

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Environment
SERVICE: Economic Regeneration
PERIOD: Quarter 1, 2007/08

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Economic Regeneration Department first quarter period up to 30 June 2007. It describes key developments and progress against 'key' objectives and performance indicators for the service.

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

It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

Following advice from the Heritage Lottery Fund (HLF), that the scale of the funding being sought from the HLF to develop a Lewis Carroll Visitor Centre in the former Parish Rooms in Daresbury village would not be approved, the Daresbury Church Council and Daresbury Parish Council have decided not to continue with the plan. Instead, work is now progressing on developing an HLF bid based on a scaled down Lewis Carroll interpretation project centred on a new annexe to All Saints Church, Daresbury. Planning permission has been applied for. If the plans are approved and the necessary funding is in place, the anticipated completion date for the project is October 2008.

Executive Board on 7 June gave approval to progress the development of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) on Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates. Consultants have now been appointed to assist in the preparation for the formal vote by businesses that is scheduled for later this year. The same report approved the expansion of the Business Parks Improvement Programme (BPIP) to cover the Widnes Waterfront and adjacent areas. As such, the inaugural Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group meeting will take place during August. Both these initiatives were recommended by the Urban Renewal Policy and Performance Board Scrutiny Panel that reviewed the BPIP during 2006/07.

The new Events Calendar has been posted on the homepage of the Council's Website. The calendar offers the facility to view, on line, the comprehensive range of events taking place in Halton. In the first two months there were over 61,000 visits by 34,000 users.

A new Victoria Square Traders Group has been established by the Town

Centre Manager to promote and improve the management of the area. As a way of encouraging local traders to become more involved in the day-to-day management of the town centres the three traders groups (Runcorn, Widnes and Victoria Square) have each been allocated part of the town centre management budget and asked to identify proposals for projects and events that would benefit the centres. The balance of the budget is being used by the town centre manager for key initiatives such as gum cleaning.

Preparations are underway to host this years national DICIDA Conference (Development Initiative for Chemical Industries Dependent Areas), which is being held on 11 and 12 October at the Daresbury Laboratory in Runcorn. The Conference will feature keynote speakers, from both the public and private sector, giving talks on the current challenges and topics of interest to the chemicals industry.

Following a Jobcentre Plus (JCP) competitive tendering exercise, the department has secured a contract worth £44,500 to deliver an 'In Work Support Service' across the boroughs of Halton, St. Helens, Knowsley and Sefton (the Greater Mersey JCP District). The project provides 26 weeks in-work support for up to 175 JCP Incapacity Benefit customers who move from Pathways to Work programme into employment to help them to acclimatise to work and keep their job. This is the first time that a district wide contract has been secured.

Following a Learning and Skills Council (LSC) competitive tendering exercise, the department has secured a contract worth £183,000 to deliver the 'Halton Public Sector Routeway'. This will provide 60 local residents with 13 weeks unpaid work experience within public sector organisations e.g. Halton BC, NHS, Cheshire Police, Cheshire Fire Service etc..

Following the establishment of the new Enterprising Halton service, 81 new business start-up enquiries have been received this quarter, all of which receive 1:1 business advice and support. 9 new business start-ups have been established with a further 5 business start-up plans pending approval from the external assessor.

The Halton People into Jobs service has been awarded Matrix in recognition of the quality of Information, Advice and Guidance, services (IAG) available to residents. Matrix is a quality standard mark awarded by ENTO – a national standard for IAG providers that is increasingly becoming a tendering requirement by funding bodies such as LSC and JCP. The Matrix Assessment Report recommended that HPIJ should seek the prestigious Matrix Excellence Award that is only held by 26 other organisation in the UK.

Children's Centre funding of £99,000 has been secured for provision and co-ordination of adult and family learning in CYPANs (Children & Young People Area Networks). This will enable enhanced levels of support over and above what the Learning and Skills Council funds.

The adult learning service has obtained Centre Approval from CACHE (Council for Awards in Children's Care and Education) for the delivery of childcare courses e.g. NNEB, CCE, Teaching Assistants

An expression of interest has recently been approved by the Big Lottery Fund for a Family Science project – it will now be fully worked up and submitted for

final approvals. The project involves a series of fun and interactive science workshops featuring 'hands on' experiments, science museum trip, industry site visits and progression support. Workshops will be fully accessible and delivered in the community in schools, children's centres and community learning venues, after school and at weekends, with creche and some transport support. The project will be delivered through partnerships with the Catalyst museum, Kings Cross project and the Daresbury Laboratory. It is hoped that by learning as a family, parents and children will develop a mutual appreciation of science and technology in their local community and the opportunities it affords/offers.

The Learning and Skills Council requires that each local authority establishes a PCDL (Personal and Community Development Learning) Partnership. In Halton, rather than develop another partnership, it has been agreed to utilise those partnerships that already exist, namely the Employment Learning and Skills SSP and its Skills Task Group. A PCDL mapping exercise is now underway to establish the total level of PCDL activity that takes place (as opposed to activity that is just LSC funded)

As a direct result of business surveys and follow up work, the adult learning service has introduced a range of cost effective quick fix courses for local businesses. These can be delivered on site and it is hoped that they will encourage both employers and employees to pursue more structure qualification based activity.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

An E survey of over 800 local businesses is taking place investigating what businesses think of council procurement. To date, some 190 businesses have returned the survey.

Lead by Cultural Services, a cross directorate steering group has been established to develop and deliver the Council's proposed Spike Island Capital Of Culture event next year. The event itself will be managed 'on the day' by the Promotions and Tourism team.

The Chief Executive will host a dinner on July 26 2007 for key players in the science and technology sector locally. It is intended that the dinner will kick start the 'Halton Science Initiative'

The creation of a Liverpool City Region Single Investment Agency (SIA) will have a profound effect upon the way investment enquiries are managed locally. Over the coming months it will be necessary to integrate new 'sub-regional' ways of working into existing, local, service delivery to ensure that the Borough isn't disadvantaged with respect to the generation of investment projects. A number of issues still need to be resolved with respect to the funding of the SIA. Each LA has agreed to contribute £50,000 per annum for a period of three years to support the SIA. The Borough Council has identified funding to support the initiative in Year 1.

The department currently has a small Next Steps Contract that provides Information Advice and Guidance to the unemployed. HPiJ has submitted a re-contracting application to Learning and Skills Council/Connexions to continue to deliver IAG services for 12 months from August 2007; a decision is expected

end of July 07.

The department has recently started developing a relationship with HMP Altcourse Liverpool, where, on average, 10-20 ex offenders are released each month that re-settle in Halton. A pilot pre-release programme will start in July that includes delivery of Next Steps IAG services and pre-HPIJ registration for those due for release in the next 6 weeks who wish to resettle in Halton.

The department is developing a 3-week pilot pre-employment programme for residents from priority groups and wards to better prepare them for interview with O2. HPIJ staff have been trained in the O2 recruitment process and have developed interview technique training guidelines to support applicants attending the pre-employment training. Neighbourhood Renewal Funding has been secured to run a pilot programme of activity.

The North West Regional Development Agency has now let a region wide contract for the provision of business start up activity. A consortium lead by A4E has been appointed though the local service will be provided by Blue Orchid that has been active in the borough in the past through the Merseyside Social Enterprise Initiative. A meeting has been arranged to find out more about the plans for Halton.




The Learning and Skills Council has released the budget figures for the Adult Learning Service for next academic year. There is no increase at all. This is in addition to the 6.5% cut for the present year. The impact of this is being assessed. It is already clear that the cost of some courses will have to rise.

Changes to legislation around ESOL (English for Speakers of Other Languages) learners will need to be taken into consideration when planning the curriculum for September 2007. Currently all ESOL provision is free to all ESOL learners and the changes will mean that non-EU learners will have to pay for learning, unless they fit particular categories. The cost of delivery compared to outcomes will be evaluated at the end of the academic year.

The LSC is introducing a new comprehensive performance assessment framework for the FE Sector (all adult learning providers are now included within the Further Education Sector) – Framework for Excellence. It is intended that this will provide a single unified framework for assessing and reporting achievement in key areas of performance. It will also provide information to providers for benchmarking purposes and will inform inspectors' planning decisions and assessments. The framework will provide clear numerical information for learners and employers to make informed choices. Initially it was to be introduced for adult learning providers from 2009/10, however this appears to have now been brought forward to 2008/09.




The FE Bill currently before Parliament will require FE providers to develop their own learner involvement strategy for the academic year 2007/08, for which there is no additional funding. Providers will have a duty to consult learners, employers and prospective learners about their provision. The Framework for Excellence will set a standard and criteria for providers to develop their own learner involvement strategy. It will have to be inclusive and also cover disadvantaged and potentially excluded groups.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	20		18		1		1
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Progress against the majority of objectives is on track. Two of the service objectives have not progressed as anticipated. Additional details are provided within Appendix 1.

4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES




Total	0		0		0		0
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There are no "Other" objectives for this service.

5.0 SERVICE REVIEW




There have been no service reviews this quarter.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	9		6		3		0
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The majority of indicators are progressing well with the exception of those relating to inward investment and job creation/safeguarding. Additional details are provided within Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Total	4		4		0		0
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None of the remaining indicators for the service are presently showing cause for concern and are therefore not being reported at this time.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

Appendix 3. Both LPSA 10 & 12 show satisfactory progress towards their targets.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2007-08 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.








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







9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS

During 2006/07 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

10.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones
Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators
Appendix 3- Progress against LPSA targets
Appendix 4- Financial Statement
Appendix 5- Explanation of traffic light symbols

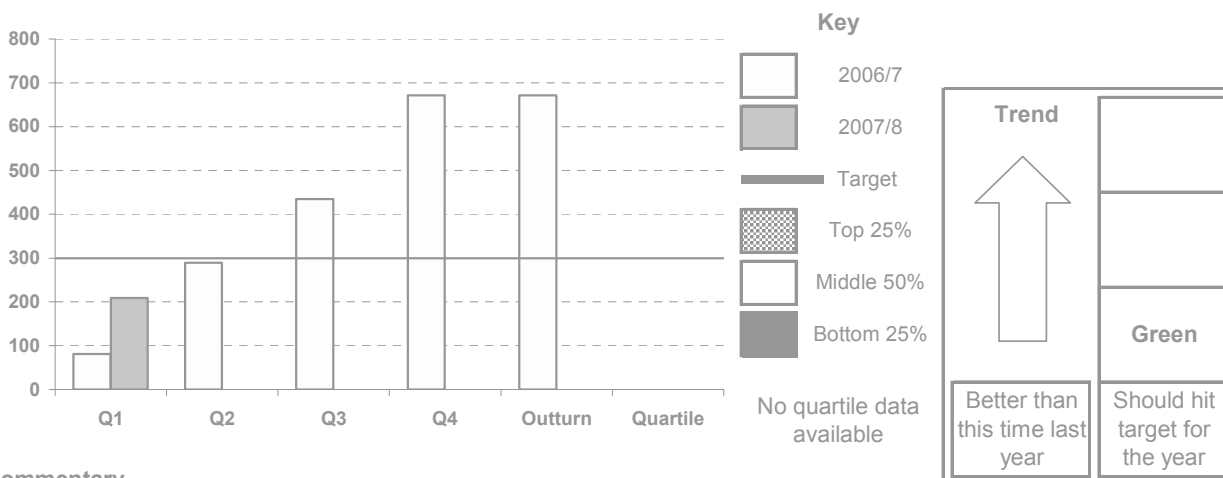
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER01	Promote diversity and competitiveness, in order to develop a modernised and more competitive business base to provide greater employment security for the Halton community.	Implement Phase 2 marketing action plan by 30-3-08		On track
		Forward Strategy for eHalton by 30-9-07		In development
		Expand business Parks to another estate by 30-6-07 (dependent on funding)		Executive Board approved the expansion of the programme on 7 June 2008. Inaugural meeting August 2007
		Present options for future of eHalton to Strategic Director Environment by 31-10-07		On track.
ER02	Develop sectors and clusters with a view to developing stronger business inter-linkages and stronger overall business performance in Halton	Implement phase2 sector plans for tourism, science and chemicals – by 31-3-08		Halton Science Forum Steering Group to formulate Action Plan for science sector.
		Facilitate the development of Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus (DISC)		Business Development Team is fully engaged with DSIC master Planning Group and negotiations with the new owners of Daresbury Park
ER03	Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to develop an enterprise culture that encourages people to consider starting a business and give new ventures every chance of success.	Explore on-line enterprise game by 30-9-07		The EBP are progressing several versions of the Game including separate Maritime and Primary School versions as well as an 'On-line game'.

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		Establish Halton Enterprise Island pilot by 30-9-07		The Enterprising Halton Challenge pilot is on schedule for a summer launch.
		Develop LEGI bid by 31-3-08 (subject to round three taking place)		The Enterprise Action Plan has been refreshed in readiness for a Round 3 LEGI bid.
ER04	Reduce unemployment and increase employment by equipping people with the basic skills and assisting them to secure employment.	Review Basic Skills Strategy by 30-9-07		The Skills for Life Strategy is now being finalised and an executive summary is being developed.
		Outreach pilot programme to be evaluated by 31-12-2007		Programme was being delivered though secondments. However, Jobcentre Plus has recalled staff as part of a head count reduction programme.
		Deliver JCP co-finance contracts by 31-3-2008		All JCP co-financed contracts are running satisfactorily and meeting or exceeding targets.
		Deliver ILMs programme by 31.3.2008		Stepping Stones (Halton ILM) continuing to deliver job outcomes. Steps2Work (PCT funded Mental Health ILM) commenced. Preferred supplier status to LHT Jigsaw Environmental Services secured but start of project uncertain.

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER05	Raise workforce skill levels by reviewing and addressing the skills deficit in Halton	Review TNA provision between 30-6-06 & 30-6-07		Targets set within the NRF WFD project in 2006/7 were overachieved with 89 individual employees benefiting from workforce training. TNA will now be delivered through the Train to Gain programme.
		Develop a Skills Sub-Group of the ELS by 30-6-07		Skills Sub-Group has met 3 times in Q1. To date, it has reviewed the Business Perceptions Survey and made changes to the survey planned for 2007/8.
		SSP to consider customer satisfaction post LSC revamp by 31-3-08		On track.
ER06	Encouraging investment in land and property to develop assets that meet business needs and help to produce an attractive and prosperous Borough.	Commence Implementing commercial property plan by 30-3-08		Astmoor Master Planning Group constituted. Position statement prepared
		Complete delivery of BIA scheme by 31-3-08		One new application received this quarter and a further five pending
ER07	Improving the environment and image of the borough including town centres, to appeal to residents, encourage visitors, businesses and investors.	Annual footfall statement by 30-9-07		Footfall counters installed and operational
		Finalise night time plan for Victoria square by 31-12-07		Risk assessment prepared

ECO RLI 1

Number of local people into jobs

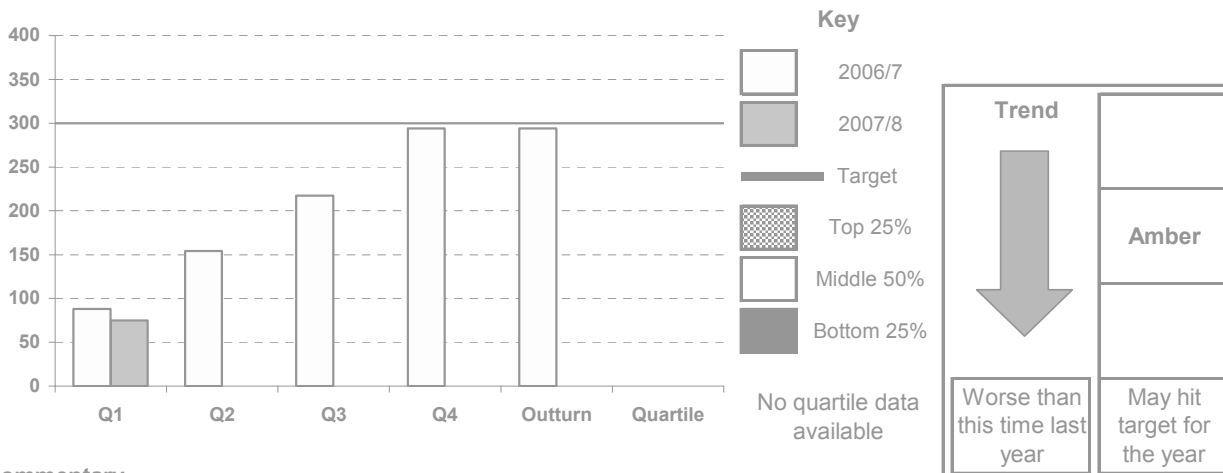


Commentary

In the last quarter HPIJ assisted 161 people into employment. HPIJ have supported the Wilkinsons recruitment in Partnership with Job Centre Plus - total job outcomes for this recruitment will be evident in July/August, but early indications are that HPIJ client are in all of the key roles (supervisor, team leaders, night staff). The Employment Team assisted 48 people into employment.

ECO RLI 5

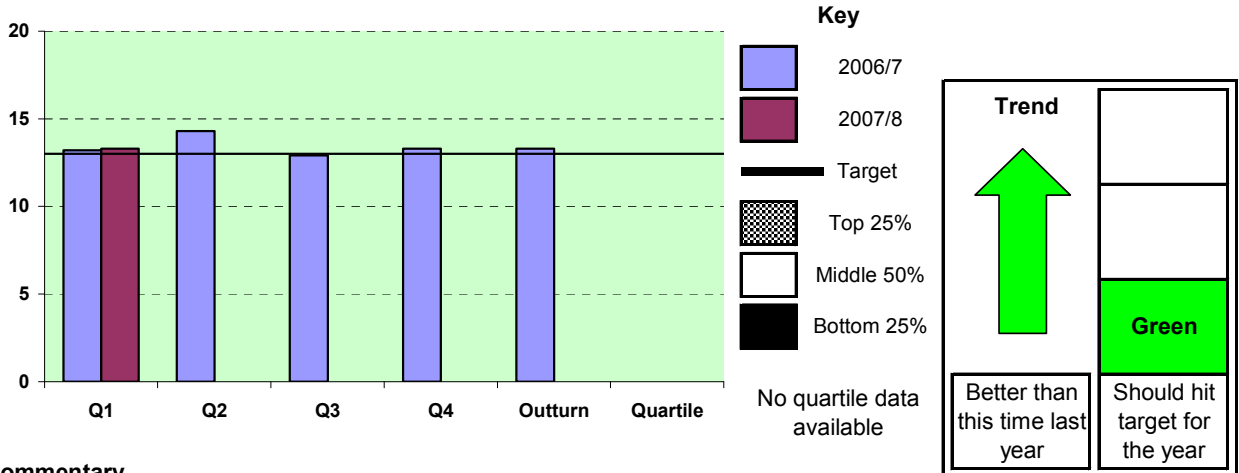
Number of inward investment enquiries per annum



Commentary

Number of property enquiries is below that for previous years and below the target for 2007 - 08. Similar down turn is being felt in other areas across Greater Merseyside and by the commercial agents.

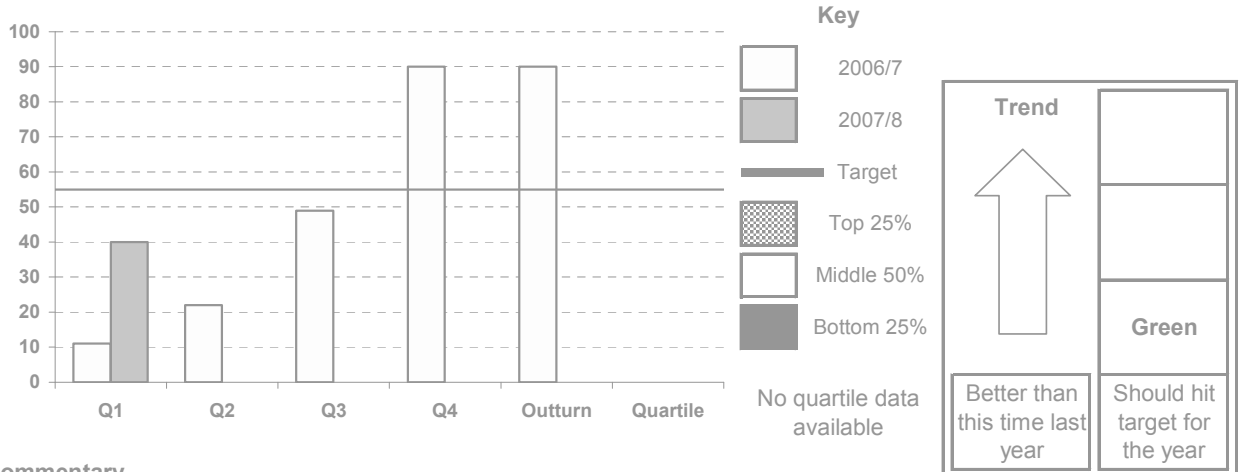
ECO RLI 6 **Inward investment enquiry conversion rate**



Commentary

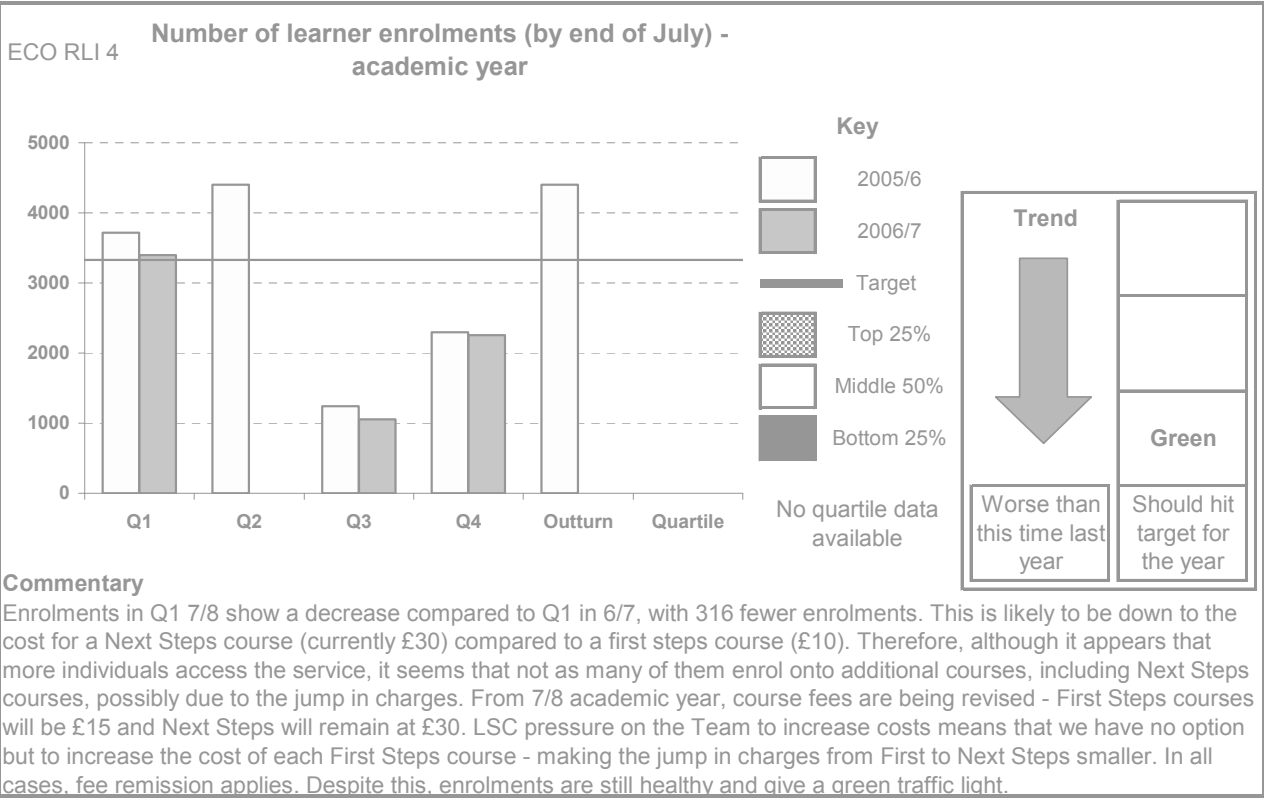
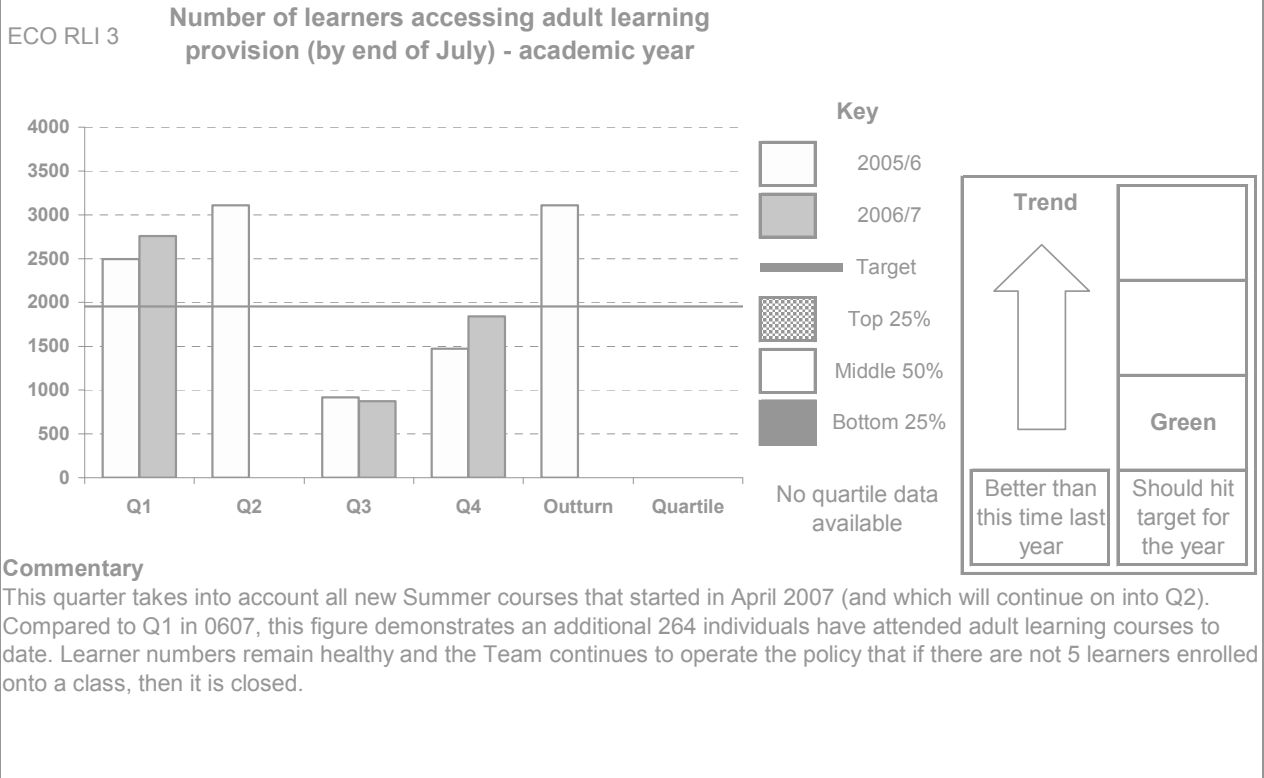
Nine industrial units and one office accommodation, all small space, less than 5,000 ft2. Wide range of activities.

ECO RLI 2 **Number of local people with disabilities into permitted/paid work**

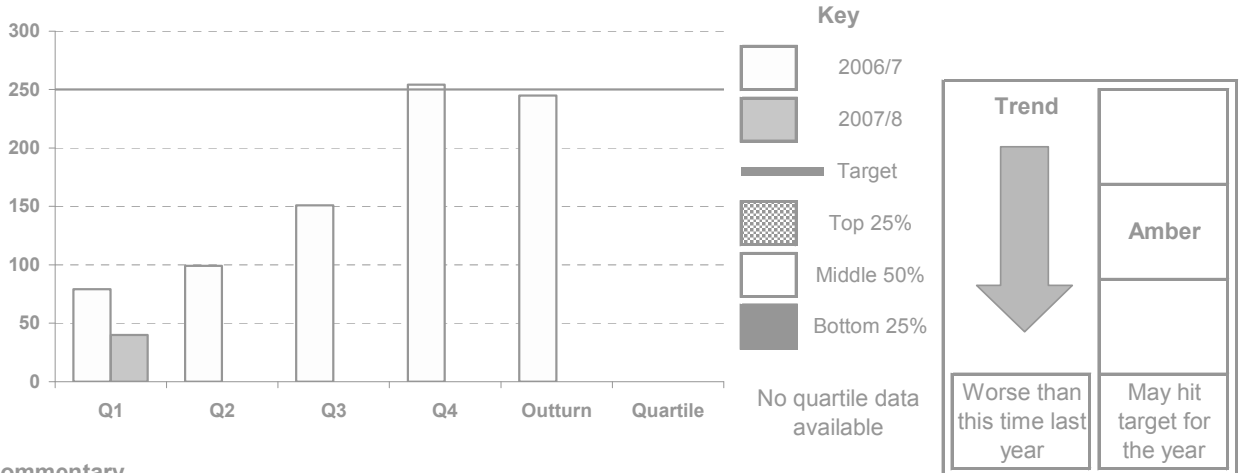


Commentary

HPIJ has assisted 2 clients from Income Support/Disability, 25 clients from Incapacity benefit and 1 from Disability Living Allowance into work in the last quarter. The Employment Team have helped 12 people with disabilities into work.

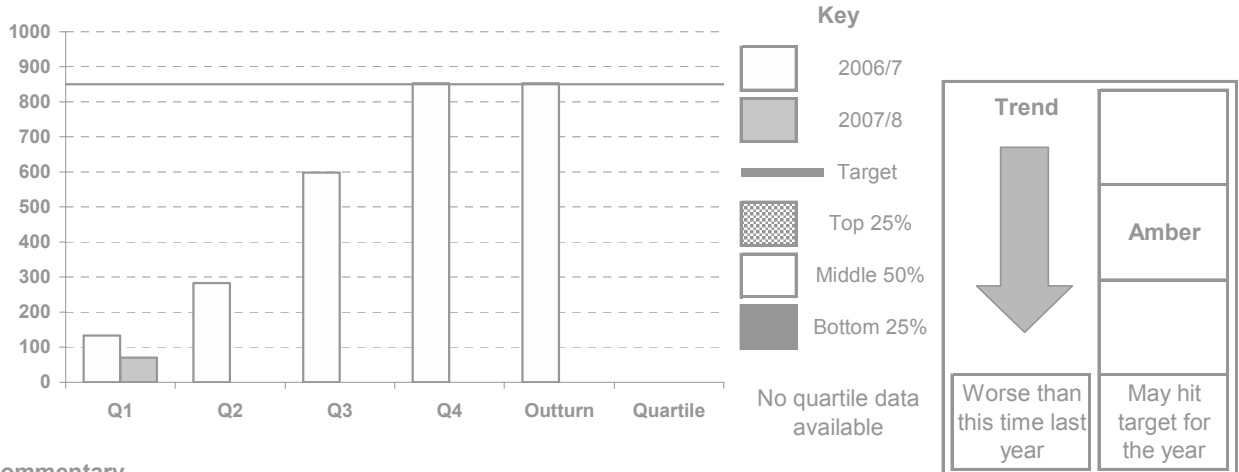


ECO RLI 7 **Contribution to the number of jobs created, as a direct result of the service/s being provided**



Commentary
 Whilst the inquiry conversion rate is good, the level of jobs created per conversion is down on previous years (this is a region wide issue). As such performance at this stage is less than last year.

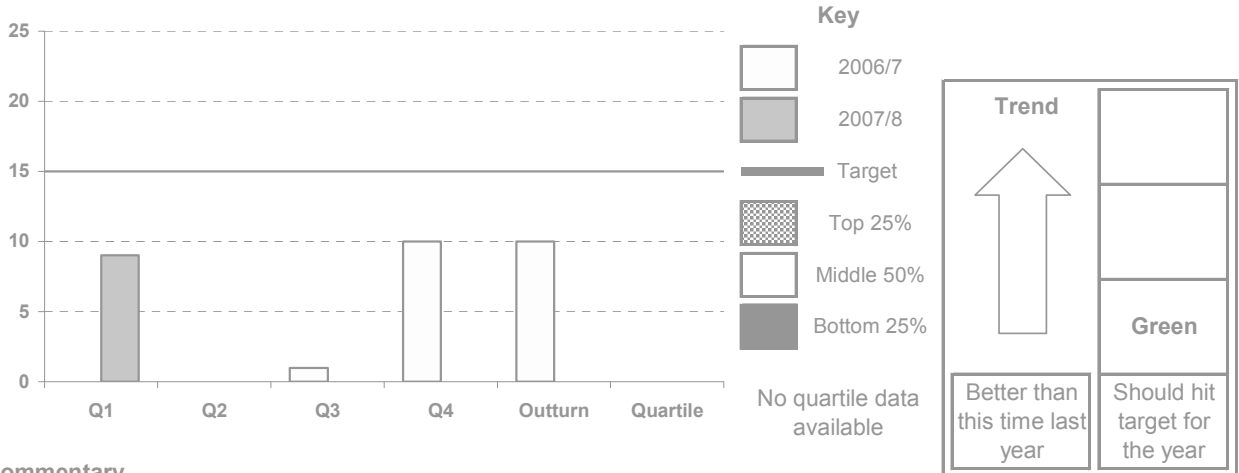
ECO RLI 8 **Contribution to the number of jobs safe guarded, as a direct result of the service/s being provided**



Commentary
 HPIJ supported 71 clients who were facing redundancy into work in the last quarter.



ECO RLI 9

New business start-ups and self-employment starts



Commentary

The Enterprising Halton Service handled a significant number (81) enquiries during Q1, all of whom are receiving 1:1 business advice and support. There were 9 new start-ups during the period.

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q1	Traffic light	Commentary
10	Number of adults gaining a national Skills for Life qualification at level 1, 2 or 3 in literacy, numeracy or ESOL	19 04/05	116 measured in academic year ending 31/08/08	35	13		13 learners achieved Adult Literacy/Adult Numeracy Level 1 qualifications in Q1. Online testing (GOLA) has continued to open up access to nationally recognised qualifications.
12	Increase the number of people who have been claiming an incapacity benefit into sustained employment of at least 16 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks or more	18 for year ending 31/03/06	179 3 year cumulative to 31/03/09	38	17		A further 25 IB claimants have been assisted into work during Q1 who are yet to complete 13 weeks.

REGENERATION

Revenue Budget as at 30th June 2007

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (Overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Expenditure					
Employees	1,319	328	284	44	284
Premises Support Office	2	0	0	0	0
Accommodation	110	1	1	0	1
Marketing Programme	53	1	2	(1)	2
Promotions	29	7	0	7	0
Development Projects	21	0	0	0	2
Supplies & Services	155	23	20	3	27
ICT Investment for Growth	20	0	0	0	0
Halton People into Jobs	125	0	0	0	0
Transport	33	8	7	1	7
Central Support Services	148	0	0	0	0
Departmental Support Services	29	0	0	0	0
Agency	4	1	1	0	1
Asset Charges	7	0	0	0	0
Total Expenditure	2,055	369	315	54	325
Income					
Sales	0	0	0	0	0
Fees & Charges	-13	-3	-1	(2)	-1
Reimbursements	-65	-9	-10	1	-10
Government grants	-382	-166	-166	0	-166
Employment Service	-257	-44	-44	0	-44
Recharges to Capital	-12	0	0	0	0
Total Income	-729	-222	-221	(1)	-221
Net Expenditure	1,326	147	94	53	104

Comments on the above figures:

In overall terms revenue spending to the end of quarter 1 is slightly under budget.

With regards to expenditure the staffing underspend relates to savings against costs for the Supported Employment Team, external funding is being used to fund eligible salary costs. There is also an underspend in salaries against the Foundation Modern Apprentice scheme as actual numbers going through the scheme are lower than estimated. A staffing vacancy also exists in the Tourism & Promotions team.

At this stage, it is anticipated that overall revenue spending will be within departmental budget by year-end.

Local Strategic Partnership Schemes as at 30th June 2007

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (Overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
Halton People into Jobs	180	45	54	(9)	54
HPiJ	143	27	18	9	18
Neighbourhood Employment Outreach					
Halton ILM	163	41	35	6	35
Enterprise Development	84	21	16	5	16
Workforce Development	44	11	0	11	0
Supported Employment	129	32	27	5	27
Skills for Life	99	20	10	10	10
Town Centres Initiatives	75	19	10	9	10
Total Expenditure	917	216	170	46	170




External or Grant Funded Schemes as at 30th June 2007

	Annual Revised Budget	Budget To Date	Actual To Date	Variance To Date (Overspend)	Actual Including Committed Items
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
ERDF					
Halton People into Jobs	69	17	37	(20)	37
ICT Investment for Growth	112	28	26	2	26
Total Expenditure	181	45	63	(18)	63

Capital Projects as at 30th June 2007

	Actual To 30 th June	07-08 Capital Allocation	08-09 Capital Allocation	09-10 Capital Allocation
	£'000	£'000	£'000	£'000
<u>Multi-Funded Projects</u>				
Business Improvement Area Scheme	0	458	0	0
Total Capital	0	458	0	0

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

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