

QUARTERLY MONITORING REPORT

DIRECTORATE: Environment
SERVICE: Economic Regeneration
PERIOD: Quarter 4 to period end 31 March 2008

1.0 INTRODUCTION

This quarterly monitoring report covers the Economic Regeneration Department fourth quarter period up to year-end 31 March 2008. It describes key developments and progress against all objectives and performance indicators for the service.

Given that there are a considerable number of year-end transactions still to take place a Financial Statement for the period, which will be made available in due course, has not been included within this report in order to avoid providing information that would be subject to further change and amendment.

The way in which traffic light symbols have been used to reflect progress to date is explained in Appendix 6.

It should be noted that this report is presented to a number of Policy and Performance Boards. Those objectives and indicators that are not directly relevant to this Board have been shaded grey.

2.0 KEY DEVELOPMENTS

During Q4, Peat Associates completed the 2008 Business Perceptions Survey with 239 employers. The report is now being assessed and results will be disseminated to the Employment Learning and Skills PPB and SSP.

3MG/logistics work has now resulted in the establishment of a 3MG 'Skills Offer' group with initial work underway in producing an Investors Handbook for the logistics sector. Additionally, Riverside College and Warrington Collegiate are working together to develop a logistics skills portfolio of training that they can deliver.

Two Skills for Life learners gained national recognition as part of the Government's Quick Reads campaign during Q4; one learner appeared on GMTV to talk about how she learned to read following attendance at our Skills for Life classes – she then went on to meet the Prime Minister. Another learner was interviewed on national radio about the same campaign. NIACE (The National Institute of Adult Continuing Education) were so impressed by the attitude and responsiveness of the learners, they went on to interview them for a bespoke DVD to be distributed

nationally to promote the Quick Reads project.

Jobcentre Plus has extended the contract for two more years as the Council is one of the best performing providers in the country. 172 job starts and development plans have been achieved against a target of 175.

Following success at a competitive tendering round, 3 new small value LSC contracts will commence in July 2008 and will run until 31.12.2010 :

- Halton Skills Boost programme will support the delivery of an integrated employment and skills system and will contribute to the Skills for Jobs framework. The programme will provide a short sharp demand led training or certificated skill intervention that will enable an unemployed resident aged 19 plus to access a specific job that has been offered by an employer. A total of £60,000 is available to support 50 beneficiaries;
- Halton Priority Sector Routeway will support the delivery of an integrated employment and skills system and will contribute to the Skills for Jobs framework. The programme will help unemployed people to develop employability skills that enable them to enter sustainable employment in growth and key employment priority sectors within Merseyside i.e. Public Sector; Port & Maritime industries; Logistics; Sport & Leisure; Retail; Tourism & Hospitality; and Enterprise. A total of £90,000 is available for the programme which will support 36 beneficiaries;
- Progression Pathways Programme is designed to be additional provision to the current learning and employment programmes on offer to 16-19 year olds and will provide young people with the abilities and behaviours needed for further learning & skills development. The programme will equip the young person with an understanding of what opportunities and support is available for them, develop their self-esteem and motivate them to develop themselves. The tender proposal was a collaborative bid submitted by the Division on behalf of the 14-19 Partnership WBL Provider Network. A total of £277,500 is available for the programme which will support up to 140 NEET young people

Since the successful Business Improvement District (BID) ballot results for Astmoor and Halebank Industrial Estates, progress has been made in implementing the Council funded activity in respect of each BID area. This includes the purchase of CCTV; SmartWater business kits, signage etc. With the BIDs live from 1st April 2008, the running costs will be met by private sector contributions.

In addition, there has been a significant amount of work undertaken in preparation for the commencement of BIDs on 1st April, including: the purchase, installation and testing of the BID software for issuing the BID Levy bills; new account codes; development of a constitution; and election of an Executive Committee for each area. The BID Levy bills were sent out at the end of March and are due for payment by 30th April 2008.

Extensive work is underway in support of the science and technology sector in Halton. The council and Mersey Partnership (TMP) have agreed to extend the existing TMP secondment in order to continue this work. Key recent actions

- R&D Tax Credits / Knowledge Transfer Partnership / GRANT funding information seminar organised with University of Liverpool Business Gateway, NWDA and HMRC (HM Revenue & Customs) (6th January). 50 people attended, and future event planned for late 2008.
- Advanced engineering / Instrumentation sector networking event organised with DSIC (Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus), Business Link, TMP, Halton Chamber of Commerce and The Heath (9th April). 60 people attended, with future networking event planned (Bioscience sector).
- Completed audits of:
 - Funding & investment opportunities for science & technology businesses in Halton
 - Links between schools, colleges, universities and businesses in Halton
 - Available science and technology vocational courses in Liverpool City Region (LSC briefed on results)
- Halton Science business compendium up to date (details on over 180 businesses). Ready for inclusion on Halton science site.

Planning is now at an advanced stage for the Capital of Culture Youth Event now named H2o8 that will be held on 12 and 13 July 2008. Invitations have been extended to the young people of Merseyside's other local authorities and other local authority twin towns to participate in what will be a keynote, international event in the boroughs diary this year. The main event will take place at the Stobart Stadium Halton and will be complemented by a series of support events at a number of venues in the borough in the run up to July. As part of the Festival 2 Superlambananas have been purchased and young people have been invited to produce a design for each. Over 350 young people entered. Very successful and good press coverage, including Radio Merseyside morning slot from the Brindley on the back of the SLB competition.

Coach Driver Familiarisation trip around Merseyside. Halton hosted 50 coach operators at the Everglades Park Hotel for an evening dinner following the Operators taking a Familiarisation trip around Halton and St Helens. Very productive, lots of positive feedback and bookings from operators already started coming in for attractions and Hotels.

3.0 EMERGING ISSUES

The Department for Innovation, University and Skills (DIUS) launched a consultation document relating to the future of informal adult learning opportunities. This is a key document as the outcomes of the

consultation will have a direct impact not only on the future of the adult learning service, but also on future funding for adult learning provision. The consultation closes on 14 May. As a service, we have contributed to a North West response and will also submit a Halton response by the deadline. The DIUS consultation is a key document as the outcomes will have a direct impact not only on the future of the adult learning service, but also on the future funding for adult learning provision.

The results of the Job Evaluation process are proving challenging in the adult learning service where the determined grade is noticeably less than the market rate. With tutors awarded contracts on an annual basis (depending on the level of LSC funding) ending in August, there is evidence that tutors are already declining work for Halton and gaining work elsewhere. Staff have lodged appeals and the impact of these will need to be assessed.

There is a Government Green Paper out at the moment entitled 'Machinery of Government'. This paper sets out the future of funding for 14-19 and post-19 provision following the demise of the Learning and Skills Council in 2010. It is intended that local authorities will have clear responsibility for the 14-19 agenda and adult learning will be funded from the newly created Skills Funding Agency. There will be an integrating of employment and skills agendas and closer alignment between the Department of Innovation, Universities and Skills and the Department for Work and Pensions.

The Economic Development Officer for Development (EDO) has been seconded to the Mersey Gateway Team for two days each week to help develop a relocation strategy for companies displaced by the Mersey Gateway development. The loss of the EDO will have a negative impact upon the Business Development Team's capacity to meet its performance targets in terms of investment enquiries and conversions. Performance targets have been revised down in 2008/09.

Consultants have been appointed to undertake a study of the current and future economic performance of the borough that will underpin the new Economic Development & Tourism Strategy (ED&TS). It is anticipated that a draft of the new ED&TS will be available for consultation in early summer.




Following the successful BID vote, a number of changes have had to be made to the role of the Business Parks Officer. The 3MG Business Grant scheme has been handed over to the Major Projects Team. There will also be a change in the delivery of the Widnes Waterfront Business Steering Group through a reconfiguration of responsibilities within the Business Development Team. The Business Parks Officer will, however, continue to operate the Business Improvement Area Scheme, as the project comes to a close in September 2008.

Cheshire Film Office: Halton and a number of other local authorities (Warrington, Vale Royal, Chester, Cheshire currently, Macclesfield and

Crewe in the past as well) put a small amount of funding into paying for a Film Officer for Cheshire. There are currently discussions, with the advent of 2 unitary authorities for Cheshire, regarding funding and the way in which Cheshire Film Office will operate in the future.




Vintage Rally. Work has now commenced on this years rally. Have insured through HBC Zurich insurance. Also looking at how this years event can be something different to reflect it is the 50th Anniversary of the Fair Organ Preservation Society.

4.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	20		19		0		1
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Good progress towards objectives and milestones, almost all (19) being achieved within timescales. For further information please refer to Appendix 1.

4.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER OBJECTIVES / MILESTONES

Total	0		0		0		0
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There are no "Other" objectives/milestones for this service.

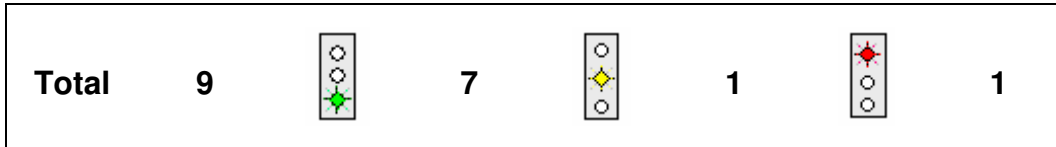
5.0 SERVICE REVIEW

The Skills Topic Group (ELS PPB) held an evidence day. This involved PPB members meeting with a range of people/partners including Riverside College, O2 employees, the voluntary/community sector and their volunteers, schoolteachers, tutors and learners. The topic will report in 2008/9.

The Procurement Topic Group (ELS PPB) held an evidence day to explore issues around how procurement can help to foster employment. A range of interviews and focus groups were held involving officers from across the authority who are involved with procurement.

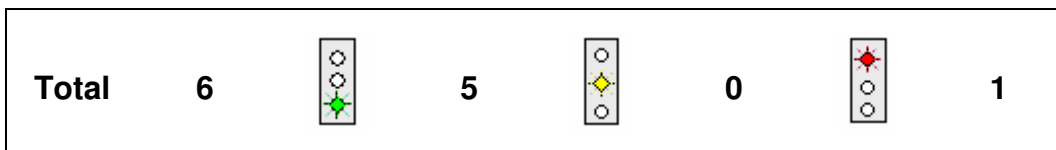
The Town Centre Management Topic Group (UR PPB) has been considering evidence regarding how TCM is delivered and financed in other local authority areas.

6.0 PROGRESS AGAINST KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Of the seven indicators that are measured over the financial year six achieved their target and one (jobs safeguarded) was awarded a red traffic light. The remaining two indicators are measured over the academic year and outcomes will be available towards the end of 2008. For further details please refer to Appendix 2.

6.1 PROGRESS AGAINST OTHER PERFORMANCE INDICATORS



Generally good performance in achieving the targets set. For further details please refer to Appendix 3.

7.0 PROGRESS AGAINST LPSA TARGETS

Appendix 4.

8.0 RISK CONTROL MEASURES

During the production of the 2007-08 Service Plan, the service was required to undertake a risk assessment of all Key Service Objectives.

Where a Key Service Objective has been assessed and found to have associated 'High' risk, progress against the application of risk treatment measures is to be monitored, and reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.

For details please refer to Appendix 5.







9.0 PROGRESS AGAINST HIGH PRIORITY EQUALITY ACTIONS




During 2006/07 the service was required to undertake an Equality Impact Assessment. Progress against actions identified through that assessment, with associated High priority are to be reported in the quarterly monitoring report in quarters 2 and 4.







There are no High priority actions for this service, therefore, there is no progress to report.






10.0 APPENDICES

Appendix 1- Progress against Key Objectives/ Milestones Appendix 2- Progress against Key Performance Indicators Appendix 3- Progress against Other Performance Indicators Appendix 4- Progress against LPSA targets Appendix 5- Progress against Risk Treatment Measures Appendix 6- Explanation of traffic light symbols
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Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER01	Promote diversity and competitiveness, in order to develop a modernised and more competitive business base to provide greater employment security for the Halton community.	<p>Implement Phase 2 marketing action plan by 30-3-08</p> <p>Forward Strategy for eHalton by 30-9-07</p> <p>Expand business Parks to another estate by 30-6-07 (dependent on funding)</p> <p>Present options for future of eHalton to Strategic Director Environment by 31-10-07</p>	   	<p>Completed. Marketing remains focused on science and technology. Next year increased activity will take place focused on logistics.</p> <p>Forward Strategy completed</p> <p>Widnes Waterfront Business Park Steering Group constituted</p> <p>Strategy detailing a timeframe and milestones for programme close down completed and ratified</p>
ER02	Develop sectors and clusters with a view to developing stronger business inter-linkages and stronger overall business performance in Halton	<p>Implement phase2 sector plans for tourism, science and chemicals – by 31-3-08</p> <p>Facilitate the development of Daresbury Science and Innovation Campus</p>	 	<p>Draft Halton Science Strategy and Action Plan completed for consultation</p> <p>The BDT are fully engaged with the DSIC Master Planning exercise</p>

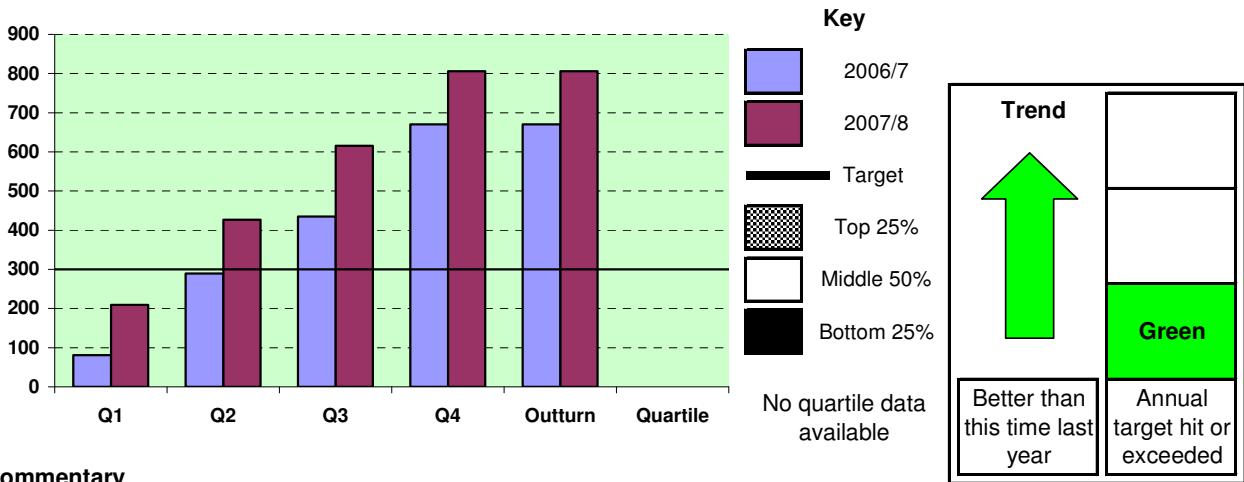
Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER03	Foster enterprise and entrepreneurship in order to develop an enterprise culture that encourages people to consider starting a business and give new ventures every chance of success.	<p>Explore on-line enterprise game by 30-9-07</p> <p>Establish Halton Enterprise Island pilot by 30-9-07</p> <p>Develop LEGI bid by 31-3-08 (subject to round three taking place)</p>	  	<p>Halton EBP developed two new versions of the Game, attracting funding to launch a Maritime version in September 2007 and a primary school version launched in November 2007. The on-line version is considered viable and will be developed during the next phase.</p> <p>The Enterprise Halton Challenge Competition 2007 was a great success, attracting 7 new business ideas of all whom received business advice and help with developing a business plan. A 2008 Enterprise Challenge Competition is planned.</p> <p>The government has announced that LEGI has been withdrawn and along with NRF has been replaced by the Working Neighbourhood Fund. The Council has received an allocation of WNF for 2008/9 – 2010/11. A request to support enterprise development via the WNF Area Based Grant has been submitted to the LSP.</p>

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
ER04	Reduce unemployment and increase employment by equipping people with the basic skills and assisting them to secure employment	<p>Review Basic Skills Strategy by 30-9-07</p> <p>Outreach pilot programme to be evaluated by 31-12-2007</p> <p>Deliver JCP co-finance contracts by 31-3-2008</p> <p>Deliver ILMs programme by 31.3.2008</p>	   	<p>Complete</p> <p>HPiJ have picked-up delivery of Neighbourhood Outreach activity and have developed a work programme of outreach provision for each priority ward. To date 164 new contacts have been made through the programme</p> <p>All JCP co-financed contract funding has been maximised and contracts ceased on 31/3/08.</p> <p>Stepping Stones (Halton ILM) continuing to exceed job outcomes. Steps2Work (PCT funded Mental Health ILM) progressing well.</p>
ER05	Raise workforce skill levels by reviewing and addressing the skills deficit in Halton	<p>Review TNA provision between 30-6-06 & 30-6-07</p> <p>Develop a Skills Sub-Group of the ELS by 30-6-07</p>	 	<p>Review completed. ELS SSP to continue TNA provision through its WNF core funding</p> <p>Complete. Focusing on logistics sector at the moment.</p>

Service Plan Ref.	Objective	2007/08 Key Milestone	Progress to date	Commentary
		SSP to consider customer satisfaction post LSC revamp by 31-3-08		There has been some feedback on the LSC's Skills Brokerage and Train to Gain services as part of the 2008 Business Perceptions Survey – and these suggest that employers are still not fully benefiting from these services.
ER06	Encouraging investment in land and property to develop assets that meet business needs and help to produce an attractive and prosperous Borough.	Commence Implementing commercial property plan by 30-3-08		The BDT are fully engaged with the Widnes Waterfront, 3MG, DSIC, Heath and New Mersey Gateway programme.
		Complete delivery of BIA scheme by 31-3-08		Lower than expected take up. The scheme has been extended until September 2008
ER07	Improving the environment and image of the borough including town centres, to appeal to residents, encourage visitors, businesses and investors.	Annual footfall statement by 30-9-07		Footfall counters installed and operational
		Finalise night time plan for Victoria square by 31-12-07		Risk assessment prepared and a draft Victoria Square Night Time Economy Plan produced

ECO RLI 1

Number of local people into jobs

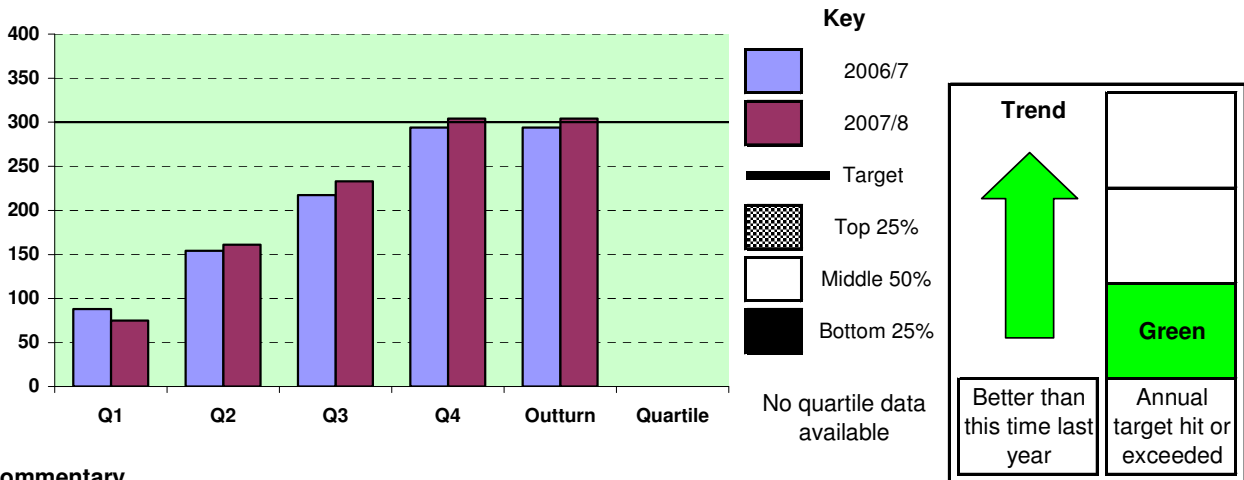


Commentary

159 HPIJ clients have secured work and 31 from the Employment Team - a total of 190 people into work in Q4. This means that the Division has helped a total of 806 residents into jobs during the year. However, the Jobcentre Plus funded employment contracts that terminated on 31/3/2008 will have a negative impact on future job outputs.

ECO RLI 5

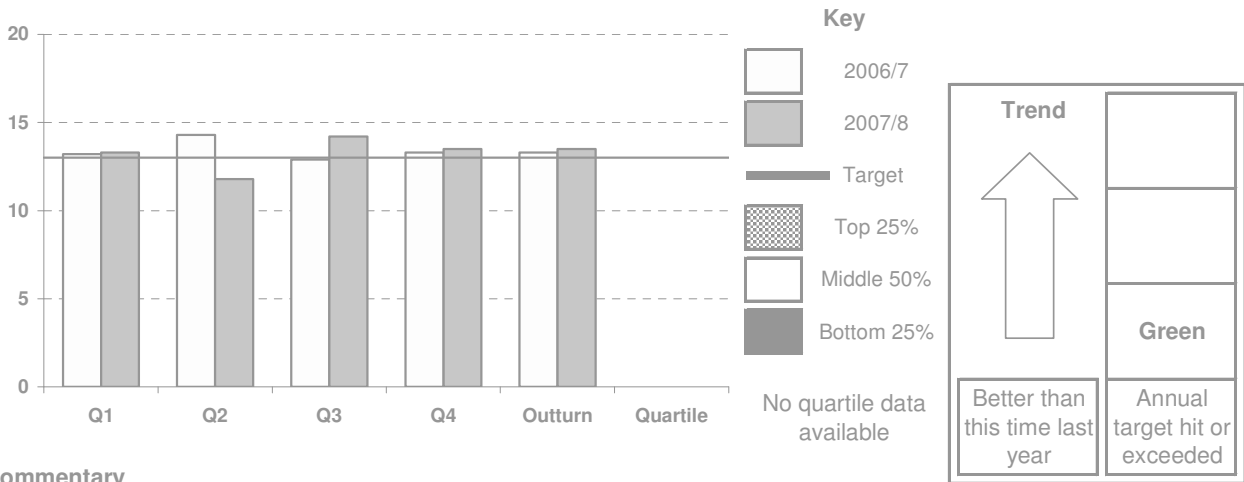
Number of inward investment enquiries per annum



Commentary

Although the target has been achieved there has been a substantial slow down in the number of enquiries received during the last two months. This slow down is anticipated to continue into 2008-09 as both the credit crunch affects the ability to borrow funds, and the new empty property rules for business rates will affect the property development market, especially the speculative market.

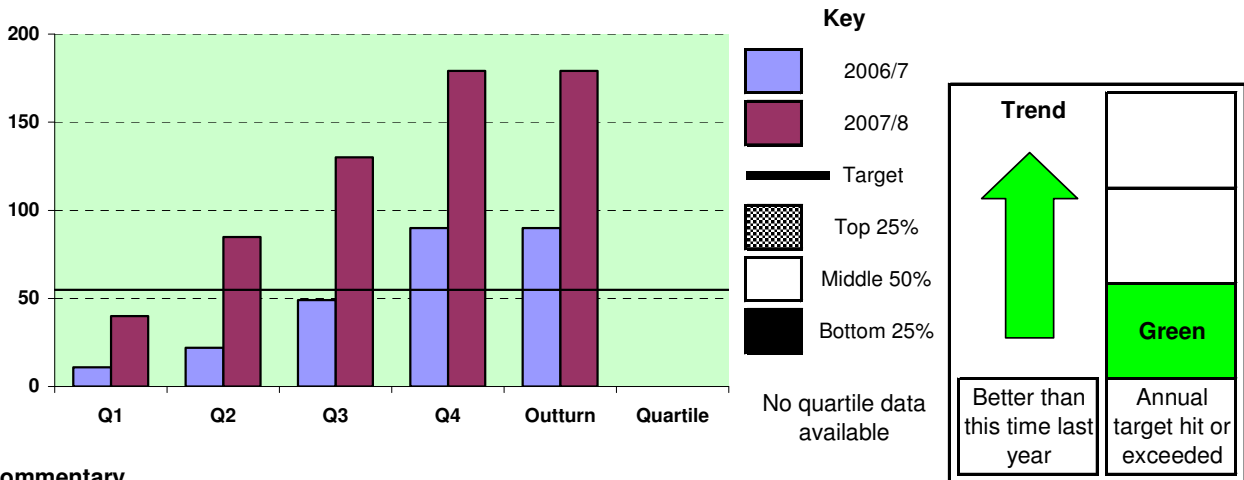
ECO RLI 6 **Inward investment enquiry conversion rate**



Commentary

Although the target has been achieved there has been a substantial slow down in the number of conversions achieved during the last two months. This slow down is anticipated to continue into 2008-09.

ECO RLI 2 **Number of local people with disabilities into permitted/paid work**

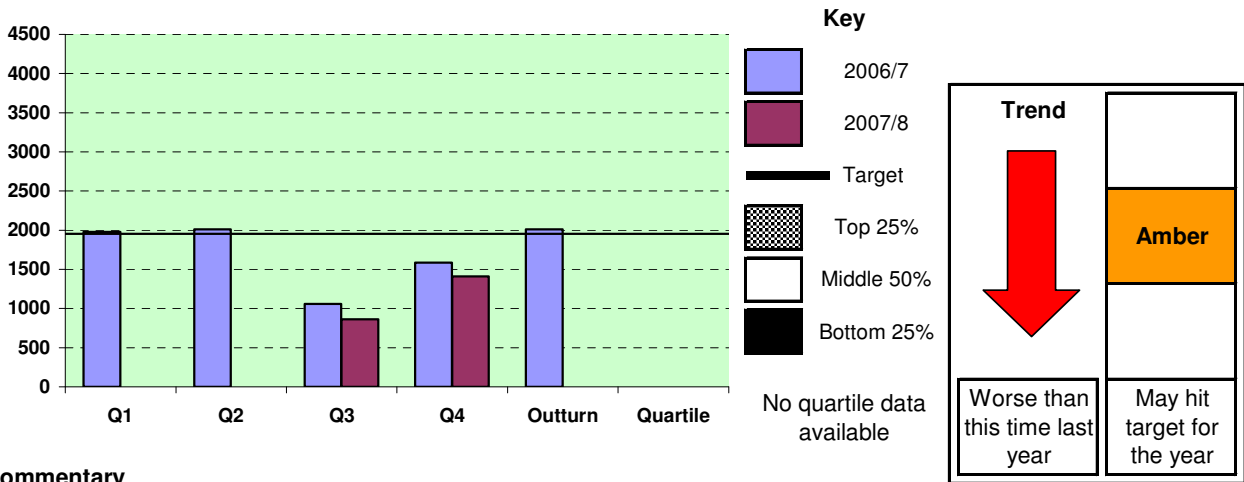


Commentary

HPIJ have supported 29 residents and 16 people into paid/permitted work from the Employment Team, a total of 49 people with disabilities into work during Q4 and 179 during the year.

ECO RLI 3

Number of learners accessing adult learning provision (by end of July) - academic year

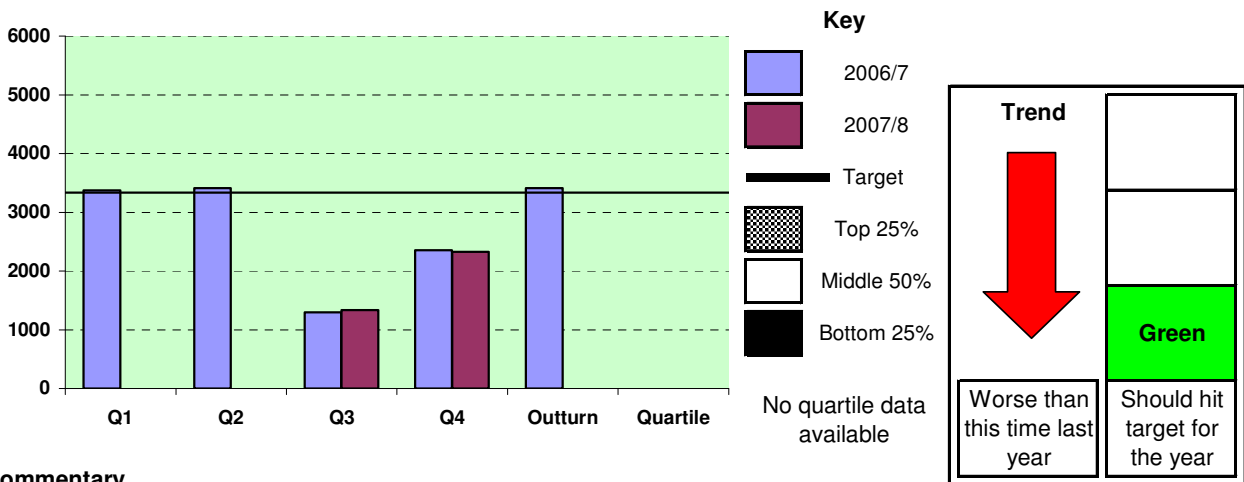


Commentary

Q4 represents the spring term January to March 2008. Compared to Q4 in previous years, learner numbers are fewer (Q4 in 2006/7 was 1584 cumulative total). The most likely reason for this is the shortness of spring term. Normally, we have a couple of weeks after Christmas/New Year holidays to market the courses and undertake enrolments. However, given an early Easter, we could not fit in our normal 11 week courses. Instead, we had to commence courses in the first week in January and courses were only 9 weeks long. This meant that marketing of courses had to be done over the festive period. We expected learner numbers to be down - but were still pleased with the overall numbers given the circumstances.

ECO RLI 4

Number of learner enrolments (by end of July) - academic year

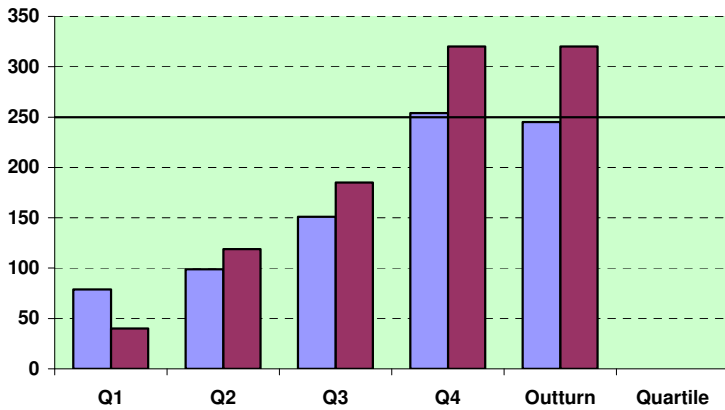


Commentary

Q4 represents the spring term January to March 2008. Compared to Q4 in previous years, enrolments are fewer (Q4 in 2006/7 had 2385 cumulative total enrolments). This is 56 enrolments less. As with learner numbers, the number of enrolments will also have been affected by the short spring term and the limited marketing window leading up to the start of term.

ECO RLI 7

Contribution to the number of jobs created, as a direct result of the service/s being provided



Key

- 2006/7
- 2007/8
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

No quartile data available

Trend

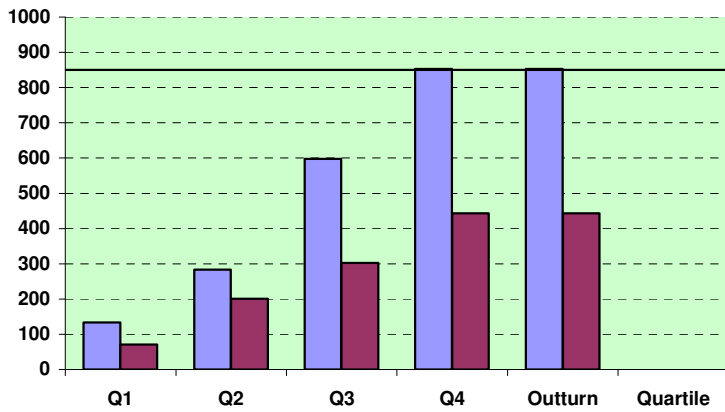
Better than this time last year	
Annual target hit or exceeded	
	Green

Commentary

The introduction of the Business Start Up programme in 2007/08 contributed to the over achievement of the annual target. Funding for this programme in 2008/09 is, however, still subject to approval

ECO RLI 8

Contribution to the number of jobs safe guarded, as a direct result of the service/s being provided



Key

- 2006/7
- 2007/8
- Target
- Top 25%
- Middle 50%
- Bottom 25%

No quartile data available

Trend

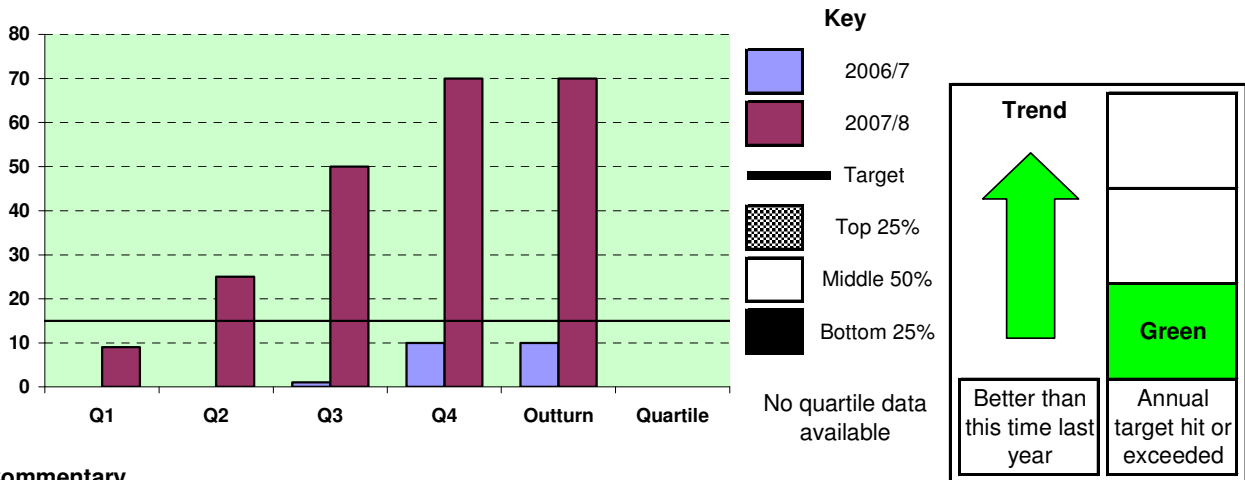
Worse than this time last year	
Annual target missed	Red

Commentary

Lower performance this year reflects lower number of redundancies announced in 2006 and early 2007.





ECO RLI 9



New business start-ups and self-employment starts





Commentary



Enterprising Halton supported 20 residents into business start-up or self-employment during Q4 - a total of 70 starts during the year. This is greatly exceeding the target and is a reflection of the impact that the new enterprise coaches are having.

Ref	Indicator	Actual 06 / 07	Target 07 / 08	Quarter 4	Progress	Commentary
Service Delivery Indicators.						
ER PI 10	No of day visitors per annum to the borough (Calendar year)	4.154m (2005)	+2% (for 2006)	4.261m (2006) Annual count		(NB reported annually , one year in arrears) 2005 was 4.154m. As such 2006 is a 2.5% increase.
ER PI 11	Footfall in the town centres	9.27m	9.45m	12.5m		Reflects final installation of additional counters. A new benchmark, covering all current counters, for the period January 1, 2007 to December 31, 2007 has been established. This will be used in subsequent performance reports as a basis for comparison.
Quality of Service Indicators.						
ER PI 12	Percentage of business customers using the inward investment services (including aftercare) expressing satisfaction with the services & support provided (Audit Commission ECR18e)	100%	82%	92%		Issues around performance of property agents as opposed to actual HBC services.
Cost & Efficiency Indicators.						
ER PI 13	Cost per job created and/or safeguarded to which the authorities inward investment promotional activity has made a significant contribution. (Audit Commission ECR18d)	£126.00	£142.00	£153.15		Slightly above target but still within acceptable parameters.

LPSA Ref.	Indicator	Baseline	Target	Perform 06/07	Perform 07/08 Q4	Traffic light	Commentary
10	Number of adults gaining a national Skills for Life qualification at level 1, 2 or 3 in literacy, numeracy or ESOL	19 04/05	116 measured in academic year ending 31/08/08	30	27		256 already achieved against the 116 target.
12	Increase the number of people who have been claiming an incapacity benefit into sustained employment of at least 16 hours per week for 13 consecutive weeks or more	18 for year ending 31/03/06	179 3 year cumulative to 31/03/09	38	15		07/08 performance is 72 against a target of 71 for the year. The target is on track with an additional 69 IB job retentions to be achieved by 31.3.2009.

Key Objective (Service Plan Ref. Only)	Risk Control Measures	Target / Deadline	Progress	Commentary
	<p>Risk Identified: The way that LSC will commission provision is to change in 2007/8.</p> <p>Risk Control Measure(s): To ensure all opportunities to secure funding from LSC (and others) to deliver provision are taken up.</p> <p>Risk Identified: Loss of NRF, New Deal, ESF co-financing and ERDF budget from March 2008.</p> <p>Risk Control Measure(s): Concentrate on priority areas. Bid for JCP/ESF monies. Secure future HPIJ</p>	<p>November 2007</p> <p>September 06</p>	<p></p> <p></p>	<p>month or so, with LSC, around funding from 1 August 2008. It is expected that funding levels will remain the same but not include a rise for inflation.</p> <p>LSC now procures much of its provision through a PQQ/ITT process. The Division has been successful at PQQ stage and has also submitted ITTs in partnership with E&E colleagues (who have been successful at gaining contracts).</p> <p>Business Plan produced and restructure pending the Division to concentrate activity in priority wards and on priority resident groups. JCP IWS contract extended to 30.9.2010 and new LSC contracts awarded until 31.12.2010. Small amount of WNF secured in 2008/9.</p>

The traffic light symbols are used in the following manner:

	<u>Objective</u>	<u>Performance Indicator</u>
<u>Green</u>	 <p>Indicates that the <u>objective has been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has been achieved</u> or exceeded</p>
<u>Red</u>	 <p>Indicates that that the <u>objective has not been achieved</u> within the appropriate timeframe.</p>	<p>Indicates that the annual 06/07 target <u>has not been achieved.</u></p>

NB In relation to those indicators that are measured over an academic year, the option of an amber light (indicating that it is either unclear at this stage or too early to state whether the target is on course to be achieved) is available to be used.