



Economic Regeneration

SERVICE PLAN

April 2009 to March 2012

Contents

Page

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Service Profile
- 3.0 Factors Affecting the Service
- 4.0 Resource requirements
- 5.0 Service Performance
- 6.0 Performance Reporting
- 7.0 Statutory and Non-Statutory Plans

Appendices

- 1.0 Corporate Priorities and Key Areas of Focus***

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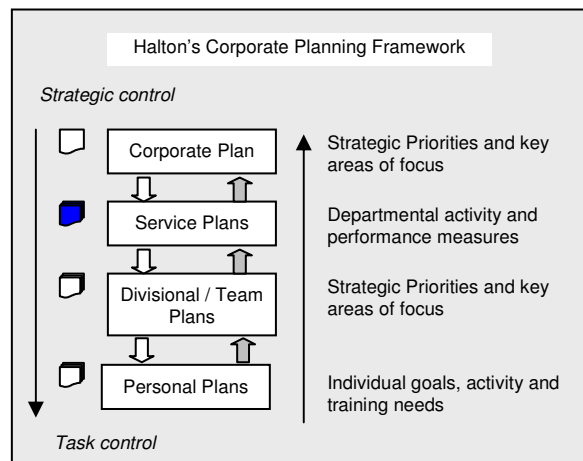
1.0 INTRODUCTION

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

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

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

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



Departmental Service Plans are primary documents that communicate:

- The existing and future influences that have informed the shaping of service delivery in the medium term.
- The existing and projected resources that are, or may, be required to deliver services.
- Departmental Service Objectives and Key Milestones that are to be delivered over the next three years.
- Those national and local performance indicators for which the department has a responsibility to report.

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

Those Strategic Priorities and associated Key Areas of Focus that have been most significant in developing this plan are detailed below:-

2.0 SERVICE PROFILE

2.1 Purpose

The Regeneration Department exists to develop and implement the Economic Development and Tourism Strategy for the Borough. Traditionally this form of activity has been voluntary, but the Local Government Act 2000 brought in a statutory duty for local authorities to 'promote economic well-being'.

The Regeneration Department is responsible for:

Business Development

- Managing inward investment and business expansion enquiries
- Economic promotion and marketing
- Promoting tourism and co-ordinating the staging of events targeted at attracting quality attractions and developing niche tourism
- Working closely with tourism and leisure businesses in Halton, in order to identify their ongoing development needs and to ensure that Halton's tourism offer is maximised
- Tackling and improving the poor visual image and amenity of the Borough's industrial areas and encouraging best practice in the field of sustainable working to assist businesses to become more competitive, particularly within the Borough's two Business Improvement Districts.
- Supporting businesses on the Widnes Waterfront site to upgrade their amenity and physical appearance in line with agreed design guide standards
- Working with large (more than 250 employees) and foreign owned companies to ensure that the Borough's most significant employers continue to invest and grow locally.

Enterprise and Employment

- Delivering Enterprising Halton new business start-up programme through a team of community enterprise coaches that provide 1:1 business advice, counselling and support
- Promoting enterprise and the development of an entrepreneurial culture including delivery of the Business Aftercare Academy that provides on-going advice and supports the further development of new start-ups, existing micro-businesses & SMEs in the borough;
- Increasing the employment rate by tackling economic inactivity that will reduce the number of residents claiming non-work related benefits, particularly those in disadvantaged groups;
- Delivering a supported employment service that provides specialist support for disabled residents who want to work;
- Reducing the unemployment rate;
- Assisting residents into work and supporting local employers with their recruitment needs and providing in-work support service to help people to retain their new job;

- Development of a new Employment Retention Service to help residents that have disabilities or health conditions to remain in work rather than falling out of work and on to benefit;
- Managing the delivery of employment and skills for jobs initiatives funded from a range of sources including Council, Learning and Skills Council, Job Centre Plus, Halton & St Helens Primary Care Trust (the latter focused on people with mental ill health);
- Neighbourhood Employment Initiatives including the Neighbourhood Outreach Programme (which takes employment services on to the streets of the 25 lower super output areas where worklessness is highest), Neighbourhood Employment Strategies for the 3 neighbourhood management areas (in conjunction with Neighbourhood Management Team) and Neighbourhood Employment Officers (again in conjunction with Neighbourhood Management Team);
- Promotion of apprenticeships both within the council and also with local businesses.

Adult/Family Learning & Skills Development

- Designing and delivering excellent adult and family learning opportunities across Halton to a wide range of adults and in a wide range of locations including learning centres, schools and Children's Centres
- Offering both non-accredited and accredited routes to a level 2 qualification, categorised as First Steps, Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL) and Safeguarded provision by LSC
- Supporting local businesses in identifying skills gaps amongst employees and providing and/or facilitating appropriate training
- Through a combination of influence and delivery, improving the skill base of the borough
- Addressing equality, diversity and widening participation issues and promoting inclusion
- Managing the Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities Project (Skills for Jobs), funded through LSCGM
- Working collaboratively with other employment, learning and skills agencies under the umbrella of the Halton Employment Partnership to provide a complete employment offer for local businesses

Who benefits?

The service benefits residents, businesses and communities across the Borough through regeneration, skills development and employment support programmes. It is increasingly looking to support other council departments to achieve their targets (e.g. working up proposals for an employment programme for looked after children) and supports partners in achieving their objectives too, particularly Jobcentre Plus, Business Link for Greater Merseyside and Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council.

2.2 Key messages

Business Development

The effects of the credit crunch can be clearly seen across the Liverpool sub region. In Halton premises enquiries are down 35% and conversions down 25% (both on the 5 year average). This is not expected to pick up for at least a couple of years. Given the time it takes to turn any enquiry of a significant size into a new investment on the ground, this means that the pipeline of new jobs over the next few years is already reducing.

The Investor Development Programme (previously known as Business Aftercare) has worked with 97 large or foreign owned companies in Halton since April 2007. A total of 9 successful projects completions have been recorded resulting 500 jobs (new and safeguarded) and investment of £21.5 million. This programme will be of increasing importance during this period of economic challenge.

Following successful votes in 2007 to establish Business Improvement Districts, these came into being in April 2008. The Business Parks Officer has begun to implement a wholesale programme of estate wide improvements at Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates including environmental uplift, landscaping, new road signage, traffic calming and a range of security measures including a CCTV security system at Halebank. A Business Steering Group has also been established at Widnes Waterfront (incorporating Riverview Business Park) which will, firstly, elect a Chair and Executive Committee from the business community before developing a comprehensive programme of estate wide improvements.

The e-Business project that has operated since 2000 is nearing closedown as its budget sources come to an end.

The latest (2007) estimated Tourism spend figures issued by The Mersey Partnership shows that tourism spend now represents £172m of the local economy. In terms of employment the numbers continue to rise and tourism now supports 2750 FTE jobs.

The proposal to establish a new Lewis Carroll visitor centre at Daresbury has made very good headway including planning permissions, church permissions and finance (both Council and Heritage Lottery) approvals. The tourism team is working closely with the Daresbury PCC in order to secure the final elements of funding to enable the project to proceed. That said, there does seem to be a problem with anything in Halton being able to secure any European Regional Development Funding for tourism. This is being investigated further.

To promote excellence and customer service, the Halton Tourism Business Network is developing new Halton Tourism Awards. This is in part a reflection of the growing importance of tourism to Halton and builds on the success last year of The Brindley being the best performance venue in Merseyside and Halton being represented in the final rounds of the Customer service awards with a member of staff from The Catalyst Science Discovery Centre.

The Vintage Rally held in September each year continues to grow from strength to strength. An estimated 50,000 visited this year and it is now the biggest free vintage rally in the UK and attracts exhibitors from all over Britain and now from Europe.

Enterprise & Employment

During 2007/8, some 806 people were supported into employment through the range of programmes offered. Over the next few years such numbers will decline (to date the division has helped 226 residents into jobs out the target of 300 for 2008/09) for two reasons. Firstly, the division is increasingly focusing on deprived areas where worklessness is very high (25 Local Super Output Areas as identified in the Local Area Agreement). Working with people that have been economically inactive for a long time takes higher levels of resources. Secondly, as a result of the credit crunch there will be less vacancies around and indeed the number of people being made redundant is already rising. With regard to the latter, Jobcentre Plus is leading the redundancy response for Halton, Cheshire and Warrington district which will see all companies making redundancies supported in the first instance by Jobcentre Plus, which will then pull in local partners as appropriate to individual circumstances.

The division has been particularly effective in 2008/09 in securing funding from the Learning and Skills Council. Five contracts (of varying length) will deliver arrange of employment, skills development and job finding services. To date these contracts have enabled 49 people into work. One of the more significant contracts is on behalf of the 14-19 Partnership to co-ordinate a Progression Pathway Programme for young people who are NEET or at risk of becoming NEET. The programme Gateway+, is being delivered by the CYP Gateway Team with help from Connexions and work based learning providers aims to support 140 young people with 70 of them entering education, employment or training with 33 of them achieving qualifications.

The division is working increasingly with the Neighbourhood Management Team. The Castlefields Employment Programme (jointly developed with Major Projects) is a new dedicated paid work experience scheme for residents from that neighbourhood (funding for this to continue into 2009/10 is being sought). The Employment Outreach project takes employment services into the neighbourhoods and on to the streets of the 25 lower super output arrears i.e. the most deprived neighbourhoods where there is more than 25% worklessness. Three new Neighbourhood Employment Officers are being recruited (one for each of the Neighbourhood Management areas) to work in collaboration with RSL's and HPiJ to improve the take up of employment and skills programmes by the hardest to reach. Also, each Neighbourhood Management area will have its own employment action plan produced by working in partnership with the local communities.

Following the division taking over responsibility for co-ordinating the apprenticeship programme across the Council, only 2 trainees (who have since left) were on programme. Whilst it has been assessing the state of play of the corporate programme, the division has helped 5 employees to be

converted to apprentices and another 9 trainees have been taken on. Four apprentices in Landscape Services have now progressed to a second year paid apprenticeship and one of those was awarded Apprentice of the Year by Association of Public Sector Employers (APSE). A full set of proposals for the future development of apprenticeships with HBC is now being developed.

In addition to championing internal apprenticeships, the division is also keen to promote them externally. A new 100 place apprenticeship programme has been developed that will deliver 10 places of care leavers, 45 places for NEETs (not in employment education or training) and 45 places for other worklessness. Initially targeted to commence in 2009/10, funding has been secured to start this programme in January 09.

The private sector led Enterprise Board leads on the Enterprise Strategy and action planning. Its key project is the Enterprising Halton business start-up programme that has been developed to promote entrepreneurship and support local residents into business start-up or self employment. Since the programme was introduced in April 2007, 108 new businesses have been set up that have created an additional 76 jobs, with 11 of those businesses registering for VAT. The programme has recently secured additional WNF from the ELS SSP to increase the number of start ups; develop an Aftercare Academy to offer support to new start-ups, as well as existing micro-businesses and SMEs in the borough, to become more sustainable; and in conjunction with the Education Business Partnership to establish a schools programme to enthuse and inspire the next generation of entrepreneurs.

Discussions are now underway regarding the Council taking responsibility for the NWDA business start-up programme within Halton from April 2009. This will particularly target start-up activity amongst the priority groups of disabled people, women and residents that belong to black, ethnic or minority communities. This does not mean that there are large amounts of additional resources coming into Halton, as the NWDA is already delivering a start up programme (ending March 2009). What it does mean is that the Council will be in a much better position to coordinate start up activity with other local programmes in order to make the programme as effective as possible. Additionally, it will ensure that Halton will get its fair share of start up funding.

Adult/Family Learning & Skills Development

NB All data given below relates to the academic year 2007/8

2007/8 has been another successful year for the Adult Learning & Skills Development Division with the target number of learners on programme (2010) being exceeded by 122, showing a 6% increase on figures for 2006/7. In terms of enrolments, the target for 2007/8 was 3416 and the actual number of enrolments was 3848, showing a 12% increase on 2006/7 figures. These figures are particularly noteworthy given the continued reduction in LSC funding. Significant progress was made in First Steps and Personal Community Development Learning (PCDL) where total learner numbers were 969, an increase of 213 (28%) from 2006/7.

It is expected that core LSC funding will continue to decline over the next few years. However, the division is securing additional LSC monies through tendering for contracts and a significant amount of Working Neighbourhoods Funding has been secured for learning and skills. This means that whilst the traditional adult/family learning provision remains the core of the service increasing activity will take place in employability provision and workforce development. These extra resources will require additional staffing.

During 2007/8, the Division was successful at securing funding through the Quality Improvement Agency for a Skills for Life Improvement Programme. This supported the development of a Whole Organisational Approach to Skills for Life; an Embedding Skills for Life project; and Continuing Professional Development planning for Skills for Life. The Improvement Programme enabled the Division to really focus on Skills for Life areas of work, which was one of the recommendations from the service's last inspection in November 2005. One of the key outcomes from this work is that any new recruits to the Division must undertake a literacy and numeracy assessment at interview stage and, if not demonstrating maths and English skills at level 2 (GCSE grade A to C), they must commit to achieving this standard within 12 months. The Division submitted an application for the Improvement Programme for 2008/9 and has been notified that the application has been successful.

The existing adult learning tutor contracts are currently being revised to bring them in line with Further Education (FE) Tutor contracts. It is expected that from December 2008, all existing tutors within the Division will move across to the new FE terms and conditions.

Riverside College commissioned the Adult Learning Team to deliver part of their own PCDL contract with LSC. This service level agreement (SLA) was successful and enabled a further PCDL SLA to be put in place for 2008/9 academic year. Additionally, a service level agreement for the delivery of Skills for Life qualifications is currently being negotiated with the college. This will mean that the Skills for Life Team will support the college in achieving its own Skills for Life targets.

The Adult Learning Team again took on the role of lead partner in the annual Adult Learners' Awards Ceremony, which was held in May 2008 at The Foundry in Widnes. The Mayoress of Halton presented awards in seven categories to learners and tutors involved in adult learning during the previous twelve months. The event is high profile and an excellent platform on which learners can celebrate their achievements.

During 2007/8, 496 adults participated in learning programmes within the Preparation for Life and Work area of learning. 140 individuals achieved a national Skills for Life qualification in literacy, numeracy or ESOL, compared to just 81 in 2006/7, showing an increase of 74%.

Additional LSC funding has been awarded to a Greater Merseyside Consortia for Skills for Life Train to Gain and Employability programmes. Halton is the lead authority for the Train to Gain contract.

During 2007/8, 429 individuals took part in Family Learning programmes. Of these, 132 were enrolled onto Family Literacy, Language and Numeracy programmes and 318 onto Wider Family Learning programmes (such as Family Guitar, Family French, etc). The service operated in a number of different venues throughout the borough and these included Children's Centres, the Women's Refuge, Schools, Nurseries and Community Centres. Although not a statutory requirement, the value of the Family Learning service is recognised in Halton and as such, is a contributory indicator for the Local Authority's 'Schools Update' Group, and the Children & Young People Area Network meetings.

During 2007/8 the Family Learning Team led on centre approval and delivery of childcare and education programmes operated through CACHE, the awarding body. CACHE awarded Halton Borough Council a grade 1 during its assessment visit. 20 learners achieved a level 2 childcare and education (CCE) qualification, with 12 achieving distinctions. Working Neighbourhoods Funding is being used to fund 2 CCE qualifications during the 2008/9 academic year.

The Family Learning Team is working with 28 primary schools. The team is currently taking part in a national research programme which aims to measure the impact of family learning on children's education. A number of Halton's schools have committed to this year long project, which has the potential to be extended for a further 2 years.

Significant progress in sector based skills development work is now being made. The first sector is logistics and distribution and much work has taken place with partners on supporting the development of 3MG. The key element is Investors' Handbook, a complete 'employment offer' for local businesses and an agreement that a single point of contact be created. This single point of contact will be the Halton Employment Partnership, which is a new team to be funded from Working Neighbourhoods Funding. A significant amount of Working Neighbourhoods Fund has been allocated to employability and this will result in additional staffing being recruited. The new Skills Development Team will continue to work closely with the Employment, Learning & Skills Specialist Strategic Partnership in developing additional sector skills action plans for Halton.

2.3 Organisation Structure

Structure Chart will be inserted by Corporate Performance Management Team.

3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE SERVICE

3.1 External Factors

3.1.1 Political

- The government response on the Sub National Review (SNR) consultation has been released. It states that Local authorities need to play a stronger role in delivering economic development in their area, building on their power to promote well-being. The response consults on the creation of a focused statutory economic assessment duty for upper tier and unitary local authorities. The results of this assessment would contribute to the analytical underpinning of sustainable community strategies, local development frameworks, local and multi-area agreement targets and the regional strategy. The first assessments would be undertaken to inform local strategies and local area agreement (LAA) targets for 2011/12. The response also talks about a renewed partnership with other agencies and an increased emphasis on the importance of local authorities working together across boundaries to boost sub-regional economies.
- The operation of the Single Investment Agency for the Liverpool City Region will continue to have a profound impact upon the delivery of local economic regeneration services over the lifetime of the service plan.
- The government new Business Simplification Model means that only approved schemes of business support will exist in the future within the public sector.
- Halton continues to work within a framework where the rest of Merseyside can access European Phasing-in monies whilst Halton has to bid into the NW Regional allocation. This is particularly holding back local tourism initiatives that would attract visitors and create jobs.
- With the close down of the LSC now nearing, how the new National Skills Funding Agency, new National Apprenticeship Service and new National Advice & Careers Service is to be established will have a major effect on the future of the Borough.
- The government has recently proposed a set of welfare reforms that will substantially increase conditionality in return for the payment of out of work benefits. The effect is likely to be more people seeking employment and skills development but there are concerns as to what will happen to those who will not seek such opportunities as lose benefit as a result.

- The government preference to procure employment and skills providers for large geographical areas (known as prime contractors) is starting to take effect which means in some parts of the departmental work it is becoming much more difficult to secure funding.
- The government has announced that local authorities will be able to raise additional levy on the business rates. Whilst many local authorities welcome this its application at a time of recession will have to be carefully assessed.
- The government skills agenda is primarily focussed on supporting people to gain a first level 2 qualification. However, this is increasingly leaving a gap below this. This is important as for many people to jump from no/few qualifications to a full level 2, is too much/off putting.
- LSC First Steps funding will transfer from the traditional Adult Community Learning funding stream to the Foundation Learning Tier (FLT). The FLT forms part of the wider 14–19 and vocational qualifications (VQ) reform programme and aims to improve the skills of learners working below level 2, aged 14 and over, through developing high-quality credit-based qualifications at Entry level and level 1 in the Qualifications and Credit Framework (QCF). The FLT funding stream will feature in FE college budgets and not in Local Authority adult learning services, thus resulting in a loss of funding for HBC.
- The findings from the DIUS consultation on informal adult learning have recently been published. Implementation of recommendations will have a direct impact on the services offered.

3.1.2 Economic Climate

- The profound instability in global financial markets will result in less ready access to investment finance and a reduction in the mobility of capital which will have an inevitable knock on effect for both new investment projects and mergers and acquisition in Halton
- The general dependence on generating external income that funds the department. With proposed public sector efficiencies this will become more challenging.
- As LSC and other funding streams become increasingly managed regionally/sub-regionally, there is greater expectation that cross-borough proposals for funding be submitted and take priority over individual borough bidding proposals.

3.1.3 Social Factors

- The unemployment register is already growing due to the economic conditions. At times of national economic growth the gap tends to narrow with more prosperous regions, but in times of trouble this gap tends to increase.
- The need to attract the hardest to engage adults in adult learning classes and employment initiatives.

3.1.4 Technological Developments

- The ability to use new technology as a way of improving service delivery is key
- An online Learner Satisfaction Survey for the Adult Learning & Skills Development Division has been developed through Halton Borough Council's Research and Intelligence Unit. This will provide intelligence that can be used to further improve the services offered.

3.1.5 Legislative

- Under the 2004 Civil Contingencies Act, Council's have a duty to promote business continuity to businesses and voluntary sector agencies in their administrative area. In taking this forward, Halton Council's Business Development Division, in conjunction with the Risk Management Division, have taken the lead in discharging the Council's responsibilities under the Act.
- The Employment and Support Allowance is a new way of helping people with an illness or disability to move into work, if they are able and is replacing Incapacity Benefit and Income Support from November 2008. Whilst the Employment and Support Allowance will initially be for new customers only, existing IB/IS customers will be fully eligible for the work-focused help which will be available with the Employment and Support Allowance if they wish to access it on a voluntary basis.
- The recent announcement by government of the power of the Secretary of State to establish Economic Prosperity Boards (covering two or more local authority areas) including the power to make the local authorities pay for the Boards. Little details exist yet to be able to determine their impact.

3.1.6 Environmental

Protecting our environment

Awareness of Climate Change is growing and the Council is committed to taking a lead and setting an example in tackling the associated problems. A corporate

Climate Change Action Plan is being prepared, but each department makes its own contribution.

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

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

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

The department will promote the new waste reduction/minimisation services delivered through the new Business Services Simplification Process and work closely with Business Link to promote the services it offers. Also, it will promote sensible travel planning arrangements within the companies and residents it works with.

3.2 Service Developments

PPB topic reviews

Three reviews will be reported in March 2009

- Town Centre Management
- Barriers to Employment
- Future skill needs within Halton
- Skills in the logistics sector (joint topic with UR PPB)

Already Identified for 2008/9

It is proposed that a topic on skills in the science sector be undertaken.

Surveys

In 1999 and again in 2004 the Economic Regeneration Service produced a comprehensive Halton Economic Development and Tourism Strategy. On each

occasion the development of the strategy was based on a detailed study of the local economy. In February 2008 consultants Pion Economics and Cambridge Econometrics were appointed to undertake a comprehensive appraisal of the current performance, and model the future capacity, of the economy of Halton.

The 2008 Business Perceptions Survey obtained the views of 239 local businesses of employers with regard to the local workforce, their understanding of current training opportunities and the skills that are likely to be required by their employees in the future. This knowledge will be used to inform a revision to the Halton Skills and Workforce Development Strategy.

Benchmarking activities

The Adult Learning & Skills Development Division has been collaborating with Local Authorities across Greater Merseyside to develop a protocol for Self Assessment Report (SAR) writing. An SAR protocol has now been agreed across Greater Merseyside with the 2007/8 SAR being the first time the protocol is applied. Further discussions are underway, again with GM LAs, to develop processes for quality benchmarking across different curriculum areas.

The Family Learning Team is taking part in a national research programme to measure the impact of family learning on children's education. Whilst this is initially a one year programme, it is expected that measures will continue for a further two years. A number of Halton's primary schools have committed to taking part in this research.

NI 150 Adults receiving secondary mental health services in employment – the Division is supporting Social Care Adults of Working Age with implementing this NI. Halton is benchmarking and collaborating with the other NW LA's, (Oldham, Stockport, Warrington) and NHS partners (Care Services Improvement Partnership -CSiP, 5 Boroughs Partnership and Pennine Care Trust) regarding a methodology to establish the baseline data for the indicator. Halton will host a Job Retention training workshop on behalf of CSiP for members from Merseyside and Cheshire.

3.3 Efficiency Improvements

It is confirmed that last years identified savings have been achieved.

3.4 National Regional and Sub-regional Focus

The Northern Way

This is aimed at lifting productivity of the three northern regions (by £29b) and bringing the jobs, investment and quality housing that can create sustainable communities. The programme is now starting to roll out its activities across the regions.

Regional Economic Strategy

This strategy sets out the key economic activities for the next three years in the North West. There are important references to Halton's key projects of the Mersey Gateway and key investment/regeneration sites. It also identifies Halton as a priority for improvements in skill development and reductions in worklessness.

Regional Spatial Strategy

This is at inquiry stage and will ultimately replace RPG. The contents and the impact it will have on the regeneration of Halton cannot be under estimated. The Halton priorities must be included to further the regeneration work delivered to date.

Liverpool City Region Development Plan (CRDP) and Merseyside Action Plan (MAP)

These documents set out the sub regional strategy and actions to support the Northern Way. The timetable for preparation and approval by government has recently been extended. Halton must continue to play an active role in the CRDP preparation to ensure the needs of the borough are included.

Skills Strategy (HM Government 2003)

This document set out an ambitious agenda for tackling the long-standing weaknesses in the way young people and adults are equipped with the skills they need. The strategy aims to ensure that employers have the right skills to support the success of their businesses and that individuals have the skills they need to be both employable and personally fulfilled. The document made the distinction between 'learning for personal development', and 'first step' learning, leading to a level 2 qualification.

Skills: Getting on in Business, getting on in work (HM Government 2005)

Following on from the Skills Strategy (July 2003), this White Paper sets out the Government's Plans for the next major phase of reform in making England a world leader in skills.

Foster Review: Realising the Potential (November 2005)

This document provides a review of the future key strategic issues, challenges and opportunities facing further education colleges. The final report sets out a vision for FE colleges and a clear set of values.

Leitch Review final report (December 2006)

The Government commissioned the Leitch Review to identify the UK's optimal skills mix in 2020 to maximise economic growth, productivity and social justice, and to consider the policy implications of achieving the level of change required. The final report was published in December 2006 and contains significant proposals to achieve a step change in skills levels for the country.

LSC's Annual Statement of Priorities (2009/10)

The LSC has recently published its Annual Statement of Priorities for 2009/10, which sets out how the LSC will undertake its commissioning and development activity to deliver the priorities within the funds made available. There are three key priorities:

- Meeting the needs of young people
- Improving adult skills through Train to Gain, integration of Employment and Skills and Skills for Work, Adult Learner Responsive provision and developmental learning, Apprenticeships and the National Apprenticeship Service
- Reforming the FE system

3.5 Equality and Diversity

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

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

Each year Departments undertake Equality Impact Assessments to examine the equality implications of all of their policies, procedures and practices. As a result an Equality Action Plan is developed to identify those issues that demand attention. This forms a contribution to the overall Corporate Equalities Plan. There are no assessments that have high priority actions.

Within the department, the focus is on closing the gap. As such, numerous programmes and activities are delivered to assist people from economically marginalised groups to gain skills and employment including the following -

- Supported Employment (employment support for disable people)

- Dedicated female business start up programme
- Inspiring women (pre employment course)
- Basic skills development
- Family learning

3.6 Risk Management

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

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

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

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

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

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

3.7 Unforeseen Developments

Whilst every effort has been made to identify those significant developments that may influence or impact upon the service during the life of this plan the possibility exists that unforeseen developments may occur that need to be considered as

and when they arise. Such developments will be detailed and commented upon as appropriate in the sections dealing with key developments or emerging issues within the relevant Service Plan Quarterly Monitoring Reports.

In addition to the normal reporting cycle the service may also report 'by exception' to the appropriate Policy and Performance Board when unforeseen developments occur. Where a more immediate decision is required due to the pressing nature of any unforeseen development, this will be referred to Management Team and the Executive Board for attention. The respective Policy and Performance Boards will be kept informed of any developments of this nature.

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

4.0 Resources

4.1 Budget Summary and Service Costs

The bulk of the departmental expenditure is from non-council mainstream sources. This method of funding has been highly effective in delivering a programme of activity that meets the priorities of the corporate plan in terms of employment, learning & skills and urban renewal. However, it is becoming more challenging to secure income as the government procurement drive for larger contracts is now starting to take effect. The loss of funding is the key reason why the e-Business programme will cease in December 2008.

4.2 Human Resource Requirements

Business Development

Year	Managerial	Professional/ Technical	Administrative/ Clerical
2008/09	1	14	2
2009/10	-	10	1
2010/11	-	11	1
2011/12	-	11	1

The reduction from 2008/09 reflects the ending of the e-Business programme and the likely ending of the tourism secondment from the Mersey Partnership. The reduction in management reflects the loss of the divisional manager post. The Economic Development Officer (Development) is currently seconded to the New Mersey Gateway project for three days each week. All of this combines to substantially reduce capacity in this division.

Enterprise and Employment

Year	Managerial	Professional/ Technical	Administrative/ Clerical
2008/09	1	18	5
2009/10	1	23	6
2010/11	1	23	6
2011/12	1	10	3

The increases in 2009/10 reflect additional activity resulting from WNF funding that is delivering LAA targeted projects. WNF is presently only programmed until 2010/11 and this coincides with the likely reduction in contracted income, so numbers drop off rapidly from that point.

Adult /Family Learning and Skills Development

Year	Managerial	Professional/ Technical	Administrative/ Clerical
2008/09	1	35	7
2009/10	1	43	8
2010/11	1	43	8
2011/12	1	38	7

The increases in 2009/10 reflect additional activity resulting from WNF funding that is delivering LAA targeted projects and additional activity funded through LSC contracts. WNF is presently only programmed until 2010/11 and if it does not continue numbers will reduce.

4.3 ICT Requirements

In addition to general maintenance and replacements-

Adult Learning Centres IT suite X 3 – equipment will need replacing every 4 years (next replacement due September 2009)

New ICT training suites to support provision delivered by the Halton Employment Partnership (1 ICT suite in Runcorn, 1 in Widnes) are to be established in 2008/9. Business Case Reviews for both will be needed – however, until suitable accommodation has been identified, the business case review cannot be progressed (chicken and egg scenario)

Since the Supported Employment team transferred to The Heath they have been using citrix shells that will need to be replaced. The co-location of the

Employment Team with HPiJ will require the purchase of 8 lap tops and docking stations.

4.4 Accommodation and Property Requirements

The merging of HPIJ and the Employment Team into space at Rutland House is planned to take place early in the new-year. This will leave some space at the Heath and property services are currently examining options for this.

With the planned expansion of skills and employment programmes there is a need to identify as a matter of some urgency additional training space. (Existing adult learning accommodation at the Acorn and Kingsway Centres is currently at maximum capacity). Any delays in sourcing accommodation will impact on delivery of project outputs.

The Acorn Learning Centre in Runcorn has now been enhanced with provision of a new classroom, as part of an investment from the Children & Young People Area Network. However, whilst this initially created a new classroom space, the pressure of accommodating a growing workforce has meant that the kitchen area (which was previously used as a classroom space) is now being used by staff as office space. The use of the centre will be reviewed to determine any future needs.

5.0 Service Performance

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

- **Objectives and Key Milestones.** These show the major events in the work of the Department that are planned to take place during 2009–12, such as the launch of new initiatives progress on major projects or the delivery of business critical activity. Objectives and Milestones are clearly linked to the appropriate Key Areas of Focus in the Corporate Plan 2006-11.
- **National Performance Indicators.** This is a national set of 198 indicators that have been prescribed by Central Government that are intended to measure the extent to which authorities are operating effectively and efficiently and are delivering upon both national and local priorities.

- **Local Performance Indicators.** These are indicators that have been developed by the Council and any relevant non-statutory indicators that have been adopted from national or other sources.
- **Local Area Agreement Targets.** The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a three-year agreement based on Halton's Community Strategy. The second round LAA commenced on 1st April 2008, and included within it are improvement targets for the Borough of Halton to which both the Council and its partners will contribute.

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

Many of the objectives contained within the current service plans are designed to support the achievement of LAA targets. A full version of Halton's LAA can be viewed on the Halton Strategic Partnership Website at [http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories/laa_final_\(march_2007\).pdf](http://www.haltonpartnership.net/site/images/stories/laa_final_(march_2007).pdf)

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

5.1 Service Objectives

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

Corporate Priority: 2	Halton's Urban Renewal
Key Area Of Focus: 8	Exploiting the benefits of inward investment opportunities by creating a physical environment that is both attractive and responsive to the needs of existing and potential customers
Key Area Of Focus : 10	Revitalising the economy by sustaining and developing an environment that compliments the core brand values of existing and potential investors

Service Objective: ER01	Promote economic diversity and competitiveness within an improved business environment.				
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Finalise the Disabled Employment Strategy by 30/6/09 • Update Economic Development Strategy by 1/10/09 • Develop Tourism Strategy and action plan by 1/10/09 • Revise Science and Technology Strategy and action plan by 1/10/09 • Deliver BIDs year 2 action plan by 31/3/10 • Secure funding package for Lewis Carroll visitor centre by 31/3/10 				
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver BIDs year 3 action plan by 31/3/11 				
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver BIDs year 4 action plan by 31/3/12 				
Risk Assessment	Initial	H	Responsible Officer	DM BD	Linked Indicators
	Residual	M			

Corporate Priority: 4	Employment, Learning & Skills
Key Area Of Focus: 25	To increase employment opportunities and business start ups in Halton, by developing an enterprise culture.

Service Objective: ER02	Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to grow an enterprise culture in Halton.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Re-launch expanded Enterprise Academy by 30/6/09 • Deliver Enterprise Week programme by 31/11/09 • Deliver expanded start up programme by 31/3/10 					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deliver Enterprise Week programme by 31/11/10 • Deliver start up programme by 31/3/11 • Secure funding for enterprise programme 11/12 by 31/1/11 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Milestones dependent on securing funding 					
Risk Assessment	Initial	H	Responsible Officer	DM E&E	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	M				

Corporate Priority: 4	Employment, Learning & Skills
Key Area Of Focus: 22	Working with employers to identify and secure opportunities for the unemployed

Service Objective: ER03	Reduce unemployment/worklessness by assisting people to secure employment.					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secure future of Castlefields Employment Project by 31/5/09 • Deliver 1 permitted work placement in each council department by 1/10/09 • Development of Employment Action Plans for each NM area by 31/1/10 • Double the number of council apprenticeships by 31/1/10 (2008/9 will be baseline) 					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Double the number of council apprenticeships by 31/1/11 (against 09/10 out turn) • Secure future funding for HPIJ 					

Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Double the number of council apprenticeships by 31/1/12 (against 10/11 out turn)					
Risk Assessment	Initial	H	Responsible Officer	DM E&E	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	M				

Corporate Priority: 4	Employment, Learning & Skills
Key Area Of Focus: 21	To improve access to employment by providing opportunities to adults to enhance employability, skills and knowledge.

Service Objective: ER04	Raise workforce skill levels by reviewing and addressing the skills deficit in Halton					
Key Milestone(s) (09/10)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Commence full operation of Halton Employment Partnership by 30/6/09 • Develop Science and Technology offer and handbook by 31/12/09 • Produce updated skills and workforce development strategy by 31/3/10 					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Business Perceptions survey by 31/3/11 • Develop Construction offer and handbook by 31/06/11 • Secure future of Halton Employment Partnership by 31/3/12 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	• Milestones dependent on securing funding					
Risk Assessment	Initial	M	Responsible Officer	DM AL&SD	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	L				

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

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2007 / 8 Actual	2007 / 08 Quartiles ² (All England)			Halton 2008 / 09 Target	Halton 2008 / 09 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			09 / 10	10 / 11	11 / 12
Corporate											
Cost / Efficiency											
ER PI 13	Cost per job created and/or safeguarded to which the authorities inward investment promotional activity has made a significant contribution. (Audit Commission ECR18d)	CP4 AOF25	£144.00	-	-	-	£144.00	£126.00	£142.00	£140.00	£138.00
									0	0	0
Fair Access											
NI 153	Worklessness within the 25 most deprived LSOAs	CP4 AOF22									

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

² No quartile data is available for local performance indicators. BVPI's will be replaced by the National Indicator Data Set (NIS) from April 2008

NI 146	Adults with Learning Disabilities in Employment	CP4 AOF22									
NI 150	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment	CP4 AOF22									

Quality											

Service Delivery											
ER PI 01	Number of local people into jobs	CP4 AOF22	806	-	-	-	300		300	300	150
ER PI 02	Number of local people with disabilities into permitted/paid work	CP4 AOF22	179	-	-	-	55		100	100	60
ER PI 03	Number of learners accessing adult learning provision	CP4 AOF20	Academic year 2495	-	-	-	2013 (as in LSC 3 year plan)		1952 (as in LSC 3 year plan)	1893 (as in LSC 3 year plan)	Yet to be agreed with LSC
ER PI 04	Number of learner enrolments	CP4 AOF20	Academic year 3713	-	-	-	3540 3434 (to tie in with LSC 3 year plan)		3331 (to tie in with LSC 3 year plan)	3231 (to tie in with LSC 3 year plan)	Yet to be agreed with LSC
ER PI 05	Number of inward investment enquiries per annum	CP4 AOF25	304	-	-	-	300		180	210	300

ER PI 06	Inward investment enquiry conversion rate	CP2 AOF8	13.5%	-	-	-	12%	13.3%	6%	9%	12%
ER PI 07	Contribution to the number of jobs created, as a direct result of the service/s being provided	CP4 AOF25	320	-	-	-	295		150	180	250
ER PI 08	Contribution to the number of jobs safeguarded, as a direct result of the service/s being provided	CP4 AOF25	443	-	-	-	850		850	750	500
ER PI 09	New business start-ups and self-employment starts	CP4 AOF25	70	-	-	-	15		60	60	80
ER PI 10	No of day visitors per annum to the borough (Calendar year)	CP2 AOF8	4.363m (2007)	-	-	-	2007 +2%	Not yet available	+2%	+2%	+2%

5.3 Data Quality Arrangements

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

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

6.0 Performance Reporting

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

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

As a result Departmental progress will be monitored through:

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

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

<http://www2.halton.gov.uk/content/councilanddemocracy/council/plansandstrategies>

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

7.0 Statutory and Non-statutory Plans

- Halton Community Strategy
- Economic Development and Tourism Strategy
- Halton Enterprise Strategy
- Halton Employment Strategy
- Halton Skills and Workforce Development Strategy

Appendix 1

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

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

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

Children & Young People in Halton

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

Employment, Learning & Skills in Halton

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

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

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

39	Ensuring that human resources are managed and deployed to their best effect and improving the relevance, availability and use of HR information
40	Ensuring that the Council has the right people with the right skills and who are informed and motivated and provided with opportunities for personal development and engagement.