



HALTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

'Halton: Gateway to Prosperity'

**A NEW ECONOMIC AND TOURISM DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY FOR
HALTON
2005-2008**

February 2005

Inside front cover

A SHORT ECONOMIC HISTORY OF HALTON

The Borough of Halton was formed in 1974 and became a unitary authority in 1998. Its Coat of Arms is based on that of William Fitznigel, and bears the Latin inscription 'Industria Navem Implet' – Industry fills the ships. It includes the Daresbury Laboratories and is now developing as a centre for business services, and a fast modernising, increasingly high-tech, chemical industry, which forms a major part of the North West's cluster of chemical industries, including Ineos Chlor, the nation's major source of chlorine. It is also an area that is undergoing significant environmental enhancement in order to underpin a modern and improving economy and an improved offer for visitors to the area, in anticipation of the celebration of Liverpool and its environs as the European Capital of Culture in 2008.

The economy of Halton currently boasts more than 2500 individual companies trading successfully in a range of attractive, well-serviced employment areas. Internationally renowned names -such a Ineos Chlor, Guinness, YKK, Yokogawa, Atos Origin, MMO2, DeVere, Vistorm and ABB Ltd all have a significant presence in Halton, and BNFL has a headquarter building in the Borough. In addition to this SOG Ltd has converted the ex ICI headquarters 'The Heath' into a successful Business and Technical Park that is attracting major businesses from a range of sectors.

In the last five years 6,000 new jobs have been created in Halton. Fine chemicals, pharmaceuticals, food and drink, plastics, engineering, telecommunications, distribution and financial services are all represented in Halton, demonstrating an increasingly diverse economy.

Halton's history is the story of three towns astride the River Mersey-

Widnes grew out of a rural hamlet at a ford across the Mersey, on moors and marshlands. A few Roman coins have been found, the hamlets have Anglo-Saxon names (e.g. Ditton, Farnworth), and the Danes were here - Princes Ethelfleda (daughter of King Alfred the Great) granted land to the Danes on both banks of the Mersey. The Normans created a Barony of Widnes, which was later linked to the Duchy of Lancaster. The small rural settlement grew slowly over the centuries to the point where it became, in the eighteenth century "a pleasant river resort, offering rest and recreation to the jaded Liverpoolitan" on the banks of a River Mersey - which was rich in fish. Widnes became a centre for light industries connected with fishing and agriculture, plus watch-making, tool-making, wire-drawing, file-cutting and weaving of canvas for ships' sails, loosely centred on Farnworth Church. Then, in the nineteenth century, Widnes grew rapidly, as the St Helens Canal and rail development and the chemical practices (developed by Gossage, Muspratt, Robinson, Deacon and Hutchinson), together with local supplies of coal, salt, pyrites and limestone, created the impetus for considerable growth. Brunner met Mond, and scores of chemical factories were established. The sodium carbonate wastes were spread across the marshes. The town grew, gathering churches and sports facilities, attracting people from far and wide. In the twentieth century, it gained and lost a Transporter Bridge and had considerable image problems. More recently, the Widnes Rugby League Club's successes (and the new Halton Stadium) have brought much delight to the town.

Runcorn was really formed when Halton Castle – which is still there - was established on the Castle Rock, in 1070, by Nigel, the first Baron of Halton. An Augustinian Abbey was established in 1133 and removed to Norton in 1143. The Duke of Bridgewater's Canal was completed in 1766, and the Manchester Ship Canal in 1893. The small market town quickly became an industrial town – centred on shipping and chemical works, including a large company – the Imperial Chemical Company (ICI), and its office complex at The Heath. The Runcorn –Widnes Bridge (now known as the Silver Jubilee Bridge) was opened in 1961. The Brindley Arts Centre was added in 2004.

Runcorn New Town was designated in 1964 and a Runcorn Development Corporation appointed to contribute 'towards the relief of overcrowded Merseyside', on the back of post-war reconstruction and selective policies which directed major new industrial development into Liverpool. It set out a recipe for developing a New Town. In the late 1960s, coal mining, shipbuilding, leather tanning and textiles were in retreat and chemical and electrical engineering companies were the major employers. The plan heralded a major expansion of the ICI chemical plant, plus new industry around Shopping City/Halton Lea –the new retail centre for the New Town.

CONTENTS

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 The Strategy
- 1.2 Key Principles
- 1.3 Vision and Key Aims

2. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT – VISION AND GUIDANCE

- 2.1 Broad Context of the Review
- 2.2 International Context
- 2.3 European Context
- 2.4 National (UK) Context
- 2.5 Regional (North West) Context
- 2.6 Sub-Regional Context
- 2.7 The Local Context - HALTON

3. RECENT RESEARCH – AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 The Product Market
- 3.3 Sectors and Clusters
- 3.4 Business Start Up and Density
- 3.5 Unemployment and the Employment Rate
- 3.6 Demand for Labour and Skills
- 3.7 Land and Property
- 3.8 Infrastructure
- 3.9 Town Centres
- 3.10 Image and Perceptions

4. THE POLICIES AND ACTION AREAS

- 4.1 Introduction
- 4.2 Promoting diversity and competitiveness
- 4.3 Developing sectors and clusters
 - 4.3.1 Supporting and modernising the chemical industry
 - 4.3.2 Developing the tourism offer
 - 4.3.3 Science and technology
- 4.4 Fostering enterprise and entrepreneurship
- 4.5 Reducing unemployment and increasing employment
- 4.6 Raising workforce skill levels
- 4.7 Encouraging investment in land and property
- 4.8 Infrastructure
- 4.9 Strengthening the town centres
- 4.10 Environment and image

5. DELIVERY

- 5.1 Delivery Through the Halton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)
- 5.2 The Delivery Framework
- 5.3 The Private Sector Network
- 5.4 Financing the Strategy
- 5.5 Conclusion

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ANNEXES –

- 1. Halton LSP / BC – Urban Renewal Objectives**
- 2. Halton LSP / BC – Life Chances Objectives**
- 3. The monitoring framework**
- 4. Baseline contextual indicators**

GLOSSARY

THE EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

‘Halton Gateway to Prosperity’ *is the new Economic and Tourism Development Strategy for Halton*. Its vision is very much informed by two key policy documents - the Regional Economic Strategy and Halton’s Community Strategy

“The development of a thriving and sustainable economy”

The Strategy has **four key aims**

Enterprise and Performance	Fostering the development of enterprise culture and improving the performance of business.
Employment and Skills	Increasing levels of employment and improving workforce skills to meet business need.
Property and Infrastructure	Consistently improving infrastructure and enabling investment in land and property to create a supply of good quality business premises.
Environment and Image	Improving the quality of the environment and improving the Image of Halton.

The Strategy examines the evolving wider policy agenda including the recently launched Northern Way First Growth Strategy Report. Importantly it uses detailed analysis of the local economy from a number of sources to identify several key issues facing the Borough. In general, the analysis revealed a need for more action to –

- Promote **economic growth** (especially through diversifying the local economy and supporting chemical companies to improve efficiency, environmental practice and move towards fine chemicals and higher value added work)
- Encourage **entrepreneurship**, and **enterprise** in disadvantaged communities and increase the number of people going into business, and the overall productivity of small firms, and
- Encouraging **employment** – especially the employment rates of ethnic minorities, lone parents, those with the lowest qualifications.

This has led to a Strategy for Halton that will seek to -

- diversify the local economic business base
- improve the skills of the local workforce
- increase the capacity to secure jobs for those seeking work
- focus property and site developments to meet identifiable industrial and commercial property shortages, and
- target inward investment activities at business sectors/clusters that offer strong growth potential.

The Strategy identifies a number of specific policies/action areas that are needed to deliver strong economic revival in the Borough -

- promoting diversity and competitiveness
- developing sectors and clusters
- fostering enterprise and entrepreneurship
- reducing unemployment and increasing employment
- raising workforce skill levels
- encouraging investment in land and property

- infrastructure
- strengthening the town centres.
- environment and image.

Complimentary Action Plans will be published separately providing the details of the programmes and projects that will be implemented and which will be resourced by using partners' mainstream budgets and securing additional resources (by making bids as and when the opportunity arises).

The Halton 'Local Strategic Partnership' will be responsible for overseeing the delivery of the finalised Strategy. Progress will be monitored by the Halton LSP, through its Specialist Strategic Partnerships, and by the Council, through its Executive and Policy & Performance Boards. These will monitor the extent to which key progress measures are being achieved for each action and the overall impact of the Strategy on the economy through a range of contextual and performance indicators.

This Strategy should give the Halton economy a much-needed boost and help to move it on quickly towards achieving a more vibrant and balanced economy, and becoming a better place to live, invest and visit.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 *The Strategy*

‘**Halton Gateway to Prosperity**’ is the new Economic and Tourism Development Strategy for Halton. It sets out a range of programmes and projects for improving the performance of the Borough’s economy, with tangible benefit to the overall quality of life in the Borough during the period 2005 – 2008, for residents, businesses, investors and visitors.

It is informed by an analysis of relevant policy expectations at the European, national regional and sub-regional (Greater Merseyside) scale. Additionally, local studies of Halton provide a significant insight in to the Borough’s recent economic performance. The Strategy needs to be read in that broad context.

Accordingly, the Strategy –

- explores the global, European, national and regional context within which the economy of Halton functions
- examines the current and forecasts the future performance of the economy of Halton
- identifies the key factors which will influence the future performance of the local economy
- identifies weaknesses in the local economy that need to be addressed
- describes a series of practical and targeted measures (**Policy/Action Areas**) designed to provide an environment in which the economy can grow and prosper
- develops mechanisms for the delivery of the initiatives described within the document, and
- adopts a robust performance monitoring mechanism.

Strategy preparation has been lead by Halton Borough Council on behalf of the ***Halton Local Strategic Partnership*** that aims to create an inclusive and prosperous community. Whilst all sectors have a crucial role to play in developing local economies the Government places great emphasis on the leadership and enabling role of Local Authorities. Accordingly, the Local Government Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to **promote the economic, social and environmental well being of their area** and provides general powers to achieve this.

In the Government report ‘Productivity in the UK 4 – The Local Dimension’, it states ‘A local economic development strategy is not...just about a local authority allocating its own funding, but is a much wider community leadership role’ (page 29). The document goes on to emphasise the ‘need for local authorities to work in partnership in delivering positive economic outcomes’ (page 29).

A large proportion of the work which will need support and funding will in future require the involvement of the now emerging **Sub-Regional Partnership for Merseyside**, which will – it is envisioned – form an important commissioning arm for North West Regional Development Agency.

1.2 *Key Principles*

The Strategy places a strong emphasis on these over-arching principles-

- making a sound contribution to meeting European, national, regional and sub-regional targets to strengthen economic performance
- respecting the guidance given in the NWDA’s Regional Economic Strategy, and the advice on spatial matters as set out in the ODPM’s Regional Planning Guidance for the North West

- recognising the distinctive roles (actual and potential) of the economy in this part of England, and what is being done to develop the sub-regional area around Halton
- recognising the dynamics of the existing local economy and the scope to develop it further
- ensuring that economic growth being developed here respect the need for sustainable development of the region, as expressed in the region’s sustainable development framework (the NWRA’s Action for Sustainability), and
- giving people in areas of need equal access to the opportunities that arise as, and support that will enable them to maximise their potential.

1.3 Vision and Key Aims

Two key policy documents have influenced the development of the economic vision for Halton. The Halton Community Strategy sets out a vision for the Borough as a whole -

“Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough, where people enjoy a good quality of life...”

In its Regional Economic Strategy the Northwest Development Agency sets out a clear vision for the future of the region –

“To transform England’s Northwest through sustainable economic development”

By respecting the interaction of both, it will enable Halton to create a more thriving, diverse economy with modern premises and support systems, which will help to deliver a higher quality of life for those who live, work, invest and visit this Borough. The Halton economic vision is...

“The development of a thriving and sustainable economy”

To achieve this vision **four key aims** have been developed that reflect both the needs of the Borough and the priorities within the Regional Economic Strategy-

1. Enterprise and Performance

Fostering the development of enterprise culture and improving the performance of business.

2. Employment and Skills.

Increasing levels of employment and improving workforce skills to meet business need.

3. Property and Infrastructure

Consistently improving infrastructure and enabling investment in land and property to create a supply of good quality business premises.

4. Environment and Image

Improving the quality of the environment and improving the Image of Halton.

The Strategy describes how Halton will seek to-

- diversify the local economic business base
- improve the skills of the local workforce
- increase the capacity to secure jobs for those seeking work
- support local businesses to grow
- focus property and site developments to meet identifiable industrial and commercial property shortages, and

- target inward investment activities at business sectors/clusters that offer strong growth potential.

2. THE STRATEGIC CONTEXT

2.1 The Broad Context of the Review

Economic development and regeneration in Halton is, inevitably, influenced by the wider international forces, national policy and the regional view, as well as local factors and the political agenda at all levels. But it is anticipated that the activities of regional players, and sub-regional and local actors will have a profound impact upon the delivery of the Strategy over the next three years. The following section, therefore, describes the wider policy context within which this new Strategy is cast.

2.2 The International Context

The US economy is still dominant with China rapidly developing. Most economic forecasts for the global economy are currently fairly optimistic, despite recent nervousness about the threat of terrorism and the global economy seems to be recovering and beginning to grow again.

2.3 The European Context

The European Euro-zone is doing reasonably well and the German economy is no longer in recession. Further development of European transport routes and a Spatial Plan for the EU is anticipated. Whilst Halton presently benefits from Objective 2 funding (spent in accordance with a programme document and specific Action Plans) plus access to other more specific EU funds, the future shape of structural funding across Europe is developing new directions.

2.4 The National (UK) Context

Current UK economic policy is set out in the Chancellor's statements, Pre Budget Statements, the Budgets, and the recent White Papers on Competitiveness and Skills. In Britain, the economy is buoyed up by consumer demand - a product of fairly low interest rates, the current strength of the housing market, low inflation and fairly low unemployment rates. The Chancellor (Budget Report, 2004) forecasts growth of 3 to 3.5% in both 2004 and 2005, and predicting that inflation will remain low and stable. The Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development (OECD) has the growth rates slightly lower at 2.75% and 3% respectively.

However, high employment levels in Britain mask productivity that is lower than that of other major economies, such as the US, France and Germany. The Government is hoping for faster productivity growth, alongside higher levels of employment, to deliver greater economic prosperity and rising living standards in years to come.

The UK Government has identified **five key drivers of productivity performance** –

- **Improving competition**, which promotes flexible markets and increases business efficiency and consumer choice
- **Promoting enterprise**, through measures aimed at removing barriers to entrepreneurship and developing an enterprise culture
- **Supporting science and innovation**, to promote the development of new technologies and more efficient ways of working
- **Raising skills levels**, to create a more flexible and productive workforce, and

- **Encouraging investment**, to increase the stock of physical capital through stronger, more efficient capital markets.

Equally as important is the Government's view that the nation's competitiveness depends on maximising the benefits of the **Knowledge Economy**. The four pillars of the knowledge economy as based on OECD/World Bank research are -

- Institutional Regime - an economic and institutional regime that provides incentives for the efficient use of existing knowledge, the creation of new knowledge and entrepreneurship
- Human Capital - a well educated and skilled population able to create and use knowledge
- ICT Infrastructure - a dynamic infrastructure that can facilitate the effective communication, dissemination and processing of information
- Innovation Systems – a system that can tap into the growing stock of global knowledge, assimilate and adapt it to local needs and create new knowledge. Includes firms, universities, research centres, think tanks etc.

The **Lambert Review** of Business-University Collaboration (December 2003) identifies the biggest challenge as the demand side. Compared with other countries, 'British business is not research intensive, and its record in R&D in recent years has been unimpressive' (executive summary). That said, the report says there is much good collaborative work underway already, but much more can be achieved. The Government's **Technology Strategy** will facilitate business innovation and substantial resources have been announced for collaborative R&D and knowledge transfer networks.

The Government's view of enterprise is well set out in its **Creating an Enterprise Culture Discussion Paper (2004)** that identifies entrepreneurial activity in the UK lags behind the US but is virtually the same as in Germany. It cites that whilst attitudes to enterprise in the UK are positive, nearly a third of the population fear failure and 47% identified barriers such as regulations, finance and security. The Government is supporting *Enterprise Insight* and its national campaign to promote enterprise to young people. In its joint paper with France and Germany **Towards an Enterprising Europe**, the Government advocates public spending being directed to combat market failures and have a greater impact in supporting start-ups and high growth companies.

Full employment in every region (Dec 2003) sets out the Government's agenda for tackling areas of disadvantage and concentrations of worklessness. It is based on the belief that employment is the best route out of poverty and gives the chance for each individual to fulfil his or her potential. It identifies that much still remains to be done, particularly for the following groups –disabled, lone parents, ethnic minorities, people over 50, people with low or no qualifications and people that live in the most deprived areas. It advocates a policy approach based on three themes-

- providing active, work focused support
- ensuring work pays, and
- reducing barriers to work.

This has been further developed by the Department of Work and Pensions' five year strategy published in February 2005 - **Employment opportunity for all**. Amongst other things it heralds a fundamental review of incapacity benefits and integrated package of support for lone parents.

The Government's views on skill issues are set out in '**21st Century Skills – Realising Our Potential**'. This states 'we do not invest as much in skills as we should' (page 8). It sets down the need to have a more flexible workforce and identifies action in five key areas:

- Employer's needs must be put centre stage
- Raise ambition in the demand for skills
- Motivate and support more learners to re-engage with learning
- Colleges and training providers must be more responsive to employers and learners needs
- Better joint working across government and public services.

Tomorrow's Tourism Today sets out the Government strategy towards growing the tourism industry by £24bn by 2010. It focuses on four areas as the key drivers for the tourism industry: marketing and e-tourism, quality of accommodation, workforce skills and data. The **VisitBritain Framework for Action**, published in October 2004, is the output of a steering group of organisations from across the tourism industry that have a key role in customer contact. It is designed to identify the likely needs of tomorrow's tourism customer and consider the key applications and communications channels that will most effectively deliver customer contact services within the tourism industry.

The purposes of the Framework are:-

- Establish the broad strategic context for tourism customer services, including the existing network of Tourist Information Centres and local and regional call centres – and their supporting destination management systems
- Set out a vision for the use of new customer contact channels during various stages of the visitor experience
- Guide VisitBritain in planning its own customer contact services in England, in support of England and international marketing campaigns.

The Government's **Sustainable Communities Plan** sets out the step change needed to build successful, thriving communities. It advocates consistent high quality design in larger developments, and investing in a modern, effective transport system. Flexible housing markets are seen as being essential to a healthy and productive economy, and the Government wishes to encourage a better match between supply and demand.

The Northern Way is a further exposition of the notion of a new northern 'megapolis' stretching from Liverpool (through Halton) eastwards to Hull and northwards to Newcastle. It covers all three northern regions, seven of the nine housing market renewal pathfinders and five of the provincial Core Cities. The Northern Way is aimed at lifting productivity of the three northern regions and bringing the jobs, investment and quality housing that can create sustainable communities. Its key aims are summarise below –

- Bring more people into employment
- Strengthen the North's knowledge base
- Build a more entrepreneurial North
- Capture a larger share of global trade
- Meet employer skills needs
- Airports and Surface access
- Improved access to north sea ports
- Create premier transit systems
- Truly sustainable communities
- Market the North to the World

The UK Government also espouses '**sustainable development**' – which requires –

- Effective protection of the environment

- Prudent use of natural resources
- Maintenance of high and stable levels of economic growth and employment, and
- Social progress that recognises the needs of everyone.

Further initiatives from Government (which will be relevant to Halton) include –

- Dispersal of civil service to the regions following the Lyons Review. Although not included in the initial review, Halton has subsequently commissioned its own assessment from King Sturge and found the Borough rated in the top quartile for information support contact centres and back office functions.
- Encouragement from ODPM to local authorities to plan for growth in town centres and expand their boundaries to facilitate development.
- The review of the New Deal that is based on a national framework of rights and responsibilities with local flexibility, devolution and discretion.

2.5 The Regional (North West) Context

The economy of the North West is still more dependant on manufacturing and less evidently a knowledge-based economy than London and the South East, but the gap in growth rates between the NW and the UK has narrowed in recent years. Construction and property-based business services are performing well at the moment.

The NWDA's Regional Economic Forecasting Panel '**State of the North West Economy Report**' (October 2004) suggests that the North West economy has grown relatively strongly of late but the GVA per resident head is roughly 10% below the UK with the gap mainly due to low productivity. Whilst the unemployment rate has fallen, the employment rate continues to lag about 1.5% behind the national rate due to relatively slow growth in labour market participation. The North West has a relatively low proportion of working age population engaging in job related training which, may in part reflect, and account for, lower skill levels. The numbers of those aged 16 not in education or training (NEET) is a measure of people 'falling through the cracks' at an early stage in life, and is a key government target. At 8.6% of those completing Year 11 in 2003, the North West has relatively high numbers of such young people, despite slow growth since 1999 compared to benchmark areas.

More general information and guidance on matters that might have a bearing on economic planning within the region may be gleaned from the first tier ('big three') regional policy documents described below.

Action for Sustainability – *North West England's Framework for a Better Quality of Life* – originally conceived by the Government Office for the North West and later developed and adopted by the North West Regional Assembly – is a high-level umbrella statement which sets out a series of 'Headline Objectives', the most significant of which, in an economic development context, are -

- under 'LIVE' – to reduce poverty in the region, and
- under 'GROW' – to reclaim dereliction, accelerate regeneration, and optimise the beneficial use of brownfield sites in the region.

The Northwest Development Agency's ***Regional Economic Strategy (RES)*** – provides a framework for economic development in the North West. It is extremely important that the regional recipe is respected in order to ensure that the region's economy as a whole performs better. The RES has **five strategic priorities** -

- Business Development – improving business performance in the areas of innovation and enterprise; business start-ups; business growth and productivity rates; investment levels; the use of e-commerce; inward investment; management and workforce development; exporting and international trade.
- Regeneration – improvement in the provision of domestic and commercial properties with greater emphasis being given to economic inclusion measures for those living in disadvantaged areas.
- Skills and Employment – promoting life-long learning and dealing with skill shortages at all levels; increasing engagement in further and higher education; and providing a focus on ‘soft’ skills related to employability, communication, teamwork, attitude and customer care.
- Infrastructure – efficient transport and communications systems are seen as paramount to achieving the effective transfer of people, goods, and information to customers everywhere. Delays caused by traffic congestion and inadequate broadband provision in some areas is considered to be inhibiting business growth. Employment sites and their availability are also key to delivering growth in the regional economy.
- Image – the North West region continues to suffer from an image problem, despite the fact that there are many examples of success. The negative perceptions potential investors have of the region need to be addressed by focusing on the region’s strengths and developing the region’s tourism offer.

The NWDA has unveiled plans to devolve budgets and implementation for regeneration, business development and skills, infrastructure and image enhancement down **to sub-regional partnerships** that will develop sub-regional RES action plans. Work has commenced on developing a partnership for Merseyside that will gradually take over the central administrative tasks currently undertaken directly by the NWDA, over the next few years. The role of the local authorities will be critical in this initiative given the governments views as detailed in ‘Productivity in the UK 4’, “Local authorities can and must have a central role in shaping regional economic strategies and in leading and developing partnerships to take forward these agreed RDA strategies” (page 28).

Regional Planning Guidance (RPG) – the ODPM’s office published the finalised Regional Planning Guidance for the North West in (RPG 13) in March 2003. The Spatial Development Framework is the most important part of the RPG. It has four Core Development Principles (pages 15-22 in the RPG), which are relevant to this Strategy –

- Economy in the use of land and buildings
- Enhancing the quality of life
- Quality in new development, and
- Promoting sustainable economic growth and competitiveness and social inclusion.

It maintains a firm focus on delivering an urban renaissance, and policies on transport and economic development that will encourage significant development in the right places to benefit the region as a whole.

THE ODPM’S REGIONAL PLANNING GUIDANCE AND HALTON

In the RPG (2003) Halton is recognised as an area lying within the North West Metropolitan Area.

Primacy is given to the Regional Poles within that area - Manchester/Salford and Liverpool - and "the major strategic infrastructure which supports them" (Policy SD1), which arguably includes road and rail connections through Halton into Liverpool especially, and the major chemical and research establishments in the Borough.

There are strong messages for various towns in the region, including one for Halton within the RPG, as it calls (in Policy SD2) for "wide-ranging regeneration and environmental enhancements" to be secured "most especially in the older parts of the metropolitan settlements" and it lists five settlements in all – including Widnes and Runcorn (but also Warrington, Ellesmere Port and Skelmersdale). It goes on to require - in Widnes and Runcorn specifically - "very significant enhancements, in terms of image (improved townscape and landscape quality) and opportunities for a higher quality of life overall".

There is also a very specific guidance on further development in neighbouring local authority areas which we need to be aware of –

Warrington (which adjoins the eastern boundary of Halton) – where there is an emphasis on curtailng further urban sprawl into the countryside, and achieving regeneration and a restructuring of the older areas, and

The North Cheshire area (which adjoins the southern edge of Halton, an area which attracts much development interest although it is largely Green Belt) – where there is a requirement for a review of current development allocations against some stiff tests (allocations can remain if they are sustainable, will add significant value to the development of the national economy, or if they are of greater than regional significance, or if they meet a purely local need – and new allocations can be contemplated " where they clearly enable sustainable expansion of existing high-technology and research establishments of at least regional significance". The revised list of allocations must also avoid flood-risk areas, respect the urban/rural interface and deliver high design quality.

So, a subtle rationalisation is proposed which allows limited, high value, high quality development in the green and leafy acres of North Cheshire (from Chester to Macclesfield).

Embedded within the RPG, the **Regional Transport Plan** includes many items of proposed investment - in rail, road and other infrastructure - which will aid the development of Halton's economy, and it is not proposed to rehearse them in this report. Critical to the performance of the Halton economy will be ease and speed of access to the airports, the motorway network, the rail network, and the commercial waterways, including the Mersey Ship Canal, and ease of access for shoppers and other visitors to town centres and leisure areas.

A new **Regional Spatial Strategy** (also covering transportation) will emerge to replace RPG in the next four years. Meanwhile, the non-transport element of the existing RPG is being reviewed.

Additionally, the **Aviation White Paper's** recipe for the region's largest airport, Manchester International – with its 3 terminals, 19mppa and services to around 170 destinations - is that it currently has significant spare runway capacity and scope to use that more intensively (implying a further 50mppa), which means that it will be 2030 before it runs into capacity problems. Beyond that date, a new terminal - or satellite terminal - may be needed. Suggestions are made on ways of minimising the noise problems. Further work on modes, traffic management, and some capacity enhancements to the motorway network in the vicinity of the airport are anticipated. The White Paper also anticipates capacity continuing to grow to accommodate increased demand at **Liverpool John Lennon Airport**, with further terminal capacity, within

the existing site, improved public transport links and possibly further runway extension for long haul flights and charter operations – providing there is no encroachment on the River Mersey SSSI / SPA / Ramsar site.

In addition to the ‘big three’ policy documents there are also a number of regional statements which apply to the whole of the North West which deal with particular topics and sectors which will impinge on economic and tourism development in the Borough. Awareness of these guidelines should enable Halton to align its actions more closely with the region-wide action on those topics and sectors and assist in accessing funding for implementation of the new Strategy and the delivery of change on the ground.

The **Regional Science Strategy** (2002) – produced by the Northwest Science Council – promotes the region as a world-class area for science and encourages the attraction of investment and talent, and innovation, to further improve the region’s economy. The priorities in the first wave are – biotechnology (life sciences, pharmaceuticals, healthcare and medical technology), environmental technology, chemicals, aerospace, and nuclear energy. All of these sectors are represented in Halton and have potential for growth at locations such as the Heath Business and Technical Park. The region’s **biotechnology cluster** is located between Manchester and Liverpool, along the M62/M56 and into Cheshire. It includes Daresbury Laboratory - one of the two ‘key research institutes’ in the region in this field.

Other significant clusters with a scientific base include the chemicals industry that is well represented in Halton. The **chemicals cluster** is well integrated with other business clusters, but does not have a strong relationship with the universities. It is anticipated that chemical production will grow in volume of chemicals generated year on year but this does not imply employment growth.

A **Regional Tourism Strategy** has been produced. The Northwest Tourism Forum has been created to be by the NWDA to act both as the strategic monitoring body for the strategy and to act a voice for businesses and organisations that make up the tourism sector. NWDA aims to position the Northwest as the best tourism destination in Britain, enticing more visitors to the region from both the UK and abroad, and making the region an increasingly important business tourism destination in Europe. The strategy comprises nine core programmes around which activity and funding will be based-

Star brands, winning themes, make it easy, celebrating & growing excellence, a region for business, regional gems, intelligence led and signature projects.

The NWDA has developed a **Framework for Regional Employment and Skills Action (FRESA), 'Productivity through Employability'**. The FRESA sets out the key labour market issues in the Northwest, and how they will be tackled, whilst integrating skills, employment and productivity into a single model. Further to this, the NWDA has developed **Business Skills North West** that seeks to raise productivity and economic competitiveness in the region by bringing together the many organisations and diverse initiatives involved in business support and skills training.

The NWDA’s **Regional Rural Recovery Plan – ‘Rural Renaissance’** sets out the challenges faced by the rural economy arising from structural changes that have been underway in rural areas of the North West for some time. The outbreak of foot and mouth disease in 2000 served only to emphasise and accelerate the need for rural change. It has prompted the publication of a series of measures in the form of a recovery strategy and action plan. Responsibility for co-ordination, direction and funding the plan rests with the respective county bodies: that is, Cheshire Task Force, Cumbria Strategic Partnership and the Lancashire Rural Partnership. At

the local level, however, the delivery of the plan's strategic objectives - 'Broadening of the Economic Base of Rural Areas', 'Renewing and Strengthening the Tourism Product Offer', 'Rural Skills Development' and 'Delivering Social and Community Regeneration' still need to be reflected, alongside other sectoral priorities.

Other relevant regional publications include those that encourage new thinking and the adoption of best practice, such as –

- NWDA's "Renaissance by Design"
- NWDA's 'Northwest Innovation & Business Support Action Plan', and
- NWDA's "Regeneration Prospectus".

In addition, the NWDA pursues a number of other initiatives to improve the region's economy including –

- 'Raising the Game'
- 'Rising Stars Fund'
- 'The Northwest Broadband Fund'
- 'Newlands'
- the 'Single Regeneration Programme'
- Regional Selective Assistance.
- 'NW Brain'
- TEChINVEST
- identifying NWDA 'Strategic Sites'
- RENEW.

Also, it is important to be aware that the Northern RDAs work together to support the **North of England Inward Investment Agency** that is represented in Chicago, Atlanta, Boston and Japan.

2.6 The Sub-Regional Context

In 2002, Halton formally recognised its affinity with the Merseyside sub-region – re economic planning - by becoming a full member of 'The Mersey Partnership'.

In November 2001, The Mersey Partnership, in consultation with its partners, published an '**Action Plan for the City Region 2002-2005**' in response to the relative under-performance of the sub-regional economy as a result of industrial decline that has induced, it suggests -

- a sectoral mix which has prevented Greater Merseyside from benefiting from the growth of higher value added services
- low business density and start-up rates
- relatively low levels of qualifications and skills in higher order occupations, and
- low levels of economic participation amongst people of working age.

The Plan describes a series of economic priorities based on an assessment of their potential contribution to the local economy and identifies key initiatives under the following headings -

- Big Ideas
- Breakthrough Priorities, and
- Wealth Creation through Developing Business
- Developing People and Communities
- Creating the environment for growth

The aim of the plan is to drive up GDP and employment growth and/or complement the key economic driver priorities. Each year the Mersey Partnership publishes *a Merseyside Economic Review* to assess progress. An important publication is **The Gender Agenda**, that considers whether there is a demonstrable gender-based differential in economic participation in Merseyside.

Vision 2015 –a vision and strategy for tourism to 2015 for the Liverpool city region. This sets out, within the context of the NWDA tourism Strategy, a vision for the Liverpool City Region (including Halton) seeing it become amongst the top 20 European city region destinations, with a dramatically increased volume and value of tourism, supporting 40,000 jobs in the city region. It focuses on developing seven-core visitor experiences-
Conferences, Culture and Heritage, Essential Liverpool, Beatles,
Sport, Classic Resorts, Major Events

It anticipates a Mersey Waterfront Regional Park which is a world-class example of quality open space, the opening of new hotels and meeting facilities, the full scale restoration of the St Helens Canal (with a brand new connection into the National Waterways network), more travel via the Liverpool John Lennon International Airport, and dramatic improvements to road and rail connections, with a warm welcome and excellent hospitality.

Business Link for Greater Merseyside offers easy access to the best independent professional advice available to small and medium sized businesses based within the sub-region. It has a broad range of services available to you, tailored to meet specific needs including: advice and support on starting and growing business, business finance, human resources and information technology. It delivers services from a number of sites across including Halton Business Forum, where they are currently co-located with the major part of the Council’s Regeneration Team and the Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise.

Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside (LSCGM) is part of a national network of Learning and Skills Councils. It is responsible for funding and planning education and training for over 16-year-olds in the sub-region. It is currently responsible for further education, work-based learning, workforce development and adult and community learning. LSCGM has established three corporate priorities -

- Work with partners to develop and deliver a coherent 14-19 phase of learning, increasing participation and achievement by young people.
- Deliver the priorities of the Skills Strategy, working with employers, the North West Development Agency and Sector skills Councils.
- Further develop the learning infrastructure, taking forward Success for All to drive up quality and improve the effectiveness of planning and delivery.

Other Greater Merseyside Initiatives of major significance for Halton.

- The most significant are the **2008 European Capital of Culture status of Liverpool** and its UNESCO designation as a **World Heritage Site**.
- **The Mersey Waterfront Regional Park** including the river of light initiative (supported by the NWDA and Merseyside authorities) seeks to make the most of the waterfront, into a major force for realising the full socio-economic potential of the local environment. This proposal seeks to capitalise on the city region’s principle natural asset – its waterfronts onto the River Mersey. The success of the Mersey Basin Campaign in cleaning the river is now

being followed up by a programme of investment in enhancing facilities alongside the river to create an attractive leisure corridor to serve the sub-region.

- Expansion of the passenger handling capacity of **Liverpool John Lennon Airport** within the context of the Aviation White Paper.
- **New Approaches** is another NWDA supported initiative that seeks to provide more striking entrances into the Liverpool city region.

Other Major initiatives on Halton's doorstep

- The proposed **OMEGA** development (being pursued by Warrington BC and English Partnerships). This could become Europe's largest business park, if it can obtain the necessary planning permissions. At its largest it might provide 6.9 million square feet of industrial and office floor space, work/live units, leisure facilities and hotel and conferencing facilities, at Junction 8 of the M62, creating at least 12,000 jobs over the next 25 years.
- The **St Helens' City Growth Strategy** is one of only seven national pilots for a new approach to encouraging business and enterprise in a local authority area. It involves a close partnership between the Council, local business leaders and the local Chamber of Trade. It focuses on key assets and image.
- The **Weaver Valley Park** being pursued by Vale Royal and Cheshire County Councils, in order to develop the tourism offer in North Cheshire. At the northernmost end, it enters Halton and could link through the revamped Runcorn Town Park to the Wigg Island Community Park on the Mersey Waterfront, creating a strategically significant resource for this part of the region.

2.7 The Local Context - HALTON

The transition to new ways of working and the emergence of new patterns of work will tend to favour specific groups economically. The economic and social exclusion of individuals is invariably linked to non-participation in the labour market.

Whether voluntary or involuntary, unemployment and premature withdrawal from the labour market produces a divide between the work-rich and work-poor that invariably widens over time. A concentration of economic exclusion in particular areas can quickly turn to social decline in the form of reduced investment of time and money in maintenance of property, a threat to the survival of local shops and amenities, over-stretched public services, increased crime and vandalism, more ill-health and educational under-achievement by young people.

The most complete attempt to evaluate the nature and extent of deprivation at local level is that provided by the DTLR index of multiple deprivation (IMD). An average rank of 1 indicates that the district is the most deprived. Whilst Halton has seen significant improvements in terms of quality of life over recent years the IMD 2004 places it the 21st most deprived borough in the country. Looking in greater detail by using Super Output Areas (SOA), 48% of Halton's SOAs are in the 20% most deprived SOAs in the country.

The Community and Neighbourhood Renewal Strategy for Halton.

The Community Strategy is for the whole community of Halton. It is about steps that need to be taken to bring about real improvements that will change lives for the better. The vision of Halton is -

Halton will be a thriving and vibrant Borough, where people enjoy a good quality of life, with –

- *Good health*
- *A high quality, modern, urban environment*
- *Opportunity for all to fulfil their potential,*
- *Greater prosperity and equality; and*
- *Safe and attractive neighbourhoods.*

There are five priorities for action within the strategy, each one reflecting one of the aims stated above.

The Unitary Development Plan for Halton

This combines both strategic and local planning functions and all the relevant planning policies for the guidance and control of development and the use of land in Halton. From an economic development perspective, the UDP focuses on the need to -

- promote sustainable economic prosperity and create new employment opportunities aimed at broadening the economic base and reducing unemployment
- regenerate and revitalise Halton's older industrial areas
- regenerate and revitalise Halton's waterside environment
- increase the vitality, viability and prosperity of Halton's town centres
- return previously-used land to beneficial use, and
- provide a policy framework that takes full account of the needs of the disadvantaged section of the Borough's population.

The Local Transport Plan

The **current LTP** for Halton emphasises the need to improve road safety to reduce casualties, improve the Silver Jubilee Bridge, make the case for the **Mersey Gateway** (Second Mersey Crossing), encourage sustainable travel, improve road and bridge maintenance and improve green modes/routes through the Borough. Work has commenced on the next plan (LTP2) and emphasis is being placed on the four key areas identified by government – accessibility, congestion, road safety and air quality.

In relation to economic development in Halton, particular attention will be given to -

- (a) improve the quality of all transport systems still further,
- (b) improve people's access to areas of employment using public transport and other systems,
- (c) the protection of the 'Halton Curve' railway from North Cheshire through Halton to Liverpool, as a potential alternative future passenger train connector between Chester and Liverpool over the longer term, and
- (d) protection of the scope to upgrade rail connections for freight at Ditton, and potentially for passengers at Ditton/Halebank, and also in the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone and in the East Runcorn/ Daresbury area (over the longer term).

Critical also to the tourism development of the Borough will be gradual improvement of the main strategic routes for tourism and recreations - the footpath / bridleway / cycleway networks - and more use of the canals for recreational boating, over the next few years.

The LSP/HBC Urban Renewal Strategy - is concerned with 'Transforming the physical fabric and infrastructure, restoring derelict sites and creating a vibrant Borough that makes Halton a place where people are proud to live and see a promising future for themselves and their families.' The key elements of policy that have a direct bearing on economic development and regeneration activities aim to -

- promote sustainable development
- develop and modernise the local economy and create new jobs for the sub-regional area
- commission works to remould and enhance the three town centres
- commission work to improve, rationalise and spruce-up the older industrial areas, and
- commission works to improve the overall image of the Borough aimed at attracting investment, focusing specifically on the waterfront areas and canals.

The Mersey Gateway (New Mersey Crossing)

A 'Major Scheme Appraisal Bid' for a preferred scheme was submitted to the Department of Transport in July 2003, by the Mersey Crossing Partnership, and the scheme was confirmed in December 2003 as having '**Major Work in Progress**' status. Halton Borough Council – as the lead on this project - has been given clear guidance on the need for some further researches (re environmental issues, hydro-dynamics, potential impacts on the strategic highway network, and the scope for tolling) have informed further submissions to the Department of Transport at Christmas 2004. If approved, financial close would be in 2008 with new bridge built by 2012.

This scheme would have – it is anticipated - major economic benefits for Halton, and the adjoining areas, transforming its image and creating an iconic new gateway into Greater Merseyside, and the North West Metropolitan Area.

Lessons learnt from review of previous economic strategies for Halton.

An assessment of the progress achieved against the background of previous strategies of this ilk prepared by the local Council, and others, suggests that the scale of overall change going on in the local economy is dramatic (from manufacturing to services), but with less visible progress re net growth and employment growth. The sum of privately taken business investment decisions in response to macro-economic factors, and the Borough's outward image, which is still less good than it could be, and which probably reduces values – are major forces. Local intervention in shaping the future economy of the Borough probably needs to (a) be targeted very precisely in order to best complement the market, and take the Borough forward speedily, and (b)

demonstrate greater awareness of and synergy with higher level strategy and policy, in order to draw in support and funds to that end.

The Government’s Floor Targets.

The Comprehensive Performance Assessment of Halton BC – conducted by the Audit Commission in 2002– concluded that – “ The District has a larger than average share of deep rooted and intransigent problems in relation to deprivation, land pollution, health and unemployment” (AC, 2002).

The UK Government has in recent years devised a new tool to encourage greater equality of opportunity and quality of life throughout the realm. It involves establishing ‘National Floor Targets’, which all local authorities are required to strive to meet. In terms of economic development, those that are most pertinent for consideration within the locality are summarised below-

<p>Increase the number of adults with the skills required for employability and progression to higher levels of training through</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • improving basic skill levels • reduce the number of adults in the workforce who lack NVQ2 or equivalent.
<p>Build an enterprising society in which small firms of all kinds thrive and achieve their potential with-</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • an increase in the number of people considering going into business, • an improvement in the overall productivity of small firms, and • more enterprise in disadvantaged communities.
<p>As part of the wider objective of full employment in every region, over the next three years to Spring 2008, and taking into account of the economic cycle:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • demonstrate progress on increasing the employment rate increase the employment rates of disadvantaged areas and groups (lone parents, ethnic minorities, people aged 50 and over, those with the lowest qualifications, and those living in the local authority wards with the poorest initial labour market position) • significantly reduce the difference between the employment rates of the disadvantaged groups and the overall rate.
<p>Increase the employment rate of disabled people and significantly reduce the difference between their employment rate and the overall rate, taking into account the economic cycle.</p>

There are also a number of floor targets that refer more generally to improved productivity

3. RESEARCH AND ITS IMPLICATIONS

3.1 Introduction

In order that the Strategy should be not only responsive to the higher, strategic levels of national and regional policy-making but also locally **evidence-based**, the following research has been of critical importance in forming the strategy–

Document	Prepared by
Halton Economic Development Review 2003	Pion Economics
Merseyside Economic Review 2004	The Mersey Partnership
Employment Skills in Halton	IFF Research LTD
2001 Census	National Statistics

The PION study followed up a similar study completed in 1999 and includes work by Cambridge Economics which undertook a **modelling exercise** to anticipate the future performance of the local economy and to identify any acute problems or structural weaknesses that might present themselves in the future. **The full Pion Economics Study has been published as a companion volume to this Draft Strategy.**

The following sections provide a summary of the research, discusses some of the implications and identifies the **key issues** arising. It provides the background to the Policies /Actions set out in section 4 of this Strategy, which should address the current strategic and structural weaknesses and opportunities identified for the economy of Halton.

3.2 The product market

A calculation of the total value of goods and services produced by local companies represents a fundamental measure of economic performance. Given the lack of officially produced output statistics at local authority level, the following analysis is based on a modelling by Cambridge Econometrics within the PION work. This suggests that -

- with the exception of chemicals, most local high value added wealth creating sectors are under-represented within the local economy,
- Halton and Warrington's Gross Value added of £12,900 per head was the highest in the North West (but Halton's GVA had dipped, largely due to the contraction of the chemicals industry)
- local specialisation is predominantly based within sectors that generate below (local) average GDP per employee, and
- lower value-added sectors account for close to 60% of estimated GDP.

The Halton economy, therefore, remains somewhat polarised with –

- (i) a single very specialised and high valued-added sector - chemicals, and
- (ii) other reasonably specialised but relatively low local value-added sectors.

These observations mirror those made in the 1999 research of Haltons economy. However, since then the scale of local GDP dominance exhibited by the chemicals sector has fallen. The figures also suggest that much of this fall has been due to relatively lower GDP generation by the sector itself rather than growth from other sectors.

The magnitude of the GDP dependence on chemicals in the Borough of Halton is clear. The tendency for the value added not to be retained in the area – given the international ownership of the chemicals plants – is clear also. There is concern that the Halton economy is over-dependent on the chemical sector for local employment as well as constraining to some extent other investment opportunities in the immediate locality, both directly and indirectly.

Key Issue – How can Halton develop a more balanced and diverse local economy, and address the relative under-representation of higher value added sectors so as not to constrain the overall potential for wealth creation in the local economy?

Key Issue – How does Halton encourage businesses to become more competitive?

3.3 Sectors and clusters

In order to facilitate the sustainable development of the local economy, consideration must be given to the identification of those industrial sectors that will contribute to the development of the local economy in terms of both employment and value added (or economic activity). Within Greater Merseyside, much of this work is led by identified sector champions, a number of which are based in The Mersey Partnership.

One of the key elements of various studies undertaken in the last few years by the NWDA and others has been to distinguish between cluster and sector based approaches. While cluster activities may focus on a sector, they also incorporate a much wider set of institutional connections and relationships than is traditionally contained in sector based analysis.

Identification of clusters suitable for strategic support can be based upon a profile of sectors that are forecast to grow and contribute to the local economy alongside sectors that may be forecast to remain stable or decline but which are relatively highly concentrated in the local area and already provide a relatively large number of local jobs.

From Pion, the identification of growth sectors combines the following factors in the form of a three dimensional matrix:

- projected employment change (absolute and growth rate)
- Gross Value Added (GVA) change (absolute and growth rate), and
- local exporting/import substitution.

Directing support towards sectors that serve predominantly local markets will, all other things being equal, result in a high level of displacement of activity. Those sectors whose expansion will contribute most significantly to the development of the local economy are those that export their goods or services outside the area or substitute for imports. Local sectors have, therefore, been divided into three categories (high, medium or low) on the basis of the export/import substitution potential. Employment and GVA projections have also been divided into three categories (growth, stable/moderate growth and declining). The sectors classified as expecting growth are those whose absolute change or growth rate exceeds the average for the local economy. Following a review of absolute and percentage change in employment and GVA a number of sectors can be identified as likely to be-

*High performing with either high or moderate import substitution. These include **computing services, professional services, other business services and miscellaneous services.***

*Moderate performing with relatively high substitution. These include **instrument engineering and other land transport***

*Sectors with a major presence but a projected decline in employment performance include **chemicals and basic metals.***

Three sectors/clusters are worthy of particular attention.

- ***The Chemical Sector -***

The chemical industry is the UK's major manufacturer. The sector is technologically advanced, capital intensive and fast changing. There has been major restructuring of the chemical industry in recent years, and ownership is more fragmented and international. It needs to rise to challenges set by the 2001 EU Chemicals Strategy White Paper and the proposed REACH system – for the Registration, Evaluation and Authorisation of Chemicals – which is a single

system to gather hazard information, assess risks, classify, label and restrict marketing and use of individual chemicals.

The contribution made to the nation and the region's GDP by the chemical industries needs to be acknowledged and valued. It is a clear strength in the national and regional economy, and the chemical industry must be supported and encouraged in its efforts to modernise and retain its national and international competitiveness.

HALTON'S MAJOR CHEMICALS COMPANIES

According to the North West Chemicals Initiative (NWCi) – most of the UK's PVC starts its life in Halton, along with many of the other materials and services that benefit our lives daily.

The major chemical plants in Halton, NWCi say -

- *help to keep the World safe, through chemical and biochemical analysis (LGC)*
- *provide refrigerants for 1 in 3 of the World's cars (Ineos Fluor)*
- *are the largest producers of credit card plastics in Europe (EVC)*
- *supply chlorine that makes most of the UK's drinking water safe to drink (Ineos Chlor)*
- *are the World's largest producers of penicillin intermediates (Tessenderlo Group)*
- *help farmers to grow crops for healthy, nutritious food (Bayer Crop Science), and*
- *improve the quality of paints, paper, household and personal care products (Rockwood Additives Ltd).*

The chemical sector is clearly of immense importance to Halton and is already investing in its future. In 2003 alone Runcorn based Ineos Chlor committed itself to a major investment of £390m with the help of £50m of support from the government. Still more investment will be needed to modernise the various chemical other plants in Halton over the next several years as they adapt to the international and national markets they serve. Much of this will support local regeneration schemes such as Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone, and plans to upgrade all the business parks to Green Business Park standard.

While it may be premature to read too much into recent trends, projections to 2012 suggest that chemical sector GDP will increase while at the same time its share of local GDP continues to display marginal decline. This profile, if realised, would be indicative of some movement towards a more balanced economic structure for the Borough.

Key Issue - How does Halton support the continued national importance of the chemical industry while also managing its local impacts?

• ***Tourism***

Whilst Halton is not generally known for tourism, it has a number of excellent assets, including **Norton Priory** (Augustinian priory) that was runner up in the prestigious Gulbenkian Prize 2004 that is given for the most exciting and innovative museum in the UK.

Norton Priory, together with Halton Castle are the Borough's key historic monuments and an obvious source of interest. Norton Priory is an established visitor attraction, and the trust that runs it has recently taken over the management of Halton Castle. The Council – and Trust – are looking into the scope for a significant conservation and upgrading scheme to the Castle.

Other key assets include the Tourist Information Centre, the new Brindley Arts Centre, the Catalyst Science Discovery Centre, Runcorn Ski Slope, Halton Miniature Railway, Halton

Stadium (home to the Vikings rugby league team) and the recently refurbished Hale Duck Decoy.

Halton is one of the few areas other than Liverpool along the Mersey Corridor to be a regular venue for the production of film and television in the region. The BBC has filmed Two Pints Of Lager and a Packet of Crisps, MerseyBeat and a number of Children's TV Series. ITV used Norton Priory Museum as the venue for the recent production Islands at War. On the big screen, Halton as a venue has been filmed as a location for 51st State, There's only One Jimmy Grimble, Re-Inventing Eddie, My Kingdom and the latest offering from Danny Boyle "Millions" which is set almost entirely in Widnes. Images of the Borough have been seen by millions of people with audiences of more than 9 million watching Merseybeat each week where the bridge was used as the icon of the introduction titles and within some of the story lines.

There are numerous small villages steeped in history including - Hale (mentioned in the Domesday book and home to England's tallest ever man at 9ft3ins), Daresbury (famed as the birth place of Lewis Carroll and the church including the famous stained glass window dedicated to Lewis Carroll).

There is a programme of events and carnivals throughout the year. The biggest is **the Halton Show**, attracting some 100,000 to Spike Island, 30% of which come from outside the Borough. This free show in July combines main arena events with arts village, fairground, trade stalls and fireworks.

Other events include the Vintage Organ Rally (the largest gathering of fair organs in the north plus vintage cars, funfair, exhibits and side-shows), The Water Ways Festival, Spikey Bike (classic and custom bike show), Fireworks night, three road races and lots of smaller carnivals.

The Borough is home to 10 hotels providing 627rooms, the largest being the 4 star Daresbury De Vere. Room occupancy for 2003 for 3 and 4 star was 62.9% and for budget hotels 69.1%. This was UK and Merseyside average respectively, with significant differences in performance between local budget hotels. The corporate market is the prime source of weekday demand with residential conferences being important for 3 and 4 star venues. Contract workers provide a key source of business for budget hotels. At weekends, weddings and functions are important for most hotels.

Research as part of the Halton Hotel Futures Report (2004) shows there is little awareness of Halton by major hotel developers, the majority of which have location criteria that favours larger towns and cities. Accordingly, forecast growth for 3 and 4 star is low and only slightly better for budget hotels. However, the report identifies a number of factors that could impact on existing forecasts and given the regeneration work already underway, this gives more scope for optimism-

- Proximity to Liverpool Capital of Culture (and now World Heritage Site)
- Development of the corporate market through initiatives such as the Widnes Waterfront Economic Development Zone
- The opening of the Brindley Arts Centre, and
- Image and profile raising campaigns.

There is much to enjoy in the parks, countryside and waterways of the area. There are three golf courses and the Borough has 5 canals running through it at one point or another. The River Mersey downstream of the Bridge is an area of international importance for wildlife. It is designated as a SSSI / SPA / Ramsar site. It provides good opportunities for bird watching and nature study. The upper estuary is also now recognised as being rich in wildlife and may well merit Local Nature Reserve and possibly a higher status. The Borough has many Green Flag parks and open spaces and also includes several other LNRs with diverse habitats, and – unusually – its species count is going up year by year in response to more research, a cleaner environment and better environmental management. Wigg Island Country Park and Pickering's Pastures provide excellent open space and the Transpennine Trail goes through the Borough.

In 2003, the value of tourism was estimated using the STEAM model. The headline figures include -

- Tourism in Halton is worth £83m per annum of which £45m of this is through day visits (including petrol stations, small shops, attractions income, bus fares etc)
- 4.6m visitors spend at least a day in Halton (including overnight accommodation and day visits to events, attractions etc)
- There has been an 8% increase in the number of people coming to Halton in 2003
- Tourism accounts for 1,164 direct full time jobs, and 362 indirect, giving a total employment of 1526 jobs attributed to tourism
- Expenditure by the public on Tourism and related products increased by 5% in 2003.

Tourism is clearly very important to the economy of the Borough and there is clearly the opportunity to build on the platform of what already exists. Add to that Halton being adjacent to Liverpool with its **2008 European Capital of Culture status** and its UNESCO designation as a **World Heritage Site**, there should be strong opportunities to grow tourism over the coming years.

Key Issue– How does Halton develop its tourism potential with greater spin-off in terms of the attractiveness of the area for spend, investment and residence, whilst also improving the quality of life of exiting residents?

- ***Science and Technology***

The Central Laboratory for the Research Council at Daresbury operates advanced large-scale research facilities to support the nation's research needs. These include the UK's national synchrotron light source (used to investigate the atomic structure of a wide range of materials) and world-class high performance computers that can simulate complex systems. The facilities are used by large and small companies and university research groups from the UK and around the world. The research done at the Laboratory spans a huge range of science and technology from molecular technology to medicine, chemistry, materials, basic physics, environmental science and engineering. It helps companies develop new products and processes that improve our quality of life. In January 2005, a new genomics research facility was added.

Scope exists to expand the work and the related activities on the site of the Laboratory and possibly beyond, at Daresbury, depending on critical decisions to be made by CLRC in the next few years.

Adjacent to the Laboratories is the new NWDA Daresbury International Science & Technology Park that seeks to encourage the development of science in the North West. The Daresbury Innovation Centre (incubation facility) is open and the second unit is to become home to the Cockcroft Institute, a partnership between three universities and the Daresbury Laboratory to establish a National Centre For Accelerator Science.

The Heath Business and Technical Park is an excellent business location that offers traditional modular and open plan offices and scientific laboratory space supported by technical services staff. It delivers tailored packages to meet the particular needs of emerging and established businesses from the smallest to the very substantial. It provides a home to a large and growing cluster of science and technology based businesses including ICT, pharmaceuticals, bioscience, microwave chemistry and manufacturing technology to name but a few. It includes conference space, and supporting facilities - such a shop and a gym, attractive gardens and parking facilities – and is located just a mile off the M56, at Runcorn.

Key Issue – How does Halton support the development of science and technology?

3.4 Business Start-ups and Density

Halton has traditionally seen much of its employment through larger companies. As with many areas in the north of England with similar histories, it has suffered low rates of business starts ups and low business densities.

Area	VAT start up 2003 Per 10,000 adult population	Density 2003 Firms per 1000 population
Halton	31.5	23.1
Greater Merseyside	25.7	21.9
North West	34.6	31.6
England & Wales	41.0	38.3

With the exception of 2003 the average start up rate for Halton has been around 22 businesses per 10,000 of the adult population. The 2003 figure will require analysis to understand if it is a blip or a substantive change has taken place. The density figures show the impact of the previous reliance on larger companies and the fact that the Borough has much to do to catch up with the northwest position. However, Halton does have a good survival rate of new businesses with the number of VAT de-registrations at 18 being well below the regional average of 30 over the previous two years.

Over the last three years Halton has seen a percentage growth in the density of VAT businesses exceeding the both the Regional average and that achieved by Warrington. This slow but steady growth indicates that by 2020 the density level in Halton will be comparable with the Regional figure.

Key Issue– How does Halton develop a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship?

3.5 Unemployment and the employment rate

• Unemployment

The UK has experienced a long period of economic growth from the recession of the early 1990s throughout which unemployment has continued to decline. The National Skills Strategy recognises the need to support and encourage individuals to start learning and then continue to improve their skills. To that end, the Government invests in learning - basic skills, NVQs, improving skills in specific sectors, New Deal for skills, Modern Apprenticeships, further education (supported by the Learning and Skills Councils), Employer Training Pilots (in some parts of England, but not so far in Halton), and the Highly Skilled Migrant Programme.

In Halton, official claimant unemployment levels halved between 1992 and 1998, and halved again since. However, unemployment rates have generally been some 40% to 50% higher than regional averages, though the gap now seems to be narrowing and is presently 20% to 25%. The continuing gap, however, suggests the presence of fairly deep-rooted structural difficulties in the local labour market.

There remain significant concentrations of unemployment in the **20-29 age band** for both males and females, with –

- a concentration for **males in the 30-39 age band** and
- a concentration for **females in the 17-19 band.**

Male unemployment is approaching three times the rate of female unemployment in Halton. Based on April 2004 figures when the Borough average was 3.1%-

There are four wards Beechwood, Birchfield, Daresbury and Farnworth where unemployment level is **less than half** the area average.

There are six wards – Castlefields, Halton Lea, Mersey, Riverside, Grange and Windmill Hill where unemployment is **at least 25% higher** than the Borough average. Whilst all unemployed persons will be encouraged to seek work, there is clearly a need for particular attention to be given to these five wards.

- ***Employment***

The **Employment Rate** measure is designed to identify the proportion of the working age population that is economical active. It includes those that are employed and those not employed that have sought work in the previous four weeks and can start work within 2 weeks or have accepted a job that will start within 2 weeks.

The Labour Force Survey of May 2004 shows the employment (economical active) rate for Halton was 70.3%. This is little changed to previous years and is some 4.9% lower than the regional average and 7.8% lower than the English average. The female rate in Halton is approximately 16% lower than the Great Britain female rate and 9% lower than the Halton male rate.

To look at it another way, if 70.3% are economically active, this means that 29.7% of the working age population of Halton is economically inactive and this equates to some 21,300. National research suggests that about a third of economically inactive people wish to work, but have barriers that seemingly prevent it. If that could be achieved in Halton it would mean some 6,400 more people in employment.

Extensive research has been undertake across the country over many years that shows there are a number of identified barriers to taking employment including – transport, caring responsibilities, low self esteem, lack of skills, discrimination, culture and the benefits trap to name but a few. No doubt many residents will be facing some of these barriers.

Key Issue – How does Halton reduce unemployment and improve economic activity rates in the Borough as a whole, and in five identified wards in particular, with special reference to younger people?

3.6 Demand for Labour and Skills

- ***Education and Basic Skills***

Education and learning provides the foundation upon which the future human capital and enterprise base of the local economy is built. Educational performance is thereby of critical importance to the future development prospects of Halton. The good news is that educational achievement in Halton is fast improving in response to effort and continual investment. *At all Key Stages, Halton compares well with other similar authorities in terms of 'value added' by schools*

At Key Stage 2 in 2002, Halton primary schools were in the top ten most improved LEAs. Attainment in English at Level 4 has improved since 1998 from 62% to 74%, in Mathematics from 55% to 72% and in Science from 70% to 86%.

At Key Stage 3 in 2003, Halton secondary schools were in the top five most improved LEAs.

At Key Stage 4, Halton's attainment of 5+GCSE A -C has improved since 1998 from 37.7% to 44.2%.*

Generally, Halton is improving quicker than the national rate of improvement and in primary schools has almost reached the national average. At Key Stage 4, Halton is still below the national average, but has improved significantly.

However, post 16 participation levels are still too low in Halton and so the Greater Merseyside Learning and Skills Council is working with Halton Borough Council and other partners to develop a better and more coherent education and training portfolio for young people. These proposals, which will involve schools, colleges, and training providers, will lead to young people being better prepared for the world of work.

The legacy of previous poor learning remains in the population at large. An audit of the Borough showed that for the age range 16-60:

- 29.1% have poor literacy (24% nationally)
- 31.3% have poor numeracy (24% nationally).

This places the individuals concerned - and their families - at a considerable disadvantage. In Halton, a considerable amount of work has been done, therefore, to support people with basic skills need, and the Workers Education Association and other partners have been supported to that end.

Key Issue – How does Halton address the problem of basic skills and in particular low levels of literacy and numeracy among the existing working population?

- ***Workforce Skills***

The Local Labour Force Survey (LLFS) suggests that –

- approximately 76% of all working age persons in Halton have some identifiable qualification/skill
- 22% have an NVQ1 or equivalent qualification as their highest level of qualification,
- 9% are qualified to NVQ2, 16% to level 3, and **18% qualified to NVQ4+.**

In general terms, analysis suggests that the **existing** Halton workforce has a high proportion of the low/no skilled individuals. Also, the workforce is significantly under skilled at Level 4 but is presently broadly balanced at both Levels 3 and 2 however there are projected deficits –

- Level 3 problems particularly acute in manufacturing, utilities and hotels/restaurants, and
- Level 2 problems in retail/wholesale, construction, and transport and communications.

The research undertaken by IFF looked at the findings from existing studies and supplemented this with a programme of interviews with local companies. It found that 23% of local firms has internal skills deficiencies (27% in 2001).

The key locations of gaps are:

- among larger establishments in overall terms, although relative to the rest of the area Halton's key proficiency problems are among smaller establishments (i.e. there is a higher incidence of gaps among smaller establishments in Halton than elsewhere)
- the manufacturing and construction sectors – where the incidence (proportion of employers experiencing them) is lower than the wider area, but the density (proportion of employees who lack proficiency) is higher
- business services (where both density and incidence are higher than elsewhere)
- (to a lesser extent) the public services sector (i.e. public admin / education / health) where the incidence is high, but the density low, and
- lower order occupations (machine operatives and elementary staff in particular).

The key skills that are lacking in terms of skill gaps tend towards the generic, with IT & communication skills a high order problem, and problem solving and team working a middle order problem.

In terms of external skill deficiencies it found that 6% of firms had hard to fill vacancies (11% in 2001) and 5% of firms had skills shortage vacancies (6% in 2001), the latter of which is similar to the Greater Merseyside area.

In terms of location, quantitative recruitment difficulties are less severe among smaller establishments in Halton than among similarly sized employers elsewhere, but qualitative recruitment difficulties are more severe. Among larger establishments, all recruitment difficulties are more prominent in Halton.

By sector, difficulties are most dense in manufacturing / construction and more common in public admin / education / health. Skills that are lacking show a similar tendency towards the generic as among current employees (i.e. skill gaps), namely IT, team-working, problem solving and management.

In terms of workforce development, employers in Halton train at similar levels to those elsewhere in Greater Merseyside. They are also engage in the “skills and workforce development agenda” more, in the sense of being more likely to have fully comprehensive formal business plans incorporating a human resource and training plan, to fully assess the training and to formally assess performance and skill gaps.

The employed Halton workforce is neither synonymous nor coterminous with the resident working age population of the Borough, although the latter clearly has potential to feed the former. Levels of qualification among Halton employers are lower than in Merseyside and the country as a whole. Whether this persist in the future is less clear. Certainly Halton residents are as likely as those in the wider area to engage in learning activity. They also appear to demonstrate a greater thirst for learning, being more likely to engage in learning leading to a qualification and to foresee further learning in the future.

In terms of future directions, key occupational trends within the existing workforce are likely to see a need for:

- Fewer - but more skilled - lower order workers (in particular machine operatives) in the primary sectors; with a similar but less marked scenario apparent for skilled trades in manufacturing, specifically, and for administrative / secretarial staff in the transport sector, and
- More – and more skilled – higher order workers in the business services sector, with a likely drift away from elementary and process roles and into administrative, professional and associate professional roles.

In terms of specific skills needing development, key characteristics are likely to be in the fields of IT and, to a lesser extent, the crosscutting generic skills.

- ***Demand for Labour and Future Skills***

In the past 20 years, there has been a significant shift in employment structure with the loss of thousands of jobs in manufacturing and chemicals, whilst growth has taken place in the service sector.

The Pion modelling identifies that the overall need for labour in the period to 2012 is estimated to amount to some 25,000 jobs. Of this, nearly 21,000 will be replacement demand, which refers to the fact that the labour market is in a continuous state of change with movements between occupations, quits and retirements amongst other things. The largest sources of replacement jobs are likely to be in – **retailing, health and social care and other business services**.

The forecasts suggest a likely gross gain of over 6,000 jobs set against a likely gross loss of some 2,000 jobs across all sectors, producing a net increase of 4,000. These additional jobs are principally forecast to emerge within a relatively small number of **sectors (primarily ‘other business and computing services’)**. However, such demand will be influenced by the pace of regeneration work underway in Halton, and by rapidly bringing forward schemes such as the Economic Development Zone and the Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Terminal, it should prove possible to increase expansion demand over the period.

Analysis suggests that of the 6,000 gross additional jobs, some 48% will require some form of higher educational qualification. A further 24% are projected at NVQ3 and 15% at NVQ 2. It is estimated that only 13% of the expected new jobs in the area will require low/no skill.

Key Issue – How can Halton ensure that residents will have the skills that businesses need both now and in the future to be able to compete for the available jobs?

3.7 Land and Property

- ***Investment Enquiries***

Investment in physical capital is vital to support a productive, enterprising economy. The UK has relatively low levels of physical capital – and research suggests that US and German workers have access to 45% more capital than UK workers, and French workers over 75% more. Whilst the number of investment projects increased last year, the nature of the investments has meant fewer new jobs being added than in previous years. The UK remains the most successful European country at attracting inward investment.

Pion found that, typically, 45% of enquiries received by Halton Borough Council in any given year are from either potential new starts or existing firms wishing to expand. In terms of geographical origin, 44% of enquiries are from other parts of the North West with just 8% from other parts of the UK and 3% from overseas. Approximately 55% of enquiries were related to industrial activity, 24% to office activity, 14% to sites and 7% to retail.

It is important to recognise the impact that the river has on the property market. Runcorn tends to relate more to Cheshire whilst Widnes functions more within Merseyside market. As such, enquiries will often be received that specify which part of the borough is to be considered.

Analysis of the size distribution of enquires over the same period indicate that enquires are primarily focussed on premises below 5,000ft². though the proportion varies from around 98% in the case of retail to 59% in the case of industrial enquiries. The relatively low value of the latter reflects the higher proportion of enquiries in larger size-bands.

- ***Employment Land***

The six-year period between 1996 and 2002 has seen a total of 103.8 hectares of completed development across Halton. Much of the growth in the latter part of the period was directly related to the development of two significant sites at Manor Park and Daresbury Park. 35% of completions have been on brownfield and 65% on greenfield sites though examination of average completion across the period shows that completions on greenfield land are well above those on brownfield land.

B1 development (business – offices, research and development, and light industry) is dominant across Halton as a whole. 66% of all land developed has been for B1 use with the figure running to some 60% in Runcorn. Runcorn also enjoys higher completion rates than Widnes, with rates higher by as much as 90%.

- ***Employment Land Supply***

In May 2002, there were 205.87 hectares of land available for development within Halton. 30% of the total is designated as brownfield and primarily located in Ditton and Riverside (the older industrial wards of Widnes) with the remaining greenfield dominated by the ward of Daresbury, in Runcorn.

Daresbury (in Runcorn) effectively provides some **54% of all available land** in the Borough, with sites in Widnes accounting for 37% of the total.

While Halton has traditionally attracted B1 businesses, only 41% of available land is designated for B1 use and virtually the same volume of B2 land is available. That said, completion rates for B2 are low compared to B1.

Some 34% of B1 availability is located in Ditton and Riverside while 79% of B2 land is located in Daresbury. The stock of B8 land is, likewise, almost entirely located in Daresbury and represents a major addition to stock.

81% of land on the availability register is immediately available, some 12% is physically constrained and sites that are frozen for expansion and committed represent 2% and 5% respectively. Most of the physically constrained sites (95%) are in Runcorn, and specifically in the Daresbury ward. This is largely accounted for by the eastern areas of Manor Park, which are affected by constraints relating to poor load bearing capacity, making that area expensive to develop.

- ***The Commercial Property Market - Offices***

The range of office property within Halton broadly reflects the cycles of office development that have characterized much of the North West over the last 40 years. The Review of Employment Land in Halton (2002) draws attention to the pattern of local office land values (reported by

Chesterton as at May 2001). Land values for Runcorn are moderate while those for Widnes are relatively low. Yields, however, are valued at around 9% to 9.25% in Widnes compared to 8.25% in Runcorn.

It is suggested that the high yields in Widnes reflect either/or the relatively higher risk of void periods/vacant premises or difficulty in re-letting premises, even though rentals are also low.

- ***The Commercial Property Market - Industrial***

The Employment Land Review also reports figures in values, rents and yields of industrial land. Land values are moderate in Runcorn and low in Widnes with yields of 8% and 9% respectively.

The report by Chesterton (2001) concludes that land values in Widnes are amongst the lowest in the sub-region, and offer little 'headroom' to address the costs of remediation, whether fundamental or in the form of residual contamination. Since much of the land stock in the area faces such problems there exists a structural barrier to (private sector) redevelopment.

- ***Overall***

The supply of development land in Halton appears generally adequate to meet projected demand within the area as a whole. Runcorn tends to have the major and higher quality sites - such as Daresbury. Widnes on the other hand has a high proportion of brownfield sites from past industrial use, a perceived shortage of good (greenfield) sites for new industry, a relatively poor location and more difficult access to the current motorway infrastructure. This distribution problem is of particular concern given how the local property market and two initiatives have already been developed as a response.

The **Widnes Waterfront EDZ** is a major new initiative for Widnes that which will transform 80 hectares of low quality land on the banks of the River Mersey and Sankey (St Helens) Canal to the south of Widnes town centre. It will become a focus for commercial, office, tourism, and industrial development, creating an estimated 2,700 new jobs with a high quality waterfront setting, approached by a tree-lined boulevard sweeping down from the town centre to the waterfront. Key to this is the ground breaking new remediation techniques that Halton is developing which so far have shown to be highly cost effective and will enable greater strides in addressing contaminated land issues.

There is a clear need to develop a new **Widnes Business Park** given the lack of high quality space available in Widnes. The original North Widnes location was not pursued following the Council's decision to accept the recommendation of the UDP Public Inquiry Inspector's report. Every effort is being made to try and deliver, on established brownfield sites, the quality and variety of economic opportunities needed. However, it is considered likely that during the lifetime of this strategy the need for a new 'high quality' location will become increasingly apparent and will need to be addressed as a high priority.

Key Issue – How does Halton ensure that the advantages of Runcorn are properly exploited and the challenges of achieving better quality development in Widnes addressed?

Key Issue – How does Halton ensure that we use the Council, its partners' and the private sectors' property portfolios effectively to build a diverse local economy?

3.8 Infrastructure

Halton is on the West Coast mainline and many people prefer to use Runcorn Station rather than going into Liverpool. Both the M56 and the M62 give easy access to Liverpool, Manchester, Cheshire, North Wales and the rest of the motorway network. Key roads within the Borough such as Watkinson Way, Speke Road and the Runcorn expressways make it easy to move around and access adjacent areas. The two growing airports of Liverpool and Manchester are both within a 20-30 minute drive.

The proposal for the **Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Park** followed a sub-regional study that identified the potential for a rail freight terminal of greater significance to be constructed around the existing inter-modal terminal at Ditton, in Widnes. Supported by the Strategic Rail Authority and the NWDA (it is one of its Strategic Regional Sites), there is a potential to radically upgrade the infrastructure in this area of the region in order to create many new jobs. The Ditton Strategic Rail Freight Terminal received support from the Inspector following the Unitary Development Plan local public inquiry. The Council will now look to advance this scheme with key landowners and a JV partner.

The major concern is the problems of congestion associated with the Silver Jubilee Bridge. Opened in 1962, its 330 meters make it the longest steel arch bridge in the country. It takes £3m to maintain each year and is already at capacity with some 90,000 vehicles using it per day creating significant congestion. By 2025, it is projected that 112,000 vehicles per day will try to use the bridge. Of the users, four fifths are passing through to access destinations across the region and it is clear the congestion already experienced is putting a break on economic growth in the North West. The proposed Mersey Gateway crossing will release economic potential both within Halton and the wider North West.

A very real issue is that many industrial estates in Halton no longer meet the requirements of modern businesses. Lack of investment, inadequate security, insufficient parking and poor image can lead to reduced competitiveness, increased vandalism and recruitment problems. If companies are to invest to become more competitive, these areas must be targeted for action.

The successful and attractive industrial area is one that fulfils the requirements of its business users whilst having a reasonably positive impact on its surrounding environment, making a positive contribution to the neighbouring communities and enhancing the image of the borough.

A programme of activity is being developed to address this situation with three estates being selected to start with – Astmoor (very high vacancy rates and proximity to Castlefields), Tan House (supporting the adjacent EDZ programme), and Halebank (given proposals to expand housing in the area and the desire for a mini relief road). Regeneration plans for each area will be drawn up by a steering group of local businesses supported by public sector partners.

Water dominates the Borough. The River Mersey and its estuary is the most physically dominating feature in the Borough and five canals run through it, *the Manchester Ship Canal, the Bridgewater Canal, The Sankey, the Weaver Navigation and the landlocked Latchford canal on Wigg Island*. These are steeped in history and yet the Borough has failed to maximise the potential benefits as demonstrated around the country when water is embraced rather than ignored. For example, if Runcorn Locks were re opened it would create a second Cheshire Ring and would boost local tourism, as would the restoration of the Sankey Canal.

In *Waterways for Tomorrow*, the Government acknowledges the regeneration benefits of waterways. It advocates the promotion of inland waterways, encourages a modern, integrated

and sustainable approach to their use. Importantly it advocates a balanced to conserving heritage and maximising the opportunities the waterways offer for leisure and recreation; as a catalyst for urban and rural regeneration; for education; and for freight transport. (This has already been recognised in Halton with the development of the Watersides Development Strategy).

Key Issue – How does Halton ensure its infrastructure meets the need of businesses within the Borough and across the region?

Key Issue – How does Halton maximise the regenerating effects of the waterways whilst balancing this with conserving its heritage?

3.9 Town Centres

Halton Lea, Runcorn, and Widnes form the **three main retailing areas** in Halton. Halton Lea is relatively modern, being part of the new town development. The two older, traditional town centres - Runcorn and Widnes - face increased competition arising from greater mobility, rising customer expectations and wider choice, all within the context of a gradual falling of foot fall across the country but increasing retail spend.

Given the levels of deprivation in the borough, it has proven challenging to attract well known/branded shops. However, this is a well-known problem and one that the government backed ‘Underserved Markets Project’ is starting to address. However, the town centres have recently seen increased levels of development that indicates the market is increasingly seeing them as places worthy of investment.

In Widnes town centre –

- A new 50,000 sq ft JJB leisure/retail development including a swimming pool
- Plans for more in town living
- Further small-medium sized units on Widnes Road
- Refurbishment of Victoria Square
- New ASDA new food-store at Simms Cross
- Kingsway ‘lifelong learning centre’
- Extensive programme of street and landscaping works.
- Opening of the Vue Bar and Grill.

In Runcorn town centre –

- New Kwiksave supermarket
- New Market Hall
- Large new private housing development schemes are planned for several sites beside the Manchester Ship Canal and the River Mersey.
- The opening of the Brindley arts centre
- New Runcorn Sixth Form and FE College development
- New small retail units

In Halton Lea –

- Extensive improvements have been made in recent years to create a more attractive environment within the Halton Lea development
- Development of the Trident Retail Park including cinema, and
- Planning permission sought for the extension of Asda.

In addition, Halton Borough Council is stepping up its approach to **Town Centre Management** (TCM) that is concerned with improving the vitality of the centres and addressing the issues and priorities that businesses, other stakeholders and the local authority see as important. Integral to this are independently chaired town centre forums for Widnes and Runcorn.

User Perceptions of the Town Centres

The 'Halton Town Centre User Survey 2003 Report suggests that the majority of current visitors access the town centre for shopping, with the supermarkets being a big attractor.

Current users are strongly in favour of having more clothes shops than at present in the town centre, and some call for more supermarkets, shoe shops, music shops and department stores.

Currently, buses are more favoured than cars to access to town centres though frequency and reliability is an issue to some. Users coming in cars tend to favour the Morrisons' car park (Widnes) over others, and find parking fairly easy. There was reasonable satisfaction with overall pleasantness, planters, Christmas lights etc provided in the town centres but more seats and toilet provision seemed to be high on users' wish list for additional fixtures in the public realm.

Users were also strongly in favour of more musical events, traditional Christmas events, children's events and street entertainment – a challenge to the Council and town centre retailers.

The survey shows demand for measures that address graffiti, vandalism, anti-social behaviour litter and dog fouling, with high levels of support for fines.

Finally, there was a general desire for more nightlife, but differences of opinion as to what that should be.

What is clear is that all three centres have an opportunity to benefit from the continuing strength and potential for growth in retailing in the UK and the investment that has taken place over the last few years.

Key Issue – How does Halton develop its town centres, including leisure developments, to their full potential and ensure that they reflect well on the Borough, and its overall quality of life?

3.10 Image and Perceptions

Recently more effort has gone into improving the image of the Borough. Noticeable improvements can be seen in the parks and open spaces, key strategic routes have been targeted and key developments such as the Brindley have featured in the national press. New high quality housing estates offering a range from flats to six bedrooms have been developed to encourage local people to stay in Halton and to attract new people to the Borough. From a business

perspective, big projects such as the Economic Development Zone have been complimented by smaller scale awareness events such as heli-days aimed at agents. The campaign for the New Mersey Crossing has put Halton onto the government agenda as well as featuring in numerous journals and in the media.

During late 2003, the Council undertook a review of how people and organisations perceived both the Council and the Borough. This work built upon what was already known through normal day to day working and responses to previous marketing campaigns. The key messages include -

- limited recognition of Halton in the wider regional and national arenas.
- improving
- still associated with the legacy of the old chemical industry
- clean and tidy
- dereliction, run down
- in some instances, almost complete lack of awareness of Halton and what it has to offer
- lack of quality business premises in Widnes
- a tendency not to promote Halton's successes, and
- too much emphasis on the negative rather than the positive.

Add to this, that many people think that the Daresbury Business Park, the NWDA Science Campus and Daresbury Laboratories are actually in Warrington – a perception that must change.

Key Issue – How does Halton continue to improve its image and project that to decision makers?

4. THE POLICIES AND ACTION AREAS

4.1 Introduction

Informed by the analysis above, the following section details a range of policies and key action areas that are responsive to the policy hierarchy, reflects Haltons potential to contribute to the region's regeneration as a whole and will bring about the sustainable improvements to the local economy by addressing the key issues already identified. Complimentary **Action Plans** will be published separately providing much more detail about the actual programmes and projects that will be implemented.

4.2 POLICY/ACTION – PROMOTING DIVERSITY AND COMPETITIVENESS

Halton will strongly support the development of higher value added sectors in the Borough and will seek encourage existing companies to become more competitive.

Key Issues addressed

- How can Halton develop a more balanced and diverse local economy, and address the relative under-representation of higher value added sectors so as not to constrain the overall potential for wealth creation in the local economy?
- How does Halton encourage businesses to become more competitive?

Key Aim relates to - **Enterprise and Performance**

Outcome Sought –

A more diverse and modernised business base, in both Widnes and Runcorn, which will provide greater security of employment over the next several decades for the local community.

Key Measures of Progress/Success –

1. Marketing campaigns that attract under-represented sectors, particularly business services and science/technology.
2. Adopting ‘Green Business Park’ standards for all existing business parks over time including the physical reshaping of industrial and other sites to meet new and emerging business needs.
3. Clear evidence of better practice – environmentally and in terms of sustainability and profitability - in the three employment areas which will be first on the list for action - Astmoor, Tan house Lane and Halebank.
4. Improved productivity.
5. Better links between business and research, HE and FE institutions.

4.3 POLICY/ACTION - DEVELOPING SECTORS AND CLUSTERS

Halton will work with partners to ensure that current theory on economic ‘clusters’ and ‘sectors’ informs our approach, with a view to developing stronger business inter-linkages and stronger overall business performance in Halton.

Key Issue addressed

- How does Halton best encourage the development of strong performance within existing ‘clusters’ and emerging ‘sectors’ in the Borough?

Key Aim relates to - **Enterprise and Performance**

The three nominated clusters to be examined and supported are detailed below-

4.3.1 POLICY/ACTION – SUPPORTING AND MODERNISING THE CHEMICAL INDUSTRY.

Halton will encourage the modernisation and diversification of the chemical industries within Halton through –

- **supporting sites to meet growing EU and UK expectations**
- **encouraging improvements to the industry’s overall environmental performance**
- **ameliorating the wider visual impact of the plant and premises, and**
- **employing and training local people in the manufacture of chemical products and by-products, old and new.**

Key Issue addressed

- How does Halton support the continued national importance of the chemical industry while also managing its local impacts?

Key Aim relates to - **Enterprise and Performance**

Outcome Sought –

A modernised, environmentally – friendly, high technology, chemical industry which makes a strong contribution to the nation’s GDP and local employment, without detriment to other economic development in the Borough.

Key Measure of Progress/Success –

1. Commitment by the chemical companies to further major investment to modernise the industry, improve its visual image and environmental performance.
2. Significantly improved image for the chemical industry in Halton.

4.3.2 POLICY / ACTION – DEVELOPING THE TOURISM OFFER.

Halton will develop the tourism offer of the Borough to support the Liverpool City Region, and other brands as advised by the NWDA, and in doing so –

- (i) will place the emphasis on investment in quality attractions which make apposite contribution to the overall quality of life and opportunities for employment for residents, potential new residents, and visitors**
- (ii) seek to develop Halton’s niche tourism offer(s) and to ensure that the tourism infrastructure is in place to satisfy growing demand for visitor accommodation in terms of quantity and quality within the Borough, and**
- (iii) contribute to the VisitBritain Framework for Action to reflect the changing needs of tourism customers and to enhance tourism customer front line services.**

Key Issue addressed

- How does Halton develop its tourism potential with greater spin-off in terms of the attractiveness of the area for spend, investment and residence, whilst also improving the quality of life of exiting residents?

Key Aim relates to- **Enterprise and Performance**

Outcome Sought –

A wider range of quality leisure and cultural facilities providing a quality tourism experience that will attract more visitors and new residents into the Borough.

Key Measure of Success –

1. Attraction of a large three / four-star new hotel into the Borough.
2. An enhanced range and quality of visitor facilities of all types in the Borough.
3. Increase visitor numbers.

4.3.3 POLICY / ACTION – SCIENCE AND TECHNOLOGY.

Halton will strongly support the development of science and technology, and research and development units in the Borough, particularly at the NWDA’s Science Park at Daresbury and at the Heath Business and Technical Park.

Key Issue addressed

- How does Halton support the development of science and technology?

Key Aim relates to - **Enterprise and Performance**

Outcome Sought –

A strong centre for science related business, and research and development, in Halton, which will offer well-paid and satisfying career paths for local people.

Key Measure of Progress/Success –

1. Significant expansion of the Daresbury Science Park.
2. Continued business growth and expansion at the Heath Business and Technical Park.
3. Development of ‘big science’ in Halton.
4. Exploitation of nano technology within local businesses.

4.4 POLICY/ACTION - FOSTERING ENTERPRISE AND ENTREPRENEURSHIP

Halton will foster the development of an enterprise culture that encourages people to consider starting a business and a support network that gives new ventures every chance of success.

Key Issue

- How does Halton develop a culture of enterprise and entrepreneurship?

Key Aim relates to - **Enterprise and Performance**

Outcome Sought –

More local people willing to consider and choosing to start up a business/go into self-employment

Key Measures of Progress/Success –

1. Development of an Enterprise Strategy for Halton.
2. Higher business start up rates.
3. More women, disabled and young people, professionals, artists and musicians setting up small businesses in Halton.
4. More social enterprises.

4.5 POLICY/ACTION – REDUCING UNEMPLOYMENT AND INCREASING EMPLOYMENT

Halton will implement its basics skills strategy and develop activity that enables local people to access employment

Key Issues addressed

- How does Halton reduce unemployment and improve economic activity rates in the Borough as a whole, and in five identified wards in particular, with special reference to younger people?
- How does Halton address the problem of basic skills and in particular low levels of literacy and numeracy among the existing working population?

Key Aim relates to – **Employment and Skills**

Outcome Sought –

Improved levels of basic skills and increased rates of people in employment.

Key Measures of Progress/Success –

1. Further improving educational attainment levels of pupils in Halton’s schools.
2. Improving levels of basic skills.
3. Enhanced levels of transport provision and advice.
4. Increased numbers of people that are willing to work and are job ready.

4.6 POLICY/ACTION – RAISING WORKFORCE SKILL LEVELS.

Halton will continually map, review and address the skill deficits in the Borough to enable businesses to recruit and develop their workforce.

Key Issue addressed

- How can Halton ensure that residents will have the skills that businesses need both now and in the future to be able to compete for the available jobs?

Key Aim relates to – **Employment and Skills**

Outcome sought –

A highly educated population, committed to lifelong learning and educational achievement, which will enable local people to attract and access interesting and well paid jobs which add to their quality of life.

Key Measures of Progress / Success –

1. Production of a Workforce Development Strategy leading to a rise in skill levels.
2. Reduced levels of skills vacancies in local businesses.

4.7 POLICY/ACTION – ENCOURAGING INVESTMENT IN LAND AND PROPERTY

Halton will develop a balanced portfolio of development land and commercial property, will seek to use and continually adapt that resource intelligently to meet contemporary and future needs and will have a regard at all times to its most appropriate use, its architectural / aesthetic quality and its landscape impact.

Key Issues addressed

- How does Halton ensure that the advantages of Runcorn are properly exploited and the challenges of achieving better quality development in Widnes addressed?
- How does Halton ensure that we use the Council, its partners' and the private sectors' property portfolios effectively to build a diverse local economy?

Key Aim related to - **Property and Infrastructure**

Outcome sought –

Employment areas that are fit for purpose, in the sense that they both meet business needs, and help to produce an attractive and prosperous Borough.

Key Measure of Progress / Success –

1. The sum total of new investment made in adapting and redeveloping land and premises in the already developed (brown-field) areas of the Borough.
2. Redevelopment of vacant derelict sites.

4.8 POLICY / ACTION -INFRASTRUCTURE

Halton will work to improve its existing infrastructure and secure major investment on the New Mersey Crossing, and the waterways and watersides of the Borough

Key Issues

- How does Halton ensure its infrastructure meets the need of businesses within the Borough and across the region?
- How does Halton maximise the regenerating effects of the waterways whilst balancing this with conserving its heritage?

Key Aim related to - **Property and Infrastructure**

Outcome sought –

Employment areas that are fit for purpose, in the sense that they both meet business needs, and help to produce an attractive and prosperous Borough.

Key Measure of Progress / Success –

1. Progress on the Mersey Gateway.
2. Implementation of Waterside Development Strategy.

4.9 POLICY / ACTION – STRENGTHENING THE TOWN CENTRES.

Halton will invest in the public realm and encourage the gradual regeneration of the two older town centres and their retail, office and leisure offer, and support efforts to develop the retail offer at Halton Lea.

Key Issue addressed

- How does Halton develop its town centres, including leisure developments, to their full potential and ensure that they reflect well on the Borough, and its overall quality of life?

Key Aim related to - **Property and Infrastructure**

Outcome Sought -

Vibrant town centres that offer a good shopping experience, and all-year-round interest and appeal to visitors.

Key Measures of Progress -

1. The number of brand new and extensively refurbished retail and office units in the town centres.
2. The extent and quality of public realm upgrade.
3. Improved satisfaction through the Users' Survey.

4.10 POLICY / ACTION – ENVIRONMENT AND IMAGE

Halton will improve its image and project a positive image through a continuous public relations campaign and by improving its environment.

Key Issue addressed

- How does Halton continue to improve its image and project that to decision makers?

Key Aim relates to – **Environment and Image**

Outcome sought –

Enhanced environment and improved perception by public, business and investors

Key Measure of Progress / Success –

1. Successful image campaign with improved perception results.
2. Improved environment on strategic routes.

3. Further investment in new housing.
4. Key gateways improved.
5. Reduced vandalism.
6. Increased public art.

5. DELIVERY

5.1 Delivery Through the Halton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP)

Given the myriad of strategic documents and policies in existence each of which acknowledge similar problems and, in many case, propose similar solutions it will be the Halton Local Strategic Partnership (LSP) has taken the responsibility for the delivery of this Strategy at a local level.

5.2 The Delivery Framework

The programme and actions set out in this Strategy and accompanying Action Plan should also be seen within the context of the Halton LSP and Council's shared wider regeneration objectives. Ultimately, all aspects of the public sector activity impact upon the economic development of the Borough. For example, the environmental and highways services, and the local heritage / sporting / cultural activities of the Council influence the Borough's capacity to attract and retain investment. Education and training provision plays a key role in raising standards of attainment and enhancing the future skills base of the local workforce. Social services and community development influence the scope for community capacity building and address disadvantage and inequality. The participation, co-operation and goodwill of all organisations working within Halton will, therefore, be essential for this Strategy to be fully realised.

Under the auspices of the LSP, the major players will be -

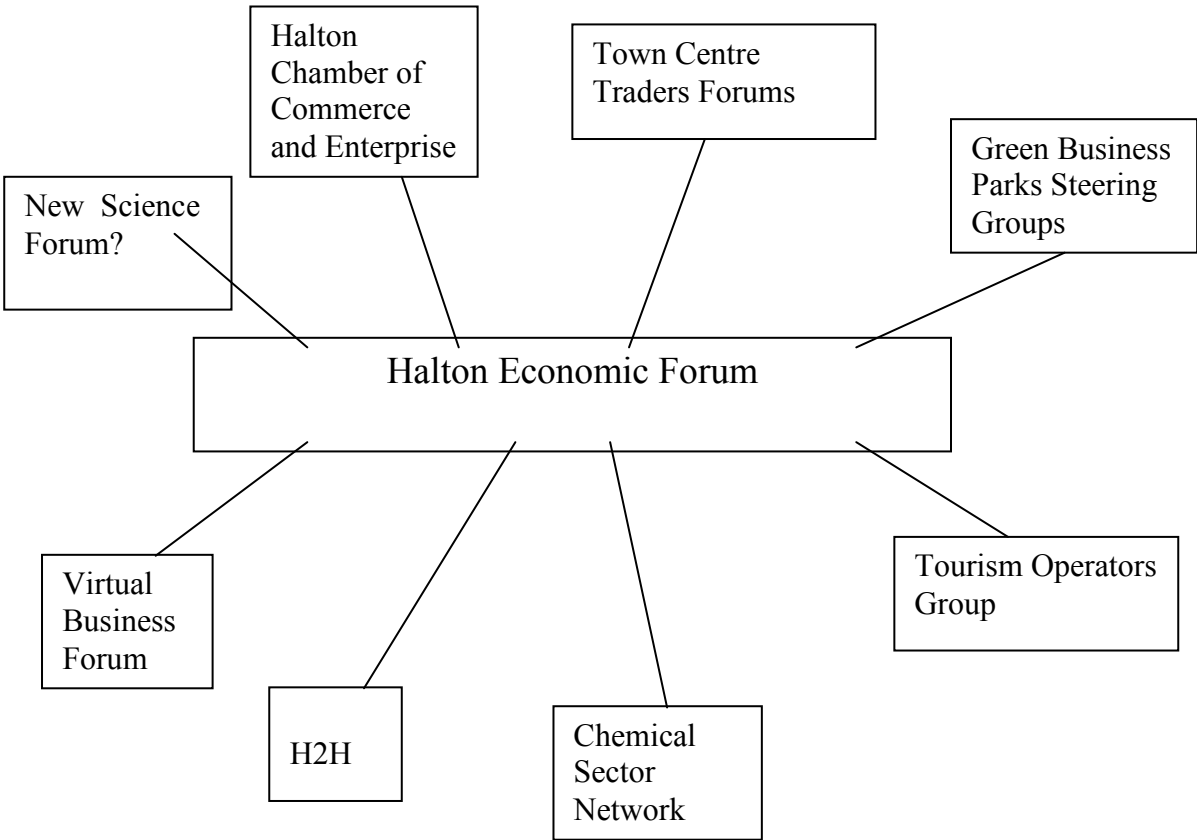
- Halton Borough Council
- North West Development Agency
- The Mersey Partnership
- Business Link Greater Merseyside
- Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside
- English Partnerships
- Halton Chamber of Commerce and Enterprise
- The Further and Higher Education Sector
- Business Community
- The Voluntary Sector, and
- Other funding organisations.

5.3 The Private Sector Network

The private sector clearly has an extensive roll in delivering large parts of the Strategy. Just as important is its role in promoting it and helping the Halton Local Strategic Partnership to evolve its contents overtime.

Whilst are numerous groups and networks involved in business within Halton, there is little co-ordination or sharing of ideas and views between them. This represents a loss of energy and talent that could be brought to bear in aiding the regeneration of the Borough. Accordingly, it is proposed to unite this activity through the creation of an **Open Economic Forum** that will meet twice a year to review progress and to provide an opportunity for businesses and groups to make

comments and suggestions as to how the Strategy should develop. This would operate under the umbrella of the Halton Local Strategic Partnership with administration and support from Halton Borough Council and Halton Chamber of Commerce and Industry. Overtime, it is hoped that this would engage a substantial number of businesses in the Borough and become web enabled.



5.4 Financing the Strategy

The Halton Local Strategic Partnership and all the partners within it will not only deploy their own resources to implement the strategy, but will also lobby government, the European Union and various agencies for resources. In general, finance can split into two categories –

- **Mainstream funding.** Funding that is available year on year to regeneration organisations.
- **External funding.** This is most often characterised through a bid process and as such is far less certain than mainstream funding. Additionally, it is normally for a time-limited period and for a specific initiative.

In terms of mainstream provision the following already commit significant sums of money to the regeneration of the Borough and developing its economy and tourism offer-

- Halton Borough Council’s Capital Programme and Capital Priorities Fund - provides monies for major projects such as the Widnes Waterfront EDZ scheme, the Local Transport Plan, etc. Also, revenue to fund the work of the Major Projects and Regeneration Services Departments (circa £1m p.a.)
- Learning and Skills Council Greater Merseyside funding - supports skills and, workforce development
- Business Link Greater Merseyside – provides business support
- Job Centre Plus - New Deal programmes etc, and

- Colleges' funds – higher education funding.

Additionally, there are a number of external sources that support specific initiatives and a number that must be applied for. These include –

- Northwest Development Agency (e.g. for environmental improvements, infrastructure, dereliction removal, social and economic inclusion, business support). Also, NWDA administers the Single Regeneration Budget (which will cease in Halton in March 2006) – but that programme is already fully allocated
- Neighbourhood Renewal Funding is channelled through the Halton 'Local Strategic Partnership' and will continue until 2008 (e.g. health, urban renewal, life chances and employment, poverty and deprivation, safe & attractive neighbourhoods)
- Department for Trade and Industry (e.g. business support aids)
- English Partnerships offer a range of support for major initiatives (e.g. Castlefields) and flexibility on claw-back arrangements
- English Heritage and the Heritage Lottery Fund (in relation to heritage conservation)
- Strategic Rail Authority (e.g. grants for sidings and handling equipment)
- The National Lottery
- European – European Regional Development Fund, European Social Fund, and various other EU schemes
- Sure Start, and
- Other Bodies (eg Forestry Commission, Environmental Agency, English Nature, Countryside Agency, Sports and Arts Councils) provide much free best practice advice and guidance, plus funding for special projects.

Looking at the possible expenditure over the next three years, subject to funding applications being successful, it is envisaged -

Source	Total £ 000's
Halton BC	6,000
JCP	5,500
NWDA	39,000
NRF	2,914
Lottery	600
European	8,900
Private Sector	94,360
TOTALS	157,274

5.5 Conclusion

This Strategy for 2004 – 2007 establishes the framework for the creation of a more vibrant and sustainable economy. It acknowledges the vital role to be played by partner organisation to ensure the delivery of the Strategy and seeks to ensure complementarity between the objectives of the Strategy and partners own corporate plans. By working together on the implementation of this Strategy, it will be possible to address many of the embedded structural issues in the economy of Halton and provide local people with greater opportunities to develop their own skills and abilities, and to secure employment that suits their personal circumstances.

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Halton LSP/BC – Urban Renewal Objectives

- A. To promote sustainable development.
- B. To encourage the diversification and modernisation of the local economy and the creation of new jobs for the local, sub-regional and national economy.
- C. To remould and enhance the three town centres and adjacent residential areas.
- D. To improve, rationalise and spruce up the older industrial estates.
- E. To improve the overall image of the Borough in order to attract regenerative investment, by maximising the attractiveness of the waterfront areas and canals in particular.
- F. To secure continual investment in developing the quality and range of housing opportunities in the Borough.
- G. To enhance the transport infrastructure of the Borough.
- H. To ensure a high quality of attractiveness and maintenance of the public realm, especially along strategic routes and in town centres.
- I. To remodel and extend key open spaces to provide a better network of high quality recreational open spaces.
- J. To ensure high quality design and landscaping throughout the Borough, and eradicate visible dereliction.

Halton LSP/BC – ‘Enhancing Life Chances and Employment’ Objectives

- A. To promote access to suitable education, training and means for personal development for residents of all ages.
- B. To promote the ability of local residents to ensure that they have the skills and means to access a range of good quality, secure job opportunities and encourage and support residents to seek employment (*link to Urban Renewal job creation objective 2*).
- C. To ensure that all pre-school children have access to high quality early years educational and care provision and development opportunities.
- D. To achieve an overall improvement in the achievement of school age children and encourage the take up of further education and training opportunities.
- E. To improve opportunities for the personal development of young people, particularly those who are disenfranchised, disaffected or hard to reach.
- F. To improve educational and skills levels of the 14+ population to enable them to take advantage of other life opportunities.
- G. To promote education / business links within Halton and the surrounding area in order to enhance opportunities.
- H. To contribute towards reducing the unemployment rate in Halton and increasing the economic activity rate.
- I. To support businesses to become more competitive and encourage workforce development.
- J. To promote and support the development of a thriving entrepreneurial culture.

MONITORING FRAMEWORK

The Halton Local Strategic Partnership will have overall responsibility for the stewardship of the Halton Economic and Tourism Development Strategy. Under its duty to promote economic well being, the Council's Executive Board and various Policy and Performance Boards will further scrutinise the realisation of its specific objectives.

The Local Strategic Partnership and Council Boards will -

- Evaluate the impact of actions taken
- Assess the relevance of policies being pursued
- Be responsible for changes in the direction of the finalised Strategy that circumstances might dictate, and
- Co-ordinate and formulate the resource bidding process.

There is no Best Value Performance Indicator framework for economic development activity. However, the Audit Commission working in partnership with the Local Government Association, the Chief Economic Development Officers Society and a number of Local Authorities have developed a set of voluntary indicators that are being piloted in England and Wales. These indicators recognise that much economic development work combines to produce outputs and outcomes, thus making it difficult to attribute them to individual programmes or partners. It is anticipated that the final agreed list will be available in September 2005 and until then, the draft set forms the basis of the monitoring framework.

Within the Audit Commission framework, there are two levels of indicators-

Contextual Indicators that are employed to identify a baseline assessment of an area and identify the conditions within which the regeneration strategy is operating. They measure the overall performance of the local economy and therefore reflect the both the activities of local partners and also the impact of regional, national and global agencies, governments and markets. Contextual indicators will be used to compare the performance of the economy of Halton against similar geographical areas across the UK.

Performance Indicators are by definition more specific and therefore more measurable at a local level and will be used to measure more precisely the impact of local activities and in some instances of the local organisations. They are more suitable to enable the comparison of activities against other similar agencies.

Each area has its own circumstances and as such, the Audit Commission indicators provide a menu from which to select those indicators that are relevant to local circumstances. The following are applicable to Halton and will be used in monitoring the Strategy.

Contextual Indicators

<i>Category</i>	<i>AC ref</i>	<i>Title</i>
Employment	EC1	• The proportion of working age in employment.
Unemployment	EC2	• The proportion of working population who are unemployed. • The proportion of unemployed people claiming benefit

		who have been out of work for more than one year.
Local jobs	EC3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local job numbers by sector. The percentage of these that are full time. Annual change in number of local jobs.
Earnings	EC4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average annual earnings for full time males and full time females.
Workforce Skills	EC5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of adult with (i) literacy and (ii) numeracy skills at or above level 1. Percentage of population of working age qualified to NVQ level 2 or equivalent. Percentage of population of working age qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent.
Economic activity	EC6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP per head of local population. Trend growth in GDP per head of local population (compared to trend growth in regional GDP per head). Gross value added (GVA) per hour in the locality.
Business growth	EC7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of VAT registered businesses in the area per 10,000 population. The % change in number of VAT registered businesses in the area over the year.
House Prices and affordability	EC8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average property price. Average property price/average earnings.
Business confidence	EC9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Previously developed land that is unused or may be available for redevelopment as a % of the local authority land area. Satisfaction with the local area as a business location (CBI or Chamber of Commerce survey).
Population	EC10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Total number living in area
Household Poverty	EC11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Percentage children under 16 living in low-income households. Percentage of population of working age who are claiming benefits.
Deprivation	EC12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Proportion of population living in wards that rank within the most deprived 10% of wards in the country

Performance Indicators

<i>Category</i>	<i>AC ref</i>	<i>Title</i>
Town centre Usage	EC13	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pedestrian footfall in the town centre (survey). User satisfaction with town centre (survey).
Town centre activity	EC14	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Number of ground floor units not being used as a proportion of the total number of ground floor Businesses. Number of charity shops as a percentage of the total number of ground floor businesses. Prime retail rent per square metre. Shopping centre yield.
Tourism	EC15	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Day visitors per annum Bed nights per annum.

Workforce Development	EC16	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of employees and self employees that have received job related training in the last 13 weeks.
Employability	EC17	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unemployed people in employment and/or education a) six months, and b) twelve months after registering on New Deal and other vocational and basic skills training and employment programmes.
Business investment	EC18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number of ‘inward investment’ enquiries dealt with per annum. • Number and value of re-locations and re-investments annually as a result of ‘inward investment’. • Number of jobs created and safeguarded from firms moving to, re-investing or re-locating in the area following ‘inward investment’ enquiries.
Land and premises brought forward for development	EC19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Value of investment land and premises development in the area. • Brownfield land reclaimed as a percentage of all land made available for industrial, commercial and leisure purposes.
Business support start-ups	EC20	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of new business start ups supported in the local area. • Percentage of these start ups which are located in wards identified in the 20% most deprived wards in the Country. • User satisfaction with business start up support (SBS indicator).
Business support units and managed workspace	EC21	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of jobs created and safeguarded in business units and managed workspace for economic development purposes. • Survival rates of businesses in managed workspace (i.e. after two years).
Business support other	EC22	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Number of business support enquiries for advice and other information received per annum. • Number of jobs created or safeguarded by each type of business support.
Community Enterprise and the Social economy	EC23	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Jobs created by support to community enterprise. • Income generated by community enterprise.

*AC ref – Audit Commission reference

A progress statement using these indicators will be issued annually. This will also report on the progress of the key success measures as identified in chapter 4 (Policy/Action Areas). This will enable stakeholders to monitor and evaluate progress transparently, identifying where satisfactory progress is being made and areas where further effort is required.

BASELINE CONTEXTUAL INDICATORS

Category	Title	Data	Information Source/Baseline Date																		
Employment EC1	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of working age in employment. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton - 66.7% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.nomisweb.co.uk <p>Mar 2002 – Feb 2003</p>																		
Unemployment EC2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of working population who are unemployed The proportion of unemployed people claiming benefit who have been out of work for more than one year 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton – 7.3% Halton – 15.5% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.nomisweb.co.uk <p>Mar 2002 to Feb 2003</p>																		
Local jobs EC33	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Local job numbers by sector. The percentage of these that are full time. Annual change in number of local jobs. 	<table> <tr> <td>Manufacturing</td> <td>10,323</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Construction</td> <td>2,430</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Services</td> <td>38,305</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Distribution</td> <td>11,603</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Transport & communications</td> <td>4,817</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Finance, IT, other business activities</td> <td>8,967</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Public admin, education, health</td> <td>10,652</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Other</td> <td>2,266</td> </tr> <tr> <td>Tourism related</td> <td>3,385</td> </tr> </table> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton – 71.6% N/A – Year 1 	Manufacturing	10,323	Construction	2,430	Services	38,305	Distribution	11,603	Transport & communications	4,817	Finance, IT, other business activities	8,967	Public admin, education, health	10,652	Other	2,266	Tourism related	3,385	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.nomisweb.co.uk <p>2002</p>
Manufacturing	10,323																				
Construction	2,430																				
Services	38,305																				
Distribution	11,603																				
Transport & communications	4,817																				
Finance, IT, other business activities	8,967																				
Public admin, education, health	10,652																				
Other	2,266																				
Tourism related	3,385																				
Earnings EC4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average annual earnings for full time males and full time females. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton – Male: £488.80 Female: ? (NW £367.90) <p>(Data only available for weekly earnings)</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.urban.odpm.gov.uk/research/id2000/index.htm <p>2002</p>																		
Workforce Skills EC5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of adult with (i) literacy and (ii) numeracy skills at or above level 1. Percentage of population of working age qualified to NVQ level 2 or equivalent. Percentage of population of working age qualified to NVQ level 3 or equivalent. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adults' Basic Skills (2001) Price: £29.38 Product Code: A1062 (Information available in publication) Halton – 55.5% Halton – 34.8% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.basic-skills.co.uk <p>2001</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.nomisweb.co.uk <p>Mar 2002 to Feb 2003</p>																		
Economic activity EC6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> GDP per head of local population. Trend growth in GDP per head of local population (compared to trend growth in regional GDP per head). Gross value added (GVA) per hour in the locality. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> £16,022 NB for Halton and Warrington combined 12% increase between 1998-2001 compared to 13% regionally. Not found 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 2001, Regional Trends 38. ONS, Regional Trends 38 <p>2002</p>																		
Business growth EC7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The total number of VAT registered businesses in the area per 10,000 population. (NB usually per 10,000 of 16+ population) The % change in number of VAT registered businesses in the area over the year. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton- 231 1.05% increase 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Stocks at start of 2004 . Nomis Web http://www.statistics.gov.uk/about_ns/ons/downloads/ONSAnnRpt0102.pdf Percentage change in VAT registered stocks at start of 2004 and 2003. Nomis Web 																		
House Prices & affordability EC8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Average property price 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Halton Detached £184,372 Semi £103,379 Terraced £74,408 Flat £86,392 Average £105,242 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> www.landreg.gov.uk http://www.landreg.gov.uk/assets/library/documents/pprg2_2004_bw.pdf 																		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Average property price/average earnings. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • £105,242/£413.00 	2004
Business confidence EC9	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Previously developed land that is unused or may be available for redevelopment as a % of the local authority land area. • Satisfaction with the local area as a business location (CBI or Chamber of Commerce survey). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton – 42 hectares/183 hectares = 23% (see PDF for calculation) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.nlud.org.uk • http://www.nlud.org.uk/draftone/results/pdf/2003/Supplementary%20table.pdf <p>2003</p>
Population EC10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Total number living in area. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton – 118,000 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • www.statistics.gov.uk <p>2002</p>
Household Poverty EC11	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Percentage of children under 16 in families in receipt of Key benefits. • Percentage of population of working age who are claiming key benefits. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 30.4% • 21% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.dwp.gov.uk/mediacentre/pressreleases/2004/iune/iad160604ssjune04.pdf • DWP, February 2004 <p>2004</p>
Deprivation EC12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Proportion of the population living in the top 20% most deprived SOAs. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Halton – 50% 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • http://www.odpm.gov.uk/stellent/groups/odpm_control/documents/contentservertemplate/odpm_index.hcst?n=4610&l=3 <p>2004</p>

GLOSSARY

AC	Audit Commission	BL	Business Link
DCMS	Department for Culture, Media and Sport	DTI	Department of Trade and Industry
DEFRA	Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs	DWP	Department of Work and Pensions
DfES	Department for Education and Skills	DICIDA	Development Initiative for Chemical Industries Dependent Areas
EDZ	Economic Development Zone	ERDF	European Regional Development Fund
GME	Greater Merseyside Enterprise	GONW	Government Office for the North West
HASWA	Health and Safety at Work Act	HCCE	Halton Chamber of Commerce & Enterprise
ICT	Information and Communications Technology	IDeA	Improvement and Development Agency - formerly the Local Government Management Board - LGMB
IiP	Investors in People	IMD	Index of Multiple Deprivation
JCP	JobCentre Plus	LAs	Local Authorities
LEA	Local Education Authority	LGA	Local Government Association
LSC	Learning and Skills Council	LPSA	Local Public Service Agreement
LSP	Local Strategic Partnership - HLSP in this context is Halton Local Strategic Partnership	LTP	Local Transport Plan
NRF	Neighbourhood Renewal Fund	NVQs	National Vocational Qualifications
NWRA	North West Regional Assembly	NWDA	North West Development Agency
ODPM	Office of the Deputy Prime Minister	Ofsted	Office for Standards in Education
PCT	Primary Care Trust	PFI	Private Finance Initiative
PSA	Public Service Agreement	PIs	Performance indicators
SMEs	Small and Medium Enterprises	SRB	Single Regeneration Budget
RDA	Regional Development Agency	TMP	The Mersey Partnership
TIC	Tourism Information Centre	TCM	Town Centre Management