



**The Sustainable Community
Strategy for Halton
2011 - 2016**

**Full Year Progress Report
01st April – 31st March 2012**

**Document Contact
(Halton Borough
Council)**

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This report provides a summary of progress in relation to the achievement of targets within Halton’s Sustainable Community Strategy 2011 - 2016.

It provides both a snapshot of performance for the period 01st April 2011 to 31st March 2012 and a projection of expected levels of performance to the year-end.

The following symbols have been used to illustrate current performance as against the 2011 – 12 targets and as against performance for the same period last year.

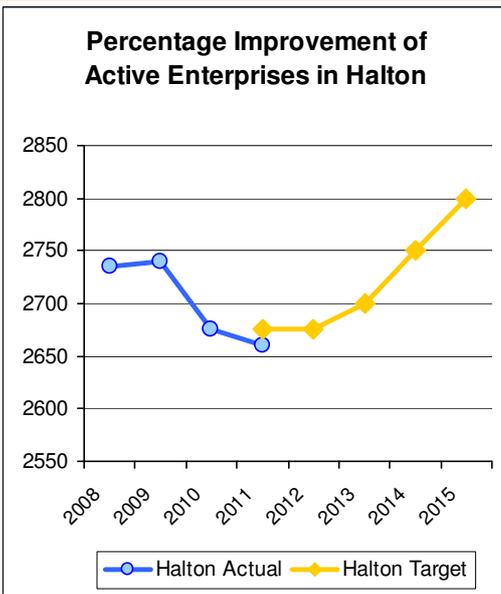
	Target is likely to be achieved or exceeded.		Current performance is better than this time last year
	The achievement of the target is uncertain at this stage		Current performance is the same as this time last year
	Target is highly unlikely to be / will not be achieved.		Current performance is worse than this time last year

Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Page	Ref	Descriptor	2011 / 12 Target	Direction of travel
4	ELS 1	Increase the number of active enterprises within the Borough (NEW 2011)		
6	ELS 2	Increase the proportion of business diversity (NEW 2011)		
9	ELS 3	Increase the number of people classed as self-employed (NEW 2011)		
10	ELS 4	Reduce the proportion of people with no qualifications		
12	ELS 5	Increase the percentage of people achieving NVQ Level 4 and above (Revised NI 165)		
14	ELS 6	Increase the percentage of adults using a library (NI 9)	Placeholder 2012/13	N/A
15	ELS 7	Reduce the percentage of people registered unemployed and seeking employment (JSA claimants) (NI 152)		
18	ELS 8	Reduce the percentage of the working age population claiming out of work benefits (Revised measure)		
20	ELS 9	Increase the gross weekly earnings by residents (NI166)		
21	ELS 10	Increase the number of residents accessing welfare rights/ debt advice at a casework level (Local Measure) a) Debt b) Welfare Rights		

SCS / ELS1

Increase the number of active enterprises within the Borough (New measure)



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
2675	2675	2675	2660		

Data Commentary:

Used to show growth of active enterprises within the Borough.

Information from: (table B1.1)
<http://ons.gov.uk> at March 2011 and Nomis website 2008 & 2009 data

Targets based on current information and subject to known funding level. Targets will require review should funding or priorities be changed.

Performance Commentary:

A decline in the number of active enterprises was noted in the year to March 2011 of 15 active enterprises. Business closures were noted in the following sectors – Production, Construction, Accommodation and food services with active enterprises established in Retail, Education, Health and Information and Communication sectors.

However, in the twelve months to March 31 2012 Halton Borough Council Enterprise Team facilitated the creation of 97 new start businesses. In the same period the Business Improvement & Growth (BIG) Team facilitated either the expansion or relocation of 180 companies. In total, the activities of the Enterprise Team and the Business Improvement and Growth Team contributed to the creation of 287 jobs in 2011/12. In light of this, the downturn in the economy, the direction of travel has been assessed as being stable until further data is available from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

Potential Changes to Business Support and Start Up Programmes in Halton

- Start Up Support

Business start up support will change profoundly in the coming year. The demise of the North West Development Agency (NWDA) has led to the cessation of the Intensive Start-Up Support (ISUS) programme which has traditionally supported the activities of the Enterprise Team.

Halton Borough Council, together with the Cheshire and Warrington local authorities and partners Blue Orchid, Dane Plus Housing, Warrington Ventures and the Princess Trust, have therefore submitted a funding bid under ERDF Priority 4 (to support economic activity in disadvantaged areas) to deliver a business start up service locally.

The programme will be delivered by Blue Orchid, who will also act as Accountable Body. The funding proposal aims to draw down £1.9 m of ERDF funding across the programme area. Blue Orchid can also utilise NEA funding in Halton.

Based on the current funding profile the programme will result in the delivery of 43 new start businesses in Halton in Year 1. Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise are also party to a combined Liverpool City Region funding bid under ERDF Priority 4 (Economic Activity in Disadvantaged Areas) to deliver a similar service in Halton

One of the strands of the DWP Work Programme delivery model is Enterprise. Halton Borough Council's Employment, Learning & Skills Division delivers the Work Programme on behalf of Ingues and A4E in Halton. The Division has just undergone a restructure which reflects an emphasis on supporting people to start up in business. A re-launch of all enterprise services will take place in the new financial year and will include raising awareness of enterprise amongst school children, business start up support and some financial incentives.

▪ Business Support

Business support nationally has changed profoundly in the recent past as the current government migrates business support from the public to the private sectors. This has resulted in the demise of a number of organisations and sector support bodies, for example NWDA and Business Link, who traditionally were active in Halton.

In 2011 the government awarded contracts to private sector consortia to deliver both the UKTI inward investment and the former 'High Growth' programmes nationally. The Business Improvement and Growth Team are, therefore, endeavouring to forge a strong working relationship with the new private sector providers to ensure that Halton companies are not disadvantaged.

The recent merger of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) and The Mersey Partnership (TMP) will have an impact upon business support in Halton as the new body promotes a sub-regional delivery mechanism for a range of business support programmes. Halton Borough Council are also a key partner within a LCR consortia, made up of thirteen organisations, that has submitted a funding proposal for post start up support under ERDF 4.2 across the City Region.

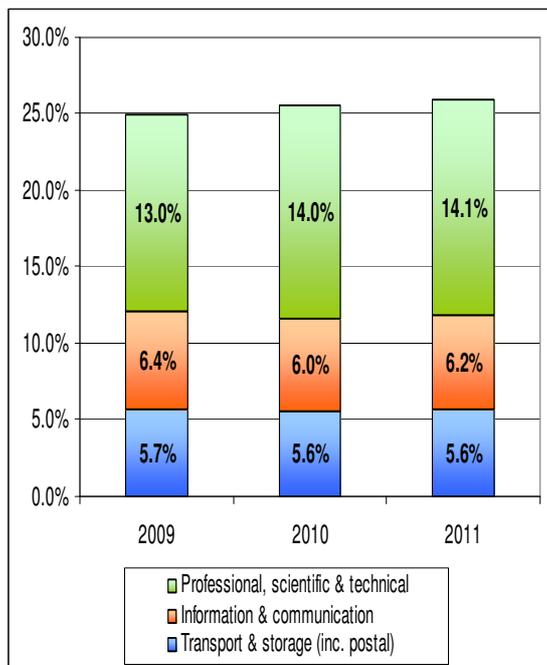
The Halton element of the programme will result in :-

▪ No of business assisted to improve their performance	146
▪ No of gross jobs created	115
▪ No of gross jobs safeguarded	60
▪ No of businesses with improved performance	94

The Business Improvement and Growth Team are also collaborating with Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise and, Daresbury based, Wild Fire Information Technology Ltd to develop a dedicated, bespoke, second stage business growth programme. The programme, entitled Total Business Manager, is currently at proof of concept stage and will be piloted with eight local companies during 2012.

SCS / ELS2 Increase the proportion of business diversity in the following sectors: (New Measure)

- Knowledge / Economy,
- Super port
- Low Carbon/ green
- Visitor Economy



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
25.61% (2010)	23%	N/A	25.94% (2011)		

Data Commentary:

The measure is in line with the Liverpool City Region priority agreed sectors for growth. Standard categories are used to classify businesses, which enables diversity of business within the local area to be measured. These particular categories have been chosen as areas of focus for growth and as representative of the four larger sectors within the local area. The following standard categories have been chosen as a proxy for these priorities:

- Professional, Scientific and Technical
- Information and Communication
- Transport and Storage

Data for prior years has been updated on the ONS website (www.ons.gov.uk). Targets for future years will be reconsidered in the light of annual performance and subject to known funding levels

Performance Commentary:

Over the 12 month period the three areas that are currently monitored, two have improved in sector size whilst the third has remained the same. The sectors for Professional, Scientific & Technical and the that of Information & Communication increased by 0.1% and 0.2% respectively. Transport and Storage has remained the same at 5.6%,

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

Knowledge / Economy

The Business Improvement and Growth (BIG) Team work across the Authority and with external partners to develop the Science, Technology and Advanced Manufacturing (STAM) sector locally. Specifically, the BIG work with colleagues from the Employment, Learning and Skills Team to address the latent need for skilled and competent employees within the sector locally.

A study has recently been completed by PEAT Associates who interviewed 120 of the 210 STAM businesses in Halton to ascertain their present and future skills requirement. The information from PEAT Associates and other studies will be used to influence the Further Education sector to modify their curriculum in order to ensure that local young people are able to access the training they need in order to gain employment in the STAM sector.

A PEAT Associates study has recently been formatted in order that it might be emailed to all STAM businesses in Halton. An event is also planned aiming to build upon the momentum created within the sector by the study.

The Business Improvement and Growth (BIG) have also developed a suite of web resources to promote science business investment and growth;

- www.wheresciencesucceeds.co.uk to provide an information resource for businesses in the science, technology and advanced manufacturing sector
- www.scipodonline.co.uk to enthuse young people about science
- www.sciencehalton.com to provide young people and careers professionals with an online 'careers route way' illustrating available support, opportunities and useful courses and qualifications

The Business Improvement and Growth have also made numerous presentations to local schools and colleges about careers in science and technology, worked with Careers Academies UK to promote the development of science, technology, engineering and maths (STEM) Career Academies in Halton at, for example, St Chad's Catholic and Church of England High School and supported Bankfield School's five Primary feeder schools to obtain PSQM (Primary Science Quality Mark).

The roll out of Daresbury Enterprise Zone (EZ) will have a profound impact upon the STAM sector in the coming years.

- Local authorities with an enterprise zone will provide discounts on non domestic business rates of up to 100% for every business within that zone, with the Government reimbursing the local authority the cost of the discount.
- Discounts are limited by EU state aid law, up to a *de minimis* threshold of €200,000 over a rolling three-year period, the equivalent of approximately £55,000 per year. The relevant local authority will be required to ensure that businesses do not receive greater levels of support.
- Each business will receive discounts for five years from the start of its occupancy in the Zone, providing it enters the Zone by April 2015.
- Businesses will therefore see a major reduction in their rates, and there will be no direct cost for those authorities who introduce the discount within an Enterprise Zone.
- The uplift in business rates receipts as a result of the introduction of the Enterprise Zone will be used to support the priorities of the local enterprise partnership.
- All business rate growth within the zone for a period of at least 25 years will be retained and reinvested in the local area, to support the local enterprise partnership's priorities

Super Port

The BIG Team work closely with the SuperPort Sector Manager from Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to provide detailed and up to date information about sites and properties within the Borough of Halton which compliment the wider LCR SuperPort portfolio of sites.

The BIG also work with colleagues from Major Project and the Employment, Learning and Skills Teams to facilitate the development of 3MG and associated sites and work closely with specific inward investing companies within the logistic sector who want to locate to Halton.

In January 2011 £9m was secured from the Regional Grow Fund to facilitate the further development of 3MG. Specifically, the Stobart Group of Companies will utilise £4.5m of the RGF grant for the reclamation of a heavily contaminated 100 acre site, which will enable private sector development to proceed which will ultimately create, in excess of, 1m sq ft (92,000 sq m) of warehousing space. The remaining £4.5m will be used for the provision of infrastructure to open up HBC field.

Preparatory works on the link road commenced in September 2011. The main link road works and the warehouse development were to commence in December 2011. However, with the potential legal challenge pending the developer has not yet progressed with the road or the warehouse development.

Low Carbon/ Green

The BIG Team work closely with the Low Carbon Sector Manager at Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership to identify opportunities for local companies in, for example, the growing off shore wind market

The Business Improvement District or BID programme at Astmoor and Halebank industrial estates has introduced numerous energy efficiency measures, for example an estate wide recycling team. The Business Parks Manager is also working with a number of agencies, for example Enviolink, Groundwork Cheshire and the major utilities provides, particularly e.on and Scottish Power, to bring forward Smart Grid, micro-generation and PV technologies at Astmoor and Halebank

Visitor Economy

The BIG Team supports the visitor economy in Halton through the management of the Tourism Business Network which brings together representatives from the Borough's hotels and visitor attractions to share information and develop activities of mutual benefit, the management of the web site www.visithalton.com, tourism blogs and four public information kiosks across the Borough. The 'Visit Halton' web site is currently benefiting from a major upgrade funded by the Borough Council and Liverpool City Region Local Enterprise Partnership

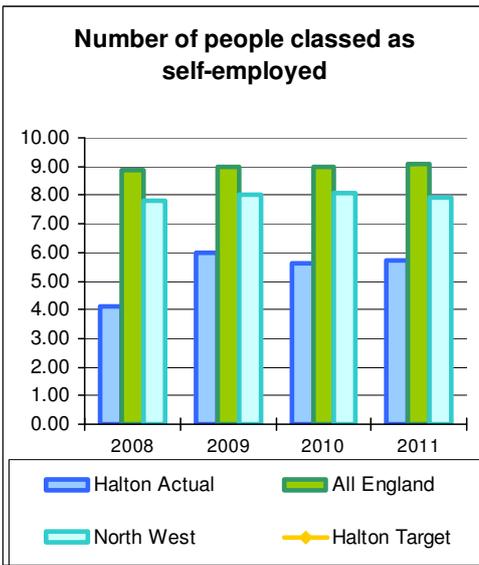
The Team also facilitate the management, in partnership with Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise, of the annual Halton Business and Tourism Awards. The 2012 awards took place on Friday 30 March.

There are action plans in place to maximise the benefit to the visitor economy of the construction phase of the New Mersey Gateway and Widnes Viking's first season in Super League.

The visitor offer in Halton also improved in 2012 with the long awaited Lewis Carroll Visitor Centre opened to the public. Also, the Hive Leisure Development, featuring a new cinema, bowling alley, restaurants, hotel, public house and very soon an ice rink, was completed and is open for business.

SCS / ELS3

Increase the number of people classed as self-employed (New measure)



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
5.6% (Jan 10 to Dec 10)	6.0%	5.7% (July 10 to June 11)	5.7% (October to September 11)		

Data Commentary:

To show that the authority is supporting entrepreneurship by showing how much Halton has increased the number of people classed as self-employed.

Source NOMIS: % self-employed of those aged 16-64.

Self-employed information for the borough is available from the NOMIS website via the annual Business Register and Employment Survey (BRES). This measure is reported between September and December for the previous year. Targets based on current information and subject to known funding level. Targets will require review should funding or priorities be changed.

Performance Commentary:

Self employment rates have remained stable in Halton at 5.7%, though falling in the North West from 8.1% to 7.9%. Though failing to meet the aspirational targets, this is an improvement since 2010, 4600 people being self employed (3100 Males / 1500 Females).

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

This measure links to objective 2 - to foster a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship to make Halton an ideal place to grow a business.

From April 2011 the New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) Scheme was introduced. This scheme is available to Job Centre Plus customers aged 25 years and over who have been claiming JSA for between 6-12 months and who move into employment with an allowance of £65 per week for 26 weeks, £32.50 for the following two weeks. Those new businesses that remain trading after 52 weeks will be able to access a low interest loan to be repaid in a period of 3 years. Blue Orchid has won the NEA contract covering Halton and will work closely with Enterprising Halton to support local people with starting their own business. Additionally, Halton Borough Council is included in a number of ERDF bids relating to enterprise and we are currently awaiting the outcome.

SCS / ELS4

Reduce the proportion of people with no qualifications.

<p>Percentage of people with no qualifications</p>	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
		16.8% (2009)	12.0%	12.8% (Jan to Dec 2010)	12.8% (Jan to Dec 2010)	
Data Commentary:						
<p>To show that Halton is fostering a culture where learning is valued this indicator would assist by showing the number of residents without any qualifications decreasing.</p> <p>Source: ONS annual population survey (latest survey Dec 2010) % is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64</p> <p>Targets based on current information and subject to known funding level. Targets will require review should funding or priorities be changed.</p>						

Performance Commentary:

Data is awaited for 2011 which will be published on 18th July 2012. Though not achieving the aspirational target set to be in line with the North West average, considerable progress has been made over the last 5 years reducing from 20.4% in 2006 to 16.8% in 2009 to 12.8% in 2010.

During January and March 2012, The Employment, Learning & Skills Division supported in the achievement of 43 Skills for Life qualifications, broken down as follows:

Literacy:

- 1 learner achieved Entry Level 2 Literacy
- 1 learner achieved Entry Level 3 Literacy
- 13 learners achieved Level 2 Literacy

Numeracy:

- 2 learners achieved Entry Level 2 Numeracy
- 3 learners achieved Entry Level 3 Numeracy
- 13 learners achieved Level 1 Numeracy
- 10 learners achieved Level 2 Numeracy

The Division’s performance this quarter is down on the previous year due to a reduction in staffing levels in the 2011/12 academic year. No further reductions are expected for the next academic year.

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

Links to SCS objective 3 – To develop a culture where learning is valued and skill levels throughout the adult population and across the local workforce can be raised.

There is currently funding in place to support those unemployed to attend training and increase their skills, of which those long term unemployed are most likely to have no qualification. Therefore target to reduce to level below that of England average given the significant improvement already seen over the past three years. The commentary below relates only to Halton Borough Council performance – data from other providers in the borough is reported to Skills Funding Agency; however, this data is not publicly available until 18 months afterwards.

Skills for Life and Employability programmes have been delivered in 17 different venues across the borough up to the end of Quarter 4. In terms of numbers of courses, there were 18 HEP Award courses, 5 Employability courses and 4 Tesco Pre-Employment Training programmes (336 enrolments) up to the end of Q4. Mapping of Skills for Life and Employability provision across the borough will be reviewed by the Halton Skills for Life Group in April 2012 with a view to identifying any gaps in provision and putting in plans to increase the numbers of Skills for Life opportunities.

SCS / ELS5

Increase the percentage of people achieving NVQ Level 4 and above (Revised NI 165)

<p>Percentage of people achieving NVQ level 4 and above</p> <p>2008 / 2009 2009 / 2010 2010 / 2011</p> <p>Halton Actual All England North West Halton Target</p>	2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
	18.3% (Jan to Dec 2009)	22.0%		21.3% (Jan to Dec 2010)		
Data Commentary:						
<p>Showing the number of people achieving NVQ Level 4 and above qualifications show that residents within the borough are reaching a high level of educational attainment. NVQ4 equivalent and above: e.g. HND, Degree and Higher Degree level qualifications or equivalent</p> <p>Source: ONS annual population survey % is a proportion of resident population of area aged 16-64</p> <p>Targets based on current information and subject to known funding level. Targets will require review should funding or priorities be changed. Data for 2011 will be published by NOMIS on 18.7.2012.</p>						

Performance Commentary:

HBC does not own this NI data, which is only available from Skills Funding Agency 18 months after learners achieve the qualification.

Considerable progress has been made to increase in recent years the percentage of people with NVQ Level 4 and above showing an upward trajectory of improvement.

The aspirational target has been set to narrow the gap between Halton and the North West average over the five year period based on current funding levels and initiatives in place.

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

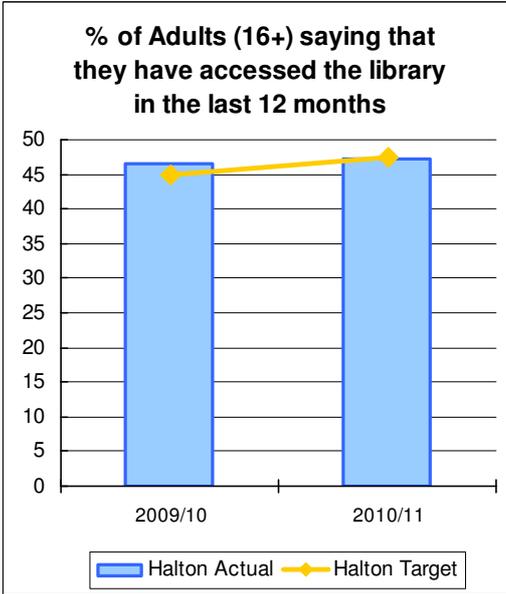
This measure links to SCS objective 3 – To develop a culture where learning is valued and skill levels throughout the adult population and across the local workforce can be raised.

There is a current emphasis on high level apprenticeships driven from central government. Research underway to determine what our local employers require in order to influence local delivery of appropriate level 4 qualifications.

Growth not expected to be significant for first few years due to time taken to achieve level 4. A growth employment area for Halton is within the Knowledge Economy (Science, Technology & Advanced Manufacturing - STAM). During Q3, a piece of research was commissioned to explore the future employment opportunities within STAM businesses in Halton and to identify any gaps in provision. The Science Halton research report was finalised in Q4 and shared with key partners.

The research identified gaps in STAM provision at levels 4 and 6. It is hoped new provision can be developed (in particular by Riverside College Halton) to meet the employment requirements and ensure local people can be upskilled to obtain employment requiring higher level qualifications. Additionally, the Government has allocated further funding to support the development of higher level apprenticeships.

SCS / ELS6 Increase the percentage of adults using a library (NI 9)



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
47.3	-	N/A		Placeholder 2012/13	N/A

Data Commentary:

CIPFA PLUS Survey, a public library user survey, will be undertaken in Autumn 2012 and then every three years. Data from this will be used to provide data around uptake of library services.

Performance Commentary:

No targets to be set against this data as the data source is no longer available. Performance will be reported first in 2013 and then again in 2016 and therefore this is a placeholder measure where the target will be to improve performance from 2012 to 2015.

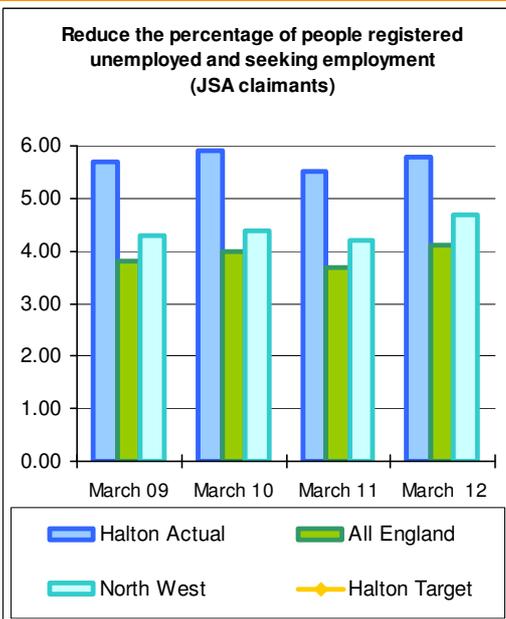
Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

To increase the percentage of people using a library an number of initiatives have been undertaken during the year. For instance in quarter 4 :

- To celebrate National Libraries Day the children’s book character Kipper the dog visited Halton Libraries. More than 100 families met Kipper over the week, with guest appearances at 3 library rhymetime sessions. Kipper was also spotted walking around Halton Lea Shopping Centre promoting the rhymetime and libraries to families.
- With partner organisations Kipper also visited 2 Children Centres – Halton Brook and Halton Lodge, where families were encouraged to join the library.
- Halton Libraries National Libraries Day events also included an evening with award winning author Helen Walsh at Widnes Library and an evening with astrophysicist Dr Tim O’Brien from Jodrell Bank Observatory and presenter of BBC’s Stargazing at Halton Lea Library.
- The service continues to provide support for 8 reading groups and launched a new online reading group in January 2012.

SCS / ELS7

Reduce the percentage of people registered unemployed and seeking employment (JSA claimants) NI 152



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
5.5% (March 2011)	5.5% (March 2012)	5.5% (December 2011)	5.8% (March 2012)		

Data Commentary:

JSA claimant count records the number of people claiming Jobseekers Allowance (JSA) and National Insurance credits at Jobcentre Plus local offices. People claiming JSA must declare that they are out of work, capable of, available for and actively seeking work during the week in which the claim is made.

The percentage figures express the number of claimants resident in an area as a percentage of the population aged 16-64 resident in that area. Data is available one month in arrears from the Office of National Statistics (ONS).

Targets based on current information and subject to known funding level. Targets will require review should funding or priorities be changed.

Performance Commentary:

During March 2012 the Halton Jobseekers Allowance claimant count was 4510 which was a 2.9% decrease on the February 2012 figures; and a 4.6% increase on the March 2011 figures. The March 2012 figures showed an increase in those claiming JSA across all ages when compared with March 2011.

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

Jobcentre Plus are active members of both the Employment, Learning & Skills SSP and SSP subgroups.

- Jobcentre Plus had 1202 vacancies in quarter 4, with a total of 3347 jobs which is an increase of 10.86% on the same period of the previous year.
- The Governments ‘Get Britain Working’ measures have seen an increase in customers accessing work experience leading to job opportunities (with in excess of 90 Halton residents starting Work Experience placements), volunteering opportunities, New Enterprise Allowance (NEA) to support those wishing to go into self-employment (with approximately 145 Halton residents starting NEA).
- There are currently 5 Work Clubs operating in Halton to support residents with job search, CV’s interview technique whilst looking for employment opportunities.

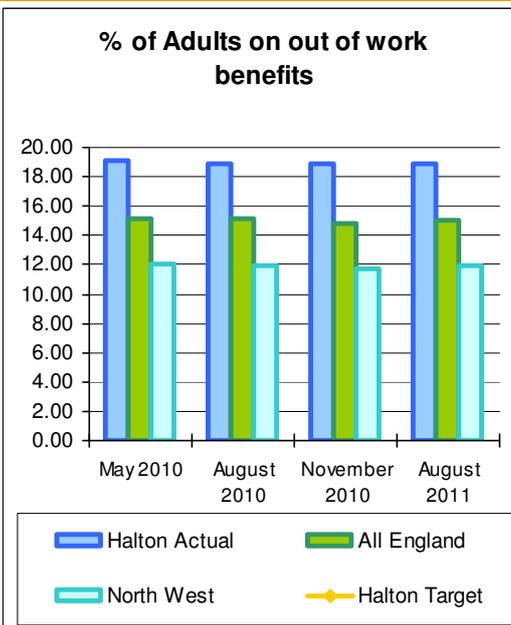
- There are currently 5 Enterprise Clubs in Halton working to support residents looking for self-employment.
- Halton are acting as a pilot area with 'Next Steps' are co-located in each of the Halton Jobcentre Plus offices offering immediate careers advice to customers.
- Jobcentre Plus are working closely with the Skills Funding Agency and their Providers to ensure that short job focused training opportunities are available to support short qualifications and an insight into occupational areas for Halton residents. These providers include Riverside College, Asset training, In Training and Scientium.
- Jobcentre Plus have worked with the LA to support the local transport bid, which in turn will support the local labour market through enhanced links to employers, in particular the industrial areas. Jobcentre Plus have been working with the NTT to design a transport questionnaire which is being dispatched to all customers in receipt of JSA across Halton.
- Good links have been forged with Prince's Trust looking at the youth agenda, working closely with Employment Advisers and the Work experience team to support the programme and those customers moving closer or into the Labour market.
- A youth employment plan is currently being drafted to support the Government's announcement of the Youth contract.
- During March 2012, Halton Jobcentre Plus hosted 2-weeks of Helping Young People Engage (targeted at 16-24 year olds in receipt of JSA) this fortnight saw the attendance of Providers, training organisations and support organisations attending the Halton Jobcentre Plus offices to inform Young People (16-24) of the services available to them.
- Jobcentre Plus are working with apprenticeships (contributing to the borough Apprenticeship plan via the Apprenticeship group) and Employment Advisers are promoting apprenticeships with employers that JCP are speaking with to support residents with apprenticeship opportunities.
- Jobcentre Plus support the NEET agenda, sitting on both NEET Groups to support customers into education or training.
- Jobcentre Plus are continually working with providers to support training requirements of the borough, a new provider is moving into a residential area to deliver training in the hub of the community focusing initially on up-skilling residents with basic skills needs.
- Jobcentre Plus has had a lead role in recruiting unemployed customers for the new development in Widnes. A relationship with employers, offering sifting application forms, setting up open days, and offering interview rooms. Within quarter Jobcentre Plus have obtained vacancies for a new shift with Mexichem.
- Jobcentre Plus have hosted 4 Sector Based Work Academies (SBWA) within Quarter 4 across Halton with Halton employers these SBWA resulting in 21 Halton JSA customers obtaining employment.
- Jobcentre Plus & Partners have supported the Tesco recruitment in Widnes. With 100 unemployed customers starting a pre-employment training programme. This training programme resulted in 98 of these

customers (who had been out-of-the Labour Market for over 6 months) being offered employment with Tesco.

- Logistics remain one of the top vacancies currently advertised in Halton. Jobcentre Plus have established links with the Road Haulage Association, Skills for Logistics, HBC and NAS to host an employer event on 22/05/12 targeting the agenda at recruitment needs, skills, qualifications and work experience opportunities.
- Jobcentre Plus currently issue on a daily basis a 'Stop Press' notice to all staff to promote local recruitment, large scale recruitment, learning opportunities and additional opportunities surrounding the borough.
- Jobcentre Plus are working closely with newly unemployed customers to support them with 'back to work sessions' to enable customers to have early knowledge of support, courses and up-skilling that is on offer to them borough wide.
- Jobcentre Plus predominantly support customers who are under 12 months unemployed, JCP will at this stage refer customers to the Work Programme.
- Jobcentre Plus is proactive in supporting inward investment recruitments, contacting local employers to actively promote services to support recruitment requirements.

SCS / ELS8

Reduce the percentage of the working age population claiming out of work benefits (Revised measure)



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
18.9% (March 2010)	18%	18.6% (May 2011)	18.9% (August 2011)		

Data Commentary:

Out of work benefits includes Job seekers allowance, ESA (Incapacity Benefits), Lone parents and other income related benefits.

Data is taken from the Department for work and Pensions claimant figures via the office of National statistics NOMIS reporting system.

Data is available quarterly and is released six months in arrears.

Targets based on current information and subject to known funding level. Targets will require review should funding or priorities be changed.

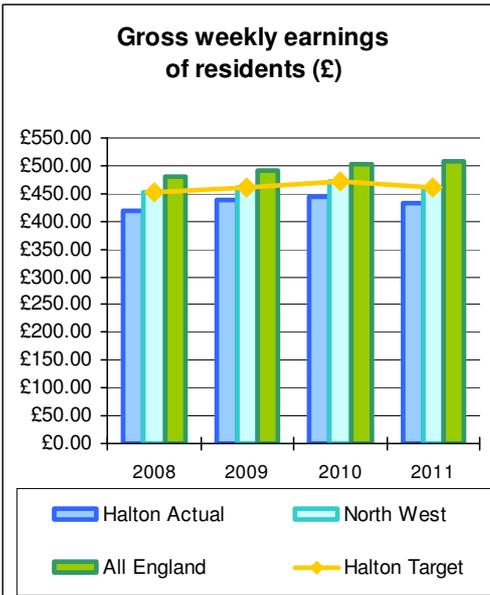
Performance Commentary:

In Halton, 18.9% of the working age population are claiming out of work benefits. The figure for the North West currently stands at 15.2% and nationally at 12.0%. Whereas as rates in Halton has stayed relatively stable over the last four quarters with a drop in May to 18.6%; this compares against increases for the North West from 14.8% (Nov 10) to 15.2% (Aug 11) and all England 11.7% (Nov 10) to 12.0% (Aug 11).

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

- Jobcentre Plus (JCP) work closely with all the Halton Children’s Centres to support lone parent activity. Personal Advisers are currently on outreach in Widnes Children’s Centres and this will once again role out to Runcorn in Quarter 1 2012.
- JCP have piloted ‘Group Sessions’ in 5 Widnes Children’s Centres to support lone parent activity. This has been well received and some Lone parents have moved into training\employment. 62 customers attended the group sessions, a further 23 were contacted by telephone as they could not attend the group sessions at the dates set. The group sessions also generated enquiries at the Widnes office about vacancies available. All of those who attended the Group Sessions had a NEXT Steps appointment. 10 customers obtained employment which was directly linked to the Group Sessions. The Group Sessions generated further enquiries from customers’ enquiring about the TESCO recruitment and this then resulted in 25 obtaining placements on the Tesco Pre-Employment Training and subsequently obtaining employment.
- Children Centres are in attendance at the Runcorn Jobcentre Plus offices weekly to engage with lone parents and families to offer the support required.

- Jobcentre Plus sit on the Advisory Board of the Children Centre's to support the Economic agenda.
- Incapacity Benefit Reassessment is currently under way and will be completed by 2014. Customers moving into ESA (Work Related Activity Group) will be assigned a named Personal Adviser who will support customers move closer to the labour market.
- Jobcentre Plus has a Disability Employment Adviser in each site to support customers who require additional support going into employment. There are programmes such as Work Choices which supports customers with highest support needs, and helps moves them into employment.
- Access to Work can support customers with equipment required to support a return to employment for customers with a disability.



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
£443.50p	Close gap with NW average	£432.30p	£432.30p (Dec 11)		

Data Commentary:

The gross median weekly earnings of residents showing an increase would show that people are able to maximise their potential and rise out of poverty.

Data obtained from NOMIS. The target is to close the gap to the North West average.

Performance Commentary:

All England weekly earnings figure saw an increase of 1.16% for 2010/11, whilst the north west and Halton both registered decreases; 2.37% (north west) and 2.5% (Halton). The gap between Halton and the region was virtually unchanged, widening by 0.1%.

The economy’s continuing sluggish recovery from the recession, and the Government’s deep public sector spending cuts started to impact in Halton; both directly by the start of reductions in public sector jobs, and indirectly by major spending reductions in the local economy by the public sector.

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

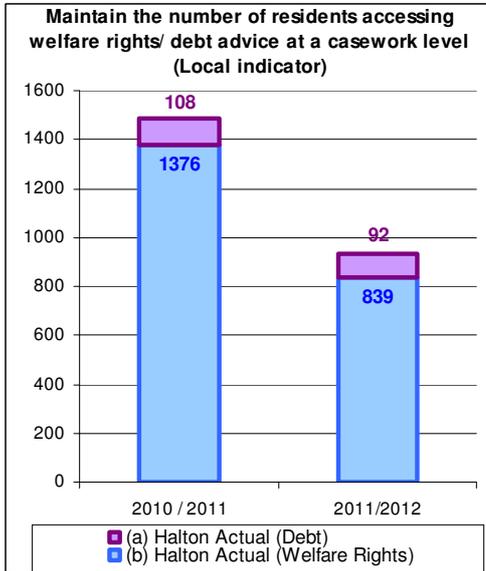
Economic Growth – Work to attract new employers in sectors of the economy likely to see sustained growth. Example of this is the emerging Enterprise Zone at Daresbury, already attracting a series of new companies to the Borough. A recent survey commissioned by the BBC identified Halton as the best place in the North West for business growth, placing Halton 13th out of 324 English local authorities for the proportion of businesses with high growth potential.

Maximising incomes - second element of work is to equip the local labour force with the skills, knowledge and confidence to compete for these new jobs, both in Halton and across the city region. The promotion of careers in science, technology and advanced manufacturing (STAM), through to apprenticeships and the work by HEP with new and expanding employers to maximise the proportion of new jobs filled by Halton residents.

Reducing poverty – the work of partners to maximise household incomes and lift families out of poverty continues. Examples include the Child & Family Poverty Strategy and the recent LSTF bid.

SCS / ELS10 Maintain the number of residents accessing welfare rights/ debt advice at a casework level

(Local Measure)
 a) Debt
 b) Welfare Rights



2010/11 Actual	2011/12 Target	2011/12 Qtr 2	2011/12 Qtr 4	Current Progress	Direction of Travel
a) 108 b) 1376	Baseline year	a) 39 b) 605	a) 92 b) 839		

Data Commentary:

This measure captures the number of people accessing a welfare benefits or debt advice agency and receiving a specialist casework service.

This is a numeric indicator, taken as a simple total which will reflect the level of uptake of specialist services to assist an individual to better their economic circumstances. To assist an individual to manage their income, both debt and benefits advice will be necessary and neither service in isolation is sufficient to address the needs of most individuals who need to access support. Much specialist welfare rights casework involves “in work” benefits such as Disability Living Allowance and Tax Credits and income maximisation.

Target is to maintain the performance from 2011/12 through to 2015/16. The Chart shows HBC information only to establish a baseline. Information anticipated to be supplied by Halton CAB in 2012/13.

Performance Commentary:

The demand for Welfare Rights and Debt advice services remains high and all services are at capacity. The number of advisers in large part determines how many people are assisted.

There has been a fall in casework figures from 2010/ 2011 to 2011/12 that reflects a reduction in the number of advisers. Proportionately the team have modestly over achieved in 2011/12. However, it is expected that if the number of advisers is maintained then the number of local residents given specialist help will broadly stabilise. There will always be small variations reflecting the fact that cases vary in complexity.

However, we have seen an increase in demand for specialist advice linked into the welfare reform agenda. This is especially from those who are receiving Incapacity Benefit and need to be assessed by Jobcentre Plus against the harsher criteria for Employment Support Allowance. This increase is essentially for more complex casework advice.

The welfare reform agenda is radical and due to gather substantial momentum over the next 5 year period. It is predicted that the demand for complex casework will increase further in both welfare benefits and debt advice and it may be the number of specialist advisers that determine to what degree this need is met.

Summary of Key activities taken or planned to improve performance:

This indicator measures the uptake of relevant advice services at a specialist level. It is necessary to draw a distinction between the provisions of advice via a leaflet, self-completed pro forma, or lower level tier assistance. This has a value but a distinction must be made between this and specialist work. This may involve as examples, financial negotiation for a client, court representation, a Debt Relief Order or appeal tribunal representation. It is not possible to gain a full picture of the advice sector with a single statistic and to be comprehensive would entail numerous performance indicators measures being measured and undue complexity. Commentary will be provided on key developments/ initiatives undertaken on a six monthly basis to provide further detail in monitoring reports.

It is therefore necessary to focus on a clear, easily measurable statistic, which avoids undue complications in definition. This statistic also largely avoids “double counting” which can easily happen with lower tier advice. Anecdotally, all specialist advice services have been working at capacity and the definition will illustrate reductions and increases in advice provision.

It is recognised that not all cases counted are equal in terms of content, but this does not matter because the indicator is measuring service access, and not being used as a method of inter-agency comparison. The statistics given have a value for comparative work within Halton, but external benchmarking has previously been found to be both complex and potentially very misleading.

This links to objective to maximise an individual’s potential to increase and manage their income, including access to appropriate, supportive advice services in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Also, the statistic provided will link into both the advice required to fulfil obligations under the Child Poverty Strategy.