

Directorate Performance Overview Report

Directorate: **Policy and Resources**

Reporting Period: **Quarter 1 – Period 01st April to 30th June 2012**

1.0 Introduction

1.1 This report provides an overview of issues and progress within the directorate that have occurred during the period.

2.0 Key Developments

2.1 There have been a number of developments within the Directorate during the period which include:-

- Performance during the period for processing Housing Benefit / Council Tax applications remains one of the highest within the Greater Manchester and Merseyside areas and has improved since the same period last year. Council Tax collection also remains high with the use of Direct Debit payments increasing to 71.1% at the end of June (up 2.3% on the same time last year. Additionally 42% of all payments made through the Contact Centre now use the automated telephony system.
- The Government has announced revisions to proposals to the Business Rates Retention Scheme which will see 50% of business rates being retained by the Council with the remainder going to central Government. The Council would then receive a Revenue Support Grant although the direct implications for Halton are not yet clear.
- Additionally, the Corporate Service PPB is presently considering how the £1.4m shortfall in Government grant, that will arise when the current national Council Tax Benefit System ceases from April next year, can best be managed through the introduction of the Halton Council Tax Support Scheme.
- The Efficiency programme continues to be delivered with an evaluation currently taking place following the implementation of revised Contact Centre and out of hour's telephony services.
- The 2011-12 financial outturn report was presented to Executive Board in June that showed a very successful outcome, with the Council's overall revenue spending being almost £200,000 below budget and 87% of the capital programme having been spent.

- During the first quarter period ICT services have been working on a number of key projects including:-
 - Windows 7 and Office 2010 roll out (including agile workforce)
 - Lync Telephony replacement for the MD110 Switchboard
 - SharePoint Intranet development
 - Cloud services and Virtualisation
 - Schools service development with a number of schools now fully operational under the new SLA.
- As part of the budget proposals and following the failure to reach agreement through negotiation on the removal of the Long Service Award Scheme and revised terms and conditions for the purchase of four days additional leave. 2,600 employees were issued with letters seeking their agreement to vary their terms and conditions.
- As a result of the positive staff response to this consultation work has been on-going to build the deduction calculations into Trent and deductions for the four days leave will commence with effect from August salary.
- The Council has been represented on a county level working group to develop a shadow Police and Crime Panel (PCP), which will exist until the PCP comes fully operational in November.
- Further information for partners in relation to PCP's can be accessed via <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/partners/police-and-crime-panels/> and Police Commissioners via <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/police/police-crime-commissioners/partners/>
- A new framework agreement for print services went live in June and the renewal of leasing arrangements has resulted in new equipment being acquired at no extra cost to the Council. Significant savings have been made as a result of less reliance on external contractors and high quality design and print work now being completed in-house.
- There have been some significant changes within the bus network during the period with fares rising on average by 6% and one operator increasing child fares by 17%. Subsidy has been withdrawn from 8 local contracts although, whilst not yet confirmed, it is hoped that at least one service will be retained and operated on a fully commercial basis.
- The development of planning and strategy documents continues with the Design of Residential Development Supplementary Guidance now being adopted and the Affordable Housing

Supplementary Planning Document being approved for public consultation.

- Consultation has commenced on determining the priorities that will form a foundation for Halton's Health & Wellbeing Strategy with over 120 attendees, including Officers, Members, partner agencies and members of the public attending an event in May.
- On 6th April 2012 there was a transfer of regulatory powers on 'Ordinary Watercourses' from the Environment Agency to The Council. There is the potential, based upon current and impending major developments, for existing resources to be impacted by the need for the authority to now deal with watercourse applications.
- Work continues, in collaboration with Warrington BC, to develop a new term-contract for highway maintenance and improvement works, with the potential combined value in excess of £70 M over ten years. Contract pre-qualification has now been completed, with invitation for tender programmed for July and contract implementation from April 2013. Additionally it is anticipated that works will commence in August on the construction of the 3MG Western Access road which will serve the HBC Fields development site.
- Three additional Variable Message Signs (VMS) have been installed to improve the information available to drivers. One of these is on A561 Speke Road near Liverpool John Lennon Airport to advise drivers of delays on the Silver Jubilee Bridge prior to the A5300 Knowsley Expressway.
- Ofsted have recently published new inspection frameworks across all Children's Service areas, significantly raising the bar of what is expected. Thus, communicating these changes to the frameworks was and will be a key area of work for the Performance and Improvement Division alongside the Strategic Director for Children and Enterprise; for instance, the new framework for the Local Authority Arrangements for Child Protection – effective May 2012.
- The Association of Directors of Adult Social Services (ADASS) in the North West have also made recommendations in June to develop Sector Lead Improvement for Adult Social Care through similar peer challenge initiatives, supported by regional benchmarking. Officers from Performance & Improvement representing Halton BC have been actively involved in supporting developments in benchmarking at a regional level through the North West Performance Leads Group. These recommendations have been approved by ADASS to be introduced from September 2012

3.0 Emerging Issues

3.1 A number of emerging issues have been identified during the period that will impact upon the work of the Directorate including:-

- I. As of 1st April next year the Government will be introducing a Benefits Cap which will place a ceiling on the amount of benefits income that will be payable. In Halton the DWP¹ have identified 108 families in Halton, mainly with between 3 and 8 children, who may be affected. The Council's Housing Solution service will offer housing advice as to the options that may be available to this group of families.
- II. Additionally, the Government, at the same time, are also introducing a size criterion in the social rented housing sector that will restrict the amount of Housing Benefit payable to working age claimants who under occupy their homes. Regulations are currently being laid before parliament which will allow the Council to request property and household information from RSL's² to establish who will be affected by this change.
- III. Recent accommodation changes have been made to the management and collation of the authority's paper records. As a consequence administration staff are now working at full pace to develop a new centre that will manage and begin to digitise the significant amount of paper records that the authority currently holds. This is a considerable task that will continue as we move forward into the current financial year.
- IV. Projects such as the deployment of the new contact centre software, Care First Server replacement and the deployment of enhanced storage and backup facilities will start within this new quarter.
- V. The provision to HMRC³ with real time earnings information (April 2013), the introduction of staged Pensions Auto Enrolment (May 2013) and changes to CRB⁴ identity checks (August 2012) will all require a review of employee data and associated processes including communication with staff.
- VI. A new Code of Conduct for Members has been drafted and will be submitted to Council in July and, following a recruitment process, recommendations for the new category of Independent Person. Training on the new code will be offered to Members and Parish Councils during the autumn.

¹ Department for Work and Pensions

² Registered Social Landlords

³ Her Majesty's Revenue and Customs

⁴ Criminal Records Bureau

- VII. A new intranet will be launched during quarter 2 providing staff with more flexibility and control over site content, making document management more efficient and help to improve internal communications across the Council.
- VIII. Health & Social Care Act - Considerable policy and strategy work is taking place to establish the structures and systems that underpin the reforms as a result of the Act – the NHS Commissioning Board, Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and the Commissioning Support Services (CSSs) that will support their work, the transfer of public health and Healthwatch. Work has also commenced on developing a Public Health Transition and Holistic Workforce Strategy.
- IX. The Public Services (Social Value) Act received Royal Assent in March 2012 and requires public bodies to give due consideration to social value within their commissioning framework. A policy response is being developed to achieve this in procurement activity.
- X. The Department of Health has published in June an extensive consultation regarding proposed changes to statutory Adult Social Care Data Collections known as the Zero Based Review (ZBR). The consultation covers both changes to existing returns and also proposals to introduce new data collections including the collection of health related data. The proposed new collections will make social care data more outcome focused, giving more information on how well adult social care is delivering personalised care and short term and long term care; to assess the effectiveness of the preventative and re-ablement services in delaying dependence and promoting independence.

Details of the consultation can be accessed via the following link
<http://www.ic.nhs.uk/adultsocialcareconsultation12>

A co-ordinated response to the consultation has been co-ordinated by the Performance and Improvement Division on behalf of the Communities Directorate and will be submitted on behalf of the Council. It remains to be seen how this will reduce the burdens placed on Local Authorities

- XI. On behalf of the Liverpool City Region, Halton has responded to a request for suggested improvements to the Strategic Road Network (Motorways) through the Highways Agency “Pinch Point” programme. These would be funded by a Government grant. The aim of the scheme is to ease congestion and improve journey times in Halton through smaller scale improvements. The response identifies 4 schemes on the M56 motorway at/or between junctions 11(Preston Brook) and 12 (Clifton).
- XII. Further bids, totalling £833, 000, have been made to DEFRA / the Environment Agency for funding in relation to flood defence grant.

This involves 5 sites in Halton including the repair and stabilisation of coastal armouring at Pickering's Pasture.

Defra will prepare an 'indicative programme' in August for consideration by the Regional Flood and Coastal Committee in October.

- XIII. The HSE has designated two more sites as high tier COMAH (Control of Major Accident Hazard), due to a change in criteria rather than a change in operations of the sites. COMAH off site plans will need to be prepared for these sites within the next few months. Once these are completed they will need to be tested.
- XIV. In relation to the Mersey Gateway the Project Team has been reorganised to form Core Dialogue Teams and administrative/technical support. Contract documentation including Demand Management Participation Agreement (DMPA) and Project Agreement (PA) were distributed to the bidders on the 20th April 2012 with a view to final draft tenders being received in November.

4.0 Risk Control Measures

Risk control forms an integral part of the Council's Business Planning and performance monitoring arrangements. During the development of the 2012/13 Business Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all key service objectives with high risks included in the Directorate Risk Register.

As a result, monitoring of all relevant 'high' risks will be undertaken and progress reported against the application of the risk treatment measures in Quarters 2 and 4.

5.0 Progress Against High Priority Equality Actions



There have been no high priority equality actions identified in the quarter.

6.0 Performance Overview

The following information provides a synopsis of progress for both milestones and performance indicators across the key business areas that have been identified by the Directorate.

Financial Management

Key Objectives / milestones





Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
FS O1	Report Medium Term Financial Strategy to Executive Board November 2012	
FS O3	Complete the Draft Abstract of Accounts for certification by Chief Financial Officer by 30th June 2012 . Publish the Abstract of Accounts by 30th September 2012 .	

Supporting Commentary

Both the medium-term Financial Strategy and Abstract of Accounts are on track to be reported / published as planned.

The draft Abstract of Accounts was prepared and signed-off by the Operational Director, Finance by 30th June 2012. The Audit Commission are now undertaking the audit of accounts based upon the draft Abstract. The final version of the Abstract of Accounts will be presented to the Business Efficiency Board along with the Audit Commission's Governance report on 26th September 2012.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
FSLI 05	Proportion of Council Tax that was due that was collected	97.11	96.00%+	29.20%		
FSLI 06	The % of Business Rates due that were collected	97.11	96.00%+	30.83%		

Supporting Commentary

The collection of Council Tax and Business rates continues to follow a positive trend and has increased over the same period last year by 0.06% and 1.59% respectively.

Human Resources & Organisational Development

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
HRLD O1	To further enhance the existing coaching programme - September 2012	
	Further develop the capacity for e-learning opportunities and undertake promotional activities December 2012	
	Promote and take forward the delivery of actions identified within the Corporate Peoples Plan March 2013	
HRLD O2	Further develop the HR Self-serve portal - September 2012	

Supporting Commentary



Accreditation for Coaching and skills training with the ILM has been undertaken and the team continue to deliver courses as part of the Learning and Development calendar of events.

There are a total of 23 modules available across the Council with 9 e-learning modules being available to Health and social Care Teams. Q1 saw the addition of Awareness of Alcohol and Substance Misuse and Autism Awareness with Domestic Abuse and Safer Recruitment modules currently in development.

In relation to the delivery of the Peoples Plan Qualification gaps have now been identified and the availability of courses has been widely promoted and responses are being awaited from managers. Priority will be given to level 2 courses that attract external funding. Additionally developments to the HR self-serve portal remain on-going.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
HRLD LI 1	The number of working days / shifts lost due to sickness (Corporate)	9.03	8.5	2.22		
HRLD LI 7	The percentage of top 5% of earners that are					
	a) women	58.27	50.00	54.33		
	b) From BME communities.	2.73	1.0	2.08		
	c) With a disability	0.61	5.0	0.64		
HRLD LI 8	No of staff declaring that they meet the Disability Discrimination Act as a	2.21	7.50	1.26		

	% of the total workforce.					
HRLD LI 9	Minority Ethnic community staff as % of total workforce.	0.89	1.0	0.87		






Supporting Commentary

Whilst staff sickness is marginally lower than the same period last year it is subject to seasonal variation and will increase as we move throughout the year. However it is envisaged that the positive year on year trend will continue.

There have been some marginal changes to the workforce profile during the period and at this stage it is uncertain whether the ambitious target in relation to employees meeting the DDA Act can be achieved.

ICT Infrastructure

Key Objectives / milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
ICT O1	Upgrade of the virtualization platform to version V6 – December 2012	
	Development of Cloud Application Distribution Platform - February 2013	
	Site to site dual Backup system - September 2012	
	Schools Cloud Services Trial and the development of a future primary trial site - September 2012	
	Interactive Web Services and SharePoint Integration – June 2012	











Supporting Commentary

The majority of objectives are at this stage progressing as planned with equipment for the upgrade of the virtualisation platform now on site and the test environment installed. The site to site back up has seen equipment installed at Runcorn with the project further enhancing the strategic management of the Council's data assets.

The interactive web services and SharePoint integration objective has been delayed by a month following the need for further intranet work to ensure branding consistency and it is now anticipated to go live during July.

In addition to those objectives above the Lync enhancement and Contact Centre integration has been delayed due to procurement requirements and is now scheduled for completion by December 2012.

Key Performance Indicators




Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
ICT LI 1	Average availability of the Council's operational servers (%).	100	99	100		
ITC LI 2	Average availability of the Councils WAN infrastructure (%).	100	99	99.9		
ITC LI 4	% Of all responsive repairs completed within 2 working days.	92	80	93		
ITC LI 6	Member Support: % of calls responded to within 1 working day	99	95	99		
ITC L1 8	Average working days from order to completion of a new PC	10	10	9		

Supporting Commentary

All performance indicators for the service are showing positive results with many at or near their ceiling of 100%. There are presently no measures that are showing cause for concern.

Legal & Democracy

Key Objectives / milestones







Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
LD O1	Secure renewal of Lexcel & ISO Accreditation January 2013	
LD O3	To ensure that all members have been given the opportunity of a having a MAP meeting March 2013	
	To induct all new members – by October 2012	

Supporting Commentary

All objectives for the department are currently progressing as planned.

Work on ISO internal audits to secure renewal of accreditations continues. Ten Members have had MAP meetings during the period with all 9 newly elected Members taking the opportunity to engage in the induction programme.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
LDLI 01	No. Of Members with Personal Development Plans (51 Total)	51 (100%)	51 ⁵ (100%)	48 (94%)		
LDLI 06	Members of Public attending Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) – For information	138	N/A	41		
LDLI 07	No. Of Questions asked by Members of the Public at Council Meetings (Council, PPBs, Exec Board, Exec Board Sub, Area Forums) – For information	20	N/A	1		

Supporting Commentary

The total number of Members wishing to engage in personal development plans this year is 53 with a total of 48 MAP meetings being held to date.








⁵ 5 Members have expressed a wish not to partake in this programme.

Attendance and questions asked at meetings are monitored for the purposes of quantifying one aspect of public engagement in the political process and every effort is made, for example through the timing of meetings, choice of venue etc., to encourage civic participation in the democratic process. In both respects the quarter 1 position is lower than that in 2011 – 12.

However it is recognised that opportunities for engagement in this form can be influenced by the nature of the subject matter within board agenda's which can directly influence public interest. The situation will be kept under review to ensure potential opportunities to increase participation are not missed.

Policy , Planning and Transportation

Key milestones

Ref	Milestones	Q1 Progress
PPT O1	Progress the Core Strategy to adoption October 2012	
	Progress the Waste Development Plan document to adoption February 2013	
PPT O4	Respond as appropriate to the Munro Review of Child Protection to ensure that the Children and Enterprise Directorate have effective quality assurance and performance management frameworks in place by September 2012 .	
	Support statutory inspections in CYP Directorate March 2013	
PPT O5	Review progress, revise SJB maintenance strategy document and deliver 2012/13 major bridge maintenance works programme. March 2013	
PPT O7	Commence the procurement process for the construction of the Mersey Gateway : <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bidders submit draft final tenders November 2012 • Issue invitation to submit final tender February 2013 • Deadline for return of key tenders March 2013 	
PPT O9	To deliver the 2012/13 LTP Capital Programme. March 2013	

Supporting commentary

The Core strategy has been modified following Examination Hearings by the Planning Inspectorate and this will be the subject of public consultation from July until mid-September. In addition examination hearings in relation to the Waste Development Plan in June with modifications required by the Planning Inspectorate being subject to further consultation in autumn.

The Department for Education (DfE) consulted during the end of Qtr 4 and beginning of Qtr 1 on the Safeguarding Performance Information as part of the Government response to the Munro review of Child Protection. Responses were co-ordinated by the Division in respect of the Children's Safeguarding Performance Information consultation, on behalf of the Children and Families Department and Halton Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB), submitted in April 2012 to DfE. The resulting performance information around

Safeguarding has since been published. The Division has redeveloped the performance management framework for HSCB in response to the published information.

A new framework for Child Protection, introduced in May, was widely communicated to staff in order to ensure that the authority's response to inspection remains fit for purpose. Work was also undertaken concerning the availability of management information required on day one of this unannounced inspection in advance of a further revised multi-agency framework being introduced in May of next year. The Division also supported the Fostering Inspection conducted 12-15 June 2012. During this inspection Ofsted graded Halton's Fostering Service as 'good' across all areas.

The SJB maintenance works are underway with the DfT approving the bringing forward £1.25 M of funding into this year to exploit the opportunity of maximising existing traffic management and scaffold access to increase the scope of works undertaken.

In relation to the Mersey Gateway project the competitive dialogue commenced as programmed in March 2012. A series of both commercial and technical dialogue meetings have taken place with the three main bidders. Bidders are on course to submit draft final tenders in November 2012.

The LTP works are progressing as planned with first phase footway reconstructions and a pedestrian crossing scheme at Warrington Road and cycle route improvement at west Bank being completed in the quarter. Additionally preliminary design of sustainable transport and highway improvements has been completed with consultation with Elected Members and residents being planned for quarter 2.

Key Performance Indicators

Ref	Measure	11 / 12 Actual	12 / 13 Target	Q1 Actual	Q1 Progress	Direction of travel
PPT LI 07	Processing of planning applications (major / other % < 13 wks / minor % < 8 weeks)					
	a) 'major' applications	25	60	14		
	b) 'minor' applications	34	80	36		
	c) 'other' applications	55	80	73		
PPTLI 07	To ensure a 5 year rolling supply of housing land available for 2,000 homes over 5 years (%)	128.8%	100%	N/A		
PPT LI 28	No. of passengers on community based accessible transport	253,682	267,000	68,529		
PPT LI 31	Local bus passenger journeys originating in the authority area in one year (000's)	6,060	6,200	1,383		
PPT LI 16	Roads and pavements % Dangerous damage repaired within 24 hours.	94.4	98.0	86.8		

Supporting Commentary

Alternative methods of delivery in relation to processing planning applications are presently being trialled and the impact of these new arrangements will be monitored during the coming months.

The Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment is prepared annually with result published in September. The SHLAA 2011 indicated that there is sufficient land available.

In relation to bus passenger journey's there have recently been a number of marketing campaigns and increased fleet utilisation approaches and quarter 1 has seen an increase in numbers of 8% as compared to the same period last year. However, a reduction in routes and the number of supported services has seen a decline in the number of journeys originating in the area of almost 7%.

The repair to dangerous damage to roads and pavements undertaken within 24 hours has reduced since the same period last year. An investigation of the reasons for this downturn in performance for is on-going although it is suspected that this may have been caused by poor contractor performance.