible, web based database allowing development of its components depending on the service provider's engagement or to tie in with local or national requirements. Together with the CYP Database, once in place it will enable the exchange of information on the regular basis. The system has been used to record data from health personnel to enable integrated reporting of performance

### **Schools Information Management System/Virtual Learning Environment Support Service**

The Directorate provides a support service to schools for the Virtual Learning Platform and the Schools Information Management System (SIMS). A new centralised server is now in place and the project is being developed to centralise the SIMS software / data within the Local Authority data centre. Schools will link into the database through the appropriate security settings.

### **Halton and Perspective Lite - Distribution of Performance Data Reports to Halton Schools - Primary and Special Schools**

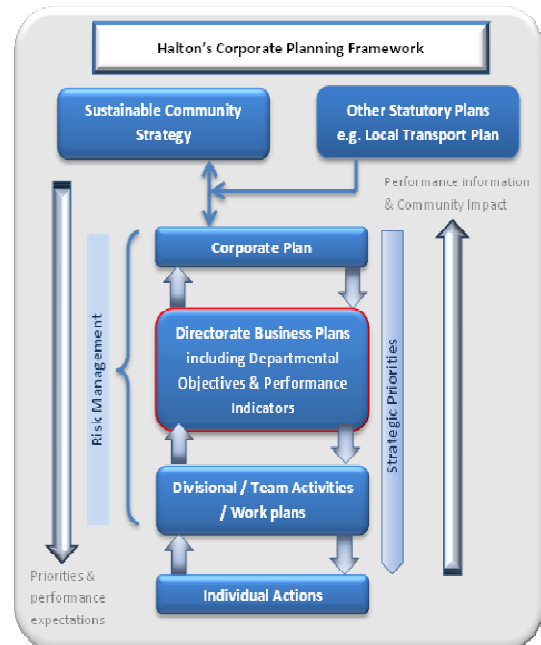
The Council has moved to a new web based system to improve the management process of circulating and reviewing school performance data reports. This system is called Perspective Lite and is developed by Angel Solutions in partnership with the NCER cic - National Consortium for Examination Results. Previously Council used the Intranet to communicate school performance data reports to schools. The Intranet can only be accessed by Headteachers from their school PC whereas Perspective Lite can be accessed from any PC - using the appropriate Headteacher login details.

## 8.0 Business Planning

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

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

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



### Performance Monitoring and Reporting

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

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

- **The day to day monitoring by Strategic Directors through their regular interaction with Operational Directors;**
- **Provision of Quarterly progress reports to Corporate and Directorate Management Teams;**
- **The inclusion of Quarterly progress reports as a standard item on the agenda of all the Council's Policy and Performance Boards.**
- **Publication of Quarterly monitoring reports on the Council's intranet site.**

In demonstrating its commitment to exploiting the potential of Information and Communications Technology to improve the accessibility of its services and related information an extensive range of documentation, including this plan and its associated quarterly monitoring reports, are available via the Council's website at <http://www3.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies>

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

To Follow

1. **ECONOMY, ENTERPRISE & PROPERTY**
2. **CHILDREN AND FAMILIES SERVICES**
3. **LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT SERVICES**
4. **CHILDREN'S ORGANISATION & PROVISION**

## Appendix B: Detail of Major Activities (see 3.2)

### Implementation of findings of Munro Review of Child Protection

This independent review to improve child protection in 2010-11, led by Prof. Eileen Munro, looked at the problems in the child protection system, with an analysis of how they had arisen and the characteristics of an effective system, with an outline of the reforms needed to create a system that keeps a focus on the child's journey from needing help to receiving it.

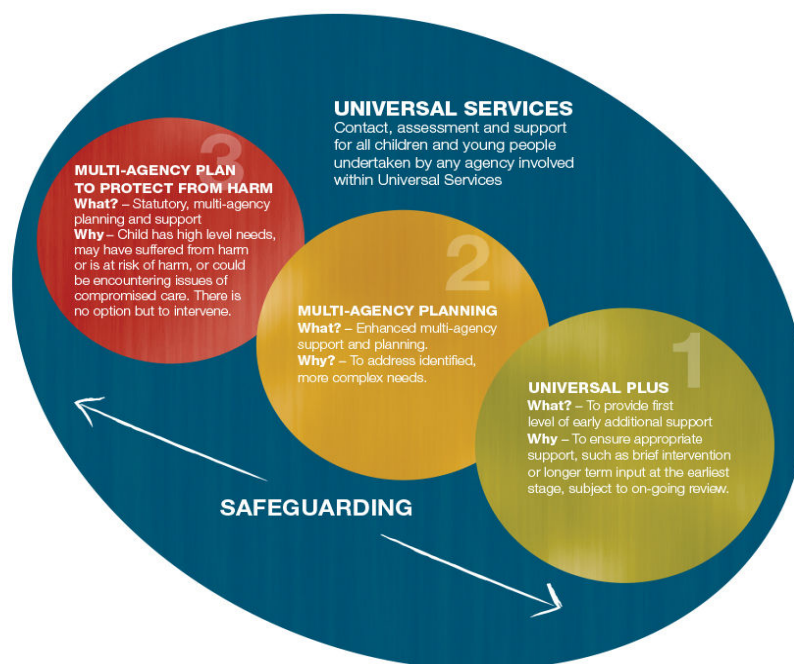
The findings of the Review are informing the new Ofsted Inspection Frameworks that Halton will be inspected against over the next three years (see Appendix C for detail on these Frameworks).

The focus on the child's journey is informing all work of Halton Children's Trust and Halton Safeguarding Children Board and is a key part of the priorities and areas of focus of both.

### Development of new Halton Levels of Need Framework

The Halton Levels of Need Framework aims to support agencies to meet the needs of children, young people and their families to ensure the best possible outcomes. It aims to assist practitioners and managers in assessing and identifying a child's level of additional needs and how best to respond in order to meet those needs as early as possible to prevent needs escalating further.

The Framework sets out three levels of additional needs above Universal Services that captures the full range of additional needs as they present. Universal Services remain at the heart of all work with children, young people and their families and are in place for all whether additional needs present themselves or not. The fundamental relationship between Universal Services and the three levels of additional needs is captured in the diagram below:



### Development of Contact, Assessment and Referral Team (CART)

Halton's CART service was launched in September 2013. The service provides a single Team acts as a single front door for access to all Children's Social Care services and advice. CART ensures that all telephone, email or letter referral and

information requests for a child with a Halton address will receive a decision made by a qualified social worker. Information containing safeguarding concerns will receive a response within 24 hours of being received into the service. The decision will be authorised by the CART Principal Manager.

The service records all contacts and where a referral or re-referral is appropriate, the Team will refer to the appropriate service at Level 2 or Level 3 of the Level of Need Framework. The Team can be contacted on 0151 907 8305 or [contactandreferralteam@halton.gcsx.gov.uk](mailto:contactandreferralteam@halton.gcsx.gov.uk)

### **Development of a Recruitment & Retention Strategy**

A new Recruitment & Retention Strategy has been developed for the Children & Families Service to look at some of the major challenges that the service faces moving forward. In particular:

- Recruiting more high quality staff into the workforce ensuring the work is attractive and promoting more flexible entry routes into the workforce.
- Retaining people in the workforce by continuing to offer better development and career progression.

The Strategy has a broad range of aims and these include:

- To positively advertise Halton as an employer to attract a good field of applicants from which to make appointments.
- To attract Social Work staff to work in Halton in the context of a very competitive recruitment environment.
- To make speedier appointments to staff vacancies.
- To provide a comprehensive induction when joining the Authority.
- To reduce staff turnover.
- To retain existing and recruited staff to provide high quality service to children and families living in Halton.
- To establish a stable workforce with positive work experiences.

### **Developing further Early Help & Support resource across Halton Children's Trust**

Team around the Family was established in 2010 as the new Halton Children's Trust approach to early help and support, the local term for the national early intervention and prevention agenda. This became a key strategic priority of the Trust from 2011. By intervening early, the aim is to prevent issues escalating to the point where they require higher level interventions. This contributes to keeping children safe and helps families to develop the resources needed to ensure that the outcomes for their children are positive.

The Integrated Working Support Teams for Runcorn and Widnes are a major element of Team around the Family. These are the 'front door' to early help services and the teams provide support to professionals working with families where additional needs have been identified.

Further work has started to look to further embed early help & support and to add more resources into the approach. The principles of the next stage of the development of the Early Help model for Halton have been agreed by Halton Children's Trust and work will be undertaken during 2014 to put these principles into place across multi-agency teams.



### **Child Sexual Exploitation**

Halton has signed up to a Pan-Cheshire and Merseyside Protocol on Child Sexual Exploitation and a multi-agency operational group in place. Below this, Halton has developed its own specific action plan.

Catch 22 have been commissioned to do preventative work with schools and are working with partner agencies to ensure consistent key messages are delivered to young people. Further resource is also being put into place through the Police.

### **Missing from Home and Care**

Halton is notified of Missing From Home (MFH) cases when 3 or more episodes of becoming missing. For those in care, it is after 24 hours. In addition, we are notified if the child is considered vulnerable and/or acting out of character.

A Pan-Cheshire Joint Protocol is in place that seeks to identify and manage risk and ensure a consistent approach across borders and agencies. **The** Pan-Cheshire MFH Service is provided by Catch 22, who link closely with Cheshire Constabulary to ensure coordinated and organised responses, including return interviews and direct intervention where appropriate.

#### *Key Facts*

- In 2012/13 there were 165 individuals reported missing to the service and between these there were a total of 310 episodes. 148 individuals had a return interview and direct work undertaken with 107.
- Children are more likely to be reported missing from home than care.
- Numbers of repeat episodes from CiCOLAs (Children in Care from Other Local Authorities) have been high but reducing.
- Model has been recognised as good practice by the Children & Young People Now journal and Association of Chief Police Officers.

### **Embedding Integrated Commissioning**

With diminishing resources, a greater focus has developed on commissioning to ensure best use is made of the available resources. This focus is reflected in the Halton Children's Trust priorities within the Children & Young People's Plan. The Commissioning Partnership sub group of Halton Children's Trust has broadened the integrated commissioning arrangements to include all relevant partners from across the Children's Trust. The Children & Enterprise Directorate plays a major role in these arrangements, which bring together all aspects of commissioning and decommissioning for children and young people in Halton, and monitors the impact of commissioning and decommissioning decisions. The Commissioning Partnership works closely alongside Public Health and Halton CCG to meet the shared objectives of the CYPP and Joint Health & Wellbeing Strategy, in particular around the priority of Child Development.

Eight key commissioning priorities have been agreed. For these, resources within the Children's Trust will be combined to tackle these issues. These are:

- Pre-conception Pregnancy and Birth
- 0-5 Development
- Inspiring Families
- CAMHS
- Risk-taking Behaviour
- SEN High Needs
- Team around the Family
- Children in Care

### **Review of commissioning arrangements at Cheshire West and Chester and development of training programme.**

Halton's Children's Commissioning team were invited to undertake a review of the commissioning arrangements in place in Cheshire West and Chester and suggest any areas for development. Following a detailed review a report was produced summarising the key findings. Cheshire West and Cheshire subsequently commissioned Halton to provide a range of training and development sessions for their staff. Agreement has now been reached to jointly commission a number of pieces of work together in order to achieve efficiencies for both boroughs.

### **Raising the Participation Age**

This national agenda is not about raising school leaving age, young people can still leave school at 16 but must participate in education or training until 17 years of age from 2013 and until 18 from 2015.

As of November 2013, 95.9% of Halton 16 year olds were participating in education or training, slightly above the Liverpool City Region average of 95.3%. In July 2013 5.9% of 16-18 year olds in jobs without training – from September 2013 jobs without training do not count as participating.

Halton has a 14-19 Commissioning Statement developed in conjunction with all relevant partners and aims to secure sufficient suitable education and training provision.

A Halton Participation Strategy has also been developed to address the statutory duties in relation to RPA.

### **More integrated and targeted Youth Provision**

Halton's youth provision offer was reorganised in 2012 and has so far resulted in:

- Increased number of targeted and accessible universal youth sessions.
- Increased number of holistic health sessions in schools.
- Improved inter-agency working, with five agencies permanently based at CRMZ.
- Increased the number of young people accessing targeted youth session in hotspot areas through the VRMZ outreach bus and street based teams.

### **Development of Halton Learning & Achievement Strategy**

The Department works in partnership with schools and early years settings to raise standards of attainment and achievement. Our overall aim is that no school or setting should fall into a category of concern. This work is undertaken by a team of specialists who focus on for example the curriculum, attendance, inclusion and behaviour within the different phases of education. We work together with the other departments of Children and Enterprise to achieve the best possible outcomes for all young people and to close the gap in outcomes for Halton's most vulnerable children and young people. The Department's main areas of responsibility are summarised in Section 6.2 of this document.

The Learning & Achievement Strategy sits within the framework of Halton Children's Trust and the Children & Young People's Plan, and aligns closely with the Halton Early Help Strategy. It is framed around the following three objectives:

- Increase the percentage of schools and Early Years settings where Ofsted judge overall effectiveness to be good or better.
- Increase the GCSE attainment for 5 or more A\*-C including English and Maths

- Close the gap in attainment between vulnerable groups and their peers through early identification of need

Work in order to meet these objectives will be monitored and reported on a quarterly basis within Halton Children's Trust.

### **Development of Halton Anti-Bullying Policy and Accreditation**

The multi-agency Anti-Bullying Operational Group has now developed a template Anti-Bullying Policy and accreditation.

The overarching policy template has been developed for schools to adopt. Previously, although each school had its own policy in place, they have been developed separately to one another and so naturally vary in detail, style and guidance used. The universal policy template captures the latest national and local policy guidance and will allow for a common policy across schools.

The Anti-Bullying Accreditation is designed to give recognition to the commendable work of Halton's schools in effectively responding to and managing incidents of bullying and peer conflict. It promotes the development of a culture and policy that sits comfortably and supportively within the safeguarding ethos of a school.

The Accreditation has two levels: 1 and 2. Each level of award builds upon good practice that is already in place, supporting the development and implementation of progressively robust anti-bullying practice and policy across the following five standards:

- Head teacher values and school involvement
- Behaviour and Anti-Bullying Policies
- Curriculum and pupil understanding of values
- Communicating expectations
- The wider community and support

### **Development of further Transition activities for children & young people 0-25**

The Transition team, within the Division of Inclusive Learning, continues to expand the provision of transition projects to children & young people across settings, schools and College in Halton. Building on the successful "Halton Photo voices", work has now started in partnership with the internationally renowned "Photo Voice International", to devise and run a project around knife crime and drug/gang culture.

Other developing projects also include an Early Years Transition Project with reception/nursery children, focussing on how children with additional needs can begin to access person-centred planning from the very start of their school careers.

### **SEN Reforms and Children & Families Bill 2013**

The project has been launched as a direct result of the Children & Families Bill 2013 (S. 3) and the need for Halton to implement the wide-ranging reforms, embedded within the Bill and the associated draft Code of Practice and Regulations.

Work is underway in Halton to respond to the following:

- To make statutory processes fully "family-centred"
- To enhance ways for parents and children to participate in decision-making
- To provide SEN support from 0-25
- To publish a fully integrated Local Offer

- To promote the new Education, Health and Care Plans
- To facilitate joint commissioning across Education, Health & Social Care
- To provide greater levels of support for transition, via the Preparing for Adulthood agenda

The Department for Education has made clear its commitment to the timetable for the Bill and it is on schedule to receive Royal Assent by spring 2014. There will be a three year transition window to for existing Statements of Special Educational Needs; two-years for Learning Difficulty Assessments.

To implement the reforms in Halton, a leadership structure has been developed comprising a strategic group, operational group and task & finish groups that where possible build on existing frameworks.

It is essential that all agencies are involved in the process, that there is full consultation / participation of parents/carers, children & young people and the voluntary & community sector.

### **Evaluation of Educational Standards, categorisation of schools and settings and targeting of support**

Given that Ofsted are again raising the bar as a result of the revised Ofsted framework (see Appendix C) there is a possibility that some schools will 'drop' a category. Should this be the case for schools currently judged to be good or better this will have implications for the School Improvement Service.

As we work with schools to refresh our school improvement strategy we will be looking at where the additional school improvement capacity will come from including consideration of:

- more school to school support
- the role of the Learning Teaching and Leadership Alliance (Teaching School)
- the work of Aspire (traded School Improvement Service)

Services across Learning and Achievement have continued to provide support, and as appropriate intervention, for schools and settings that have been identified through the categorisation process. Improving rates of attainment and progress in underachieving schools and settings remains a priority.

There have been some very positive outcomes but there remain issues around attainment at the end of reception, despite the support that has been provided for settings and schools, particularly around language development and moderation and assessment practice.

Despite the increases in attainment in both Personal Social and Emotional Development (PSED) and Communication. Language and Literacy (CLLD) outlined below, this continues to be an area of significant challenge.

In 2012, 77% of the cohort achieved 6+ points in PSED. This is 4% increase on last year's performance.

- In 2012, 58% of the cohort achieved 6+ points in CLL. This is 6% increase on last year's performance.

Given levels of attainment on entry it is vital that children continue to access a high quality offer in settings and schools. Support will continue to be provided to settings and schools, through training and advice including around Child Development, and developing children's literacy skills, through the implementation of a range of programmes to ensure 'school readiness'. This includes joint working with colleagues in the Speech and Language Therapy Service (SALT).

Attainment at the end of Key Stage 2 continued to rise in 2012 with Halton's attainment in combined English and maths at level 4+ rising from 77% in 2011 to 83% in 2012 - a 6% increase and 3% higher than national.

There was also an increase in the higher level 5s.

- 3% increase in level 5s in English and maths combined
- 8% increase in level 5s in English
- 2% increase in maths

The national attainment floor standard is 60% combined English and maths level 4+. There has been a significant reduction in the number of Halton schools attaining below this attainment floor. In 2011 there were 9 schools attaining below 60%, in 2012 this has fallen to 3 schools.

Halton has continued to achieve significant improvements in attainment at Level 2 (5 A\*-C GCSE grades or equivalent). In 2012, Halton's GCSE results were once again the best ever recorded for the Borough. Overall, 87% achieved 5 A\*-C's, with 59% achieving 5 A\*-C's including English and Maths.

There has been a significant increase in Halton's "English Baccalaureate" (EB) attainment in 2012, rising from 4.7% in 2011 to 12.9% in 2012 – an increase of 8.2%.

In 2012 there was a further rise in the DfE attainment floor standard from 35% 5 A\* - C including English and maths in 2011 to 40% in 2012. The expectation is that all schools should have at least 50 per cent of pupils getting five good GCSEs including English and Maths by 2015. Despite the 5% increase in the attainment floor standard, all schools in Halton have again exceeded this threshold.

At Level 3, 51.2% of Halton learners in 2011 achieved a qualification by age 19, a 9% increase compared to 2010, which is the highest level of increase recorded nationally. When the 2012 data is released, it is expected that there will be a further increase in the rate of Level 3 achievement.

### **Narrowing the Gap, Peer Challenge and Virtual School for Vulnerable Pupils**

Narrowing the Gap for all groups of vulnerable pupils in Halton was identified as a key priority for the Learning and Achievement service and the end of key stage data demonstrates progress in this area.

There is clearly much more work to be done. Our objective remains to eliminate the gap completely by raising the performance of the FSM cohort to that of their non FSM peers. However we are pleased with the progress we have made this year.

Halton was involved in a sector led, peer challenge improvement programme earlier in the year, where the focus was upon the gap in attainment between FSM and non-FSM pupils at the end of key stage 2. Much was learned from our schools that have been successful in narrowing, and in some cases eliminating, the gap in attainment.

We intend to work with a number of identified schools over the next 12 months as part of a Narrowing the Gap project. The Strategy for School Improvement is to be re-written with the support of head teacher colleagues and narrowing the gap will be integral to the revised Strategy.

In addition to this we have also established a Virtual School that extends the current approach adopted for Children in Care. This will focus on multiple flags of vulnerability with FSM as the initial indicator flag. The Virtual School approach will encompass both discussions of provision and support around individual vulnerable young people and strategic challenge and support across the LA and schools.

There has been an increased focus upon the way that schools are using their Pupil Premium and we will continue to work with our link schools to support the monitoring and evaluation of the impact of this funding upon outcomes for vulnerable groups. We have recently informed all schools that Ofsted is now undertaking surveys of a sample of schools, focusing upon the impact of the Pupil premium upon standards, including how the attainment gap is narrowing. It is for schools to determine how this additional funding is spent but the expectation is that it will have a positive impact upon raising rates of progress for example teachers' development of strategies to support meta-cognition, effective feedback, peer assisted learning, early intervention (seen as having most impact) and through the purchase of one to one or small group targeted support. Schools continue to be encouraged to track and monitor the attainment and progress of all groups as part of their school self-evaluation process.

SEN provision continues to be monitored and evaluated in response to the NAS review of autism, the Green Paper and local needs and preference.

The application of additional Support through Enhanced funding at School Action Plus continues to have a beneficial Impact upon outcomes for children & young people and is demonstrated through improvements in Narrowing the Gap outcomes. This is reflected in the reduction in the number of requests for statutory assessment. This provides a mechanism for applying additional support earlier and without the use of demanding bureaucratic systems enabling the process to be more targeted and streamlined.

### **Understanding and ensuring all schools meet requirements of new Ofsted School Inspection Framework**

Support has been provided to schools, including Governors, to enhance their understanding of the changes to and implications of the new Ofsted inspection framework for schools that was implemented in September 2012. Once again the bar has been raised. To be judged as outstanding overall, schools need to have teaching judged as outstanding. A school's standard of education will only be defined as acceptable if it is good or better. Schools that are not at least 'good' will be judged in one of 3 categories:

- **Requires improvement** - School has demonstrated the capacity to improve and has *not* been designated in the category of a school causing concern (SCC). School will be monitored and re-inspected within 2 years.
- **Serious weaknesses** - School has demonstrated the capacity to improve but has been designated as a SCC (replaces current notice to improve). School will be re-inspected within 18 months.
- **Special Measures** - School is not demonstrating the capacity to improve and is designated as a SCC. As now there will be regular monitoring visits prior to re-inspection.

LA colleagues continue to provide support for those schools where overall effectiveness is not yet judged to be good or better.

### **NEET (Not in Employment, Education or Training) and September Guarantee**

The Government in November 2011 announced a new £150m programme to provide support to some of our most vulnerable 16-17 year olds NEET from 2012. This will provide vital support to help them to get back into education, an apprenticeship or a job with training.

The way in which NEET figures are calculated nationally has been changed. Calculations now cover all 16-19 year olds and are residency based. This new method is positive for Halton. Previously, Halton figures have appeared higher as we were unable to count young people from Halton receiving their education outside of the borough. It can however, give misleading figures during summer holidays.

In June 2013, the NEET figure for Halton was 8.6%, continuing the reduction from the figure 12 months previously. At the same time, the number of 'Not Knowns' in Halton is also now falling.

To ensure continued progression from Year 11 into positive destinations and continue to support improvements in NEET figures, a significant amount of time has been invested in the September Guarantee. This includes monthly performance monitoring meetings. Currently the Guarantee is offered to 92% of Year 11 pupils and the focus is on the additional 8%

### **Local Authority commissioning provision for young people with high needs**

The Government believes that funding arrangements for pupils and students with high needs require urgent reform. There are two principal reasons for this:

- To ensure funding arrangements fit with and support Government policy; and
- To address the short comings of current funding arrangements

The Government wishes to promote a simple new system that:

- Defines " High Needs"- requiring provision costing more than £10k (not linked to statutory assessment);
- Bring into line the level up to which mainstream providers will contribute to pupils and students with high needs (local offer);
- Introduce an equivalent level of base funding for specialist settings( address potential perverse incentives and provide some stability);
- Bring together all national high needs funding-provide local authorities with a High Needs Block ( covering 0-25); and
- Bring educational commissioning and funding together-pupil or student-led funding, direct funding relationships.

Halton is being asked to:

- Construct a new mainstream formula and decide upon the maximum level of funding to be provided by mainstream schools and academies from their notional SEN budget.
- Define the local offer of provision working with Schools, Academies and Post-16 providers- including what mainstream settings will make available from their notional SEN budget
- Consider and if necessary, define local circumstances in which Schools and Academies would receive additional funding - where the formula does not adequately reflect the number of needs of pupils with SEN.

### **Mersey Gateway Acquisitions/Disposals**

Work has been undertaken in 2013/14 to ensure that any land and property no longer required post-construction of the bridge is returned to the Council in a condition which does not present any risks or liabilities to the Council. Consequently, priority will be given to drawing up criteria for return of assets which adequately protect the Council land and property.

### **Energy Management – meeting reduced emissions targets**

The Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling climate change and a Carbon Management Strategy has been developed. From a property perspective, the Council has set a target to reduce its emissions by 20% from 2008 – 09 levels over 4 years by 2013/14. Corporate buildings and schools are responsible for 68% of these emissions. There is particular focus on the CRC energy efficiency scheme and the implications for the Council. We will continue to work on:

- carbon management plan
- work with schools on the Eco schools programme
- energy efficiency works implemented to date
- awareness raising with officers/managers
- Sustainable Projects office focusing initially on working with managers re energy management,
- solar/PV panels to take advantage for the feed in tariffs.

### **(Investment in) Economic Regeneration**

The Council is currently developing a long-term regeneration delivery framework (2013-2028) which will help the organisation and its partners to make decisions on the borough's economic priorities and is also being used as a basis for agreeing the type and level of intervention needed by the Council and its partners to grow and sustain our economy. Within the framework described, there are a number of key projects which will require the Council's input. However, the following areas are highlighted as key priorities.

- Runcorn and Widnes Town Centres.
- Mersey Gateway
- Enterprise Zone status at Daresbury
- Widnes Waterfront
- The delivery of the HBC Field site as part of the Multi-Modal Gateway.

### **Business Improvement Districts (BIDs)**

A major consultation exercise with the Astmoor and Halebank business community between August 2012 and December 2012 found that 85% of businesses reported that the BID has had a beneficial impact on their business while 80% of businesses reported that Astmoor Industrial Estate has improved as a place to trade/operate since the establishment of the BID in 2008.

In January 2013 a mandate was secured from the business community to continue the BID Programme at Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates for a further five years. 75% of Astmoor businesses and 82% of Halebank businesses voted in favour of continuing the BID Programme

It is an aspiration to extend the BID Programme to further industrial and commercial areas in Halton, for example Widnes Waterfront or Manor Park. However, it is necessary to spend a number of years working more intensively with the business



community in a given geography in order to have any realistic expectation of a positive outcome from a BID ballot.

### **Combined Authority Liverpool City Region**

Liverpool City Region (LCR) submitted its Governance Review to Government in September 2013 for creation of a Combined Authority for the Liverpool City Region, including Halton.

The Combined Authority if accepted by Government will ONLY deal with strategic economic development, transport, housing and employment and skills.

The conclusion of the Governance Review is that a Combined Authority is the best model to support economic growth and secure more jobs, in Halton and across the LCR.

The Combined Authority will help to signal to businesses and Government that we are serious about working together. It is expected that it will also be able to attract devolved powers and funding from Government.

The proposals were subject to extensive consultation with Members, businesses, partners and the public, and were supported by LCR Cabinet and Council in each of the six City Region boroughs and the Merseyside Integrated Transport Authority. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive, with over 80% of respondents supporting the proposals.

If there is support for the proposal, an order will be laid before Parliament to create the Combined Authority from April 2014.

### **European Programme 2014 – 2020**

The new 2014 - 2020 European Structural Programme consists principally of ERDF (European Regional Development Fund) and ESF (European Social Fund) funding. UK Government has devolved European Union (EU) funding in England to the 39 LEPs (Local Enterprise Partnerships). LCR (Liverpool City Region) has been working to produce an EU Investment Plan that sets out how they intend to spend their allocation of EU funding which equates to approximately £185m over the seven year period. The Investment Strategy was submitted to Government in October 2013. After feedback has been received, the LEP will consult with partners before a final version of the Investment Strategy will be submitted to Government in January 2014. This will form part of the National Operational Programme for England for the period 2014 - 2020.

Within the LCR budget, Halton has an indicative allocation of approximately £17m. This is because Government allocated resources based on the regional geography of 2006 (when Halton was classed as part of Cheshire) and apportioned resources for Halton accordingly. Given that the Liverpool LEP will be required to distinguish between the resources set aside for Halton and the rest of the City Region, it is logical to develop a European Funding Action Plan for the Borough. As part of this work Halton has led on the development of the Assisted Area Map on behalf of the Liverpool City Region.

### **Delivering Business Support Programme (including grant)**

Increasingly the Business Improvement and Growth Team (BIG) are responsible for the delivery of major grant schemes and business support programmes. Typically, the BIG Team manage the programme and delivery is outsourced to a third party.

The two key programmes currently delivered by the BIG Team are the Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme and the Merseyside Business Support Programme.

#### *Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant Programme*

The Council's Executive Board gave approval on October 17 2013 to roll out the Liverpool City Region Business Growth Grant in Halton. The Business Growth Grant scheme can provide grant of between £10,000.00 and £750,000.00 across the LCR based on a private sector leverage ratio of 5:1 and the creation of sustainable jobs. There are currently 27 local companies seeking support for the schemes

#### *Merseyside Business Support Programme*

Since November 2012 Merseyside Business Support Programme has received 150 + enquiries. Currently 82 businesses who are receiving assistance via the programme either in the initial diagnostic phase or the subsequent specialist intervention phase. Assuming that all SMEs currently engaged in the programme successfully complete, then the programme has already achieved over 50% of its output target.

The Merseyside Business Support Programme in Halton has had two audits. The project was described as 'a beacon of good practise'

#### **Service inward investment enquiries from both inward investors and local companies wishing to expand and grow**

The number of investment enquiries for the 2013 calendar year (280 to date) has surpassed the average, pre-recession, level. The number of inward investment enquiries is likely to be a nine year high by end of the calendar year. Similarly, the upward trend of conversions (40 to date) has continued. The current level of conversions is the highest since the onset of the 2008 global recession

#### **Localism Act - Right to bid for Community Assets/ Community Right to Challenge**

The Community Right to Bid will give community groups the right to prepare and bid to buy community buildings and facilities that are important to them. From 12 October 2012 parish councils and local voluntary and community organisations will be able to nominate local land or buildings to be included in lists of community assets maintained by local authorities. In the event of a proposed sale, a process will be triggered that allows a community interest group – more closely defined than a voluntary or community organisation – to express an interest in bidding to purchase the property.

Community Right to Challenge came into force on 27 June 2012. Under the Right, introduced by the Localism Act, local authorities must consider expressions of interest in providing a service, and where they accept an expression of interest, must carry out a procurement exercise for the service. The Community Right to Challenge allows voluntary and community groups, charities, parish councils and local authority staff to bid to run a local authority service where they believe they can do so differently and better. This may be the whole service or part of a service. It came into force on 27 June 2012.

## Appendix C: Detail of External Factors (see 4.2)

### POLITICAL FACTORS

#### **Marmot Review of Health Inequalities**

The Review argues that traditionally government policies to reduce health inequalities have focused resources only on some segments of society. To improve health for all of us action is needed to build on the past ten years work to continue to improve everyone's health and reduce differences that are both unfair and unjust.

From a Directorate perspective, the Review recommends:

- Giving every child the best start in life - increasing the proportion of overall expenditure allocated to the early years and ensure expenditure on early years development is focused progressively across the social gradient
- Enabling all children, young people and adults to maximize their capabilities and have control over their lives - reducing social inequalities in pupils' educational outcomes;
- Creating fair employment and good work for all
- Ensuring a healthy standard of living for all minimum income for healthy living
- Creating and developing sustainable places and communities

#### **Family Justice Review**

The family justice system is a network of organisations and individuals from many different professions all working co-operatively and collaboratively so that the system achieves its aims. A Family Justice Review Panel was appointed in 2010 to review the effectiveness of the whole of the family justice system, looking at all aspects, from court decisions on taking children into care, to disputes over contact with children when parents' divorce. The Panel aimed to improve the system so that it is quicker, simpler, more cost-effective and fairer, whilst continuing to protect children and vulnerable adults from risk of harm.

The panel's final report was published in November 2011. This took into account the views expressed during the consultation on the interim report and the call for evidence. A useful young person's guide to the review has also been published.

The key recommendations are a new six month time limit in care cases; enabling people to make their own arrangements for their children when they separate, using the courts only when necessary; and a range of proposals to ensure that agencies and professionals work together to make the system simpler and far more effective, improving the experience and outcomes for children and families. One element of particular interest for the Directorate is the review of the Guardian/IRO role.

#### **School Capital and Funding**

For the 2012-13 academic year, over £2 billion of capital funding was allocated nationally to schools and local authorities. This included:

- £800 million of basic need funding to local authorities to provide school places where needed in their area, in all categories of publically-funded schools;
- £686 million of maintenance capital to local authorities to support the needs of the schools that they maintain and for the Sure Start children's centres in their area;
- £276 million of maintenance capital for Academies;

- £174 million of locally-coordinated VA programme capital to support the maintenance capital needs of voluntary-aided schools;
- £200 million of devolved formula capital for schools; and
- a total of £107 million for 16-19 maintenance, devolved formula capital and basic need funding.

### **Taylor Report on Alternative Provision**

Charlie Taylor, the Government's expert adviser on behaviour, reported his review on Alternative Provision in March 2012. The Review was initiated in 2011 following an Ofsted survey that found serious concerns with alternative provision. The review focused on pupil referral units and schools and found concerns within its review of provision, but also areas of good practice. The Review found that the focus of pupil referral units and alternative provision, just as it is in schools, should be about getting high quality education for all pupils and the best value for public money. All decisions around provision should take this as the starting point.

The Report was accepted by the Government and a consultation exercise undertaken to seek views on proposals to implement some of the recommendations found within the Report. These views have been taken forward and new statutory guidance came into effect from 1 January 2013.

### **Inspiring Families (Troubled Families Initiative)**

In 2011 the Government announced that almost £450 million has been made available in a cross-government drive to turn around the lives of 120,000 troubled families. The money is being made available to local authorities to fund a national network of Troubled Family 'Trouble-Shooters' and family intervention projects. The trouble-shooters will oversee the programme of action in their area.

It is estimated that troubled families cost the taxpayer an estimated £9 billion per year, equivalent to £75,000 per family. The initiative is intended to cut the costs of this to the state.

In Halton, the initiative is to be known as Inspiring Families. It will be part of a collective approach using services already in place. This means augmenting the 'Team Around The Family' approach in Widnes and Runcorn. It should enable us to scale up and broaden this work; particularly multiagency working 'Team Around the Family' services provide early help for families. All agencies, central and local, will need to work closely together to get over some of the hurdles in delivering more co-ordinated and effective services, for example, in information sharing.

Halton has been set a target of 375 families to support, chosen by filtering local and national indicators, by 2015 and success will depend on all public services in Halton and Government departments working closely together. Fees are based on a payment by results process, with Halton eligible for payment around successful outcomes for 313 of the 375 families

Local partners, such as health and the police are contributing to a multi-agency approach. Multi-agency groups have been established in Halton and branding in place around the 'Inspiring Families' banner.

### **The DWP Work Programme**

The Work Programme provides tailored support for claimants who need more help to undertake active and effective job seeking. Participants receive support to overcome barriers that prevent them from finding and staying in work. It is delivered by Department of Work & Pensions contracted service providers who have been given

complete autonomy to decide how best to support participants while meeting their minimum service delivery standards. The Work Programme is part funded by the European Social Fund.

The Programme is a key part of the Government's commitment to fighting poverty; supporting the most vulnerable and helping people break the cycle of benefit dependency. This has been the basis for the significant reforms to the welfare-to-work programmes.

The Work Programme aims to create a structure that treats people as individuals and allows providers greater freedom to tailor the right support to the individual needs of each claimant. The Work Programme also looks for value for money for the taxpayer by basing payments largely on results, and paying service providers from the benefits saved from getting people into work. The Programme is a partnership between Government and providers from across the public, private and third sectors.

### **Better Regulation – Red tape Challenge**

The Government launched the Red Tape Challenge in April 2011 to reduce the overall burden of regulation. The Government believes that better regulation can encourage economic growth by freeing business and civil society from unnecessary regulatory burdens and contribute to improving the environment and protecting human health. The Red Tape Challenge is a systematic review of some 6,500 substantive regulations that to scrap or significantly reduce as many of them as possible. The Red Tape Challenge gives businesses and civil society the opportunity to have their say on the regulations, grouped by theme, that affect their everyday lives.

## **ECONOMIC CLIMATE**

### **Deprivation**

The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) for 2010 is the most comprehensive source of deprivation indicators and shows that overall, Halton is ranked 27th nationally (a ranking of 1 indicates that an area is the most deprived), which is third highest on Merseyside, behind Knowsley and Liverpool, and 9th highest in the North West. Deprivation has stayed relatively level in the borough from since 2007. The Index shows that 25% of Halton's population live in the most deprived areas (i.e. the top 10% of Lower Super Output Areas) nationally. Much has been done but clearly there is still much to do to narrow the gap between the least and most deprived parts of the Borough while at the same time improving prosperity for all.

### **National Careers Service**

The National Careers Service (in England) was launched on 5th April 2012, with the aim of providing telephone and online advice to 370,000 young people and face-to-face advice to 700,000 adults. Halton People into Jobs has been commissioned to deliver elements of the services locally.

From September 2012, high schools, academies and colleges are required to directly commission their own information advice and guidance provision for pupils and students, but not necessarily to provide advice on a face-to-face basis.

### **Apprenticeships**

Statutory standards for apprenticeships were introduced in Autumn 2011. Following this, the National Apprenticeship Service (NAS) developed an action plan to ensure

every apprenticeship meets the following standards on behalf of apprentices and employers;

- All apprenticeships for 16-18 year olds to be a minimum of 12 months
- Withdrawal of inadequate sub-contracted provision
- New safeguards to strengthen monitoring, reporting and subcontracting arrangements, including making public a list of all sub contracted provision over £100,000
- New contracts to ensure training providers not only act according to regulations, but also within the spirit of the apprenticeship programme
- A new 'enquiry panel' has been established, reporting directly to the Minister, to manage poor quality providers as soon as they are reported.
- New measures to ensure all adult apprenticeships are of sufficient length to deliver the training employers need
- Review of apprenticeship frameworks that have been deemed a cause for concern
- New guidance on the implementation of quality standards

Following consultation and feedback received on proposals to amend the AGE criteria for 16 to 24 year-olds which provides up to 40,000 grants of £1500 to encourage and support employers taking on a young apprentice aged 16 to 24, the following changes were approved by Government for implementation:

- Training providers will now pay employers the full amount of £1,500 at 13 week stage after the apprentice starts, rather than previously in two £750 payments.
- Employers will be able to claim grants for up to 10 apprentices (previously 3), and the scheme will be opened to employers who have not hired an apprentice in the last 12 months (previously 3 years).
- The Grant will be available to businesses with up to 1,000 employees.

The NAS re-launched AGE to employers and businesses to coincide with the publication of the Holt Review.

### **Holt Review; Support for small businesses to take on apprentices**

Businessman and social entrepreneur Jason Holt was commissioned by the Government to review ways to make apprenticeships simpler and more accessible for small and medium businesses ('SME's'). His research highlighted widespread lack of awareness about the benefits of taking apprentices on, and how to recruit and train them amongst SME's. The three key recommendations were to:

- Improve communications with business to raise awareness of the benefits of apprenticeships.
- Empower SME's to participate and develop their own training provision so they can get the right type of training for their apprentices.
- Simplify the ownership and responsibility for apprenticeships by removing unnecessary administrative and bureaucratic barriers.

### **Talent Match**

In June 2012 Big Lottery Fund (BIG) launched 'Talent Match', an ambitious £100 million investment aimed at tackling youth unemployment. This programme targets the 21 Local Enterprise Partnerships ('LEPs') where those aged 18-24 are finding it hardest to secure jobs or training opportunities because of the economic downturn. The Liverpool City Region LEP is included on the list.

Talent Match aims to put charities at the heart of local partnerships established between local councils, charities, employers, and colleges to develop proposals on how to make best use of the funding to help match the talents of local young people with skills and opportunities of the future.

### **'Building Engagement, Building Futures'**

This is the Government's strategy to increase participation of 16-24 year olds in education, training and work through five priorities for action:

- Raising attainment in school and beyond so young people have the skills they need to compete in a global economy.
- Help for local partners to provide effective and coordinated services that support all young people, including the most vulnerable, with a target of full participation by 16-17 year olds by 2015.
- Encouragement and incentives to employers to recruit more young people by offering more high quality apprenticeships and work experience places.
- Ensuring that work pays and giving young people the personalised support they need to find it, through Universal Credit, the Work Programme and our Get Britain Working measures.
- Implementing the Youth Contract to help young people get into 'learning or earning'.

### **Youth Contract**

The Youth Contract aims to help the most disengaged 16 and 17 year olds by getting them back to school or college, onto an apprenticeship or into a job with training. It includes:

- Provision of 410,000 new work places for 18 to 24 year olds between 2012 and 2015.
- Wage incentives worth up to £2,275 per person, available for employers who offer an 18 to 24 year-old from the Government's Work Programme, a job lasting at least 26 weeks.
- Extra voluntary work experience places to ensure an offer of a place for every 18 to 24 year-old who wants one, before they enter the Work Programme.
- 40,000 Apprenticeship grants for employers of 16 to 24 year olds. Aimed at helping small (under 50) & medium (50 to 250) sized employers offer young people employment by providing wage grants to assist employers in recruiting their first apprentice. Has a value of £1,500 in addition to the training costs of the Apprenticeship framework which are met in full for young people aged 16 to 18 and 50% for those aged 19-24.
- Support for disengaged 16-17 year olds in England. £126 million over three years to support NEET. Organisations are leading this programme on a regional/sub-regional basis in process of recruitment. Payment by results based on successful progression into sustainable positive outcome.

## **SOCIAL FACTORS**

### **Child & Family Poverty**

The Child Poverty Act received Royal Assent and became an Act of Parliament in 2010. The Act imposes specific duties including:

- Local partners to co-operate to mitigate the effects of child poverty
- Local authorities to make arrangements to prepare a local child poverty needs assessment

- To demonstrate how Local Authorities and partners are working together to tackle child poverty. In Halton, this is achieved through the local joint child and family poverty strategy
- Child poverty to be considered within the Sustainable Community Strategy.

The national Child Poverty Strategy was launched in April 2011. In Halton a needs assessment was undertaken as part of an overall needs assessment for Greater Merseyside, with a local strategy developed from this. The LCR Strategic Needs Assessment was refreshed in March 2013 and Halton's Child and Family Poverty Strategy 2011-13 is being refreshed using this as an evidence base.

In the development of the Strategy in Halton, consideration is being given to how we as a Directorate commission services and the implications of new initiatives such as the pupil premium.

### **Demographic Changes**

The population estimate of Halton from the 2011 Census is 125,700 with an estimated 53,300 households. This compares with the 2001 Census population estimate of 118,210. Of the 2011 population estimate, approximately 24,900 (20%) are children and young people and 82,300 people are of working age (65% of the population).

The Office for National Statistics has produced baseline population projections based on recent demographic trends. These show that for Halton:

- In the medium term (2011 - 2017) Halton's population is projected to grow by 2% to 128,000
- In the long term (2011 - 2021) Halton's population is projected to grow by 3% to 129,300. This is lower than the North West region which is projected to grow by 4% and nationally, which is projected to grow by 9%
- Younger people (0 - 15 year olds) - population projected to grow by 10% (2011 - 2021)
- Working age (16 - 64 year olds) - population projected to decline by 5% (2011 - 2021)

The Office for National Statistics estimates that each person counted in the census is worth up to £5,000 to a local authority over ten years. This means that an undercount of just 100 people could mean Halton misses out on around £500,000 worth of funding over the next decade. The population increase is important, as the amount of money Halton has to spend on services over the next ten years is directly influenced by how many people are counted in the borough.

## **TECHNOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS**

### **Digital Accessibility**

New communications technologies not only help businesses trade and develop; they also create opportunities for businesses to develop new applications and services. These new applications and services increase demand for faster and better communications facilities, which in turn leads to more innovation in applications and services in a development spiral. Connecting people to ICT skills can connect them to new or better jobs, to new forms of communication and social interaction, to community infrastructures and government services, to information to help with homework, to consumer power and convenience. It can save people time and money, open new doors and new worlds. Digital inequality matters because those



without the right combination of access, skill, motivation or knowledge to make digital decisions are missing out in all areas of life.

In Halton, a Corporate Digital Economy and Inclusion Strategy is delivering on these challenges. Within this Directorate, it is imperative that ICT form part of core curriculum in schools. Digital life skills offer a route to employment, with employers seeking employees who are computer literate and able to take advantage of technology. For the mobile 24/7 society service engagement is often through a web interface and the advent of smart phones and iPods and other mobile devices will continue to drive advances in community engagement and service delivery.

### **Universal Jobmatch**

Universal Jobmatch is the Department for Work Pension's new, free online job posting and matching service. This new online service will improve our recruitment service for both companies and jobseekers by speeding up the recruitment process, making it quicker and easier for companies to find suitable jobseekers. Universal Jobmatch replaces the current vacancy management services, Employer Direct and Employer Direct Online for companies, and it replaces the Jobcentre Plus jobs and skills search facility for jobseekers.

This new streamlined service will be accessed through [GOV.UK](http://GOV.UK) for companies and anyone looking for work.

### **Jobseekers Allowance Online**

Under the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP) "Digital by Default" agenda we are now encouraging claimants to make new claims for Jobseekers Allowance online (JSA OL). Insight suggests that a large and growing number of claimants would prefer to access DWP services online.

Merseyside Jobcentre Plus District took part in a Trailblazer Pilot to encourage all claims to JSA to be made digitally. Claimants from Merseyside post codes calling the JSA claim helpline were diverted to a dedicated Contact Centre, who will explain that they will need to make their JSA claim online and explain how, when and where they can make their claim. Local Jobcentre Plus offices will advise claimants to apply online for JSA. If the claimant requires support to access online channels they can be booked into their local Jobcentre Plus office to use an Internet Access Device.

## **LEGISLATIVE FACTORS**

### **Ofsted Framework for the Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers**

Ofsted launched a new single inspection framework in November 2013 that inspects local authority services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Under this framework, Ofsted will inspect services for children and young people who are:

- at risk of harm – covers both Early Help and Child in Need (Levels 2 and 3 of Halton Levels of Need Framework).
- in need of protection and provided with a multi-agency child protection plan
- no longer needing a child protection plan but still require some help and support
- in need of Social Care support but below the significant harm and looked after thresholds
- Missing from education or offered alternative provision
- looked after or care leavers

The focus is on children and young people's own experiences and inspectors will evaluate the effectiveness of:

- the quality and timeliness of assessment and risk assessment;
- the impact of the help given
- the focus on the interests of the child;
- inter-agency working
- meaningful, consistent and direct contact with child and their family
- quality assurance and management oversight of practice/decision making;
- the experiences of particularly vulnerable children (private fostering, those not in education, those in families with domestic violence, substance misuse, mental illness etc.);
- whether services are accessible to everyone and that there is equality of opportunity and outcomes.

### **Framework for Early Years Foundation Stage (EYFS)**

The framework for the EYFS - *Setting the standards for learning, development and care for children from birth to five* - became mandatory for all early years' providers, maintained schools, non-maintained schools, independent schools, and all providers on the Early Years Register in 2012.

The curriculum focuses on 3 prime areas (Communication and Language; Physical Development and Personal, Social and Emotional Development) and 4 Specific Areas (Literacy; Mathematics; Understanding of the World and Expressive Arts and Design). There is a statutory requirement to report on progress and level of development in the 3 prime areas at age 24-36 months. Assessment at age 5 (final year of reception) reports on levels of development across all 7 areas of learning, using statements of "expected" "emerging" or "exceeding". Reporting on Foundation Stage Profile (FSP) data is in terms of percentage of children reaching expected attainment or higher.

### **Ofsted Framework for Early Years Providers.**

The latest Ofsted framework became statutory on 1 September 2012. Inspectors judge overall effectiveness in terms of:

- how well the early years provision meets the needs of the range of children who attend
- the contribution of the early years provision to the wellbeing of children
- the leadership and management of the early years provision

Inspection judgements will be graded against 1 of 4 grades:

- grade 1 - outstanding
- grade 2 - good
- grade 3 - satisfactory
- grade 4 – inadequate

All providers will be inspected at least once by July 2016, although any provider judged as less than good will be re-inspected within 1 year. Any concerns reported to Ofsted will be risk assessed as to whether the item is routine (e.g. change of contact details); minor or need to re-inspect. Any minor matter will be noted and referred back to the provider, although once 2 minor matters have been recorded, this will trigger a full re-inspection. Re-inspections will take place within 30 working days or if identified as a priority within 5 working days. Inspections will continue to be no notice inspections, apart from childminders who will receive a couple of days' notice.

Any child minder must have Local Authority (LA) approved training prior to applying for a registration visit. If they are not deemed to be ready at this visit, then they will be refused registration and this would be classed as a lifetime disqualification. If this were to occur, the child minder could resign and withdraw their application, rather than be barred.

The new Ofsted framework has been published in response to the changes of the new EYFS and will have a much stronger emphasis on learning and development and whole care packages providing emotional security. Progress of different groups will be reported and partnership working with parents and multi-agency professionals will be a focus for inspection, linking into Early Help policies. There will be a stronger focus on direct observation of children and professional dialogue with all practitioners regarding a child's level of development; progress and how this compares to age related expected development. Ofsted will also be keen to observe the progress of babies and toddlers including tracking groups of children.

### **Academies Act 2010**

The Academies Act 2010 enables more schools in England to become academies. Since the Act was passed, the number of Academies nationally and locally has grown each year. Academies are funded at a comparable level to maintained schools but would also get their share of central funding that local authorities used to spend on their behalf. Schools that become academies are allowed to keep any surplus balances that they hold. The Act is not allowing for the expansion of selection but grammar schools and other schools which select or partially select pupils are able to continue to do so. Key areas of the Act include:

- enabling all maintained schools to apply to become academies, with schools rated 'outstanding' by Ofsted being pre-approved
- allowing maintained primary and special schools to apply to become academies in their own right
- giving the Secretary of State the power to issue an academy order requiring the local authority to cease to maintain the school
- removing the requirement to consult the local authority before opening an academy
- requiring the consent of any existing foundation (mainly churches) before a school applies to become an academy (and prohibits the religious character changing during the conversion to academy)
- deeming academy trusts to be exempt charities.

### **Education Act 2011**

The Education Act 2011 paves the way for implementing the Government's education reform programme that aims to create an education system that delivers ever higher standards for all children. Key changes for local authorities within the Act include:

- a new entitlement for disadvantaged two-year-olds to 15 hours' free early years education;
- replacing independent appeals panels for exclusions with independent review panels;
- removing the duty on local authorities to appoint a School Improvement Partner for every school;
- giving precedence to academy proposals, where a local authority identifies the need for a new school, and expands the academies programme to allow 16-19 and alternative provision academies;
- extending the Secretary of State's powers to intervene in underperforming schools;

- providing for the closure of the Local Government Ombudsman's school complaints service, and removes the duty to consider complaints about the curriculum from LAs. General complaints about schools will now be made to the Secretary of State;
- allowing for pilots of direct payments for SEN education services;
- making changes to LA powers over sixth form colleges; and
- providing for the abolition of five arm's length bodies (the TDA, the GTCE, the QCDA, the YPLA and the SSSNB).

The Act no longer makes changes to the section 10 Children Act duty to co-operate with the local authority to promote children's wellbeing.

### **Revisions to Adoption and Fostering Legislation**

In April 2012, the Government published [An Action Plan for Adoption: Tackling Delay](#) which explains planned changes to speed up the adoption system in England. Adoption is one of the Government's top priorities and ministers want to create a more effective and user-friendly adoption system which is fit for purpose. They aim to ensure that adoption is available for children where this is in their best interests, and for it to happen without undue delay. The action plan sets out a range of proposals to speed up the process for children; to overhaul the service for prospective adopters; and to strengthen local accountability for the timeliness of adoption services.

In July 2012, the Prime Minister also announced [Proposals for the earlier placement of children with their potential adopters](#)

In the Adoption Action Plan, a range of measures were set out to reduce delay so that more children for whom adoption is the best option can be placed swiftly with adoptive families.

The measures include the wider use of concurrent planning, which should be considered by all local authorities for their youngest children in the care system. The Government would like to see wider application of concurrent planning principles through 'fostering for adoption', and propose to introduce a new legal duty on local authorities to consider placing a child with carers who are likely to become their permanent carers, where it is clear that a child is unlikely to return home.

The Government also plan to clarify the lawful use of concurrent planning and fostering for adoption, and to require local authorities to consider both, where appropriate.

It is proposed that the following measures be implemented to improve adoption and fostering:

- A new, shorter two-stage approval process for prospective adopters;
- A fast-track procedure for approved foster carers and previous adopters;
- Regulations to make it easier for prospective adopters to be approved as temporary foster carers – the 'fostering for adoption' proposal;
- Sharing of case records between fostering services and adoption agencies; and
- Restricting the size of adoption and fostering panels.

These changes are aimed at increasing the use of the Adoption Register by adoption agencies, and will change regulations to make it easier for prospective adopters to be approved as temporary foster carers – the 'fostering for adoption' proposal.

On fostering there is a package of changes to the foster carer assessment and approval process to make the process clearer, more proportionate and responsive to the needs of children coming into the care system; and to ensure foster carers are able to take everyday decisions about the children in their care (delegated authority).

For both adoption and fostering the DfE are consulting on proposals for the sharing of case records between fostering services and adoption agencies and are seeking views on whether the size of adoption and fostering panels should be restricted.

### **Public Services (Social Value) Act 2012**

The Act aims to strengthen the social enterprise business sector and make the concept of 'social value' more relevant and important in the placement and provision of public services. Key areas include:

- placing a duty on the Secretary of State to publish a 'national social enterprise strategy' to encourage engagement in social enterprise
- amending Section 4 of the Local Government Act 2000 so that local authorities are required to include in their sustainable community strategy proposals for promoting engagement with social enterprise in their area. They must also include a statement of the measures suggested to enable social enterprise to participate in implementing these proposals
- requiring local authorities, when entering into public procurement contracts, to give greater consideration to economic, social or environmental wellbeing during the pre-procurement stage.

### **Health and Social Care Act 2012**

The Health and Social Care Act 2012 gives effect to the policies that were set out in the White Paper Equity and Excellence: Liberating the NHS which was published in July 2010. It allows for a new public health service and the transfer of local health improvement services to local authorities.

The main aims of the Act are to change how NHS care is commissioned through the greater involvement of clinicians and a new NHS Commissioning Board; to improve accountability and patient voice; to give NHS providers new freedoms to improve quality of care; and to establish a provider regulator to promote economic, efficient and effective provision. In addition, the Act will underpin the creation of Public Health England, and take forward measures to reform health public bodies.

### **Welfare Reforms and the Single Programme**

The Single Programme was introduced in 2011 with the underlying principle of 'making work pay', but proposed further reforms will place demand on our services as more people on benefits are encouraged to find work and, therefore, seek training and development to support them.

The Work Programme provides an advice and employability service to long term unemployed people. Those eligible for the Work Programme are mandated to the provision offered through HPIJ for a period of 52 weeks. The traditional HPIJ service was available to any adult living in the borough and, in the main, individuals voluntarily referred them to the provision.

Delivering the Work Programme has required a very different type of model than the historical HPIJ service has used. Firstly, Jobcentre Plus (JCP) mandatorily refers long term unemployed residents to the Work Programme. Secondly, income is generated per customer, so the more customers Work Programme Advisors support into sustained employment, the more income that can be generated. It is a

performance oriented model that is driven by volume (quantity) with increasingly more focus on supporting those in particular 'Priority Group's (PG) into work. The relationship that HPIJ advisors were able to build up with their customers in the past is not possible with a commercially driven contract such as the Work Programme, and structures have had to be redesigned to reflect this.

The emphasis is on advising customers and supporting them into sustainable employment as quickly as possible. The longer the individual remains in employment, the more income that can be generated for the council. The contract has demanded a complete change of culture to the existing HPIJ operation given the mandatory nature of referrals. Very specific targets are imposed by the Prime Contractors and on-going performance management is undertaken. Individuals on the Work Programme are expected to engage; non engagement may require Work Programme Advisors to raise doubts with JCP, who would then determine if benefits would be sanctioned. There are minimum levels of performance to be achieved and these are carefully monitored internally and externally by the Prime Contractors.

HPIJ's Work Programme Advisors work closely with the other services within the Employment, Learning & Skills Division to offer clients a broad range of interventions to assist them in entering the labour market. This includes access to adult learning and employability provision, National Careers Service interventions, Skills for Life assessments and Business Start Up advice.

The Halton Employment Partnership (HEP) also sits within the Division and is the interface between new and existing businesses in the borough who are looking to recruit, and those seeking employment. HEP is able to bring these opportunities to Work Programme Advisors and support clients in accessing bespoke pre-employment programmes. In addition, HPIJ works alongside Jobcentre Plus who offer a range of measures to help claimants back to work.

### **Skills Funding**

The Government's approach to funding skills development has changed, especially over the last 12 months, and will continue to do so, placing employers much more in the driving seat of skills and qualifications funding and development. Utilising public funding for skills that meets the demands of the current and future workforce (e.g. through Skills Funding Agency) makes great business sense, but this is not something that has happened to a great extent in the past. As the pressures on public funding for skills development continue to grow, the way these funds are deployed becomes all the more critical and requires careful planning and joined up thinking.

### **Children & Families Bill**

The Children & Families Bill is expected to become an Act during 2014. The main changes that the Bill introduces include:

- To make the statutory processes fully "family-centred"
- To enhance ways for parents and children to participate in decision-making – they must all have more say
- To provide SEN support from 0-25
- To publish a fully integrated Local Offer – a comprehensive guide to services for children & young people with SEND
- To promote the new Education, Health and Care Plans, which will replace Statements
- To facilitate joint commissioning across Education, Health & Social Care

- To enable parents, children & young people the right to ask for their own budget
- To provide greater levels of support for transition, via the Preparing for Adulthood agenda
- To promote and develop robust integrated working across all agencies
- To ensure that our children & young people with a wide-range of additional needs continue to have their needs met within their educational settings

### **Ofsted Framework for the Inspection of Children's Centres 2013**

This framework sets out the statutory basis for Sure Start Children's Centre inspections conducted from April 2013. The three key judgements are:

- access to services by young children and their families
- the quality and impact of practice and services
- the effectiveness of leadership, governance and management.

Under this framework:

- an inspection will either be of a single centre or of a children's centre group that offers integrated services and shares leadership and management
- wherever possible and appropriate, inspections will take place simultaneously across a locality<sup>1</sup> where local authorities or partner organisations deliver integrated services collaboratively
- a centre that is not yet 'good', but that is not judged 'inadequate', is a centre that 'requires improvement'
- centres that are judged as 'requires improvement' will be subject to monitoring and support and will normally be inspected within a maximum period of two years and earlier if required – the timing of inspection will reflect the quality of the action plan, the individual circumstances of the local authority and the centre and will be informed by what inspectors find during their monitoring activities
- if a centre is judged as 'requires improvement' at two consecutive inspections and is still not 'good' at a third inspection, it is likely to be deemed 'inadequate'
- a centre judged as inadequate will be re-inspected within 12 months of the previous inspection – the quality of the action plan produced by the local authority in response to the inspection and its implementation will be an important feature of the re-inspection.

### **School Governance (Constitution) Regulations 2012**

These Regulations apply alongside the 2007 Regulations where appropriate. The key features of the 2012 Regulations include:

- The Regulations allow governing bodies constituted on or after 1<sup>st</sup> September 2012 to have a minimum size of seven members<sup>1</sup>, rather than nine as under the Constitution Regulations 2007
- The governing body should ensure that it has the skills needed to conduct the governing body's business effectively
- The method of appointing the local authority governor has been amended
- A new definition of co-opted governor has been introduced
- The role of sponsor governor has been removed.

### **Roles, Procedures and Allowances Regulations 2013**

These came into force in September 2013. They change the existing Regulations in the following ways:

- Shorter definition of the roles and responsibilities of governing bodies and headteachers
- Provision to join meetings virtually
- Slimmed down governor allowance provisions
- Governing body must now have regard to advice from the clerk
- No restriction on the length of the term of office of the chair and vice chair
- Persons eligible to be chair and vice chair have changed
- Restrictions on delegation have been relaxed
- Restrictions on associate members have been relaxed

### **Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012**

The Legal Aid, Sentencing and Punishment of Offenders Act 2012 received Royal Assent on 1 May 2012. The act contains a number of measures on reforming Legal Aid, as well as provisions on sentencing and reducing reoffending. These include:

#### **Legal Aid**

- retaining legal aid for cases where people's life or liberty is at stake, where they are at risk of serious physical harm, or immediate loss of their home, or where their children may be taken into care
- legal aid being made available for victims of domestic violence and child abuse
- abolishing legal aid for squatters resisting eviction and most immigration cases
- means testing all applicants including those on benefits
- retaining legal aid for Special Educational Needs cases
- abolition of the Legal Services Commission

#### **Sentencing**

- a new offence of threatening with an offensive weapon in public or on school premises
- life sentences for more serious offenders
- offenders committing serious sexual and violent offences spending two thirds of their sentence in prison rather than the half they spend under the current system
- all young people remanded in custody will have to be recognised as looked-after children by local authorities
- changes to powers to make suspended sentence orders

#### **Reducing reoffending**

- new rules on employment in prison
- deducting money from prisoners in employment while in prison to give to victims
- a crackdown on drugs in prison

## **ENVIRONMENTAL FACTORS**

### **Low Carbon Economy**

It is estimated that in the Liverpool City Region 12,000 additional low carbon jobs could be created over the next five years in offshore wind, micro-generation and in retrofitting business opportunities from developing the infrastructure needed to move towards a low carbon economy. Therefore, although climate change and carbon reduction is of paramount importance, the Council's focus needs to be on deriving



economic advantage from sustainable technology and similarly the financial gains from acting in an environmentally friendly manner, not least in reducing costs.

### **Mersey Gateway**

The main objectives of the Mersey Gateway project to build a second crossing of the River Mersey are:

- to relieve the congested Silver Jubilee Bridge, thereby removing the constraint on local and regional development and better provide for local transport needs
- to apply minimum toll and road user charges to both the Mersey Gateway Bridge and the SJB consistent with the level required to satisfy the affordability constraints
- to improve accessibility in order to maximise local development and regional economic growth opportunities
- to improve local air quality and enhance the general urban environment
- to improve public transport links across the River Mersey
- to encourage the increased use of cycling and walking
- and to restore effective network resilience for road transport across the River Mersey.

The project will bring many economic benefits to Halton. These include:

- 470 permanent full-time equivalent jobs on site during the construction phase
- 4,640 permanent new jobs as a result of the operation of the Mersey Gateway, regeneration activity and inward investment
- £61.9 million a year in Gross Value Added from the new jobs by 2030, and
- it will also support sustained growth at Liverpool Ports and Liverpool John Lennon Airport and improve business productivity throughout the Mersey corridor (known as agglomeration impacts).

### **Minimising waste production, increasing recycling and reducing waste to landfill**

Given the ongoing financial climate, and the increasing costs associated with waste disposal to landfill, a key challenge over the medium term will be to concentrate efforts to improve recycling and reduce waste production within the borough.

Recycling facilities have been extended to all properties within the borough over the last 3 years and in some areas 70% of residents make use of kerbside services. However, there are areas where participation rates remain disappointingly low resulting in a borough average of 60%.

Further work will be needed in relation to community engagement and educational activities which will be supported by the review and development of strategies and action plans relating to environmental sustainability and climate change.

### **Tackling Environmental Crime and promoting positive behaviours**

Halton residents have consistently identified clean and safe streets as critical factors in making their neighbourhoods a good place to live. As a result, it is crucial that we continue to effectively tackle issues such as littering, fly-tipping and dog fouling.

This would involve a combination of both educational and enforcement activities at both an organisational level and through effective collaboration with key local agencies.

### **Liverpool City Region Transport Agenda/Local Transport Plan Block Funding**

Bus operators, including community transport, are facing significant challenges through a 20% reduction in Bus Services Operators Grant and increases in fuel and insurance costs. The outcome of such pressures is likely to be further reductions in both the commercial and subsidised networks with implications for access to employment, training and leisure opportunities.

This situation will need to be monitored and efforts will need to be made to mitigate, as far as possible, the adverse impact of such pressures, particularly amongst the most deprived groups and socially excluded groups within the borough.

We continue to work with private, public and voluntary sector partners to develop our 'Routes to Prosperity' application for the Local Sustainable Transport Fund. This is a programme of co-ordinated actions and interventions, costing in excess of £5m, aimed at removing transport obstacles to employment for local residents.

If successful tailored works will promote smarter travel choices to key employment sites, reduce carbon emissions, improve safety and tackle disadvantage whilst supporting economic growth.

### **Road Safety and Street Lighting**

The authority's success in reducing the number of people killed / seriously injured in road accidents by 70% over the past 15 years has largely been dependent upon central government grants which will no longer be available.

Additionally the LTP settlement, which helps fund Local Safety Schemes, has been reduced by 66% from almost £1.8 m to £680,000. As a consequence, future initiatives will need to be risk-based and focused upon target groups such as young drivers and motorcyclists and consequently the extent to which we can sustain our record of on-going accident reduction remains questionable.

We face a growing problem in relation to street lighting as a result of ageing stock and energy costs. A large proportion of our existing stock of over 19, 000 lighting columns are now more than 40 years old and have exceeded their 30 year design life. Additionally, with over 5,000 illuminated signs and bollards the current energy cost to the Council is approximately £1 m per year.

In order to reduce our consumption and emissions we will continue to explore savings opportunities, for example through energy efficient practices and reducing overall numbers. It has to be recognised however, that sustainable solutions will require capital investment and may result in a risk based approach being adopted in terms of the ongoing illumination of roads and footpaths.

### **Flood Risk Management**

New statutory powers and duties will be introduced for Halton, as Lead Local Flood Authority for the area, as a result of the incremental implementation of the key provisions of the Flood and Water Management Act (2010).

In addition to the need to develop a Local Strategy, which will set out our objectives and associated timeframe, this legislation will also result in new and significant operational demands. These will include responsibility for developing and maintaining

a register of assets, approval and adoption of sustainable drainage systems on developments, and undertaking consent and enforcement role in relation to watercourses.