



Environment & Economy

DIRECTORATE PLAN

April 2011 to March 2014

Contents

Page

1.0 Foreword and Introduction

2.0 Key Messages

3.0 Factors Affecting The Directorate

4.0 Organisational Initiatives

5.0 Directorate Structure

6.0 Resources

7.0 Business Planning

Appendices

Service Objectives and performance Indicators

1.0 *Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business Development*

1.0 FOREWORD AND INTRODUCTION

The Environment and Economy Directorate has a very varied remit covered by three Departments. It has an annual revenue budget in excess of £33 million and is responsible for significant annual capital expenditure.

The main purpose of the Directorate is to manage the built and natural environment in the Borough, to foster economic regeneration and to address the underlying causes of deprivation: problems of unemployment; worklessness; and lack of skills appropriate to the 21st century.

The Directorate Plan is designed to provide a strategic link with the Council's Corporate Plan. The Directorate is at the forefront of change within the Borough, as it helps drive forward both regeneration and waste management agendas. It will also be significantly affected by debate in the Liverpool City Region, particularly in respect of transport, regeneration and waste.

Of particular importance in the immediate future will be the need to manage the outcome of negotiations to secure a Joint Venture partner for the Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus; the translation of development at 3MG into good quality job opportunities for local residents; the further development of Widnes Town Centre; and the revitalisation of Halton Lea and Runcorn Town Centre. The anticipated outcome of the Public Inquiry into the Mersey Gateway Bridge will open up immense opportunities but will bring with it enormous demands to effectively manage a complex procurement process.



Dick Tregua
Strategic Director
Economy and Environment Directorate

2.0 KEY MESSAGES

Environment and Regulatory Services

The Change in national government and the current economic climate will provide opportunities and challenges for local government regulatory services over the next three years.

The current economic uncertainty presents a challenging trading environment for business and there is perception amongst businesses that regulation can potentially create financial burdens. However a recent report published by LBRO entitled *From the Business End of the Telescope: Perspectives on Local Regulation and Enforcement* suggests businesses value the advice and guidance issued by local regulatory services. The report recognises that this advice & guidance can contribute to business success and sustainability. Halton has a strong record of supporting businesses with regulation. 81% of businesses in the Borough that have been subject to inspection, report that they are satisfied with regulatory services (National Indicator 182). This places Halton BC in the top 20% nationally in terms of satisfaction with local regulatory services.

To ensure businesses can trade both profitably and compliantly, Halton is committed to providing free comprehensive advice on regulation to all businesses, particularly small and medium sized enterprises. We will continue to focus resources on areas of highest risk and ensure that legitimate businesses that want to trade compliantly are protected from those who will not or can not comply with the law.

Key areas of work for environmental health will include the production and implementation of the following statutory documents:

- Food safety and standards inspection and enforcement plan
- A health and safety at work plan
- A pollution control enforcement and inspection plan
- A review and assessment of local air quality
- An animal welfare enforcement and inspection plan

In addition the following Key areas of work will also be undertaken 2010-2013

- Implement the new National Food Hygiene Rating Scheme operated by the Food Standards Agency (FSA). Hygiene scores of all food premises in the Borough will be published. The scheme will reward compliant businesses and provide a non-regulatory incentive to non-compliant businesses.
- The Food and Health & Safety teams will address recommendations in Lord Young's review of health & safety law (*Common Sense, Common Safety 2010*) and work towards greater integration of food and health & safety inspections.

- Following recent government support of the Mersey Gateway, the Contaminated Land team will need to work closely with the Environment Agency and associated agencies prior and during construction to carry out risk assessments, site investigations and any required remediation work arising from contaminated land in the region of the Gateway.
- Following the declaration of Air Quality Management Areas in Halton by Environmental Protection, the service will continue to monitor and consult with stakeholders in order to produce an Air Quality Management Plan to improve air quality in these areas.
- Recent government proposals to change the delivery of public health services have yet to be formalised. It is proposed that local authorities will assume responsibility for public health & well being from PCT. It is crucial that Regulatory Services play a substantial part of this role given our current close collaboration and partnership work with the PCT. Major public health concerns such as obesity and smoking are already being addressed by projects undertaken by both partners: Development Control and Environmental Health are developing a Special Planning Document to limit the number of takeaways around schools; Environmental Health are working with the PCT to improve the nutritional quality of takeaway food in the Borough. Regulatory Services have the potential to improve the public health of the Borough alongside its regulatory role.

A key cross cutting task for the department will be to utilise powers presented in the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act to improve the quality of the local environment, by deterring litter, fly-tipping, fly-posting, graffiti and dog fouling; to require managers of land used by the public to remove litter and abandoned vehicles; and to enable local authorities to use enforcement powers to tackle poor environmental quality and anti-social behaviour.

The Council has committed significant investment to deliver enhanced kerbside recycling services, however, regardless of the systems that are implemented, the Council will only be successful in increasing recycling if it has the cooperation of the residents of Halton. Essential to achieving increased cooperation and participation is a raised awareness of waste related issues.

The Council's current Waste Strategy highlights the need for effective communications and awareness raising and during the life of this plan the Department will continue to develop and deliver comprehensive and targeted education and communications programs. The need to divert waste from landfill and increase recycling is likely to result in the implementation of initiatives or services designed to encourage higher levels of participation with the Council's services. Incentives and rewards for recycling will also be maintained that, together with improved community engagement activities, will encourage positive environmental behaviour amongst Halton's residents.

Local environmental quality is important as it impacts on the whole community and is consistently rated as the most important issue for local people. Whilst the Department's approach to changing attitudes will focus upon increased education and community engagement the strengthening of enforcement measures will be required to underpin the Council's efforts to tackle environmental crime and nuisances. The Department now delivers a more coordinated approach to ensuring a cleaner, greener, safer environment and a continued emphasis will be the development and implementation of plans, strategies and policies to tackle, and deal effectively with the effects, of environmental crime and nuisance. During the life of this Plan, further coordination of departmental enforcement activities and joint working with key partners will be delivered.

There has been and continues to be a problem with recruiting staff across the professional regulatory domain which has the potential for affecting the Department's ability to deliver a challenging agenda. There is only a finite pool of available qualified labour to tap into and replacing staff members almost always involves poaching from neighbouring authorities.

Requirements to prepare sustainability appraisals and 'Appropriate Assessment' of the impact plans may have on the environment have increased project timescales for all planning documents. Similarly, tests of 'soundness' for the Local Development Framework (the replacement Unitary Development Plan) require considerably more public consultation and a wider and rigorous evidence base. Divisional resources have been switched to concentrate on the core strategy to meet government expectations, implement the Sustainable Communities Strategy and replace outdated UDP Policies. The Division will continue its commitment to the Growth Point for Halton, St. Helens and Warrington that aims to provide an additional 20% more housing in the Borough. These requirements put additional pressures on existing resources and again have the potential to impact upon service delivery.

The Council's success in securing 'Playbuilder' funding, of £1.121 million over a three year period, to develop play facilities in the Borough has placed extreme pressure on the Landscape Services Divisions Design and Development team who are charged with delivering the physical facilities aspect of the project. Revenue maintenance costs would have been an issue that may have derailed the 'Playbuilder' scheme but funding has been secured from the PCT for two additional Playground Maintenance Operatives. This funding is in place for a five-year period. The Council has made a commitment to the PCT to provide five new play facilities.

Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business Development

In presenting revised strategic objectives, at a departmental level, we want to:

- Develop performance indicators which reflect ‘the journey’ of skills development and learning, alongside a quality physical and business environment leading to the generation of employment opportunities;
- Measure success but have the right indicators to do this;
- Demonstrate in performance management terms that stimulating business growth, universal access to learning and the provision of a high quality built environment will have a dramatic impact on the quality of life of the community of Halton.

The Employment, Economic Regeneration, Employment and Business Development department has simplified these aims and objectives to focus departmental activities on: -

Halton – a place where people can learn and develop their skills to enable them to compete effectively in the jobs market;
Halton – a place with a high quality urban environment;
Halton – a place with a thriving business community

With a vision for the department as:-

“Halton is a place where sustained economic growth provides opportunities for all”

Departmental Aims

- 1) To improve access to employment in the borough
- 2) To encourage Investment and Physical Regeneration in the borough

Departmental Objectives

- 1) To contribute to raising skills levels in the borough;
- 2) To contribute to increasing the number of Halton people in employment;
- 3) To generate investment in physical regeneration in the borough;
- 4) To manage the Council’s land and property portfolio in a safe, cost effective and fit for purpose condition.
- 5) To develop and implement prudent Strategic Asset Management

This will be achieved by: -

- widening participation in adult learning and skills.;
- offering a range of employability skills programmes and initiatives;
- regenerating derelict sites and brownfield land;
- encouraging entrepreneurship and self employment;
- optimising receipts from land and property disposals;
- maintaining a strategic approach to securing and maximising external funding.

Our proposed outcomes will be: -

- An improved business environment;
- A growing enterprise culture;
- Reduced worklessness;
- increased employment;
- improved skills and qualifications amongst our residents
- operational and investment properties that will achieve best value.

The Department will need to be aware of the following issues:-

- The Government appears to recognise that public sector capital investment on infrastructure is vital for economic recovery.
- The Benefits system is being reformed to 'make work pay'
- Personalised job training and support is being redirected to private sectors 'investors' who will expect a return on this investment.
- A reliance on 'Voluntary' Job Seeker Support.
- Recognition that family learning supports wider economic and social well-being measures.
- Focus on higher level skills and high(er) growth companies.
- Greater role for employers in providing and delivering their own in-house training.

Highways Transportation and Logistics

Mersey Gateway

The coalition government announced the results of its Comprehensive Spending Review on 20 October 2010 which approved funding for Mersey Gateway, subject to detailed funding proposals being confirmed by the Department for Transport (DfT). The outcome has established strong policy and funding support for the project. Further clarification from Ministers has confirmed that the £80m grant required to secure land and to pay compensation, including site clearance and remediation works, is included in the DfT budget for the next four years. The Council has also been advised that options for the remaining government funding contribution, including Private Finance Credits (PFI), are being assessed but these costs are likely to fall outside the spending review period and the DfT has requested revised estimates from the Council. The Council project team was invited to discuss funding options with DfT officials during November and December 2010 leading to a final funding agreement being proposed by the Department before the end of January 2011.

The project team is looking to secure the final confirmation of funding necessary to deliver a successful project and will urge Ministers to grant the approvals necessary so that we can commence procurement avoiding further delay. We have also been advised that the final preparations for a decision on the Planning Applications and Orders are now being undertaken. The project plan was amended based on the approvals to commence procurement in early 2011. The aim is to commence construction within two years of receiving the approvals from government.

As the largest project of this type currently being undertaken by a local authority, it will have a significant influence on the work of the Council in the coming years.

The HTL Department will be engaged with the Mersey Gateway Project Team in resolution of the procurement process, including approval of all design issues, to ensure that long term construction management and the impact on the borough's highways and transportation networks are adequately considered. This will place a significant demand on the Department's resources, possibly to the detriment of other services.

The de-linking of the SJB was a topic issue for the Urban Renewal PPB in 2008/09. The development of highway designs for de-linking on both sides of the river are tied closely into both the Sustainable Transport Strategy and the Regeneration Strategy. Proposals need to be consistent and taken forward in parallel with the development of policies under these strategies. It is anticipated that the Topic Group will be reconvened in 2011.

Local Transport Plan 3

2010 / 11 is the final year of both the current Local Transport Plan (LTP 2) and of the three-year transport capital settlement. Halton has been working closely with its Merseyside neighbours including Merseytravel on transport planning for the Liverpool City Region. Originally, it was intended that there would be a Joint third LTP (LTP 3) produced but a decision taken in 2010 means that there will now be separate LTPs for both Halton and Merseyside. LTP 3 will be developed to ensure that the transport services we provide meet the needs of residents and businesses and support the achievement of the Council's priorities, the Core Strategy, the Sustainable Community Strategy and the Merseyside MAA, as well as progressing initiatives in Halton that reduce transport's contribution to greenhouse gases.

SJB Complex Major Maintenance

Section 31 Primary Route Network (PRN) Grant for funding the increased programme of major bridge maintenance in the SJB Complex expires in March 2011. Continuation of delivery of the major bridge maintenance programme (through the HBC Bridge Maintenance Partnership Contract) will continue until 2015/16 using the £18.6m maximum funding availability from the SJB Complex Major Maintenance Scheme which has received DfT's full approval.

Government approval of the Mersey Gateway project dictates that review of the SJB Complex bridge maintenance programme is required to remove work no longer required or that which may be postponed to allow it to be delivered more effectively and economically post Mersey Gateway construction. This will have implications for the total funding requirement for future SJB Complex bridge maintenance, the delivery programme and for how the funding is awarded through DfT (i.e. combined with Mersey Gateway funding).

Parking

The Department continues to review the demand for on and off – street parking in the Borough. The parking situation in Runcorn town centre is now considered problematic by many businesses, and some nearby residential streets continue to experience problems. One of the proposals being considered to better deal with parking issues is the establishment of a Parking Partnership with private sector operators. The aim is to develop a parking strategy for the Borough. A study to consider the feasibility of the Council adopting its own parking enforcement powers has been completed and a decision on whether to proceed with an application will need to be made. A review of the Policy on Residents Only Parking Schemes will also be considered.

Development and Regeneration

Halton, along with Warrington and St Helens (Mid Mersey) was awarded Growth Point Status in 2008. As a round 2 Growth Point, this allowed the 3 Authorities to bid for funding which would unlock development sites or provide sustainable access to accelerate housing delivery. Unfortunately, due to Government cuts in funding, it has not been possible to provide any new or improved transport infrastructure in the Borough through the GHP although some revenue funding does remain that may enable a study of transport infrastructure to be undertaken.

The Department continues to be heavily involved in the transportation planning and highway infrastructure aspects of key commercial development schemes in the Borough's town centres and regeneration projects at 3MG, Widnes Waterfront and Daresbury SIC.

Flooding and Water Management

The Flood and Water Management Act received Royal Assent on 8th April 2010. The Act, together with the Flood Risk Regulations (2009), places significant new duties on Halton as a 'Lead Local Flood Authority' to prepare flood risk assessments, maps and Plans to manage flood risk across the Halton area. Strict timescales for delivery of the various responsibilities have been laid down by Defra/Environment Agency, which will have significant resource implications. Work is already underway on the preparation of a Surface Water Management Plan which together with other plans and strategies developed by our Partners, the Environment Agency and United Utilities, will inform the development of flood risk mitigation measures in the future.

Transport Asset Management

New accounting rules will require the adoption of a full asset management approach to Highway maintenance and management. Over the plan period, this will require further development of the assets inventory and the development of 'levels of service', together with policy and strategies for future maintenance and improvement, to enable the valuation of our highway assets.

Personalisation Agenda

The Personalisation agenda will enable vulnerable adults with complex needs including learning difficulties, physical and mental health issues to maintain an individualised budget and make their own decisions on what activities they partake in and how they will travel to those activities. This radical change is currently being planned for and comes into full effect from early 2011, this will pose many challenges and will require a different transport set-up to that currently being provided.

Accessibility Study

Transport consultants TAS Partnership and Richard Armitage Transport Consultancy were commissioned to produce a study into the ageing population problem and how this is likely to impact on transport over the short, medium and long term future. This has now been completed, results being that the demands on specialised transport in forthcoming years will be far higher than at present. Therefore a range of options have been received, which have been discussed with Health & Community Directorate, on how to best cater for this predicted additional demand for transport.

Transport Act 2008

The Transport Act 2008 has given Local Authorities and Integrated Transport Authorities greater powers with regards to the co-ordination of the local bus network. Authorities are now able to work within a partnership environment with the bus operators to develop Statutory Quality Bus Partnerships and Punctuality improvement Partnerships. Both the partnerships will ultimately improve access and the reliability of bus services but will also improve the frequency of services and also improve the coverage of the network within the borough. However there is a significant amount of work to be carried out to allow the partnerships to move forward.

3.0 FACTORS AFFECTING THE DIRECTORATE

The work of the Directorate is influenced in large part by external factors. Changes in Government could see alterations to the legislative framework upon which much of the work of the Directorate is based. The present economic climate has had a severe impact on the rate of development with consequential effects on, for example, the fee income arising from planning and building regulation fees. A reduction in public sector spending will affect the pace of regeneration and will necessitate a review of priorities to take account of any changes. It will also mean that the need to respond to opportunities will become even more critical.

Environment and Regulatory Services

The Better Regulation Executive (part of the Business Innovation and Skills Department) is likely to be retained by the current administration as will some functions of the Local Better Regulation Office (LBRO). The purpose of both organisations is to reduce the regulatory burden on business and ensure regulations are applied in a transparent and proportionate manner.

The six national priorities for enforcement set out by the Rogers Review in 2007 are:

- Air Quality including regulation of pollution from factories & homes
- Alcohol & entertainment licensing enforcement
- Hygiene of food premises
- Improving health in the workplace
- Animal & Public Health
- Fair Trading

As this government has retained the bodies overseeing these areas, it is likely these areas will remain a regulatory priority in forthcoming years. This government appears to be committed to furthering the *Better Regulation* agenda to ensure regulation and enforcement is consistent with 5 key themes:

1. Transparency
2. Consistency
3. Accountability
4. Proportionality
5. Targeted

The waste management agenda continues to move at a great pace and there remain powerful economic, environmental, legislative and policy drivers for continued change. In order to meet the requirements of the EU Landfill Directive, implemented in England through the Landfill Allowance Trading Scheme (LATS), Waste Disposal Authorities were set diminishing limits on the levels of biodegradable waste permitted to be disposed of at landfill sites. This legislation, together with annual increases in landfill tax and disposal costs, continues to represent the most significant drivers for change, and the ones that have the greatest financial impact upon the authority. The Department plans to increase the level of waste sent to landfill disposal, and minimise future cost increases, through a programme of waste reduction initiatives, delivering successful recycling services, implementing initiatives to encourage increased participation with the Council's recycling services and through the procurement of services for the long term treatment of residual waste.

In June 2010, the Secretary of State for the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) announced that the Government would undertake a full review of waste policy in England. The outcome could significantly affect Halton's policies for dealing with waste.

The Council had intended to carry out a full review of its own Waste Management Strategy in 2010, however, following the announcement from the Secretary of State, the Council agreed to undertake a review of its own Strategy once the full details of the Government's review were known. Preliminary results from the Government's review will be available in spring 2011.

Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business Development

Employment Learning and Skills

The overall context for Employment Learning and Skills was set out in the recent Comprehensive Spending Review which was published on 21st October. This confirmed changes in welfare and departmental spending which is set out in more detail below.

The 21st Century Welfare White Paper has identified a number of principles for welfare reform, but the key principle at the heart of this reform is 'to ensure that work would always pay.

Government has decided to end all current employability and welfare reform programmes and replace them with a new Single Programme. These will be large contracts organised on a regional basis with contracts predicted to be between £10m and £50m. They will work with individuals on a variety of benefits that have been out of work for a period of time.

This programme is described as 'Black Box' which means that there will be little to no prescription for how services will be designed; this will be left to the view of potential 'investors'.

The term 'investors' is used as opposed to contractors or providers because those successful will be investing their own money at their own risk to create employability initiatives. If they help individuals get back to work and sustain them in work, they will receive payments from future benefit savings – if they do not, they will lose their investments.

The Skills Strategy Skills for Sustainable Growth

The Skills Strategy was launched on 16th November and presents a number of opportunities for the continuation of services provided by the directorate. It identifies apprenticeships as a major focus for developing the skills of the workforce.

The strategy also states that the UK is currently weak in the vital intermediate technical skills that are increasingly important as jobs become more highly skilled and technological change accelerates.

The strategy states that learners will select training and qualifications valued by business, and available through a broad range of autonomous providers who will attract learners depending on the quality of their offer.

There will be an expectation that learners and employers will co-invest alongside Government in meeting the costs of intermediate and higher level training courses.

The strategy also reaffirms support for Adult and Family Learning for the period of the current spending review.

Information Advice and Guidance

Of equal note is the recent announcement of an all-age careers service whereby from April 2012 schools will be under a legal duty to secure independent and partial careers guidance.

The Schools White Paper will include plans to improve the quality of education in schools and ensure all children gain the basic skills and knowledge they need to make a successful transition from school into FE or employment.

Regarding Urban Renewal, the Local Growth White Paper published on 28th October 2010 sets out the Government's role in empowering locally driven growth, encouraging business investment.

An awareness and understanding of both the internal and external operating environments is a crucial aspect of business planning activity. There will inevitably be developments, opportunities / threats or emerging issues that will, or are likely to, impact on a directorate and the services that it provides over the life of the plan.

Highways Transportation and Logistics Department

Government Transport Policy and Funding

The transport capital settlement announced in November 2008 gave details of the indicative allocation for 2010/11. In June 2010 however, the Government announced funding cuts for transport in the 2010/11 financial year. This resulted in the following for Halton;

- Integrated Transport Block funding down from £1.787m to £1.325m, this represented a £442k or 25% cut;
- Road Safety Capital Grant cut by 100% or £75k;
- Road Safety Revenue Grant cut by £90k or 27%; and
- Primary Route Network funding cut by £440k.

The cuts in road safety funding are likely to not only have a significant effect upon Halton's ability to continue to contribute to the Cheshire Safer Roads Partnership (whose role included camera enforcement, for example) beyond March 2011 and certainly to the extent it has done in the past. It will also impact our own programmes for road safety, education, training and publicity. This is a serious concern because of the potentially adverse impact on road casualties in the borough which have until now shown a markedly downward trend.

In his Comprehensive Spending Review (CSR) announcement in October 2010, the Chancellor pledged to make the tough choices that will allow us to maintain investment in new and existing infrastructure that will support a growing economy, while eliminating the structural deficit over the lifetime of the Parliament.

The key transport priorities of the Government for Transport are:

- Facilitating long-term sustainable economic growth; and
- Tackling carbon emissions.

These two priorities are based upon two of the five national transport goals/priorities of the previous Government.

However, the CSR has also confirmed that significant funding cuts for transport will become a reality. The DfT will reduce overall spending by 15% in real terms, making savings of 21% from its resource budget and an 11% reduction in capital spending. To support the localism agenda, DfT plans to carry out a radical simplification and reform of local transport funding, moving from 26 grant streams to 4 from 2011-12:

- a local sustainable transport fund (capital and revenue);
- major schemes (capital)
- block funding for highways maintenance (capital); and
- block funding for small transport improvement schemes; the 'Integrated Transport Block' (capital).

Details of block funding allocations to individual local authorities were awaited at the time of writing but at a national level block funding for highway maintenance will be down by around 20% over the next four years. As far as the Integrated Transport Block is concerned the DfT intends to provide over £1.3bn over four years for small transport improvements. However, this represents an average cut of 23% over the coming four year period and a reduction of around £1m since the beginning of LTP2. These cuts are likely to significantly affect the number and size of capital funded transport schemes we are likely to be able to deliver in future years, at a time when we are trying to deliver the largest local authority transport project in the country.

The Government is establishing a £560 million Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) to challenge local authorities outside London to bid for funding to support packages of transport interventions that support economic growth and reduce carbon emissions in their communities as well as delivering cleaner environments and improved air quality, enhanced safety and reduced congestion. Consideration is being given to the possibility of a bid being submitted as part of the Mersey Gateway Project.

The Department for Transport is contributing around a third of the funding for the £1.4bn Regional Growth Fund. Bids for local transport schemes that unlock sustainable economic growth will be eligible for submission to this fund.

The Local Enterprise Partnerships will be responsible for bids to the Regional Growth Fund. It may be possible for Halton to access this Fund but this is yet to be determined.

From 2012/13, the DfT plans to make a reduction in the subsidy paid to bus operators (Bus Services Operators Grant or BSOG) by reducing the rate at which subsidy is paid by 20%. Halton will need to look carefully at the potential impacts of this but basically certain bus services may either not be provided or they will become more expensive for our communities. The potentially significant cuts to the Department's revenue budgets could likewise impact seriously on the provision of supported bus services and community transport provision in the borough.

The cost of street lighting energy is very susceptible to changes due to issues outside our control. In the main, there are year on year increases in price and this trend is expected to continue. Options are being investigated to reduce demand and our carbon footprint but the switching off of certain lights needs to be considered as a distinct possibility.

Finally, the Council itself faces huge cuts in its budgets and these will, in turn, mean similar cuts to Departmental budgets. These will definitely impact on the level of service we are able to provide to our customers.

4.0 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:-

Equality, Diversity and Community Cohesion

Halton Council is committed to ensuring equality of opportunity within all aspects of its service design and delivery, policy development and employment practices. This commitment is reflected in a range of policies, strategies and other framework documents and practices that underpin the work of the Council through its day to day operational activities.

The Council reviewed and refreshed its [Single Equality Scheme](#) in 2009. As a result of the introduction of the Equalities Act (2010) the scheme has recently been further reviewed and slightly refined to ensure that it remains current and fit for purpose.

The scheme sets out the Council's approach to promoting and securing equality of opportunity, valuing diversity and encouraging fairness and creating and promoting a social environment in which people can work, learn and live free from discrimination and victimisation in all of its forms.

The Council will combat discrimination throughout the organisation throughout the organisation and will use its position of influence in the borough to help to identify and remove discriminatory barriers and practices where they are found to exist.

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.

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.

At a partnership level issues of equality are overseen by the Halton Strategic partnership Equalities, Engagement and Cohesion sub-group and the Community Cohesion Officers Group, which has a more operational focus to any potential tension within communities.

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 Strategy 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 will be reviewed and updated during 2011/12.

The Council has set a target to reduce its emissions by 20% from 2008 – 09 levels over 4 years by 2013/14. If this target is to be achieved individual services areas will need to develop service specific plans for their areas. The Council's total emission levels in 2009/10 were **(to be added)**

This breaks down as follows: -

- Corporate Buildings
- Schools
- Street Lighting
- Vehicle Fleet
- Business Miles

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, business miles and street lighting.

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 to be developed in 2011/12. Directorates will contribute to and support specific actions within the overall Strategy.

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:-

- Accurate:* For its intended purpose;
- Valid* By being consistently recorded and used in compliance with predetermined definitions and rules;
- Reliable* By reflecting stable and consistent data collection processes;
- Timely* By being made available as soon as possible after the activity or event and in line with organisational requirements;
- Relevant* For the purpose intended;
- Complete* 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.

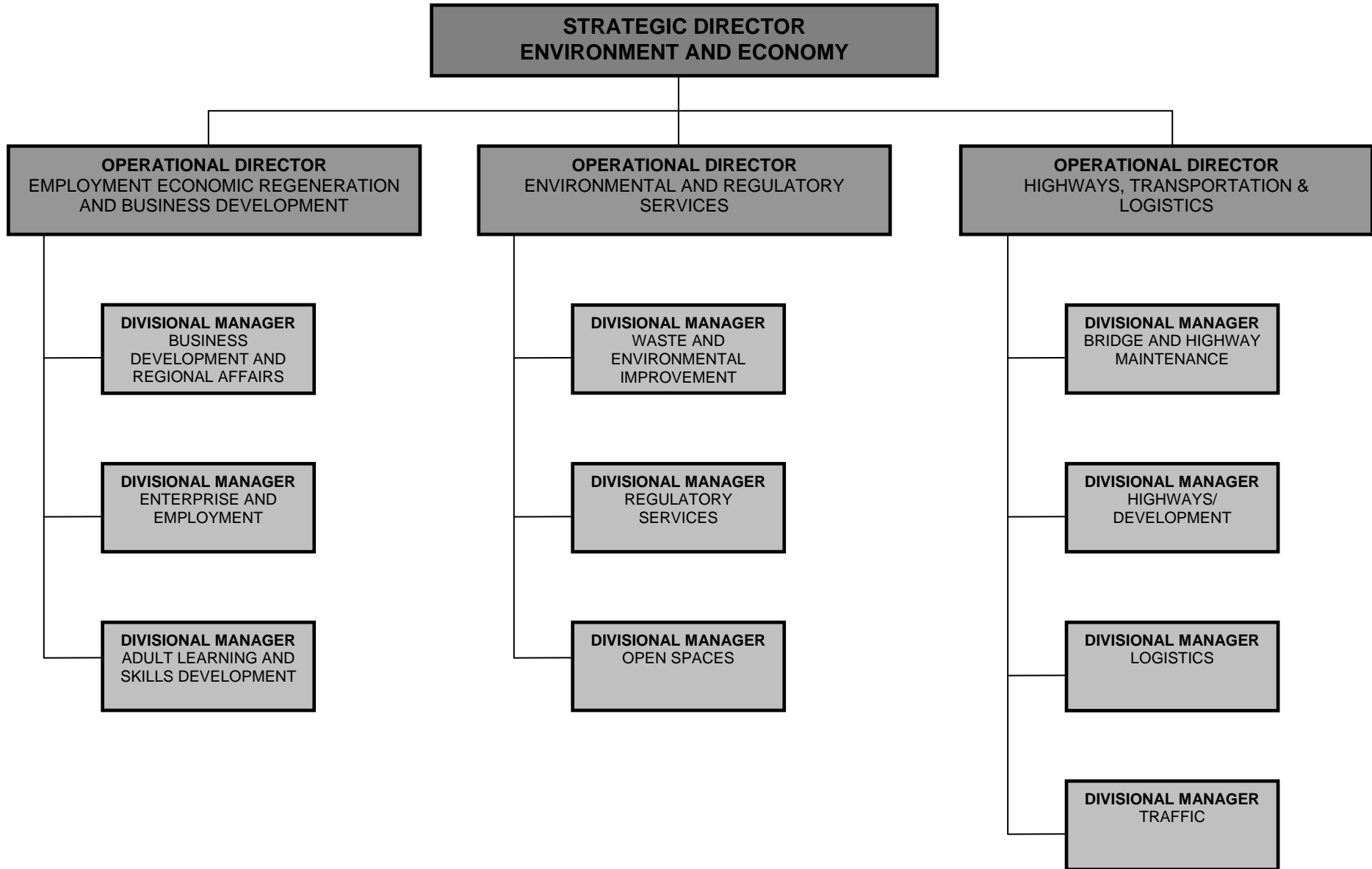
Risk Management

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

5.0 DIRECTORATE STRUCTURE



6.0 RESOURCES

The reorganisation of the Directorate involving the reduction in Departments from four to three but with the incorporation of both Property Services and External Funding and Regional Affairs into the Business Development and Regional Affairs Division, a modest movement of staff to ensure effective operation will be necessary. The Directorate's employees will be mainly concentrated in Rutland House and the Municipal Building. The two depots at Lowerhouse Lane and Picow Farm Road will remain the main focus for operational activities, including amongst others, maintenance of open spaces, refuse collection and community transport.

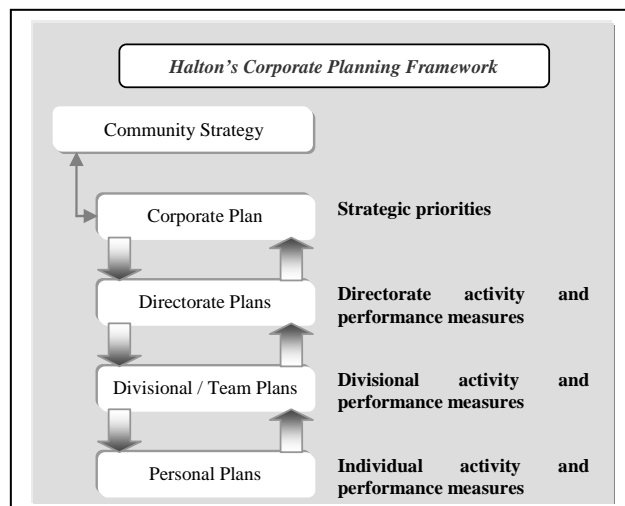
The Mersey Gateway Team will remain in its present location at Turnstone Park as it moves through the procurement phases of its work. Funding for the Mersey Gateway Team and the procurement of the Project will remain a significant resource issue during the duration of this plan. The other main financial issues remain the increasing costs of dealing with the Borough's waste through recycling and disposal. The effect of severe weather also has an impact on resources and in each of the last two winters, the cost of gritting and snow clearing has exceeded the budget allocation, whilst the longer term consequences of the adverse weather in terms of damage to the roads has also severely affected budget availability.

The way in which incidents of severe weather affects the operation and budget of the Directorate will be kept under close scrutiny.

7.0 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 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.

Performance 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 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 monitoring 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://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.

Appendices

Departmental Service Objectives / Key Milestones and Performance Indicators / Targets.

1. Employment, Economic Regeneration and Business Development

Service Objectives/Milestones/Performance Indicators: 2010 – 2013

Employment, Economic Regeneration & Business Development

Corporate Priority:	Employment, Learning & Skills
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Service Objective: EEB 2	Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to grow an enterprise culture in Halton.					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Launch expanded Enterprise Academy by Sep 2010 ▪ Deliver Enterprise Week programme by Nov 2010 ▪ Deliver expanded start up programme by Mar 2011 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver Enterprise Week programme by Nov 2010 ▪ Deliver start up programme by Mar 2011 ▪ Secure funding for enterprise programme 11/12 by Jan 2011 					
Key Milestone(s) (12/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Milestones dependent on securing funding 					
Risk Assessment	Initial	High	Responsible Officer	DM Enterprise & Employment	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	Medium				

Service Objective: EEB 3	Reduce unemployment/worklessness by assisting people to secure employment.					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deliver permitted work placements in council department by Oct 2010 ▪ Development of Employment Action Plans for each NM area by Jan 2011 ▪ Double the number of council apprenticeships (against 09/10 out turn) by Jan 2011 ▪ Finalise the Disabled and Carers Employment Strategy by Sep 2010 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Double the number of council apprenticeships (against 10/11 out turn) by Jan 2012 ▪ Secure future funding for HPIJ 					
Key Milestone(s) (12/13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Double the number of council apprenticeships (against 11/12 out turn) by Jan 2013 					
Risk Assessment	Initial	High	Responsible Officer	DM Enterprise & Employment	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	Medium				

Corporate Priority:	Employment, Learning & Skills
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Service Objective: EEB 4	Raise workforce skill levels by reviewing and addressing the skills deficit in Halton					
Key Milestone(s) (10/11)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Develop Construction Investors' handbook by Dec 2010 ▪ Complete the Business Perceptions survey by Mar 2011 ▪ Develop Construction Investors' handbook by Dec 2010 ▪ Secure future of Halton Employment Partnership by Mar 2011 					
Key Milestone(s) (11/12)	▪ Milestones dependent on securing funding					
Key Milestone(s) (12/13)	▪ Milestones dependent on securing funding					
Risk Assessment	Initial	Medium	Responsible Officer	DM Adult Learning & Skills Development	Linked Indicators	
	Residual	Low				

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2009/10 Actual				Halton 2010/11 Target	Halton 2010/11 Actual	Halton Targets		
									11/12	12/13	13/14
Corporate Health											
There are presently no indicators of this type identified for the service											
Cost & Efficiency											
EEB LI18	Cost per job created and/or safeguarded to which the authority's inward investment promotional activity has made a significant contribution. (Audit Commission ECR18d)	CP4 AOF25		-	-	-			£140.0	£138.0	
Fair Access											
NI 153	Worklessness within the 25 most deprived LSOAs	CP4 AOF22	33.5%	-	-	-					
NI 146	Adults with Learning Disabilities in Employment	CP4 AOF22	28	-	-	-					
NI 150	Adults in contact with secondary mental health services in employment	CP4 AOF22		-	-	-					
Quality											
There are presently no indicators of this type identified for the service											

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

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2009/10 Actual				Halton 2010/11 Target	Halton 2010/11 Actual	Halton Targets		
									11/12	12/13	13/14
Service Delivery											
<u>EEB LI1</u> Previously ER PI 01	Number of local people into jobs	CP4 AOF22	374	-	-	-	300 (WNF ends)		Subject to funding	Subject to funding	
<u>EEB LI2</u> Previously ER PI 02	Number of local people with disabilities into permitted/paid work	CP4 AOF22	38	-	-	-	75 (WNF ends)		Subject to funding	Subject to funding	
EEB LI3 Previously ER PI 03	Number of learners accessing adult learning provision	CP4 AOF20	1369	-	-	-	2041		2041	2041	
<u>EEB LI4</u> Previously ER PI 04	Number of learner enrolments	CP4 AOF20	1683	-	-	-	3450		3450	3450	
EEB LI5 Previously ER PI 05	Number of inward investment enquiries per annum	CP4 AOF25	119	-	-	-	200		210	225	
EEB LI6 Previously ER PI 06	Inward investment enquiry conversion rate	CP2 AOF8	15.3%	-	-	-	11%		12%	13%	
<u>EEB LI7</u> Previously ER PI 07	Contribution to the number of jobs created, as a direct result of the service/s being provided	CP4 AOF25	153	-	-	-	200		225	250	
EEB LI8 Previously ER PI 08	Contribution to the number of jobs safeguarded, as a direct	CP4 AOF25		-	-	-	150		150	150	

Ref ¹	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2009/10 Actual				Halton 2010/11 Target	Halton 2010/11 Actual	Halton Targets		
									11/12	12/13	13/14
	result of the service/s being provided										
EEB L19 Previously ER PI 09	New business start-ups and self -employment starts	CP4 AOF25	154	-	-	-	125 (WNF ends)		90	90	
NI 163	Working age population qualified to at least Level 2 or higher	CP4 AOF22		-	-	-					
NI 171	Business growth rate	CP4 AOF25		-	-	-					

Area Partner National Indicators:

The indicators below form part of the new National Indicator Set introduced on 1st April 2008. Responsibility for setting the target, and reporting performance data, will sit with one or more local partners. As data sharing protocols are developed, baseline information and targets will be added to this section.

Ref	Description	Corp. Plan Priority	Halton 2008/9 Actual	2008/9 Quartiles (All England)			Halton 2009/10 Target	Halton 2009/10 Actual	Halton Targets		
				Top	Middle	Bottom			10/11	11/12	12/13
NI 151	Overall employment rate	CP4 AOF22, 21		-	-	-					
NI 152	Working age people on out of work benefits	CP4 AOF22, 21		-	-	-					
NI 161	Learners achieving a Level 1 qualification in literacy	CP4 AOF20		-	-	-					
NI 162	Learners achieving an Entry Level 3 qualification in numeracy	CP4 AOF20		-	-	-					
NI 164	Working age population qualified to at least Level 3 or higher	CP4 AOF22		-	-	-					
NI 165	Working age population qualified to at least Level 4 or higher	CP4 AOF22		-	-	-					

NI 166	Average earnings of employees in the area	N/a		-	-	-					
NI 172	VAT registered businesses in the area showing growth	CP4 AOF25	44.5	-	-	-					
NI 173	People falling out of work and on to incapacity benefits	CP4 AOF24		-	-	-					
NI 174	Skills gaps in the current workforce reported by employers	CP4 AOF21		-	-	-					