



## Environment & Economy

### DIRECTORATE PLAN

### **Environment & Regulatory Services (Extract)**

**April 2011 to March 2014**

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## 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 Tregoe  
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.

### **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.

#### **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.

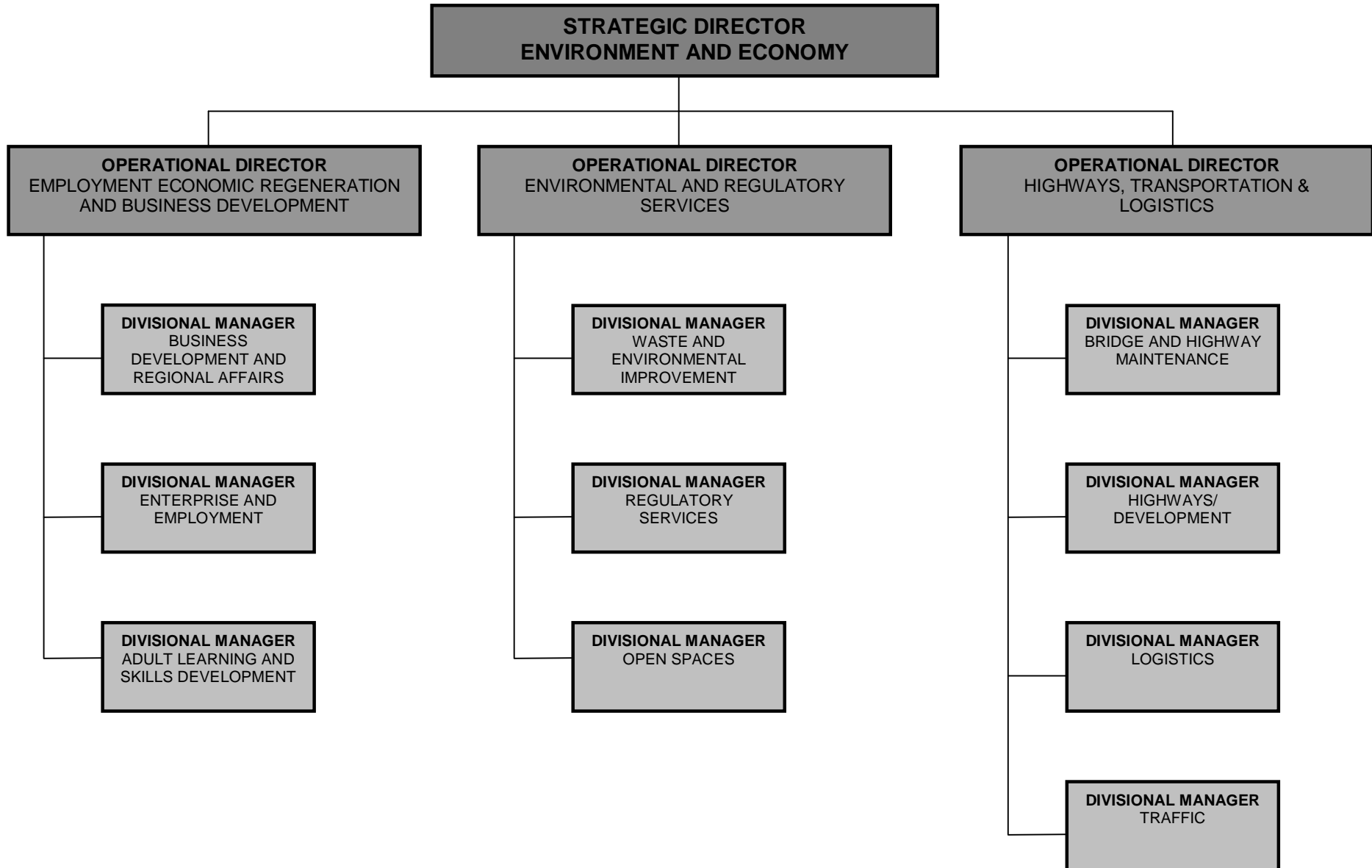
### **Risk Management**

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.

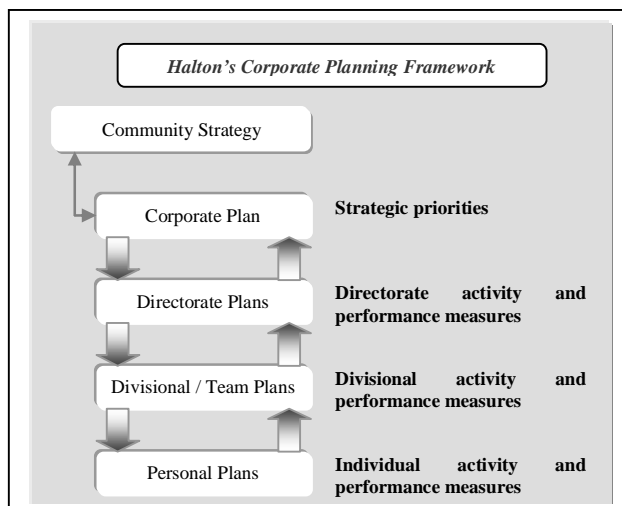
The Mersey Gateway Team will remain in its present location at Turnstone Park as it moves through the procurement phases of its work. Funding for the Mersey Gateway Team and the procurement of the Project will remain a significant resource issue during the duration of this plan. The other main financial 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.

**Environment & Regulatory Services Division**

**Extracts for Safer Halton PPB**

**Service Objectives/Milestones/Performance Indicators: 2011 – 2014**

**Draft**

<b>Corporate Priority</b>	<b>A Safer Halton</b>					
<b>Service Objective: EAR 5</b>	<b>To undertake actions to maintain a clean, safe and attractive borough.</b>					
Key Milestone(s) (11 – 12)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Develop Action Plans and Protocols with External Agencies, to effectively prevent and tackle a range of waste and environmental offences <b>March 2012.</b></i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to review and assess the effectiveness of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Strategy <b>March 2012.</b></i></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (12 – 13)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continue to review, and implement actions to meet, the commitments of the Council's Action Plans and Joint Protocols. <b>March 2013.</b></i></li> <li>• <i>Continue to review and assess the effectiveness of the Council's Environmental Enforcement Strategy <b>March 2013.</b></i></li> </ul>					
Key Milestone(s) (13 – 14)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Continue to review, and implement actions to meet, the commitments of the Council's Action Plans and Joint Protocols. <b>March 2014.</b></i></li> <li>• <i>Review and update as necessary the Council's Environmental Enforcement Strategy and policies <b>March 2014.</b></i></li> </ul>					
<b>Risk Assessment</b>	<b>Initial</b>	Medium	<b>Responsible Officer</b>	Divisional Manager Waste & Environmental Improvement	<b>Linked Indicators</b>	NI 195 & 196
	<b>Residual</b>	Medium				

Ref <sup>1</sup>	Description	Halton 09/ 10 Actual	Halton 10/11 Target	Halton 10/11 Actual	Halton Targets		
					11/12	12/13	13/14

### Service Delivery

NI 184	Food establishments in the area which are broadly compliant with food hygiene law	84%	72%		75%	75%	75%
NI 190	Achievement in meeting standards for the control system for animal health	LEVEL 1	LEVEL 1		LEVEL2	LEVEL2	LEVEL2

Ref	Description	Halton 09/ 10 Actual	Halton 10/11 Target	Halton 10/11 Actual	Halton Targets		
					11/12	12/13	13/14

### Quality

<i>NI 182</i>	Satisfaction of business with local authority regulation services	82%	80%		80%	80%	80%
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<sup>1</sup> Key Indicators are identified by an **underlined reference in bold type**.